

Every intranet has its successes

Running an intranet can be a huge and unappreciated task. All too often, intranet teams may feel that they have made little progress towards their long-term ambitions for the sites.

While the success levels of intranets vary greatly, there are very few sites that do not contain at least a few successes.

These successes may be small, perhaps benefiting only one group of staff, or may be substantial pieces of functionality that support the whole organisation.

In either case, it is important to fully recognise these successes, and to communicate them throughout the organisation. Intranet teams should also take care not to forget that much has been delivered, even if there is much yet to be done.

This briefing explores the idea of intranet successes, how to identify them, and how to gain the greatest value from them.

Identifying intranet successes

Intranet successes may sometimes be very obvious, the 'killer apps' that drive site usage and reputation. These may be related to core business functions, or to the social environment within organisations.

In many situations, however, successes may not be recognised as such. Even small improvements to the functionality or content of a site may greatly benefit an single business area.

For example, in one call centre, a simple calculator tool for determining the tax payable on a transaction turned out to be the most successful aspect of the whole call centre intranet. This functionality took only a few days to develop.

In other cases, the intranet team itself may be the catalyst for business improvements, helping to connect business areas or solve problems, even if the end result isn't visible on the site.

Fundamentally, intranet successes are best measured by their impact on staff and on the organisation, rather than on the size of the change.

Intranet teams should therefore take care not to overlook their successes even if these consist of many small benefits rather than one large project or feature.

Celebrating the successes

Intranet teams need to take the time to celebrate their successes, even if this involves just going out for a team lunch or some other equally simple approach.

Intranets are not a sprint, they're a marathon, and intranet teams need to sustain their energy levels and enthusiasm. Celebrating successes is an important part of this.

It is all too easy for intranet teams to focus solely on the 'battles' ahead, and in the process overlook the considerable progress that has already been made.

Communicating the successes

Intranet teams also often forget to communicate their successes to the wider organisation. How are others going to recognise the importance of the intranet, if the team doesn't communicate what has been delivered?

Ongoing time should be set aside for communication of new functionality and capabilities, as well as outlining very clearly how the intranet has directly assisted staff.

This doesn't mean 'trumpeting' the team's successes. Instead, the intranet team should use channels such as the staff newsletter to communicate intranet improvements in a low-key way.

Sharing and trading the successes

With intranet team taking different approaches to managing their sites, intranet successes will naturally vary greatly from organisation to organisation.

Moreover, intranet teams don't need to have the perfect site in order to be able to expose teams in other organisations to new approaches or ideas.

Intranet teams should therefore look for opportunities to share their successes with other teams, and with the intranet community as a whole.

Good ideas can also be 'traded', such as one intranet team showing how to best implement project collaboration spaces, in return for some help regarding taxonomies. In this way, intranet teams can directly help each other, even if they haven't yet delivered the perfect site.