

Case Study BGL Group



Microsoft SharePoint Intranet brings increased efficiency and enhanced communication to the BGL Group.

Within the BGL Group are a number of leading brands, such as the hugely popular Comparethemarket/ Comparethemarket.com and Bennetts, the UK's number one motorbike insurer. BGL Group was founded in 1992 as an insurance underwriter before becoming a broker in 1997. It is a privately-owned company and is one of the largest personal lines insurance brokers in the UK.

BGL arranges and administers insurance for more than two million customers and employs more than 2,000 staff globally. The business head office is based in Peterborough, UK and it has contact centres in Peterborough, Coventry and Sunderland, as well as in Cape Town, South Africa.

The BGL Group pays particular attention to its staff retention and work environments. Listed in the 2009 Sunday Times Top Track 250 as one of the UK's largest mid-market companies it attributes its success to its people and offers rewards, training and career development to encourage ambitious and driven staff to manage their own

careers and exceed the required expectations. The aim is to make BGL an employer of choice and a company people enjoy working for. To do this BGL works hard to create a positive culture to bring its employees together through fun activities and ongoing promotions.

Last year the BGL Group took a closer look at the organisation and compared this to where it wanted it to be in a few years time. It identified the need to improve its intranet and to offer its employees a single digital work space for staff to communicate and learn with each other across the different business divisions and geographies, as well as providing a platform for the senior management team to instantly communicate throughout the organisation.

BGL Group's existing intranet was developed nearly five years ago and did not reflect the current corporate ethos. A new intranet was needed together with a supplier that could offer a fast and effective solution as well as an insight into the business drivers behind the requirements for the intranet.



An Intranet system that was tailor-made for the BGL Group and our diverse business units

The new intranet needed to allow relevant information to be shared clearly between the large number of staff, the companies that sit within the BGL Group and the separate support functions and departments such as IT, Finance and HR. The intranet had to offer each separate business unit its own area within the site. Each department and division within BGL Group also needed to be able to feed information into a central communication area where announcements could be made and documents shared with all employees whilst observing access permissions.

The key objective in developing the intranet was to make sure the right information was available to the right people at the right time. Every employee has a personalised homepage containing relevant content and a profile page which is set up to allow their line managers to approve the material that is published.

BGL previously used a Content Management System for its intranet, however the product was purely focused on creating content on pages. These pages were linked together but had zero knowledge of each other or the people who were currently viewing them.

The new intranet would be built in Microsoft SharePoint as it integrated effortlessly into BGL's existing Microsoft investment of Active Directory, Exchange and Microsoft Windows on the desktop to allow for a level of personalisation that could not be matched by any other product.

The business requirements stated that the new intranet should not only recognise the user by name but also the role they play in the organisation and the division they belong to. The content management system therefore had to role up information that is relevant to the logged in user in this context.

SharePoint gave the ability to delegate page and site creation to dedicated site and content owners within the business whilst maintaining the style guidelines managed by the Group Communications team within BGL Group. SharePoint was also being used in other areas of the organisation for its dash boarding capabilities, reporting and analysing statistics for its various businesses and brands including Bennetts and comparethemarket.com.

Having considered five different suppliers BGL Group chose Corporate Project Solutions (CPS) to deliver the new SharePoint based user platform. It was clear that CPS had the correct business focus, cultural set and SharePoint expertise to meet BGL Group's requirements for the new intranet. BGL Group had not developed a detailed business requirements document before contacting CPS meaning the first step was to hold a workshop with senior management to establish clear objectives and targets for the new SharePoint Intranet.

Ivan Lloyd, Director at Corporate Project Solutions commented: "Our aim was to provide the maximum benefit from the minimum change; we developed a simple and clear SharePoint Intranet that has numerous benefits for BGL. As businesses constantly need to adapt to changing market conditions they are beginning to look very carefully at where they are spending money and if it is in line with business objectives. BGL clearly knew where it needed to focus its efforts and the planning and time it invested in researching this project has undoubtedly paid off."

As a working practice BGL matched CPS' consultants with their own staff to ensure that knowledge transfer was taken up to make the BGL Group self sufficient in the future. This ensured good development practice and that the 'go live' environments were available with full backup and disaster recovery scenarios in place.

The implementation involved the creation of:

- Four Development Environments (2 for BGL head count, 2 for CPS head count) all virtualised.
- One Staging Environment (virtual) to bring together all the separate developments on one box.
- One Testing environment (virtual – mimicking the live environment in security and number of servers)
- One Live / Production environment (Physical Hardware)
- One Disaster Recovery environment (mixed physical and virtual environment)
- A mix of 32 and 64 bit environments with Live and Disaster Recovery environments entirely 64 bit.



CPS provided training onsite for all of the BGL Group staff including a site owner and content editor for each department. Each department and division within BGL Group can now feed information into a central communication area where BGL Group can share documents and announcements with all employees. Online project management functionality for the IT department was also included to monitor and record risks, issues and actions of staff as well as an automated expense process to enable staff to work more efficiently and reduce the amount of time spent filling in expense forms. CPS also launched a toolkit box for line managers so that they could log into the community and get instant access to guides for items such as appraisals and 121s for their direct reports.

The intranet went live having passed all performance, back up and security tests. Overall the Intranet took just under four months to implement. The SharePoint site was developed to BGL Groups specific requirements. The tailored style and accessibility of the system means that all relevant information is available

to staff in less than three clicks of the mouse.

Peter Winslow, BGL Group Chief Executive, said: "We have been particularly impressed with CPS' expert SharePoint knowledge, flexibility and capacity to come up with an Intranet system that was tailor-made for the BGL Group and our diverse business units. BGL Group is a leading player in the insurance industry and is spread across a number of sites in the UK and Cape Town, incorporating employees ranging from call centre personnel in the Fusion Contact Centre division to business development specialists working on joint ventures for our affinity partnerships at head office."

This project has provided BGL Group with enough knowledge and training to take SharePoint and the intranet forward on its own. The project was a complete success and the team are now fully self sufficient. BGL Group continues to work with CPS to deliver additional SharePoint functionality and training to employees.



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