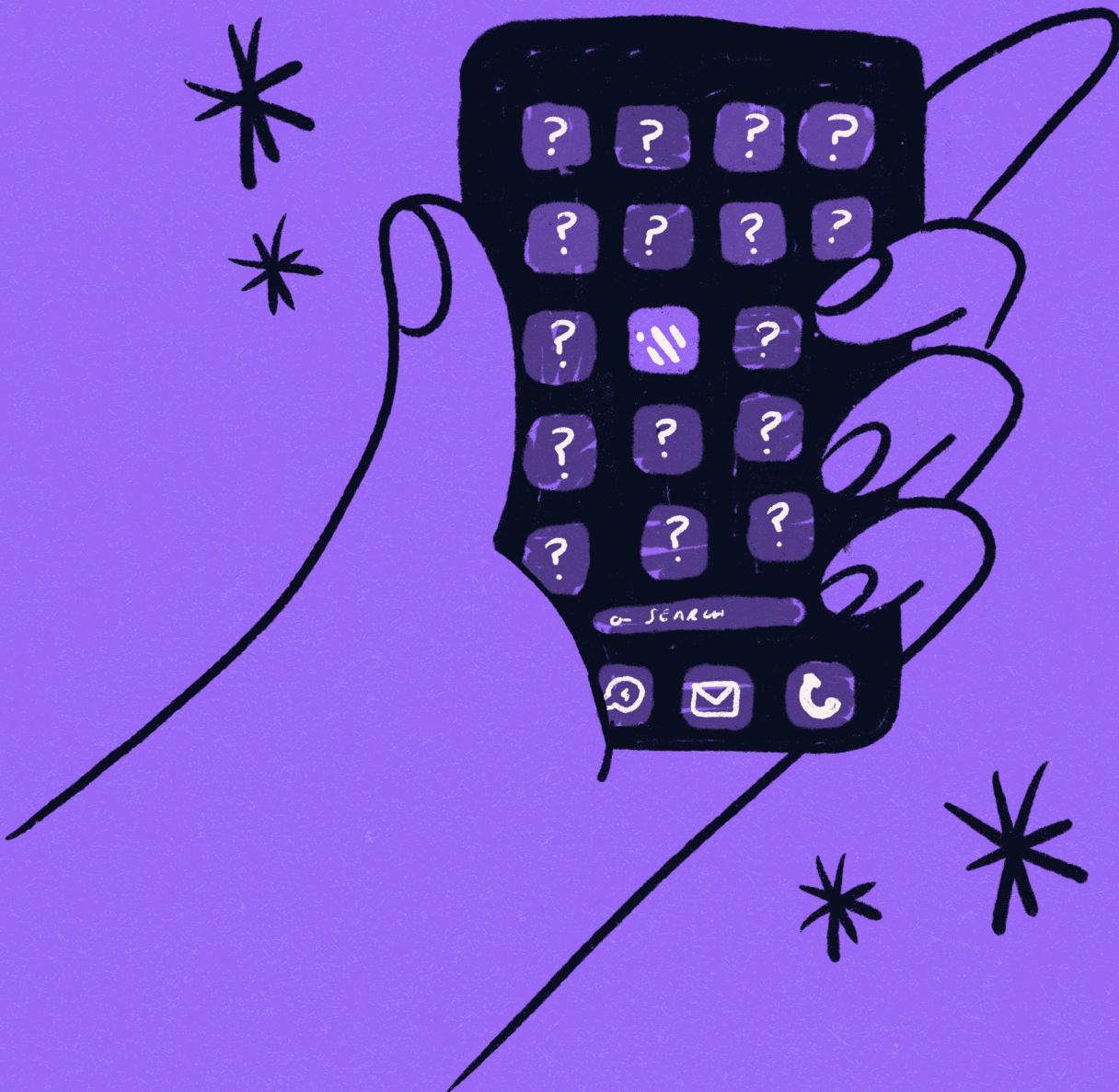workvivo

Employee App:
Finding the Right One to Connect to Your Workforce

"

The digital channels, tools and apps we choose to help us communicate and access information make an enormous difference to everybody's working day, and collectively to the success of each team or division's ability to meet their objectives.

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Introduction

Employee apps are important tools that connect your entire workforce and facilitate meaningful communications and dialogue. They also drive efficiencies by providing access to digital services and information.

Many internal communications teams, HR functions, digital workplace professionals, and senior leaders are using apps that focus on employee communication to achieve strategic objectives such as workforce engagement, smoother collaboration, and increased productivity.

Employee apps have also proved to be highly valuable during the COVID-19 crisis, keeping employees informed in real-time, as well as engaged through difficult, stressful circumstances.

The market for employee communication apps is still growing and innovating. New market entrants emerge every month while some established providers, including Workvivo, are receiving funding to invest in even stronger offerings.

This means that there are a lot of choices for organizations with both general solutions and specialist offerings targeted at niche use cases. The levels of competition and investment also mean products are getting better and better.

When somebody declares "There's an app for that", in this case, the cliché is true; there will be an employee app!
With so many options, it is important to find the right employee app for you and your workforce. Every organization's needs are slightly different.

We have created this book to help kickstart your employee app journey. You might be thinking about investing for the first time or looking to consolidate as apps start to proliferate through your company.

We Cover

- What an app is and what it can deliver

- The main typical features and capabilities

- How an app fits into your wider digital communications landscape

- Some key use cases where employee apps make a real difference.

We hope this will help you make an informed choice when you review products, create a business case, and then eventually launch your employee app.

Good luck with your employee app journey!

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What is an employee experience app?

Strictly speaking, an employee app is an "app" that is used by employees for work purposes. And while there is no standard definition of an "employee app" or "employee communication app", generally it is considered to:

- Focus on internal and employee communications

- Be available on a mobile device.

It may also provide access to a range of other digital services and information that helps employees get things done.

While 'mobile' is a strong component of an employee app, it is also usually available as a web-based app. For example, approximately half of overall access to the Workvivo platform is through the desktop.

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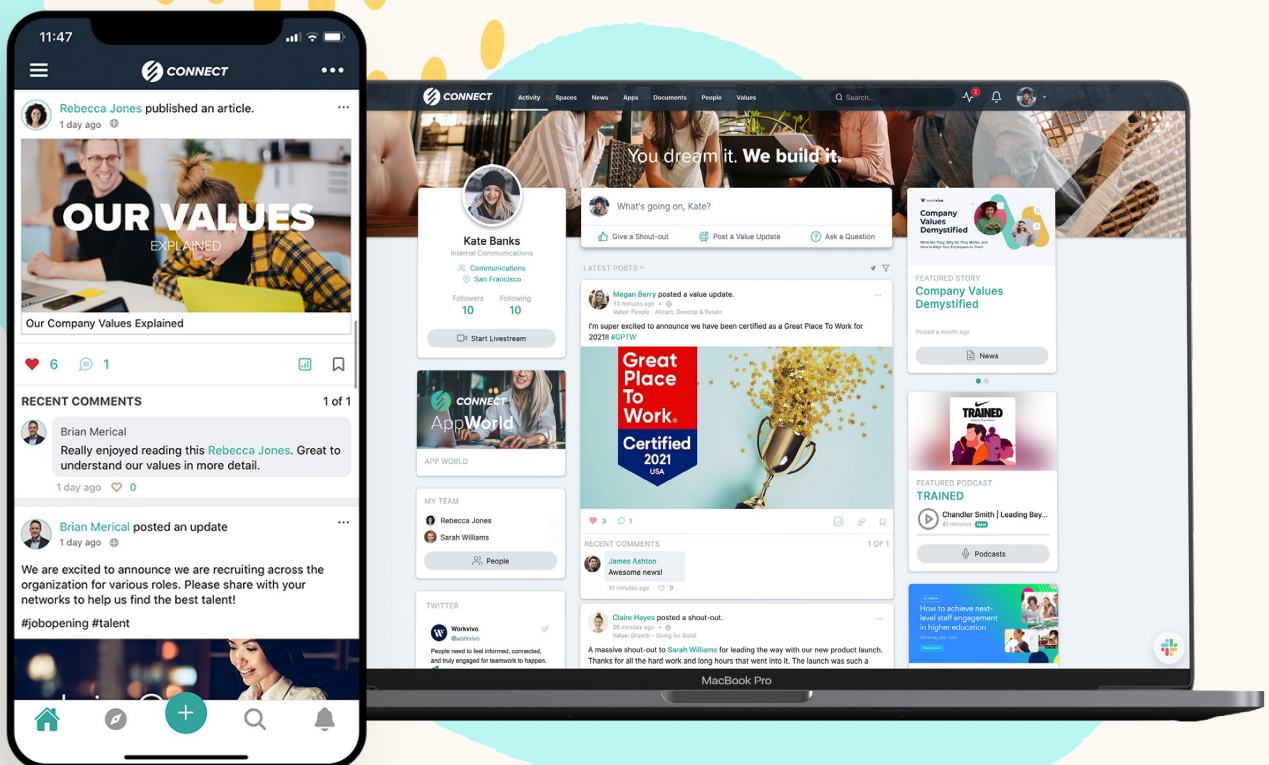
What are the advantages of an employee app?

Although each employee app is unique, a successful app has several key advantages over other types of digital channels.

1 An app connects the entire workforce

A good employee app should be able to reach your entire workforce, regardless of country, location, division, role and even employment status. Many intranets provide information and services for knowledge workers based in offices, but not always to first-line and customer-facing employees who may not have a corporate digital identity (email) or a corporate-issued mobile device.

An employee app takes a different, more inclusive approach. Whether an employee is a trainee person working in a retail environment, a part-time contractor, even a person on furlough, or an office-based knowledge worker, they can all access the employee app.

2 An app cuts through organizational silos

Silos cause inefficiencies through poor communication and workflow; they also drive low engagement through a lack of transparency or by reinforcing the negative aspects of organizational culture. Silos also inhibit collaboration, innovation, growth, and Diversity & Inclusion.

An app cuts right through organizational silos. All employees have the potential to see the same information and be able to contribute, breaking down some of those barriers that exist between locations, divisions, departments, teams, and layers of hierarchy.

An employee app reduces the distance that can exist between company HQ and locations, between office and frontline employees, between leaders and more junior staff.

Make it clear that nobody is going to be disciplined for using an authorized system.

3 An app is lightweight, supporting the quick deployment

Organizations need to be agile and adaptable; being able to move and respond quickly to competitive pressures and external events has always been regarded as important, but the COVID-19 crisis has proved it is now beyond critical. Because an app is lightweight in its nature and super-easy for an employee to deploy on their device or to access the web equivalent, it means an employee app is usually much easier and quicker to launch across your workforce than other types of digital technology.

4 An app is mobile-first

A good employee app is truly mobile-first, meaning that it has been built around an excellent user experience on a mobile device. Being mobile-first usually results in highly intuitive interfaces, a scope that focuses on what employees need and want, and shorter and more focused messages that are easy to digest and respond to. An app also mirrors and echoes employees' familiar experiences of using apps and social media in their non-working lives, again helping to drive adoption and engagement. There are also potential opportunities to use the native functionality of a smartphone such as a camera, for example allowing the easy upload of photos and videos.

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What are the advantages of an employee app?

5 An app drives engagement and creates a level playing field

Because an employee communication app is social at its core and is something everyone can access, it can have a dramatic impact on organizations with a more hierarchical or traditional culture. An employee app gives everyone a voice through various the use of various social tools and also democratizes access to information for everybody. This drives transparency and creates a level playing field, standing as a powerful foundation for sustained employee engagement. The fact that an app is also lively, fun and celebrates success also helps!

6 An app lowers the barriers to adoption

Good adoption of digital communication tools is key. Many of the qualities of an employee app lower the barriers to adoption associated with other channels such as traditional intranets. Because an employee app is intuitive, easy to use, focused on its function, easy to launch, accessible by the entire workforce, and always available, it can be highly effective. If you need a quick communications solution with high adoption, an employee app is ideal.

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What are the headline benefits of an employee app?

Taking the various qualities of an employee app means it can drive strategic benefits across many key areas.

Heightened workforce engagement
Multiple benefits flow from a more engaged workforce, including talent retention, better performance, better recruitment, health and well-being, innovation, and simply a more enjoyable working day for everybody.

Better communication
Poor communication leads to disengagement, inefficiency, and frustration. When you better communicate, sometimes in real-time, staff are better enabled, more agile, and more engaged.

Culture amplification
Organizational culture is important. You want employees to feel a sense of belonging to something bigger, particularly if you have a complex structure, multiple locations, or frontline employees who never have an opportunity to visit your HQ. An employee app helps amplify and nurture everything positive about your culture, people, and values.

Increased productivity and efficiency
An app facilitates better communication and can improve some processes, including digitizing manual processes. It also reduces email. An app should enable people to work better and increase productivity.

Enhanced collaboration
An app drives connection and also facilitates collaboration across the entire workforce. If enhanced collaboration is on your organization's strategic "to do" list, an employee app can help.

Innovation and agility
An app speeds up communication, allows employees to share ideas (including customer-facing staff who often have a vast wealth of knowledge), and also supports a culture of innovation, making organizations more agile and responsive.

Better customer experiences
Increased innovation and agility, as well as equipping customer-facing staff with access to knowledge and information, can deliver enhanced customer service. An internal facing app can positively impact your external touchpoints.

Digital transformation
Never underestimate the impact an employee app can have. Influencing everything from culture to collaboration to the way people work, an app can be a component of a wider digital transformation agenda.

The employee app's place in the digital communications landscape

The role of an employee app, the kind of features it must have, and the content and communications you want to add to it are dependent on several factors.

These include your company culture, your strategic objectives, the composition of your workforce, your legal and regulatory commitments, the devices that are in use, and also the communication tools that you already have deployed.

This latter point is important. You want to make sure an employee app fits into the rest of your digital communications landscape. This may already include a complicated mix of intranets, social networking platforms, specialist employee apps, collaboration tools, messaging and chat apps, and email newsletters.

In the Workvivo whitepaper "The digital communications landscape: getting it right" we suggest that those organizations who carefully consider, plan and evolve their digital communications landscape can end up with "tools that work well, fewer duplicated apps, less confusion for employees, a reduction in fragmented processes, and more impactful communication."

To be able to achieve headline organizational objectives such as heightened workplace engagement and culture amplification, having a strong, robust digital communications landscape is a necessity.

An employee app can do a surprising amount of heavy lifting to make a digital communications landscape effective. In our whitepaper we go into more detail about the attributes of the best comms landscapes; let's explore these in more detail and the contribution an employee app makes.

"

Tools that work well, fewer duplicated apps, less confusion for employees, a reduction in fragmented processes, and more impactful communication

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The Journey To a Better Communication Landscape

Jamie Evans posted a shout-out
10 minutes ago

Couldn't have done it without this team!

Give Back
Organizational Goal

Search this space...

- 📁 Sales
- 📁 Marketing
- 📁 Development
- 📁 Onboarding

Shout-out to:

Joe Deane

Mia Cambridge

Great job, Clare!

❤ 127   💬 49

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Landscape Characteristic	How an employee app supports this
High Efficiency Streamlined to help employees get things done	• Improved communications and collaboration to enable a wide variety of tasks • Easy access to work-related information from any location • Reaches all employees, including deskless workers who may have only had limited access to digital channels previously • Replaces highly inefficient email for some use cases • Ability to use a mobile app in 'downtime' during the working day, such as when traveling, helping save time • Can leverage native mobile device features such as cameras, important for some processes
Good Findability Employees can find who and what they need	• Simple and focused user experience helps employees find that they need • A focused, easy to scan activity feed • A good employee directory
Lower Costs Presents a good ROI	• No need to issue additional corporate IDs or devices • Low costs associated with the roll-out and high adoption • Improved processes and digital communication enabled early on • ROI amplified by use across large sections of the workforce • Potential cost savings through streamlining communications landscape • Huge range of benefits delivered through increased workforce engagement supported by the app • Range of specific ROI outcomes such as driving employee advocacy
Healthy Adoption Great levels of usage	• All employees can access the app • Very low barriers to use • Easy to install and easy to use • Convenience and proximity of a mobile app supports strong levels of adoption • 'Social' features and messaging are popular and encourage continued use and participation

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Landscape Characteristic	How an employee app supports this
Good Employee Experience Drives engagement and is built around the way people work	• Well-designed and attractive interfaces • The lively and dynamic flow of content and information • Relevant and personalized to individual roles, locations, and interests • Any time access from anywhere on any device • Mirrors the experiences of apps we enjoy using outside work • Celebrates success and establishes connection, helping to boost morale and support wellbeing • Employees have a voice, feel listened to, and feel valued
Low Risk Does not expose the organization to risks such as data breaches	• The app is fully secure with recognized standards and is GDPR compliant • It integrates with Active Directory (AD) and has robust authentication processes for non-corporate IDs • Admins are fully in control of who can access the app • Inappropriate use and content are easily reported
High Trust Employees trust the information and communications they need	• One authoritative place for internal communications • Communications on an app are open, honest, and attributed, driving a culture of transparency and accountability • Senior leaders and managers make visible and regular contributions • High adoption that is visible establishes collective responsibility across your employee community • Mobile and social posts tend to be more focused, personal, and authentic
Effective Processes Key business processes are successfully enabled by the tools on hand	• Access to real-time information for all deskless and mobile employees to help them carry out their roles from any location • Easy communication and collaboration to support numerous processes • Integrations with other tools and forms can improve or replace simple manual or email-based processes

What are the key features and capabilities of an employee app?

There is a lot of choice in the employee app market and each product is different. A typical employee communications app has several essential features and capabilities that ensure it can deliver the kind benefits that many internal comms and HR teams are seeking.

Available on all devices
Employee apps are inclusive by default. Your app should be available on every device, whether iOS or Android, corporate-issued or employee-owned, smartphone or tablet, laptop, or desktop.

Easy to use, easy to administer
Nobody uses apps that are hard to use. An app must be easy to use, intuitive, and feel instantly familiar. At the same time, it also should be very easy to administer for the team responsible for it.

Fully secure and compliant
Security, privacy, and compliance with legal and regulatory obligations are given. An app must tick all the boxes for your IT, risk and legal functions and meet standards such as SOC2 and ISO 27001, while also ensuring you are compliant with GDPR.

Easy to for employees to install
An app must be straightforward for employees to install, otherwise, this can prove to be a serious barrier to adoption. For example, Workvivo can be downloaded directly from the iOS App Store and Google Play.

Open to non-corporate ID's as well as Active Directory
An employee app is for everybody. It needs to extend to parts of your workforce that may not have digital identities, but also be easily accessible for those who do, for example, those in your Active Directory.

Easily scalable
A strength of a good app is the speed with which it can be rolled-out. Scalability is key, especially for companies that are growing rapidly or acquire others. Your app should be easily scalable.

Targeted news and activity feed
Employee apps keep people informed. At the center of the experience, there is usually an aggregated news and activity feed that can be easily scrolled through, with targeted news, updates and interactions targeted to the needs of each employee.

Everyone can contribute
An employee app gives everyone a voice by allowing them to post updates, comment on news, participate in discussions, complete polls, add likes and shares, upload photos, ask questions and more.

Social networking and directory
An employee app connects your entire company. It should have some form of social networking capability as well as employee directory so your workforce can communicate effectively with each other.

News and blogs
An employee app supports both formal internal communications and more informal, social posts. News and blogs should allow IC teams to post news, help leaders to post authentic personal blogs, enable teams to post updates, and ensure everybody can express themselves.

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What are the key features and capabilities of an employee app?

Teams, groups, and communities
Most of our work happens in different groups. An app should facilitate communication across closed and open groups including immediate work teams, project groups, and communities of interest.

Add photos and videos
Photos and videos are at the core of any social, mobile and app experience, and a must for effective digital communication. An employee app must allow for the easy upload of photos and videos, directly from a mobile device.

Reference pages and information
An employee app provides an opportunity to provide useful reference information to support people and help them get things done. There should be some way to publish useful reference pages and information on the app.

Celebrate success
Employee apps help drive engagement. Celebrating company success and accentuating positive achievements from individuals is key. Employee apps should have a facility to add shout-outs, peer recognition, thank you's, and similar messages that celebrate success.

Polls and surveys
Listening to employees is important. An app should have a polling or survey feature allowing teams to sense check employee mood or to get input and feedback on different topics.

Employee advocacy
Although not a feature of every app, advocacy capabilities where employees can easily share stories contained in an app on their own external social media channels drives enormous brand value for organizations.

Analytics and insights
A good employee app should have robust analytics that delivers insights into how employees are interacting with the app, revealing the kind of content that resonates with the workforce and uncovering issues that need addressing.

Your branding
An employee app should reflect your corporate branding to some extent, so employees know the app is a key workplace tool.

Options for integration
An employee app is often an excellent entry point into the wider digital workplace or a go-to app to complete tasks, such as booking annual leave. An app should have some kind of option to potentially extend integrations with other systems you use throughout your company.

Reflect your needs tomorrow
The need and expectations of your employees will continue to evolve. Technology marches on. Organizations change too. You need an app that keeps on growing and evolving with you, adding new features, keeping up with technology trends, and mirroring changes in the consumer app world.

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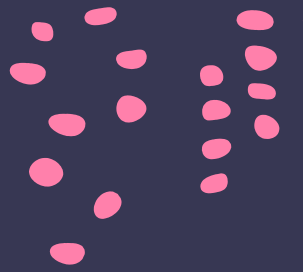
Five great use cases for an employee app

1
Sense checking how employees feel

2
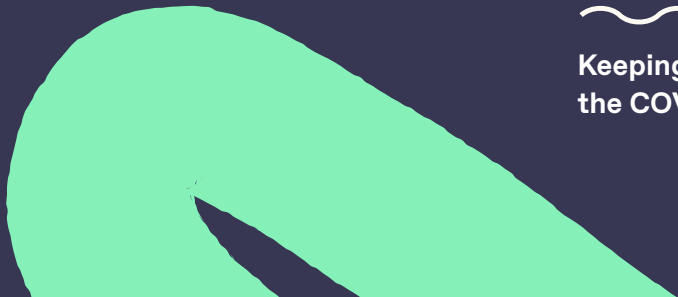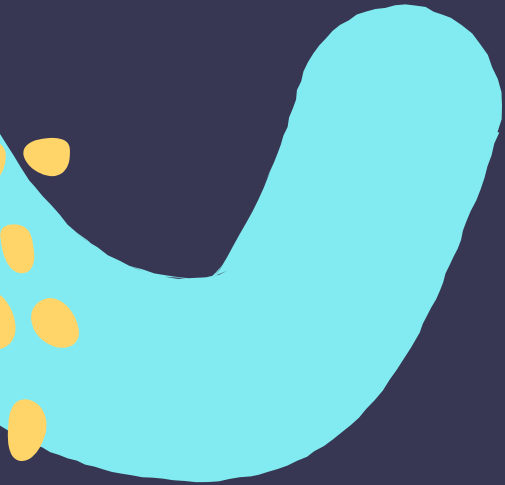Communicating with disconnected and deskless employees

3
Weaning the workforce off email

4
Streamlining employee communication into one place

5
Keeping in touch with employees during the COVID-19 pandemic

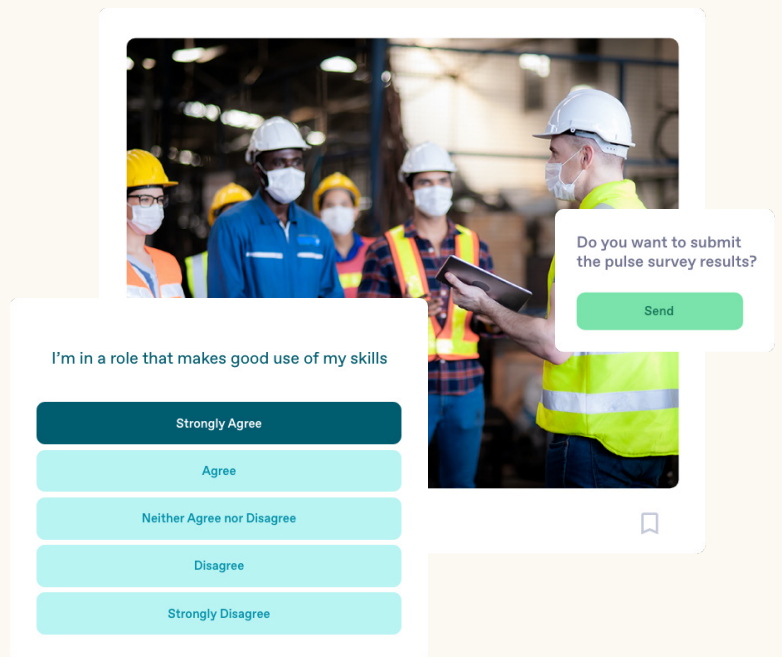![Workvivo logo] workvivo

1.
Sense checking how employees feel

Forward-thinking organizations have leaders that listen and respond to their employees.

An app where employees can quickly give feedback or say how they are feeling is an excellent way to get a quick understanding of employee sentiment.

At specialist recruitment company Morgan McKinley, the HR team uses Workvivo's polling feature to quickly gather staff feedback and get a "temperature check" to see if there is any action that needs to be taken; polls get high response rates and are just one of several approaches that underpin strong engagement. Morgan McKinley's CEO, Aldagh McDonogh, comments "Workvivo is the personality and the pulse of this business. It puts people front and center. It says that people matter."

I'm in a role that makes good use of my skills

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Do you want to submit the pulse survey results?

Send

"

Workvivo is the personality and the pulse of this business. It puts people front and center. It says that people matter.

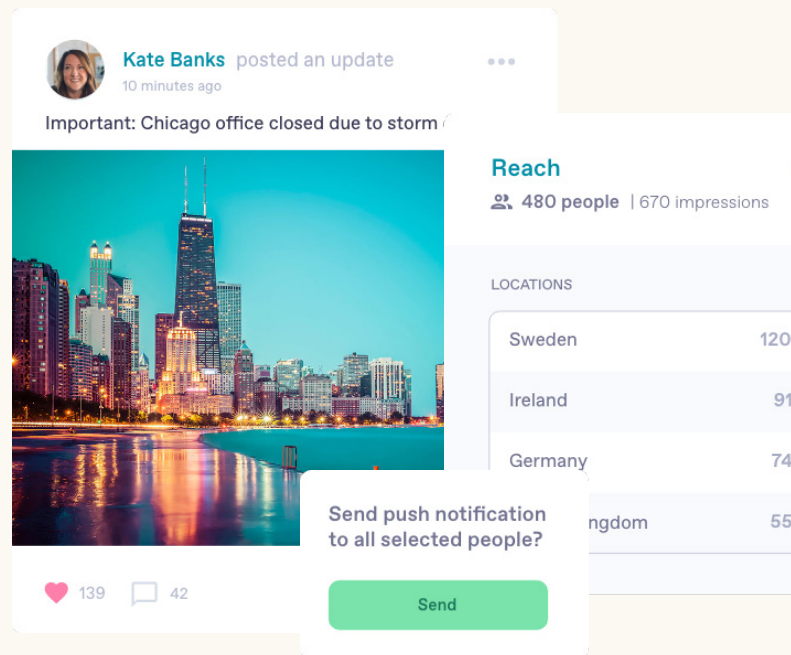**Aldagh McDonagh**
CEO, Morgan McKinley

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2.

Communicating with disconnected and deskless employees

In many organizations communicating digitally with those parts of the workforce who are deskless – for example, those working in manufacturing plants, retail environments, and field workers – has proved challenging.

It's even harder when these employees don't have a corporate digital identity (usually an email address) or a corporate-owned mobile device.

An employee app that can be accessed on employee's smartphones has consistently proved to be the best way to communicate with deskless employees and reduce any "digital divide".

Kentech is a global energy and industrial services provider with 4,000 employees across 17 countries, speaking multiple languages. Many of these are working in remote manufacturing facilities and do not have a company email address. Allowing everybody to access Workvivo, has allowed Kentech to communicate with and celebrate its highly diverse workforce. Connecting the entire company including those working in its plants has allowed the company to drive forward employee engagement and created game-changing transparency.

Kate Banks posted an update
10 minutes ago

Important: Chicago office closed due to storm

❤ 139   💬 42

Reach
👥 480 people | 670 impressions

LOCATIONS

Sweden	120
Ireland	91
Germany	74
...ngdom	55

Send push notification to all selected people?

Send

"

Culture is not something that happens by accident. Workvivo has been right at the center for us in how we've shaped our culture.

Mandy Kennedy
Head of Talent and Communication, Kent

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## 3.
Weaning the workforce off email

Email can be useful, but its consistent overuse fuels inefficient communication and zaps productivity.

When everybody's inboxes are overburdened, messages get missed and employees get overwhelmed. An email culture can also fuel a lack of transparency that undermines staff engagement and stymies collaboration, innovation, and agility.

For many, the launch of an employee app represents a very welcome alternative to the inbox, providing a quick, convenient, and far more effective way to send and receive messages that simply do not need to be sent by email. It also drives more transparency through open communications and conversations.

Technology provider Cubic Telecom wanted to reduce the amount of communication that was happening by email, which was felt to be disengaging, did not encourage true dialogue, and ineffective; were messages getting through?

The company used Workvivo as an employee app to offer immediate respite from the overuse of email, reaching everybody and producing a far more consistent and efficient way to communicate across the whole company.

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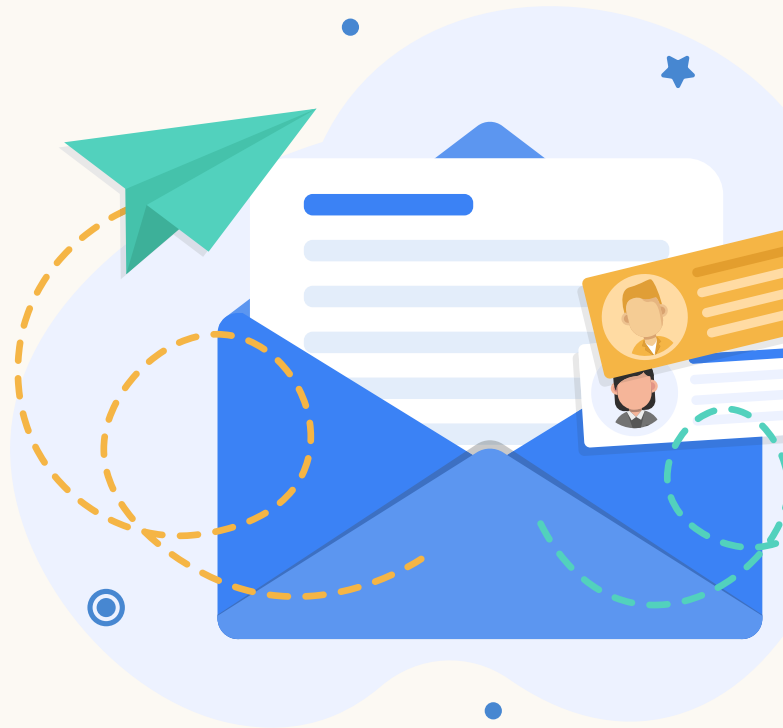
People are truly engaged with the platform because it's so easy to use and intuitive. It really gives Cubic a personality

Emma Behan
Communications Executive
Cubic Telecom

4.

Streamlining employee communication into one place

Digital communication inside complex organizations often ends up being complex!

Because the digital communications landscape in any organization tends to grow organically there can end up being numerous communication channels in operation. Too many or ill-considered channels result in gaps, duplication, and fragmentation in communication. This causes confusion and frustration for employees who just want one place to go for reliable, authoritative updates and announcements; it is equally frustrating for internal comms and HR teams who find it much harder to drive effective internal communications across the entire organization.

An employee app is often the easiest way to establish an authoritative communications channel that everyone across your company can reach. It can mirror comms on other channels such as a corporate intranet, but because of its ease of use and convenience, it often proves to be the essential go-to place for employees to stay informed.

A University is a complex organization with a mobile workforce, multiple locations, and highly autonomous departments. Staffordshire University used Workvivo as an employee app to consolidate and simplify a complex communications landscape and ensure there was one channel that all staff could access and rely upon. Because Workvivo is modern, engaging, and intuitive, it made streamlining channels that much easier.

"

We had so many different disparate channels where people could receive updates, information and communicate with each other. There was a lot of fragmentation in what we were doing and we wanted to consolidate it into one channel."

Andrew Proctor
Head of Digital Services
Staffordshire University

5.

Keeping in touch with employees during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been extremely challenging for many organizations, in trying to keep operations running in lockdown conditions, navigating an exceptionally fragile economic climate, and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of staff.

Strong and effective real-time communication has been important in keeping employees up to date in a rapidly changing situation ad also in engaging staff and maintaining morale through leadership communications and in maintaining connection and community across a dispersed workforce. Keeping in touch with furloughed employees has also been critical.

During COVID-19 effective employee apps have come into their own. Employees can be immediately notified of developments, view videos from the CEO, stay connected with their colleagues, give feedback about their challenges through polls and updates, and take part in wellbeing and non-work activities that help keep spirits up. Because a mobile app reaches all employees, it also can include furloughed staff.
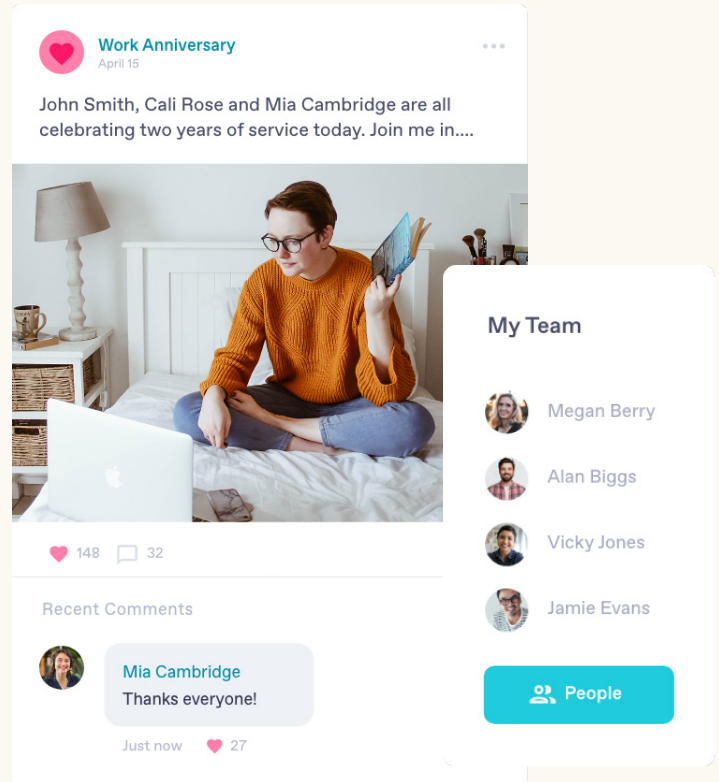
Woodie's is the leading DIY retail chain in Ireland. In the past few years, it has focused on employee engagement with strong results.

During the pandemic, Woodie's has used Workvivo to stay in touch with all employees across its stores, some of whom have been furloughed. It has helped keep them informed, for example providing quick updates on changes that will impact employees.

It has also helped everyone to maintain a sense of connection and community, preserving the organizational culture that makes working at Woodie's special.

Conclusion

An employee experience app is a potential game-changer with multiple positive benefits for organizations and employees. You want to make sure you get the employee app which is the perfect fit for your workforce.

If you'd like a demo of the Workvivo platform and to discuss how it can make a difference in your company then please get in touch.

About Workvivo

Workvivo is the communication platform employees love to use. We took the digital social experience people are familiar with in their personal lives, and applied this to business. Employees can read and post content, like, share and comment in exactly the same way they do outside of the working environment, but they can also recognize others through shout-outs, link posts to company goals and values, create community spaces and publish company articles and events.

The way employees interact is changing, and companies must adapt if we're to maintain high levels of employee engagement. We founded Workvivo to connect employees in new and interesting ways. To increase engagement, to amplify culture and to create a real sense of community.

Give Back
Organizational Goal

Shout-out to:

Joe Deane

Mia Cambridge

127   49
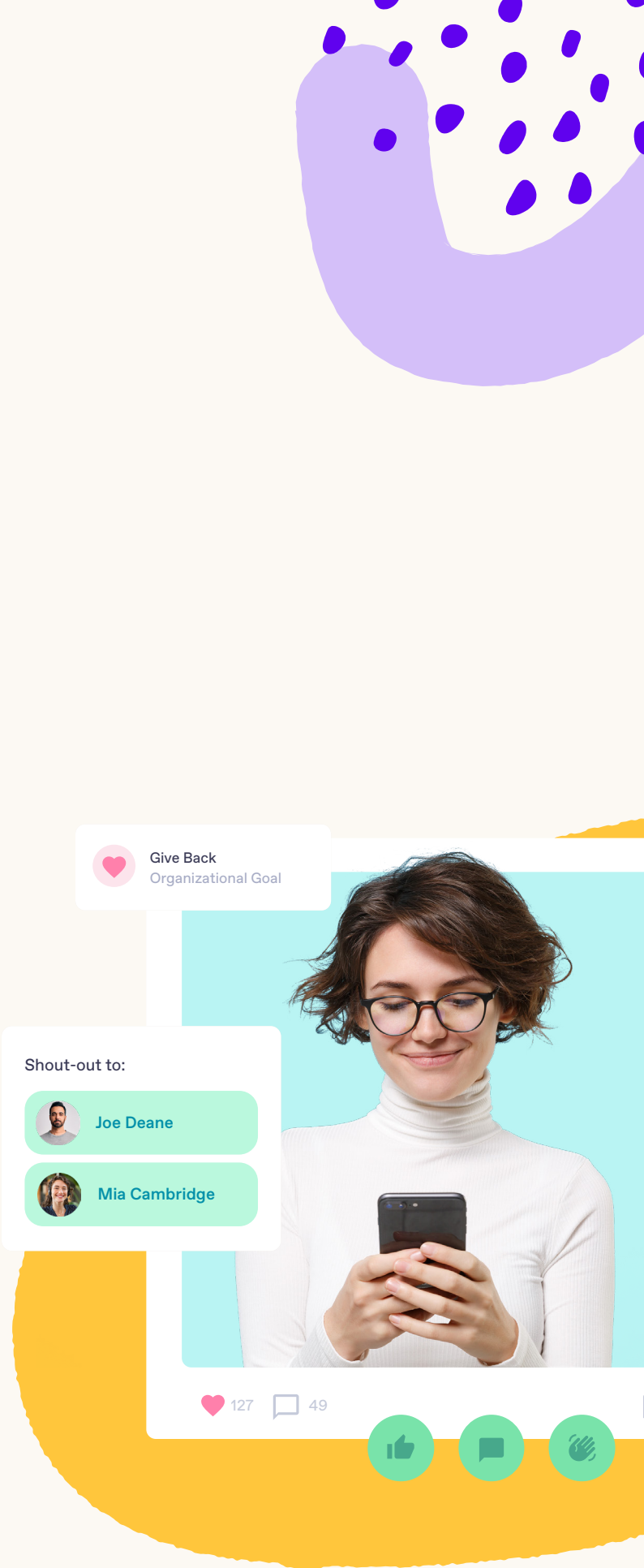
Workvivo's mission is to elevate everyone's workplace experience by helping employees stay informed, engaged, and connected wherever they work from.

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Simple Communications. Happier Teams.

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