



BOCES Employee Resource Tool (BERT): Using a social intranet to increase employee engagement

2017 NSPRA Gold Medallion Award Entry

**Please consider this entry for a Golden Achievement Award.*

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Organization Information

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Number of PR/Communications Staff: 72

Type of organization: Education service agency/Intermediate unit/BOCES

Entry Category: Special Communications Projects/Campaigns



PROJECT SYNOPSIS

Connecting with colleagues and associating a name with a face is a big challenge in our organization, which has more than 1,000 employees spread across six divisions, 11 BOCES-owned buildings and 150 school districts statewide.

Employees cite other problems such as an over-reliance on email, existence of various versions of internal documents stored in multiple places and a need for better ways to collaborate. A number of solutions have been offered over the years, such as an all staff newsletter, use of shared network folders, and mock group work areas. All of these efforts failed, in part, because they were silo-based and unconnected to our central human resources and business office operations.

After trying several iterations of an intranet on our own, we had all but given up on the idea; then we partnered with a social intranet vendor. Soon after, a broad cross-divisional group of employees helped set the overall strategy for the intranet and developed four key performance indicators. An intranet work team met weekly from February to June 2016 to launch the BOCES Employee Resource Tool - BERT.

Site analytics and anecdotal feedback show that employee engagement is up, particularly in areas where leadership is engaged. We firmly believe BERT is the difference-maker in our changing company culture. Whether it's birthdays on the homepage, updates in the activity feed or a group forum, employees have been interacting with each other more than ever.

The design and launch of BERT quite literally embodies the organization's goal of enhancing BOCES' effectiveness and efficiencies through interdivisional cooperation, collaboration and innovation.

Project Summary

RESEARCH

Problem statement

It is difficult for Capital Region BOCES employees to find the information and tools they need to do their jobs and connect and collaborate with colleagues in hundreds of locations statewide.

Situation Analysis

It's not easy for employees to feel connected to each other in an organization as large and diverse as Capital Region BOCES. More than **1,000 employees** are spread across **six divisions**, **11 BOCES-owned buildings** and **150 school districts** statewide. Positions include everything from teachers to computer technicians and programmers to account clerks, professional developers and administrators. Approximately 55 percent of employees, mostly instructional staff, work a 10 month schedule. The rest are mostly non-instructional staff who work year-round. Anecdotal feedback over the years suggests a desire for a more open, transparent and collaborative culture. Some examples of problems employees struggle with include:

- **Feeling disconnected** and isolated from other divisions, groups and programs.
- **Having difficulty finding out what is happening across the organization**, and the basic information, tools and forms employees need to do their jobs.
- **Spending an inordinate amount of time in meetings** – either in-person or online, which can sometimes prevent employees from getting their work done.
- **Using email for everything** related to communication and collaboration even though it's no longer the most effective way to do either.

Communications staff have been working with our leadership team over the past few years to try to break down silos and become one united organization. However, we have struggled to find the right tactics to reach our diverse group of employees. Many creative solutions have been offered over the years without success, such as use of a variety of tools

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and software to get work done, an all staff newsletter to promote division and organization-wide news and updates, our public-facing website to post staff resources and a first iteration intranet site to post news and share resources. However, **all of these initiatives were failures**, in part, because they were silo-based and unconnected to our central human resources and business office operations.

Research findings

Recognizing the fact that current tools are not working, and with agreement among the leadership team that internal information should not be accessible to the public, a vision started to take shape for a central location where employees could connect and access the information and resources they need to do their jobs—effectively and efficiently.

This is consistent with the Capital Region BOCES Board of Education’s goal to “Enhance BOCES effectiveness and efficiencies through **interdivisional** cooperation, collaboration and innovation.” With this in mind, communications staff went back to the drawing board and researched intranet basics. When intranets first came on the digital scene, they were basically just used to store company-wide data and broadcast information from a central location. However, this has changed significantly over time. Global expert on intranet strategy and design, James Robertson, says the modern intranet is more than just a place to store static corporate content – it’s becoming a key tool for organizational success.

Today’s intranets are designed to enhance communication and collaboration by giving people the tools they need to be productive, informed and engaged. Intranets now allow for two-way communication making it easy for everyone inside an organization to contribute, not just a select few. Empowering employees with a voice and the freedom to share ideas with their colleagues can be a positive step forward to a culture of collaboration. This is significant given how the rapid rise of social media has changed how people get things done and interact with each other. Smartphones are everywhere. Employees use these tools in their personal lives every day and are capable of doing so at work, too. To that end, communications staff began exploring a genuine intranet solution as a way to address the challenge of connecting and communicating with employees in new ways. After three demos from intranet software vendors in December 2016, the decision was made to partner with ThoughtFarmer, a social intranet provider.

Goal: Foster internal communication and collaboration among all employees with the launch of a social intranet.

Measurable Objectives

- Prior to the full site launch, **20 percent** of employees will **engage in activities to develop the new intranet**.
- By October 2016, **100 percent of employees** will **participate in BERT training activities**.
- Within six months of launch, increase the percentage of **employees who can find the information they need to do their jobs** and **feel more informed and connected** to their colleagues by **10 percent**.
- Within six months of launch, increase the percentage of **employees who can find the information** they need to do their jobs by **25 percent**.
- By January 2017, 50 percent of **all employees will be aware of BERT’s collaboration feature**.
- By February 2017, **70 percent of all employees** will login to BERT daily.
- By March 2017, **75 percent of employees** will upload a profile photo.

ANALYSIS/PLANNING

Under our intranet vendor’s guidance, an intense planning phase began with a broad cross-divisional group from BOCES. To guide the development work, the group came up with the following questions and answers:

- What do employees want from an intranet?
- What value do we want our intranet to accomplish for us as an organization?
- What are our “Rules of Engagement”?
- How will we measure our success?

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Through participation in and analysis of a “user stories” activity, the overall strategy and key performance indicators were set for BERT, including:

- Make staff news and information easier to find.
- Strengthen community across the organization.
- Use the intranet to encourage professional development and innovation.
- Enable meaningful work-related collaboration within and across work teams, programs and divisions.

With these indicators in mind, we set out to launch a new internal communications platform. Three intranet teams involving a broad cross-section of employees were formed to facilitate planning, including an:

- **Intranet governance team to help users make good decisions.** The group, including the chief executive officer, two communications staff and an information technology representative met monthly early in development.
- **Intranet steering team to make decisions** related to budget, content or technology. The group met once or twice monthly and included a representative from the business office, one from human resources, two from information technology, three from communications, and a staff developer.
- **Intranet work team to review all existing documents, forms and processes** with division leaders/key staff. The group began meeting weekly once the site was up and running to migrate, edit and develop content for BERT.

The key audience was BOCES’ employees for which the intranet was being created. Given that 10- and 12-month employees often have different needs they were both identified as target audiences. In addition, BOCES key opinion leaders – the executive leadership team, managers, executive secretaries, union representatives, and division communications staff – were identified as another key audience given that each of these individuals would model usage.

Internal communications tactics typically involve email, face-to-face communication, paper-based information and use of the staff resources section of the public-facing website, and were selected as the primary means for communicating about the intranet.

Strategies and key messages

Audience: 10- and 12-month employees

Key messages:

- BERT is an exciting new intranet designed to be a one-stop resource for employees.
- Help is here to acquaint you with BERT and answer any questions you may have.
- You can help drive the structure and design of the new staff intranet.

Key strategies:

- Provide employees with opportunities to influence the final site product.
- Provide a variety of training opportunities to make it as simple as possible for employees to login, use and find information on BERT.
- Establish an awareness campaign to highlight ways the site will help solve organization problems.

Audience: Key opinion leaders: BOCES’ executive leadership team, managers and principals, executive secretaries, union representatives.

- *Key message:* You set an example for others about BERT usage.
- *Key strategy:* Build a community of intranet champions

Budget

The planning, content migration and outreach for this project was completed by three communications specialists, the communications director and a graphic artist from the Capital Region BOCES Communications Service. Support was also provided by nine other cross-divisional representatives through an Intranet Steering Committee that met weekly through the development process. The web-based intranet platform cost \$66,830 in year one with annual automatic renewal terms set at \$31,680 per year. The annual rate averages \$28, per user, per year.

COMMUNICATIONS/IMPLEMENTATION

In early March 2016, several members of the CRBOCES communications team joined a cross-divisional intranet work team to help plan, develop, launch and roll-out BERT. Given the previous, recent failed intranet attempt and disparity of technology skills, it was critical for communications to build consent from employees for the new and improved staff intranet.

During the first week in April 2016, staff was tapped to participate in an online card-sorting activity to help inform the site architecture. Mid-month, they would participate in an online findability/task-testing study to ensure information was easy to find on the intranet. Messaging announcing BERT was on the mend and would be flying by June was prominently placed on the “Staff Resources” section of the public website.

In early May, training needs were identified and step-by-step instructions and video tutorials were prepared for a BERT “Help & How To” section. At the same time, communications staff created a BERT the Owl persona to familiarize staff with BERT. This included a profile and an @BERT feature in the site for employees to ask questions and get answers directly on and from BERT, as well as an email address to relay messages to staff and provide another means for them to ask questions and get answers. “BERT the Owl” emailed all staff with updates on his progress, including an image of the owl with a bandage healing from his previous iteration.

In early June 2016, employees completed an employee engagement benchmarking survey over the course of two and a half weeks to serve as baseline data prior to the intranet launch. A variety of introduction/training initiatives are rolled out for each division of the organization. BERT was officially launched to all 12-month employees via a “soft launch” on June 29. BERT’s “12 Rules of Engagement” were shared via email, on BERT and at trainings to get everyone off on the right foot using and contributing to the new staff intranet.

Throughout July 2016, BERT continued to be introduced through targeted emails, promotional materials and trainings. A flyer and large laminated “Meet BERT” posters were displayed in BOCES facilities, a series of one-hour drop-in sessions were held for 12-month employees, and a postcard was snail mailed to all employees introducing BERT along with login instructions and information about key features. BERT was rolled-out officially to 10-month employees at the Opening Day event on September 6 and all internal documentation was removed from the public-facing website on October 10, completing the transition to BERT.

How key messaging supported goals

The intranet would likely be the biggest change employees have ever seen to their work resources. The social aspect – encouraging comments and feedback – is very different from what staff are used to, and the fear of engaging and providing feedback could cause some uncertainty. However, with the goal of enhancing BOCES’ effectiveness and efficiencies through interdivisional cooperation, collaboration and innovation in mind, the communications team recognized that different aspects of the intranet would resonate uniquely with staff and planned accordingly to try to highlight the distinct features and garner staff support upon roll-out. For example, when communicating with teaching staff, messaging focused on where needed documentation could be found. Conversely, when communicating with staff located within the technical arm of the organization, the social features of the site was the focus.

Examples of quality written and graphic materials:

- [A screenshot of the BERT Homepage](#) (reminder: the site is password-protected)
- [An email introducing BERT to all employees](#)
- [A postcard that was mailed to all employees during summer 2016](#)
- [A flyer that was posted in faculty lounges, restrooms and bulletin boards at BOCES' facilities](#)
- [The '12 Rules of Engagement' was given to employees at training sessions, posted on BERT](#)
- [A 'Help & How-To' section was created and posted on BERT with step-by-step written instructions and videos explaining how to use key intranet features](#)

EVALUATION

As a result of the campaign, BOCES was able to meet its goal of launching a social intranet site to foster internal communication and collaboration. The following outline the campaign's success in reference to its objectives.

Prior to the full site launch, 20 percent of employees will engage in activities to develop the new intranet. Employee engagement served as a cornerstone of site development to help inform the site architecture, and *exceeded our goal of 20 percent participation*. In addition, feedback was used to revise the site navigation and structure. For example, one of the proposed main navigation links, "Policies & Guidelines," was changed to "Work Resources" because the information provided within the former category label didn't make total sense to employees.

By October 2016, 100 percent of employees will participate in BERT training activities. By November, nearly *100 percent of employees had the opportunity to participate in training*. This is the result of making support and training available every step of the way—both in person and online—for all skill levels. Video-conferencing was also available. Nearly 120 year-round employees participated in one-hour drop-in sessions during summer 2016. The introductory sessions were hands-on, allowing employees to login, peruse the site and ask questions. BERT was introduced to 10-month employees as soon as they returned from summer vacation during division-specific sessions to address each division's unique needs. Informal trainings were held with various groups from each division, during professional development days, after school or during regularly scheduled meetings. A "Help and How-To" section with step-by-step written instructions for at least 16 intranet features and 10 videos section has received 2,266 views as of March 7, 2017.

Within six months of launch, increase the percentage of employees who can find the information they need to do their jobs and feel more informed and connected to their colleagues by 10 percent.

Three hundred and ninety-five employees took a 12-question baseline survey over a two and a half week period in June 2016, prior to the new intranet site launch. During a three-week period in November 2016, 295 employees took an 18-question post-launch survey (with six additional questions specifically on BERT). In meeting these targets, the number of employees who said they "agree" or "strongly agree" with a series of statements increased. For example, the number of respondents who said they feel informed about what is happening at BOCES increased from 58 percent in June 2016 to 65 percent in November 2016. The number of respondents who said they feel connected to BOCES employees at other locations increased from 24 percent in June 2016 to 32 percent in November 2016. And, the number of respondents who said they can easily find the information and forms they need to do their jobs increased from 57 percent in June 2016 to 61 percent in November 2016. Further evidence of our success comes from BERT winning first place for "Biggest Impact" in ThoughtFarmer's bi-annual intranet contest. The award recognizes BERT's effect on our organization's engagement, culture and efficiency.

By January 2017, 50 percent of all employees will be aware of BERT's collaboration feature. With the loss of BOCES' staff developer in mid-September 2016, plans to roll-out the collaborative feature of the staff intranet organization-wide have been stalled. However, we have been learning from two groups piloting the space that collaboration happens organically. While we can easily create collaborative spaces for groups, they have to want to use them and have

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leadership committed to communicating in this way. We are in the process of developing guidelines and best practices for groups and continue to accommodate individual requests for team spaces. We anticipate moving forward by next school year.

By February 2017, 70 percent of all employees will login to BERT daily. Only 24 percent of employees are logging in to BERT daily, which is significantly lower than anticipated. Survey results and analytics indicate that employees are using the site differently based on their division and work schedule. The majority of staff (38 percent) surveyed in November 2016 indicated they are signing in to BERT once or twice a week. However, a more reasonable expectation may be weekly login. Analytics indicate that 79 percent of employees log in to BERT each month since September 2016, when the full intranet site was rolled out to employees.

By March 2017, 75 percent of employees will upload a profile photo. As of March 2, 2017, 329 employees or 32 percent uploaded a profile photo to BERT's employee directory to allow staff to attach names and faces. This does not meet our target of 75 percent. However, in looking closer at the data, 79 percent of Management Services employees and 67 percent of NERIC employees uploaded a photo. It's likely because leadership in both divisions encouraged employees to do so. For example, NERIC held a photo contest with prizes to encourage participation and Management Services employees who hadn't uploaded a photo were contacted by their manager to do so. Less than 25 percent of employees in every other division uploaded a photo, and there has not been a push by those division leaders to encourage staff to do so.

One the biggest benefits of BERT that we didn't identify specifically as an objective, but should be noted is the fact that internal processes have improved. This is the result of a broad cross-section of content owners working together over a three-day period for a "barn-raising" session. Content owners are responsible for oversight and upkeep of reference materials and worked together to review, edit, streamline and move content from the public-facing website to the intranet. During this time, business office and human resources staff transitioned from paper-based forms to electronic versions to better gather and track information. According to BOCES Assistant Director of Human Resources Carol Ratigan, the use of BERT has made a huge impact by streamlining processes and workflows.

Supporting Materials

Research

BOCES previously used a variety of tools to communicate with employees – none of which met employee’s needs efficiently or effectively.

A variety of tools and software to get work done - Employees used a disparate collection of calendar tools, email programs, and file share sites. Conflicting versions of official BOCES materials would end up on division-specific network drives, internal servers and other mock work areas, so it was hard to know what’s most up-to-date. Information was not easily accessible by all employees, particularly those off-site. As a result, information sharing wasn’t happening efficiently.

An all staff newsletter to promote division and organization-wide news and updates – The newsletter was previously distributed every other week, but analytics indicated that it received just a 25.8 percent open rate.

Our public-facing website to post staff resources (*see image below*) – Employee forms and other important internal documents were previously posted on our public-facing website. Although analytics indicated this was the second most visited page on the website, there were myriad problems with this solution. Since the section was not password-protected it could be confusing to the general public. For example, an individual downloaded the organization’s human resources recruitment packet from the public website, completed the paperwork and submitted it directly to the county civil service agency despite the fact that he or she hadn’t been hired. Since the public-facing website was not mobile-friendly nor up to modern standards for accessibility and responsiveness, it was cumbersome for employees visiting with a mobile device.

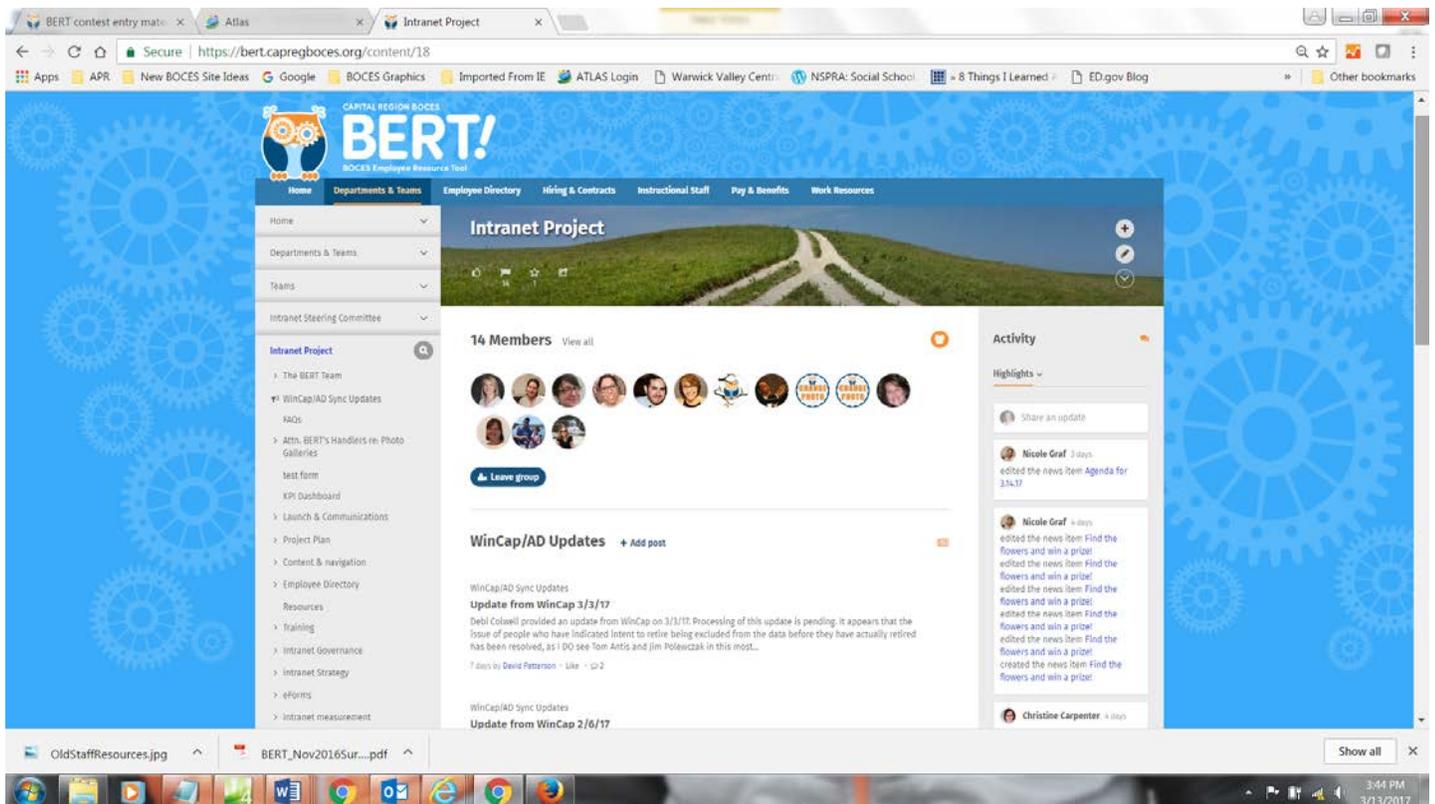


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A first iteration intranet site to post news and share resources - A beta version of an intranet site was piloted by a small group of employees in Summer 2015. Leaders decided to shelve the project shortly after the pilot group expressed concerns about the limitations of the intranet software. Feedback was loud and clear that the site was not as user-friendly or intuitive as employees desired.

Analysis/Planning

Several intranet groups completed the bulk of the planning work using BERT as a space to plan, collaborate and communicate with each other, as shown in the screen shot below. This section provides links to everything from the results of a strategy session, to our launch communications plan, the identification of training needs, and resources informing our approach. [Meeting agendas and notes outline our work in real-time throughout the process.](#)



Communications/Implementation

March 2016

- Cross-divisional intranet work team formed to review all existing staff documents, forms and processes with division leaders/key staff prior to migrating/developing content to BERT.

April/May 2016

- BERT the Owl emailed employees to participate in an [online card-sorting activity](#) to help inform the site architecture.

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- BERT the Owl emailed employees to participate in an [online findability/task-testing study](#) to ensure information is easy to find on the intranet.
- Special education employees participated in an additional card-sorting exercise to ensure they will be able to easily find division-specific content.
- Branding meeting was held to select the top five “reactions” that should be evoked by the design of BERT.
- Division communications representatives finalized content inventory of existing staff resources for discussion and/or migration to the new site.
- A message announcing the impending arrival of BERT is prominently placed on the “Staff Resources” section of the public website.
- BERT design is finalized with the assistance of a BOCES graphic designer.
- Content owners participated in on-site session with vendor representatives on intranet launch best practices.
- Content owners participated in a “barn-raising” session over a three-day period to actively review, edit and move content from the public-facing website to the new intranet.
- Human resources staff began to transition from paper forms to online forms.
- Training needs are identified; and step-by-step instructions and video tutorials are posted for staff on key intranet features in a [BERT “Help & How To” section](#).
- Introductory training sessions are held with key staff:
 - Members of each division’s communications staff receive an overview of BERT.
 - BOCES leadership received an overview of BERT and time to personalize their profiles.
- A group of early adopters get access to BERT's collaborative team workspaces.
 - Grants staff is trained to begin piloting a team space.
 - Network technicians are trained to begin piloting a team space.
- Communications staff create a BERT the Owl persona to familiarize staff with BERT:
 - [A BERT profile](#) and an @BERT feature is created in the site for employees to ask questions and get answers directly on BERT.
 - A BERT email address is created for our email client to provide another means for employees to ask questions and get answers.
 - [The intranet mascot—BERT the Owl—made an appearance on employee t-shirts](#) at the Corporate Challenge road race on May 19.
 - “BERT the Owl” emailed all staff regarding the new intranet development process; includes an image of BERT with a bandage healing from previous iteration.

June 2016

- [BERT the Owl emailed employees about completing](#) an [employee engagement benchmarking survey](#) over the course of two and a half weeks to serve as baseline data prior to the intranet launch.
- A variety of training initiatives are rolled out for key intranet champions:
 - Small group and one-on-one sessions were held with key opinion leaders to build informed consent.
 - BERT is rolled out to level 5 and 6 program managers and principals; and they’re given time to personalize their profiles.
- BERT is rolled out to all 12-month employees via a “soft launch” on June 29
- [BERT the Owl emailed all employees a link to BERT](#) along with login information and dates for training.
- “Staff Resources” page on public-facing website is updated with information about and a link to BERT.

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- BERT's ["12 Rules of Engagement"](#) is shared via email, on BERT and at trainings to get everyone off on the right foot using and contributing to the new staff intranet.

July 2016

- BERT continues to be introduced with targeted emails, promotional materials and trainings:
 - [Flyer and large laminated BERT posters](#) were displayed in BOCES facilities.
 - A series of one-hour drop-in sessions are held for 12-month employees.

August 2016

- A [postcard is snail mailed to all employees](#) introducing BERT along with login instructions and information about key features.
- A series of one-hour drop-in sessions are held for 12-month employees.
- New employees at Career & Technical Education Center staff get an overview of BERT.
- The Northeastern Regional Information Center held a [photo contest to encourage staff to upload their photo](#).

September 2016

- BERT is rolled-out officially to 10-month employees at the Opening Day event on Sept. 6.
- An [Opening Day event program agenda](#) is distributed with a page devoted to BERT.
- Career and Technical Education and Special Education division employees receive an introduction to BERT during a hands-on session.

October 2016

- [BERT the Owl sent an email to staff](#) about all content being removed from the "Staff Resources" section of the public-facing website except for retiree information and select hyperlinks. Information was also posted on BERT.
- [BERT the Owl sent an email to employees about the staff photo day](#) to provide employees with a chance to get a professional headshot they can upload to BERT's employee directory. Information was also posted on BERT.
- [BERT the Owl sent a reminder to all staff about the staff photo day](#). Information was also posted on BERT.

November 2016

- Special education teachers attended a two-hour BERT session. The hands-on sessions provided staff an opportunity to login and navigate BERT, and ask questions.
- Staff photographer is made available at various sites to take employee profile photos.
- Special education teachers attended an after-school session on BERT at a school-based location.
- Staff participated in a fall photo contest on BERT.
- Two communications staff meet with a component district interested in BERT.
- [BERT the Owl sent an email to all employees](#) to participate in a [post-launch employee engagement survey](#) over a three week period to gauge use.

December 2016

- Staff participated in a BERT holiday photo contest.
- The director of NERIC and a BERT communications team member [gave a presentation about BERT](#) for school district administrators and educators interested in the effect BERT has had on our organization.

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January 2017

- Educational Support Services division employees get a BERT tutorial.
- [Staff are notified about an intranet software upgrade providing enhanced functionality](#) including a more robust search and new shout-out feature.

March 2017

- Two communication staff participated in a video conference with an educational organization interested in BERT.

Future Plans

- Plans to roll-out phase two of the intranet organization-wide include making collaborative team spaces available to all interested groups, and using BERT as a vehicle for professional development.
- A work team will continue to meet every other week to analyze BERT's effectiveness and make modifications based on feedback and analytics.

Evaluation

Anonymous and Voluntary Employee Engagement Surveys

- 395 respondents completed a 12-question baseline survey in June 2016 (*prior to the site launch*)
[Full Survey Results](#)
- 292 employees completed an 18-question post-launch survey in November 2016 (*post-site launch*)
[Full Survey Results](#)

Key takeaways

Employee engagement increases in November 2016, per base-line survey results

<i>Respondents who said they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the following statements</i>	<i>June 2016 395 total responses</i>	<i>November 2016 292 total responses</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
<i>“I feel informed about what is happening at BOCES”</i>	<i>58 percent</i>	<i>65 percent</i>	<i>+12 percent</i>
<i>“I feel connected to BOCES employees at other locations.”</i>	<i>24 percent</i>	<i>32 percent</i>	<i>+33 percent</i>
<i>“I can easily find the information and forms I need to do my job.”</i>	<i>57 percent</i>	<i>61 percent</i>	<i>+7 percent</i>
<i>“There is a good feeling of community among employees at BOCES.”</i>	<i>47 percent</i>	<i>50 percent</i>	<i>+6 percent</i>

Employee engagement is higher among 12-month employees, according to *post-launch survey* responses

<i>Respondents who said they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the following statements</i>	10-month staff <i>395 total responses</i>	12-month staff <i>292 total responses</i>	Percent Difference
<i>“I feel informed about what is happening at BOCES”</i>	<i>58 percent</i>	<i>70 percent</i>	<i>+19 percent</i>
<i>“I feel connected to BOCES employees at other locations.”</i>	<i>28 percent</i>	<i>35 percent</i>	<i>+22 percent</i>
<i>“I can easily find the information and forms I need to do my job.”</i>	<i>43 percent</i>	<i>72 percent</i>	<i>+50 percent</i>
<i>“There is a good feeling of community among employees at BOCES.”</i>	<i>39 percent</i>	<i>56 percent</i>	<i>+36 percent</i>
<i>“I enjoy using BERT, the new BOCES intranet.”</i>	<i>34 percent</i>	<i>61 percent</i>	<i>+59 percent</i>

Intranet statistics

- [Key performance indicator dashboard with full analytics since the full site launch in September 2016](#)

Additional statistics

- Total visits: **47,203** encompassing **302,512** actions (such as page views, clicks and downloads)
- Returning visits: **40,674** returning visits
- Average site visit: **6 minutes, 30 seconds**
- BERT homepage: **103,597 page views**
- Employee Directory: **7,458 page views**

Employee directory profile photo uploads by division:

- **79 percent of Management Services** employees (*88 out of 112 total*)
- **67 percent of Northeastern Regional Information Center** employees (*132 out of 198 total*)
- 23 percent of Educational Support Services employees (*13 out of 57 total*)
- 20 percent of Central Administration employees (*10 out of 51 total*)
- 19 percent of Career and Technical Education employees (*25 out of 133 total*)
- 14 percent of Special Education employees (*61 out of 436 total*)

Overview of employee engagement during the development process:

- **Card-sorting activity** - More than 245 employees participated in this exercise to help inform the site architecture (24 percent of staff).
- **Findability/task-testing study** - More than 180 employees participated in an online test to ensure information is easy to find on the intranet, resulting in an 81 percent success rate (18 percent of staff).
- **Additional card-sorting exercise** - Approximately 26 special education employees participated in an additional exercise to ensure they will be able to easily find division specific content (3 percent of staff).

Comments on the November 2016 survey related to BERT included:

- “I feel that BERT is certainly a great addition to Capital Region BOCES & NERIC. “It has helped centralize all the important employee information and is starting to enhance how the employees perceive how much they impact the organization as a whole.” *12-month NERIC division employee.*
- “I find the ability to search for someone by name and see their photo to put a face to a name. It’s a unique feature that has saved me some embarrassment during team meetings.” *12-month Management Services employee*
- “I have noticed people put comments or questions in the system and they get answered rather quickly. Then I use the answers to help me find my way.” *10-month Special Education division employee*
- “I feel that BERT is certainly a great addition to Capital Region BOCES & NERIC. It has helped centralize all the important employee information and is starting to enhance how the employees perceive how much they impact the organization as a whole.” *12-month NERIC division employee*
- “BERT is a great step in the right direction, I am glad that the team scrapped the old one took a step back and got it right. BOCES has a whole would be better if we all worked that way.” *12-month Special Ed employee*

Additional anecdotal feedback from staff:

- “Our employees are able to create an identity within BERT so that other colleagues are able to get to know a little more about who they are working with. This could ultimately help in facilitating a much more positive and productive workplace.” *NERIC Director Dale Breault*
- “Prior to BERT, a simple task of requesting a name or address change required many back and forth communications. Now, a simple entry into BERT utilizing a self-service form of required fields allows this type of task to occur seamlessly.” *Capital Region BOCES Assistant Director of Human Resources Carol Ratigan*
- “BERT is becoming indispensable” *Grants Writer Nancy Morrison*
- “It was an adjustment in the beginning, but now it’s just part of our team. We can’t be without it.” *Director of the Grants & Development Service Megan Allen*
- “It’s [BERT] just part of my daily routine now.” *Grants Writer Laura Whalen*

Comments emailed or posted to BERT:

- “This is another great source of up-to-date information for all staff. I am happy to be a dedicated fan of BERT!!” *Catherine Jakway, Teaching Assistant*
- “I like that NERIC has a platform that can showcase our team outside of work doing good things!” *Monica Statielel, Managing Program Coordinator I*
- “For the record - BERT was such an awesome idea and everyone did such an amazing job. WELL DONE!” *Mehreena Ahmad, Clerk I*
- “Thanks to all who worked on this website it’s so user friendly.” *Valarie Gottlieb, Teaching Assistant*