



AN INTRODUCTION TO SHAREPOINT GOVERNANCE

A GUIDE TO ENABLING EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION WITHIN THE
WORKPLACE

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INTRODUCTION

SharePoint and its related technologies offer a compelling portal and information management platform. The platform has been widely adopted throughout both the private and public sector, and Navantis has been working with its clients to deploy the technology since it was first released in 2001. Over the past ten years, SharePoint has evolved into a complete information management platform and expanded its offering of tools. When deployed with a mature project management process, clear governance, and a commitment to on-going operational excellence, SharePoint provides an excellent business productivity tool that solves many of the challenges we face as information workers, including finding information, managing documents, gathering information across diverse sources and managing web content. Combined with other Microsoft products such as Microsoft Office, Lync, Unified Access Gateway (UAG), SQL Server, etc. the SharePoint platform can become the information hub for the modern workplace.

However, like many IT projects, SharePoint projects experience significant failure rates or do not achieve their desired objectives. One of the key contributors to projects not achieving their objectives is the failure to establish a formal governance program for SharePoint. This may lead to the following issues:

- Proliferation of content, sites and applications to the point where they cannot be effectively managed
- Organizational conflict due to lack of roles and responsibilities definition
- Poor adoption and resistance to change from the organization due to lack of training, poor operational support and lack of process for involving business stakeholders in the change management process
- The perception from stakeholders that the solution is controlled by Information Technology and does not meet their business requirements
- Operational inefficiency due to lack of management processes, escalation paths and poorly designed infrastructure
- Exposure to significant risk of downtime due to poor or undefined backup/restore procedures, disaster recovery plans and operational management processes

Many organizations start SharePoint projects within their IT departments. IT departments may not be empowered or able to adequately engage the rest of the organization to ensure they are involved in “owning” their new information management platform.

The establishment of governance at the beginning of a large enterprise technology roll-out significantly increases the chances of success for both the initial implementation and subsequent phases. A governance program sets expectations with the organization on what the solution will provide and establishes a process that achieves buy-in from the organization and ensures that the solution continues to evolve to meet business needs. Governance provides the operational models for ensuring that the business is an active participant in the process and that they are provided with on-going operational support for the SharePoint adoption.

This white paper provides a general introduction to SharePoint governance. It begins with an overview of general governance principles and how they apply to IT projects. We then provide some guidance on how governance applies to the implementation of SharePoint with examples from both private and public sector organizations.

We encourage you to contact Navantis for further guidance and support in establishing your governance program, whether you are starting a new SharePoint program, trying to rescue a troubled project, looking to upgrade to the latest version of SharePoint, or migrating to SharePoint from another platform. Our team of strategic consultants will provide practical advice on how to use the concepts explained in this white paper and apply them to your particular objectives, functional requirements and employee culture.

WHAT IS GOVERNANCE?

Governance is the set of policies, roles, responsibilities, and processes that you establish in an enterprise to guide, direct, and control how the organization makes decisions.



FIGURE 1: GOVERNANCE MODEL

SharePoint Governance is the set of policies, roles, responsibilities, and processes that you establish in an enterprise to guide, direct, and control how the organization makes decisions about the Implementation, Roll-Out and Operation of SharePoint.

GOVERNANCE AND SHAREPOINT: AN EXAMPLE

Let's take a basic example that most organizations are familiar with – organizing documents. Many organizations have significant challenges in organizing and managing documents. They use either corporate file servers or email as the primary mechanism for authoring, collaborating, publishing and archiving. File servers and email, by their nature, are typically identified as an organizational pain point because of their lack of support for version control, approvals, collaboration and structured metadata. Reliance on email and file servers typically results in large file servers containing thousands of unmanaged documents or email inboxes that contain lots of attachments. This causes the IT department to be continually running out of space as users accumulate many versions of the same document and it causes significant productivity issues for business users as they try to find previously created documents, share documents with others or collaborate on revisions. In addition, ineffective document organization is a key contributor to organizational challenges in retaining corporate knowledge and intellectual property.

SharePoint solves this problem by migrating existing file shares and email-based collaboration to the platform in order to take advantage of built-in document management features such as workflow, version control, search, permission management, publishing, etc. However, the moment that such a project is started, important questions arise, including:

1. **HOW** do we categorize documents as an organization?
2. **WHO** is responsible for approving documents?
3. **WHAT** are the types of documents that we would like to manage?
4. **HOW** do users find documents?
5. **WHEN** do documents expire? **WHAT** do we do when they do expire?
6. **WHAT** is a document vs. a “record” within the organization?
7. **HOW** do we retain and archive files? **WHAT** are the rules for retention?
8. **HOW** do we incorporate new processes?
9. **WHAT** are the infrastructure requirements for storing all these documents? **WHO** pays for the storage?
10. **WHO** is responsible for defining templates? **HOW** do we ensure consistency?
11. **WHAT** types of files do we want to be able to support? **WHAT** versions of office are we going to use to create documents?
12. **HOW** do we actually collaborate with each other? **WHAT** values are we impacting if we change existing collaboration processes?
13. **HOW** are we going to train people on using this new set of tools?
14. **WHAT** is our strategy for migrating existing documents into the new system? **WHO** will be making decisions on what documents will be moved?

SharePoint Governance is about providing answers to these questions. The objective of governance is to provide a strategy for managing the platform that answers these questions both in terms of initial implementation, as well as on an ongoing basis. Resolving these questions establishes the overall Strategic Plan for the roll-out of the platform as well as the Operational Strategy for managing SharePoint as an enterprise “service”.

WHY GOVERNANCE?

REDUCED RISK OF FAILURE

IT projects have historically had a high rate of failure. Studies and surveys on the outcomes of IT projects typically report high failure rate ranging from outright cancellation of the project to respondents reporting that the systems put in place by IT were not providing the expected value.

When reporting on project failure, the key reasons that projects fail are attributed to the following:

- Lack of Planning
- Weak business case
- Lack of resources
- Unrealistic Expectations
- Poor quality control
- Poor requirements
- Lack of executive buy-in
- Poor communication
- Lack of focus on end-users, adoption and training

A formal governance program helps to address many of these causes of project failure and reduces the risk that SharePoint will fail to meet the immediate and on-going needs of the organization.

A SHAREPOINT PROJECT IS NOT A TYPICAL IT PROJECT

SharePoint is unlike typical IT Projects (such as installing a new phone system, upgrading the mail server, or building a custom developed application). Traditional projects tend to be delivered under the following assumptions:

- Business users are customers, while IT acts as the service provider. IT provides the answers, business users consume the service.
- Requirements must be known up front because changing them mid-stream causes disruption, change requests, increased costs, downtime etc. The goal of an IT project manager is to minimize change.
- IT prioritizes spending the vast majority of effort in meeting functional or feature-related requirements. Each feature requires a significant amount of effort in analysis, design, coding, and testing, especially if it is non-standard.
- For product-based projects, the business must conform to the way the product “works” because deviation from what is “out of the box” becomes very expensive to implement and to maintain.
- Business users are not responsible for maintaining or delivering the project – they provide the requirements and then IT is exclusively responsible for providing the service.

SharePoint is by design a technology platform that is “business centric” – it requires IT and business users to work together to design, implement and govern the solutions to be provided by the platform. In a SharePoint project, business users and IT users have to work together in a much deeper way, not just during the initial implementation but also once the platform has been launched. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for business users who are often used to having IT deliver everything themselves.

SharePoint provides the opportunity for the business to have significant input into core information management processes that was never available before. As a platform, Sharepoint can help encourage business participation and the delegation of decision-making responsibility to business areas. Through this delegation, business users can take ownership of their own productivity environment and collaboration processes. As a result, the IT department is not a central decision making authority or a potential bottleneck in the process. Enabling this delegation of authority requires business users to be engaged in the process, ask questions, and make decisions as to how they will use the tools effectively.

SharePoint as a technology platform cannot provide all the answers. While best practices exist, an effective governance strategy will assess and reflect your specific requirements, structure and organizational culture.

A FOCUS ON BUY-IN AND ADOPTION FROM DAY ONE

One of the reasons IT projects fail is lack of executive buy-in. Another reason is poor adoption. Identifying executive champions helps encourage their staff to participate and adopt the new platform. By engaging business users at the planning stages of a project excitement is built from the very beginning, and users develop a sense of ownership for the project.

Governance questions are the right strategic discussion to have with executives. Engaging stakeholders through a governance program will allow them to understand how your SharePoint project will align with their strategic objectives. Later, executive stakeholders will act as champions within their own departments when you need their support during roll-out.

Having departmental business users involved in planning discussions early on results in higher adoption once the platform is rolled out. Departmental business users can act as champions and can act as mentors and coaches within their departments once the platform is launched. Having business stakeholders participate in the project from day one makes them partners instead of customers.

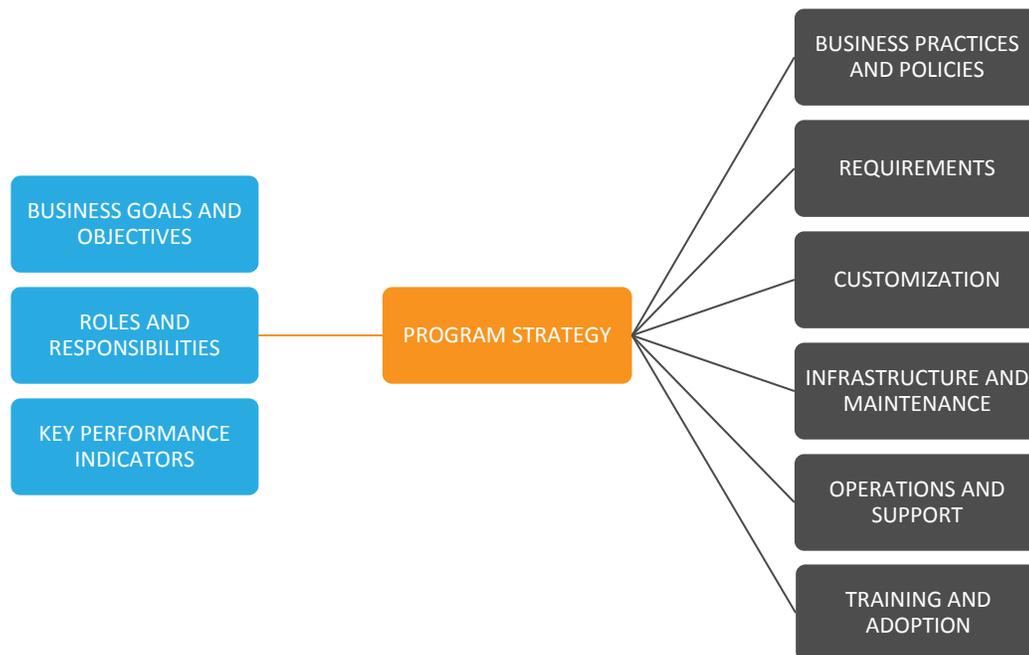
Business users are often wary of new technology projects. A common concern is that following the technology rollout their jobs will be negatively impacted because of new processes to learn, poor quality of delivery, or features that don't match their business processes. Effectively managed governance discussions allow the IT department to assure business users that the roll-out of SharePoint is more than just a "technology project" – it will provide business users the confidence that the impact to their existing processes will be managed effectively and that they will have an on-going voice in how the platform will evolve over time.

HOW TO INCORPORATE GOVERNANCE INTO YOUR SHAREPOINT PROJECT

This section provides a high level overview of how you can start thinking about and implementing a governance program within your SharePoint implementation. This section provides some helpful strategies on starting a SharePoint Governance Program within your organization.

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR A GOVERNANCE PROGRAM FOR SHAREPOINT

The Navantis Governance Framework establishes a set of key areas of concern that we believe are essential for a mature governance program for SharePoint. The model is as follows:



For a SharePoint program to have the highest chance of success, it needs to be guided by an overall strategy that defines WHY the program is in place, WHO will be responsible for various tasks, and HOW you will measure success. In addition, in order to operationalize and sustain the program, the organization needs to look at policies, requirements, customization, infrastructure, operations and training as key areas of opportunity and risk for the organization. As a consulting group, our Governance Practice works with organizations to facilitate governance conversations with stakeholders and provide best practices in each of these areas to ensure the success of your SharePoint project.

INCORPORATING EXISTING GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

One of the key starting points in building SharePoint Governance is examining your existing governance processes and organizational structures. For example, here are just some of the types of processes your organization may have already established that can be re-used in your SharePoint Governance Program:

- A Project Management Office or project management processes already established
- Software development life cycle methods used within your organization (e.g. waterfall, various agile methods, etc.)
- Operations teams, processes, and service level agreements (e.g. ITIL, helpdesk processes, ticketing systems, etc.)
- Change control processes (e.g. change control boards, gating processes, structured reviews, etc.)
- Branding and communications standards
- Committees, boards or existing user groups
- Policies, legal frameworks and compliance standards
- Teams, departments, project teams and other organizational structures

There is a significant advantage to re-using existing processes or organizational structures, at least in part, for defining your SharePoint Governance Program. Stakeholders, participants and teams are already trained and have adopted these practices and so the change management requirements are significantly reduced.

The biggest risk in using existing processes is they may not be quite right for what you need. For example, in many organizations there is a “Web Committee” that is responsible for managing decisions on what appears on the public facing web site. This type of committee is a natural place to bring up SharePoint decisions around content, especially if it is being used to power the organization’s public facing web site. However, the “Web Committee” may not be responsible for the internal intranet, so there may be a gap between their current mandate and the scope that your SharePoint Governance Program may need to cover. When you define your program, you may need participation from multiple committees or teams for different aspects of your SharePoint implementation. For example, you may have decisions around software development being made by the IT department while content changes are approved by the communications department.

In some cases, you may have to create entirely new processes or team structures to provide the right decision-making body for your SharePoint implementation. Some organizations have created a “SharePoint Committee” precisely for this purpose – existing teams weren’t able to satisfy the cross-disciplinary requirements that SharePoint decision-making requires.

Using Existing Information Technology Governance Models

SharePoint as an information technology platform can fit within existing IT governance programs. Many enterprise class IT organizations have adopted enterprise architecture or process methodologies such as Zachmann, ITIL, COBIT or TOGAF to govern how IT projects are rolled out. In addition, many organizations have defined roles and responsibilities for different aspects of decision-making for IT projects.

In their book, *IT Governance*, Peter Weil and Jeanne W. Ross identify five areas that a governance process must address:

- Principles: high level statements about how SharePoint will be used in the business
- Architecture Decisions: Organizing logic for data, applications and infrastructure captured in a set of policies, relationships and technical choices to achieve desired business and technical standardization and integration
- Infrastructure Decisions: Centrally coordinated, shared IT services that provide the foundation for the enterprise's SharePoint capability
- Business Application Needs: Specifying the business need for purchased or internally developed SharePoint solutions
- Investment and Prioritization Decisions: Decisions about how much and where to invest in SharePoint including project approvals and techniques. (see Weill & Ross, 2004, p. 27: paraphrased and adapted to SharePoint context)

For each area, there may be different decision-making models. For example, in many organizations infrastructure and architecture decisions are governed exclusively by the IT department. In the case of Business Application needs, models include: duopoly models where a group of business stakeholders meets with the IT department; fiefdom models where each department can exclusively make their own decisions; or federation models where there is a combination of input from departments that is rolled up to a central decision making body.

Additionally, there is a difference between “providing input” and “making decisions” – the models for each may be quite distinct. For example, for investment and prioritization, decision departments might provide input but it is a management board that ultimately makes the decision.

A SharePoint Governance model can map to existing IT Governance models quite easily. However, there are aspects of SharePoint Governance that go beyond existing methodologies or impact multiple processes. For example, your organization may use PMI methodologies for managing projects, TOGAF processes for defining and rolling out architectures, and ITIL for managing operations. SharePoint Governance spans all of these areas and also includes areas typically outside IT governance frameworks such as branding, content design, and training.

FACILITATING THE DISCUSSION

One of the key challenges in implementing SharePoint is the sheer number of impacted stakeholders within the organization. SharePoint is a powerful platform that when fully implemented can become the global information management platform for the organization.

As discussed above, SharePoint is NOT primarily a technology platform. It's a business centric platform that encourages business users to make decisions on their own, to collaborate with one another, and to create their own content without any involvement from IT. One of the key success factors of a SharePoint implementation is business user enablement – do business users feel like they own the platform and gain value from it?

In developing the requirements for your SharePoint implementation and defining your governance processes, we recommend engaging the following types of stakeholders during the planning phase:

- **Executive and Senior Management:** You need to engage executives and senior leaders in your organization for two reasons: 1) to get their input and ensure that your strategies align with overall organizational strategies and 2) so they will commit to acting as champions and encourage their departments to adopt the platform.
- **Specialists:** There are folks in your organization that will provide specific expertise for your project. For example, you may have a records management department that is responsible for defining retention policies for documents. IT specialists also need to be involved as required for defining infrastructure requirements, operational processes, etc.
- **End Users and Power-Users:** Engaging people who will be the end-users of the SharePoint “service” is important to validate both the configuration of the software but also the operational processes for managing it.

In facilitating these discussions, we engage stakeholders in a series of workshops that start from a very broad strategy-oriented discussion that involve mainly executives and key end-users, to more detailed issue-specific sessions where we involve specialists.

Facilitation is a specialized skill, especially when applied to governance, and we would encourage you to look within your organization for a leader who is expert at managing a room of diverse stakeholders in order to gain their input and buy-in. Alternatively, we recommend you engage an outside facilitator (such as provided by Navantis Senior Consultants) who can lead stakeholders through these discussions.

KEY DELIVERABLES FROM A GOVERNANCE STRATEGY PROJECT

As part of a governance strategy, we recommend the following deliverables be produced:

- **Implementation Strategy:** a description that defines the strategy for implementing SharePoint including key objectives and success criteria. The strategy should provide a clear direction to teams involved in making decisions as to the mandate for the service.
- **Operational Strategy:** a description that defines the strategy for maintaining, operating and managing the SharePoint service. Components of the operational strategy should include: policies; infrastructure operations (backup and recovery, monitoring, DRP, etc.); customer service; communications; training and adoption.
- **Responsibility Matrix:** a model that defines the different tasks required as part of the SharePoint program and who will be responsible for each task.
- **Organizational Structure:** a model that defines team structures, committees, etc. and how each team participates in making decisions.
- **Costs, Commitments and Funding Models:** for every on-going program, there is a cost. The governance strategy should identify the on-going commitment required to manage the platform. This should include internal resource time commitments, external support costs, and infrastructure requirements.
- **Tools:** a repository for storing documents, helpdesk systems, monitoring tools, processes, collaboration sites, etc. can be used to support your governance program. These tools need to be rolled out as part of your initial implementation so that when the platform is launched it can be efficiently managed from day one.

Setting Expectations for On-Going Involvement

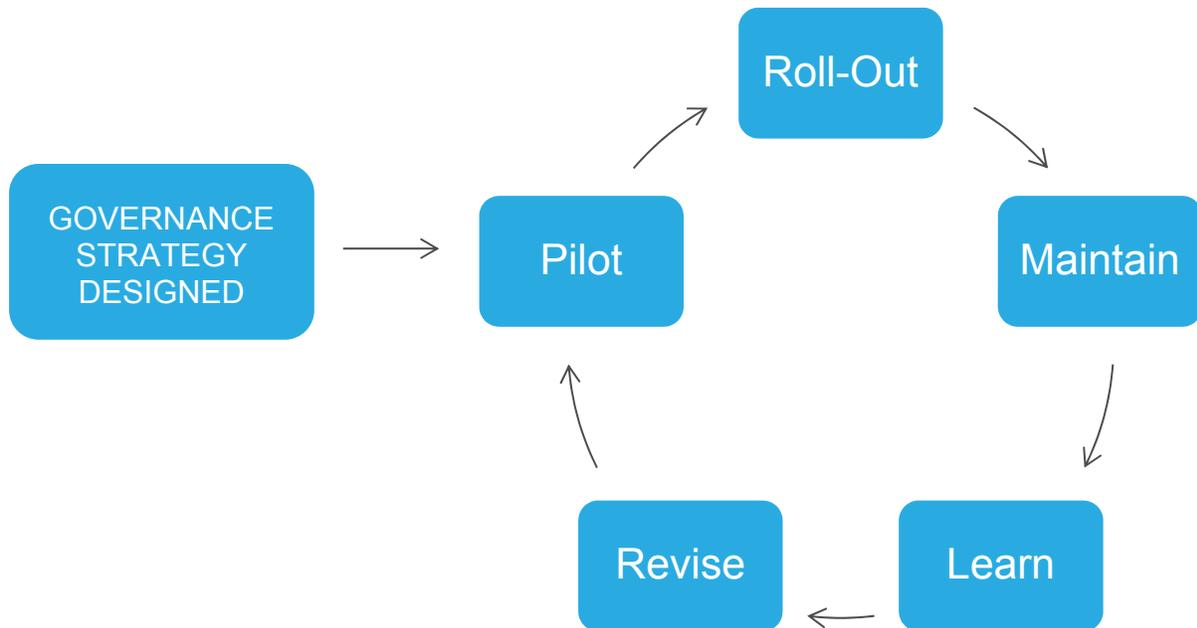
As part of your strategy, you will define a set of on-going activities that include training, operations, and governance. For each of these activities, your strategy will define the processes, people and time required to complete the task.

As part of your budgeting exercise, we recommend that you set reasonable expectations for business users as to their on-going involvement. For example, if you are proposing a SharePoint Committee that meets once a month to evaluate change requests, content structure and meta-data requirements then you need to identify and obtain commitment from the organization that the right people will attend and participate. Comparable with other operational tasks such as helpdesk, backup and recovery, etc., there needs to be a full costing of the on-going support role required to keep the platform available to the organization.

One of the many reasons IT departments struggle with supporting SharePoint is that they do not fully identify the business impact of implementation and so they do not focus enough on change management, ongoing feedback and training. We recommend that business stakeholders be actively consulted during planning and their commitment obtained so that the platform is appropriately supported.

SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY

Governance programs are only useful if they are sustainable. As part of your strategy, we recommend you provide an operational model that will allow stakeholders to make on-going decisions and to evaluate the effectiveness of the SharePoint platform.



Your governance program should be measurable: is the committee structure you have designed working effectively? Are the rules initially defined around customization, branding, workflows, meta-data, etc. still appropriate? Are stakeholders still showing up to committee meetings and providing appropriate input? Have there been other changes to the organization in general that might have an impact on your governance program? Are any of the newly established processes causing bottlenecks and impeding change?

A governance program, like any set of processes, is only effective if it delivers value to the business. The value of governance is in establishing a mature model for making decisions and assuring that operational support is available as the program evolves. We would recommend a review of the overall program at least once a year in order to ensure that it is still effective.

Use SharePoint to Manage SharePoint

One of the ways you can have a “living strategy” is to use SharePoint itself for managing your governance program. There are a number of features within the SharePoint platform that can support a governance program, such as document libraries for storing reference materials, calendars and meeting sites for organizing committee meetings, and feedback gathering tools for logging enhancement requests from end-users. As you move from initial pilot to global implementation, you may need to revise your governance processes, roles and responsibilities, etc. in order to ensure they continue to be effective. Using SharePoint as a collaboration tool will enable you to quickly change processes, workflows and share communications as your governance program evolves. In addition, it has the added benefit of providing the opportunity for participants to use the SharePoint tool itself and experience the platform directly.

CONCLUSION

SharePoint is a powerful platform that when adopted globally can transform an organization in how it manages its information, communicates with its employees, markets to its customers and saves time by automating repetitive processes.

When we visit organizations to talk about their business objectives and challenges, we find similar pain points with existing collaboration tools and processes:

Lots of content generated, does anyone read it? | Content doesn't expire

Content is inconsistent and doesn't align to brand | Need to use many systems to get reports

Lack of compliance | Lots of duplicate documents – which one is the truth?

Hard to find anything | Fileservers are clogged with old files

Change is too slow because IT is bottle-necked | Manual and paper process waste people's valuable time

Impossible to share documents with external partners

SharePoint can alleviate many of these pain points by implementing tools that improve workflow, compliance, document management, search, content publishing and the organization of information.

However, if you are planning on implementing SharePoint either as an upgrade to an existing intranet, a redesign of your web site, or as a brand new set of processes, establishing a governance strategy is essential to achieve its maximum benefit. If you don't establish a governance program up front and set expectations appropriately with your stakeholders, the platform that you worked so hard to implement will very quickly become unmanageable.

The more business users are empowered to take part in the decision making process, the more value they will receive from the technology. A comprehensive governance strategy will provide the program structure and organizational support to ensure that business users can adopt the technology and start to take ownership around how it will be used. An on-going commitment to maintain a governance program that ensures users are trained, supported, and given opportunities for feedback is worth the investment – a little bit of structure and process will provide massive savings in end-user frustration and helpdesk support calls, and avoid the re-appearance of the pain points the SharePoint implementation was intended to resolve.