

Title:

Make Your Client's Life Easier: The Power Of An Extranet

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Summary:

Over the past several years, extranets have become a popular tool used by service companies to enhance their client relationships. Originally, they were implemented to overcome the time and cost barriers associated with a distance relationship. Today, service companies use extranets to serve clients who are right down the street because of the many ways they make the client's life easier.

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Article Body:

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What is an extranet?

An extranet is a web-based collaboration tool that allows a defined group of internal and client users to access projects and documents in a secure environment.

One way to think of an extranet is as a shared filing cabinet. It allows clients to access documents immediately, all organized by project. It is particularly useful when groups of people need to access the work at the same time, and need everything organized in the same way.

Who uses extranets?

Any company that shares documents with clients can benefit from using an extranet. Advertising agencies, law firms, real estate brokers, financial service companies, architectural firms ? the list can go on and on.

How does an extranet enhance client relationships?

Enhanced relationships result from the many benefits extranets offer to clients. The most important is time savings. Rather than searching emails or paper files, everything is organized in one place to assure a quick review and response. A client extranet assures that nothing is lost and that the correct version is being reviewed. Many extranets feature an alert system to assure that documents are posted and reviewed on a timely basis.

Other benefits include easy client access to past work through the use of an archive, the ability to limit access to selected individuals when needed, the documentation of all activities, and a higher level of security than is offered by email.

The bottom-line

Enhancing client relationships supports retention and saves administrative time. At minimum, this impact on both revenue and costs often allows the extranet to pay for itself, and in many cases can result in increased profits.