ECORYS

Digital collaboration with GreenOrbit

GreenOrbit

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FOCUS
- **Collaboration**
- **Communications**
- **Enterprise Social**

Ecorys is an international research, consultancy and management services company headquartered in the Netherlands, with over 700 staff across nine international offices. The business specializes in economic, social and spatial development and aims to deliver real benefits to society through the work they do. After nearly 90 years in operation, Ecorys is one of Europe's oldest and most established consulting companies.

This highly skilled and specialized team rely on one another's expertise to deliver the best solutions for their clients. Having consulted to some o f the world's premier organizations, the team have accumulated invaluable knowledge to share with one another — but there was no efficient way to do this globally.

GreenOrbit (formerly Intranet DASHBOARD) worked closely with Ecorys to facilitate an intranet focused on building an Enterprise Social Network (ESN) that would form the foundation for internal communication and collaboration.

CHALLENGES

Replacing the 'Old' Intranet

An existing nine year old, static intranet was posing issues for the business. "Our existing intranet had become one big ball of static information that was ugly and outdated. It was department driven and no one could find anything anymore." IT Manager; Iwan Westfa, describes it as a "one-way communication tool" that could not facilitate employee participation in any way. To counteract these challenges, the team identified the need for a solution that would establish a central location for information, while enabling open communication and collaboration.

Ease of use was paramount to the intranet's success and Internal Communications Manager; Serdar Demirel, envisioned a solution that would diminish bottlenecks and "allow relevant staff to edit and manage content themselves." Frustrated by the existing intranet, Ecorys collated these requirements and evaluated providers that could give "the best of both worlds" through an intranet that included ESN collaboration.

Knowledge Management Challenge

The dispersed nature of the business established a challenge for collaboration and previously there was no platform that could facilitate the knowledge sharing they needed. With offices in nine countries around the world, it's hard to be in the same place at the same time. Iwan reflects that "Previously, for example, it was not possible to see the day to day activities of other offices."

Ecorys are a team of highly knowledgeable and specialized staff — they knew that there was so much they could learn from one another, but had no easy way to connect! "You could be working on a project in Bangladesh, and there could be someone in another office with expertise. Normally you'd never know, it was too annoying to send an email out to everyone in the company." A central platform was required to search for knowledge experts and initiate open discussions to "share knowledge both locally and internationally."

Communication Challenge

Prior to GreenOrbit, Ecorys' communication was conducted via email and Skype for Business. All general information, weekly overviews and newsletters were pushed to inboxes and resulted in an overflow of email. This meant that important information had the potential to be lost. From this, the business knew that email was no longer suitable for broadcast communication and could not form the basis of its internal communications strategy.

"We wanted to showcase our projects to each other more regularly but we had no way to do this, there was never an easy way to reach all of Ecorys."

Timeframe Challenges

The business needed a new intranet, and they needed it fast! Due to the scheduling of other projects, Iwan and Serdar were allocated just a few months from management to transform the business' internal communications. "We knew our requirements but it was daunting, we weren't sure where to start as our existing intranet had been a mess."

While being across other projects, Iwan and Serdar were not able to work full time on the intranet. As a result, they knew they had to find a partner who was willing to work with them closely and that would take their launch date "very, very seriously."

SOLUTION

Intranet Benefits & Results

Ecorys understood its business and communication challenges and knew exactly what they needed; an easy to use tool that would become the 'go to' place for information, communication and collaboration. This would allow employees to easily share and access information, enabling them to build knowledge with peers across projects. "We looked at a bunch of different systems which provided one or two of our requirements but we found that GreenOrbit had the best combination of features. Other solutions were either an intranet or a collaboration tool, but GreenOrbit was both."

Developing Knowledge via Central Communication & Collaboration

Internal communication at Ecorys now stems from the intranet. GreenOrbit's #Channels functionality has completely changed the way communications are distributed throughout the business. #Channels are communities of interest based on relevant Ecorys topics and are fed to the intranet homepage, making it the central location for finding and sharing intelligence.

As opposed to email, employees turn to this content for updates and information that is categorized and allows for group discussion.

The distribution of information via #Channels initiates the acquiring of knowledge, which can then be applied to completing tasks. "People go to seminars or meet with clients and share their experiences to a #Channel. People comment asking questions and learn from each other. This just wasn't possible for us before." #Channels have surfaced information away from inboxes and into the hands of the wider business, allowing employees to upskill every time they visit the intranet.

Across every department of the business, there was a need and desire for collaboration. Iwan describes that "Ecorys were looking for a solution that would enable staff to participate and share knowledge from all areas and countries." As a highly skilled team, there was so much expertise waiting to be shared and leveraged to achieve better solutions across projects. GreenOrbit has provided the platform required to enable this process.

Ecorys deem GreenOrbit #Channels to be the "stand out feature" that has welcomed excellent rates of user adoption from all departments because it is so easy to use:"You simply post a comment to a feed just like you would in other familiar social media. It's a low threshold and engaging solution. People use it because they can directly see the business benefits."

"Someone in the UK posted to a #Channel that their client needed to conduct an interview with a particular type of expert. Up until then, they could not find anyone and the project was in jeopardy. Once it was posted to #Channels, an expert in the Netherlands popped up by commenting on the post. So the reporters came to the Netherlands to carry out the interview. Normally we would have just lost the opportunity, but we made a profit."

Staff Directory: Search and You Shall Find

Ecorys have also used GreenOrbit's Staff Directory to surface employee skills and expertize. Ecorys staff are empowered to share the projects they have worked on, their strengths and experiences. This information is then able to be searched. For example, if an employee requires the assistance of a French speaker in the UK, they simply search 'French' then filter to 'UK.' The employee will now have access to find relevant experts and experience to help them in their projects.

"Working all across Europe, sometimes we need to find someone who is fluent in a particular language to provide assistance. Staff Directory enables us to track down these skills and who to reach to get the job done properly."

Easy Intranet

The GreenOrbit intranet is a complete departure from Ecorys' previous, static intranet. GreenOrbit's drag and drop interface and user-friendly CMS empowers users to quickly update and share content. Iwan says that "It's so easy to modify basically anything because the CMS is really easy to use. Ease of use is a really important aspect, now people can edit content themselves rather than needing internal communications to do it for them." Employees continually return to the intranet because they know they will find something new, and something important that will assist their work.

"I've seen a lot of CMS systems but GreenOrbit is by far the easiest to use."

Rapid Deployment

Meeting the project deadline was highly important for Ecorys. With everything built in, GreenOrbit allowed for rapid deployment. However, Iwan and Serdar also greatly credit the GreenOrbit services team for working at the pace they required and ensuring the intranet project goals were accomplished. "GreenOrbit was always available, regardless of the time zone, which was really helpful.

We give huge props to the technical team who were always ready and happy to help us. They took our launch date very, very seriously. We were only able to finish on time because GreenOrbit helped us, advising best practice and making sure we didn't stray off path."

"The commitment was there. The GreenOrbit team went above and beyond. All of this has led to the successful launch of our intranet."

Future Plans

The first phase of the Ecorys intranet has focused on enabling communication and collaboration throughout the business. The adoption of GreenOrbit, and its built in Enterprise Social Network, has been critical for accessing and building intelligence. Employees are able to apply these findings to assist clients and provide transformative solutions to challenges.

Next, Ecorys will use GreenOrbit's API to integrate with other systems and establish the intranet as the 'front door' portal for internal processes. GrrenOrbit look forward to working with the talented team at Ecorys to further evolve and leverage its intranet, delivering even more business benefits.

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Get Going

www.GreenOrbit.com
info@GreenOrbit.com

USA	+1 888 424 0212
AUST	+61 3 9819 6333
NZ	+64 9887 4308
UK	+44 20 3519 8529

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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