Case Study

Building an Intranet for an Industrial Manufacturer

A large manufacturer needed a new intranet, a website limited to users inside the organization. The company turned to Northwoods, which had built the company's public site, to design and implement its new intranet.

Challenges

An intranet for a large company must cover a broad spectrum of information and functions: an employee directory, HR and benefits information, corporate news, statistics, financial dashboards, inventory levels, procurement requests, technical documents, estimating spreadsheets and more.

This client sought an intranet that would give employees fast, efficient access to information and specified four top needs:

- A home page with a large amount of information that employees could scan and grasp quickly
- Departmental pages aimed at specific groups of employees
- A robust library that can store and process a wide variety of media, including PDFs, videos, spreadsheets and more
- Easy, in-house maintenance and updating.

Actions

For ease of updating and site maintenance, Northwoods built the intranet on its Titan CMS platform. As Northwoods addressed each challenge of the project, it provided the client with a series of wireframes – mockups that approximate the functionality and look of the finished product – to inform the client of progress and to seek feedback.

Results

Northwoods gave the company an intranet that met all its needs. The client asked us not to publish screenshots of the finished products but approved the display of the preliminary wireframes in order to illustrate our approach as we worked through each challenge.

Requirement #1: Content-Rich, Scannable Home Page

Northwoods divided the intranet home page into zones with specific functions that are apparent at a glance.

1. **Quick Links,** determined by popularity with employees, ensure productivity and give users quick access to information they most often need.

2. **Rotating Messages** (Jquery) provide a place to highlight the most current and important company news items and guarantee fast, wide distribution of those items.

3. **People Finder** is among the most important intranet functions for a company with thousands of employees. The Finder provides quick connections for collaboration and exchange of information.

4. The **News Items** section can contain company-wide news or can be customized by department, to give users information most relevant to their jobs.

5. The **Submit News** function gives employees means to quickly distribute news items and notices of events.

6. **CEO Corner,** very important to the leadership of the company, opens a channel of communica-tion from the CEO directly to every employee and promotes a consistent corporate message.

Requirement #2: Flexible, Customizable, Expandable Department Pages

Departments have considerable latitude on the elements that appear on their home pages. These are just some of the options:

1. **The Intranet-Wide Search Box** allows employees to search successfully without knowing which department houses the needed information.

2. The **A to Z Index** is a powerful search tool.

3. The **Department Information** section, in addition to providing general information about the department, can serve as a table of contents for the departmental page.

4. **Links to Benefits** provides benefits information employees can scan easily and links to the benefits pages they need.
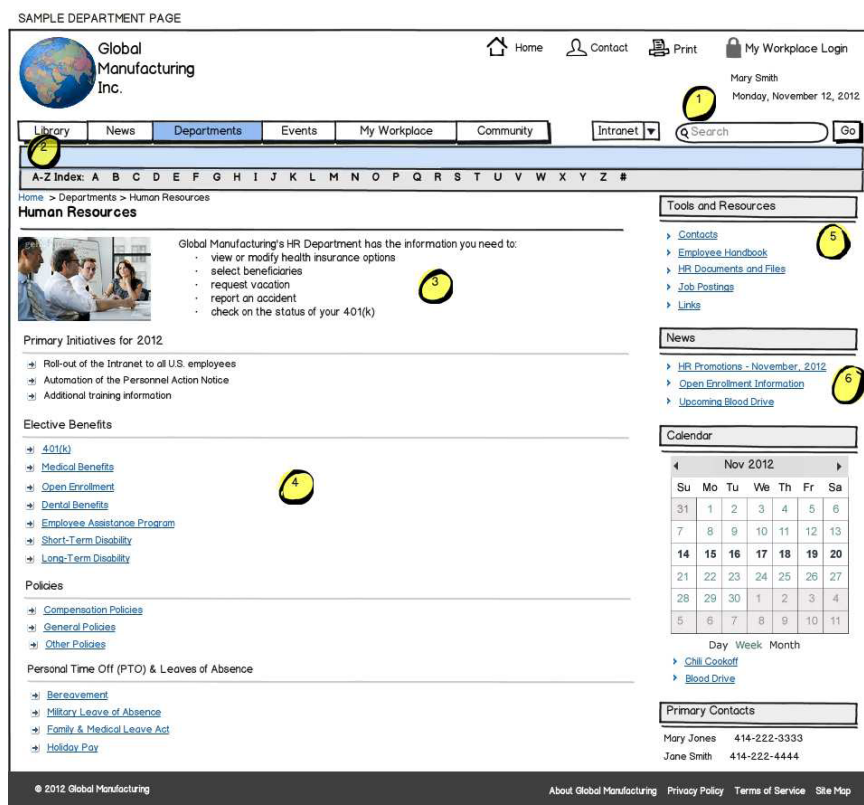
5. **Common Links**, customized by department, put pages most useful to a given department immediately at hand.

6. **News Items** specific to departments give users recent information most relevant to them.

Northwoods has given the client the ability to build and grow its intranet as new departments arise or as departments merge or split. New and re-formed departments can remodel their pages in ways that work for them.

Requirement #3: Media Library

The media library, among the most vital pieces of an intranet, provides access to company documents and other media. Northwoods built robust filter and search functions, essential when documents can number in the thousands, into this client's library. Features include:

1. In the **Listing of Relevant Documents**, each entry offers not only the title but also a brief description and the document type. The user understands what he or she will get before opening the document. That understanding is a key to usability and productivity.

2. **Refined Search** within the library, distinct from the intranet-wide search bar at the top of all pages, allows the user to run keyword searches of the library exclusively.

3. Particular keywords associated with each document in the library enhance speed and accuracy of employees' full-site and library-only searches.

4. The **Filter by Department** feature further narrows results and speeds library searches.

5. **Filter by Document Type** allows employees to limit searches to certain document categories – forms or production guides, for example – as defined by the company.

Requirement #4: Content Management System (CMS) for easy, in-house site updates

The client wanted its own employees to easily maintain and update its intranet. Northwoods' Titan Content Management System gave them that capability. Titan software powers websites, intranets, extranets and portals for over 400 clients worldwide.

Multiple website support
Access based on login

Instantly search for pages, docs, HTML, tags, properties, dates

Save, Publish, Add, Delete, Move, Copy, Preview, Refresh, Logout, and more

Add content blocks to any page

Tool Bar

Select pages Batch operations

Editor for all content types

Title, date, SEO, Template, Nav

Workflow

Security

Tagging

Comment and Rating

Version History

Notes

Analytics

File and Data management

Titan's recycle bin is very forgiving

WYSIWYG editor with powerful image and link management

Titan CMS makes content management easy. The client company can maintain its intranet without assistance from Northwoods or from in-house programmers. Non-technical personnel can quickly learn to create, edit and update content, including images and video.

Learn More

A successful intranet requires careful planning, starting with a clear idea of what your employees want and need when they log on. Northwoods' work begins with the discovery process. We guide clients through the design and build phases by creating wireframes that illustrate strategies and options for organizing and sharing content. Northwoods works closely with clients to design for success from the start.

We've helped companies meet a wide variety of intranet needs, and we can help yours bridge your internal communication gaps.

Learn more about **Intranets for Manufacturers**

Learn more about **Titan CMS for Manufacturers**

NORTHWOODS

855-877-3115

ManufacturingWebsiteSolutions.com