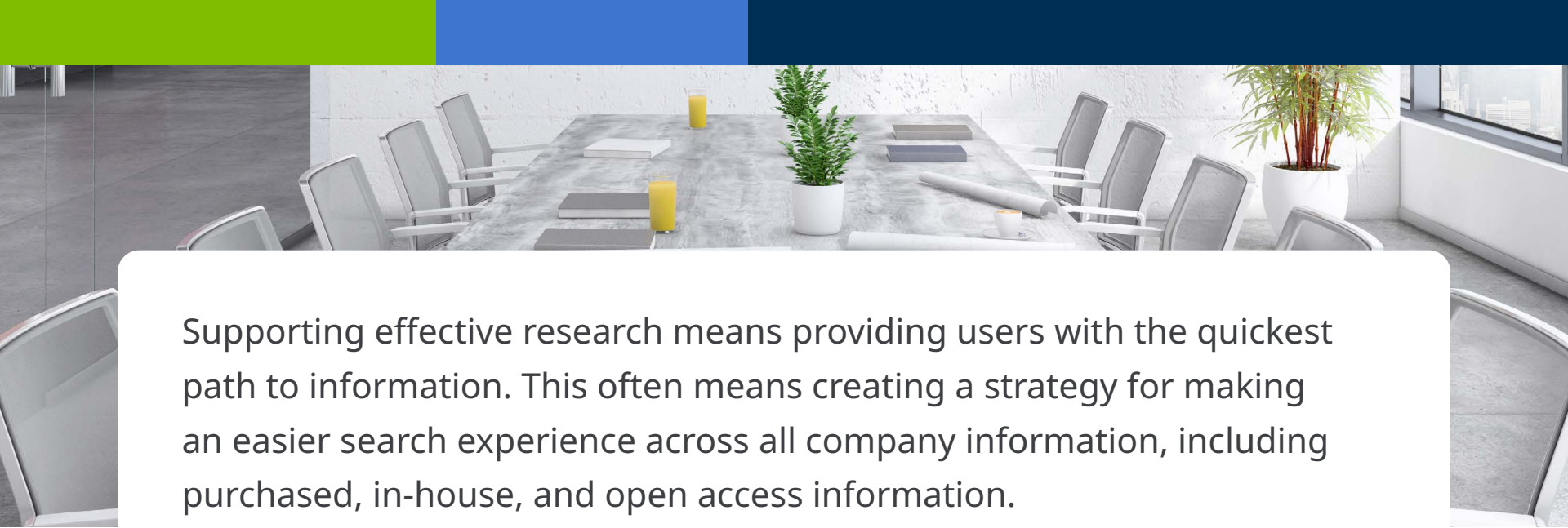
The background image shows a clean, modern workspace. In the foreground, a dark wooden desk holds a silver laptop, two spiral-bound notebooks, and two small potted plants. One plant is a succulent in a light grey pot, and the other is a small aloe vera in a similar pot. In the background, a desk lamp with a silver shade and a wooden base is visible, along with more greenery. The overall aesthetic is bright and professional.

How to Build the Case for a New Research Portal

EBSCO Stacks
www.stacksdiscovery.com

A photograph of a modern conference room. A long, light-colored wooden table is set with several grey mesh chairs. On the table are two yellow candles, a small potted plant, and some papers. The room has large windows on the right side, offering a view of a city skyline. The background is decorated with three horizontal bars in green, blue, and dark blue.

Supporting effective research means providing users with the quickest path to information. This often means creating a strategy for making an easier search experience across all company information, including purchased, in-house, and open access information.

As the keepers of information, you should also have the ability to build and manage a **company research portal** — ensuring that every integration, search configuration and news feed can be easily set up and updated by you and your team.

Building a business case for an intuitive research portal that you manage may seem like a difficult dance. **This guide can help.**



Why Does a Self-Service Research Portal Matter?

Layers of pages and links make it difficult for users to navigate to the resources and services they need. In order to provide a successful research experience, employees need to easily and efficiently access information available in your corporate knowledge center. With high usage of these resources, your team can prove ROI and help employees achieve their goals.

A user-friendly and self-service research portal means you can bring together the best in content, integrations and search — no matter the device, time of day or skill of the user.



Elements for a Successful Research Portal

Aesthetics is Key

Implementing a content management system (CMS) built on user experience best practices will incorporate the best of UX both on the front-end and on the administrator-end.

Search Front and Center

Users have been conditioned through their own personal web experiences to expect a search box, front and center. This natural expectation will also be applied to your library website.

Scannability

Users' eyes tend to follow an [F-Shape](#) pattern — scanning across the top first, then down the middle and finally partially through the middle of the website. When it comes to optimizing your library website for “scannability,” think about the most important items and resources to your users and arrange in that pattern.

Simplicity

A website with clear, simple, active language aims to help users understand what the site offers and what actions they can take on the website.

Organization

Content hierarchy as well as options for search configurations allow your library to tailor the website to users based on their interactions and present resources in an easily digestible way.

Be Where Your Users Are

Mobile and tablet usage has continued to climb, with [reports](#) citing that Internet usage by these devices has now exceeded that of desktops.

Building a mobile-friendly research portal means that you are remaining relevant and responding to your users' needs.

What is a Mobile-First Strategy?

A mobile-first strategy means a few things:

First, that your portal is designed for a smaller screen and features and content are then added for larger screens.

Second, displayed elements should respond to the user's behavior based on their screen size as well as the platform they are using (think Android vs. iOS). A mobile-first strategy also takes into consideration how a user is accessing a website. For example, "heavy" design elements such as sliders and videos will slow down the load time of your website and will become more bothersome.



Improving the ROI

A self-service CMS platform which builds your research portal will raise usage of your information resources taking this platform a step further to have a user-friendly administrator dashboard gives time and effort back to your staff (think, no more IT requests). Let's explore in more detail.

Integrations

Core integrations such as discovery or internal repository should fall under a plug-and-play approach within your CMS platform. This helps to avoid unexpected costs, risks and custom development work, saving your department time and money development.

Self-Service

A dashboard-driven interface empowers staff to create brilliant and engaging content with ease. The content management system should allow for you to promote programs and manage registrations in the same place people search, place holds, or access content.

Sustainable

A product that is part of a subscription service with an annual license fee ensures that your integrations are maintained, software and hardware updates are taken care of and security remains at an industry best. This means platform maintenance is taken care of behind the scenes so you can focus without any surprise costs.

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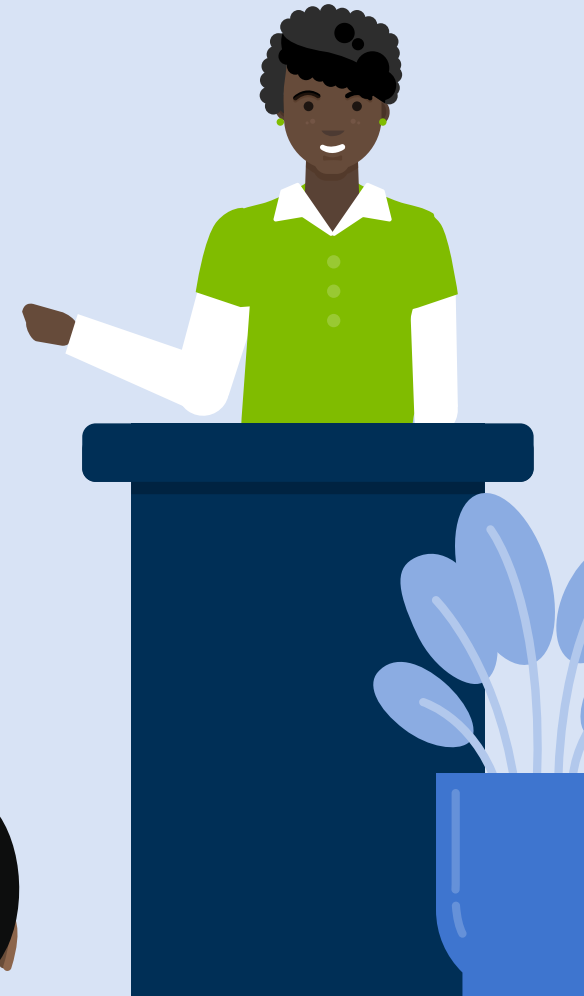
"The Stacks content management system avoids the need for expensive customized custom development by incorporating tools that can be configured and populated by libraries themselves to produce a customized website."

Marshall Breeding,
*Founder, Editor at
Library Technology
Guides*

Let's Get Down to Business

This section will take you through the key stages and areas you need to consider as you prepare your business case.

Before you start, are there any previous web projects you need to be aware of? If they have not been successful, then make sure you factor any lessons learned into your own business case and project plans. And look for any internal expertise that you can make use of.



Objectives

By the time you start writing your business case, your high-level objectives – **the goals you want to meet and the problems you need to solve** – should be clear. Failure to define your objectives will mean problems later, especially when working out costs. That said, as you engage stakeholders and maybe potential suppliers, for example, you might revisit and refine your objectives.

Stakeholder Engagement

With any business case, identifying the key decision-maker and budget-holder is crucial. You will need to compose your central arguments and shape your proposal around those individual people, their capabilities and their responsibilities. The key stakeholder you identify will have a direct bearing on the form that your business case document eventually takes, in terms of format, structure, tone and level of detail. Stakeholder engagement isn't just something you do in the background to help your business case succeed. It should also be a section in your business case document, outlining the key areas of need and how your proposal meets them.

Identifying the primary stakeholders requires you to ask this question: "why is a separate library web strategy important?" And then you should consider to whom it matters most.

Stakeholder Examples:

- Users
- Operational Staff
- IT
- Senior Management or Business Case Sponsor

Outline for a Successful Business Case

Once you're ready to produce your business case, you need to decide on the best format for the specifics of your organization and project. The likelihood is that you will have to write a formal proposal of some type. To structure your proposal, follow this checklist to make sure you have included sections that your stakeholders expect to see:

- Executive summary – Including a high-level summary of recommendations
- Introduction – Background information, objectives and problem statement
- Business drivers and anticipated benefits – Targeting the appropriate stakeholder type
- Fully quantified cost-benefit analysis
- Project overview
- Solution description, with options if applicable
- Timeline
- Budget
- Success criteria
- Recommendations

Start with Stacks

Stacks is the first turnkey, responsive content management system with plug-and-play integrations and mobile apps connected in real time.

Transform your research experiences into a single, streamlined, intuitive workflow that generates meaningful insights and improved outcomes.

Search all of your Content at Once

Include subscription services, open content, content you create, proprietary collections and more with our robust search integrations.

Internal Repositories

Integrating internal repositories of all shapes and sizes is easily supported.

Sustainable Integrations

All Stacks integrations are plug-and-play meaning there are no risks or costs associated with custom development. Stacks ensures industry-leading maintenance and support when compared to any other unique implementations available.

Seamless Subscription

One affordable annual license fee guarantees all your integrations are maintained, software and hardware updates are taken care of and security remains at an industry best.

Are you ready to build the case?

Stacks empowers you to create a world-class library experience –
all on your own.

[Learn More](#)

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