

Lifetime Television

Intranet portal clicks with communications goals

Known as "Television for Women," Lifetime Television is dedicated to offering the highest quality entertainment and information programming, and advocating a wide range of issues affecting women and their families — on-air, online and in their communities.

The network's commitment to its viewers has been recognized by leading women's groups and nonprofit organizations, including the National Breast Cancer Coalition honoring the network for its commitment to end breast cancer; the YWCA of the United States and the National Hispanic Media Coalition in appreciation for the network's strong, ongoing dedication to women and minorities.

Launched in 1984 and serving over 80 million households nationwide, Lifetime Television is the number one cable network in primetime television and the leader in women's television. Lifetime also launched a 24-hour sister service in 1998, Lifetime Movie Network. A second sister service, Lifetime Real Women, will launch in the summer of 2001.

It's no surprise that such a media leader would look to a leading-edge corporate intranet solution from Compaq to

provide a better way to create, publish and distribute timely information to staff located at the Lifetime corporate headquarters in New York City and its production facility in Queens, New York, as well as its Los Angeles, Detroit, Dallas and Chicago-based offices.

"This is a fast-moving field. Our biggest challenge is to provide the necessary, up-to-the-minute information to our employees, managers and executives to improve their productivity and help them make high quality business decisions," explained Dan Thatte, senior vice president of information technology at Lifetime Television.

The timing was right

Lifetime had been using an Electronic Library to distribute documents. However, it was not a very reliable or friendly solution. No collaboration and search features were available, the document maintenance could not be under user control, the information was not current and was cumbersome to access.

"Our goal was to launch an intranet site," said Thatte. "We had already teamed with Compaq for architecture and planning services to help us assess our infrastructure and our use of

Internet and intranet technologies. They were up to speed on our business and they knew our problems. Based on that knowledge, they proposed a customized solution based on Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server that would include a publishing and intranet portal, information search portal and document management capabilities.”

Pilot takes off

Compaq worked with the MIS team at Lifetime to select the right software tools, plan the initial architecture of the intranet solution and develop a functional portal prototype based on user input.

The customized Compaq solution for Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server focuses on document organization and management, plus information retrieval using intuitive navigation by categories.

Launched initially (and tested thoroughly) by the MIS team, Lifetime is now rolling out the intranet portal solution from department to department. The number of users will expand quickly to 600 or 700, then up to a total of 1,000 users.

Rapid deployment of a customized solution

“Compaq’s expertise with Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server was extremely valuable to this project,” observed Thatte. “Remember, this was a new product and if we had to learn all about it ourselves, we would have faced some time-consuming difficulties. The Compaq

“Compaq’s expertise with Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server was extremely valuable and helped us achieve a faster time to a customized solution.”

Dan Thatte, Senior Vice President of Information Technology, Lifetime Television

services professionals that worked with us here and at the Compaq Expertise Center were extremely knowledgeable and definitely helped us speed the implementation of the portal solution.”

Customization of the “out-of-the box” Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server application was a key component of the final solution design. Compaq customized dashboards for several business areas and also programmed a scheduled Web news feed using an XML interface to pull current data directly to the intranet home page. Compaq also developed a solution to tag media content, so Lifetime’s vast library of pictures, video and sound clips could also be available for searching, viewing and listening within the SharePoint portal environment through Multimedia Player.

“The Lifetime Inline intranet portal is the place where everybody should go first thing in the morning to see what’s happening in our company,” said Thatte. “Compaq is helping us reach this information, publishing and communications goal smoothly and quickly.”

Business results:

- > **Improved productivity** — the customized Compaq solution for Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server was fast and easy to deploy; now users can get to critical information quickly
- > **Improved communications** — giving all users access to the most current documents and up-to-the-minute corporate and industry news
- > **Improved decision-making** — staff can quickly locate and access the timely information needed to make quality business decisions

What makes it work:

- > **Systems:** One Compaq ProLiant™ DL 380 server
- > **Software:** Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server application and Windows 2000 Advanced Server operating system
- > **Solutions:** Compaq Publishing and Intranet Portal Solution, Information and Search Portal Solution, and Document Management Solution
- > **Services:** Compaq Global Services to help plan, design and implement the custom portal solution

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