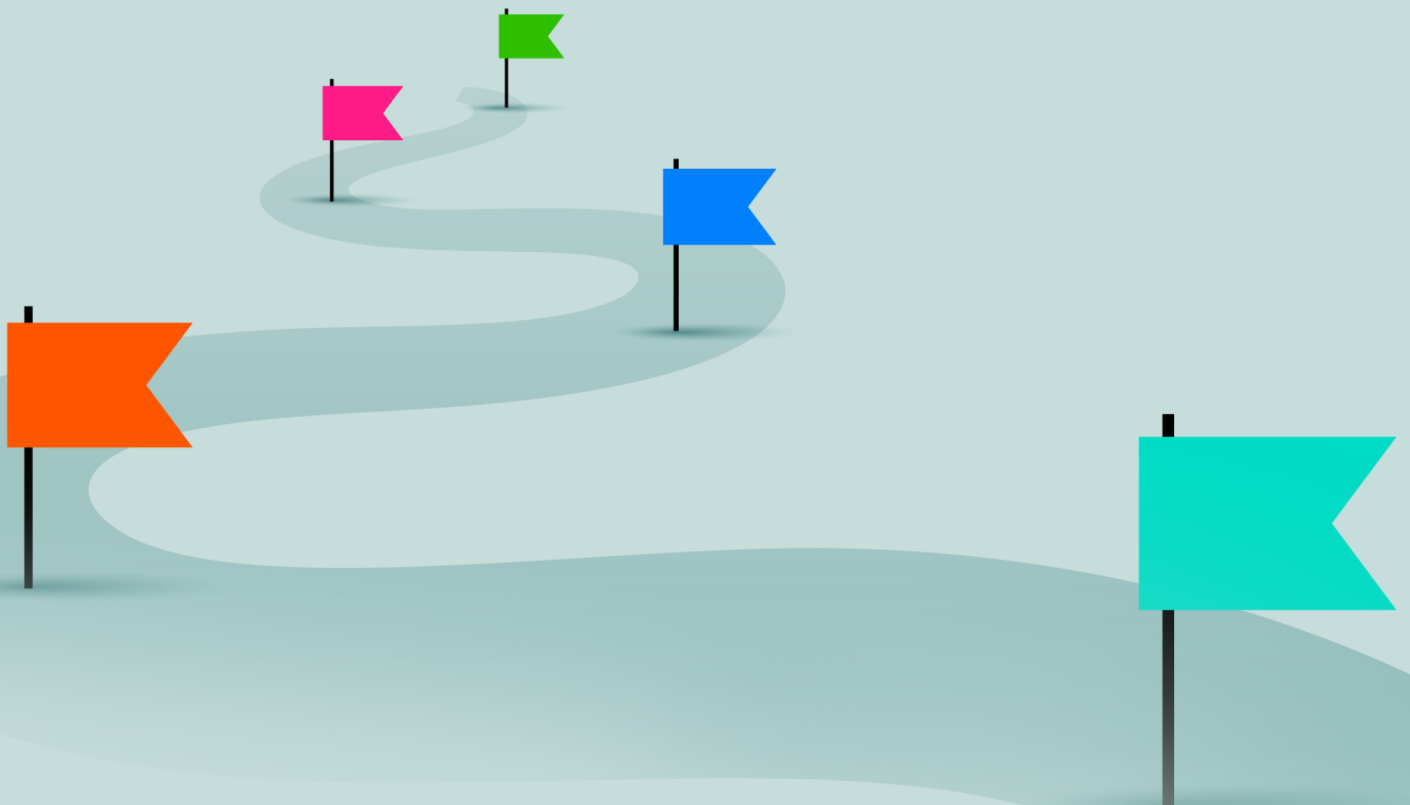


GUIDE

The Digital Workplace Consolidation Roadmap



Introduction

There is no one app to rule them all. But there should be.

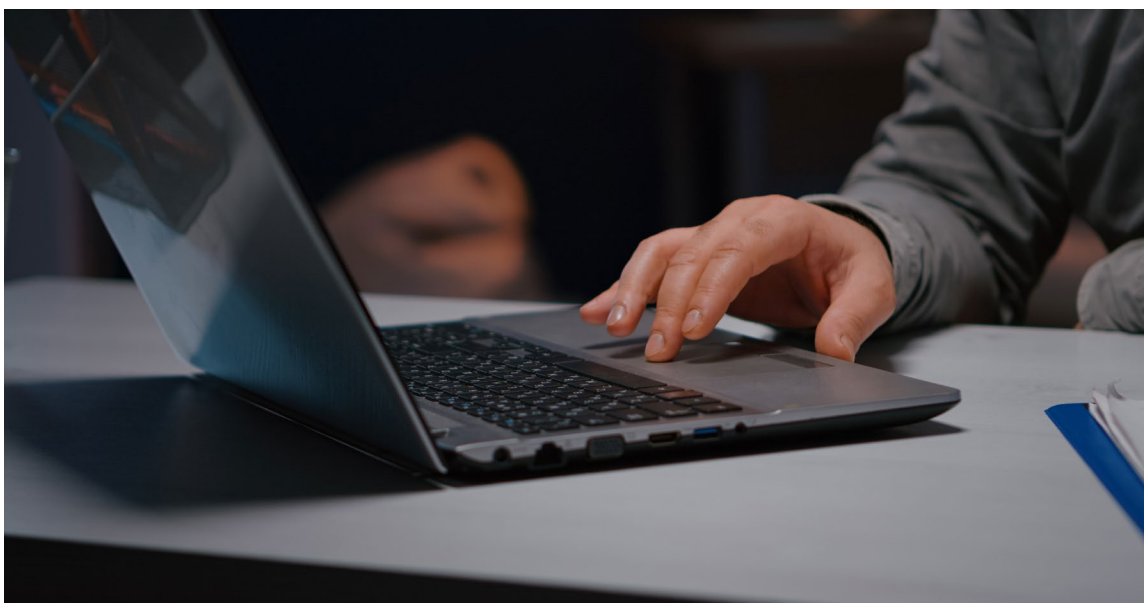
In one of the most commonly cited pieces of business research of modern times, Okta's survey of companies with over 2,000 employees reveals that **organizations have an average of 211 software apps in their digital workplaces.**

In many cases, this fragmented vendor sprawl of document management systems, cloud storage, HRIS, internal communications software, and more leads to a kind of digital funhouse; use cases get lost, workflows are duplicated, and employees struggle to find their way in or out.

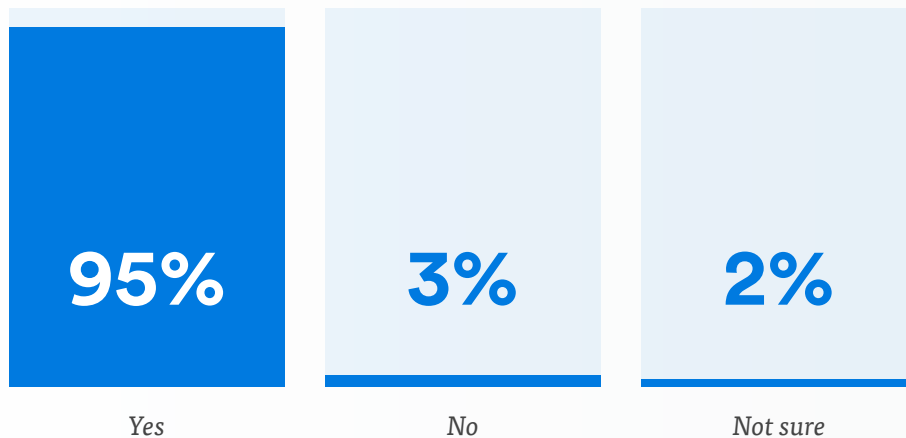
Consequently, unchecked SaaS bloat and shelfware is bad for productivity, employee experience, and operational efficiency.

In this environment—and pressed by the need to cut costs, optimize workflows with new generative AI tools, and drive employee experience—technology consolidation is now a defining trend for IT executives and their senior enterprise peers.

CIO magazine found that a staggering [95% of organizations](#) are already planning IT vendor consolidation exercises, while Forrester research has shown that over [90% of organizations](#) are actively seeking a unified IT platform.



Is your organization planning to consolidate vendors over the next 12 months?



Source: CIO, What IT executives are saying about vendor consolidation

If an organization's C-Suite aren't already planning to consolidate software redundancy, they risk getting left behind.

For C-Suite decision makers and operational communicators alike then, digital consolidation is a priority.

The same trend is true for HR systems and internal communications, where having multiple single-system options for onboarding, learning and development, email, mobile app, employee recognition, and more, all leads to avoidable repetition of work.

The question is, how do you do it?

This guide sets out the potential benefits of a unified platform for your enterprise and outlines how to plan and make a business case for an integrated intranet that consolidates the digital workplace, internal communication, and employee experience.



Organizational leaders see the value in reducing their overall digital footprints in favor of unified workplace solutions with extensive functionality. Rather than manifold single-purpose apps, intelligent digital workplace platforms can help to reduce costs and attack surfaces, boost employee experience through simpler digital pathways, and reduce manual work for IT, HR, and internal communications.

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Part 1 – The case for consolidation

Chapter 1

Defining consolidation: What it means for workplaces

The notion of “consolidation” can be unclear.

For the CIO of an organization, consolidation may mean identifying which data centers are less well used before migrating and consolidating information.

For someone working in procurement or supply chain, consolidation is more likely to mean reducing a portfolio of suppliers and commercial partners to create greater efficiencies when ordering and delivering products or services.

Communicators and HR professionals, however, may be more interested in tool consolidation.

Rather than constantly switching between multiple systems to send emails, perform employee surveys, create digital signage alerts, and send onboarding information, they prefer a single system that covers the entire digital employee experience.

This is what we believe digital consolidation should represent.



Technology consolidation for digital workplaces aims to merge and integrate tools and functionalities into a single, central platform. A consolidated system should use its intranet as an employee experience hub, providing one-stop access to HR systems, communication channels, and knowledge resources, streamlining navigation, and optimizing workflows for employees and people-focused teams.

Chapter 2

When intranets collide— consolidating platforms

The most common form of consolidation in the digital workplace is the replacement of multiple legacy intranets (or document management systems serving as makeshift intranets) with a single unified platform.

This typically happens when organizations merge, when a parent company decides to offer a corporate intranet for brands within a group, or when company acquisitions mean that one organization takes over operational control of the tech stack of newly acquired companies.

In some cases, multiple legacy intranets exist simply because they have never been completely downgraded in favor of a new platform.

In these situations, the presence of multiple systems can have negative effects:

- *Silos working may arise from individuals and groups working in different systems*
- *A lack of authoritative, updated policies and procedures*
- *Excessive manual work needed to update multiple systems*
- *Some teams have better access and features than others*
- *Incompatible designs and site structures make finding information harder for employees*
- *Lack of a “one culture” approach due to inconsistent branding, values, and tone of voice*

With a single system, however, these inefficient ways of working can be overcome and the company can consolidate information and tools into one platform.



Consolidation in action

The **co-operative** bank

The Co-operative Bank

Vertical Financial services	Location United Kingdom	Retail customers 3.2 million+
Business customers 95,000+		

The Co-operative Bank is built on co-operative values and a customer-led ethical policy. They are the original ethical bank. The bank has branches, colleagues, and services across the UK.

Challenges

The Co-operative Bank has a colorful intranet history. Prior to the creation of the new Interact platform, The Buzz, any colleague working in one of the bank's contact centers had to use up to four different intranet platforms in a day to access the information they needed.

Each platform varied in functionality, tone of voice, and brand. There was no consistency and each platform had its own flaws, including a lack of social and collaborative features.

Solutions

They set out to create an intranet that would meet employee needs now and in the future. The bank wanted to build an enterprise social network while also improving discoverability and making content easy to access.

- *Employees can find key communications both across the bank and locally within their areas, enabling the delivery of information more efficiently.*
- *The Buzz delivers one version of the truth and a consistent brand message.*
- *The new system has initiated a thriving culture where colleagues can be open and honest in asking questions and sharing their thoughts, experiences, and ideas.*

Benefits

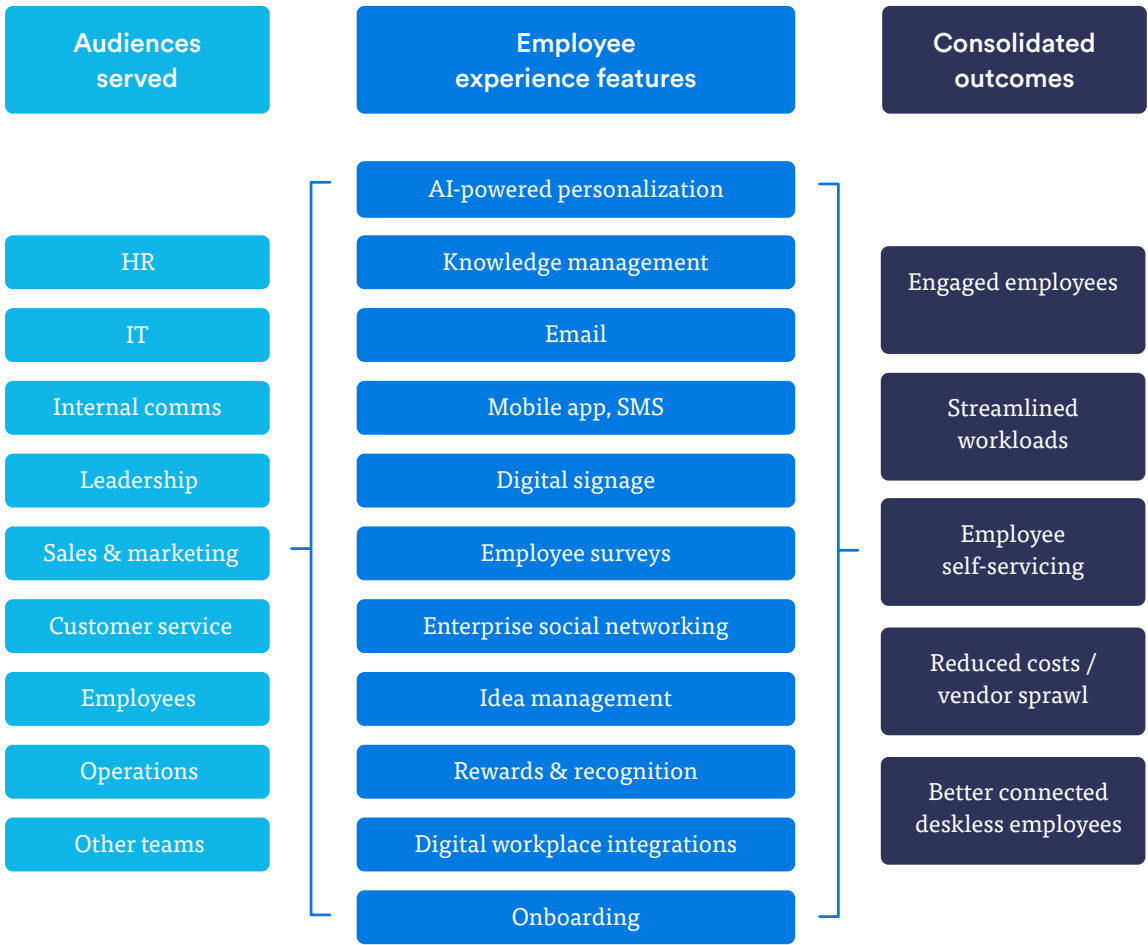
The Buzz has become integral to everyday work and all colleagues access the intranet daily to view process maps, scripts, and information. The Buzz now provides the tools colleagues need to connect and do their jobs.

While this is the traditional view of intranet consolidation, as modern intranet software has evolved into AI-powered employee experience platforms, it now performs many more critical functions and can help to consolidate other systems.

For intranets, the idea of consolidation is no longer just about the merging of intranet platforms into one.

Intranet consolidation should also mean bringing a wide range of EX, communication, and digital workplace tools into one coherent whole.

Interact, for example, provides features such as an employee app, pulse surveys, digital signage, idea management, social advocacy and more—all of which are integrated with the intranet and can be used to reduce vendor sprawl elsewhere. This goes far beyond the traditional image of an intranet as solely a knowledge management platform.



Chapter 3

Why is technology consolidation important right now?

While there have always been good general reasons to streamline the digital workplace, recent years have made it timely and necessary.

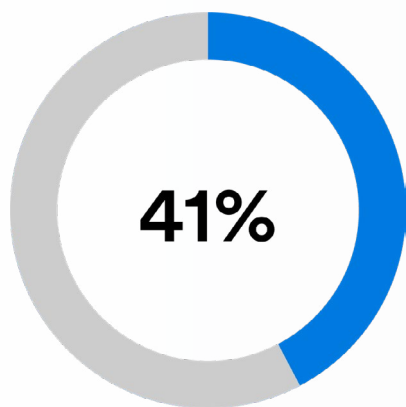
- *Between 2002 and 2022, global mergers and acquisition activity grew by over 80%, leading to many companies inheriting disparate technology stacks and vendor relationships. Consolidation helps them streamline operations and eliminate redundancies.*
- *Vendor consolidation has been especially important given the global economic turbulence experienced in the pandemic and post-pandemic eras.*
- *The growing sophistication of cyberattacks has also made security a top priority for businesses. Consolidating vendors makes it easier to implement and manage comprehensive security solutions as it reduces the number of attack surfaces and provides user-friendly access through single sign-on (SSO).*
- *The human resources challenges that companies face (e.g., the scarcity of skilled workers in specific areas, high employee turnover, and declining levels of employee engagement) are all forcing companies to streamline their technology environments and reduce the complexity of managing diverse vendor relationships.*

Organizations need platforms that make work easier for staff, and do more to increase engagement and alignment.

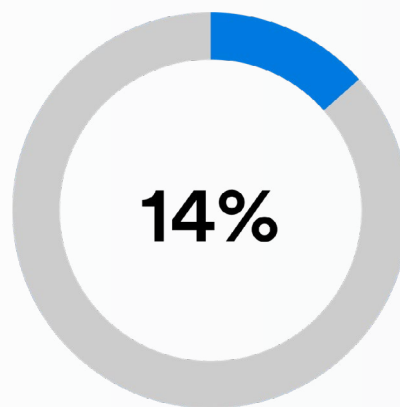
Nowhere is this more apparent than in human resources and internal communications.

According to Gallagher's State of the Sector report for 2023, IC teams are pulled in two opposite directions. 41% of comms professionals

say their organization does not invest enough in technology, yet only 14% say that introducing new digital channels is a priority for them.



IC professionals who say their organization isn't investing enough in technology



IC professionals who say that introducing new digital channels is a priority



People-focused teams do not simply want to roll out yet more platforms, they just want better, smarter solutions. They don't want another email platform with a 1% uplift in open rates; they want investment in a consolidated platform that streamlines their workloads and helps them to reach and engage employees.

Now is the time to consolidate. Let's get started.

Part 2 – Planning and implementation

If you're reading this guide, you may already be at one of two possible stages in the consolidation process.

-
1. *You have identified that your digital workplace is full of fragmented platforms that are not functioning harmoniously and effectively. You wish to reduce the number of software vendors and consolidate a range of HR, internal comms, IT, and other workflows into one system.*

To do this, you need to build a business case for an employee experience intranet that will replace the redundant apps you have.

-
2. *You already have an intranet capable of offering a wide range of employee experience and productivity-enhancing functionality. You want to use this platform optimally and to engage other internal teams by showing them its potential to enhance their work. This may be due to a desire to reduce costs or to improve digital experiences.*
-

Either way, both positions start with knowing how an optimized, consolidated intranet should sit within the wider digital workplace and serve organizational objectives.

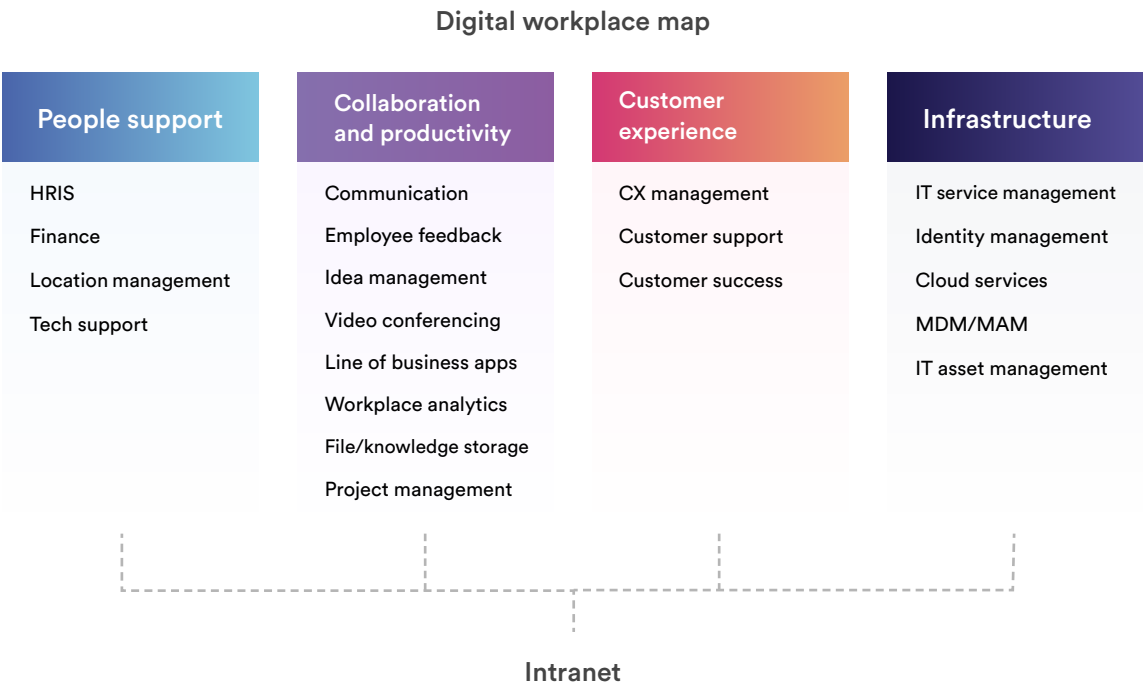
For position one, you need to know what kind of intranet you're making the case for; for position two, you are planning how you will optimize the platform so that it can turn company goals into specific deliverables.



Chapter 4

Planning a consolidated digital workplace

Whether it’s through native features, knowledge management capabilities, or integrations with third-party software, the intranet should be at the heart of the digital workplace.

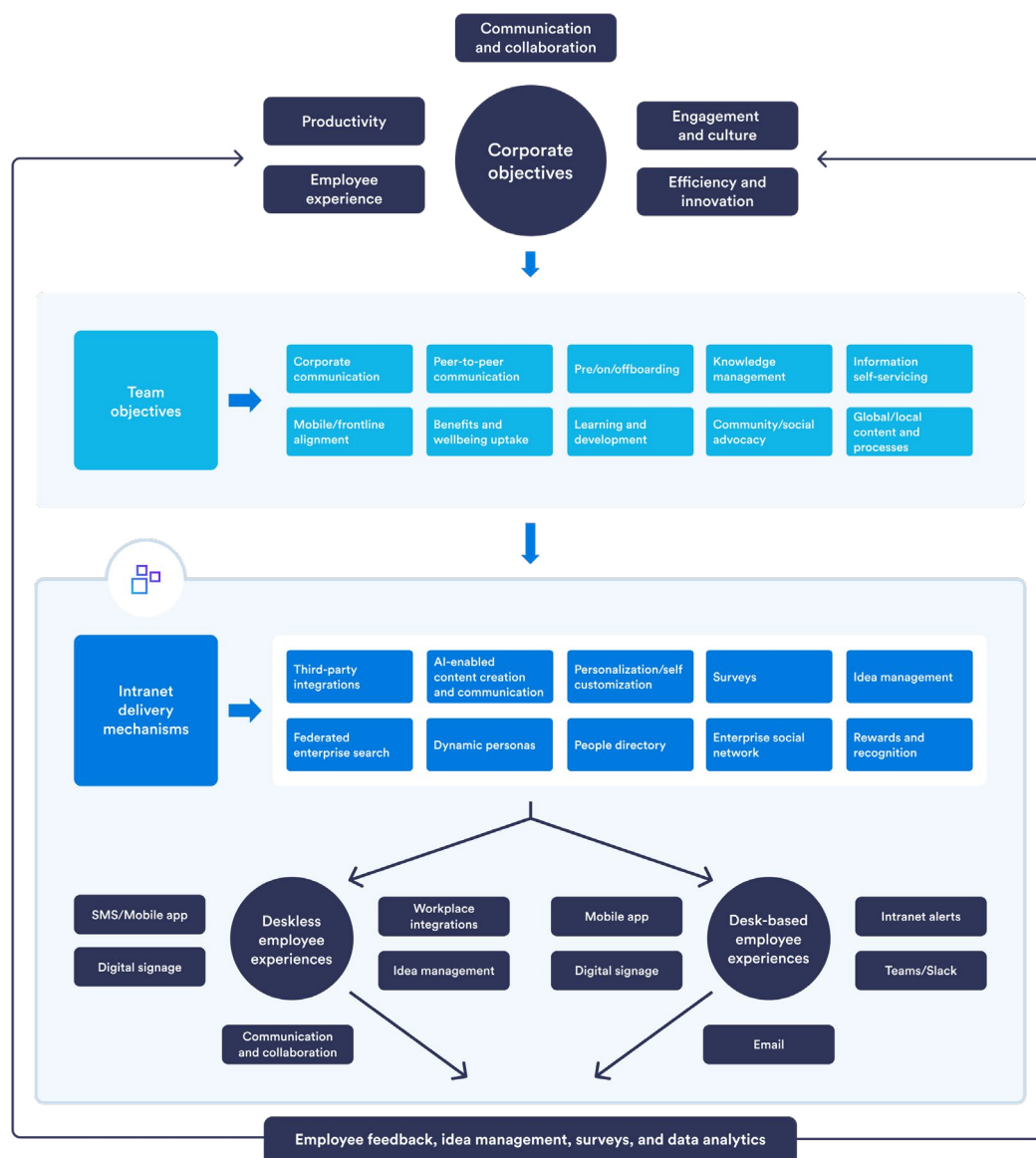


It can serve a wide range of purposes, so when considering how to consolidate other apps into the intranet, it’s essential to map out ideal scenarios.

This diagram shows the overall flow of organizational objectives and how they impact the delivery of digital experiences for employees.

In a perfect world, your intranet should be organized so that company objectives can be filtered down to different teams, which can then use a range of employee experience-focused teams to reach and engage employees.

It should be a centralized ecosystem that removes the need for costly extra tools.



To take one example, a company may identify the need to **improve frontline engagement and alignment** for employees in a particular region or country.

The responsibility falls jointly to the **HR and internal communications teams**, who discover through employee research that corporate communication is not getting through, peer-to-peer communication across work locations is lacking, and there is a complete **lack of local content** on the company's enterprise social

network app, which is devoted to corporate content in a different language.

Currently, the company is using document management systems to host work-related content, a failing employee app that few people have downloaded, and a digital signage integration that is cumbersome to manage and which ends up only hosting global content.








With an integrated intranet, all of this can change.

The corporate communications team can easily create dynamic persona groups to target specific workers according to location, role, and interest. This enables them to create specific content to engage this user group. Using AI, they can also surface relevant local content and work-related information for more employees. Now, when employees see digital signage or log in to the intranet to access information or another work-critical platform (e.g., submitting timesheets in Workday), they see relevant news stories in their language, leading them to engage more with one another and the organization.

It goes beyond the corporate comms and HR teams, however, because an AI-powered content creation engine makes it easy for local authors with permission rights to create new content specifically for local audiences. Your intranet might uncover experts throughout the organization who are keen to contribute.

This process enables the company to consolidate information natively on the intranet (rather than out-of-date Word docs and PDFs on document management systems), remove the digital signage partner, replace the employee app, and streamline digital experience.

Raise frontline engagement

- | | |
|--|--|
|  <i>Reduce reliance on unmanaged document management systems</i> |  <i>Easy to update intranet knowledge management for multiple authors</i> |
|  <i>Remove unpopular employee app</i> |  <i>Native employee app that uses AI-based personalization for individual employees</i> |
|  <i>Sunset third-party digital signage vendor</i> |  <i>Integrated digital signage tool makes comms easy for global teams</i> |
| |  <i>Local authors contribute more news and information for co-workers</i> |

To return to the point made earlier, whether you are creating a business case or making a plan for internal change, this top-down view should guide decision making.

It should answer the question of how it's possible to create a streamlined digital workplace that delivers company and team goals.

Chapter 5

Map out stakeholders and decision makers

Simple as it sounds, the first step of any proposed transformation project is to identify and map out who the major stakeholders are.

This covers individuals or teams affected by the project—from sign-off and budgetary approval to roll out, implementation, and adoption.

Consider their level of interest in your consolidation project and their power to influence it. This will help you define where to focus efforts and give a greater sense of how consolidation can empower different groups.



For an intranet or digital workplace project, these stakeholders typically include representatives and department leaders from internal communications, HR, IT, and senior leadership. In some companies, there will also be highly relevant use cases for people in sales and marketing, operations, and customer service. It's worth casting your net widely

to see who is currently relying on different communication, knowledge management, and experience tools.

These stakeholders are more likely to engage with the project if you address issues that affect them directly. We consider their main priorities and objectives in Chapter 9.

Chapter 6

Take stock of the internal digital landscape

With your stakeholder list or map, it's time to initiate an audit across relevant departments and business units.

This will be the first step in identifying and documenting the software solutions and vendor relationships currently in use.

Depending on the stage of your research and planning, the audit process will vary. Some reviews include detailed information about each software application the team uses, including its purpose, functionality, version, licensing details, vendor contact information, and associated costs. Some are more high-level and focus on

platforms and desired outcomes.

Some of this research may be automated if your organization has access to asset management software. This should be supplemented in any case by surveys, feedback, and interviews with relevant personnel.

This approach should capture a comprehensive snapshot of the organization's software landscape, including both sanctioned and shadow IT applications.



Team	Current software platforms/needs	Objective	Cost
HR	Employee survey	Driving employee morale and retention	\$
	Onboarding management	Seamless employee experience	\$\$
	Compliance	Monitoring workplace compliance	\$
	Performance management	Improving development	\$\$
	Benefits	Engagement and retention	\$
	Workforce planning	Optimizing productivity	\$\$\$
Internal comms	Email newsletter	Engaging workplace communication	\$\$
	Employee app	Generating community discussion and engagement	\$
	Digital signage	Reaching frontline workers	\$
	Employee rewards	Increasing peer-to-peer recognition	\$\$
	External AI tools	Content creation and language checking	–
IT	ITSM	Issue/request tracking	\$\$\$
	Free IT daily work to improve strategic availability	Increase employee self-led resolution	–
	Asset management	Managing hardware and software	\$
	IT documentation platform	Maintaining documentation for IT systems and processes	\$\$
	IAM systems	Identity and access management	\$\$\$
Senior leadership	Enterprise social network (ESN)	Creating community and engagement	\$\$
	Multiple top-down communication channels	Increased strategic alignment and awareness	\$\$\$
	Decreased vendor sprawl	Free up resources and streamline workflows	\$\$\$
	Improved productivity	Reduce digital noise and surface information faster	\$\$
	SOP knowledge base	Scalable growth and customer experience	\$
	Increase innovation	Crowdsourcing employee ideas directly	\$\$

By conducting a thorough inventory, the business can establish a baseline understanding of its software portfolio, laying the foundation

for subsequent steps in the consolidation process.

Chapter 7

Leveraging a consolidated approach for different stakeholders

Now that you are aware of what your organization's teams are currently doing, what they want to achieve, and where they are spending money, it's easier to build up a more detailed picture of how consolidation may benefit them.

If you have a table showing approximate overlaps in software and goals, a second round of feedback will yield a nuanced picture of where these goals and tactics can be connected in a single feature set.

This will either enable you to build a stronger business case or to advance your plan for change.

Example:

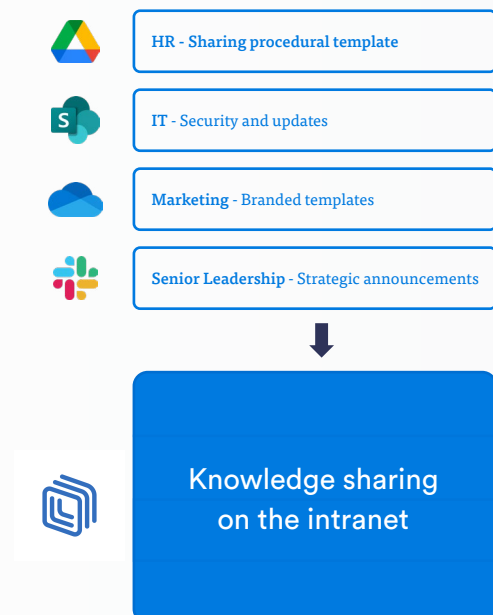
Your research has shown that four internal departments all require knowledge management.

Each team is currently using a different solution, which is costing the organization more and leading to siloed working across different groups.

Working with the teams, you discover what their purposes are, and can better understand whether a single platform could serve the different objectives everyone has.

What your research may uncover is the detailed knowledge that each team requires AI-enabled content creation, which none of the current solutions offers.

This opens the door for the recommendation of a single platform that reduces costs and increases alignment.



For the consolidation of digital workplace and internal communications technologies, the following drivers are central.



You now have more detail to add to your view of where overlaps exist and how consolidation may help. This will be important for a business case's goals or a project's objectives.

For a business case especially, it may also provide important information when constructing

a buyer's list of requirements or request for proposal (RFP).

Before adding these to your business case or project strategy, there is one major piece of work to add in—outlining how employees will benefit from the change.

Chapter 8

Employees are the biggest beneficiaries of digital consolidation

If IT and internal comms professionals stand to gain from the streamlining of the 200+ apps in the digital workplace, end-user employees will benefit just as much, if not more.

Rather than spending time searching through out-of-date information, receiving inbox-cluttering emails not meant for them, and failing to remember a litany of URLs and

passwords for different business applications, they can simply access a unified digital hub that cuts the fat from their working day.



Case Study 1

Resolving the daily struggle of navigating an ocean of apps

Robin is a desk-based business analyst in a large, international investment bank. With hundreds of software applications in the company's digital estate, reaching tasks and information can feel like swimming in an ocean of disconnected islands.

A typical day is a frustrating exercise in context switching and operational inefficiency. The following points compare the difference

between a fragmented and a connected digital experience for this worker.

1. Starting the day and catching up

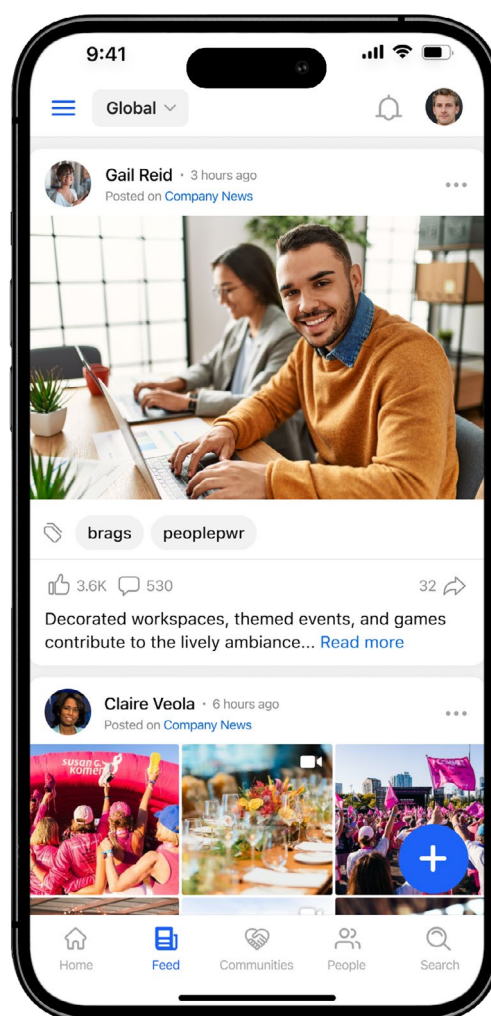
Fragmented: On their way to the office, Robin wades through a mass of all-company emails, announcements, business-critical alerts, team-specific Slack channels, and the enterprise social networking activity taking place in the company's Viva Engage channels.

The result of having a lot of non-personalized communication in several different spaces is that Robin automatically deletes most of the company comms and focuses only on the messages from clients and co-workers. Because Robin's personalized intranet feed is available via the intranet app, engagement begins before they even arrive at the office.

The opportunity for alignment and engagement with the company is missed.

Connected: With a single intranet hub using AI and personalization options to aggregate the content most relevant and interesting to Robin, the most personal content is automatically surfaced in a single space. Because comms are hosted in one space, there is no need to flood Robin's email inbox, which makes checking important updates faster. This leaves more time to engage with the updates Robin is already engaged in.

The mobile app feed delivers personalized comms for employees on the go. ▶



2. Collaborating on a project

Fragmented: Robin is collaborating with co-workers in two different countries on a new internal company policy.

The team members have varying levels of SharePoint access and speak different languages, so working collaboratively on documents has been cumbersome and involved IT support. The team has resorted to working independently on downloaded versions (in their own languages) and then emailing files. All of this has led to confusion, version control issues, and a lack of alignment.

Connected: The multilanguage intranet offers one seamless way to collaborate on an internal page. All the people involved can edit the same page, meaning everyone can work in turn on the same document with no issues. The page is automatically translated into the end user's language, meaning there is no need for manual changes (although this too is possible).

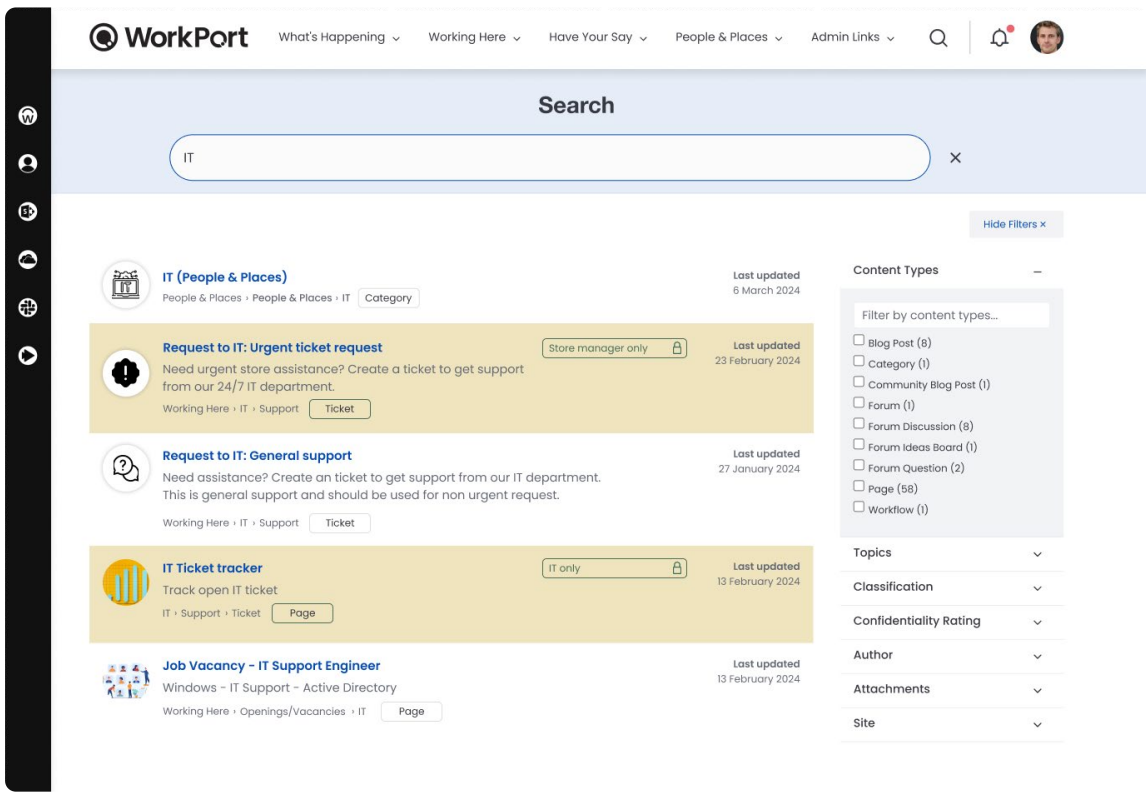
3. Finding information

Fragmented: The company has announced changes in its travel policy. Robin wants to know how the changes will affect them, so searches manually through SharePoint and OneDrive but is unsure whether the documents there are drafts or final. This leads to frustration and inefficiency. The information seems partial and not fully related to people in Robin's position. Eventually Robin spends time emailing HR directly to find out more. This one-on-one communication increases everyone's workload and is damaging to the digital employee experience.

Connected: Through the intranet's federated search tool, Robin is able to quickly search across all pages on the intranet (the visibility of which are enhanced by metadata, keywords, summaries, and topics) to locate the relevant, recent content. The powerful enterprise search also includes connected document management systems, so Robin can find the correct information if it hasn't yet been published on the intranet.

Fortunately, the HR team has recently created a comprehensive page outlining all the changes in policy. They have also tagged the page as a "best bet," meaning certain keywords are weighted so that the page returns at the top of search results, saving time for everyone.

To ensure the page has everything that different employees need, the AI writing assistant has already created a set of detailed FAQs that mean any questions are answered without the need to contact people directly.



Federated search makes information retrieval fast and efficient. ▲

Case Study 2

Bridging the distance for frontline workers

Sandra, a dedicated warehouse worker for a packaged food manufacturer, navigates a different digital landscape.

Sandra has limited access to a computer and no corporate email address, so alignment with communications and company culture is a

challenge. Sandra's digital experience contains a different set of challenges that a connected intranet can resolve.

1. Adapting to different locations

Fragmented: Sandra's role involves working at different sites. Starting a shift at a new location for the first time means Sandra may be unsure of specific procedures or safety protocols—not to mention not knowing the area's news or what's for lunch in the canteen. Hunting for paper manuals and relying on unreliable word-of-mouth information slows Sandra down and creates potential safety hazards.

The digital solutions that the company has tried include giving visiting workers access to a corporate kiosk with a desktop connected to an inconsistently managed SharePoint site. In the short time Sandra has at the start of a shift, it may be possible to find information, or to access Viva Engage for local news, but it's challenging.

Connected: With geofenced content on her mobile phone and the office computer, Sandra receives targeted information for each location. The intranet surfaces relevant site-specific manuals, safety videos, and emergency procedures instantly, ensuring she's well-equipped and informed, regardless of location. The intranet homepage displays local company news, so she feels connected to co-workers and aware of what's happening in the vicinity.

With an integrated people directory, social networking features, and employee rewards, Sandra can easily find out more about different employees and managers, giving kudos to those who support her in a new place. This increases engagement and removes the need for superfluous employee experience tools catering to only a single purpose.

2. Staying connected and informed

Fragmented: Important company announcements and team messages often miss Sandra, who ends up relying on posters or manager cascades. This creates an information gap and hinders engagement with the company culture and values.

The company has tried to use digital signage across its locations, but the integration between other digital workplace tools and the third-party vendor has proved costly. Reliance on yet another third-party platform creates more work for internal communicators who have to write and design content specifically for that channel. In the hope of connecting with frontline workers the company has also invested in an employee app, but this is seen as another cost and yet another channel that needs to be managed for corporate employees.

Connected: With an intranet that has digital signage as a native communication channel, the corporate comms team can send and track engagement (through QR codes) in every location. Analytics show the performance of key content, which encourages iteration and improvement of content. Sandra's access to user-friendly mobile content (via responsive experience and an intranet app) also removes the cost of an employee app and concentrates all news and digital workplace tools in one place.

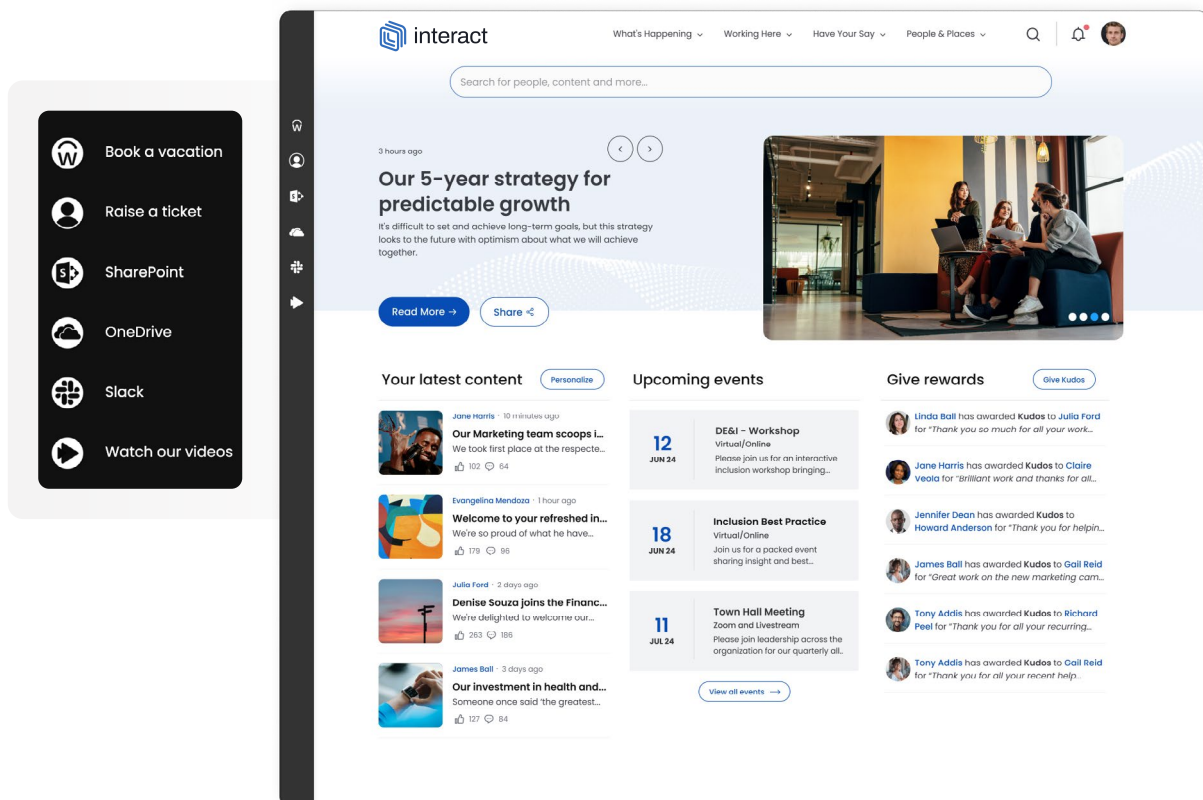
Personalized content updates also ensure she sees relevant company news, team updates, and even motivational messages. As the app enables Sandra to comment, upload images, and write blogs, the intranet becomes a two-way communication channel.



3. Streamlined access to essential tools

Fragmented: Checking paystubs, requesting time off, or swapping shifts involves juggling multiple, individual apps. This fragmentation is time-consuming, frustrating, and damages employee experience. Having to download multiple third-party apps to claim expenses or book travel may even put Sandra off from fully participating in company life.

Connected: An intranet that offers extensive integrations with common workplace apps can streamline this process by offering a single digital gateway to all the workflows your employees need. From their personalized homepage they can find the apps they need to achieve their objectives. Where the intranet goes even further is through the addition of engagement-boosting resources. You can use AI to easily build training and resource materials that show employees how and why to use the apps that will make everyone's life easier.



Case Study 3

Employee appreciation for everyone

Whether employees are at a desk, working on a hospital ward, or delivering the mail, they all want and need user-friendly access to tools which help them to feel like a valued part of their organization.

This is challenging in a digitally fragmented and physically dispersed workplace. Having a more connected and consolidated digital hub

can empower people through peer rewards, idea submission, and community engagement.

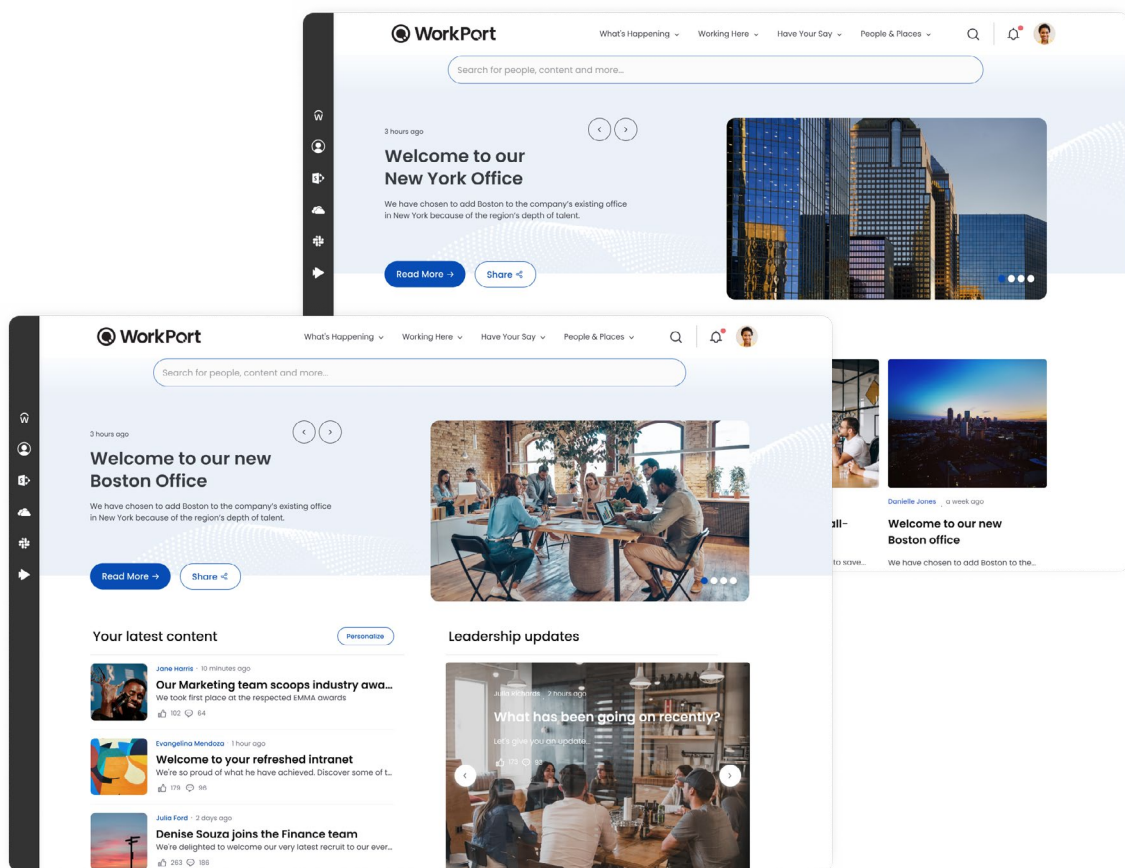
Fragmented: Productivity, retention, and morale all suffer when employees feel disconnected from company culture. A lack of communication and engagement with the benefits and technologies in place also creates more work for HR and internal comms. In some cases, employees simply don't know which platforms to use. Should they post personal blogs on Viva Engage or make comments on Slack? Which channel is best to hear from co-workers in different locations? Can they access the eNPS survey via mobile? Is there any way to submit ideas for change?

A fragmented approach means that people end up not engaging and the company spends more money and time on trying to implement partial solutions that only some people have access to.

Connected: An integrated, experience-focused intranet can be a unique, customizable platform for showcasing appreciation and fostering community.



- *Rather than searching through multiple enterprise social networks, AI-powered personalized newsfeeds automatically surface employee achievements, company initiatives, and upcoming events relevant to each employee's role and interests.*
- *Self-customization options enable employees to change notification settings and follow topics of interest so they're in control of a more personalized experience.*
- *Interactive features such as polls, surveys, and quizzes increase engagement and provide opportunities for learning and professional development.*
- *Active discussion forums create opportunities for every employee to share their voices, connect with colleagues, and improve best practices across the business.*
- *Community sites are an essential way to give people a dedicated space for their professional and personal interests. Although they may never meet 90% of their co-workers, they can still connect digitally with fellow dog lovers or data experts.*
- *Public employee recognition programs provide a user-friendly, highly visible way to encourage peer-to-peer engagement and highlight recognition from managers. Your organization doesn't need a separate app or software platform that can cause digital confusion. Kudos (with or without prizes) should be part of an employee experience intranet.*
- *Idea management software is a scalable way to drive innovation and improve employee listening. Run idea generation campaigns to crowdsource employee ideas and then use automation to reward the best ideas. All of this is integrated into the main platform that employees use each day.*



Customized homepages use AI to automatically surface the content that's most relevant for different employees, leading to increased engagement and productivity.

Improved communication drives additional value

At the center of all the above stories is good access and communication.

In addition to creating more work for IT, HR, and internal comms, a fragmented digital landscape hinders productivity, information access, and collaboration between employees. A single digital hub streamlines workflows by giving everyone instant access in one place—without having to remember 20 different URLs or download a host of different apps.

Where a consolidated intranet becomes even more effective than a constellation of scattered programs is with the inclusion of

communication channels that alert everyone to changes.

Through native options for digital signage, email newsletters, mobile alerts, Teams and Slack messages, and much more, you can streamline and personalize the number and format of notifications so that essential channels are kept free of digital clutter.

This enables any employer to create a seamless digital employee experience and to thread communication throughout an employee's daily journey—increasing engagement and alignment.

Consolidation in action



Audacy

Vertical Financial services	Location United Kingdom	Retail customers 3.2 million+
Business customers 95,000+		

Formed from the merger of CBS Radio and Entercom, Audacy is a leading multi-platform audio content and entertainment company with thousands of employees across the US.

Challenges

Before implementing its new intranet, Audacy relied on out-of-date technology that resulted in sporadic communications and a fragmented digital experience. Communicating with employees was inconsistent, which made it difficult for people to stay up-to-date on company news and events.

The overreliance on multiple platforms, including email and SharePoint, meant that information was not managed in a consolidated way. Audacy is also a large company with thousands of employees, so it needed to reconcile everyone under a unified new culture and set of values following a merger and rebrand.

Solutions

Audacy addressed these challenges by building a unified digital workplace called AudacyAtWork. The new intranet is a unified communications and employee experience platform that acts as a front door to the digital workplace. AudacyAtWork includes features that help to improve employee communication and experience:

- *It's easy access to critical tools: Employees can instantly find the apps and resources they need to do their jobs, such as email, calendars, and file sharing.*
- *Culture-boosting recognition programs: AudacyAtWork is the home of the company's much-loved rewards and recognition program.*
- *Searchable information: SharePoint and other document silos are gone because AudacyAtWork offers an easy-to-maintain knowledge base where employees can find answers to their questions and learn about new company policies and procedures.*

Benefits

- *Improved employee communication: AudacyAtWork has helped to improve employee communication by providing a central place for employees to stay up-to-date on company news and events.*
- *Increased employee engagement: In the first three months post-launch, the Audacy team saw 98% of active users visit the site each week. That number has averaged to over 90% after the first two years.*
- *Improved onboarding experience is a win for HR: Onboarding is now customized through the intranet. AudacyAtWork greets new hires and boosts employee experience from the start.*

“ Our onboarding process has also been greatly enhanced through Interact’s onboarding structure. New team members are exposed to a different homepage for their first 60 days with Audacy. We have increased onboarding satisfaction by 40% in the last year

– VP of Communications & Corporate Social Responsibility



Part 3 – From research to recommendations

At this stage, the path you are on may diverge. If you are building a business case for a new intranet platform, you will have already formulated a set of high-level objectives and a list of requirements for a vendor.

From here, the typical next steps are to:

- Quantify hard and soft objectives and outline the potential ROI
- Craft an opportunity statement
- Outline and shortlist options
- Recommend one option and outline the rationale for this choice
- Draft a timeline and implementation plan

If these are your next steps, please download Interact's comprehensive guide: **Building an intranet business case: getting your project on the radar**

[Download now](#)



For project plans with an existing intranet (or the latter stages of a business case proposal where you have already selected a vendor), however, the following steps will help you to move

forward in creating a digital workplace that takes advantage of the multi-purpose features a modern intranet offers.

Chapter 9

Turning department objectives into actionable realities

Whether you are speaking with multiple intranet vendors or working with a current provider, it's essential to take your research to them and ask for clarity on how their features and functionality could meet your needs.

This will mean you can outline a plan for your different stakeholders, encouraging them to see that a consolidated solution would serve them best too.

There are many intranet software vendors and all of them are going to tell you that they're the strongest. Truthfully, each provider carries a particular set of strengths. As the person leading

the project, it's your responsibility to find out which one is the best fit for your organization. It can be difficult to get a clear idea of how a solution will perform. It's worth noting that independent reviews, including guides, often only tell one side of the story. You will need to be diligent and examine potential vendors from all angles. There are a few strategies that, together, may help you decide on a solution.

Three things that help some buyers are:

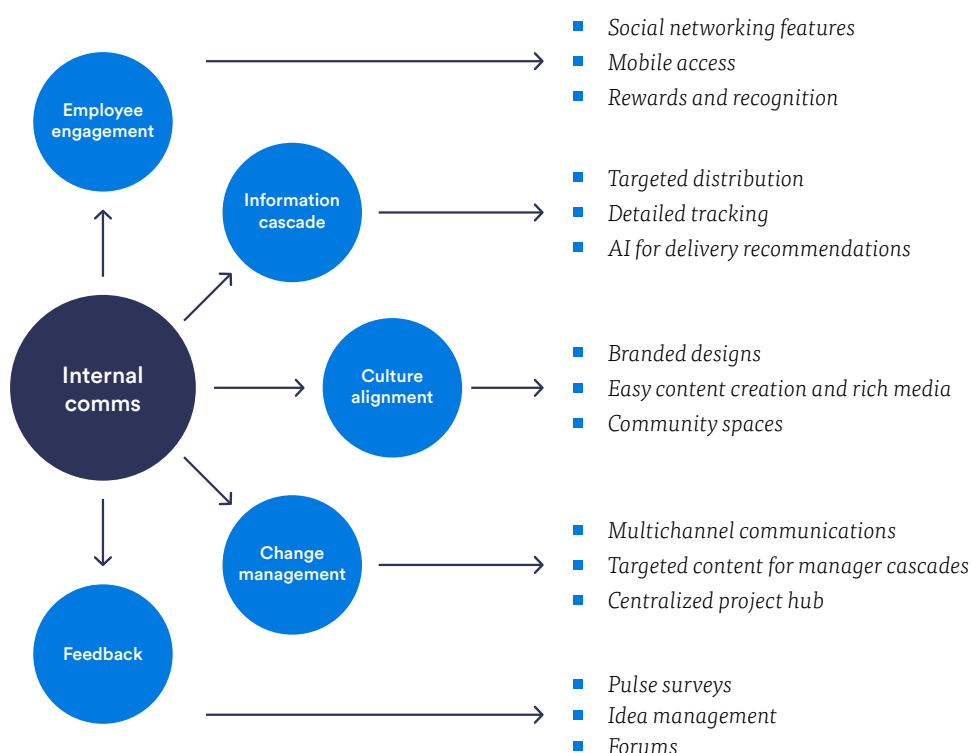
- *Global consultancies (e.g., ClearBox Consulting and Gartner)*
 - *Peer interviews (ask to speak with a current customer)*
 - *Take a tour (request a demo of the product)*
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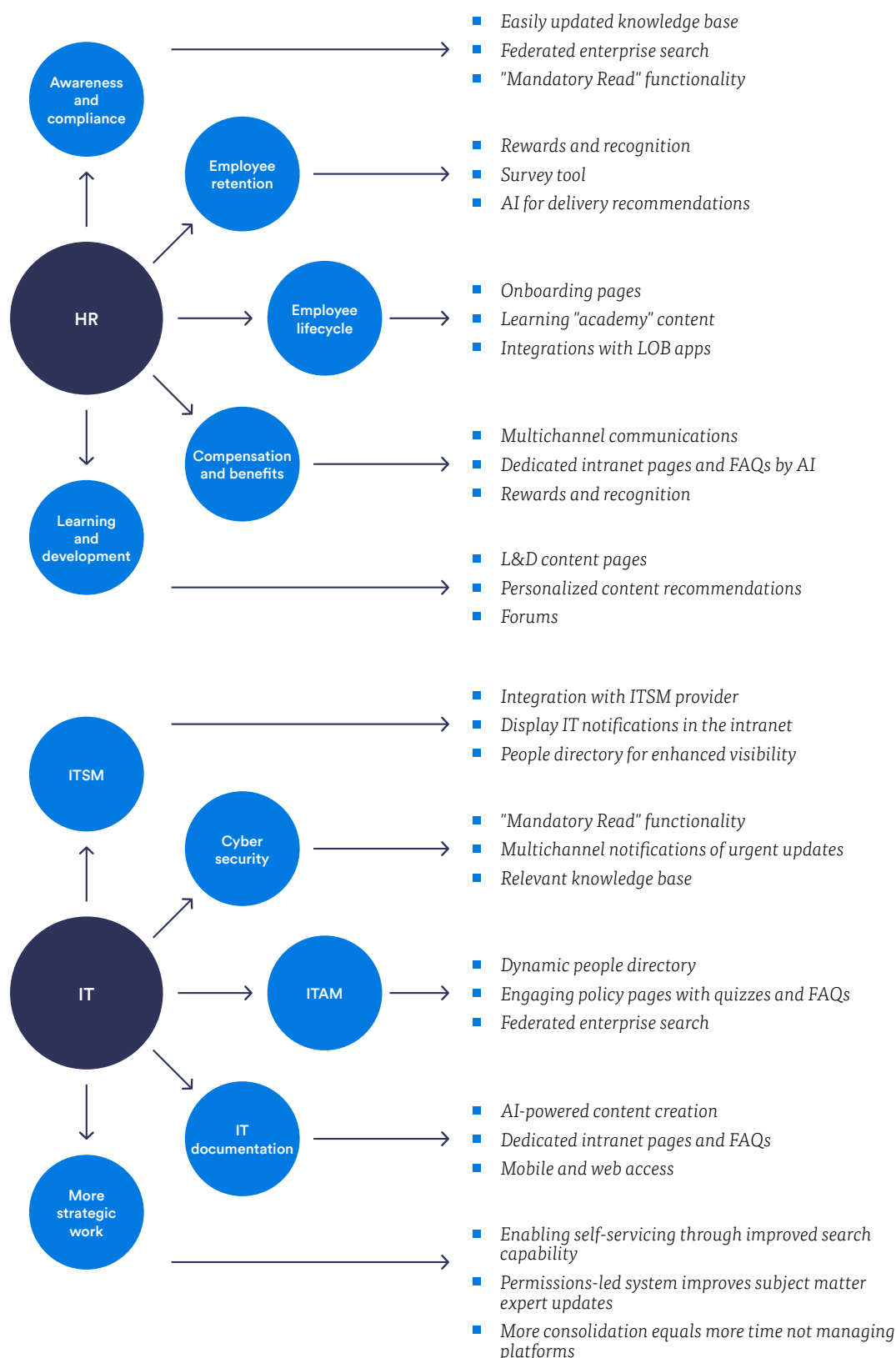
All of these can be important places to check, but you still may not have a full picture. Software comparisons may present an unfathomably long list of features, user reviews can be incomplete and biased, while reports from global advisors are often so expensive as to exclude all but the biggest organizations. We believe that the best way to decide upon the software and vendor for you is to go into conversations with them already knowing the toughest questions

that all providers get asked.

The following diagrams use the team objectives already outlined to show how an intranet could use multiple features to deliver an outcome.

Your question for each team should be, what are the ways this software could reproduce or improve this outcome and thus allow us to streamline the digital workplace?





With a set of concrete answers about how the new intranet can meet a variety of goals, you can identify vendor overlaps and propose a reduction of software duplication.

Chapter 10

Identifying and removing duplication

Now that you have some additional details about intranet capabilities from your vendor research, it's time to return to the internal software audit from Chapter 6.

This revised document should be an essential component of a consolidation plan as it lays out which software platforms or features can

be replaced for different teams by the intranet pathways on offer.

Example:

Your internal research reveals that the HR team is using an employee survey platform to improve retention.

The internal communications department has a separate survey tool for measuring comms preferences.

Senior leaders have an objective of driving innovation and operational efficiencies. They are not currently using any software to achieve this, but have identified a combination of idea management and surveys.

In a fragmented workplace, there are potentially three separate costs here that could all be consolidated into a single platform, an intranet that allows you to communicate around employee feedback, conduct and measure surveys, and run idea management campaigns.

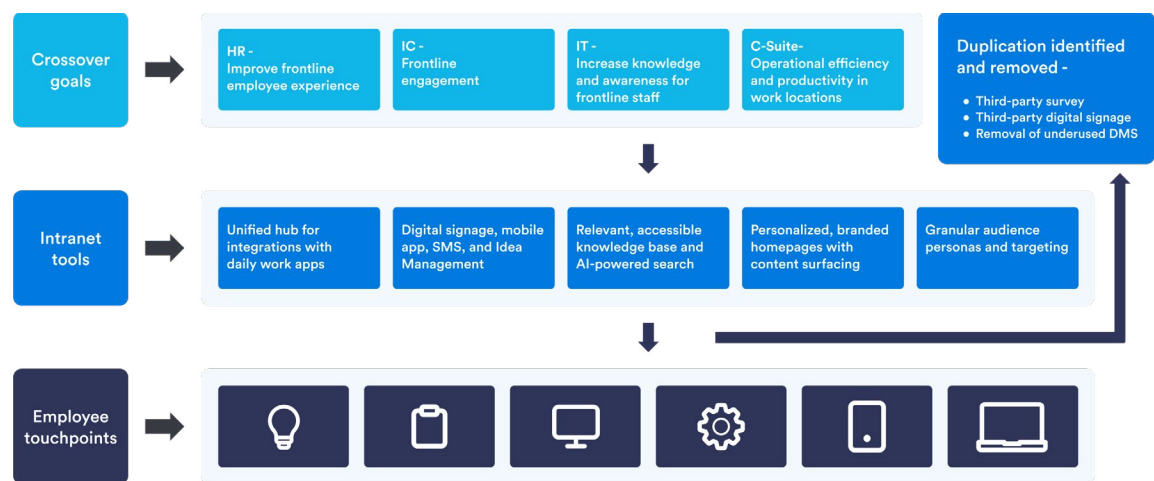
This enables the elimination of surplus platforms and encourages more collaborative working.

This table outlines some examples of common crossover areas.

Team	Current software platforms/needs	Objective	Cost	Intranet to replace or complement?	Consolidation	Cost saved
HR	Employee survey	Driving employee morale and retention	\$	Replace with integrated surveys	✓	\$
	Onboarding management	Seamless employee experience	\$\$	Replace with onboarding pages	✓	\$
	Compliance	Monitoring workplace compliance	\$	Replace with Mandatory Reads	✓	\$
	Performance management	Improving development	\$\$	Complement with knowledge base	–	–
	Benefits	Engagement and retention	\$	Complement with knowledge base	–	–
	Workforce planning	Optimizing productivity	\$\$\$	Complement with geofenced content	–	–
Internal comms	Email newsletter	Engaging workplace communication	\$\$	Replace with email newsletters	✓	\$
	Employee app	Generating community discussion and engagement	\$	Replace with app/communities	✓	\$
	Digital signage	Reaching frontline workers	\$	Replace with digital signage	✓	\$
	Employee rewards	Increasing peer-to-peer recognition	\$\$	Replace with intranet recognition tool	✓	\$
	External AI tools	Content creation and language checking	–	Replace unsecured third parties with Intranet AI	✓	–
IT	ITSM	Issue/request tracking	\$\$\$	Integrate with intranet to increase access and use	–	–
	Free IT daily work to improve strategic availability	Increase employee self-led resolution	–	Provide knowledge base and federated search tool	✓	New
	Asset management	Managing hardware and software	\$	Complement with knowledge base	–	–
	IT documentation platform	Maintaining documentation for IT systems and processes	\$\$	Replace with knowledge base and federated search tool	✓	\$
	IAM systems	Identity and access management	\$\$\$	Seamless integration with multiple platforms and SSO configuration in the intranet	–	–
Senior leadership	Enterprise social network (ESN)	Creating community and engagement	\$\$	Replace ESN with social intranet	✓	\$
	Multiple top-down communications channels	Increased strategic alignment and awareness	\$\$\$	Replace fragmented systems with multichannel intranet	✓	\$\$
	Decreased vendor sprawl	Free up resources and streamline workflows	\$\$\$	Consolidate overlaps in the intranet	✓	\$\$
	Improved productivity	Reduce digital noise and surface information faster	\$\$	AI-led personalization, consistent knowledge base, and federated search	✓	\$
	SOP knowledge base	Scalable growth and customer experience	\$	Replace with knowledge base and federated search tool	✓	\$
	Increase innovation	Crowdsourcing employee ideas directly	\$\$	Use idea management tool	✓	\$

To take this a step further—and generate compelling evidence for a business case or project plan—visually map out how these

changes will benefit different teams in their shared goals and use of the consolidated platform.



In the table outlining your software audit and consolidation opportunities above, there is an approximate cost saving attached to each line item.

You may notice that the projected cost saving is lower than the cost identified. This is because although you may save money through consolidation, there will still be a cost associated with the procurement of a unified platform.

It is another goal of your project plan or business case to identify where that financial balance lies. Is the removal of several platforms financially validated by the implementation of a different system?

To do this you may perform a cost-benefit analysis of the consolidation project.

Chapter 11

Cost-benefit analysis

On the surface, it should be simple to produce a financial analysis of consolidation.

If you currently have an intranet, you already know the pricing. If you require additional features or development, there may be some extra fees, but this will still be easy to understand.

If you are planning an intranet, vendors will provide you with a full cost breakdown as part of

a proposal.

In both cases, there is a simple reckoning that calculates the monthly or annual cost difference when, for example, you remove three third-party platforms in favor of a unified intranet.

Nominally, this could be written as:

Cost of all duplicate platforms – Cost of intranet platform = Savings

For example:

**(Platform A: \$50,000 + Platform B: \$40,000 + Platform C: \$30,000 = \$120,000)
– Intranet: \$60,000 = \$60,000**

While it's essential to evaluate the hard opportunity costs, such as monthly fees, the soft opportunity costs associated with consolidating technology providers should also be factored in. In the case of workplace software consolidation, there are both positive and negative factors to consider. For example, while removing several platforms may temporarily increase the work on

some teams, it may lead to long-term efficiency for the whole organization. This is a secondary level of balance to consider.

This more holistic approach is key, however, as it provides a comprehensive analysis of the total cost or savings of consolidation.

Some of the positive and negative soft opportunity costs to consider include:


Negative soft costs of consolidation	Positive soft costs of consolidation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>Work disruption</i>■ <i>Additional training on new platform</i>■ <i>"Growing pains" of adaptation</i>■ <i>Short-term process disruption</i>■ <i>Time needed for implementation project for new intranet</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>Improved productivity</i>■ <i>Increased employee engagement</i>■ <i>Frontline alignment</i>■ <i>Long-term process adherence</i>■ <i>Increase in innovation from employee ideas</i>

So, a total cost-benefit calculation should produce a total consolidated opportunity cost based on hard costs of legacy and new platforms,

and the potential negative and positive impacts of change.

Need help calculating the potential ROI of a new intranet? Our interactive calculator enables you to see the value based on Onboarding, Productivity, and Employee Retention.

Calculate your intranet ROI now



Chapter 12

Building and delivering a consolidation plan

Even if you are working with a specialized intranet vendor or external consultancy, there will be resource requirements and business impacts on your organization when delivering a new unified platform or sunseting other software.

This chapter outlines key things to know for the most comprehensive projects (i.e., creating an entirely new platform). By identifying how—and

who—will be involved up front, you can create realistic timescales and mitigate project risks.

Your consolidation project team

Getting the right people behind the project, both during the implementation and to ensure ongoing success, is critical. Planning the team is important for determining resource requirements and for aligning people with defined roles and responsibilities. This reduces many common risks such as project overrun,

lack of accountability or ownership, or poor oversight of key tasks.

While every organization should plan their unique governance and team structure to match their culture and objectives, there are some basics to consider when identifying who needs to be involved and what their role may include.




Who?	Why do you need them?	What should they do?
C-Suite/Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leadership ■ Strategic communication ■ Budgetary approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sign off and support the project's objectives ■ Enhance and develop new ways of working ■ Lead change and help break down barriers ■ Escalation point for unsolved issues
Stakeholders/Team leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Project/area responsibilities ■ Inter-team liaison ■ Department workflow ■ Department comms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with project manager(s) and C-suite to plan and execute ■ Enhance and develop new ways of working in their teams ■ Chair governance meetings ■ Work with Finance and project manager(s) to sunset duplicate platforms ■ Manager cascade of departmental comms ■ Ensure compliance with new ways of working
Project manager(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ They lead the overall project direction and report back on ongoing adherence and success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with stakeholders to develop and execute consolidation strategy ■ Day-to-day project management, including managing meetings and updates ■ Work with stakeholders to check compliance and enhance workflows and platform access ■ Ongoing training of employees and new hires if required
IT Support – senior representative, as well as day-to-day support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strategic and technical consultancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult and assist on technical aspects regarding hosting, security, and user management ■ Support for integration and digital workplace management ■ Help troubleshoot technical problems
Steering group – mixture of roles and seniority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To consult on ideas, plans, strategy, and any proposals you want input or opinions on – a "check and test" group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with the project manager(s) to provide user feedback on current and future plans ■ Input ideas into strategic planning ■ Represent employee groups

Defining scope and approach

In addition to personnel, a comprehensive consolidation plan will clearly define the scope of the project, specifying which software solutions and vendors will be retained, replaced, or integrated.

Factors to consider include:

- **A needs assessment:** Identifying the existing problems and cost implications of having a fragmented digital workplace. This will include pain points, redundancies, and areas for improvement.
 - **Setting clear objectives:** Based on your previous research, you can define the objectives of the consolidation initiative for the organization and each department. This may include reducing costs, improving efficiency, enhancing user experience, or aligning with organizational goals.
 - **Defining the scope:** Scope specifies which software solutions and vendors will be retained, replaced, or integrated.
 - **Selecting a consolidation approach:** Decide on the approach for consolidating different needs into your intranet. This could involve a “big bang” standardization on a single platform or phasing out redundant solutions gradually and according to teams/locations. Choose an approach that aligns with your objectives, resources, and organizational culture.
 - **Resource requirements:** You will likely have a clear idea of who will be involved in the project, but it is also useful to set out how much time will be required, how often, and whether there will be any additional costs (for training or communications).
 - **Identifiable risks:** If there is any concern about the deliverability of the project, these should be identified as soon as possible.
- 

Timescales and deliverables

The question of how long a project will take is always high on the priority list for senior stakeholders, but as any project manager will testify, there is no clear-cut answer.

Timescales will vary according to scope, customization requirements, size and complexity of the organization, and more.

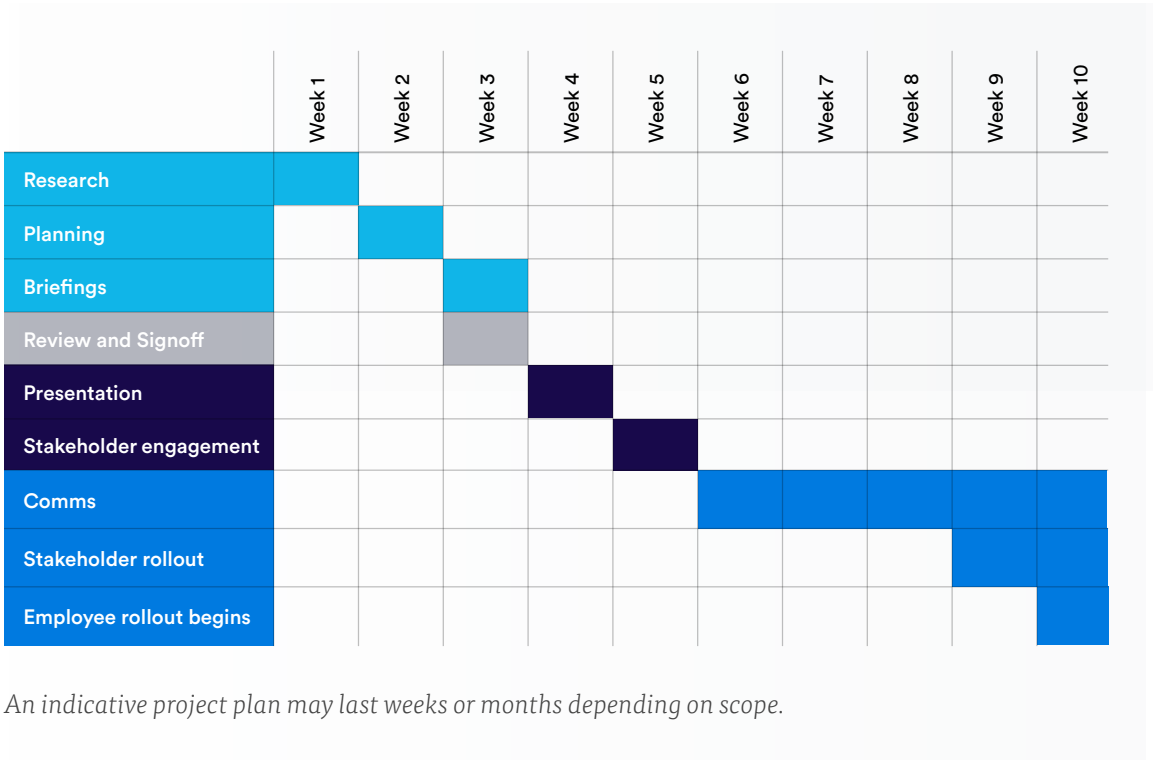
For anyone planning to implement a new intranet from scratch, however, the chart below shows how differences in scope—whether this is a new project or redevelopment of an existing site—could impact on timescales for that element of the project.

Work with your intranet vendor to understand the goal for initial and full rollouts of a new platform.

01	Existing site - fixing and improving key issues (small scale)	6 months
02	Existing site - minor redesign, rebrand or structure improvement (mid-scale)	6 -12 months
03	Existing site - extensive redevelopment to functionality, technology or complete redesign	12-18 months
04	New intranet - migrating from a legacy system to a new platform	12-18 months
05	New intranet - building from scratch, no previous system in place	6 -12 months

The timings for a consolidation project with a pre-existing intranet will differ. In this case, it is likely to be much shorter and to encompass

key milestones that should be included and communicated as part of the project plan.



Communications

Employees won't change their behaviors and technological defaults without a significant

investment in change communications, including a multichannel strategy.

Three important factors to consider are:

- The frequency of messages
- Organization-wide channel choices
- The timing of different strands of messages.

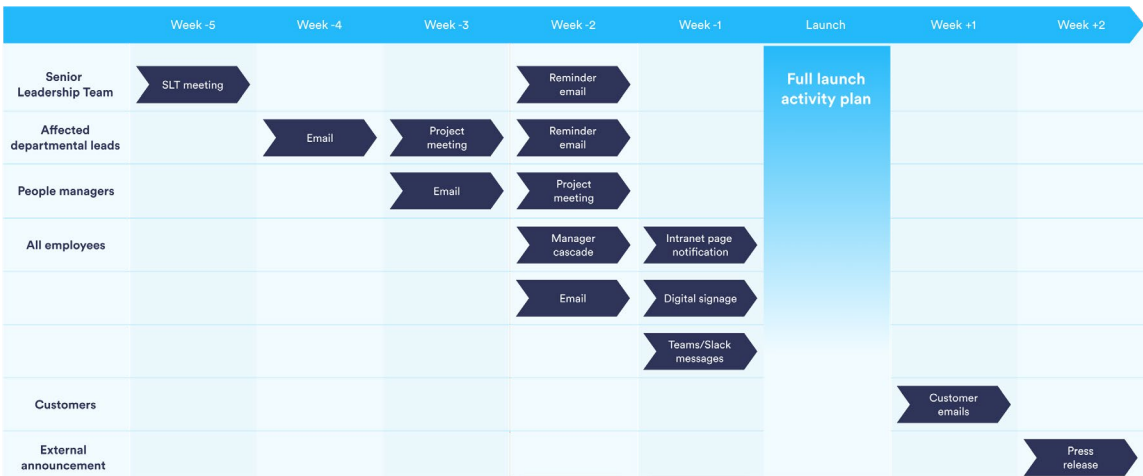
A good starting point is to map message frequency across different channels and the likelihood that they will be engaged with.

Your channel choices may look something like this



Your comms plan will also depend on your organization’s size and structure, and on the planned changes.

Whatever the end goal, however, thinking in stages, audiences, and outputs will enable you to identify and fill any gaps so that you can ensure a seamless transition.



Conclusion

Monitor and engage to optimize

Consolidating communication and employee experience tools into a single intranet platform holds immense promise for organizations seeking to streamline operations, reduce costs, and enhance productivity.

By consolidating multiple platforms into one cohesive solution, businesses can create a unified and efficient digital workplace that fosters collaboration, communication, and innovation across teams and departments.

However, the journey towards tech consolidation does not end with the implementation of a new platform or the successful sunsetting of multiple providers. To ensure long-term success and maximize the return on investment, it is crucial to continuously monitor and optimize

the performance of the consolidated software solutions and vendor relationships.

Gathering feedback from employees and stakeholders will enable you to understand their experiences and pain points, tracking key performance metrics to measure the impact of the consolidation efforts, and making adjustments as necessary to optimize efficiency and effectiveness.

Consolidation is not a one-time event but an ongoing journey of improvement and refinement. By remaining agile and using the new features available in the unified system, organizations can unlock the full potential of the technology they choose to keep.



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**.

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