

Intranet design best practices checklist

Key design considerations for your intranet, inspired by the 2026 Best Intranet Award winners in the design category.

1. Start with a strong brand foundation

Does your intranet feel like it belongs to employees?

The look and feel of your intranet is the first signal employees receive about whether the space was built for their needs. Brand decisions made early, such as name and color palette, set the tone for everything that follows.

- Give your intranet a name.** Go beyond a generic label like “Company Intranet”
 - Considering running a naming contest to get your team involved and excited about your intranet
- Document your visual identity,** including colors, logo, and imagery style, on your intranet where contributors can easily find it
- Consider making your intranet feel human** by giving it a mascot, a unique tone, and a distinct personality
 - If you have a mascot: is it doing actual work or just occupying space? Authoring posts, sending friendly reminders, and seasonal appearances are effective ways to put it to work
- Be deliberate about how aligned your intranet brand is to your organization’s overall brand.** Fully aligned with your organization’s overall brand identity, a distinct sub-brand, or self-contained. Any is valid. No decision is the problem
- Follow [accessibility standards](#),** ensuring adherence to recommended contrast ratios, link text, and button labels. Integrate accessibility into your intranet content owner training
 - Build this in from the start. Retrofitting accessibility is significantly harder than designing with it in mind

2. Build it together from the start

Were employees part of crafting your intranet brand?

Involvement before launch is a pivotal moment for building excitement and adoption.

- Encourage staff to contribute ideas for your intranet’s name and theme** (and mascot if you have on) so staff feel a sense of ownership over the end result
- Create an ongoing channel for employee feedback** on the intranet’s design and content. A feedback form, a suggestion forum, or a seasonal poll are all effective ways to gather your team’s ideas and insights over time
- Create a cross-department consulting panel for gathering regular feedback.** Ensure all departments are represented, so everyone’s voices are heard

3. Create a consistent, trustworthy experience

Does it hold together across the whole site?

Consistency is what makes an intranet feel trustworthy. When layouts, visual styles, and navigation patterns are predictable, employees can find what they need more easily.

- Give section and page layouts a predictable structure**, so employees aren't reorienting themselves every time they navigate somewhere new
- Ensure every section has a branded visual identity** to keep everything consistent and make it easy to navigate your intranet
- Create and use templates to ensure consistency.** Templates make it easy for staff to create new content and ensure it stays in line with your brand
- Provide guidelines** for choosing stock imagery that looks on-brand

4. Stay fresh, stay accessible, stay relevant

Does it stay alive, and does it work for everyone?

A well-designed intranet that never changes can start to feel abandoned. Keeping surface elements, like homepage visuals, mascot moments, and seasonal details, updated signals to employees that the intranet is active and makes it exciting to use.

- Plan seasonal or recurring visual updates** into your content calendar: themed homepage backgrounds, logo swaps, and holiday mascot moments
 - The design system, including your HEX codes, templates, and layout rules, should stay stable.
- Ensure your intranet provides a great mobile experience** for employees who aren't at a desk. Frontline staff should have full access to intranet content from their mobile device

To see these principles in action, watch our Lessons from the Best-Designed Intranets of 2026 webinar or download the full ebook: [2026 Award Winning Intranets](#).

Explore ThoughtFarmer's intranet design tools to build a beautiful, on-brand intranet your employees will love to use. [Schedule a demo today](#).

www.thoughtfarmer.com