

SLC Rail intranet brings colleagues closer together



SLC Rail

For many reasons 2020 was a tough year, but the need for remote working, social distancing and limited face-to-face meetings proved a challenge for most businesses, with the need to maintain or even improve effective collaboration and communication increasingly important.

One such business, seeking an efficient solution to this challenge, was SLC Rail. This is a consultancy-led business committed to supporting local authorities, developers, train operators and other third parties to achieve maximum benefit from their investments in new and enhanced rail infrastructure.

Based in Birmingham, SLC Rail integrated around 50 specialist contractors and consultants, with the company's 50 permanent employees through a degree of remote working and collaboration, which made the transition to working from home during the pandemic relatively easy.

Although utilising SharePoint initially, the need for an intranet was quickly identified and a roadmap for its implementation was developed following a discussion with the managed IT service partner for SLC Rail, Birmingham-based Probrand.

Probrand, a leading technology services provider, had previously worked with the team at Circyl to deliver productivity and business intelligence solutions for some of their more than 3500 clients and introduced Circyl to the project lead at SLC Rail, who recognised the need for specialist support.

- SLC Rail identified the need for an intranet to improve collaboration and communication amongst a dispersed workforce, prior to the Spring 2020 lockdown.
- Recognised need for specialist support from Circyl and opted for a tailored version of its Intranet JumpStart package.
- Intranet solution developed, built, tested and launched within three weeks from project start date.
- Employee satisfaction survey confirmed approval of solution that is now checked for updates by almost half of the workforce on a daily basis.

"Planned ahead of the problems of 2020, thanks to Circyl we were able to accelerate the implementation of the intranet, which not only helped our ISO certifications, but ensured the team communication improved. The Circyl team were a pleasure to work with, they were flexible and communicated well at every stage even though they too were working from home. Together we achieved a great solution, delivered on time and to budget."

- Project Lead for SLC Rail

Preparation mitigates pandemic disruption

Developed as a solution to address just this situation, Circyl's Intranet JumpStart would bring together information streams to ensure not only could important documents be found and used more easily, with the appropriate permissions, but so could firm news and office chat.

The Circyl solution is based on Microsoft technology, but tailored expertly by the team's years of experience. This project although on a short deadline, still required

"It was clear that SLC Rail understood the value of a good intranet, long before the pandemic lockdown made one essential to ensure teams can collaborate and communicate more easily. Once the capabilities of our JumpStart package were recognised, continuous discussion with the SLC team ensured a perfectly tailored solution, with all the features they wanted, with more to come."

Andy Smith
Business Development Manager,
Circyl

the team to understand the needs of SLC Rail precisely, to allow for a unique solution to be created.

It was important to listen to every requirement and discuss them with the client, before working a resolution, rather than dismissing any additions as being outside the scope of the project. This flexibility is a key strength of the Circyl, 'out of the box but modified' approach of JumpStart.

Despite a limited requirement initially, to include company news, a newsletter, 'lunch & learn' sessions and Yammer messaging, engagement with the intranet has improved and many new features have been added, such as virtual birthday cards, to reflect the team ethic.

Hosting videos in Stream and embedding these in intranet pages to play them, not only keeps the content secure, but is so easy to do that use of video within the business has increased significantly since its introduction.

It was important to strengthen the team spirit, given the potential impact of the pandemic on the mental wellbeing of all employees, even those used to working away from the office and the 'hub' is a mine of information and coping strategies to offer support for those who need it.

Specific information can be tagged to pages on the intranet, like events, deadlines, project milestones etc., which is proving its worth as a collaborative tool, apart from now being a valuable repository for almost everything!

Integrated management system proves worth

Although the intranet was already planned, the senior team at SLC Rail recognised the likely impact of everyone working from home for an extended period during the Spring lockdown and the need for better, more readily available internal communications, to ensure no one felt isolated.

The intranet was central to the introduction of the new integrated management system (IMS), which was at the heart of the firm's certification push for ISO 14001, ISO 45001 and ISO 9001, all of which were achieved in August 2020.

The IMS has been very well received across the business, which has four divisions in total and now everyone can find and process documents more easily, with a huge amount of work completed on the system in small amount of time.

The IMS now demonstrates the benefits of a better SharePoint environment, improved automation and document control, with new flows automating previously manual processes, helping drive efficiencies within the business.



The timeline was shortened with the help of Circyl, who were able to design, build, test and launch within 3 weeks, with training then given to help people understand how to get the most from the platform.

Success of the project was confirmed through an employee survey undertaken in July, which offered an overall endorsement of the new intranet. Almost half of the entire workforce are checking the intranet on a daily basis, bringing them closer together despite social distancing



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