

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 communication from the CEO directly to every employee and promotes a consistent corporate message.

The screenshot displays the 'INTRANET HOME PAGE' for Global Manufacturing Inc. The page is organized into several functional zones:

- Top Navigation:** Includes links for Home, Contact, Print, and My Workplace Login. A user profile for Mary Smith is shown with the date Monday, November 12, 2012.
- Secondary Navigation:** Tabs for Library, News, Departments, Events, My Workplace, and Community. A search bar is also present.
- Zone 1 (Quick Links):** A vertical list of links including My Workplace, Employment Opportunities, John Hancock 401(K), Conference Room Maps, Group Travel, Personnel Information, Wellness Day Health Topics, Benefit Forms, and Records Retention.
- Zone 2 (Spotlight):** A large featured area with a photo of employees and a reminder: 'Your 401(K) Catchup form needs to be submitted by November 19, 2012'.
- Zone 3 (People Finder):** A section titled 'PEOPLE FINDER' with a search bar and a 'Search' button.
- Zone 4 (News):** A section titled 'NEWS' with a 'View All' link and a 'Submit News' button. It features three news items: 'New Cafeteria Menu for Milwaukee Employees', 'Expanded Product Family Provides Increased Flexibility', and 'GMI Analytics Software Drives First Advanced Solution'.
- Zone 5 (CEO Corner):** A section titled 'CEO CORNER' featuring a bar chart and a video player.
- Zone 6 (Weather):** A section titled 'WEATHER' showing the current temperature in Milwaukee as 35°F and a 'See 10-Day Forecast' link.
- Other Sections:** 'ABOUT GLOBAL' (Organization, Company Overview, Employment Opportunities, Locations, Major Product Lines), 'GMI TIMES' (a table of times for various locations), 'EVENTS' (a calendar for February 2011 and a list of upcoming events like 'GMI World Show Orlando'), 'WELLNESS NEWS' (a link to a 5K run), 'PRODUCTIVITY TIP' (a link to a PC performance article), 'DISCUSSIONS THIS WEEK' (a link to a discussion about a calculator), and 'GMI STOCK STATUS' (a link to a stock status page).

Numbered callouts (1-6) are placed over the page to highlight specific features: 1 points to the Quick Links section, 2 points to the Spotlight section, 3 points to the People Finder section, 4 points to the News section, 5 points to the CEO Corner section, and 6 points to the Weather section.

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.

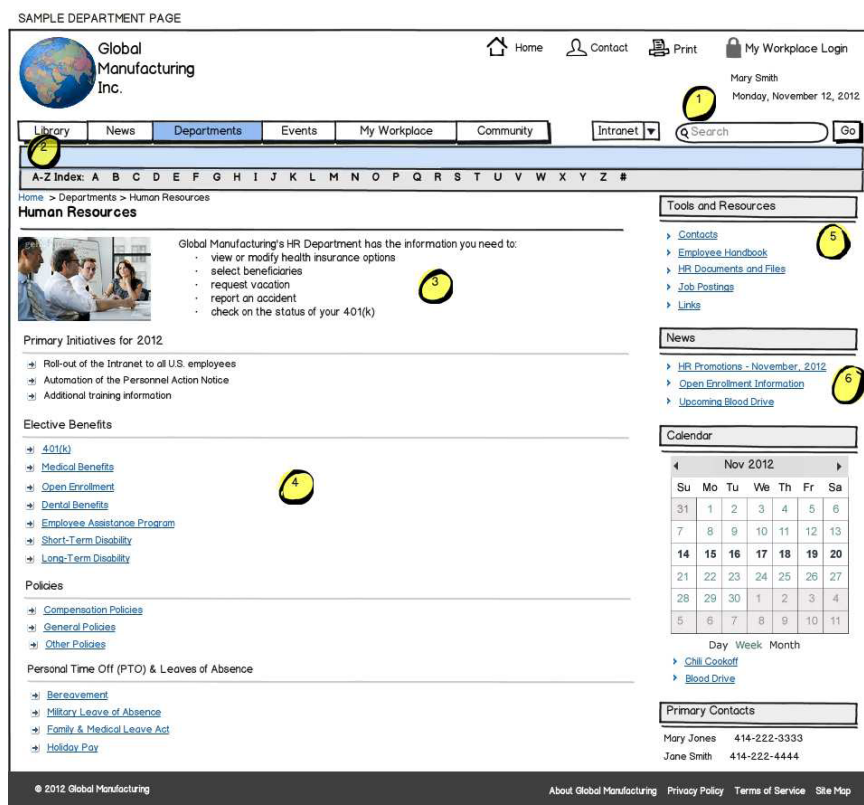
5. **Common Links**, customized by department, put pages most useful to a given department immediately at hand.

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.

LIBRARY LANDING PAGE

Global Manufacturing Inc.

Home Contact Print My Workplace Login

Mary Smith
Monday, November 12, 2012

Library News Departments Events My Workplace Community Intranet Search Go

A-Z Index: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z #

Home > Library

Library

2012 Committee Goal Tactics
1/13/2012
Goal #1: Solidify each employee's understanding of each value and what it looks like in action. Goal #2: Host an end of year/annual event to include an awards ceremony for all of the values. Goal #3: We as a committee will provide leadership with the tools they need to clearly demonstrate the value
By: JDoe Size: 386KB Type: PDF

2012 W-4 Form
1/13/2012
Complete this form so that your employer can withhold the correct federal income tax from your pay.
By: ADoe Size: 103KB Type: PDF

Account Reconciliation Tracking Template
1/12/2012
Account Reconciliation Tracking Template
By: BDoe Size: 110KB Type: Excel

Corporate Expense Report - biweekly
2/18/2012
Corporate Expense Report
By: CDoe Size: 37KB Type: Excel

Federal Equal Employment Opportunity
1/12/2012
This poster is required by law to be displayed for employees to view. This law protects applicants and employees from discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), or national origin.
By: nwspn Size: 89 KB Type: PDF

Refine Your Results

Keyword

v Department dear

☐ Accounting (1)
☐ Administration (14)
☐ Customer Service (7)
☐ Finance (24)
☐ Human Resources (35)
☐ Production (45)

v File Categories dear

☐ Brochures (1)
☐ Forms (24)
☐ Images (42)
☐ ISO 9001 (75)
☐ Marketing Materials (22)
☐ Production Guides (24)
☐ Style Guides (10)
☐ White Papers (24)

Page 1 of 8 Next >>

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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**

Site Map

- Start - Dashboard
- Learn at Northwoods Home
- Northwoods Intranet
 - Clients
 - Creative Department
 - Development Department
 - Sales Department
- Titan CMS Documentation
- TitanCMS
- TitanCMS - revisions
- Northwoods Public Site
- Northwoods Creative
- TitanCMS Survey Globe
- Northwoods Intranet
- Northwoodsoft
- Titan Documentation File File
- TitanCMS
- Northwoods Creative
- After Market Components
- Certifications
- Event
- NWSEvents
- Recycle Bin

Editing: Learn at Northwoods Home

ADD

Freeform

Learn @ Northwoods

Join us on Tuesdays for an hour-long Learn @ Lunch seminar, or at one of our frequent in-depth morning workshops held several times each month. These workshops and seminars cover website design and website development topics useful and relevant for business through the Milwaukee area and business through Wisconsin and Illinois.

Intranet Best Practices - Nov 12

This 90 minute workshop is a fast paced review of Intranet best practices and covers guidelines for **design, governance, usability, search, content, content management, and training.**

Learn how to improve productivity, cut costs, and implement the features employees and partners want.

We will cover:

- Key characteristics of an effective Intranet
- 60 Intranet best practices
- Intranet ROI calculation
- Stages of Intranet evolution
- Creating and managing Intranet content

Take a break from your Thursday routine and join us for this informative and practical morning workshop.

Date: Thursday, November 12, 2009 ***New Date**

Schedule: 8:00 to 8:30 - Check-in and coffee selection
8:30 to 10:00 - Session Presentation, Q&A

Presenter: [Patrick Bieser](#)

Register Online Today!

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**



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