AT A GLANCE

Company
CentaCare
Wilcannia-Forbes

Industry
Not for profit,
Community services

Location
Central and Far West,
NSW

Solution
SharePoint, Office 365

Function
Communication,
Operations

Key Points
- Centralised document management ensures fast, easy access to information
- Compliance has improved thanks to consistent workflows and processes
- A new channel for keeping all staff, including casual and part time employees, informed about company and industry news

The Company

Established in 1996, CentaCare Wilcannia – Forbes is the official social service of the Catholic Church of the Diocese of Wilcannia – Forbes, which covers the western 52 percent of New South Wales. It provides a diverse range of services to the region including support for parents and children, counselling, mental health, help with financial management, housing and accommodation, as well as programs for indigenous communities, youth and men. The organisation employs 100 staff and operates 14 offices throughout the region.

The Need

Twenty years ago, CentaCare Wilcannia-Forbes' budget was approximately $3,000. Today, with a far greater range of services to deliver across an extensive geographic region, its budget sits at $13 million annually. Despite this growth, internal processes and systems remained largely unchanged.

The technology infrastructure was based on a convoluted mix of terminal servers and distributed file servers. Staff largely managed their own content in My Docs folders. Day-to-day communication between staff, groups and regions was heavily email-centric.

"It's not until you leave the metropolitan arena that you can truly appreciate the environment out here. The central and far west is vastly different to Sydney or Melbourne. If I want to go to Bourke, I have to put five-and-a-half hours aside to get there."

Phil Lawler
Chief Executive Officer

Supplementing this, senior staff periodically spent half a day or more time travelling between offices to attend meetings or provide staff support. All of this combined to make knowledge difficult to share and reuse.

The management team had identified that an updated intranet based on SharePoint 2013 could resolve many of their problems. But they needed a partner to help them understand exactly what was feasible, to design an effective solution, and finally, to deploy and support the platform.

"What we've created is like a wonderful toolbox. We've opened the top drawer and found a variety of tools, many of which are already familiar to us. But below this are three more drawers that we are yet to explore. That's the challenge for us now. With Professional Advantage's help we are putting together the training that will get people confident enough to use those tools so we can achieve a more productive output. The overall benefit will be an organisation that is comfortable with communicating over a geographically challenging area, information that is readily accessible and people who are confident in sharing that information with their colleagues."

Phil Lawler
Chief Executive Officer

The Solution

Professional Advantage recommended adopting a cloud strategy whereby the entire intranet, all documents and emails would exist in the cloud. The strategy leverages not only SharePoint, but the entire suite of Microsoft Office 365 tools including OneDrive, Exchange, Enterprise Social Newsfeeds, and Skype for Business.

Inter-office communication is facilitated through real time messaging, and easy video-based online meetings. Searchable newsfeeds and online Q&As encourage organisation- and group-wide knowledge sharing, while new, digital workspaces support increased teamwork, file and content collaboration. In addition, being cloud-based, staff can obtain the same experience regardless of whether they access content from the office, mobile devices or their PC at home.
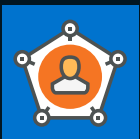
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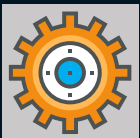
Engagement with the new tools is increasing week-by-week.

Staff more readily share ideas and inter-office communication has increased due to the introduction of social tools.

Newsfeeds and Q&A tools are helping to share knowledge more broadly across the organisation.

Hard copy documents and processes are making way for more digital forms, documents and more efficient, streamlined workflows, in areas ranging from travel to training to expenditure requests.

Training is becoming more immediate and more accessible as it is moved to the intranet.

IT champions have been identified in each office to identify staff needs and oversee ongoing enhancement of the IT infrastructure.

The establishment of a central repository has removed the issue of multiple versions of content and ensures email attachments are no longer lost.

The increase in activity over the intranet has resulted in reductions in travel time and costs. More reductions are expected when Skype for Business is rolled out in the coming months.

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