

Building an Online Community of Practice



Employees have joined the community of practice and are incorporating it into their daily work habits.

Using Social Media Behind the Firewall

Situation

When two global pharmaceutical companies merged, they had to combine their drug safety databases into one. This massive and complex integration of business-critical, highly regulated systems required a cutting edge approach to communication and teamwork. The drug safety leader championed the development of a Sharepoint community of practice, giving scientists and technologists a common online collaboration space. While many employees eagerly made use of the technology, which was just being introduced into the organization, others were skeptical and had to be convinced of its value.

Solution

The Drug Safety Department engaged VTLO to develop, launch, promote and engage employees in a new community of practice dedicated to integration efforts. As a result, the internal social media technology became a powerful tool for change management.

Objectives

- Develop a community of practice to drive integration activities by providing a forum for collaboration and communication among cross-legacy colleagues and a platform for sharing knowledge, best practices and new learning.
- Educate employees about how to use this new social media technology and create awareness of its value.
- Eliminate barriers to using the community of practice.
- Change work behaviors to foster real-time communication.

Results

- Developed and implemented a strategic community of practice plan that earned the support of the senior leadership team of scientists and technologists.
- Built a network of internal experts, captured ideas and knowledge, encouraged teamwork, drove collaboration and facilitated successful change management efforts.
- Engaged employees in incorporating the community of practice into their daily work habits, speeding integration.
- Set an example of contemporary communication for the organization.

How VTLO Helped Our Client Succeed

- Built and led a team of early adopters to guide development of the community of practice site and to encourage colleagues to use it.
- Educated the early adopter team and drug safety senior leadership team about functions, dynamics and benefits of the community site.
- Developed the community site using Sharepoint My Sites, a social media tool similar in nature to Facebook inside the corporate firewall.
- Created and implemented a promotional plan to create awareness of the site and engage employees.
- Developed a measurement plan to assess employee engagement as well as the usefulness of the community site.
- Continue to serve as “community steward” with responsibility for updating the site, posting new content, and encouraging continuous improvement.