PBWORKS

Driving Wiki Adoption In Your Organization

White Paper

Includes PBworks Best Practices on Driving Adoption
The Four Horsemen of Behavioral Change * Use this script for a rollout schedule
Blank Page Syndrome * Increasing adoption using collaboration resources
Weaving collaboration into your workflow * The role of rewards

Overview

Everyone wants to run his or her business more effectively, but implementing new policies and procedures often can feel like an uphill battle. Even tools like PBworks, that were created to increase your company's productivity, can face a tough "staff adoption" challenge. Luckily, the PBworks team has spent a lot of time and energy not only perfecting their product, but coming up with ways to help you drive wiki adoption in your organization.

There are four strategies that help tremendously in the adoption of PBworks within a company:

1. Structure
2. Resources
3. Workflow
4. Rewards

Start With Structure

Structure the Adoption Process

- Start with a core team
- Work out a rollout schedule
- Assign specific tasks to specific people
- Set up weekly meetings and checkpoints

The first thing you want to do is start with a core team of PBworks users. Get your core team up to speed on what PBworks is, what it does and how you want to implement it in your workplace. Make sure that they are educated on all aspects of the tool. This way you will have a "go-to" team to which the rest of your employees can turn if they have problems or questions. Your core team also can help with structuring the content of your wiki to fit the needs of your company.

Next, you should work out a rollout schedule. Simply opening up the workspace and encouraging folks to "try it out" is likely to result in uneven adoption. Let's face it—we're all busy people, and if there's no deadline, we're not likely to spend a lot of time learning a new tool, no matter how attractive and easy to use it might be. We recommend a simple four-week rollout schedule:

Week 1

- Kickoff session with core team (Monday 12 PM--Lunch provided)
- Assign specific tasks to specific people
- Core team watches online training course, and attends PBworks Office Hours to ask questions of the PBworks staff (Wednesday 10 AM--snacks provided)

Week 2

- Core team members create structured pages (to avoid the blank page syndrome)
- Core team meets to review pages and overall structure (Thursday 12 PM--Lunch provided)

Week 3

- Add all relevant organization members to the wiki
- Kickoff meeting with entire team (Tuesday 12 PM--Lunch provided)
- Entire team watches the online training course, and attends PBworks Office Hours to ask questions of the PBworks staff (Wednesday 10 AM)
- Training session on available resources (Wednesday 11 AM)
- Training session on using the workspace for workflow (Wednesday 12 PM--Lunch provided)

Week 4

- Core team spends 1:1 time with other team members
- Team uses PBworks to sign up for next week's indoor skydiving outing
- Team uses PBworks to sign up for company-provided headphones
- Entire team feedback session (Friday 12 PM--Lunch provided

Once you've set a rollout schedule, you should assign specific tasks to specific people. There's no better way to get things done than to make sure that there's a single person on the hook to deliver on each individual task. Sending out tasks to the group as a whole simply doesn't provide the necessary accountability. For example, here's how a list of assignments might read:

Workspace pages setup:
* Admin Folder (David)
* Marketing Folder (Ramit)
* Engineering Folder (Nathan)

Training sessions:
* Available resources (David)
* Using the workspace for workflow (Ramit)
* Set up pages for skydiving RSVP and headphone offer (Nathan)

Finally, make sure you set up weekly meetings and checkpoints. As the old saying goes, "out of sight, out of mind." Weekly checkpoints provide a forcing function to make sure that you're adhering to your rollout schedule, and provide a perfect opportunity to hold people accountable for completing their assigned tasks. A simple way to do this is to schedule two regular meetings, one for the core team, and one for the entire team:

Core Team meetings

- Mondays, 10 AM
- Goal of meeting: Review progress of rollout, collaboration effectiveness

Entire Team meetings

- Fridays, 12 PM
- Goal of meeting: Provide venue for questions and discussion, as well as sharing best practices

Structure the Workspace Content

PBworks is all about flexibility, but many people who are new to the system find the level of flexibility to be overwhelming. We call this "blank page syndrome." For many, this brings up uncomfortable flashbacks to their college days.

Blank page syndrome is the feeling a person gets when he or she is sitting down to start a huge project, like a lengthy report, and ends up staring at all the empty space that needs to be filled. It can be hard to know where to start!

By having a core team learn and build the basic structure of your company's PBworks, the rest of your employees will feel more like they are editing instead of creating content. This takes away from the pressure they might feel from "blank page syndrome". Instead of building something from nothing, they are simply working with something that is already there and molding it to their particular needs.

Provide Ample Resources

One of the most important resources you will need to have available is a variety of "Independent Study" materials. These can be physical manuals that your team creates, or better yet they can be documents kept on your workspace. These materials can act as "how-to" guides and are extremely helpful in implementing PBworks into your workplace. While you should certainly conduct group training sessions, there always are some people who prefer to learn about things at their own pace and who feel shy about admitting that they don't know how a new piece of technology works yet. Your Independent Study materials are for these people. This way, everyone can have access to the answers without having to worry about protecting his or her image and ego.

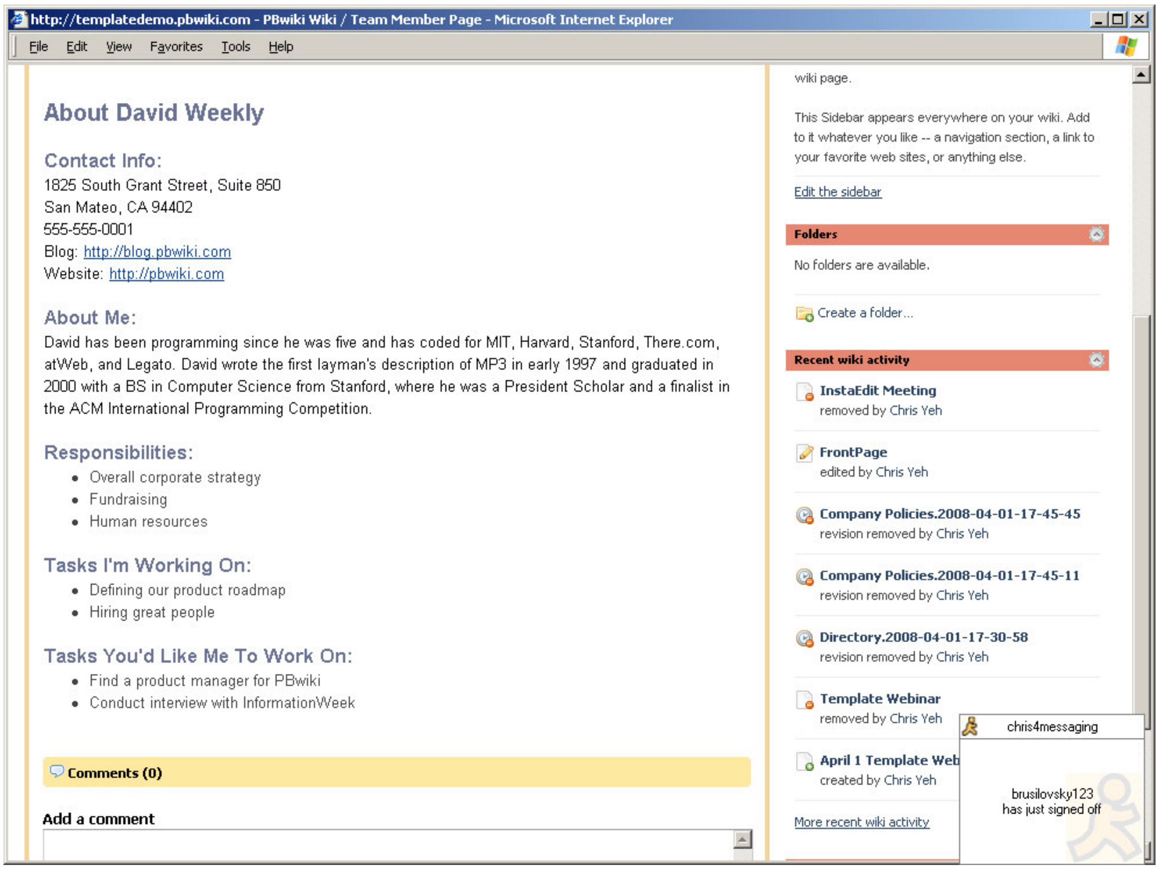
Because PBworks is always adding new features and troubleshooting it is important to keep your employees up to speed. PBworks offers a wide variety of free resources to make this process as easy as possible. To access these resources, visit PBworks University (http://pbworks.com/u).

And if you have specific questions, PBworks holds weekly office hours every month, where you can tune in and get live answers from the PBworks team. You can find a schedule of office hours, as well as other webinars and resources, at PBworks' webinars page (http://pbworks.com/content/webinars).

Weave Collaboration Into Workflow

One of the best ways to drive PBworks adoption in your company is to gradually work the technology into the workflow of your business. This slow integration allows your employees to become familiar with the PBworks system without being overwhelmed by it. You can start by implementing the reservation template, publishing meeting notes and meeting schedules, or even by using PBworks as a company policy portal. That way, all your employees will touch the workspace in the course of their day-to-day activities. For more ideas on how to use templates, pick up our white paper on that topic, "Boost Productivity With PBworks Templates."

One of the easiest ways to implement PBworks into your company's workflow is to give each of your employees a Team Member page that he or she can edit however each feels is necessary:



The larger your company is, the murkier the communication may be between departments. Everybody has had that moment when he or she feels like shouting, "This is not my job! If you want this part of a project done, you need to talk to someone else!" It's highly likely that your employees will relish the chance to document exactly what their functions are within the company; how they go about doing their jobs and the projects on which they are working.

Even better, you can require that each team member's page have "What I'm working on now", "What I will be working on next" and "Ask me to do something" sections.

Your employees will love being able to see who is doing what on a project, and they will love that there is a public record of their interactions. No longer can somebody excuse missing a deadline by saying "I'm sorry, I never got your e-mail asking me to complete that project!"

Reward Participation

Of course, even with all of these great PBworks adoption strategies, there always will be days when it feels like everyone in your company is resisting change. That's human nature. We all try to avoid the pain of change. One way to overcome this natural aversion is by rewarding participation. Here are a few of the ways we've seen people successfully use rewards to drive adoption:

Monetary rewards
Rosen Law, a law firm in Raleigh, offered a one thousand dollar reward to the employee who used the company workspace the most. You may not need to spend quite so much, but it's certainly a good way to get people's attention!

Edible rewards
Offer free lunch to anyone who attends a PBworks training session. You might even have a PBworks training session catered and allow the free food to be consumed right then and there! You also might offer coupons to local establishments as a reward to anyone who puts together his or her team member page by the end of a designated period of time.

Attendance rewards
Plan a really fun company-sponsored trip but only allow sign-ups to happen via your company's workspace. If they don't use the workspace to sign up, then they aren't

allowed to go! (This works best when there are a limited number of places available on the trip)

Praise

This may be the most important reward of all and it costs absolutely nothing. Make sure your employees know how much you appreciate them making the switch from the old system to PBworks. Publicly thank them for keeping their Team Member pages up to date or for reserving a conference room via the PBworks reservation template. If your employees know that you appreciate them taking the time to work with the new system, they are more likely to embrace the change.

Conclusion

Most people fear change both on personal and business levels. When it comes to sweeping business changes, like transitioning your business's communications to PBworks, it is best to make the change slowly. Get people used to the system, and make sure they have plenty of helpful resources to help guide them through the process. Most importantly, make sure you let them know how much you appreciate the time they are taking to learn the new system.

Eventually your team will be familiar with PBworks and embrace it. Then, instead of having to listen to, "Why can't we just do things the way we've always done them?" You'll be hearing, "Remember the way things used to be done? This is so much easier!"

About PBworks

PBworks is the world's leading provider of hosted collaboration solutions. Leading companies and organizations like FedEx, Bracewell & Giuliani, and the FDA choose PBworks to collaborate with employees, customers, partners, and vendors. We host over 800,000 workspaces, serve millions of users per month, and 94% of users would recommend PBworks to a friend. Over 50,000 businesses have chosen PBworks to implement knowledge management, extranets, project management, and a host of other business processes and workflows. PBworks' investors include Mohr Davidow Ventures, Seraph Group, Sippl Investments, and Ron Conway.

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