ONLINE VOTING OF DUTCH ALPA (AIRLINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION)

With the POLYAS online voting system, Dutch ALPA has found a long-term online solution for making decisions quickly, independently of location and according to the principles of grassroots democracy. From minutes of meetings to the collective agreement – everything can be voted on online.

Initial situation before Autumn 2018

Union VNV (Vereniging Nederlandse Verkeersvliegers), also known as Dutch ALPA (Airline Pilots Association), represents the interests of pilots working for Dutch Airlines. The union members vote on various small and big issues several times a year. This may involve both the approval of the minutes taken during the meetings and important decisions on collective agreements by all members.

Challenges

Alternative to postal voting

Until autumn 2018, the VNV conducted postal voting only. The ballot papers, along with return envelopes, were sent to the members. Pilots had to fill in their ballot papers, put them in the correct envelope, stamp them and send them back on time. The board then had to manually count all the ballots received – and this took place several times a year.

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This procedure had many disadvantages: On the one hand, postal voting was quite cumbersome for the union members. If one sent the ballot paper a bit late or if there was a delay in mail delivery, the vote was lost.

On the other hand, postal voting also meant an enormous amount of work for the board. Up to 5,000 ballot papers had to be counted manually for each voting, which required a lot of time and effort in the secretary's office, not to mention the costs that sometimes had to be paid out of their own pockets. As the union had grown considerably in recent years, the number of voters was consequently increasing - and so was the workload for the executive board.

Secretary General of the VNV, Daan Zwart, eventually felt that the cost of the postal voting was too high. He was looking for a more efficient way to conduct internal voting and found it in POLYAS.

"We looked for a more efficient way to hold a vote."

Daan Zwart, Secretary General of the VNV

2 Maintaining the grassroots democracy

Maintaining the democratic voting practice was clearly necessary for the VNV. Members still needed to be able to exercise their decision-making rights. However, calling meetings regularly was not possible due to the high mobility of union members.

3 Long-term use

It had to be possible to use the voting tool on a permanent and long-term basis in order to maintain the grassroots democracy within the VNV.

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POLYAS offers a solution

The requirements of the VNV have been met by introducing online voting with POLYAS on a regular basis. The online voting with POLYAS offered the opportunity to make many more democratic decisions than before. Not only did this reduce the effort for the secretariat, but also increased member loyalty. VNV concluded a framework agreement with POLYAS for the long-term use of online voting. This offers discounted conditions compared to the one-time voting.

"The experience shows that POLYAS is willing to think with the customer."

Daan Zwart, Secretary General of the VNV

Daan Zwart:

"Response from the POLYAS support team is always quick, polite and accurate."

Online voting procedure

1 Electoral roll and processing of personal data

VNV union members receive an email invitation every time they vote online. The invitation provides information about the subject of the survey and is also used to send the access data for the POLYAS online voting system.

2 Transmission of login credentials

The login credentials for the online voting consist of a voter ID and a password. The POLYAS voting system therefore does not require any personal data of the voters. Security mechanisms of the POLYAS online voting system ensure that the voters can cast their vote only once.

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3

Voting procedure - Online voting in five steps:

✓ The eligible members log onto the online voting platform using their personal username and their password, wich their find in the email invitation.

✓ The voting system checks the access data and assigns the ballot papers to the authorized person.

✓ The eligible voters cast their votes securely online.

✓ Now the voting can be checked and finally confirmed by the eligible voters.

✓ After confirmation, the voters will be automatically logged out.

TIP

After the end of the election, you can check the integrity and authenticity of the individual components with the verification tool. In addition, you can count the election results while maintaining the secrecy of the ballot and thus universally verify the election. For this purpose, POLYAS provides the log files of your election. The tool is available as Open Source.

Daan Zwart:

"The majority of our members seem very satisfied with digital voting."

The VNV regularly uses the opportunity to send a reminder a few days before the end of the election, which has a positive effect on the voter turnout.

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4 **Evaluation**

The result of the online election is available in PDF format within two hours after the end of the election period. The voter turnout is also shown in the report.

Daan Zwart says that the use of online voting pays off, especially in the long term: "Once the process is standardized, organizing the next election requires minimal effort." The VNV now uses the POLYAS online voting regularly.

General Secretary Daan Zwart also favors the possibility of tracking the voter turnout daily using a graph. After the first voting already, the voter turnout was increased by about 20 percent compared to postal voting.

Daan Zwart, Secretary General of the VNV:

"First results look very promising. The voter turnout went up by approximately 20% in every voting."

Conclusion

To meet the demands of the VNV, a digital solution was found by introducing POLYAS online voting: the online survey for the members does not require paper, can be used permanently and promotes grassroots democracy within the pilot union, which is proved by the increased voter turnout.

POLYAS – the election experts
We have been the leading provider of digital elections since 1996. Businesses, cooperatives, associations, credit unions, churches and universities have all voted securely and conveniently with us online. Combine different election procedures online. Boost you voter turnout and save valuable time and money in managing your next election.

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