

## Create IT Social Intranet on Office 365

### summary

Create IT Social Intranet uses collaboration as a tool for business transformation, by enabling staff to communicate through easy-to-use digital channels. Create IT has a solution and a methodology that allows a company to create their Intranet and enable their teams to communicate, share and collaborate using structured and unstructured content. The solution aims to take full advantage of the **Office 365** technologies, with special focus on the **SharePoint** and **Yammer** platforms, being based on the following fundamental pillars:

- A social intranet for sharing information that previously was dispersed, and as such allowing for a **faster collaboration**;
- Integrate the communication and collaboration infrastructure, creating a productive **collaborative environment**;
- An intranet for sharing more structured and reviewed information, and also top-down **corporate communication**;
- Promote knowledge and information **sharing among all employees**;
- Platform for **two-way communication**, enabling employees to talk to the organization and with each other;
- Integration between the previous two and the **Office 365 collaboration tools** (SharePoint Online, Yammer, Delve, OneDrive for Business, Skype for Business).

With this solution we want to:

- Increase the **productivity**;
- Promote the **alignment** between employees, teams and management;
- Increase the end-user **satisfaction**;
- **Humanize the workplace** and give every employee a face and a voice;
- Create a Workplace Collaboration and **Employee Engagement**.



### about Create IT

Founded in 2001, Create IT is a company that strives for excellence in every project executed. In 2014, it earned the **PME Excelência** award for the fourth year, awarded to the best SMEs operating in Portugal.

A **Microsoft Gold Certified Partner** with a clear focus on Microsoft technologies, specifically SharePoint, BizTalk and Windows Azure, it was the first partner in Portugal to attain the **Gold** level in the **Content Management** and **Application Integration** competencies. It has also been awarded by Microsoft Portugal as **Partner Ambassador of the Year (2014)**, **Solutions Partner of the Year (2013)**, **Portals & Collaboration Partner of the Year (2011)**.

In 2012, Create IT won the **European SharePoint Community Award for Best SharePoint Public Website** and in 2013 and 2014, won the **European SharePoint Community Award for Best SharePoint Search Solution**.

All the members of the team are either **Microsoft Certified Professionals** or **Certified Project Managers** by the **International Project Manager Association (IPMA)** and a few are also **Certified Scrum Masters** by the **Scrum Alliance**. Most of the team has a blog at <http://blogit.create.pt>.

For more information about the company and other projects, visit [www.create.pt](http://www.create.pt)

## the challenge



**Ascendum**, one of the largest suppliers of equipment solutions for infrastructure and construction, operating in 18 countries, was looking for a collaborative solution that would help getting geographies closer and leveraging communication between all its 1,350 employees, as well as promote the proximity with the administration.

The main challenges were be able to present, in a structured and centralized way, relevant information to employees; integrate the **communication and collaboration infrastructure** of several countries; and promote the **sharing of knowledge** and information among all employees, creating a **productive collaborative environment**.

There was a need for a solution to share general information about the group, as well as guidelines that top management wants to ensure that are received simultaneously by all employees. In addition, the focus was also to stimulate informal sharing of information, easily and immediately, between all employees.

The solution implemented by Create IT has **strengthened collaboration, involvement, commitment and knowledge sharing among all employees** of Ascendum (1350 in 18 countries), through a more agile and real-time communication, based on a centralized and easy to use online platform (intranet).

## the solution



The solution designed by Create IT for Ascendum's challenges resulted in the development of an online portal (intranet) based on the Office 365 tools where

Yammer plays a predominant role. As a Microsoft Gold Partner for 4 skills ('**Application Development**', '**Application Integration**', '**Collaboration and Content**' and '**Cloud Platform**') and a wide experience in similar projects, the option for Create IT came naturally and had Microsoft's recommendation.

The biggest challenge was delivering all the desired functionalities without increasing the complexity of the final solution, by taking the most advantage possible from all that is natively provided by **Office 365 services**. Some of the requirements included:

- Presenting the desired branding while assuring the continuous correct behaviour of **SharePoint Online** after service updates;
- Providing **custom page templates** for internal communication contents (example: news and blog posts), that automatically take in consideration metadata about the target audience;
- **Integrating Yammer with SharePoint** so that teams can have the best from document management and social collaboration;
- **Increasing page load performance** across all intranet without using content delivery networks and other cache systems.

The above requirements were achieved by using:

- **SharePoint Online search service**;
- **Search Results Web Parts** with custom display templates to display information;
- **Custom master pages** and page layouts, custom CSS and JS with bootstrap.js for web layout responsiveness and Yammer REST API.

The following picture presents the solution architecture:

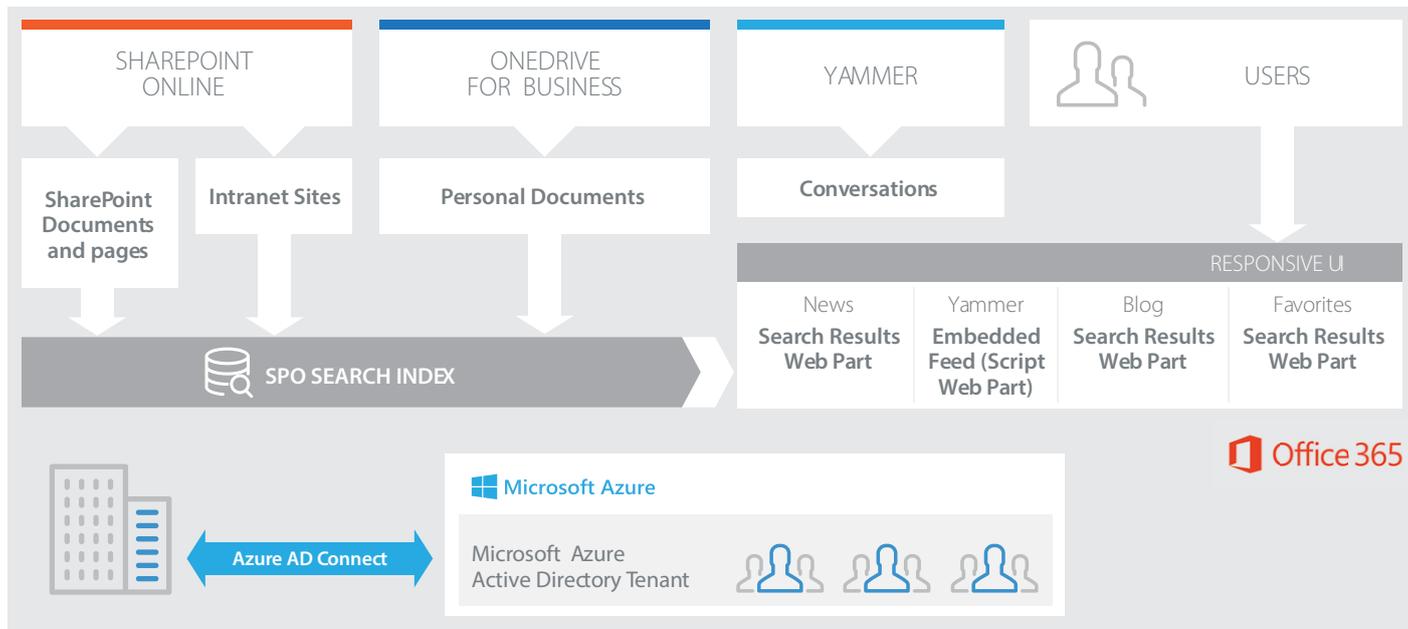


Figure 1 - Solution Architecture

Create IT approach allowed scale economies in terms of licensing, with a **significant cost reduction**, and the total alignment with the infrastructure services outsourcing strategy (cloud services tailored to the geographical dispersion of Ascendum), as well as accelerate the consolidation and adaptation processes of the Yammer platform to the internal communication strategy of **Ascendum**.

It is further noted that for **Ascendum** it was critical that the content management system was sufficiently user friendly to be able to distribute the responsibility for the contents to different profiles. Ascendum delegates part of the creation and insertion of more structured contents to different geographies and different people, with distinct profiles and functional and technical

capabilities. It was therefore essential to have a **fast and simple content management solution**.

The solution started as a proof of concept based on **Yammer and Skype for Business tools** as a communication support to teams from different continents. The proof of concept was a success and, from there, the solution was evolved into a complete Social Intranet solution for the entire organization.

The solution allowed establishing points of communication and information sharing not only between the board of **Ascendum** and the teams geographically distributed, but also between the teams, as a way of bringing the active participation to the search for solutions in their day-to-day work.



## about Ascendum

Ascendum is a Portuguese group with global reach and one of the largest global suppliers of industrial equipment for construction and infrastructure. With operations in Portugal, Spain, the U.S.A., Turkey, Mexico, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Moldavia, Angola, Mozambique, Morocco and Poland,

Ascendum is active in four major lines of business: Industrial Machinery and Equipment, Infrastructure Equipment, Trucks and Cars.

For more information about the Ascendum, visit <http://www.ascendum.pt/en/home/>.

One of the key factors for the success of the project was the capacity of Create IT to address the specific challenges that appeared during the project, having also invested in analysis and research, which allowed to achieve all the goals initially set. One other major success factor was the fact that Create IT and **Ascendum** always worked in a **true partnership**.

## results



The main added value of the project was the **spirit of unity brought to Ascendum**, an organization of large dimension and major cultural and geographical differences.

Here are some of the most important results achieved:

- **SaaS solution** based on Office 365 platform with uptime of 99.9% and accessible from anywhere;
- **Improved knowledge** management and information discovery, giving people fast access to the information;
- **Improved information sharing** and allowing people to collaborate in a faster, more agile and more dynamic manner by taking advantage of SharePoint Online and Yammer integration and the usage of Skype for Business;
- **Maximized efficiency**, reducing both IT and overall costs, allowing employees to save time on their daily tasks and helping them to quickly obtain results in the projects they are involved;
- **Usage of Delve** to get the most relevant information for each employee in their daily work;
- **Major employees empowerment** with more accessible information and strengthened the overall team spirit inside the organization.

The success of the project resulted in a partnership for ongoing maintenance and continuous improvement between **Ascendum** and Create IT, which is now the **Office 365 Ascendum partner**.

In this process that transformed the way **Ascendum** works, both teams worked in a single team concept, in close proximity and alignment among all. This led to highly motivated people from both Create IT and **Ascendum** with the goal to make a better **Ascendum**.

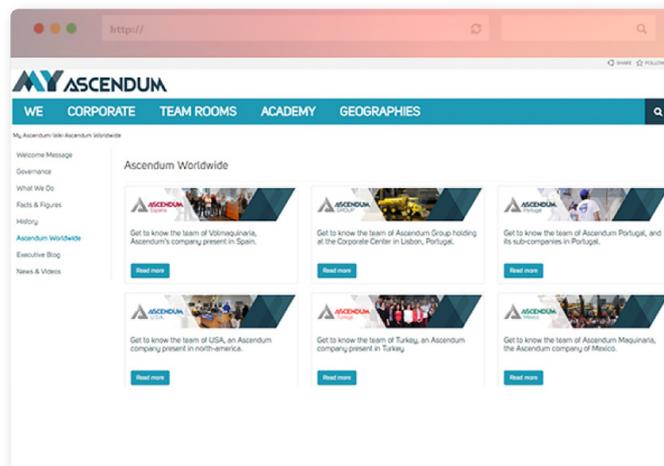


Figure 2 - Intranet Homepage

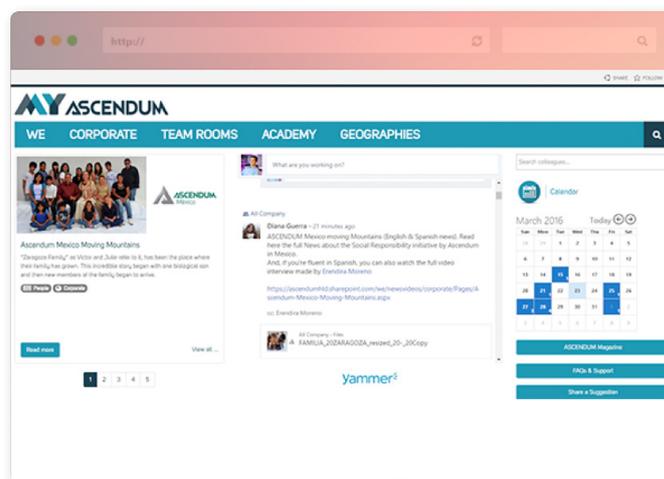


Figure 3 - Access to Ascendum Geographies

## Contact Information

**Candidate:** Miguel Isidoro, SharePoint Team Leader at Create IT  
**Email:** miguel.isidoro@create.pt / **Phone:** +351 96 252 17 50

**References:** Please include the names and contact information for two additional people that have knowledge of the solution, support the nomination and can be used as references.

1. Luis Belo, Tech Lead at Create It, [luis.belo@create.pt](mailto:luis.belo@create.pt)
2. Raul Ribeiro, Create IT's Business Advisor, [raul.ribeiro@create.pt](mailto:raul.ribeiro@create.pt)