

## Background

In 1997 Ogilvy & Mather Direct re-organized and re-branded itself as OgilvyOne. As part of this redevelopment, OgilvyOne developed a proprietary methodology called Customer Ownership. To ensure this philosophy was put into the hearts, minds and not least the hands of our 2500 employees, the chairman asked that it be made “electronic”. This was the beginning of what was to become “Truffles”, so called from a David Ogilvy quote

*“we pursue knowledge the way a pig pursues truffles”*

3 years later, Truffles has fundamentally changed the way OgilvyOne does business. Probably the two biggest reasons for it’s success are hidden in the paragraph above. Firstly OgilvyOne started, not with an ambition to build an intranet, but a desire to share knowledge. Secondly the driver for the project was the chairman himself. Over the 4 years, 3 versions and multiple enhancements to Truffles, OgilvyOne has learnt many lessons, some of which have been described in this article. Some of these were identified through careful analysis, some through simple inspiration, some changes were engineered, some were accidental – yet the lessons of an active champion and useful content are the most important, and for the readers of this article - unfortunately the most difficult to replicate.

## The approach

In the development of Truffles (which can never be considered finished), effort is concentrated in three areas; content, usage and application. Obviously these three areas are inherently linked, however to ensure no one area is overlooked at the expense of the others, it has been important to have three distinct groups looking at each of these areas.

## Content

Over the 4 years Truffles has been in place, OgilvyOne has tried different approaches to content development – from the extremes of allowing anyone to publish to having a single ‘gatekeeper’. Currently a compromise exists. Geographically based Knowledge Managers (the larger offices may have a full time KM, while the smaller offices use a part-time KM), as well as KMs who lead the “Communities of Interest” have the rights to publish. Although internally the published ‘knowledge objects’ are called ‘truffles’, to prevent confusion with the application itself I will refer to them as knowledge objects. As it happens a knowledge object is a fitting title for a nugget of knowledge that could be a case study, an article, a piece of research, a TV advertisement etc. The job of the Knowledge Managers is to source material – they work with the authors to knock the material into shape. This is to ensure that a case study describes the client and market situation and the challenge we were presented with before leaping into what was actually done for example. In addition it is necessary to create a flash summary of the ‘knowledge object’ (this ensures people know what to expect before deciding to view the ‘knowledge object’). All this is before any layout or design is applied to the knowledge object. In fact the application itself looks after much of this and a perfectly acceptable knowledge object can be created with just basic computer skills. However with increasing frequency, OgilvyOne applies its design and creative skills to a percentage of knowledge objects such that they appear to be almost sitelets in themselves (such knowledge objects are often advertised on the site itself through banner advertisements). For all published work however the application itself manages other tasks automatically. It decides on which pages the knowledge object should appear, whose personalized front pages it appears on, which community pages it should appear on and who should be notified that it has been posted.

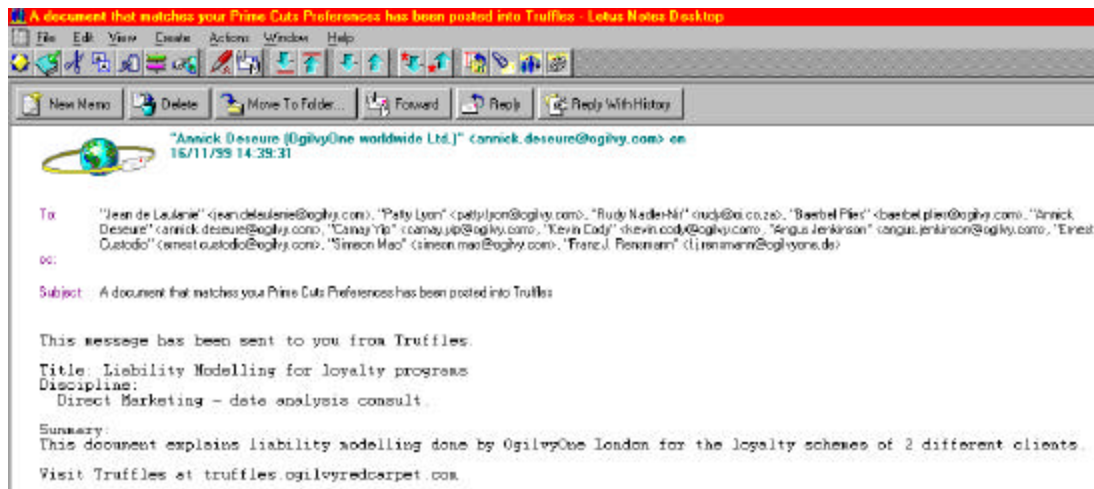
Of course this type of ‘best practice’ content is not the only content. Discussion groups also exist which are open to anyone to post material to. This approach has often been likened to a library and cafeteria. Although as previously mentioned, content is key to a knowledge based intranet,

strategies for engaging people and encouraging interaction and collaboration should be part of the intranet.

## Cafeteria

A number of features were designed to encourage interaction. Firstly people 'exist' within the 'cafeteria' by registering and completing their profile. Like the real world there are different facets to a person – the professional persona (their skills and experience) and the social persona (hobbies perhaps or other more personal aspects). Truffles asks for 'skills' and 'interests' which are captured in a structured and searchable form. In addition however users have the ability to write a biography and include pictures. In fact essentially they have the opportunity to build their own page on the intranet. Of the 50% or so registered users who have taken up the option, these biographies range from the straightforward professional biography to the more creatively presented 'fun' page with everything from wedding snaps to holiday photos included.

For some people the personal page is an opportunity for some creative expression. For others it is another task – but one with a payback. Having defined themselves in their personal page, Truffles uses their interest data to personalize the information it presents to them each time they log on. Documents matching their interests are displayed in date order first, and the most recent postings to the discussions they have subscribed to (more on these later) are also displayed. In fact Truffles will email the users each time content is loaded that matches their interests. In short Truffles automatically drives traffic to itself – it markets itself one-to-one!



Having captured their skills it is now possible to retrieve from a search, not just the content that matches the search criteria *but also the people*. For example, it is possible to list the German-speaking copywriters with financial services experience. Having identified the people who might be able to help, it is possible to view their biography (i.e. their personal page) and email them directly from Truffles.

One of the difficulties OgilvyOne had in the earlier versions of Truffles was engaging it's experts on a more regular basis. The problem was that if people were using Truffles primarily as a means for self-education or a means to find experts who could help, why should an expert use it? Recognizing that these experts liked to meet their peers in the real world and discuss the latest trends in their areas of expertise, Truffles provides similar virtual facilities through a variety of "communities of interest". These communities filter out non-community related information and

provide members with just a list of community related documents, a community specific discussion and a list of community members.

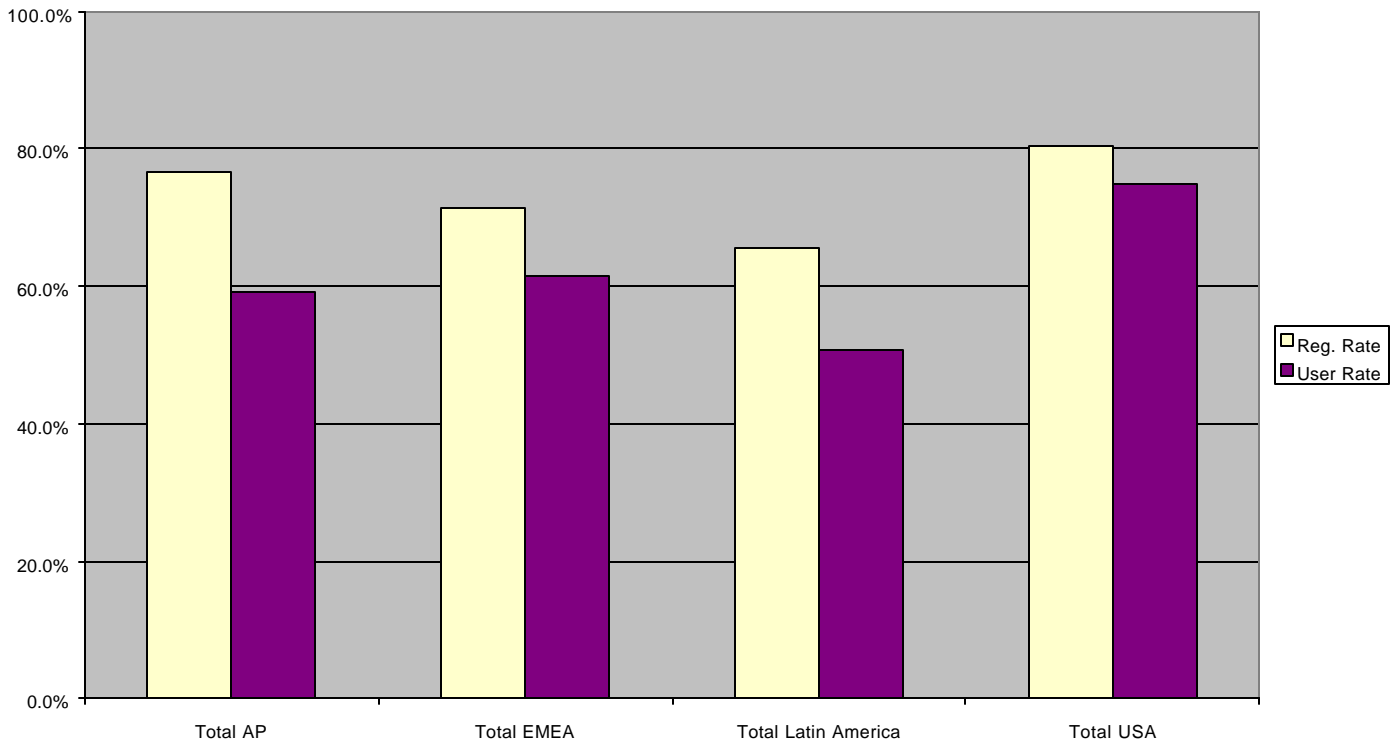


These are not exclusive. OgilvyOne adopted a blanket policy of providing all information to everyone. Anyone can visit the community pages. The purpose of the community pages is to allow Truffles to filter the information of specific interest to the community members and also encourage interaction between community members. I often hear the phrase “oh yes, I’ve seen your name on Truffles” spoken between apparent strangers at international meetings.

## Usage

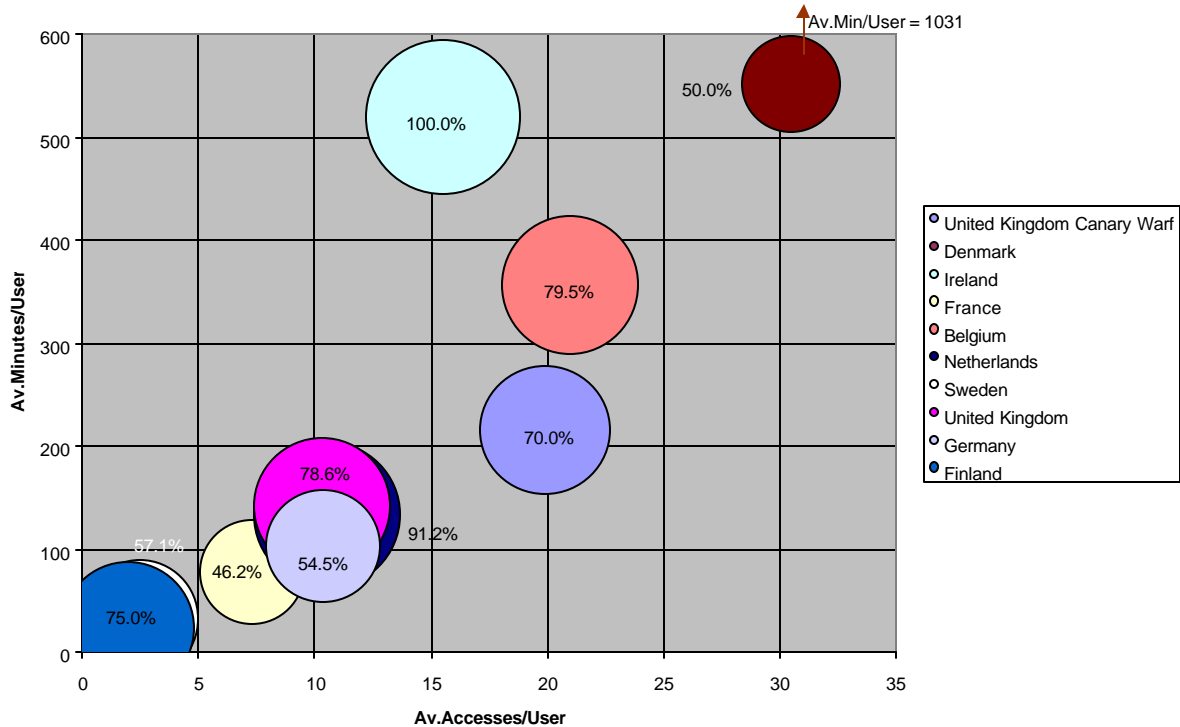
Obviously a primary factor in encouraging usage is ensuring a usable application and useful content. Although this will attract the early adopters, further encouragement is required for the remainder. OgilvyOne applied all its marketing expertise – from traditional media (posters and mail) through teaser email campaigns and competitions. In general, if someone could be encouraged to invest a little time in experiencing the intranet, they were converted. Of course unlike an internet site, OgilvyOne could and did apply a stick as well as a carrot. Usage is monitored, and part of the annual review of local offices, carried out by the chairman includes, in addition to a review of finances and creative output, a review of the office’s usage and contribution to Truffles. In fact every aspect of everything that OgilvyOne now does includes a Truffles element. Such ubiquity does not happen naturally – it is through the active championing of the intranet by the chairman and the management team. These efforts have resulted in very high registration and trial rates throughout the company as the following diagram shows:

### Ogilvy One Worldwide - Registered/User Rate Worldwide by Region



Appreciating that a knowledge management application is of little use to operational and administration staff, these registration and usage figures are acceptable. Not surprisingly for a one-to-one agency, all manner of measurements are taken to continuously improve the usage of the application and the application itself. Analysis of these figures show the rules of differential marketing apply with approximately 15% of users responsible for 60% of usage. Outside of this pattern, other patterns are more difficult to discern as the following graph showing a snapshot of usage over the last few months demonstrates

### OgilvyOne - Usage EMEA - North & Central Europe



The percentage of users within an office ranges from 46% to 100%, while the usage ranges from less than 5 visits and 100 minutes per user to 30 visits accounting for 10 hours of usage per user. Generalising however certain patterns emerge. Usage tends to be higher in smaller and more remote offices. Office usage can be heavily influenced by a core group of high usage users who appear to encourage a higher use throughout the office. Where this core group does not exist, overall usage can be extremely low. Stimulating usage within a large office where a core high usage group does not exist is a challenge.

More recently OgilvyOne has begun to look at the impact of banners (quite high) and to identify if there are patterns in the usage of truffles (e.g. patterns of usage versus user skills or usage versus date of registration etc.). This latter analysis may lead to identifying the characteristics of potential high value users who could be used as a catalyst to stimulate usage throughout an office.

Finally some mention has been made of the features within Truffles itself that further supports usage e.g. personalized home pages based on a users' interests, banner advertising on the front page to encourage visits to specific areas of Truffles and auto-generated emails targeting particular knowledge objects to particular users.

### Application

Although OgilvyOne recognized that content was important even from our earliest attempts at building an intranet, what wasn't anticipated is that a wealth of content can be overwhelming for people. Creatives visited the site, saw all the content related to our methodology and thought "this site is not aimed at me" – meanwhile consultants visited the site and saw the creative and case studies and thought, "this site isn't aimed at me". In trying to please everybody we ended up

pleasing no-one. This was where the concept of communities of interest was born. The purpose was twofold. Firstly it encouraged use of the tool. Secondly it encouraged collaboration between experts in a particular field. To support these communities, community pages were set-up within the site. As described above, these filtered out information not relevant to the community. In our most recent version of Truffles however, we have used techniques to customize the content appearing on the front page according to the interests of the individual user – a community of one?

The front page is key to Truffles. We realized that although we could probably get people to the front page at least once, if this did not grab their attention, then they may not return. Approximately 50% of the front page of Truffles is customized to the users interests; of the remainder, 25% is static navigation bars and 25% is frequently changing information. The latter includes news, the title and summary of the most recent knowledge object to be added, and a banner which advertises either a particular knowledge object or an area of the site that we are trying to encourage the use of. These banners change frequently. All in all the front page is a busy but dynamic place to visit. The personalization means that there should be something to grab the eye of the occasional visitor, encouraging them to delve further into the intranet. All knowledge objects can contain links to other knowledge objects as well as external sites. It is always tempting to get involved in a discussion which you have subscribed to – of which the most recent postings are displayed on the front page also. These features make Truffles quite a sticky site while the frequently changing portion of the front page encourages repeat visits.



As is now apparent, the application was developed with features to encourage usage in mind. In fact it also contains features, beyond the obvious, to manage content also. Anyone can vote on

whether a knowledge object is good or not. The most popular knowledge objects are listed on the front page, while the unpopular are considered for deletion.

In addition to the front page, the individual knowledge objects and the community of interest pages already described, Truffles contains a series of other main sections; a discussion page (organized under broad topics); a large Customer Ownership section (remembering the original brief); a day to day section (dealing with HR policies, tools for use everyday such as our creative brief, data analysis tools etc.); a local section (all offices can publish material for local consumption only – useful for local language material); a creative section (in addition to OgilvyOne case studies, Truffles also contains the Cannes, D&AD and other major award winning TV advertisements for the last several years). In fact any one of these sections could be a site in itself. However the management of each of these sections is left to Truffles. The Knowledge Managers publish a knowledge object, and by filling in various parameters, Truffles decides where the knowledge object should appear. Take for example a case study that was primarily creative focused. The knowledge object would firstly appear as the latest added to Truffles (so everyone would see that on their front page), it would appear in the Creative section, and it would appear in the Creative community page. Anyone who had expressed an interest in creative would receive an email announcing the new knowledge object and when they logged in, it would be top of the list of personalized knowledge objects. If people voted accordingly, it would appear in the list of most popular knowledge objects. All of this happens at the push of the publish button, without any additional input from the Knowledge Manager.

Searching the wealth of knowledge on Truffles is obviously a primary function and it is possible to do a simple word search for matching knowledge objects. However it is also possible to apply more rigorous criteria e.g. a “case study” dealing with “customer retention” in “financial services” (in conjunction with searching the knowledge base it also searches a glossary, so in this example it would suggest searching on customer loyalty also). Combined with the people search described above (the German speaking copywriter example), Truffles provides anyone in OgilvyOne with access to our collective experience and our experts from around the globe within seconds.

It has been 9 months since this latest version of Truffles was released and like the effort in usage and content, work on the application is never finished. A number of features have been introduced throughout this year. It is now possible to download the contact information for all OgilvyOne employees onto a PalmPilot (indeed Ogilvy no longer produce an internal worldwide telephone directory) and we have tested WAP applications. A popular feature has been a button that lists everyone logged in. From this list, it is possible to click on a name and view their biography (and email them directly – no instant messaging yet). It is interesting to see this list of names move from Asia, through Europe and the Americas as the day progresses. Such features – a mixture of the practical and fun – continue to be released every two months. This keeps the interest and awareness high within the organization (one of the more fun enhancements planned is for a virtual dating game where Truffles matches people according to their interests). Already OgilvyOne has begun to look at another major release. Having made major progress in our goal of sharing knowledge and engaging users, the next step is true global collaboration.

No-one within OgilvyOne anticipated where the journey from a simple request (“make this electronic”) would take us. What is clear is that it is a journey without a destination. Four years on and with a successful application, broad content and high usage, OgilvyOne is still not finished. Obviously the application continues to be improved and content continues to be developed. However the goal now is to develop OgilvyOne into a true knowledge sharing and collaborative organization. Although we have now reached a point where the first step in any new project is to check what exists and who can help on Truffles, this is only half the story. Perhaps 3 years from now, the need for Knowledge Managers will have disappeared, as the idea of sharing knowledge becomes as much second nature as accessing it.