



ClearBoxCONSULTING

2023

REPORT
EXTRACT

AKUMINA



INTRANET AND EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE PLATFORMS

Reviews of the best products on the market

V2.0

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V2.0 issued January 2023

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ABOUT THIS EXTRACT

You may have been sent this document by a software vendor, downloaded it from their website, or come across it via another route. Here's some background.

ClearBox's Intranet and EX Platforms report

This is an extract from a much larger report, which includes reviews of the best intranets, employee experience (EX) platforms, and internal communication solutions on the market. This extract is one product review – the remaining 29 reviews and dozens of pages of introduction have been removed for ease of distribution by vendors.

Vendor neutral assessment

ClearBox Consulting Ltd is a UK-based company that helps organisations of all shapes and sizes with their digital workplace needs, from strategy through to content life cycle. Importantly, ClearBox is entirely vendor neutral – this means any critiques in the reviews and client recommendations are based on significant experience and we don't have a product of our own to promote or get commission for any recommendations..

ClearBox has been helping organisations for 15 years and has been reviewing this market since 2016. We produce the most in-depth reviews of any analyst firm, and we're also a hands-on consultancy helping clients directly.

Download the [full report](#) for free - it's over 700 pages!

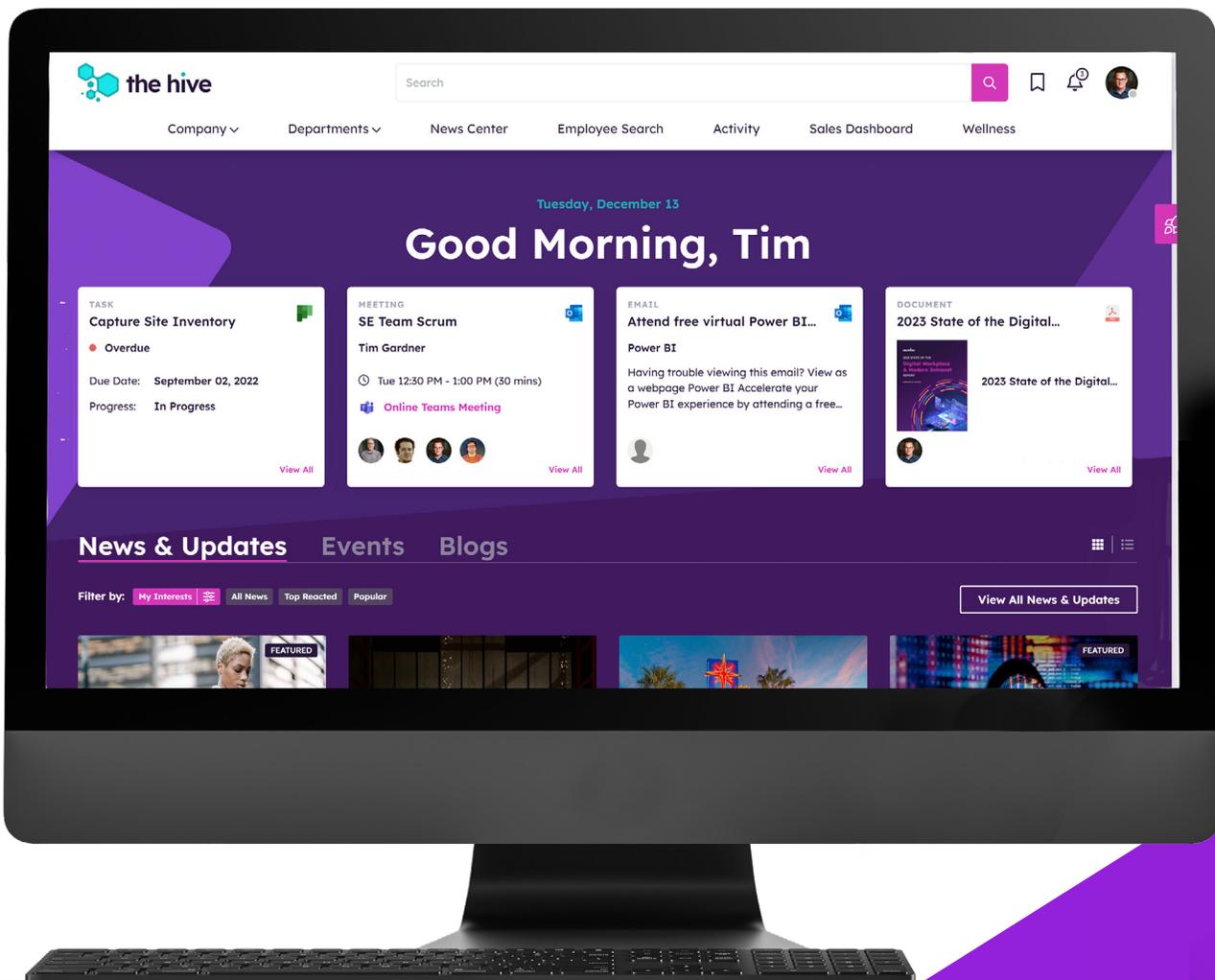


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Our view in one tweet

Akumina from @AkuminaInc is a highly flexible platform, with an excellent approach to application integration and offering a great employee experience.





Akumina Employee Experience Platform owned by Akumina

Akumina Employee Experience Platform was first introduced in 2015 and is owned by Akumina, who are headquartered in New Hampshire, USA. The platform is a highly flexible and mature product that delivers a top-tier experience for desktop and mobile users alike. Features for content creation, collaboration and information finding are excellent, and the options for integrating with Microsoft 365 and third-party applications are among the best we've seen in this report. The product is also easily extended to offer extranet and portal functionality.

There are a few areas where we would like to see improvements made, however. The out-of-the-box analytics are high-level and presented simply. The admin experience has improved since our previous review in 2022, most notably in the area of content management, but other areas such as the Akumina Flow engine are complex and require technical skills. Akumina says that further improvements in the admin area are on the product roadmap.

It's worth noting that Akumina relies

on the Microsoft ecosystem in order to work, but it does not require SharePoint to deliver intranet pages. Businesses have a choice to rely on SharePoint for displaying content pages (called a 'headed' delivery) or to use SharePoint only as a data service (called a 'headless' delivery); Akumina says that most customers opt for the latter approach. We found that Akumina performs better when deployed as 'headless', with faster page load times for example. Businesses that have Microsoft will still make good use of their investment, but without being tied to SharePoint interfaces and approaches.

Overall, Akumina is likely to appeal mainly to large and complex enterprise organisations, as its flexibility and mature features will meet many of their requirements. Smaller businesses can get up and running quickly with an out-of-the-box offering, but the price point for them is high. For those organisations that have the ambition and the resources, Akumina offers a strong proposition to create an integrated digital workplace.

Summary table of scenario scores

NO.	SCENARIO/SCORE
1	User experience and visual appeal
2	Mobile and frontline support
3	Internal communication
4	Community and engagement
5	Information finding and knowledge management
6	Admin experience and governance
7	Analytics
8	Digital workplace integrations
9	Microsoft 365 integration
10	Wildcard

Pricing

PRICE BAND

250 users	
1,000 users	
5,000 users	
20,000 users	

PRICING MODEL

Subscription – price per user per month,
Subscription – price band based on number of users

PRICING NOTES

Discounts available for: Charities and non-profit organisations, schools and educational institutes, government / public sector, multi-year commitments.

Price includes: Training for admins, training for end users, maintenance, product support, updates and upgrades, hosting, access to a community & webinars.

Key benefits

- Akumina is a highly flexible product that offers businesses a great deal of choice around design and features.
- The approach to integration of business systems and M365 tools is excellent.
- The overall employee experience for desktop and mobile users is strong and consistent.
- Content creation and management is handled in an intuitive yet powerful user interface.

Improvements and considerations

- Out-of-the-box analytics could be improved to offer a greater depth of data.
- The admin experience has recently been refreshed in some areas, but other parts of the admin functionality would benefit from a similar overhaul.
- The price point for smaller organisations is comparatively high.

Product type



Branding opportunities



Target businesses

	SMALL less than 1,000 people
	MEDIUM 1,000 to 5,000 people
	ENTERPRISE over 5,000 people

Base systems

Fully standalone	Requires SharePoint	Optionally works with SharePoint	Other*

*Akumina requires Microsoft in order to operate, however, businesses can choose whether the platform is positioned on top of SharePoint or separately.

Sectors

Accountancy, banking and finance	Engineering and manufacturing	Retail	Energy and utilities	Healthcare

You may also be interested in...



COMPANY AND PRODUCT

Company details



Company
Akumina



Company founded
2015



Company locations
Nashua, NH USA (HQ), UK,
India, Brazil



ISO 27001 certified
Akumina says it holds a number of industry-expected certifications around privacy and data security.



Typical client size
3,000+ Employees



Largest deployment so far
240,000 employees
in over 80 countries.



Partner locations
Please [see their website](#) for details.



Customers
Please [see their website](#) for details.

Product and technical details

Name of product Akumina Employee Experience Platform

Product launched 2015

Current version 6.0 (October, 2022)

Accessibility WCAG 2.1 compliant

Deployment

Client on-premises	Client private cloud	Microsoft Azure	Amazon Web Services	Vendor-hosted	Microsoft 365 tenant	Other
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Data residency

Akumina offers both SaaS and self-hosted deployment options of the platform. The Multitenant Cloud has locations in the USA, Canada, UK, Germany, India, Singapore, Australia, and Japan.

Client data encrypted

In transit only	In transit and at rest	At rest only
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Authentication supported

Azure Active Directory	ADFS	Open ID	Oauth	G Suite	Other*
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* Okta, EmpowerID, Ping, SiteMinder

Search technology

Apache Lucene/Solr	Apache Lucene/Elastic	Microsoft	Vendor's own	Other*
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*Autonomy, Sinequa, Coveo, and BA Insights are supported in addition to the ones above.

Document library sources integrated

Box	Dropbox	Google Drive	SharePoint	OneDrive	Other
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*NetDocs and M-Files

SharePoint/O365 versions supported (if applicable)

SP Server 2016	SP Server 2019	SP Server Subscription Edition	SP Online	Viva Connections
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Mobile app deployment

Google Play store	Apple store	MDM	MAM	Other*
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*Akumina also offers a private corporate app store.

Reverse-out options

Akumina is typically not any customers' primary source of data and does not remove any data from the customer's existing source systems. While Akumina synchronises data to deliver personalised content-based experiences into its platform, only certain customer data resides 'exclusively' in the Akumina's use of the Azure CosmosDB and Azure Storage services.

Languages supported

Akumina supports all languages offered by Microsoft 365.

Machine translation

Yes - via the product

Right to left script

Yes

Set-up and support

Set-up process for new clients

Akumina offers the platform via both a SaaS deployment model and via a self-host deployment model. Akumina's customers can start from a series of pre-configured foundational experiences (that are included with an Akumina subscription at no extra charge) or start from a blank slate to create their new experience under Akumina's 'Total Visual Control' design freedom capability.

Product updates

Akumina releases approximately two to three major product updates a year. Akumina also provide patch and point releases three to four times a year.

Product update process

Akumina SaaS customers are delivered new capabilities and releases through a traditional non-production environment first, then to a production environment during defined maintenance windows. Akumina self-host customers are provided the new capabilities through an upgrade wizard-based deployment on the customers timeline and under their governed pipeline process.

Technical support

Akumina has support personnel globally located to be able to provide all day, every day first response support. Akumina's support line routes the request to handle first response, triage and assignment of the support incident based on Akumina's SLA policy.

User community

Akumina has an active online user community and provides an annual Customer Advisory Board meeting, which is typically held in-person but has moved to a virtual model at this time due to travel restrictions across various customers and countries.

In their own words

Akumina says: "The Akumina EXP enables enterprise employees to do their best work in a vibrant and connected digital workplace experience. With over 6+ million active daily users all over the globe, Akumina empowers communications, human resources & IT professionals to deliver personalized digital experiences to their workforce on any device, in any language and at any time."

Their view of the marketplace

Akumina says: "At its core, the Akumina EXP addresses many challenges that businesses face today: simple content authoring, ability to communicate effectively with employees, and allow team members to find the information they need to do their jobs. Through key features like total design flexibility, localization, Broadcast Center, Mission Control, Intelligent Activity Streams, Persona Builder, onboarding tools, and extensive integrations, and many more, we are able to provide our customers with simple solutions to complex business issues."

Voice of the customer

Several customers praise the freedom and the flexibility that Akumina offers to create custom designs and layouts. One customer likes "the autonomy to decide how to lay out your intranet to fit user needs" while another one mentions "the ability to achieve custom UI/UX on top of SharePoint Online". Clients appreciate that Akumina "is really a platform – built for integrations and customisations" and praise the support that Akumina offers along the journey. One customer sums it up succinctly: "Great UI, great team, great possibilities."

When asked about improvement suggestions, some customers mention the content authoring experience and CMS functionality. For instance, one customer asked for "more streamlined and efficient authoring for content owners". This part of the product has been significantly improved in the latest version of Akumina (see Scenario 3) so these customers will be looking to upgrade to the newest release. The upgrade process itself is also an area where several customers want to see enhancements. "Better release notes for new versions and an easier path to upgrades" is what one customer wants, while another is looking for "better product build quality, better documentation". Yet another client would like "smaller, easier, iterative changes" as opposed to "daunting project-size changes requiring a good deal of planning and management".

Working together with Akumina has been a positive experience for most customers. According to one customer, "Akumina has been a superior vendor and we value the partnership" while another praises the whole team: "We've never had an issue getting assistance from anyone on the Akumina team! If the person you're talking to doesn't have the answer, they will find the person that does." A few customers have raised concerns about responsiveness of the support team. "Issues take a lot of time to resolve" says one client, and another finds that "product support has been uneven, sometimes responsive, but other times very unresponsive". Still, the majority of customers are more than satisfied: "Akumina has a skilled support and account management team. We've had a very good experience working with them."

Tuesday, December 13

Good Morning, Tim

TASK
Capture Site Inventory

● Overdue

Due Date: September 02, 2022
Progress: In Progress

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MEETING
SE Team Scrum

Tim Gardner

🕒 Tue 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM (30 mins)

📺 Online Teams Meeting

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Reason: Vacation

Will be away with my family the last week of the year.

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Sales

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REVIEW

1. User experience and visual appeal



SCORE

3.5+

Akumina is an attractive and flexible platform that gives administrators many possibilities to create a highly customised look and feel. While most intranets begin as an out-of-the-box Akumina foundation site, all aspects of design and user experience can be controlled by in-house experts where wanted, or by an Akumina partner where assistance is needed. End users too can configure many elements of their experience, such as widgets on the home page to display their tasks or surface other relevant information. We were shown some examples of how customers have put this flexibility to good use; see the Highlights section for details (including information about the 'me-bar' referenced below).

The product's flexibility extends to the navigation. Customers have a choice between a simple top-level mega menu, or a bar on the left with descriptions under links and highlighted content in the form of images. Navigation is audience targeted and security trimmed, potentially giving one user a very different experience from a colleague.

The user interface offers different ways for users to stay on top of their to-do list. A centralised notification system brings messages from across the product together under a bell icon. Notifications from external systems, such as a task in Workday or an update in ServiceNow, are also accepted and integrated (see Scenarios 8 and 9). There is a 'me-bar' widget with personalised actions, such as an overdue task from Planner, and there is a card-based activity stream where cards surface calls to action coming from various applications. This works particularly well on mobile devices, where it turns into a social media-style feed.

Branding is another area where the product's flexibility allows administrators to build intranets that look very different from customer to customer. When installing a foundation site, a default theme is applied, but this can be adapted and expanded later. Different site templates can be applied to regional or departmental sites, or to create a site for a sub-brand within a multi-brand organisation.

Overall, Akumina provides an attractive set of capabilities. It's a mature product that offers a lot of choices that might overwhelm less digitally savvy users. Admins can introduce online help for people to get used to the platform, and the recently improved interface for content creation (see Scenario 3) will be intuitive for most knowledge workers. Still, digitally mature organisations will certainly get the most out of the product's features.

2. Mobile and frontline support

SCORE

4

The flexibility that's evident on desktop transfers into the mobile experience, which offers some simple solutions for mobile and frontline users. For businesses that have chosen to run their intranet on top of SharePoint (a so-called 'headed deployment'), all users will need a M365 license. Organisations that have chosen not to deploy on top of SharePoint (a 'headless deployment') avoid the need for this additional license cost, which is especially useful for frontline workers who may not need other Microsoft applications. More about headed versus headless deployment is covered in Scenario 9.

A dedicated mobile app is available for iOS and Android, which can be deployed using an MDM or MAM solution or via a private app store. This means that the app can be white-labelled and branded as desired by customers. There is no generic version available in the public app stores; Akumina says that this is on their roadmap. The native app uses a web view to surface the content from the responsive site, while supporting all typical features of a native app such as push notifications and biometric access. For users that aren't already on a central database, Akumina can provide a sign-up form with a configurable background workflow to grant initial access.

While there are no features in Akumina created solely for mobile, administrators may decide as part of the configuration that certain elements are only appropriate for mobile users. The card-based activity stream, mentioned in Scenario 1, works well on mobile. A 'wellness check' poll (see Scenario 4) and a pay stub display card are nice examples of features that are particularly relevant for frontline workers.

Administrators will target content to users via a 'mobile' Persona, directing certain features or individual pages of content to them. More about the creation of Personas is discussed in Scenario 6. Admins may also choose to simplify navigation for a mobile view, which is helpful given the potential for the site to be very comprehensive.

3. Internal communication

SCORE

4

In late 2022 Akumina overhauled its content creation functionality by bringing it to the front end of the product and giving it a much more contemporary look and feel than in previous versions. Content authors and editors now have access to a left-hand side navigation bar with intuitive icons for accessing the different features and overview areas. Please see the Highlights for details.

When creating a new message, content authors will select a message type, which determines a number of preconfigured options such as the layout of widgets on the page and the approval process that the message needs to go through. Experienced content authors can be given full freedom to control the layout of the article, while others will follow an intuitive template to create the body of the story and set appropriate metadata. News stories can be flagged as featured, publication and archive date fields are available, and tags are easily added. We like the possibility to preview the story for different devices, such as mobile and tablet-size screens.

Akumina includes the concept of 'Personas', which are target audience groups set up by administrators (see Scenario 6). This makes it easy to target news articles to the right people

based on their profile data. There is a news centre that gives an overview of all articles, which is useful, but we would like to see some additional features, such as a visual Kanban board, to help internal communicators with editorial planning.

Creation of static reference pages follows a similar approach. Depending on permissions, authors may be confined to work within a predefined page layout or may have the freedom to adapt the layout and change the configuration of the widgets.

Urgent and crisis communication is handled well through dedicated 'broadcast' messages. These are managed separately from news articles and include a range of specific delivery channels. For instance, it is possible to have alert messages appear as a banner, as a popup message upon login, as an email, or an SMS message.

Communicating across channels is enabled in different ways. News stories can be shared in MS Teams, while broadcast messages can be pushed out via email and SMS. Where users can't access the intranet on their device, digital signage and kiosks are supported via Personas, although the management of the digital signage screens is not integrated into Akumina and so is a limited option when compared to other platforms. Finally, users may share news into personal social media channels; news articles are set up and approved for this purpose during the article creation process.

4. Community and engagement



SCORE
4.5

Akumina's flexibility stands out in this scenario, giving admins tools to build relevant and attractive community and engagement features. Community collaboration is handled well, where authorised users can provision themed workspaces for knowledge, communities, teamwork, and education. These workspaces can be open, for anyone to follow, or closed, just for selected members of a group or Persona, or selected individuals. While the provisioning process adds standard widgets, admins have a good selection of others to choose from to then build the space appropriately. Widgets include discussion boards, an integrated Yammer feed, featured news, videos, blogs, or highlighted experts.

Akumina includes a range of features for commenting and reacting to news articles and other content. Commenting allows users to create posts and to react to the posts of colleagues in a threaded conversation. Users may report comments as inappropriate where needed, and admins can review to take action and potentially remove a post. There is also an option to have comments pre-approved by a moderator before they are published. If users don't want to leave a comment they may react instead. Reactions go beyond simple 'likes'; icons and the named reactions can be configured by an admin, making it appropriate for the business. The product supports gamification features such as earning badges based on activity, and there is also a feature that allows users to nominate a colleague for an award, linked with a nominee dashboard and review process.

Admins can choose to add simple polls to pages, which return results to users as they are completed. There is also a basic feedback form accessible from the bottom of every page. Alternatively, for more sophisticated use cases, there is Akumina Flow, a rich form building and workflow automation tool that will be useful in a range of scenarios. We were shown a well-executed example of a wellbeing feature, where a user is prompted to complete a poll asking how they're feeling. Based on the user's reply, a variety of actions is proposed, and results are tracked in a dashboard. Their manager optionally receives updates as they complete certain tasks. Please see the Highlights section for more about Akumina Flow.

5. Information finding and knowledge management

SCORE

4

Akumina uses Microsoft search by default but will integrate with other search solutions that are in use by an organisation. This means that certain aspects of search rely on the source system rather than Akumina, for example promoted results and relevance ranking will use the Microsoft functionality by default, while Akumina manages the presentation of results.

As a user types in the search box, they are presented with suggested search terms and results. Alternatively, the search results page shows more, where the standard display is attractive with good icons alongside results to differentiate content types, and with searchable filters to refine results. We like the shortcut menu against each result that allows users to quickly download, open in a new window, share, add to favourites, or provide feedback, as well as the 'preview' button to help avoid navigating to an incorrect page. Simple search management can be completed via the Akumina admin screens, which are integrated into the AppManager (see Scenario 6). Broader search management configuration is handled in the source search system.

Users can search for colleagues by name or keyword in the global search, or within the people directory. Profile pages are attractive, displaying information as tags or free text boxes, although the org chart display is limited to a simple tree structure. People data can be fed from multiple sources, including Active Directory but also from Workday or SuccessFactors. When a user updates a field, this information can be passed back to the source where wanted.

Information finding is supported through a number of predefined libraries or content centres with local search capability, such as the news centre and media library. A local search box combined with relevant refiners and tags allows users to explore the content. At the level of an individual page or news article, related tags are shown. Clicking the tag leads to a page with more information about the topic, similar to Viva Topics. There is no dedicated knowledge base tool included in the product; instead, Akumina focuses on facilitating content discovery through an intuitive and consistent usage of metadata.

6. Admin experience and governance

SCORE

3.5+

Administration in Akumina is handled in two different places. Management of pages and content is handled in an intuitive front-end experience, where admins and duly authorised content editors can create pages and templates, adjust layouts, configure widgets, etc. Other admin functionality is grouped in a more traditional back-end environment called AppManager. The different areas within AppManager are presented as a set of large buttons, opening into more detailed screens, for instance to manage site permissions or to moderate comments. Other functionality included here is a 'Persona Builder', where user segments are created by applying rules to user profile data, and a 'Flow Designer' module where workflows are configured such as the wellness workflow described in Scenario 4 and in the Highlights section.

For life cycle management, publishers can see an overview of their content nearing expiry and renew, revise, or archive via personalised analytics dashboards. Expiry warning notifications are also triggered via email, the notification bell, and into the activity stream. These analytics dashboards are part of AppManager, so content editors are still going to be exposed to the back-end environment when consulting the reports. We would prefer to see these reports

migrated to the more user-friendly front-end, giving editors a consistent experience.

Multilingual support is strong in Akumina. By default, the product will display content in the user's preferred language, and users can select an alternative from a toggle. Different language versions are stored together with the original content item (which can begin in any supported language) and workflows can be set up to notify translation publishers if the original is updated. During content creation, an automated translation feature will translate and store the created text in all configured languages. Large organisations will also appreciate the option to export content and send it off to a translation agency, and then import the results back into Akumina.

Overall, we like the richness of the configuration options, especially in the new front-end experience. For instance, it is possible to set up multiple versions of the same page, which can be used to target different audiences with a different layout, or for A/B testing like on customer-facing websites. In comparison, the back-end experience within AppManager is less attractive, and some areas such as the Flow Designer tool are complex and come with a steep learning curve. Akumina says that an overhaul of Flow Designer is on the product roadmap.

7. Analytics



SCORE

2+

Akumina's approach to analytics is to give clients a set of widgets and dashboarding capabilities so that they can build the views they want. By default, the product is integrated with Azure Application Insights; other analytics tools such as Google Analytics can be hooked up as well. Akumina says that customers like to consider what data matters to them and what dashboards they would like to see, and Akumina or a partner will help them with the configuration as part of the implementation process. We understand this approach but we feel that the depth of the out-of-the-box offering could be improved, to give customers a better starting point to work from and reduce the set-up effort.

The available analytics dashboards are part of AppManager and consist of around 30 widgets that visualise data across adoption and content, such as 'top reactors' and 'trending search terms'. Most of these widgets come with different views and flexible configuration options, allowing information to be shown by department, by Persona, or by some other category that is more relevant for the client. Some of the widgets get their data from Microsoft 365, such as a widget showing total tasks by department, which gets its information out of Planner. There is also a report available to support the A/B testing feature mentioned in Scenario 6, showing which page versions are more effective among the different target audiences.

Reporting is available for individual content too, such as views on a news story, survey results, or mandatory reading. This information can be viewed on screen or results downloaded to csv. For mandatory reads, any content can be marked as mandatory with an 'acknowledge' button applied to ensure the user has interacted in some way. The publisher can check the progress of who has read or not, but there is no feature to remind people.

All analytics widgets are integrated into the dashboard section of the back-end AppManager environment and have a consistent look and feel. They cover a broad range of the product's functionality and are nicely presented, but in some areas they are lacking detail. For instance, the search widget shows top searches, but other aspects of search are not covered.

8. Digital workplace integrations



SCORE

3.5+

Integration with third-party systems is an area of strength for Akumina. Different approaches are available, including the product's own connector framework (powered by the Akumina ServiceHub), via Microsoft Graph or using Power Automate. A large range of integrations are available out of the box, and there are different ways to present them to users.

A 'Mission Control' area is one approach, which is a personal dashboard that includes a launchpad of icons giving access to the most used systems or tools. These are configurable by users but can be locked in place by admins. Systems can also be integrated via widgets, providing a more in-depth experience where users can interact with the source system via the Akumina interface. Widgets can include activities, such as requesting time off in Workday, or surface information, such as a sales pipeline from Salesforce. Widgets can be grouped and linked together, so that an update in one widget triggers updates to related content.

Another integration option is to use the 'activity stream' within Akumina to present notifications and activities from across integrated sources. A stream can be added to the home page in the form of attractive cards, but on a dedicated page the functionality shines. See the Highlights section for more and note that 'activity streams' is a separate module, but its cost is included in the pricing in this report.

Integration with communication and collaboration tools such as Zoom and Slack is also possible through these same approaches. For instance, cards in the activity stream can link to a Zoom meeting or embed a Slack channel. Sending Akumina content into Slack is not available out of the box but can be set up using the Flow engine (see Highlights section).

Akumina supports federated search via Microsoft Search and the Graph connectors, or through alternative products such as BA Insight. This allows the indexing of third-party sources that are presented on the search results page. Helpfully, users don't have to remember the source of any federated content, as everything is displayed together. Finally, Akumina will integrate with Microsoft or other third-party bot frameworks and provide an attractive front-end to the experience.

9. Microsoft 365 integration

SCORE

4.5

As Akumina relies on Microsoft 365 in order to work, integrations with Microsoft applications and especially with SharePoint are understandably strong. Akumina uses features of SharePoint, M365 and Azure for content storage, managed metadata, governance, and permissions. Customers have a choice to use SharePoint also as a page rendering engine, in which case Akumina content is displayed using the SharePoint framework; Akumina refers to this as a 'headed' deployment. Alternatively, in a 'headless' deployment, pages are displayed independently from SharePoint in an Azure site. In both 'headless' and 'headed' delivery, the product can display any SharePoint content and document libraries in its various widgets. Where SharePoint content is displayed, it looks like Akumina content and so delivers a consistent user experience.

Along with the quick launcher that includes Microsoft applications, the 'Mission Control'

dashboard mentioned in Scenario 8 includes widgets that will show personalised activities for the user. This includes 'my recent documents' in SharePoint or OneDrive, tasks from across Microsoft applications, or upcoming events from an Outlook calendar.

Yammer is integrated well into widgets, which show followed communities, the 'all company' feed, and some example communities for users to follow. This allows appropriate communities to be added to page widgets, encouraging use of Yammer while ensuring its relevance. MS Teams is integrated in a similar way, offering Teams chat and a list of available Teams within Akumina widgets. The full product can also be made accessible as an app within MS Teams.

Support for Microsoft Viva is currently quite limited, but Akumina says that more is on its product roadmap. Content created inside Viva Connections, such as dashboard cards, can be surfaced within Akumina, but Akumina news is not displayed in the Connections feed. Akumina says that its focus is on other elements of the Viva suite, for instance to integrate Viva Insights into their analytics dashboard, and to integrate Viva Topics cards with Akumina cards in the activity stream. We agree that these will be interesting additions to the product once delivered, but currently support for Viva is not strong.

10. Wildcard



SCORE

2.5+

Akumina includes a number of capabilities that allow customers to not only power their corporate intranet for their employees, but also to deploy an extranet or portal targeted at other audiences.

A number of features within Akumina support extranets and portals. The option to run Akumina as a 'headless' deployment, on an Azure site independently from SharePoint, makes it easy to set up security and access permissions. Initial registration of targeted users is handled using a signup form and customised workflow, similar to what was described in Scenario 2 for frontline workers.

Once registered and approved, users will have access to a separate environment that may inherit some of the look and feel of the corporate intranet on which it is based, or it may have a completely different visual identity if desired. Using the 'Persona Builder' (see Scenario 6), the different audiences are defined, and a specific subset of intranet content is targeted to them. For instance, external users will be granted access to relevant news articles, workspaces for collaboration, media files and appropriate training materials.

We can see how this functionality will be useful to support different use cases for a range of organisations. Examples include franchisees in retail and hospitality, alumni of educational organisations, financial advisors and resellers of investment and insurance products, and many more. Examples and screenshots are included in the Highlights section.

Offering extranet functionality is not particularly unique or innovative, but Akumina's rich feature set combined with the 'headless' deployment in Azure makes it a powerful platform for a combined intranet / extranet solution. The examples we were shown are compelling and well-executed, and the benefits for businesses are clear. To make the proposition even stronger, we think that a setup wizard or similar functionality would be useful, bringing the various disparate features together in a single place. It's also worth noting that the extranet solution is not supported on 'headed' deployments, so existing customers with a 'headed' setup will have to migrate first to a 'headless' one.

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

Flexibility in the look and feel, including on mobile

Akumina's flexibility is most noticeable in the different approaches that can be taken when creating the home page and setting up the overall design for the site. Many products will lock certain features down, such as the position of the search or the approach to navigation, however Akumina can be customised to work as the customer feels is most appropriate. Many intranets begin life as a foundation site, but there is total administrative control to change this. Custom designed sites often start with an InVision or an Adobe XD design before being brought to life on the Akumina canvas.

Branding choices are a big part of the look and feel, which admins or partners can apply to the site. Colours, fonts, backgrounds, and more can be changed to form the basis of the site as wanted. Then there are over 200 widgets in Akumina's library that can be configured in numerous ways. For example, the news widget displays articles in different ways, and there are many other widgets available to display practical information, such as latest documents.

The screenshot shows a customised Akumina intranet home page for a customer named 'the hive'. The page features a dark blue header with the company logo, a search bar, and user profile icons. A yellow sidebar on the left contains navigation links for 'TOOLS & RESOURCES', 'MY BENEFITS', 'MY CAREER', 'OUR COMPANY', and 'I NEED...'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Weather Widget:** Displays 'Good Morning, Jacqueline! It's Friday. The weekend is in sight!' along with a weather forecast for Springfield (75°F, High: 82°F, Low: 62°F).
- News Carousel:** A large featured article titled 'Akumina Cares Team Supports Local Food Drive' is highlighted, with a 'VIEW ALL NEWS' link. Below it, a row of smaller news items is shown, including 'Akumina Cares Food Drive', 'Fanning's Five: Our CEO's Insights', 'New Inclusion Resources', 'Can You Spot the Dirty Money?', 'Take the Inclusion Challenge', and 'Teaching Kids About Money'.
- Calendar:** A 'CALENDAR' widget showing 'TODAY' events: 'Meet the e-Signature Center of Excellence (CoE)', 'What is Society 185?', and 'Focus "No Diet" Program'. It also lists 'UPCOMING' events: '2019 Holiday Toy Drive' and 'Competencies Are Cool'.
- Favorite Apps & Links:** A section titled 'FAVORITE APPS & LINKS' displaying icons for RSA, ARIBA, Jira, WORKDAY, CONFLUENCE, and MENU.

In this customer example, news is displayed in a carousel and navigation sits on the left.

Sales Select ▼
Sales Home



#DIGITAL WORKPLACE +4
Boston Properties Select Akumina

 **TIM GARDNER**
NOV 01, 2022 | 2 MIN READ

👍 1 👁️ 2 💬 0



#COMMUNICATION +6
LinkedIn Prospecting Tips

 **DAVID MAFFEI**
NOV 01, 2022 | 2 MIN READ

👁️ 0 💬 0



#COMMUNICATION +4
The Art of Networking for Sales

 **HARRY FETTER**
NOV 01, 2022 | 3 MIN READ

👁️ 0 💬 0



#INNOVATION +5
ING Akumina Story

 **STEVE KIRKPATRICK**
NOV 01, 2022 | 1 MIN READ

👁️ 2 💬 0

Documents

Most Recent Most Viewed

-  [The Workplace Innovation Gap](#)
-  [Strategic Alignment Of Akumina And Microsoft](#)
-  [Five Most Common SharePoint Problems](#)
-  [Moments That Matter](#)
-  [Modern Intranet Buyers Guide](#)

Birthdays

-  **Matt Sullivan** 👥 Oct 02
-  **David Maffei** 👥 Nov 02
-  **Luke Fleming** 👥 Nov 19
-  **Tim Gardner** 👥 Dec 18

Anniversaries

-  **David Maffei** 📅 6 Years On Nov 01
-  **Jim Shomberg** 📅 2 Years On Nov 01
-  **Riddhi Karani** 📅 2 Years On Nov 06
-  **Andy Frades** 📅 9 Years On Nov 14

Key Contacts



in

Steve Kirkpatrick
Head of Sales

[Bio](#) →



in

David Maffei
President

[Bio](#) →



in

Tim Gardner
VP of Technical Consulting

[Bio](#) →



in

Harry Fetter
Sales Enablement Lead

[Bio](#) →

In this design example, news and other widgets are displayed using a card-based look and feel.



Intranet and Employee Experience Platforms

21

Sales FAQ's

-  Security Center Access Request
-  Where can I find important Sales documents?
-  Where do I find RFP responses?
-  Where do I go to request a reference?
-  How do I file expenses?

Discussions

-  Sales Kickoff 2023 How about a demo contest - Sales Engineering vs Regional Sales Managers?
Tim Gardner NOV 03, 2022
 -  Sales Enablement Top... Good call Harry. I have some materials I can bring together and drive a presentation. I'll look ahead...
Tim Gardner NOV 01, 2022
 -  Customer Design File... We just got some updated screens from BP. This includes a full benefits modeler experience that will...
Steve Kirkpatrick NOV 01, 2022
- [All Discussions >](#)

Resources


Ariba


Cafe Menu


Excel


Expenses


legal Docs


Planner


PowerPoint


Teams

[>](#)

Birthdays

-  Matt Sullivan  Oct 02
-  David Maffei  Nov 02
-  Luke Fleming  Nov 19
-  Tim Gardner  Dec 18

Anniversaries

-  David Maffei  6 Years On Nov 01
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-  Andy Frades  9 Years On Nov 14

Documents

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-  The Workplace Innovation Gap
-  Strategic Alignment Of Akumina And Microsoft
-  Five Most Common SharePoint Problems
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VP of Technical Consulting



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Sales Enablement Lead

In this alternative design example, the news and documents widgets display information as a list.

Flexibility in the site design extends to how notifications are presented to users, so they can stay on top of their tasks. There is a traditional notifications bell icon where messages from within Akumina and from external systems are brought together, but there is also a 'me-bar' widget and an activity feed that administrators can decide to put on the home page. We especially like the 'me-bar' widget with personalised action cards, such as an overdue task from Planner or an upcoming meeting from Outlook, sitting prominently on the home page as a strip of cards just below the welcome message.

Users stay on top of their tasks thanks to a notifications panel and a personalised 'me-bar' that sits prominently on the home page.

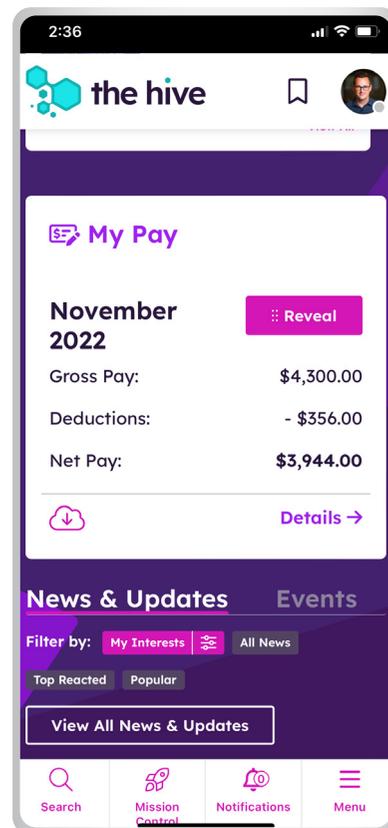
The flexibility of the product extends into the mobile experience. The card-based activity stream works especially well on mobile, and Akumina includes some cards that are particularly relevant for frontline workers, such as a pay stub component.



Mobile home page with the 'me-bar' experience.



Consuming content such as news articles is intuitive.



A pay stub card shows salary information after clicking the 'reveal' button.

News and content creation

Akumina has overhauled its content creation functionality, bringing it to the front end of the product and giving it a much more contemporary look and feel than in the past. Content authors and editors are presented with an intuitive and consistent look and feel throughout the process. Two types of news exist within Akumina: simple broadcast messages, mainly used for operational or urgent communication, and fully-fledged news articles for a broader usage. Helpful overview reports of news and broadcast messages make it easy for editors to track pending approvals. Behind the scenes, Akumina's flow engine enables customised approval flows. Translation and targeting of content are also well integrated.

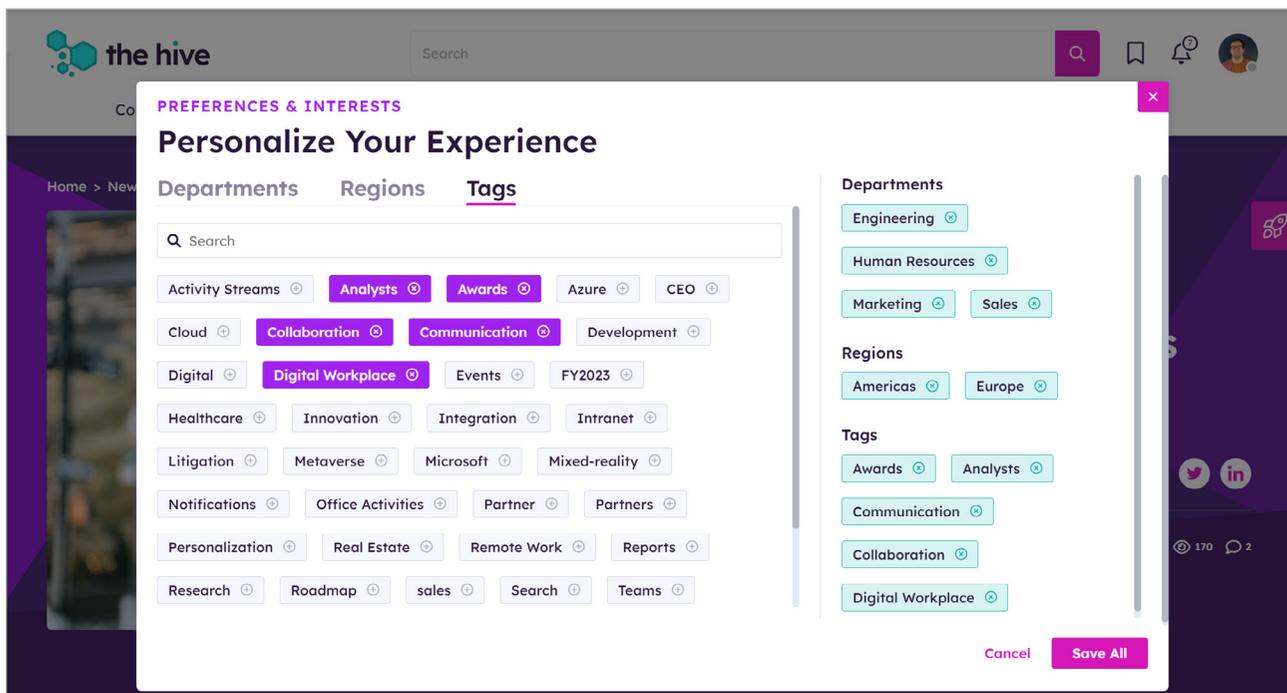
The screenshot displays the Akumina news editor interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'AnalystHome' and 'Preview', along with a 'PENDING' status indicator and 'Save' and 'Submit' buttons. The main header includes 'News', 'Editorial Comments', 'Auto-Translate', 'Manage Translations', and a language dropdown set to 'English (U.S.)'. The editor is divided into several sections:

- Title:** 'Why In-Person Sales Really Matters' (221 characters remaining).
- Summary:** 'Work is evolving. But that isn't true for all job titles. For some, including the domain of professional sales, 'remote' isn't a viable long-term option.'
- Body:** A rich text editor with a toolbar containing various formatting options. The main text discusses the virtualization of work and the impact of COVID-19 on remote work. The headline at the bottom of the body is 'Can You Build Trust and Credibility Remotely?'.
- Properties Panel (Right):**
 - Featured:** A checkbox to mark the article as featured.
 - Publisher:** A dropdown menu currently showing 'Steve Kirkpatrick'.
 - Contributors:** A dropdown menu for selecting users.
 - Image:** A section for adding an image, showing a preview of 'InPerson-Sale.jpg' (261 KB) with a 'Select Image' button.
 - Video:** A section for adding a video with a 'Select Asset' button.
 - Is Akumina Page:** A checked checkbox.
 - Thumbnail URL:** A field for entering a thumbnail URL.

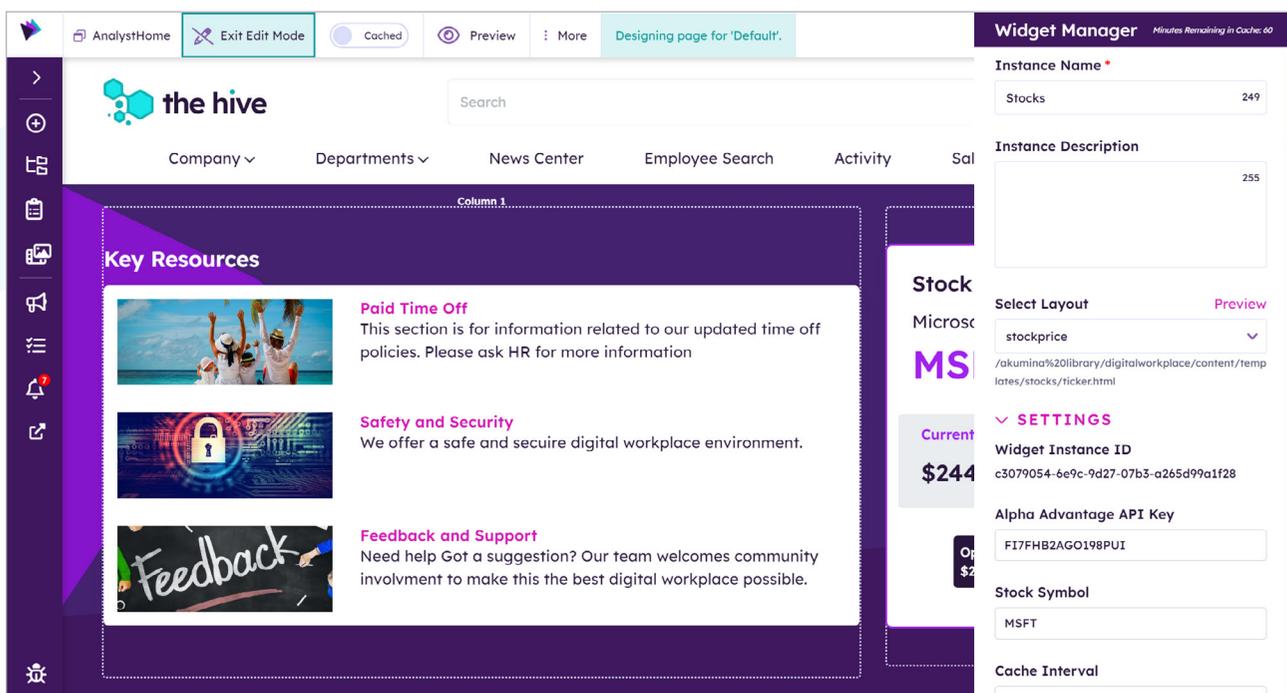
Editing a news story in Akumina.

Akumina has an extensive system of tagging and taxonomies to help publishers categorise content. During the creation process, metadata is added by the content author via well-designed and intuitive screens. Users can personalise which content they want to see based on these tags and taxonomies, for instance, they can opt in to see content from other departments or regions than their own.

Managing page layouts and configuring widgets is all done within the same front-end experience. Administrators and authorised editors have the freedom to move widgets around and configure different 'views' of the same content.



Users personalise their content of interest using a system of tags.



Authorised editors or administrators configure the page layout and the individual widgets on content pages.

Three approaches to integration

Two-way integrations are an area of strength for Akumina, and businesses can choose the most appropriate approaches for their users. The first approach is through 'Mission Control', which can be accessed via a small, persistent rocket icon that opens a personalised dashboard with a launchpad of icons to the most used systems or tools. The links make use of single sign-on where available, and can point to business tools such as ServiceNow, frequently used pages like the canteen menu, or in-built forms. These icons are configurable, so could be labelled 'ServiceNow' or 'Raise an IT ticket', and core links can be locked in place by admins. Users can then add, remove, or change the order of the icons, with additional icons stored in categories for easy searching and filtering.

Mission Control

Teams Outlook Word Planner Excel PowerPoint To Do Help Desk Close

Add Apps

Search apps by name Filter: All Departments

Excel Help Desk Outlook Planner PowerPoint Teams To Do Word

Manage Widgets

Emails

Flagged All Emails

Human Resources New Benefit Available 4 days ago

Human Resources New Benefits Available 5 days ago

Meetings

Leadership Team Sync Tue 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM (1 hours)

SE Team Scrum Tue 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM (30 mins)

Documents

Recently Opened Shared with Me

01_IntroducingTheAkuminaPlatform Brad Steele Aug 29, 2022 3:50 PM

Dynamic Field Parsing Brad Steele Aug 29, 2022 3:50 PM

Widget Best Practices Brad Steele Aug 29, 2022 3:50 PM

Mission Control includes a library of links that users can configure themselves.

There is the option to add other widgets to Mission Control that display personalised content, mainly coming from Microsoft 365 applications. For example, recently opened documents are listed, as well as upcoming meetings, emails and tasks. Mission Control is an effective dashboard to aid people through their day.

The screenshot displays the Akumina Mission Control dashboard with the following widgets:

- Manage Widgets**: Reorder Widgets, Reset Widgets
- Emails**:
 - Flagged | All Emails
 - Human Resources: New Benefit Available (4 days ago)
 - Human Resources: New Benefits Available (5 days ago)
 - Sales Enablement: New Case Study Available (6 days ago)
 - Microsoft 365: Your subscription keeps getting better (6 days ago)
- Meetings**:
 - Leadership Team Sync (Tue 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM (1 hours))
 - SE Team Scrum (Tue 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM (30 mins))
 - Central Sales Review (Tue 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM (1 hours))
 - Weekly Connection with team
- Documents**:
 - Recently Opened | Shared with Me
 - 01_IntroducingTheAkuminaPlatform (Aug 29, 2022 3:50 PM)
 - Dynamic Field Parsing (Aug 29, 2022 3:50 PM)
 - Widget Best Practices (Aug 29, 2022 3:50 PM)
 - Akumina-Video Intro-03162022 (Mar 22, 2022 8:14 AM)
 - Five Most Common SharePoint Problems (Feb 14, 2022 11:03 AM)
- Stock Update**:
 - Microsoft Corporation
 - MSFT
 - Current Price: \$240.45
 - Change: -1.73% ↓
- Tasks**:
 - Eat my lunch (Overdue, Not Started)
 - First Task With Member functionality (Overdue, Not Started)
- Favorites**:
 - Akumina
 - Sales Dashboard
 - Planner

Mission Control also includes personalised content coming from Microsoft 365.

A second approach sees business systems integrated via widgets, providing a more in-depth experience where users can interact with a source system via the Akumina interface. Widgets can display information, such as in the Mission Control example above, or users can interact with their content to complete tasks.

Widgets don't have to be standalone activities either, different widget types can be grouped together to display different content when a user interacts with one. In the sales dashboard shown below, when an account name is clicked in one widget (this integration shows recent opportunities from Salesforce) the associated marketing collateral populates from SharePoint, case studies are populated from OneDrive and a real-time information feed about the selected company is shown. Further down the page, this user can see their expense reports in Expensify and their holiday balance in Workday.

The screenshot shows a dashboard for 'the hive' with a navigation bar and several data widgets. The 'Sales Pipeline' widget contains a table of accounts and opportunities. The 'Performance' widget shows a 60% progress gauge. The 'Sales Insights' widget features news articles about Northern Trust. The 'Case Studies' widget lists several companies with links to their digital hubs. The 'Expense Reports' widget shows a table of reports with their status and values. The 'Vacation Time' widget displays a 7-day used and 21-day remaining gauge. The 'My Training' widget shows 5 completed, 3 past due, and 0 upcoming training items.

Account	Opportunity	Probability	Solution	Deal Size
Northern Trust	NT HR Hub	80%	Digital Hub	\$350,000.00
HSBC	HSBC Modern Workplace	65%	Digital Hub	\$465,000.00
BASF	BASF Pilot	80%	Digital Hub	\$190,000.00
Occidental Petroleum	Oxy Power Portal	50%	Intranet	\$95,000.00
GlaxoSmithKline	APAC Expansion	65%	Digital Hub	\$201,000.00
Moderna	Moderna Frontline	50%	Intranet	\$145,000.00

Report	Status	Value	Submitted
Forrester Conference	Processing	\$1,280.40	Dec 14
MSFT Partner Lunch	Approved	\$250.04	Dec 09
Sales Training	Paid	\$783.00	Nov 29
Gartner UK Trip	Paid	\$4,821.00	Oct 12
SKO	Paid	\$890.00	Sep 09

Information in the sales dashboard is dynamically updated when clicking on an account in the pipeline.

A third integration approach is via an 'Intelligent Activity Stream', which gathers content, actions, and notifications from across integrated sources that are presented in 'Stream Cards'. Cards include simple messages, such as 'a new video has been added to a YouTube channel', or more in-depth capabilities, such as the user needing to approve an expense request. 'Streams' has an infinite-scroll experience for each user and a 'splash' of most recent Cards can be added to a home page.

An activity filter accompanies the feed and collates integrated systems into categories assigned by the user. Some feeds can be locked, with users automatically subscribed, while users may activate or deactivate others. For example, MS Teams notifications may be locked as mandatory while YouTube notifications set as optional based on personal preference.

The screenshot displays the 'the hive' intranet interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Company', 'Departments', 'News Center', 'Employee Search', 'Activity', 'Sales Dashboard', and 'Wellness'. The main content area is titled 'Home > Streams' and features a 'What's on your mind?' input field. Below this, the activity stream displays four cards:

- ServiceNow Ticket**: 23 hours ago, ID Inci1000305. Raised by Tim Gardner on Nov 08, 2022. Category: Software. Description: AirServer license request. Severity: 2. Actions: Resolve, Find Related Articles.
- Workday Approval**: 5 days ago. Luke Fleming has requested 18 hours off from Nov 18, 2022 to Nov 19, 2022. Reason: Jury Duty. Description: I have been pulled into jury duty on the 18th. Expected to just last half a day. Will be back in the office on Monday. Actions: Approve, Reject. Note: This employee has 30 leave hours left.
- Yammer Group Message**: 5 days ago. Harry Fetter posted a message in Yammer in group Product Roadmap. Content: Anyone have any details on the campaign management functionality that we are brining to market?
- New Asset Available**: 5 days ago. Harry Fetter has uploaded a new document Akumina Enterprise Briefing.

On the right side, the 'Activity Filter' panel allows users to organize filters into folders. It includes a search bar and a list of filters:

- Filters**: Birthday, Documents (1), Images (2), My Yammer Mentions, Posts, Videos, Yammer Group Message (1).
- Tasks**: Workday Approvals (2), ServiceNow Incidents (2), My Planner Tasks.

At the bottom of the filter panel, there are 'Save', 'Cancel', and 'Reset' buttons, and a 'Priority' section with a 'None' option.

Cards of actions and information in the activity feed and the associated activity filter.

Flow engine for wellbeing and onboarding

Akumina Flow is a traditional workflow tool combined with a micro-application and processing engine. It gives admins step planning and form building tools to combine with widgets or pages of content, which seamlessly progresses people through content based on decisions they make.

As an example, Akumina showed us a simple wellbeing flow. On a content page in the Wellbeing section, a widget presents a simple poll that asks, 'how are you feeling today?'. People are encouraged to complete the poll as frequently as they can, but the poll is restricted to once a day at most. Users click on their chosen answer and are presented with the next step depending on their response.

An 'excited' or 'happy' response could encourage them to browse a discussion board and get involved in a discussion with a colleague. 'Confused' could show a meditation video to help them refocus. 'Upset', 'angry' and 'sad' may then ask a qualifying question, as to whether it is work related or not. If related to a feeling of being under-trained, the flow could present a list of relevant courses coming from an integrated Learning Management System.

The screenshot shows the Akumina Flow interface for a wellbeing check. The top navigation bar includes the 'the hive' logo, a search bar, and various menu items like 'Company', 'Departments', 'News Center', 'Employee Search', 'Activity', 'Sales Dashboard', and 'Wellness'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Company Wellness Check:** A pink header with a leaf icon and text: "We are placing a major focus on the wellbeing of all our employees. Please use the form below to provide us some feedback and we can make recommendations on how to improve your overall wellbeing. Thank you for your time! Any questions please use the feedback form on the footer." Below this is a poll titled "How are you feeling today? *:" with radio button options: Excited, Happy, Confused, Upset, Angry, and Sad. A "Next" button is at the bottom.
- Mental Wellbeing Importance:** Text explaining that employee wellbeing is important for company success and that the platform provides a guided experience to help with mental health.
- Did You Know?:** A fact stating "More than 40% of our creative ideas come when we are taking breaks or allowing our minds to wander." with a "Book Focus Time Today" link.
- Wellness Report:** A section for authorized HR managers. It includes filters for "Choice Properties", "This Year", and "All". A dropdown menu shows "How are you feeling today?". A "Run" button is present. Below is a table showing the results of the poll.
- Benefits of a Healthy Workplace:** A circular diagram with six segments: Increased Employee Morale, Reduced Employee Sick Time, Improved Company Image, Increased Productivity Levels, Reduced Presenteeism, and Reduced Staff Turnover (Higher Commitment).

Value	Total
Angry	19
Confused	13
Excited	22
Happy	21
Sad	5
Upset	22

The wellness check starts with a simple poll; authorised HR managers also see a wellness report.

The screenshot shows the 'the hive' intranet interface. At the top, there is a breadcrumb trail 'Home > Wellness' and a navigation bar with 'AnalystHome', 'Edit Mode', 'Cached', and 'More'. The main header features the 'the hive' logo, a search bar, and navigation links for 'Company', 'Departments', 'News Center', 'Employee Search', 'Activity', 'Sales Dashboard', and 'Wellness'. The main content area is split into two columns. The left column contains a video player for 'Daily Calm | 10 Minute Mindfulness Meditation | Letting Go' with a 'Share' button and a 'Finish' button. The right column features a 'Did You Know?' section with a quote: 'More than 40% of our creative ideas come when we are taking breaks or allowing our minds to wander.' and a 'Book Focus Time Today' button. A 'Back to top' button is located at the bottom right of the content area.

When a user selects 'confused' they are presented with a meditation video to help them clear their mind.

Another example is onboarding an individual into the business, which can be targeted to 'new starter' Personas. The flow mechanism is positioned within a dedicated workspace with connected widgets that display only once a step is complete. Steps could include watching a video from the CEO, completing profile information, visiting their department's site on the intranet, and configuring their 'Mission Control' board. The steps can be time limited, to stop people racing through and missing things, and their manager optionally receives updates as they complete tasks.

The screenshot displays the 'the hive' onboarding interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'the hive' logo, a search bar, and a notification bell. A warning banner indicates '3 days until password expiry' with a 'SNOOZE' button. The main content area is titled 'Your Onboarding Plan' and is divided into several sections:

- Left Panel:** A welcome message from Ed Rogers, including a personal note and contact information.
- Simple Onboarding Progress:** Shows '10% Completed' and a list of tasks: 'Welcome Videos (0)', 'Human Resources (6)', and 'Just for Starters... (2)'. The 'Let Us Get To Know You' task is currently active.
- Update Your Profile Form:** Includes fields for Mobile Phone (603) 867-5309, Birth Day (April 22), and an 'About You' section with a text area containing: 'Interests and Hobbies: Camping, Photography, Music' and 'I have more than thirty years experience working on web applications and systems. Able to communicate highly technical concepts to both technical and non-technical audiences.' An 'UPDATE PROFILE' button is at the bottom.
- Confirm ID Badge:** Shows a digital ID badge for DARRIN SMITH, ASST. REGIONAL MANAGER, with EID: 16. A 'REQUEST CHANGES' button is below the badge.
- Paperwork (3):** A task 'Find Kelly in the Human Resources Department' is listed.
- Task List:** A vertical list of tasks with progress indicators: 'Message From Your New CEO', 'Let Us Get To Know You' (current), 'Confirm ID Badge', 'Find Kelly in the Human Resource Department', 'Complete W-4 Form', 'Fill Out Direct Deposit form', 'Attach and Upload Forms', 'Visit IT department', 'Confirm email setup', and 'Listen to Message from the President'.
- Remaining tasks:** A large circular counter showing '9' tasks remaining.

Taking new employees through a number of onboarding steps.

Extranet and portal functionality

Akumina includes functionality that allows customers to extend their corporate intranet into an extranet or portal targeted at broader audiences. External users will be able to register on the extranet, and after approval they will get access to a separate environment where they can read relevant news articles, collaborate in workspaces, download media files and follow online training.

We were shown some compelling examples of how this functionality supports different use cases for a range of organisations. A first example is that of a franchise model in the restaurant business. While employees of the franchising organisation have access to an Akumina-based intranet, independently owned franchisees can also login to a subsection of the intranet that contains information relevant for them.

Franchisees have access to a subset of the corporate intranet and to a dedicated area with targeted information.

The second example is that of a global consulting firm staffing projects with internal employees as well as independent consultants. In this example, the consultants and customers for key accounts have access to a separate portal that reuses many of the widgets and content from the main corporate intranet, but also includes project-specific information for each client and their corresponding account teams and consultants.

The screenshot displays a reseller portal for NewCo. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the NewCo logo, a search bar, and a user profile icon. Below the navigation bar is a large banner image with the text "Consistency is the Key to Success" and a "Learn More" button. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Account Teams:** A list of account teams with dropdown arrows: Northern California, Chicago, New York, Asia Pacific, and Europe. A "Go to Account Team Page" button is located below the list.
- External News Feed:** A list of news articles with images and titles:
 - "Satellite launched to map the world's oceans, lakes, rivers"
 - "In Dallas suburbs, Friday Night Lights make way for cricket"
 - "California approves roadmap for carbon neutrality by 2045"
 - "Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker to be next NCAA president"
 - "California lowers incentives for rooftop solar panels"
 - "Nevada flower listed as endangered at lithium mine site"
- BlueTech Lingo:** A list of categories with dropdown arrows: EPS, Coronavirus, TechStop, Transportation, and Europe. A "See all Lingo" button is located below the list.
- BlueTech Communications:** A section titled "Welcome Notes" with a "WELCOME" sticky note image and text: "Please join us in giving a warm welcome to those joining BlueTech and to some of our amazing Consultants who have returned back from their respective clients..."
- Feedback and Contact:** A "Submit your account feedback today!" section with a "Submit Feedback" button, and an "Account Contact Lead:" section with a "Submit a Contact" button.
- FAQs:** A list of frequently asked questions with dropdown arrows:
 - "What is a WSR?"
 - "Can I work on a client holiday that is not a BlueTech holiday?"
 - "I require new/additional access for my project."
 - "I need to take time off, who do I talk to?"

The reseller portal reuses many widgets from the corporate intranet but applies a different design.

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

Akumina has grown and evolved over the years into a rich and highly flexible offering. More than other products in this report, Akumina is a powerful platform that integrates in different ways with a host of external applications. Some technical skills or assistance from an Akumina partner will be needed to make the most of the various capabilities, however.

Administration screens have improved in some areas, such as the new front-end interface for creating and managing content, which we find appealing. In other areas, the admin screens aren't as intuitive and would benefit from a similar overhaul. In particular the Akumina Flow module is complex and has a steep learning curve; Akumina says that a redesign of this area is on the product roadmap for early 2023.

Analytics is one of the few functional areas within the product where richer functionality could be offered out of the box. While we appreciate that different customers have different analytical desires, we feel that a better starting point would be beneficial and give admins more choice.

For end-users Akumina offers a sophisticated and considered intranet experience, but for those less digitally savvy it threatens to feel overwhelming. Careful planning is needed (more than with other, simpler products) to introduce the right features on offer, rather than all of them. For less mature and less complex customers, Akumina has an out-of-the-box offering that allows them to get up and running quickly.

Customers choosing Akumina must have Microsoft 365 in place, as it relies on Graph and other elements in order to work. However, customers can choose whether to deploy in the headless (non-SharePoint) or headed modes. This makes Akumina an unusual blend of being an independent intranet with a vastly different experience to SharePoint, while at the same time being dependent on Microsoft. Note though that where SharePoint is used as the page rendering engine (the 'headed' mode) the load times are markedly slower, as the SharePoint framework adds overhead before any content is displayed.

Why choose this product

Akumina is a versatile platform that is rich in functionality and highly flexible. It allows organisations to integrate with a range of third-party applications, living up to its promise of being the foundation of a full digital workplace. While there is a dependency on SharePoint and Microsoft 365 for some aspects, there is also enough flexibility to push beyond the constraints of SharePoint and create a highly attractive and personalised experience. The product will mainly appeal to large and digitally savvy organisations that have the ambition and the resources to turn Akumina into a true hub for their digital workplace.



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