

BESIG 2013

Corporate Intranets as Materials Goldmines

Sebastian Turnbull

Target Training

- 47 full-time employees in locations all over Germany
- in-house solutions – embedded trainers
“InCorporate Trainers”
- seminars
- blended learning

What is an intranet?

“An intranet is a computer network that uses Internet Protocol technology to share information, operational systems, or computing services within an organization.”

wikipedia.org

Challenges!

Challenges in Business English:

- sporadic
- difficult to get continuity
- difficult to find source material
- lack of relevant material in coursebooks
- worried about copyright
- difficult to know where to start if you don't understand what the participants really do
- conflicts – your company has promised tailored training but the participants just want a conversation class
- boring for the participants if they only concentrate on their key needs (not presentations again!)

But the intranet gives you:

- a shared context
- something tangible for the participants to explain
- a wide variety of texts
- automatic relevance (participants will be expected to read the intranet)
- productive tasks that are real (participants will get brownie points for contributing to the intranet and in some cases must do so)

What's out there?

- Wikis/Blogs/Forums
- Company Facts and Figures
- HR Documentation
- Customer/Supplier Databases
- Original texts
- Ishares/Knowledge Management
- Social Media/Recruitment

It's in English!

- National companies ----- multinational organisations, e.g.
 - Euler Hermes --- Allianz Insurance
 - Deutsche Post - DP DHL
 - Vivendi
 - Siemens
 - Bosch
- 25% Global GDP, and 70% of all world trade now conducted by multinationals. (United Nations Conference on Trade & Development)
- The intranet will have a local and an international (English) version

Wikis/blogs/forums

- Wikis – internal knowledge base that is built up by the employees
- Blogs – dairy/log of what goes on in that department or team: a way to facilitate communication and teamwork within the company
- Forums – allow employees to ask questions and ask for help publicly so that solutions can be easily shared

Relevance for trainer and participants:

- Participants will get brownie points for contributing and may need to contribute to find solutions or get assistance
- For trainer: a source for both receptive (reading) and productive (writing) training interventions

Company Facts and Figures



- Annual General Report
- EBIT/Profit and Loss
- Company Strategy
- Organigrams
- Interviews with the CEO about strategy

Relevance for Participants

- Expected to know this information
- May work in financial controlling or HR

Pedagogical relevance

- Resource for lexis: numbers, statistics, graphs etc.

HR Documentation

- Email/Internet Policy
- Time Recording
- Working Time Compensation
- Company Car Policy
- Dress Code

Relevance/usefulness

- All participants will be expected to know about HR procedures.
- Changes to these procedures are often hot topics within companies.
- But be careful not to go into sensitive areas, e.g. personal stories about disciplinaries etc.
- Obvious source for training on modal verbs of obligation!

Customer/Supplier Databases



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- Addresses, contact details
 - Billing information
 - Customer classification
 - May contain personal/sensitive information, so tread carefully

Relevance

- Clearly relevant to any personnel working in sales, logistics or procurement
- Useful for low level groups (giving and asking about personal details)
- Can start discussions on sales or procurement strategy, customer classification, data protection

Texts - examples

- Newsletters
- Reportage: video, audio and text
- Interviews
- Webinars
- Speeches
- Wikis/blogs

Texts - relevance

Relevance to Participants

- Expected to keep abreast of company developments
- May need to contribute to newsletter
- May be mentioned in the reportage
- Stories may directly impact on their daily work

Pedagogical Relevance

- Easy source of comprehension material
- Reason for productive use of the language (articles or video)
- Articles could actually be published and this could earn your participants 'brownie points'.

Example text activity

Interview: Lead-in and gist reading

Predict the answers from the questions.

LR – new CFO at company XYZ

1. How have your first weeks at XYZ been?
2. How have your first weeks at XYZ been?
3. What do you think are the keys to being a successful CFO?
4. Is it easy for an American to work at a German company?

Example question

Is it easy for an American to work at a German company?

Generally speaking, I think American and German business cultures have a lot in common. In particular, management decisions are made on the basis of logic and facts. This reflects my own personal style and approach to good management.

Source Texts - pitfalls?

- Honest discussions can be fiery ones.
- Don't let the participants compromise themselves.
- Keep the discussion constructive, e.g.
 - *Why do CFOs manage differently to CEOs?*
 - *Why has a new CFO been brought in at this time?*
 - *What challenges does she face?*

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- Knowledge Management System/Ishare
 - Work instructions
 - How-to's
 - Document archive
 - Project specifications
 - Project tracking
 - Wikis/blogs

Relevance to Participants

- Expected to keep records, log progress, write work instructions
- Will also have to follow the work instructions of others (e.g. while covering for someone)
- Writing a work instruction in English may be a performance goal

Pedagogical Relevance

- Productive tasks – speaking and writing
- Process writing approach -. Who is your audience, what do they need to know, how much context will they need to understand your instructions?
- Language of instruction/modal verbs

Recruitment Platforms/Social Media



- Job search
- Career profiles (for allocation to different projects)
- Internal LinkedIn

Relevance to Participants

- Expected to have an online profile and to keep this up-to-date
- Job opportunities

Pedagogical Relevance

- Talking about career history
- Tense usage
- CVs
- Sexy language for personal introductions
- Consistency in CVs

Input example

Writing a Career History: Tips

Consistency in CVs

- Give a brief description of each project including goals and activities.
- Outline your job roles and responsibilities. Use bullet points to make things clearer.
- Remember to include important tasks and to give examples of important achievements.
- If the project or responsibility is finished, used past participle forms (-ed), e.g. managed, grew, lead, created.
- If the project or responsibility is on-going, use -ing forms, e.g. managing, grow, leading, creating.

Profile – Language Toolbox

- **I'm passionate about** *[developing software]*.
- **I'm interested in** *[finding solutions to my client's problems]*.
- **I'm responsible for** *[maintaining our customer database]*.
- **I'm in charge of** *[a team of 15 people]*
- **I've recently moved into** *[the field of financial consulting]*.
- **My love of** *[Formula One]* **led me to work in** *[the automotive industry]*.
- **I started out in** *[the general accounts division]* **before moving on to** *[credit control]*.
- **I started out as** *[a trainee]* **in the** *[mechanical engineering division]*.
- **I was promoted to the post of** *[senior manager]* in 1996.
- **While studying for** *[my degree]*, **I took the opportunity of** *[doing work experience with KleinSchmidt Maxo]*.

Gaining Access

- Via the participants
- Get them to bring their laptops and a projector into the training room
- Check with HR beforehand that this is ok
- You may need to sign a confidentiality agreement
- Get them to show you around
- See if you can receive the newsletter

First training session

Language Toolbox

- Scroll up
- Scroll down
- Click the button to the left.
- Open up the window
- Click on the link
- Enter your password
- Open up the drop down list
- Select _____

Intranet as a Business Opportunity



- Intranet authors who write in English may need extra training.
- If your participants get published, you may get a mention or credit and so internal publicity.
- Try to get your tips and tricks onto the Ishare, e.g. Tip of the Week.

Tip of the Week

- Weekly e-mail
- Sent out to all participants in one location.
- Gives advice about
 - Useful phrases (apologising, inviting etc.)
 - Common mistakes
 - False friends
 - Tips on how to communicate (active listening, “THINK before you INK”)

TOTW – example extract

TARGET BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Target Tip: AT THE END; IN THE END; AT THE MOMENT

“At the end (of something)” = at the time when something ends. Examples:

- I’m going on holiday at the end of August.
- My holiday finishes at the beginning of September.

sebastian.turnbull@targettraining.eu