



AT A GLANCE

Company

Autism Spectrum
Australia

Industry

Not for profit,
Community Services

Location

Sydney, NSW

Solution

SharePoint, Yammer

Function

Communications,
Community services,
Training, HR

Key Points

- As a growing and geographically dispersed organisation, a good collaboration and communication platform is essential for Autism Spectrum Australia
- The company had an intranet, but many employees avoided it as the platform was old, difficult to use and it was hard to find information.
- Within six months of deploying a new SharePoint intranet and Yammer enterprise social network, 60% of employees have signed up to use the new tools and communication within and between teams has improved.





The Company

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is Australia's leading service provider for people on the autism spectrum. Operating throughout New South Wales, Victoria and with its first school about to open in South Australia, the organisation is on a steady growth trajectory. Approximately 1,000 employees deliver information, advice and outreach services including diagnostic assessments, behaviour support, parent and family support and adult programs. Aspect also manages the world's largest specialised schools program for students on the autism spectrum.

The Need

Good communication is crucial to the delivery of Aspect's services. Teachers and outreach workers frequently confer, compare notes and share strategies with colleagues in other locations. They tap into the expertise of the autism spectrum professionals employed within the organisation. Timely communication keeps staff informed of changes such as new services or expansion into new geographic territories. It also enables remote workers to feel connected and part of the organisation.

Although Aspect had used an intranet to facilitate communication for many years, it was limited in its capabilities. Based on technology more than a decade old, it was difficult to use and made no allowance for today's mobile devices. Staff complained it was hard to find information and many avoided using the intranet unless essential. With the organisation continuing to grow, a new, easier to use intranet was essential.

Challenges

Among the key challenges for the new intranet were mobility, accessibility and ease of use. The project was driven by a desire to update, therefore it had to make allowance for modern social and mobility tools. The new platform had to be accessible to all, regardless of location or role. It had to make information easy to find. Above all, it had to be engaging.

"Many of our staff are teachers in schools or spend their days out and about working with children. They may only have half an hour at lunch time to lodge their annual leave request. They don't have time to be mucking around with remote log ins, two factor authentication and other complications. They need to be able to get into the intranet and find the information they need quickly and easily."

Joshua Dodd,
Intranet Administrator
Autism Spectrum Australia



The Solution

Aspect selected Microsoft SharePoint to be its new intranet platform. The software offered the familiarity of the Microsoft environment and it would have no problems working with the organisation's existing Microsoft applications. Also, as a not for profit organisation, the pricing was extremely generous.

Next, a tender was conducted to find a partner who could help make Aspect's intranet plans a reality. Professional Advantage was engaged in early 2016 and the project began in earnest.

"The last intranet that Aspect built was populated and it entered basic use but it never evolved. It accrued too much information that was badly organised and eventually, it stagnated. Now we have a new tool for efficiency and to deliver service provision improvements. The plan is to keep it clean, archive what's not being used and to continually add new tools. We have a good management team that recognises intranets and internets need to be ongoing programs. I was brought on board to keep SharePoint going and growing, and we won't be letting this intranet stay static."

Joshua Dodd

Intranet Administrator, Autism Spectrum Australia

Results

- Within a matter of months a new SharePoint intranet and integrated enterprise social network, Yammer, were rolled out across the organisation.
- In addition to replicating existing forms and processes, the intranet has introduced electronic workflows that are now streamlining activity.
- Search functionality has dramatically improved.
- Workspace functionality is providing departments, schools and workgroups with new opportunities to collaborate, share files and capture project timelines.
- High levels of workspace security ensure sensitive or confidential information and documents can only be accessed by authorised users.
- An emphasis on consistent design and visual appeal has achieved the goal of making the intranet more engaging and easier for users to navigate.
- In less than six months, 60% of employees have signed up to use Yammer. The network is being used by management and staff to share news and ideas, and contribute comments.
- Autism and education experts can more easily reach out and share their knowledge.
- Intranet training has been incorporated into the induction process, to ensure all new employees are equipped to use the system from day one.
- Future plans include:
 1. enabling using the intranet to order stationery and materials
 2. creating a central repository for all marketing and media files
 3. updating the company's internet presence
 4. deploying a document management system to integrate with SharePoint.





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