How to drive the effectiveness of your intranet

NEWSWEAVER
powering communications

The number one rule to follow to ensure a successful thriving intranet: It's never finished. Your intranet needs to be responsive to your organization's changing business needs, and it must stay aligned to your employees' needs.

Whether you are just beginning the process of creating and implementing a company intranet, or you want to improve your existing one, here are a few areas you should focus on to ensure the ongoing success of your intranet.

Setting up or reviewing an intranet

Conduct an audit Establish the essential principles for your intranet. During this process you should also create guidelines for usage policies, standards for publishing, and how you will measure results and gauge the success of your intranet. You need to ensure your intranet is reliable, efficient and provides value to employees.

If you already have an intranet, evaluate the current state, such as what pages employees use most frequently. This will help you identify what to prioritize for improvement, and then make those tasks simpler and faster to complete.

Define your purpose Do you use the intranet mostly for top-down management information, application forms and HR documents? Or is it used for true social collaboration? Establish your intranet business objective, which in turn will make it easier to measure success. Ensure that business objectives are clearly articulated, and the design and look are aligned with the corporate brand and promoting messages that reflect your business mission.

Design for ease of use Three key components of good design are: a well designed interface, usability and organization of content. Apply these throughout the intranet – especially to the layout of the homepage and sections – as this can make or break your success. If a section's headline is not clear and concise it will not be read. Embed your digital tools such as videos, a PDF viewer and a photo gallery so that employees can access them without having to follow a link and leave the site.

Build with employees in mind Along with ensuring top tasks are easy to accomplish, your intranet should be a place where colleagues want to go. It should feel like an inclusive forum where employees are involved in meaningful conversations, contributing content and have access to information that helps them with their job.

Create an intranet team Identify the employees across the organization who are passionate about employee communication. This team should not just be administrators – it should include content producers with skills in writing, editing, technology, design, video production and community management.

Adding social collaborative elements

Prescient's 2013 Social Intranet Study found that 71% of organizations have at least one social media tool available to some or all employees. The five most popular social media tools on corporate intranets are instant messaging, blogs, discussion forums, wikis and user commenting.

The next generation of employees entering the workforce expects management to understand their way of thinking – which is having the ability to collaborate with their co-workers across an organization and to feed back up to management. Social media suits them, as it is about participation and dialog.

Adopt social media into your intranet More than 40% of organizations are testing, piloting and evaluating blog and wiki applications. Review the social tools available and decide what to include in your intranet. Start simply, and fold in new tools as the intranet grows in popularity.

Put social upfront and center stage To make the home page of your intranet more interactive and vibrant, put your social network or other activity streams on the home page. This encourages employees to join conversations and share information across the organization.

Encourage participation in the intranet's success You can engage employees by asking them to participate in the success of their intranet. Remind employees that intranets are only as effective as the information put into them. Encourage them to update their data, provide content, and start or participate in discussions. One way to do this is to provide opportunities for employee-generated content and self-publishing platforms.

Open up two-way feedback Offer easy ways for employees to give feedback on how they would improve the intranet, what they think works, and doesn't work. Make sure you act on feedback, as that really encourages employees to participate in the success of your intranet.

Ensuring the intranet is accessible to remote workers

In today's digital world we're used to viewing websites on any device – from desktop to smartphone. If you want all employees to use the intranet, then it must be mobile-enabled so they can access it wherever they are. Don't cut corners in your mobile design. It is frustrating for those working remotely to not have access to the full functionality of the intranet – and gives them a reason to not use it.

Employees shouldn't have to log in and out between the company intranet, CSM and email systems to get even the simplest of tasks done. Work with your IT department to ensure your intranet is accessible using the same single sign-on portal that connects them to your company's other enterprise services.

Driving adoption through a multichannel strategy

It's important to use a mix of channels to reach all your employees to increase awareness and adoption of your intranet. Conduct a channel audit and review how you can use them to cross-promote your intranet.

Drive traffic and adoption through the email communication channel

Newsweaver/Melcrum's 'IC and Technology' survey 2014 found that not only is email the most used communication channel by internal communicators, but also the most effective.

Here are a few examples of how Newsweaver customers use our communications software to send measureable employee email communications to drive the adoption of their intranet:

- Wrap up and deliver the week's top stories. Include a teaser image, headline and summary to capture attention, linking employees straight to the intranet to read more.

- Drive and build on conversations at the intranet by linking directly to that conversation.

- Highlight multimedia content available on the intranet by linking to videos, podcasts, webcasts and other rich content.

- Encourage employees to update their data by including personalized links that bring them directly to their own profile page on the intranet.

Measuring to improve engagement and prove business value

You can't manage what you don't measure. Not only does your team need access to metrics to review and build on the success of your intranet, you must be able to prove business value to your organization.

Identify your Key Performance Indicators, and then select the metrics that best measure those KPIs. Don't forget to factor in the metrics and measurements you have from your multichannel activity, such as your email communications, to give you a complete view of how your intranet is performing.

Want a successful intranet?

- Identify top tasks employees perform
- Ensure top tasks are easy to accomplish
- Design the interface for optimum usability
- Offer a mobile version for workers on the go
- Use other channels to promote and drive traffic adoption
- Encourage employee-generated content
- Remember an intranet is never truly finished
- Enhance with social and collaboration features
- Recruit a team for the ongoing creation of content
- Identify metrics that matter to measure success

Newsweaver Internal Connect

Dramatically improve the results of your employee email communications with Newsweaver Internal Connect.

Boost the engagement of employees by sending emails that are high-impact using the full interactivity of the web – and which provide you with actionable insights and metrics to transform your internal communications.

Newsweaver is the global leader in Internal Communications Management with proven technology, comprehensive services, and expert guidance that is helping more than 400 blue-chip and FTSE 100 companies.

Cutting Edge Communications

Cut through inbox clutter and grab your audience's attention with memorable messages that are on-brand and viewable on any device. Newsweaver allows you to keep their attention with stylish embedded images and videos.

Gain Audience Measurement & Insights

Monitor email performance so you can shape your content strategy with powerful insights into content popularity and engagement. Boost your credibility with powerful intelligence that proves ROI and drives real organizational change.

Champion Two-Way Communication

Newsweaver Internal Connect is packed with social features that allow you start conversations across your organization. Give employees the ability to comment, rate and like content, and participate in surveys and polls; while gathering valuable intelligence with every communication sent.

Manage Events More Effectively

Take the hassle out of event management with our smarter event management tool that brands invitations, manages registrations and targets communications by response, and then measures your success; all from one, intuitive system.

Newsweaver is recognized with ISO 27001 Accreditation for protecting your employee data.

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We know that every organization faces different communication challenges. Call us now if you'd like to discuss yours with one of our IC experts.

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