

Connect, Empower and Share(Point)

Rhi Bell, Internal Communications, Box Hill Institute

So thank you so much for having me, everybody. I really appreciate it. You can all hear me all good? Yes, great, love that. So thank you so much for joining me for Connect, Empower and SharePoint. Anyone that knows me knows I love a great pun, so I couldn't resist with this. Fran knows what the first iterations of this presentation was originally called, so I'm glad we settled on this one. So first, before I get started, I just wanna acknowledge that all of our learning sites are situated on the ancestral lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

We pay our respects to the traditional custodians and extend that respect to their elders, past and present. So just a little bit about me, because one of my favorite topics is myself. I'm Rhi, fun fact, my parents did not know what to call me when I was born. So to come to a compromise, they decided to name me after the first song they heard on the radio. Lucky for me, it was Rhiannon by Fleetwood Mac. I have five siblings, so I'm incredibly aware of what the possibilities were at that time, and I can say that I got this one.

I'm part of the internal comms team at Box Hill Institute. I've been here for seven years and we're a mighty team of two. I'm personally responsible for maintaining and leading our intranet, Viva Engage, and looking after our BAU communications. Prior to this, I worked 12 years in television with seven of those being in the internal and corporate comms team. Away from BHI, I'm a big nerd. I love to play board games, play Dungeons and Dragons. So yes, I have a lot of dice or die and get ridiculously excited about storytelling that's all dependent on how I roll those dice.

And I'm a huge wrestling fan. Been involved in local wrestling for the past 20 years, which has led to incredible opportunities with WWE, New Japan Pro Wrestling, and couldn't resist this one. Yes, that's me with Hulk Hogan. And yes, my inner five-year-old self was incredibly excited about this moment. So yes. A little bit about Box Hill Institute. So we're a trusted vocational education and training provider in Victoria, and we've been connecting people with genuine employment outcomes for over 100 years with the purpose of connecting people to life-changing learning.

Our students can pursue everything from short courses, completing year 12, pre-apprenticeships to certificates, diplomas, higher education degrees. We have around 1,600 employees. This is inclusive of casuals, part-time and full-time. We have five campuses in total around Victoria, and around 60% of our employees are from the education team. The other thing I can tell you about our employees is that over 33% of them have been with us for five years and more. So when we are communicating with our people, we're not only mindful about the area of the business that they're in, but also mindful about how long they've been with us.

It's just a little note about what we're covering in my little new session here. And now go, go, go. So about 12 months ago, I was really at a loss about our intranet. I knew Copilot was coming. I was truly being kept awake at night at the sheer thought of it being deployed on our intranet. I just knew we weren't ready. There was a lot of duplication and what I would call or reference like dirty data in that it

was just no longer relevant or it wasn't timely or it was just no longer useful. Lucky for me, I attended a SWOOP Analytics in-person meetup and I heard this incredible story from Australia Post about how they were on a very similar journey, but towards the end, and they were talking about how they started essentially being, they were taking a forward approach to their archiving.

So I was so inspired by that. I immediately went back to the office and put plans in motion to basically do exactly that. So for the last 12 months, we've focused on reducing the duplication across our intranet that we have a single source of truth in the one place. We've worked on archiving content that's no longer relevant and worked through our purpose for what our intranet is. And that is, it's not a history lesson. It's there for sharing information. The other big thing we've done is we've really strayed away from creating those traditional news pages every week.

We can see from our analytics that employees were just not spending so much time there. They were really spending the bulk of their time in those content pages that hold the information that helps people to be able to do their jobs effectively. So we spend more time now on ensuring that those content pages are really rich. They're full of all of the things that we know our people need. So before I show you a little bit more of a detailed screenshot of our landing page, just a few little things I wanted to touch on.

As I stated before, educators make up 60% of our audience. But for many of those, that could mean only working one or two days a week. But that's in the classroom. That's face-to-face time with our students. They don't have a lot of time to check emails, browse the intranet. So we keep this in mind. The other piece of work we're doing is that we are also trying to reduce that reliance on email. So we're leveraging our other comms channels like our intranet and Viva Engage. Every one of our comms plans starts with the intranet.

How can we develop a page, keep the information relevant for our people so they can do their jobs effectively and with impact? And this also means that when we are building out those initial pages, in addition to the key messages, we're thinking about that full deep dive, FAQs, videos, training, policies. So the page is reflective of the true one-stop shop. And finally, any email we send always has a link to the relevant content, whether that be on our intranet or Viva Engage. We wanna encourage our employees to self-serve wherever they can.

So this is the good stuff. This is our homepage and this is the landing page for everyone. So this is our menu, which I'll actually go deeper in a minute. And this is our quick links. Again, I'll go deeper in that in a minute. This here is our values. This is our carousel. So this is the top six pieces of information we want people to read and often links to content pages. Sometimes Viva Engage, depends what the item is, but this accounts for 55% of the clicks on our homepage. I call this prime real estate.

All the content here needs to be accessible to every employee. And I have a very strict schedule about the length of time items are up and what kind of content can go on there. This here is our events calendar. So this is a mix of not just employee events, but student events as well. A little careers site. And this here is our notice board. So obviously for privacy, I can't scroll down and show you a bit more, but when our people do scroll down, what they can see is our notice board, which contains campus specific information.

We introduced this to ease the constant use of all employee emails. And this section is targeted to people's locations specifically. So if there is something happening at one particular campus or multiple campuses that may be a teacher, teachers across all of those locations, they can subscribe to that content. A little bit further down, we also have an embed of our Viva Engage feed, which features weekly videos from our CEO where he shoots them selfie style, gives an update on the key things that have happened in the last week and gives a little promotion of some things that are coming up.

So this is our menu layout. So our menus are designed to be topic based. They're not based on departments. Our employees love this. So that makes me really happy. In this example, this is our people and culture tab. So anything from the stuff we're doing in our culture, diversity, inclusion space, to resources for our employees, such as flexible working or employee assistance program, all here. And then this here are our sub pages, which includes more of that nitty gritty information such as workplace agreements or guidelines about leave and pay or induction guidelines.

We want to try and make this section as intuitive as possible. This is our quick links menu that is displayed on the left-hand side of our homepage. So the reason why this section is really special is that it's also embedded in our Microsoft Teams environment. So employees don't need to open the internet to access these elements. So when they open the section in Microsoft Teams, it actually opens up into the screen that you can see now. So they can access stuff like job requests, like raising a job request really quickly, makes it super easy.

This menu also has a lot of the elements that are on our homepage. So such as our notice board, so that campus specific news updates, the organization news updates, but also the emergency information. So first aid, warden, all that really important stuff, and then our policy and procedures. So if you are in that student facing role and you need a policy really quick, you can access that. So we're just making it really easy for our people to get the information that they need and quickly. So while the internal comms team, our little mighty team of two, oversees, manages and creates new pages, we also leverage our power users across the organization to help us.

And it's the reason why our structure works. So our power users are approximately 50 employees that have the power to edit and maintain specific pages. They are subject matter experts across different areas of business and are our direct liaisons. They also take the stress away from our team of being that wealth of information and wealth of knowledge of everything, which is really valuable. And side note, I know 50 sounds like a lot, but it's actually not. These individuals only have permission to maybe edit one or two pages across our whole intranet.

So it's not like a whole section. So part of the responsibilities of power user is that they have to keep the content up to date from the contact details to very simple resources. Some other work we did over the last 12 months is we actually moved most of our forms into our human resource platform as well. So they're no longer scattered across several different places. Power users don't need to keep them updated. It's all in one place with one version, one single source of truth. And then I support the power users directly by holding refresher training twice a year.

They receive a handbook upon completion of that training. They also receive a membership into a private Viva Engage community so they can crowdsource answers among each other. And employees must complete this training to get any kind of edit access to any page on our intranet. The

reason why this works so well for us is that thanks to our power users and that we've got these really strong stakeholder relationships, we're in a unique position to really listen to our people. Whether that's planning out the communications and building that initial information page, we're also hearing from our people about the spaces that they need to empower them to do their jobs effectively.

So I'm actually going to take you through a couple of examples of where we've done this. So the first example is our education delivery comms hub. I've said it a few times. Our educators do make up 60% of our audience. So we're really mindful of the fact that they might only work a handful of days a week. They often don't get a chance to read through their emails or catch up on news updates. So we worked with the team and decided to create a one-stop shop for everything that that team would need. We've produced this page, which is updated frequently, and we're training our educational employees that if there's one thing you open on the days that you work, it's this page.

Each month, I sit down with the team, we collaborate on the page, they provide the content, and we make sure all of those touch points are updated. So what's not shown in this screenshot, which I think is actually the most powerful part, but what's not shown is that when you scroll down, our people get a high-level bullet point list of what's new, what's happening, what needs to be done. And then we also provide a link for further information so they can read more should they need it. But most importantly, we aim for this information to be quick and easy to digest, so you can read it at a glance.

The second example is our Child Safety Hub. And side note, I promise not everything is a hub. I just happen to have chosen two hubs for this example. But in 2024, we worked with our child safety specialists to launch the Child Safety Hub. There was a lot of confusion in this space for our people since we have our obligations to our students, but then we also have children on campus. That's thanks to our play group run by our early childhood students, to our onsite childcare centre, to students that we have on placement, and then of course, students who have children and bring them to campus.

There was confusion about that, and also confusion about whether the obligations only extend to student-facing employees or if it applies to everybody. So we've created this space so that everyone was clear on the obligations overall, plus our commitment. This is a copy of the landing page. And what isn't shown is that we really utilise the Viva Engage embed on the right-hand side of the page. We have a group of employees that are child safety champions, and they are constantly sprinkling messages on Viva Engage from their presence to after-hour BHI events to work they're doing on campus, so that there's really rich content that's coming through this page all the time.

And it also provides an opportunity for some two-way engagement as well. But then when you scroll down the page, this is how we display our resources. So it's from policies, procedures, external resources, and quick links to internal documents. Everything you need to know about child safety is here. And this is a really nice companion to the chatter that's happening on Viva Engage. And this is my last example, and this is our AI at BHI page. So we are at early stages. We are building confidence and capability because Copilot is still new.

So I'm just using this as an example of how we're supporting this from an internal comms and intranet perspective. But we really wanted to provide a comprehensive page about what Copilot was, how data remains protected, and really take our people on the journey of what AI at BHI will look like. We wanted it all in one place, and we wanted to make it easy for our people to get what they wanted all

from the one spot. So this page provides links to our policy, our training, the get started guide. So everyone is getting the same information, which now leads me to briefly touch on how we're approaching AI at BHI.

So in addition to our page on the intranet, we worked with Microsoft to create two separate training sessions, one for educators and one for professional support, because we recognize that this is just not familiar for our people. This isn't Google, this is generative AI. It's about asking really great prompts and providing the information you want it to use to get the best quality results. We have a Viva Engage community where every Wednesday we post a prompt power up. You can steal that, that's fine.

And we suggest really great prompts for people to use because they told us they wanna know more about prompting. We also have an AI steering committee. We also have an AI steering committee and they support the rollout of Co-Pilot Chat across BHI. They provide strategic oversight and governance of our adoption of its capabilities. They ensure that our approach aligns with our strategy. It adheres to our policies while also ensuring that we're fostering innovation and building AI literacy across BHI. So what that means is that not everyone can go out and build an agent.

There must be real thought behind it. There has to be a reason. We're asking the question of why do we need this? What will it do? How will it help us in the future? So any agents that are built are done so with purpose. They, that they will be used and we don't end up in a situation where we have 20 something agents created and there's no governance and or maintenance behind them. Luckily for me, I am part of the Co-Pilot testing group. And so thanks to the time we've spent over that last 12 months, really clearing up and cleaning up our intranet and having really great quality data.

I am really confident in the agent that I've been able to build and I can see the quality results that it's retrieving and how it will be beneficial to our wider employee community. So in summary, I, number one, recommend taking stock of your intranet, what content you have, what performs well and review what you can change to fit what your people wanna read and see and use. Number two, I may have told people, I may have been deleting everything if they didn't touch the page in the last 12 months, not suggesting that's a method you should use, but it's funny how it worked.

I didn't delete anything, I just archived. But what effectively what my point is, is bravely archive anything that no longer attracts clicks. Number three, connect and think about your audience. Maybe a one size fits all approach doesn't work for you. It doesn't for us. So creating those spaces has been really valuable. Number four, lean on your subject matter experts. They are not only the wealth of knowledge, but they are the connectors of information to within their work circles and work areas. So if you have great pages that they're using, that they've helped with, they're going to tell people about those pages too.

So let's empower them to do that. And number four, use intranets as the source of truth. For us, that means we want people to go to those pages. We want it to be the hub, I hate that word, want it to be the hub of everything that they need and for all of our comms to start here first. It's where we find it to be valuable.