

StyleTech's practical tips for creating intranets that work!

What to do, what not to do?

StyleTech's practical tips for creating intranets that work appeared in the January 2008 edition of the Business Intelligence.

While trends and design elements are useful, David Scotney, Managing Director of StyleTech Solutions says,

"You should approach the development of an intranet from the company's business needs and from the users' perspective.

In some instances, this might include public sector requirements and standards.

Don't base your design on what other intranet providers are doing. That might not be right for your client and users.

Rather let user and business needs, drive intranet creation in new and more effective directions."

Content must be "up-to-date, relevant, informative, enjoyable and graphical—human interest stories work well. StyleTech has provided their top ten tips for successful intranet development.

1. Don't build an intranet for the sake of it:

- Identify the need and stick to defined achievable goals.
- Identify why previous intranets failed and conduct surveys if necessary.

2. Appoint someone to drive the project:

- Ensure you put a carefully considered plan in place that includes all stakeholders.

3. Avoid using an internet developer:

- They don't usually have the necessary business skills and knowledge required.
- Designing effective intranets is not only about technology.

4. Take a user's perspective:

- Gear the functionality around this.

5. Be flexible:

- Build a flexible system so that you can identify how people use the functionality.
- They might not be using it as you had expected.
- Be prepared to adapt the functionality quickly as this shows people that their views are noted.
- This can build confidence in the intranet for future developments.

6. Keep it simple:

- Ease-of-use and good consistent content are the key.
- Ensure users do not require any technical knowledge (HTML or graphic optimisation) to place content within an intranet.

7. Empower users to add and maintain content themselves:

- Content is more likely to be up-to-date, consistent and correct.

8. Remove complex features which are not intuitive:

- Redesign features were necessary.

9. Design for the future:

- Implement a system that helps ensure content providers keep content up-to-date.
- Ensure your intranet allows for multilingual functionality for future growth.

10. Ensure the intranet develops a sense of team working:

- You want the intranet to move a company forward together.

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