



POTENTIAL INCPAS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
University of Notre Dame Consulting Team Findings
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The group's project dealt with the Society's need for a Knowledge Management System. As with all professional membership organizations, INCPAS hopes to provide solutions for its members so that they can work more efficiently and competently. With INCPAS members working in diverse industries, a knowledge management system will help members succeed.

Overview

The Knowledge Management Task Force defined the true essence of a KMS as "capturing the experiences and best practices of subject matter experts, packaging them in such a way that others can easily access those experiences to enhance their competency level. That sharing of knowledge and experiences will lead to gaining confidence and achieving results." By sharing best practices and solutions, INCPAS will add value for members and may be in a position (in the future) to charge a subscription price for this system to increase revenues and resources.

With this goal in mind, other aspects of a KMS considered included:

- The KMS needs to have quick, user-friendly functionality, be easily searchable, and allow for file sharing and collaboration.
- The KMS has the potential to help members monitor legislative actions that impact the CPA profession.
- An additional opportunity for INCPAS use of a KMS is with Peer Review. Use of the knowledge management system may facilitate a more efficient Peer Review process.

Recommended Software Platform

With these ideas in mind, the team recommended that INCPAS utilize the software platform, Ning. Ning provides an online destination that weaves social conversations through its content. Ning has the potential to be customized to a powerful social web site for organizations of various sizes with branding capabilities. We found Ning to be the most comprehensive solution. Ning provides a cost effective solution. Initial data storage is low (20 GB) but as the network grows more space can be acquired at a rate negotiated with Ning administrators.

In addition, ads can be placed on the site to generate revenue in the future. Advertising in the initial stages of implementation, however, is not recommended. Ning brings the term 'communication under one roof' to life. Previously it would take days or even weeks to retrieve vital information from other society members. These exchanges would often be inhibited by the different networking sites that INCPAS currently uses. For instance, certain members would have profiles on LinkedIn but not Facebook. Ning links all the current sites under one roof.

Ning can capture this value with its cell phone application. With this application, members will always be up-to-date. All files uploaded to Ning are stored using cloud technology, so one can retrieve the information from any location, whenever they want. Finally, INCPAS is concerned with allowing members to communicate while not disclosing secrets or confidential data. Ning allows members to securely share files, read news, and chat without having outside eyes seeing their sensitive files. Members have to be invited by an administrator of the network in order to join. While no system is entirely secure, Ning offers what appears to be a high level of security.