



Case study

Policy Review

Ww staff of German Foreign Office, 2014

Synthetron online debates helped the German Foreign Office gain input from staff around the world into a review of Germany's foreign policy

German Foreign Policy review: What next?

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The crowdsourcing approach was a new, modern approach in the IT architecture of the Federal Foreign Office, from which we learned a lot. The on-line debates on a synthesized basis have been an important integrating element in the various participation formats of the Review 2014 process. It was only through this instrument that we were able to give colleagues around the world the opportunity to participate in the process in a short time. A big win for us was the technical possibilities of your product as well as the variety of evaluation possibilities. The quick analysis of participants' attitudes on the basis of their phrasing and words used was also impressive.

For me it became clear that a good cooperation of your specialists with my team is essential to harmonize the Synthetron expertise with the knowledge of procedures and specifics of the Federal Foreign Office and make optimal use of them. This was successfully done.

Thomas Bagger
Head of Planning Staff of the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of

Background:

In November 2013, shortly after the beginning of the 18th legislative period, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier announced that he wanted to answer two questions

- 1 . What is wrong with German foreign policy?
- 2 . What would have to be changed?

The German Foreign Office conducted a review to help answer these questions.

Consultation

On 4 November 2014, Foreign Minister Steinmeier gave the go-ahead for a broad internal review of German Foreign policy with international staff as part of a wider review with internal and external stakeholders

The focus of discussions with the staff was what impact would the various challenges, facing the Foreign Office, have on working methods and culture within the Foreign Service.

Synthetron online dialogues

In addition to three face-to-face formats to get staff input - fishbowl discussion, gallery walks and idea workshops - the German Foreign Office used the Synthetron platform of anonymous, online discussions to get input and involvement from multiple locations, specifically staff in offices outside of Germany.

Approach

In close consultation with the foreign ministry's planning staff, the Synthetron team developed open questions for four 75-minute live debates.

Guided by a focused moderation, a total of around 350 employees dealt with questions of organization, external networking, dealing with creativity and innovation, as well as with the European Union's position on the Foreign Office. More than 3,250 ideas were exchanged in the debates.

Immediately after each debate, the planning staff received an overview of the level of activity and of all the ideas that received support during the discussion – the *synthetrons*.



> 1000's
Sessions

> 100,000's
Participants

> 40
Countries used it

14
Languages

> 30
Consultants

Results

The Synthetron team then analyzed all the supported statements, in terms of content and language, consolidating all the debates.

The results gave insight into:

- what staff understand by as appropriate 'home culture' and how this affects the way they work – we were able to segment these views by where staff were from and their area of work
- what actions seem essential to achieve the desired home culture
- challenges around staff engagement, conflicting goals and bottle necks that should be considered in the review process
- what consistent communication requirements are, and
- which change management aspects need in-house attention.

Outlook:

Combining the Synthetron report with input from external reflection and face-to-face interactions the Foreign Office developed, in 2015, a plan *How to move forward with what culture at the Foreign Office*.

More Information

"Review 2014 – A Fresh Look at German Foreign Policy" - Closing Remarks by Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier



Synthetron Moving forward. Together.

Synthetron helps you get actionable insights to move forward by engaging the people that matter via a unique crowdsourcing methodology of online dialogues.



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watch our video

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**Over 10 years of smart
crowd dialogues
Present in 16 countries
14 languages**

The Platform

The Synthetron platform allows you to conduct a one-hour real-time online moderated and focused discussion with 10 to 1000 participants.

Participants join in and write from their own PC or tablet to share ideas, react, vote and interact anonymously. Our clever group organisation and algorithm ensure a real-time engaging interaction without overload and instant participant synthesis.

Participants feel appreciated and engaged and you gain insights on what is important for moving forward, instantly.

After the session, the short list of most supported ideas is available as well as all messages. Our seasoned team of consultants will help you gain deeper insights with a set of proven analysis tools adapted to your needs. It is very easy and quick to set up a session, and it typically takes less than 4 weeks from briefing to final report.

Applications

- **HR & employee engagement:**
to understand employee satisfaction, co-create corporate culture, explore a sensitive topic, support a change program or review /work on a policy
- **Strategy & Change management:**
to get feedback on strategic options, communicate the change story, keep finger on the pulse during an organizational change or support a merger.
- **Customer understanding:**
to understand drivers and barriers, get feedback on a new concept or co-create new products & solutions.
- **Citizens/ stakeholders:**
to engage citizens in policy making, create a new kind of relationships with members or tap into the wisdom of experts.