



WHITE PAPER

Measuring Internal Communications

**YOUR LAST MINUTE GUIDE TO EVALUATING YOUR
COMMUNICATION EFFORTS**



ThoughtFarmer

Where Teams + Ideas Grow



MEASURING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

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STEP ONE

START WITH ‘WHY’

I know you are eager to get measuring—but let's first take a minute and think about why it's worth measuring internal communications.

Understanding the significance of measuring internal communications will help you stay focused and motivated throughout the process, and can also help you set some tangible goals.

Your why may be unique to your organization, and you may have your own reasons for measuring internal communication efforts, but here are a few reasons why measuring internal communications is worth the effort:

TO IMPROVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

How can you improve communications if you don't understand where you have failed? Measuring your internal communication efforts will give you real data and awareness and baselines to plan for the following year and beyond.

TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION OR KNOWLEDGE

Isolated knowledge is a growing concern—especially as many organizations remain in a remote or hybrid structure. Learning where content and communication gaps occur can help identify what tools you might need to strengthen knowledge management throughout your organization.

TO IMPROVE COLLABORATION

Lack of collaboration is consistently cited as a factor in workplace failures. As more and more businesses offer hybrid and remote working options for their employees, we can no longer rely solely on in-person collaboration. Measuring your internal communications efforts can help guide which platforms are necessary to grow and sustain collaboration.

TO STREAMLINE SPECIFIC PROCESSES

It's common to have legacy ways of systems or processes in place; like the over reliance on paper, or continuing to depend on instant communication applications for messaging that may better be served with email or intranet communication. Understanding wasted or unnecessary practices helps improve the entire chain of internal communication.

TO IMPROVE WORKPLACE CULTURE

When you identify communication and culture barriers, and set forth plans to address them, everyone wins. Your employees become happier and your workplace becomes more productive. Corporations that cultivate a positive and strong workplace culture could see a 400% growth in revenue.

TO JUSTIFY YOUR INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET

Whether you are thinking about adding more technology or initiatives, or whether you are having to defend your current spend, you need data to back it up. This is particularly important when dealing with business leaders who speak the language of key performance indicators. And while “we are communicating better” may be true, you need the numbers to verify it. Measuring your success gives you the ammunition you need to prove the value of internal communication.

TO SAVE TIME AND MONEY

A data-driven approach to internal communications can help you identify and understand which content your employees crave. It will also help you avoid ineffective comms strategies which can potentially save a lot of money. Having the data takes the guesswork out of communication initiatives so you can be hyper focused on the right approach.

TO MAKE YOU LOOK LIKE A HERO

Despite the pandemic putting internal comms folks on the map, it's still an undervalued job. So when you can measure the extent of all your efforts, you will emerge as a true hero within your organization.



PRO TIPS

- Consider your organizational goals, and where possible try to align your internal communications goals to your organizational goals.
- Also consider looking at core values and mission statements.

STEP TWO

CONDUCT A (QUICK) COMMUNICATIONS CHANNEL AUDIT

Ok, so this might not be so quick, but it isn't as exhausting or as comprehensive as something like an internal content audit.

All we are really asking you to do is identify all the different communication channels within your organization. This could include your intranet, newsletters, email, instant messaging apps, or any other ways you disperse communication throughout your organization. If you ran any town hall meetings, include it here.

Don't forget to include the less obvious channels as well, such as bulletin boards, internal podcasts, or even project management tools.



ACTION

Select the communication tools your organization uses

List of communication tools

Here is a complete list of all the tools used to communicate internally in the last 12 months:

- ☐ Intranet
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Town hall meetings
- ☐ Video meetings
- ☐ In-person meetings
- ☐ Asana
- ☐ Additional communication tools:

STEP THREE

SEND OUT A SURVEY

Now that you have a good understanding of all your internal communications tools, it's time to find out what your employees think of them, and just how effective they are.

The best way to do this is to send out an employee survey.

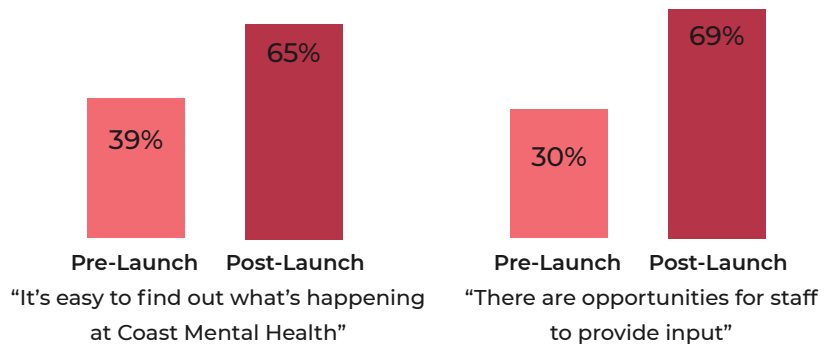
Ok, yes, perhaps you should have been sending out surveys throughout the year, but it's never too late. And since this is the last minute guide, we are going to give you permission to send out your first survey now.

Surveys are fantastic because they give you real data right from employees. We will get into analytics further down, but surveys are powerful in a different way. Because as much as analytics from tools like your intranet provide value, they do not give you an understanding of the 'why', or where your employees are getting frustrated. To get to the heart of your comms efforts, you will need to hear directly from your employees.

Running a survey periodically can show the strengths and weaknesses of your comms efforts over time. It can also provide guidance on how your team can focus their efforts.

Our customer Coast Mental Health did an excellent job of this after they launched their intranet in 2019. Their survey (conducted prior to intranet launch, and then repeated after six months) helped them create clear benchmarks for measurement. Questions asked revolved around employee communication, culture, and the challenge of locating information.

As you can see, they were able to measure significant improvement in their internal communications. The survey also helped them develop action items for further improvements to employee engagement.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

While it likely varies depending on your communication channels and the size and scope of the teams and departments, here are some questions to consider including in your survey:

- Do you feel connected to the company's mission and purpose?
- Do you understand the corporate goals and how your work ties into them?
- Do you feel there is strong communication between silos and departments?
- If you are a remote worker do you feel connected to what's happening inside the company?
- Have you been with the organization less than one year? If so, do you understand where to access important information?
- Do you understand where to access important information?
- Do you enjoy reading internal communications?

Consider asking these questions on a sliding scale, so you can truly understand how employees feel. Make sure to also add a text box comment section, so employees can add context to their rating.

Within your survey you could also ask the question of "On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to recommend this organization as a good place to work?" This will provide you with an employee net promoter score, or eNPS. eNPS is an indispensable employee engagement metric because it gives you a good benchmark of the state of your workforce, and can be directly correlated with profitable outcomes.



PRO TIPS

- Keep it concise and to the point. The end goal of the survey is to have valuable data. If your survey is too long or extensive, your employees are less likely to complete it, and you won't get the data you need.
- Consider making your survey anonymous to increase the response rate.

STEP FOUR

CONSIDER A FOCUS GROUP

You can also obtain feedback on the effectiveness of your internal communications using focus groups.

The main advantage of these groups is that they allow you to generate real conversations that shed light on deeper areas of concern.

Focus groups are great because they can help facilitate productive discussion about internal communication within your organization. Even in hybrid or remote workplace settings, virtual focus groups can still produce strong results.

Consider inviting an employee from each department in your organization. As your colleagues may not be as excited as you are about this meeting, you might want to add a bribe—like free lunch—for their valuable time and input.

While a focus group can be conducted at any time, it's beneficial to host one after reviewing the results of your internal comms survey. From here you can select a few areas of interest and determine which questions you want to ask your focus group.



PRO TIPS

- While the intent of a focus group is discussion, you still need a strong purpose and desired outcome (otherwise you will just annoy your participants by wasting their time).
- As a general rule, five to six questions is appropriate, and there should be a logical flow to each question.
- To prevent your focus group discussion from turning into a venting session, prioritize potential solutions.
- Consider concluding each session by asking participants the one thing they would like to change if they could. This question can help highlight issues that are considered most significant by the people who matter most.
- Since employee time is valuable, you might want to incentivize focus group participation

As focus groups tend to produce qualitative data, it might be challenging to display the results of these discussions. Here is what your slide on focus groups might include:

Focus Group Discussions

A focus group was held two months ago to discuss internal communication

| Number of participants | Number of departments represented | Chief concerns cited | Things that are working well |
|------------------------|---|--|---|
| 9 | Four: sales, customer success, finance, and development | Lack of employee recognition, lack of inter departmental communication | Launch of new internet, frequent CEO emails |

STEP FIVE

LOOK AT YOUR EXIT INTERVIEWS

Exit interviews are a valuable way of collecting organizational feedback during the offboarding process. While at first glance this may not seem worth measuring—or a task for HR—it's a great opportunity to see if communication played a role in any turnover.

For example, maybe a departing employee feels as though they aren't recognized for their efforts, or perhaps they feel that they were not included in important information.

Another rising factor in employee turnover is the desire to work remotely. This isn't directly related to internal communication, however if your organization does not currently support remote work because they don't have the tools required to support it, it can quickly become an internal comms challenge.

Mental health is also an important consideration. Do your employees feel supported in their role? Do they feel supported by management? Again, not directly a communication concern, but it definitely plays a role.

2021 Exit Interview Statistics

A summary of employee turnover in the last 12 months

| Number of employees who departed | Average employee tenure | Top reasons cited for departing |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 32 | Six years | New opportunity, lack of internal communication, lack of recognition |



PRO TIPS

- Make friends with HR! You will need their support and assistance on this section.
- Start planning for next year by suggesting communication questions in upcoming exit interviews.

STEP SIX

REVIEW YOUR INTRANET ANALYTICS

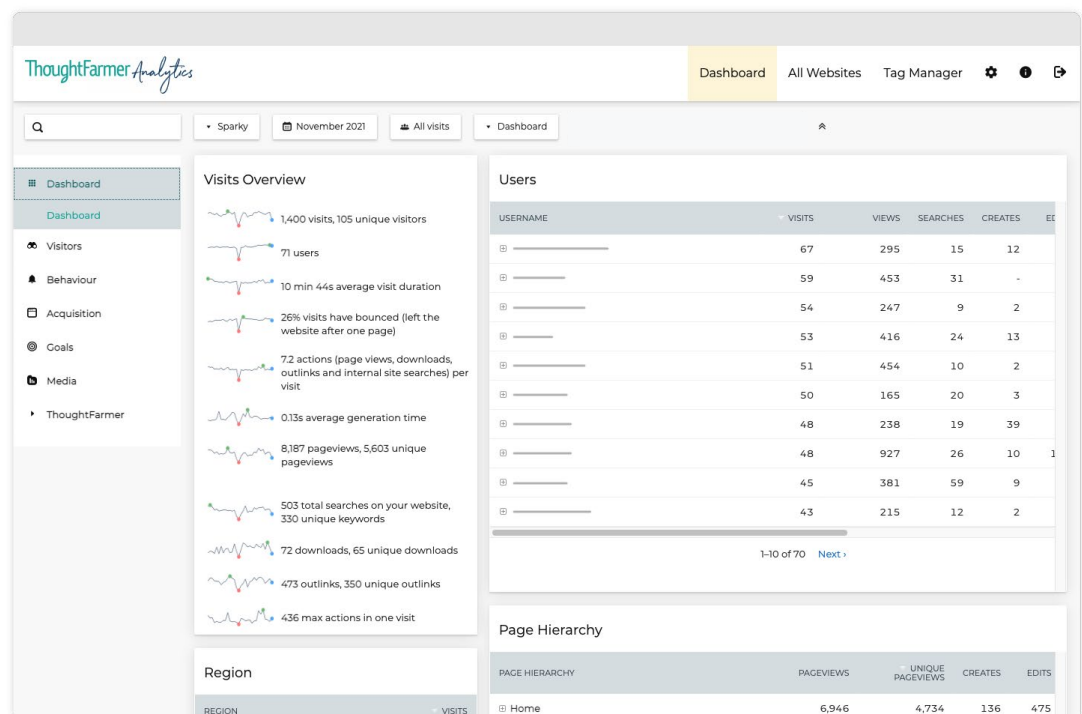
Despite the amount of effort that goes into deploying and maintaining an intranet, many internal communications professionals still neglect to measure the success of their intranet

Monitoring and measuring your intranet and using the insights gained to improve its effectiveness will ensure your intranet stays relevant, and that it remains a valuable platform for employees. Intranet analytics provide an in-depth understanding of which pages have the highest visits, where your employees are engaging with content, and more importantly, which areas they aren't.

Intranet analytics can feel overwhelming if you have never used them before, but they aren't as complex as you might think.

Your intranet solution hopefully includes an intranet statistics package. If you are a ThoughtFarmer user, metrics will begin accumulating as soon as users interact with the platform. Once these metrics accumulate, you can easily view them in a dashboard and pull reports. ThoughtFarmer also makes it super easy to set up goals and conversions.

HERE IS A PEEK AT WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS SEE WHEN THEY OPEN UP THEIR INTRANET ANALYTICS:

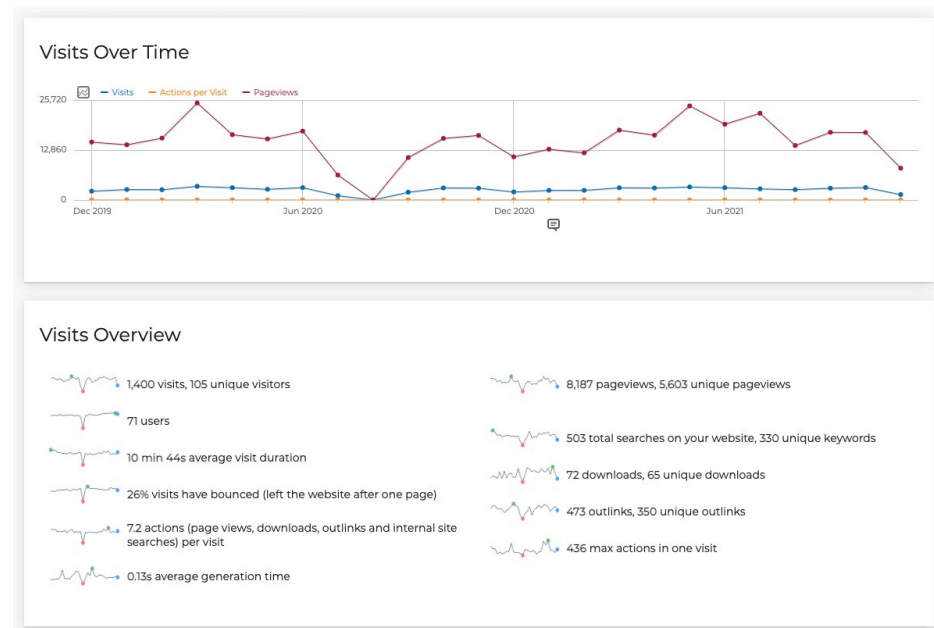


What to measure

REACH

Reach is the number of users using your intranet for a specified period of time. This could refer to employees visiting your intranet, or viewing a specific document on your intranet. Reach can be measured per day, month, or year. If this is the first time you are measuring your intranet's success, reach will provide a nice baseline for future measurement.

Reach is also useful when trying to understand the effectiveness of critical employee announcements, and CEO messages. In other words, are your employees reading what you want them to read?



TOP USERS

As the name suggests, top users are your employees who use your intranet the most. This might include designated super users (chosen advocates who act as your intranet ambassadors) or employees who organically use your intranet a lot. Knowing who your engaged users are is useful when trying to understand engagement at a deeper level. This group can provide tangible feedback into what they like, what they don't like, and what can be improved.

This group is easy to find as they are consistently on the top of the list of employees who frequently comment, create, and edit content. Don't forget to omit intranet managers from the list, as they will likely already be at the top.

Top users are easily identified within ThoughtFarmer, through the Users report. Depending on how your intranet is used, you may find that Visits and Views are the best determinants of active users. Alternatively, content Creates and Edits may be the best indications of active users for your intranet.

USAGE

Another popular metric for internal communications professionals is usage. This includes specific metrics like views, visits, bounce rate, average time on site, etc. Similar to Google Analytics, it can provide a lot of insight into your users and your content.

To track usage metrics, look at things like top users, top commenters, top searches, top viewers, and top editors. You will also want to search for top keywords to understand what content your employees may be searching for. Once you have identified these groups, segment them in a way that makes sense to your organization; for example, by role, team, or location.

PAGE HIERARCHY

Finding out the most active areas of your intranet is a very important metric to have. You can use this information to take a number of actions, including:

- Adding quick links on the homepage to popular pages deep in the hierarchy.
- Finding out which groups/sections are the most active and looking for usage patterns that can be used in other areas of your intranet.
- Providing this information to content authors to know which sections to target for high visibility of new content.

CONTENT ENGAGEMENT

Your intranet content's success isn't solely determined by views and visits; it's also determined by deeper engagement through shares, likes, and comments. These metrics reveal the true impact of a specific content piece.

To measure this, look at critical content pieces and measure comments, follows, subscribes, or even shares.

COMMUNITY METRICS

These metrics refer to groups, the number of groups, and/or the number of contributions from these groups. With the majority of workplaces either operating remotely or in a hybrid setting, this segment is increasingly more useful to measure and can provide a lot of insight into how remote workers interact with communication.

To measure this start by selecting any one of the metrics above. The next step is to segment by a specific group. Segments can be created via the ThoughtFarmer Analytics admin panel by defining segment name and criteria. Using segments, you can display just tracking data that is relevant to your reporting needs.

COST SAVINGS

While cost savings might not feel like an internal communication metric it does relate to your internal communication budget. After all, if you know that your intranet reduces communications costs, wouldn't you want everyone to know?

There are many ways to realize a potential cost savings. This could be things like a reduction in travel, or employee turnover, or the amount of time employees save by quickly locating content and expertise across the organization. This metric won't magically appear in your analytics, but you could determine cost savings by measuring something like paper usage before your intranet is deployed, and then measuring 6 months to a year later.

Obviously there are additional metrics you can measure too, including organizational objectives, productivity, cost savings, and knowledge management. We won't dive too deep into this here, as this whitepaper is primarily on internal communication measurement, but if you want further information on this, you can check out our article: [8 key intranet metrics you should be tracking, or The best intranet metrics measure business outcomes.](#)



PRO TIPS

- Get creative with segmentation. Segmenting by departments and teams can provide valuable insight into your organization, it is just as important as general intranet usage.
- Make sure you look at outliers, both positive and negative. And if you do find outliers, try to learn why a specific department is engaging differently than another—you might just learn something remarkable.
- Try to pull metrics from as large a sample size as possible to avoid making assumptions.
- Don't forget to also measure your mobile users. This is especially important if you have frontline workers or deskless employees.

ONCE YOU EXTRACT YOUR DATA, YOUR INTRANET METRICS SLIDE COULD LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

| Our intranet's reach & usage | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| The number of users that were active on our intranet last month | | | | |
| Visits | Users | Pageviews | Unique Pageviews | Avg. Visit Duration |
| Number of visits. A new visit will be recorded after 30 mins of inactivity. | Number of unique users logged onto the intranet. | Number of times a page was visited. | Number of times a page was viewed in one visit. | The average duration of a visit. |
| 3,329 | 75 | 25,051 | 13,985 | 11 min 9 sec |

STEP SEVEN

DIG INTO YOUR MEETING ANALYTICS

With the majority of employees working remotely or in a hybrid setting, many meetings over the last year were hosted on video platforms.

This was especially true for large scale company wide meetings like town halls.

Most video platforms have some type of analytics package, especially if it is a platform suited for hosting audiences in the thousands. Analytics available include things like sentiment analysis, where administrators can truly see how employees felt about the content presented. If you have run town hall meetings, this is especially useful, as it helps you gain insight into if employees understood the content presented.

Other analytics include length of view by webcast attendee, as well as response rates, which can be captured through survey, poll, and questions by attendees.

Also, if you are using ThoughtFarmer to post your video meetings, you can measure the success through our Media report. This report allows you to see how your users are interacting with video and audio content, and can help you make the best use of media on your intranet. You can see which videos are the most popular, how many times a video has been watched and whether users watch it to the end. You can also see what locations users are watching videos from, the actions users take before and after watching a video, and how interaction with the video changes over time.

YOUR SLIDE RELATING TO MEETING ANALYTICS MIGHT LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

2021 Video Meeting Analytics

A snapshot on the meetings held throughout the last 12 months.

| Number of town hall meetings | Avg. number of attendees | Avg. session duration | Avg. participant attendance |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 12 | 612 | 74 minutes | 32 minutes |



PRO TIPS

- Consider including meeting-related questions in your survey.
- If you end up with large subsets of data, get granular in your segmentation. For example, look at the participants asking questions in a town hall. Do they represent your workforce equally? Do women feel empowered to speak up?

STEP EIGHT

MEASURE YOUR INTERNAL EMAIL OPEN/ INTERACTION RATES

Even if email isn't your prime communication channel, it's still worth measuring the efforts of newsletters or event invitations.

Monitoring your email analytics can also help provide insight into your overall internal communication plan, and help you plan for the future. For example, a very low open rate may indicate that email is not the most effective internal communications tool to reach your employees. Regardless, internal communication professionals have a responsibility to ensure employees are not overly burdened with emails.

To measure the impact of your emails, you will want to measure open rates, click-through rates, and, if possible, attention rate or average read time.

Depending on your email platform, you might have a way to simply export a snapshot of your email analytics into your presentation. Otherwise consider adding in a slide that looks something like this:

| 2021 Email Analytics | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|--|
| An overview of internal emails sent throughout the last 12 months. | | | | |
| Number of internal emails sent | Avg. open rate | Avg. click thought rate | Avg. list size | Avg. time spent reading <small>The avg. duration of a visit</small> |
| 32 | 22.5% | 3.9 | 812 | 1:31 |



PRO TIPS

- Research shows that only 65% of internal emails are ever opened. And of those who do open emails, even less actually take action. If this matches what you are seeing in your organization, it might be time to rethink if this is the best channel for internal communication within your organization.

STEP NINE

PRESENT YOUR FINDINGS

Now it's time for the fun part: presenting your data.

It's up to you on how you present your research—it could be as a PowerPoint presentation, a Google Doc, or even a post to your intranet. If you really want to bring your data to life and have the time to create a powerful story, we suggest contacting our friends at [Brilliant Ink](#). They have some incredible resources on how to tell a story with data.

Whatever format you choose, make sure you distribute to as wide of an audience as possible. Why? Because the results of your newly measured communication efforts aren't just for the executives—it's for everyone. Every single employee plays a role in internal communication, so why not share the results with them? Also, keeping your colleagues involved will help for future measurement efforts as they will likely be more invested in the outcome.



PRO TIPS

- Enlist the help of a graphics wizard to really make your presentation pop.
- Keep it simple. Not everyone will understand your data to the same depth.
- Include proposed outcomes and next steps. Since all employees play a role in internal communication, let employees know what to expect in the future.

STEP TEN

BENCHMARKING FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

It's never too early to start planning for next year. One way to get ahead is to establish benchmarks.

WE GET A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT BENCHMARKING STATISTICS AND MEASURING INTRANET SUCCESS. QUESTIONS LIKE:

- Can you show us what success looks like?
- Do you have any benchmarking data that we can compare to?
- Are there resources on how others have done so we can benchmark our success?

WHILE WE WISH IT WAS THAT EASY TO ANSWER, THERE ARE SIMPLY TOO MANY VARIABLES TO CONSIDER. THIS IS BECAUSE ALL ORGANIZATIONS ARE DIFFERENT.

- They vary in size: employee numbers, available resources, etc.
- They use the intranet in different ways: focus on engagement, focus on knowledge consumption, etc.
- They have different busy and quiet periods

Now that you have collected your annual data, we encourage you to benchmark this data against yourselves by looking back at your historical data. Try comparing January of this year to January of last year, or the first week of January this year to the first week of January last year, and see how things have changed.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Is there a reason for that growth?
Is there a reason for that drop in usage?
- Was it a holiday season or a quiet season for our organization?
- Did we do a lot of hiring in this period and our organization size increased significantly?
- Did we have an intranet manager whose job was dedicated to growing our intranet?

There are many factors that come into play. Hopefully this can help you create a benchmark to measure your own success.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Measuring the result of your internal communications is no small undertaking, but hopefully these tips helped simplify the process while alleviating stress.

Investing in platforms and technology that do the heaving lifting for you will make future measurement that much easier. This allows you to spend less time trying to collect and crunch the numbers and more time creating effective communications that contribute towards your strategic goals.

If you're looking for an intranet platform that makes measuring your success simple, or if you would like to see a demonstration of our award winning intranet software, please reach out to us to learn more.

THANK YOU FOR READING!

We want to help make your intranet project a success. If you have questions, need additional resources, or simply want to check out what our award-winning intranet ThoughtFarmer has to offer, [get in touch with us](#). We'd love to chat.

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