

Holman Fenwick Willan

ClearPeople develop an enhanced
knowledge management intranet for
the global law firm

a case study by ClearPeople  + 

firm profile

Holman Fenwick Willan LLP is an international law firm headquartered in London, United Kingdom.



Holman Fenwick Willan specialises in international commerce, acting predominantly for airlines, shipping firms, insurers, commodity and energy companies, construction contractors, investment banks, and large corporates.

Established in 1883, the firm has grown to over 450 lawyers working worldwide and provides a global service 24 hours a day.

project background



“Holmanet”, the intranet for Holman Fenwick Willan (HFW), was described by Paul Jenkins, the global law firm’s Head of Projects and Change as “not meeting the needs of the firm and largely unfit for purpose.” A SharePoint 2007 based application, analytics proved that it demonstrated a severe lack of staff engagement.

Usage was limited to the intranet’s homepage and the café menu, with the overall perception of the platform that its content was out of date and unreliable. Considered by many of HFW’s employees as visually unappealing, boring and irrelevant, it wasn’t easy to navigate or find the right information either through search or the browse experience. A comment prevalent in the firm was “if you want to hide something, put it on the intranet”.

This lack of engagement had to be addressed. As a global law firm centred around knowledge sharing and collaborative working, it was essential that their intranet was redesigned to be aesthetically

interesting and intuitive to provide HFW’s lawyers and business services staff with significant improvements to access to knowledge and information to deliver a better sense of community and improve internal efficiencies and productivity.

On the project, Paul Jenkins continued: “We wanted to create a new ‘Holmanet’ that is welcoming to all users, with relevant and useful information on it that users trust and want to engage with, in an inviting and visually compelling setting that provides the tools and functionality that increases user effectiveness in their day-to-day work activities.”

solution

“

ClearPeople were proactive in engaging with 3Kites, they had a better understanding of our requirements from the outset and were honest in what elements could be taken "off the shelf" and what elements may need to be written.

”

Paul Jenkins, Head of Projects and Change – HFW

After drawing up a business case for a new intranet, Holman Fenwick Willan understood the need to engage with third parties to assist in the delivery of such improvements and to guide the overall project with expert consultancy around knowledge management and technical skills. HFW first worked with 3Kites Consulting to determine an overall approach and following a tender process between ClearPeople and another agency, ClearPeople was selected as the preferred intranet design and implementation partner.

Paul Jenkins said of ClearPeople's involvement: "The project team selected ClearPeople because whilst both [agencies] could deliver the project, ClearPeople were proactive in engaging with 3Kites, they had a better understanding of our requirements from the outset and were honest in what elements could be taken "off the shelf" and what elements may need to be written."

solution

With its great out of the box functionality and outstanding search capabilities, SharePoint 2013 was the ideal platform to take HFW's internal communications further.

With over 13 years' experience in intranet development and a proud working ethos of being upfront and open with our clients, we were delighted to work alongside Holman Fenwick Willan and 3Kites to provide an improved employee experience through an enhanced intranet. 3Kites were able to offer their expert legal consultancy around intranets and knowledge management to help HFW understand the impact of consolidating all their knowledge documents into SharePoint whilst our understanding of the technical requirements coupled with our award-winning design and user experience credentials meant that we could deliver a

new platform that exceeded HFW's expectations. HFW were also in a great position to make use of their own in-house SharePoint technical resource and had recently moved their licensing deal to SharePoint 2013.

With its great out of the box functionality and outstanding search capabilities, SharePoint 2013 was the ideal platform to take HFW's internal communications further.

solution

ClearPeople employed their unique Discovery Framework to advise HFW on the best approach to these integration points which were fundamental to the project's success.

Very early on, HFW had identified that they wanted to surface information through their new intranet from two separate systems; Thomson Elite, their practice management system; and Interaction, their CRM. ClearPeople employed their unique Discovery Framework to advise HFW on the best approach to these integration points which were fundamental to the project's success. Following user requirements workshops where use cases were created, ClearPeople developed a Proof of Concept (POC) in just six days to test and prove how such integration could work. In this time we created an intermediate database containing extracts of data from both Thomson Elite and Interaction. The POC we developed was able to surface matter data from Thomson Elite and

client contact details from Interaction and HFW were so impressed with what had been achieved in a short space of time that we were able to add in some customisations to further improve the search experience through preview elements.

Following the successful delivery of the POC, we could then work on the intranet build as a whole which embraced the bespoke design we had created during the creative brief phase.

solution

Key features in the redesigned intranet include:

A refreshed, employee-focused homepage: The starting point of all user journeys, bringing together key communication pieces and critical access points for all task-oriented activities with its visually appealing and intuitive design. The improved architecture and key content focuses on a news carousel, events, an employee poll, launchpad for quick links, a people directory and important resources for systems, tools and new starters.

Global navigation: Displayed along the top of the page above the content area, the HFW Global Navigation shows prominent text links to the main intranet areas, and allows users to easily navigate between them.

Mobile responsive: Having an improved mobile experience helps users access and digest content on their mobile devices and tablets more easily. The responsive layout means users accessing the intranet on the go will get an easy to use and considered experience no matter where they work, whatever device they are on.

Intelligent search: Users can perform various types of search and content is easily surfaced through customisation on how the search results are previewed and displayed.

Launchpad: Consists of key links to resources that users frequently access.

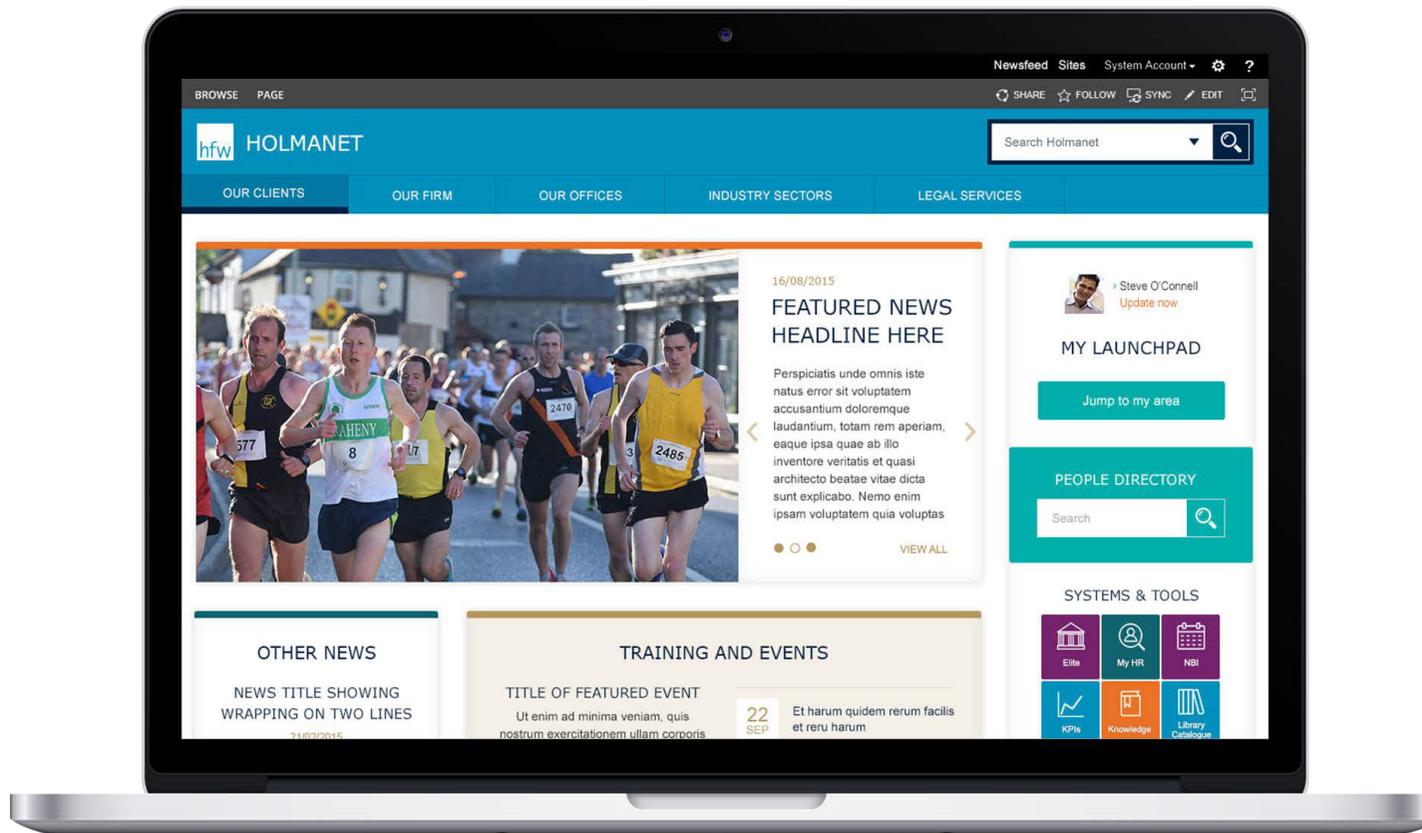
People Directory: A second out-of-the-box search control will be configured on this page. This will take users to the HFW People search results page when they submit a query so that they only get People in the results set.

Client and sector homepage: Each of HFW's Top Clients and their core sectors will have their own page to display relevant information about the client and industry.

Content page templates: ClearPeople developed consistent templates so that content editors and those with the right permissions are able to easily create their own topic sites, lists and libraries and customise them with specific news items, spotlights and banners.

Knowledge Hub: The Knowledge Hub is the primary resource for fee earners seeking HFW approved template documents and other KM resources. The site comprises of a landing page, a KM repository, a browse application and an integration with search. The design of the Knowledge Hub allows the KM team to upload and profile resources quickly whilst enabling fee earners to search and retrieve relevant documents; key areas of functionality that were absent in the previous system.

solution



solution

benefits

Holman Fenwick Willan now have an enhanced digital workspace which allows their employees to have quick and easy access to client information, matter data and internal admin data in a single platform rather than spending time in disparate systems searching for this information.

The new solution, designed and built in SharePoint 2013, enables:

- The sharing of knowledge between users as well as providing a system that facilitates effective communication down to a team level.
- Improved search capabilities, allowing users to refine on results returned.
- A more intuitive user experience with clear and effectively labelled navigation systems, which will get users to the content they need quickly and easily.
- An increase in adoption of the system by the users through the provision of a stimulating and relevant environment that aligns with user and business needs and makes a difference to their daily working lives, appealing to all users by being useful, welcoming and engaging with a clean design.

benefits

The new intranet and knowledge management portal is proving to be an invaluable resource for Holman Fenwick Willan.

Paul Jenkins describes the benefits as “intangible” such that they aren’t easily quantifiable, but he recognises that bringing together key business information from different systems is making a huge difference in the efficiencies and productivity of fee earners and business services.

In the future, it will also be capable of offering targeted financial reporting from Elite so that HFW won’t need on-going investment in 3rd parties to provide KPI information. This should lead to improved matter, time and debt management.

The HFW project team first presented Holmanet to the Managing Partner and committee of partners as part of their internal progress

updates. This went much better than expected as the majority of the committee volunteered to be contributors of content and requested the training. This was a real positive for both HFW and ClearPeople project teams and it was encouraging to see the new development was encouraging contribution and engagement from the outset.

Paul Jenkins concluded: “We’re really excited to see the added value the intranet can bring. I’m confident it will deliver an increase in shared knowledge throughout all lawyers and staff and therefore an improved sense of community throughout the firm.”

3Kites Consulting

3Kites Consulting worked on the discovery phase of the project which involved producing a user survey which went out to all staff and partners across the HFW network.



The aim of the survey was to understand current ways of working and identify areas in need of improvement. 3Kites were also responsible for the subsequent analysis of the survey results. 3Kites then worked with ClearPeople on running a series of workshops to understand further the firm's requirements for a new intranet. The workshops involved a cross section of

staff and partners from all practice areas, business services teams and offices and used a combination of activities, such as card sorting, to begin to think about the potential structure of the new version of Holmanet. 3Kites then worked closely with ClearPeople and HFW to refine requirements and input into the overall intranet specification.

3Kites Consulting

3Kites also assisted HFW in producing user guides for knowledge owners, responsible for producing and adding knowledge to the new knowledge repository, as well as a guide to searching for knowledge using Holmanet for all users.



Alongside this, 3Kites worked on a review of the Knowledge Hub on Holmanet in order to update, rejuvenate and therefore improve usage of knowledge documents at HFW on the new site. This required a full review of the metadata and taxonomies that were currently being used in the knowledge repository, supporting HFW on a review of the existing content and producing a specification for a new repository for managing knowledge documents. Importantly, the review also

involved putting in place new policies for submission, review and updating knowledge at HFW to ensure that, moving forward, the Knowledge Hub was seen as a reliable source of information.

For further information: www.3kites.com

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