

Why SharePoint?

Keys to a Successful Deployment

Since its inception, Microsoft SharePoint has set the tone for enterprise information sharing by bringing a new level of collaboration to its users' organizations. With the recent updates to SharePoint 2013, including an increased focus on the mobile experience and cloud offerings, Microsoft has demonstrated a continuous evolution in its SharePoint Solution to meet the expanding needs of the enterprise.

However, almost 15 years after the release of SharePoint, many organizations are still struggling to successfully adopt the software as their company's chief ECM system. In fact, a recent study by the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) revealed that a mere 6% of respondents claimed that their SharePoint implementation has been a success. These respondents cited user adoption, migration, governance, uniformity of information classification, and user-security issues as a few of the primary roadblocks in their deployment.

In today's competitive marketplace, organizations cannot afford to fall short on their content management capabilities – the ability to effectively organize, create and share information across the enterprise can mean the difference between a good and great company. Fortunately, with the right blend of planning and integration, users can realize the value of the SharePoint platform and discover why it is a worthwhile investment.

Planning and Strategy

A successful SharePoint deployment begins with thorough planning and defining goals. This is where many companies that attempt to deploy SharePoint fall short. Long before installation or migration, consider how the platform can truly align with your business objectives. Are you looking to enable staff collaboration on files, or are you trying to improve document search-and-retrieval processes? Also, from the get-go, creating a governance and compliance plan will establish user roles, company-wide policies, and solve security issues down the line.

But, what good is a software system if no one knows how to properly use it? Another alarming statistic from AIIM shows that 22% of organizations have not sought external advice or training for their SharePoint implementation. End-user training will not only help employees better utilize SharePoint, but will also raise company buy-in and user adoption. As with any software, SharePoint cannot do everything, so setting user expectations up front is essential to driving adoption down the road.

Among respondents to a recent AIIM survey—

- 6% claimed their SharePoint implementation has been a success
- 30% have only a basic deployment of SharePoint with limited customization
- 17% relied on ECM specialists, and 22% sought no external advice or training

Beyond Out-of-the-box

AIIM reports that 18% of organizations have a basic deployment of SharePoint and 30% are using a “somewhat customized” version. Yet, it is often the case that a basic deployment of SharePoint is not sufficient – integration is vital to an effective implementation. Customizing SharePoint by integrating the solution with third party add-ons (workflow designers and digital signature solutions) and other back-end systems (CRM and financial management systems) allows companies to fill in the gaps where other applications fall short.

Going Mobile and Social

SharePoint’s latest updates help poise organizations for the future as mobile, cloud and social computing are more than just buzzwords; they are becoming competitive differentiators. SharePoint’s three deployment options—on premise, cloud, or hybrid—and integration capabilities with Microsoft Office 365 give businesses the flexibility to extend their

collaboration capabilities and workflow beyond the office and across devices. Similarly, integration with social tools, like Yammer, boosts corporate communication, enhances productivity, and promotes idea crowdsourcing.

Why SharePoint?

If a successful SharePoint implementation requires in-depth strategy and planning, integration and customization, and training and user adoption, is it really worth the dedication, time and resources? The answer is simple: When correctly deployed, SharePoint can provide a wealth of benefits that positively affect the organization as a whole. You’ll increase productivity by having the right people collaborating on the right documents; you’ll decrease costs by reducing the number of technologies required to manage both digital and paper content; and you’ll increase revenue by ensuring that your SharePoint deployment is aligned with your overall business goals. Then, instead of asking, “Why SharePoint?” you’ll find yourself asking, “Why not SharePoint?”