



Global Public Relations Agency Unleashes the Power of Creativity with Open Text

Cohn & Wolfe uses Open Text Collaboration to create a community where ideas rule

Industry

Public Relations

Customer

cohn&wolfe

Business Challenges

- Create a global unified working environment from two merged entities
- Give employees around the world the ability to share information, expertise, and ideas, and leverage tools and resources
- Develop a solution that would work across markets, cultures and languages

Business Solutions

Open Text Collaboration, Vignette Edition (formerly Vignette Collaboration)

Business Benefits

- Business productivity is enhanced as employees can instantly access case studies, presentations, discussion forums, articles, and other materials that advance business development.
- The site provides a community for employees across the globe to search for, develop, and respond to content—as well as connect with other people—on a variety of topics, projects, and ideas.
- Employees can quickly and easily reach out to one another for strategic planning and idea sharing, with the ability to see who has the knowledge or experience best suited to a client or prospect.

Customer Overview

Cohn & Wolfe is a strategic marketing and public relations agency with core areas of expertise in consumer, digital, healthcare, technology, and corporate communications. Dedicated to creating, building, and protecting the world's greatest brands, Cohn & Wolfe has offices in North America, Europe, and Asia. Known for creating and implementing powerful communications programs, Cohn & Wolfe's client roster includes Hilton, Dell, Nike, Walmart, and American Express.

When WPP public relations agencies GCI Group and Cohn & Wolfe merged in July 2008, they were faced with the task of creating a unified global agency, and, ultimately, a working environment that would enable it and its people to succeed. The combined firm, which would do business under the Cohn & Wolfe name, wanted to establish a contemporary culture that reflected the transformed communications landscape and nurture core principles of thought leadership and internal development.

As a public relations agency known for creativity, brand building, and digital media expertise, Cohn & Wolfe needed to connect employees around the world to share information, while supplying the tools and resources they would need to become the agency's next expert.

The Challenge

Cohn & Wolfe understood it was crucial to build a system to share expertise and interact with ideas. Employee collaboration and dialogue were the top priorities—not an easy task, given that whatever solution the agency developed would have to work across multiple markets, cultures, and languages. Rather than simply serving as a document repository, Cohn & Wolfe wanted a system through which employees could collaborate, brainstorm, and help each other win new business. The agency needed a system that was easy to use and valuable as an idea generator and idea enhancer and a tool to increase productivity and efficiency.

The Solution

Working with Vignette, now part of Open Text, Cohn & Wolfe developed a new kind of portal that is not so much an intranet as an internal social network, using Open Text Collaboration, Vignette Edition (formerly Vignette Collaboration).

Open Text Collaboration provides a Web 2.0-ready, intuitive, and extensible enterprise solution that enables organizations to improve knowledge management, harness expertise, and more efficiently direct business processes that require collaboration across disparate geographic and organizational boundaries.





Cohn & Wolfe's "Den" – An Internal Facebook for the Organization

The Cohn & Wolfe Portal

Using Open Text Collaboration, Vignette Edition, Cohn & Wolfe created a site with the familiar look and feel of social media sites such as Facebook. It also embraces the overarching idea of social media: let anyone create content and let anyone engage and respond to that content to generate a snowball effect of conversation and idea development.

Among the key functions of Cohn & Wolfe's portal:

- Anyone can create a profile, community, blog, wiki, or discussion forum
- Employees can bookmark, tag, and subscribe to their favorite content
- Every office has its own community and homepage
- Content—including case studies, presentations, proposals, podcasts, articles, and blogs—comes from the agency's offices all over the world

The site even makes it easy to see what's new, as content on the home page dynamically updates based on user activity.

Cohn & Wolfe's social Intranet offers easy navigation and encourages participation. As opposed to a traditional intranet where a handful of people control and distribute information, the agency site creates a democratic community of global employees who can search for, develop, and respond to content—as well as connect with other people—on any variety of topics, projects, and ideas. The agency encourages employees to find colleagues with similar interests outside of work and create communities and blogs on these topics.

The Results

With Open Text Collaboration, Vignette Edition, Cohn & Wolfe was able to develop a platform that connects everyone and at the same time provides a valuable source of ideas and expertise to sustain the agency's focus on thought leadership. The platform generates its own momentum—growing and improving the more people use it.

"It's not enough for it to be a cool idea or just the latest idea. It's got to be productive as well. People have to understand why they should use it."

Eric Litchfield,
Vice President of Communications, Cohn & Wolfe

The agency's Web 2.0 tools not only deliver on their original purpose of unity and collaboration, but also fuel business productivity. Employees from around the world can instantly access case studies, presentations, discussion forums, articles, and other materials that advance existing work and help foster business development. Cohn & Wolfe employees can quickly and easily reach out to one another for strategic planning and idea sharing, with the ability to see who has the knowledge or experience best suited to a client or prospect.

"It's not enough for it to be a cool idea or just the latest idea." said Eric Litchfield, Vice President of Communications, Cohn & Wolfe. "It's got to be productive as well. People have to understand why they should use it."

Another major benefit is that the portal lets agency staff build the kind of culture and work environment they want. The goal: let self-directed talent thrive.

The social nature of the portal is already leading to new features. One is the Idea Request network, which emerged from the site's discussion forums. This network allows anyone to send in a request for new ideas and feedback, and garner responses from all over the world.

Conclusion

The Cohn & Wolfe intranet is a great example of how the Web has become more social, and an engine for growth and productivity. With Open Text, Cohn & Wolfe's social intranet, The Den, is a vital collaboration tool, knowledge base, and space for employees to hone their skills, and even make new friends.

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