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Intranet Team Structure

OVERVIEW

Getting representation and buy-in across the organization is critical to the success of the Intranet, from the time of the initial rollout as well as post-launch to ensure it remains a successful project. Creating the right team and defining responsibilities is at the core of ensuring this success.

In the article we talk about the make-up of an Intranet Team. What roles need to be filled and what are their responsibilities? How many team members should there be and what type of commitment will they need to provide? Most of these questions depend on a few factors but the typical make-up of an Intranet Team is pretty universal.

WHY CREATE A DEDICATED TEAM?

The primary benefit of defining an Intranet Team is having a clear framework for governing the Intranet as a key business tool. By defining clear roles and responsibilities as part of your team, you are setting accountability and ownership for the various elements that are needed for a successful Intranet. Even once developed and launched, an Intranet should be seen as an ongoing project that is never truly finished.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF AN INTRANET TEAM?

Your Intranet Team will fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Planning, delivering, and implementing your Intranet
- Ongoing management of your Intranet after launch
- Refreshing and updating to the Intranet based on review points, such as; submitted feedback, user surveys, analytics review, and more.
- Contributing to and ensuring continued engagement of users within the Intranet
- Measuring and reporting on KPIs

WHAT SIZE SHOULD AN INTRANET TEAM BE?

This will vary from organization to organization, and no two are exactly alike. Available resourcing is often the major factor in determining the size of the team, along with the priority and emphasis that is placed on the Intranet also factors in.

Small to medium-size companies will often centralize the Intranet management to a handful of team members, or quite often just the one, and that person needs to wear many hats, taking on full responsibility for the Intranet as a whole. Larger enterprises on the other hand, will often have a dedicated internal communications, and or, marketing team, which affords a dedicated full-time Intranet manager along with a team of content writers that can work effectively across areas of the business to ensure the timely updating and dissemination of content.

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Most organizations will sit somewhere in the middle. According to Nielsen Norman Group, Intranet team sizes have been increasing over time.

*"The average team size since 2001 is 14 people, although this year, six teams had smaller teams. Over time, the **average team size doubled** from 8 people (during the range 2002–2007) to 16 people (both for 2008–2013 and for 2014–2020). It seems that organizations have been devoting more resources to intranet teams in recent years, which we believe is a very positive development."* - Nielsen Norman Group.

WHAT ROLES SHOULD FORM PART OF YOUR TEAM?

As we've mentioned, every organization will be different and as such the make-up of an Intranet team will vary. However, at a high-level these are the roles that should form part of your Intranet team. Depending on the size of your organization, individual team members may take on more than one role.

The Stakeholder

In most cases getting the buy-in on your Intranet project starts with the approval and backing of a key Stakeholder, or Stakeholders. In large enterprises this could be the C-level Directors or Executive Management Team, whereas for small companies this may be the Company owner or Senior Management. Having support from the top will ensure the project gets the resources needed to define the remaining roles.

Their responsibilities will include:

- Approval of the Intranet proposal and plan
- Definition of the organizational objectives that the project needs to meet
- Advocating on behalf of the project across all other teams, projects and staff, ensuring it has the priority and resourcing it needs to deliver
- Escalating issues and final decision making to resolve conflict

The Stakeholder has a critical role to play in getting an Intranet project completed to agreed timelines and within budget. Having the right Stakeholder back your Intranet project will ensure they have a vested interest and desire for the immediate and ongoing success of the Intranet.

The Project Manager

Every significant Intranet project, whether rolling out an Intranet for the first time or refreshing an existing Intranet, should have a dedicated Project Manager. Their role will be to ensure all the resources that have been dedicated to the project meet their obligations on time and on budget. While they will not generally have an ongoing day-to-day role in the Intranet management or maintenance, their role is critical to the success of the project.

Their responsibilities will include:

- Developing the project plan ensuring it is achievable with the resources the project has been allocated
- Liaising with the Stakeholder to keep them informed of progress and any conflicts
- Managing the budget and resources to keep the project on track
- Working with external parties including consultants from vendors or software partners

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The Intranet Manager

The Intranet Manager is the champion of the Intranet and the go-to point for the initial build and ongoing maintenance of the Intranet. Their goal is to ensure it remains relevant, up-to-date and engages with the staff as a critical tool the organization depends on. They should be the most highly skilled individual within the organization in relation to the Intranet software/platform and have a direct relationship with related vendors.

In many cases the Intranet manager is a dedicated full-time role. However, for many organizations that may not be feasible so it would be a shared role, although it is important that it is a clearly defined role that ensures accountability and clear lines of communication.

Their responsibilities will include:

- Work with the Stakeholder to plan, create and execute the Intranet strategy.
- Undertake high-level management tasks, including; creating page structures and templates, assigning security, updating configuration.
- Act as the go-to point of contact internally for Intranet related queries, issues or conflict.
- Work with Content Owners and Publishers to review content, promote best practices and ensure compliance with content strategy.
- Conduct, or facilitate, ongoing training of publishers and familiarization for users.

The Content Owner

A Content Owner is the subject matter expert, who is responsible for a department, team or function of the organization. Their role is to plan, source, and create content that should be available to staff via the Intranet.

In many cases the head of each department, team or functional area will be nominated as Content Owners as part of new Intranet projects or refresh projects. Although they may not actively write or source all of the content, they will delegate amongst their team the tasks necessary to collate all required content. They will also have the final say over what is approved and published to the Intranet on behalf of their area.

Their responsibilities will include:

- Providing the relevant Content Publisher with the content as needed to keep their area up-to-date.
- Respond to requests for content ensuring that it is gathered and delivered on time according to set timelines.
- Liaise with the Intranet Manager and Stakeholder to develop the overall content strategy.
- Provide representative members to form part of the Steering/User group for providing feedback.

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The Content Publisher

In many cases, especially with smaller organizations the role of a Content Publisher and Content Owner role may be performed by the same individuals. Alternatively, if the governance model is more centralized the Intranet Manager may be the publisher of content on behalf of the Content Owners.

However, publishing content to the Intranet requires a specific skillset such as knowledge of the Intranet software, competence with content layout and formatting as well as ensuring the content is published in accordance with internal guidelines and processes.

Their responsibilities will include:

- Liaise with relevant Content Owners to publish, promote and maintain content.
- Comply with established policy and processes for communicating information.
- Attend training and maintain a high level of competence with the Intranet software and best practices for publishing.

The IT Support Team

The role of the IT Support Team will largely depend on the Intranet software and platform. In a Cloud based, SaaS (out-of-the-box) solution your internal IT Support Team will likely be involved at the beginning to assist with the setup and rollout of the new Intranet to users and then have a relatively small role to play with end user hardware and software support.

No matter the level of support that your IT Support team needs to play it is important that they are included in your Intranet Team and given a clearly defined role and responsibilities to ensure all technical matters or issues can be troubleshooted quickly and unplanned outages of the Intranet are avoided whenever possible.

This team's responsibilities will include:

- Consulting and liaising with the Intranet software/platform vendor with technical aspects regarding infrastructure, access, security, and management of user information and hardware.
- Provide input on integration with other systems, software vendors, or data sources.
- Act as first level user support to help troubleshoot technical issues.
- Escalate issues to the relevant vendor, software, hosting, domain, etc.

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The Graphic/Visual Designer

Visual impact plays a big part in communicating content to users on the Intranet. In many cases the Content Owners and Publishers are well versed in creating and publishing content for the Intranet but may not have the skillset to design graphic elements or shoot, direct and edit video content, etc. All these elements are important parts of making sure that a well-structured, and content rich Intranet is also visually pleasing and engaging. A Graphic/Visual Designer is typically called upon to assist with individual content pieces or as part of an Intranet Rebrand or Redesign project.

Their responsibilities will include:

- Support the Content Owner and Content Publisher with graphics and video content as needed
- Provide overall Intranet design guidelines
- Ensure the Intranet design is in line with established brand guidelines

The Architect

This role will often fall outside of the organization itself and can be fulfilled by an external consultant. The role of The Architect is to have an intimate understanding of the Intranet platform, the software or solution that powers the Intranet. The allows them to translate the requirements, structure, into a framework that the Content Publishers and Intranet Manager can work with to complete the build, or refresh, of the Intranet.

Their responsibilities will include:

- Working with the Intranet Manager and Content Owners to develop the Information Architecture, templates and structures to form the Intranet framework
- Analyze the business requirements and propose solutions
- Provide software or platform support to the Intranet Manager

The User/Steering Group

This is a group of 'power users' that will represent all users of the Intranet. The User or Steering Group are typically used to user test new features or proposed changes in order to provide feedback and can be consulted at regular periods of time to contribute new ideas, assess what is, or isn't, working well as part of a regular review process. Setting up and consulting with this group helps ensure that the Intranet evolves in the best interests of both the users and the organization.

The group's responsibilities will include:

- Work with the Intranet Manager and Content Owners to provide user feedback on current and future plans
- Put forward new ideas and suggestions on behalf of all users
- Review and test new features prior to launching to the whole organization

PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR TEAM

While reviewing the list of roles above and thinking about your organization you'll need to form a plan of your Intranet Team based on the resources and the skillsets available. Keep in mind that a number of the roles we have outlined here are often combined, or only require a part-time commitment. The make-up of every Intranet is unique.

EXAMPLE INTRANET TEAM STRUCTURES

Based on the roles and responsibilities above, what does a typical Intranet Team look like? In our experience working with a large number of clients across varied industries, we have summarized the typical teams sizes we see and grouped them by organization size:

Organization Size / Roles	Up to 500 staff	500 – 2000 staff	2000 – 5000 staff	5000+ staff
Stakeholder	Company Owner or Management Team	C-level Directors or Executive Leadership Team		
Project Manager	External contractor or vendor provided	Internal or External Project Manager	Internal Project Manager	
Intranet Manager	1 or shared responsibility	1 - 2 dedicated	1 - 3 dedicated	
Content Owner	Shared across multiple areas	1 per dept, team, or functional area	1 - 2 per dept, team, or functional area	2 - 3 per dept, team, or functional area
Content Publisher	Joint role with Content Owner	1 per dept, team, or functional area	2 - 3 per dept, team, or functional area	2 - 4 per dept, team, or functional area
IT Support	1 person to small team, often external vendor	1 - 3 person team	3+ person team	
Visual/Graphic Designer	1 - often external contractor	1 person, internal	1 - 2 person team	
Architect	External contractor/ software vendor	External contractor/ software vendor	Internal resource along with external contractor/ software vendor	
User/Steering Group	Not often required as users provide direct feedback and Intranet Team is small	Up to 5 representatives across the organization	Up to 10 representatives across the organization	10+ representatives across the organization