Run link-checking reports across the intranet to identify broken links. Allows business areas to more easily own and update their own content. Use workflow rules to manage review and approval. Use reports and management tools within CMS. Display last modified date and owner on published pages. When migrating into a new CMS, conduct a cleanup first (only good content is migrated).

Provide feedback mechanisms on all pages for staff. Ensure feedback items are managed. Address feedback in a timely way. “Close the loop” by contacting staff when feedback has been acted on. Build usage by ensuring that staff know that feedback is acted on. Allow user comments on intranet pages. “Was this page useful?” Better to have a “living” intranet that is quickly updated than to try to get everything right before it is published.

Not all content needs to be of equal quality. Define (and communicate) different levels of intranet content quality. Help staff to self-assess the expected quality of different intranet content. Create personas to capture and communicate the needs of key staff groups. Use to help authors better target their audiences. Use to prioritise intranet improvements and additions.

Focus personas on staff with distinct needs and environments (not “general” staff). Conduct content reviews and cleanups across the whole site. Look for ROT (redundant, outdated, trivial). Identify owners for all content. Remove any content or sections that don’t have an owner (they are by definition out of date). Avoid trying to “boil the ocean.” Run link-checking reports across the intranet to identify broken links.

Define the role of the central team in relation to intranet content. Document and communicate this. Avoid playing a “gatekeeper” role (it’s a shortcut to burnout). Lose the “language of enforcement” (force, compliance, audits, standards). Know when to say “yes” and “no,” and when to escalate. Position the intranet as the “making it happen” team. Use to say “yes” and “no” when appropriate. Self-reflection role as a publisher of whatever is provided by business units. Demonstrate professionalism. You get the right content when the right people are doing the right things (these are all people issues).

Grow interpersonal relationships with authors. Build engagement with business areas. Understand motivations of site owners and authors (they are mostly positive!). The most successful intranet teams are “people people.”

Assign specific roles and responsibilities within intranet team. Allocate specific proportion of team time to content development and maintenance. Setup task tracking system and processes to keep on top of jobs. Assign service levels (SLAs) to each business unit. Have multiple levels of SLAs, depending on importance of business area and content. Hand off work to other teams and areas where appropriate. Establish an escalation process for resolving content and support issues. Build team skills in writing and editing. Define clear intranet goals and purpose. Define what should be on the intranet (and what shouldn’t!)

Articulate the benefits that the intranet should be delivering. Communicate this to all site owners and authors. Derive policies and governance from intranet goals. Collect overall usage reports for the intranet to identify most (and least) used areas. Provide local usage reports to content owners. Generate search engine usage reports (most popular searches, failed searches). Use reports to identify key topics of interest for staff. Use reports to identify terminology used by staff. Use statistics and search usage to guide review and development of content. Provide mechanisms for teams or groups to collaborate more effectively on content.

Use this community model to build better engagement and involvement. Break down the lines between “author” and “reader.” “User-generated content” is good, as long as it is well-managed. Use local spell-checking tools. Use a structured writing methodology such as Information Mapping® where appropriate. Define roles and responsibilities for authors. Establish policies for appropriate format of content (documents vs pages).

Locate where opportunities exist to improve these sections. Use meetings to provide training and skills transfer. Build a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. Use group dynamics (including peer pressure) to improve intranet practices. Ensure there is value and benefits for members (keep them coming back). Harness the group to help build policies, guidelines and governance. Include a social element to help build relationships.

Recognise the gap between amateur authors and the desire for professional content. Ensure intranet team has influence over who is chosen as an author. Include intranet authoring in formal position/role descriptions. Create intranet standards and style guide. Create guidelines and “how to’s” for authors. Ensure feedback items are managed. Address feedback in a timely way. Use structured techniques, such as interviews, workplace observation, contextual inquiry. Establish policies to address key business needs. Drive these projects from business needs, not content policy. Articulate (and measure) benefits.

Use business projects to demonstrate value of intranet content management. Identify important sections of the intranet. Examples: HR, policies, forms. Use centralised resources to help business areas improve these sections. Apply usability and information architecture techniques. Create “exemplar” sections for others to follow. Use a mix of approaches. Some ideas will be more effective than others in your situation. Copyright Step Two Designs. Shared under Creative Commons license (Attribution, No Derivatives). Written by James Robertson. Thanks to Catherine Grenfell, Amanda Bromhall, David Williamson, Jane Floyd, Richard Tuftin, Tori May.