



DIGITAL

# 8 MUST HAVES FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTRANET

SYSTEMS  
UNIFICATION

ENGAGING CONTENT

PERSONALIZATION

CONNECTING  
EMPLOYEES

SEARCH AND FIND

MOBILITY

GOVERNANCE

CONTINUOUS  
IMPROVEMENT



**A successful and engaging intranet connects employees, reflects and promotes your organization's culture and essentially helps your employees get work done. When designing a Digital Workplace, design with your employees in mind.**

You begin with the best of intentions for your employees. To empower them to collaborate, communicate and manage projects with ease, you want to build and deploy an intranet solution. In the beginning, they will be engaged. They will now be able to access the documents they need. But with time, technology and our modern global economy drastically changes how today's worker gets their work done. That's why it's time to say goodbye to your "set it and forget it" intranet solutions of yesterday and embrace the future of an agile, ready-to-go digital workplace. And this guide will help you design a Digital Workplace with your employees in mind.

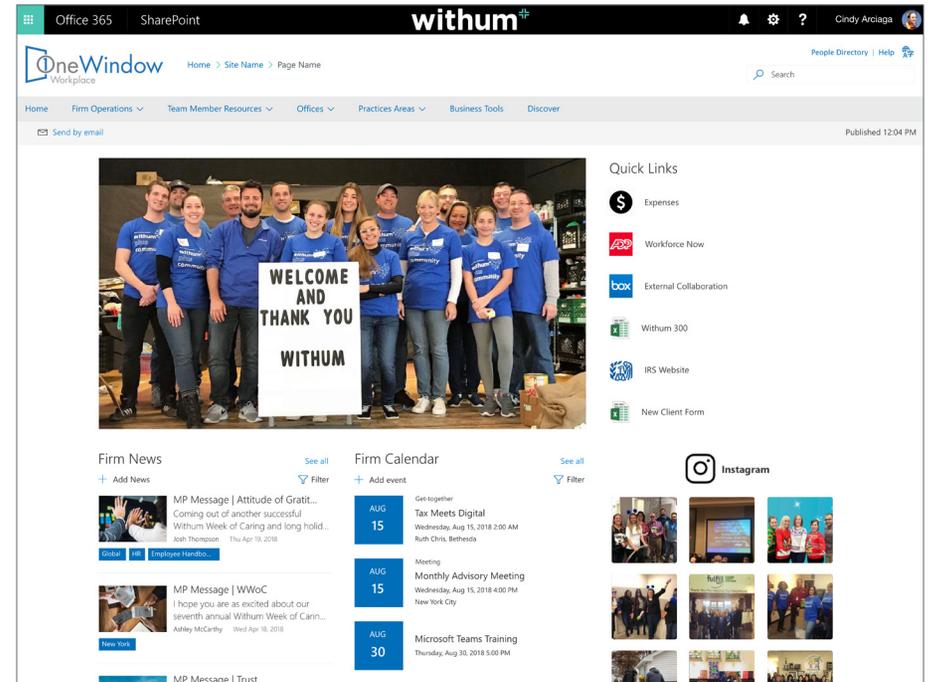
# 1. SYSTEMS UNIFICATION

**Changing the behavior of how information is produced, disseminated, and consumed is a key part of successful workplace adoption. The best digital workplaces act as a single, unified place where users can find corporate information.**

Microsoft 365 makes unification and personalization easy. Even if your intranet isn't an all-in-one system, it still needs to function as a one-stop-shop. Use a combination of Single Sign On and linking from the Intranet's navigation and home page to create consistent access to systems that employees want.

## Resources that help how work gets done:

- Operational systems
- Marketing systems
- Information technology
- Productivity & efficiency tools
- Forms



## Resources that support your employees:

- Personal employee resources
- Human resources
- Policies and procedures

## 2. ENGAGING CONTENT

To keep employees coming back and consistently using your Digital Workplace, you need captivating content to keep them engaged. But where is that content going to come from? The good news is that you probably have a ton of content already, it just wasn't distributed in a way that made sense.

### So, What Types of Content Are Engaging?

#### 1. Content that Represents Your Organization's Culture

Content that focuses on your organization's culture and community is some of the most engaging. Typically pushed out as central communications from corporate (or even top-level department heads), this content can be:

- Company news and announcements
- Company social events
- Community service involvement

Publishing this type of information brings people together, fosters a sense of community, shows the company's commitment to their mission and values, and more. This can be especially important in an organization with many different offices, where visiting the intranet might be the only way to feel close to the company as a whole. At Withum, we have a page called Withum Way, and each week the Managing Partner talks about one of our key cultural elements and describes a new example that brings it to life.

#### 2. Content Focused on Employee Recognition

Whether it's birthdays, anniversaries, promotions, or awards, if you make your intranet the only place to find recognition-type content, then your employees will stop and look. Even though this content may feel more like traditional "watercooler" talk, people enjoy it because it makes them feel connected to one another. Even better, this content automatically generates itself from details in your HR system, or values employees are allowed to enter.

## 3. PERSONALIZATION

### Build A Customized Home Page for Every User

Yes! — With Microsoft 365, everyone can have their own, personalized homepage, but you certainly don't have to create an individual page for every user (yikes!). However, custom pages are going to be necessary for some folks. In those cases, the metadata tied to each user in Active Directory can be used to serve up the most relevant information and really personalize their pages. When a page only has room for five pieces of news, then that news should be the most appropriate for that user.

### Personalization in Microsoft 365: It Remembers You

Have you ever searched online to buy an item and all of a sudden it pops up on every future website you visit? Similarly, but definitely more valuable, with Microsoft 365's login, no matter what device you log into you'll be presented with your content – Documents, pages, sites.

### Have Users Participate in Their Experience

The controlling factor for all personalization features is the metadata that's tied to each user. This data included fields with attributes like:

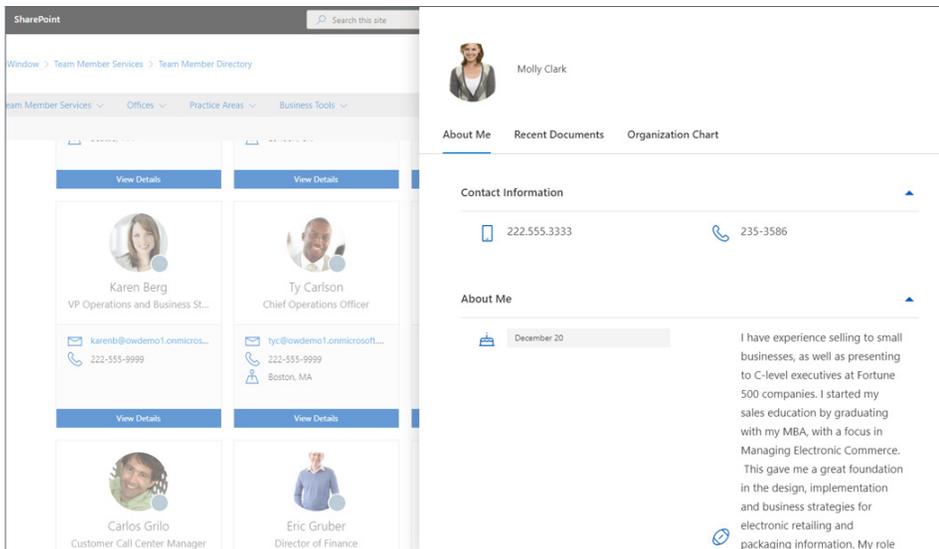
- Location
- Department
- Focus Area
- Interest (I like a topic)
- Skills (I have a capability)

With Microsoft's Active Directory, you can even create your own custom attributes as needed.

## 4. CONNECTING EMPLOYEES

### How Well Do You Know Your People?

Your company is only as good as the people in it. If you don't know who those people are, you can't effectively leverage their talents, and you can't cultivate a work environment that allows them to thrive. [Microsoft 365](#) has a ton of tools that can help your people get to know one another as they interact with the [Digital Workplace](#).



### Become Familiar With Fellow Employees

In the Microsoft suite, Profile Cards are one of the easiest ways employees can get to know one another. Anytime you click on someone's name, in virtually any application, you will be directed to their Profile Card. At a glance, it can provide all types of valuable information about a person like:

- Displaying Certifications/Credentials — If a project needs a team member with a specific credential, managers can easily find a person with the bandwidth and ability that's needed
- Connecting Employees in Different Countries — Is the talent at the local office all booked up? Find a person at a different office with similar skills and expertise

**Find Subject Matter Experts for Content Creation** — Is it a struggle to track down in-house experts for internal content creation? Quickly find and connect with all the people in a department/project who might be willing to lend a hand

**Meet People Where They Are With Conversation Based Interactions**

**Communication Through Content**

## 5. SEARCH & FIND

### Ensure There's No Outdated Information

First, the importance of content management needs to be stressed. For users, there's nothing worse than hopping into your company's brand new intranet, looking for something (like benefit policies), and finding outdated information. Trust is immediately lost and engagement suffers.

### Commercial vs. Enterprise vs. Intranet Search



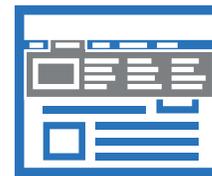
In order to make sure your workplace search is set up the right way, it's important to understand what types of results people expect to see.

**In a Commercial Search...** users are more willing to see results that they're not expecting because it's typically more of an exploratory search experience.

**In an Enterprise Search...** the system looks everywhere across the site and finds everything related to the query. Users know what they're looking for, but know that they're going to get some choices and may have to dig for it.

**In an Intranet Search...** limit the search results to intranet content only. Users know exactly what they're looking for, and they don't want to dig for it. They want the most relevant results as quickly as possible.

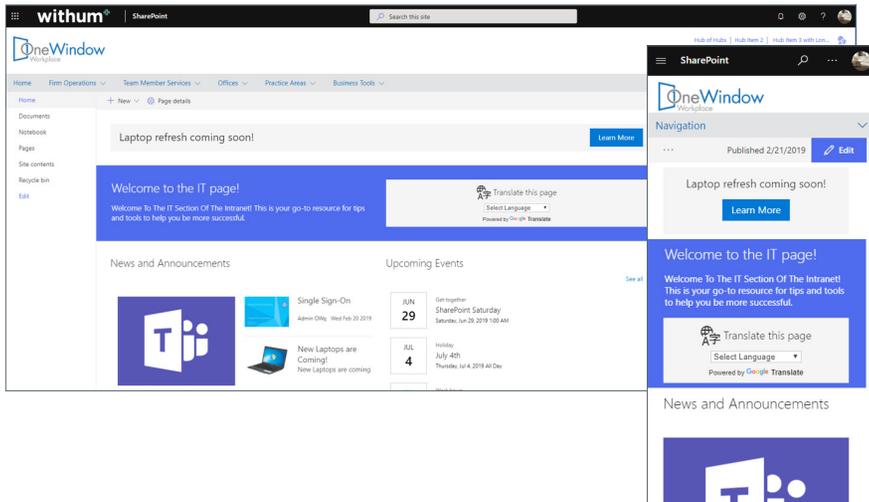
### Have an Ever Present Navigation



Even with "Google" becoming a commonly used verb, browsing through a traditional navigation is still a common practice. Your IT team can use the same metadata and tags they applied to the search bar experience, to "nest" pages and create a site hierarchy. By default, the navigation isn't persistent across Microsoft 365 applications, but it can, and definitely should be customized to be consistent.

## 6. MOBILITY

Having mobility is a step beyond being mobile. It's the consistent access to information across devices. It means giving employees the power to work on **any device, at any time, from any place.** If connecting employees is facilitating conversations wherever they prefer to communicate, then mobility is allowing content producers to create however they prefer to collaborate.



### Not Just Mobility, But Security

If you've built your intranet within the Microsoft 365 ecosystem, then you've got access to all their security features, which can be leveraged across desktop, mobile, and tablet devices. The same security and privacy policies that are created for the corporate laptop can be applied to an employee's personal smartphone, iPad, or other tablet device.

### Why Your Employees Need A Mobile Intranet

There's not enough time in the day. In the hustle and bustle of the work week, no one has the time to consume everything that's going on in their corporate intranet on the job. But, people still want to be able to stay in the know. People use phones for everything. Studies estimate that people check their phones almost 100 times a day on average, and they use it for countless things, whether it's keeping up on the news, interacting on Facebook and LinkedIn, or using one of the thousands of apps available to make people more productive. Mobile intranet users should be able to do the same things they can do on their desktop, like find an employee, locate area experts, discover and share content, stay up to date with corporate news, and participate in forum discussions.

## 7. GOVERNANCE

**Govern** = Decision Making Process to create rules to achieve your organization's goals

**Review** = How are the rules working to achieve your goal

**Repeat** = A set of rules created before launch changes over time

### Create Positive Guidance

There's so many features that your Information Technology team does not support and even some that they actively do not want people to use. However, the best guidance we've seen is the 10 things TO DO in an organization. Use SharePoint for X. Use Microsoft Teams for Y. Use OneDrive for U.

### Keep It Simple with Templates

You've positively guided your users to take advantage of the features that are supported in your organization. Guide them further by creating templates - documents, pages, sites, teams, plans - to help get work done and follow governance.



### Classify and Tag Everything

In Search & Find we talked about the importance of metadata. Here we want to note that it's not only applied to content, but templates too. This allows your organization to display intranet or collaborative spaces in many ways, allowing users to navigation, search and find where they are working.

## 8. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### The Two Sides to Continuous Improvement

When discussing the continual improvement of your intranet, it's important to look at it from two different perspectives; technical upgrades and innovations, and feedback from end users.



### Continually Improving with Technical Upgrades

Microsoft 365 is always releasing new upgrades and solutions with innovative features. While you might not always have a choice in what programs exist within your 365 environment, you do have a choice on whether or not to include them in your governance plan and roll them out for adoption. Upgrades and improvements don't have to be huge technical undertakings, they can be as simple as installing updates to an existing app, or launching a [chat bot](#). It can also be as complicated as shifting from manual processes to [Intelligent Process Automation](#). Technology has advanced tremendously over the last decade, so if you're not taking advantage of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning capabilities, you should know that your competitors are. Plus, studies show that people react positively to change. If you're always adding new things, people will want to come back and explore the new features.



### **Continually Improving through Gathering User Feedback**

The only way to keep people engaged with your digital workplace is to aggressively seek feedback, or even require it. This can not be stressed enough. Requesting feedback can't be a passive attempt, like an obscure help button you hope someone will interact with — it must be proactively sought. There are a hundred different ways to get feedback; lunch-and-learns, surveys, polls, and one-on-ones are just a few ways you can get an honest evaluation from end users. The best intranets have a built-in feedback application or review form that allows users to explain the intranet problems they're experiencing, and it allows them to attach screen-recording, images, videos, etc. to better explain the issue. Use analytics and reporting features to see how users interact with the intranet. Are there some features that they ignore? These features may be broken or difficult to use, making them prime candidates for updating.



**HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT USING EMPLOYEE-DRIVEN DESIGN TO DEVELOP YOUR DIGITAL WORKPLACE?**  
**CONTACT US ONLINE** TODAY AND WE'RE HAPPY TO HELP.