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## 5 Strategies to Boost Your Intranet Engagement Rates

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In today's corporate environment of multiple use platforms like email, shared drives, and file sharing programs it's easy to see why the introduction of a brand-new intranet may not take off with as much fanfare as originally planned.

Without a proper communication plan, and some key strategies (which we will outline below) no matter how great your intranet platform is – it may fall flat if your employees fail to see the benefits of adopting “yet another” platform in an already convoluted spectrum of daily tasks, responsibilities, and diminishing time.

But the strength of an intranet platform is that it's not “yet another” platform to add to the daily list of tasks to conquer – rather it is a tool that streamlines heavy workloads, pressing priorities, improves communication and boosts employee satisfaction.

Here are some proven strategies [HospitalPORTAL](#) has been utilizing over many years to assist in launching many successful intranet platforms within hospitals and healthcare organizations. It's not necessary to adopt all these strategies, as the dynamics of your organization may dictate them unnecessary, rather here are five key strategies we utilized to successfully increase adoption and engagement of intranet platforms.

### Strategy #1: Early Planning

The age-old adage “build it and they will come” isn't an effective strategy in implementing a successful intranet platform. By engaging your key stakeholders early in the process of building your intranet you will not only gain some key insights but give your staff a vested interest in your intranet platform.

The first step is to identify key staff across all functional areas of your organization and form a “governance team” that will later form your “Intranet Steering Committee”. This group will give you the individualized perspective you need to develop a successful intranet platform and the perspective you wouldn't otherwise have had without their expertise on various departments. For example: You'll hear from folks with key insights into what tools Human Resources need, what content would most benefit the IT department, whether kitchen menus should be posted (believe it or not, they're a very popular item on intranet platforms), whether or not people would be interested in a CEO blog, or chat platforms, etc.

A governance team also allows for opportunities to celebrate success, discuss pitfalls, organize objectives, vote on ideas, set the tone for intranet development strategies, provides a forum for discussing and deciding on the structure of the home page and primary navigation options, and once the

intranet is built the team will be able to review, scrutinize, and adjust content based on the intranet's site utilization reports.

**Pro-Tip:**

**Make sure you identify those that will most likely be “early adopters” of the intranet and have expressed an interest in and willingness to be a part of the process. These should be people from departments (like Human Resources) that will most likely have content to contribute.**

By utilizing this team, you'll be able to formulate a “Plan of Action” to develop a successful blueprint for your intranet.

Here are some key questions you can ask:

- What types of communication are important to your department?
- What topics, content, information should the Intranet contain?
- What should be on the homepage?
- What tools would best serve the organization as whole?

**Pro-Tip:**

**If you already have an intranet, that hasn't had a successful adoption rate, utilize these same strategies to do a “restart” or “redesign” of your intranet platform. Your intranet deserves a second chance.**

**Strategy #2: Divide, Conquer and Assign Owners**

Once you've got a basic concept for your intranet, you're ready to move on to strategy number 2: divide, conquer and assign owners. Decide when and how often to meet with your governance team and begin these meetings by finalizing what facets of the intranet project people will “own”. This can be done by functional areas (e.g. Human Resources will own the HR landing and related pages), areas of expertise (e.g. IT will own the security and compliance pages), or areas of interest (e.g. an administrative assistant owning content related to employee engagement). Once you've designated owners, identify a project manager that will develop a system of spreadsheets to document feedback, plans, tasks, accomplishments, etc.

While you will want to give your staff the freedom to come up with new and engaging ideas and solutions, you will also want to develop a set of guidelines for them to work with. This can include things like general layout of a page, fonts, colors, HIPAA compliance rules, etc.

**Pro-Tip:**

**Be flexible in these assignments of ownership and give assignments to people with the willingness and/or expertise to tackle what can seem like complicated terrain. Make sure to communicate the**

**importance each person will play in their role, the value of their opinion, and the freedom they'll have to make each area of ownership "their own".**

### **Strategy #3: Internal Marketing**

Did you ever hear about the greatest website ever built that no one ever saw? Without marketing your intranet internally – you may have the most functional, useful platform ever created – but if no one knows about it – no one is going to use it. Start with a basic communication cascade. Some helpful questions to ask yourself:

- What tools will you use to communicate the intranet? (E.g. Email, bulletins, employee forums, department meetings)
- How far out should you start communicating the launch of your new intranet? (E.g. 1 year, 6 months, 3 weeks)
- What key words, graphics, logos will you use to identify your intranet?
- What areas of your intranet do you want to highlight the most? (E.g. availability of HR trainings, CEO blogs, chat forums)

Once you have a communication plan launched, make sure to check in with your staff for feedback on the new intranet platform. This can be added as a line item on the agenda of your governance team meetings. This feedback can come in the form of emails, a suggestion box, or even word-of-mouth.

### **Strategy #4: Training**

When launching a brand-new platform, it's best to provide formal training and reference materials for the platform. A simple webinar can do the trick to give your staff a personalized walk-through of the tools and functionality of the intranet. This webinar can be recorded and utilized in department meetings, town halls, or sent via email for staff to view at their leisure. Even if your communication plan (strategy #3) is impeccable – your intranet will fail if your people don't know how to use it. The good news – often an intranet vendor will provide all these resources for you as part of their package.

#### **Pro-Tip:**

**If you decide to go the route of utilizing an intranet vendor make sure to choose a vendor that provides a platform designed for non-technical staff. It should be visually appealing, easy-to-use, and have the tools your governance identified as useful and helpful.**

### **Strategy #5: Listen, Review, Adjust**

Once your intranet is up and running you can inquire for feedback on its performance from your staff and from your intranet's site utilization reports. Create easy to find feedback forms and ticket submissions where any person in your organization can submit feedback about a page, content, or the site.

Create ways for staff to submit feedback. Review comments and make adjustments to pages and content based on users' suggestions.

Route this feedback to your governance team for review. Based on this feedback you can continuously adjust your intranet to meet your user's needs. This can include:

- Removing pages that no one utilizes
- Adding or removing menu items
- Adjusting the homepage (and other pages) to include the most utilized content / features

**Pro-Tip:**

**Do not create “under construction pages”. Either publish a page when it’s finalized or don’t publish it at all. It only takes one “click-it-and-forget-it” for someone to never return to that page again.**

Just like with any large project, if your efforts are persistent, you use common sense approaches and incorporate user feedback, your staff will see the value of your intranet efforts and engage in continuous development and improvement of the platform. There is no magic bullet to getting awesome results, but certainly the saying that you “get out, what you put in” is true here.

Cooperation of others in intranet upkeep will be directly proportional to the efforts you put into planning, directing and responding to requests.

Visit [HospitalPORTAL](#) website to learn about our healthcare specific Intranet platform or access our blog page with [many helpful blogs](#) on best practices for healthcare intranets implementation and management.

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