

# BUILDING A CORPORATE INTRANET ON SHAREPOINT

## CHALLENGE

With a need to collaborate, share knowledge, and communicate company information to a dispersed workforce, our client recognized that their current intranet could no longer support the company's operational needs or the needs of employees. The site was visually outdated, had a site architecture that couldn't manage the content that tripled in size since the original 2006 redesign, did not have the ability to discover relevant or new information, and was hosted in an aging server environment.

In addition, the site did not represent our clients open company culture; information was "pushed" to the employees through the intranet and then duplicated in global e-mails rather than allowing user generated content, blogs, discussion boards, or wikis. An additional challenge was that the site supported two audiences; client-facing employees who primarily used the site as a resource for communications and locating information on co-workers, and the internal support teams who used the site to publish information for employees and to host their SharePoint based team sites.

## SOLUTION

To solve the challenges with the intranet, Allyis' development team worked to develop a new solution that achieved the following goals: build a more stable server environment, create a site architecture that allowed for future growth, increase information discoverability, improve communication channels, and support our client's company culture through clear communications and user generated content. We began by implementing user experience interviews to gain a deeper awareness of how their employees currently engage with the company intranet. The information gathered from these user experience studies drove many of the proposed site changes. The ability to surface employee contact information, particularly in a dispersed workforce, surfaced as a key component, and drove an enhanced Employee Finder tool that allows for employees to search across the population using a variety of filters. Since many end users are less familiar with some of the features of out-of-the-box SharePoint functionality, including Alerts and Bookmarks, a "dashboard" area was integrated to make them more easily accessible.

Our client has a reputation of being an employee-focused company with a strong sense of community among its employees and leadership. Surfacing profiles of different employees through a "Spotlight On" feature supported this perception by providing engaging content highlighting different individual employees. Additionally, the creation of a Blog platform (for both employees and management) not only provided a new, non-email-based platform for management to discuss business issues, policies, and business trends but allowed for employees to provide feedback on those posts and develop blogs of their own, whether focused on business practices/subjects or personal interests. This concept of management-employee dialogue was also carried through to an area known as "You Ask, We Answer", which is a message-board format allowing employees to post questions (anonymously or not) to the leadership team, to which management responds within 24 hours whenever possible.

Like most companies, it would be difficult to dedicate a significant number of resources to managing and maintaining an intranet site on an ongoing basis, so the creation of a publishing desk for approved non-technical employees to publish or edit content on the site on a real-time basis was a significant business need. The publishing desk allows the internal communications team to publish, edit, or remove content from the site and – perhaps most significantly – provides a "quick view" for the communications team via a Recent Activity tool: new content additions/edits to the site are grouped according to content type, allowing the communications team to quickly surface the most compelling and relevant content, as well as approving and publishing content submitted to the site by other employee contributors, without dedicating significant or costly development resources to day-to-day publishing needs.

The development, however, does not end here. Team sites – areas dedicated to housing content, discussions, blogs, and other resources around specific teams or projects – are being developed within the corporate intranet environment. This will allow for teams to collaborate remotely in a secure environment, and eventually allow for a greater personalization of the intranet experience by allowing team members to surface team-specific content for a more relevant user experience. And ongoing user testing continues, ensuring that the focus of future site development is meeting and exceeding the expectations of our client's employee population.

## KEY BENEFITS

- **Improved Knowledge & Information Discovery**  
Utilizing tools like search, tagging, best bets, Employee Finder, tag-based search, customized alerts tagging, and a 'What's New' feed allows for easier access to information.
- **Streamlined Operations & Efficiencies**  
The Publishing Desk provides the ability to publish and edit content in real-time, reducing the amount of time and resources needed to get content up.
- **Improved Communication & Collaboration**  
Web 2.0 tools like blogs, wikis and messaging allow for improved collaboration and communication across the organizations dispersed workforce.

## PRODUCTS & SERVICES

The Allyis team provided end-to-end support, including:

- User experience testing, listening labs
- Web information architecture and design, production, and development
- Project management
- Adoption strategic planning and implementation
- Technical implementation