

7 Ways SharePoint Falls Short for Knowledge Engagement

Often viewed as a Swiss Army Knife of enterprise software, SharePoint markets itself as a collaboration and document management solution. But in reality, it's often more like a dull knife when it comes to sharing company knowledge. Below, we dive into seven SharePoint limitations when it comes to knowledge engagement — and show how Bloomfire picks up the slack.

Search

SharePoint's search experience is highly dependent on how an administrator sets it up, and end users may struggle to find the information they need if the search settings aren't configured correctly. Even when search is configured correctly, administrators must make constant adjustments to continue delivering the most relevant results.

The ways in which users can search are also limited. In older versions of SharePoint, users can only search by file name. SharePoint Online does deep index Office documents, but it doesn't let you search for spoken words within audio or video

files. In addition to entering search queries, users can filter results by the age of the document, but they can't filter by other fields such as author or category without additional customization.

Bloomfire's search engine deep indexes every word of every document, including words spoken in video and audio files, so that users can find relevant content without having to know the file name. In addition to entering keywords into a search bar, users can browse multiple levels of categorization and filter results by content type, author, and more. Bloomfire also auto-tags content so that users can easily find it without the contributor having to manually tag it. And best of all, Bloomfire's search doesn't require an IT professional to manage it.

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Implementation & Maintenance

It typically takes companies about **3-6 months** to set up SharePoint. And because SharePoint requires custom coding, an IT team must drive the entire setup process and ongoing maintenance. If your IT team doesn't have time to work on SharePoint, it's not going to be a workable product for your end users. If you experience an issue after SharePoint has been set up, you have to go to IT to resolve it.

Bloomfire typically takes 4 weeks to set up, with no IT resources or custom coding required. Analytics and insights company Dun & Bradstreet reported that their employees were using Bloomfire to search for and share content **within a week of launching the platform.**

Consumer-packaged goods company Conagra reports that their SMEs save an average of 1.5 hours per week with Bloomfire.

Q&A

SharePoint doesn't have an out-of-the-box tool that allows users to ask and answer questions within the platform. Without Q&A functionality in a company knowledge sharing platform, employees often resort to asking and answering questions over email, contributing to the estimated 4.1 hours a typical knowledge worker spends in their inbox every day.

Bloomfire has an integrated Q&A engine that lets users 1.) search for questions that have already been asked and 2.) pose new questions for the subject matter experts (SMEs) in their organization. Once a platform user responds to a question, the person who asked can choose to approve the answer. When searching for questions, users can filter to only those questions with approved answers to get the most trustworthy results.

This Q&A feature encourages SMEs to transform the tacit knowledge that lives in their minds into shared knowledge that benefits their co-workers. It also reduces time spent communicating over email and searching for answers. Consumer-packaged goods company Conagra reports that their SMEs save **an average of 1.5 hours per week** with Bloomfire.

Siloed Content

Due to SharePoint's folder structure, finding content can be highly dependent on your understanding of the underlying logic of where that content was placed. Accessing content becomes especially challenging when you have multiple SharePoint sites for different teams and projects. As a result, key pieces of content may become siloed to specific teams or individuals, and untangling the complexity of SharePoint's access controls typically requires an IT professional.

Bloomfire lets you organize content by categories — and searches across categories so that your company knowledge never becomes inadvertently walled off from the people who need it. You'll always have the option to change your content categories, and you can even recategorize in bulk so that the structure of your information always makes sense for your organization.

End User Experience

While SharePoint is extremely customizable, that customization can't occur without the help of developers who are familiar with the platform. You may experience bottlenecks if there are only a few people in your organization who know how to make changes in SharePoint, leading to a less-than-ideal experience for end users. And if users are having a hard time navigating or searching SharePoint, they're likely to abandon it.

Bloomfire puts the power of administration in the hands of the business team instead of IT. Admins can maintain the platform without coding knowledge, and the interface is intuitive for anyone who has ever searched Google or shopped on Amazon. Team members are able to use the platform with minimal training.

Storage

If your company has a large volume of content to store, SharePoint may not be the best fit. SharePoint charges for storage and has a storage limit that is subject to the version of the platform and where it's hosted.

With Bloomfire, users have unlimited storage and aren't charged by the amount of content in their knowledge sharing community, making this the more scalable solution.

Total Cost of Ownership

If you choose SharePoint, keep in mind that you'll need to budget for both the license and ongoing maintenance costs. Microsoft recommends that you budget \$8 of customization services for every \$1 of license fee per year.

Often, organizations can misinterpret how much Sharepoint will actually cost because the fees are included in their Microsoft subscriptions. In 2012, the SharePoint Census estimated the monthly cost to support one user per month was \$48.47. This includes hidden costs such as consultants, add-on software, custom integrations, internal support staff, etc.

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Takeaways

If you're looking for a document management system that is highly customizable, allows you to create workflows, and gives you granular control over document access — and you have the IT bandwidth to support it — SharePoint may be a great option.

However, if you need a knowledge engagement system that has robust search functionality, is easy for end users to adopt, provides unlimited storage, and doesn't require ongoing IT support, Bloomfire is the better fit.

Feature	SharePoint	Bloomfire
System Structure	Folders/ subfolders	Indexed search
Search Capabilities	Deep index of Office documents	Deep index of all file types, including video and audio, plus categories and tags
Implementation	3-9 months with IT support	1 month with no IT resources
Q&A Engine	Nothing out of the box	Options to crowdsource and search for questions, approve answers
Storage	Fees and limits on storage space	Unlimited storage and no fees
Modification	Requires IT	Performed by admins with no coding required
UX	Search experience can be confusing	Intuitive search and browse

Bloomfire is the leader in knowledge engagement, delivering an experience that connects teams and individuals with the information they need to do their jobs. Our cloud-based knowledge engagement platform gives people one centralized, searchable place to engage with shared knowledge and grow their organization's collective intelligence. For more information or to schedule a demo, visit www.bloomfire.com.