Hacking SharePoint To Make Internal Content Go Viral

In 2011, Carpool showed one of Microsoft's largest sales and marketing groups how they could **improve** not only the look and feel of their internal content, but also that by doing so they could **evolve** the way their teams communicated. Over the course of just a few years (and running) the expanding popularity of Microsoft's new team sites have filtered throughout the organization, with approximately **200 Carpool sites** driving communications between and within key Microsoft teams.

The Problem

In late 2011, sales and marketing began the hunt for a redesign of their internal content. Due to the nature of the organization, their content had an extremely high visibility rate among nearly 10,000 employees in teams throughout North America. However, the internal site as it existed had grown outdated, clumsy in some places, and unattractive by modern design standards. Correspondingly, employee usage and engagement rates were not what they could or should have been.

Microsoft wanted a redesign. They wanted a site that better reflected the style and business goals of the organization.

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200
Sites Built

8K+
Employees

500K
Article Views

In short, they wanted something that looked cool and something employees would want to use.

Without an attractive team site that allowed employees to engage with content from executive leadership and create their own content among smaller teams, Microsoft was unable to meet their internal communications goals. And when information cannot flow freely through such a large, complex organization, it can create bottlenecks and result in siloed communications, duplication of efforts, and an overall inefficiency in attaining strategic business goals.

But a new, redesigned team site would offer an attractive communications portal to thousands of employees and **break down** the **silos and walls** that isolate teams from one another and stymie innovation.

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The Plan

Microsoft was referred to Carpool in late 2011. The partnership began with an overhaul of the team site design and structure. Carpool began by updating the overall look of the site and creating a more user-friendly interface that would allow employees to find critical information quickly.

Carpool's flexible internal team site infrastructure allows team sites to sit on top of existing SharePoint CMS, but it also adds new functionalities like hashtags to sort and catalog content, and built-in content syndication that filters and sends content across multiple teams simultaneously based on individual preferences and needs.

In addition to developing a final design with Microsoft based on their unique communication needs, Carpool provided the strategy and consultation necessary to drive traffic and employee engagement with content on the team site. This often resulted in strategic new designs and features to promote critical content that would have the most impact to improve the flow of information throughout the company.

What really made the project successful, both in the short-term and over the subsequent years, was the way other teams within the organization responded.

The Results

The solution implemented by Carpool allowed employees to gain new visibility and insights into the company and offerings, helping them **highlight** their **personal value** to the company to **make work better.**

New team sites within the organization grew exponentially, with more than **50 percent of the North American teams implementing their own Carpool sites** that mirrored the functionality of the lead sales and marketing organization. Multiple sites are also capable of interacting with the same content. Today, Carpool has built approximately **200 sites** for teams throughout Microsoft's global network. Those sites have allowed teams to publish more than **34,000 pieces of content**, which have been **viewed** more than **half a million times.**

50% Faster

95% Cheaper
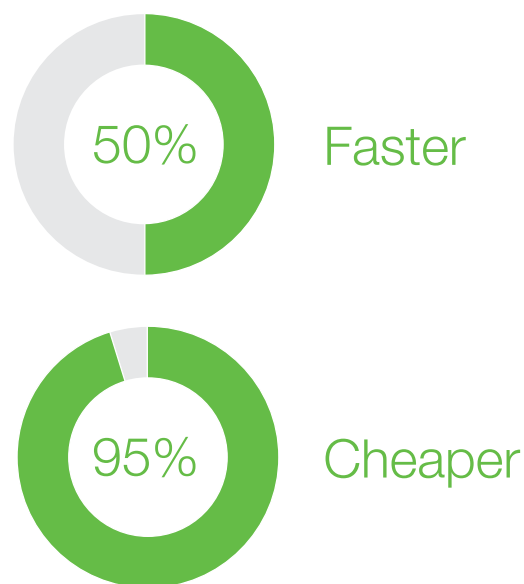
Overall traffic increased widely, generating new interest among leadership across the organization, who began implementing new team sites of their own.

Team sites quickly become the official resource for trusted company content. More so, the content evolved to take advantage of the new infrastructure and shifted in tone, structure, and cadence to become more useful for a myriad of employees and teams to perform their jobs.

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Overall, the new method of interacting with internal content altered the way that Microsoft and the employees thought about publishing. After the shift, they had a platform to distribute information strategically, rather than their previous communications method of spamming through email.

Employees can now **publish content** themselves using a built-in content editor, **sort their content** appropriately through a hashtagging taxonomy, and **distribute it across hundreds of sites** simultaneously via syndicated content.

And over the course of Microsoft's relationship with Carpool, it was possible to do so faster and cheaper.

In just a few years, Carpool was able to reduce team site build costs by **95 percent**, making a strong value proposition even more appealing than competitors, who often charge tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of dollars. Additionally, team sites can now be built and implemented in about **half the time**.

Evolve the way you **work**.

About Carpool

Carpool helps you do work better. We do this through environment design, community management, technology, and a whole lot of internal communications know-how. Founded in early 2010, Carpool is an internal communications consulting agency that provides flexible development solutions and innovative strategy to small, medium, and large organizations.

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