



CASE STUDY

# Bain & Company accelerates access to insights with next-generation knowledge management platform

Cultivating Bain's collective knowledge in an intuitive platform differentiates its strategic insights for consulting employees and clients

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### Business situation

#### A time consuming search for knowledge

What if the collective knowledge, experience and insights of your employees were the very things that differentiated your work with clients but was stuck in an outdated platform that proved so time consuming and difficult to use that they lost employees' trust and confidence?

This challenge is more commonplace for knowledge workers, who on average spend more than one-third of their day looking for information, only to find it unacceptable 50% of the time. Global management consulting firm Bain & Company (Bain) – for whom domain expertise and knowledge is the foundation of its client work – addressed this challenge head-on as its legacy knowledge management platform reached its end of life.

Over the years, the platform had become cumbersome to use, slow in performance and difficult to maintain. As a result, information searches for both content and internal experts took appreciably more time, and employees didn't always trust that the information was accurate or current. Meanwhile, the business also had changed: Bain needed a faster, scalable and secure platform that could support a wider network of partners and third-party experts who collectively support clients around the world.

"Knowledge management is the lifeblood of what we do at Bain. We use our collective insights, knowledge, experiences and expertise to deliver extraordinary results for our clients. We knew that transforming our approach to how we gathered and presented that collective knowledge and, more importantly, how our employees could engage with it to deliver for our clients was critical to our future growth," said Angela Varner, vice president of knowledge management technology at Bain.

### Solution

#### A scalable platform for intuitive insights

As Bain began to rethink what it wanted in a new knowledge management platform that could grow with the business far into the future, it took advantage of the opportunity to start from scratch.

On the wish list: leverage the latest technologies – like [Microsoft Azure, AI](#) and the engine of [Microsoft Teams](#) and SharePoint – to build something truly revolutionary and customized. Bain wanted a scalable platform that managed all its knowledge more intuitively and could ultimately anticipate what an individual user was looking for even before they asked.

Bain chose to partner with Avanade to bring this ambitious vision to life. "We felt Avanade had the most innovative ideas, the best quality talent and were really a partner that we knew we could work with to bring our grand vision to fruition," Varner said.

The project kicked off with [Avanade Advisory](#) experts culling through extensive user interviews conducted by Bain to pinpoint user challenges and opportunities. Avanade expanded on that user input with design-led thinking workshops that led to the creation of a click-path prototype of the new vision. Using [Agile](#) methodology, Avanade's team then got to work with Bain on designing and deploying the new platform, leveraging our interactive design team to create a rich, user-friendly and sleek interface that worked seamlessly with each of Bain's key audiences.

Constant partnership was a major factor in our mutual success, as Bain and Avanade worked together to prioritize the implementation of key features.

### Results

#### More time devoted to client experiences

Within nine months and amidst a global pandemic during which the team switched to 100% remote working, Bain and Avanade successfully released the first version of the new knowledge management platform, named Iris. Bain's legacy system was retired four weeks later. Iris's evolution has continued and the team uses the Agile methodology to release new features and functionality every two weeks.

Consultants, content creators and knowledge management specialists at Bain report significantly improved efficiencies. Employees say they are more productive, reporting a 60% increase in their satisfaction with the new platform compared with the legacy one since its launch.

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“Where it used to take me 30 minutes to find what I needed, I can get the content I want in less than five. I can use that time to actually help clients, create new content or update the materials already in Iris.”

**Michelle Machado**

Knowledge Management Specialist, Bain

Leaders are enthusiastic about the new platform’s ability to assemble important information on industry trends and projects more rapidly than ever before. “Our new advanced search capabilities allow me to quickly extract what I need for our senior executives. The new platform has done a marvelous job of being able to look through our vast Bain knowledge base and quickly assemble a point of view. It even contextualizes the data so we all have better insights into what the information we’re seeing really means. That’s a huge differentiator for us as we work with clients,” said Herbert Blum, communications and media practice lead at Bain.

By arming its teams with a more intuitive way to find the right information for clients, Bain has transformed both the workplace and client experiences. Today, Bain is applying what it has learned through its experience in building Iris to help its own clients facing the same challenges.

“Not only are we able to use our new knowledge management platform to better guide our clients, but we are tapping into that experience to provide strategic direction on how to capture, manage and disseminate knowledge within their own organizations.”

**Karim Shariff**

EMEA Sector Leader for Construction, Real Estate and B2B Services, Bain

### About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital, cloud and advisory services, industry solutions and design-led experiences across the Microsoft ecosystem. Every day, our 56,000 professionals in 26 countries make a genuine human impact for our clients, their employees and their customers. Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at [www.avanade.com](http://www.avanade.com)

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### About Bain & Company

Bain & Company is a global consultancy that helps the world’s most ambitious change makers define the future.

Across 63 offices in 38 countries, we work alongside our clients as one team with a shared ambition to achieve extraordinary results, outperform the competition, and redefine industries. We complement our tailored, integrated expertise with a vibrant ecosystem of digital innovators to deliver better, faster, and more enduring outcomes. Our 10-year commitment to invest more than \$1 billion in pro bono services brings our talent, expertise, and insight to organizations tackling today’s urgent challenges in education, racial equity, social justice, economic development, and the environment. We earned a gold rating from EcoVadis, the leading platform for environmental, social, and ethical performance ratings for global supply chains, putting us in the top 2% of all companies. Since our founding in 1973, we have measured our success by the success of our clients, and we proudly maintain the highest level of client advocacy in the industry.

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