

Nebraska Medicine: Modernizing an intranet and healing the digital employee experience

As the state's leading academic health system, and affiliated with one of the country's premier health science research and education centers, Nebraska Medicine provides patient access to more than 1,000 doctors in nearly 40 specialty and primary healthcare centers across the state. Named one of **America's 100 best hospitals,** they've built an international reputation for breakthroughs in cancer care, organ transplantation, and treatment of infectious diseases. Employing over 10,000 employees, they have the added complexity that a majority of their medical staff maintain dual employment through their research and education partner, the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC).

Creating a destination for every employee. *In an effort to modernize their intranet, Nebraska Medicine wanted to provide a place for employees to log in for the "need to know," but stay for the "nice to know."*

90%	10K	40
EARLY ADOPTION	EMPLOYEES	SPECIALTY CARE CENTERS

firstup

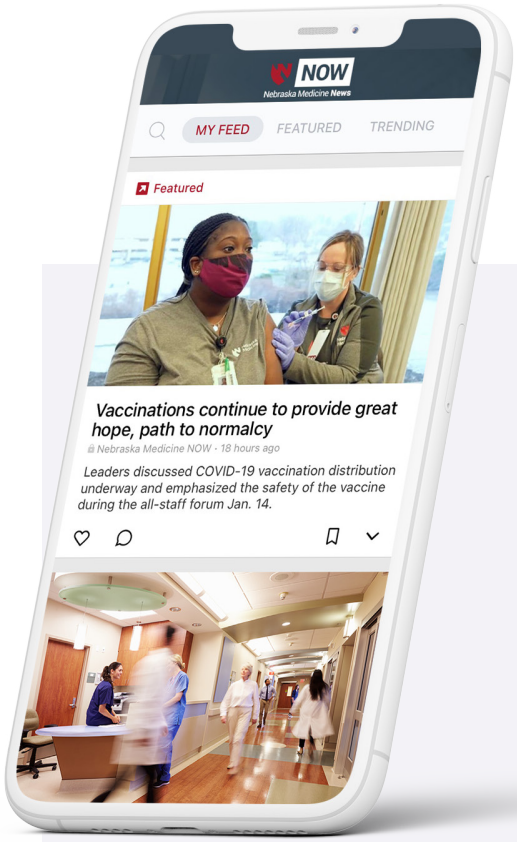
SEARCHING FOR A HEALTHIER WAY

In healthcare, most employees don't have a computer dedicated to, or readily available for, internal communication. Nebraska Medicine needed a better communications delivery system that could reach a broad spectrum of roles with information that was not dependent on email. What the staff really needed was a larger-scale digital employee experience platform, so the comms team, with strong buy-in at the CEO level, took this as a mandate to get it done.

Staying connected can be life-saving

As COVID-19 cases started to explode, Nebraska Medicine was on the front line. The Nebraska Biocontainment Unit (NBU) is the largest biocontainment unit in the United States and was one of the first to see patients infected with the virus.

With the COVID outbreak, employee communication took on a sense of urgency. So many operational and safety changes were happening, and communicating quickly and directly with those on the front line was becoming critical. Nebraska Medicine needed a tool that could ensure reach for every worker, across every channel, in any location.



"Accurate and easily accessible information is the best way to 'vaccinate' our employees from uncertainty. When communication is timely everyone is best able to do their job at the highest level."



JAMES LINDER, MD
CEO | Nebraska Medicine

The team knew they were looking for a **complete digital employee experience solution,** not just somewhere to store documents or send emails. They needed an engagement system—an omnichannel employee communication platform that would help them address the unique challenges of their dispersed, frontline workforce.

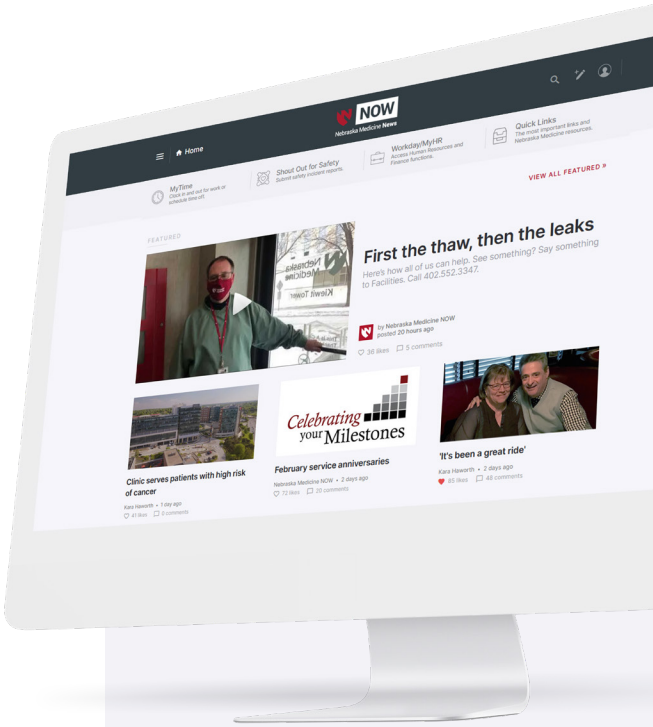
"This has to happen now"

With the CEO's executive mandate in hand, the team went to work. The initiative was collaborative, with input and support from physicians—as one of the key target groups—and "indispensable" support from the IT Director. She had worked on and developed corporate intranets for over 15 years and was heavily involved in the rollout. Additionally, the team is finding that sit-downs with influential people as content contributors have helped bring quality employee-generated content and higher levels of engagement across the organization.

So much more than just an intranet

As one of the largest employers in the state, with 60% of their employee base in clinical roles and a nursing contingency of over 3,600, sending out newsletters was no longer enough to satisfy the level of engagement and workplace camaraderie required. As proof, an internal audit found that a good percentage of frontline employees "did not feel equipped with the right tools to effectively communicate organization-wide news and information," or how their teams contribute to the Nebraska Medicine overall strategy. Additionally, most physicians were either unfamiliar with the legacy intranet or did not find it regularly useful or relevant.

To compound the challenge, employee turnover in healthcare can be costly. The internal audit showed especially low scores from employees concerning the frequency and effectiveness of C-level communications, which could have significant impact on employee satisfaction. If the right digital employee experience can influence and strengthen the relationship between top-level managers and employees, nurses and physicians, that's a huge win for the organization.



NEBRASKA MEDICINE NOW:
INTRANET, EMAIL NEWSLETTER DELIVERY SYSTEM AND MOBILE APP

"We looked at building something off of SharePoint or a custom app, which would have fit the bill for document storage, but having a platform purpose-built for engagement and experience is more important."



PAUL BALTES
Director of Communications | Nebraska Medicine

The Firstup platform was the solution

After exploring several tools, and even entertaining the possibility of building a home-grown solution, they realized that not many platforms could replace their intranet and email while also helping with engagement and retention.

Beyond replacing email and intranet tools, the team is already looking to overhaul digital displays and kiosks across sites as well as invest in assistant integrations to their commonly used enterprise systems, providing frictionless access to the tasks and information employees need.

Having access to **unified analytics** will also help their leadership team be more strategic and see what's working and what's not—providing a deeper insight into how well employees understand key business initiatives and how they can contribute to the overall success of the organization. This is especially helpful when it comes to tracking the effectiveness of critical communications about COVID and vaccination protocols.

This type of two-way communication will also help in employee retention. With the Firstup platform, managers and teams can quickly see which employee segments aren't engaging or might require different levels of communication to feel empowered.

To dig even deeper, they have plans to measure the impact of the new communications platform on the existing employee engagement surveys, with the belief that this type of feedback can help strengthen the relationship between managers and employees as well as other cross-functional teams in the organization.



Trusted Communications

According to the 2021 **Edelman Trust Barometer,** business is the only institution seen as both ethical and competent, with a 61% trust level globally.

They also suggest that businesses can build on that trust by ensuring trustworthy information goes out to their employees, and then, by extension, the community.

Building a foundation

While happy with the early success, the team is realistic in how long it takes to bring change forward, especially to a workforce that is often overburdened and underappreciated. In a recent interview, Director of Communications, Paul Baltes described it by using the “wet cement” analogy, “We want to give people as many tools as we can to build engagement and communication both ways,” so that, when the cement dries, the solid foundation is built and there is a clear pathway for where to go for information.

Communication is the foundation of every business objective, mission statement or core value. If leaders are thoughtful and thorough, both editorially and technically, the organization will benefit. Just like in medicine, having a clear and defined treatment plan is the best defense for any ailment.



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Learn how Firstup can help you build a digital employee experience that works for all your people. Contact us for a demo.

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