From Concept to Reality – Crucial Considerations for Your Intranet

GreenOrbit
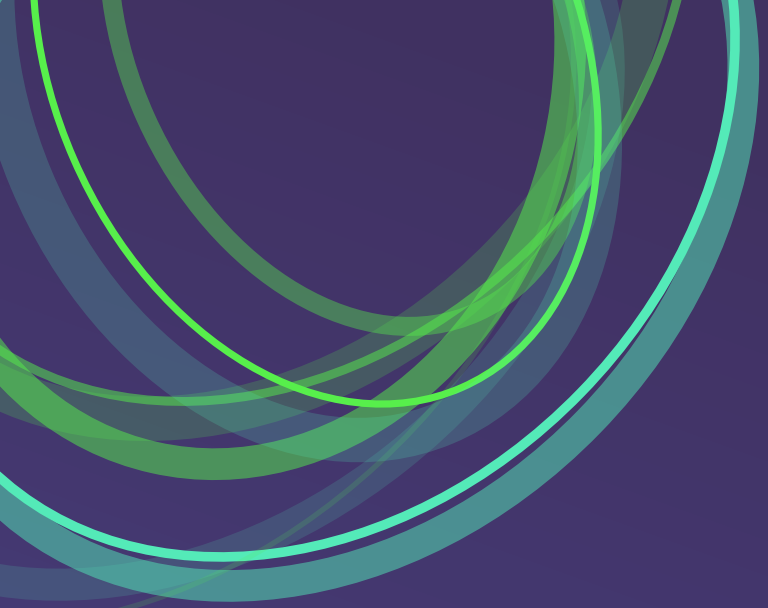
A solution by Knosys

When it comes to planning a new intranet project, you could search for what you need online. However, there is a plethora of information available and sifting through it all will take a long time. The GreenOrbit team has compiled this straightforward guide to help you kickstart your intranet project.

Contents

Define the purpose and goals.

The purpose and goals of an intranet are the overarching objectives that the intranet is intended to achieve.

These goals should align with the overall business objectives of your organization and be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Some examples of common intranet goals include:

Improving communication and collaboration among employees

Communication within an organization helps to build and maintain relationships between employees, departments, and management. Strong relationships can lead to more effective collaboration, increased innovation, and better problem-solving.

Increasing employee engagement and productivity

Helping to create a sense of belonging among employees. When employees feel heard and valued, they are more likely to be motivated and committed to their work.

"Employees who work in digital workplaces are not only more productive but also more motivated, have higher job satisfaction, and report an overall better sense of well-being."

- HP Enterprise

Streamlining access to company resources

When employees have easy access to the tools and information they need to do their jobs, they are more satisfied with their work. This can lead to increased employee retention and reduced turnover. Access to company information can help employees make informed decisions that are in the best interests of the company.

Enhancing employee development

Encourage continuous learning and development among employees by creating a culture of learning within your organization. This can include providing access to training, mentorship, and other development opportunities.

Reducing the cost and time associated with finding and sharing information.

Centralize information in one location to make it easier to find and share – important for organizations to improve efficiency and productivity.

Improving the security of company information

Many industries e.g. Financial Services and Healthcare have specific regulations and standards for protecting sensitive information. Improving security measures helps organizations comply with these regulations and avoid penalties or legal action.

Enhancing employee self-service

Provide a variety of self-service resources, such as FAQs, knowledge bases, and videos, to ensure that employees have access to the information they need in the format that works best for them.

It is essential to define the purpose and goals of the intranet before launching it so that the intranet can be designed and developed to meet those objectives.

Identify the target audience.

Identifying the target audience for an intranet is a vital step in the planning and development process.

The target audience is the group of people for whom the intranet is intended to serve. Some examples of target audiences for an intranet include:

- All employees within a company

- Specific departments

- Remote employees. Read more on how Greenorbit has supported remote employees

- Non-desk employees

- External parties for example, customers, suppliers, contractors, dealers, agencies, investors. Read more about the extranet capabilities of GreenOrbit.

It's important to understand the needs, preferences, and habits of the target audience in order to design and develop an intranet that meets their needs and is easy for them to use. This can be done by conducting user research, surveys, and interviews with representative members of the target audience. It is also important to keep in mind that the target audience may change over time and that the intranet should be adaptable to accommodate new users or use cases.

Develop a plan for training and supporting users.

Developing a plan for Intranet training and supporting users requires careful consideration of the software, the target audience, and the resources available.

Here a few ideas to help you get started:

Assess User Needs

Begin by understanding the specific needs of your users – you could conduct a needs assessment survey. Identify their skill levels, familiarity with similar software, and any challenges they may face in adopting the new intranet software. This will help you tailor the training and support program to their requirements.

Set Clear Objectives

Define clear objectives for the training program. These objectives should align with the overall goals of the intranet implementation and address the specific needs of the users.

Determine Training Methods

Consider the most effective training methods based on the target audience and the complexity of the software. Some common training methods include Instructor-led training, hands on practice in a sandbox area, learning from peers, access to a library of online tutorials/videos/documentation that users can access at their own pace like the GreenOrbit customer help site.
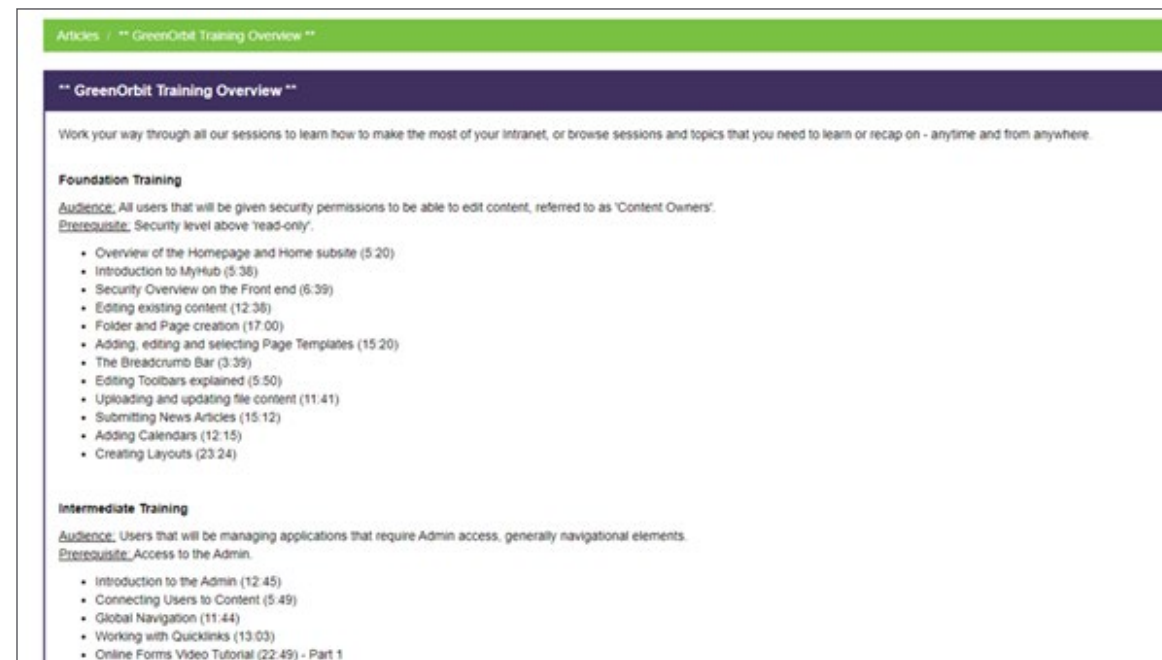
Provide Ongoing Support

Training shouldn't be a one-time event. Establish channels for ongoing support to address user questions and issues. This could include frequently asked questions [published on your intranet], helpdesk or support ticket systems, user communities.

Software Updates and Notifications

Keep users informed about software updates, bug fixes, and new features. Provide release notes or changelogs to help users understand the changes and how they may impact their workflows. The support team at GreenOrbit sends out walkthroughs when they release new functionality, that can be shared with users.

Establish policies and guidelines.

Creating policies and guidelines for intranet use is crucial for maintaining security, compliance, productivity, and cost efficiency within organizations.

These measures help protect data, streamline operations, and promote responsible software practices among employees. And the great thing is you can store them on your Intranet for everyone to access. Below are some policies and guidelines you may wish to consider writing.

Develop a governance plan

This will outline roles and responsibilities for managing and maintaining the intranet. The plan should identify who is responsible for managing the intranet and what their roles and responsibilities are. This could include an Intranet manager, content manager, site administrator, and IT support staff.

Establish policies for content creation and management

The policy should outline guidelines for creating and publishing content on the intranet, including who has permission to publish content, what types of content are allowed, and how often content should be updated. It should also include guidelines for formatting, style, and accessibility.

Develop policies for user access and permissions

Use this for creating user accounts and managing user privileges. Security within GreenOrbit follows a hierarchical model, enabling you to easily apply complex security controls at multiple levels within your site structure (e.g., Sites, Folders, and Pages) as well as your business Roles (Everyone, Domain, User Groups, and Users).

Create a brand guideline

You may well have an existing company one to draw upon. This will outline how your brand should be presented, including its mission, values, tone of voice, and messaging. This clarity helps in avoiding confusion among the stakeholders, including employees, partners, and customers. It ensures consistency in the use of a brand's visual elements such as logos, colours, typography, and imagery.

Establish guidelines for user-generated content [UGC]

Provide clear guidelines on what types of UGC are acceptable and what is not. This can include guidelines for language, tone, and content, as well as rules around copyright and privacy.

- Encourage positive behaviour: Encourage users to create content that is positive, respectful, and relevant to your brand or platform.

- Monitor content: Regularly monitor UGC to ensure that it meets your guidelines and does not violate any laws or regulations.

- Give credit: Always give credit to the user who created the content. This can be done by tagging them in social posts or by including their name in the content.

Build procedures for regularly reviewing and updating the intranet

Create a schedule for content updates and a process for removing outdated information.

It goes without saying that you will need to regularly review and update the policies and guidelines to keep up with the changing needs and technologies.

Test before launching.

Testing the intranet before launching is an important step in the development process to ensure that it is functioning properly and meets the needs of the target audience.

There are several types of testing that can be done to ensure the intranet is ready for launch:

User acceptance testing (UAT)

This type of testing involves getting a group of representative users to test the intranet and provide feedback on its functionality and usability. This helps to identify any issues or areas for improvement before the intranet is launched to the entire organization.

Functional testing

This type of testing checks that all the features and functionality of the intranet are working properly. This can include testing the intranet's compatibility with different browsers and devices and ensuring that links and buttons are working correctly.

Performance testing

This type of testing evaluates how the intranet performs under different loads and conditions, such as many concurrent users or slow network connections. This helps to identify any bottlenecks or scalability issues that may need to be addressed.

Security testing

This type of testing checks the intranet's security and compliance against your organization's security policies, regulations, and standards.

It is also important to have a plan for handling and resolving any issues that are identified during testing before the intranet is launched. This can include creating a bug tracking system and assigning individuals or teams to investigate and resolve issues.

Create a plan for ongoing maintenance of the intranet.

Creating a plan for ongoing maintenance and improvement of an intranet is essential to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of your organization and its users.

Many of the key elements we have already touched on, or will, but they include:

Regular software updates and upgrades

Keep the intranet software up to date with the latest security patches and updates to ensure it remains secure and functional. These will be provided by your vendor, but if you host your software on your infrastructure try to make sure you are on the latest versions.

Content management and updates

Regularly review and update the intranet's content to ensure that it remains accurate, relevant, and useful for users.

User feedback and analytics

Continuously gather feedback from users and analyse usage data to identify areas for improvement and new features that could be added.

Monitoring and troubleshooting

Monitor the intranet for any issues or errors and troubleshoot them quickly to minimize downtime and user frustration.

Training and support

Provide ongoing training and support for users to ensure they can effectively use the intranet and take full advantage of its features and functionality.

Security and compliance

Regularly assess the intranet's security and compliance against your organization's security policies, regulations, and standards.

An ongoing maintenance and improvement plan helps to ensure that the intranet remains relevant, useful, and secure for users and continue to support your organization's business objectives.

Name your Intranet.

"An intranet name should resonate with the organization and people. A name should never come from a list you've Googled."
- **All Things IC**

Naming your company intranet of course isn't mandatory, but when done well, it can be a wonderful way to add to your internal brand and build engagement with your employees. Naming an intranet can be a fun and creative process. Here are a few tips and ideas to help you come up with a name for your intranet:

Keep it simple and easy to remember

Choose a name that is easy to spell and pronounce. Avoid using complex words or phrases that may be difficult for employees to remember. Some names will work in a particular organization while others may not. When looking at a word or phrase, remember to consider all connotations and ensure no offence can be taken.

Reflect your company culture

The name of your intranet should reflect your company culture and values. Consider using a name that is related to your company's mission or vision. It's important to consider the brand and values of your organization when selecting a name that would resonate with the employees and make it easy to remember and use.

Make it fun

Inject some fun and creativity into the naming process. Get employees at all levels involved in deciding the name, you could hold a company-wide competition to come up with the best name for your intranet.

Signpost

Signpost to the intranet across your other channels and refer to it by its name.

Review it

Decide a timeframe to measure and see if it's memorable. Ask staff what it's called, has the name stuck, does it make sense etc.

Plan a communication and launch strategy.

Developing a communication and launch strategy for a new intranet is central for ensuring its successful adoption and creating excitement among your target audience.

You will have done much of the groundwork already, but here's a few steps to guide you through the process:

Identify your target audience

You will have done this early in the project. Tailor your communication strategy accordingly. Identify key stakeholders and influencers within the organization who can help promote the intranet to their teams and departments.

Set clear goals and objectives

Again, you will have already done this. Determine what you aim to achieve with your new Intranet within your communications.

Craft a compelling brand story

Develop a compelling narrative that explains the purpose and benefits of your new Intranet. Highlight its unique selling points, features, and how it solves the target audience's problems. This story will form the foundation of your communication strategy. Don't forget to use its name if you have given it one.

Create a pre-launch buzz

Build anticipation and excitement by teasing your Intranets upcoming launch. Utilize various channels such as internal social media and targeted email campaigns to create awareness and generate interest. Consider offering exclusive sneak peeks or beta testing opportunities to key influencers or early adopters.

Use your Intranet homepage

For those employees that missed the pre-launch hype, use your new Intranet homepage to introduce its benefits and features and how it will help them in their daily tasks.
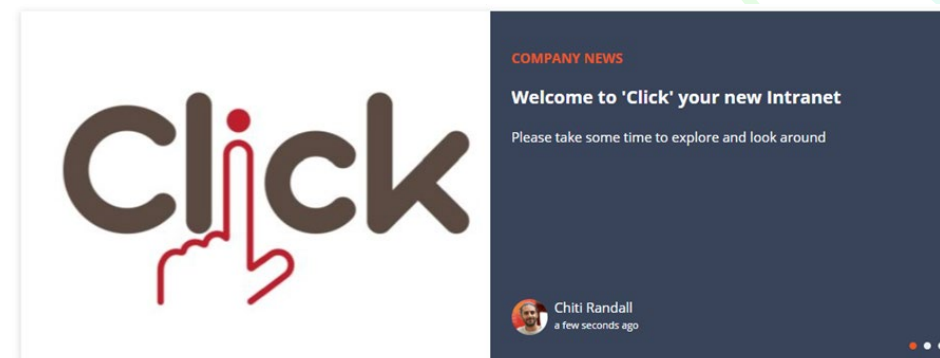
Establish metrics for measuring success.

Tracking intranet usage allows you to assess the effectiveness of your internal communication, collaboration and to see how engaged your employees are.

Understanding how your employees interact with the intranet allows you to improve the user experience. By analysing usage data, you can identify pain points, user preferences, and behaviour patterns. This information can guide the design and layout of the intranet, making it more intuitive, user-friendly, and aligned with the needs of the employees.

It's important to think back to the goals you set at the beginning of the project and track KPIs specific to those objectives.

Metrics you could measure include:

User adoption

Track the number of active users, the number of new users, and the frequency of use. This can help you understand how well employees are engaging with the intranet and identify areas where adoption may be lagging.

Content engagement

Track the number of views, likes, comments, and shares on intranet content. This can help you understand which content resonates with employees and which content may need to be re-evaluated.

Search analytics

Measure the number of searches performed on the intranet and the success rate of those searches. This can help you understand how well employees are able to find the information they need and identify areas where the intranet's search functionality may need to be improved.

Time spent on the intranet

Track how much time employees spend on the intranet. This can help you understand how engaged employees are and identify areas where the intranet may be able to improve to keep employees on the platform longer.

Feedback and support requests

Track the number of feedback and support requests received. This can help you understand how well employees are able to use the intranet and identify areas where additional training or support may be needed.

Return on investment (ROI)

Measure the return on investment of the intranet by comparing the costs of developing, deploying and maintaining the intranet with the benefits in terms of increased productivity, collaboration, and cost savings.

Employee satisfaction

Collect employee feedback and satisfaction surveys to understand how well employees are enjoying the intranet, what could be improved and how it's impacting their work.

The Digital Workplace Group have a great article which is worth a read, in which they split KPIs into employee engagement KPIs and employee morale KPIs.

About GreenOrbit

Dare to seek a better intranet. You're not distracted by the flashy integrators with their shallow functionality. No, you want to equip employees and empower content creators with the right tools. Discover the intranet that provides everything you need, built in. GreenOrbit enables you to drive efficiency, foster collaboration, and create an intranet experience that works for your culture and brand.

Learn more at GreenOrbit.com

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