

10 Top tips for marketing your intranet

Janet Corcoran, Imperial College London Library and UKeiG Intranets Forum Co-ordinator
j.m.corcoran@imperial.ac.uk

1. Involve everyone, especially the management

- Get the management on board. If top managers realise that the intranet is fundamental to the activities of the organisation this message will filter through to all staff.
- Provide training for your section owners and editors so that they are aware of the importance of the intranet and can create good content.
- Encourage all staff to take an interest at the outset by inviting them to take part in a naming competition or in designing the structure.

2. Include the intranet as a core element of your information strategy

- The intranet is one of a number of information platforms within your organisation. Ensure that staff know what type of information is on it, why it is there and how to find it.
- A clear information strategy will mean that everyone knows which tool is appropriate for which type of information.
- Reduce e-mail and the use of shared network drives by mounting documents on the intranet.

3. Make the intranet essential to the activities of all staff

If the intranet is essential for some activities, this will draw your staff to other sections. Some core applications that work well are: room booking systems, staff lists, diaries, acronym finders and essential information such as annual leave procedures.

Avoid unnecessary duplication of documentation by ensuring that corporate documents are stored on the intranet rather than on every shared drive, and that e-mails have links to documents instead of attachments.

4. Offer easy access

- Provide a link from your website.
- Create short URLs with memorable names, to make linking to important content easier.
- Set up office PCs so that they automatically open at the homepage when the staff member logs in.
- Put intranet-ready PCs in meeting rooms.
- Follow Web accessibility guidelines.

5. Provide interactive applications

Wikis, blogs, booking diaries, people finders, discussion lists and bulletin boards are all interesting add-ons that can be used to make your intranet more interactive.

6. Create good content

There are a variety of articles, books and training courses that give advice about writing good content. Make your text brief, simple to understand and easy to read. Keep it up to date and

ensure that all content editors do the same.

Add frequent news items or announcements to the homepage to give a sense that the content changes regularly.

7. Design with the user in mind

Ease of use is critical. Provide a good search system, an A-Z index and a structure that staff understand. Put links to the most frequently used information on your homepage or near the top of your structure. Remember that buried content might be forgotten for ever!

8. Train your staff

A well designed intranet will be easy to use, and training will not be required. However, some organisations do decide to offer training sessions either on a one-to-one basis or in a presentation. At a training session, staff will have an opportunity to ask questions, and you will be able to highlight the importance of your intranet. Training can be given not only to staff who use the intranet, but to those who edit it as well. Supplement training sessions with online activities and handouts.

9. Publicise

Use presentations, posters, staff publications, emails, displays and goodies such as pens and other promotional products. During the design and launch phase there will be a host of opportunities for announcements about developments. Keep up this promotion on a frequent basis. Staff news bulletins and emails can be used to highlight new content but do not duplicate the text, send a link to it instead. Give out flyers to new staff and when changes are made give out information to all staff again.

10. Have some fun...and cakes!

You might like to try a competition such as a treasure hunt or quiz to get staff looking around the intranet. However be warned that this type of activity is not welcomed in every environment.

Or why not hold a birthday party a year after the launch? It's another excuse for office cakes!