AGREEYA®

SHAREPOINT GOVERNANCE:
SHARE THE BURDEN

Index

Abstract

SharePoint Self-governance is a strategical move that stitches the functionality of IT and business content owners, bringing: delegated access, policy enforcement, and an effective reporting mechanism. This strategy does not crop up over a day. It is built, evolved, and established for organisational — stability and disaster resistance. This document will take you through: understanding governance, challenges related to it, how to establish a lasting strategy, and how to quantify your policy.

Introduction

Governance is much more than an IT sprint; it is - IT and business users' - marathon. SharePoint management might have always fallen into the scope of IT, but SharePoint governance is a mutual thing for IT and business team. Besides, knowing SharePoint governance just a set of rules that run a SharePoint in an organisation is an incomplete knowledge. As a larger picture, governance is a strategy built on the throbbing pulse of a business's need.

Understanding Governance

So what is Governance in the world of SharePoint? Governance can hold different meaning for different organizations, pertaining to the benefit they draw from it. While some companies see it as a documentation process, others see value in its trainings, while rest focus on its associated rules and regulations that shape up the SharePoint usage. Governance is like a crystal reflecting different lights on the elemental level, but it has a united core which is — Impeccable Management. In bigger terms, governance is a set of policies, responsibilities, processes, and roles that structuralise IT operations for an organization. A SharePoint governance system also streamlines the usage of SharePoint, dodging the complexity and unfortunate accidents from its procedures.

Governance is a way of sustaining organisational growth, by establishing a sync between SharePoint and the organizational culture. Besides, it is the best way to empower the business users with right tools and direction, to bring a natural shift from IT to business.

"Governance is the set of policies, roles, responsibilities, and processes that guide, direct, and control how an organization's business divisions and IT teams cooperate to achieve business goals." - Microsoft's definition, TechNet.

Challenges in Governance Process

With an evident growth in the number of people currently using SharePoint, its associated complexities are becoming a major challenge that need urgent solution; like the double digit technological leap it is taking every year. These complexities can only be tackled by democratising it for a better: channelling, guidance, and oversight and this is where self-governance comes in.

SharePoint Governance and its Associated Challenges:

Governance: Idea is Unhealthy in Practice

While the idea of governance is good, problem is vested in this term itself, as it disperses the power which otherwise is in the hands of IT. As you enforce governance, business owner will get a nagging from the IT Department, who will constantly send corrective statements like - it is better that way, or this doesn't work properly. Which they will never appreciate. With this kind of confusion, there remains no scope of improvement, as the business team and the IT Department will never come along to dig out a common and agreeable solution. While this is a challenge, it can be dealt through a proper management of the resources that draws boundaries for each of them. This way, business ambitions and goals remain the focus.

Technical Requirements Grow Bigger Than the Business Needs

Organisations find it obligatory to pursue technology, but they soon begin to feel that too much attention towards technology is taking a toll over their real business requirements. How to deal with a situation where technology is not your business goal? This challenge needs weighing of technological business benefits v/s technological investments made. Besides, calculate, how much is an organisation's saving through this new technology?

Steer Away Through: A Change In Perspective

Many-a-times, it is the term 'Governance' which is controversial. IT team might not be very comfortable in calling it a governance system. So, if it disturbs, let's shirk off this term, and find some other title. This is just an analogy, one can conveniently do away with. Term it as 'Partnership'? Showcase it as - a job done is a partnership, where both the parties are cardinal to the process. Let the user take all the primary responsibility, and enforce self-governance. Keep minimum guidance and rules, to let the functionality flow. Yet, keep all the rules that are needed to keep the idea of governance in order.

How to Establish a Lasting Governance Strategy

Creating governance strategy does not happen with overnight of implementation. This needs sowing of the seed and regular watering. Start with a small initiative of governance plan that reflects your organisational beliefs and core values. When employees pick from there, it is likely to show far reaching effects. Secondly, establish a plan foreseeing the future shifts and organisational developments that can possibly take place in the future. Make space for employee attrition, provisioning of new employments, and a case recovery post the disaster. It will be a long-term strategy that should survives between the IT team and business owners. Some essentials components of this strategy building process:

Sharing a Clarity over System Permissions and Authority

Building a plan includes its execution, which begins from allocation of responsibilities and assuring a clarity among the team members related to their scope of work. Demarcate system permissions and authority, communicate clearly, and answer all the doubts. There will be roadblocks like conflicts, voids, and overlaps which will need to be resolved by the senior management, to keep the work flow smooth. This will be the beginning of the II phase in implementation of governance.

Transparent Documentation

A transparent documentation of system configuration and usage is what assures that everything is on track. And if anything goes out of control, it becomes easy to trace it. Document everything carefully, it is to secure the future.

Contingency Plans

As a self-governance system is established, it is cardinal to back it up with contingency plans; assuring an immediate recovery of the environment in case of a disaster. No matter how much prepared a system is to dodge one such disaster, this will remain a possibility and power to fight back this disaster is a constant need. There are tools, which help in performing a complete SharePoint Farm Restore and item level granular recovery of individual documents, lists, document libraries, sites, workspaces. IT administrator is empowered to locate, deleted, or modified the SharePoint documents and other items, and restore them from a content database backup.

Systems Performance, Business Needs, and Resources in Sync

A self-governance plan is planned right, when all these factors are clear to the authority of an organisation. Know the capabilities of the system and resources, match them with the business needs. This will regulate the expectations and results.

Concepts Ready

Involve people from top to bottom as everyone has something to contribute to this initiative. Like: the content authors, developers, designers, administrators. Besides, on this journey, a SharePoint user will need stylesheets, templates, designs, and reusable components as methods to support the business aim.

Building a Stronger Self-Governance Team

Secret of a solid governance is vested in its team's performance. Take due consideration of these factors as you proceed:

Provide Training

Your team can't be built with SharePoint experts exclusively. People will need additional assistance or training on SharePoint usage and compliance to organizational policies. To build an army of self-governance, run assistance programs and provide essential trainings on serve administrators and power users.

Go Slow with Features

Working on SharePoint can be overwhelming for the new users. Power users and administrators will find it even more difficult in the beginning.

So the recommendation is — go slow with feature introduction. Enable limited functionalities which can be actively governed. Eventually, enable more features and evolve their governance plan.

Involve All the Right Groups

A proper governance plan will have everyone involved, from the top management to the IT support and the users. While some will be reluctant, others will get too involved into building this plan. While involving them might be a challenge, this is what is imperative to its success. Drag everyone in your plan.

Keep It Active and Fresh

It is very unlikely that the governance plan for SharePoint should get through in the first phase of planning itself. There are challenges, unseen scenarios, lapses, gapes which will appear eventually. And it shall call for revision. Besides, no matter how perfectly the content might seem written now, people will not be able to follow the rules right in the first go, be patient, try to fix the issue and give more chances.

Quantifying the Success of a Governance Policy for Your SharePoint

Organisations around the world are widely adopting the governance way of SharePoint. But with all the investments and labours gone under this marathon, it is cardinal to quantify the success of this venture. But what are the parameters that govern its success or failure?

Quantifying the performance is not an easy task, but since it has an important purpose, as this will either justify your venture bringing you a new awakening, or otherwise (which has the least probability). Besides, this will also help you justify all the resources that undertook the SharePoint tasks.

First, if regulatory compliance is necessary for an organization, this is a measure for it. Were all the federal regulations concerning the management of information planned properly? With all the documents addressing the regulatory issues, this is one component of a list of quantifiers.

Secondly, could you work within the available server space of the SharePoint? If yes, this lives up to be the next quantifier of the governance process. This indicates saving of time and life of the SharePoint, restricting the need to replace, or even upgrade the server anytime soon. Pushing the boundaries of a SharePoint's life is an achievement towards resource efficiency, that can't go uncounted.

Thirdly, governance brings — business continuity. Record the disaster recoveries made, to nail the point of 'business continuity' home. How many times did the SharePoint stood face to face with a potentially disruptive disaster, which could bring down all the efforts made by the team? How did the governance method help in recovery? These questions justify the costs, time, and effort made by quantifying the company money saved.

Lastly, the rest of the quantifying reasons will be found in the reasons why SharePoint was adopted in the first place. Use those rationales, by identifying the purpose of SharePoint's deployment and achievement of those. It will be easy to find substance in SharePoint governance.

To Conclude

A SharePoint governance is not directly about the vital business aims, but it will enforce system with least scope for flaws. Its goodness is into the insulation that it provides to a business against spin offs related to legal processes. Besides, the way it keeps the resources from fritting away, and rather focus on tasks that aim at achievement of a strong organizational good. So one might see different reasons, and different benefits in governance, these remain the underlining factors which survive.

About AgreeYa

AgreeYa Solutions is a global provider of software, solutions, and services focused on deploying business-driven, technology-enabled solutions that create next-generation competitive advantages for customers. Headquartered in Folsom, California, AgreeYa is a growing and dynamic organization with 8 offices in 4 countries employing more than 1,700 professionals. Over the past 19 years, AgreeYa has worked with 500+ companies ranging from Fortune 100 firms to small and large businesses, delivering solutions for variety of industries including telecommunications, BFSI, healthcare, high-tech, manufacturing, utility and government.

Global Headquarters

605 Coolidge Dr., Folsom, CA 95630 USA

Phone : +1 916 294 0075, Toll Free: +1 800 AGREEYA, Fax : +1 866 886 1555

Email : siteadmin@agreeya.com

India | Mexico | Singapore | USA