

# Intranets That Fit

Mapping to Business Goals, Enterprise Maturity and the User Experience

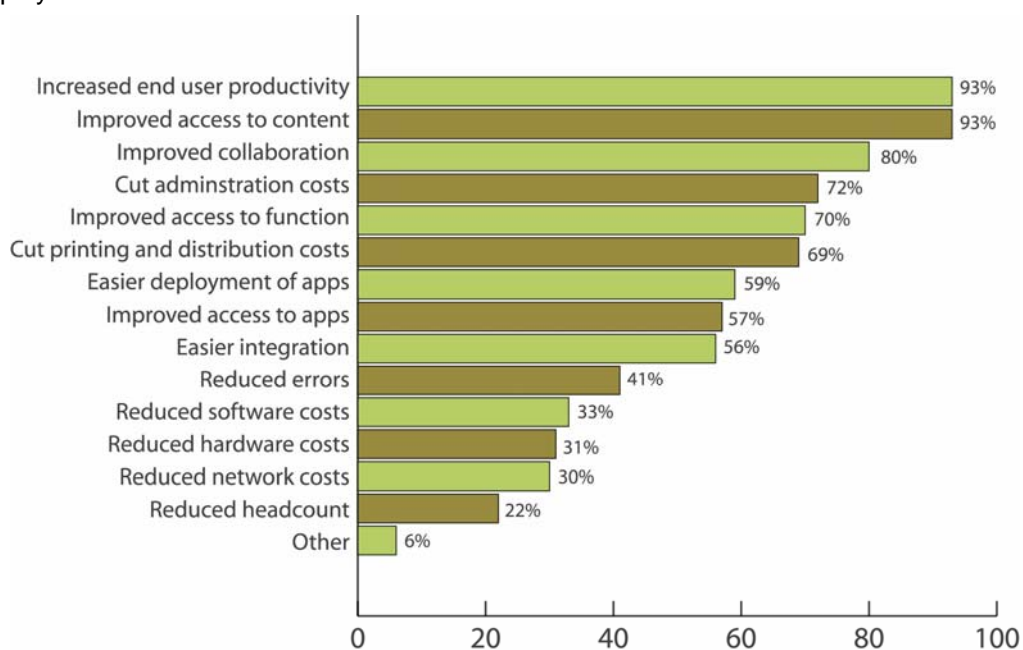
insight

Shiv Singh | June 2005



## The Business Value of Information

More than just a sales tool, the internet is increasingly adopted as a broader communication tool by businesses who realize that the value of information multiplies when it is extended more deeply into and beyond the enterprise. Those who invest in user-centric solutions that empower employees and partners to communicate, collaborate, knowledge share and perform business tasks with greater efficiencies are those that receive the greatest benefit from the online channel. Increasingly, they are turning to employee intranets and portals to fill the role. In a recent Forrester Research survey, 93% of executives named increased end user productivity and improved access to content as stated business goals for their employee intranets.



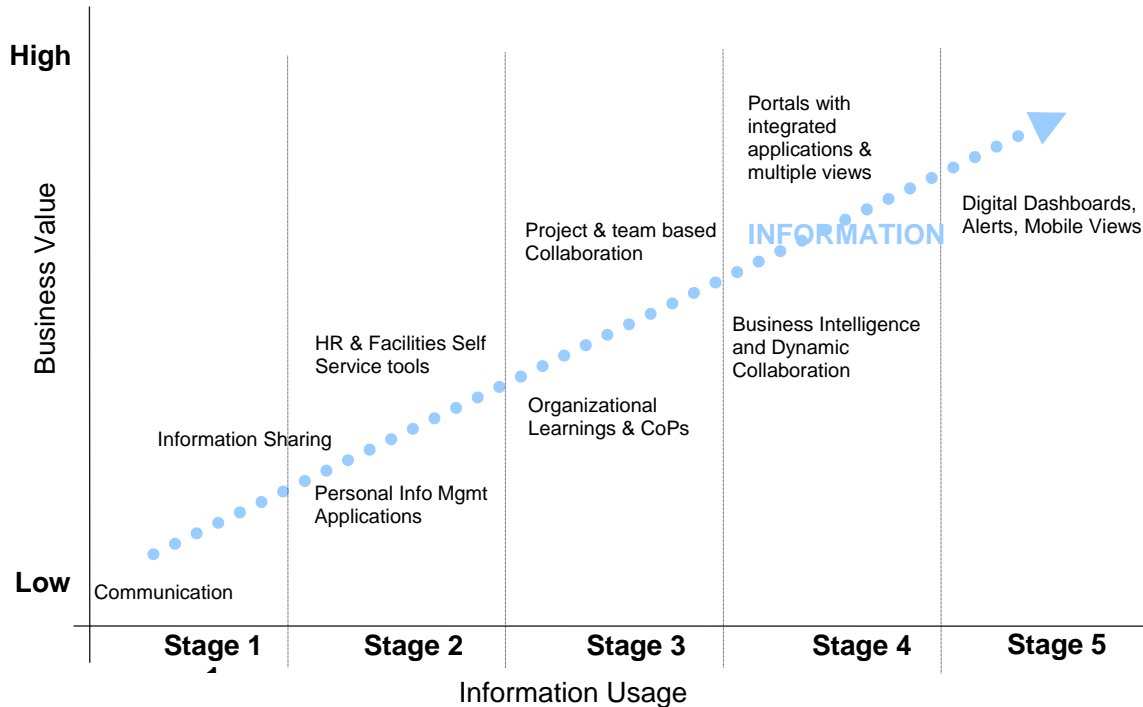
Stated Business Goals for Intranet/Employee Portal  
(survey of 54 executives from >\$1 billion companies)

source: Best Practices in Employee Portal Design, Forrester June 2003

## Maturity Cycles

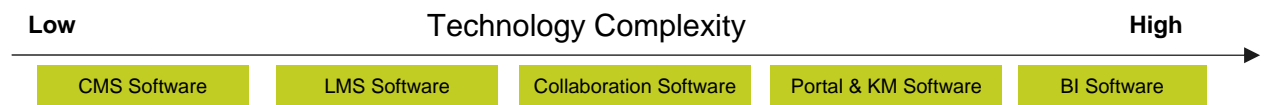
All intranets and extranets go through similar maturity cycles. How quickly they mature depends on the organization and their approach to information. Not surprisingly, the business value of an intranet or extranet rises as the information usage it provides grows. From the early stages of an intranet's development as a general purpose communication tool, through its evolution into a self-service employee portal right on through to its ability to provide digital dashboards, alerts, and other powerful business

intelligence, the intranet may offer a variety of benefits from convenience to operational efficiency to deep actionable insight.



It's important to understand the level of intranet maturity the organization needs and can support before embarking on an intranet development and implementation project. It's also notable that not all organizations develop through each of the stages. Sometimes, continuous optimization within a stage can be the best strategy. A deep understanding of user goals and designing an intranet experience that maps directly to their needs is more important than trying to over-develop the site in order to achieve a level of information usage that may not be warranted.

Depending upon the stage of information usage an intranet supports, the level of technological complexity required also varies. A simple content management software package may be sufficient for a basic communication tool, whereas more sophisticated business intelligence software may be required for those intranets expected to provide detailed metrics and reporting.



### Related Trends

As the customers' demand for more compelling web site experiences influences their expectations for intranets, we see the following near-term trends:

- As more and more B2B sites fail the usability test, enterprises will apply the persona and scenario design techniques now used for commercial sites to their intranet designs.
- Web analytics will be increasingly used to measure intranet users, goals and lifecycles.
- Software vendors will include more off-the-shelf user experience applications into their product releases.
- Companies will invest more heavily in internal user experience teams.
- IT buying patterns will shift back to package application implementations.
- Having near shore/offshore capabilities will be considered less important than a focus on ROI.
- Large vendors will implement strategies to lock enterprise clients into their technology stack.
- Governance will continue to be the most challenging aspect of portal development and maintenance.

## About the Author



**Shiv Singh** is Director of Enterprise Solutions for Avenue A | Razorfish, building intranets for such clients as Avaya, Genentech, Thomson, Verizon, and Western Union. Shiv's experience spans user research, persona creation, conceptual design, Internet/intranet site architecture, information design, and usability testing. He has been responsible for the overall experience design of strategic online solutions for clients in various industries, including retail/CPG, IT and communications, healthcare and life sciences, and non-profit.

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## About Avenue A | Razorfish

Avenue A | Razorfish ([www.avenuea-razorfish.com](http://www.avenuea-razorfish.com)) is the largest interactive agency and an operating unit of Seattle-based aQuantive, Inc. (NASDAQ: AQNT), a digital marketing services and technology company. Avenue A | Razorfish solutions are entrenched in deep technology, rigorous analytics and a rich understanding of customer needs, including award-winning online advertising media and creative, search marketing services, email marketing, and world-class design and implementation of websites and intranets/extranets. Avenue A | Razorfish operates three regions – East, West and Central – with 11 offices located in major U.S. markets. Clients include AstraZeneca, Best Buy, Kraft, Microsoft/MSN, Ralph Lauren, and Wells Fargo.

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