



THE POWER OF EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION:

From frontline engagement to digital transformation

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INTRODUCTION: A FERTILE GROUND FOR FRONTLINE COMMUNICATIONS

Back in my university days, about a zillion years ago, I was a gardener. It's hard work, but a great job. You get to play with lawnmowers, hedge trimmers and whipper snippers, completely transforming someone's backyard. The customers were always grateful, free cold drinks were common. And at the end of the day, you'd take your gloves off and shake their hand.



That experience has always helped me to appreciate the contribution that frontline and customer-facing staff make in any organization, not only in their hard work but also in the unique perspectives they hold. The people who spend the most time with customers know your customers best. Unfortunately, frontline workers have not always been as appreciated as they should have been, but that's now changing in 2021.

The term 'frontline worker' takes on a whole new meaning with the onset of COVID-19. They're the healthcare workers behind protective face shields. They're the teachers remote educating our children on digital devices. They're the retail staff scanning our QR codes at the checkout. Frontline can mean risky and high pressure, but it also means proximity to the customer. Historically, they've been a neglected constituency in the digital workplace discussion. Now they're front-and-centre, where they belong.

The ability to bring the frontline workforce into the digital workplace is being driven by a generation of apps that employees can access securely on their own mobile devices. These mobile-first digital experiences are rewriting the conversation about who can access digital services, bypassing old barriers around cost, digital identities, and access to devices. These apps are supporting efficiency, engagement, and innovation. They are creating significant opportunities for greater diversity and inclusion as well as true digital transformation involving all staff, not just people who work at desks.

An app means a gardener today can feel truly connected with the company they work for and their co-workers. They can ask a question on how to fix the lawnmower to a co-worker at another site. They can share a photo of their handiwork with their boss or upload it to the company intranet – turning organic gardening into organic storytelling! They could share the news of a happy customer with the wider team. They can catch-up with the latest updates as they sip that well-earned cold brew.

It's also worth remembering that employee communications apps bring value to knowledge workers too. Office-based workers will increasingly find themselves working from different locations in new hybrid workplace patterns. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, many office workers were frequently on the go; perhaps visiting a client, in transit to an event, or just moving around the building.

In this report we explore the power dedicated employee communication apps are bringing to frontline staff, as well as other parts of the organization. We cover the opportunities they unlock around improving the digital employee experience and some of the deeper business benefits, including supporting an organizational culture of greater diversity and inclusion.

We hope you find this a useful resource on your own journey to launch, upgrade or extend your own employee communication apps and create a great mobile-first digital experience.

Karl Redenbach

CEO, LiveTiles

May 2021

HOW TO USE THIS EBOOK

In this eBook, we explore the power of the employee communication, particularly in relation to frontline staff, employee experience and digital transformation.

It is designed to help senior stakeholders and practitioners from communications, human resources, IT, customer services, operations, leadership, and other functions to consider their employee communication strategy and options.

Use the report to help:

1. Kick-start your own thinking.
2. Enable the right conversations.
3. Consider improvements.
4. Define your strategy.
5. Plan your roadmap.

WHAT IS AN EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS APP?

In this report when we refer to an employee communications app, we mean a mobile app that:

- employees can access on both corporate and employee-owned devices
- focuses on communication, collaboration and other digital capabilities
- aims to keep employees informed, engaged, healthy and productive.
- is mobile-first but also accessible via desktop, MS Teams and other channels or devices.

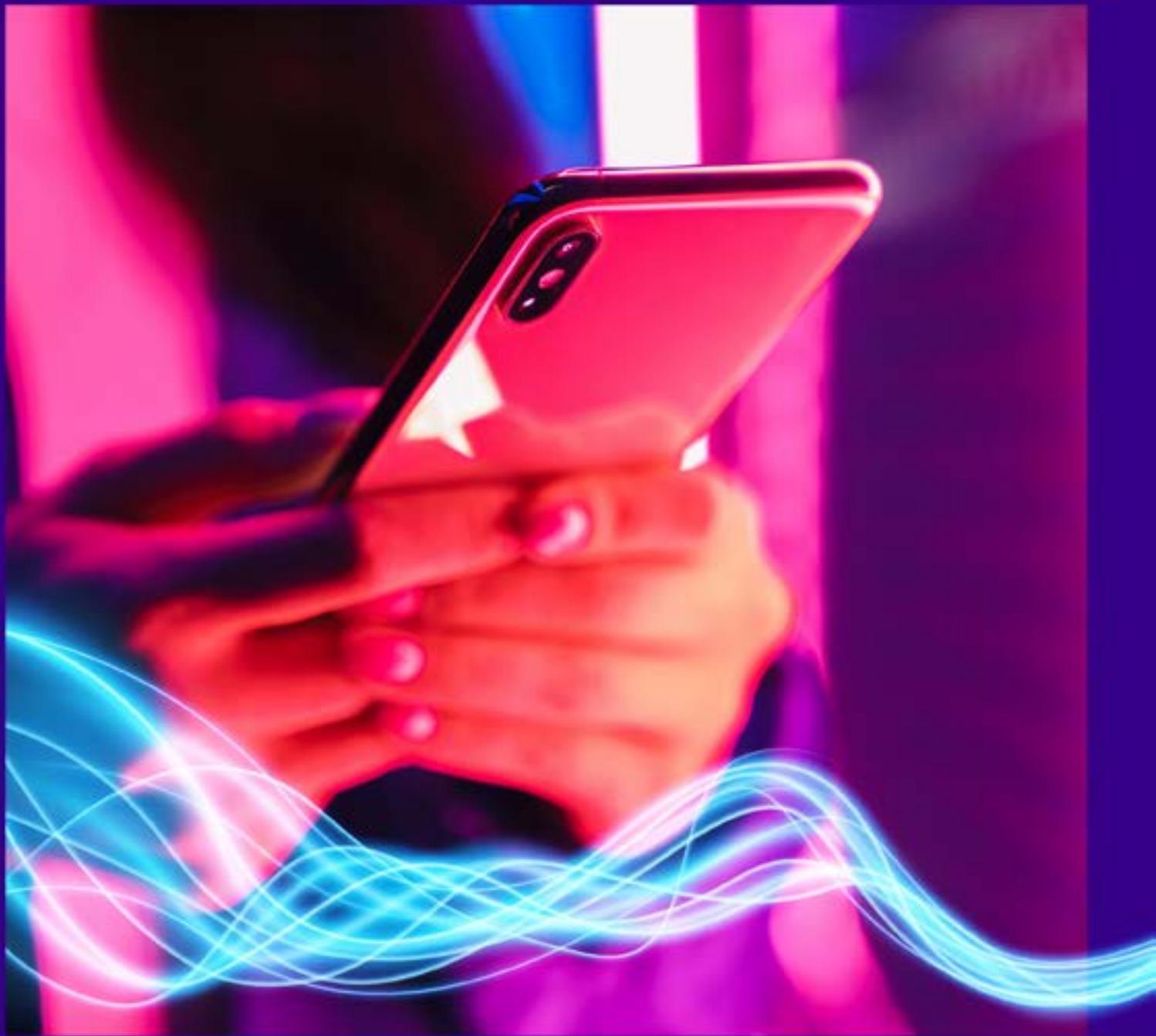
Typically, an employee app might feature:

- Access to news and communication updates
- Access to reference and learning content covering everything from processes to wellbeing
- The ability to message and communicate with peers and across teams
- Social tools that allow employees to post updates, blogs, give feedback and take part in polls
- Groups and communities for both work and non-work collaboration and discussions
- The ability to carry out transactions based on integrations with other digital workplace tools.

CHANGING THE GAME: THE BENEFITS OF AN EMPLOYEE APP

The potential benefits of an employee communications app are enormous, bringing frontline employees into the core of the digital workplace experience, but also driving deeper organizational-level change. We see this happening across six distinct but overlapping areas of change, with a number of associated factors within each area.

AREA OF CHANGE	KEY FACTORS DRIVING BENEFITS
<p>1. DRIVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION</p> <p>Realizing deeper strategic objectives through a more connected workplace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating the truly connected workplace • Increasing productivity across the frontline and beyond • Amplifying and evolving an inclusive culture • Becoming the employer of choice • Ready and equipped for the future
<p>2. FUTURE-PROOFING FOR THE HYBRID WORKPLACE</p> <p>Preparing organizations and employees for both the immediate and longer-term future of work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing connection and community • Enabling remote work for all staff • Driving remote worker efficiency • Improving collaboration and communication • Supporting the transition back to the office
<p>3. REVOLUTIONIZING FRONTLINE ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Raising engagement, efficiency, effectiveness, and innovation across the frontline workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting all frontline employees at last • Onboarding and engaging frontline staff in fast turnover industries • Improving effectiveness and customer service • Transforming frontline processes • Driving innovation • Including everyone regardless of whether they have Office 365 licences or not
<p>4. DELIVERING THE MOBILE-FIRST DIGITAL WORKPLACE</p> <p>Providing an optimized mobile digital workplace experience that supports IT function goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging digital workplace access for all • Supporting faster time to value • Ensuring scalability and flexibility • Establishing business continuity • Optimizing your application landscape
<p>5. EMPOWERING THE EMPLOYEE VOICE</p> <p>Giving everybody a voice and harnessing the power of this approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telling everyday stories that preserve and nurture a grassroots culture • Embracing the power of dialogue • Gathering feedback from the frontline • Driving greater Diversity & Inclusion • Flattening the hierarchy
<p>6. SUPERCHARGING EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE</p> <p>Making a tangible difference to the way employees experience their work, supporting HR department goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting moments that matter • Onboarding new employees • Promoting health and wellbeing • Enabling learning and development • Increasing the adoption of employee self-service



ONE: DRIVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Realizing deeper strategic objectives through
a more connected workplace

Launching a mobile employee communications app that delivers digital communications and services to your entire workforce is a gamechanger, driving engagement, productivity and even innovation.

When you achieve a truly connected workplace, the impact is tangible. Senior leaders see the realization of strategic objectives, while employees find themselves digitally connected for the first time.

Creating the truly connected workplace

Deploying communications to all employees via a mobile app accessible on all corporate and employee-owned devices is a critical milestone in building a connected workplace.

Our *Digital Workplace Trends 2021* report identifies this as “connecting the entire workforce for the smooth and efficient flow of knowledge, information and data, enhancing enterprise-level processes and culture.”

The benefits of a connected workplace are broad and deep. *Research carried out by the Harvard Business Review* has indicated that highly connected companies are twice as likely to hold a favourable marketing position compared to those that aren't.

Many organizations have launched “one company” initiatives to create more connected companies with an emphasis on bringing standardization, process improvement and brand unity to organizations built up through M&A activity. But often these initiatives fall short by focusing on knowledge workers; a mobile employee app brings the entire workforce, including previously disconnected frontline workers, into the fold.

Estimates suggest that **80% of employees are deskless**. In industries like retail, manufacturing, leisure, and travel, connecting all employees is highly important.

Explore 'Revolutionizing frontline engagement' in section 3.

Increasing productivity across the frontline and beyond

Digital transformation is an overused term, but it's often an explicit aim for senior leaders who want to drive efficiency through process improvement, role enablement and collaboration. They also wish to solve deeper rooted issues around increasing productivity while evolving company culture to embrace change.

Connecting frontline workers via a mobile app is a common milestone in digital transformation efforts. It's also usually a no-brainer, eliminating outdated manual processes and eccentric workarounds by giving frontline staff access to operational information, productivity tools available through integrations, and the ability to communicate with colleagues. It kickstarts an exciting digital workplace journey by providing a channel for targeted digital services to drive broader productivity gains and provides a mobile-first communications channel increasingly demanded by employees.

Explore "Delivering the mobile-first digital workplace" in section 4.



Amplifying your culture

An equally extensive impact centres around culture change, diversity, and inclusion. Connecting frontline employees and giving them a voice is a statement of intent that sends a strong message that they are valued.

It also means they may be connected to communications for the first time, getting insights into a company's purpose and values and how they are put into action. An employee app may be the first time a frontline employee has had any insight into what their CEO believes in.

For the first time, there may also be a connection to peers who are geographically dispersed. More than anything, this can support a sense of community that underpins a more unified, transparent, and human-centered culture that supports other aims such as better Diversity and Inclusion. The ability to be heard and recognized also supports a culture of transparency and dialog.

Explore "Empowering the employee voice" in section 5.

Becoming the employer of choice

The ripple effect of culture change can also support an employer's value proposition. When you support flexible working choices, transparency, and have leaders that listen, it does not go unnoticed. Your Glassdoor reviews start to glow, and employee advocacy starts to rise. Ultimately, being recognized as a great place to work helps talent retention and attraction.

Of course, this is driven by a range of efforts and initiatives, but an employee communications app can be an essential and effective means to achieving this.

Explore "Supercharging employee experience" in section 6.

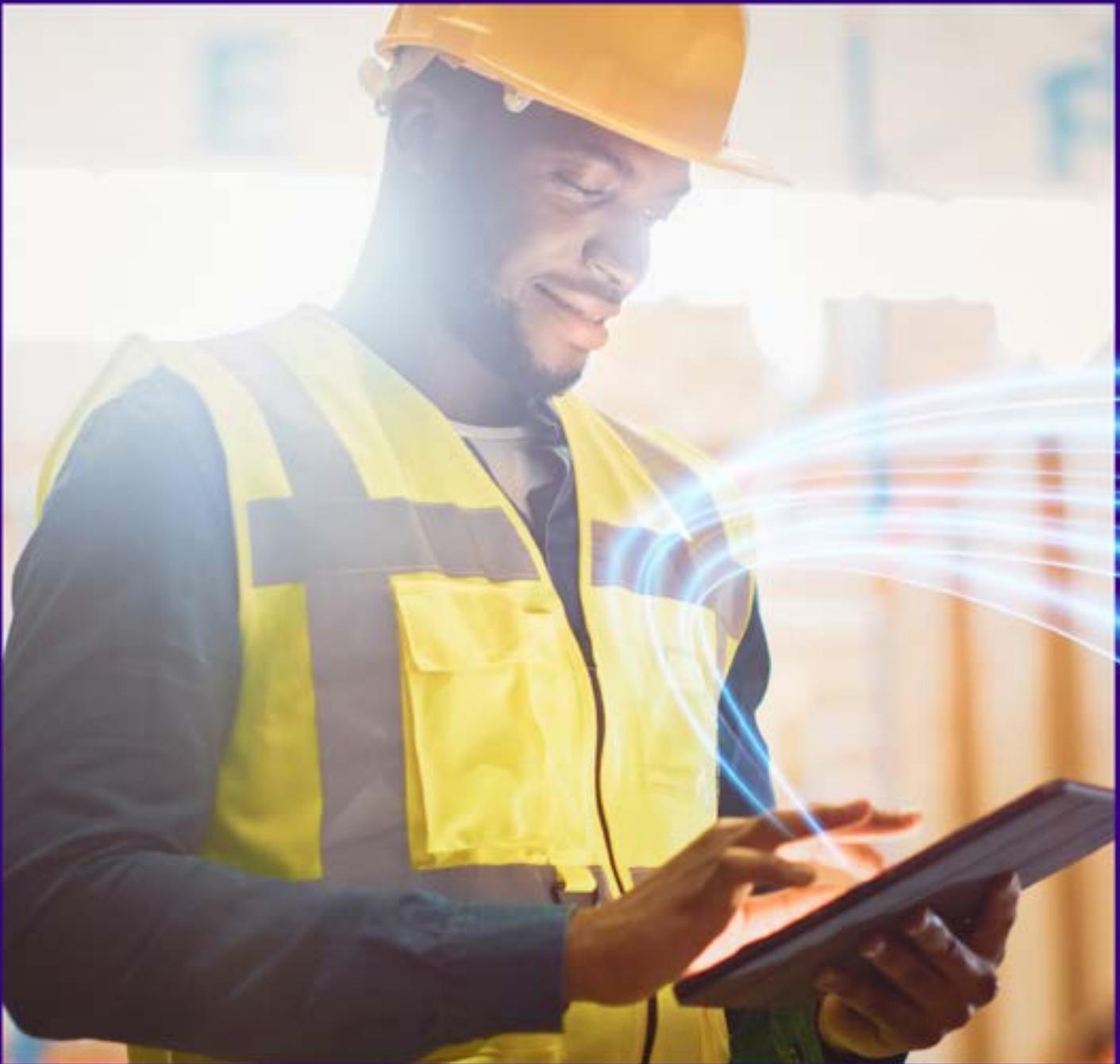
Facing the future

The pandemic means that the business climate in 2021 and beyond will be uncertain and highly challenging. One certain and permanent change however is that flexible working is here to stay, as is the opportunity to include all workers in workplace communications and culture. An employee communications app can help you face the future, playing a part in being future-ready by driving innovation, agility, and a strong customer service ethic.

Direct, real-time communications are a must-have to support the agility and adaptability required to support rapid operational pivots, changing customer needs and new commercial opportunities. Connecting your frontline workers with the ability to provide feedback and ideas can also be an engine to drive innovation and improve customer service, particularly when you tap into the knowledge of the frontline staff who are closest to your customers. Ultimately, this will help prepare your business to face future needs and expectations.

Explore "Future proofing for the hybrid workplace" section 2.

The benefits of a connected workplace are broad and deep. Research carried out by the Harvard Business Review has indicated that highly connected companies are twice as likely to hold a favourable market position compared to those that aren't.



TWO: FUTURE-PROOFING THE HYBRID WORKPLACE

Preparing organizations and employees for both the immediate and longer-term future of work

COVID-19 has scaled up remote working to unprecedented levels, but there is a consensus that we will not be returning to the pre-pandemic situation. [Research from Gartner](#) suggests 48% of employees will continue to work remotely after COVID, compared to 30% before. This trend was confirmed in a November 2020 survey of LiveTiles global customers with some 70% saying they are committed to a hybrid model of work from here on in.

We are entering the era of the “hybrid workplace”, with a combination of more ‘deskless’ mobility, working remotely or being physically at the office as part of the normal pattern.

Great employee communications support the hybrid workplace, navigating current challenges and meeting longer-term objectives.

Enabling remote work for all staff

The benefits of more distributed work include cost reductions, better work-life balance, environmental benefits, improved employee experience and more.

In the hybrid workplace, work needs to be enabled from any location. Employees’ working patterns will be far more fluid; our [Digital Workplace Trends 2021 report](#) foresees “people working from home and at an office or premises, often switching between them from day to day”. Access to the digital workplace is the cornerstone of supporting remote work for all staff, facilitating fluidity and flexibility around where people work. An employee communications app helps all staff become connected wherever their location and regardless of their role or device.

It’s important to note that the hybrid workplace is not just about more previously office-based employees working from home. After COVID, [64% of staff](#) want to spend some time in a physical workplace rather than just working remotely. Conversely, frontline or deskless staff frequently have tasks that could be carried out from home and may want the opportunity to do so if their role allows it. Local co-working hubs are also likely to rise in popularity. An employee app is accessible from all these scenarios.

Driving remote worker efficiency

Working remotely can provide challenges around productivity when employees need to find information quickly to get things done. Poor findability and having to work with too many apps are just two barriers to efficiency which tend to be heightened in remote work situations.

A dedicated employee app can help colleagues find the essential information they need quickly and efficiently and allow them to complete a range of transactions through integrated applications. With more distributed working, employees may also be moving between locations, and completing tasks on a mobile device can be a great use of downtime while on the move.

Improving communication and collaboration

A [comprehensive survey](#) detailing the experiences of people working remotely during the pandemic in Ireland identified “communicating and collaboration with colleagues” as their second most significant challenge.

It can be tricky to reach your co-workers when you’re uncertain of their working patterns. Are they on Teams? Should I set up a Zoom call? Which technology is best for where they are working today?

Here, a dedicated employee communications solution makes all the difference, particularly with everybody connected to the same app. Being able to confidently communicate with colleagues in real-time supports the smooth flow of information that is the lifeblood of organizations.

Providing connection and community

Isolation caused by remote working is a major wellbeing issue. Research suggests that remote working during COVID has impacted the mental wellbeing of [up to 35% of employees](#), with 38% suggesting employer support can help.

An employee app provides essential connection and community for all staff. Contact with peers, social communities, and participation in virtual town halls and events can all help reduce feelings of isolation. Anecdotally, there are many inspiring stories about how the digital workplace has provided an essential connection during COVID, including for staff on standby or temporarily laid-off during lockdown restrictions.

As we continue our hybrid workplace journey, wellbeing will stay in the spotlight, and an employee app that provides connection makes a difference in promoting it and demonstrates the potential of tech-for-good.

Supporting the transition back to the office

The transition back to the office is going to be gradual, with social distancing and safety measures likely in place for some time. Here, a mobile employee app helps in several ways, particularly through integrations with other workplace applications:

- Providing a convenient place to check-in to a building to support enterprise track-and-trace
- Reducing the need to touch common surfaces, for example, activating printing from a mobile
- Supporting desk and meeting room booking to ensure safe numbers of people are in the office
- Co-ordinating working patterns so employees can arrange to come to a workplace on the same day and locate near each other.

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THREE: REVOLUTIONIZING FRONTLINE ENGAGEMENT

Raising engagement, efficiency, effectiveness, and innovation across the frontline workforce

Most people who work do not sit behind a desk; as already stated, estimates suggest that **four fifths of the global workforce** may be considered deskless. Despite this, investment in digital workplace tools has traditionally focused on desk-bound knowledge workers. Thankfully, this is changing through the deployment of employee communication apps which can be accessed via personal or company devices, allowing frontline staff to fully engage with your digital workplace.

If your workforce includes frontline, deskless or mobile employees, having a mobile-first employee app to access digital communications and services is essential. In some industries such as retail, manufacturing, hospitality, travel, distribution and health, your employee app will be the primary digital channel for staff engagement and enabling business processes.

Connecting frontline employees finally

In the past, logistical barriers and high costs have prevented frontline staff from accessing the digital workplace. Licensing issues and costs have meant few deskless employees have digital identities, and even fewer have corporate mobile devices. However, robust authentication processes and BYOD (bring your own device) policies now mean that it is possible for all frontline staff to be given increased access to the digital workplace via a dedicated app on their personal device. An employee app connects all your employees, removing the constraints relating to devices and digital identities.

As argued earlier, the importance of connecting frontline employees should not be underestimated. Narrowing the digital divide and creating equal access to information and workplace culture transforms engagement for staff who may have previously felt disconnected.

The overall impact can be exceptional. Research suggests that organizations who connect frontline employees can **achieve significantly faster growth, improved productivity and reduced costs**.

Engaging frontline staff in fast turnover industries

Disengagement at work is a general problem, but frontline employees can feel even more disengaged than most. In industry sectors where there is a large proportion of deskless staff, employee turnover can **be among the very highest rates** - as high as 300%. This is very expensive, harms operations and negatively impacts service delivery.

With a digitally connected frontline, organizations have an opportunity to properly address engagement issues and reduce employee turnover. Access to leadership communications, being properly informed, creating a level playing field and reducing employee frustration through improved processes all play their part. Indeed, the research already cited found that 64% of organizations with digitally connected frontline employees reported lower employee turnover.

Improving effectiveness and customer service

Organizations have spent millions on digital workplace tools to enable knowledge workers to be more effective in their roles. An employee communications app empowers frontline employees to work more effectively through increased access to information, real-time communication, productivity tools and learning opportunities. Sometimes this will be enabled through integrations from core systems within the app.

One area where apps play a significant role is in improving customer service. When customer-facing staff in retail, leisure and transport industry sectors can access reliable and accurate product and service information, it means they can also provide rapid and well-informed responses to customers on the ground. They can also ask questions of their peers and get quick responses.

In manufacturing and engineering sectors, employees who can access how-to videos on their mobile device on-site, or who can send images or videos to illustrate technical problems to get quick feedback from peers, can also solve complex technical issues fast.

Transforming frontline processes

Because frontline staff has traditionally had less access to digital services, basic processes currently in use may involve manual forms, information printed out via paper, and requests being channeled through managers. This means there are significant opportunities to improve processes through digitization, thus enabling direct access to information, introducing forms and workflow, and generating greater data-driven insights.

Typical frontline processes that can be improved and made more efficient using employee communications apps include:

- Accessing shift information and swapping rosters
- Receiving key operational information and alerts
- Requesting annual leave, equipment, uniforms and more
- Reporting incidents immediately as they occur
- Inputting data when on-site or out in the field.

When a mobile communications app enables these new capabilities through integration with elements of your digital workplace, it raises productivity and collaboration, and reduces errors while increasing morale.

Driving innovation

In the challenging economic times ahead, innovation is going to play a significant role. Involving frontline staff in these innovation processes by encouraging their ideas and seeking their feedback is a huge opportunity to tap into their collective wisdom. Frontline staff are frequently the people who know your customers the best and are closest to your operational processes.

If you want input into the best way to streamline processes, improve customer service and create new products and services, an employee app is a great way to gather ideas and feedback.

64%
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FOUR: DELIVERING THE MOBILE-FIRST DIGITAL WORKPLACE

Providing an optimized mobile digital workplace experience that supports IT function goals

In recent years, the 'digital workplace' concept has gone mainstream. Organizations realize the benefits of taking a strategic, coherent, and coordinated approach to how employees experience the workplace via technology. Providing a good digital workplace experience drives efficiency, reduces employee frustration, supports better communication, stimulates collaboration, increases employee advocacy and sense of purpose, and more.

Typically, an element of the digital workplace that organizations focus on is providing a single environment and front door to the wider digital workplace, reducing the need to visit multiple applications, and thus saving time and effort. Sometimes the intranet fulfils this role, but in organizations with many dispersed or frontline staff, an employee app can work in a similar and more effective way.

Arranging digital workplace access for all

Currently everybody across your organization needs access to your digital workplace including your frontline staff, and even sometimes contractors and outsourced staff. But IT teams are faced with the logistical conundrum of providing access for a workforce with no corporate digital identities and potentially high turnover, while also keeping licensing costs down.

An employee communications app is simply the easiest and most cost-effective way to provide a digital workplace experience to all staff that delivers digital communications, operational content, real-time collaboration, and employee self-service through integrations. No corporate digital IDs are required, personal devices are used and there's a bonus... employees love it! Pursuing a mobile-first digital workplace strategy can be the best route for universal access.

Supporting faster time to value

A significant advantage of a well-designed employee app is that it's super-easy for employees to onboard. They can then use it almost immediately after recruitment with no training required and start to reap the benefits from the beginning. Download, authenticate, go!

This means that for every individual employee, the 'time to value' (TTV) experienced can be very quick; typically, our customers' TTV is measured in hours, not days, even for large organizations. This also results in consistently high rates of user-adoption.

The combination of rapid roll-out, quick adoption, low cost and scaled access also means that ROI is faster to achieve and easier to demonstrate. In a tough economic climate where stakeholders want everything to be "low-cost, high value", the swift ROI of an employee app proves very welcome.

Ensuring scalability and flexibility

Modern, global workforces are in a permanent state of flux. Changes can be unpredictable and significant due to restructuring, M&A activity, outsourcing and even unexpected seasonal work.

Going forward, the increasing prevalence of the gig economy and use of freelancers will be another factor in creating (and being able to support and serve) a more flexible workforce.

A good employee app is highly scalable and flexible. Because of the relatively low overhead, easy change management effort and absence of technical and infrastructure-related constraints, an app can meet the challenges of an ever-changing workforce.

For example, it is very quick to onboard new parts of your business. Organizations that often acquire new companies will find a mobile app can accelerate the onboarding process and help new employees feel welcome on day one, with the more complex integrations required for the desktop experience worked on in the background.

Establishing business continuity

An employee communications app with access for everyone is also an essential part of business continuity, providing access to updates and operational information. Remember when a crisis meant a manager had to call their team at home to cascade a message? Not anymore. Notifications and integrated automated people directories take care of that.

Whilst an app has proved critical for business continuity during extreme circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic, it's also essential for more routine issues such as announcing IT outages or closing a local office at short notice. It can also ensure there is real-time team communication and collaboration to minimize disruption to operations.

Optimizing your application landscape

An employee app provides frontline staff with an entry point to the wider digital workplace - a single location for information, engagement, and productivity - with integrations providing further value.

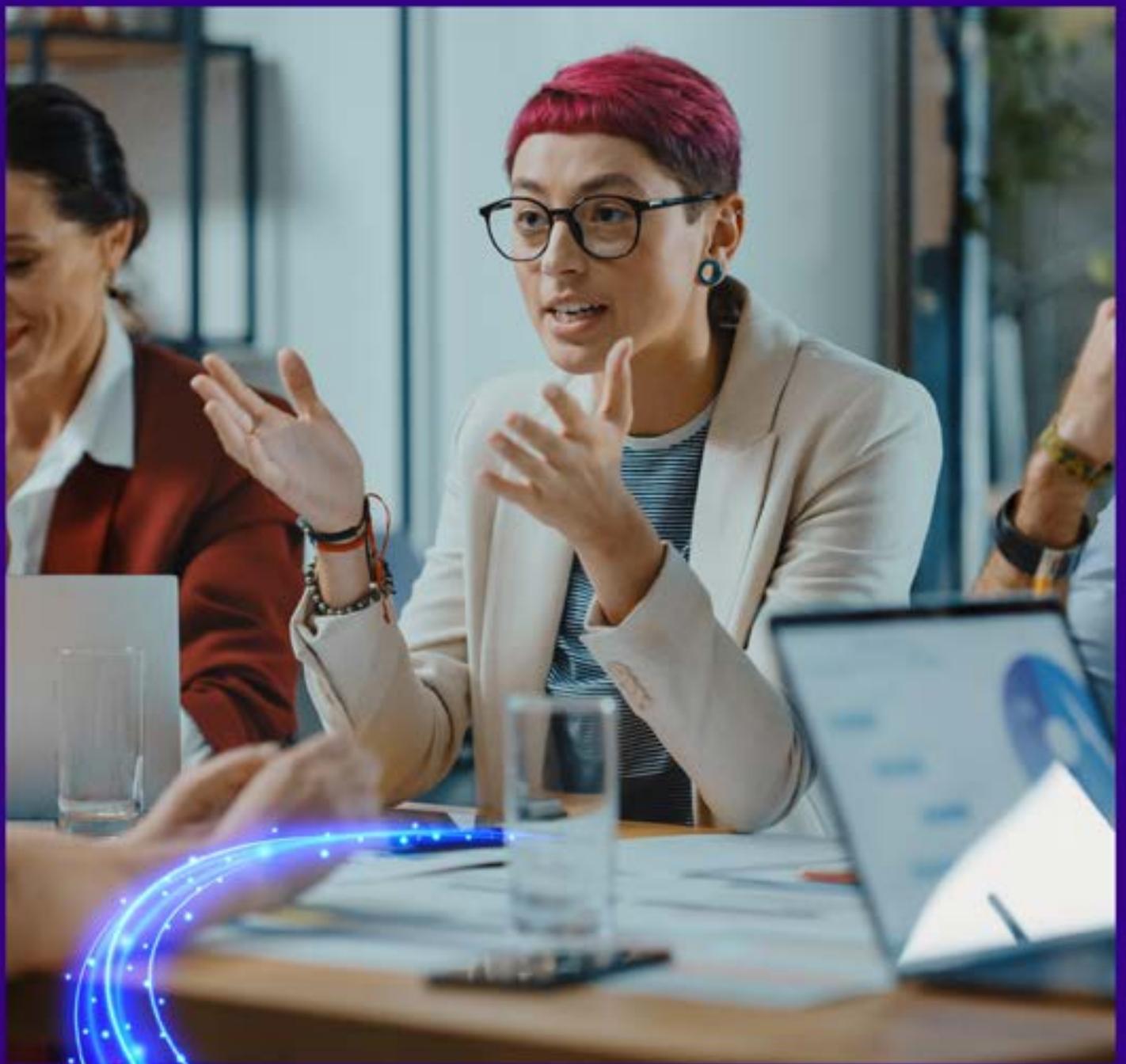
Establishing this provides a real opportunity to improve your overall digital employee experience by rationalizing and simplifying the portfolio of applications you have in use. In any organization, there will be an abundance of different tools and apps with overlapping functionality, leading to employee confusion, duplication of effort, unnecessary costs, siloed knowledge, and broken processes.

Knowing that everybody has access to the same capabilities via one app is incredibly powerful because it means you can start to reduce licensing costs and retire those legacy systems. It's also an opportunity to shut down risky shadow IT and consumer-grade apps that your frontline employees may have been relying on to communicate with each other in their efforts to get things done.

According to
*Mercer's Global Talent
Trends Report*

77%

of executives
believe freelance
and gig workers will
substantially replace
full-time employees
within the next
four years.



FIVE: EMPOWERING THE EMPLOYEE VOICE

The communication channels in a good digital workplace reflect and celebrate the culture, values and achievements of an organization and its community of employees. Through news, stories, updates, pictures, messages, and discussions, as well as interaction on intranets, social channels, community spaces and other related channels, the digital workplace should be vibrant and dynamic. It should feel like the “beating heart” of an organization and give a voice to every employee.

Reflecting, celebrating, and nurturing what’s best about an organizational culture and its people has never been more important. With the absence of face-to-face interaction due to lockdown conditions, many HR and internal comms teams are now relying on digital channels to support employee engagement and celebrate organizational culture.

Even before the pandemic, the absence of meaningful interactions with employers has been an issue for frontline staff who often feel disconnected from their employers, meaning they may not feel they are being listened to and might have few opportunities to access the digital workplace.

Here, an employee app can act as an excellent place for all employees to access digital communication and social channels, allowing them to facilitate dialogue.

Telling everyday stories that preserve and nurture culture

An employee app can easily provide everybody with the ability to access everyday stories and updates from all around an organization. For example, during COVID-19 there have been amazing examples of how employees are helping the wider community, clients, and each other. Frequently inspiring and uplifting, these people-focused stories do more to preserve and nurture organizational culture than traditional ‘corporate’ internal communications.

Stories do not necessarily have to be formal and polished. An employee app can enable anybody to publish an update, contribute a story, provide a shout-out and celebrate achievements of peers. All of this enables and strengthens grassroots storytelling and promotes a more authentic employee voice. These social contributions resonate strongly, and collectively help amplify organizational culture in lieu of face-to-face interaction.

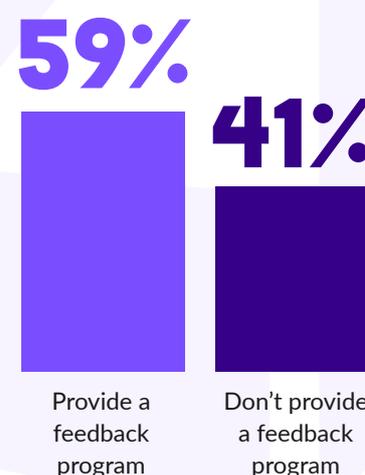
Embracing the power of dialogue

Dialogue, listening and getting feedback from employees makes a big difference. Research suggests that the *employee engagement scores of companies* who provide a feedback program are significantly higher (59%) than those who don’t (41%). The insights gained from pulse checks on employee sentiment also mean organizations can act based on these feelings, for example, to support employee wellbeing.

Dialogue is impactful for leaders too. During the pandemic, some CEOs have experienced the power of asking for direct feedback from employees, giving them a sense of what is troubling employees and providing invaluable real-time input on new ideas.

An employee app is an excellent way to facilitate dialogue: CEOs can ask for comments from all staff, polls and *pulse checks* can give real-time snapshots of employees’ opinions or feelings and analytics can provide clues as to what’s on employees’ minds.

Employee engagement scores



Gathering feedback from the frontline

Earlier in the report we covered the power of engaging frontline staff through an employee communications app. Here, giving a key segment of your workforce a voice for the first time can be electrifying, not only providing insights into how they are feeling and what they are thinking, but also leveraging their expertise for the very first time.

Hearing what your customer-facing staff are saying means you get to know your customers better, and gain insights into supporting better customer service. Listening to your manufacturing, transport and distribution staff will help you to understand your processes better, and gain insights into driving operational efficiencies. Using feedback loops and ideation techniques via an employee app opens the door to continual improvement and innovation.

Of course, giving your frontline a voice also drives engagement. [Gallup research](#) has concluded that “employees who strongly agree that their opinions count at work are more likely to feel personally invested in their job”.

Supporting Diversity & Inclusion

Nowadays, organizations are strongly committed to Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) due to a wide range of benefits that impact positively on areas such as culture, talent attraction, performance, employee retention and innovation. Because all employees can access and post to an employee app, it is an excellent enabler of driving D&I; it shines a light on the positive contributions of a highly diverse, modern workforce, and is truly inclusive of all viewpoints.

Specifically, an app can reinforce D&I by supporting discussions across Employee Resource Groups and providing access to awareness campaigns, learning resources and related events. An app can also be a place where the multiple languages used across a global workforce can truly live and breathe; sometimes the more formal approach to internal communications on an intranet requiring translation is slow and expensive, and communications tend to remain in the official “corporate” language.

Flattening the hierarchy

When you provide all employees with a voice, it can have a profound impact on culture and engagement. The combination of equal access to information, the signal that all employee viewpoints are valued and a commitment to transparency shifts organizational cultures where a hierarchical mindset had previously hindered engagement, innovation, and agility.

When an app provides a way for your CEO and frontline staff to have direct conversations and staff are consulted on their views to define strategy, then benefits will inevitably start to flow.



SIX: SUPERCHARGING EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Making a tangible difference to the way employees experience their work, supporting HR department goals

Employee experience has become a major focus for senior leaders and HR functions. Just as 'customer experience' takes a holistic and strategic view of all the touchpoints a customer has with your organization; employee experience applies similar joined-up thinking to your workforce.

Employee experience is very important. [Gallup research](#) indicates that 85% of the global workforce are not engaged or, even worse, are actively disengaged at work. They have also found that [business units which are highly engaged](#) are 17% more productive and have 41% reduced absenteeism.

The digital workplace is a major component of employee experience. The technology we use can spell the difference between a successful day and a less productive one. During the COVID-19 pandemic, digital channels have assumed even greater importance, with remote working patterns meaning our daily interactions as employees can be exclusively digital. For some frontline staff out in the field, an employee communications app or similar may have already been the place where most interaction with colleagues and employers happened even before the pandemic.

Supporting the moments that matter

The employee lifecycle is made up of 'moments that matter' that contribute to employee experience. These include both the pivotal and the everyday, from life events such as starting a family, to career advancement, to learning something new.

An employee app can support all these moments, both large and small, by:

- providing timely access to the right information and establishing clarity
- supporting awareness of the opportunities available to employees
- providing communication and connection with peers
- receiving (or sharing) recognition and kudos.

Sometimes an app can have a major impact in an obvious way, like providing details of a job opportunity. At other times, the impact is less tangible but just as vital, such as furnishing employees with connections to experts who can support learning and growth.

Onboarding new employees

One of the most critical 'moments that matter' is the employee onboarding experience. Research sponsored by Glassdoor suggests that companies with strong employee onboarding can [improve new hire retention by 82%](#). Here, an app can make a real difference, providing easy-to-access digital channels that help new hires both feel welcome and navigate the administrative tasks that need to be completed on joining.

A new hire could view a welcome video from the CEO, get to know their immediate team via social updates, read up about the company, complete any required learning and complete various forms, all via an employee app. The beauty of an app is that it can be easily rolled-out to an employee even before their first day, as they don't need a corporate email ID to access it. They are then equipped to hit the ground running on day one.

Companies with strong employee onboarding can improve new hire retention by

82%

Promoting and health and wellbeing

Today, the wellbeing of staff is a major priority for HR functions, recognizing the advantages of healthy staff for productivity, engagement, and employee turnover. The stress associated with the pandemic has only increased the importance of wellbeing.

An app can play a significant part in delivering a wellbeing program by providing connection and access to a community to tackle loneliness, streamlining work to help reduce technostress and information overload, and providing access to wellbeing-related content and events for all employees, such as yoga or mindfulness sessions.

An app can also provide a way for HR teams to carry out a pulse check on how employees are feeling so they can identify and deal with wellbeing issues. Here, polls and analytics can provide insights, or you can use more targeted tools like [LiveTiles Vibe](#) to generate a quick snapshot or pulse check.

Enabling learning and development

Learning and development is a critical aspect of employee experience but is often treated merely as a 'tick the box' exercise or lies on the periphery of the digital experience, so suffers from poor adoption. When you put learning in the hands of employees, they will be more engaged with taking up learning options that support both career and personal development. Ultimately, this drives role enablement, internal talent mobility, knowledge-sharing and wider employee engagement.

Using an employee app is an excellent way to deliver bite-sized learning to employees through videos, quizzes, events, and content. Not only can every employee access learning easily, but they can do so at the time that is right for them, either at a point of need or when they have downtime. For frontline employees, videos can be especially powerful for training, including for response teams, healthcare workers, customer service, or catering staff prepping food.

Increasing the adoption of employee self-service

A significant aspect of everyday employee experience is being able to complete tasks and find information quickly. There is nothing more frustrating than jumping through unnecessary hoops to accomplish basic tasks.

An app should always enable quick employee self-service, ensuring this is open to all staff, including frontline workers. Through straightforward integrations with key systems, employees can view their payslip, check vacation status and book annual leave, request equipment and raise IT tickets, view shift information and more. This saves valuable time (and avoids unnecessary frustration) for the employee while relieving the pressure on busy HR teams and support desks.

Having just one app to complete the majority of employee self-service increases efficiency, reduces confusion, and makes it easier to introduce new features across your entire workforce.

CHECKLIST: SEVEN STEPS TO LAUNCHING AN EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS APP

1. Understand your users

To deploy an employee app that will be successful and sustainable you need to understand your users, including your frontline staff. Carry out user research through interviews, workshops, surveys, analytics, observation, and other techniques to understand working patterns, information needs, pain points, technology use and more. Researching your users is also an opportunity to create valuable relationships to get ongoing feedback for continuous improvement and to champion the app with peers.

2. Speak to your stakeholders

An employee app is a strategic investment and can support business change and digital transformation. An app should align to your overall organizational strategy, as well as your talent strategy and HR roadmap, your overall digital strategy and IT roadmap, your comms strategy, and other plans for the digital workplace. Valuable conversations with stakeholders can help drive alignment and remove barriers, dependencies, and opportunities. In considering an employee app, always get a cross-functional consensus on the way forward which will also help drive future adoption of any new solution or optimizing the digital workplace to drive greater collaboration.

3. Carry out a device and apps audit

In planning an employee app, it is important to have the details on patterns of device ownership and apps usage. This can help you select the right app, but also identify overlaps and gaps with existing solutions; for example, there may be opportunities to rationalize your apps landscape or reduce licensing costs. In carrying out an apps audit also try to ascertain use of 'shadow IT', as an enterprise-wide employee app can help reduce risks associated with non-approved app usage.

4. Research the market

There is a lot of choice. Research the market and offerings like [LiveTiles Reach](#) to help inform you about the art of the possible, and to identify the potential solutions that might be the perfect fit for your workforce. For example, does it integrate with MS Teams or require additional O365 licencing?

5. Define your strategy

Consider all your data inputs and define a strategy and high-level roadmap. Reflect and align the input gathered from other functional stakeholders and user groups to refine the strategy and gain consensus and buy-in on the road ahead.

6. Plan and launch your app

It's time to execute your strategy. Depending on where you are in your employee app journey, you may need to select an app or make a business case. You might be extending what you already have. Plan your project and launch your app!

7. Continually improve

The digital workplace is never done! Continually improve your app and drive adoption through employee feedback loops and tracking community analytics. Here, ongoing dialogue with employees and having the right mindset is key. It's always good to have these discussions on the platform itself.

UNITE YOUR WORKFORCE

LiveTiles' workplace technology can help your business stay connected with staff, no matter where or how they work. Find out more about our products [here](#). Complete the form and we'll reach out to coordinate a time for a chat about your business challenges.

ABOUT LIVETILES

We are a workplace technology company offering expertise and software designed to improve productivity, innovation and connection in the workplace. From large enterprises to start-ups, we believe that people are at their best when they are empowered to focus on the work that matters most. LiveTiles has more than 1,400 amazing customers around the world. We help organizations, their employees and stakeholder groups across a wide range of industries as well as government and not-for-profit agencies, education and healthcare. We are proud to provide our customers and end-user community unparalleled expertise and support in over 30 languages. Learn more about [LiveTiles](#).





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