Centralized or Decentralized Content Management?

Adopting a Centralised or Decentralised Content Creation Approach on your Intranet

A significant factor in achieving high user adoption rates on your intranet involves the regular addition of relevant, good-quality content. This is often the reason why organisations adopt an effective, ongoing content creation method that suits their particular needs and availability of resources.

Content Creation Methods

A decentralised content creation approach involves the contribution of numerous departmental groups. It is often chosen by organisations as it reduces costs and guarantees a consistent flow of organisational-related content.

Alternatively, a centralised content creation approach typically involves the allocation of a dedicated intranet team, tasked with content management, production and distribution. This approach is normally adopted when internal communications, as an objective, exist within an organisation to unite multiple business units.

Rather than adopting a single approach, it may be beneficial to take certain aspects from both approaches.

The benefits and drawbacks of each approach are outlined below.

Decentralised Intranet Content Creation

Content owners are assigned from various functions across the business to create and update intranet content from their departments. A decentralised content creation approach works effectively when you have active and engaged employees passionate about their departmental work and can relate to the importance of keeping other employees up-to-date.

Benefits:

- Content will be added regularly
- Each department or business unit will have a voice
- Reduces the need for a dedicated intranet team
- Content creation is spread amongst the entire organisation
- Removes the chances of issues occurring due to 'bottlenecks'

Drawbacks:

- Difficulty in maintaining quality standards
- Additional content authoring training needs to be provided
- Change management efforts required
- This may be prevented due to busy schedules
- Motivation in the form of incentives may be needed
- Company culture may need to be altered

Decentralised Content Creation Tips

Best Practice Intranet Content Document/Policy: Employees may be hesitant in regards to adding organisational-wide content as there can be doubts

due to not knowing the type of information they should be sharing. In this case, to provide reassurance and to instil confidence the production of a 'Best-Practice Intranet Content' document or policy may be necessary.

Provide Recognition: It's important to provide recognition to employees who regularly contribute content. This can be done as often as you feel necessary; it can be in the form of an email or a free lunch...or you could announce it on your brand new intranet!

Training: Content authors should feel confident in their ability to upload and distribute content on their intranet - scheduling a dedicated training session will be necessary.

Departmental Management Authorisation: if your content authors are not departmental managers you should discuss the task with their managers to keep them informed. If you're attempting to recruit content authors from each department, a great starting point is to have a discussion with departmental managers so they're aware of your objectives - they'll help to motivate employees too.

Establish an Approval Process: With a decentralised intranet content creation process, it can at times (depending on your organisation's needs) be necessary to create a final review and approval process. Try to keep this as simple as possible, you don't want to discourage content authors from creating content.

Centralised Content Creation

A centralised content creation approach consists of having a dedicated intranet team responsible for creating and publishing content.

In essence, the intranet team will also be responsible for keeping abreast of departmental progress and updates.

Benefits:

- A dedicated team with the sole responsibility of managing all intranet related aspects/tasks
- Accountability is maintained with a team
- A team focussed solely on the intranet
- Content is produced in a consistent manner and to a high standard

Drawbacks:

- Extra costs in regards to hiring or maintaining a dedicated team
- Relies on information from other departments
- Content can be inaccurate
- Cannot work in isolation from the rest of the business

Centralised Content Creation Tips

Build Strong Cross-Departmental Relationships: As previously noted, a centralised intranet team cannot work in isolation. An important, ongoing objective is to build cross-departmental relationships with other business functions.

Inform employees of your Intranet's Goals and Objectives: Make sure employees are aware of your intranet goals and how they correlate with the objectives of your intranet team.

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