

Onit Streamlines City of Seattle Procurement SharePoint Site

Issue:

In 2024, staff and stakeholders of the City of Seattle's Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) division were struggling to access information and resources via the FAS SharePoint site. While the site was aesthetically consistent with the City's template, its contents were not well aligned with user needs. Onit Management Consulting was engaged to determine and implement a more user-friendly structure.

Strategy:

Onit quickly identified that the FAS site, which hosted critical Purchasing and Contracting information for the Procurement department and business unit buyers, had two distinct audience profiles. Some were regular visitors who were already familiar with the specific information they sought, and usually accessed pages via saved bookmarks. Other users were new visitors who struggled to navigate the information.

Previous redesign efforts had prioritized the owners of the information; however, they were not representative of all site users. Onit's strategy focused on engaging representation from a diverse set of stakeholders, and getting consensus on how to segment, prioritize, and present the site contents.

Solution:

Onit's team worked with stakeholders to understand where site usage aligned with the main Purchasing categories (Purchasing Services, Consultant Services, and Construction Services), and where they did not.

For example, while most users outside Procurement primarily needed information from one of the three areas with each visit, most users *also* needed information stored on a separate site regarding contracting policies related to Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (MWBEs). Accordingly, the site would better align with stakeholder needs if MWBE information was incorporated into the main FAS site, presented at the same level as the three main Purchasing categories. The three Purchasing categories and MWBE information therefore formed the primary content areas for the redesigned site.

The new design also elevated content that had been previously buried and dispersed on the old site. This included information on Emergency Procurement, which was rearranged for quick access to critical steps in the process.

Also, information on bid limits and thresholds was found in multiple locations in the old site and was streamlined into a standard format on a single page.

Key to new and occasional users was information on navigating the new structure. Onit created a short, animated video to orient users to the structure and redesigned navigation, including adding large buttons, to connect new users with help. Onit also trained site owners in best practices to maintain the site.

Results:

By gathering requirements from a broad set of site users and aligning site owners around a thoughtful content structure, Onit was able to deliver a new site that met the needs of both frequent and occasional visitors. Site owners were trained in new procedures to maintain the content, and a project that had been unsuccessful when previously attempted with internal resources, was completed by Onit on time and on budget.

For more information:
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