

Measuring and Evaluating an Intranet Designed to Enhance Employee Communication and Two-Way Communication

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was twofold: (1) to describe how a hospital garnered input from its employees to design an intranet that enables its employees to do their jobs more effectively and to communicate with management and with each other, and (2) to test whether employees' level of satisfaction and perceived input into the decisions of the hospital increased after using the new intranet. Research included a baseline survey (n= 718), a follow-up survey (n= 393), and interviews with a purposive sample. Hospital communication effectiveness, perceived employee voice, and employee satisfaction increased after employees had used the new intranet.

Public relations professionals and senior management have traditionally controlled internal communication tools, such as newsletters and Web casts, leaving employees to merely receive and react to the messages. The intranet, an internal Web site geared for an organization's employees, offers the potential to transform the internal communication process by enabling two-way communication. An intranet empowers employees to participate on message boards and wikis in order to share information and to provide feedback via polls. However, although an intranet has the potential to encourage dialogue among management and employees, the majority of companies still utilize a highly controlled intranet whereby management pushes communication messages to employees (Holtz, 2008). The purpose of this case study research was twofold: (1) to qualitatively examine how one organization used employee feedback to construct an intranet designed to increase work productivity and to enable employee communication, and (2) to analyze whether employee usage of an intranet designed to foster two-way communication yielded enhanced hospital communication effectiveness and increased employee satisfaction and employee voice into the decisions of the organization.

Review of the Literature

Intranets function as internal Web sites providing Internet technology and content for the exclusive use of the organization's employees. Their purpose is to disseminate information, increase productivity, and facilitate knowledge sharing, collaboration, and teamwork among an organization's staff. If used correctly, intranets can build a common culture and enhance information flow within an organization (Global Intranet Strategies, 2006; Howard, 2000; Lehmuskallio, 2006). An intranet serves as a company-wide mass medium that circulates content to the entire organization simultaneously across the world, maintained within company firewalls (Lehmuskallio).

Intranet technology is a relatively young phenomenon. Technology firms were the first to create internal networks for business purposes. In 1992, Cisco Systems was one of the earliest

companies to create an intranet system. “Our intranet was originally conceived to help employees support our customers,” (cited in Howard, 2000, p. 17) said Nicolle Henneuse, employee communications intranet manager for Cisco Systems. IBM soon followed with an intranet site of its own in 1994, and three years later Intel, 3Com, and Dell all launched their intranets (Howard).

Benefits of Intranets

An intranet can streamline communication within an organization. A 2006 survey of 101 companies from around the world found that 52% of intranet managers polled perceived the intranet to be the primary means of delivering information within the organization, which signals a change from a reliance on printed communication or e-mail. Twenty percent of intranet managers found intranets to be a collaboration platform and knowledge-sharing tool, and 19% thought they enhanced productivity (Global Intranet Strategies, 2006).

The intranet not only fosters communication, it radically changes the way people communicate. Management can still disseminate pertinent communication to employees in a timely manner with official content written and published by communication staff. But the exciting thing about the intranet is that it also allows staff members to find information they want and need to do their jobs, providing for a bottom-up communication form that features unpolished content written for internal use and generated by employees in the field. Examples include internal employee blogs, feedback forms, user-specific dashboards, and shared video (Frankola, 2009; Fugere, 2009; Howard, 2000; McConnell, 2007).

Intranets also allow for horizontal information flow, including collaborative tools such as wikis and message boards, for employees across the organization to exchange information and best practices with one another (Holtz, 2008; McConnell, 2007). When information is shared among co-workers via the intranet, organizations may experience increased productivity, better customer service, and less troubleshooting.

The intranet has opened up communication and empowers employees to take part in an ongoing conversation with management and with each other (De Bussy, Ewing, & Pitt, 2003). It provides a forum for dialogic, two-way communication between staff and management, allowing the two parties to foster a communication spirit with a commitment to open, two-way communication, a willingness to listen, and a willingness to share best practices (De Bussy et al.). This opportunity for two-way dialogue makes the information on the intranet more relevant to employees’ daily activities and provides them with a feeling of ownership in the organization. If employees perceive the intranet as a management tool with only top-down communication, it may reinforce an “us” versus “them” mentality (McConnell, 2007; Weiss, 2007).

Barriers to Intranet Success

All employees should have access to the company’s intranet. If employees are excluded, these workers may miss important information and feel left out or less valued by management. Restricting usage reinforces the privileged position of those with intranet access and intranet access can become a status symbol within some organizations, leading to social inequality (Lehmuskallio, 2006).

A challenge with the intranet is ensuring that employees understand how to gain access to information they need in order to do their jobs better. Employees must be aware of the intranet tools available, and those tools must be relevant. Intranet gatekeepers must act as tour guides to ensure that employees fully understand how to navigate the site and find the information they

need (Grates, 2005). An intranet is most effective when it becomes the entry-point for basic tasks performed daily by staff at all levels of the organization, including job instructions, regulations, policy documents, demonstrations, and customer files (Cozijn, Maes, Schackman, & Ummelen, 2007). Intranets must also be used to enhance employee work productivity, not to encourage excessive non-work related online usage (Anderberg, 2008).

An employee population with limited knowledge or a fear of Web technology must be educated to use new technology and understand how to navigate it to easily find the tools available. Intranets are not an “If we build it, they will come” phenomenon (Weiss, 2007, p. 23). Employees must be convinced that the effort it takes to master the intranet will eventually lead to a more efficient and satisfactory job performance. If not, these users will eventually turn to alternative ways of executing their tasks, and the intranet will be underutilized and irrelevant (Cozijn et al., 2007; Royal & SunAlliance, 2000). Intranet developers should avoid using technical language and instead educate employees on individual components that will quickly enhance job performance (Weiss). If employees understand the intranet, it has a better opportunity to succeed (Royal & SunAlliance)

An intranet should be organized in such a way that it becomes intuitive for the end user. It should enhance task performance by allowing users to locate information quickly and efficiently. There are many ways a company can organize and label its intranet structure. Research has shown that organizing intranet content based on the company’s organizational chart is more intuitive for employees because they are more familiar with that structure. Yet, with training, eventually employees can become equally as familiar with a task-based structure as well (Cozijn et al., 2007).

Intranet Ownership

The literature reveals two primary approaches to intranet control. Some organizations practice tight control by only a few developers, while others allow for viral updates by all users to create material that is more user-specific and relevant. There are pros and cons for both approaches.

A centralized, tightly controlled approach to content publishing ensures a cleaner, better organized intranet with higher content quality. Many companies with looser controls complain that their intranets have grown too large, responsibility for who maintains each content section is unclear, and information is out of date. By having few content publishers, information remains more manageable. However, under this model, content is also less specific and more generalized, which may not provide useful to individual employees looking to the intranet to make their jobs easier. Also, because few content creators serve as gatekeepers, the information communicated may convey a strong top-down feeling, reinforcing an “us” versus “them” mentality among staff (Lehmuskallio, 2006). Another potential negative ramification may be that employees don’t receive relevant information quickly enough to maintain their competitive advantage (Holtz, 2008).

Several case studies feature organizations with tight publishing controls. Royal & SunAlliance, an international company with more than 50,000 employees, uses an intranet council of core business representatives to keep its intranet from being clogged with irrelevant material (Royal & SunAlliance, 2000). Halifax Bank of Scotland (HBOS), a company with 45,000 employees, re-launched its intranet site, which had grown unwieldy from years of allowing anybody to publish information. The company identified a team of eight publishers who took 47 internal sites and combined them to one more manageable intranet (France, 2007).

Melcrum's 2006 online survey of 1,149 companies from various industries all over the world found that 87% of companies surveyed had a highly centralized model for internal communications. However, only 53% thought it would be structured that way in the future (Dewhurst, 2006/2007). More companies are planning to progress toward a less structured, less centralized model that allows for more contributors.

A decentralized approach to content publishing risks a lack of content control and a drastic increase in the amount of information published, which can lead to information overload (Lehmuskallio, 2006). However, benefits include a dispersed maintenance load, faster content updates, and contributions by employees closest to the issues, providing for more specific content and more job-related information (Holtz, 2008; Lehmuskallio). If employees can navigate through the noise of more information, then the result can be a tool that is more meaningful and useful for employees.

Metrics for Success

Companies employ various methods for measuring success and return on investment for their intranet sites. They measure a combination of hard and soft benefits:

- Increased usage/readership (Global Intranet Strategies, 2006; Lehmuskallio, 2006; Prime & Williams, 2007; Ward, 2007)
- Amount of discussion (Royal & SunAlliance, 2000)
- Amount of content and the amount of employees with access to the intranet (Global Intranet Strategies, 2006; Lehmuskallio, 2006)
- Dollar savings and streamlining due to maintenance tips and best practices shared (Global Intranet Strategies, 2006; Ward, 2007)
- Improved efficiency and effectiveness (Cozijn et al., 2007)
- Improved user satisfaction (Cozijn et al., 2007; Haithi, 2007; Prime & Williams, 2007)

These measurements are taken through various means, including Web statistics (Prime & Williams, 2007; Ward, 2007), user surveys (Haithi, 2007; Prime & Williams), quality audits that ask users if the intranet helps them do their job better (Gleba & Cavanagh, 2005), and informal feedback from users, focus groups, and telephone interviews (Global Intranet Strategies, 2006). The Global Intranet Strategy Survey found that only 29% of the participating organizations conduct formal evaluations on an annual basis, while almost half (48%) do not conduct regular evaluations, and 9% have not done any type of formal evaluation.

In summary, much of the research on intranets has focused on large companies with thousands of employees and multiple locations. Although smaller organizations don't typically have as many resources to fund their intranets compared to larger companies, they nonetheless must design intranets that are capable of providing timely and relevant information and enabling employee dialogue. This study seeks to examine how one medium-sized organization designed an intranet from the ground up to reflect the needs and wants of its employees. This study describes the initial research conducted to identify the organization's needs, the grassroots planning and implementation of the new site, the testing, and finally, how employees rated the employee-friendly intranet and their perceptions of how much feedback they now have into the decisions of that organization and their level of satisfaction.

Method

Overview of the Subject Company

North Hills Hospital is a 176-bed hospital located in a suburb of Dallas-Fort Worth. By industry standards, North Hills is a medium-size hospital with approximately 8,200 admissions, 42,000 emergency room visits, and 36,000 outpatient visits each year. It offers a broad spectrum of health care services including emergency services, surgery, cardiac care, women's services, therapy, and a rehabilitation unit. The hospital, in operation since 1961, has enjoyed a stable leadership team, with its CEO at the helm for the past 18 years. Of the hospital's 800 employees, 80% are female. The average North Hills employee is 42 years old and has been working at the hospital for 14 years.

Data Collection

In phase one of the study, a baseline survey was disseminated to all employees in May 2008 via a telephone and Internet survey. The hospital had 718 employees participate, for a 92% response rate. In phase two, informal interviews and open-ended surveys were conducted with a purposive sample to gauge input into the intranet design process. In stage three—five weeks after employees had been using the new intranet—a follow-up survey was posted on the intranet site for one week in December 2008. Three hundred and ninety-three employees responded to the survey, for a response rate of 49%.

Measurement

Five items measured communication effectiveness, employee voice, and employee satisfaction in both the baseline and follow-up survey. Communication effectiveness of the hospital was measured by asking respondents to rate this statement on a scale from one to five: "I am kept well informed of what is happening here." Employee voice was measured by responses to these three statements: (a) "I am satisfied with the amount of voice I have in the decisions that affect my work," (b) "My facility is a place where differences are valued and people feel included," and (c) "All employees are treated with respect regardless of their job." Employee satisfaction was measured by asking employees to rate their level of agreement with this statement: "I would recommend North Hills Hospital as a great place to work." These five statements were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale with "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" serving as anchors.

Informal interviews and open-ended survey questionnaires constituted the qualitative portion of this study. The results section provides the wording of the qualitative questions.

In the follow-up survey, four Likert type-scale statements (see Table 2) and two open-ended questions measured employee satisfaction with the intranet (see Table 2).

Results

Phase One: Baseline Survey

Results from phase one of the study indicated that North Hills Hospital had room for improvement in both its communication effectiveness and in its effort to secure feedback from employees. As indicated in Table one, 31 percent of employees were either neutral or negative when asked to respond to the statement, "I am kept well informed of what is happening here." Thirty-five percent of employees indicated they were not satisfied with the amount of voice that

they have in the decisions that affect their work. More than a quarter of employees did not believe that the hospital “is a place where differences are valued and people feel included.”

The results of this baseline survey did not surprise the hospital communications director. In recent years, the hospital had practiced a scatter-shot communications strategy, utilizing newsletters, bulletin boards, poster campaigns, letters to employees’ homes, and a disproportionate reliance on email. The hospital had no single communication channel that consistently reached every employee, making it difficult to ensure that employees received and understood important messages.

The hospital faced major barriers to implementing a consistent communications strategy. First, employees had inconsistent access to technology. Staff in business operations had access to e-mail, but most clinical staff and support services employees did not. Electronic messages sent to clinical staff had to be sent using an antiquated DOS-based communication system unable to support graphics or text formatting. It was difficult to communicate important messages in a creative and efficient manner; with this system, every message looked the same.

Another communication challenge stemmed from the round-the-clock nature of hospital staffing. Employees could work days, nights, weekends, holidays, or part-time. This made interpersonal communication between hospital leadership and employees difficult because many employees rarely interacted with their department directors, much less senior leadership. Except for the occasional evening leadership rounds, night and weekend employees received most of their communication through either formal hospital communication or through a secondary source, such as a shift supervisor. As messages were disseminated, key components were changed or dropped, meaning that employees did not receive consistent messaging.

At the time, the hospital had an antiquated intranet site consisting of just five pages, each a white screen featuring a grid filled with links to various nursing, managerial, and educational resources (see Figure 1). It was not used to communicate messages to employees, but rather as a resource library for information. It was run by the information technology department and had no involvement from human resources, the communications department, or senior management.

Phase Two: Qualitative Research Used in the Planning Stage

In order to address some of the problems identified in the baseline survey and to formalize a communication structure at the hospital, the communications department set out to design a user-friendly, all-inclusive employee intranet site. The goal was to provide a way to seamlessly communicate a consistent message to all employees, regardless of email access, shift, age, department, or comfort with technology. By creating a tool to improve communication, both two-way and top-down, the communications department expected to see an improvement in the hospital’s employee scores regarding communication, voice, and satisfaction. By employing a grassroots approach, the communications department hoped to increase employee buy-in and adoption of the new site. Additionally, the hospital planned to measure and trend usage rates to see if employees were receiving the messages disseminated.

Before starting work on the hospital’s intranet, the communications director conducted extensive research to find best practices for other corporations’ intranets. After analyzing research on intranet trends, she conducted a content analysis of other hospitals’ intranets and of large businesses from several different industries. The communications director used the information gleaned from the content analysis to identify a list of the items thought to be most beneficial for the hospital. Additionally, creating opportunities for two-way communication and extensive, meaningful measurement was made a priority.

The communications director next selected a reputable communication agency to design an intranet. Then, armed with a plan and a price, the next step was to propose the project to the hospital's Administration team, whose response to this unbudgeted and unprecedented project was overwhelmingly positive because of the site's ability to measure communication effectiveness. Each administrator was consulted individually to discover what features he or she felt would be important to include. Administrators helped promote the project to the leadership team to emphasize the importance of participating in the research and testing phases of the project.

After meeting with Administration, the communications director presented the project to the hospital's leadership team of 30 department directors. The communications director emphasized that she was not changing the intranet for the sake of change, but that she was altering the intranet to enhance communication and employees' access to information. In order to secure buy-in, the communications director then provided a handout with planned features for the intranet site to the directors and asked for their feedback. She then gave each director a survey that enabled administrators to recommend additional features that could make their job easier if added to the intranet site. Finally, the communications director asked the leadership team to go back to their staff to solicit their ideas as well.

Once the leadership team was educated on the project, the hospital's key employee committee, the Employee Advisory Group, was given a similar presentation, and those members identified several previously unconsidered issues. These committee members were then asked to return to their respective departments and solicit ideas for features that would make the new site more valuable. Each employee received the same written survey given to the directors that asked for her or his feedback. As the results of the director and staff surveys were compiled, some individual passionate supporters of the project who could act as staff resources were identified. These employees answered specific, clinical questions about the current site and its resources, provided heavily used documents that could be added to the site, and acted as informal focus groups as questions arose throughout the design phase.

These employee surveys produced many new and previously unplanned features for the new site, including a hospital-wide events calendar, with a news feed on the homepage promoting the most current events, a human resources page, filled with frequently used forms and links, and the addition of a FAQ's section on the existing education page, helping users understand how to log into various education Web sites, something that department receives calls about frequently. Not only were these resources important additions, but they also showed that staff could have ownership of this new site and that the staff's feedback could be heard, valued, and implemented, reinforcing the grassroots approach to development.

Once all of the content had been written and provided to the advertising agency, the site took about four weeks to design. After that, the communications department and the agency spent another two weeks testing and revising the site.

After both parties had agreed that the site was ready to be viewed, the communications director took the site to the Employee Advisory Group to solicit testing feedback. The employees on the committee received a common password to allow them access to the site, and they were asked to fill out a short survey telling what they loved about the site, what they hated about the site, what they would like to change, what they would like to add (referred to each time as an intranet "wish list"), and then they had the opportunity to provide additional comments. Not only were the employees asked to test the site, but they were also asked to identify other opinion leaders within their respective departments and have them test as well. Employees were

encouraged to ask as many people as possible to test and provide feedback, with the understanding that the more feedback given, the better the site would be. The same survey was emailed out to all of the hospital directors, and they were also asked to involve opinion leaders from their departments. A one-week deadline was given. The site link was added to the hospital's current intranet homepage for the staff without access to email. The whole process was purposely casual and uncontrolled so that staff could start to build excitement and "pass along" the link, building momentum, excitement, and a sense of ownership before the site's roll-out, reinforcing the grassroots adoption approach

Thirty-one employees in 14 departments completed a survey or sent an email with their feedback from the testing. The communications director sent a personal response to all employees who submitted feedback, thanking them for their involvement and reinforcing the importance of having staff input to better the site. The employee feedback was then compiled, and changes were made based on those recommendations. Some of the staff's wish list items were tabled until after the initial site was rolled out, but staff provided some valuable ideas, and many could be implemented quickly.

Before the new site was launched, the hospital posted a banner ad at the top of its current intranet site with a countdown clock to promote the launch of the new site. Emails were also sent to all staff with email access, information was posted on the clinical employees' DOS-based computer system, and information was posted in the hospital's weekly newsletter. Directors were asked to promote the launch to their staff individually, prompting a word-of-mouth campaign. A few days before the launch, an email was sent out providing a sneak peek of the design of the new site (see Figure 2), and that communication included a question and answer section, promoting the fact that the site was built based on feedback and ideas provided by their employee peers, and alerting staff that the old site would still be available temporarily until employees grew accustomed to the new site navigation.

Lessons Learned in Phase Two

The Roll-Out: Taking a grassroots approach to collecting ideas and testing the site allowed employees to feel ownership and eased the strain that accompanies any transition. In a fast-paced hospital environment, employees have little time to spend learning a new program, but knowing that the site was created with input from coworkers, with the purpose of improving communication, made them more willing to experiment with the new site. Continuing to make the old intranet available during the initial roll-out was a key factor in reducing push-back from users.

During the testing phase, the communications director personally emailed and called key opinion leaders in different departments to solicit feedback concerning the site. Involving the staff and making changes based on feedback created a sense of empowerment and ownership before the site ever went live. In a post-launch survey, one employee said, "My feedback has been taken and was included in the new site." Even those adverse to change have shown an unexpected level of acceptance of the site's intuitive design. "It (the intranet) is something new. I was used to the previous site, but I'm sure I will get used to this one." Another said, "The format is easy to navigate and is simple enough for the less adept computer user." Another said, "I love that it is so easy to navigate and all the information is readily available.

Culture: Employees have quickly embraced the more personal aspects of the site. The photo slideshows had more than 1,500 hits in the site's first two months, the most of any of the new non-clinical pages. The "fun" survey on the homepage consistently receives more than 200

votes per week, allowing staff to weigh in on their favorite sports teams, New Year's resolutions, and even their initial opinion of the new site. In the post-launch survey, one employee commented, "The links for pictures are fun to look at. I enjoy seeing the camaraderie that is present here at North Hills."

Consistent Messaging: One of the site's key goals was to create a consistent messaging tool for all staff so that everyone had access to the same information communicated in the same way. Since the site has launched, participation has increased. For instance, one director wrote, "Thanks so much for adding the link to the blood drive on the home page. We had 17 donors sign up for the drive today. That is a first! I am lucky to have two or three people call me to sign up. This was a great idea and has really helped bring in donors. Thank you!" Other staff members have commented on the site's consistent messaging. "I love that the information is so readily available," said one employee. Another said, "This is one stop for all pertinent information."

Two-Way Communication: The site was created to improve two-way communication between employees and between employees and management. Features included a process improvement page, a CEO blog where staff could ask candid questions and get answers straight from the CEO, and a page for employees to submit topics to be discussed by the Employee Council. Staff members have responded with enthusiasm. One employee said,

The new site seems like an open door to the powers that be and will be used a lot by those anxious to communicate with [administration]. My job will be easier because people I work with will have a forum to speak freely... they will be more contented employees. Happier nurses make better coworkers and therefore better caregivers. It is a win-win situation.

Improving employee voice is especially important for the night and weekend shifts. One employee said, "I can convey any opinion at any time." In the first two months, the site had 18 suggestions for its process improvement section, aptly named "What's bugging you?" All suggestions were followed up on and responses were posted for all staff to see that their feedback was heard and taken seriously. In the first three months of the intranet, the hospital completed 31 process improvement projects based on feedback from the Bug Zapper process improvement page.

Phase Three: Follow-up Survey

As indicated by the descriptive results in Table one, mean scores for communication effectiveness, voice, and satisfaction increased from the time of the baseline survey to the time after the new intranet was used by employees.

Descriptive results of the questions measuring employees' perception of the intranet were also positive. The Likert-scale statements were measured on a five-point scale. As indicated by Table two, responses to each statement ranged from 3.68 ("The new intranet site will make my job easier") to 3.89 ("The new intranet site has made it easier for me to find information"). Although the results are positive, there is still room for improvement.

In response to the open-ended question, "What do you like most about the Intranet site?", 93 employees provided comments. Nearly half of the comments related to employees' satisfaction with the intranet's ease of use. Typical comments included "easier to find information," "information is easily available," "it has easy links and is user friendly," and "very

user friendly.” Almost one fourth of employees praised the appearance of the intranet, using phrases such as “I like the colors,” “more professional appearance,” “the layout,” and “It is beautiful.” Ten percent of employees talked about how the new intranet effectively streamlines the communication process. More specifically, employees mentioned liking the “central site for information,” “everything that is important to know is on the home page,” the intranet “is more streamlined,” and the intranet is a “one stop for all pertinent information.” Finally, another 10 percent of employees mentioned the two-way communication afforded by the intranet. Employees used phrases such as “it is able to provide feedback,” “interactive opportunities afforded by the Bug Zapper,” “increased communication,” and the intranet is more “inclusive.”

Although sixty-six employees provided feedback to the question, “What do you like least about the intranet?”, nearly twenty percent of the comments were either positive (“I like everything”) or neutral (“I have to get used to it”). Twenty percent of employees said that they found the new intranet difficult to navigate. More specifically, employees said they had to do “lots of scrolling to find what they are looking for,” and that the new intranet requires more “scrolling and clicks” and “more navigation to find what I need.” Fifteen percent of employees mentioned the difficulty in using the drop down boxes of the intranet. Finally, five employees said they did not like the appearance. Specific comments targeted a dislike of the “colors,” the “blandness of the site,” and the “arrangement of items on the screen.”

Measurement of Success

In order to measure the future success of the intranet, a variety of tools will be employed. Usage statistics will be measured to understand how many employees are exposed to specific messages and site components. The hospital also plans to tailor usage statistics to specific departments, allowing management to better understand who is using the site and which areas need further education. Additionally, responses to items posted on the intranet will be measured, including event attendance, online form submissions, and program participation. Semi-annual employee surveys, similar to those in phases one and three of this study, will also be implemented to show the impact of the intranet.

Discussion

This case study illustrates the importance of using grassroots planning for designing and implementing an employee-friendly intranet. The results of the grassroots planning process helped to increase employee buy-in and adoption of the new intranet. The planning process also yielded new ideas that the hospital communications director was able to incorporate into the intranet design. Other companies may want to consider a similar intranet development process.

The fact that perceived communication effectiveness, employee voice, and satisfaction increased after employees had time to use the intranet is noteworthy for many reasons. First, the increased mean scores illustrate the value that can be gained from an intranet that enables two-way communication and that helps employees to share best practices. Corporate communicators should not view an intranet merely as a tool to electronically disseminate information in order to save money on traditional print pieces (Holtz, 2008). Rather, an intranet should be used to build employee collaboration and communication, which may ultimately result in increased satisfaction and perceived voice, as in this study. Long-term, increased employee satisfaction and voice may result in better employee retention and enhanced productivity. Employees in this study offered suggestions via the intranet that resulted in 31 process enhancements in a three month time period.

The quantitative results also indicate the importance of developing and implementing a measurement and evaluation system for an intranet. Less than one third of organizations currently measure their intranets (Global Intranet Strategies, 2006), which is surprising because measurement does not have to be expensive or time consuming. Measurement can be beneficial to corporate communicators for many reasons. First, measurement enables communicators to discern which intranet messages are reaching and resonating with employees. Second, measurement helps communicators know if they are reaching the goals and objectives that they initially identified prior to a program launch. Third, measurement may help to secure management buy-in of future communication initiatives, as was the case with the hospital highlighted in this study.

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