Checklist: 7 Steps to a Successful Intranet

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Let's face it. Most IT directors know of an organisation that spent big on a new intranet, only for the solution to fail a few months later. Whether this was down to poor planning, a lack of buy-in from executives or a misunderstanding of end user needs, it's a situation many would have preferred to avoid.

An intranet's success isn't determined on launch day. Keeping end users satisfied is an ongoing process. Ensure your success with these guidelines to implementing and maintaining an intranet solution that delivers long-term value.

1 Benchmark your Intranet

Before you upgrade or replace your existing intranet, it can be useful to see how it compares to those of organisations in similar industries. There are intranet benchmarking surveys that can identify what your organisation does well, what can be improved and which new features or functionality should be prioritised. This information can help you make a strong business case for funding intranet improvements if needed.

2 Understanding Your Core Business Drivers

While your organisation may use the intranet for knowledge sharing and collaboration, it's unlikely these are your core business drivers. Based on our experience, an intranet's ultimate purpose is usually to foster innovation, boost operations or improve employee engagement. When you understand there's more to intranets than just publishing content, you can align yours to support your organisation's strategic objectives.

3 Make it Interactive

If your organisation's intranet is closer to a virtual ghost town than thriving online community, you may have issues with interactivity. Interactivity includes publishing content, discussing work topics and providing user feedback to administrators. Employees are more likely to engage online if doing so is straightforward, convenient and their contributions are recognised. An enterprise social networking tool is one way to improve intranet interactivity, particularly if you – and those at the top – lead by example.

4 Make It Easy to Use

Successful intranets are almost always developed with the end user in mind. They are intuitive, well presented and easy to use. As employees need to find information quickly, keep your design simple and resist the temptation to add media-rich features such as animations. Follow best practice intranet design guidelines and ask employees for their feedback on wireframes or layout changes.

5 Measure Your Success

There are many ways to measure intranet performance. If your goal is to reduce internal emails by posting project discussions online, for example, monitor email traffic over time. If you want employees to store documents in the correct SharePoint folder, check whether people are still saving content on network drives, desktops or public cloud services. You can also analyse search data to see what employees search for the most, and whether they find what they're looking for.

6 Ask End Users for Feedback

There's no such thing as a 'set and forget' intranet. A successful intranet is constantly evolving to suit end user needs. That's why it's important to ask employees for regular feedback – both during implementation and once the solution is up and running. This could take the form of an online survey, an informal conversation with regular users or a dedicated feedback forum on SharePoint.

7 Get Senior Decision Makers Involved

Even if your intranet went live 18 months ago, it's important to keep senior decision makers in the loop. They have the authority to sign off on future upgrades or purchases, so it's worth letting them know about return on investment, roadblocks to success and how the solution helps achieve your organisation's goals.

Let's Talk.

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