



Supercharge SharePoint with Enterprise Social Collaboration



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The Future Workforce

By 2020, the Millennial Generation will form 50 percent of the global workforce. This new generation was raised on mobile devices and social networks, which means they have come to expect a workplace with those same technologies they use in their personal lives.

In fact, a recent study found 59 percent of millennials said that an employer's provision of state-of-the art technology was important to them when considering a job, and three quarters believe that access to technology makes them more effective at work.

Millennials value transparency in the workplace, as well, and want to know how their work fits in with the organization's overall goals and strategies. These workers are also looking for a close-knit environment and a more connected work structure.



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They prioritize work-life balance over a higher salary and want to feel like they are making a contribution to their company.

Traditional communication methods of the past are no longer working on this new breed of employee, as they want quick feedback and access to the resources they need in real-time. Companies are shifting to a more social and collaborative environment in order to successfully attract, engage and retain these workers. Tools and technologies that enable millennials to work in a more open, collaborative and flexible environment will be key in attracting the best and most talented workforce of the future.

The Challenge with SharePoint

SharePoint is one of the most widely used enterprise tools, with 80 percent of Fortune 100 companies deploying the platform. It also plays a prominent role in about 70 percent of knowledge worker intranets. There are far more advantages than disadvantages of working in SharePoint - yet, most information workers have nightmare stories about SharePoint implementations gone wrong.

The two most common problems companies face when leveraging SharePoint tend to be 1) *people's ability to find exactly what they need, when they need it*, and 2) *the hardships of creating new workflows and processes within SharePoint*, due to the fact that all changes require the involvement of experts from the IT department.

Those two challenges stem from the fact that SharePoint really is used as an information storage system, but not much else.

A survey that asked more than 1,100 SharePoint users how much of their content was actively being edited at any given time found that, on average, less than one third was being edited, leaving more than two thirds completely static – and in some cases even unread.

The same survey also asked users to share just how much of their SharePoint content is actively viewed at any given time. Less than half of SharePoint content, 41 percent to be exact, was actively used. Almost 40 percent of respondents said that less than a quarter of their content was actually being used at any given time. This makes SharePoint a platform with the primary purpose of storing static content for reference, rather than actively collaborating on living and constantly changing content.

SharePoint is still widely adopted, and for a good reason: it is built upon a structured and logical foundation. However, it's also cumbersome and not very intuitive. And that can result in lost productivity, wasted time, and even unengaged employees. Thankfully, there are ways to help you get the most out of a SharePoint implementation and keep the future workforce using the technologies you already have in place.



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Security Where and How You Need It

Security in the cloud is one of the major issues in IT today. Employees want the flexibility and mobility that comes with being able to access their work in the cloud and collaborate anywhere, at any time.



But IT departments dread the data leaks and breaches that can (and likely will) happen. They are tasked with ensuring their companies' sensitive information and intellectual property is secure while still accessible from remote locations or on-the-go employees.

Some companies are taking a hybrid approach, migrating some files and apps to the cloud but keeping others in their own data centers. This approach brings even more issues, such as monitoring multiple installations and performance challenges.

Whether you're using SharePoint on-premise, hosted in the Azure cloud or both, you can easily adapt a layer of secure social collaboration to any of these options. With single-tenancy, companies can make their platforms as secure as they need and as accessible as they want.

Single-tenancy ensures you are in control of your data and knowledge. It can be accessed via the cloud in a few clicks or downloaded and installed on your own server behind your own firewall – the choice is yours.

A Social User Experience

Let's face it – SharePoint is just not that easy to use. People require training in order to use the system. And with new employees joining a company or new versions or upgrades to the platform – or people just simply needing a refresher – training needs to be ongoing.

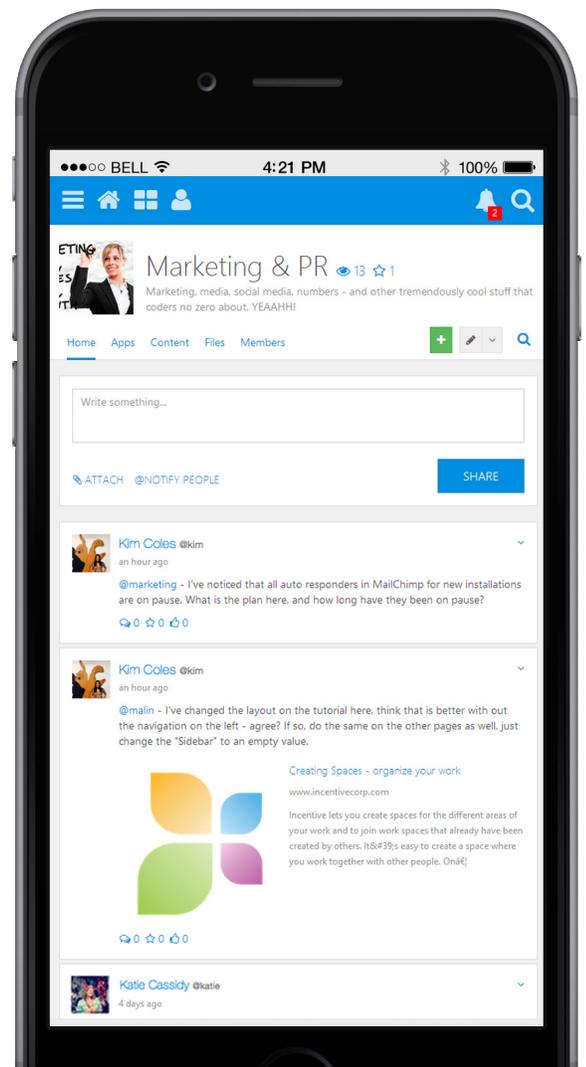
A system that's too complicated, clunky or slow will not encourage adoption. Users will not switch over to SharePoint if its interface and performance is not up to par with what they're used to and currently working with.

Adding a layer of social collaboration to SharePoint helps it become more intuitive, following the same look and feel as the social networks employees are already using.

Just like on any social network homepage, activity streams and feeds are the best way for employees to know what's going on, communicate and work together. With a social feed, users automatically import information they find relevant, reducing time wasted reading emails or communications that do not pertain to them.

The option to follow people, topics or groups also enables added collaboration and productivity. By following those resources most relevant to them, users can easily and quickly find conversations and content they need or are participating in.

Additionally, being able to comment on and share files with others ensures they can collaborate and work together more effectively. In SharePoint, you can't make comments on or have a conversation around a file. Social collaboration makes this possible.



Searching for and Discovering Content

Storing all your knowledge and information in SharePoint is great, but what about when you want to find that information? Scrolling through hundreds of files is time-consuming, inefficient and unproductive. Simple searches rarely return all relevant results, usually because files aren't correctly tagged. Or you might have more than one installation – and all content isn't available to everyone.

Surveys have shown that about a third of all SharePoint users report that the biggest barrier to greater content use is that they don't even know that the content they're looking for exists in SharePoint in the first place. Even if they do know the content they need is actually in SharePoint, they have trouble finding it via search or navigation.

And millennials are even more discouraged when they can't find files than the rest of the workforce – a study found that 38 percent of millennials found it frustrating to waste time searching for documents, compared to 28 percent of the total sample base.

Another problem workers often encounter is that not all knowledge resides in a file. It may also be a part of the discussions around a file - in comments or when sharing the file - or even in private chat messages between two or more colleagues. People spend up to nine hours per week just searching for information, whether it's on a server, in a file, in apps, email messages, chat messages – or even on social media.

SharePoint, as it is today, makes it difficult to find this information, and therefore can't satisfy an organization's needs by itself.

Social collaboration platforms with a powerful, algorithm-based search function

can help solve this problem by sifting through the myriad content in SharePoint to easily discover files and information. Think of it as an internal Google search – a simple yet powerful search function to look through all content, files, apps and spaces.

Having this powerful search function makes it easy for any employee to find the resources they need. No matter the file, all content is easily discoverable.

All in One Place

Today's organizations don't just use one instance of SharePoint – they have multiple SharePoint installations. This means more infrastructure and administration costs, as well as an added headache for users and administrators.



Companies also have dozens of other solutions for workflow applications, storage, document collaboration and much more. In fact, a recent study found that the average business uses 27 different storage apps and 41 different human resources apps.

This leads to platform fatigue, as teams and employees are forced to manage multiple logins, processes and searches across too many different platforms, which is time-consuming, unproductive and exhausting.

Consolidating and standardizing existing apps and tools in a central location helps eliminate this platform fatigue. All content – whether a wiki, blog, document, IM or video conversation – should be centralized and accessible by every employee through a simple, intelligent search.



Tracking information and documents across each app is time-consuming and inefficient, especially for today's organizations that need to quickly and easily "get stuff done - together."

By keeping everything in a central repository, employees have access to all the information and knowledge they need, making it quick and easy to communicate and collaborate – not to mention actually being able to find the content you need.

Flexibility to Make Changes

Another common challenge with SharePoint is the fact that users cannot change or configure much on their own. Because the interface is complicated, users find it hard to start new projects or define new processes, so the structure of a SharePoint installation often stays the same during its lifetime. In fact, nearly half of all organizations using SharePoint rely on the IT department to deploy, configure and launch the application, as well as train business users. Talk about an inefficient process.

This lack of flexibility can make adoption even slower and result in lost productivity or inefficiencies, as the IT department has to step in any time changes are needed. While many complex systems do require technical expertise, the rigidity of a tool as widespread as SharePoint makes it frustrating for users who want quick and easy access to the tools they need for work.

A layer of social collaboration also helps ease this IT burden – as users can have the freedom to create the apps and files they need without involving IT, while the administrators still maintain control of the platform.

True Document Collaboration

While SharePoint is great for storing files in a structured folder environment, there are still some challenges when it comes to collaborating on those files. For example:

- ▶ What if you need to discuss a certain file outside of what SharePoint allows?
- ▶ What if you need to connect the file to a previous discussion leading to its creation?
- ▶ What if you want to find this particular file from within another system that is based on social collaboration rather than folder structure?

Adding a layer of social collaboration to SharePoint aims to solve these issues by giving users the option to edit, like, link to, share, attach and comment on files. Users can have discussions around files and other content, as well as edit and keep track of different versions of documents.



Video Conversations to Improve Communication

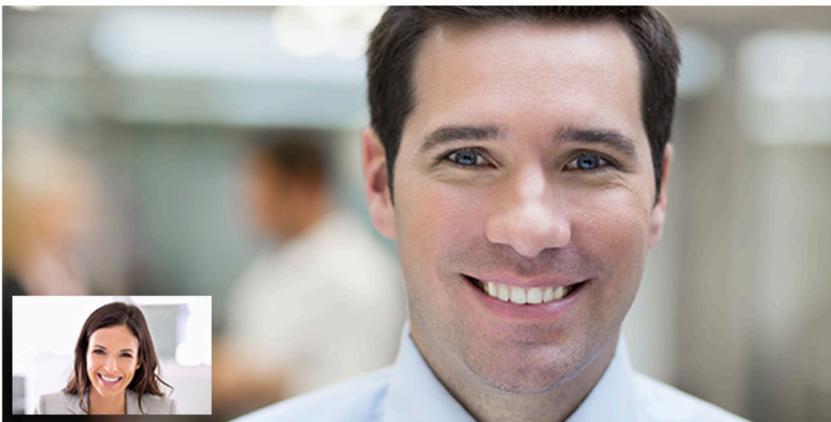
Collaboration is greatly improved when people are able to chat face-to-face, even if they're not in the same room. Distributed workforces and remote employees can interact with people they never get to meet or have never been to a company's main office.

The ability to see body language and facial expressions adds another layer of effective communication, and you can't get that from audio calls or emails.

Not only can video conversations improve communication and collaboration, they can also save money and time and reduce a company's carbon footprint by decreasing the need for business travel and commuting. Thanks to video collaboration, employees no longer need to be in the same office, city or even country in order to work together.

Video Conversation

Calling Sam...



HANG UP

Additionally, work-life balance is improved when time spent commuting to and from the office can instead be spent with family and friends or getting to those personal tasks we never have time for. And work-life balance has always been a priority for millennials, with 95 percent of survey respondents saying it's important to them.

Today, companies mainly use traditional VoIP services such as Skype or Lync for videoconferencing, which are set up by third parties or can, in some ways, compromise privacy. But these require an additional investment in new technology or hardware to connect face-to-face.

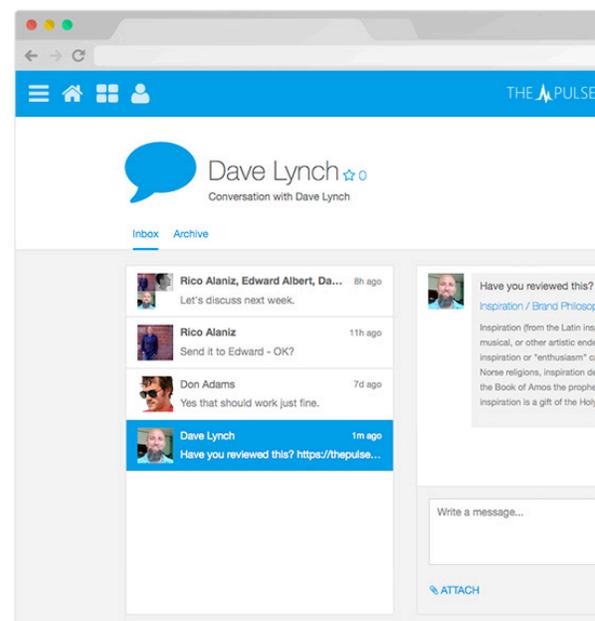
A social collaboration platform that supports WebRTC provides the capability to video chat via a browser or mobile application. This means no plug-ins or downloads. Users can video chat directly from their web browsers quickly and easily. Additionally, users don't have to learn a new software, eliminating training costs and lost productivity due to ramp-up time.

Real-Time Messaging

Although email has been how we communicate at work and in our personal lives for several years, that doesn't mean it's the most effective. We live and work in a fast-paced world, so email doesn't always make sense. When we need to ask a question or get feedback quickly, email can take too long because the recipient might not see it in a timely manner.

Email misuse can also include using it too much – which leads to email overload. Whether it's including recipients who don't need to be involved or forgetting to add people who should, receiving too much or too little information via email can result in communication breakdowns.

In addition, the new millennial workforce values collaboration, transparency and flexibility –



which isn't easy to achieve when communication is limited to silos buried within personal devices and emails. In fact, 41 percent of millennials say they prefer to communicate electronically at work rather than face-to-face or even over the telephone.

Real-time chat features help reduce email overload by enabling people to communicate instantly. In addition to private, one-on-one conversations, group chats also help teams and colleagues come together without involving others who are not part of the conversation.

More importantly, chats are also retrievable. While emails might be deleted or lost and talks around the water cooler aren't saved anywhere, conversations can be saved so users can go back and reference them if needed.

Beyond achieving better workflow, real-time conversations also reinforce corporate culture and make accomplishing tasks faster, increasing productivity.

Ready to Collaborate?

Adding social collaboration to SharePoint helps ease issues workers typically experience with the unwieldy platform. As more and more tech-savvy millennials join the workforce, offering a layer of social collaboration that enhances the user experience will be key in engaging and retaining talent within an organization.

A platform that features deep integration with SharePoint provides a seamless experience, empowering all employees within an organization to continue using SharePoint, while embracing the social and collaborative features Incentive offers – without having to switch between multiple apps and programs.

Incentive, a leading provider of a complete, socially powered enterprise collaboration platform for mid-market organizations and enterprise teams, adds this social collaboration layer to SharePoint.

SharePoint content behaves as native content in the social collaboration platform with seamless and transparent integration. REAL integration.

- ▶ Quickly find your SharePoint content with a simple, yet powerful, search option.
- ▶ Easily visualize all your SharePoint content - anywhere, anytime - while providing access to anyone.
- ▶ Discuss, share, comment, like and collaborate around SharePoint content.
- ▶ Get notified whenever a SharePoint item, relevant to you, is added or changed.

Designed for organizations using Microsoft apps, architecture and services, Incentive allows users to take advantage of existing workflow apps, storage systems and document management tools such as SharePoint in one central location, with single sign-on and intelligent search. Its features include wikis, blogs, micro blogging, document collaboration, file sharing, instant messaging, video conversations, social behavior UX and API-based platform for app development.

Sign up now for a free trial of Incentive and start realizing the benefits of an enterprise social collaboration platform. The free 45-day trial includes the full suite of features for unlimited users.

GET STARTED WITH A FREE TRIAL