Valo
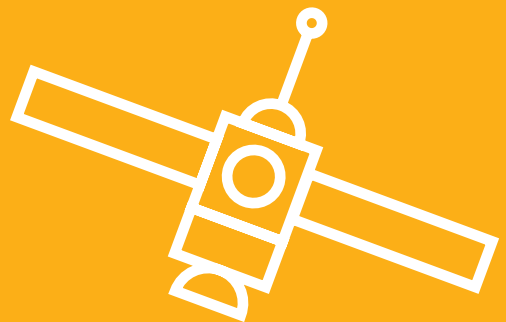
The Modern Intranet:
MOBILE, SOCIAL AND COLLABORATIVE

SharePoint

Office 365

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IN THIS BOOK

Good news, SharePoint fans and users! In recent years, there have been many speculations about the future of SharePoint. Jeff Teper, the "father" of SharePoint, gave the speech at the European SharePoint Conference 2015, and made it clear: SharePoint is a very important product for Microsoft and they invest in its future.

Tiina Manninen,
Blue Meteorite

THE EVOLUTION
OF SHAREPOINT

THE EVOLUTION OF SHAREPOINT

SharePoint is probably the most popular intranet platform in the world, but the great paradox is that there is actually no such thing as an "intranet" in SharePoint. Instead, SharePoint offers huge amount of building blocks from which the intranet can be built. And if some features are missing, you can always customize SharePoint to fulfill your needs. However, after 15 years of building SharePoint-based intranets, it is important to understand that many things have changed.

SharePoint intranets are evolving

Technically the biggest trend is moving intranets from own servers to the cloud. Microsoft's widely popular Office 365 suite offers a flexible, cost-effective and continuously developing set of tools for the information workers. Office 365 forms the basis for a true digital workplace and is therefore also a natural "home" for the corporate intranet.

SharePoint Online is included in Office 365, but when building an intranet on Office 365, you shouldn't only look what SharePoint can offer. There are really cool features outside SharePoint like Yammer, Office 365 Video portal and Delve which you can make use of when building in your intranet.

For developers the biggest change that has happened recently is the way to do customizations. Transformation from using full trust code to SharePoint Add-in model has made coding SharePoint fun again! Using client-side code, REST APIs and remote provisioning from Azure, SharePoint is clean from customizations and there will be less worries with the Office 365 platform updates.

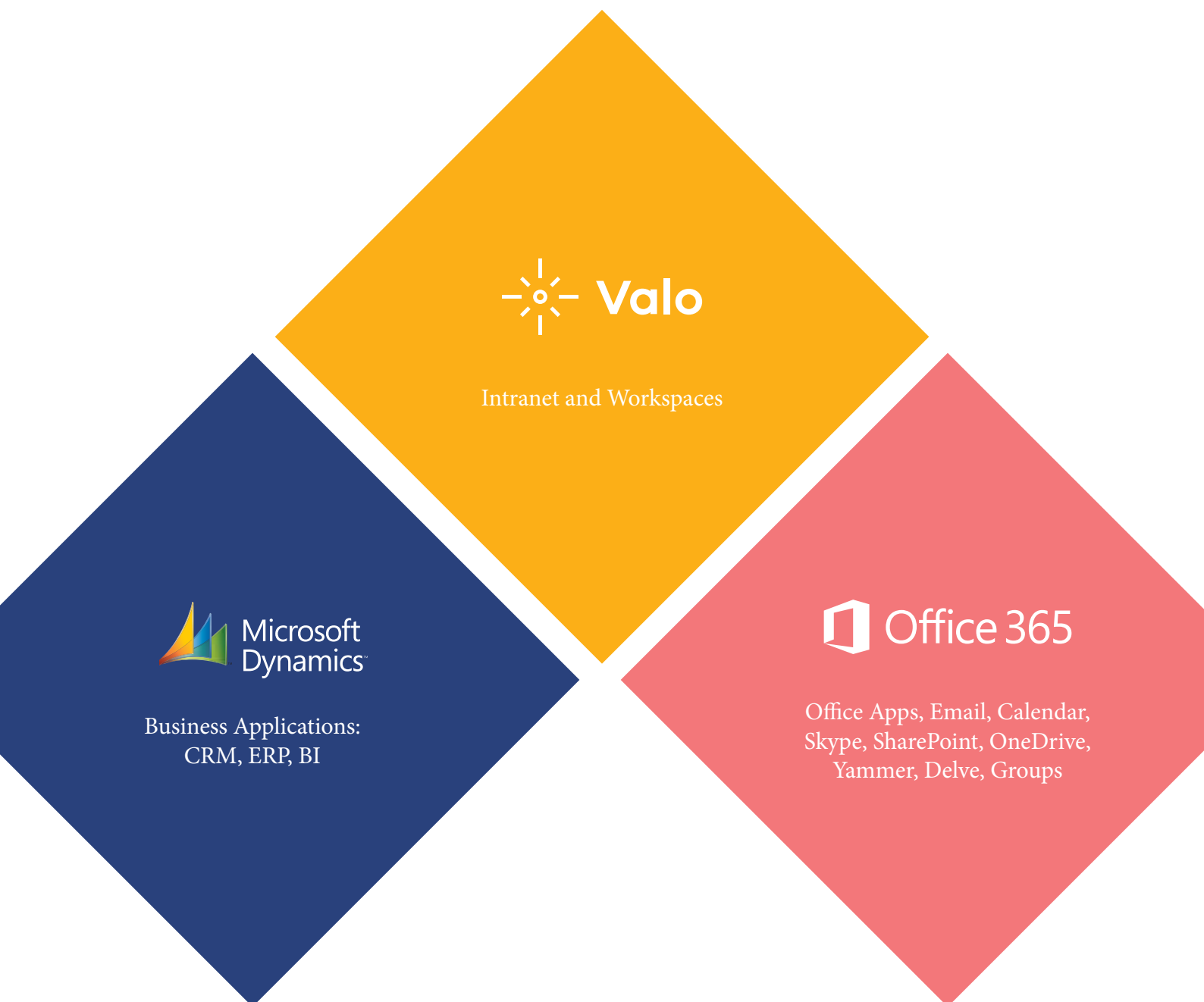## From static corporate intranet to social mobile intranet

At the same time when things are changing technically, intranet concepts are also evolving. Modern intranets are like internal social networks including a lot of discussions and communities. Change in the amount of user generated content is huge compared to the old days when intranet was mainly for publishing internal news and instructions. Also new, more efficient ways to communicate, especially videos are coming at full force to the intranets.

When in the past intranets were mainly used at work, within working hours and with the corporate PC, modern intranets are used anywhere, anytime and with any device. Userbase is also wider since field workers with smartphones can access modern intranets as well. Intranets are not anymore only for information workers only!

OFFICE 365 IS
THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE

Microsoft's Office 365 is the world's leading cloud productivity platform. Together with Dynamics Business Applications and third party apps like Valo Intranet it forms the foundation for the modern Digital Workplace to support knowledge and field workers in their daily work anywhere, anytime and with any device.

Valo

Intranet and Workspaces

Microsoft Dynamics™

Business Applications:
CRM, ERP, BI

Office 365

Office Apps, Email, Calendar,
Skype, SharePoint, OneDrive,
Yammer, Delve, Groups

Although the intranet is a key service for the workers, it is really essential to understand that Office 365 doesn't include a ready-to-go intranet solution. Good news is that SharePoint Online, together with Yammer, Office 365 Video and Office Graph offer nice building blocks for building world-class intranets. And of course, if required, Microsoft's support for hybrid environments also makes it possible to run for example SharePoint Server from own datacenters and connect it with cloud services from Office 365.

DO NOT SETTLE FOR OUT-OF-THE-BOX SHAREPOINT USER EXPERIENCE

Let's face it. SharePoint out-of-the-box user experience is horrible. Therefore, a lot of usability improvements, branding according to company brand guidelines, as well as responsive design to support mobile and tablet users must be built when building an intranet that end-users are really willing to use. If using the company intranet is a delightful experience, your workers will be more engaged and satisfied.

Although it's important that end-users feel that they are using their intranet designed just for them, reality is that 80% of the intranet features are always the same.

TOP10 INTRANET FEATURES

1. News Center
2. Search
3. Publishing pages
4. Social feeds and communities
5. People Finder
6. Internal Videos
7. Company Events
8. Social Hub
9. Internal and extrernal Workspaces with lifecycle model
10. Forms & workflows

A new SharePoint trend:

INTRANET-IN-A-BOX

In the past, SharePoint intranet projects may have been painful experiences. Fortunately, there are nowadays easier alternatives to complex, long-lasting and expensive SharePoint intranet projects. Intranet-in-a-box solutions, like Valo Intranet, are easy to buy, bring in to use and adopt. They offer a cost-effective and risk-free alternative to custom intranet projects. So, the valuable time and money can be used to producing high-quality content, building new organizational culture and developing new working methods.

YAMMER IS NOT DEAD

In my opinion, technical experts who are burying Yammer are missing the key point: Enterprise Social is not only a tool for team collaboration but a company-wide initiative to break down team and division silos to make scattered employees connected and agile to adapt to change. Yammer boosts openness and transparency, aligns people to shared vision and helps organizations to solve problems as one entity. Or at least as a much bigger entity than a small team. People desire to belong to a group and Yammer brings colleagues together 24/7.

Jari Pullinen
Blue Meteorite

yammer

DESIGN TRENDS

As for the user interface, intranets often take a cue from web design, but in some areas intranets lead the way. Strong trends in intranet features this year include:

Responsive Design

Like last year, responsive intranet design is significant again. Organizations overcame the usual concerns around intranet security and offer employees access to expected content in varying ways.

Flat Design

Bevels, shadows, and elaborate framing effects seem to have become about as necessary as the human appendix, at least for this year.

Clever Use of Video

Today's intranet designers understand the potential and power of video. And they are moving away from the idea of limiting how or when video can be used on intranets. For example, Klick offers knowledge sharing via iPhone video. The process begins when an employee submits a question. The content team then identifies an expert on the topic, walks to the expert's desk with an iPhone in hand, records the expert's answer as video, and immediately uploads the video to the intranet for all to access. In another example, Adobe has 90-second recaps of top news stories, which the Employee Communications team produces biweekly. Finally, Sprint displays relevant news as video, and its sales staff often create and post short videos about an assortment of sales topics.

Fat Footers

Companies display large footers at the bottom of intranet pages, giving employees one more chance to find what they need when down there. These oversized footers, separated from the main content area with a different background color and containing distinctly headed sections, are an expected and obliging anchor on intranets.

SHAREPOINT
ADD-IN MODEL

SHAREPOINT ADD-IN MODEL

SharePoint Add-ins are self-contained extensions of Share-Point websites that you create, and that run without custom code on the SharePoint server.

All SharePoint Add-ins are self-contained pieces of functionality that you write to extend the capabilities of SharePoint websites to solve a well-defined business problems.

Add-ins don't have custom code that runs on the SharePoint servers. Instead, all custom logic moves "up" to the cloud, or "down" to client computers, or "over" to an on-premise server that is outside the SharePoint farm or SharePoint Online subscription. Keeping custom code off SharePoint servers provides reassurance to SharePoint administrators that the add-in can't harm their servers or reduce the performance of their SharePoint Online websites.

Business logic in a SharePoint Add-in can access SharePoint data through one of the several client APIs included in Share-Point. Which API you use for your add-in depends on certain other design decisions you make.

Almost all major types of SharePoint components can be part of a SharePoint Add-in, including pages, lists, workflows, custom content types, list templates, Web Parts, and more.

The SharePoint websites where SharePoint Add-ins are installed, and from which users launch them, are called host webs. The SharePoint components, however, are generally in a special child web of the host web called the add-in web.

GOOD INTRANET
DELIVERS 3 BASIC
USER NEEDS

FIND
information

Search
Documents
Employee Database
Digital Asset Management
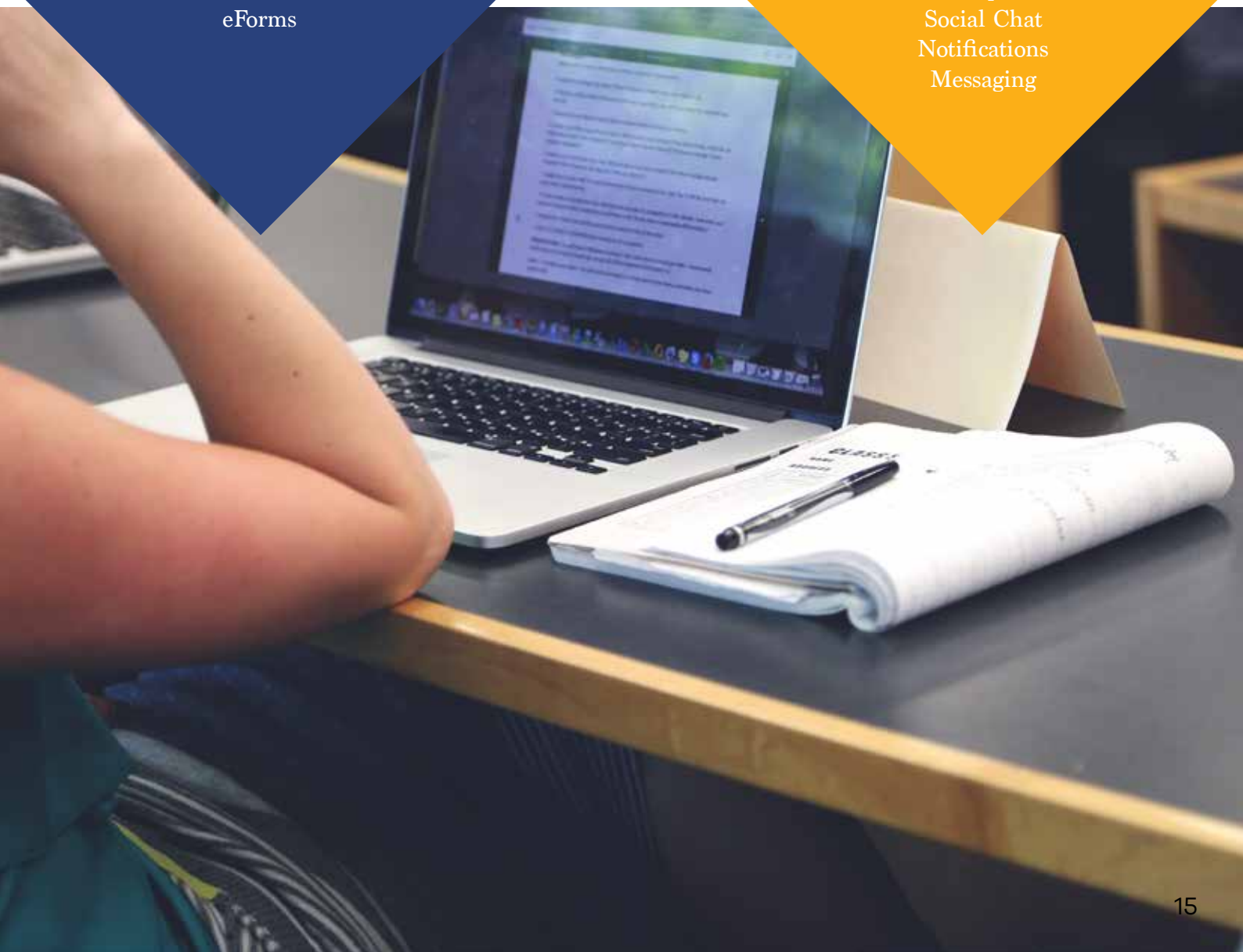Pages & Sites
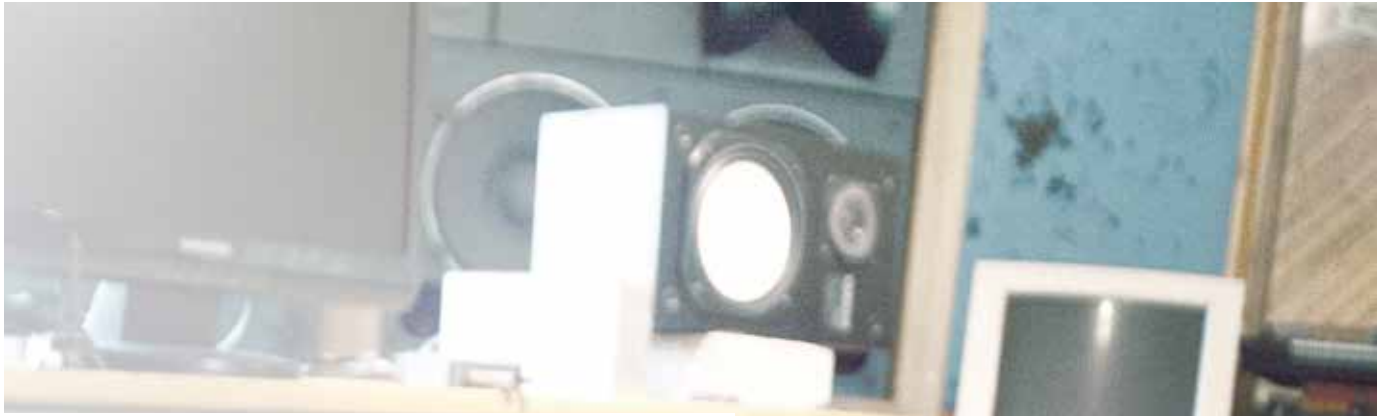Shared Calendar
Knowledge Base

GET
the job done

Projects
Business Apps
Workflow
Tasks
eForms

BE
informed

Dashboard
Blogs
News
Ideaspace
Social Chat
Notifications
Messaging

READY-MADE PACKAGED INTRANET ON OFFICE 365 - AN INTRANET TO SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS.

Your intranet can be easy, cost-effective and very useful – at a fixed price! With Valo you can design an intranet that your users love. Your intranet finally focuses on the most important factor: to support your employees in their daily work.

It's all about people and sharing. Want to encourage your people to share knowledge across your organization? We help your business work at its full potential.

Valo is the center of all communication and collaboration in your organization. People can share questions, ideas and innovations about your products, services and processes – no matter where they are. They can easily collaborate on documents without tons of emails. And even better, easy collaboration and document management is possible with external partners too!

# THE LAST
INTRANET YOU WILL EVER NEED

Valo

THE LAST INTRANET YOU'LL NEED!

Forget about building a new intranet to replace the old one every now and then. Valo is a flexible solution for the changing world.

As your "internal social media", Valo is always updated with the latest news, discussions, questions, ideas and best practices. It's a place where new information is created every day. Through simple processes it's also easy to remove outdated content.
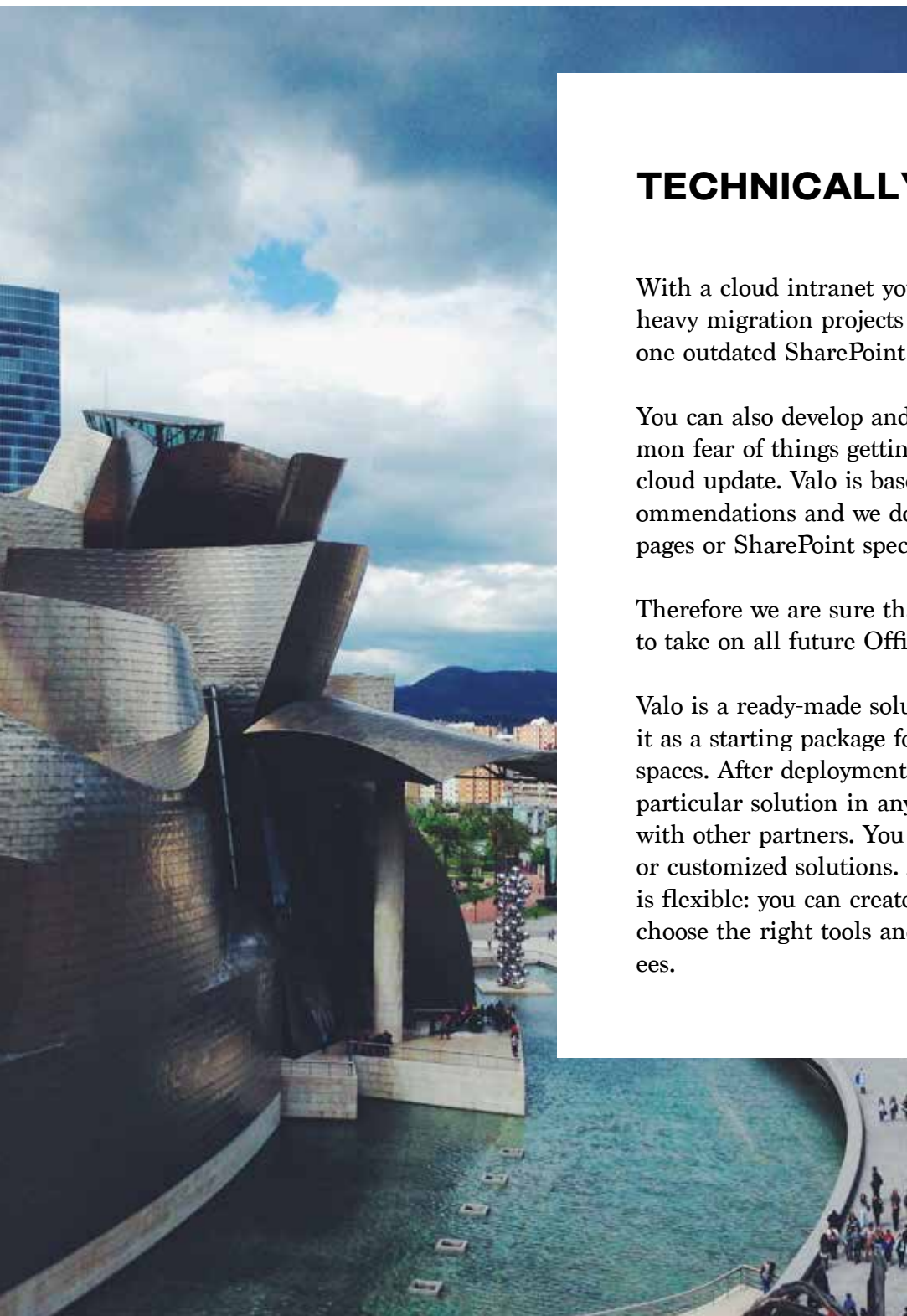
TECHNICALLY STRONG

With a cloud intranet you can leave behind the heavy migration projects and moving content from one outdated SharePoint version to another.

You can also develop and use Valo without the common fear of things getting "broken" with every new cloud update. Valo is based on Microsoft's latest recommendations and we do not use any custom master pages or SharePoint specific declarative XML.

Therefore we are sure that our product will be ready to take on all future Office 365updates!

Valo is a ready-made solution, but you can also see it as a starting package for your intranet and workspaces. After deployment you are free to develop your particular solution in any direction you want – also with other partners. You can use SharePoint features or customized solutions. Also the deployment process is flexible: you can create your own schedule and choose the right tools and modules for your employees.

HOW TO REACH YOUR MOBILE WORKFORCE WITH INTRANET

When you open the start page of Valo Intranet with a desktop browser, you notice right away that its user interface has been designed with the multitude of different end devices in mind. The UI elements are large, they look modern, and there is a fair amount of space between the elements, making the browsing and reading as easy as possible.

But when you open the site with a mobile device, that's when the fun really starts. Those of us who are familiar with SharePoint know that its pages are not very amigable to use with mobile devices. Valo Intranet, however, has 100% responsive design in its publishing pages, enabling an excellent user experience with mobile phones and tablets.

What does this mean in practice?

It means that now your Corporate Intranet message can finally reach your field workers.

All they need to do is open the Intranet start page in their mobile phones, set "remember login", and bookmark the start page (*). Then they can use their coffee breaks or waiting time for getting a brief overview of what's happening in the company.

When using Valo Intranet with a mobile device, the contents of the start page are displayed in just one or two columns (depending on the resolution of the user's device), making it very easy for the end-user to get an overview of Corporate news, events, discussions, etc. Characteristic to a responsive layout, there is no horizontal scroll bar, making it easy to browse through the publishing pages.

In the mobile views, the horizontal top navigation is suppressed into the familiar "hamburger" menu, with large enough navigation elements so your employees can hit them with their fingers. Should they need to check a HR policy, fill in a report form, or find instructions to emergency situations, they can perform these tasks in a breeze with their mobile devices, thanks to Valo Intranet.

Your employees can even open Office documents for reading and basic editing with their mobile devices, thanks to Valo workspace solution and Office Online!

TIPS FROM #MWSSUMMIT

1) Office365 is not a collaboration strategy

Having a platform or a tool is not a strategy. Collaboration strategy is more than just "right" IT tools. It is about people, culture, working habits, management, business goals, and much more. Figuring out what results you want and how to strengthen cultural values are critical, said Naomi Moneypenny. Following one is also a good one to keep in mind.

2) Helping people to understand the big picture makes adoption easier

When adopting new technology to your organization, remember to communicate when & why, not so much how to use it, reminded Naomi Moneypenny. This will help end users learn and get motivation to use the tool. Success in technology adoption starts with the right questions. In this case, the question could be for example "Why do I need that tool?" or "I have Yammer, Email, Intranet,.. But when do I need them?". Remember to give answers with real-life examples, not from the technical point of view. Christian Buckley told in his presentation that in adoption of technology, you need to go the extra mile to provide a better user experience. Product customization and personalization makes technology more customer-facing.

3) Give people tools to choose from

Internet is not a big and scary thing anymore, and people have learned to use the tools that best suite their ways of working outside the office (Facebook groups, Pinterest board, and Slack – just mention a few of them). At the same time people are getting tired of slow IT processes and reverting to rogue IT in order to get the job done faster and easier, to say more efficient. Why not give the chance to choose the tools the team or group prefers to use on a daily basis (e.g. Yammer, Groups and Delve in Office 365), instead of top-down-use-this-tool-we-gave-you approach?
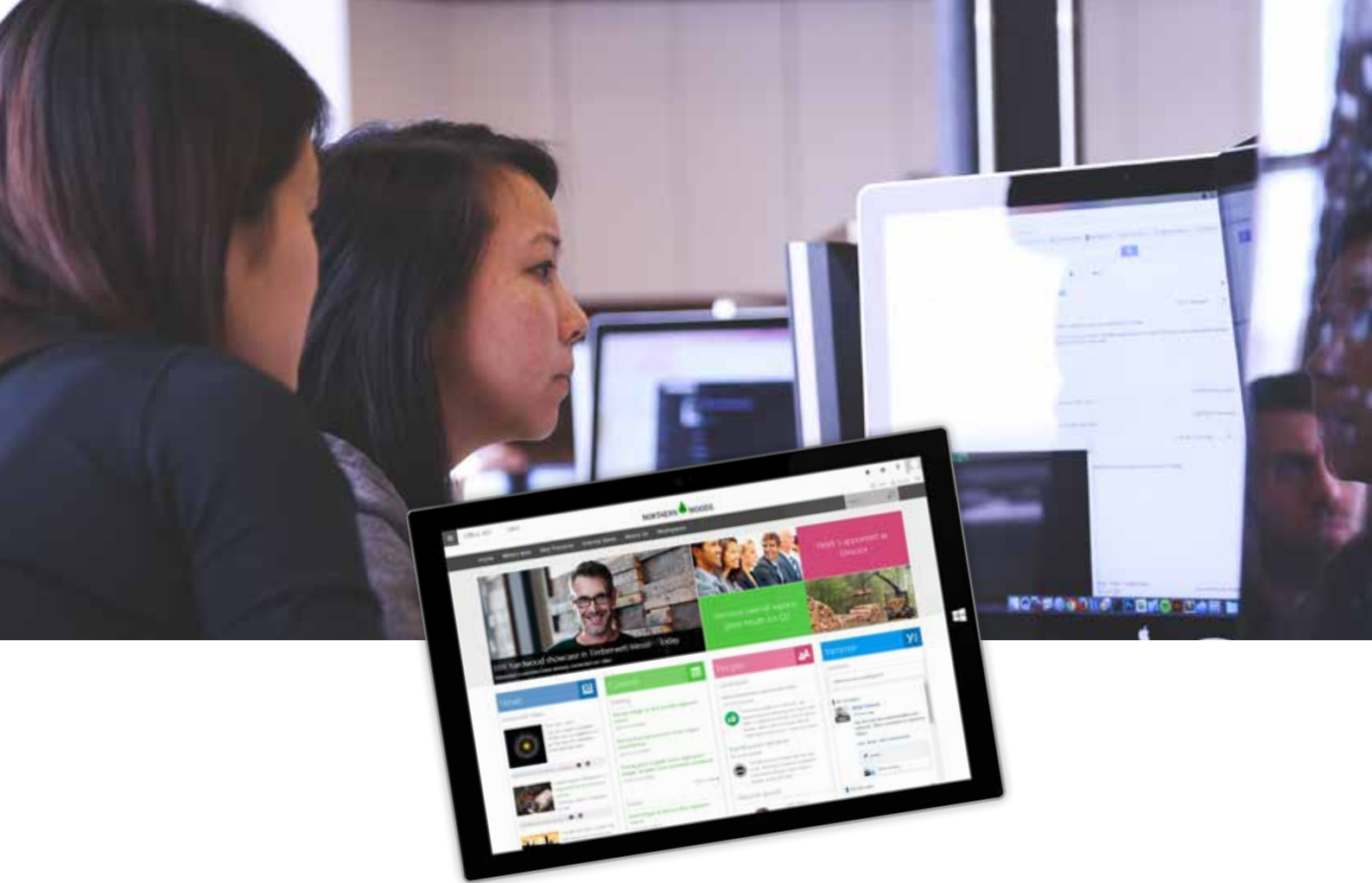
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Find your Partner from

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