Working for a Virtual Company
How we do it at MySQL

Lenz Grimmer <lenz@grimmer.com>

http://lenzg.net/

2009-08-22 | FrOSCon 09 | St. Augustin
Make Superior Database Management Available and Affordable to All.
Distributed Workforce

- Establish early!
- Good: Development & Support
- Good: Consulting & Training
- Good: Sales
- Less suitable: Finance & Admin
- Needs capable HR staff
Centralized management
Passion and Disagreement
Other Social Aspects

- Trust
- Self-motivation
- Leadership
- Open & direct communication
- Different cultures
- Work/life balance
Advantages

• Hire talent everywhere
• Work from anywhere
• Setting your own work schedule
• Reduced costs for facilities
• Time zone coverage
• Less distractions
Disadvantages

- Work/life balance
- Isolation
- Time zone differences
- Communication overhead
- Decision making processes
Disadvantages: Travel

- Meeting colleagues means travelling (a lot)
- Travel restrictions (e.g. Visa issues)
Personal Requirements

- Skills
  - Communication
  - Language (English)
  - System administration
- Motivation
- Working in isolation
- OSS development experience helps!
Work environment

- Separate office room
- Hardware budget
- Fast/reliable Internet connection
- Platform-neutral formats/protocols
Activities & Incentives
Activities & Incentives

- All-company meetings
- Team meetings
- Travel budget
- Life@ Mailinglist
- Global sports day
- Global culture day
Collaboration Tools

- Email / Mailing lists / Archives
- Intranet / Wiki (Mediawiki)
- IRC / Chat (AIM, ICQ, Jabber, etc.)
- Skype / VoIP (Asterisk)
- Conference calls
- Issue Trackers (Eventum, BugDB, Worklog)
- DVCS (Bazaar)
Questions / Discussion

Thank you!

Lenz Grimmer

lenz@grimmer.com

http://lenzg.net/
~400 Employees, ~70% work from home

>25 Countries

Top 5: USA, Sweden, Germany, Russia and Ireland

10 subsidiaries/offices
(Uppsala, Cupertino, Munich)

No change due to Sun acquisition