



# **Discovery Communications**

Takes a DIY Approach  
to Wdesk

**wdesk**

**W**hen most people hear DIY, they might think of redecorating or building a planter box—not learning how to implement and maintain a powerful accounting platform from scratch. But that’s exactly what the external reporting team at Discovery Communications did when it switched from a cumbersome SEC reporting process to Wdesk.

The team decided to handle the transition to the application on its own, with very little support. The five-member team based in Silver Spring, Md., handles SEC reporting for the company that owns popular TV channels like Discovery Channel, TLC, Animal Planet and Investigation Discovery.

Most companies choose to have the professionals at Workiva build a workbook of the company’s data, set up the new reports, and even provide direct support for first few reports. But Discovery wanted autonomy.

“We have a motivated team,” says Kristine Deringer, Vice President of Technical Accounting and Reporting at Discovery. “We needed a solution that fit the needs of our global content company. As the world’s number one nonfiction media company, our requirements were to implement an efficient solution to support the needs of our growing company.”

The day after completing its first quarter 10-Q, the Discovery team made the complete switch to Wdesk. For the previous three months, team members had been steadily training on the platform so they could be up and running with it right away. They had divided up the training responsibilities, then came back together to leverage their combined knowledge to develop and file their second quarter 10-Q.

*“Wdesk improved our process for report development by reducing work and lowering cost.”*

—SAFI MAJID, Senior Accountant of SEC Reporting and Accounting Policy



### Many Ways to Train

From the online help section to webinars and training videos, the team used all of the extensive resources from Workiva to learn about the platform. “We’re part of the YouTube generation, so we like being able to watch a video, download it to our brains, and know what we need to do,” says Alana Lee, Assistant, Executive Assistant to the CAO.

And if they did have a question, support was just a phone call away. “I was

comfortable that we could find everything we needed in the help section, but we also knew we could call our Customer Success Manager anytime,” adds Lee.

### Empowering the Team

The Discovery team says the platform has completely revolutionized its reporting process. The single document datamodel eliminates version control issues and facilitates the group’s teamwork approach.

Gaurav Dhawan, Manager of SEC Reporting and Accounting Policy, appreciates that the teamwork process isn’t weighed down with tedious checks for minor details. “With Wdesk we can be assured that there is consistency between the numbers.” With that assurance, all five members can work in a report at one time—and reviewers from other areas of the company can join them.

“It’s incredibly helpful for all of us to be doing our tasks in the file at the same time,” says Erica Jacobson, Manager of

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“With Wdesk, we’re able to spend more time on value-added activities and we’re less buried in the details of the report.”

—KRISTINE DERINGER, Vice President of Technical Accounting and Reporting



Technical Accounting and SEC Reporting. “We used to spend a lot of time writing down comments from legal and then sending them back to them for review. Now legal can go right in and make their own edits.”

The review tools make collaboration even more effective. “With Wdesk the commenting process becomes a dialogue, because you can respond to the comments in the document and you don’t have to have a meeting or talk in person, which saves a lot of time,” explains Jacobson.

She adds that the solution’s linking function is particularly helpful. “With the linking function in the workbooks, the numbers are automatically updated so it’s incredibly efficient, and it reduces the potential for error.”

All of the tedious busywork that the team used to do is a thing of the past. The team is now doing more value-added work to improve the content of the documents. “Since all the administrative things are being taken care of by Wdesk, we can focus on the things that really matter,” explains Safi Majid, Senior

Accountant of SEC Reporting and Accounting Policy.

### Robust XBRL Tagging

The team had been handling XBRL tagging with spreadsheet software before transitioning to Wdesk. The new platform has vastly improved the process with better formatting, clearer reports, and a host of XBRL tagging features.

“It gives you a really simple way of going through the document to get all the information you need,” says Majid. He says the various views of the report, the ability



#### Company:

Discovery Communications,  
Silver Spring, Maryland

#### Situation:

The Discovery Communications reporting team is collaborative and forward thinking—and it was looking for a reporting solution that works the same way.

#### Business Profile:

Discovery Communications (Nasdaq: DISCA, DISCB, DISCK) is the world’s #1 nonfiction media company reaching more than 2 billion cumulative subscribers in over 220 countries and territories. Discovery is dedicated to satisfying curiosity through more than 190 worldwide television networks, led by Discovery Channel, TLC, Animal Planet, Science and Investigation Discovery, as well as U.S. joint venture networks OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network, The Hub and 3net, the first 24-hour 3D network. Across the Nordic region, Discovery owns and operates SBS Discovery Media, a top-three portfolio of television brands that feature leading nonfiction content, as well as locally produced entertainment programs, sports and the best scripted series and movies from major studios. Discovery also owns Discovery Education, the leading provider of educational content and services to schools including an award-winning series of K-12 digital textbooks, and owns and operates a diversified portfolio of digital media services, including Revision3. *For more information, please visit [www.discoverycommunications.com](http://www.discoverycommunications.com).*

#### Solution:

Switch to the External Reporting Solution powered by Wdesk, and use DIY training to quickly implement a platform for efficient external report development and filing.

#### Results:

- True teamwork on external reporting
- Successful DIY implementation
- Total control over SEC report development, filing, and XBRL tagging
- A more collaborative process

*“Wdesk gives you control, confidence, and leverage over your entire reporting process.”*

—ALANA **LEE**, Executive Assistant to the CAO



to create XBRL blacklines, and the features that let him review and test the data in different ways are particularly helpful.

Previously, Majid had been doing all of the XBRL tagging, but now with Wdesk integrated XBRL, he has been able to cross-train Jacobson and one other team member on XBRL tagging, which helps with task allocation and time management.

Deringer says the choice to switch to Wdesk and the team’s DIY strategy has really paid off. “We’re always looking for ways to improve our process and maximize communication. And we did that with Wdesk.”

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