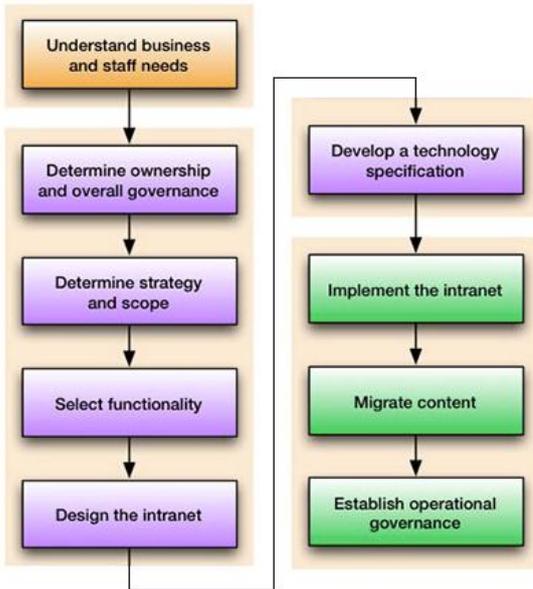# Sharepoint Solutions – Project Approach

Delivering a SharePoint intranet

A Methodical Approach …

Intranet projects are not easy at the best of times. Often replacing sprawling legacy sites, they have to meet the needs of a diverse audience with a limited budget and constrained resources.

SharePoint intranets are just like any other technology platform in this respect. Independent of the underlying product, the new intranet needs to be usable for staff, valuable for the business, and easy for the intranet team to maintain.

An effective project methodology is required to ensure that all necessary steps are considered during the delivery of the service.

As with any IT project, it is essential to understand business and staff needs for the intranet. It is important not just to ask what staff would like to have in an intranet – as they may be unfamiliar with the possibilities on offer – it is more important to explore how the business operates, and what problems staff encounter on a day-to-day basis. A range of techniques can be used to uncover this information, including one-on-one interviews, focus groups, workplace observation, contextual inquiry.


… to support Business Needs

Going into an intranet project, it is often unclear what role the intranet should be playing within the organisation. Beyond 'having an intranet', many organisations struggle to articulate overall intranet strategy. There are five primary purposes for an intranet and it is important to understand the level to which each factor is important for you. And remember, intranets don't run themselves. Even when a usable and powerful intranet is delivered, this effort will be for nothing if it immediately starts to slide into disrepair.

The ongoing management and governance of intranets is therefore critical. This includes establishing:
- an ongoing central team to manage high-level aspects
- standards and guidelines
- training for content authors and owners
- decision-making processes for intranet changes
- ongoing reviews and enhancements
- ongoing promotion and visibility raising
- change management and adoption activities

Most of all, don't fall into the trap of building a solution and then simply 'handing it over to the business'. Instead, consider at the outset of the project the governance and resources that will be put in place for the long-term. This will help to guide decisions about strategy, functionality and design.

It is important that a single person is given overall responsibility for the intranet. Often, but not always, this person works within the IT department. This person will not do all the work themselves, and in fact rarely provides any content, but they can provide a focus for the representatives from the business teams. Who is responsible for your intranet?
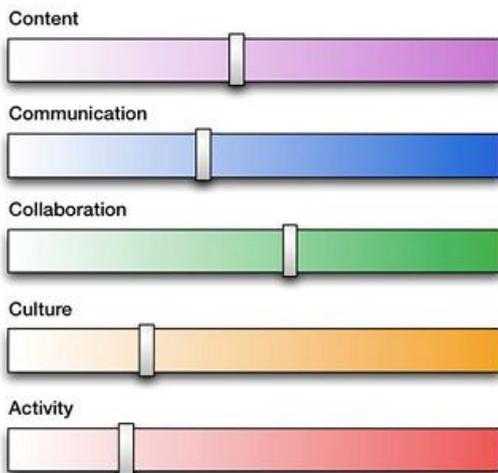
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