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Measuring the Health of Your Intranet

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Measuring the Health of Your Intranet

The critical question you will need to answer throughout the lifecycle of your intranet is whether or not it is functioning as intended. Intranet health is comprised of a combination of factors, from whether it is satisfying the business objectives of the team(s) it is supporting to whether or not users are successfully integrating the site features and functionality into their daily work experience.

A robust user feedback and measurement plan will help you to measure the health of your intranet and to make adjustments to your approach based on the feedback and trends you observe. This plan should include metrics for site activities considered most valuable to your organization as well as levels of user satisfaction with various aspects of the site. **The work of community building is never finished so constant listening, fine tuning and testing is necessary to keep up with the constantly changing needs and preferences of your users.**

GATHERING USER FEEDBACK

You should aim to establish user-initiated and manager-initiated mechanisms for the collection of user feedback. It will also be important to gather feedback from different types of users at each stage of their engagement journey. The following are suggested approaches to gathering user feedback that can be employed in specific areas of your intranet or site-wide. You will want to time these to coincide with strategic events within your community, such as beta testing, early roll-out, annual planning cycles, upgrades and so on.

Table 1. Typical User Feedback Mechanisms

SIte Manager-Initiated	User-Initiated
One-on-one interviews	Feedback form(s) on iste
Focus group discussions	Comments on community manager blog posts
Online surveys	Questions/suggestions on support page
Polls	

The key is to ensure that users see you are responding in real time to any issues they raise, regardless of the channel through which they're received. If user feedback includes requests for new features that may not be available right away, immediate mention in a site plan or roadmap is useful to demonstrate that the user's suggestion was heard and is being considered. This type of responsiveness will encourage ongoing user willingness to provide feedback. No one wants their feedback disappearing into a black hole.

When you actively solicit feedback from your users, be thoughtful and concise about the questions you ask. Every question should directly serve the aim of your feedback effort. Are you trying to assess what new features to include in the next release? Do you want to understand how satisfied new users are with their onboarding experience? Be specific and targeted with your questions so as not to overwhelm your users with constant requests for feedback on matters that are not directly related to their experience.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT METRICS

There are variety of methods for gauging the relative health of your intranet over time. Some of these data collection methods need to be designed into the site management approach at the time the intranet is launched. Other metrics are collected automatically by your intranet software platform and accompanying third-party web analytics tools like Google Analytics.

The right set of metrics should assess whether the site's overarching objectives are being met as well as whether the site features and functionality are being used as intended. The metrics you define to routinely measure the health of your intranet should include both quantitative (numerical, often automatically captured) and qualitative (text, often from surveys and feedback forms) measurements, as well as a subset of critical metrics designated as key performance indicators or KPIs. These KPIs will ensure the prioritization of the aspects of your intranet that matter most to its users and sponsors and can serve as a shorthand for communicating about site performance and status.

User Adoption and Engagement Metrics

The following metrics can be used to measure uptake and usage of the site itself and the various features and functionality it offers. Suggested key performance indicators (KPIs), highlighted in orange, can be used by community sponsors and managers to closely monitor, assess and communicate about the health of the community.

Table 2. List of Metrics and Data Sources

SGM=site-generated metric; **GA**=Google Analytics; **S**=survey

Metric	Data Source(s)
# of registered users	SGM
% of target users who are active users	SGM
# new users by month	SGM
# and % of active, participating, contributing users	SGM
page views per month (returning vs. new)	GA
# site visits by geographic location	GA
% of visits from mobile device	GA
# of creates (by content type) per month	SGM
average # of creates per user	SGM
average # of page views per visit	GA
most popular tags	SGM
average duration of site visits	GA
total quantity of content by type	SGM
user leaderboard (by # of actions)	SGM
most popular groups	SGM
average number of replies/comments per post	SGM
most popular content	SGM

Metric	Data Source(s)
# of open vs. answered questions	SGM
incoming link sources (email, website mentions)	GA
site speed / performance	GA, S
% users visiting daily, weekly, monthly, rarely	S
reported barriers to frequent usage	S
reported site usability	S
reported search performance/ease of finding information	S
reported email notification performance	S
reported favorite site features	S
reported needed improvements	S

Community Effectiveness Metrics

The following metrics can help determine whether your intranet is producing the desired results in support of your project or initiative. These data can be collected via surveys, one-on-one or group interviews or similar qualitative data collection methods. Questions should be closely aligned with the foundational objectives of your intranet and the projects/initiatives that it supports.

Estimated percent of time users spend focused on each the following:

- Engagement: developing relationships with other users, understanding and responding to their needs (primarily site managers and advocates)
- Content: creating and collaborating on content
- Strategy: planning and developing roadmaps, policies and approaches
- Technical: providing technical support and sharing expertise
- Business: connecting and networking with other organizations
- Meetings & Events: event planning, meeting minutes, collaboration before, during, after key meetings and events

User perception of the site's ability to support the following activities:

- Discover and connect with experts and people engaged in similar work
- Find the content and information I need related to [initiative/project]
- Collaborate and share knowledge with people engaged in similar work

- Perform one or more core job functions
- Learn about latest activities, news, developments

User reported outputs from site activities:

- Creation of content for external dissemination
- New connections that led to collaboration
- Technical support received
- Successful meetings/events
- Other outputs

PUTTING YOUR DATA TO GOOD USE

Every metric you collect should serve a purpose. Otherwise, why bother collecting it in the first place? Once you've defined the metrics that you will routinely collect and put your plan into action, it's time to put that great data to work. Some metrics will give you actionable information about how to deliver an improved site experience in response to user needs. Other metrics will help you promote the value of the site to organizational leaders, late adopters, and other important audiences. You'll want to include a thorough communications plan as part of your feedback and measurement approach that defines the content, delivery channel(s) and frequency of reports highlighting the data you collect.

Data doesn't have to be boring. Be creative in your presentation and use colorful, engaging visuals to highlight the most important findings. When you're sharing information with diverse audiences, pick a style and delivery method that will be most appealing to each target group. If possible, test out a few approaches with a sample of audience members until you get it right. And check in with them periodically to see if they're still liking what they're seeing. Not a data visualization whiz? Not a problem. Take advantage of the great free or low-cost online tools available to produce engaging charts and infographics.

About Ideal State

Ideal State designs and builds digital workplaces that inspire teams to do their best work. We do this by combining people, processes, and state-of-the-art technology to redefine how people work and learn together.

Visit www.idealstate.co to learn more about our whole-systems approach to solving persistent collaboration, content, and information management-related challenges.

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