



LOWES

Digital Transformation at Lowes

CASE STUDY

GreenOrbit 



"Head Office now has a direct line of communication to reach all employees."

INDUSTRY

Retail Trade

USERS

2000+

FOCUS

- Online forms
- Communications
- Knowledge management

Overview

Lowes Manhattan Pty Ltd is a leading Australian menswear and schoolwear chain with operations across Australia. With over 200 stores, the business employs more than 2,000 employees nationwide. As a private, family-owned business, Lowes is a part of a small but elite group of companies, which have been in business for over 120 years and are still 100% Australian owned.

Today, Lowes continues to offer the public a range of well-made clothing at affordable prices and has expanded from its traditional offering of menswear and business wear to offer a full range of school wear, young mens wear, sportswear, active wear, footwear and work wear to name a few.

This highly successful company has enjoyed many years of stable growth and is incredibly proud of its longstanding heritage. However, Human Resources and general company communications were mostly paper based and were no longer practical for its large and dynamic workforce.

Lowes initiated a complete digital transformation by deploying GreenOrbit (formerly Intranet DASHBOARD). As described by Human Resources Coordinator, Angela Ro, "It was time to digitize and centralize our communication and HR to say goodbye to paper once and for all."



CHALLENGES

A Unique Cultural Challenge

There is no doubt that Lowes is a special place to work. "It's somewhere people love to work and love to stay. It's a culture thing — we're a real family business." Angela said. From this, the company boasts a unique problem — employee longevity! "Employee retention is not an issue at Lowes, quite the opposite. We've had a high percentage of staff whom have been with the business for 20 years plus with two staff whom have recently celebrated 50 years with us."

There are also a significant number of retail staff who are not your average millennials. Angela herself began as a casual store employee over 10 years ago and states that, "we help each other and support each other. Many staff start as casual sales staff, complete their studies, and get a position at head office through internal promotions."

This is a business that values its culture, and identified the opportunity to uphold, celebrate, and strengthen these values via digital tools. Lowes were ready for digital transformation via an intranet that would cater to all staff of all backgrounds.

HR & Training Challenges

HR sought to transform their mostly paper based manual operations. They wanted to improve and digitize the delivery of HR tasks and processes for their nationwide workforce. The business sought to establish a more efficient method for training, induction, and compliance.

Prior to the GreenOrbit intranet, the induction process was paper-based. New staff were supplied with a physical folder of paper work that they had to read and learn. "New staff are required complete induction training within the first 6 weeks of employment," said Angela. The existing manual training process made it difficult to track compliance and identify employees' comprehension and understanding. This issue also plagued ongoing HR updates to training and policies because these were sent to stores via a paper-based memo, but head office could not track who had in fact read them.

Lowes also needed to establish the process automation of forms. Forms were also paper-based and handwritten items were sometimes misread or damaged. Often, incorrect or out of date forms were being submitted by staff.

CHALLENGES CONT.

Knowledge Management Challenge

With head office receiving customer feedback nearly every day, there was no shortage of stories to share among the organisation. However, there was no vehicle to share this valuable feedback & knowledge throughout the business. This was important information that could assist retail employees in service delivery, yet there was no way to reach them.

Previously, this information was published via an internal magazine released 1-2 times per year. While the magazine was a fantastic internal communications initiative, it was a time consuming project to produce and released infrequently.

This sparked the need for real-time knowledge sharing and a shift to "Understanding what happens around the whole company, beyond each store."

Communications Challenges

Prior to the intranet, Lowes communicated via email, phone calls, internal mail and a biannual staff magazine. These methods were not always sufficient, especially with 85% of staff working in the retail environment and not in the offices. These staff had no company email and were deskless, forcing head office to contact retail managers to then relay messages to store staff.

These challenges often rendered communications inaccurate and inefficient. From this, Lowes identified the need to communicate effectively, regularly and in real-time via a central, mobile platform.

SOLUTION

Intranet Benefits & Results

Lowes understood their business challenges and identified an opportunity for transformational change for its business and operations. By partnering with GreenOrbit, they were able to achieve a story of pure digital transformation of a business.

Throughout the intranet project they always remembered to maintain and celebrate their amazing culture, and made sure it was not lost in this new digital era of their business story.

An Intranet on-the-go

All staff were immediately given access to the GreenOrbit intranet via unique secure remote logins for each and every one of the 2,000+ staff. The in-store iPads were a key part as these became the mechanism for staff to access the intranet. Immediately staff could access valuable information and news.

"The Mobile accessibility of the intranet has been revolutionary for business operations. Head office now has a direct line of communication to reach all employees, whether they're in the office, on the sales floor, or in the warehouse."

Previous communication bottlenecks have been removed. Important updates and alerts can be distributed instantly and directly to its target audience and there is no longer the risk of misinformation presented by outdated paper documents, phone calls and hearsay.



SOLUTIONS CONT.

For retail sales staff, being able to access the intranet via a mobile device or computer in-store has enabled them access to information critical to serving customers. By readily accessing product videos, 'how to' manuals, and product information they are able to always provide customers with the most up to date and accurate sales information, and in doing so improve sales.

Real time News and Knowledge Sharing

The GreenOrbit News feature plays a key role in Lowes' new communication strategy. "There is no more paper-based magazine, or paper-based anything!" The intranet is where Lowes employees now go to for all their news and information. "I love the news feature, its so easy to use and I use it in many different ways" says Angela. "The Lowes intranet homepage has set the expectation of being the place to go for news — it is updated daily, it is the central place."

'Customer Care News' acknowledges staff achievements and reinforces the most important stakeholder; the customer. Compliments and comments given to staff by customers are published here and they serve as both a recognition system and a reminder to all staff to excel in customer service. "Valuable customer feedback that was once lost, now takes pride of place on the intranet." says Angela.

'Lowes Talk' is real stories about what is going around the business. "It is about understanding what happens around the whole company beyond your own store." It is knowledge sharing in a relaxed and engaging way. "Oh look what they're doing over there, what a good idea!" The former bi annual staff magazine used to publish this sort of story but it has now been completely replaced by the intranet.

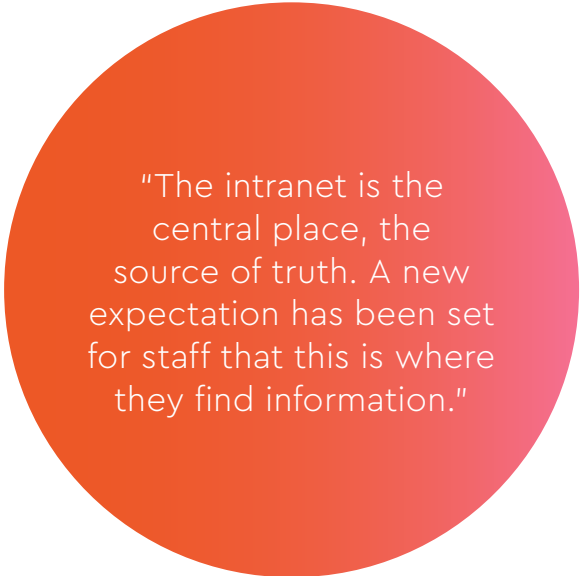
One Central Place for all Communication & Information

"The intranet is the central place, the source of truth. A new expectation has been set for staff that this is where they find information." This is applicable both for dynamic content such as news, as well as the document storage of important policies, SOPs, and manuals.

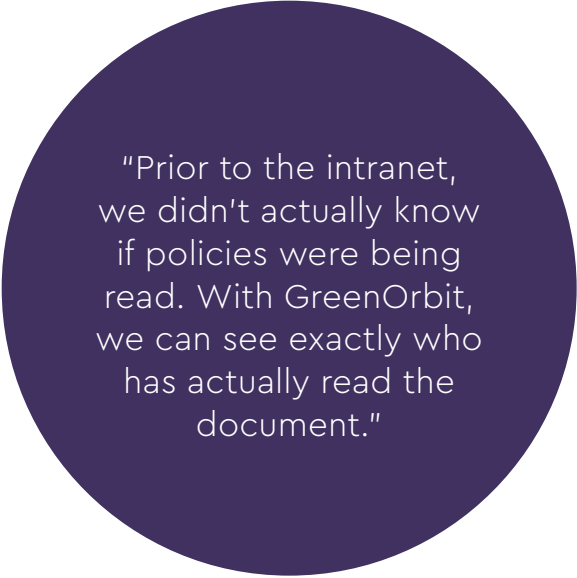
Information is now posted to the intranet, and it is no longer sent via email or printed paper format. GreenOrbit's user-friendly interface allows content to be quickly updated and securely shared, meaning information is always available and always up to date.

Online Training, Induction and Testing

The implementation of GreenOrbit has enabled a complete overhaul of Lowes' training processes. The bulky paper based 'induction folder' has been replaced by an online training module and questionnaire using Online Forms, Workflow and Notifications. This means head office can track who has and hasn't completed training, plus monitor staff understanding of the material. Inevitably, this will enable staff to provide a higher level of operational and customer service and ultimately improve sales!



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Interactive Online Training & Videos

As Lowes believe in ongoing employee education, training existing staff on new products and their features is also highly important. This is now completed via in-house product videos that are accessible to watch via the intranet. The joy and success of this content is that they don't use actors, but real staff to feature in the videos, real life product experts that are highly informed (and entertaining). Angela describes that "Staff love to come through and watch these, they are one of the most popular areas on the intranet."

Compliance and Proof that HR Policies and Important Documents are Read

Paper-based HR policies have been replaced with GreenOrbit's document management library. 'Read Receipt' functionality allows HR to manage the distribution of up to date policies, and nominate items that are 'Must Read.' When a staff member reads a 'Must Read' document, HR receive an notification, conversely they can see who has not read items. Angela reflects that "Prior to the intranet, we didn't actually know if policies were being read. With GreenOrbit, we can see exactly who has actually read the document." From this, the feature plays a key role in ensuring compliance and consistency across the organisation.

Improved Employee Engagement

Employees are thoroughly engaged via the intranet, it is without doubt a huge success. One of the most popular features is the 'Suggestion Box.' This is an Online Form that invites staff from any corner of the business to submit their suggestions to management regarding stock, processes, anything! This activity enables employees to help shape their workplace and encourages them to be thinking about the 'bigger picture.' It's through these functions that Lowes are able to continue the traditions of an inclusive, family business.

Operational Cost Savings

Digital transformation has been revolutionary and has thoroughly improved the efficiency of operations at Lowes. The business reports that, by digitising processes, documents, forms, and communication, the following savings have been realized:

- A 70% reduction in paper from HR
- A 50% reduction of email traffic

As the business and its intranet continue to evolve, Lowes expect that these figures will increase.

Future Plans

Now that Lowes has transformed communications and operations with GreenOrbit, they are ready to embark on implementing an Enterprise Social Network. Lowes plan to implement GreenOrbit's communication features such as #Channels and Private Groups to further evolve its communications strategy and enhance collaboration.

"We've had a really great experience with our intranet" said Angela. We, the team at GreenOrbit, can't wait to see how Lowes and its intranet continue to evolve and how they as a business realize even more business benefits.



Get Going

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About GreenOrbit

Dare to seek a better intranet. You're not distracted by the flashy integrators with their shallow functionality. No, you want to equip employees and empower content creators with the right tools. Discover the intranet that provides everything you need, built in. GreenOrbit enables you to drive efficiency, foster collaboration, and create an intranet experience that works for your culture and brand.

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