

INTRANET

CREATING A MORE MODERN, VISUAL AND INCLUSIVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS TOOL

Mid 2019, we decided to build a successor to Barry Callebaut's intranet. It was important to us that right from the beginning we aim for a solution that is aligned to how we all use and communicate via digital tools in our private lives. Our goal was to create a platform where sharing information, best practices, and celebrating success is easy for all. The Google Workspace tools allowed us to do just that.

*By Raphael Wermuth
Head of Digital Communications, Barry Callebaut*

Today, internal communications competes amongst an array of attractive channels people use in their private lives. We all have access to news everywhere and anytime.

We share, we like, we comment, we connect with people, we follow what we deem interesting and what we think is relevant for us.

Most of this, we do with our mobile phones. Within company walls, the world still looks very different, with traditional intranets prioritising top-down communications, a

content management system to which only a few people have access to and can contribute with content.



Inside company walls, the world still looks very different.

Bringing internal communications to the next level

After six years, our intranet desperately needed a technical upgrade. As such, in mid 2019 we decided to embark on a new internal communications journey at Barry Callebaut. Our goal was to become more modern, more visual, more inclusive.

With the green light from top management, we started putting together our wish list, asking our employees what the future solution should offer them. We analysed the market, looked at trends, and benchmarked other companies.

Having been a Google Workspace (formerly G Suite) customer for some years, we also looked into whether and how we could leverage the tools we already had. Ideally, our new solutions should not add a new tool or channel.

While closely looking at the Google tools, we came across Google Currents (formerly Google+) and Google Sites.

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Testing Google Currents showed its top-down ‘News’ potential...

Barry Callebaut was an early adopter of Google’s work productivity tools, with Google+ used across different teams and departments to share best practices, knowledge, and discuss certain topics.

However, the tool was far from being widely used across the organisation. We knew Google was planning to introduce a new, upgraded version of Google+, and were able to get an early beta test access to the new Google Currents. Now working closely with the tool, we saw its potential for becoming the new home for all our company internal, top-down news.

With a group of around 100 colleagues across the organisation, we started a comprehensive four-month testing phase.

The feedback we gathered was overwhelmingly positive, with employees remarking on the social media-like approach of Google Currents and the ease of consuming official Corporate Communications news.

Barry Callebaut

Headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland, Barry Callebaut is the world’s leading manufacturer of high-quality chocolate and cocoa products, mastering every step in the value chain from the sourcing of raw materials to the production of the finest chocolates.



...and Google Sites can become the home for all the rest

Our decision to go with Google Sites was obvious from the get-go: it offers much more flexibility to present content than our classic intranet was able to do. Also, no special knowledge is required to use it. Anyone can become and be an editor.

All kinds of content that is stored on Google Drive can easily be shown on Google Sites while maintaining one single source of truth: no more versioning conflicts with files, or the need to upload a new file because there is an updated version.

Agility is key - especially in times of the Corona Virus Pandemic

While the COVID-19 pandemic brought many new internal communications challenges, it also presented us with the opportunity to live test our new digital solution. Early 2020, most office workers at Barry Callebaut moved into their home offices.

From one day to the next, working remotely was the new normal. Thanks to the Google Workspace tools, this posed no problem at all from an IT point of view. The tools proved to be extremely stable and reliable.

For us working in Corporate Communications, this was also the time we started to make use of Google+ for the first time: In March 2020, in a truly agile mindset, we established a community where everyone could become a member.

We aimed to digitally replicate the 'Barry Callebaut family feeling' during the COVID-19 pandemic. Within a few months, it

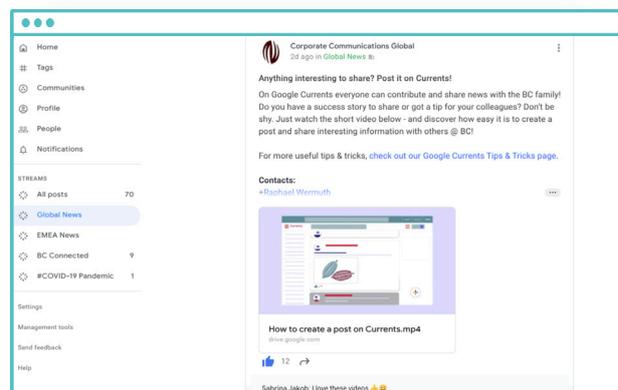
became the largest community our company ever saw with over 1,300 members - from home office tips & tricks, sharing motivation and business success stories, up to joint company-wide challenges people could join.

It was the first real-live test of how Google+ can bring together our employees.



We knew that the new solution would be quite a "game changer" for many of our colleagues.

This real-live test gave us the confidence that we are on the right track. We decided to completely build our nextGen (social) intranet solution on the available Google Workspace tools, using Google Currents for the news and social intranet part and Google Sites for all other (static) content.



The nextGen (social) intranet solution based on Google Currents is more like a newsfeed we all know from social media - more modern, more visual, more personal, and more engaging.

Google Currents

your place for Barry Callebaut news

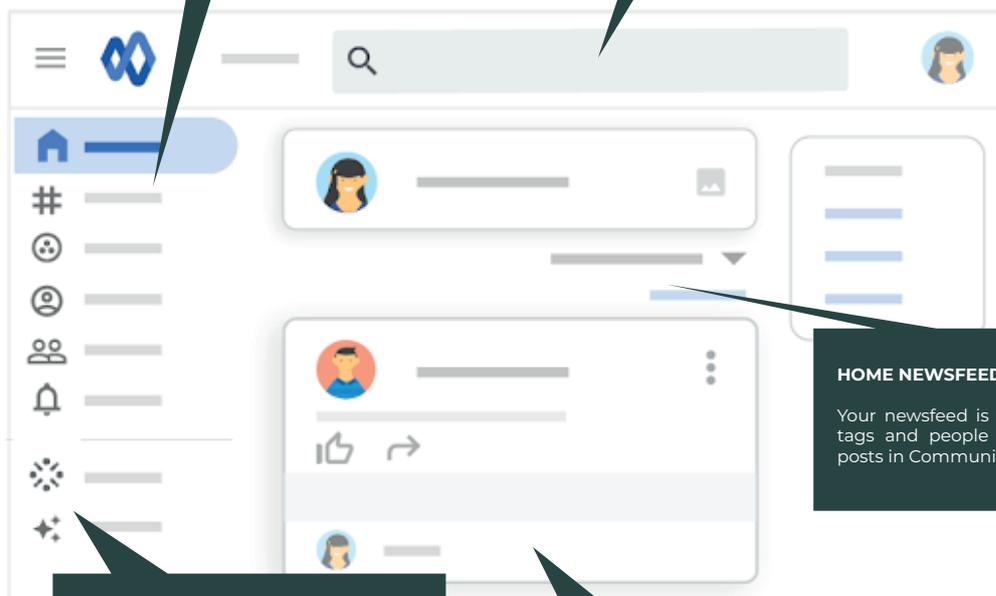
With Google Currents you can consume Barry Callebaut news the same easy and personalized way you do in private - be it global, regional or local news. Currents is also a place for sharing interesting topics and connecting with other colleagues around the world.

TAGS, PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

You can follow Tags, People, and become a member of Communities you are interested in.

SEARCH

Use the search bar to find content that is relevant to you. Tip: You can also use it to find Communities or people.



HOME NEWSFEED

Your newsfeed is showing posts with the tags and people you are following, plus posts in Communities you are a member of.

STREAMS

Check out the Global and your Regional news Stream. This is your direct access to official global and regional Barry Callebaut news.

INTERACTION

You can like posts using the "Thumbs up" button, add a comment, or reshare the post into another Community.

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Through a series of 'How-to-videos', we showed our colleagues what Google Currents is - and how they get the most out of it.

Soft launch to accommodate early adopters and prepare for the 'big bang'

Despite the positive feedback we gathered with our new idea, we knew that the new solution we had in mind would be quite a 'game-changer' for many of our colleagues.

Knowing the ¹Law of Diffusion of Innovation, we wanted to make sure our 'innovators' and 'early adopters' in the company would help us in spreading and adopting our new innovative idea.

Starting in September 2020, four months before the official launch, we started to build our new solution on the 'live' environment. More and more, we made chosen stakeholder groups in the company aware of it, advertising our new solution, making

them curious about checking it out, further spreading the word to the 'early majority'. This approach also helped us to still have enough time to prepare all the necessary communications and training material for the 'big bang' launch on Feb 1, 2021.



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Note: ¹Diffusion of innovations is a theory that seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread. Rogers, Everett (16 August 2003). Diffusion of Innovations, 5th Edition. Simon and Schuster.

A constantly evolving tool, with the flexibility to adapt to our needs

At the time of writing this article we are a month into the official launch of our new social media solution.

We are halfway through our communications and training campaign.



It's much more aligned to how we all consume news these days.

We continue to work on optimising areas with our community of editors. But the response so far is very positive and looks promising. Our new solution is much aligned to how we all consume news these days. Our colleagues are also welcoming the benefits of an all-in-one tool.

But it doesn't end here: the good news is that these tools will further evolve and

continue to change, as will we. We now have a future-proof set-up that still offers a lot of flexibility to adapt to our needs.



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Working in the Corporate Communications team, Raphael Wermuth is overseeing both the internal and external digital channels and tools of the Barry Callebaut Group headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland. He has more than 15 years of experience in the classic PR & communications work.

In the last five years, he built the digital Corporate Communications function in the world's largest chocolate manufacturer, with the goal to bring the Group's communications activities to the next level: more digital, more visual, more personal, more relevant.

