

User Centred Intranet for Capacitybuilders



Improving support for a stronger third sector

Capacitybuilders was established to manage the £70 million ChangeUp programme. Launched by the Home Office, the overall aim of the ChangeUp programme is to strengthen the voluntary and community sector through radically improving support available to third sector organisations.

Capacitybuilders' remit is to help develop the infrastructure for Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) which includes physical facilities, systems and relationships, as well as the people, knowledge and skills needed to provide services to local communities.

Helping to improve communication across the organisation

Despite having a central IT infrastructure, one of the initial challenges facing Capacitybuilders was the absence of a system to help the organization store and distribute information to all their staff in a consistent manner.

This absence of a central system was hampering Capacitybuilders' ability to work

together and co-ordinate efforts efficiently, as their workforce are located throughout the country.

Gilbert George, Director of Resources and Planning for Capacitybuilders explain;

"We needed a solution that would be able to support office based and remote workers wherever they were working - to better co-ordinate with the various communities they support. Without a single point of access, it was proving difficult to share information efficiently across the organisation. We were keen to improve communication between all our staff so that they could plan and work together more effectively."

In tandem with this requirement to improve communication and share information internally, Capacitybuilders was looking for a customer relationship management solution (CRM) system to centrally co-ordinate contact with VCOs, and a grant management system to manage the disbursement of funds. These were critical business systems as Capacitybuilders needed the ability to disburse grants in a cost effective and auditable manner to the many thousands of potentially eligible organisations in the VCO sector.

Working together more efficiently and effectively

Following a competitive tender, Capacitybuilders selected Parity Solutions to develop a brand new corporate intranet based on Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS 2007) followed by a grants management solution based on Microsoft CRM. This approach provided a cost effective solution that offered the potential to scale up to meet Capacitybuilders' future growth plans as well as protecting the agency's investment in technology.

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Parity delivered the corporate intranet successfully in less than 3 months, providing a customised "look and feel" based on feedback gathered from several client workshops. Parity used a "user-centred" design approach created jointly with Capacitybuilders to develop the site which helped to ensure that Capacitybuilders' staff was presented with a solution that supported the way that they actually worked. This approach also increased the likelihood that staff would quickly adopt the new system as part of their day to day work.

Gilbert George described how the ability to share and distribute information more easily is already having a positive impact on Capacitybuilders operations:

"We are already seeing the benefits of improved communication throughout the organisation. As we load more content and information onto the intranet, it will become an increasingly valuable resource that can help us all work together more effectively."

Helping organisations work more productively

With one project already successfully delivered, Parity continues to work closely with Capacitybuilders on the new CRM and grants management system that will underpin the agency's work with distributing grants to the VCOs.

From Capacitybuilders' perspective, the success of the corporate intranet project is a good first step in providing them with the infrastructure and tools they need to work more productively together as an organisation.



In the future, the CRM and grants management solution being developed will also enable multiple staff to work together on campaigns or events to target VCOs and further improve communication throughout the organization and the services delivered to Capacitybuilders' clients.

Terence Blow, Managing Director for Parity Systems, commented:

"Parity specialises in providing solutions that help public and private sector organizations work together more productively and efficiently. Our work with Capacitybuilders continues to build on our growing track record in creating Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 based solutions that improve an organisation's ability to work together and share information."