

# How to build a convincing business case for your intranet



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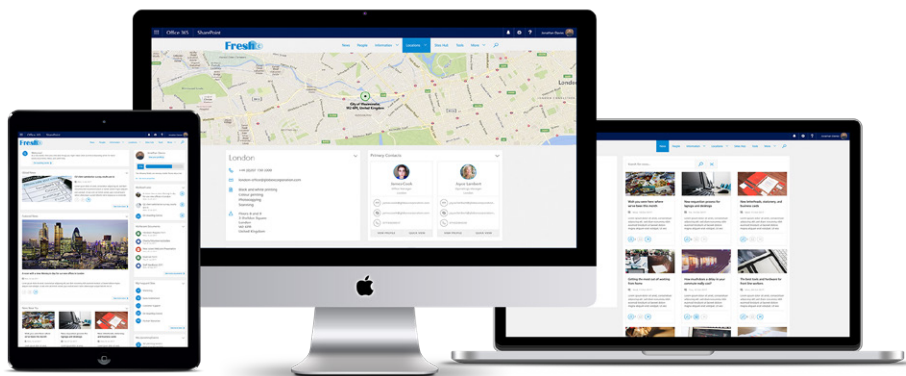
# The business case: an essential tool

A business case document is an essential part of due diligence when it comes to deploying a new intranet at your organisation. It ensures you have considered the implications of introducing the platform, that you have the correct budget and that the tool will fit your specific needs.

A good business case document will analyse the needs of your organisation objectively, while also making an argument for the new initiative. It should:

- Detail all the required information for sign-off, including goals, financial impacts, risks and alternatives
- Speak to all key stakeholders in the business, including the CEO, the CIO and CFO
- Give stakeholders an opportunity to contribute
- Achieve buy-in and commitment from stakeholders
- Provide transparency and accountability to build the necessary trust and commitment to make the project a success

This guide will provide you with concrete steps to building the business case for an intranet solution like Fresh from Content and Code.



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# Building a business case for your new intranet

When creating your business case, we suggest using the following structure and headings:

- 1. Executive summary**  
Summarise the business case and highlight your proposed solution, e.g. Fresh Intranet
- 2. The opportunity**  
What an intranet is / problems at our business / the main benefits of an intranet. Also: how it can solve our problems / financial impacts / summary
- 3. Potential solutions**  
List the options available / compare and contrast / summary
- 4. Proposed solution**  
Identify the option you propose / explain why it is the best option / summary
- 5. Plan going forward**  
Set out the plan of action including timeframes & budget / identify the risks / detail responsibilities / summary

Above all, your document needs to be succinct and easy to understand. Often business case documents are read by people who have little knowledge of the subject matter. Avoid jargon where possible and try to create a sense of urgency. You may want to complement your written argument with tables and graphs – this can be particularly useful for highlighting financial impacts and comparisons between options.

## WHAT TO REMEMBER

The purpose of IT in modern businesses is to co-ordinate change. However, any attempt to instigate change should be properly scrutinised and its value held up to rigorous analysis. Before starting a business plan start writing an analysis, this can be a simple SWOT analysis or an in-depth Pestle analysis. It's important to understand the field your business plays in and learn how to spot opportunities for change.

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# Step one: the groundwork

**Prepare, plan and research.** When it comes to laying the groundwork, there are a few important things to consider before sitting down to write.

- **Identify the key stakeholders**

You need to identify all key stakeholders. Understand that you're writing for different individuals with very different roles at the company – and you only have so much space to make your case. You need to speak their language.

For instance, the CFO will be interested in the financial impact and ROI; the HR Director will be more interested in speeding up HR processes; the CIO will want to hear about security and how much of their time will go into supporting the new intranet.

- **Plan your argument**

Before you start writing, you need to do your research. Seek out the latest studies, read success stories, articles and blogs, and compare a variety of vendors' websites. List all the benefits you can think of. Then take all these benefits and marry them up with any statistics, facts and figures you have found. It's a good idea to create a list of the benefits for each stakeholder or department. You can then prioritise these benefits and highlight several (5-10) that add the most value to the company, based on your company's goals, values and culture. You should refer back to these throughout your business case document, as they will become the spine of your proposal.

- **Reach out to colleagues**

Every employee at your organisation will be using the new intranet. So, it's important to leverage their insights to build your business case. Different departments will have different uses. Consider sending a survey out to every department – ask them about pain points, how their work lives could be improved, their experience of using current technology, etc. What's more, actively involving colleagues now can help guarantee buy-in later.

## WHAT TO REMEMBER

Deciding which solution for you is like being an investigator. You'll need to plan for treating, sorting and gaining insights from all the various stakeholders in the business. Whilst building a business case don't be afraid to reach out to colleagues. Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service sent a survey to all of their employees, asking them what areas in the business needed improving and why. The conducted focus groups to validate perceived issues, and were able to use this information to make their case for implementing Fresh intranet.

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# Step two: the opportunity

**Focus on outlining the opportunity.** Now it's time to start writing, but leave your executive summary until the end. Start with the opportunity that a new intranet presents.

When highlighting the potential benefits a new intranet will bring to your organisation, you need to be as specific to your organisation as possible. Keep in mind your company's mission and values. How will a new intranet support these? Find out the goals of different departments and discuss how a new intranet will help achieve these.

The problems posed by the current setup should then outline how a new intranet will solve these problems, showing how the new tech can:

- Improve communication and collaboration
- Make it easier to convey company news, information and documents
- Provide a central hub to amplify company culture

However, you need to go one step further. You need to translate these indirect benefits into more concrete terms. Here's an example:

"Instant chat will speed up how sales professionals communicate with each other, as they can now share ideas, and ask for help when they stumble upon obstacles to a sale. A quick response will improve sales efficiencies, leading to more sales and, ultimately, more revenue for the company".

Use research and statistics to support these arguments. And, where possible, demonstrate the financial value of the opportunity. This can be difficult. So, ask the finance stakeholder to help - they should be able to provide figures on the current situation. Ask yourself for every benefit: how is it measured? What is the current situation? How can an intranet improve this? By how much?

Similarly, you can use statistics and analytics on the usage of the current intranet to show where there is room for improvement.

## THE BUSINESS CASE IN ACTION

In this eBook we are using one example of how the intranet could help your sales team, which we will continue to use throughout. However, at every organisation a new intranet like Fresh will bring lots of different benefits for specific departments, as well as lots of general benefits that will be enjoyed by the whole company. Your job is to go through this process for each main benefit you have identified as being the most important.

Describe the problems posed by the current setup. For example: "The sales team often work remotely; they complain that they find it hard to access the information they need, to communicate obstacles they face out on the road, and feel like the team is a disparate group of individuals rather than a cohesive whole."

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# Step three: the options

**Discuss and weigh up the options available.** Now you need to provide a detailed look at the different solutions available. You may already have a solution in mind, but it's always good to present an objective view of the different options before making a case for your preferred choice. We recommend picking out three or four options, including Fresh. For each, there are two things you should cover.

- **Examine the functionality**  
Assess how specific features can add value to your business; it can be useful to create a matrix where you list the features that you are looking for and then compare different offerings from vendors side by side.
- **Undertake cost-benefit analysis**  
Weigh up the costs and benefits of the technology; if your company is going to invest in the new technology, decision-makers need to know that the investment will have a positive impact.

Once you have finished with the 'Potential solutions' section, move onto the 'Proposed solution' section. Now it's time to show your hand. Make a choice, pick an option and explain why it's the best one for your business. Where previously in 'The Opportunity' section you made a case for intranets more generally. Here, you need to make a case for one specific intranet solution. Let's take Fresh as an example.

Fresh can help your sales team improve their efficiency by using Yammer to speed up communication. By giving employees access to Delve, Fresh helps the sales team find useful information. With all your company news and announcements in one place, your remote sales workers can stay up-to-date with everything that is going on in the office when out on the road. This helps them stay informed but also makes them feel included.

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# Step four: the final plan

**Outline a plan of action.** Now that you have explained why Fresh is the right option for your company, you need to provide a high-level plan in the 'Plan going forward' section, detailing what is required to get it up and running, including timeframes and proposed budget.

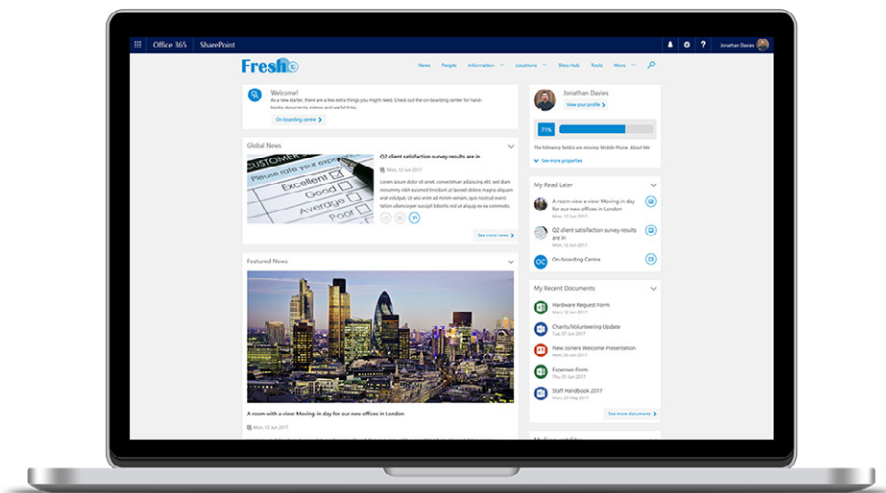
As the project hasn't been signed off yet, this doesn't need to be an in-depth plan; at this stage it won't be actioned by anybody. It's just to show a clearer picture of what the project requires.

A project can seem like a great idea on paper, but it's important to be able to show how you make a success of it. There are a lot of important things to consider, such as training staff, incentives for increasing engagement, the roll-out of updates and so on. You also need to list all the risks and the plans you have in place if something goes wrong.

It's at this stage that you bring in the key stakeholders and discuss their roles. What will they do to make the new intranet a success? You need to make sure responsibility is shared out between the key stakeholders and that everyone has some part to play in the plan. Successful initiatives should always be led from the top.

## WHAT TO REMEMBER

Form a project team with representatives from all the various teams across the business. Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service formulated a project team made of champions from comms, IT, training and senior management. When mapping out each of the stages allow for contingency, ensure the development of the project is communicated to the champions, get approval and sign off wherever possible.



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# The benefits of Fresh intranet

To further support your business case, here's a quick reminder of the main benefits of using Fresh:

- Increased employee engagement
- Minimal disruption
- Easy to update and maintain
- Mobile-responsive
- Flexible and future-proofed
- Rooted in modern user experience
- Engaging and intuitive design

Fresh Intranet has been built following years of proven innovation building powerful intranets for organisations of all sizes in different industries, by the communications and collaboration experts at Content and Code.

*If you have any further questions building your business case, please contact Fresh Intranet to learn more. Alternatively, sign up to one of our roundtable discussions where you can access expert advice on any issue related to intranet roll-out and adoption.*

## Who wants what from an intranet?



**Intranet Managers** sitting between Communications and IT. They want something that looks great and is intuitive to use.



**Comms Directors** want to engage with their staff on any device, anywhere; delivering creative content that boosts employee engagement.



**Finance Directors** want value for money. Fresh will save over £150,000 of upfront development.



**HR** want a one-stop portal where employees can find information easily, collaborate, and work in a way which suits them.



**CIOs and IT Directors** want to get value from Office 365 with swift deployment and rapid adoption.



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