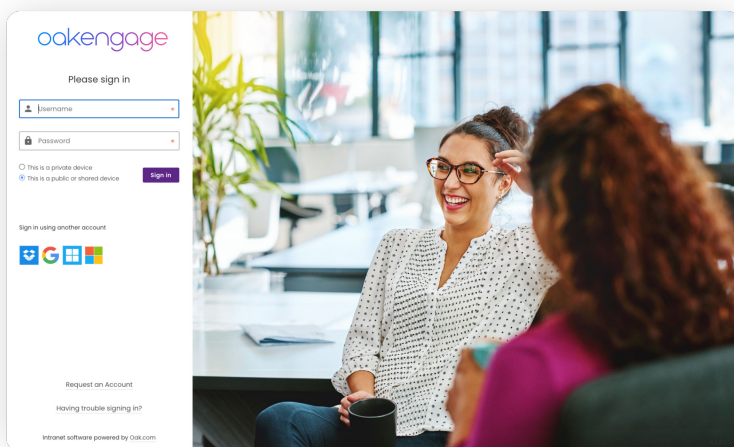# How to get started with your intranet

Your practical guide

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Getting started with your intranet

You've taken the step to implement an intranet and now you're ready to see your internal communication success skyrocket.

The next step is to understand how to make your intranet a success that will stand the test of time.

It's important to bear in mind that building new habits will take your people time, it's not all about seeing instant results.

To get what you want from your intranet, you'll need to put in the work to deliver something truly great to your audience.

Luckily, we've got plenty of experience in this, and are here to guide you through it.

The first stages

When it comes to setting up your intranet, planning is key.

Having an understanding of how you will use the platform and how you will train others to use it and advocate for it throughout the business will help you get off to a strong start.

We've put together some of the things you should consider in the planning stages.

Set your objectives

As with any project, setting goals and defining ojectives from the outset will help to measure success. If you had an intranet or internal comms platform prior to this, you can use statistics from that to benchmark the performance of your new intranet.

In this early stage you can define what purpose you want your intranet to serve. Whether this is to store important documentation, increase productivity and streamline user journeys, keep your employees informed with internal company news or to encourage social and community engagement, the world is your oyster.

Defining SMART objectives provides clarity, focus and motivation to achieve your internal comms and employee engagement goals.

Content is key

It's best to have some content ideas planned out so that you'll have an idea of what you need when you start populating your site with content.

This is also a great time to get your people involved in the process. Ask them what sort of content they want to see, understand how they interact with content and what will make their digital experience enjoyable and user-friendly. They are your end users, so any intranet content should be designed with them in mind, and with Oak, you have everything you need to create engaging content for serious and sociable matters alike.

There is a place for every aspect of your internal comms on your intranet, including company policies, mandatory reads and forms. This can all be stored on your site with easy access for your people.

Having a dedicated section within your intranet to store important information is a must. This makes it super easy for your people to know where to access company information while also keeping the important stuff safe and secure with permission-based access.

Where the capacity is available, try to assign some intranet champions from each department or interest group to share updates to dedicated spaces on your intranet. Your intranet champions should be the ones populating your site with engaging and informative, jargon-free content from their team to help share the load of content management.

The benefits of relatable content

Make sure all content is relatable and relevant for your audience. If you post an article or a blog with little or no relevance to the majority of people, it's not going to receive high engagement.

Research published in the Harvard Business Review shows that people respond positively to a story that they can relate to, and our brains react well to storytelling. Before creating or posting any content to your intranet, analyse your audience and their levels of interest.

If your content is particularly relevant for one group of people in your organisation, ensure it is published only to them with targeted delivery. Keep your whole organisation engaged by serving content that will be of interest and importance to them, reducing noise.

Accept feedback

Feedback plays an essential role in the internal communications journey. Your people are the ones who will be using the platform day to day, so you need their feedback to ensure it evolves and develops into something they will continue to utilise and benefit from.

Throughout the launch period and phase one of your new intranet, accept that it will be a period of trial and error as to what works best for your people. Try to gather as much feedback as possible from those using it at all levels within your organisation. If they have constructive criticism, don't be offended; work on this feedback to create something they won't be able to live without.

Collate your feedback over the introductory few months, and then you can test different layouts and applets to see what gets the best engagement and feedback. Not all feedback may be actionable, but by getting a full picture of how your people use your intranet, you can make the relevant changes that will improve the user experience overall. Remember, it's a marathon, not a sprint!

Familiarity

From brand identity to embodying your core values, the more your intranet feels like an extension of your brand, the more buy-in you are likely to get from your people.

Familiarity with the brand and the purpose of the intranet will encourage further buy-in. You can then build on that trust and position the intranet as the go-to hub for everything and place to bring your people together.

Here at Oak, we know that all organisations are different and when it comes to designing and piecing together your platform, it needs to feel like it belongs to your company. We will utilise your logos, brand colours, fonts and guidelines to build the basis of your intranet that your people will be familiar with and is consistent with the rest of your brand.

Remember, your people need to resonate with your core company values and what your organisation stands for. By keeping this consistent throughout your site your people will be able to connect with it on a personal and professional level.

Don't stop learning

Once your intranet is up and running, it might be tempting to sit back and relax. You can certainly celebrate and give yourself a pat on the back, but your intranet remains a platform that is constantly evolving. To maintain engagement, it becomes a platform for continuous improvement.

With built-in reporting and analytics, you can monitor the performance of your intanet content. Find out which formats get the most comments and engagement, see if your people are exploring the site beyond the homepage and understand through search queries if there are any content gaps that need to be filled. Continue to seek feedback from your people through polls or surveys and don't be afraid to try and test out different things!

Review your site every month or quarter to get a full view of its performance and areas for improvement. If there's anything you need help with, our Customer Success and support team are here to help!

Planning the launch

The training is done, the planning is done, your intranet is filled to the brim with content and homepages have been built, now what? It's time for the big reveal and to really test the waters.

In an ideal world, you'd launch your platform to your workforce and see results instantly, but unfortunately, it doesn't happen like this. You'll need to have an effective launch strategy in place to get your workforce onboarded with your platform.

Roles and setting permissions

Have peace of mind and maintain security standards across your intranet by setting user roles and permissions. To help you think of different levels of access, ask yourself the following questions:

• Who will be responsible for your intranet as a whole?

   Think of who will be best to turn to if any technical issues arise.

• Who will moderate your intranet?

   Think of someone good with copy and an eye for detail.

• Who will keep your intranet up to date with relevant content?

   This is where your intranet champions come in.

You want your intranet to be a place where your people can go to be informed, engaged and connected to your organisation.

In order to moderate and ensure that content upload and management is responsible, you'll need to consider what your audience can view and contribute. You can allocate permission-based access to those who are trusted to share and manage content, while still allowing the majority of staff to share posts on their own blogs or departmental timelines.

For example, if your workforce is made up of over 1,000 people and nobody has set permissions, it could get messy and lead to irrelevant, inappropriate and even damaging content being distributed throughout your intranet.

Onboarding

Your onboarding strategy should make users feel **excited**, **intrigued** and **informed**.

All too often with many onboarding processes, it can be easy for your audience to lose interest. With a disinterested audience comes disengagement and lack of buy-in, which is something we definitely don't want to happen. Ensuring your workforce are engaged throughout the onboarding process is essential.

Remember to assign team leaders during the onboarding process; it's more than likely your team will have a number of questions during the process and might run into some issues along the way. So, having members of your team on hand to help who were involved in the initial training process is crucial.

Throughout the onboarding process, remember to include:

• The fundamentals of your intranet

Provide clarity on how your audience can access it, their login details and how they will be expected to use it

• Video tutorials

Video is more memorable, engaging and drives more traffic giving it a clear advantage over using just text, so diversify your content

• Get your workforce involved from the beginning

Make your workforce feel part of your software and involved from day one to help build an intranet that really caters to your people
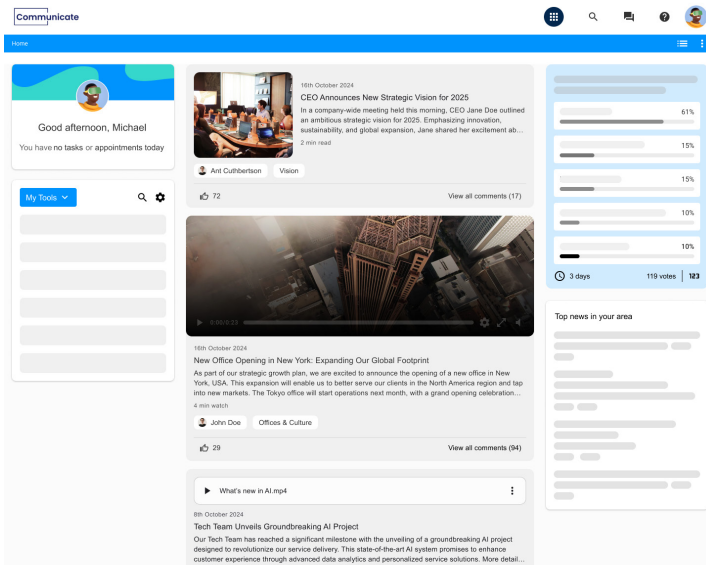
After the launch

When the intranet is live and your newly engaged, motivated workforce is getting to grips with your intranet, what happens next?

Think of your intranet like planting something new; the launch is only the start and as time goes on your platform will expand, improve and flourish, but you must keep nurturing it for this to happen. Conduct a full review of your platform around three months after the initial launch.

At this stage, analyse your intranet's performance and measure engagement levels against your original objectives. If you have achieved them, well done! Time to set new ones for the next phase.

If you are still on your way to achieving your initial objectives, think about what might be holding you back. It may be evident in your review from your analytics or from user feedback. Perhaps training refreshers are required. Reach out to your people for honest, constructive feedback and incorporate this into your plan of action. If you require support with the software and maximising the impact of its capabilities, our team are more than happy to provide guidance, ideas and support throughout the process. We're here to help you get the most from Oak and will be with you every step of the way.

Summary

Your intranet has the power to achieve incredible results; from a more engaged, productive workforce to a happier, positive workplace. Remember, this process is an ongoing journey and and not just a process that has to be completed within a certain timeframe.

An award-winning employee app and intranet solution

Oak Engage empowers your teams to get the right message, to the right people, at the right time.

We're here to make communication simple. We believe there is a better way to use technology to engage employees, cut through the noise, and inspire action that puts people at the heart of organisations.

The customer is at the heart of Oak Engage, with an attentive support team on hand to help with any customer queries.
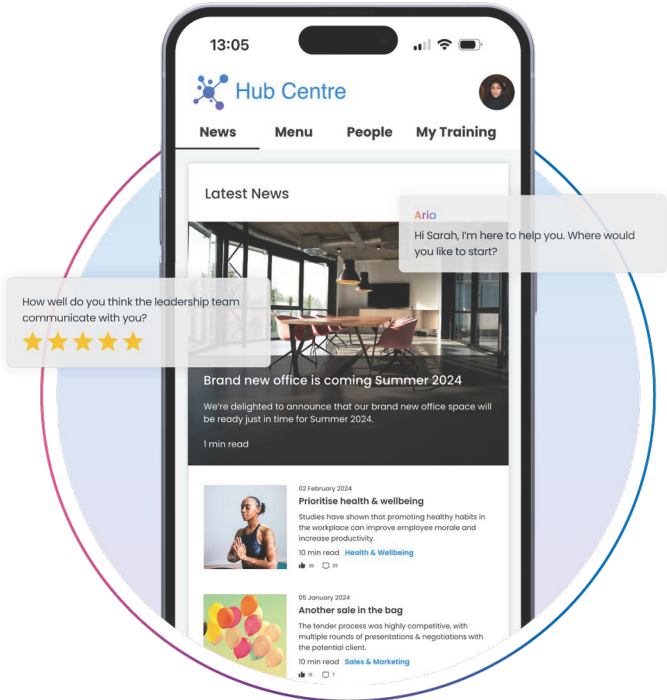
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