

An honest look at what a real intranet migration actually involves

Kelly Short, Resmed

Kelly is going to walk through some of those real lessons that we'll learn from the journey at Resmed, including some of the quick wins, maybe some of the things that would be changed next time. It's a fantastic, really practical session, so get ready to take notes. Kelly, I will hand over to you now. Awesome, thank you so much, Emily, and thanks for having me today. I am Kelly Short, I'm the Director of Communications at Resmed, and I oversee our internal communications team.

And today I'm going to talk a little bit more, as Emily said, about the team's effort last year to migrate our intranet to SharePoint. If you haven't heard of Resmed before, there's a good chance someone whose life we helped change. Resmed is a global health tech company focused on helping people sleep better, breathe better, and live healthier lives at home. We develop connected devices, software, and digital health solutions for sleep apnea, respiratory care, and home healthcare, serving more than 150 million people in 140 countries. So what really powers Resmed is our people.

More than 10,000 employees around the world combine deep healthcare expertise with innovation, technology, and a strong sense of purpose, and our people span the frontline of manufacturing, clinical support, corporate, sales, research, and development, and so our intranet has to meet a wide range of needs. My team leads global employee communications across channels, leadership, digital employee experience, and one of the biggest initiatives our team led in the past year was Resmed's global intranet, and we migrated to SharePoint, which really became about rethinking how employees connect to information and tools and leadership inside the digital workplace and with each other.

We worked closely with a cross-functional team and to really help bring it to life, and we had folks from across marketing, operations, IT, our global network of intranet admins help bring it to life, and today, I'll share some of the lessons we learned along the way, what worked, what didn't, and what we'll definitely do differently next time. There we go. It took a minute to load my presentation, but there we go. All right, so I don't know if it's slow on your end. There we go, okay, there we go.

So when we look at our intranet journey, it mirrors the broader evolution of many organizations have faced. In 2021, our intranet was essentially a SharePoint archive, a place where documents went to disappear, basically. It wasn't searchable, it wasn't inclusive, and it wasn't designed with the employee experience in mind. But as our business transformed into a digital-first organization, our intranet had to keep pace. We started

layering in design, accessibility, analytics, but even those efforts exposed a bigger problem.

That platform couldn't scale with the way the work was changing, and so by 2025, we really had to think differently, and instead of treating the intranet as a standalone channel, which it ended up being during that phase, we integrated it directly into Teams last year, and the whole Microsoft 365 ecosystem, and that shift turned our intranet from a separate tool into a tool that really helps connect everything else. So a key lesson for us was that the evolution wasn't just about features, it was really about building a digital workplace, about the culture and the employees and matching the strategy of the company.

So we really listened to employees before we launched. Oftentimes, you are looking at an intranet redesign with technology at the forefront, which is critically important, but we also just kind of flipped that as well. Our starting point was listening to our employees. We did a survey, and I'll tell you a little bit about how we conducted it too, because we tried to have fun with it, but employees really wanted reliable articles, quick tool access, and an intranet that matched their daily flow in Teams. What stood out most, though, was the nuance.

Nearly half of the employees told us that quick access to tools directly increased productivity, while others felt most productive through collaboration, and that told us we weren't designing for one type of user, we had to design for multiple styles. So as a side note, actually on this survey, when we sent it out, employees at the time were receiving multiple different surveys from various teams for different reasons, and we really didn't want to exhaust people with another survey, so we made it all about them.

We designed it after a Reddit-style personality quiz, where people answered questions about their habits and their work style, and at the end, they were told what their work personality was, rather than just filling out a standard survey, and we, in turn, were able to get the information that we needed to help inform a better intranet for our employees. So when we set out to design our intranet, we didn't start with a blank page, we started with employee behaviors, and what they told us shaped five themes that became the backbone of our design. It began with integration.

77% of employees told us they started their day in Teams. It was a clear mandate. If the intranet wasn't inside Teams, it would always feel like an extra stop for them, so we built it into the flow of their work. From there, we had to acknowledge that not everyone works the same way. Some people are natural connectors, and others are efficiency-driven. That insight helped shaped our second theme in designing that adapts to different work styles. Whether you're chasing collaboration or shortcuts, the intranet is adjusting to employees and what they need.

But even the best design can fail, we all know that, if people can't find what they need. So our third area that we focused on was fast and easy search. We made it frictionless because it takes more than a couple of clicks. Employees will check out and get frustrated and not come back and not see it as a helpful resource. So once we had the structure, we focused on keeping it alive, and that's where our fourth theme came in with fresh and relevant

content. Nothing was gonna kill our adoption faster than a homepage that was stale.

So we knew that by building in mechanisms for daily updates, the intranet became something employees wanted to check and not something that they had to. And finally, we opened the door to dialogue. Instead of a top-down broadcast channel, we created spaces for employees to share, build communities, suggest, and shape what comes next. So that shift from one-way to two-way conversation was really critical in turning our intranet into a living, evolving hub, which we call it, by the way.

So rather than five isolated principles, these themes helped form our journey to meet employees where they are, adapt to how they work, and to really make it easy for them and keep it fresh and invite them to participate in the process, make them part of it. And it's continued to stay relevant for employees. To give you a sense of scale, this was a global migration with a highly distributed model. We had hundreds of intranet admins across regions and functions. And importantly, these were not full-time communications or intranet employees.

These folks were marketers, HR partners, finance team members, operations leads, all folks managing content for their intranet site on top of their day jobs. At the same time, we weren't just changing platforms. We were really shifting how the intranet fit in to our broader digital workplace at Resmed. So the challenge wasn't just about moving content. It was about how do we move content, retain the admins that we had built up over the past couple of years, support them, and drive adoption without breaking the employee experience in the process. So we treated admins like owners. We brought them into the process.

We positioned them as the folks responsible for their site's success, not just maintaining a page, but making decisions about their content and structure and experience. And the reality that we had was that with hundreds of admins and a small core team, we also had a very tight timeline. So a more traditional support model with a central team and tickets and one-off help wasn't going to be manageable during this quick process for our migration within our timeframe. So we introduced a task force model. We pulled together a group of subject matter experts across teams and regions, assigned them directly to admins.

So each person had their own group that they would work with. And so instead of having one small central team supporting everyone, we added a distributed support network. This did a couple of things. It helped scale our support in a way that was manageable, and it also created trust. Admins weren't just reaching out to a project team. They were working with someone who understood their local region, their function, and their challenges, but was also knowledgeable about the intranet and could help them with some questions that they had. To set boundaries, we had to set boundaries to create what support looked like for everyone.

So we were explicit in what we would and what we wouldn't do throughout the process. For everyone, we provided training. We actually worked with our learning and development team to be able to host that training on our LMS system. We provided guidance and

templates. We had an on-demand library of knowledge that the team did an incredible job with. And we helped audit and lift the content over and guide them to the migration of the new site. For the most strategic areas of the site, we were very hands-on.

We provided hands-on help with the new pages and the setup, but we also had to enable admins with the tools and templates they needed for the entire site to get across the finish line. So it was really clear that they were enabled to move that content and bring over what they needed themselves. As part of our change management phase, we had to focus on the fact that not all audiences need the same message, which is communicators. We do know that, and this was such a perfect example of that. The admins, for example, needed very specific action-oriented communications.

They needed to know what they needed to do, by when, how to do it. They may have needed training communications, for example. Employees in the greater employee population, on the other hand, needed something different. They needed to understand why it even mattered to them. What's better about the new site? What's changing? How's this gonna impact my day? And we obviously didn't wanna have any kind of negative impact of like, oh, well, I can't find something now. We just wanted to add value in this area. So we really had two different strategy tracks for this effort.

Often, with a global launch strategy, you might think about doing a big global launch, but instead, we chose to do a phased rollout instead. We launched region by region, and the simple reason for that is that we wanted to learn as we scaled. So each phase gave us insight on, were people getting stuck? What questions were coming up? And what needed to be clarified? So by the time we reached the end, we were in a much stronger position and learning from our work along the way.

And one of the most important mindset shifts I think we made during the process was to launch with a minimum viable product that it wasn't perfect. It wasn't even fully complete, but it was strong enough to deliver value to the organization. We had a hard deadline we needed to meet to get this content migrated over and move away from our previous provider. So we knew we had to work in a very fixed timeframe. So by launching in this way, we were able to learn faster, and it allowed us to improve the experience based on user behavior.

And over time, we were able to make improvements along the way. And it's still something to this day that we do, that we continually look at the site and improve it based on how people are using it and the needs of the organization. After launch, it was very clear that our biggest driver of adoption was our administration, our admin network, because they were embedded truly in our teams. They understood their audiences, they could help reinforce behaviors locally. So while the global comms created that awareness, the admins and content experts really drove the actual usage at the beginning.

And your admin community is not a support function, it's really an adoption engine to your intranet and helping in that way. Some of the things I might do differently or might adjust if I

had to do this again, I think I'd potentially even simplify the admin experience more upfront, invest in the content cleanup before migration. We were on a very tight timeline and it's seeing kind of all the content that had been created over the years. I think that definitely having that audit is important as you maintain your intranet.

And then definitely on the story about the, analytics and dashboards are amazing, but it's also the story behind it and how it's driving value for the organization is what's important. So really a couple of final takeaways, enabling admins, designing for your employees, knowing the audience and their behaviors and really launch and iterate, right? You're not gonna launch it and leave it. And like I said, every week the team still meets and we talk about what improvements we're making to the site. Sometimes it's big improvements, others it's small tweaks to make differences to improve it for employees. So that's it. Thank you so much, Kelly.

Now, as you've been sharing, we've had lots of people in the chat, they're sort of bonding, I think, over a bit of shared trauma, maybe from previous migration projects. So I feel like people are maybe reflecting on some of those previous experience. I think a lot of what you've shared as well is also going to be quite timely and helpful for people who are just about to embark on these big initiatives. So really appreciate you going into detail and kind of sharing how you approached it at each different step.

Now, let me just jump in and I'll have a few questions for you as well off the back of this. So let me just jump into the Q&A. I'm just wondering, looking back, what do you think was the single biggest decision that made the migration either a lot easier or a lot harder than expected? That's a good question. Yeah, I think, and Holly and William, I know you're on the call, so if you have thoughts about this too, please jump in, my amazing team members. But I think like, I mean, one, to design with an MVP.

I mean, not trying for perfection right out of the gate because no matter what, you're gonna keep iterating and keep continuing to improve. So focusing and really prioritizing on what the organization needs, I mean, we were in a very fixed timeline, like we couldn't move it. So it forced us to prioritize what was needed, so. Perfect.

And from my perspective on that, just real quick, the admin kind of network, Kelly, that you were talking about, I feel like that was one of the most valuable things, having local champions who can help kind of drive adoption with their teams in ways that an email from corporate communications won't reach people. It really was super valuable to get admins to champion this for us throughout the whole process. So when we worked like the past seven years building relationships with people to get to that point, so having those relationships and champions was super valuable for us throughout the whole process of the migration. Thanks, Holly.

And now that the migration is complete as well, like how do you continue to support and engage those admins longer term? We have a, what's worked out really well, Holly and William started a Teams community for our admins, and they also rely on each other. So

they'll be able to post in there and say, hey, does anybody, you know, has anyone worked with this widget or has anybody done this? And, you know, obviously we'll step in to support them, but it's been great to see them support each other as well, to say, hey, I tried this on my page. How about you try this?

And you're still seeing that team kind of active to this day as well, and you're continuing to provide that support? Yeah, it's an active channel. The peer-to-peer learning and knowledge shares is awesome. William's our guru, like development guy who helped us build everything. So people will go to him, but the peer-to-peer learning has been great. And we also have kind of a help center on our intranet that we started and continue, you know, when we have, you know, new features available and things like that.

So, you know, we'll post an article on, you know, this new feature is available, you know, and it's specifically for admins or, you know, here's a new way that you can, you know, use your site, things like that, or there's new templates available that we've built, something like that. So that's more of like a resource center where they can go in new admins or existing and get help on different areas. Fantastic. And just going back to some of the other questions that we've got here, how do you main consistency and quality with so many decentralized admins across the board?

Yeah, so a couple of things, when someone becomes an admin, they were actually required to take a training that Holly and William had developed. And we worked with our learning and development team to put it on our LMS platform. So it walked them through what it meant to be a SharePoint admin and, you know, all of the tutorials. And we would get a record of, you know, who would take that. So then we would, you know, know who would be eligible to be an admin and things like that. So you had to take that course, which worked out really well.

And then I think, you know, just providing, you know, we have templates that are built in to our pages. For example, we have layouts for articles and for pages that we give, you know, each team a couple of options on. Yes, they can go in and, you know, technically they could change it, but we give them a starting point that is branded, that has our company colors built in, that even has a suggested layout, you know, and we did, we looked at the most common types of pages and gave them two different, you know, styles to choose from.

And so for the most part, for the new pages that are built, they're going on those. And then we also have more of a hands-on approach with some of our teams that we are working with more strategically where we might, you know, work closer with their admins and things like that to help with that layout. But we try to give them the tools that they need in templates in a way that set them up for success. Excellent. And there's a really good question here as well. It's just popped it up, just popped up in the Q and A.

So just a little bit of background to the question as well. So I was drafted by leadership to help our IT team create our intranet, but they do not want anyone outside of IT having admin rights. Any insight on how to break that barrier or maybe even just some general insights

about building relationships with IT as well? Yeah, Holly, do you want to? Yeah, I feel like one of the biggest things Kelly and I learned through this, and we went through two intranet migrations in six, seven years together.

So the relationship with IT besides admins was one of the most critical things we had for a bit. Kelly and I were the technical support for our whole intranet platform until we were able to really hone in that relationship. So I mean, very practically tactically for us, it was set up regular touch points, find out who the decision makers are with the IT team, find out who the influencers are on the IT team, get in their ear, make sure that they understand the value of it.

Because a lot of people might still think intranets are just a checkmark box, but they're super valuable for employee communication, engagement, employee retention, IT news, IT alerts, that kind of thing. So from my perspective, it was just kind of like driving that awareness and adoption for those groups. And then having them sit at the table with us, getting executive sponsorship and everything is really helpful. But I think for us having a decentralized model of administration and people going in and creating content on different teams there was gonna be no other real way for us to manage our intranet.

So maybe it just depends on kind of resources for your team as well, Chris. And I don't know, resourcing is important. If you want quality content, you need to get it from, or you want relevant content, you're gonna wanna get it from the sources. So I think that has a lot of value too. I don't know, Kel, if you have any other thoughts on that. Yeah, I'd say it would probably have required us to have a different style of intranet if we didn't have that distributed admin model and had to have it focused on just the small core team for sure.

And I think, yeah, we definitely wouldn't have, between our relationship, which I mean, huge kudos to Resmed between IT comms and then with this latest migration with operations, really our teams worked so closely together. On our different aspects of this project. So, and maybe there's an opportunity to do different levels of administration and admin on the site where maybe, for example, William is our super admin behind the scenes and has all the access, but we've got different levels of access and maybe there's something to discuss there where there's different levels of support. Thank you.