Software for the Agile Business.

Content management solution delivers intranet ownership to Sydney Airport staff

Company Profile

As the major international gateway into Australia, Sydney Airport is Australia's busiest passenger airport, handling 49 percent of international traffic coming in and out of Australia and 30 percent of all domestic traffic. Sydney Airport is also Australia's busiest cargo airport, responsible for handling over 500,000 tonnes of airfreight annually. Following a significant upgrade of infrastructure and enhancement of already high service standards, Sydney Airport is now recognised as one of the best airports in the world – receiving the "Best Airport Worldwide" award for 2001 (15-25 million passenger category). Administered by Sydney Airport Corporation Limited (SACL), the enterprise has received industry accolades and international recognition for developing a world-class airport in the context of significant logistical, transportation and passenger service challenges. This universal recognition follows a period of considerable investment and commitment of resources and reflects SACL's clear focus on passenger service requirements, and an ability to plan, implement and maintain initiatives to meet and exceed these needs.

Business Scenario

The original Web site architecture at SACL was built on a proprietary technology, which limited its flexibility. Scalability was also a problem as any expansion to the system required extensive HTML coding. The structure of information on the site was under review in order to improve its relevance, and users suggested the incorporation of a search engine to make it easier to locate information. Content publication occurred on an as-required basis, without an integrated workflow management process. As a result, published material could not always be managed efficiently by business users. SACL decided to develop a corporate intranet solution that would streamline and upgrade internal communications, with a long-term view to the solution growing into a complete information portal for SACL staff.

Business Solution

After studying a range of Web content management products in the marketplace, SACL decided on Microsoft Content Management Server 2001 as the best fit for their budget and feature requirements. The goal was to create a new corporate intranet that would enable business

"Internal communications is about people. Our new intranet gives our people direct control of sharing their knowledge, and allows them more timely involvement in what's happening in the rest of the organisation. Streamlining information on the site has also cut down considerably on frustrating "all staff" e-mails, paper memos and hard copies of manuals, for example. It's bright, has fun stuff incorporated, and will really help us to build on our 'team effort" culture."

Janet Houen,
Internal Communications
Manager,
Sydney Airport Corporation.

Organisation
Sydney Airport Corporation Limited

Web Site
www.sydneyairport.com

Industry
Airport Management

users to publish and manage content on the site independently of IT staff. Once a product had been selected, the project team conducted workshops involving the business managers as part of the solution planning. As Bala Govindaswamy, Project Manager at SACL, explains: "We ran workshops to explain to people what a content management solution could do, and collected feedback from interested parties on what direction they thought it should take. Essentially, staff wanted to publish content, add or change graphics, read the corporate news, explore career opportunities, and have access to corporate knowledge using a series of links from a single page."

Links to frequently used pages

The home page displays corporate welcome information and provides links to frequently used pages including classified advertisements, an internal communication directory, and an out-of-office page that lists staff currently on leave. Alternative contacts are listed for each area of responsibility, streamlining the process of communicating across the organisation. A common request from the user representatives in the project team was the need for a search engine to locate content by keywords. This capability was provided by integrating Microsoft® SharePoint™ Portal Server with the Web site solution.

Workflow features streamline content approval

The inbuilt workflow capabilities of CMS were utilised to implement an approval process that ensures content is authorised in a streamlined and efficient manner. These capabilities were of particular value to the Public Affairs and Legal staff, whose work required strict control of content by approved editors. The corporate affairs team wanted to publish content for viewing by senior management and so a secure channel was created for this purpose. Govindaswamy describes the process: "We didn't want to give all the authors editorial privileges, so we created a workflow process for each author to submit content to a nominated editor for approval."

Each page includes a built-in feedback capability with the author's contact details and publication date shown at the bottom of the page. Readers can email authors with comments or suggestions so that authors can find out how their content is perceived in the workplace. "Standards and feedback loops are built into the solution which means that the whole content management process is delegated out to the business units. This has relieved the IT staff of responsibility for content management and we are using that time for the development of new resources that will add value to the business."

Templates enforce consistent standards

The challenge of generating content of a consistent standard across the organisation was met by designing a set of templates to meet the full spectrum of user requirements. "We ended up defining about 27 templates as a result of the feedback provided by key team members.

There are single-column and multi-column templates, with standard corporate graphics included where appropriate. We have templates for the operational security branch, for classified advertisements, flight information and so on, and each template has exactly the same overall appearance," Govindaswamy says. Users only have access to the templates that are allocated to them and this prevents unauthorised changes to content published on the site.

Comprehensive training plan ensures user uptake

A key success factor in the implementation was the comprehensive training plan applied across the organisation. Approximately 90 users were trained to publish content in an initial group, with training for the remaining users in subsequent sessions. To facilitate the indirect transfer of skills, a training document is available on the intranet that explains to users how content is published using the available templates. "We have found that authors don't have to call for support as they are referring to the online reference materials for answers to common questions. The direct result is that most of the initial content on the site has been generated by users rather than the IT department," Govindaswamy says.

Navigation tools ensure easy access to information

The site includes four distinct modes of navigation to ensure that information is both easily accessible and structured into related units. Users can navigate using links down the left-hand side of the screen; a breadcrumb path provides a trail showing recent movements; a site map defines whole-of-site navigation pathways; and the search engine can be used for identifying content by topic. Each of the navigation streams is automatically updated by CMS, which means that the technical staff is relieved of the overhead of rebuilding the Web site structure when pages are updated.

Benefits

The CMS solution was a key part of the strategy to add value to the business prior to its transfer into the private sector. The solution has achieved this in a variety of ways, as Janet Houen, Internal Communications Manager, describes: "The whole communication strategy of the organisation has improved in the last 18 months because content publication has become sufficiently streamlined to be completed outside the IT department. Staff who have published content are remarking that reader awareness of the information has improved, and our reliance on traditional methods of communication such as faxing or sending copies of manuals or memos is greatly reduced. A good example of this is the online availability of the newsletter, which means that we no longer have to print 400 paper copies of the document. Staff are no longer looking for policies or procedures by phone because they can now easily find most corporate information on the intranet. This means that knowledge is transferred more easily through the business and the process is encouraging a

Benefits
The CMS solution has added value to the business prior to its transfer into the private sector by improving the communication strategy of the organisation. Content publication has become sufficiently streamlined to be completed outside the IT department and reader awareness of published information has improved. The reliance on traditional methods of communication such as faxing or sending out copies of manuals is greatly reduced.

culture of self-reliance."

Technology

CMS delivers publication and workflow management features from a server-based component, and content editing capabilities are available in either a desktop or thin client mode. SACL have implemented the thin client option and as a result there is no software maintenance required at the desktop level. Database services are provided by SQL Server 2000 so that content can be stored and retrieved automatically by CMS whenever the site is regenerated. The intranet operates on a Microsoft® Windows® 2000 Server platform, which delivers a single sign-on facility to all areas of the system via Microsoft Active Directory® Services. Authorisation for content viewing is also based on Active Directory permissions, and editing capabilities are similarly assigned. SharePoint Portal Server is integrated into the solution, providing powerful search engine capabilities.

Maximising Success

With the tight budgetary constraints and limited resources available for the design, development and implementation of the intranet solution, CMS has enabled IT staff to leverage their time by enabling content provision responsibilities to be handled by the users. The solution has been widely accepted by staff, and senior management are delighted with the results. "When we took it to the CEO and the executives, they were amazed to see that a Web site of this scale could be built internally. Once they had seen what we were able to do, they were committed to ensuring that the development process continued and this was a key factor in the success of the project," Govindaswamy says.

The Future

The immediate focus for the project team is to look at areas of the business where the uptake of content ownership has been slow in order to bring user involvement levels up to expectations. Houen explains her perspective on development at this point: "We are delighted with the appearance and structure of the solution as it stands, but the real value is that we can change and grow because we have the flexibility to incorporate new requirements. From here we will be looking at business units that haven't yet embraced the publishing process so we can show them ways to make their job much easier."

Microsoft Technology

- Content Management Server 2001
- SQL Server 2000
- SharePoint Portal Server
- Windows 2000 Server
- Active Directory

Microsoft® CERTIFIED Partner

For more information

For more information about Microsoft products or services in Australia, contact Microsoft on 13 20 58. To access information via the Web, go to www.microsoft.com/australia/business