

A group of people are seated around a long conference table in a meeting room. In the background, a large screen displays the text 'DO WORK BETTER' in a stylized font. The room is brightly lit, and various items like water bottles and papers are on the table.

Overhauling Internal Communications & Creating New Efficiencies

By restructuring how information flowed across their global organization, this Microsoft business group was able to more efficiently **compile** and **distribute** business-critical **data** using Carpool's tools and strategies.

The Problem

It used to be the case that in order to disseminate critical business information throughout one of Microsoft's global business groups, one full-time employee had to collect, assemble, regurgitate, and repackage data for distribution across more than 30 global territories to approximately 800 employees. The result was a gargantuan PowerPoint slide deck that totaled, on average, more than 100 slides.

"It was very time consuming, and very manual," said the group's chief of staff from that time.



Critical data delivered in real time across 33 countries

In all, the hefty PowerPoint deck took about two business weeks, on average, to compile.

The FTE was responsible for tracking down information from employees, editing the information they provided, and hyperlinking the information within a shareable PowerPoint to give the impression that users could navigate through something that resembled a website.

There was such an intensive process around creating and formatting the final slide deck, or “monthly business scorecard,” because it was critically important to the group's operations and strategy. It provided executives, teams, and group leaders with emerging business needs and status reports on existing initiatives. However; mission-critical information was hidden behind a clunky interface that required far too much time to compile.



Communications
Efficiency

So the business group began a complete overhaul of its scorecard strategy and, indeed, how they created and shared vital internal information. In the end, they were able to promote knowledge sharing among their global teams, develop strategic and informative business analytics, and increase the efficiency of their dashboard communications by approximately 260 percent.

The Plan

The business group's first step in their ongoing working relationship with Carpool—which has spanned several years through a retainer partnership—was to revitalize the format and methodology behind their internal communications.

- 1: Build.** Carpool's first step was to build a customized team site that sat atop their SharePoint framework. Using live tiles that filter content by topic with an intuitive hash tagging system, Carpool helped revamp the content-distribution strategy, taking advantage of modern tools that promoted internal communications in a more effective way for the group..
- 2. Implement.** With a new infrastructure in place, the group began the transition from the old PowerPoint deck into the new team site. This made it easier to compile data, provided a more intuitive interface for users, made the information more relevant for global executives, and made it easier to distribute in real time—a factor that prior to rollout, was made difficult as 51% of the groups teams were based on the Seattle area while the remaining 49% were spread across 33 different countries.

- 3. Engage.** In the next phase of development, the group moved the PowerPoint scorecard system to the team site via a "Dashboard." The new Dashboard negated the need to devote an FTE who would pull together scorecard data and, instead, allowed individuals and teams to populate valuable data in a shared space. This simple switch had a dramatic reduction in the amount of time devoted to culling information (approximately a 260 percent increase in time efficiency).

"From a quality perspective, it got so many kudos," said one person who worked on the project, adding that the process previously required as many as eight days to complete, but with Carpool's added efficiencies, that process shrank to between one and three days of work.

As an additional benefit, the new content-delivery method encouraged employees to take more pride in how they presented their data. Employees became more concise with their words, which translated into more efficiency for executives who could simply pull up the Dashboard on a tablet and quickly identify emerging needs and monitor goal-tracking.

In the end, the geographically diverse workforce was able to learn from one another as the organization became more transparent and accessible through their Dashboard.

"They kind of pushed each other," the group's chief of staff said of the peer-to-peer nature of the new shared interface.

The Results

Some of the immediate benefits included:

- Access to real-time news feeds, performance scores, and corrective action plans on top suppliers
- Up-to-date supplier profiles from Hoovers
- 360-degree view of supplier engagements that included performance, executive briefs, and targeted news feeds

The real-time flexibility of the site also helped users present more credible information to the rest of the organization. Individual users could customize the look and feel of their site, as well as change and create content on the fly.

The group's "Business Intelligence" site was capable of automatically updating with the most current information. This further allowed the business group to easily and quickly calculate YTD amounts, trending, and KPI thresholds.

"The group's various teams could maintain **individual customized team micro sites** that were built around their **individual needs** with content that was automatically curated based on preset parameters."

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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