SHAREPOINT ADOPTION

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SIMILAR BUT SPECIAL

In many ways, the challenges of rolling out SharePoint are universal to the deployment of any new tool or process. But which strategies are especially helpful for the promotion of SharePoint?

For starters, **always be mindful of SharePoint's scope**. I use the word "scope" to refer to several elements. The scope of the user-base. The scope of the functionality. The scope of the lifecycle.

SCOPE: USER-BASE

SharePoint is not for *one* user, or even a *handful* of users – SharePoint is for an **organization** of users. Meaning, **everyone** needs training, reinforcement, encouragement, access.

- Employ "responsive" support for different departments, roles, and computer-experience levels
- Demonstrate that SharePoint will be unilaterally and continually supported by leadership and IT
- Publicly identify the people who influence the site: SharePoint Governance Team, SharePoint Help Desk, Owners, and Power Users
- Don't forget to train and support IT – in both back-end and front-end roles – because SharePoint is bigger than AD, SQL, or CMS

SCOPE: FUNCTIONALITY

SharePoint is not a single software, but rather a **framework** or **platform** (there's debate as to which term is more accurate). There's a lot we can do with SharePoint – content management, record keeping, version control, fast searching, social computing, content security, business analysis, project management, automated workflows, publication, syndication, external websites… This breadth makes it challenging to define **"What Is SharePoint"** to someone new to it. But it's also challenging to define your organization's SharePoint site to those who are familiar with the product – because SharePoint is so adaptable and also ubiquitous, SharePoint architects and end-users alike often have **preconceived notions** of what their SharePoint site should look like and do.

- From the beginning, establish a SharePoint Governance team made up of a cross section of user roles
- Don't assume everyone has the same view of your organization's SharePoint site, but instead communicate the SharePoint Governance best practices and guidelines
- If your organization supports multiple portals (e.g., HR, production, social computing, publications, etc.), be sure to clearly identify the best practices and guidelines for each portal
- Set up open forums for questions and input
- Teach your team how to use your SharePoint site as intended; for example, if you want them to view content or manage team sites or develop workflows, then show them how
- Also teach them about SharePoint's object hierarchy as well as permissions and roles

SCOPE: LIFECYCLE

A healthy SharePoint site grows and evolves as people use it, "live" in it. Rigid sites die. Static sites die. Unmanaged sites die too.

- Employ sound web-design and usability standards; i.e., don't make it a tedious site to use
- Strike a balance between limiting permissions and empowering users to build, between design standards and personal ownership
- Consider rolling out SharePoint in stages; for example, begin with an HR portal, then add basic Team Sites with a Document Library and Calendar, then integrate other features some as Project or workflows
- Regularly evaluate SharePoint's performance, usability, and efficiency as well as "wish-list" requests
- Encourage users to attend SPUGs (SharePoint User Groups) and pursue on-going SharePoint training
- Use SharePoint to teach SharePoint; for example:
    - Offer HR and Help Desk SharePoint sites that utilize wikis, articles, newsfeeds, community forums, etc. – and comingle SharePoint training and news the other training and news
    - Use SharePoint workflows and forms to handle troubleshooting tickets and document review
    - Regularly post usage stats, or business stats, or team stats in SharePoint
    - Distribute the company newsletter via a SharePoint publication site