



KL CONSULTING

# KL Consulting Overhauls PeopleSoft Corporate Intranet

*New Design Enhances Employee Productivity and  
Simplifies Content Creation*

It's common knowledge that a corporate intranet is the right tool for granting employees access to important corporate information. But actually creating an effective intranet is a tough proposition. Just ask enterprise software giant PeopleSoft. The company launched its first intranet over a decade ago but discovered many employees had some difficulty finding the information that they needed.

Planet PeopleSoft (as the intranet was dubbed) had grown into a complex network of more than 3,400 pages--some of it outdated, inaccurate or unnecessary. Meanwhile, useful data was buried within myriad data categories that were difficult to search and navigate.

"Like many intranets, ours had grown over the years to a point that there was a lack of clear guidelines," said Brad Berman, Intranet Manager. "Individual site owners had the freedom to create any kind of site structure that they wanted...to the disservice of the users. We knew that we needed to bring everyone into a consistent framework."

## Customer Background

The original intranet, known as corp.i, was launched in the 1990s and grew organically. Planet PeopleSoft, the next iteration of the intranet was launched in October 2000, as a joint effort of the Internal Communications team and PeopleSoft IT. The stated goal of the intranet was to provide the information and tools that employees need to make better, faster and more consistent business decisions.

Planet PeopleSoft has become a vital part of the company's intracorporate communications efforts, serving 11,000 users in 12 departments across more than 50 countries. The company knew, however, that formal standards and guidelines, as well as a major redesign of the system, were needed to make it more useful. Meanwhile, a tough economy, reduced budgets and a tight timeline made an overhaul challenging at best.

## The Challenge

Planet PeopleSoft grew considerably as well-meaning managers and employees added information, sub-sites and tools that seemed to be useful. The result was uneven navigation and taxonomy and a proliferation of departmental sub-sites. In fact, Berman identified more than 60 sub-sites within Planet PeopleSoft—far more than were really useful or useable. When surveyed, 36 percent of users characterized the Intranet as hard to navigate and in need of both technical and design improvements. The company knew it needed a set of consistent editorial processes for posting information to the intranet, as well as a strategy for creating a consistent look and feel throughout the entire site.

Finally, PeopleSoft knew that, in order to succeed, it needed a firm understanding of their users' needs. The company wanted to make sure it gathered information from everyone who used the system, from top management to sub-section managers to employees on the frontline.

## The KL Consulting Approach

In early 2002, PeopleSoft asked KL Consulting to join the team it had created to address these challenges and to bring Planet PeopleSoft into a new era. Principal Karilee Wirthlin interviewed key stakeholders within the company in order to create a content management methodology that included an outline of roles and responsibilities of PeopleSoft content providers (including a group of 10 key site managers who would manage all other content providers).

"One of Karilee's strengths is her ability to work with a lot of people with wide ranging sets of expectations and find consensus," said Berman. "Over the course of a relatively brief period of time, she was able to help everyone involved understand the wisdom of taking certain actions that they might not have initially wanted to take on."

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The resulting Content Policies document, which defines standards for the creation and publication of material on the intranet, remains in use at PeopleSoft today. By creating a consistent approach, Wirthlin lowered PeopleSoft's overall cost of ownership for the intranet, which had been inflated by having too many people involved in posting information, and to elevate user productivity by ensuring that users didn't have to spend time searching through unnecessary, outdated and redundant information.

Wirthlin also oversaw the development of a set of wire frames and then HTML templates (based upon user testing and interviews) that would allow new content to be added quickly and easily while maintaining a consistent navigation and appearance. "Karilee is a master at taking a common sense business approach and then streamlining the project," said Berman.

Wirthlin also coordinated training sessions to teach content providers how to leverage the new templates, and developed a style guide to streamline the process of migrating existing content to the new design. Finally, Wirthlin managed the project in order to ensure the process remained on track and that, when it was launched, the site maintained the highest level of quality.

"Karilee listens and understands so that I didn't have to say anything twice," said Berman. "I knew I could trust her with a level of responsibility that is much greater than I would give most consultants. Not only is she a great communicator who understands intranets, she is an excellent project manager who tracks milestones and delivers on time."

### **The Bottom Line**

In early 2003, PeopleSoft introduced its new corporate Web site templates and launched a new primary taxonomy. The biggest boon that the new system brought to PeopleSoft was the ability to maintain the highest quality for its content. By creating a framework and approval process for intranet contributions, Wirthlin helped the company ensure that everyone within the organization had a clear idea of how and what they could contribute to the intranet site.

Creating a well-defined funnel for new content and a definite structure for existing data also increased the site's overall navigability and usability. Usability studies confirmed that employees could find desired content 48 percent faster than before the redesign. At the end of the project, the 14 intranet data categories were whittled down to only four. The company also cut down on what Berman characterizes as intranet ROT (Redundant Outdated and Trivial Content).

### **About PeopleSoft**

PeopleSoft (Nasdaq: PSFT) is the world's leading provider of application software for the real-time enterprise, serving 5,100 organizations in 140 countries. PeopleSoft pure-Internet software enables organizations to reduce costs and increase productivity by directly connecting customers, suppliers, partners and employees to business processes on-line, in real time. PeopleSoft's integrated, best-in-class applications include Customer Relationship Management, Supply Chain Management, Human Capital Management, Financial Management and Application Integration.

### **About Karilee Wirthlin of KL Consulting**

Karilee Wirthlin, principal and founder of KL Consulting in Silicon Valley, California, is a leading web site strategy consultant who combines her sales support experience with her technical background to produce innovative, targeted, and effective web content management programs. She has worked with companies such as PeopleSoft, Business Objects, Adobe, NVIDIA, and SGI applying best practices to large-scale, strategic web site efforts and has worked with web content management systems since their emergence in 1998.