

## NTRANET CASE STUDY

### A Plus Federal Credit Union: A Journey from Passé to Purposeful

#### A+ Federal Credit Union

**Location:** St. Paul, MN

- 450+ Employees
- 22 Branches

Without effective leadership, your intranet solution can quickly turn into an intranet problem. An employee intranet takes careful planning, organization, but most importantly, ownership. A+ Federal Credit Union recognized that they were missing a true leader for their portal. Read how Jennifer Hughes led A+ Federal Credit Union to relaunch their employee portal taking it from antiquated to awesome, from passé to purposeful.

A+ Federal Credit Union is a 70-year-old credit union located in Austin, Texas. With 22 branches, \$1.7 billion in assets, and 450+ employees, internal sharing of documents and communication is critical to their success. In 2006, A+ launched their portal, named OWL (Online Wisdom Link).

Over the years, ownership became disparate and disorganized. Enter Jennifer Hughes, Internal Communications & Development Specialist. She shared that “when I came into ownership of OWL, we were several versions behind the current technology and had no clear owner. Our home page looked pretty, but it was just a façade.” OWL needed a relaunch.

#### The Challenge

The portal had no guidelines, no consistency, and no branding. There was so much text, it was visually difficult to navigate, and links were neglected and broken. Too many people had access to make changes. Bottom line: Employees didn’t trust it. “We knew, as a growing organization, we needed a better tool to communicate to our employees that was reliable and accurate,” Hughes shared. “We were desperate for something better. It was time for an update, and I knew it was going to take starting over.”

#### Buy-in is Key

One of the biggest factors in relaunch success was getting the right management support. Jennifer presented a plan for this organizational project to organization leadership who granted their approval and resources. With support from management, a relaunch team was assembled, led by Jennifer. To build the relaunch team, diverse individuals were picked from different roles to represent various areas of the organization so that everyone had a voice on the team.



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**- Jennifer Hughes, Internal Communications & Development Specialist**

Having the support from key leaders like Tricia Lewis, VP of Human Resources, and Marie Spencer, Training Manager, is what brought this organizational project to fruition. Jennifer, along with Tricia and Marie, created a comprehensive business case outlining the positive organizational impact the relaunch would have. Once the project was voted on by senior leadership, it unlocked much-needed department resources crucial to make this project a success.

### Starting over is not always bad

Along with eight other members of project team, Hughes blew up the old portal and started over. The project started with a discussion on strategy. The challenges and needs were assessed as follows:

- **Promoting teamwork and collaboration. Branch staff felt like islands and wanted to be a part of the A+ team. Two-way communication was critical.**
- **Employees need access to current and accurate events and information.**
- **The solution needed to be scalable for the growing organization.**
- **The look and feel of the new site needed to reflect the branding that is so carefully presented to the world.**

As a result, the team determined their goal was to connect, collaborate, cultivate, and provide continuity.

### A wise new OWL

The project took 8 months and they launched their new intranet in the spring of 2019. Before launching, A+ did a naming contest and the employees overwhelmingly chose to keep OWL, feeling Online Wisdom Link still fit their goals and needs. As part of the relaunch, Hughes and her team did teasers to staff and had them complete activities in the old portal to prepare them for the new one. Upon launch, A+ did a scavenger hunt to get employees acquainted with the new navigation.

The new design is simplified, clean and branded with side navigation and a custom tool bar. They have highlighted announcements, provided tips within the portal to drive recommended behavior and ensured no information is more than 4 clicks deep.

Each branch and department own their unique page, created from a template so that each page carries the brand forward while opening up creative opportunities for each team.

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## From Passé to Purposeful

Through Jennifer's guidance, everything in the portal has structure and purpose. A+ is now able to share information on learning opportunities and provide up-to-date company information.

OWL is a living breathing tool to allow staff to do the things they need to do every day and create a collaborative environment. It's always a work in progress as the needs of the organization and its employee's change. Hughes said, "Our intranet is a direct reflection of who we are as an organization and how we choose to work with one another."

