

Case study

BDP.

Sector Architects, Engineering & Construction
Service Bespoke Software

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A Collaborative Hub - an information hub to aid collaborative working

For architectural practices like BDP working in the knowledge economy, project team integration, information management and communications are critical to achieving high standards of quality, efficiency and success. We're passionate about helping people improve how they collaborate and communicate with their colleagues and clients so we were delighted when BDP asked for our help in unlocking their potential.



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Results at a glance

- Using Microsoft SharePoint to improve communication and collaboration for geographically dispersed people
- A content management solution to allow quick and efficient access to information
- Integration with over Microsoft products

BDP enable their partners to succeed in the knowledge economy. Creating places and spaces across the world, everyone plays their part. Architects, designers, engineers. BDP has the challenge of making sure they've all got the latest information – whenever they need it.

That's a very real challenge. Today's AEC sector is truly global, and best practices are in continuous development. BDP know that smooth collaboration between global, interdisciplinary teams is key. So how did we help?

We partnered with BDP to understand how their partners collaborate. Very quickly, we recognised that a strategy for content management would underpin the solution. Why start with a strategy rather than the technology? Simple. We're people-first. We worked with BDP stakeholders to understand how they needed to communicate – and perhaps talk about their challenges.

We also involved BDP's internal technology experts. Any technology solution is a partnership, so we get everybody involved from day-one. Involved people become interested people, and that's when the best ideas come about.

"Waterstons have been very willing to listen to our specific needs and work with us to develop solutions with a low management overhead."

Matt Sheard
Intranet Editor



The Solution

With BDP's goal to improve content management, team collaboration and practice wide communication in mind, we identified the need for a new corporate intranet which could act as a content collaboration hub. Microsoft SharePoint was quickly recognised as the right platform for the job.

SharePoint would offer the centralisation and content management needed. And coupled with the flexibility to extend functionality using Microsoft .NET customisations, we could make sure to meet any niche requirements. Going beyond SharePoint's intranet capabilities, its ability to integrate with existing technologies such as Microsoft Exchange and Microsoft Office only increased the collaboration possibilities.

Our consultants worked in partnership with BDP to design and deliver collaboration functionality across the practice worldwide. Our first step was to extend their existing corporate intranet onto the new platform - now with its new name and identity - Planet. The strategy comprised of three key areas:

People

We've spoken already about putting people at the centre of everything we do - and BDP's interdisciplinary teams are at the heart of their philosophy, too. We focused on creating configurable "People Pages" within SharePoint, extending the My Site functionality within SharePoint. All key information - contact information, profession and location information, an informal Curriculum Vitae and details of internal committee membership - was put at the forefront, allowing people to search and connect with each other. Connecting individuals was the key for team integration and project mobilisation.

Practice

We realised that BDP's corporate practice information fell naturally into professional and sector groupings. BDP use a distributed approach to editing and curating information: their people are empowered. We developed bespoke styling controls, so that BDP could easily de-centralise their content editing, while retaining a consistent look-and-feel for their intranet identity.

Design Process

Fundamental to delivering projects within BDP is the design process. Therefore, it was vital that the relevant information (for example; procedures, guidance documentation or proformas) was both accessible and clearly structured into related project stages. How did we achieve this? We developed a portal that laid out the process using a graphical interface and linked the relevant information to specific activities. Built in SharePoint electronic document management functionality makes the portal usable to all project team members. BDP Authors now have the ability to edit the graphical process layout within the portal continually and collaborate, approve and publish any new information.

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Almost half of architects
are using BIM



About Process



Welcome to New Process

The New Process has been re-designed and re-structured in order to comply with the new RIBA Plan of Work, whilst ensuring that the tool becomes more user friendly. New Process is more than a facelift of the previous. New Process is a toolbox for employees of BDP and a graphic example of the institutional mechanism.



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Glossary of Terms

'As Constructed' Information

Information produced at the end of a project to represent what has been constructed. This will comprise a mixture of 'as-built' information from specialist subcontractors and the 'final construction issue' from design team members. Clients may also wish to undertake 'as-built' surveys using new surveying technologies to bring a further degree of accuracy to this information.

Building Contract

The contract between the client and the contractor for the construction of the project. In some instances, the Building Contract may contain design duties for specialist subcontractors and/or design team members. On some projects, more than one Building Contract may be required; for example, one for shell and core works and another for furniture, fitting and equipment aspects.

Building Information Modelling (BIM)

BIM is widely used as the acronym for 'Building Information Modelling', which is commonly defined (using the Construction Project Information Committee (CPIIC) definition) as: 'digital representation of physical and functional characteristics of a facility creating a shared knowledge resource for information about it and forming a reliable basis for decisions during its life cycle, from earliest conception to demolition'

results are powered by
BDP Glossary of Terms

The Benefits

We worked with BDP to design and implement Planet - keeping in mind their core design principles - providing the highest quality through integrated, interdisciplinary teams. Essential to this concept was the ability to collaborate and communicate information efficiently with team members, freeing up more time to concentrate on producing a quality design.

By concentrating on the concepts of People, Practice and Design Process, the solution has enabled BDP to:

- Centralise multi-dimensional content from across the organisation into a central repository.
- Provide an environment for managed communication with a decentralised editing community.
- Quickly connect geographically dispersed people, ensuring that the disciplines have the best access to relevant information.
- Make the people, across the business, more visible, fostering a greater sense of community, improving interpersonal communication and making the identification of unusual skills easier.
- Provide a robust technology solution supporting all project teams and improving the delivery of projects throughout the practice.

Today, together with the BDP Content Management Group we are continuing to enhance the Planet solution. Continually, we are demonstrating that high quality design and performance can be achieved through technology.