

Sharing Corporate Knowledge and Insight with Wikis

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Wikis might be old news in the technology sector, but for other industries like health care and financial services, it's a concept that's gaining traction.

Everyone knows [Wikipedia](#). And now we're starting to know [WikiLeaks](#). But what is a wiki in the general sense? It's a simple website that allows many people to quickly and easily create and edit pages. Wiki is a type of content management system that emphasizes flexibility and speed over strict control. It's a useful way for companies to deploy intranets, manage projects, share knowledge and even gather customer feedback.

Putting a Wiki to Work

How are companies using wikis? Imagine the possibilities...

I added a page today with details about our newest product. I included documentation PDFs and contact information so people could easily tap into the experts on my team.

Our wiki has a forum for informal discussions. It's our digital water cooler.

The wiki is an idea exchange. It helps us brainstorm, capture ideas, gather suggestions for improvements and innovation. The wiki helps solve everyday problems.

We have a lot of policies, procedures and project road maps. The wiki makes it easy to share these documents.

A wiki is great for sharing tips and best practices with all employees.

Part of our wiki houses our request for proposal responses. I always know where to find the most current answers.

The HR department uses the wiki for training. It helps to bring employees on board quickly and get them up to speed right away.

Our wiki began as a customer support tool, and we've expanded it to help manage partner and vendor relationships.

In short, wikis encourage communication across an organization. Thanks to their decentralized nature, they facilitate new and surprising connections.

Did You Know?

“Wiki” is the Hawaiian word for “fast” or “quick.”

Benefits of a Wiki

In a corporate setting, wikis help to...

- **Make information quickly accessible** – Users can structure and organize new and existing information so that it’s easy to find and linked to other relevant information.
- **Store knowledge in one place** – Gather project details. Put all your documentation together for easy access. Teams or working groups can even share messages and files in the wiki, keeping e-mail inboxes free for other things.
- **Decentralize authority** – With open access, users are empowered to create new, meaningful content. And as with any content management systems, administrators can control and limit access for different users so the right people have the right authority to view and edit certain pages.
- **Build consensus** – Using a wiki is an excellent way to make sure everyone is “on the same page” with corporate information. It’s also a great space where people can collaborate on written documents and presentations.

Planning for Wiki Success

A successful wiki is accessible, reliable and maintainable. It’s a tool that lives and breathes with your organization, becoming part of the fabric of who you are. If your organization is thinking about launching a wiki, how can you ensure its success? Here are four ideas:

1. **Champion the project** – Get executive buy-in right away and appoint a wiki champion or a group of champions. These leaders can explain the benefits, move the implementation forward and keep spreading the enthusiasm post-launch.
2. **Plan for content** – Identify the people who will generate and manage content. Build content-related tasks into their job description or duties, then reward their participation.
3. **Launch with substance** – Seed the wiki with lots of useful content so people will be able to use it and find value in it right away.
4. **Promote your new knowledge source** – Every chance you get, let everyone know about the wiki. Your success requires an active community. Promote your wiki in newsletters, e-mails and all communications. Provide incentives for people to use it so you can grow the crowd and tap into its wisdom.

Bringing it All Together

Thinking of starting a wiki? You don’t have to start from scratch. There are several software options to get you started. Some popular options include Confluence, Socialtext and TWiki. And there are lots of reviews, resources and experts online to help you pick the right software for your needs.

A wiki can help you listen to different voices all over the company. It can help you talk. A wiki can provide support for employees, partners, clients and customers. A wiki can make collaboration easier. And finally, a wiki can revitalize an organization, spreading positive ideas and enhancing communication. If you need to store and share corporate knowledge, consider creating a wiki.

Care for Your Wiki

Wikis, like all websites, need content. If you need help creating and managing your wiki content, High Point Creative can help. Call 651-426-4012 or e-mail kate@highpointcreative.com.