



Extranet Collaboration Manager for SharePoint 2007 (ExCM)

Case Study: Large National Professional Association

The Client

The client is a large professional association that provides information, resources and leadership to members throughout the nation.

The Challenge

Although the association has about 750 employees at its headquarters, it actually has more people in its external audience. Among them are those who assist with promoting the organization. Some are not members and therefore not in the membership interface.

The association uses SharePoint for collaboration at a variety of levels, ranging from simple tasks such as time-and-data entry to building and developing an application with a team. According to the project manager, the organization didn't know how much collaboration was taking place, just that a lot of people—more than a thousand—were being given access. Only one Web portal was being used, and as a result the association's external internet was exposed to the outside world and its server was vulnerable. The association needed a software product that would enhance collaboration, provide proper security and make it easier for external users to manage their accounts.

The Solution

The association began searching for an add-on software solution. The project manager identified four reasons for choosing Extranet Collaboration Manager for SharePoint 2007 (ExCM):

- *"It solved our problem.*
- *We were able to download a copy and test it with no red tape.*
- *We were able to prove to ourselves it does what we want it do.*

- *ExCM provided a 'canned' solution that also was flexible enough for customized configurations."*

"We knew the value of ExCM before implementation because we suffered so long," she says. Although there were some installation challenges, "Technical support was really, really good." SharePoint Solutions also created custom configuration sections for the association.

The association now has information separated into two portals and can see who is currently logged in. It no longer uses a virtual private network (VPN), and user passwords remain the same. External users also find their lives have become easier because they feel in control of their accounts.

"We have been able to tighten down, know who's who, do security properly and also make interface easier," the project manager comments. *"Everything is less complicated and more flexible."*

Although the internal users who represent and deal with external users initially were concerned about using ExCM, particularly because they didn't get to experience what external users were experiencing through the product, *"They are very happy and have expressed appreciation for how simple it is to use,"* the project manager says. *"ExCM has put a lot of confidence in the minds of those who have to interface with external audiences."*

Describing ExCM's quality as "top notch," she sums up the association's experience since installing the software: *"We hadn't anticipated having this high level of capability around extranet user authentication and management."*