



## Transform Member Interaction with Social Technology

Facilitate information sharing, networking and collaboration by taking membership interaction far beyond face-to-face meetings and emails

### CLIENT PROFILE | IPWEA

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) provides member services and advocacy for those involved in and delivering public works and engineering services to communities throughout Australia and New Zealand. The association consists has 3,700 members, but its networking and outreach community reaches as many as 10,000 professionals. They are civil engineers or workers in the public works sector, delivering community infrastructure services including roads, bridges, parks and recreation facilities, storm water drainage and flood mitigation and waste management.

### THE CHALLENGE

IPWEA members have long connected to “mates” on job sites, at face-to-face networking meetings and through email discussion groups. But the informal nature of the interactions made it difficult to tap their true potential and reinforce a sense of belonging for membership growth, retention and outreach.

### THE SOLUTION

IPWEA Communities of Practice is powered by Higher Logic’s online community platform. IPWEA sought a flexible and customizable online social networking suite with a rich selection of features for its members. They turned to Higher Logic, an industry leader in cloud-based community platforms for networking, collaboration and member membership tools for associations and nonprofits.

Higher Logic’s platform allowed IPWEA to engineer a fully integrated solution—implementing a full-featured website, a social portal, the iMIS association management system and the ACCPAC accounting package.

“IPWEA’s integrated approach to our community has increased new member prospects by more than 25%, with a net increase in membership in 2014 of 11%, which has improved outreach effectiveness to people interested in our services.”

~ Chris Champion  
Former CEO  
IPWEA

### AT A GLANCE:

#### The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA)

- Headquartered in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
- Provides member services and advocacy for professionals that deliver public works and engineering services to the community
- 9 staff members in the main office and 11 staff members in the regional offices
- 3,700 members who work for local government or in the wider public works sector
- Community site: IPWEA, [www.ipwea.org](http://www.ipwea.org)
- Website: [www.ipwea.org](http://www.ipwea.org) (Also powered by Higher Logic)
- AMS: iMIS
- Public social media: Blogs, Facebook and Twitter

**IPWEA**INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC WORKS  
ENGINEERING AUSTRALASIA

The Higher Logic suite enabled IPWEA to take a phased approach to rolling out new offerings, with Higher Logic coordinating international efforts among teams in the United States, Australia, Canada and India:

- Fifty members and staff were chosen to beta test the social offerings
- Social Tools, such as five “Communities of Practice”, were turned off for a six-month familiarization period with their new website built on the Higher Logic platform
- Finally, IPWEA transferred its “Ask Your Mates” email discussion and other groups to the new platform, opening a main open forum as well as practice-based sub-forums

### LEVERAGING NEW SOCIAL TOOLS

IPWEA’s Community has been a success for both the association and members:

- System developed by consolidating five state-based membership databases and spreadsheets into a single, national association management system (AMS)
- Seamless iMIS and ACCPAC integration so members can register and pay online for events
- Development of a branded mobile app integrated with and fed by data from the website
- IPWEA expanded by merging with its New Zealand sister organization, INGENIUM in 2013, facilitated by the desire to provide better access to active communities and resources for all members

### PUBLIC WORKS PROFESSIONALS BENEFIT TOGETHER

Today, IPWEA members enjoy a new level of online interaction. Rather than communicating through awkward email discussion groups, they can network with fellow public works professionals on IPWEA’s centralized, feature-rich online platform. Registered community users—both members and non-members—automatically gain access to the general “Ask Your Mates” open forum, and can subscribe to practice-based sub-forums. Community members can also create customized profiles, browse discussion forums, view upcoming events, search libraries and upload documents, video and other files.

Response to IPWEA’s Community site has been overwhelmingly positive, and growth has been rapid. Before Higher Logic’s “Communities of Practice” social tools were launched, the site averaged 3,800 visits per month. Since launch, visits have increased exponentially, from around 5,000 in July 2012 to nearly 20,000 per month as of September 2014. In the first three months, IPWEA Community users made 227 posts in the “Ask Your Mates” open forum, uploaded 122 library entries, wrote 69 blog posts and accounted for 4,019 unique logins—with 30,214 total logins.

#### Higher Logic

Higher Logic is an industry leader in cloud-based community platforms, with over 25 million engaged members in more than 200,000 communities. Organizations worldwide use Higher Logic to bring like-minded people all together, by giving their community a home where they can meet, share ideas, answer questions and stay energized.

“Higher Logic’s online community platform makes for a very active community of peers with similar interests. It also creates an enormous number of new member prospects, and increases outreach effectiveness to potential event attendees and people interested in our services.”

~ Chris Champion  
Former CEO  
IPWEA