claromentis

Internal Communication Strategy

Best Practices and Trends to Help You Succeed in 2024

Contents

Overview

> ## *The art of communication is the language of leadership*
>
> 👤 James Humes (1934-2020)

Effective communication is the lifeblood of any organisation.

When it flows seamlessly throughout your business it is a sign of health, productivity, and growth.

But, if you have too many siloed operations, disparate platforms, and inaccessible information it will stagnate.

Then all the familiar symptoms of poor communication - confusion, frustration, and stress will start to present themselves.

These all cost your business in time, money, and wasted potential.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

With the right internal communication strategy, you will be able to:

→ Improve information management throughout your business.

→ Cultivate your company culture based on your chosen values and purpose.

→ Enhance employee engagement and collaboration in the digital workplace.

→ Empower your workforce by increasing productivity through communication.

→ Measure the effectiveness of your actions to show ROI.

In this guide, we will discuss the most important goals, challenges and trends within the internal communications industry. All with a view to setting you up for success in 2024.

We'll also give our recommendations on how to address these issues, as well as tips about software that can help you.

Over the past three years, the digital workplace has become the new normal.

We will help you take it from normal to extraordinary.

The State of Internal Communications in 2023 / 24

Who knew that this decade would be the "roaring twenties" of internal communications?

Since 2020, hybrid and remote working have brought many business benefits:

Increased productivity

Both employers (38%) and employees (46%) state that remote/hybrid working has increased efficiency. Only 13% of organisations saw a reduction in productivity.

Improved work-life balance

The flexibility and autonomy on offer means that 98% of workers want to work remotely, at least some of the time.

Reduced costs

Reduced costs. With reduced rent, insurance, and utility bills employers can save an average of $11,000 (£8,628) a year for each half-time remote worker.

Increase employee retention

Hybrid and remote working can reduce staff turnover by 12%. Indeed, 66% of employees who prefer hybrid working models say they would look for another job if asked to return to the office full-time.

But, for a lot of organisations it made communication harder. In fact, research suggests that collaboration and staff communication are some of the key challenges facing businesses.

What's more, this new normal has led to:

Increased reliance on digital communication tools

In 2020, daily users of Microsoft Teams rose by 50%. This trend has continued, with the likes of Zoom and Slack continuing to grow and dominate the market.

Non-verbal communication challenges

It's said that tone, voice, and body language make up 93% of communication. Even with cameras on, it can be hard to replicate this online which can lead to miscommunication.

Overcommunication and digital fatigue

Ensuring your message reaches your audience is important. But, remote workers already spend 13 hours a day on their screens. Adding to that with too many notifications can affect their wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Miscommunication due to lack of context

81% of employees say that miscommunications are common at work. If you're not careful, digital communication won't provide the same level of context that a quick chat in the office can.

As you can see, there has never been a greater need for effective workplace communication.

This is why internal communications have unprecedented levels of influence over leadership. In fact, 2023 marked the continued expansion of internal communications within businesses.

As a result, you may think the industry has never had it so good. And that this is the start of a golden age of internal comms.

But, there are some drawbacks appearing as we go through 2024.

Despite increased expectations, internal communication teams don't have the resources to meet escalating demand. This reduces communicators' ability to be strategic in their role.

For example, recent research shows that on average across businesses there is only one internal communications team member per 1,000 employees.

Not only that, but 25% of teams say that they have no dedicated communications budget.

Typically, this means that small, under-resourced teams need to make the most of what they've got. And it's leading many practitioners to burn out.

Sound familiar?

That is why you need a foolproof internal communications strategy for 2024 and beyond. One that elevates your position, enabling you to deliver tangible, measurable business outcomes.

So, let's get started.
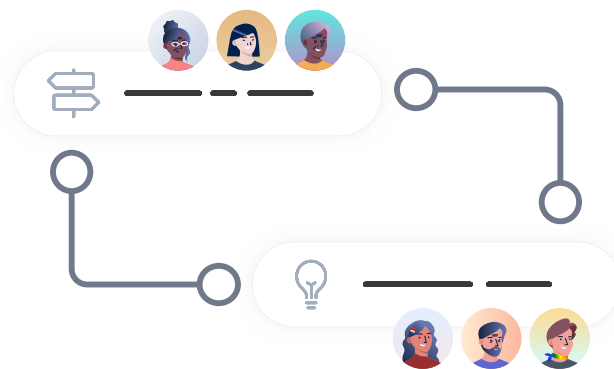
The Top 5 Goals of Internal Comms Teams in 2024 (and How to Achieve Them)

According to the 'State of the Sector 2024' report by Gallagher, there were five clear priorities that teams focused on.

We will examine each of these in turn, showing why each goal is important and how you can achieve them.

① Engaging teams around purpose, strategy, and values

② Developing or refreshing internal communication strategies

③ Enhancing leadership visibility

④ Enhancing people manager communication

⑤ Improving impact measurement and evaluation

The Goal

Improving team engagement and awareness of purpose, strategy and values remains a top priority for organisations. This is regardless of size, industry, and location.

Ensuring awareness and engagement with these core initiatives can:

- **Improve alignment, clarity and motivation**. Understanding the 'why' and 'how' of your business helps people work better. They can collaborate better towards the same goals with less confusion, miscommunication and duplication of work.

- **Attract and retain talent**. 52% of jobseekers won't accept a job offer if they don't agree with your purpose or values. What's more, existing employee buy-in makes them 87% more likely to stay.

- **Make delegation more effective**. Clearly defined guidelines help employee decision making as they understand the overall business strategy behind their actions.

But, often this is all easier said than done.

In 2023, 90% of organisations planned change programs. Not only that, in 2024 the three most common planned changes are system and technology changes, culture changes and brand and offering changes.

These are significant changes requiring effective, strategic communication and change management.

Yet, this is a weakness across most businesses and a core challenge for IC teams. In fact, many businesses report "change fatigue", disengagement and a lack of understanding across their workforce.

52%

of jobseekers won't accept a job offer

The Solution

To ensure alignment across your business, you need a long term vision. Then, you need to strategically communicate that vision to your staff.

Find a software that enables you to share clear, concise, and relevant messages to your workforce. If they have a single source of truth, in a centralised location, they can easily remind themselves of your North Star goals.

According to the 2024 Gallagher report, focusing on strategic communication, with easily accessible supporting documentation greatly increases employee understanding.

We also recommend creating specific channels to encourage company wide communication. These allow your employees to discuss purpose, values, and strategy in a safe environment. They can share their expertise, ask questions, and subscribe for updates.

All of which will make a huge difference to any change management process if you need to make a strategic pivot.
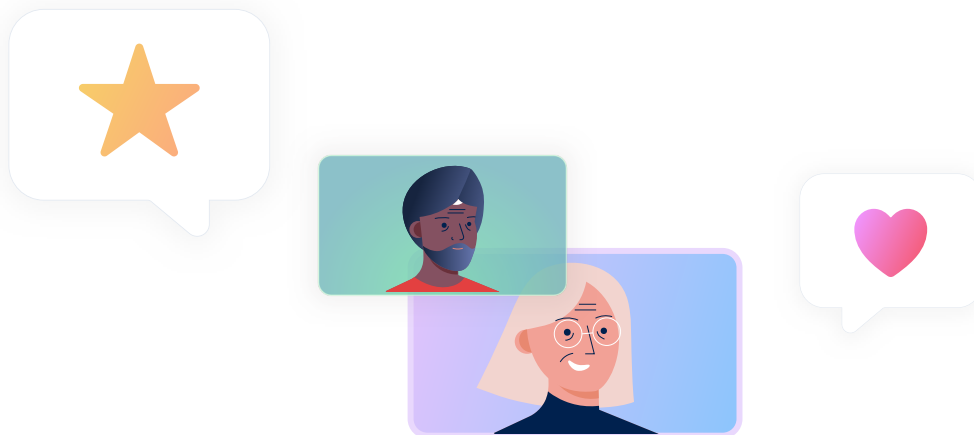
The Goal

An effective internal communication strategy ensures employee engagement, interaction, and understanding of business goals.

It needs to be comprehensive enough to ensure consistent communication, but flexible enough to react to unexpected changes.

A delicate balancing act, whether you're updating your strategy or starting from scratch.

The Solution

If you don't have an internal comms strategy, you'll have to start from scratch. But, typically your strategy development will involve the below steps.

1. **Audit your current strategy.** What is and isn't working? Who is involved? Who is/are your audience(s)? Is your strategy aligned with your business objectives? You should also get feedback from employees to discover their pain points and preferences.

2. **Assess your technology requirements.** Identify and analyse your current setup. What channels are missing? What technology would be most suitable to put them in place? If you're not sure, why not partner with an expert to get the help you need?

3. **Establish timelines, budget, and buy-in.** You now know what you want to achieve, you just have to get approval. Provide stakeholders with your anticipated budgets, timelines and ROI. If you do, they'll be more than happy for you to execute your plan.

4. **Establish KPIs and monitoring mechanisms.** To prove ROI, you need to know what to measure. Common KPIs include employee retention and turnover; email open rates, and intranet usage.
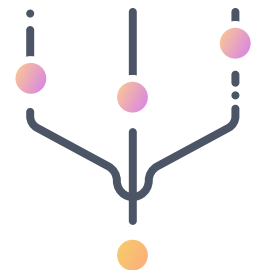
Once you have your strategy in place, monitor and improve it over time.

And don't be afraid to make changes if the data is telling you something isn't working.

The Goal

According to the Gallagher report, leadership visibility is becoming increasingly important for organisations in 2024.

After all, it's leadership that sets the tone, vision and strategy of your business. The past few years have been turbulent. So, leaders have to strike a balance. They should focus on both guiding the business, but also be available to employees.

As the report states, leaders need to be seen as "real, empathetic, and responsive in order to drive trust, and in turn, increase employee engagement and retention".

The Solution

If visibility is key you need communication channels that make it easy to both share and access key information.

Find an internal communication software that enables leadership to share their message and communicate with employees via discussion forums.
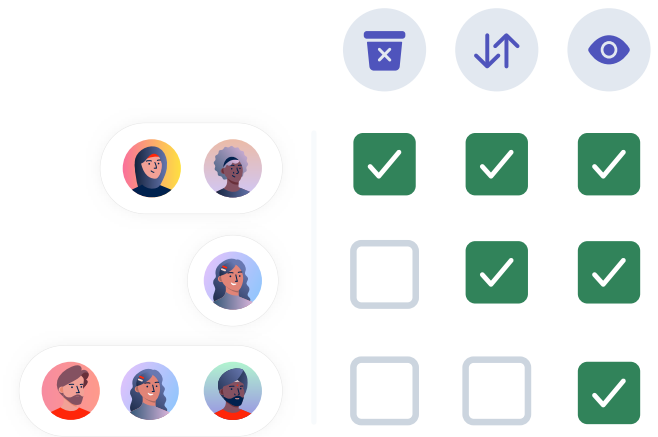
④ Enhancing people manager communications

The Goal

Communication is a crucial part of leadership. Yet, 69% of managers are uncomfortable communicating with employees.

Also, only 50% of employees say they understand what their managers want from them.

In 2023, this led to a third of internal comms teams viewing managers as simply a "cascade channel". And the other two thirds made little or no use of them at all for corporate messages.

Fast forward to 2024, and the picture isn't much better. 60% of internal comms teams say that manager communication is "below expectations".

Yet, 84% say they rely on managers for communication to some degree.

After all, they're the ones on the ground. They're likely to have a better understanding of employee sentiment than those higher up in your business.

This reliance on managers shows why you should support them in their communication. With a bit of help, they could be a vital channel within your communications strategy.

The Solution

Provide communication training to managers who need it and make them accountable for it. You can do this by providing them with resources, as well as with on-demand learning via an LMS or other e-learning solution.

Research shows this makes managers more than 2 times more likely to exceed communication expectations. Helping them better showcase the vision, ethos and expectations of your company to employees.

> **Managers can also enable a two-way feedback loop between the workforce and leadership. A vital component for any successful communication strategy.**

Find a platform that enables simple, effective communication at a macro level while encouraging feedback.

As an example, with Claromentis, internal comms can make announcements and share company news and blogs. People can like, comment on, and share any of these messages. If further discussion is needed, they can then create dedicated discussion spaces, polls and surveys to address any issue.

⑤ Improving impact measurement and evaluation

The Goal

Proving ROI has always been a challenge within internal communication teams. This is due to difficulties in quantifying benefits and a lack of standardised metrics.

Despite this, studies show that highly engaged business units generate 23% more profit.

So, it's important that teams bridge the gap between their actions and business outcomes.

But, teams say that issues such as a lack of time, resources, and benchmarking data make this difficult. They also lack the tools and software to collate their data and analyse it.

The Solution

Firstly, when measuring your impact forget benchmarking. Look to your baselines instead.

Every business is different, and if you're always improving then that is success. After all, no-one knows your business better than you do.

The most common metrics that teams measure are reach and employee understanding. But, there are better things to monitor if you want to prove ROI.

We recommend focusing on the below to show value:

- → **Behaviour change**. Measure adoption rates for new processes and changes throughout your business to see if your message is sinking in.

- → **Business outcomes**. These can include employee engagement rates, staff turnover and absenteeism, number of errors, onboarding time and ease of collaboration.

- → **Employee satisfaction**. Use employee surveys, pulse checks, and net promoter scores to see if your workforce are happy with internal communication.

Demonstrating ROI can be difficult, particularly if you don't have the tools to support you.

Find a platform with audit logs and dashboards that allows you to analyse, track, and report on the data that matters.

The 5 Most Common Internal Comms Challenges in 2024 (and How to Overcome Them)

The Gallagher report also spoke on the challenges teams face across organisations.

Remember, every challenge is an opportunity to do better. And we're here to help with every challenge you face.

1. **Lack of time and capacity**

2. **Employee disengagement**

3. **Lack of budget**

4. **Internal technology and channels not fit for purpose**

5. **Overcommunication without clear direction from leadership**

Lack of time and capacity

The Challenge

As we said above, the average business only has one internal communicator per 1,000 employees. With a scattered hybrid workforce, increased information overload, and shifting priorities teams can find themselves stretched thin.

The Solution

As the old saying goes, "work smarter, not harder".

There is never going to be a perfect job without stress and complications. But, there are things you can do to make your life easier.

For example, you can improve productivity by automating core processes. Why spend hours working on something when automation could do it for you?

Not only would this make things easier for employees, it would also streamline your workload. All of which helps you make the most of the team, time, and resources you have.

(2) **Employee disengagement**

The Challenge

Recent research shows that global employee engagement has hit a record high of 23%. But, this means the vast majority of employees are either not engaged or actively disengaged.

This has to change, especially considering that engagement is the main metric internal comms teams are accountable for.

But, it's an uphill battle, with the majority of employees (60%) currently "quiet quitting" their positions.

Taken together, these low engagement rates cost the global economy $8.8 trillion dollars. That's 9% of global GDP.

Ongoing costs of employee disengagement can be hard to measure. But, estimates suggest that a disengaged employee costs your business 34% of their salary.

This means if you have an unhappy employee earning $50,000 (£40,000) you will lose $17,000 (£13,500) per year.

The Solution

Engagement starts with communication. You need to create a two-way dialogue between leadership and your workforce. Especially in a hybrid/remote working environment.

Also, consider revisiting your "Employee Value Proposition" (EVP), discuss the policies and benefits on offer. If you make sure that your offering to employees is good, you are more likely to keep them.

Not only that, but it makes your business more attractive to potential new hires.

You can better engage your employees using discussion rooms, polls and surveys.

They help you take the pulse of your workforce and discover what benefits, perks and issues they actually care about. This can be through open dialogue or an anonymous questionnaire.

Then you can collate the results and enact meaningful change to re-engage your staff.

③ **Lack of budget**

The Challenge

Times are tough for businesses. Inflation, interest rates, and general costs are on the rise. So it's little wonder that internal comms teams are being asked to make the best with what they've got.

In fact, most teams in SMEs across the UK have a budget of less than £20,000 for the year. This is the same in the USA, Canada and Europe. What's more, 64% of them anticipate either a budget decrease or no change.

This represents a 19% increase on last year's figure. So, the trend is clear, for the foreseeable future teams are going to have to do more with less.

The Solution

To combat budget constraints, you need to find the most value for your cost.

For example, compared to alternative providers, the Claromentis intranet provides both substantial savings and Enterprise level capability.

It's easy to run, with no IT involvement required. We designed it with non-technical people in mind. With other providers, the complex design, maintenance, and increased overheads would increase your costs significantly.

So, if you want a cost efficient solution that can solve all your communication challenges, why not reach out today?

④ Internal technology and channels not fit for purpose

The Challenge

According to Gallagher, 33% of organisations are not happy with their current channel mix.

Not only that, many practitioners say there isn't enough investment in the technology that would help make it better.

Technology and channels not fit for purpose can cause confusion, frustration and disengagement in your workforce. After all, they say the medium is the message.

If you don't get it right you can put your whole communication strategy at risk.

The Solution

Streamline your technology and channel mix to simplify your communication.

Replace disparate, siloed systems with a single centralised hub. This means that everything you and your employees need would be in a single, secure location.

For example, on our platform you can keep your workforce information with news channels and announcements. This helps you deliver key updates in real-time.

Not only that, it's both flexible and easy to use so you can adapt it to any use case you need.

And if you can't figure it out on your own, we can provide you with all the support you need to create the perfect internal comms platform for your business.

(5) Overcommunication without clear direction from leadership

The Challenge

Approximately one fifth of businesses say that leadership doesn't provide adequate direction. Yet, 15% say that there is too much communication.

Unfortunately, this [overwhelm of unclear, irrelevant communication is common in modern digital workplaces](#).

This overload appears to be connected to the usage of too many digital tools, too much information and too many hours spent in online conferencing.

[Experts say that our brains are not attuned to media multitasking](#). It has a negative impact on our perceptions, decision making, communication, emotional regulation and memories.

So, if your employees are suffering from digital information overload it's going to significantly affect their performance.

The Solution

Communicate with purpose. Think about your message, who needs to know and why they need to know it. If you can't answer both of those questions adequately then you don't need to send the message.

The message itself should also be succinct, personalised, and relevant to the receiver.

You can ensure this within an intranet environment using [role-based permissioning](#). This allows people to only access the things they need, reducing confusion and frustration.

Personalisation is key, but some messages are for everyone. So, how do you ensure that everyone receives these critical messages?

Claromentis has an ['Announcements' application](#) that pushes important messages to users. They then have to tick a box that shows they received and understand the message.

This monitoring of acceptance rates helps in a crisis or when making business changes as you keep people informed while reducing stress.

Internal Communications Trends to Look Out for in 2024

We've talked about the priorities, goals and challenges facing the industry today. But, what about the future?

Here are some internal communications trends you need to consider for 2024 and beyond.

① Being more proactive with internal communications

② An increased focus on wellbeing, culture, and belonging

③ Rise of employee advocacy

④ Increased focus on DE&I and ESG Initiatives

⑤ Shifting attitudes towards artificial intelligence

① Being more proactive with internal communications

The Trend

A common complaint of internal communications teams is that they spend the majority of their time reacting to requests.

Although this can be helpful, if you're spending too much time reacting then you don't have time to be strategic. And, as we've discussed, ROI can be difficult to prove at the best of times. Even more so if you don't have time to act with purpose.

Combine this with tight budgets and limited resources and you can see why teams want to be more proactive.

What You Can Do

If you want to be more proactive you need a strategic plan. You also need software capable of backing it up.

We recommend something powerful, yet simple. For example, our intranet has drag and drop capabilities meaning you can create the perfect environment for employees.

It allows you to send highly personalised messages to the right people at the right time. Not only that, you can easily upload, edit and share documents on the platform.

This simplicity of function means that you won't waste time reacting. You can be proactive with a structured system where everyone has what they need, or the ability to easily find it.

All of which means you can focus on providing the most value possible.

② An increased focus on wellbeing, culture, and belonging

The Trend

The last few years have been a period of reflection for the workforce. Employees now put more emphasis on their personal purpose and values when thinking about their career.

But, it seems employers have some catching up to do.

Gartner states that [82% of employees say it's important that their organisation sees them as a person](#), not just an employee. But, only 45% say that their employer actually does see them this way.

Internal communication teams are trying to counteract this view. In fact, the Gallagher report shows organisations with fewer than 5,000 employees listed "Culture and Belonging" as the primary purpose of their internal communications team.

By focusing on wellbeing, culture, and belonging internal comms teams seek to humanise the world of work. The objective being to improve engagement, retention and productivity.

What You Can Do

The right intranet software helps you [give employees the authentic, people focused experience they desire](#).

You can celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, add social features, and appreciation pages to encourage interaction between colleagues. Also, creating user profiles will help employees add a bit of personality and help people get to know each other better.

Finally, make sure that all your culture policies and documents are easy to find, update and share.

③ Rise of employee advocacy

The Trend

Did you know that [52% of consumers trust an "average employee" more than the CEO](#)?

That's why employee content on social media gets 8x the engagement of content shared on company pages.

With stats like these it makes sense that internal comms teams want to encourage employee advocacy and thought leadership. All with the goal of promoting your brand, services and products.

What You Can Do

Provide willing employee advocates with the resources and information they need to help promote your business. Encourage them to share on social media, host webinars, and create content.

But, only ask employees to do things they are comfortable with. Advocacy should never be mandatory, but do encourage people to engage with it.

Depending on your business size, employee advocacy may be difficult to manage. This is where [an intranet like Claromentis can help](#).

You can use permissioning to ensure that your advocates can easily access everything they need. This can include things like product knowledge, best practices, and FAQs. It could also be any assets that help maintain a consistent brand tone across employees like: tone of voice guidelines, graphics, and pre-approved posts.

## ④ Increased focus on DE&I and ESG initiatives

The Trend

The majority of businesses are familiar with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) regulations. But many businesses are starting to also focus on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives.

There are minimum standards for DE&I policies in most countries. However, not all companies need to adhere to ESG regulations.

That being said, investors, consumers and job seekers want to engage with businesses that reflect their values. If you fail to prioritise DE&I and ESG you risk reputation damage and reduced growth.

To protect their brand, culture and values internal communication teams want to increase focus on DE&I and ESG initiatives. This makes sense as the Gallagher report found that:

- 60% of organisations don't have a clearly defined DE&I strategy.

- More than a third of organisations don't talk about ESGs at all. And of those that do only 10% of ESG communication encourages the business and employees to reduce their environmental impact.
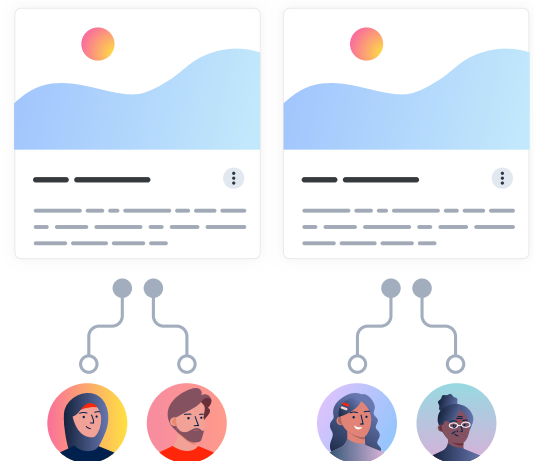
What You Can Do

Appoint champions to run awareness days and establish employee resource groups. Internal training and events can help with these initiatives and keep them front of mind for staff. Be practical, show them what they can do to help.

Beyond this, proving your compliance with either DE&I or ESG frameworks can be time-consuming. Especially if you have to manually prepare for audits.

With effective policy management and automation you can make sure you're always up to date. So when the next inspection or audit happens you're already fully prepared.

⑤ Shifting attitudes towards artificial intelligence

The Trend

One of the most (in)famous developments of recent times, it's almost impossible to write about business strategies without mentioning artificial intelligence.

Since the launch of ChatGPT in 2022, attitudes towards artificial intelligence have changed. People have stopped worrying about being replaced, and more about how they can use it to make their job easier and better.

For example, in 2023 40% of internal comms professionals said that AI would impact the way they work. Within a year, that figure has risen to 68%.

Yet, only 20% of teams say that their organisation provides AI guidance, training, or resources.

So we find a sector willing to embrace the technology, but they don't have much of a plan on how it can help.

What You Can Do

According to the Gallagher report, 50% of respondents are "Enthused" or actively "Championing" AI.

This makes sense, considering key sector challenges include lack of time, budget and capacity. If you can use generative AI for internal communications then you unlock a lot of lost productivity in your team.

However, you will have to find the balance between AI and human communication.

If you aren't already, encourage your teams to look into the practical applications of AI for internal communications. For those who aren't enthusiastic about it, be sure to highlight the potential benefits of the technology.

And be sure to let them know that they cannot be replaced.

For example, Claromentis has recently introduced an AI powered chatbot on our Discover platform.

CLaromentis **AI R**esource or CLAIR trained on our knowledge base and helps answer customer queries.

This hasn't replaced our amazing team, or our comprehensive knowledge base. But, it helps answer more simple questions allowing our internal experts to handle more complex, nuanced support tickets.

We think this is the perfect use case and proof of concept for artificial intelligence. One that augments what our team can do and makes the most of the resources available to them.

# Claromentis: a Single Platform for all Your Communication Needs

In this ebook, we have discussed all of the top priorities, goals, challenges and future trends facing the internal communications industry. And we've provided both recommendations and actionable next steps to help you on your way.

The only thing you need now is Claromentis.

Our secure platform is a powerful integrated digital workplace built for modern business. Accessible anywhere, anytime, on any device, it can take your internal communications strategy to the next level.

With our simple, easy to use intranet software you can:

→ Improve employee communication, engagement and collaboration.

→ Make information management simple with intuitive drag and drop features.

→ Generate personal, relevant and valuable content through role-based permissioning.

→ Deliver meaningful results when tracking engagement with user stats and audit logs.

→ Simplify management and employee acceptance of corporate policies.

→ Ensure your workforce is up to date with the latest industry or company knowledge.

→ Provide relevant e-learning to enable employee development and training.

→ Streamline and improve employee onboarding.

→ Strengthen partner and customer relationships with an integrated ecosystem.

→ Increase productivity with automated processes.

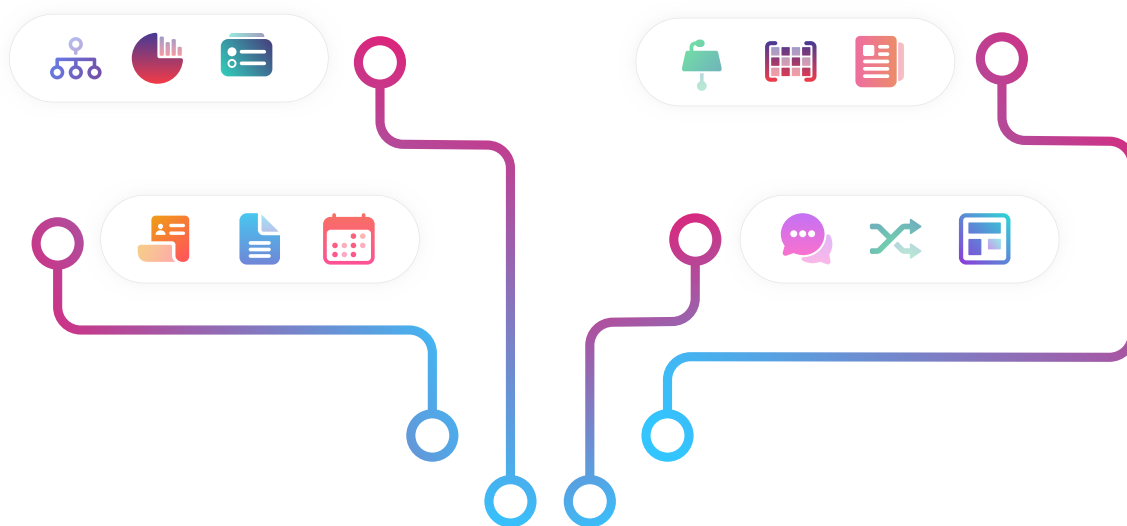→ Balance user experience with compliance efforts (we're ISO and HIPAA compliant).
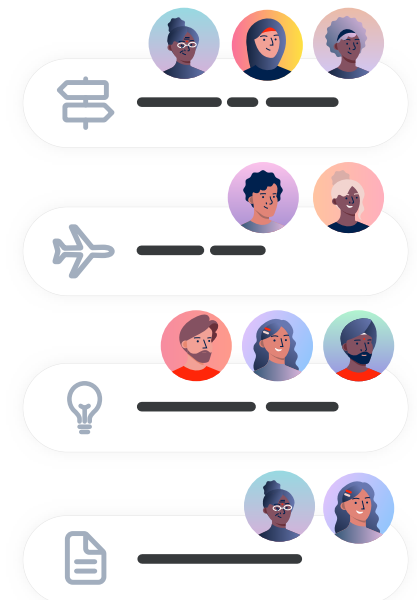
But, don't just take our word for it. Why not try it yourself?

Sign up now for a personalised demo of our full platform. Our team will show you everything we've talked about and more. After all, the intranet is only one part of our integrated platform.

Our expert team can also show you our Business Process Automation, LMS and Task Management toolset. All of which give you a cost-effective, collaborative area for connecting teams, improving engagement and boosting productivity.

This demo is a fully personalised experience that is dedicated to showing how Claromentis can help you with your specific business needs and goals.

Not only that, we'll provide this bespoke portal in your company's branding. All so you can give your staff a workplace to call home.

Book A Demo