

# Intranets for Accountancy Firms

*Expert knowledge means success*

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Note: This publication has not been updated since it was last published. Some of the hyperlinks may have changed and may need updating. In addition, some of the information in this publication may be out of date.

## Introduction

Accountants today are faced with an ever-increasing demand to evidence best practice and comply with regulations.

An Intranet supports this by allowing firms to manage internal documents and information sources more efficiently from one easy to access, secure area.

An Intranet can help improve business efficiencies and **aid compliance**, and can also be used as a **client-facing 'extranet'**, so you can add value to your offering by allowing selected clients to access certain areas via a secure login (you have complete control over who accesses what).

"An Intranet is a private website where authorised members of companies, teams, departments and workgroups can share information. With an internet connection and web browser, you can access your Intranet from anywhere in the world."

## What is the difference between company Intranet and a website?

An Intranet is just like a website, with a few exceptions and additions:

- It has a different voice. It speaks only to employees and managers in your firm, not outsiders.
- It has more details, and company specific information that outsiders normally wouldn't be allowed to have.
- It includes internal information. For example, human resources information, office and work policies and procedures, standard forms people use every day and templates that avoid re-inventing the wheel every time something needs to be done.

But, employees want to know the same things about a company that outsiders want to know, too.

- How is the business performing?
- Who is who and what is their background; what projects are in the works; and who is working on them?

What new clients have come to the firm?

- What services does the firm provide?

What is the strategy for next quarter? Next year? And so on.

Ask yourself:

- Do you want an effective information management system?
- Do you want to improve the internal communications of your business?
- Do any of your employees ever work from home?
- Do any of your employees need access to information in meetings held away from the office?
- Do any of your employees ever travel abroad on business?

If the answers to any of these are yes, you could benefit from having an intranet.

## The main benefits on an Intranet include:

- ✓ **Improved communication**
  - Communicate with specific or all Intranet users easily and with the minimum of effort
  - Provide a centralised communications method for all users
  - Reduce day-to-day informational emails to users – this can mean a significant reduction in the number of internal emails sent within the business
- ✓ **Improved decision-making**
  - Employees have access to more time-sensitive information faster, enhancing the decision-making process.
- ✓ **Increased productivity**
  - There is faster, easier access to information, with less time spent searching for documents/information, so employees become more productive.
- ✓ **Improved information and knowledge management**
  - Intranets enable information to be easily available, and users know where to find what they want. This, in turn, creates a culture of sharing and collaboration where users build and share knowledge, and it facilitates organisational learning.

## ✓ Save money

- Intranets facilitate a reduction in paper-based systems leading to a decrease in operating costs, as well as a reduction in telephone costs. There is also a reduction in time wasted searching for information – valuable time which could be spent on more important tasks.

## ✓ Increased employee satisfaction

- There are a number of different reasons employees' satisfaction increases when Intranets are introduced into a business, such as the decrease in bureaucracy, the feeling of empowerment, and also the fact they spend less time with the frustration of tracking down documents, all of which improve the quality of life at work.

## ✓ Goodbye to Geography

- Employees can access information from anywhere in the world and at any time... and can work from home and on the move much more effectively than ever before.

## An Intranet can provide improved efficiency and peace of mind by...

- Making sure you know where all your template documents and standard agreements are, and finally giving you the structure for accessing them whenever you choose.
- Ensuring you can get access to all your important documents and files securely via your internet browser 24/7.
- Providing assurance that everything you think of as important is backed up remotely and securely, everyday.
- Supplying the framework for having a paperless office, without the risk.
- Facilitating collaboration through your organisation, with a living, breathing notice board and calendar system.

## Further Information

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues. We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.

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