

Being an intranet star isn't easy, as any intranet manager overwhelmed with the underwhelming response from authors and managers will agree to. Nevertheless with some fearless counsel and a good measure of bravery on the part of intranet managers it can be done. There is precious little guidance on the necessary behaviours in this area. This briefing seeks to redress this shortfall.

Seize power

It can often be the case that in all matters intranet, the organisation just doesn't have the 'right' kind of focus. When I was much younger, a particularly well-weathered project management veteran, to whom I was grumbling, told me to get over myself and said "power's not given, it's taken". He was right, it was up to me to take the initiative. Often we expect others to take the initiative in and to know how to go about doing things, yet we are the experts. The organisation looks to its intranet staff to provide that expertise and leadership. If knowledge is power and intranet managers have this knowledge then it follows that they have also have the power.

Be brave

Intranets and all their accompanying complexity are not for the meek. There are few if any organisational roles that are charged with taking care of business across the organisation, and in most cases intranet managers take on this challenge alone, as a team of one.

An ability to face up to the organisation is certainly part of an intranet star's make up. The best intranet managers are heroes who understand that their ultimate customer is the end user of information. Content authors are often the most vocal and demanding and the intranet manager's job is to find a way to temper the content authors' demands with the real needs and habits of the content authors' customer: the end-users.

Find your flavour

The exact way that an intranet manager will take the organisation on this journey will depend on the style of the individual. It is important that intranet managers recognise their own personal 'flavour' and use this to their best possible advantage. Whilst some people are naturally socia-

ble, outgoing and gregarious. Others are methodical, introverted and shy. All have their strengths and, therefore their weaknesses.

There really is no perfect fit. Intranet managers deal with such a wide variety of people that the most important thing is for them to understand their own strengths, use them where they can, and supplement them where necessary. Forming relationships with people who have complementary styles is one strategy and works well in cases where there is some common ground and genuine relationships. The common ground in many cases may be a desire to see the organisation make better use of the intranet, or stem unnecessary expenditure.

Do something and tell everyone about it

All these things, while certainly necessary, won't make an intranet super star unless something is actually done. We have written many articles that emphasise the importance of tangible and visible improvements. Whatever is delivered, ensure that staff really want it, that they can actually see what has changed and for goodness sake, when you've done something great make sure that you tell everyone about it. Part of the trick to being a star is publicising the fact. Not all of us feel comfortable doing this. That's probably why movie stars enlist the help of a PR agent, and it may be prudent for intranet managers to do the same. This can take the form of testimonials from content authors, end users, or managers or by enlisting the help of the comms team. In short, use whatever resources are at your disposal.

Say 'no' for success

Finally, successful intranet managers learn to love the word 'no'. There is no case on earth where an intranet manager can do all the things that the organisation wants and successful intranet managers understand and act on this. At one time or another you are likely to have to give a qualified 'no' to almost everyone in the organisation, including the CEO. Take your time, provide a strong case to back up your 'no' and provide an intelligent alternative.