ThoughtFarmer

Roadmap to a better intranet

A step-by-step, proven guide inspired by a real-world success story

For many organizations, the intranet is either a silent hero or an invisible burden.

In Premier America Credit Union's case, their old intranet had slowly become a barrier to productivity and engagement rather than a platform that empowered their team members.

With over 450 team members across 20 branches and a rapidly growing digital workplace culture, it was clear that their outdated system couldn't keep up. But instead of rushing into a new solution, they took a thoughtful, step-by-step approach: listening to users, building internal buy-in, and partnering with a vendor who aligned with their needs and values.

This guide is inspired by the real success story mapping their journey from problem discovery to post-launch optimization, so you can confidently navigate change, gain buy-in, and launch an intranet your entire organization will embrace.

> " Our new ThoughtFarmer platform is light years ahead of what we had before. It's user friendly, easy to navigate and most importantly, looks and feels like a tool that a world class organization should have."
>
> **Shelley Tam**
> Chief People Officer

Where Teams + Ideas Grow

Step 1

Start with honest assessment

Before exploring new tools or technologies, take a clear-eyed look at what you already have. One of the biggest mistakes organizations make is assuming that a new platform will solve old problems. But unless you understand what's broken (and why) your next solution will run into the same issues.

Begin by evaluating your intranet's current state:

- Is the user experience intuitive and pleasant, or clunky and confusing?
- Are people able to find what they need quickly and reliably?
- Is content up to date, well organized, and relevant to daily work?
- Are there any content gaps or missing information?
- Is there any content that is outdated or no longer needed?
- Do internal stakeholders have the access and tools they need to manage their areas effectively?

Talk to users. Look at usage reports. Review complaints and support tickets. Your goal isn't to fix every detail, but to identify patterns that show where your intranet is falling short.

> 💡 **Lesson**
>
> An intranet should grow with your organization. If it's become a bottleneck instead of a bridge, it's time to rethink your approach.

Step 2

Gather feedback from the people who use it

An intranet project only works when it centers on the people who rely on it. If your users don't find value in the platform, they won't use it. That's why listening early and often is essential.

Use a mix of feedback methods:

- Company-wide surveys to gather broad input and performance metrics across roles.
- Focus groups representing a cross-section of departments that use the intranet every day.
- Interviews with content owners to uncover backend frustrations and publishing challenges.
- Executive conversations to align your intranet vision with broader business goals.

This kind of layered feedback gives you both quantitative and qualitative insights. It also signals to your organization that this isn't just an IT project, your team's voices are shaping it.

💡 **Tip**

Make sure you're not just looking for agreement. Differences in expectations can reveal important needs you might miss otherwise.

Step 3

Define what success looks like

Once you've gathered input, turn those insights into clear success criteria. Don't just focus on features. Define what you want the intranet to accomplish in real-world terms.

For example:

Instead of: "a better search function"
Aim for: "employees should be able to find a document in under 30 seconds"

Instead of: "easy to use"
Say: "non-technical staff should be able to publish a page without IT help"

Common goals include:

- Modern, user-friendly design that's intuitive to navigate.
- Easy publishing tools that empower teams to manage their own content.
- Scalability to grow alongside your business.
- Effective search and content structure so information is easy to find.
- Responsive vendor support that helps you solve problems quickly.

💡 **Pro-tip**

List your requirements as "must-haves" and "nice-to-haves." This keeps your team focused when comparing options.

Step 4

Run a collaborative vendor evaluation

Choosing an intranet platform shouldn't fall on one team alone. Involve the people who will actually use it.

Here's how to evaluate vendors effectively:

- Narrow your list based on your defined needs.
- Use a scoring matrix to compare vendors across key categories like usability, permissions, support, and integration.
- Host demos or trials that let staff explore the tools firsthand.
- Collect structured feedback with rating scales or open-ended surveys.
- Make a data-backed recommendation to leadership, showing how the choice aligns with your goals.

Involving users at this stage builds early trust and can surface red flags that wouldn't show up in a feature checklist.

💡 **Tip**

Evaluate the vendor relationship, not just the product. Great support and onboarding can be just as valuable as the right feature set.

> At Premier America, one of our core values is to Find a Better Way. When we set out to implement a new intranet, ThoughtFarmer stood out by sharing that same mindset. They helped us find a better way to deliver an engaging, easy-to-use platform that gives our team the resources they need to provide an exceptional member experience."

Merisol Speat
VP, Enterprise Project Management Office

Step 5

Launch strategically (and make it fun!)

Treat your intranet launch like an event, not just a system update. A thoughtful rollout helps users get excited, stay engaged, and feel supported.

Start by getting organized well before launch day. One of the most important (and often overlooked) elements of a successful intranet launch is the preparation and migration work. Being strategic and thorough with your migration plan is key to launching on time.

Plan ahead and allocate resources with clear ownership and committed contributors. Set expectations early around time and effort, assign content owners, and establish routines to keep migration on track. Without this prep work, delays and last-minute scrambles are unavoidable.

Consider launching in phases:

Soft launch to a small group of champions who provide feedback and help smooth out rough edges.

Company-wide launch with training sessions, drop-in help labs, and support resources to ensure your team feels confident using the new platform.

Use creative engagement tactics to build buzz and excitement, such as a naming contest, themed swag, or a "discovery" scavenger hunt that encourages exploration.

Throughout the process, tie the new intranet to real, day-to-day value like faster access to HR tools, easier collaboration, and better communication.

> 💡 **Engagement tip**
> The more interactive and human your launch feels, the more quickly it will be adopted.

Step 6

Implement a governance model that supports autonomy

After launch, your intranet needs care and structure to thrive. That's where governance comes in.

Good governance doesn't mean locking everything down. It means putting systems in place so that content remains useful and consistent without overburdening your central team.

Here's a simple governance structure:

- Content owners assigned within each department and trained on best practices.
- Templates and style guides to ensure a unified look and feel across the site.
- Quarterly reviews supported by reports or automated tools to flag outdated pages.
- Central oversight for homepage management, core resources, and platform standards.
- This approach keeps the intranet fresh, accurate, and aligned with your business, while giving teams ownership over their content.

💡 **Tip**

Empower your content owners, but don't leave them unsupported. A little guidance goes a long way.

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As a content owner, I appreciate how simple our new intranet is to create and manage content. I can keep pages in draft mode until they're ready, set expiration dates for content, and overall just work more efficiently. I'm so grateful we found a better solution. Our intranet is an awesome tool and a game changer for our team!"

Stacey
Content Owner

Step 7

Use data to drive improvements and unlock real ROI

A strong intranet doesn't just serve your team today, it evolves based on how they use it.

Start collecting and acting on insights early:

- Track search queries to see what users are looking for (and whether they're finding it).
- Review top-performing content to spot patterns and identify best practices.
- Measure engagement by role or team and adjust homepages or permissions accordingly.
- Quantify wins like reduced time spent searching for information, fewer emails sent, or smoother onboarding.
- These metrics help you justify continued investment and prioritize improvements that matter most.

💡 **Insight**

When you connect intranet data to business outcomes, you turn it from a utility into a strategic asset.

" Becoming a content owner within the intranet has been a great experience, especially building out the new department pages. It's easy to build and customize pages that support our teams."

Jeremy
Content Owner

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Conclusion

A better intranet starts with your people

Premier America's intranet transformation wasn't about technology alone. It was about empathy, inclusion, and a clear vision for what internal communication and collaboration could look like.

They built a platform that team members actually enjoy using. One that supports daily tasks, encourages connection, and evolves with the organization.

And most importantly, they did it by listening first, planning carefully, and launching with purpose.

Want a partner to help you get started? We're here to help.

Get in touch with our team at hello@thoughtfarmer.com and we'll walk you through how to apply this roadmap to your own intranet project.

Explore ThoughtFarmer's success stories to see
how we've helped countless other organizations transform
their workplace communications, processes,
and connectivity.

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