



Connecting Xero across the globe

Xero is a global creator of cloud-based accounting software with over 1,600 employees working in five countries. Rapid growth demanded a new way for Xero to manage their enterprise IT tools. This growth also illuminated problems with people connection and discovery. At the same time, Xero identified a need to unify and formalize their internal communications to continue scaling their culture.

The **Jostle**® intranet is helping Xero overcome these people discovery and internal communications challenges. The Jostle platform neatly wraps around everything to create a more persistent structure to reflect Xero's business. It seamlessly integrates with Xero's existing applications, provides the pieces that are missing in their current tools, and offers a great mobile interface. Most of all, the Jostle platform is helping keep people at the heart of Xero to enable, support, and propagate their very people-centric culture.

Company:	Xero
Size & Locations:	1,600 people across five countries
Sector:	Technology
Interviewees:	Rod Drury, CEO Ally Naylor, Global Engagement Advisor
Participation:	70% monthly



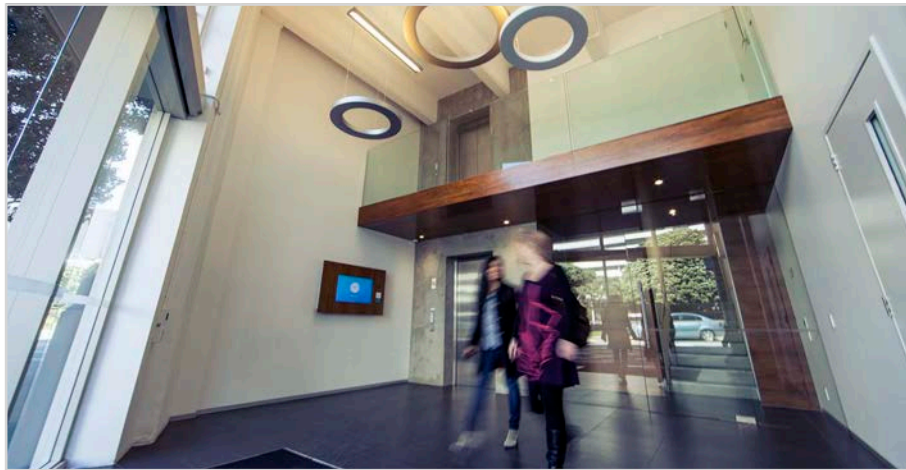
Creators of beautiful online accounting software

Xero is a global technology business with over 1,600 employees located in 18 cities across five countries around the world. Their beautiful cloud-based accounting software connects people with their numbers anytime, anywhere, on any device. Xero was started in Wellington, New Zealand by technology entrepreneur, Rod Drury, in 2006.

This fast growing organization now has over 800,000 customers across 180 countries using their platform. Proudly disrupting the cloud-based accounting market, they're out to change the game for small business in particular. Xero is one of the fastest growing Software as a Service (SaaS) companies globally, leading the New Zealand, Australian, and United Kingdom cloud accounting markets. Forbes identified Xero as the World's Most Innovative Growth Company in 2014 and 2015.

A truly global organization

Xero is a highly distributed matrix organization with people and offices across the world. Although their head office with 550+ people continues to be based in Wellington, their executive leadership and development teams are spread across multiple countries. Xero has employees dispersed across offices in New Zealand, Australia, USA, England, and Asia.



The entrance to Xero's Wellington head office

Xero has very deliberately built an organization where people can thrive, despite being physically separated from one another. It's a place where people come to do the best work of their lives. Core to creating this environment is a collection of people who can operate with both local and global responsibilities and who can be effective in a dispersed matrix management structure. It involves providing the tools and systems necessary to connect people, align teams, and make work more efficient. We recently talked to Rod Drury, CEO, and Ally Naylor, Global Engagement Advisor, about how they're going about their business at Xero.

Breaking the ground on enterprise IT

From the earliest days at Xero, the quest has been to embrace enterprise systems that connect their people, and help scale their organization quickly and efficiently. Early on in their growth Xero discovered that there wasn't a single playbook for all of the enterprise tools they needed to run their business. This resulted in a collection of somewhat disconnected tools for various purposes.

Building a business with fragmented tools

One of the first platforms that Xero introduced was Yammer. Early adopters of Yammer, this platform became the backbone of the company before it reached 100 employees. Xero built their culture and communications infrastructure around Yammer, aligning everything in their growing business around its framework.

In addition to Yammer, Xero implemented a custom-built intranet that was designed as an overlay to an application called Confluence. Initially intended to be the go-to place for key documents and processes alongside Yammer, this quickly became a stale, hard to use, and dull dumping ground that saw little uptake and was difficult to maintain. Xero also added a human resources information system called Workday to manage people data and information.

In addition to these tools, Xero has applications specific to their development requirements and workflow. With all these tools in play, Rod explained why managing enterprise IT is difficult: "There's a whole lot of overlapping tools that each company has to individually figure out. That's the real stress of running enterprise IT. There's a lot of work to be done on

enterprise IT, which is still very fragmented and you feel like you're the first company in the world trying to figure this stuff out."

The transition to G Suite

In an effort to begin streamlining their tools, Xero transitioned to Google's G Suite in 2012. This allows them to integrate email, documents, calendars, storage, and virtual communication via Hangouts into one suite of tools across their organization. Xero has made significant advancements with integrating G Suite into their dispersed environment, fully embracing the open and fluid structure that it offers for collaboration.

Rapid growth challenges tools

The drivers of change

The rapid growth Xero has experienced - particularly in the last two years when their workforce more than doubled - has tested and stressed their existing collection of tools. They began to realize that there was a lack of connectivity of people across their existing enterprise tools. There was no way to find team members across the organization, or the means to search people and target communications. They were also lacking the ability to make information available across all devices - whether in an office or on mobile. Finally, they didn't have a way to unify their internal communications and scale their culture.

Wrapping Jostle around Xero

Progressive and passionate about technology, Rod pushed to find an off-the-shelf cloud-based solution to solve these problems. It needed to seamlessly integrate with their existing applications, provide the missing people and information discovery, and offer a great mobile interface. Jostle's **People Engagement**® platform met these criteria, and Xero quickly set about adding it to their dynamic environment.

Rippling systems of record across the organization

In addition to wrapping around G Suite and its related components, the Jostle platform also integrates with Workday. This ensures that the platform's living organization chart is current and available to everyone, and fills in the people discovery gaps that Yammer isn't able to



provide. “A big thing is the integration with Workday. I think that's an important one, being able to manage people in one place and have that ripple through to the Jostle platform. The same way we manage our Google domain and then that ripples through too. The Jostle platform respects the core systems of record for the business and adds value on top of them. It's very, very complementary without too much overlap, which is perfect,” explained Rod.

“What I love about the Jostle intranet is that it leverages the advancement we’ve made in the Google platform. Effectively it turns that kind of open Google structure into a much more persistent working style functionality. The Jostle platform neatly wraps around everything to create a more persistent structure that reflects our business. We think it’s an essential layer that goes over the top of that Google investment.”



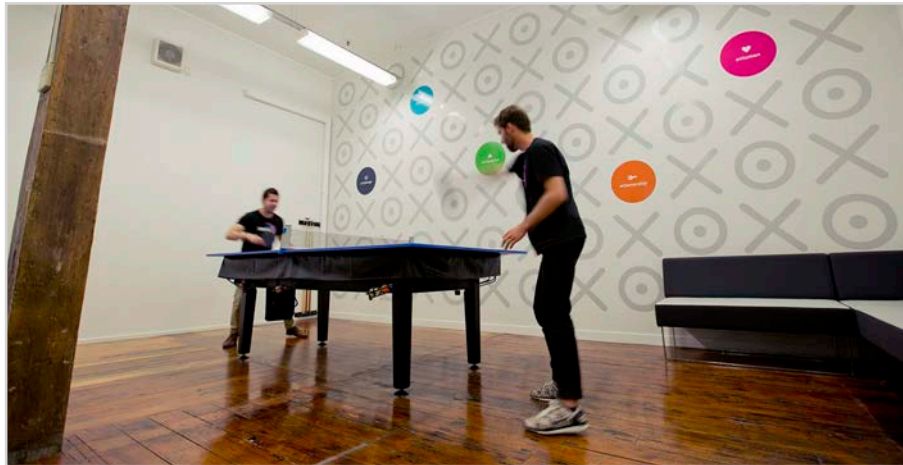
Rod Drury
CEO

Scaling the Xero culture

In conjunction with addressing their enterprise IT needs for the present and future, Xero also started taking a closer look at how to scale their culture. People are at the heart of Xero - always have been and always will be. Everything they do as individuals, teams, and as an organization, is geared to enable and propagate this very people-centric culture.

Ally explained: “The Xero culture is very open and transparent, so we consider ourselves as more of a network organization as opposed to a hierarchy. Our CEO has a very anti-corporate attitude and that means that everybody's opinion and voice is equally as important, which is really amazing. During our employee onboarding, the expectation is set that you should be involved, participate, and communicate. We've got five values that we hold real true to. Two of them are ‘ownership’ and ‘champion’. That's all about owning stuff. If you see something not working, step up and take control of it and sort it out.”





Xero at work and play

Xero's five values are part of their organizational DNA, not simply lofty statements that are easily forgotten and difficult to attain. The values are constantly referenced and are visible throughout the company. They even have an awards campaign devoted to recognizing employees who live and breathe the values.

Although Xero's values framework is well understood, their dispersed locations and a dramatic growth spurt were making it challenging to find, unify, and connect all their people, all the time. Since people play such a significant role in enlivening the Xero culture, it became critical to find a way to connect everyone. "For us, building a truly connected business is all about having a communications platform to support a highly distributed business," said Rod.

A new communications platform

A focused approach to internal communications is relatively new at Xero. Ally shared: "Until recently it was expected that everybody at Xero was a communicator. Now we've reached the size and the structure where we really need a dedicated team working on it. We've started working on communication strategies, asking questions like 'Okay, who are we going to communicate with? When are we going to communicate with them? What are we going to communicate about? Who's actually going to say it?'"

The Jostle platform was introduced to help formalize the channels of communication and to provide a common place for Xero's people and culture to thrive and be unified. Xero is using



the Jostle platform for three key communication purposes: discovering, sharing, and informing. With communication at the core, each of these purposes is tied to their overall goal of improving contact, knowledge, interaction, and recognition across Xero's dispersed global operations.

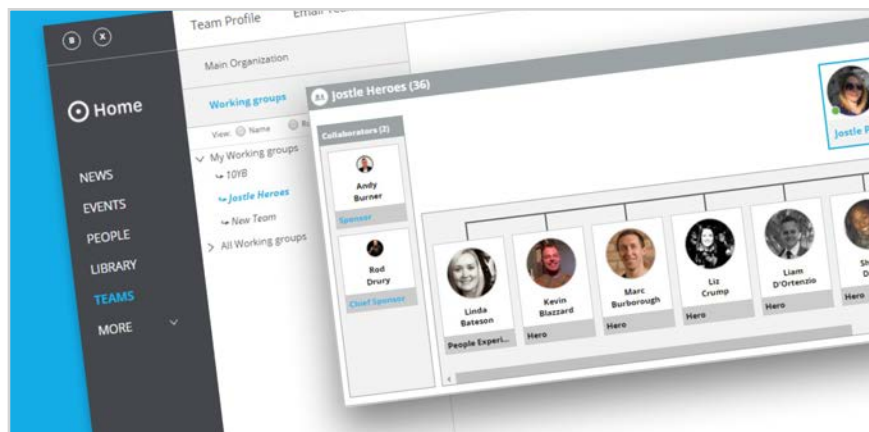
"We've been really impressed by how the Jostle platform has created a really positive framework. It's become a core part of our operating infrastructure."



Rod Drury
CEO

Discovering and connecting

Prior to the Jostle intranet, Xero was struggling to keep their people visible and connected. "The biggest challenge that we had came down to finding people. It was really, really hard. We were this innovative tech company, but didn't even have a way to go, 'Hey, I'm visiting Denver. Who are all the people in the Denver office?' We didn't have a living organization chart to connect everyone. When we're growing at the rate that we are it's so hard to keep track of everyone, and where they are, and where they fit, and who's coming, and who's going. I think the Jostle platform has definitely helped solve that," shared Ally.



The Jostle intranet helps Xero connect their people with the TEAMS view



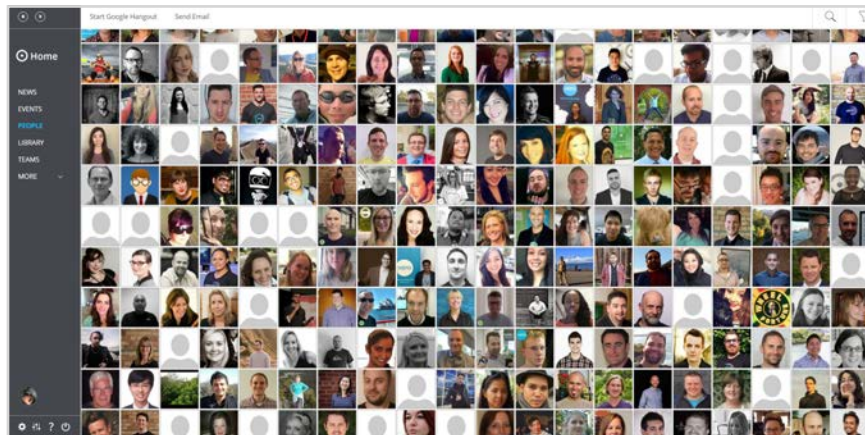
Xero relies on the Jostle platform to ripple people information from Workday into the organization. This means that anyone can see the current structure of the all or part of the organization at any time. It means that the CEO, who spends the vast majority of his time on the road, can now find anyone across the entire organization, with the stroke of a few keys to search and filter. And it means that faces are easily recognized, and roles and functions are easily understood.

“The people discovery within the Jostle platform is phenomenal.”



Ally Naylor

Global Engagement Advisor



Xero's vibrant PEOPLE view

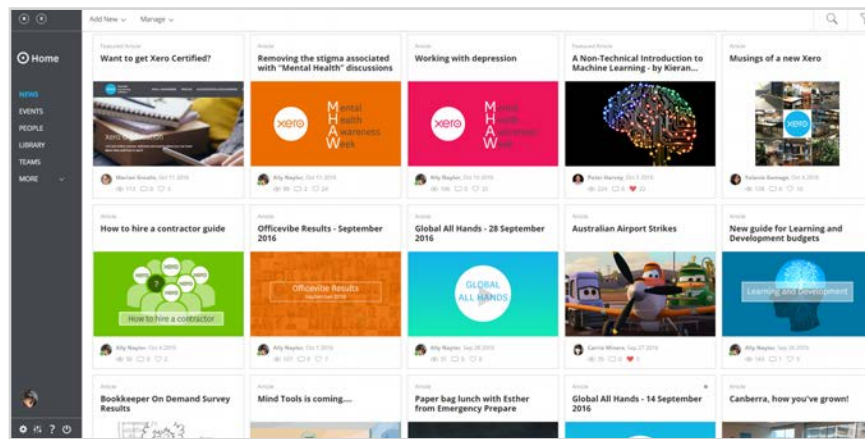
Sharing and celebrating

Xero uses NEWS in their Jostle intranet to share announcements, celebrate milestones, and recognize individual and team efforts. NEWS is used extensively by the business services team which includes facilities, people experience, finance, strategy, legal, and related teams as a way to communicate basic information and work relevant updates.

Like their organizational structure, Xero's approach to contributions on the Jostle platform is very open and transparent. According to Ally, “The big win for us is that now everybody can post and share latest updates and news around the organization. We can have more



continuous up-to-the-minute coverage than ever before. And in addition, people can share and celebrate success.”



Xero uses their NEWS view to share and celebrate

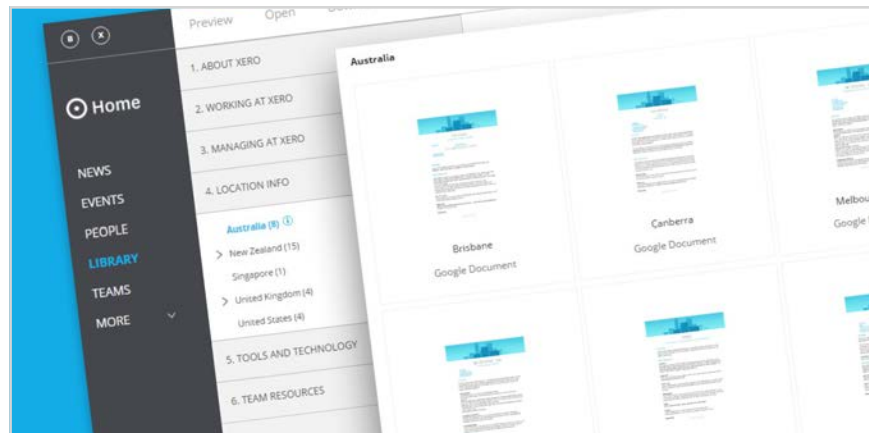
Informing at all levels

Xero now has the ability to share company and role specific information using LIBRARY in their Jostle intranet. It's made their processes more efficient, and has helped individuals gain control of information and time in their day with a much easier way to administer and communicate changes. Ally told us: “LIBRARY has been a massive success for the business services team in particular. Beforehand when somebody needed to update a policy or a guide on something, they had to come to me to do that. With LIBRARY, I was able to organize the content and assign and train individuals to be Librarians. Now they just go in and maintain all of their documentation themselves.”

“LIBRARY on our Jostle intranet has completely changed the way that our business services team looks at communicating. It's so much easier for them now, and everyone else too.”

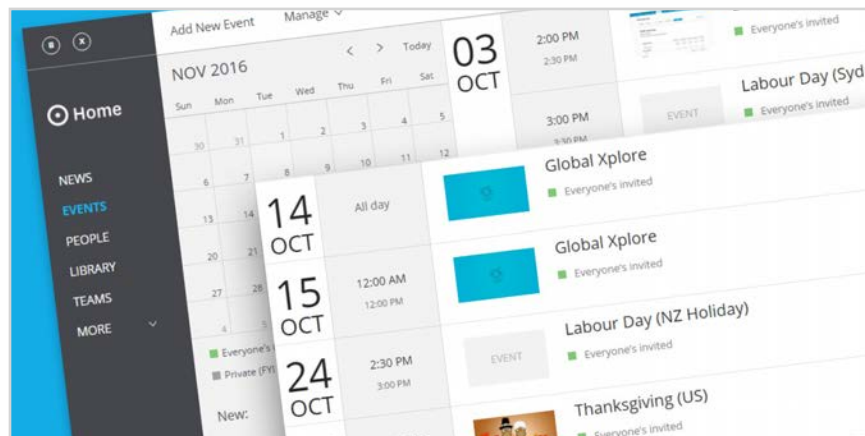


Ally Naylor
Global Engagement Advisor



Xero uses their Jostle intranet LIBRARY extensively

Another interesting application of the Jostle platform at Xero is EVENTS. The customer experience team uses EVENTS for all of their training and for sharing product updates. Ally explained: “We operate a continuous release model so we have teams changing the product on the fly all the time. While that's really good for the product, it's very challenging for marketing, sales, and customer support. The customer experience team has a dedicated team member who works with all of the different product managers to gather different release information. Then they develop training material and use EVENTS to share this information. We've set up virtual groups that they post to and then they use the notification system to let people know when a new training module is coming up and how it's going to impact them.”



Xero's busy EVENTS view

Navigating change

Xero has seen tremendous changes over the past couple of years. So how have they navigated this given the many moving and growing parts, near and far, in their organization? As might be expected, they began with an open attitude and relied on people to lead the change from the start. From the CEO and other senior leaders to functional level employees, Xero looked to everyone across the business to be true to the core values of 'ownership' and 'champion' to adopt new technologies and actively scale their culture, together.

Rod had this to say about his role as CEO along with others at the executive level: "Well, we have to lead by example. I think modern organizations know that you need to be over-communicating and you need to make sure that you're driving the conversations into the right forum, so leading by example. I'd be one of our biggest posters on our internal social networks. It's really hard when you see IT trying to push this through an organization. It has to have senior leadership support and they need to be the ones that are really starting and making sure and driving the conversations back there. That gives you the biggest chance of success, no doubt."

Ally was responsible for the tactical introduction and uptake of the new intranet, alongside other changes happening concurrently. She took a divide and conquer approach. "I set up a champion network of people from each region and across each of the teams. It was a bit of implementation saturation with a bunch of other changes that were happening at the same time. Initially we set up a Discussion on the new Jostle platform called 'Jostle Q&'. I had somebody in there answering questions, while I was dealing with all of the outside application queries."

There was a lot of pre-work done to prepare for the implementation of the new intranet to make it very easy for everyone to make the transition into a new communications framework. Once the proof of concept was accepted by the executive team, Ally and her colleagues set to work populating the intranet ahead of launch day with NEWS Articles and LIBRARY content. They also created and posted 'how to' videos to explain the various sections of the new platform.

Clear and regular communication was a priority. Ally shared more on their approach: "It was really a matter of bombarding everyone with various types of communication. We did



presentations at our global all hands every fortnight. We sent emails out to everybody. We made sure that we targeted different communications to different people with different needs. We gave managers slightly different messages to what we did everybody else. For them it was more about supporting and encouraging their team. For the broader team it was more about 'Hey, this is an awesome new thing. This is what it gives us.'"

The future is beautiful at Xero

Xero will continue to be a dispersed, innovative organization with a firm forward focus. With the Jostle platform wrapped around their core operating infrastructure, they have a robust environment that prioritizes people and the connections and information they seek on a daily basis.

"The Jostle intranet becomes where we live every day."



Rod Drury
CEO

The next step in Xero's internal communications strategy is to encourage employees to richly populate their individual profiles on the Jostle platform. They want people to fill out their profile data so that you can search and find people easily based on knowledge, skills, interests, and topics.

"The part that I'm most excited about is the people profile information. We have name, title and department but the rich profile data helps use get more granular with skills and interests. Right now I can't find the person who's in charge of AI at Xero. I don't know where that is because that's not in a job title or a department - just yet," shared Ally.



Social and collaboration spaces inside a Xero office location

The Jostle intranet will support Xero in their future growth, and further scaling of their culture and communications. The additional layer of information that employees provide via their profiles will help Xero to further target and sync communications in a simple and effective way. It's all about placing people and their individual interests, strengths, and capabilities firmly in the centre of a beautiful and continuously evolving ecosystem - much like Xero does for their own customers.

About Jostle Corporation

Jostle's **People Engagement**® platform is helping organizations around the world become extraordinary. It creates connected and vibrant workplaces by connecting employees, enabling communication, and driving workplace culture. We make it easy for companies to engage their employees. This allows our customers to achieve employee participation rates of over 85% — that's over 5X industry norms. For more information contact info@jostle.me or visit us online at www.jostle.me.

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