

# Walmart Builds the World's Largest Intranet

The world's top retailer creates a self-service digital experience platform with consumer-grade functionality



Walmart is an American multinational retail corporation operating a chain of hypermarkets, discount department stores and grocery stores in 29 markets around the world and employing 2.2 million. Walmart's Associate Experience Innovation & Design (AxID) group is made up of user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) design experts and developers responsible for the digital experience of Walmart associates.

## THE CHALLENGE

In 2017, Walmart was relying on disparate legacy website systems and hardware to build intranets and extranets serving the communication needs of Walmart associates. Built independently over time, they were time-consuming and costly.

## THE SOLUTION

Walmart AxID took an innovative approach that would vastly improve and accelerate the pace of intranet/extranet microsite creation while dramatically decreasing routine maintenance and providing a consistent aesthetic across websites. AxID replaced the dated and expiring web technologies with one universal, consumer-grade, self-service, anytime/anywhere microsite platform with personalized interactions that save time and help associates work better. Built on Adobe Experience Manager, Walmart Experience Manager was launched in Canada and Mexico, key U.S. divisions, Latin America and India in 2018, and chainwide in the United States in 2019. China, the UK, Japan and Chile are next in line for go-live.

"The old system generated hundreds of trouble tickets per month for things like broken links. But by enabling the authors we've created an army of people who support the end-user experience by taking ownership of their sites. Now, we focus on white-glove services for 500 authors, rather than holding the hands of two million users."

- Paul Bucalo

Associate Digital Experience (AxID) Product Owner, Walmart

## RESULTS

3.5 MILLION  
DAILY PAGE VIEWS

950,000  
UNIQUE DAILY VISITORS

500,000  
DAILY SEARCHES

66%  
COST SAVINGS

50%  
FASTER  
COMMUNICATION SPEEDS



## THE ROAD TO MODERNIZATION

In 2017, Walmart was at a crossroads. Its dated technology tools for the creation of intranets and extranets for Walmart associates in stores, offices and home offices across the globe were time-consuming and costly. For example, if a store associate wanted to check a work schedule, they would have to either use a separate extranet login and password or be physically onsite on a company network to access the intranet. The process was time-consuming for associates as well as for Walmart administrators whenever users forgot their login credentials. For an organization with 2.2 million associates, 1.5 million in the U.S., every second equates to significant cost savings.

AxID replaced the disparate intranet and extranet technologies with one modern, universal, self-service platform that simplifies the system for end-users, and frees up AxID from routine maintenance so they can focus on strategic endeavors such as “white glove” support for the fast-growing contingent of content authors.

## SOLUTION COMPONENTS

- The Adobe Experience Manager content management system (CMS) hosts all experiences and digital assets
- Artificial intelligence with chatbots powered by Microsoft Azure allows authors to allow authors to integrate chatbots in a repeatable, consistent manner
- Unified login shaves 25 seconds from the login process
- Adobe Analytics monitors and evaluates user experiences
- Solr search tool generates faster and more accurate results
- Multi-factor authentication allows associates to access the intranet from anywhere on any device using a single set of credentials
- A new survey tool is built on Drupal
- Supports automated testing and automated build deployment
- Built-in UX/UI experience continuity provides a uniform aesthetic across all sites

## MODERNIZATION WITH AN AGILE METHODOLOGY TWIST

AxID replaced its legacy web systems with a digital workplace complete with best practices common to consumer-grade sites. A cornerstone of the success is AxID's agile methodology. Improvements are continual and based on user interactions and feedback, rather than a waterfall development process where predetermined user needs are addressed before launch and difficult to modify afterward. "If you always try to ascertain requirements before you start, conditions will change on the ground before you finish, and you will produce something no one can use," said Walmart AxID Product Owner Paul Bucalo. "We launch, iterate live, and every two weeks we come out with something new. We wouldn't be anywhere without this push-forward mentality: keep launching even if you fail; keep iterating and you'll get it right."

Data and analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning are leveraged to guide iterations and create seamless user experiences. For example, AxID analyzes persona preferences at points of interaction for such things as page views, in-person meetings versus virtual meetings, email versus collaborative workspaces, instant messaging versus persistent chat, and even in-person tech support versus chatbots. Helpdesk tickets, mobile application feedback, and telemetry on laptops and mobile devices are among the sources of usage data. This information is collected and analyzed by data scientists to create user personas, predict associate preferences, and make recommendations to users at the time of use.

Another key aspect of the Walmart Experience Manager platform is its "democratized" authoring process that empowers site creators. Walmart Experience Manager's template is easy to use for non-technical authors, with more than 80 components and colors to select from, and a built-in style guide with "guardrails" that creates a uniform aesthetic across all microsites. This has removed the traditional barriers of IT development. "This is no longer a traditional web development project," Bucalo said. "Instead we say, 'Here is the system, build anything you want. Choose your pictures, choose your colors and put everything on the page where you want it.'"

The screenshot displays a comprehensive dashboard for a Walmart store manager. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation links for Company, Me, Work, Directory, and more. Below this are several quick-action buttons like 'Associate Information Line', 'GTA Portal', and 'GTA Timesheet'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- WHAT'S YOUR CAMP IV Dashboard is Live**: A prominent announcement banner.
- My Schedule**: A calendar view for the week of Feb 23, 2019, to Mar 01, 2019, showing a total of 40 hours.
- STORE METRICS**: A grid of performance indicators including Sales (-7.69%), Combined CFF Score (101.9), OSCA Score (95.7%), and Markdowns (80.87%).
- Compliance**: A section with a red header showing compliance dashboard, CSS BPM tasks, and product removal counts.
- Service Channel**: A section with a blue header showing open work orders (40), reactive orders (1), and planned maintenance orders (2).
- COMMUNICATIONS CENTER**: A section with a blue header containing operations feedback, merchant messages, and email subscriptions.
- AMP+**: A task management section with a blue header, listing various tasks like 'Dept. 95: Do not Cost Inventory Dried Fruits and Nuts' and 'Dept. 87: Return Select iPhone 6 Units to Supplier By April 19'.
- TOP STORIES**: A section with a blue header featuring news items like 'Happy to Help TV - Episode 47 (Christmas)', 'Walmart World is Now on Social', and 'ASSOCIATE APPRECIATION FOR THE HOLIDAYS'.
- ME ESSENTIALS**: A section with a blue header containing essential information like 'FY19 Q3 - EARNINGS RELEASE', 'Store View', 'Store Support', 'Field Support', and 'Ethics (True North)'.

This screenshot shows the internal portal interface for Walmart associates. It features a blue header with the 'WIRE' logo and a search bar. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for 'Apps', 'Comm Center', 'My Favorites', 'One Best Way', 'Email', 'Me@Walmart', 'Knowledge Center', 'Directory', and 'Store Areas'. The main content area includes:

- Happy to Help TV - Episode 47 (Christmas)**: A video thumbnail featuring associates in Santa suits.
- Walmart World is Now on Social**: A thumbnail showing a smartphone displaying social media content.
- ASSOCIATE APPRECIATION FOR THE HOLIDAYS**: A large promotional banner with a 'FREE meal from VUDU' offer.
- Navigation Icons**: A row of circular icons for 'My Learning Portal', 'Performance & Talent', 'Workplace by Facebook', 'GTA Timesheet', 'Store Directory Lookup', 'Conference Room Directions', and 'Travel & Expense'.
- News & Notices**: A section with a blue header containing a news item for 'NOV 15 FY19 Q3 - EARNINGS RELEASE' with the headline 'Earnings results are in. So, how'd we do?'.
- Support Links**: A row of buttons for 'Store View', 'Store Support', 'Field Support', and 'Ethics (True North)'.

This has sped up site creation as authors can get on, create or borrow content and designs from each other, get reviews and approvals, and go live. “When we saw how massive a migration to the platform would be, we realized we would not be able to do this on our own,” Bucalo explained. “We democratized the authoring process and co-opted the rest of the organization into pushing the content into the system themselves.”

What’s more, authoring is now open rather than permission-based, a change that came after the first go-live when AxID saw that it created an unnecessary step for its dramatically growing contingent of content creators. According to Bucalo, “Locking it down was the default of the past, but people move around so frequently this would have put layers of routine maintenance on our plates and slowed everything down.”

## BENEFITS & RESULTS

Walmart Experience Manager is a platform for Walmart’s digitally savvy, multi-generational workforce that allows them to communicate, connect, collaborate, search and create. The thinking follows that if you empower associates with great technology, training and career opportunities, you can help them work better while strengthening company culture.

The Walmart intranets are places for disseminating information from Walmart’s central operations, including store operations, health and wellness divisions, pharmacies, warehouses, supply chain operations, and even Walmart’s emergency responses for natural disasters.

Other benefits and results include:

- Walmart associates are empowered by consumer-grade interactions that save them time, predict their needs based on personas, and promote deep work by freeing up time from mundane tasks.
- In the first year, cost savings of 66% (double-digit basis points) were realized by replacing legacy systems with Walmart Experience Manager.
- The speed of communication improved by 50 percent in the first quarter following the product launch of Walmart’s supply chain operations and training program.
- The popularity of the site is indicated by its daily use: 950,000 unique visitors, 500,000 searches, and over 3.5 million page views per day.
- A new unified login shaves 25 seconds off the login process time, which translates into savings of \$1 million a week when measured in employee payroll.

