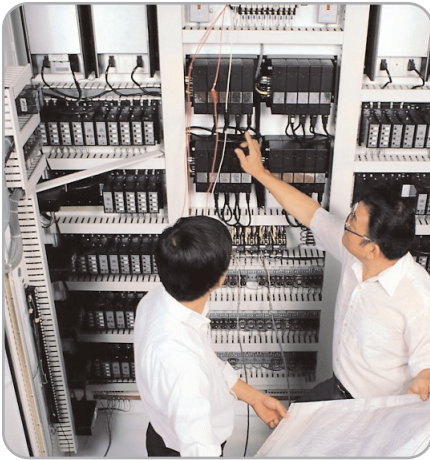




# Case Study

## DFS Group: a Division of Louis Vuitton



*“The biggest benefit we get from mapping is the way it creates a very participatory meeting environment, enabling our teams to quickly capture best thinking and make those ideas immediately actionable. And it does it in a way that drives commitment and buy-in. It represents a whole new way of thinking about collaboration.”*

### ROI

- Project implementation time reduced from 16 months to 4 months
- Ongoing IT meeting times reduced 40 to 60 percent
- Staff participation and project buy-in increased

### Company Profile

The DFS Group is the leading retailer of luxury goods and general merchandise for international travelers. With more than 5,000 employees worldwide, DFS has several hundred stores in countries throughout the Asia/Pacific region and North America.

### Challenge

Design, implement and accelerate the restructuring of DFS's global IT department to reduce overhead and improve efficiency. Collaborate with diverse, international IT staff in a way that increases commitment to project process and outcome.

### Meeting Organization

**Global retailer finishes sixteen-month project in four months. Reduces IT department meeting times by 40 to 60 percent.**

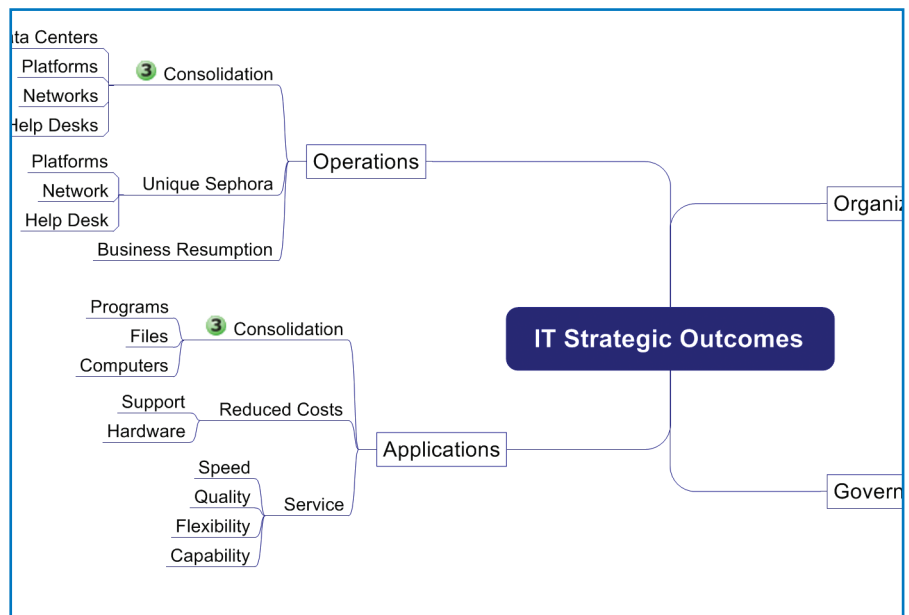
In 2000, DFS Group, a leading luxury goods retailer with hundreds of stores in major cities and international airports in North America and the Asia/Pacific region, initiated a project to completely restructure its IT services. Faced with a faltering global economy, DFS saw an opportunity to reduce overhead by slimming down its IT processing functions and focus on what it does best – selling luxury goods to international travelers. The project took on new urgency when, in the fall of 2001, the world economy took a nosedive.

Using Mindjet® MindManager® software to facilitate the design and implementation of a “transformational offshore outsourcing” program, DFS was able to dramatically accelerate the project timeline, finishing fully 12 months ahead of what had originally been designed as a 16-month schedule. By project completion, DFS's IT department had set a new standard for collaboration and cut its average meeting time in half.

### Creating the Truly Effective Meeting Environment

Key to the restructuring project's success, says DFS IT vice president Rick Hamilton, was the decision to begin the process by tossing out the company's traditional meeting structure. Hamilton says that the classic approach of “five people in a row giving one-hour slide presentations, the audience in total receive mode” wasn't going to get IT where it needed to be fast enough.

“Twenty people from all around the world, from different lines of business and with different reporting relationships, had three days to figure out how to meet what we called the ‘and’ challenge,” Hamilton says. “We had to reduce overall operating costs and improve productivity, quality, speed and agility – and do it with a team representing 13 different nationalities.”



Meeting organization with Mindjet MindManager

## Solution

DFS used Mindjet MindManager to run a series of planning meetings among 20 international staff members to design and implement the IT restructuring project. DFS IT finished the project in record time, exceeded all goals, and ushered in a “whole new way of thinking about collaboration” that has improved department efficiency and increased team commitment.

## Product

Mindjet MindManager

## Key Features

- Quick information capture
- Levels of detail

## Result

IT restructuring project was quickly implemented and has reduced DFS global IT expenses by 35 percent. DFS IT department meetings now require half as much time to complete the same amount of work.

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Working with the Hong Kong – based consulting group Quicksilver, Hamilton and DFS senior vice president and CIO Ron Glickman found a more productive way to run the initial planning meeting – as well as future DFS meetings. Their decision to run meetings using Mindjet MindManager and the information-mapping methodology behind it became the cornerstone of DFS IT's transformation.

Projecting a Mindjet MindManager map on a large screen in the meeting room, the DFS team watched the restructuring plan grow before them in real time as participants' insights and ideas were keyed in to the interface. In this setting, team members don't simply receive information: They interact with it. The meetings become a participatory, engaging, exciting process. “With the map interface everyone gets to give feedback,” Hamilton says, “and everyone can see the results.”

## Innovative Process, Unforeseen Gains

“One meeting deliverable was a map of strategic outcomes,” Hamilton says. “The entire group went through the process of identifying our key priorities and deciding where we needed to focus our time and energy to reduce operating costs. We went through all the activities we typically complete as part of the normal daily work plan. If something didn't fit the new plan we had mapped out, it was out. The final strategic outcome map was proof that in two days we had been able to create a living, breathing document that continues to guide our IT work.”

Concrete gains from the restructuring process have been impressive. Glickman, Hamilton and their team have:

- Reduced DFS's data center infrastructure by nearly 90 percent – from 16 centers to just two (currently being consolidated into one)
- Reduced the company's raw server count by 75 percent
- Reduced overall IT expenses by 35 percent

## Cutting Meeting Times in Half While Increasing Participation

Since that initial meeting, Hamilton says, his department's meetings have become very transparent and participatory – and efficient. “I would estimate that our meeting times have been reduced by 40 to 60 percent. And because all the thinking going on is being captured in real-time in the interface, everything we do is completely documented by the end of the meeting.” He says that this one benefit alone has brought “huge” gains in productivity. No longer does a member of his staff have to collect and make sense of information scattered over multiple whiteboards and flip charts. And as an added benefit, team members now tend to leave meetings on the same page and with a very high commitment to the outcome – because they have been engaged in a highly accessible process.

“The biggest benefit we get from mapping,” Hamilton says, “is the way it creates a very participatory meeting environment, enabling our teams to quickly capture best thinking and make those ideas immediately actionable. And it does it in a way that drives commitment and buy-in. It represents a whole new way of thinking about collaboration.”

DFS IT began using Mindjet MindManager to plan and implement a restructuring project. But that project has long since been completed and the team continues to map. “People here use MindManager in day-to-day activities much like they use Microsoft® Outlook and Lotus Notes,” Hamilton says. “We have really internalized the mapping process, and we use it all the time.”



To find out how other leading organizations have benefited from Mindjet MindManager, visit [www.mindjet.com/casestudies](http://www.mindjet.com/casestudies).