

jive



The Future of Intranets and Enterprise Social Networks

Why businesses need an interactive intranet

Who Should Read this eBook

This eBook is primarily for IT professionals researching the latest evolution in traditional intranet and enterprise social network (ESN) technologies, to learn why it's imperative to bring the best of both together. It's also helpful for HR and Corporate Communications professionals interested in better ways to inform, align and engage their workforce using the latest, proven technologies.

This eBook is for you if:

You're considering replacing your outdated intranet with proven communication and collaboration technologies

You need to augment your intranet with new digital workplace tools

You want to improve employee alignment, engagement and effectiveness as you grow your business

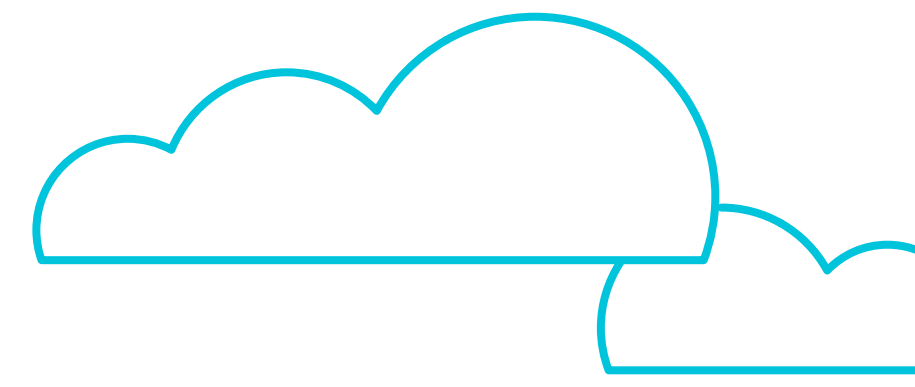
This eBook will help you assess the following:

-  How intranet and ESN technologies have evolved, and why this warrants a potential change
-  Business challenges other companies have solved, using these new technologies
-  The many benefits of an interactive intranet to IT and business stakeholders
-  How to evaluate your situation in light of what's available in today's market



Introduction

Corporate intranets are a lot like cities. Thriving cities offer great schools, vibrant cultural and community activity, efficient public transportation and little, if any, decay. And people, lots of people, are what make them flourish. Unfortunately, many of today's traditional intranets resemble ghost towns. They suffer from deserted, disconnected resources, one-way communication and little, if any, collaboration. And while some companies have embraced the idea of bringing lots of people together with an enterprise social network (ESN), they're experiencing the chaotic and unmanageable collaboration that ESNs unleash. Over the past three years, companies across virtually every industry have brought the best of these two technologies together to create a new, interactive intranet, one that empowers workforces to better connect, communicate and collaborate to deliver real business value.



Look for the following icons to guide you in your research:



Key capability of an interactive intranet



Benefits and results of an interactive intranet



Technology evaluation tip

Overview

Chapter One

Chapter one reviews how corporate intranets got started and how they've changed and evolved. By examining intranet progression, we'll better understand why so many are stuck in the past and failing to improve digital work for our companies and employees. We'll also discuss the viability of ESNs as an alternative to traditional intranets, and conclude with a high-level look at the characteristics of the interactive intranet, which blends the best attributes of traditional intranets and ESNs.

Chapters Two, Three and Four

Next, is a deeper dive into the interactive intranet and how it can empower your workforce to deliver real business value.

Specifically, we'll address:

- What needs to be connected via the intranet
- The types of communications that need to take place, and between whom (and what!)
- Which collaboration tools to integrate into the intranet to help people work better together

Chapter Five

The final chapter will demonstrate the power of an interactive intranet for emerging companies, those that place a premium on employee culture in order to grow their business, whether through rapid expansion or mergers and acquisitions (M&A). It will also address the overall business benefits of an interactive intranet for IT and business leaders.

We'll conclude with how IT leaders can make intranet improvements the cornerstone of their efforts, to evolve from technology developers and owners into digital business enablers.

Chapter One

The Evolution of Corporate Intranets: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Intranets have been around since the mid-1990s, when organizations began replacing proprietary internal networking technologies with standardized alternatives made popular by the World Wide Web. Much like the public Internet, the intent of an intranet was to give employees access to networked content throughout the company, no matter where it resided.

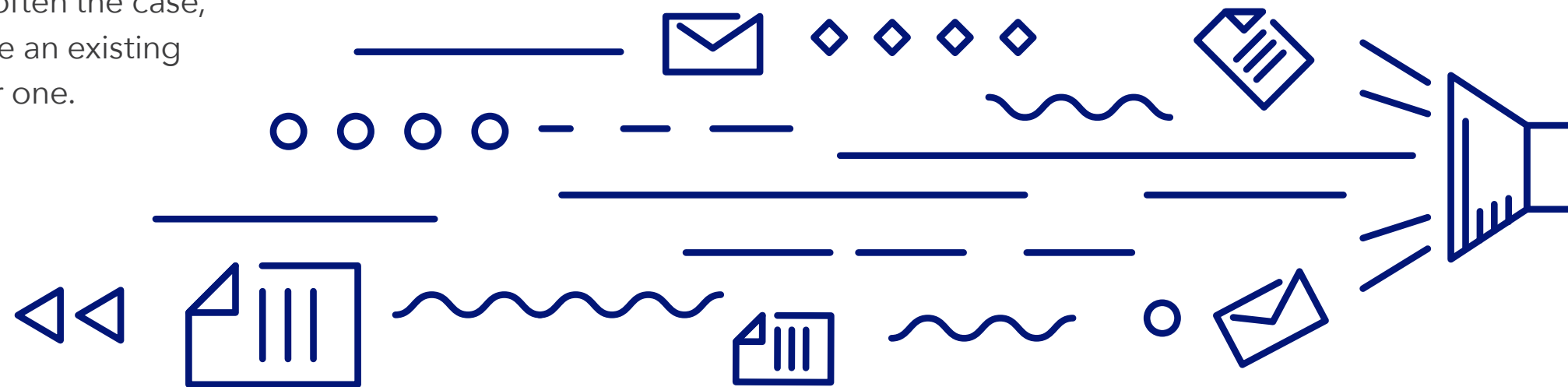
Corporate Intranet Timeline



Corporate Communications professionals had a slightly different vision, seeing the intranet as a broadcast channel, and a place employees could visit to consume information. In essence, early intranets were seen as both a network and a destination. That dichotomy has survived to this day, causing confusion and forcing intranet teams to either prioritize design for a place where broadcasts are made, or a network where content is connected. In most firms, the broadcast side won.

Instead of being printed, organizational news and information began to be published on intranets using web content management systems. This eliminated the use of paper, but did not fundamentally improve the communication process or the way people consumed the messages. As is often the case, new technology was merely used to replicate an existing process, rather than create a new and better one.

Broadcasting lots of information from a single place had an unanticipated side effect. Intranet owners and webmasters were forced to organize information to make it easier to find, even if it didn't change very often. How the intranet was structured became very important. In fact, usability quickly became a more critical driver of intranet adoption than the frequency of newly posted information.



Enterprise Portals as Second-Generation Intranets

Around the turn of the century, organizations began to adopt rapidly maturing portal technologies that improved web content creation and, in some cases, usability. Having been first developed and proven on the consumer Web by Yahoo!, Lycos and others, enterprise software vendors quickly began creating and selling their own versions of portals.

Enterprise portal technology also brought another significant advancement—the ability to personalize the environment for employees. Instead of broadcasting the same information to every employee, communications could be tailored and

pushed to targeted audiences. Data, document and application access could similarly be controlled.

Unfortunately, this meant someone in the organization made an assumption about what employees needed to do their jobs. Individuals rarely, if ever, had the opportunity to choose for themselves. An employee's personalization options were mostly limited to selecting and applying a color scheme or page layout option.

If done well, corporate portals became places filled with networked content and applications that employees found useful. However, portal technology was so complex to implement and manage that most companies ended up with very expensive link farms, and not the personalized productivity tool they thought they were buying.

Enterprise portals offered:

- A framework for merging multiple information sources into a single page
- Out-of-the-box design features that included formalized structure and consumer-style usability elements
- The ability to connect and display data from transactional systems, and documents from enterprise content repositories
- The ability to integrate limited functionality from other enterprise applications into the intranet

All of these offerings began to re-introduce the original network concept of corporate intranets.

Yesterday's Intranets = Today's Problems

The fast pace and unpredictability of business today—largely driven by the convergence of social, mobile, analytics and cloud technologies—places a premium on an organization's ability to quickly change strategy, structure, offerings and processes. In fact, it's fair to say that organizations and their work have increasingly become less structured.

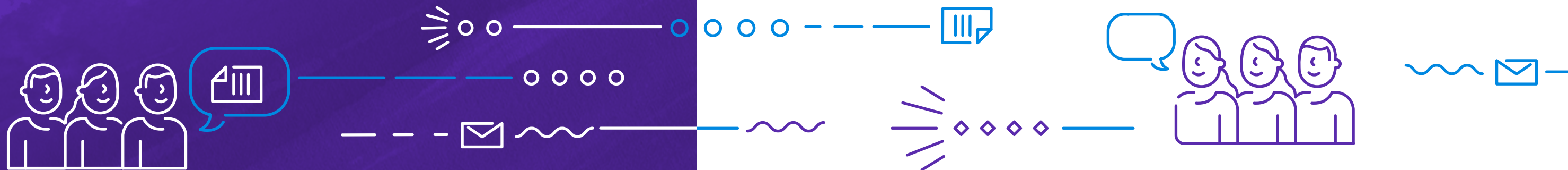
A traditional intranet—with its rigid structure and lack of individual personalization capabilities—hurts a company's ability to react and adapt to changes in the market.

As the organization tries to change, the traditional intranet becomes a quagmire of outdated content and functionality. In many businesses today, the intranet is an IT resource that must either be improved or replaced.



The Introduction of Enterprise Social Networks

About a decade after the first intranets appeared, and about five years after the advent of enterprise portals, new technology came along. Enterprise social networks (ESNs) represented a fresh look at how business was done. People and their relationships became the focal point, with information and business activities flowing through the network as people interacted. Monolithic documents shared in email took a backseat to activity streams and other means of short form communication such as instant messaging.



ESNs are first and foremost networks of people. Most of the value of an ESN lies within the conversations people have with each other.

This interaction is the single biggest differentiator between ESNs and traditional intranets. Intranets were originally designed to improve one-way corporate communications—employees had no way to reply. ESNs foster dialogue, causing conversations to become the norm, not the exception.

The second biggest differentiator is that people could also form relationships with content, and whole groups of people. While relationships between people and information are possible in traditional intranets built on portal technology, the individual doesn't get to choose those relationships.



ESNs enabled people to do something they could never do before: tap into their company's collective expertise across the entire enterprise.



The relationships and ambient awareness created in ESNs began to bridge organizational silos.



People were finally able to choose and stay up-to-date on information sources that mattered to them.



Consumer-style social sharing capabilities made it possible for people to spread their and others' knowledge at scale.

ESNs are Networks, Not Single Applications

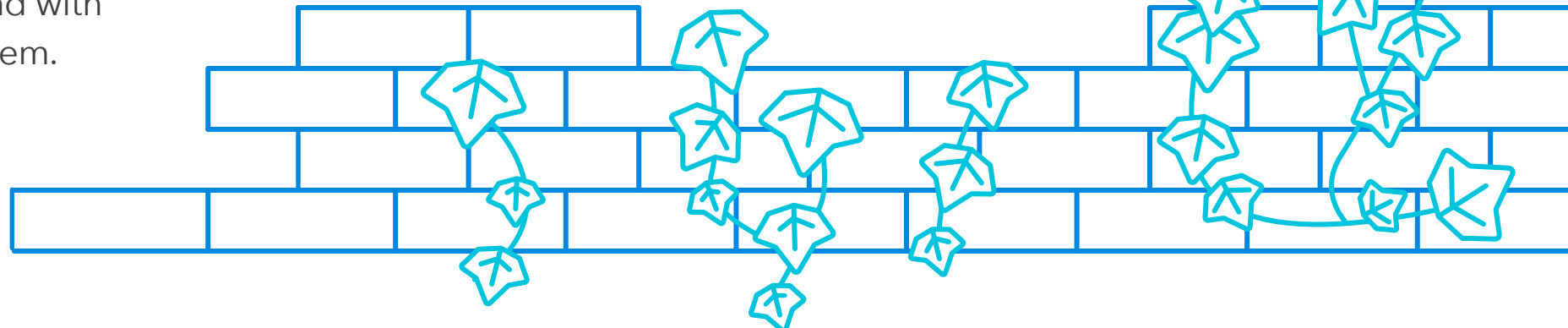
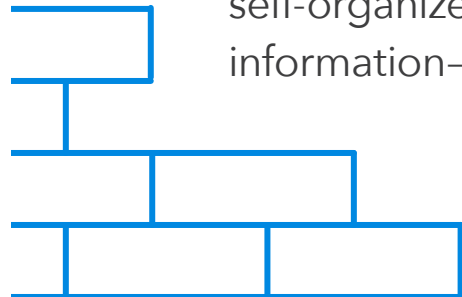
A traditional intranet—especially one built on portal technology—was a single application that brought information and applications to employees. An ESN flips that notion upside down, bringing employees to information and applications, and other people, no matter where they reside.

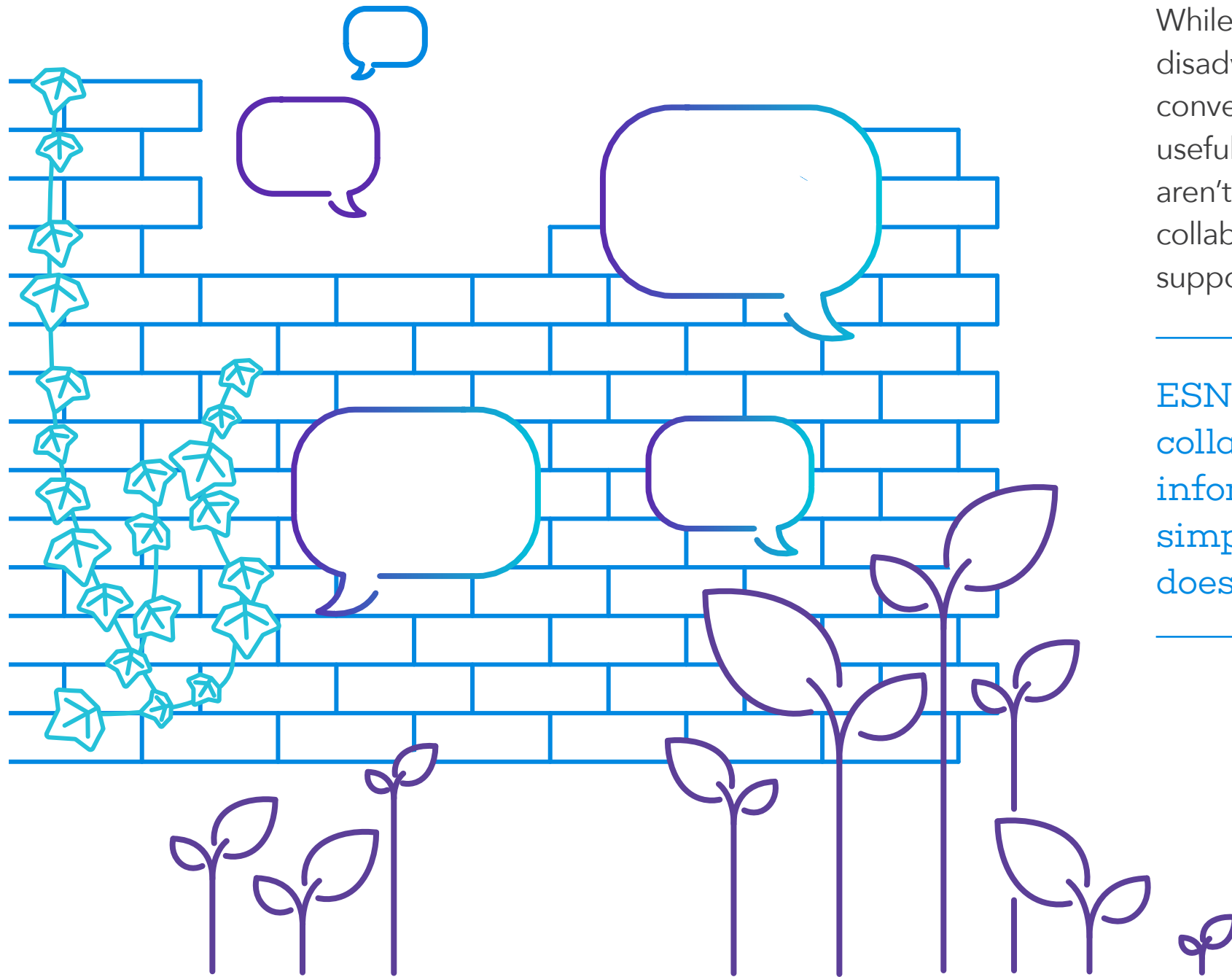
ESN Design is Emergent, Not Structured

We've discussed how a traditional intranet's structural design was key to usability, but hampered the intranet's ability to quickly adapt to changing business demands. A key differentiator of ESNs from traditional intranets is their organic, adaptable structure. Structure emerges and changes as the network grows and relationships change. Some companies have pre-structured these relationships based on departmental affiliations, geographic locations and roles. However, that's merely another case of using a new technology to replicate an existing situation, rather than creating something new and better.

More forward-thinking organizations have enabled people to self-organize their relationships—both with people and with information—in whatever structure makes sense to them.

Where a traditional intranet used predefined taxonomies, an ESN's structure emerges and changes as employees create new relationships and leave old ones, and tag and change content. Information discovery and retrieval is made personal, not imposed by someone else in the company. However, many organizations wish to keep both approaches, which is why an ESN by itself doesn't meet the needs of both corporate communicators and individuals.





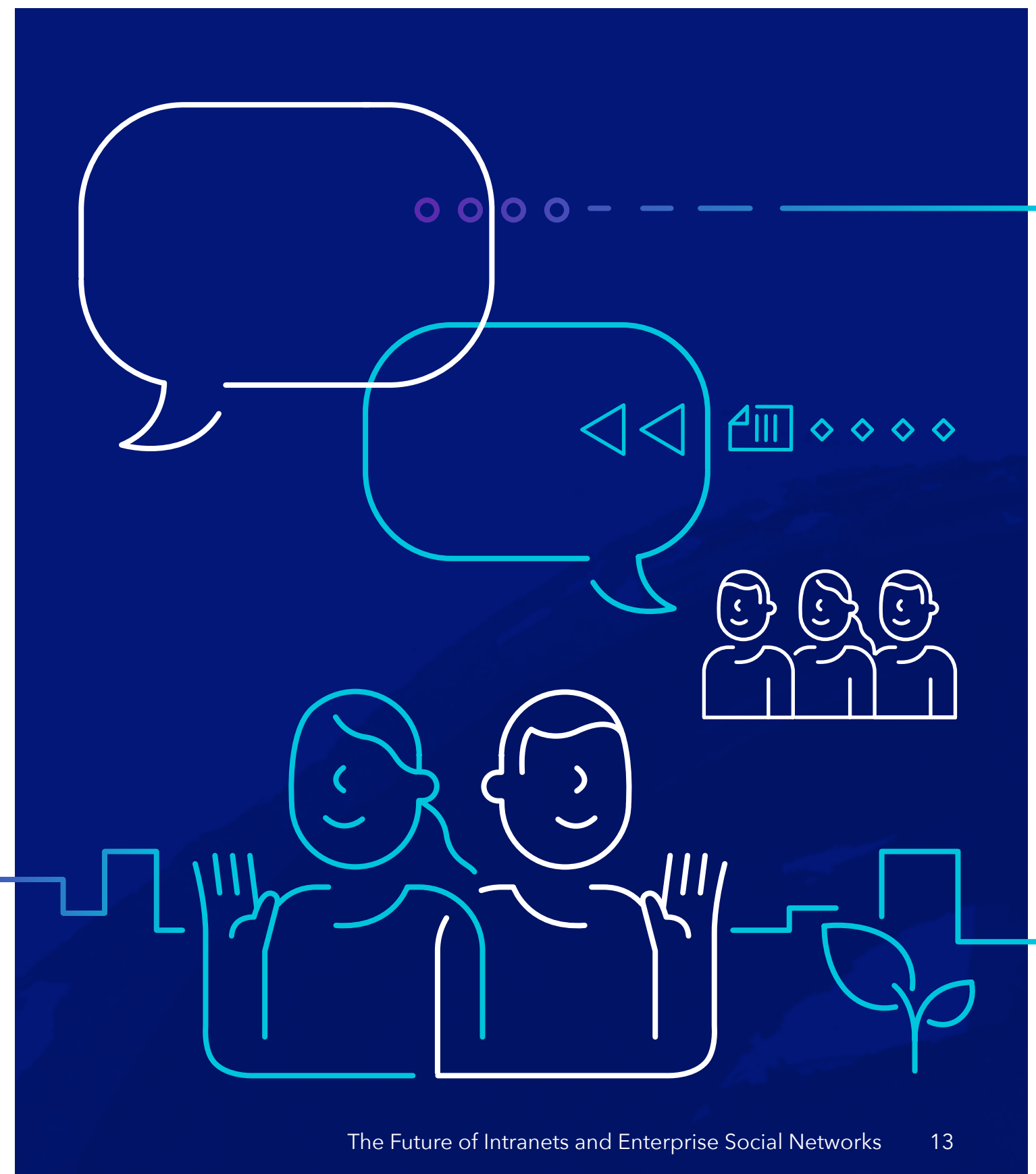
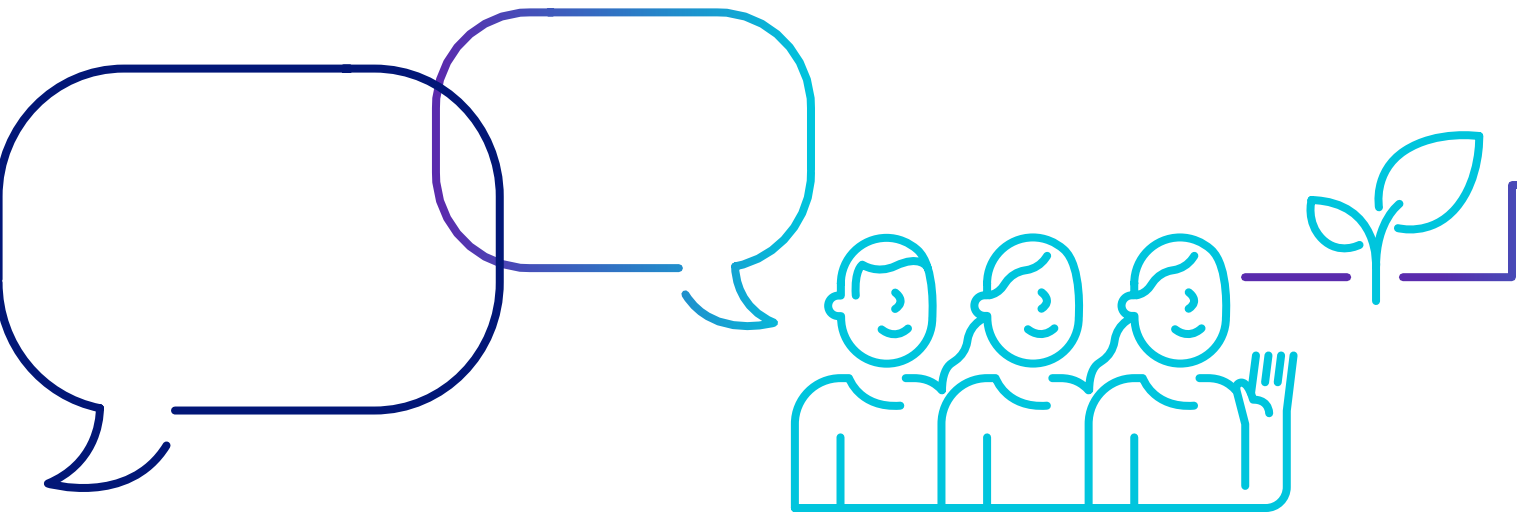
While ESNs offer many benefits, they also have several unique disadvantages. The brevity of status updates and the lack of conversation structure in activity streams severely limit their usefulness for getting work done; this is compounded by ESNs that aren't well integrated with other enterprise systems. Further, some collaboration needs well-defined structure and workflow, which isn't supported by the ad hoc nature of microblogs and activity streams.

ESNs are useful for addressing emergent collaboration needs, but important corporate information gets lost in the noise. Unfortunately, simply adding an ESN to a traditional intranet doesn't solve this problem.

The Interactive Intranet is Comprehensive

The Best of Both Worlds

The similarity between ESNs and the original concept of the intranet as a network of resources hasn't been lost on forward-thinking individuals. Some have decided to augment existing, information-centric intranets with people-first ESNs, which are better suited as a complement, rather than an alternative, to traditional intranets.



Traditional Intranets

Good:

Corporate communications and services destinations

Personalized access based on individual role

Predefined structure is easy to browse

Bad:

One-way communication with no feedback loop

Complexity discourages decentralized governance

Predefined structure hampers business adaptability

Enterprise Social Networks

Good:

Conversations occur at all organizational levels

Personalized access based on individual choice

Emergent structure adapts to changing needs

Analytics and insights into workforce relationships

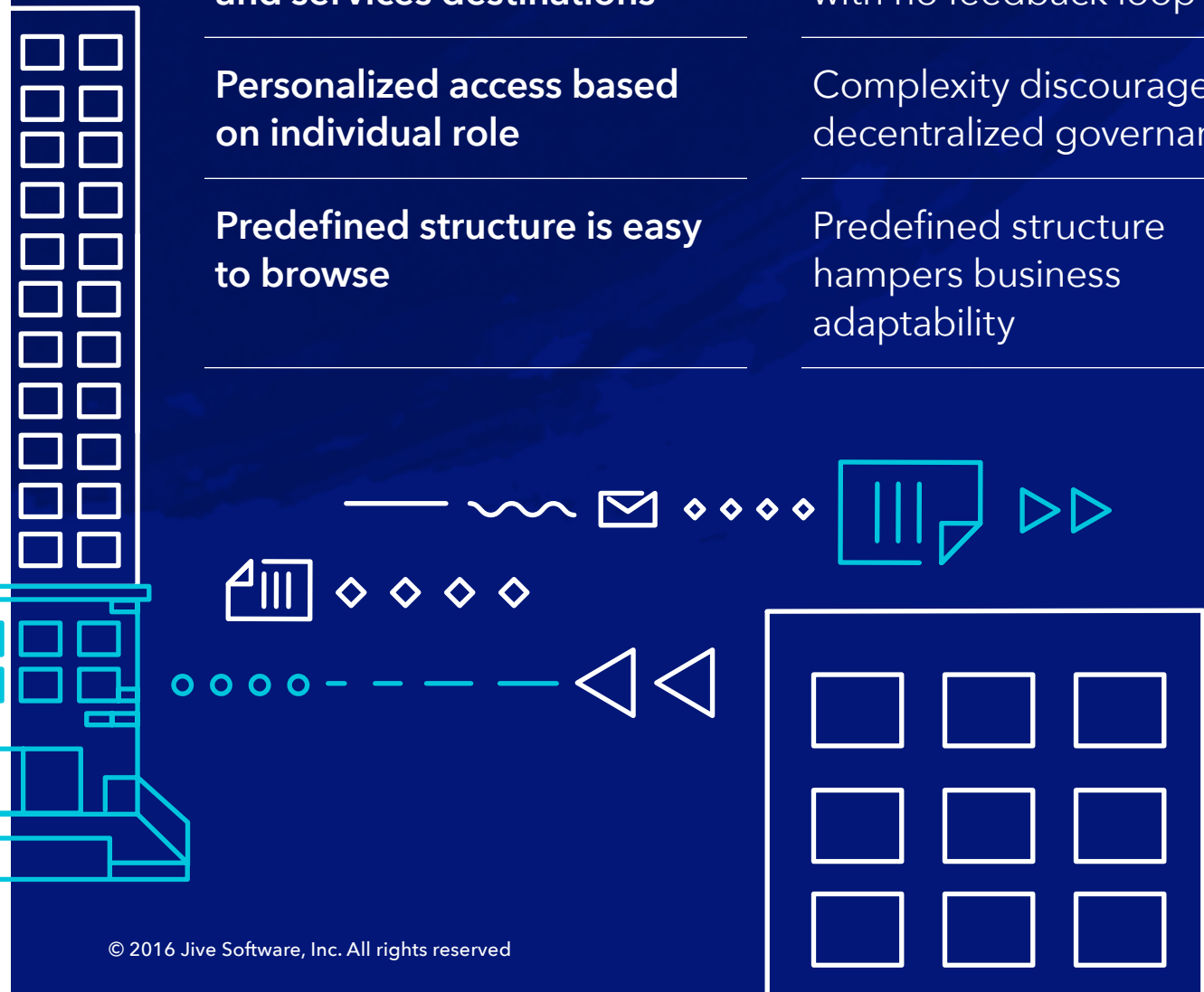
Bad:

Conversations happen outside of business processes

No way to personalize corporate communications and services

Emergent structure hampers content browsability

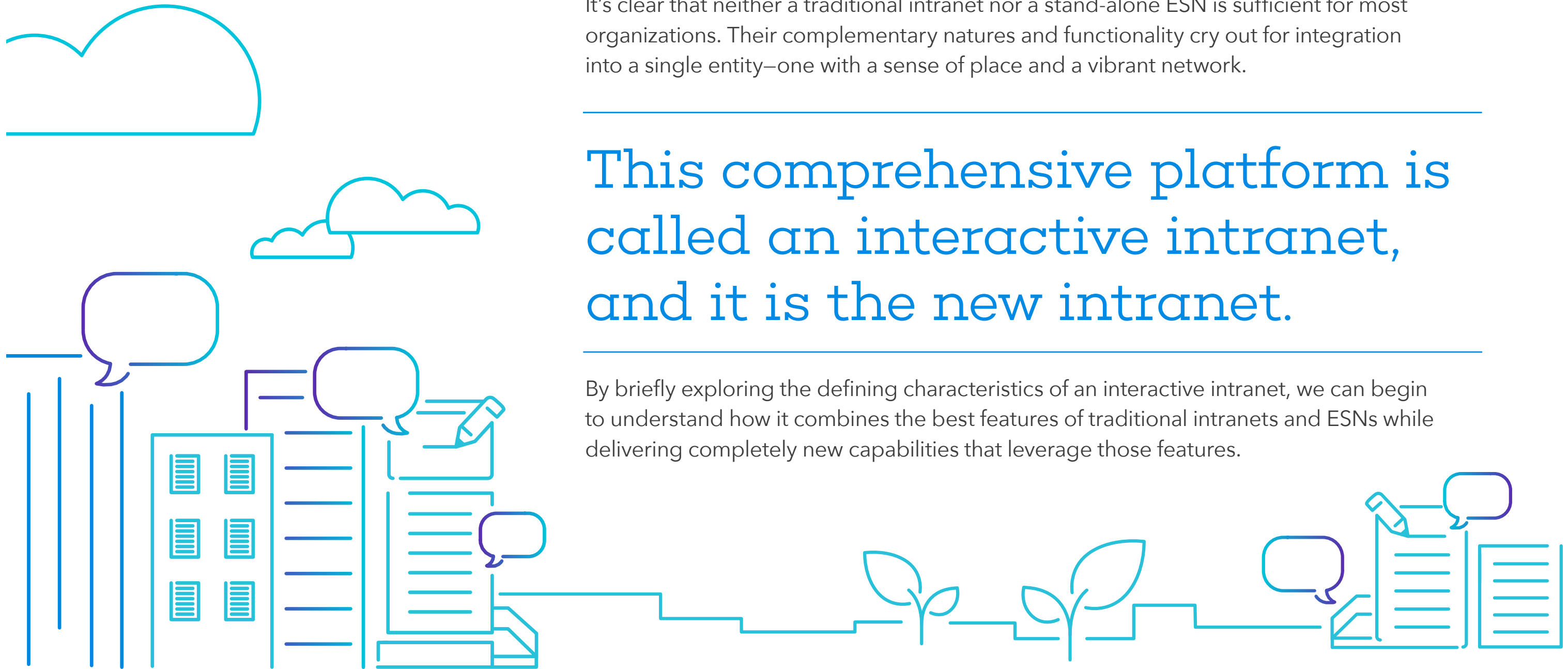
No analysis of people's relationships with content



It's clear that neither a traditional intranet nor a stand-alone ESN is sufficient for most organizations. Their complementary natures and functionality cry out for integration into a single entity—one with a sense of place and a vibrant network.

This comprehensive platform is called an interactive intranet, and it is the new intranet.

By briefly exploring the defining characteristics of an interactive intranet, we can begin to understand how it combines the best features of traditional intranets and ESNs while delivering completely new capabilities that leverage those features.



What Makes a Successful Interactive Intranet?

Supports Predefined and Emergent Structure

Some relationships and information organization may be seeded for employees in an interactive intranet. For example, when a new employee logs into an interactive intranet for the first time, they may already be connected to other department employees, as well as automatically subscribed to relevant groups and corporate news channels. After that, the system helps them discover other people and information based on their profiles and their interactions over time. These interactions, or social signals, play an increasing role in how the interactive intranet is personally structured for each individual.

While information can still be organized in a static structure and found via navigation elements, the interactive intranet also allows information to be indexed using predefined search terms. This is similar to how consumer search sites promote content

based on predefined search terms. This is especially useful for frequently searched-for corporate information, such as employee benefits information, IT knowledge base documents, and office location information.

Employees can also augment a predefined structure by adding tags to content, even if it's corporate information. This informal, dynamic method accommodates important changes that occur over time and helps other people in the network more quickly find what they need.

Supports Push and Pull of Information and Expertise

An interactive intranet lets employees pull information and expertise from people, content, places and other applications based on the context of what they're working on. It pushes information and expertise to individuals as well. The intranet makes this possible by analyzing a person's profile, network connections, recent activities and social signals gathered from other applications and systems. While often delivered via search results, this information can also be viewed using "smart" dashboards.

Supports Multiple Communication Patterns

An interactive intranet includes tools that enable both corporate communicators and individual employees to broadcast (one-to-many), narrowcast (one-to-targeted-groups) and communicate one-to-one. Communication may take place in real time or asynchronously. Similar to traditional intranet functionality, corporate communicators have options to structure and control their messages, while individuals can use ESN-like functionality to comment, share, like and bookmark official communications, as well as contribute their own communications.

Key Elements of an Interactive Intranet



Corporate destinations with official and user-generated content and conversations



Targeted, managed, two-way communication streams



Personalized access based on individual choice and role



Predefined navigation combined with user-generated structure



Whole network analytics: people, place, and content relationships

Chapter Two

What is an Interactive Intranet?

There are three activities that, when combined, make up an interactive intranet:



In order to create the most value, each activity must occur in sequence. For example, it's fruitless to communicate before making a connection. That would be like talking on a phone with no one on the other end, something that happens on far too many intranets today. Once a connection is made, meaningful communication can happen.

It's also impossible to successfully collaborate without first communicating effectively. If someone doesn't understand your idea or problem, he or she can't work with you to create a solution.

When all three activities occur, it creates the maximum value possible.

Very few business scenarios call for making connections without communication taking place as a result. Similarly, collaborating on an idea, solving a customer's problem, or improving operational efficiency clearly has far more value than merely talking without ever taking action.

So, how do these actions build upon one another to create value? Let's start at the beginning and discuss connections in an interactive intranet.

Connections: The Foundation of Interaction

Without connections, communication and collaboration can't happen. With an interactive intranet, it's possible to connect individuals, content, places and applications. The most common connections are people-to-people, and people-to-content



Connecting to People

In any organization, people are more than just "doers." They're also very important sources of information. A typical employee needs to search for information several times a day. Often, they turn to their colleagues first.

In large organizations, it's not possible for all employees to know each other, much less work together. If individuals aren't aware of others, they can't connect and share information. So helping people find each other and create relationships should be primary objectives of any large enterprise.



People spend nearly 20% of their time looking for and gathering information needed to do their jobs.

McKinsey Global Institute

The employee directory has historically been what people use to find others who can help, typically based on which business unit they're in and their role in the organization. With the introduction of employee profiles in enterprise social networks (ESNs), people could find each other based on the knowledge they've shared.



Employees save 35% of search time using an interactive intranet.

McKinsey Global Institute

Many companies have already combined traditional employee directories with ESN profiles and have given people the ability to add information about their work activities, experiences and interests. While this has yielded a more useful and valuable picture of each employee, it requires that each person regularly update his or her profile, an activity most will not undertake.

The richest profiles include information contributed by others (subject to data privacy laws). While peer endorsements are the most direct way to accomplish this, an interactive intranet is unique in that it analyzes and presents within an employee's profile their most valuable activities as determined by others. For example, an individual's profile might display their most viewed, liked or discussed content, their most helpful responses to questions,

and the badges or rewards others have bestowed on them for specific actions.

In addition to people pulling information, the interactive intranet can also push information directly to a person through proactive recommendations based on her recent activities. Real-time analytics assess what a person is working on and then connect her to colleagues and places that can help.



Ensure that employee profiles adhere to data privacy laws, and can integrate with key employee information systems with little or no cost.



Companies with interactive intranets enjoy a 20% increase in employee retention rates.

McKinsey Global Institute



Interactive intranets automatically display on employee profiles their most valuable activities, content, badges and endorsements, as determined by others.



Interactive intranets proactively recommend people, places and content in the context of recent work activities.

Connecting to Content

People are the richest source of information, but they aren't always known to each other or available to help when needed. The next best information source is the content they've created, contributed to and shared.

Content comes in many forms. Most often, people think of text-based documents and slide presentations. However, valuable content is also created and stored in tools other than office productivity suites, including system records, corporate web pages, blogs, wikis and libraries of bookmarked web pages. Audio and video files offer far richer ways to capture and experience content, and are often used by corporate communicators to create more engaging messages. An interactive intranet integrates all of these content types and makes them easily accessible.



Interactive intranets integrate multiple content types and sources and make them easily accessible to end-users.

While people find helpful information in documents and other types of content, they often need insight from others to get the most value from it. Interactive intranets enable a person to easily connect to content authors and contributors. Once a new connection is made, knowledge—not just information—can be shared between those individuals, and with their other connections, creating a powerful network effect.



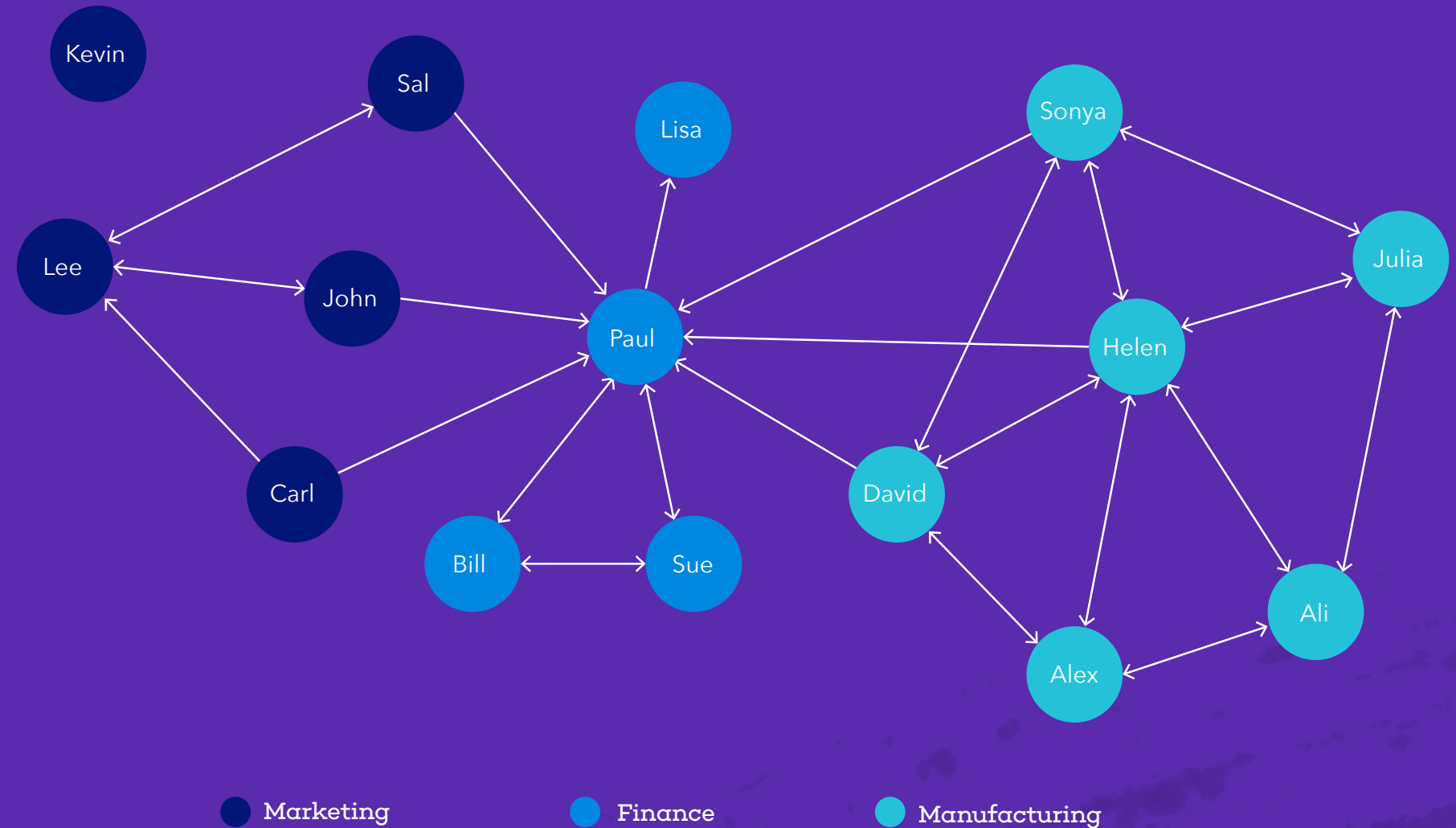
Assess which content applications a core interactive intranet package can replace. These may include wikis, blogs, knowledge bases, shared drives, and document management systems.

Searching for content is almost always done in the context of a current work activity. For people to find and retrieve relevant content, the intranet must integrate with the systems, document repositories, knowledge bases, wikis, blogs and other content stores scattered around the enterprise.

The Power of Connection: The Network Effect

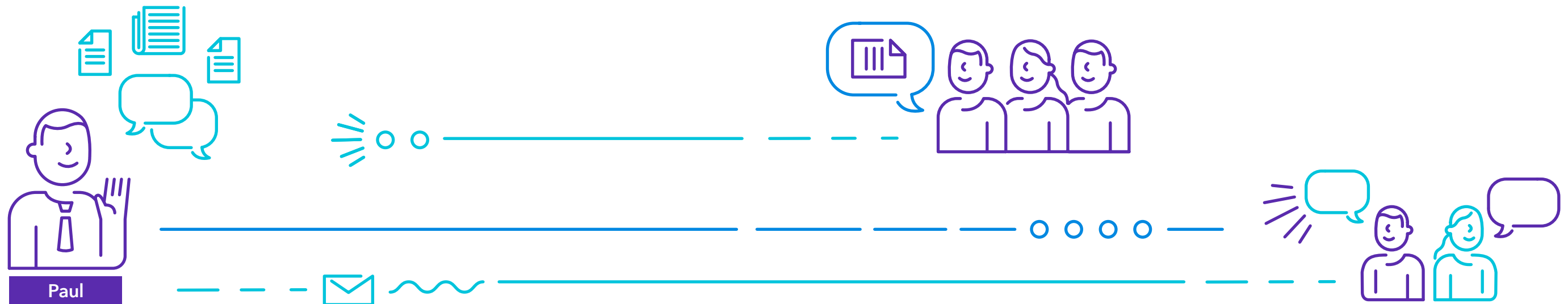
Interactive intranets are networks of individuals, content, places and applications. And the larger and more active they are, the more valuable they become. When more resources are connected, the rest of the network benefits from the activities of each resource. This is the basis for the network effect.

Researchers examine the network effect in companies using techniques collectively known as Organizational Network Analysis (ONA). ONA reveals the connections between individuals in a company and discovers which people have the greatest influence over the flow of information.



Sample Organizational Network Analysis Visualization (Image inspiration: Rob Cross)

A great illustration of this network effect occurring in an interactive intranet can be seen with corporate messages. When a Corporate Communications professional posts an important news article, they can leverage the network effect by ensuring well connected, influential employees engage with the information. As depicted in the diagram on the previous page, asking Paul—who's influential in three departments—to comment on, like or share the article would increase the article's reach. This can be verified by using the intranet's analytics capabilities to track the new article's reach throughout its targeted audience.



Interactive intranets analyze a content item's reach, sentiment and influencers.

On an interactive intranet, network effects come into play in other ways. For example, when an employee follows a colleague, they've created a single connection. If that employee subscribes to a team site, community group or corporate portal, they've informally connected with anyone who participates in that place. By making a single connection with the place, they've exponentially magnified the number of intranet resources (in this case, the place's participants, its content, and the information being exchanged) that are available to them.

Chapter Three

How Communication Increases The Value of Connections

As mentioned earlier, when at least two information sources connect—individuals, content, places and applications—they create value, most commonly by the reduction in time spent seeking information. These networked resources can create even greater value by using that connection to communicate.



Interpersonal Communication

Since their earliest days, intranets have been used to communicate information to employees. Interactive intranets continue that practice of pushing communications to others. CXOs, Corporate Communications, HR and other departmental and functional leaders can broadcast important information company-wide or to select groups of employees.

The difference is that an interactive intranet also allows people to converse with the communicator. This bi-directional conversation helps to accelerate employees' understanding and buy-in and gives the communicator deeper insights into how the message is received.



Interactive intranets include two-way corporate communication features and the ability to manage the conversations that arise.

When it comes to interactive intranets, the communications starting point has changed. The ability to push a communication is no longer just for senior executives and department leaders. Now, individual employees can communicate with anyone else on the intranet. Employees can even initiate conversations with senior executives and others that formerly only broadcast information to them, or didn't communicate at all.

In addition to pushing communications, employees can also pull communications from their network when they need it. One of the most basic, yet powerful, ways of doing this is by asking a question on the intranet.

An employee can direct questions to individuals, content contributors, or in a place and receive one or more responses. Often, those receiving the question are known by the questioner, and pre-qualified as a helpful resource. For example, they may turn to a team member for an answer, or contact a corporate support resource, such as the IT help desk or HR benefits team.

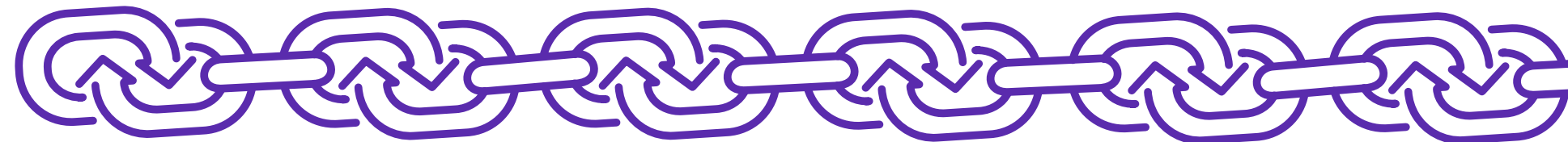


Interactive intranets include robust Q&A features. People can mark responses as correct or helpful, and easily find questions that have already been answered.



A global pharmaceutical company saved \$3.6M in outsourced IT help desk costs using Q&A features in an interactive intranet.

Jive Software, "The Digital Business Path Forward"



When an employee isn't sure whom to ask, the ability to find and connect with the right person is a prerequisite to getting help. Or is it? An even more powerful capability is for an individual to pose an open question and crowdsource responses from anyone on the intranet. Either way, not knowing who to ask is no longer an obstacle to getting an answer on an interactive intranet.

The real power of this pull communication is that employees receive information they need *right now*, in the context of whatever they're working on. Contrast this with the push model, which broadcasts information out of context with what someone is working on, forcing them to ignore it, or retrieve and apply the information later, when it's actually relevant and needed. A frequent comment made by those who've deployed an interactive intranet is that the ability to get help right now was unanticipated or underappreciated until its impact on employee productivity became vividly and irrefutably obvious.



Businesses who use interactive intranets to collaborate report a 34% reduction in time needed to find information or expertise.

Jive Software, "How Social Business Pays Off"

There are also powerful network effects created by these conversations, whether they're between corporate communicators and employees, or peers asking and answering questions. Having "out loud" conversations for employees to discover and join multiplies the information exchange value.



Content-to-People Communication

In an interactive intranet, communication isn't limited to people. Content can also communicate with people.

Notifications are the primary form of content-to-person communication. They provide an alert that something has happened to a content item or an entire content source.

Notifications usually include a link to the item and may include a summary of changes. They're usually sent as an email message, but can be issued as status updates that appear in activity streams, or even as text messages.



Ensure at least one component in your interactive intranet can aggregate and present notifications from multiple applications, so employees can personalize how they receive them to fit their workstyle.

Notifications increase awareness of changes to important information that employees need to do their jobs. Because of this, notifications are an anchor functionality that drives traffic to an interactive intranet. In some cases, they let people take action, such as approving a blog post publication. The dynamic nature of notifications and their importance to daily work make the intranet more interactive and mission critical.



Real-time automation of critical content, projects and process updates eliminate the time employees spend communicating status to each other in meetings by as much as 25%.

McKinsey Global Institute

Of course, several applications offer notifications. Document repositories send notifications whenever new versions are uploaded. Project management tools send notifications when a task or milestone is achieved or overdue. Other enterprise tools, such as CRM and ERP systems, send notifications when their content changes. For example, when a salesperson updates one or more fields in a CRM opportunity record, it can send a notification to their manager.

In this case, the real power of an interactive intranet lies in its ability to integrate with all of these content items and repositories—notifications are handled more intelligently and become more manageable over receiving them from separate sources, via email. Individuals and groups can decide which types of notifications to receive, from which integrated tool or system.

To extend the previous example, a sales team can configure their opportunity pursuit group to display notifications relevant to the opportunity. These might include update notifications from the opportunity record in a CRM system; comment notifications from documents shared with a prospect in an externally facing file share application; and task completion notifications from a task management system. Anyone who's connected to this group will be able to view and interact with these content-to-people communications in the context of the specific business process and team.



Ensure your interactive intranet includes easy-to-configure user experiences and integrations for both mobile and desktop users, and don't require lengthy custom development projects.



A global financial services firm reduced third-party development costs by 80% after replacing their outdated intranet technologies with an interactive intranet solution.

Jive Software

Content-to-Content Communication

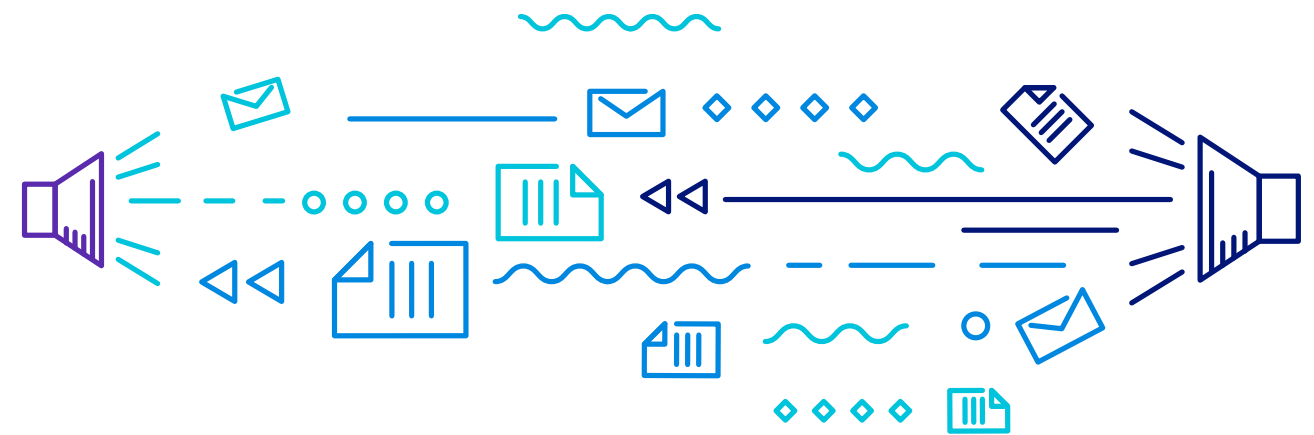
A piece of content may also be connected to and communicate with another piece of content. A common example: a spreadsheet linked to an older, existing spreadsheet. If the latter is updated, the newer spreadsheet automatically changes to include the new data.

In an interactive intranet, a content-to-content communication example is the syndication of blog or wiki posts. When a new post is published in one area, it may also automatically appear in one or more additional areas, either in full or summary form.

A more sophisticated example involves integration with office productivity suites. As IT professionals, for example, work separately or simultaneously on a knowledge base document in an office productivity app, all updates automatically appear in the IT Self-Service area in the intranet.

These types of content-to-content communications are important because they automate the flow of information within an organization. They help to eliminate the static, stale content that drags on the use of traditional intranets. Making connections between content items also dynamically creates a more structured information architecture that is essentially missing in ESNs.

The interactive intranet simultaneously provides the best of both types of information networks—some structure of traditional intranets that aids in the discovery of content, and the dynamic flow of ESNs.



Communication Capabilities of Interactive Intranets

Interactive intranets are comprised of multiple technologies that connect individuals, content, places and applications into a single, virtual system. Most organizations have procured the base of this virtual system as part of a fairly comprehensive package of intranet software or services. They then integrate other applications—especially ones used to communicate—into the base system to provide employees a full complement of capabilities.

One result of using these communication features in an integrated way is improved alignment of individuals, teams, departments and whole business units toward achieving organizational goals and objectives. The more people converse, the better they understand what each other is working on and how their own work output affects others, as well as the corporate mission.



Only 7% of employees today fully understand their company's business strategies and what's expected of them.

R. Kaplan and D. Norton



Businesses who use interactive intranets to align and inform employees have reported an average 15% increase in productivity.

Jive Software, "How Social Business Pays Off"



4 Purposes of Communication in an Interactive Intranet

Whether part of a base intranet package or an integrated application, the communications capabilities of an interactive intranet serve four business purposes. But no single capability adequately enables all four of the communication purposes. In fact, no one capability enables more than two purposes. Integration is key in order to support the full communication spectrum.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

NOTIFICATIONS

CONVERSATIONS

ASK A QUESTION

Asynchronous Communication Capabilities

Email	X	X		
Status Updates and Activity Streams		X		X
Blogs	X		X	
Threaded Discussion Forums			X	X

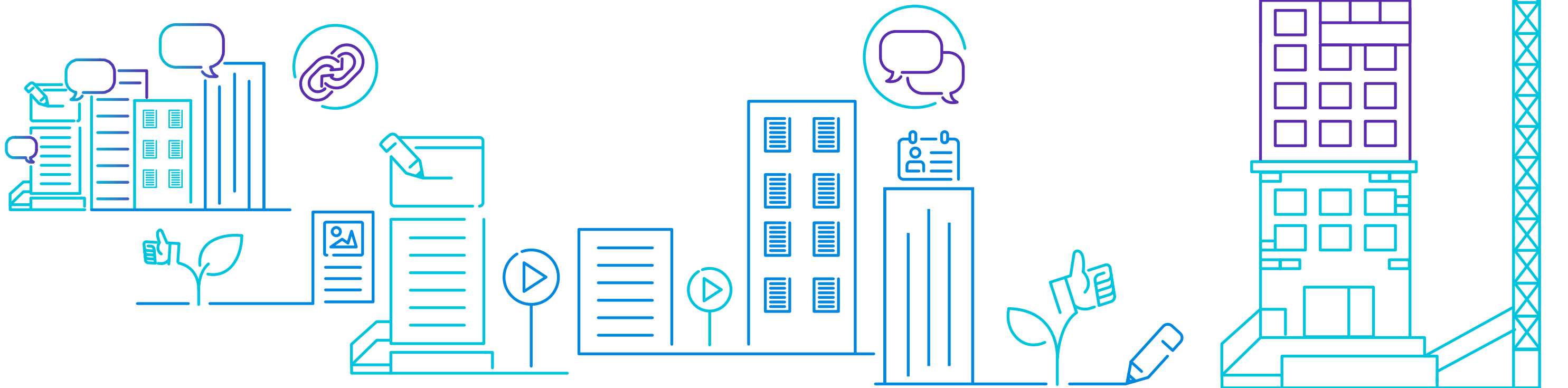
Synchronous Communication Capabilities

Presence and Instant Messaging (IM)			X	X
Enterprise Chat			X	X
Telephony			X	X
Web Conferencing	X			X

Chapter Four

Adding Collaboration Achieves Maximum Value

We've shown how connections and communications on an interactive intranet create business value. The third and final layer of incremental value is created when collaboration tools are included.



People Working With Each Other

People work together for two reasons. First, they jointly investigate and execute on new ideas and business opportunities. Second, they collectively solve problems and address routine operational issues. An interactive intranet supports both efforts.

When a new business opportunity arises, companies typically assign a team to assess its potential value, plan the strategy and tactics for exploiting it and then staff those efforts. In a large organization, this work can require input from many departments and people across multiple geographic locations. They must come together to find, create, share and debate relevant information. Ultimately, they must also make decisions and recommend or take actions.

When it comes to solving problems, collaboration is similar. Individuals must



The single largest contribution to innovation growth comes from collaboration. Any technology that helps people work better together is worth investing in.

often work with others across geographies and departments to identify potential solutions to problems they can't solve on their own. They can reach out to colleagues they know, but they may also need to find new people and content. Eventually, the person with the problem finds a resolution by working with others, applies it and moves forward with their work.

Now that we've identified why people collaborate, let's examine how they do it. While it could be argued that individuals collaborate by simply conversing, getting actual work done most often involves collaborating around content.



Businesses who use interactive intranets resolve problems faster and gain an average of 31% faster time-to-innovation.

Deloitte and MIT Sloan Management Review

People Collaborating Around Content

Content is the primary object around which employees communicate and collaborate, and they do it either asynchronously or in real time.

When people co-create content asynchronously, they review, discuss and edit at different times. There may even be a process by which others formally approve that content before it's published.

Employees also co-author, review, discuss and edit content in real time. That content is sometimes shared with others to get feedback. Eventually, the content is published and consumed by other employees, who may use it in their own work, or even add their experience or insights to it.



Businesses who have improved collaboration report a 10% median improvement in revenue growth.

McKinsey Global Institute

An interactive intranet enables both of these scenarios and all of the actions that they incorporate. Real-time and asynchronous collaboration are supported, as are structured and emergent patterns of working together.

The interactive intranet's ability to encompass a variety of collaborative work styles is what makes it a superior alternative to a traditional intranet or a stand-alone ESN. It combines the best collaboration aspects of both, and also integrates with other applications that help people work together more effectively and drive business growth.



7 Interactive Intranet Tools That Improve Collaboration

Because an interactive intranet combines the best of traditional intranets and ESNs, the range of tools it encompasses is broad and diverse. There are seven tools that should be included in an interactive intranet to improve collaboration.

The Interactive Internet

Tool:	Use:
Bookmarks Library	Snapshot, share and tag Web-based content
Idea Management	Share, develop, vote on and implement ideas
Wiki	Create, share, comment on, edit and approve content
File Sharing	Create, share, comment on and edit files and folders
Shared Calendar	View scheduled events and create meeting entries within team sites
Web Conferencing	Start, schedule, record and archive virtual real-time meetings
Task Management	Create, assign, schedule and monitor tasks

Integrating Asynchronous and Real-Time Collaboration Tools

Many organizations that have deployed an interactive intranet software package have also integrated it with their chosen office productivity suite. By nature, office productivity suites are siloed applications that only serve those who create the documents. Even the recent addition of being able to comment on documents within the most popular suites mostly serves the authors.

In order to fully leverage their network value, authors need to be able to easily share, discuss and build upon their documents with other individuals, teams, communities and other applications.



To support both asynchronous and real-time content collaboration, ensure your interactive intranet software package offers easy-to-configure integrations with your firm's chosen office productivity suite and web conferencing system.

Other than face-to-face meetings, the most often-used real-time collaboration tool is web conferencing. Usually integrated with calendaring applications, many organizations have also integrated web conferencing tools with their interactive intranet so individuals and teams can more easily schedule and invite others from within their team's workgroup, and more easily share the meeting's outcome with their network.

Chapter Five

Why Businesses Need an Interactive Intranet

Now that we've fully examined how an interactive intranet enables an organization to connect, communicate and collaborate to achieve maximum value, we'll highlight the benefits that it can deliver for IT leaders and HR executives.

Business leaders have many reasons to invest time, effort and budget into evolving their intranet. From reduced operational costs to higher overall performance, it's clear that implementing a more interactive intranet is worth it.

Benefits of an Interactive Intranet include:



Reduced operational costs



Increased organizational productivity



Improved customer satisfaction



More engaged employees



Higher overall performance

Costs are down. Productivity is up.

Reduced operational costs

Replacing multiple document content stores, web content management systems, corporate portal applications, and enterprise social networks (ESNs) can reduce hardware, storage, development, software licensing, maintenance and upgrade costs.

Enabling communications professionals and business owners to manage their own news channels and portal webpages can break the seemingly endless cycle of update requests that costs IT time and money.



A global services organization saved \$3.5 million in licensing and governance costs by replacing their portal technology with an interactive intranet.

Jive Software

Increased organizational productivity

Connecting individuals, content, places and applications means information can move quickly throughout the organization, ensuring more aligned and informed employees.

Integrating multiple tools through an interactive intranet makes collaboration more effective and efficient.



Businesses who use interactive intranets to align and inform employees have reported an average 15% increase in productivity.

Jive Software, "How Social Business Pays Off"

Improved customer satisfaction

Delivering a ready-to-go mobile, consumer-style user experience to employees increases their satisfaction with IT services.

Creating a compelling place where employees interact increases adoption, usage, and improves ROI.

Employees are more engaged. Performance is high.

Satisfied employees are more engaged in their work and with their colleagues. In fact, one commonly used measure of employee engagement is how frequently they interact with other employees. So, an intranet that improves interaction drives engagement—and engaged employees help drive innovation, growth and revenue.



Employee retention rates increase at least 20% in organizations that have deployed interactive intranets.

McKinsey Global Institute

Satisfied and engaged employees stick around. They can develop their career more quickly when using an interactive intranet by creating more connections and attaining deeper levels of sharable expertise. This leads to lower hiring and training costs, increased ability to help other employees and customers, and higher rates of productivity.



Organizations with an average of 9.3 engaged employees for every actively disengaged employee experienced 147% higher earnings per share compared with their competition.

Gallup



The Next Step

Right now, IT leaders are poised to lead their organization's digital-first initiative and drive more value than ever before. Implementing an interactive intranet can help IT leaders evolve from technology developers and owners into digital business enablers.

The next step is yours to make. Demonstrate how an interactive intranet will enable digital business better than your existing intranet. Build a realistic business case for stakeholders, and highlight the benefits for your IT leaders. Then, make it happen and lead your organization toward an interactive future.



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