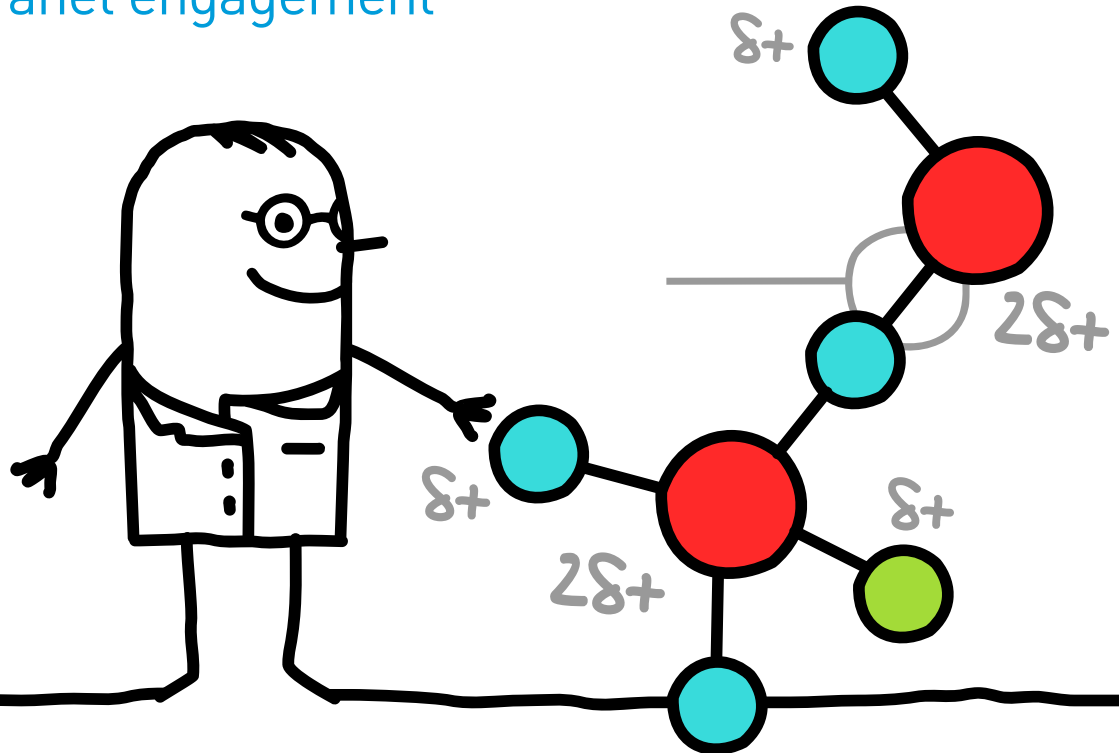
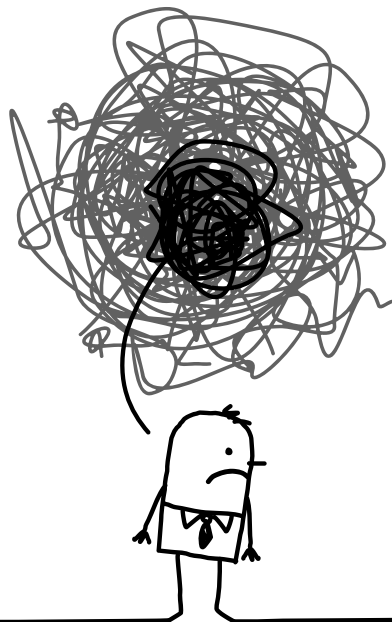


# THE SCIENCE OF INTRANET ENGAGEMENT

The how, why and what of intranet engagement



# YOUR INTRANET: SMART IDEA IN THEORY, NOT SO CLEVER IN PRACTICE?



On the face of it, an intranet is a fantastic idea. With an intranet powering your business, everything gets better. People collaborate more effectively and work more productively. Silos vanish overnight. You get to market faster with more innovative ideas. And the sun always shines.

Of course, then there's the real world.

## BACK ON PLANET EARTH

While a high-performing intranet can do all of the above (with the exception of the weather) too many organisations discover that the theory doesn't quite live up to the practice. And let's face it, an intranet 'solution' that only works in theory doesn't solve anything.

In the real world, businesses all too often find:

- What started well quickly loses steam (and active users)
- People migrate back to the old comfortable ways of doing things – like email and siloed shared drives
- The intranet soon resembles a ghost town – lots of half completed projects, hastily abandoned conversations and a few, dogged users shouting in the dark

This is particularly so in marketing departments and internal communications. It's ironic as intranets offer significant benefits where ideas are currency and brands are global.



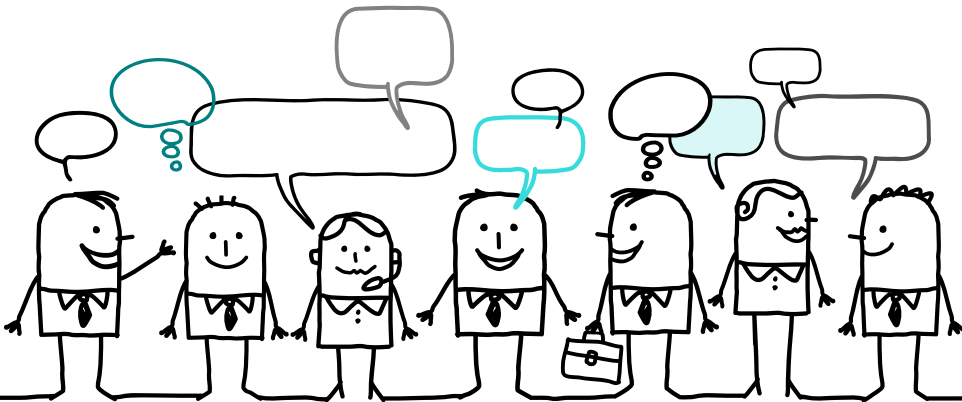
## EVERY INTRANET IS DIFFERENT. ALL INTRANETS ARE THE SAME.

Often, the blame falls squarely on the shoulders of technology. If only the intranet did X, everything would be okay. The reality is again quite different. In our experience, the technology is rarely the problem. In fact, we'll let you into a secret – most modern intranets do much the same things.

More often than not, the problem tends to be less of a technology issue and more of a people issue. Specifically it's a lack of engagement among users and a lack of resources and know-how to do something about it.

But here's the thing: Unless you crack engagement you will never realise your intranet's true potential.

In this guide we're going to take a closer look at what it means to truly engage your users. Importantly, we're going to ditch the fluffy we-all-know-what-we-mean-don't-we approach to engagement and get reassuringly scientific about the whole issue. Grab your white coat, put on your goggles and let's get started.



# THE ANSWER IS ENGAGEMENT, NOW WHAT'S THE QUESTION?

Engagement is a woolly term. One of those ideas that we can all agree is a jolly good thing without anyone ever having to really define what they mean. Internet 'gurus' love engagement.

But for those of you at the sharp end of making stuff work, how can you really tell when your audience is engaged? Basic analytics will only get you so far. And even if you have a strong suspicion that people are disengaged, what should you actually do about it?

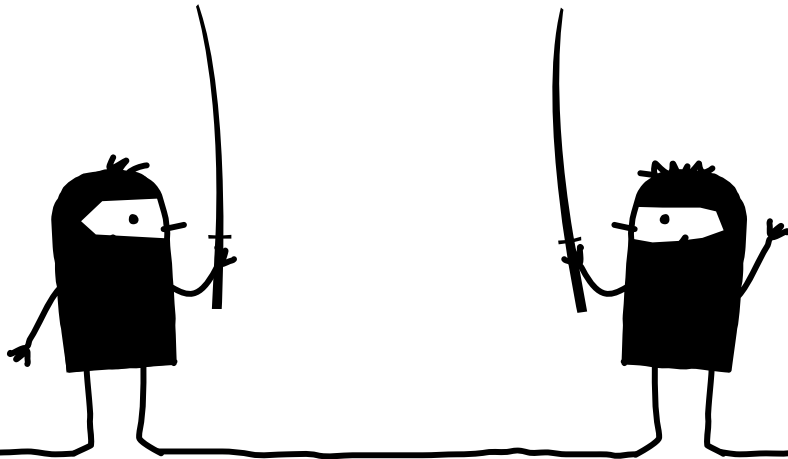
These are the questions we've been wrestling with. And we think we have the answer.

## BRING ON THE DATA NINJAS

While we think we know what it takes to deliver a high-performing intranet (we've had plenty of success after all) we didn't want to simply rely on gut feel for the answer. So we put together a crack team of our top people, locked them in a darkened room and refused to let them out until they came up with the solution.

Many days and many pizzas later they came blinking into the light with the answer – a specific, tangible break down of how engagement works. One that could be analysed and measured. One that would show exactly what was working, what wasn't, and give clear guidance on what to do about it.

The result is the **3D Engagement Formula**.

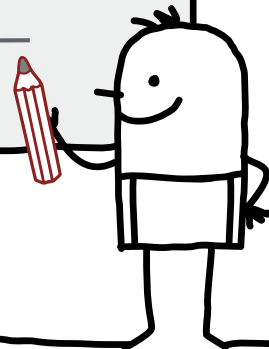


# HERE COMES THE SCIENCE...

Don't panic. We know the **3D Engagement Formula** looks pretty scary. It even gives our in-house rocket scientist the shivers. But on a basic level, it's not as complicated as you might think.

What's more, the actionable insights it delivers can be applied to virtually any digital engagement challenge and to intranets in particular.

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{Engagement} = \\
 & \left( \frac{Ll_D}{\lambda_l \times N_D \times N_U} \right) A_l + \left[ \left( \frac{\left( \frac{T \times A_T}{\lambda_T} \right) + \left( \frac{H \times A_H}{\lambda_H} \right)}{(A_T + A_H)} \right) A_{SP} + \left( \frac{\left( \frac{L \times A_L}{\lambda_L} \right) + \left( \frac{C \times A_C}{\lambda_C} \right) + \left( \frac{P \times A_P}{\lambda_P} \right) + \left( \frac{RA \times A_{RA}}{\lambda_{RA}} \right)}{(A_L + A_C + A_P + A_{RA})} \right) A_{SAC} \right] A_{SI} + \left[ \frac{\left( \frac{SH \times A_{SH}}{\lambda_{SH}} \right) + \left( \frac{X \times A_X}{\lambda_X} \right)}{(A_{SH} + A_X)} \right] A_{SAD} \\
 & \hline
 & N_D \times N_U (A_{SI} + A_l + A_{SAD})
 \end{aligned}$$



# THE 3D ENGAGEMENT FORMULA

This part deals with people's passive interaction

This part, on the other hand, calculates people's active interaction

This is where we calculate people's interest in our intranet

$$\left( \frac{L_D}{\lambda_I \times N_D \times N_U} \right) A_I +$$

Engagement =

$$\left[ \frac{\left( \frac{T \times A_T}{\lambda_T} \right) + \left( \frac{H \times A_H}{\lambda_H} \right)}{(A_T + A_H)} A_{SP} + \frac{\left( \frac{L \times A_L}{\lambda_L} \right) + \left( \frac{C \times A_C}{\lambda_C} \right) + \left( \frac{P \times A_P}{\lambda_P} \right) + \left( \frac{RA \times A_{RA}}{\lambda_{RA}} \right)}{(A_L + A_C + A_P + A_{RA})} A_{SAC} \right] A_{SI} +$$

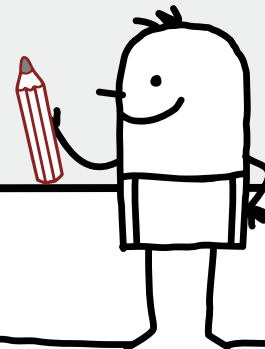
$$\frac{\left( \frac{SH \times A_{SH}}{\lambda_{SH}} \right) + \left( \frac{X \times A_X}{\lambda_X} \right)}{(A_{SH} + A_X)} A_{SAD}$$

$$N_D \times N_U (A_{SI} + A_I + A_{SAD})$$

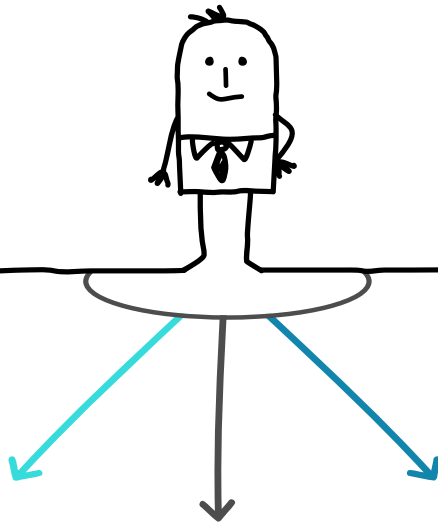
Here's where we measure our audience's advocacy

$$\left[ \frac{\left( \frac{SH \times A_{SH}}{\lambda_{SH}} \right) + \left( \frac{X \times A_X}{\lambda_X} \right)}{(A_{SH} + A_X)} \right] A_{SAD}$$

Everything inside the box is about interaction - it measures a mix of passive interaction and active interaction



# THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF ENGAGEMENT



Fundamentally, engagement comes down to three core observable dimensions: **interest**, **interaction** and **advocacy**. If you have these in sufficient quantities, you'll have engagement and all the benefits that stem from it.

Importantly, the big three do not all play an equal role. Depending on your precise objectives, some dimensions are clearly more important than others. But all three are essential to gaining the maximum engagement for your site.

**Interest** sits at the foundation level. It's a must-have for engagement. Without interest, you may as well pack up and call it a day.

**Interaction** takes engagement to a deeper level. This is where things really begin to hum.

**Advocacy** is the Holy Grail of engagement. Crack advocacy and your site will take on a life of its own and key users will do their best to help you succeed.

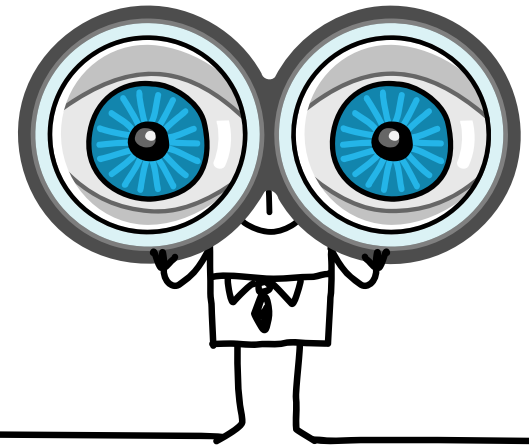
## DECODING THE ENGAGEMENT FORMULA

When you look behind all the brackets and numbers, the **3D Engagement Formula** is basically weighing each dimension for importance. Each dimension is given a score based on real-world performance. And the whole lot tells you where you are and what needs your attention. Simple really.

In the following sections we're going to break down the individual dimensions and show how they impact engagement and what it means for your intranet's success.



# THE INTERESTING THING ABOUT INTEREST







# THE INTERESTING THING ABOUT INTEREST

## HOW TO GET PEOPLE TO COME ON BOARD AND STAY ON BOARD

If people are simply not interested in your intranet, they won't get involved. This is a one-way ticket to a ghost-site populated with zombie content. But how do you really assess how interested your people are?

The first thing is: don't take anyone's word for it. Talk is cheap and, meaning well, people in enterprise situations will feign interest in all sorts of things to keep you happy (and off their backs). So data rules.

There are, of course, basic visitor analytics – if you've built it and no one came, let's face it: they're not interested. But surely there's more to it and more we can do.

## MEASURING DAY-TO-DAY INTEREST

What you're looking for is sustained interest. We're not so interested in just a one-off, 'let's check this thing out' or a 'damn it, I need to upload my monthly lead report' type thing. We want day-in, day-out interest. We want to know that the site has penetrated into the consciousness of the department or team it's aimed at.

So when we measure interest, we look at the number of users (compared to the total available), and how often they visit. We do this averaged per day per user. And we weight it based on its relative importance. This allows us to see whether interest is high, low, increasing or decreasing.



### 3 REASONS FOR A LOW INTEREST SCORE

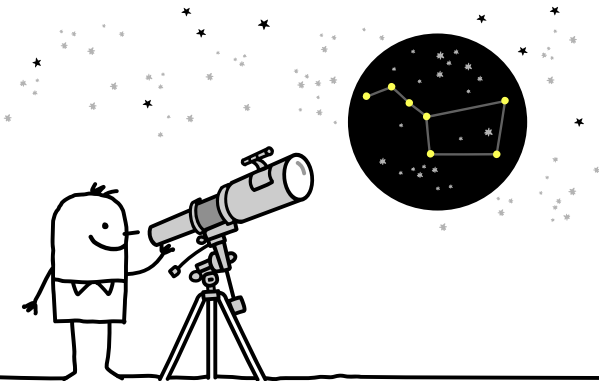
If you have a dis-interest problem, there can be multiple reasons. But from our experience, the most common are:

1. People may not know about the site – the *'Intranet, what intranet?'* problem
2. People may know about the site but may see no reason to visit – the *'Nothing in it for me'* problem
3. People may have visited but they see no reason to return – the *'Nothing new here'* problem

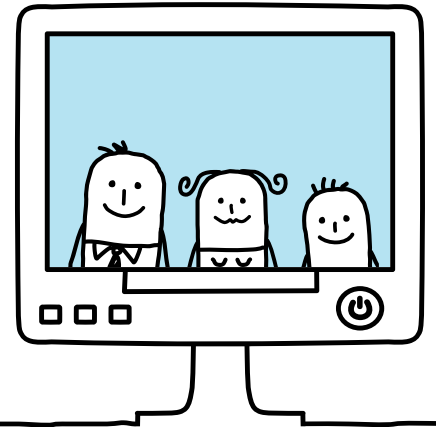
### 3 THINGS TO DO TO INCREASE INTEREST IN YOUR INTRANET

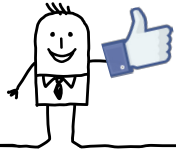
Given the critical role the interest dimension plays in overall success, if you have an interest problem you need to fix it and fix it fast. Here are three things to do for starters:

1. **Market the intranet and make it more visible** – you wouldn't ignore one of your key products and expect it to thrive, your intranet is no different. It needs active marketing and promotion if it's to become top of mind (and stay there)
2. **Highlight its value to the department** – you may have spent time and effort getting your intranet up and working but you need to show other people why they should care and what's in it for them
3. **Keep your people regularly updated** – it's easy to fall out of the habit of checking the intranet, especially in the early days when it is just getting established (or is replacing an older, underperforming version). You need to show your people what's new and what's changed. Fortunately, there are many tools at your disposal (you are in marketing after all)



**IF 80% OF SUCCESS  
IS SHOWING UP –  
THEN WHAT?**





# IF 80% OF SUCCESS IS SHOWING UP – THEN WHAT?

## HOW TO CONVERT INTEREST INTO INTERACTION

So you've got people's interest. Good job. But what should you do with it? The second dimension is focused on converting that interest into interaction. By this we mean what your users actually do while they're on your intranet.

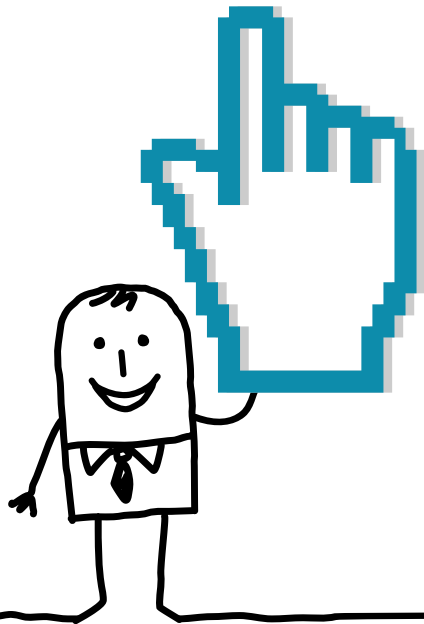
The way people interact can be split into two broad types: passive interaction and active interaction.

## MEASURING THE PASSIVE MAJORITY

Passive interaction can best be described as people spending time on the site. They've shown up and they've looked at stuff. In passive interaction, we measure how much time people spend and how many different pages they visit.

This is important to understand because most people will be passive visitors (a fact that's just as true on public sites as on corporate intranets). For example, we may love exploring our favourite news site every lunchtime, but how many of us actually go further and leave comments, or 'like' things? Not so many. But regardless, we would still consider ourselves to be highly engaged with the site and may even recommend it to others (but more on that later).





## STIMULATING THE ACTIVE MINORITY

Passive interaction is fine as far as it goes. If, however, it's collaboration you're after, you'll need more active interaction. You will need people to actively contribute to making the site richer, deeper and more useful.

These are the active users – the web 2.0 users, the enterprise Facebookers, the tweeters. When we measure active interaction we're looking for a combination of tangible behaviour such as likes, comments, new posts and ratings. We're also looking to see whether these activities are growing or diminishing over time. And we're adjusting them for their relative importance – a new post shows a greater level of interaction than a simple one-click like for example.

## GETTING 20:20 VISIBILITY ON INTERACTION

Together, these measurements deliver a clear, quantifiable picture of how often and how much our community is interacting with our site. It shows the life and soul of the site's day-to-day workings so it's a critical component to get right.

And as before, if it is going wrong, you need to address it to get back on track.



## 4 REASONS WHY YOU MIGHT GET A LOW INTERACTION SCORE

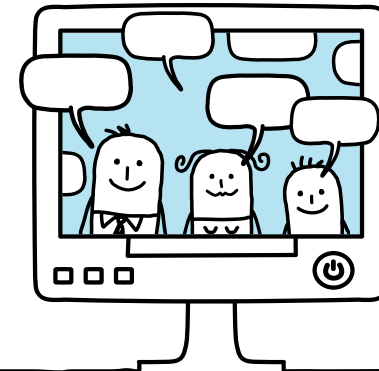
Typically, when we see an interaction problem across a site, there are four questions we ask first:

1. Is there enough engaging or provocative content?
2. Are there opportunities for new interactions on a regular basis?
3. Is interaction being adequately encouraged and praised?
4. Are interactive elements visible enough and intuitive to use?

## 4 WAYS TO INCREASE INTERACTION ACROSS YOUR SITE

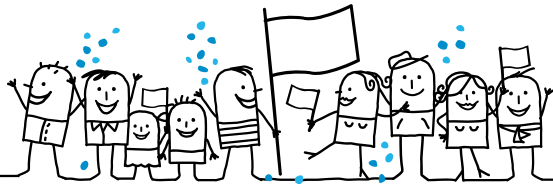
So if interaction is flagging, what can you do to boost it? Here are four approaches we've seen work well for our clients:

1. Develop a content strategy and activation calendar
2. Run promotions to specifically encourage both passive and active interaction
3. Make sure you actively and positively react to contributors
4. Carry out user testing to ensure making a contribution is simple and intuitive to do



# GROWING YOUR OWN ADVOCATES





# GROWING YOUR OWN ADVOCATES

## HAVE YOUR PEOPLE SELL THE INTRANET ON YOUR BEHALF

Running an intranet (especially a struggling intranet) can be a lonely job. The responsibility can weigh heavily on just a single pair of shoulders. What you really want is for others to take up the torch and share the load. You need advocates – the third dimension in online engagement.

These are the people who will sell the intranet, its resources and its value for you. They will bring others along with them. And if you can achieve a reasonable degree of advocacy, chances are your site will reach critical mass and become self-sustaining.

But what makes effective advocacy?

## HOW TO BE CONTAGIOUS

Today, advocacy in the digital world comes down to users spreading the word by engaging with their networks. This could be via social sharing. It might be through attracting new members to the community. Or you could use surveys to identify users' attitudes. When we assess advocacy, we're looking at how people engage with others both on the intranet and, where appropriate, in the outside world. We then adjust this score for relative importance and see whether it's increasing or declining.

Of course, if advocacy is declining (or absent) you need to explore how to get more people sharing more content more often.





### 3 COMMON CAUSES FOR A LOW ADVOCACY SCORE

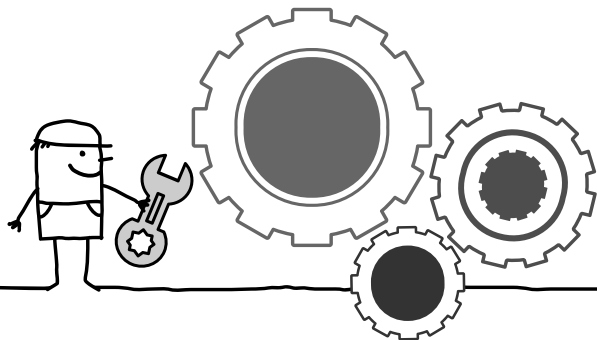
As with the other two engagement dimensions, there can be multiple reasons for poor advocacy. The three we see most often are:

1. Interest and/or interaction scores are low – without success in the other two dimensions, you cannot expect users to become advocates for your site
2. The site may not be enjoyable to use – people may struggle with a poor UX or dull content
3. There is a big leap from being a simple fan to becoming an active advocate

### 3 SOURCES OF GREATER ADVOCACY FOR YOUR SITE

For an intranet with an advocacy problem, there are tangible steps you can take to get people spreading your content more often:

1. You've already taken the first step by reading the last two sections
2. Take a good look at your UX and content strategy. Aim to delight users and re-introduce the wow factor
3. Help them make the leap. Make both departments and individuals famous by highlighting them to others – maybe as an office/person of the month. Then encourage them to tell their peers when they get recognised





# TODAY THE MARKETING DEPARTMENT, TOMORROW THE WORLD

## USING 3D ENGAGEMENT ACROSS YOUR INTRANET AND YOUR WIDER BUSINESS

Getting engagement right will revolutionise the use (and value) of your intranet. It will help you deliver on the promises you made when you first decided it was a good idea. And by using the 3D Engagement Formula, you can assign hard metrics and find actionable fixes for the problems that plague too many intranets.

While 3D Engagement was originally developed to be used in creating highly effective intranets for marketing teams and internal communications, it doesn't have to end there.

## DELIVERING THE KEYS TO WIDER EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

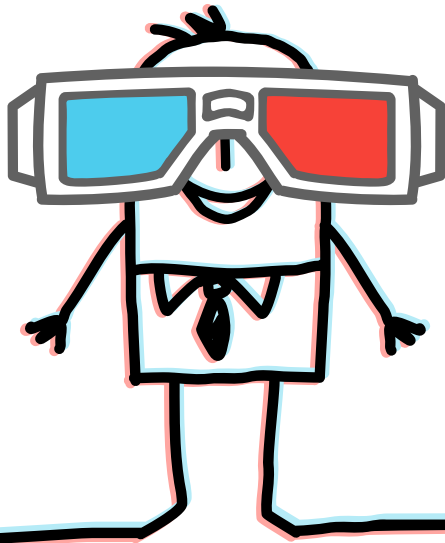
What you learn can have a positive effect that reaches from your local marketing team up to the office of the CEO. That's because 3D Engagement principles can apply to more than just your intranet.

By plotting your 3D Engagement score against other metrics – demographics, productivity, organisational/departmental performance, innovation rate, employee Net Promoter Score etc - you can begin to correlate intranet engagement with wider business-critical measures.

These are the measures that have a direct impact on wider business performance. By placing engagement in the broader context of the business as a whole, you'll be able to have more meaningful discussions with your company's leadership on the topics they care most about.



# TAKE THE NEXT STEP WITH A 3D ENGAGEMENT CLINIC



While we've presented an overview of the formula and its implications, we have not gone into the full depth of how it works in detail. If you'd like to learn more, we're happy to book you in with our team for a 3D Engagement Clinic where we can take you through the approach, look at how it could apply to your specific challenges and leave you with recommendations for what to do next. To schedule your 3D Engagement Clinic, simply contact our MD, Kevin Cody at [kevin@smallworlders.com](mailto:kevin@smallworlders.com).



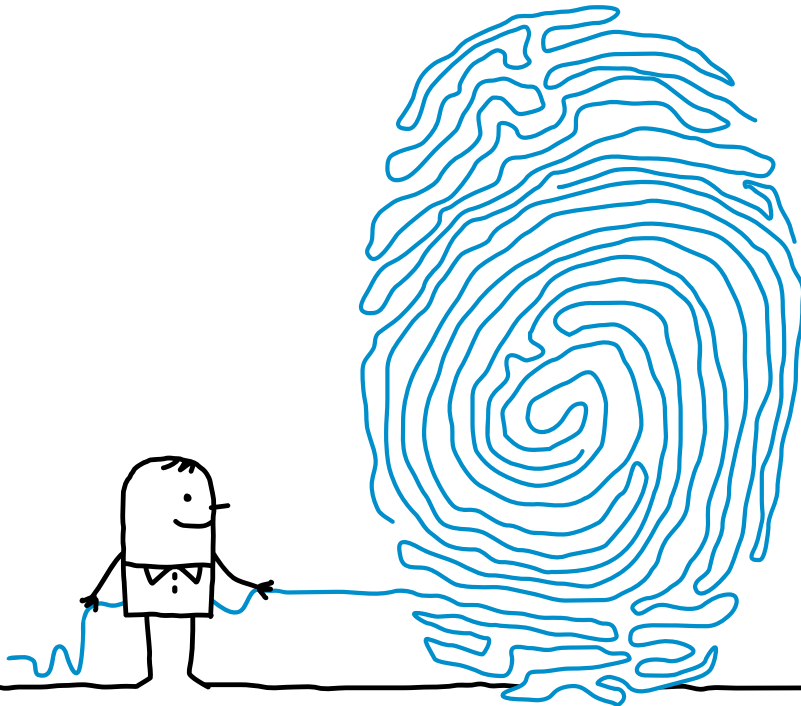
# ABOUT SMALLWORLDERS

At SmallWorlders, we're privileged to work with some of the world's top brands, building some of the smartest intranet platforms around. In every case, the communicators we work with are passionate agents of change, eager to adopt new technologies to create a more collaborative, more productive – and more fun – workplace. We adhere to one of the core guiding principles of internal communications: people first, technology second. No matter what cool new tools are available, the most important thing is getting people together to work smarter, better and more enjoyably. We can build you an internal communications platform your whole organisation will love. Visit [www.smallworlders.com](http://www.smallworlders.com) and take a look at what we've done for brands like Heineken, Nestlé and De Beers.

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