



Consulting Division

Case Study: Emdeon Business Services

The Client

Emdeon Business Services, headquartered in Nashville, TN, provides revenue cycle management and clinical communication solutions that enable payers, providers and patients to improve healthcare business processes and simplify the business of healthcare.

The Challenge

Emdeon Business Services had been built through a number of acquisitions that took place over the past several years. Until recently, those companies operated as separate stand-alone businesses, each with its own brand and with its own internal systems and processes. Those companies included: Envoy, WebMD, ExpressBill, Medifax EDI, Advanced Business Fulfillment (ABF), Dakota Imaging, and others. When senior management made the decision to consolidate the brands and the operations of the business, Emdeon's Web Marketing department recognized an urgent need for the implementation of a company-wide intranet to provide geographically dispersed employees with a sole source for internal information to eliminate the complications created by maintaining various systems, and to emphasize the new brand and company culture.

Emdeon's objective was to improve communications between departments, increase the visibility of team contributions, ease the burden of document management, and automate work flows. Emdeon also sought to provide standard tools for project, content, and information management, which previously existed in disparate systems. Finally, Emdeon required the removal of all references to legacy company names and structures through the creation of a common site, allowing employees to actively engage in communication and collaboration while reinforcing the new company brand.

According to the Emdeon Web Marketing Manager, Beth Smith, the company evaluated several solution options, which included the building of an intranet through internal IT resources, implementing an out-of-the-box solution, or a creating a hybrid system through these two options. Microsoft SharePoint 2007 MOSS was also considered.

However, Emdeon's experience with Microsoft SharePoint 2003 caused many employees to feel skeptical concerning the utilization of that product. Despite this hesitance, Smith attended SharePoint Solutions' core concepts class, which explains Microsoft SharePoint on a non-technical level.

"We came away thinking SharePoint had real potential to provide the solution we needed, as well as offering several beneficial options that we had not considered. We also realized it could be extremely complicated, and there were so many different ways the application could be deployed."

In addition to these concerns, Emdeon, as a technology-based corporation, held their own internal software systems to a higher standard than the average company.

"We wanted a system that was as advanced as the software we sell our clients. We really needed to have the ability to customize the solution to our company and not have it look like a standard SharePoint system," Smith says.

Emdeon started with a cross-functional team to evaluate the features offered with Microsoft SharePoint 2007 and to understand how they could benefit the company. Because Microsoft SharePoint 2007 was a relatively new offering, Smith realized that no single source of detailed information or best practices existed. After several weeks of research, the team realized it needed expert help to fully understand Microsoft SharePoint 2007, including the options it offered and determining the best deployment method.

The Solution

Recalling the positive experience she had at the SharePoint Solutions class, Smith turned to its consulting division for assistance. A SharePoint Solutions Consultant, Scott Mayo, worked with Emdeon's internal staff to reconfigure the initial SharePoint MOSS installation to incorporate publishing as a base point. A small group of employees was empowered to approve decisions on design, information structure, availability of features, and rollout planning, which resulted in an expedited implementation timeframe.

According to Smith, the planning and vision involved in the first phase was the most difficult.

"We had a vision of how we needed it to work and that we wanted a core site that represented every department within our company with the layout based on our organization chart."

SharePoint Solutions was instrumental in evolving Microsoft SharePoint 2007 into the final product envisioned by the Emdeon SharePoint team. Employee feedback concerning the first phase has been very positive. *"We have been surprised to find that many people have already become dependent on it in such a short time,"* Smith says.

SharePoint Solutions is in the process of executing the second phase of the implementation with the Emdeon Web Marketing team, which will open the portal to include team and collaboration sites. To avoid the problems encountered with Microsoft SharePoint 2003, training will be required for all site owners, which is comprised of the people who will manage team sites and content. Training will include a review of Emdeon's implementation process and branding expectations to ensure a common look and feel, as well as demonstrations of core features and functionality to encourage the creation of interactive, engaging sites, as opposed to static document libraries.

"We had a very structured plan going into the project and we received everything we wanted," Smith says. "We had a very productive experience with SharePoint Solutions. I wouldn't change anything concerning how we approached and addressed this project."