

PRWD Case Study: Hyde Housing Group

Client



www.hyde-housing.co.uk

Objective

Provide usability consultancy and user research to identify improvements to Hyde Housing's intranet system, Hydewide.

This was the first such research carried out on the usability of Hydewide, and would form a major part of the future development strategy for the intranet.

“ It was especially useful to get feedback from the interviews as colleagues seemed to be more candid with PRWD so hopefully gave a real insight and so will appreciate changes made even more. ”

Ruth Appiah, Communications Manager

“ PRWD have delivered exactly what was required of the project and done so in an extremely efficient way. ”

The information gained from respondents, both qualitative and quantitative, helped to reinforce the need for change and gave a clear direction for travel. ”

David Boardman, Communications Director

Valuable insights gathered from across the group to improve intranet usability

Background

Hyde Housing Group is one of the UK's largest housing associations, managing over 43,000 properties, principally located across the South of England. Hyde employs over 1,600 staff, based at their Head Office in London and at branch offices in a wide variety of locations. Hyde also coordinates with local and national government agencies.

Hyde's intranet system, Hydewide, provides vitally important information to staff members and helps to keep staff across the group in touch with each other and with the latest developments. Prior to PRWD's involvement, the intranet had grown organically with no user testing or usability analysis.

Objectives

PRWD were asked to conduct a range of qualitative and quantitative research into the usability of Hydewide, in order to produce a report detailing potential usability improvements.

What We Did

PRWD carried out extensive user research, using the following methods: -

- Interviews and user testing, with employees from across the group
- In-depth questionnaire sent out to all employees
- Expert evaluation of Hydewide, carried out by Paul Rouke

The interviews involved visiting several locations, including London, Peterborough, Southampton and Brighton. The staff members interviewed held a range of different positions within the group and had different perspectives on the usability of Hydewide as it related to their role. The interviews involved building trust and confidence, ensuring that all interviewees offered their thoughts. Where possible, interviews also included 'guerilla' user testing, where users carried out simple tasks using Hydewide in order to identify problems.

The questionnaire was designed in collaboration with Hyde's Communications Department and the internal Communications Champions, staff members who have special responsibility for supporting change and improvement within the group.

The expert evaluation was based on a comparison of Hydewide to industry-standard best practices, identifying weaknesses in the concept, design or implementation of the intranet.

Finally, all these findings were collated into a detailed report and presentation for Hyde's executive management team.

Results and Next Steps

The questionnaire received a response rate in excess of 20%, and along with the enthusiastic response of staff members in interviews, provided valuable feedback from Hydewide users. Many of the findings from user feedback were supported by the expert evaluation, which identified many similar improvements and others beyond.

The final recommendations were divided into three categories, based on the extent of work required to implement them - quick wins, improvements and new developments. This provided immediate actions to be taken, some of which were implemented immediately.

The report now forms part of the plan for future development of Hydewide, and the process of staff involvement has ensured that staff throughout the business are fully behind the planned changes.