interact

Peak Productivity: Mapping Efficient Pathways in the Digital Workplace

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Introduction: Destination productivity

Individual, team, and even organizational productivity comes in peaks and troughs. At the individual level, some employees do their best work in sudden bursts while others have a more linear approach to workplace performance. For an organization to be successful and scalable over time, however, it's essential to understand where performance can be improved so that productivity becomes predictable and growth-focused.

Through smart automation and efficient resource planning, organizations can make significant changes that circumvent some of the obstacles impeding productivity. These strategic interventions make employees more efficient by reducing digital friction and improving employee experience.

This guide examines the common barriers to productivity and highlights the measures that organizations can take to facilitate smoother, faster, and more seamless journeys to the destination we all want to reach: peak productivity.

The digital productivity paradox

While digital transformation promises streamlined processes and increased efficiency in the workplace, it often introduces a paradoxical challenge. The proliferation of platforms, logins, and complex navigation menus can all result in technology fatigue, which hinders productivity instead of enhancing it.

Employees may find themselves grappling with a multitude of tools they have little understanding of, resulting in a fragmented workflow that demands constant adaptation.

The unintended consequences are:

- An irritable workforce grappling with apps and documentation

- An internal comms function solely focused on change management

- The HR team dealing with retention issues and a changing onboarding process

- IT managing an increasing mix of new systems

- SaaS bloat and overspend

- Frustration from senior leadership when improvements don't occur

All of this ultimately impedes the productivity that digital transformation aims to improve.

Recent research highlights these issues

- Enterprises use an average of 211 software applications in their tech stacks. (Okta, 2023)

- The average employee switches between 30 different digital tools and platforms in a single workday. (The Radicati Group, 2023)

- Employees spend 28 minutes per day switching between different applications. (Forrester Research, 2023)

- Employees waste 2.5 hours per day searching for information due to the lack of a centralized knowledge base. (Nucleus Research, 2022)

- Employees who are overwhelmed by the number of digital tools they use are 10% less productive than those who are not. (Gallup, 2022)

- Employees who have a streamlined digital workflow are 20% more likely to report being satisfied with their job. (O'Reilly Media, 2023)

To counteract the negative impacts of fragmented digital experiences on productivity, leading organizations now adopt a holistic approach and view the digital ecosystem as a unified entity rather than a collection of isolated platforms.

It's this strategic consolidation that drives individual and company performance and makes the relationships between people and platforms efficient and harmonious.

Preparing for the productivity journey

To achieve heightened productivity in the digital workplace, meticulous preparation is essential before implementing changes.

The following key steps serve as a guide for organizations in this preparatory phase:

☐ **1. Define clear objectives**

Identify and prioritize your business objectives and user needs. Clearly articulate the goals you aim to achieve through productivity enhancements. It will help to define this in a mission statement, such as:

To create a digital environment that caters to the specific needs and challenges faced by every employee, leveraging the digital tools at our disposal without impeding productivity or job satisfaction.
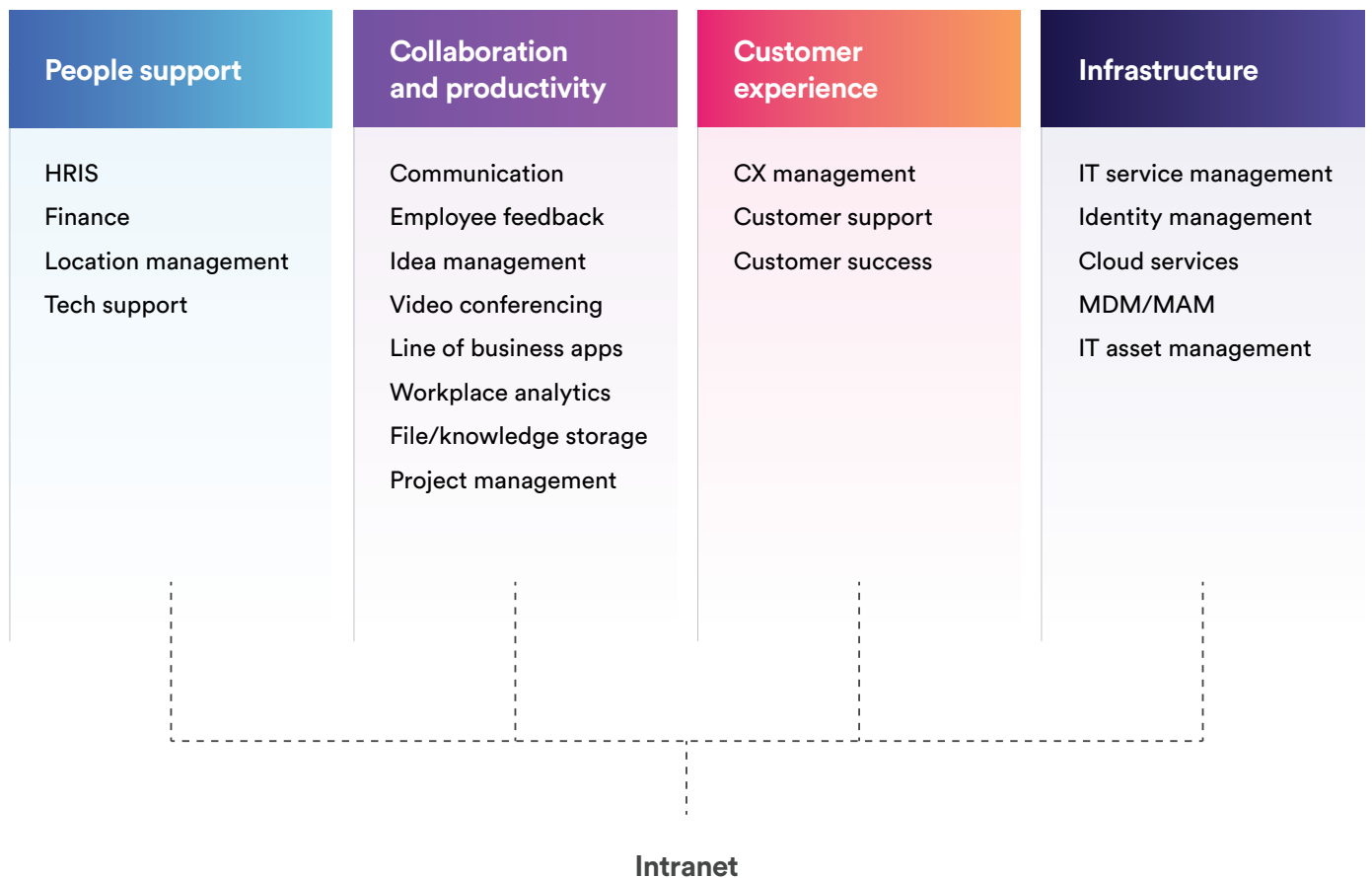
Setting out clear objectives from the start will be crucial as the project will likely involve stakeholders from multiple departments, and you will need everybody on the same page.

☐ 2. Evaluate current infrastructure

Guide informed decision-making by understanding the technological landscape within your organization. Take inventory of your existing infrastructure, tools, and content to identify strengths and weaknesses. It may help to lay everthing out on a digital workplace map like this:

Digital workplace map

People support	Collaboration and productivity	Customer experience	Infrastructure
HRIS	Communication	CX management	IT service management
Finance	Employee feedback	Customer support	Identity management
Location management	Idea management	Customer success	Cloud services
Tech support	Video conferencing		MDM/MAM
	Line of business apps		IT asset management
	Workplace analytics		
	File/knowledge storage		
	Project management		

Intranet

For many organizations, the intranet is the connective tissue that ties many of these systems together in a single interface.

☐ 3. Collect employee feedback

The most valuable insights about the digital ecosystem will come from the people using it every working day, so establish effective feedback mechanisms to understand how employees currently interact with the existing infrastructure. This could include online surveys or focus groups to gain insights into user experiences and identify hidden pain points and areas for improvement.

☐ 4. Embrace simplicity

Simplicity not only enhances the user experience but also promotes efficiency and effectiveness, leading to increased productivity. Work with fellow stakeholders to prioritize potential streamlining of the digital workplace. This should include identifying opportunities to streamline processes and tools, and enhancing communication across the digital workplace to reduce complexity. If the marketing and customer success teams are using different email platforms to send communications, for example, there may be an opportunity to consolidate and adopt one set of best practices.

☐ 5. Don't forget deskless employees

Ensuring that digital workplace enhancements extend seamlessly to all work environments will promote inclusivity and productivity across your organization. Consider changes that can bring the productivity benefits of the digital workplace – such as digital signage and mobile access – to employees who may not have a dedicated desk or company device.

Creating a centralized productivity gateway

Having a clear understanding of the extent of the digital workplace enables the consolidation of some platforms within a centralized hub for digital tools, resources, and communication.

While this will not include every application, it will still be a single home for many of them, and is essential for enhancing employee productivity by seamlessly integrating workflows, eliminating information silos, and providing employees with quick, unified access to critical information.

Modern intranet software provides this, integrating with the myriad tools and platforms through integrations and leveraging outbound single sign-on (SSO) functionality for seamless access to everything.

Many of Interact's customers refer to their intranets as a "one-stop-shop" for enhancing the employee experience through the simplicity that it brings to their digital journeys.

A centralized hub also nurtures a culture of collaboration and becomes a catalyst for innovation and shared knowledge with employees finding themselves in an ecosystem where information flows seamlessly, breaking down departmental barriers and fostering cross-functional synergy.

Pathways to productivity

A digital home lays the foundation for a more cohesive, productive digital experience through accessibility, design, and personalization.

The following sections set out how to optimize employee experiences for peak performance.

Accessibility

Ease of access is one of the most important factors to consider when it comes to facilitating productive digital journeys. Single sign-on (SSO) is a pivotal factor in the accessibility equation.

By enabling users to login once through SSO, you may be able to create a single access point that does not force users to juggle a multitude of passwords. SSO is well known as a tool for increasing security and streamlining user journeys.

Accessibility extends beyond traditional desk-based environments. The importance of seamless access from mobile devices cannot be overstated. A centralized hub optimized for mobile ensures that employees can stay connected, collaborate, and access essential information anytime, anywhere.
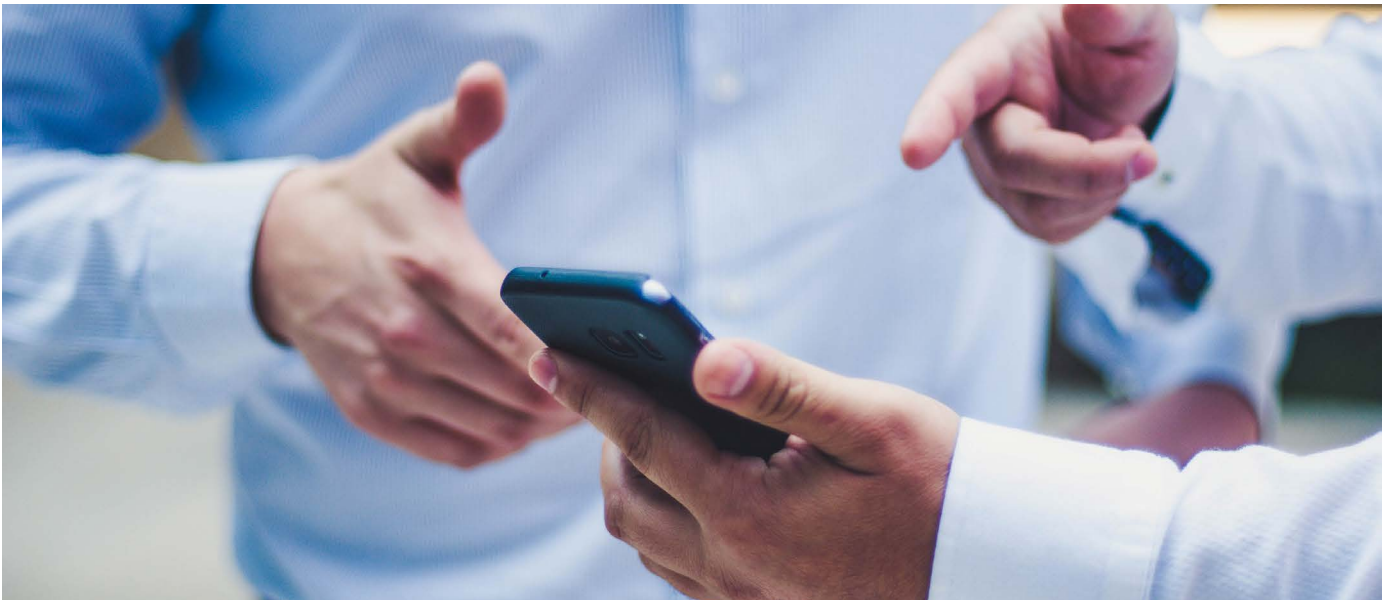
Integrations

By integrating many of your enterprise applications with the intranet, you can significantly enhance productivity by curating access in a single space.

Interact can integrate with a multitude of business platforms, including (but not limited to) Slack, Zendesk, ServiceNow, Salesforce, Workday, SAP Concur, Microsoft 365, Google Workspace, and Dropbox.
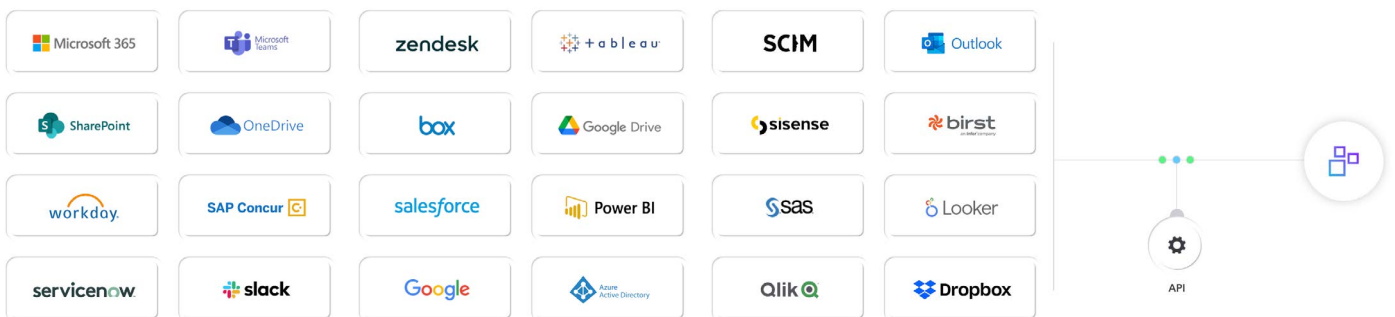
If your organization relies on a Microsoft 365 infrastructure, selecting any centralizing platform should involve verifying its compatibility with popular M365 applications. This will ensure that integrations are in place to streamline workflows and processes, ultimately eliminating any potential bottlenecks experienced by employees. Integration between M365 apps and an intranet platform may confer benefits such as surfacing of Outlook emails or Power BI analytics within the intranet.

Similarly, organizations that use Google Workspace (formerly G Suite) should ensure their chosen platform delivers seamless access to Google apps including Drive, Calendar, Tasks, and Forms from within their intranets.

Search capabilities

Putting the right content into the hands of employees is key to improving productivity. This is achieved by providing a powerful and comprehensive search experience across all your intranet content and cloud storage systems.

Research suggests workers spend on average 19% of their working week searching and gathering information. An intranet, as part of an integrated and centralized digital workplace, provides a single, searchable version of truth, reducing time spent searching.

A powerful enterprise search tool will enable users to instantly find content across the whole intranet and connected document management systems. Removing the time and frustration of finding important information and resources, an intelligent search functionality creates a faster, more appealing digital employee experience.
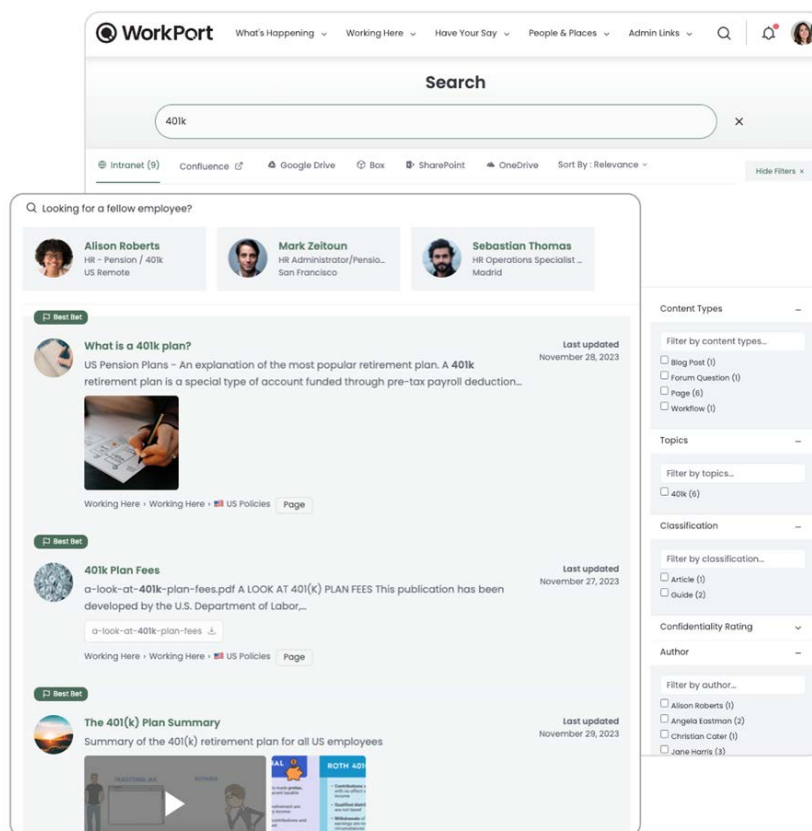
More advanced systems will use personalized rankings to display the most relevant results for each employee based on individual behaviors, interactions, permissions, and search history.

The key features and capabilities to look for in a centralized search tool include:

- Federated search capabilities spanning natively created intranet content and third-party data repositories, e.g., SharePoint Online and OneDrive

- Use of natural language processing and machine learning to enhance search result relevance for every user

- Allows system administrators to give priority to important pages with a "Best Bets"-style feature

- Extensive search filters to refine any results returned

- Ability to search in the user's language for translated pages

- An advanced people search that connects colleagues by skills, interests, department, and custom criteria

- A mobile app that replicates the same search engine experience and results

teva

Productivity in action

Interact customer Teva is a giant in the pharmaceutical sector with over 40,000 employees in multiple countries. The company reduces digital noise by ensuring employees have access to local content wherever they are located.

Personalization

Personalization in the digital workplace boosts productivity by customizing tools and experiences based on individual preferences. This creates a more efficient and engaging work environment. Organizations can deliver personalization by utilizing permissions and built-in intelligence, ensuring relevant content is delivered to each employee based on factors including role, location, and personal content preference.

Interact's AI-driven recommendation engine facilitates the automatic discovery of new content for employees. Subscribing to content guarantees that crucial updates to essential information are never overlooked and with granular controls, employees can choose the alerts they receive and how they receive them, ensuring that the right content is always prioritized.

Productivity in action

Interact customer Domino's delivers productivity-boosting personalization through homepage customization. Customized homepages ensure that the content users see is relevant, whether they are part of a franchise organization and need information about the products, or are corporate employees searching for benefits and policies.

Additionally, people who travel between offices, retail stores, or geographic locations need unique resources, and geofencing is an exciting field that is transforming the way employees receive information as they move from one geofenced location to the next.

Human-centered design

A human-centered user experience is pivotal for enhancing productivity in any digital environment. This principle can be brought to life through a clean design that strategically organizes building blocks on each page and menu. This user-centric approach, exemplified by a task-driven design, not only facilitates easy access to essential workflows but also avoids overwhelming users with convoluted navigation menus, ensuring a seamless and efficient digital employee experience.

Helping employees find what they need easily can be as simple as grouping content within menus or giving popular pages or content areas a prominent position. It's also worth replacing quick links with HTML widgets. In essence, this means using a clickable image or icon instead of a standard text link, with a text overlay on the image, to show users exactly what the image is pointing to. This will help users to find and identify important routes to the content, resources, or applications they need quickly and easily.

Online forms streamline business processes (such as submitting expenses), which saves valuable employee time and improves information accuracy. Interact's Workflow & Forms feature employs a user-focused design that allows non-technical people to create simple, easy-to-build forms, supporting efficiency by removing the need for IT support.

Multichannel communication

Multichannel communications can significantly enhance employee productivity by providing diverse avenues for information dissemination. When these communications are managed and deployed from a centralized platform such as a modern intranet, each communication can direct employees back to the platform for further information and resources, regardless of the channel it is received on.

Mobile
Push Notifications / SMS

Web
Desktop / Mobile

Email

Integrations

Digital Signage
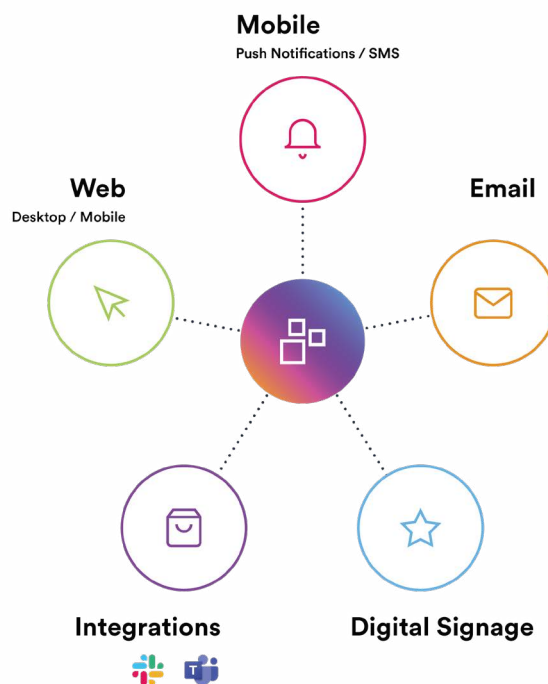
Offering a variety of communication channels helps overcome communication barriers. Different individuals may have different communication preferences, and providing multiple channels ensures that everyone can engage in a way that is most comfortable and effective for them.

Real-time updates deployed across instant communication channels such as Slack and Teams can facilitate prompt information sharing, addressing time-sensitive matters and preventing delays that might inhibit productivity.

Incorporating mobile channels via an employee app allow employees to stay connected and engaged whether they are deskless workers or on the move, promoting continuous access to communications at their fingertips.

Optimizing productivity for the enterprise

As companies have invested in countless digital applications and platforms to support efficiency, the digital journeys that employees take every working day can now be more disjointed and complex. For CIOs, it has become an ongoing challenge to ensure that employee productivity is not hindered by navigating the growing labyrinth of tools and platforms.

By creating a centralized employee experience that expedites access to everything an employee could need, organizations can help every individual in the workforce be more productive. Tailoring that experience to their specific role, location, and personal preferences enables employees to achieve more through the clarity and convenience of smarter and more seamless digital journeys.

About Interact

Interact supplies over 1,000 organizations with an award-winning employee experience platform that boosts productivity and drives engagement. Through enterprise-grade intranet software and decades of expertise, Interact provides Fortune 500, FTSE 250, and globally recognized brands such as Levi Strauss & Co., Domino's, and Teva Pharmaceuticals with a powerful way to inform and connect their greatest asset: their people.

Interact has offices in Manchester and New York, and operates across the whole of the US and Canada, EMEA, and Australia.

US: +1 (646) 564 5775
UK: +44 (0) 161 927 3222
info@interactsoftware.com
www.interactsoftware.com

US: +1 (646) 564 5775
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www.interactsoftware.com