The Four Stages of Intranet Maturity

Evolving Your Intranet for the Future of Work

Liferay

Fears of unemployment due to technological takeovers have existed since the Industrial Revolution and today, with the rise of AI, IoT and other technologies, those concerns are still very prevalent as we try to come to terms with the future of work.

The Changing Nature of Work

Employees are already experiencing the effects of digital disruption in their work. Most notably, technology has changed:

1. **What Skills Are Needed.** Since robots can automate a large portion of manual tasks, workers need to cultivate cognitive skills in order to provide value that robots cannot replace. Businesses are looking for employees that possess complex problem-solving skills, high-level reasoning and the ability to work well in a team. Advanced digital dexterity will also be needed for employees to be able to use and work alongside the latest technologies. Over the past several years, the demand for digital skills has grown by 60 percent and will continue to rise.[1] As intelligent machines and software becomes more integrated into workplaces, employees will also need to be able to adjust their workflows and tasks in order to be able to work alongside new technologies.

2. **How People Work.** With the growing use of digital platforms, people are empowered to work outside of the traditional 9 to 5 schedule. More employees have been leveraging digital tools that allow for flexibility in remote work. Additionally, digital tools can help improve productivity, collaboration and communication. However, expanding work beyond the boundaries of the office and working hours can negatively affect work-life balance, requiring employees to be accessible no matter where they are.

3. **How the Business Grows.** Technology makes scaling up faster and easier at a lower cost. However, globalization also creates new challenges in privacy, competition and taxation. Another difficulty includes the necessity for a more connected network between customers, producers and providers in order to create a multi-sided model that can capture more value as the business continues to expand.

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1   How We Will Work in 2028

Because technology and work are so intricately connected, CIOs and HR leaders have to grapple with this relationship as they consider the future of work. How will digital continue to disrupt workplaces and the nature of work? Here are some of our predictions for the near future:

1. **AI and ML:** One of the most exciting developments is the rise of artificial intelligence and machine learning. These advancements can help enhance analytical skills and even provide predictive analytics to guide future strategies with data-driven insights. This also has ramifications for what's possible with robotics. Historically, robots could only perform programmable tasks; however, with more powerful algorithms, robots will be able to do more complex duties by determining patterns and learning from those patterns to make decisions.

2. **IoT Connectivity:** As connected devices grow in popularity, IoT has the potential to enhance the workplace. Sensors and beacons can be installed to create "smart offices" that can enable individuals to find the closest parking space or automatically connect to a meeting room through their badge to access information, notes and schedules. IoT capabilities can even be used to enforce workplace safety; by using advanced analytics and environmental sensors, businesses can identify hazards early and stop issues before they become dangerous.

3. **Workforce Transitions:** Due to the displacement from automation and the changing nature of jobs, a large number of people will need to learn new skills or get a new job; McKinsey predicts that up to 375 million individuals will need to do so.[2] However, technology and automation will also help to create new types of jobs; the same McKinsey research estimates that up to 280 million new jobs could be created globally.

While these predictions reveal exciting possibilities for the future, it's still difficult to determine when, or even if, these predictions can come to fruition. Instead of creating a future strategy based on these predictions, enterprises should be focusing on investing into their workforce.

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2 Jobs Lost, Jobs Gained: What the Future of Work Will Mean for Jobs, Skills and Wages

Unlocking the Value of Your Workforce

Work will continue to be disrupted by new technologies and trends, so organizations will need to train and support their workforce to be able to adapt to these advancements in order to remain competitive. According to a recent study from Accenture, 63 percent of companies, across 98 industry segments, are already experiencing disruption. Additionally, 93 percent of executives say that they know their industry will be disrupted at some point in the next five years.[3]

In the wake of digitalization, the rate at which technology and change happens will be exponential; attempting to be the fastest innovator will become exhausting and ultimately not profitable. Instead, a more viable, long-term solution is to invest and build up a workforce that is able to work critically to leverage these changes to improve the business.

In order to achieve this, organizations will need to continually cultivate innovative digital environments that help support and connect employees or else succumb to "Digital Darwinism,"[4] an idea that applies the concepts of Darwinism to modern-day organizations. Since the digital era is marked by fast evolving technological and societal changes that force businesses to adapt, those that cannot end up with a fate similar to that of Blockbuster or Borders.

To ensure digital survival of the fittest, organizations must create superior employee experiences to build up effective teams that are able to thrive amidst complex business processes and disruptions.

Accomplish this by leveraging a digital tool that focuses on employees and ultimately that affects the success of your business: an intranet.

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3   Disruption Need Not be an Enigma
4   Digital Darwinism: How to Survive that which Killed Blockbuster

The Four Stages of Intranet Maturity

Many businesses might already have an intranet set in place as a tool to help distribute information. However, these organizations have not been utilizing intranets to their fullest extent since it's only in its first stage of maturity and is failing to provide benefits that a fully matured solution could. From our years of experience working with companies who use our software to build their enterprise intranets,[5] we've determined that there are four stages of maturity for an intranet solution, distinguished by the range of functionality and its focus on employee experience and engagement. Recognizing which of the following stages your tool falls under will help you identify the next steps to take in order to support enhanced employee experiences to build up your workforce:

1. **Traditional Intranet:** The most simple intranets primarily facilitate one-way, downward communication from the company leaders down to its employees. Quick to build and easy to use, this basic corporate communication channel is very useful in delivering information to employees; however, many of these intranet point solutions tend to be rigid and lack the necessary features and customization modern-day employees need in order to do their work well.

2. **Advanced Intranet:** Building on top of basic communication functions, intranets in this stage facilitate departmental and interdepartmental collaboration with features such as knowledge bases, blogs and document management. Employees aren't necessarily doing their work using the intranet but rather using these features to collaborate and discuss with others about their work, which can boost employee engagement and morale.[6] However, in trying to achieve these functionalities, organizations might leverage multiple tools and thus may struggle integrating all their different systems to work together seamlessly.

3. **Basic Digital Workspace:** It is not until this next stage that employees are able to execute work processes within the platform as this stage focuses on productivity and the development of interdepartmental relationships. Examples of processes that can be streamlined include onboarding, performing product development, responding to work tickets and
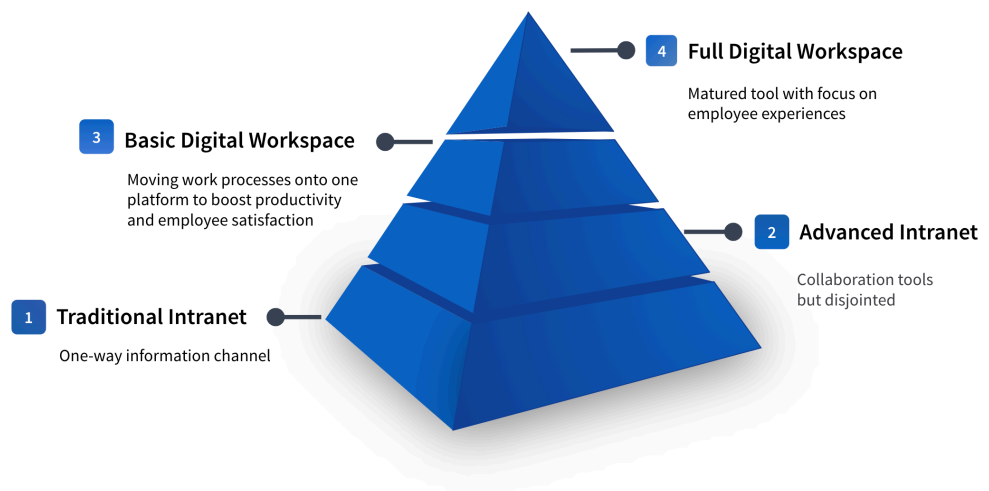
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5   Liferay DXP for Intranets
6   Creating a Culture of Collaboration with Liferay DXP

troubleshooting. A common challenge in enterprises is flawed internal work processes, which can raise employee turnover rates and increase frustrations.[7] Moving these work processes into a single platform, together with mobile functionality, helps to not only increase productivity but also boost employee satisfaction.

4. **Full Digital Workspace:** Most organizations find themselves stuck between the second and third stage; they have yet to realize a fully matured intranet solution. A full digital workspace really emphasizes cultural transformation of the organization through the workforce. Organizations have the resources to do so by optimizing their employee experiences. By providing employees excellent experiences, your workforce will be able to produce great results, even when processes and technologies change. Leveraging analytics and AI/ML, this advanced intranet solution can personalize knowledge delivery and content based on interests and past behavior, automate tasks through ML-powered tools such as auto-tagging or auto-processing of work items, measure employee engagement and alert stakeholders of bottlenecks in business processes in real-time. Unlock the full potential of your workforce by using an intranet tool that is able to adapt according to future work trends and the evolving needs of your organization.

The 4 Stages of Intranet Maturity Depicted

4 Full Digital Workspace

Matured tool with focus on employee experiences

3 Basic Digital Workspace

Moving work processes onto one platform to boost productivity and employee satisfaction

2 Advanced Intranet

Collaboration tools but disjointed

1 Traditional Intranet

One-way information channel

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7   Definitive Guide to America's Most Broken Processes

Maturing Your Intranet to a Full Digital Workspace

Empower your organization to successfully navigate the changes to work by using a fully matured digital workspace. This solution can help position your business for success since it will be optimized to improve employee experiences.

According to research from MIT, companies who scored the highest in employee experience reported two times higher customer satisfaction than companies who scored the lowest in employee experience, increased innovation by twofold, raised profitability by 25 percent compared to competitors, improved staff retention and lowered employee churn.[8]

Only a full digital workspace, with analytics integration and a concentrated focus on employee experience, can deliver a more flexible, engaging and collaborative work environment that is future-proof and able to withstand the disruptions of the modern age.

Steps to Execute a Maturity Strategy

Achieving full intranet maturity requires proactive leadership and a clear vision for effective execution. There is no one correct organizational structure for governing intranet programs so leaders instead must make their decisions based on what will benefit their unique company and workforce. What's ultimately critical is that leaders focus on leading and encouraging change instead of lagging behind technological advancements and employee expectations. Consider these general guidelines:

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8   Building Business Value with Employee Experience

1. **Mapping Out a Strategy:** Start by creating a digital workspace vision and establishing clearly defined goals. Consult all necessary parties such as IT, sales, marketing, finance, legal and HR to gather insight to take into account input from all relevant parties in order to establish reasonable and agreed upon goals. Here are some sample questions to include:

   1. What are the key organizational drivers for leadership?

   2. What are some roadblocks to change?

   3. How is success and failure measured?

   4. What is the total cost of ownership?

   5. Who is going to control and maintain the platform?

2. **Emphasizing Employee Experience:** A fully matured intranet tool is centered around employee experiences, so here are some important points to consider:

   1. What are the key organizational drivers for your employees?

   2. How do people in your organization conduct their work?

   3. What are employees' biggest frustrations in their daily work experience?

   4. What does your corporate culture need to increase employee satisfaction?

   Ultimately, these topics should be ones that will still be relevant in the future, no matter how work might change.

3. **Finding the Tools:** Using the insights gathered from the first two steps, implement technological tools that help execute your strategy and meet your team's needs. While there may already by existing intranet technology in place, you will need tools that include ML/AI functionalities, robust features for enhancing employee experiences and powerful analytical capabilities. The solutions you add must not only be flexible to enable your organization to evolve and scale, but also be able to integrate and connect with other, even newer, technologies as you continue to add to your digital workspace. Don't shift your strategy to match your technologies but rather make sure the technology aligns with your vision first.

4. **Monitoring Intranet Usage and Gathering Post-Implementation Feedback:** Send surveys and gather feedback from the team to see if any adjustments to either strategy or technology are needed. This step should be continuous, as employee expectations and work trends will change, requiring improvements, reassessments of strategy and addition or removal of tools.

The Future of Work and the Workforce

There's no crystal ball that can enlighten us as to what the future of work will look like in ten or even five years from now; however, it's clear that organizations that are not able to evolve will be left behind and become defunct. A fully matured digital workspace is just one component to future-proof your business, one piece of a digital workplace: a larger strategy that ties together workspaces, apps, processes and culture for an integrative employee-first digital solution. As the threat of Digital Darwinism continues to loom over businesses, executing a successful digital workplace will only increase in strategic importance. There's no stopping the rate at which digital transformation is changing the nature of work, so the survival of your business will be dependent on the success of your team and the tools you provide them.

Moving Forward

To learn more about how you can implement an intranet to enhance employee experiences, visit our solutions page here.

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