

Intranet Buyer's Guide 2025

How to choose the best intranet for your organization



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Introduction

The company intranet has long been a staple for helping employees access critical resources and stay informed. But let's face it — a basic intranet isn't enough. Employees expect the same ease from work tools as the apps they use in their personal lives, whether they're in the office, remote, in the field or on the frontlines.

As businesses evolve, so must their intranets. The best platforms do more than deliver information. They foster seamless communication and collaboration, helping employees stay engaged, aligned and empowered to perform at their best. A well-designed intranet becomes the backbone of your team's productivity, creativity and growth.

On the flip side, a poorly designed intranet can wreak havoc on productivity and morale. When employees have to search endlessly for information or if the interface is clunky and outdated, frustration builds and productivity plummets.



The significant impact of intranets

Simplplr’s [State of the Intranet research](#) confirms the critical importance of a high-performing intranet. Of the 1,000 senior intranet program leaders surveyed, 95% of companies with effective intranets said it boosts productivity, and 94% reported a positive impact on revenue.

95% report improved employee productivity

94% report a positive impact on revenue

These platforms go beyond basic functionality — they support employees with targeted communications, personalized experiences and AI-driven tools that simplify work across devices and locations.

Imagine an intranet that not only connects people but also makes their workday smoother, more productive and more fulfilling. That’s the potential of a great platform.

Conversely, Simplplr’s research shows companies with subpar intranets are three times more likely to see diminished performance and higher disengagement. If your intranet isn’t working for your employees, it’s working against your business.

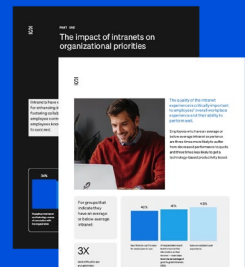
58% of organizations say a subpar intranet hurts profitability

43% see a direct impact on retention

SIMPLPLR RESEARCH

State of the Intranet and Future of Employee Technology

[Read the report](#)



How to choose the best intranet for your organization

The modern intranet has become a full-fledged employee experience (EX) platform that drives engagement, collaboration and innovation.

So how do you ensure you're picking the right one? This guide will walk you through the key criteria for selecting a modern intranet that not only meets but exceeds the expectations of your team.

From unlocking seamless collaboration to driving engagement and innovation, we'll show you how the right platform can transform the way your employees work — no matter where or how they do it.

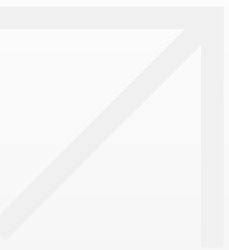
This guide will help you:

- **Build a strong business case:**
Make the case for a comprehensive EX platform with an intranet at its core.
- **Identify essential capabilities:**
Discover the features that make work more inclusive, engaging and frictionless for all employees.
- **Assess vendor commitment to your success:**
Evaluate how vendors plan to support your organization in maximizing platform usage and engagement.
- **Future-proof your technology choices:**
Learn how to choose a technology partner that can adapt to your organization's evolving needs.
- **Evaluate different approaches:**
Weigh the pros and cons of purpose-built solutions versus homegrown or suite-based options.

Develop the business case for your intranet

Many intranets today function as a basic hub for accessing key resources and internal communications. But organizations are increasingly recognizing the potential of a more comprehensive approach. A unified EX platform can streamline collaboration, foster community-building, enhance program engagement and much more.

As intranet platforms evolve, the potential return on investment (ROI) grows, making a compelling case for this transformation.



Outline key use cases

When making the business case for a unified EX platform with the intranet at its core, start by outlining use cases specific to your organization. Different companies need their intranets to support different needs, so it's important to tailor your approach to what matters most to your team. Consider how improvements in communication, engagement, knowledge sharing or collaboration can lead to a more connected and efficient workforce.

Capture baseline metrics

The next step is to gather baseline metrics, such as employee engagement rates, time spent on administrative tasks, or communication response times. These will serve as benchmarks for measuring the potential impact of the new platform. When outlining benefits, remember to include both **quantitative** and **qualitative** metrics. Some gains, like engagement rates, are easier to measure, while others — such as improved employee morale or enhanced executive visibility — are equally important, even if harder to quantify.

Consider downstream impacts

Be sure to factor in **downstream impacts** on broader business metrics like retention, productivity or customer satisfaction. Connect the dots between your platform and these bigger wins to strengthen your case. Even if these correlations are harder to prove, they add credibility to your argument and increase the likelihood of approval. And, of course, tailor your business case to the metrics and outcomes that matter most to your organization.

Keep in mind that a unified platform — unlike disparate point solutions — offers cumulative benefits. By consolidating and integrating multiple EX applications, you'll reduce administrative burdens while driving improvements across the board.

To help you get started, the table below outlines common intranet use cases and examples of potential improvements, providing a framework for building a compelling business case and measuring the success of your platform.

USE CASE	CAPABILITIES	BENEFITS
 <p>Internal communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver targeted communications and reduce digital noise • Track content engagement to optimize communications strategy • Seamlessly connect across multiple communication channels • Integrate notifications and reminders for critical and urgent updates • Streamline workflows for creating, approving and distributing content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase reach and saturation of critical updates • Accelerate delivery of urgent messages • Reduce time spent on content creation • Enhance overall communication clarity and alignment • Increase employees' trust and connection to leadership • Facilitate smoother change management processes
 <p>Employee engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create digital gathering spaces for teams and interest groups • Foster social collaboration through activity feeds, discussion forums and group chats • Provide interactive tools for feedback and participation • Facilitate virtual and hybrid events across dispersed teams • Enable employee recognition and incentives programs • Streamline feedback on employee satisfaction, needs and concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boost participation in employee events, programs and initiatives • Increase employee feedback rates • Reduce time to act on employee feedback • Foster community and belonging within the organization • Strengthen alignment around company values and culture • Improve engagement, morale and employer brand • Lower regrettable turnover, reduce recruiting and training costs, and minimize productivity gaps • Increase customer satisfaction and loyalty • Reduce inventory shrinkage
 <p>Knowledge management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a searchable repository for institutional resources and knowledge • Protect sensitive information with role-based access controls and security measures • Support employee contributions to knowledge bases • Automate content organization and version controls • Track content usage and engagement to optimize the knowledge base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease time spent searching for information • Reduce onboarding time for new employees • Increase usage of knowledge resources • Minimize duplicated work • Support a culture of continuous learning and growth • Foster greater organizational transparency • Improve decision-making, innovation and problem-solving • Boost employee engagement and customer satisfaction and loyalty

USE CASE

CAPABILITIES

BENEFITS



Employee productivity

- Centralize tools, resources and information needed for daily tasks
- Ensure remote access so employees can work from anywhere
- Facilitate easy access to knowledge bases, FAQs and training materials
- Enable real-time communication and collaboration among team members
- Optimize in-platform and integrated workflows and automate repetitive tasks

- Decrease search times for information
- Shorten onboarding time for new employees
- Reduce time spent on repetitive administrative tasks
- Reduce the number of repeat IT and HR tickets
- Accelerate project turnaround times
- Reduce digital friction in employee workdays
- Boost employee empowerment and motivation
- Enhance cross-team collaboration and reduce bottlenecks



Employee listening

- Collect real-time feedback through pulse surveys and other feedback channels
- Utilize passive listening analytics to surface trends and areas of concern
- Design tailored surveys to address specific topics
- Combine quantitative and qualitative feedback, including sentiment analysis
- Report and visualize data to highlight trends and response rates
- Embed feedback processes into regular workflows and communications

- Boost participation in feedback initiatives
- Reduce time to gather feedback
- Identify emerging trends and issues faster
- Foster a culture of trust and transparency
- Improve employee morale and engagement based on feedback
- Reduce software costs by consolidating point solutions



Recognition and rewards

- Offer a variety of recognition options (peer-to-peer, manager-led, etc.)
- Integrate tangible rewards programs
- Customize recognition programs to align with company values and culture
- Provide a centralized recognition hub for employees
- Monitor and analyze recognition trends and participation levels
- Allow employees to share recognition on social channels or internal forums

- Boost participation in recognition programs
- Drive greater utilization of rewards programs
- Foster a culture of appreciation and motivation
- Improve overall employee morale
- Strengthen relationships between employees and leadership
- Promote team collaboration
- Improve employee engagement scores
- Decrease regrettable turnover rates
- Reduce software costs by consolidating point solutions



EX tech consolidation

- Integrate multiple employee programs into one cohesive experience
- Offer a unified login experience with SSO
- Combine data from various programs to provide comprehensive analytics and insights
- Provide customizable dashboards for users to prioritize tools most relevant to them
- Consolidate administrative processes and workflows

- Decrease administrative overhead
- Increase employee program visibility and participation
- Speed up data analysis and reporting
- Reduce software subscription costs
- Enhance overall user experience across EX programs
- Increase tool usage and employee satisfaction with technology

Evaluate intranet solutions

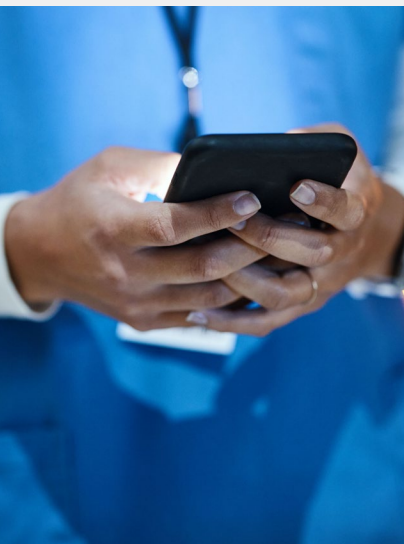
The intranet landscape is constantly evolving, with many vendors claiming to offer similar features like communication, social elements, collaboration and document management. It's crucial, however, to look beyond these standard capabilities and consider how your employees and leaders expect your platform to deliver value in the future.

Achieving the level of agility, engagement and adoption necessary to create real business impact requires a platform that balances simplicity and robust functionality.

This balance is especially important when considering the diverse needs of your workforce, which may include not only desk workers but also frontline and deskless employees who lack regular access to traditional communication tools. Supporting these workers requires solutions that offer seamless mobile access and real-time communication to ensure every employee feels connected and informed.

As you evaluate potential solutions, prioritize the capabilities that will drive success across your entire organization and all employee types.

The following attributes of best-in-class EX solutions will help you understand what to prioritize, why each feature matters, and the key capabilities to look for under each



Fully-integrated AI

02

AI has the potential to be transformative for intranet and EX platforms, but buyers need to be able to distinguish between hype and true value.

Poorly implemented AI often feels like a gimmick — offering flashy features that don't significantly impact usability or effectiveness. It might be restricted to surface-level tasks, such as basic chatbots or automatic replies, with little integration into the deeper workflows of the platform. In these cases, AI can feel disjointed, adding unnecessary complexity rather than streamlining processes.

In contrast, a best-in-class platform embeds AI into the core of its functionality. This kind of AI continuously learns from real-time data, adapting and improving how the platform supports users. It's not just about automating isolated tasks, but intelligently enhancing the entire system — simplifying workflows, improving search accuracy, predicting user needs, and delivering personalized experiences that drive meaningful outcomes across the organization. Fully integrated AI doesn't just improve the platform — it transforms how employees work, connect and engage with the organization.

Key capabilities:

- ▾ AI-driven personalization powered by a personalized knowledge graph
- ▾ Intelligent, behavior-based search with smart answers
- ▾ AI-enhanced analytics and insights, including theme and sentiment analysis
- ▾ Responsible AI practices
- ▾ Generative AI for content creation and categorization
- ▾ Automated content governance and moderation
- ▾ Purpose-built AI for employee experience



What is a personalized knowledge graph?

A personalized knowledge graph is a dynamic, AI-driven representation of information tailored to an individual's specific context, preferences and interactions within a system. The graph evolves over time as the user interacts with the platform, learning from their choices and adjusting the experience it delivers.

Robust analytics and insights

03

Robust analytics and insights are vital for maximizing the impact of an intranet platform. However, our research revealed that inadequate analytics and reporting capabilities significantly impair effective intranet administration.

Best-in-class solutions provide comprehensive, real-time data that helps organizations understand employee engagement, content effectiveness and overall platform usage across their entire workforce — whether they're engaging via desktop or mobile.

These insights can be filtered by specific cohorts so leaders can quickly pinpoint trends or issues as they arise. This level of insight — paired with powerful predictive and prescriptive analytics — allows decision-makers to anticipate employee needs, optimize strategies and workflows, and make data-driven decisions that align with business goals.

Key capabilities:

- ▾ Predictive and prescriptive analytics
 - ▾ People manager dashboards with AI-powered insights and recommendations
 - ▾ Granular insights at every level (user, team, content, site, app, campaign)
 - ▾ Real-time, interactive reporting dashboards with customizable filters (segment, department, location, user category)
- ▾ Comprehensive usage and engagement metrics across desktop and mobile
 - ▾ Comprehensive content performance metrics across desktop and mobile
 - ▾ AI-powered sentiment and theme analysis
 - ▾ Powerful employee survey tools
 - ▾ Integration with external data sources

User-centric design

04

An intuitive, well-designed user interface is key to ensuring an intranet platform is widely adopted and used effectively across an organization. In fact, 70% of our research respondents cite ease of use as the most important characteristic of a great intranet.

When employees can easily navigate and find what they need, engagement and productivity naturally rise. Conversely, poor user interface and broken search are among the top reasons for intranet failure.

70% cite ease of use as most important intranet characteristic

A well-designed platform simplifies the experience for all users, regardless of their technical expertise, while offering flexibility for personal preferences across desktop and mobile. Instead of requiring users to seek it out, the platform should seamlessly integrate into their preferred devices and workflows — with an intuitive UI that cuts through information overload and delivers the best user experience.

Key capabilities:

- Intuitive navigation and consumer-grade experience
- Powerful, intelligent search with personalized results and smart answers
- Easy accessibility via employees' preferred devices (desktop, mobile, tablet)
- Personalization based on user role, preferences and behaviors
- Customizable user dashboards and interface
- Notification management and push notifications
- App localization

Distributed content and platform administration

05

Distributed content and platform administration are essential for fostering agility and responsiveness in an organization. An overly centralized approach often creates bottlenecks, slowing down content creation and decision-making.

By enabling more employees to contribute content and monitor metrics within their specific domains, organizations can become more nimble and innovative.

Best-in-class platforms provide the structure needed to empower teams while maintaining control over access, quality and compliance.

Key capabilities:

- ▾ Role-based administration (distinct roles with specific access and privileges across the platform)
- ▾ Decentralized group and team spaces with structured autonomy (customizable templates, guided governance)
- ▾ Always-on, AI-supported content moderation
- ▾ Democratized metrics dashboards with granular insights into community health and engagement
- ▾ Automated content governance
- ▾ Streamlined processes for content creation, review and publication
- ▾ User-friendly content creation and editing tools (WYSIWYG editor, drag-and-drop design, generative AI writing assistance, rich multimedia support)
- ▾ User-friendly campaign management tools (asset, audience, analytics management; digital read receipts)

Configurability and extensibility

06

More than a quarter of organizations we surveyed said IT dependency created significant barriers to intranet success.

26% cited overreliance on IT

22% cited insufficient IT resources

An ideal intranet platform should deliver value right out of the box. It should enable nontechnical users to customize features, layouts and functionalities through low-code or no-code options, making the platform accessible and easy to adapt.

At the same time, best-in-class intranet solutions offer extensibility for advanced use cases or customizations, ensuring the platform can meet organizations' unique needs. This combination of user-friendly configurability and robust extensibility ensures organizations can quickly implement new initiatives and adapt the platform as needs evolve.

Key capabilities:

- ▾ Point-and-click configuration of features and layouts
- ▾ Pre-built integrations with essential systems and applications
- ▾ Ability to view external data (e.g., inboxes, tickets) directly within the intranet
- ▾ Ability to transact with external applications without leaving the intranet
- ▾ Open architecture with APIs and SDKs
- ▾ Low-code or no-code development tools
- ▾ Modular architecture
- ▾ Pre-built templates with flexibility for custom development

Enterprise-grade platform assurance

07

An enterprise-grade intranet platform must meet rigorous standards for security, governance, access control and accessibility. While many intranet solutions providers claim to meet these standards, they do so at varying levels of diligence.

A best-in-class solution guarantees robust security measures, including encryption, secure authentication and regular vulnerability assessments, alongside accessibility evaluations like [Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#) to ensure conformance with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) standards.

Effective governance frameworks should establish clear policies for content management and compliance. Buyers should feel empowered to ask for a peek behind the curtain to understand how these assurances are implemented.

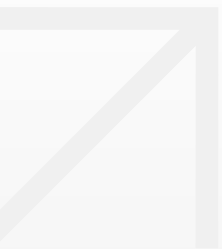
Key capabilities:

- SSO integration supporting robust authentication methods (e.g., MFA) and centralized identity and access management (IAM)
- Role-based access control (RBAC) with granular permissions
- Access for frontline workers without email
- Compliance support for GDPR and relevant industry regulations
- Regular security audits and penetration testing
- Accessibility conformance (VPAT for WCAG 2.2 AA)
- Security and privacy certifications (ISO 27001, ISO 27701, SOC 2)
- Data residency and region-specific hosting
- Performance scalability and uptime guarantees (99.9% uptime)
- Disaster recovery and business continuity planning

When these seven attributes come together in a single platform, organizations can effectively engage and support each employee in the way they need — at scale. This comprehensive approach not only enhances individual experiences but also drives overall business success.

Assess vendor commitment to your success

B2B technology solutions never exist in a vacuum. Even the most advanced platforms can underperform if there's a gap between their technical capabilities and how they are implemented and used. This disconnect can be the difference between rapid success and delayed or diminished returns.



Here are 10 questions to ask vendors about deployment, implementation and ongoing support:

- 1 ? What is the typical process and timeline for deployment and implementation of your platform?
- 2 ? How quickly can we expect to see value from the platform after implementation?
- 3 ? What ongoing support do you provide after the platform is live?
- 4 ? How quickly can we expect support response times during implementation and after go-live?
- 5 ? What training programs or materials do you offer for different user roles?
- 6 ? How often do you release updates or new features, and how do you communicate these changes?
- 7 ? Do you offer an early adopter program for upcoming releases?
- 8 ? How do you ensure the platform remains user-friendly as features are updated or added?
- 9 ? What measures do you have in place to ensure system performance and reliability?
- 10 ? What mechanisms do you have in place for gathering user feedback?

Future-proof your choice of technology partner

Choosing the right intranet or EX platform isn't just about what a vendor can offer today — it's about ensuring they'll continue to deliver value as your organization evolves. Beyond evaluating the technology and support, be sure to select a partner that will grow with you, stay innovative, and keep your platform responsive to changing needs, expectations and possibilities.

A future-proof partner will support you through immediate challenges and also push toward a broader vision of employee experience, ensuring your platform remains agile and innovative. Look for partners who demonstrate a commitment to continuous innovation and are equipped to help you navigate future trends.



Checklist for evaluating vendor staying power:

- Reputation and experience:**
Research the vendor's track record through customer references and verified user reviews. A strong history of success with other organizations is a good indicator of reliability.
- Stability and focus:**
Ensure the vendor is financially sound and stable and demonstrates a clear, long-term commitment to the development of their intranet or EX platform. Look for indicators such as years in business, consistent growth and investment in platform development.
- Visionary leadership and roadmap:**
Evaluate whether the vendor's leadership has a clear vision that aligns with your goals. Look for a track record of innovation and a forward-looking roadmap that addresses future trends in employee experience.
- Domain expertise:**
Assess the vendor's expertise in employee experience and intranet platforms. Do they demonstrate thought leadership? Check industry analyst assessments and reports, such as the Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ and The Forrester Wave™, as well as participation in EX-related forums and events.
- Continuous innovation and support:**
Ask about the vendor's history of rolling out new features and enhancements. A strong vendor should regularly introduce improvements and adapt to new technologies or challenges, ensuring your platform remains up-to-date.

Third-party vendor capabilities assessments:

The Forrester Wave™:
Intranet Platforms,
Q2 2024

[Get the report](#)

2023 Gartner® Magic
Quadrant™ for Intranet
Packaged Solutions

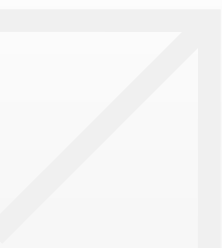
[Get the report](#)

G2 Report: Employee
Intranet Software,
Summer 2024

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Evaluate different approaches

When evaluating intranet solutions, organizations need to decide how to best address their specific needs. The main options include purchasing a purpose-built solution, building a custom intranet, or extending an existing productivity suite. Each approach has its own pros and cons, so making the right choice depends on carefully considering your organization's goals, resources and long-term plans.



Building a custom intranet

A custom intranet gives you full control and the ability to customize the platform to fit your organization's needs. However, this approach comes with significant trade-offs. Development and maintenance costs are high, and these projects often require extensive technical resources. Delays and cost overruns are common, adding more risk.

Before choosing this route, carefully consider what needs to be in place right away versus what can wait.

Assess the timeline, whether you have an interim solution to support employees, and ensure your organization has the necessary infrastructure and integration capabilities.

Lastly, factor in the full cost of building, scaling and maintaining the system over time — this often exceeds initial estimates.

Extending an existing productivity suite

An existing productivity suite can reduce costs and offer employees a familiar interface by building on your current infrastructure. While this approach can be appealing, it also has limitations.

Many productivity suites lack the full range of features found in a dedicated intranet, such as robust communication tools, collaboration spaces, document management and employee directories. Customizing the suite to fill these gaps can strain performance and introduce technical challenges.

It's important to assess how well the suite supports your organization's unique workflows and whether it integrates smoothly with other critical business systems. Additionally, consider the long-term impact — while this option may provide short-term benefits, there's a risk of vendor lock-in, limiting your future flexibility and growth.

Launching a ready-to-deploy intranet solution

For many organizations, a **purpose-built, ready-to-deploy intranet solution** strikes the best balance between benefits and drawbacks.

These solutions are specifically designed for internal communication, collaboration and engagement, and come with the following advantages:

- ▾ **Time and cost-effective:**
Pre-built solutions are typically faster to deploy and more cost-effective than custom development.
- ▾ **Regular updates:**
Vendors provide regular updates and improvements, ensuring your platform stays current.
- ▾ **Reduced risk:**
The risk of project delays or failures is lower with a pre-built solution.
- ▾ **Specialized features:**
Purpose-built solutions offer features tailored to internal communications, employee engagement and collaboration.
- ▾ **Scalability:**
Designed to grow with your organization, these solutions can scale easily.
- ▾ **Vendor support:**
Dedicated support and maintenance services are usually included, reducing the burden on your internal teams.

While custom builds and productivity suite extensions may offer some benefits, most organizations find that purpose-built intranet solutions provide the best balance of functionality, scalability and support, making them the most efficient and reliable option for long-term success.

What comes next

A well-designed intranet platform can transform how your organization communicates, collaborates, and engages. By streamlining internal communications, boosting employee engagement, improving collaboration, and integrating key programs like recognition and feedback, the right platform can greatly improve employee satisfaction, productivity and overall business outcomes.

The selection process starts with defining your use cases and building a solid business case around them. It's also crucial to understand the capabilities and support you'll need for long-term success. Choosing a platform — and a partner — that can scale with your organization and adapt to evolving employee needs will lay a strong foundation for years to come.

Ready to create a better digital workplace?

Contact us today to explore how the right technology can empower your employees to do their best work.

Contact us



About Simpplr

Who we are

Simpplr drives employee engagement and productivity through its comprehensive employee experience platform. Leveraging AI, Simpplr delivers personalized, frictionless digital experiences, empowering employees to perform their best work from anywhere.

For over a decade, Simpplr has been a trusted partner to 1,000+ leading brands, including AAA, Eurostar, Penske, SoFi, Moderna and Snowflake, creating transformative digital workplaces. Simpplr is headquartered in Silicon Valley, CA, with additional offices in the UK, Canada and India. We are backed by Norwest Venture Partners, Sapphire Ventures, Salesforce Ventures and Tola Capital.

Learn more at simpplr.com

Trusted by

