

Building a Modern Digital Workplace Intranet

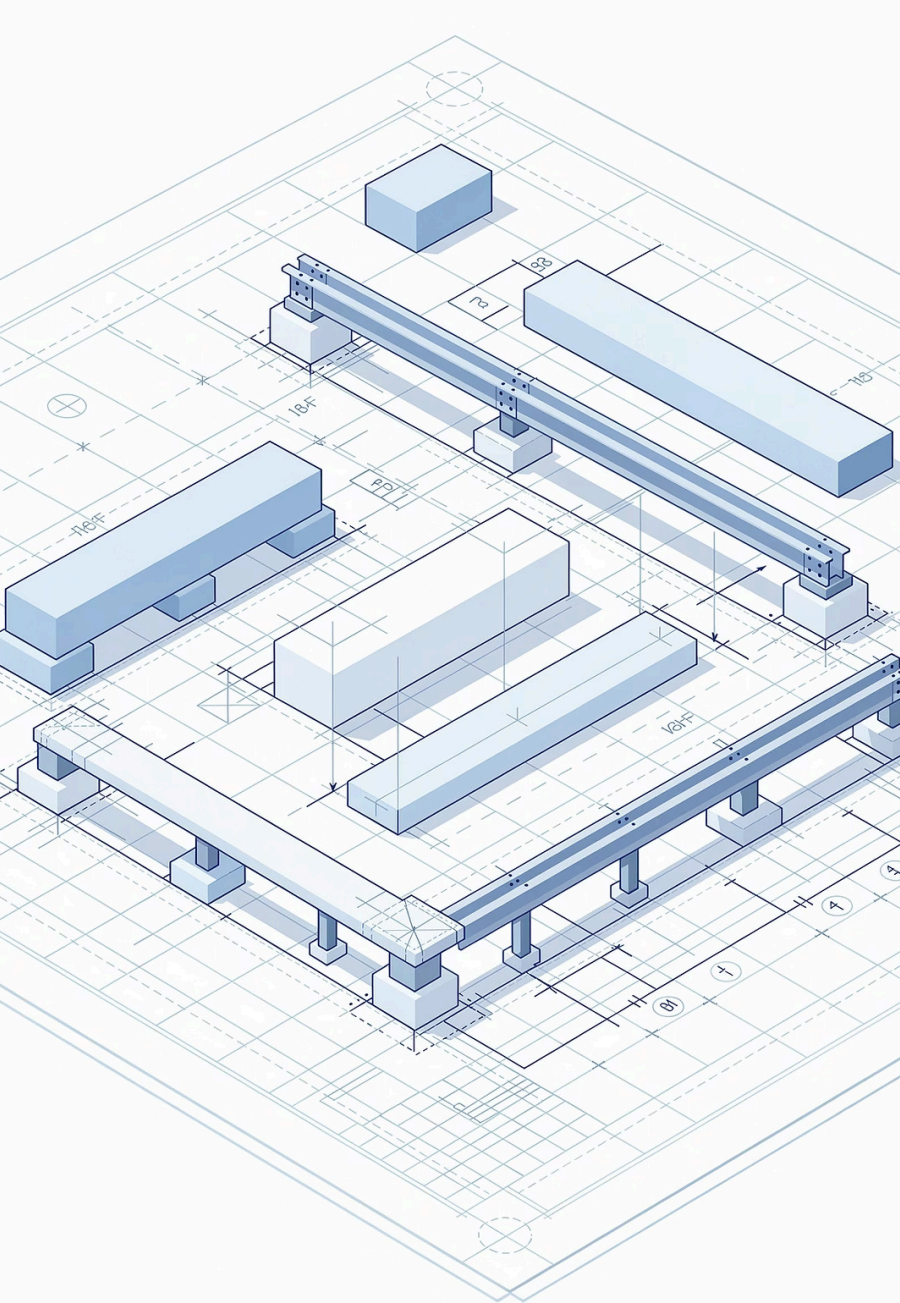
with Microsoft SharePoint 365





Building and Extending Your Corporate Intranet with SharePoint

A practical guide to creating a connected, intelligent digital workplace — from foundational setup to powerful integrations and future-ready capabilities.



CHAPTER 1

The Foundation: Your SharePoint Intranet

Understanding the core principles, components, and capabilities that make SharePoint the platform of choice for modern corporate intranets.

What is a Modern SharePoint Intranet?

A modern SharePoint intranet is far more than a static document repository. It is a **dynamic employee experience platform** designed around how people actually work — not merely how IT organises data. At its heart, it serves as the central hub for knowledge management, internal communication, and team collaboration.



Knowledge Management

Centralise policies, guides, and expertise so employees can find what they need, when they need it.



Communication Hub

Broadcast news, announcements, and leadership messages across the entire organisation with rich formatting.



Collaboration Platform

Connect teams around shared projects and goals with co-authoring, version control, and integrated workflows.

Why SharePoint for Your Intranet?

Seamless Microsoft 365 Integration

SharePoint works natively alongside Teams, Outlook, OneDrive, and the entire Microsoft 365 suite — eliminating friction and leveraging tools your employees already use daily.

User-Friendly Design

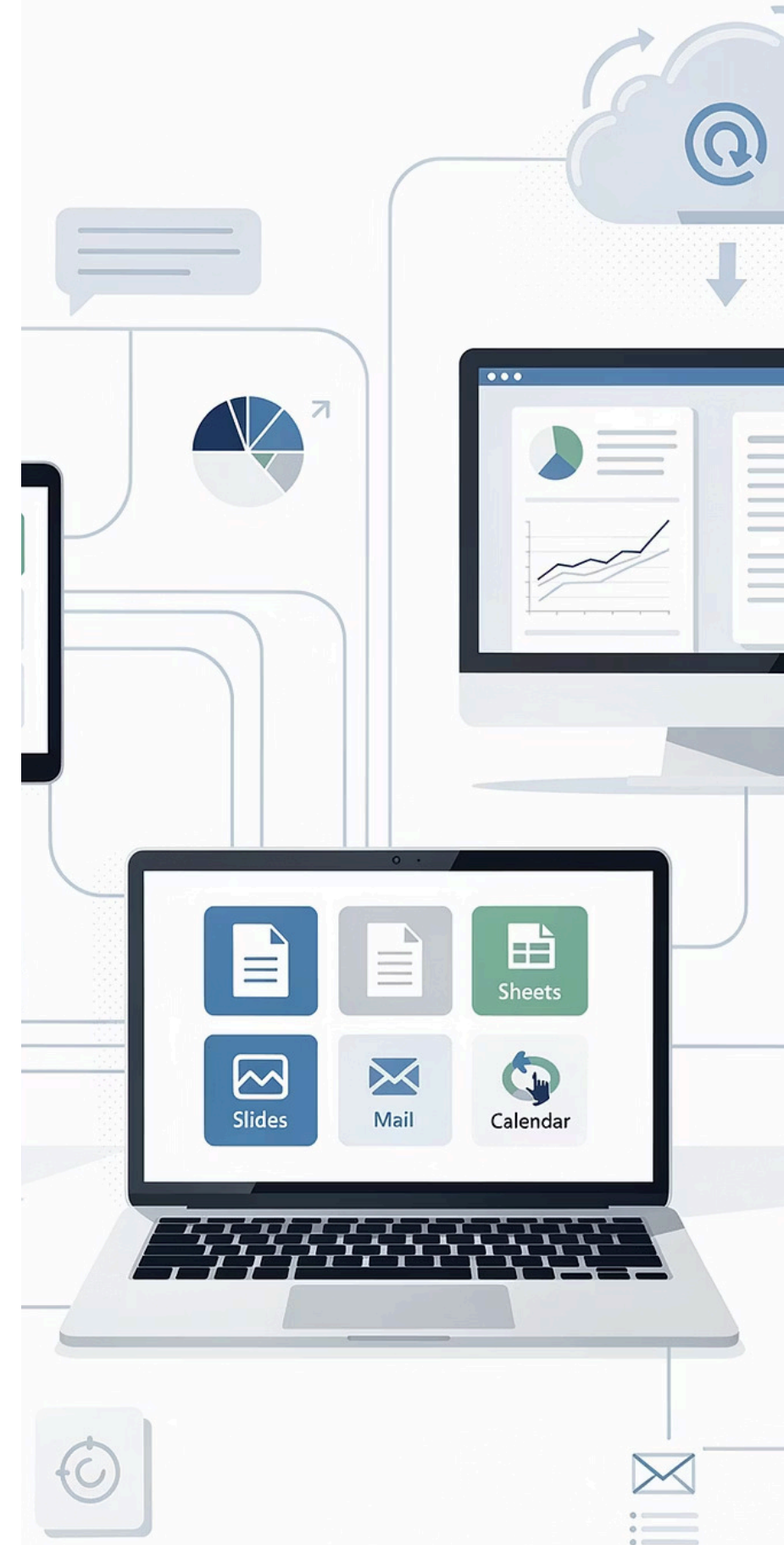
Modern web parts and page templates empower any employee — not just developers — to create functional, visually appealing, and fully responsive intranet pages.

Scalability & Enterprise Security

Built on the robust Microsoft 365 cloud backbone, SharePoint scales from small teams to global enterprises while maintaining enterprise-grade compliance and security controls.

Cost-Effective Investment

For organisations already licensed on Microsoft 365, SharePoint represents outstanding value — maximising your existing investment without additional per-seat costs.



Core Components of a SharePoint Intranet

A well-structured SharePoint intranet is built on three principal site types, each serving a distinct purpose within your digital workplace architecture.



Hub Sites

Organise content by business function — HR, IT, Finance, Legal — with consistent navigation, shared branding, and rolled-up news and search across associated sites.



Communication Sites

Visually rich, responsive pages designed for broadcasting news, announcements, policies, and resources to broad audiences across the organisation.



Team Sites

Dedicated collaboration workspaces for specific teams or projects, featuring document libraries, shared lists, and integrated Microsoft 365 tools like Planner and OneNote.

Key Web Parts for Engagement

Web parts are the building blocks of every SharePoint page. Choosing the right ones is critical to driving adoption and keeping employees engaged with your intranet.



News

Surface the latest announcements and stories with rich formatting, author attribution, and audience targeting.



Hero

Showcase key initiatives, campaigns, or important links with large, prominent visual tiles at the top of any page.



Quick Links

Provide fast, intuitive access to frequently used applications, tools, and resources — reducing time-to-task for employees.



People

Help employees easily find, connect with, and learn more about colleagues across the organisation.



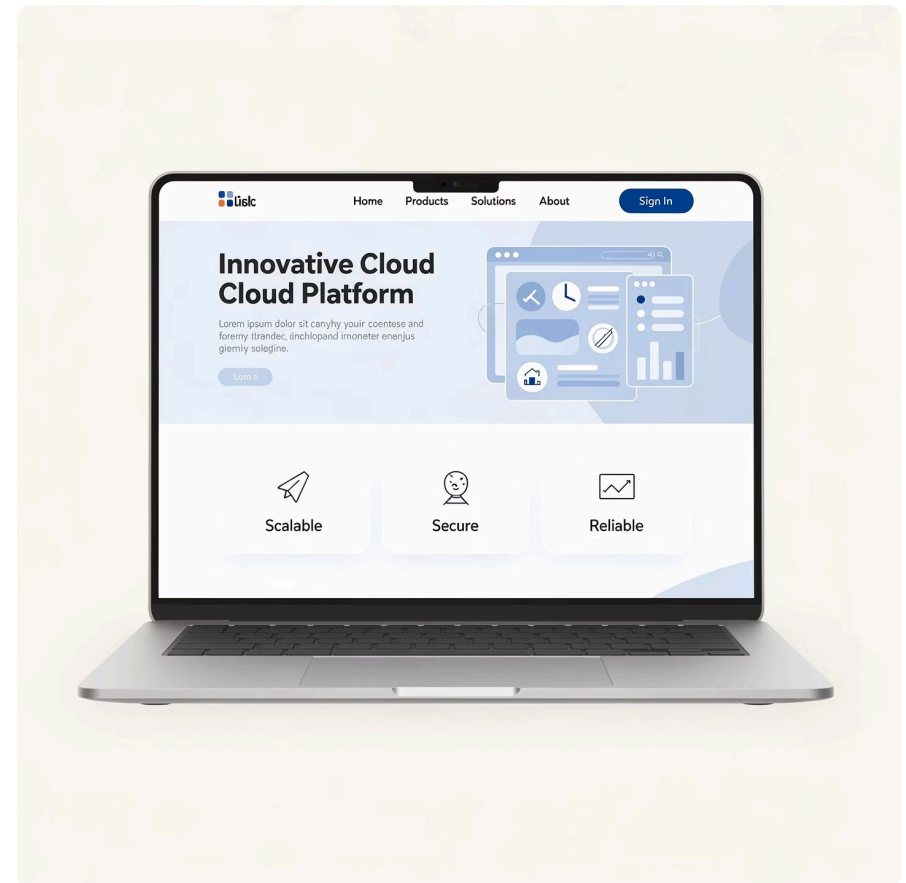
Events

Keep the workforce informed and engaged with upcoming town halls, training sessions, and organisational activities.

The Homepage: Your Digital Front Door

Your intranet homepage is the most strategically important page you will build. It functions simultaneously as a **news aggregator**, a **wayfinding hub**, and an employee task centre — the first thing thousands of people see every single working day.

A great homepage prioritises employee-centric content over IT structure, making it immediately obvious where to go and what to do. Audience targeting ensures that a Finance employee sees Finance news, while a Sales employee sees relevant Sales content — all from the same page, configured entirely out-of-the-box.



- 1 **Aggregate News & Announcements**
- 2 **Enable Fast Wayfinding**
- 3 **Target Content by Audience**

CHAPTER 2

Extending Your Intranet's Reach

Unlocking the full value of SharePoint through deep integration with the Microsoft 365 ecosystem and third-party partner solutions.



The Power of Integration: Microsoft 365 Synergy

SharePoint's greatest strength is how it connects with the broader Microsoft 365 ecosystem. Rather than operating as a standalone platform, it becomes the **connective tissue** of your digital workplace.

Microsoft Teams

Embed SharePoint pages and document libraries directly within Teams channels. Co-author files, manage team sites, and keep collaboration in context — without switching apps.

Viva Engage

Foster community and organisational culture by embedding Yammer/Viva Engage conversations, highlights, and leadership posts directly within your intranet pages.

1

2

3

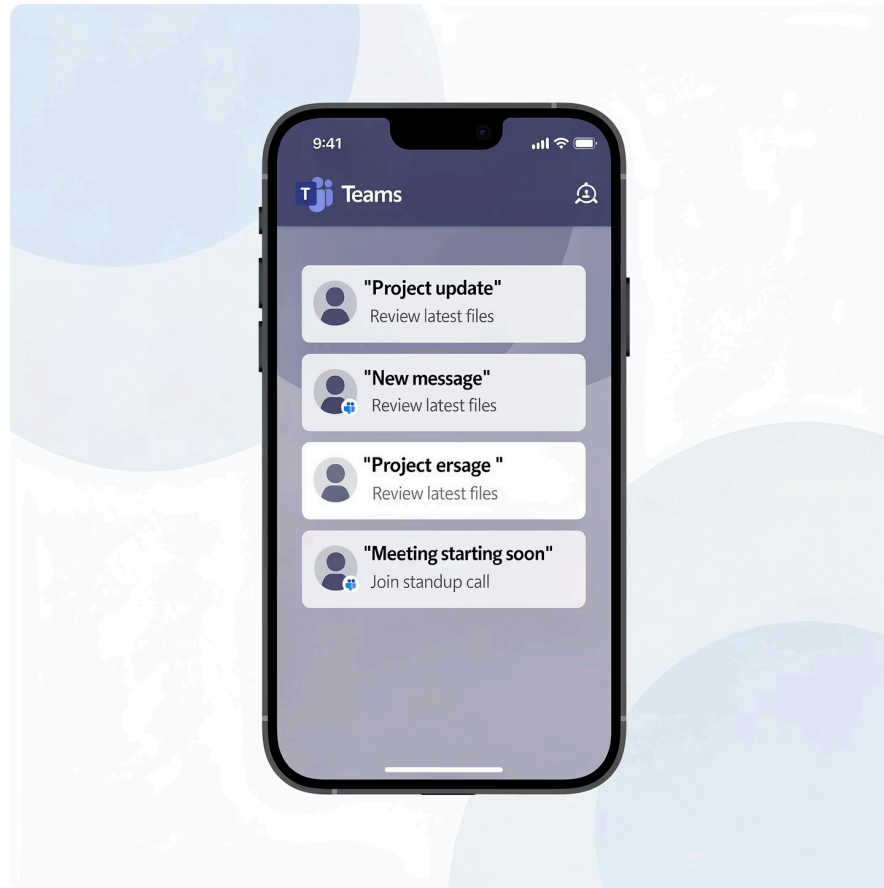
4

Viva Connections

Surface your SharePoint intranet as a personalised, mobile-first gateway inside Teams — bringing content, news, and tools to where employees already work.

Viva Topics

Automatically surface expertise and knowledge cards across your intranet, connecting employees to subject matter experts and relevant content using AI-driven discovery.



Viva Connections: Your Intranet in Teams

Viva Connections is one of the most transformative capabilities in the modern digital workplace. It delivers a **personalised employee experience** directly within Microsoft Teams — the app where most employees already spend the majority of their day.

Using **adaptive cards**, employees can surface the information most relevant to them — news, approvals, tasks, and company resources — in a scannable, action-oriented format without ever navigating away from Teams.

Crucially, Viva Connections is **fully mobile-accessible**, ensuring that frontline and remote workers are never excluded from the intranet experience, regardless of device or location.

Beyond Out-of-the-Box: Third-Party Solutions

While SharePoint's native capabilities are extensive, a thriving ecosystem of **third-party partner solutions** allows organisations to extend functionality significantly — filling gaps and unlocking capabilities not available out-of-the-box.



AI-Powered Search

Solutions like Coveo and Sinequa deliver next-generation search experiences with semantic understanding, personalised results, and cross-system content federation.



Content Creation Tools

Tools like hubley.ai integrate AI writing assistants directly into the SharePoint authoring experience, helping content owners produce polished, on-brand articles faster.



Analytics & Insights

Platforms such as Valo Intranet and Powell Software provide deep analytics on content engagement, user behaviour, and intranet effectiveness — going far beyond standard usage reports.



Custom Web Parts

Lightning Tools and similar vendors provide premium web parts — org charts, countdown timers, advanced forms — that dramatically enhance the range of page experiences possible.

The Connected Digital Workplace

SharePoint sits at the centre of a richly interconnected Microsoft 365 ecosystem. Together, these tools dissolve the boundaries between communication, collaboration, knowledge, and productivity.

SharePoint

Central hub for content, pages, and knowledge

Teams

Collaboration and communication in one workspace

Viva Suite

Employee experience, engagement, and insights

Partner Apps

Specialised capabilities to extend and enhance



CHAPTER 3

Best Practices for Success

The most technically sophisticated intranet will fail without a clear strategy for design, governance, and adoption. Here is what separates thriving intranets from digital graveyards.



Design Principles for Adoption

Adoption is not an afterthought — it must be designed into your intranet from the very first page. The most successful SharePoint intranets are built around **three interlocking design principles** that put the employee at the centre of every decision.



Employee-Centric

Personalisation by role and location. Task-oriented design. Mobile-first layouts. Intuitive navigation that reflects how people think, not how IT categorises data.



Communication Hub

Effective, structured news publishing. Event calendars that keep employees informed. Rich video content that brings leadership closer to the workforce.



Productivity Integration

Deep connections to everyday work tools. Powerful, relevant search. Workflow automation that reduces administrative burden and streamlines approvals.

Content Strategy & Governance

Without governance, even the most beautifully designed intranet becomes a **digital landfill** within months. A clear content strategy is the difference between an intranet people trust and one they abandon.

Clear Ownership

Every section, page, and news category must have a named content owner responsible for accuracy, currency, and quality. Without ownership, content drifts and stales.

Realistic Governance

Establish a practical framework covering content creation workflows, naming conventions, archiving schedules, and retirement processes — designed to be sustainable, not burdensome.

Search is Everything

Research consistently shows that **75% of intranet traffic arrives through search**, not navigation. Investing in search relevance, metadata tagging, and content quality is not optional — it is the highest-impact activity you can undertake.

Avoiding Common Pitfalls

Many intranet programmes stumble on the same predictable obstacles. Understanding these failure patterns in advance is the best way to avoid repeating them.

IT-Designed vs. Human-Centric

Organising your intranet around IT's data classification rather than employee behaviour creates navigation that feels logical to architects but baffling to users. Always design from the outside in — start with what employees need to find, then build the structure to support that.

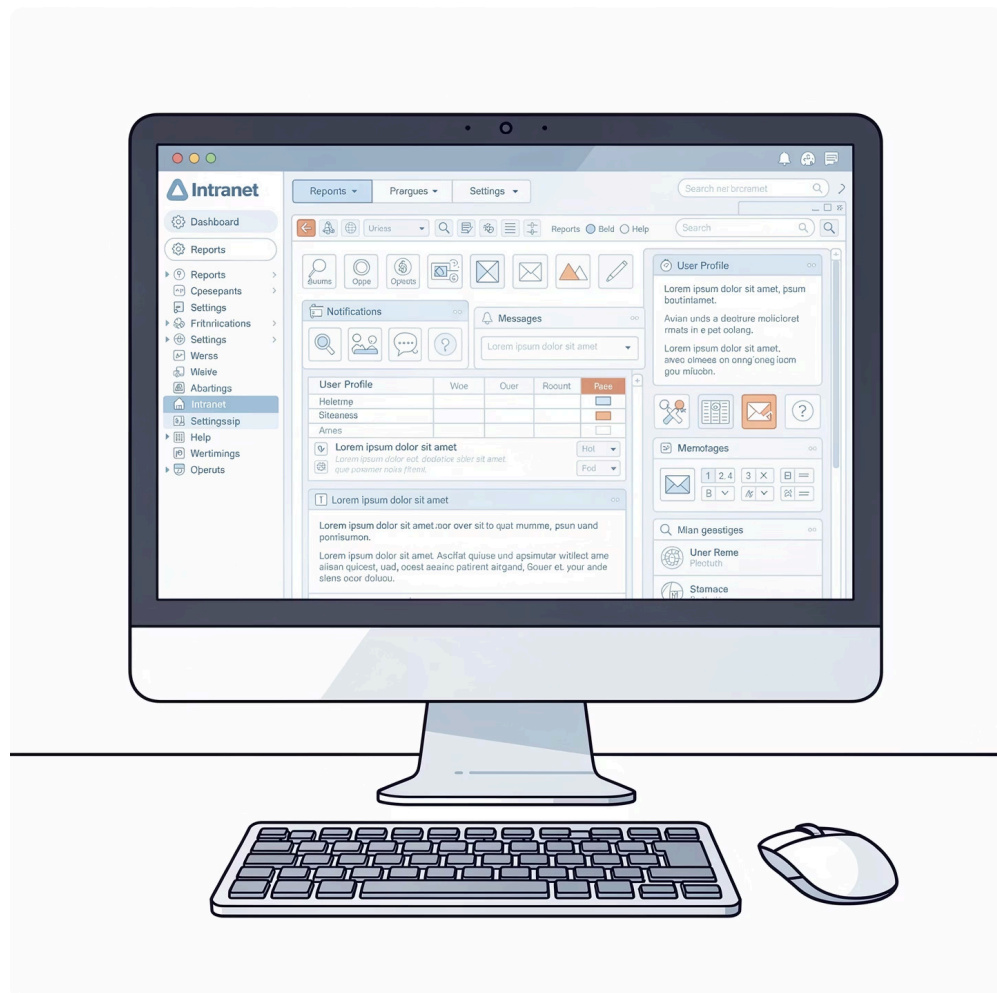
Stale Content Problem

An intranet with outdated news and expired policies erodes trust faster than having no intranet at all. Implement a clear publishing rhythm, automated content review reminders, and a retirement process before launch — not after.

The Migration Trap

Attempting to migrate everything from your legacy system at once is a recipe for delay, overwhelm, and poor quality. Start with two or three high-value scenarios — such as the homepage, HR policies, and IT help — and expand iteratively from there.

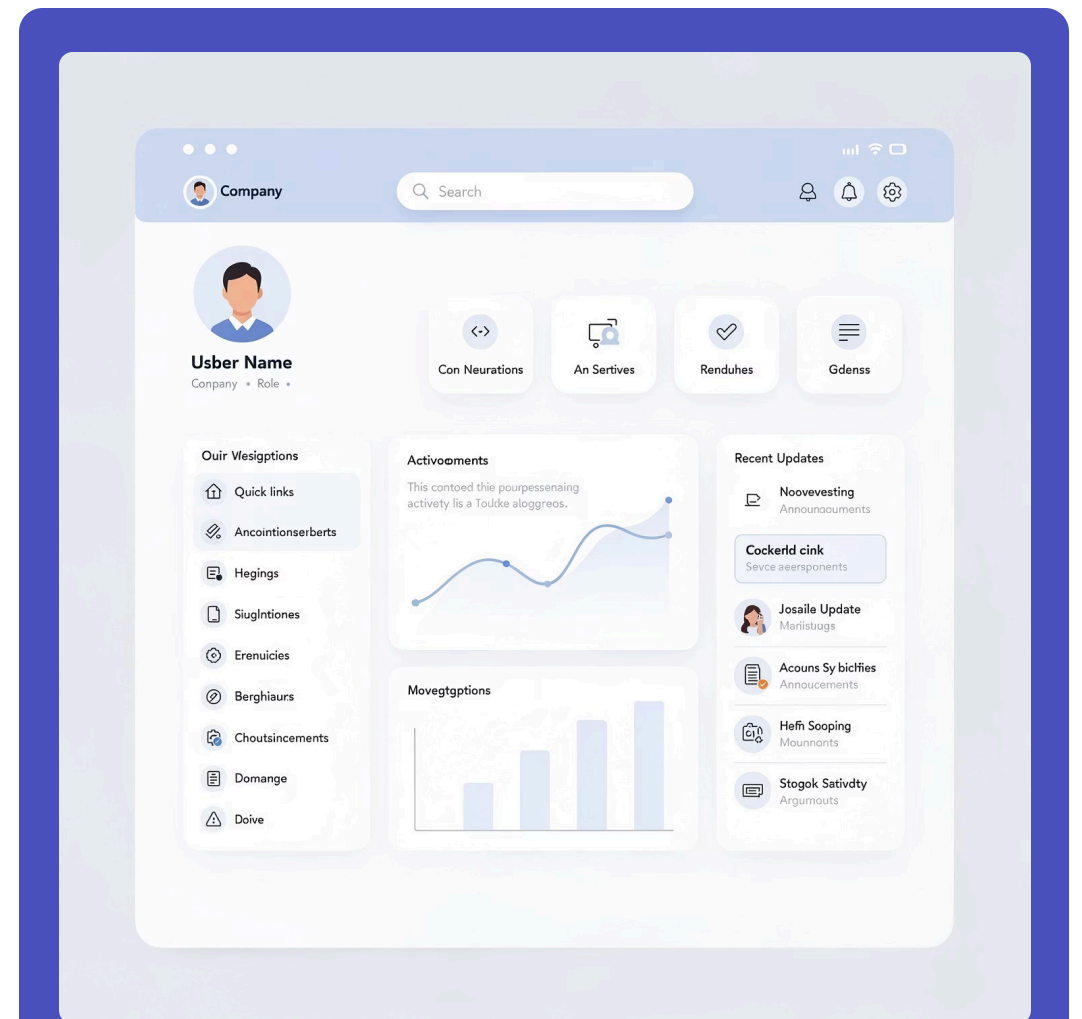
Before vs. After: The Intranet Transformation



BEFORE

The Digital Landfill

- Organised by IT data structure, not employee tasks
- Stale content and broken links erode trust
- Poor search returns irrelevant results
- No mobile access for remote or frontline workers



AFTER

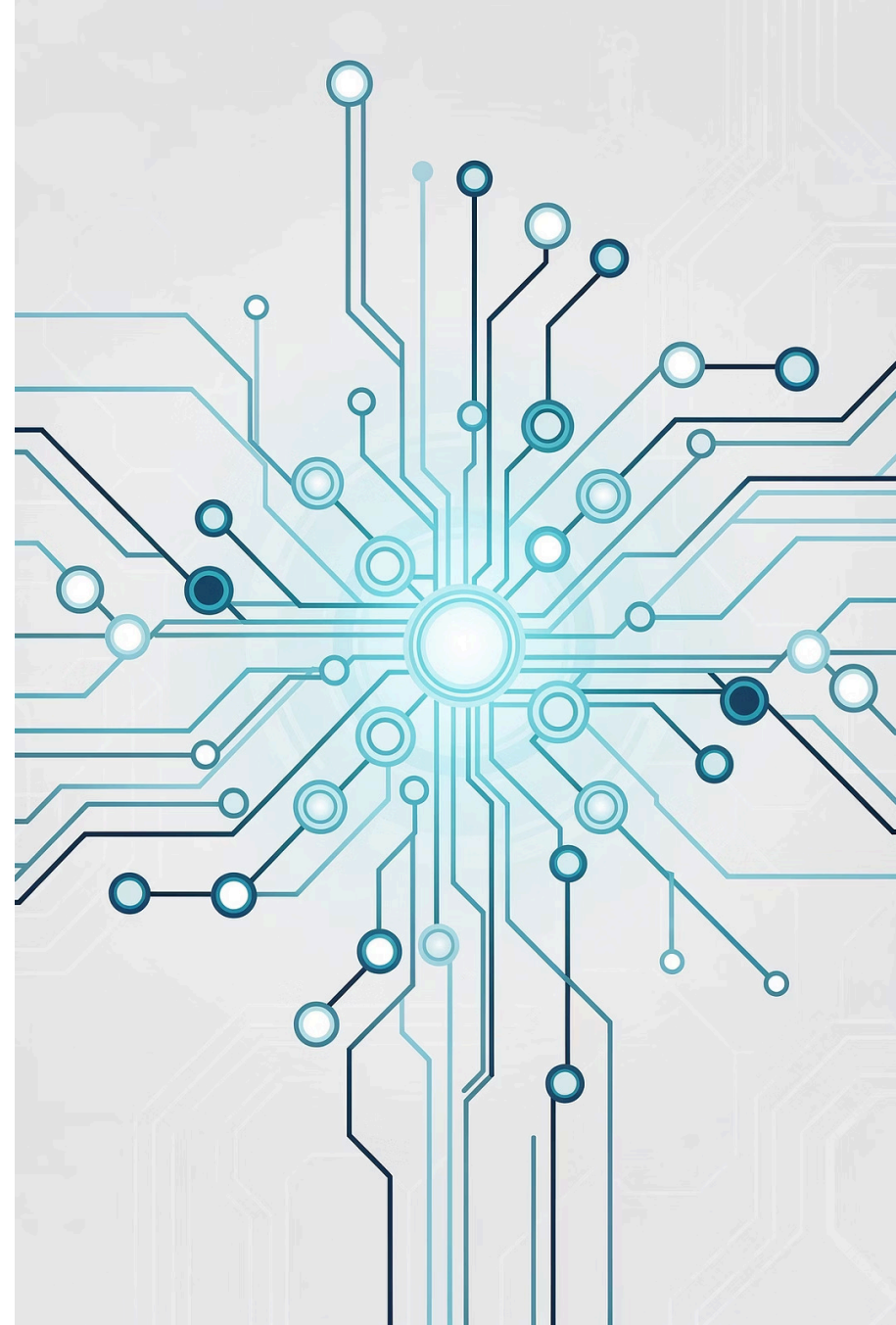
The Employee Experience Platform

- Designed around employee journeys and daily tasks
- Governed, fresh content with clear ownership
- Intelligent, personalised search surfaces relevant results
- Fully mobile-accessible via Teams and Viva Connections

CHAPTER 4

The Intelligent Intranet of 2026 and Beyond

Artificial intelligence is fundamentally reshaping what an intranet can do — moving from a passive information store to a proactive, intelligent workplace companion.



The Future is Intelligent and AI-Powered

The next generation of SharePoint intranets will not simply store and surface information — they will **anticipate needs, generate content, and measure impact** with unprecedented sophistication. Microsoft's deep investment in Copilot and AI across Microsoft 365 is already reshaping what is possible today.



AI-Driven Search

Copilot-powered search scans documents, pages, Teams conversations, and emails simultaneously — delivering natural language answers, not just links. Employees ask questions; the intranet answers them.



AI Writing Assistants

Microsoft Copilot and third-party tools like hubley.ai help content owners draft news articles, policy summaries, and page descriptions in seconds — dramatically reducing the time and effort required to keep the intranet fresh.



Personalised Delivery

AI engines analyse user roles, locations, interests, and behaviour to surface the most relevant content for each individual — ensuring every visit to the intranet feels tailored, not generic.



Enhanced Analytics

Advanced analytics platforms provide deep insights into content performance, search patterns, and employee engagement — enabling data-driven decisions about what to build, improve, or retire.

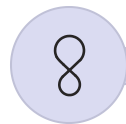
Your Next Steps: Building a Thriving Intranet

A world-class SharePoint intranet is not built in a single sprint — it is grown iteratively, shaped by employee feedback, and continuously evolved. Use this framework to move from where you are today to where you want to be.



Define Your Goals

Begin by understanding your organisation's key priorities and the unmet needs of your employee audience. What problems should your intranet solve first?



Iterate & Engage

Continuously gather feedback from employees through surveys, usage analytics, and focus groups. Treat your intranet as a living product — never finished, always improving.



Prototype & Pilot

Select one or two high-impact scenarios — such as the homepage or HR self-service — and build a working prototype. A quick win builds momentum and executive support.



Embrace Integration

Unlock the full value of your Microsoft 365 investment by connecting Teams, Viva, Power Automate, and trusted partner solutions to create a truly unified digital workplace.

✔ **Ready to begin?** Start with a stakeholder workshop to align on your top three intranet scenarios — then prototype the homepage within four weeks. The best intranets are the ones that ship.