Reimagining the Search Experience
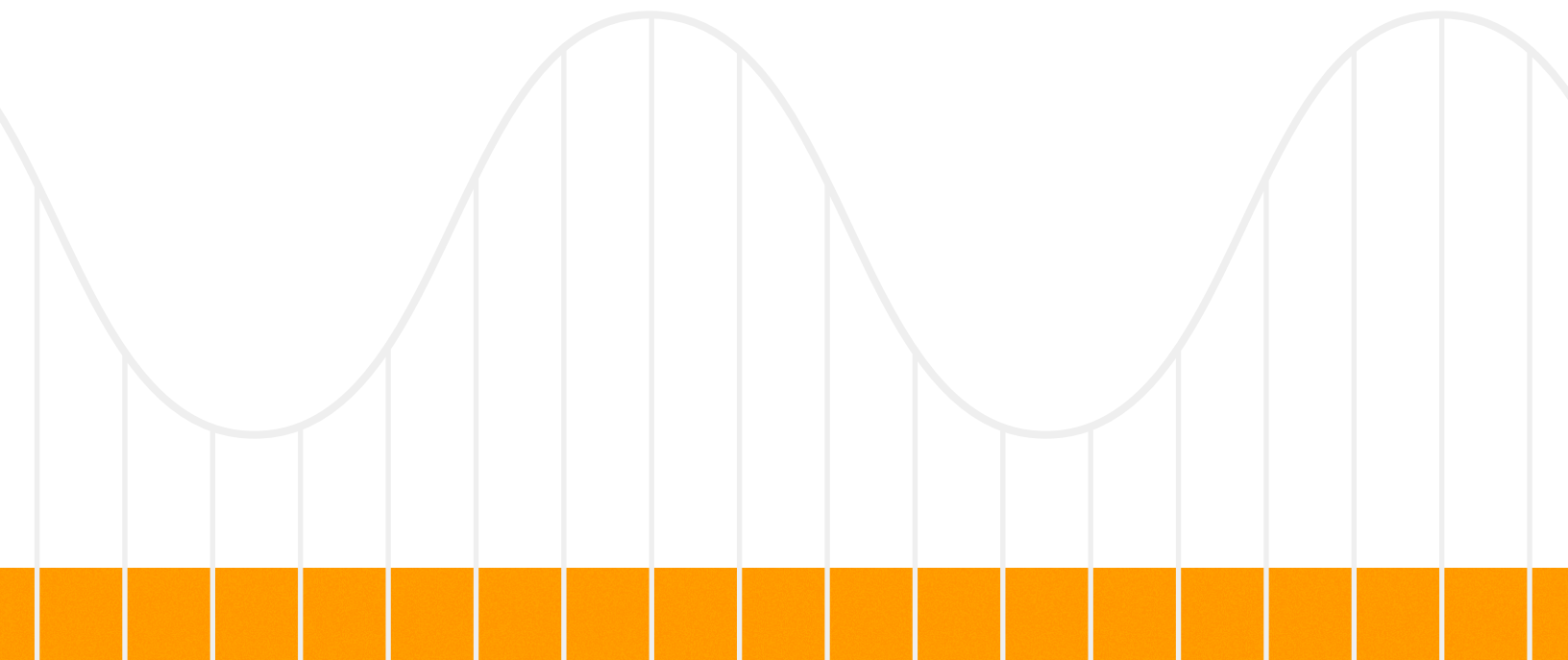
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Executive summary

Search is foundational to a wide variety of experiences. The ability to instantly find relevant information and gain insights into large amounts of data from various sources is key to organizational productivity. Organizations' data contains key insights that make employees more productive and effective. A holistic search approach is the key that unlocks insight from data.

The reasons we search remain constant: we look for insight, information, people, and answers. Today, what we search for has grown to include a rapidly increasing amount of structured and unstructured data from a multitude of internal and external sources, including databases, websites, communities, applications, and file shares.

Google has taught us how valuable and powerful search can be and set high expectations for simplicity and ease of use, which is why the phrase "Google it" is now a part of our everyday language.

Each day knowledge workers waste time searching for information across corporate intranets and other enterprise infrastructures, looking for information needed to perform their jobs productively. The same workers who can pull out a smartphone and immediately locate a nearby restaurant, or compare hotel prices around the globe, find that this type of internet search is not available on their corporate intranet or within the business systems they use, nor does it allow them to include external sources in their search results. Instead, they have to search multiple locations and then consolidate the results.

Various analysts and consultants have put price tags on the lost productivity of inadequate search. McKinsey estimates the average employee loses about 1.8 hours a day, nearly 20% of the workweek, searching and gathering information. IDC places the figure at 2.5 hours a day, almost 30% of their workweek, searching for data that should be at their fingertips.

You can run your own multipliers for the number of employees and hourly costs, but the losses from inefficient searching are staggering and a hidden pain point.

Effective search can facilitate all the information you need to do your job from a single source. BA Insight makes search significantly easier and faster. You can have a meaningful and positive impact on employees by thinking of them like you do your customers and applying similar engagement techniques.

Work hubs increase employee productivity and efficiency.

Team members in a sales organization will use vertical applications such as Salesforce to manage and access information about customers, companies, and people. They will also often use a document management system containing content required to do their jobs and collaborate with others, such as SharePoint Online, Teams, and Outlook.

In this example, their daily lives require them to perform five different searches in five disparate locations, all with varying features and capabilities, just to find necessary information.

Deploying a search solution as a work hub to help employees find the information they need to do their jobs faster and better is critical to a productive and engaged organization. This has previously consisted of a centralized enterprise search solution built on SharePoint On-Premise or SharePoint Online. But why not make a work hub within each application, allowing them to access information from all internal and external resources from a single enterprise system?

We hear from customers that their Salesforce users complain about the Salesforce search experience. The same goes for Teams, Outlook, and ServiceNow. How long will it be before investments are made to improve the search experience within these applications to resemble internet searches more closely?

Let us reimagine enterprise search and make it available in as many places as possible, searching as many locations as possible. After all, we are well into the 21st century and should move on from the centralized ideas about enterprise search and start thinking about work hubs everywhere.

BA Insight customers are modernizing the search experience by bringing:

- Natural language query/search to each application. Search as you type, recent searches, and recommendations based on previous searches.

- Search analytics so we know what users searched for and the results.

- Information that can help administrators improve results.

- Autoclassification to tag information independent of where it resides.

- Ability to preview documents and the pages within them that contain what users are looking for, independent of where the information resides.

AI-assisted enterprise search is powerful.

AI is everywhere. At Upland BA Insight, we have and are making continued investments in applying AI to internal search problems whether it is helping to bring things like natural language queries to Salesforce and SharePoint or using it to extract insights from documents stored in business systems. So, instead of investing in developing AI technologies, we take advantage of billions of dollars invested by behemoths like Microsoft and Amazon or the innovation provided by the open-source community by integrating with them and applying AI to search.

Below are some examples of how we apply the AI integrations:

Natural Language

For years, the web has allowed users to successfully search by asking natural language questions instead of keyword search. Now you can provide the same capability to employees. In fact, through our work hub strategy, we can bring natural language search to many systems, including Salesforce, SharePoint Online, ServiceNow, Microsoft Dynamics, Microsoft Word, and even intranet platforms like Akumina and LiveTiles. The beauty of the approach is that we can bring natural language search based on your organization's language, to many systems.
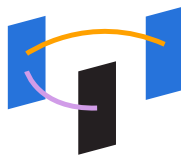
Natural Language Processing

Natural language processing is excellent in helping categorize information automatically, suggesting meta tags for documents, and inferring relationships.
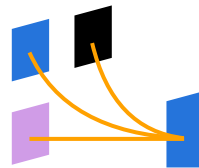
Image and Video Identification

Ability to find the video that has the information you need, get you to the correct place in the video, or find the document because the image in the document is the answer to your question.

Relevant Recommendations

When you start typing, it starts acting. Rather than waiting for the user to express an intent, it proactively makes predictions. A user receives recommendations based on a variety of captured data. Machine Learning-based recommendations are a welcomed capability for internal search implementations.

Search should be proactive, not reactive.

Enterprise Search has come a long way but still needs to be more actionable. With the help of many visionary organizations, we have spent years and invested millions of dollars in R&D to make enterprise search much more like web search. We now have over 90 connectors, make search available anywhere, anytime, on any device, and we have tools that improve relevancy and personalization to help users quickly find the information they need. Customers refer to our search solutions as "Google-like."

However, once users find the information, they still have to go to the source system to make even the most superficial changes, like uploading a file to a document management system, changing the attributes of a file, submitting a request for time off, changing the status of a support case, and many other actions.

Consider this scenario:

You decide to buy a new television, so you start researching online. You can do this from any device, phone, tablet, or computer. Using Google, you type in the keyword "tv" and receive results from many sources, including Amazon, Sony, LG, Samsung, Vizio, Best Buy, and more. The results on the first page show the most relevant and accurate results. When clicking on one of the links, you land on a site with more details, where you can refine your criteria. You could filter by price, brand, size, reviews, etc.

This process helps you quickly find the information you seek, after which you can immediately purchase it. Buying it is an extension of the search experience instead of a separate action on its own.

We advocate for enterprise search to follow the lead of web search and make it actionable by taking advantage of hyper-automation platforms that make that possible.

About BA Insight

SmartHub, ConnectivityHub, and AutoClassifier are powerful search tools on their own and provide an amazing better-together platform when combined. To fully appreciate how this can help your organization soar, we would love to provide you with a demonstration—using your own data.

Schedule a demonstration.

bainsight.com/request-a-demo
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