

Much effort is focused, on the selection and subsequent implementation of a content management system (CMS).

While it is obviously vital to ensure that the initial implementation project is successful, this is only the beginning of an ongoing commitment to growing and enhancing the use of content management throughout the organisation.

Implementing the CMS

Implementing a content management system is not easy, and there are many challenges to overcome, including:

- deployment of a new IT architecture
- training of staff in the use of the CMS
- migrating content into the CMS
- determining suitable workflows
- changing work practices and processes

All of these factors contribute to an almost-inevitable 'scope trimming', which leaves many tasks still to be done by the end of the official implementation project.

Tracking de-scoped tasks

The first step is to keep track of the various activities which were dropped out of the scope of the initial implementation.

In practice, many of these will be the key activities needed to make the CMS a success, even if they are the more challenging aspects to address.

These must be clearly listed, and plans put in place to tackle them after the initial 'go live'.

Content management as a process, not a project

Beyond the catching up on the 'to do' list, it must be recognised that content management is a process, not just a single project.

The deployment of a CMS will address some of the immediate issues within the organisation, but is just the start of an ongoing journey towards better information management practices.

Content management (in whatever form) is a core strategic activity for most organisations, and it must be tackled as an ongoing process.

Ongoing training

The initial deployment of the content management system may focus on a small number of authors within the organisation, or may even restrict authoring to a central team.

Beyond the initial project, additional training will therefore be needed as the CMS is rolled out across the entire organisation.

This process may take upwards of a year (or longer), and both time and budget must be set aside for this.

Set aside budget for improvements

Once the value of the content management system has been demonstrated, many additional business requirements will be identified.

This is a good sign that the CMS is being used, and resources should be allocated to meet these additional requirements.

In many cases, these needs will be met by ongoing small improvements to the content management system. Both development costs and staff must be included in the yearly budget to support these incremental changes.

Focus on content and site structure

In most cases, the key reason for obtaining a CMS was to improve the quality, accuracy and currency of information published to the corporate website or intranet.

While considerable improvements can be made by restructuring the site when it is migrated into the CMS, this is only the tip of the iceberg.

There will undoubtedly be many gaps identified during the migration, as well as content that will need to be rewritten or updated.

These content and structural changes will take some time, well beyond the initial deployment.

Sustainability

The over-arching goal of all these activities is to ensure that the CMS solution is sustainable into the future.

Much work will be required after the initial implementation project to achieve this goal.