

Société Générale

An innovative intranet portal for an optimal user experience

Summary

Societe Generale is one of the largest European financial services groups. Based on a diversified universal banking model, the Group combines financial solidity with a strategy of sustainable growth, and aims to be the reference for relationship banking, recognised on its markets, close to clients, chosen for the quality and commitment of its teams.

SocieteGenerale.com

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Overhauling 169 intranet sites is no mean feat. The wide range of features offered by Liferay made it easier for users to accept the change and get to grips with the new solution. Also, its flexibility means we can now create a site in 3 days instead of one month.

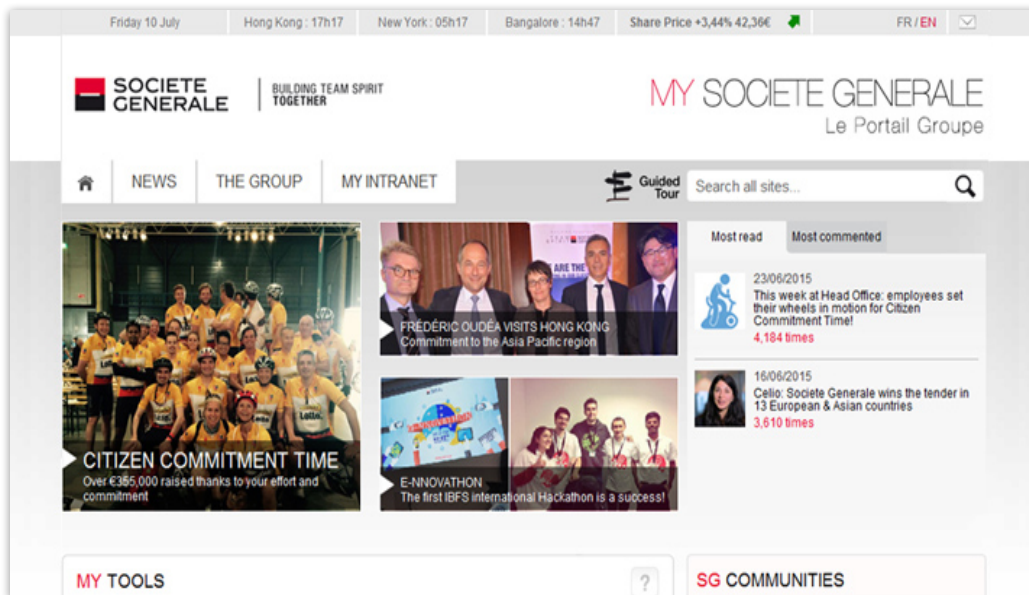
François Dreuilhe, Head of the Web Department

Organization

Societe Generale has been playing a vital role in the economy for 150 years. With more than 148,000 employees, based in 76 countries, it accompanies 30 million clients throughout the world on a daily basis, offering advice and services to individual, corporate and institutional customers in three complementary core businesses: Retail Banking in France, International Retail Banking, and Corporate and Investment Banking, Private Banking, Asset Management and Securities Services.

Challenge

In 2010, Societe Generale launched a vast project to bring together its 169 intranet sites - 93 in French and 76 in English - on a single platform. These sites had been designed using technology that was considered obsolete, with every request often necessitating specific developments.



Facing an increase in traffic - 4 million page views per month - and a growing need for additional features, the Group decided to turn to a more efficient solution that would also keep costs down. “We needed a more scalable solution to provide innovative, web 2.0 features, but we also needed to cut our maintenance costs by 20%,” says François Dreuilhe, Head of the Web Department. Reworking existing tools is always a big challenge. It is complex, to say the least. On the one hand, migration to the new solution has to happen quickly to avoid paying maintenance costs on two solutions at once. On the other, it is an opportunity to rethink certain sites and to reduce their number, which means implementing a change management process. Finally, creating a new site needed to be much easier and involve business teams. “Before, you needed over a month to create a new site and business teams were not able to implement it independently, which created a huge workload for IT teams,” adds François Dreuilhe.

Resolution

The Liferay solution was selected from a call for tenders launched in March 2010. Its native web factory function sets it apart from the competition. It makes it possible to roll out sites using an automated, industrialized process based on pre-defined templates, which considerably reduces the time taken to produce a new site. To start with, a pilot site is migrated to Liferay to test out the tool and get a better idea of how long it takes to rework a site. Users are involved from the start to ensure that all their needs are taken into account.

Business Value Added

Societe Generale now moved from 169 sites to 40 multilingual sites. Some of them have been completely rethought. For instance, 13 sites have been combined into just one. The multilingual function allows users to add as many languages as they want to a site without having to duplicate it, compared to the previous version.

Another development that has been warmly welcomed by users is that it now only takes 3 days to provide a new site, rather than a month. Besides, business teams are now much more autonomous. “Site section managers can update their content without having to have any special technical knowledge. IT teams create site templates in line with the new graphic guidelines and then let them deal with all the content management,” explains Ingrid Broussillon, Product Owner. The setting-up of a Users’ Club and the organization of regular trainings have encouraged user involvement and facilitated change management.

In addition, the new 2.0 features offer an optimal user experience. The new version moves away from standard browsing to personalized and dynamic browsing. “Users can personalize their home page so that they only see the information they are interested in. They are also provided with suggested articles thanks to the contribution of everyone,” adds Ingrid Broussillon. Indeed, each post can be rated or commented upon, providing a useful way of gauging user satisfaction levels as well as suggesting content to users via different categories: most read, most commented, highest rated, etc.

The blog, newsletter and alert features also add a lot of value. They allow the Group to regularly inform users about the latest news, and eventually boost the number of visits.

Finally, the new portal represents an opportunity to promote digital accessibility. “That is a key priority for us. It is essential for disabled users to access the information they need. That could mean incorporating voice synthesis, or ensuring that documents are formatted in such a way that they are easily accessible to the visually impaired,” explains Ingrid Broussillon. A quality label has been created to raise contributors’ awareness and reward the best efforts. A dozen or so sites have already achieved the label.

Alongside this project, the Group portal was overhauled and rolled out in late 2013 with Liferay version 6.1. It represents a real “Digital Workplace” that offers customized and customizable tools for each user, as well as automatic login with its profile to the enterprise social network.

In keeping with the provision of 80,000 tablets to employees as part of the “Digital4all” program, all intranet sites are now available on tablets and smartphones via the Societe Generale app store. For more information, contact sales@liferay.com.