

CASE STUDY

BlueJeans Strengthens Collaboration within France's Council of Tarn & Garonne and Increases Citizen Engagement

The Tarn & Garonne Department is a local government unit in southwest France. Since the country passed the Decentralization Act of 1982, an elected council has been administering it, just like other French departments.

The Council of Tarn & Garonne comprises a president and several elected representatives and is structured around four main areas: coordination and resources, knowledge and leadership, human solidarity, and balanced territorial development. These matters are discussed during meetings involving the Council, concerned personnel, and residents. It is also in these meetings that budgets to support and serve families in the department are voted on.

In March 2020, faced with a national lockdown and a pandemic that was difficult to contain, the Council thought about how to maintain its meeting schedule and mandatory public meetings, particularly those involving voting on budgets or amending decisions. It seldom used video conferencing and considered how to get its stakeholders and various public institutions within its department to use it. Its goal was to provide a video conferencing service that would be easy to use and accessible from any hardware system, and to broadcast its public meetings live to residents.



Industry: Government

Challenge: How to extend the use of video conferencing within the Council and by the various public institutions in the Tarn & Garonne Department, and to broadcast public meetings live.

Solution: The Council deployed BlueJeans Meetings, Events, and Rooms to speed up decision-making and ensure closer collaboration with its various stakeholders.

Results: Using the BlueJeans mobile or tablet application, the Council has achieved flexibility to schedule meetings on demand. All public Council meetings are now systematically virtual, increasing resident participation and facilitating engagement by elected officials who are sometimes geographically remote.

“With Events...wherever they are, anyone can follow the live debates and financial allocations that concern and affect the daily lives of Tarn & Garonne residents.”

– WILFRID GARCIA, MANAGER OF AUDIO-VISUAL MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE,
HÔTEL DU DÉPARTEMENT OF TARN & GARONNE

Using BlueJeans' Winning Combination of One-Click Access, Interactivity, and Live Streaming

The Council already had BlueJeans Meetings prior to the lockdown. It found the platform effective in meeting the Council President's communication needs, thanks to its functionality, one-click access, and reliability. At the suggestion of Wilfrid Garcia, Manager of Audio-visual Management and Maintenance at Hôtel du Département of Tarn & Garonne, the Council decided to extend its deployment of the video conferencing platform.

Being a Software-as-a-Service solution, BlueJeans Meetings enabled the Council to create about 20 new accounts for several elected representatives and various entities in the department, such as the archives office, town halls, and libraries, in a matter of a few days. Various organizations within the department now successfully hold their meetings remotely. This has brought together a larger number of participants who are often spread across the territory, saving them time and travel costs.

“BlueJeans provides the means for closer and more frequent collaboration between the members of the Council and their various contacts at a departmental level, which facilitates faster and more collegial decision-making,” says Wilfrid Garcia.

In its drive to provide easy-to-deploy and cloud-based meeting services, the Council also adopted BlueJeans Events to organize virtual events such as budget votes, which are legally required to be public. It now livestreams on its website public meetings that are open to all Tarn & Garonne residents, enabling more people to participate. In fact, up to 400 residents joined one of these meetings, which was way more than the average of three attendees in face-to-face gatherings.

“With Events, the Council gains in communication scope and proximity with its constituents, who are now more inclined to participate and get involved,” says Wilfrid Garcia. “Wherever they are, anyone can follow the live debates and financial allocations that concern and affect the daily lives of Tarn & Garonne residents.”

An interactive and intuitive platform, Events allows the Council to organize online events for large audiences and requires neither technical knowledge nor specific equipment. It engages attendees through features such as chat and Q&A, allows multiple presenters, and provides moderators with a centralized dashboard. With this dashboard, a moderator can easily control sound and video, customize screen layouts, integrate the Council logo, and organize express polls.

Enjoying Unsurpassed Sound Quality and Modern Meeting Facilities

The Council benefits from the impeccable audio quality of Dolby Voice embedded in the BlueJeans platform for all its virtual meetings and events. Dolby Voice suppresses unwanted noise in real time and lets participants hear everyone's voice from a distinct location, preventing voice mixing and clearly identifying the speaker, even when they are using conventional headphones.

The Council also sought to equip itself with collaboration and virtual communication tools that can adapt to all meeting configurations and contexts. So, with BlueJeans Rooms featuring Dolby Voice Room, it transformed five traditional meeting rooms at Hôtel du Département and in the Council President's office into modern workspaces, combining audio, document sharing, and video. A simple and intuitive interface now allows staff members who are unfamiliar with the technology to kick off a meeting with a single click.

"We called on our local service provider CAP SON to install the hardware in the rooms, including the camera cabling, which remains very simple. In each room, the configuration of the touchscreen console and the reservation schedule are managed by our audio-visual team via a centralized interface," explains Wilfrid Garcia.

Becoming More Productive, Interactive, and Involved

Simple, reliable, and user-friendly, BlueJeans' online meeting and event services are now well regarded in the Tarn & Garonne Department. The Council, its staff, and residents interact more effectively, make quicker and more collaborative decisions, work together, and communicate without logistical constraints.

"Via its mobile or tablet application, BlueJeans gives the Council flexibility to schedule meetings on demand, which is very practical when you are far from the department hall," says Wilfrid Garcia.

All Council meetings that need to be public are now accessible virtually. This has considerably increased public participation and made life easier for elected representatives, who are sometimes away, busy with their professional activities, or are simply constrained by bad weather. All these advantages resonate even more strongly when movement and gatherings are restricted or prohibited, such as during a pandemic.

"With BlueJeans, the icing on the cake is its 24x7 chatbot, which guarantees business continuity throughout the Tarn & Garonne Department," says Wilfrid Garcia.

ABOUT THE TARN & GARONNE DEPARTMENT COUNCIL

The French Revolution created departments (or départements in French) to bring citizens closer to their administration. This level of government has emerged as a major framework of state administration and as a decentralized approach suited for policies fostering solidarity. Represented by their councils, such as that of Tarn & Garonne, departments are an indispensable link across the French Republic's territories.