

EMPLOYEE-EXPERIENCE-PLATFORM – A MODERN INTRANET FOR THE FUTURE



Introduction – History and Present-day Challenge

The intranet of today has come a long way. From a mere employee portal for corporate information, it has metamorphosed into something much larger. What started as a simple web page with static information and a few links, the intranet story has evolved in length and breadth across multiple dimensions.

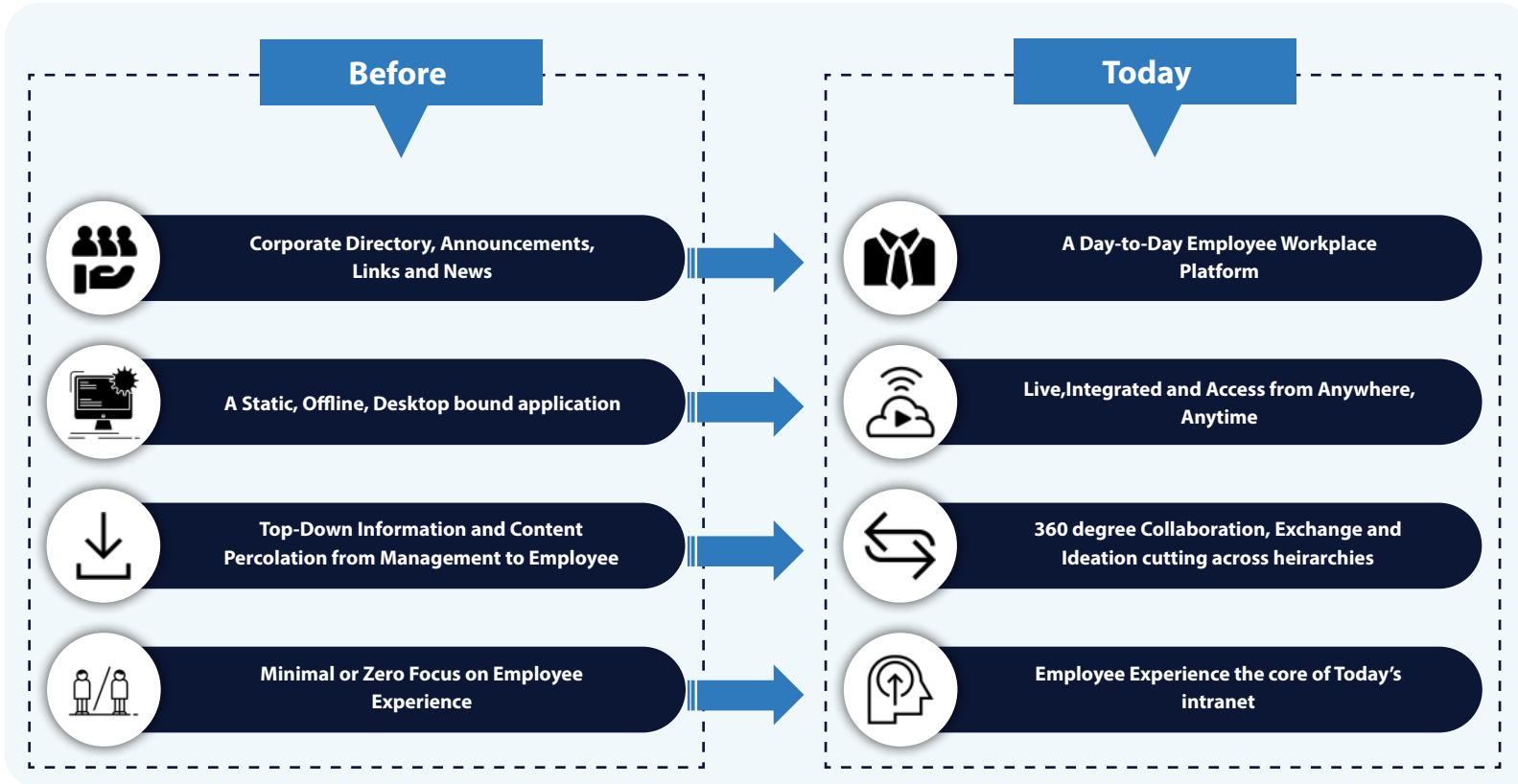


Figure 1: Journey of an Intranet



In most organizations, the intranet set up is typically initiated by the Human Resources or the Corporate Communications department. Their intent is to establish a system or an application to publish corporate resources including leadership announcements, events, policies, guidelines, and so on. In last decade, significant investments were made in the way intranets are designed to address considerations like –

- **Cloud-based ecosystem**
- **Anywhere and any device access**
- **User-interface and visual aesthetics**
- **Social collaboration**
- **Integration with applications**

In the pre-pandemic era, an employee typically had multiple isolated physical and digital channels to collaborate and obtain information to accomplish their work. The post-pandemic era

has shaken up the old ways of doing things. Organizations are suddenly faced with a previously unforeseen challenge, that of enabling a remote worker, in numerous aspects of their work such as meaningful employee engagement, information access and dispensation, social capital, ease of work anytime, anywhere, uncertainty in these times of digital disruption, unclear intranet purpose, and so on.

Fast forward to now, an increasingly hybrid-work era, organizations are quickly trying to bridge this growing gap. This is where the intranet in an entirely new Avatar can be the crucial piece in the digital workplace jigsaw driving exponentially enhanced experience.

In this thought paper, we would like to offer a Point-of-View, a concept on how the intranet can be reimagined to drive profound impact within an **organization's modern employee experience** journey.



Roadmap for Intranet

Modern intranet is poised to take full advantage of several niche technologies as they achieve maturity and usefulness in near future. On one hand, we have automation offerings such as Virtual Assistants, Robotic Process Automation, Generative AI, and Workstream collaboration to become a mainstay in the modern workplace landscape. On the other hand, we hope for a rise in commoditized services (such as Intranet-As-A-Service, Desktop-As-a-Service, etc.), technologies focusing on measuring employee experience, digital experience monitoring, employee productivity monitoring, etc. Solutions such as Conversational User Interface, Employee Wellness, and Smart Workspaces are expected to bring a whole new dimension to a modern workplace experience.

Organizations are realizing that employee experience in its entirety is driven by a smart combination of one or more such elements that will specifically cater to their own end-user needs. Then why should an intranet be constrained?

While retaining its core purpose a Modern Intranet can be envisioned as the **Next Generation Employee Experience platform** which has two parts -

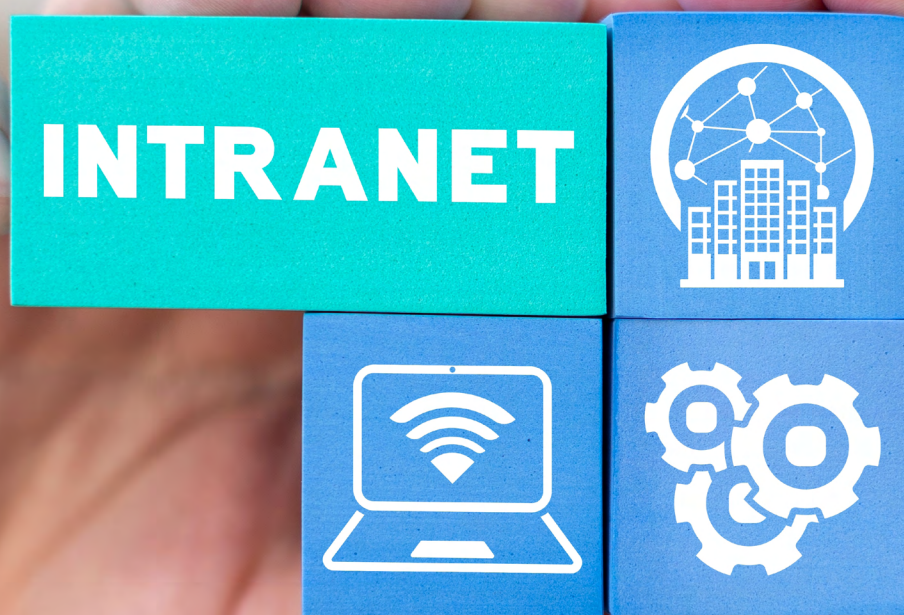
A. Platform services – comprising of

1. A “Core” intranet engine on which
2. “Plug and Play” modules can be loaded, as well as,

B. Employee Experience - which is multi-faceted, multi-dimensional, and ever-expanding.

The roadmap for a Modern Intranet is to transform it into a service that consumes and can be consumed. In simpler words it will be a service that can consume emerging technologies without requiring massive changes (much like plug and play) and enterprise platforms can consume intranet services to provide a personalized experience. This gives flexibility to the IT departments to scale to the ever-growing needs of an organization and at the same time enables the business to be more creative and dream of new avenues to enable employees to become more productive.

While the possibility of enhancing a Modern Intranet is endless, we would like to re-imagine intranet going forward as an **“Employee-Experience-Platform”**. This will enable us to keep the intranet both relevant and value driven in the coming times, where the focus always remains on an “Employee”.



“Employee-Experience-Platform” - A Modern Intranet for Workplace

Let us look a bit deeper into our proposed ‘Modular’ Modern Intranet design which could comprise the below elements (to name a few but not restricted to)

1. Platform Services – Forms the heart and soul of the intranet, which is scalable, resilient, and cloud-based. A strong platform provides the foundation upon which various user experience structures can be built and mounted. In turn, it comprises of :

1. Core Services –the core engine and intelligence which operates the intranet. The core services provide a medium for various teams to build and develop technology-agnostic solutions or modules which can be added upon

- Content Integration Services
- Search
- Security
- Business Process Management
- Usage Analytics
- API Enabled

2. Modules – that are Plug-and-Play micro functional elements that have a unique business purpose and objective. The Modules can also interact with each other using the core services

- Knowledge Graphs
- Employee Rewards and Recognition
- Workstream Collaboration
- Business Functions (One or More)
- Micro Apps (including Citizen Developed Applications. One or More)

2. User Experience – The user experience elements help to disseminate the information through several innovative mechanisms which help to capture the interest and imagination of an employee

- Immersive Workspace Experience (Metaverse)
- Generative AI and Virtual Assistants
- Smart Workspace and Device Channels
- Employee Wellness



We have tried to visually depict the above multi-layered Modern Intranet Model

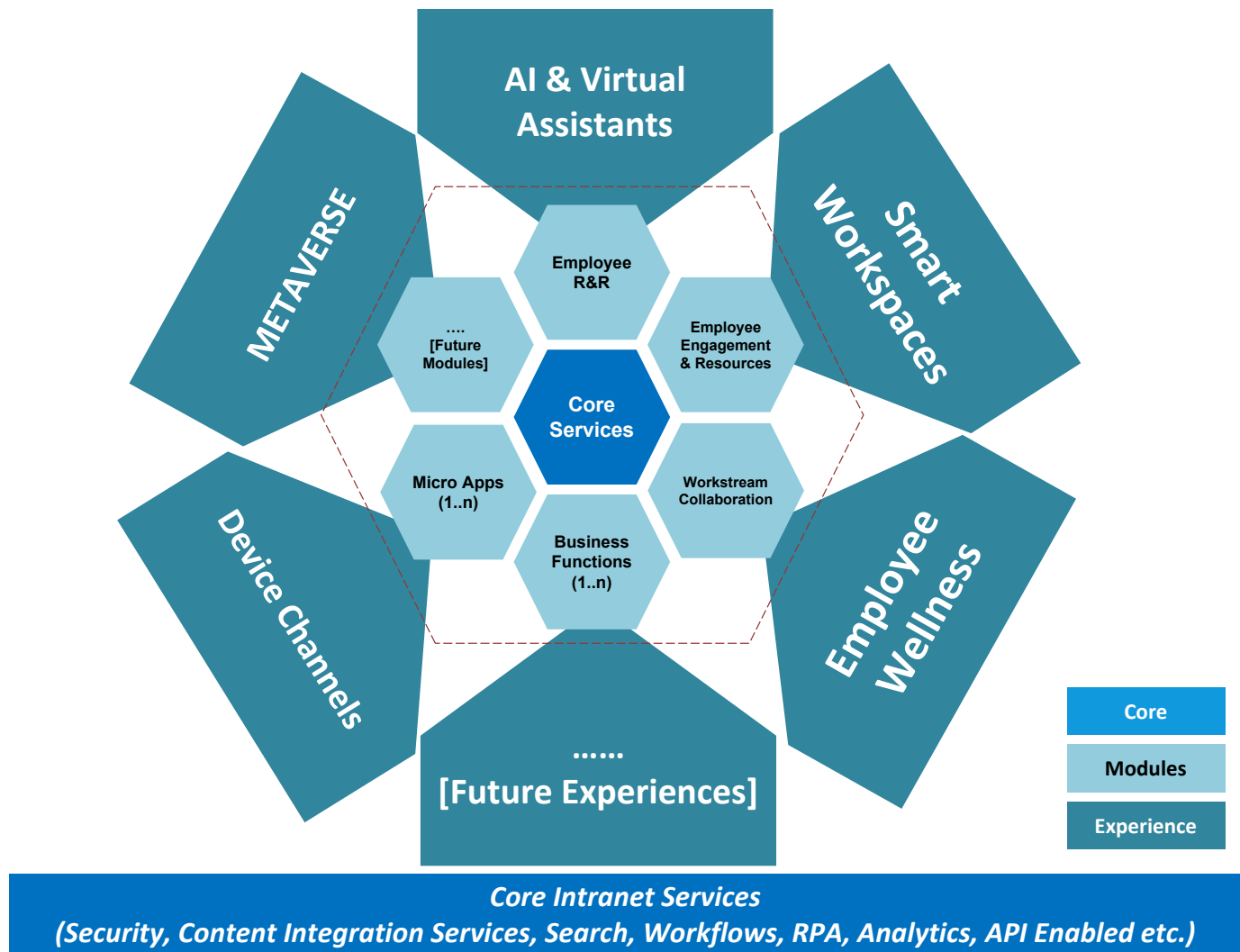


Figure 2 - Re-imagining Intranet as Employee-Experience-Platform

To see how the Modern Intranet model could operate, let us look at some of the user experience examples.

Metaverse

Modern Intranet is set to make use of the best of VR, AR, and Metaverse. Advancement in Virtual Reality means immersive, and utility-driven virtual spaces which will enable users with a three-dimensional experience for certain resources within the Employee Experience Platform over the available existing two-dimensional channels. Augmented Reality and new hologram technologies mean the seamless blending of digital life with the real world out there. While the metaverse is already creating an impact on the social internet, it is uniquely positioned to redefine Employee Experience. Some use cases-

- **New Joiner Process** – Consider a scenario where new joiners in the organization get a welcome kit with a VR headset that is preconfigured to give them a walkthrough of an organization as a part of the induction process. Traditionally a new joiner would go to an intranet to read one or more documents, web pages, video recordings, and even podcasts.
- **Immersive Meeting Experience** – Meeting participants can attend through their digital avatars and leverage a wide variety of VR and AR applications for seamless collaboration. They get the same experience irrespective of their physical location.

- **Adaptive Workplaces** – Metaverse-based workplaces are adaptive to the nature of work. The engineering team can fill the background and space with virtual objects suited to their need and the sales team can switch the background with real-time sales order book to have a meaningful conversation with their counterparts.

Generative AI and Virtual Assistants

In a new workplace environment, a Modern Intranet has consciousness, it seamlessly flows across multiple devices and form factors, intelligently deliver just in time information through a channel most conveniently available to the employee during the day. The Modern Intranet has a personality, and it is available like a very helpful colleague that is always approachable.

- **Reducing Overheads** – Repetitive tasks such as analyzing data and pattern-based recommendations will be provided by the Modern Intranet to employees (consent-based). Employees will have more time to focus on co-creation and innovation than working on mundane tasks
- **Synthesized Information** – Modern Intranet will encourage content creators to use AI models to enrich the metadata information for easy search and discoverability

- **Intelligent Virtual Assistants** – With a more 'Proactive' than a 'Reactive' experience combined with a fast turnaround time to retrieve information by seamlessly tapping into multiple content channels

Smart Workspaces and Device Channels

Modern Intranet experience is delivered through traditional (laptop, mobile) as well as next-generation devices. Here are some of the use cases -

- **Smart displays at office reception** – Interactive display with biometric face scanner greeting employees with their names and answering their queries with context.
- **Smart audio devices while on the move** – Ability to book a meeting room or a desk on voice command.
- **Smart home devices** – Alexa, Siri, and other voice assistants can help an employee get an on-demand summary of important news, announcements, meetings, and corporate events planned for the day.

Employee Wellbeing – Modern intranet can help keep a tab on employee pulse by using sentient AI to understand the emotional state of employees and provides timely insights and tips to boost productivity.

Conclusion

The intranet has sustained and adapted to the ever-changing trends from a static destination portal to an indispensable tool for collaboration. Re-imagining the intranet beyond the traditional boundaries and evolving it into an **Employee Experience Platform** will set a solid foundation for every organization and begin a journey of great returns in terms of productivity and sustainability.

Designing the intranet as **modular service-oriented platform** will enable enterprises to become technology agnostic and thereby give them the freedom and open untapped avenues to explore in an ever-expanding digital workplace arena.

We will continue to see rapid innovations with various employee experience tools and solutions and integrating them with Modern Intranet will help organizations realize greater returns on Investment and be more resilient in the dynamic, unpredictable work world.



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