



# The Business Case for Internal Search

How internal search improves employee satisfaction, return on investment, and return on value.

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# Internal search is foundational to business success.

Businesses rely on the ability to instantly find information and gain insights in large amounts of data from a variety of sources. Having a robust internal enterprise search is foundational to accomplishing these goals and makes organizations more productive and effective.

We use search for a lot of reasons: we're looking for valuable insights, key pieces of information, and relevant answers. These days, we search for a rapidly increasing amount of structured and unstructured data stored in a multitude of sources like databases, websites, applications, and file shares.

Search engines like Google have shown us how powerful search can be, but also give employees high expectations for internal search platforms.

These expectations have been hard to meet. However, when organizations do meet these expectations, employees are more engaged, productive, and create measurable returns on the investments.



# 56%

Of employees, without a robust internal search, report never finding the information they're looking for



# “

**Knowledge and insight exist inside your infrastructure; it's just waiting to be found.**

**Jim DuBois**  
Corporate Vice President &  
Chief Information Officer

*Microsoft*

# Effective search is crucial for today's knowledge workers.

Multiple trends are increasing the demand to implement or improve internal search, such as:

## User demand for information

Over the last two decades, technology trends such as social networking, machine learning-driven personalization, natural language, and mobile computing have revolutionized our internet experiences. Both business users and consumers have grown accustomed to on-demand functionality. Users expect to find information fast, even as data volumes have skyrocketed, and the pace of change has accelerated.

## Increasing complexity in enterprise IT

While the volume of different types of data within and outside of the enterprise is exponentially increasing, the complexity of enterprise IT environments is also dramatically increasing. At the same time, IT departments must respond faster than ever before to issues such as security breaches, application performance degradation, and system outages. Search makes it possible to derive insight for many use cases across large and disparate IT environments.

## Increasing supply of unstructured content

The volume, velocity, variety, and value of unstructured content in today's digital world are rapidly increasing. Enterprises are using multiple specialized systems to improve productivity within specific functions and business processes. This results in information being trapped in those systems, unavailable to others, therefore leading to decreased productivity, employee frustration, and duplication of efforts. It also creates a growing opportunity for internal search to identify relevant and valuable information across an expanding variety of systems, making it available to a larger number of users.



# Internal search empowers employees and boosts ROI.

In the past, search solutions didn't keep pace with these trends, making it difficult to establish a business case for deploying them. Generally, there were two major impediments to search implementation.

**High Costs:** Search implementations in the last decade have included costly expenditures like large amounts of custom code and continual support and maintenance.

**Soft ROI:** Return on Investment (ROI) has historically been considered a soft measurement and therefore not hard enough to justify high investment costs.

However, in recent years much has changed in three very important fronts:

## New technologies reduce implementation costs.

Software-driven solutions provide modular products and phased deployments, cutting down on implementation costs by factors of 2-4 times. Additionally, this approach results in low support and maintenance costs while providing continuous improvements to customers.

## ROI is quantifiable beyond productivity.

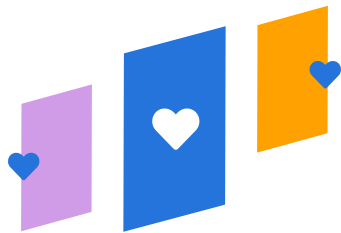
Studies have proven that employee engagement drives both top and bottom-line growth, spurring the rise of measuring Return on Value (ROV) over ROI.

## Digital transformation is now employee-facing.

Until recently, digital transformation investments have been customer-facing, with a focus on integrating digital technology into all areas of a business. This resulted in a fundamental change to how businesses operate and deliver value to their customers. It's now recognized that customer facing digital transformation

# The key benefits of employee-facing digital transformation.

Historically, organizations have invested heavily in customer-facing digital transformation. However, employee-facing digital transformation has key benefits that improve an organization's top and bottom-line.



## Empowering employees

Providing employees the autonomy and tools they need to do their jobs successfully improves quality of life, engagement, and organizational success.

An Altimeter group study revealed that one of the highest ranked benefits of digital transformation for organizations included a positive impact on employee morale, with "37% of respondents stating that, after increased market share, employee engagement was the next big return."



## Breaking down barriers

Jim DuBois, Corporate Vice President and Chief Information Officer at Microsoft stated, "Knowledge and insight exist inside your infrastructure; it's just waiting to be found. By securely breaking down information barriers we'll understand and learn how everyone in the company uses their time and help maximize the impact of our workforce."

No digital transformation initiative succeeds if it doesn't include internal search, which is a fraction of the total cost, but potentially the cornerstone of its success.

# Internal search improves productivity and ROI.

Generally, ROI is about reducing operational costs or improving productivity. The ROI measurement for internal search is based on the time saved finding the information required to do one's job.

Let's review a few research-based statistics around how much time is actually being wasted across organizations as employees struggle to find the information they need to effectively do their jobs.

## According to IDC:

- 36% of a knowledge worker's day is spent looking for and consolidating information that is spread across a variety of systems.
- 61% of these workers regularly access four or more systems to find the information they need to do their jobs.
- Nearly 15% need to access eleven or more systems.
- Despite all of this searching, only 56% even find the information they are seeking.

Let's assume that each employee saves 15 minutes a day when they are looking for information.

For a **1,000 person organization** the savings equate to about:

- 15,000 minutes per day (250 hrs/day)
- 75,000 minutes per week (1,250 hrs/week)
- 3,750,000 minutes per year (62,500 hrs)



# \$3.13 MIL

Dollars wasted per year by employees searching for relevant information.

This equates to \$3.13 million wasted per year. Our calculation assumes an average employee cost of \$50 / hour — assuming per employee loaded costs of \$100K per year.

You could easily calculate the potential impact on efficiency by using your own assumptions based on the above framework.

We could also use a more sophisticated model by using different savings for different functions.

## For example:

1. Sales and support teams are heavy users who average a set number of searches per week.
2. Finance staff are light users and search much less frequently.

As simple as this seems, measuring ROI for internal search can still be challenging for organizations several reasons, such as:

- They don't have an accurate way to measure the amount of time employees spend searching for information and expertise.
- They don't have a good grasp of knowledge workers' productivity.
- Factors such as duplication of work are rarely acknowledged in knowledge industries.
- The savings from being able to leverage existing legacy systems versus replacing or migrating them are not accounted for.

To overcome these challenges, organizations can determine ROI by looking at specific business use cases for internal search, such as:

#### **Using search to implement an information portal**

This portal could improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of customer service by reducing call times and call volumes and giving self-service access to customers to solve their issues or obtain the status of an issue.

Support personnel could use this same portal to ensure that customer questions are answered correctly the first time.

#### **Providing sales staff with access to enterprise information**

Each time sales professionals call customers or prospects, they must be prepared to answer a host of questions.



**37% of respondents stating that, after increased market share, employee engagement was the next big return (on employee morale).**

From an Altimeter group study

With a diverse set of complex products and services to sell, sales professionals often rely on many forms of dispersed knowledge assets and the expertise of their distributed colleagues for the support needed to move the sales process forward.

Giving sales staff access to enterprise information shrinks the sales cycle, improves prospects' satisfaction, and differentiates account executives from competitors.

#### **Using search to innovate, reduce duplication, and get products to market quicker**

R&D and engineering organizations can use search to find critical information to help innovate, reduce replication, and get products to market quicker.



# Internal search improves Return on Value.

Given the challenges of measuring ROI and the inaccuracy of the methods used in the past, we have to find a more accurate way to measure ROI. Return on Value (ROV) is a better measure that captures the return on search investments because ROV also focuses on returns gained from having more engaged employees.

If we think about employees as customers and apply the same ideas and techniques used for customer engagement to employees, then we can have a meaningful and positive impact on them. Engaged employees are:

- Passionate about their jobs
- Committed to the organization
- Put discretionary effort into what they do every day

Internal search can be a facilitator, so “*you only look one place*” to find the information you need to do your job. This centralized search can address many of the productivity issues employees are facing.

## **ROV takes all of the following into consideration:**

### **Increased employee satisfaction**

Workers who can readily find the information they need to do their jobs are naturally happier and more productive.

### **Increased customer satisfaction**

Customers who interact with well-informed employees receive the information they need quicker and have a better overall customer experience.



**Inventories of experienced customers, employees, and investors are a company's most valuable assets.**

**Frederick F. Reicheld**  
Director

*Bain & Company*

### **Employee loyalty and commitment**

Employees who feel like their employer invests in their success exhibit higher degrees of loyalty than those who don't.

### **Employee engagement and contribution**

When employees are productive and happy, they contribute more and make the company a better place to work.

### **Decreased dependency on a few experts for information**

This enables those few experts to produce more rather than answer repetitive questions.

Successful organizations realize that by making it easier for employees to find information, they are demonstrating a commitment to support and help their employees succeed. This results in more engaged employees, which leads to many benefits for the organization.



## Robust internal search makes organizations more successful.

The truth is that an organization's most valuable asset is the team that makes the organization successful. In *The Loyalty Effect* by Bain & Company, Director Frederick F. Reicheld builds a powerful economic case for loyalty, concluding that "Inventories of experienced customers, employees, and investors are a company's most valuable assets. Their combined knowledge and experience comprise a firm's entire intellectual capital."

It goes on to describe loyalty leaders as those who "choose human assets carefully, then find ways to extend their productive lifetimes and increase their values."

Reichheld argues that good business leaders often focus on improving human assets to grow the value of their businesses.

Focusing on employee productivity improves loyalty and commitment. Many of our customers focus on their employees, acknowledging that this is key to their long-term success and the driver for their investments in internal search.

Any internal digital transformation project **MUST** include internal search. Search is a critical part of internal digital transformation initiatives and is a small percentage of overall costs.

Consider the dollar value of improved morale, satisfied customers, or a more systematic transfer of employee knowledge. Ultimately, a company loses out on valuable ROI and ROV when it lacks a robust internal search environment that empowers its employees.

# See it for yourself.

Create a search experience that seamlessly connects all of your systems with BA Insight.

**Schedule a demonstration.**



[bainsight.com/request-a-demo/](https://bainsight.com/request-a-demo/)

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