Corporate Renaissance Group

Canadian Electricity Association Builds a Collaborative Community for its Members, Committees & Staff:
with CRGroup and Microsoft SharePoint Databases

> "CRGroup helped us tap into the full potential of our SharePoint solution so we could provide better value to our members. They helped us turn our data into information. We now have the ability to show and track various measurement indicators on demand in order to serve the industry more efficiently."
>
> *– Dan Gent, Director of Analytics*
> *Canadian Electricity Association*

About Canadian Electricity Association

Founded in 1891, the Canadian Electricity Association (CEA) is the national forum and voice of the evolving electricity business in Canada. The Association contributes to the regional, national and international success of its members through the delivery of quality value-added services.

Canadian Electricity Association | Association canadienne de l'électricité

About CRGroup

Since 1989, Corporate Renaissance Group has been a global provider of innovative solutions that improve business management and performance. With over 4,000 customers worldwide, CRGroup has established itself with expertise in business management consulting and software development. CRGroup delivers solutions by leveraging their expertise in Microsoft Dynamics, SharePoint, business intelligence, financial and costing principles, shared services and employee performance management.

Overview

Since upgrading to SharePoint 2010 with help from Corporate Renaissance Group, CEA has begun the work of centralizing its data collection and reporting systems into one place, effecting a change in direction across the organization and making information more accessible to members and staff.

On behalf of its members, the Canadian Electricity Association's mandate is to provide leadership in advancing the interests of the electricity industry at a national level, and within provincial and international jurisdictions where there are collective national interests.

The Canadian Electricity Association (CEA) is comprised of many committees managing different programs, some of which collaborate and track various measurement indicators such as outages and occupational health and safety issues for industry regulators on behalf of CEA members.

In 2011 Dan Gent, the Director of Analytics at CEA, oversaw the management of data to support the various member-driven benchmarking programs. These programs included:
- The Association's Contact Management System,
- Occupational Health and Safety data collection and reporting,
- Sustainable Electricity data collection and reporting, and
- The Advanced Projects data collection tool.

At the time, information related to these programs was housed in a document library using Microsoft® SharePoint™ 2007. However, CEA saw further opportunity to streamline processes with SharePoint, specifically to simplify the collection, validation and reporting of additional data from the organization's various streams.

After conducting some preliminary research, CEA met with Corporate Renaissance Group, a Microsoft Partner with over 20 years of implementation experience and significant expertise in SharePoint. "We did not have the proficiency or the time to do the work ourselves," explains Gent.

"The team at Corporate Renaissance Group was very knowledgeable about SharePoint and had a good understanding of what needed to be done."

After reviewing the situation with the experts at CRGroup, the Canadian Electricity Association decided to upgrade the current system and move from the Foundation to the Enterprise version of SharePoint. "We understood that upgrading to SharePoint 2010 would let us gather, organize and present the data in new ways," says Gent.

"We hoped that it would make it easier for our members and staff to access information, and hopefully increase the use of the data.".

By successfully upgrading to SharePoint 2010 with CRGroup, CEA created a data management solution that better supported its members and staff, streamlined processes and improved organizational efficiency.

Streamlined Workflows
Members now have self-serve access to manage andupdate their own profile through the portal. They can also complete and submit applications for awards, reducing the redundancy of data entry by CEA staff. The system includes the formalization of electronic approval processes with alerts and email, so CEA staff canefficiently review and approve submissions and changes.

Improved User Experience
Before any data was migrated into the new SharePoint portal, CEA called on CRGroup to design and organize the information in a way that would enhance the user experience. The architecture applied to the new portal has created a sense of community among CEA staff and its members. Users now have quick and easy access to information that is relevant to them including news and reports, and they have more frequent contact with other community members as well.
"The new design helps users discover information faster. It encourages members and staff to go into the portal regularly to see what's going on," explains Gent. "It's the collaborative community that everyone wants."

Robust Reporting
In addition to integrating many existing reports into the new environment, Corporate Renaissance Group also created several new ones using the Reporting Services tool in SharePoint. The reports are accessible based on role and can be exported from web format to various formats including PDF, Word and Excel files, depending on the needs of the user.

CRGroup also used Bing maps on the Advanced Projects tool for visualizing CEA's data."These maps help users get visual indicators and a better sense of the "big picture" by mapping out geographical data in a visual format," says Gent.
For the management team, CRGroup helped CEA design several auto-generated reporting presentations that consolidate and display graphs and tables in PowerPoint. These reports facilitate access to the important data and eliminate the need to create the reports manually.

Ongoing Support
The Canadian Electricity Association and Corporate Renaissance Group have maintained a successful business partnership and continue to find new ways to optimize SharePoint to meet and exceed the needs of the community it serves.
"We are not finished yet," says Gent. "The process of centralizing our data systems continues and Corporate Renaissance Group is supporting us through this transition to get us where we want to be."

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