

CASE STUDY | DOW AGROSCIENCES, LLC

# Dedicated Software Support Team Proves Vital for Dow AgroSciences

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—Janelle Neubauer,  
Allocations Manager for Dow  
AgroSciences, LLC



## THE CHALLENGE

In 2001, Solentra (formerly E-Markets), recognized a potential issue. Solentra had just established an agreement with Dow AgroSciences, LLC, to bring an ordering system (MLink) online for their Mycogen Seeds business after having worked with other groups at Dow for various agronomy solutions for 3 years. Solentra had several other agribusiness clients, some of whom were direct competitors to Dow in this market. Solentra needed to eliminate any potential conflicts of interest so security of information was not shared between customers. More importantly, the team needed to identify a scalable solution so that over time, they could handle additional Solentra software systems deployed at Dow.

## THE SOLUTION

As a result of the security concerns, and noticing that several agriculture businesses were developing homegrown ordering systems, Solentra proposed a solution to provide customized support to Dow AgroSciences. A separate team was established by Solentra for Dow, including a dedicated support specialist, business analyst, quality assurance focal, developer and select contractors. Solentra offered a detailed agreement which included unlimited top-tier call support, a dedicated email, and training of onsite super users.

Janelle Neubauer, an Allocations Manager at Dow stated, “When we started, our system was not as involved as it is today. However, it's never been an issue because the support provided by Solentra has evolved along with the complexity of the tool.”

## THE BENEFIT

In assessing the collaboration over the last 15 years, three common themes have emerged to highlight the benefits of having a dedicated enterprise team. In fact, these benefits are the key reason why E-Markets has shifted their business strategy; the emergence of the Cultura Enterprise Group directly resulted from the benefits realized by both Dow and E-Markets. Specifically, both teams point to communication/responsiveness, depth of business and technical knowledge and establishment of trusting relationships as the cornerstones for maintaining such a strong partnership.

“I never hesitate to make a call to anyone on the Solentra team. Having the strong relationship is critical because we are able to speak openly and honestly with one another. I have trust in the recommendations provided to me.”

—Eric Scherder, Field Scientist for Dow AgroSciences, LLC

### Communication and Responsiveness

By instituting a firm foundation and process for communication, the team has the ability to grow and build their relationships. From a process perspective, Solentra has also established a robust system that enables consistent and frequent communications. There are weekly team calls that serve to touch base, review any open issues, and to identify potential opportunities. Solentra is closely involved with Dow every step of the way.

“Having that one contact I can call, who knows the systems inside and out, has been huge for us,” says Neubauer. “Our focal has been able to come up with ideas and options that make it a win-win for both sides of the fence,” she adds.

“The Solentra team is excellent at getting back to us quickly – even if they don’t know the immediate answer. I simply place a call or fire off an email, and in a short time, I’ve typically heard from the team with either an answer, or an acknowledgment of my question with an expected response time,” Marg Speller, Data Excellence Manager at Dow.

### Knowledge Base

The depth of technical and business knowledge is readily apparent when new feature requirements are needed, and has increased with the longevity of the dedicated team. Both Dow and Solentra focals are confident in the knowledge that has grown over time, including understanding the history of decisions already made.

“When Dow brings us new projects, we have an immediate advantage of already knowing a good portion of the business and the history of the relationships. This enables us to act quickly,” Corrie Strasser, Senior Consultant at Solentra. Says Speller, “When we ask for a new feature or update, we typically don’t provide a whole lot of information for the Solentra team to go on. However, they are able to take our high level ideas and turn it into a proposal that really makes sense.”

The development of core business knowledge combined with technical expertise has also yielded efficiency benefits. Says Edward Nimtz, Online Seed Ordering Leader at Dow,



“Cultura is my preferred vendor because of response time, quality of the work, and the fact that team knows our business. The time savings and the consistency of work delivered are byproducts of the deep knowledge and commitment the Cultura team has.” Added Eric Scherder, Dow Field Scientist, “I don’t think our product launches would have been as successful as quickly if we didn’t have a dedicated team. We cut out so many hours of inefficiency.”

### Trusting Relationship

Ultimately, the main outcome to providing a dedicated team for software solutions support is the strength of the relationships that have been built over time. The relationship between Solentra and Dow grew stronger and the trust developed because of strong communication and demonstration of technical and business acumen.

The majority of the Solentra team members have been supporting Dow for the length of the partnership. From the beginning, those assigned to the account spent countless hours meeting in person and on the phone. Scherder stated, “I never hesitate to make a call to anyone on the Solentra team. Having the strong relationship is critical because we are able to speak openly and honestly with one another. I have trust in the recommendations provided to me.”

Additionally, there is trust that each question or concern brought to the attention of Solentra by Dow will receive the appropriate amount of attention. According to Nimtz, “The thing about having a dedicated team is that things do not fall through the cracks.”

## CONCLUSION

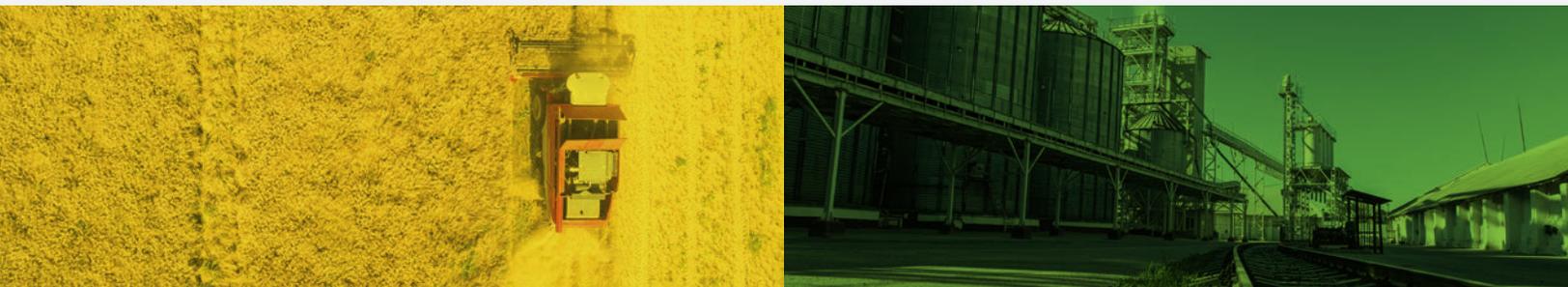
The establishment of a dedicated team at Solentra to support their software solutions at Dow has yielded tremendous benefits for both parties. Both sides recognize the time savings and productivity gains realized through this valuable relationship. Through frequent and consistent communications, the expertise shared between the two teams has grown exponentially.

"It speaks well of Solentra that they have positioned their support personnel in a way that sets them up for success. They are knowledgeable in their field – they know the tool, they know their job, and that's why they can respond so efficiently and effectively," commented Speller.

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Dow AgroSciences discovers, develops, and brings to market crop protection and plant biotechnology solutions for the growing world. Based in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, Dow AgroSciences is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Dow Chemical Company and had annual global sales of \$6.4 billion in 2015. Learn more at [www.dowagro.com](http://www.dowagro.com).



### About Solentra

Solentra is an agri-business services and software business that delivers solutions to meet the demands of our customers across the global agriculture sector. As a business partner, Solentra serves customers with our industry expertise that includes an exclusive focus and decades of industry knowledge in agri-business and agri-food technology, innovative teams, and an extensive and growing list of products and services. We acquire, develop, and deploy efficient and reliable solutions on our customers' behalf.

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