

Social Collaboration & Employee Intranet Integration

Asponte Helps Staples Develop [Gamified] Employee Intranet & Knowledge Center, "The Hub".



About the Client

Today, Staples is known as a one-stop retailer, online and in stores, for the essentials that keep business up and running. In 1986, their first store opened in Brighton, MA and has grown into a household name boasting over 2,000 stores in 26 countries employing over 1 million people.



Business Challenges

Staples watched their ever-expanding database of employee HR data and standard operating procedures grow as quickly as stores opened and employees were hired. This growth demanded an innovative, business-to-employee intranet portal that could also provide a collaborative environment to drive engagement and adoption across business units and geographic locations.

First, Staples would need a system that could manage the database, keep up with its exponential growth, and an accurate search feature to quickly find what each user type needed.

Next, managers needed a single digital space for reporting, payroll, HR functions, and for employees at all levels to collaborate via department microsites.

Also, as Seasonal employees moved on, Staples saw the impact of knowledge loss and the value in preserving those distinct voices. A recent hire with fresh eyes might look at a long-standing process and see a time saving solution that a more tenured, involved employee might not. Those unique ideas needed to be preserved, and indexed for easy searchability, for future employees.

Fortunately, Staples also saw that a “build it and they will come” approach might not work at work. Employees would need to be drawn to the new system by features, other than timeclock and HR functions— a social component with features to encourage collaboration would be needed.

To build this next generation, employee intranet called "The Hub" the Staples’ team engaged AsponTE to handle the Development, Infrastructure, and Integration phases of this project.



Our Approach

Asponte's team worked closely with Tandem Seven & Staples' development team to identify and prioritize their needs from development through implementation:

- Infrastructure Setup
- Custom Development
- Portal and WCM Configuration
- Security Model Design
- Performance Optimization
- Architecture Design
- Single Sign On
- UI Portal Custom Theme and Skin Development per design
- Archiving Strategy
- Content Taxonomy
- Custom IBM WCM Workflows



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Scope of Services

To enable collaboration from anywhere between employees from all levels of the company a virtual meeting space with custom chat features was built using IBM Sametime.

To drive users to The Hub, Asponte developed a custom social media component using IBM Connections' blogs and communities function. This custom component was seamlessly integrated with IBM WebSphere Portal to create an engaging digital space that encourages end user interaction by mirroring popular social media sites.

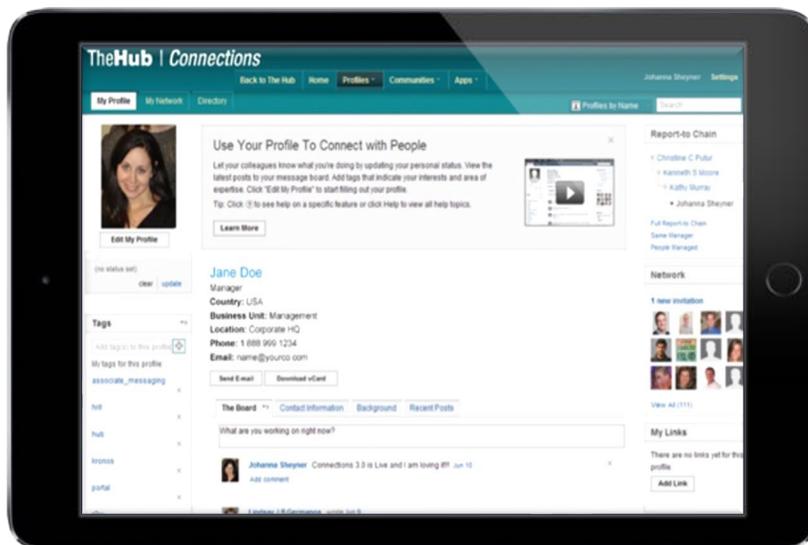
A gamified points system was created to encourage good work habits and drive employees, from seasonal to salaried, to engage with The Hub. Asponte worked with the design firm Tandem Seven to guide them through designing the gamification functionality. The design firm had not previously worked with IBM WebSphere Portal, and Asponte guided them through the art of the possible.

The Hub's most-used feature was the search function. Asponte's custom search implementation crawled and indexed content from both IBM WebSphere Portal and Web Content Manager as well as IBM Connections content such as blogs, wikis, files, and communities. This customized solution delivers every user a unified, personalized search experience across platforms and content types.

After The Hub was launched, Staples engaged Asponte for Managed Services to assist and maintain the IBM WebSphere Portal, IBM Connections, and IBM Omnifind environments. As part of Asponte's agreement with Staples, Asponte aided with education, training, and hiring of well-qualified technicians so Staples could support their environment internally without assistance.

Software Products Leveraged

- IBM WebSphere Portal
- IBM Web Content Manager WCM
- IBM Connections
- IBM Sametime
- IBM OmniFind Watson Content Analytics Search
- TDI Tivoli Directory Integrator
- Ephox Edit Live
- Ephox Web Radar Web Content Analytics



Results

Asponte's contributions to "The Hub" included an integrated portal, content management, a gamified social media component, and HCL Digital Experience Connections system that was rolled out to every Staples store.

Managers and employees can now quickly access and search through the reporting, HR data, and payroll info they needed from Staples' continuously-growing database.

The gamified portion of The Hub encourages healthy work habits by rewarding employees with points to exchange for prizes, and Staples knows employees are likely to see work-related items in their newsfeed as the gamified portion of The Hub encourages use.

The feedback from their users was excellent and Staples' "The Hub" won the 2012 Nielsen Norman Group Intranet of the year award!

<https://www.nngroup.com/news/item/2012-intranet-design-awards/>

Staples continues to support their environment internally without the need for outside vendor assistance thanks to Asponte's knowledge transfer, hiring influences, and training.



About Asponte

Asponte Technology connects applications, data, content, and people. Primarily supporting Enterprise clients with advanced development services ranging from websites, user portals, API integrations and web apps to systems architecture consulting, cloud hosting & management, to full design services and more.

Asponte is highly skilled in managing modern digital transformations and IT services. Since 2008, we have developed websites and solutions that allow companies to deliver amazing Digital Experiences to their clients and employees. Digital Experiences are the core competencies of Asponte Technology. Our team members have worked as Solution Architects at some of the top companies in the world.

Asponte offers custom development and infrastructure services, software sales, cloud migrations plus hosting options. We focus on the business strategy to deliver technical expertise along with value-added digital solutions that improve user satisfaction and achieve business goals. We provide reliability, proven technology and security through managed infrastructure, platform and software responses for clients seeking enterprise grade solutions along with Management Consulting Services.

Our experience working with Fortune 1000 companies has made us a top choice for technology services, architecture and development to help companies solve complex problems, speed time to market, and improve engagement with a lower total cost of ownership.

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