



STAFF DIRECTORIES

Designing and implementing
an effective online staff directory

SAMPLE PAGES

Step Two Designs
www.steptwo.com.au

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Step Two DESIGNS 

Additional staff directory fields

Beyond the core fields outlined in the previous section, staff directories can be enhanced through the addition of a range of supporting details. These fields can assist in finding staff when a specific name is not known, or can help to support the core activities of the organisation.

For example, papers published (page 30) is a key consideration for research organisations, while a centralised location of resumes (page 32) may be highly beneficial for consulting firms.

Examine the common tasks of staff to identify the additional information that will be of greatest value. Where necessary, consider implementing these additional fields as later enhancements, once the core functionality of the staff directory has been delivered.

Photograph

Photographs can be a very valuable inclusion in a staff directory. They are helpful for putting faces to names, as well as increasing general interest levels in the staff directory. Figures 9 and 10 provide examples of a photo displayed in a staff profile.

40% of surveyed staff directories included photographs of staff.

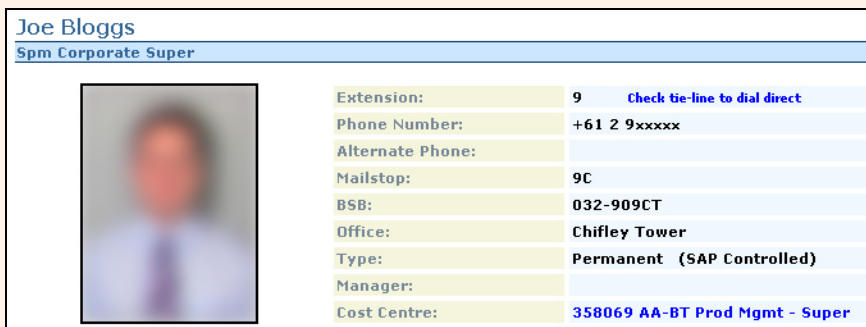


Figure 9: Staff photo prominently listed on the profile page (photo has been blurred for privacy reasons).

(Screenshot courtesy of BT.)

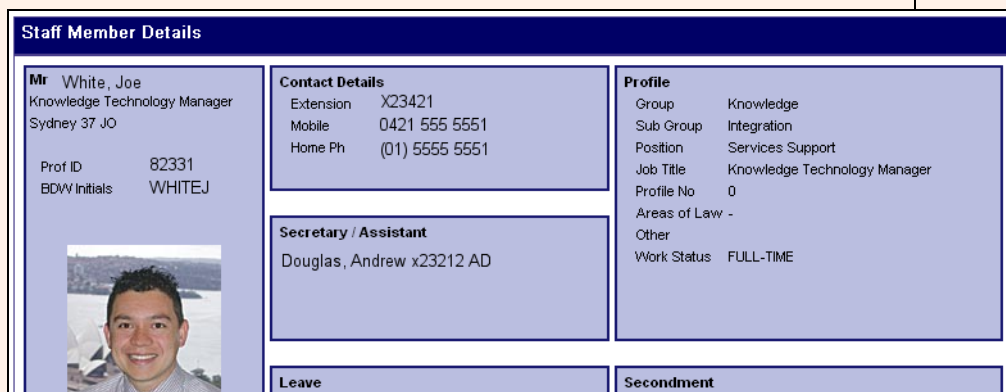


Figure 10: Another prominent presentation of a staff photo.

(Screenshot courtesy of Blake, Dawson and Waldron.)

The photos in the staff directory can be used in a number of ways:

- matching names to faces
- looking up new staff members
- checking the faces of staff involved in an upcoming meeting
- being able to see the faces of people who are being communicated with via phone, e-mail, or other online interactions

Photographs are particularly valuable for helping new staff to get up to speed on 'who's who' in the organisation, as well as familiarising them with key staff they are likely to interact with regularly.

Geographically dispersed organisations can also benefit greatly from photographs in a staff directory, as opportunities for face-to-face interaction are less likely. For example, staff travelling to an overseas offices would be able to see the face of the person who is going to meet them at the airport.

Finally, there is an important social element to having photographs visible in the staff directory, and elsewhere on the intranet. It further builds the sense of community within the organisation, and puts a 'friendlier face' to work interactions.

While photographs are a fairly widely implemented feature of staff directories, there are a number of considerations and potential issues that need to be addressed.

Tip!

When setting up photographs in the staff directory, considerable time can be saved by using the photographs collected for security passes. If these are in an usable format, it should be straightforward to import these directly into the phone directory. This also ensures that the collection of photos is complete and fairly up-to-date.

Where this is not possible, it may be possible to setup an 'image library' of staff photos taken with a digital camera. Staff can then choose the image they wish to appear in the staff directory.

Discussion

There are some important issues to consider before including photos in the staff directory. For example, there may be legal or privacy issues that may need to be discussed and resolved. This is more often the case in public-sector organisations, where there is a keener recognition of staff privacy concerns.

Some people may simply be uncomfortable with having their photo included in the staff directory, or may be unhappy with the photo that is used. In general, these issues can be resolved by giving staff the choice of whether or not their photo is included in the directory.

If a policy is set to make the use of photos in the staff directory mandatory, this should only be done after suitable consultation with staff, and if necessary, legal advice.

“ Taking photos for the database was a nightmare, people literally ran away from their desks! Or worse, if they had access to the system, their pet's photo was loaded instead! ”