



Intranet based executive system of the Faculty of Business and Management at Brno, University of Technology

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1 Intranet Business Strategy

The Faculty of Business and Management (FBM) aims its effort at giving top-class education in economic field in daily studies, postgraduate studies and lifetime studies (bachelor studies and post-experienced graduate studies - MBA).

A lot of information and communication technologies having an significant effect on increase of the efficiency in educational and administrative processes are accessible. The use of Intranet technologies in executive system of the Faculty of Business and Management at Brno University of Technology is seen as a part of the total strategy. It has been drafted as a support necessary for achieving becoming a prestige high quality educational European institution.

There are two projects carried out, at the faculty, in the framework of the strategy of Intranet application development: "Intranet of FBM" and the "Intranet of MBA". Sequential building up of Virtual Education Environment, computerization and improvement of the efficiency of the administrative processes are the main aims of Intranet projects. Consequently it will lead to the equal use of electronic and printed documents and more efficient mutual communication.

1.1 The strategy of the Intranet projects is:

- The "Focus differentiation" Strategy of implementing the Intranet projects is required according to the Faculty orientation on several study programmes.
- The mutual communication between the student and lectors is supported.
- The realisation of well-ordered, adressable and up-to-date publishing of information from the particular functional units is provided
- Maximum of the simplicity and accessibility is needed

1.2 Intranet projects support these faculty strategy aims:

- Receiving new grants and research projects.
- Participation of researchers and postgraduate students in conferences.
- Promotion of foreign scholarships and short-term exchange of students and postgraduates.
- Improving current pedagogical system of the faculty (publishing lecture notes and materials on the Intranet).
- Documentation and evaluation of researching and publishing activity.



1.3 Excepted assets of Intranet project

The use of particular Intranet based services brings a lot of advantages. Authors will mention only some of them:

- Higher topicality of information (information can be published directly by the responsible persons and without intermediaries).
- More accessible study (more students without time and place limits).
- More effective study (flexibility and possibility of specializing, easier access to information 24 hours per day, 7 days in a week.)
- Cheaper study on the side of the educational institution as well as students. (Savings relating to printing cost, copying, postal fees and travel expenses - materials can be printed when needed, but do not have to be printed.)
- Individualisation of the teaching process. (It is possible to come near to the ideal of each education, to satisfying of the individual needs of the individual student that is looking for information.)
- Improved mobility of both, students as well as teachers. (They can be in touch with the school during business trips and journeys of duty.)
- Internationalisation of the study. (On-line consultations with specialist regardless of their geographical position.)
- Benefit to the faculty marketing.

2 Main principles and main difficulties of implementation

On the basis of the carried out analyses and on the basis of a pilot project, we started to implement some services being a part of the project, in 1998. The project was divided into five stages.

In the first two stages there were implemented basic suggestion both, Intranet and Extranet as static pages. The main asset was in uniform way of actualization of data. These two parts were focused on new forms of communication between tutors, lectors and students and new forms of publishing news.

The third stage has brought new form of the Intranet as a database solution. The update and publishing of the appropriate information assigned in the whole range on the particular functional places and employees. The lectures and functional units began to be responsible for the content in the appropriate part of their personal and lecture administration. The change of the Intranet solution was prepared to minimalise impact on performance of the whole system.

In March 2000, the fourth stage was finished and brought four fundamental services to tutors, lectors and students:

1. **Public access information** - There are information about the faculty and its employees, service "Finding faculty members and students". Anyone can access this section without authorizing.

2. **Information on FBM** - This section is assigned to employees and students and the access is possible only with authorization. News and standards from functional units and information about courses can be seen.
3. **Terms of exams** - Lectors can assign maximum limit of students and date for each exam and students can register for the exam by the mean of this service from any place through the Internet.
4. **Administrations** - Service primary designed for administration and maintaining. Access is restricted for administrators and lectors. Employees can correct information about courses, personal data and functional units. Administrators can enter data for new people and their roles.

By this time the fifth period is implemented. Further differentiation of the services on particular strategic business units of the Faculty is in development. The following services are tested and implemented:

- The Module for science and research (a publication service is the main part).
- The Intranet Manager Module as a keystone for the making management decision support.
- Further development of the module for exam administration.
- Development and improving the functionality of the whole system and inner documentation.

Another functions and services are planned and progressively implemented - Newsnet, on-line courses, on-line exams, online surveys etc.

At the beginning of the project it was essential to get over many difficulties. The implementation of Intranet project has required the change in personall attitude. Except of the initial barriers to the new technologies, lectures, employees and students had to accept new ways of communication a publishing of information.

Next difficulty was low support from faculty management which is essential for success. The break point in development of the project was obtaining key persons support (stage 3). It enabled to encourage implementation of processes chains that brought the possibility of using interactive services and it became more attractive for users.

Although, we are still confronted with overdue publishing of information and insufficient communication from some functional units, all people begun to exploit the advantages of new communication and new administration. The overhead costs are being reduced, the total efficiency of the educational process increases.

3 Conclusion

The present experience that were achieved during the implementation of the project of Intranet based executive system of the faculty demonstrates that technologies as tools for support of educational processes in the field of management studies is very advantageous.

The fact that a lot of processes start to be supported in a better way together with clear definitions of powers and responsibilities as of the specified dates helps significantly change

the communication culture. Persons existing previously in more or less closed structures start to see and understand their environment in a broader context. When a certain number of key processes starts to be supported, synergy effects begin to operate. People will accept the new technologies, they will start to understand them better and will feel no more endangered by them. The improving atmosphere will have a positive influence also on the processes that have not been supported yet. The financial benefit of these influences can be enumerated only with difficulties, they are however self evident.

References

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