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Coventry Builds an Intranet for the Future

Founded in 1884, Coventry Building Society (CBS) is the third largest building society in the United Kingdom with total assets of approximately £18.4 billion. In common with other building societies, the Coventry was originally founded to provide greater access to finance within the local community.

On the 23 March 2010, the Coventry announced it was merging with the Stroud and Swindon Building Society. The new society and agencies will have 1.5 million members and 91 branches in the West Midlands and South West England. Coventry Building Society is regarded as an excellent place to work. It offers an extensive range of benefits and initiatives to help employees achieve a work life balance.

As part of its covenant with employees, Coventry Building Society launched a corporate intranet for employees in 2002. Packed with useful information on corporate policies and procedures, it proved to be an instant hit. But over the following eight years the site became increasingly dated and clogged with redundant information. Richard Field, Head of Corporate Communications for Coventry Building Society, explains: “The intranet grew as a result of the authors – the people that actually input data onto the site. They were driven to put useful information into the hands of fellow employees, but over the long term their actions had a negative result. Data ended up being applied inconsistently, and members of staff found it increasingly difficult to search and find the information they needed. We needed to start again.”

Restructuring the intranet

In 2009 Coventry Building Society contacted Microsoft SharePoint provider PointBeyond. “We were given a very specific remit,” says Ian Woodgate, Managing Director, PointBeyond. “Coventry wanted us to do two things – restructure the content on the intranet to make it more user friendly and change the graphical interface to make it much more modern and contemporary.”

Improved customer service

The revamped site is having a major impact on the business. Members of staff are able to access relevant, correct and up-to-date information on the site far more easily than before. “We believe that customers benefit” says Richard. “With really being quicker to access the information they need, members of staff are able to answer queries from the general public faster, which results in better customer service. It enhances customer service and service efficiency.”

Customer:

Coventry Building Society

Location:

Coventry

Industry:

Financial Services

Product:

Corporate Intranet

Company Challenge:

- Out-dated design
- Loss of consistency
- Search facilities had broken down
- Staff could not find the information they needed
- Intranet had become author not user focused

Key Technology:

Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007

Benefits:

- Efficiency benefits – massive reduction in the time spent searching for information
- Easy consistent design reduces training time required
- More control over who can view and edit content
- Version control functionality
- Better reporting
- Improved forward planning



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The new intranet is also easier to maintain and manage than its predecessor. Users are able to edit content more easily and a full log of their activities will be generated in SharePoint. The log is expected to help greatly with compliance.

“PointBeyond was involved in the project from the start,” says Field. “We didn’t just want PointBeyond to take our plan and give us a technical solution. We wanted them to use their in-depth knowledge of intranets, and SharePoint in particular, to help us meet our objectives. We’re very happy with the end product.”

Field says the members of staff have responded extremely positively. They particularly like the fact that the new intranet takes their requirements into account. It is much more user-centric than the previous solution.

Going forward, Coventry plans to develop the functionality of the intranet to increase the level of personalisation and enhance communication through use of forums and collaboration sites. It also intends to launch some forums on the site to encourage greater two-way communication between employees.

For more information

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