

Inside.HarlandClarke.com
Corporate Communications—Carly Barton
Harland Clarke
San Antonio, Texas, U.S.

In February 2008, a new employee intranet, *Inside.HarlandClarke.com*, was launched as a central location to find information about Harland Clarke. This tool was introduced nine months after two companies, John H. Harland Co. and Clarke American Corp., were merged. Prior to the launch of the new intranet, information was dispersed throughout hundreds of Lotus Notes databases and legacy web sites. Consequently, the same data was posted in several places, making it hard to keep information current and to ensure that all employees were getting the same updates in a timely manner.

NEED/OPPORTUNITY / The purpose of *Inside.HarlandClarke.com* was to create a centralized communication tool for employees to find time-sensitive, integrated and up-to-date information about Harland Clarke.

In May 2007, John H. Harland Co. and Clarke American Corp. merged to form Harland Clarke Corp. Directly after the merger, the primary challenge was getting important information to all employees in a timely manner when the networks, e-mail systems and legacy intranets had not yet been integrated. To temporarily alleviate this problem, an employee section of *HarlandClarke.com* (also launched in May 2007) was created to post important updates about the new company. However, the site was quickly outdated, and the functionality did not support posting updated information in an organized, user-friendly manner.

The lack of a centralized communication tool slowed down the progress of the new company. Because each of the legacy companies was accustomed to sharing information in different ways and at different times, it was hard to determine what had been communicated and to whom. Furthermore, because the ERP systems were not integrated, it was difficult to share information with targeted groups via e-mail.

In the wake of the May 2007 merger, employees were particularly hungry for information. But for several months following the merger, little or no new communication was reaching them. The reason was that senior leadership was still making key decisions about the future direction of the company. Employees expressed dissatisfaction with receiving communications that basically stated there were currently no additional updates. With such monumental change facing the organization, employees were primarily concerned with “What’s in it for me?” topics. They wanted to know answers to a few basic questions such as if their location was going to stay open, if their benefit programs were going to change, and if there would be additional changes to their reporting structure.

The team created an employee intranet that would serve as the central point of communication for Harland Clarke employees enterprisewide. It would also:

- ▶ Facilitate communication and increase productivity within Harland Clarke by reducing inquiries for basic employee needs (such as HR forms, location addresses, links to the phone directory, etc.).
- ▶ Create an online tool that replaced the existing intranet sites at legacy Clarke American and legacy Harland as well as the temporary employee section of HarlandClarke.com that resulted in a cohesive online experience.

INTENDED AUDIENCE(S) / Harland Clarke is a leading provider of integrated payment solutions, marketing services and technology solutions. It serves approximately 15,000 financial institutions as well as major investment firms, business-to-business clients, small businesses and individual consumers. With its corporate headquarters in San Antonio, Texas, and regional headquarters in Decatur, Georgia, Harland Clarke employs approximately 5,500 people and has manufacturing and contact center facilities nationwide.

INTERNAL AUDIENCE

Harland Clarke has four internal audiences:

1. Corporate and regional employees
2. Call center employees
3. Manufacturing employees
4. Sales employees

Within these groups exists a diverse workforce of all ages and ethnic backgrounds, divided primarily between management and nonmanagement personnel.

Before the merger, Clarke American and John H. Harland were fierce competitors, and had very distinct cultures. In order for both sides to come together for the benefit of the new company, the executive management team wanted to be sensitive and ensure that employees from each former company received equal communication. This was a key consideration for the corporate communications department as they began to develop the new intranet site.

Large integrations can take 18–24 months if executed properly; therefore, the team knew that all information employees were seeking would not be available at the time the new intranet was launched. Understanding this, the communication team made it a point to design the site with a customized content management system (CMS) that allowed the addition of sections and changing the navigation as the company grew without requiring additional IT support or a site redesign.

An integrated intranet was the logical choice for a centralized communication tool. Employees on both sides were accustomed to finding information through electronic media, such as the legacy intranets or through Lotus Notes databases. Managers of employees who did not have access to e-mail regularly printed relevant information and posted it in common areas around their facility; thus, the team needed to ensure the web site pages were easy to print.

Access to the intranet had to be easy, or employees would not use it. Corporate communications worked with the IT and security department to ensure that employees with approved company IP addresses had automatic entry to the site. However, if employees wanted to access the site from home (particularly beneficial to manufacturing employees who were not on a company computer), they could be assigned a username and password for authentication purposes.

The corporate communications group did extensive research on intranet design, usability and navigation before beginning this project in order to create a tool that employees would actually use. Particularly useful were four research studies purchased from the Nielsen Norman Group, which were based on usability studies of 27 corporate intranets, with employees from each company participating as usability testers.

The team also conducted a baseline survey with all employees who had access to the employee side of HarlandClarke.com, which was launched in May 2007, to determine what features they liked and disliked as well as what would be useful to include on the new site.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES / The goal was to create an intranet for Harland Clarke employees that contained up-to-date information, that was user-friendly, easy to navigate and had increased functionality from the employee section of HarlandClarke.com. In essence, the goal was to change employee behavior and to influence employees' opinions about the validity of a company intranet so they learned to always check the web site first to find the most current information before asking a question of another business area.

Objective No. 1: Increase the average number of page views to Inside.HarlandClarke.com per month by 35 percent above those to the temporary employee side of HarlandClarke.com.

Objective No. 2: Obtain at least a 70 percent overall satisfaction level with the new intranet.

Objective No. 3: Obtain at least a 70 percent satisfaction rate with the searchability and navigation of the site.

Objective No. 4: Obtain at least a 70 percent satisfaction rate with the type of information available on the intranet.

SOLUTION OVERVIEW / STRATEGY

The corporate communications team wanted to not only make a product that "looked pretty," but also to create a site that could grow and evolve with the company using the latest and greatest in web technology and research. As a result, a lot of time was spent on researching best practices and methods for presenting data online (i.e., usability and design studies). For content development, the team involved internal stakeholders in each of the business areas to determine what experience they had with legacy intranets, as well as the expectations they had for what a new intranet needed to include. They considered using newer Web 2.0 concepts to incorporate functions that many employees were already

comfortable with through the use of social media sites such as MySpace and Facebook (i.e., audio, video and image files). The thought process was that if they made the site functional and visually appealing, employees would use it regularly to find relevant information about Harland Clarke. There is nothing more frustrating than visiting a web site and realizing that you cannot find the information you need. Designing a site that was easy to navigate was imperative to the strategy of Inside.Harland-Clarke.com. This led the communication team to implement and promote five ways to search the site. Based on survey results, one of the favorite features of employees is the A-Z index, which allows the user to search for topics alphabetically.

IMPLEMENTATION AND CHALLENGES / BUDGET

Discovery and planning phase I: US\$7,500

Design, production, implementation and evaluation: US\$25,000 – US\$40,000

Web hosting with Rackspace (per year): US\$900

All phase I research, design and development for the site took place between October 2007 and February 2008. As part of Phase II, enhancements and tweaks were made to the site in July 2008. Phase III is being implemented for 2009.

Phase I: Launch a site with a sophisticated search engine, dynamic navigation and sufficient information for employees to find essential knowledge about how Harland Clarke is structured.

Phase II: Increase the depth of knowledge posted on the site to include more integrated policies and processes, HR and benefits information, and other information relating to Harland Clarke business areas.

Phase III: Add multimedia functionality to the site to include Flash video players, photo galleries, RSS feeds, rate/comment/share features and eCards for employee recognition.

RESOURCES

A creative agency, Toolbox Studios Inc., helped with creating the customized CMS and overall design. Because the IT department was extremely busy with the integration of systems and processes, corporate communications was charged with creating this site without internal IT support both before and after the launch. Only one member of the corporate communications team worked in conjunction with key subject matter experts throughout the business to outline the web site, write and load all the content.

LIMITATIONS/CHALLENGES / This was a monumental undertaking. As the team found in their research, projects of this scale usually required a team of five or more to organize gather and load all the data.

According to Toolbox Studios, the time they normally use for the planning and design of a web site was approximately six weeks. Most projects usually take about one year to complete. The corporate communications group had less than four months to draft content, get approvals, and load and test

the web site before going live.

MEASUREMENT/EVALUATION / Implementing Inside.HarlandClarke.com far exceeded the team's goal of changing employee behavior. It was amazing to see how shortly after the site was launched in February that employees would call and request additional content to be posted online. The team's favorite call to receive is an employee saying that they've looked at the site and cannot find something. This shows that they are looking and gives the team great ideas for how to enhance the site.

Launching Inside.HarlandClarke.com was a crowning achievement for the corporate communications group—and Phase I was completed in less than five months without IT support! Sample comments from Harland Clarke leadership include the following:

- ▶ “I love this new web site. It has great presentation, information is easy to find, very current and relevant. Thank you for the great job of developing and maintaining this excellent tool for the employees.”—director, billing
- ▶ “This site is really well done. I have to say, I really like this A-Z interface. I also like that I did not have to log in. Very good. This really has a fun look!”—vice president, marketing communications
- ▶ “Congratulations! Our intranet is about to take a quantum leap forward! Your drive, will-to-win and high attention to detail is certainly evident in this excellent deliverable! Great job!”—vice president e-commerce

Objective No. 1: Traffic to the new employee site increased by 50 percent over the outdated section of HarlandClarke.com (Source: Google Analytics). Seventy-one percent of employees accessed the site more than 10 times since it launched (based on an anonymous survey conducted 90 days after the launch of the new site).

Objective No. 2: Eighty-three percent of employees were more than satisfied with the new site (results were based on a poll that ran on the home page of Inside.HarlandClarke.com for 60 days). Seventy-nine percent of employees liked the site overall (based on an anonymous survey conducted 90 days after the launch of the new site).

Objective No. 3: Seventy-six percent of employees were pleased with the searchability and navigation of the site.

Objective No. 4: Seventy-eight percent of employees were more than satisfied with the type of information found on the site (based on an anonymous survey conducted 90 days after the launch of the new site).

