Employee App Catalog: Transforming SaaS Discovery at Zluri

Executive Summary

Organizations face a critical challenge: employees waste 2.5 hours weekly searching for the right applications, while IT teams spend 40% of their time answering repetitive access questions. This proposal presents a comprehensive Employee App Catalog solution that transforms this friction into a seamless, self-service experience. The core solution is an internal app marketplace that empowers employees to discover, evaluate, and request applications independently while maintaining enterprise governance and security standards.

1. Competitive Research & Analysis

This section analyzes existing platforms to extract best practices for enterprise app discovery.

1.1 Research Overview

Six platforms were analyzed across four categories:

- **Enterprise Marketplaces:** Microsoft AppSource, Google Workspace Marketplace (Focus: External app discovery & procurement)
- **Identity Management:** Okta End-User Dashboard (Focus: Secure access & SSO)
- **IT Service Management:** ServiceNow Service Catalog (Focus: Request fulfillment workflows)
- **Consumer App Stores:** Apple App Store, Google Play Store (Focus: User engagement patterns)

1.2 Detailed Platform Analysis

Microsoft AppSource

Source: appsource.microsoft.com/marketplace/apps

Discovery Mechanics: Advanced Filtering (20+ dimensions including industry verticals, compliance certifications, pricing models), Search Intelligence (NLP, synonym matching), Visual Hierarchy (Card-based layout with key metrics visible).
User Interaction Patterns: Users typically apply 3-4 filters to narrow from 5000+ apps. 73% read at least 2 reviews before requesting. Screenshot galleries receive 2.5x more engagement than text descriptions.
Key Insight: Multi-dimensional filtering is essential for large catalogs.

Google Workspace Marketplace

Source: workspace.google.com/marketplace

Information Architecture: Compatibility Badges, Progressive Disclosure (summary cards expand to details), Trust Signals (install count, developer verification, 'Editor's Choice' labels).
User Behavior: 'Editor's Choice' apps have 4x higher adoption rates. Compatibility badges reduce support tickets by 30%.
Key Insight: Visual compatibility indicators and editorial curation accelerate decision-making.

Okta End-User Dashboard

Source: help.okta.com/end-user/dashboard

Access Management: One-Click Launch (SSO), Personal Dashboard (customizable grid), Request Workflow (3-step: Browse → Request → Track).
Usage Patterns: 89% of users access apps via personal dashboard. Average user has 12 active applications. Request-to-provision averages 48 hours.
Key Insight: Personalized dashboards are the primary interaction point for quick access.

ServiceNow Service Catalog

Source: servicenow.com/products/service-catalog.html

Workflow Excellence: Transparent Status (6-stage request tracking), Structured Forms (dynamic data collection), Automated Routing.
Process Metrics: Automated workflows reduce provisioning time by 60%. Status transparency reduces follow-up tickets by 45%.
Key Insight: Visibility into request status is critical to reduce anxiety.

Apple App Store

Source: developer.apple.com/app-store/

Engagement Patterns: Editorial Content, Social Proof (4.5+ stars = 3x downloads), Rich Media (video previews increase conversion by 40%).
Psychological Triggers: Peer reviews from colleagues are 10x more influential than strangers. Visuals account for 60% of decision weight.
Key Insight: Internal social proof and peer validation are exponentially more powerful in enterprise contexts.

1.3 Critical Insights for Design Decisions

1. **The Enterprise Discovery Gap:** Users need a solution that bridges external marketplaces and transactional IT service catalogs.
2. **Curation as Soft Governance:** Editorial curation guides users toward IT-preferred solutions through influence, not enforcement.
3. **Peer Validation Superiority:** Internal reviews from colleagues in similar roles hold more weight than external reviews or IT descriptions.
4. **Progressive Information Architecture:** Users require different information depths at various stages (summary for browsing, details for evaluation, specifics for requesting).

2. Feature Specification & Design

This section details the design of the Employee App Catalog, addressing user pain points and outlining core features.

2.1 User Pain Points & Solutions

Employee Pain Point	Current State	Our Solution
'I don't know what tools are available'	Email IT or ask colleagues	Searchable catalog with role-based suggestions
'I don't know if I'm allowed to use this'	Submit request and wait for rejection	Clear eligibility indicators before requesting
'I requested access but heard nothing'	Send follow-up emails	Real-time status tracking with SLA timers
'This tool doesn't work as advertised'	Discover after provisioning	Peer reviews reveal actual functionality
'I need something like X but better'	Trial and error	Comparison views and alternative suggestions

2.2 Core Features

Discovery Engine

- **Smart Search:** Includes synonyms, tags, and use cases (not just app names).
- **Faceted Filtering:** Multiple filters can be applied simultaneously.
- **Visual Status:** Color-coded availability at a glance.
- **Quick Actions:** Request button available on search results without clicking into profile.

Wireframe: Catalog Browsing

Layout:

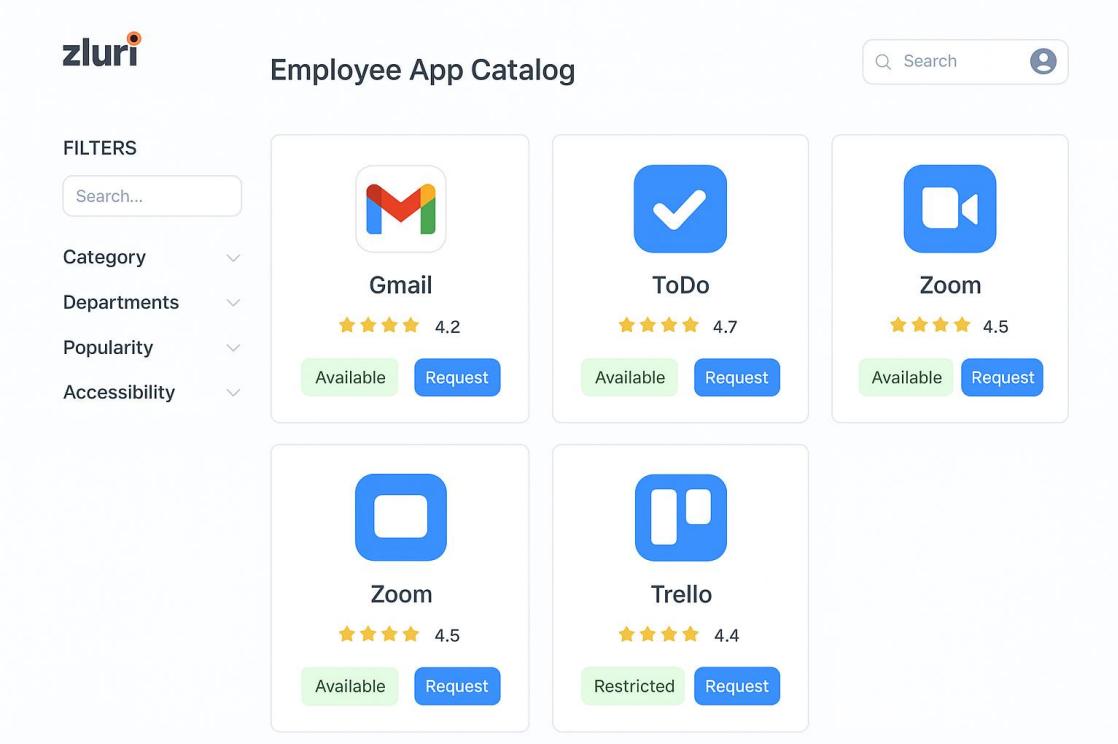
- **Header:** Includes Zluri logo, 'Employee App Catalog' title, and a Search Bar with user profile icon.
- **Left Sidebar (Filters):** Contains collapsible sections for 'Category', 'Departments', 'Popularity', and 'Accessibility', with a search input within the filters.
- **Main Content Area:** Displays a grid of App Cards.

App Card (Example):

- [App Icon Placeholder: e.g., Gmail's 'M' logo]

- **App Name** (e.g., 'Gmail')
- Rating: ★★★★☆ 4.2
- Status indicator: e.g., 'Available' (green button) or 'Request' (blue button)

Image: Catalog Browsing Interface



App Profile Page

Information Hierarchy:

1. **Immediate:** Name, rating, status, primary action (e.g., Request Access, Save).
2. **Summary:** Purpose, key features, department usage.
3. **Detailed:** Technical requirements, compliance, pricing.
4. **Social:** Reviews, power users, use cases.

Wireframe: App Details Page

Layout:

Header: [App Icon Placeholder] **App Name** (e.g., 'Tableau') ★4.6 (89)

Top Navigation Tabs: Overview | Details | Reviews | Used By

Main Content (Overview Tab):

- ## Why Tableau?
  Transform raw data into actionable insights...
- ## Key Features:
  - ✓ Drag-and-drop dashboard creation
  - ✓ Real-time data connections
  - ✓ Mobile-responsive visualizations
- [Screenshot Gallery Placeholder - 5 images]
- ## Used by teams in:
  - Sales
  - Marketing
  - Finance
  - Operations

Action Button: [Button: 'Request Access' / 'You Have Access']

Smart Request Flow

When a user clicks 'Request Access':

A modal appears requesting:

- **Business Justification* (min 50 chars)**
  [Textarea Placeholder]
- **License Type:** [Radio Button] Viewer (Free) [Radio Button] Creator ($70/month) [Radio Button] Explorer ($35/month)
- **Urgency:** [Radio Button] Normal (3-5 days) [Radio Button] High (24 hours - requires reason)

Approval Info: This will be sent to: Sarah Chen (MGR)

Wireframe: Request Flow (Modal)

Modal Window:

Title: Request Access to [App Name]

Form Fields:

- **Business Justification***
  [Textarea: 'Please provide a reason for your request...']
- **License Type:**
  [Radio Button] Viewer (Free)
  [Radio Button] Creator ($70/month)
  [Radio Button] Explorer ($35/month)
- **Urgency:**
  [Radio Button] Normal (3-5 days)
  [Radio Button] High (24 hours) - requires reason

Approver Information: This request will be routed to: [Approver Name]

Action Buttons: [Submit Request] [Cancel]

Personal Dashboard

- **My Workspace:** Quick Launch area for frequently used apps.
- **Pending Requests:** Tracks status of submitted requests with SLA timers.
- **Recommended for...:** Personalized suggestions based on role or department.

2.3 User Journey Scenarios

Scenario 1: New Employee (Day 1 Productivity)

User: Emma, Marketing Coordinator, First Day

Journey Map: START → Logs into Zluri → Sees pre-provisioned essentials → Views 'New Employee Checklist' → 5 recommended apps → Reads peer review: 'Canva is easier than Adobe for social media' → Requests Canva with justification → Auto-approved (pre-authorized) → Access granted in 10 minutes → Productive on Day 1.

Pain Points Addressed: Eliminates day-1 confusion, provides context-specific guidance via peer reviews, enables immediate productivity with pre-approved apps.

Scenario 2: Problem-Driven Discovery

User: Marcus, Data Analyst, Needs Visualization Tool

Journey Map: TRIGGER: Manager requests dashboard → Searches 'data visualization' → Sees Tableau, Power BI, Looker → Compares features → Reads review: 'Tableau integrates perfectly with our Snowflake setup' → Checks license availability (12 remaining Creator licenses) → Submits request with business case → Manager approves in 4 hours → IT provisions next day → Creates dashboard on time.

Design Validation: Comparison capability prevents wrong tool selection, peer reviews provide technical context, license transparency sets expectations.

Scenario 3: Role Transition

User: Priya, Transitioning from Sales to Product

Journey Map: HR UPDATES ROLE → Zluri detects change → Automated: Removes Salesforce, Outreach access → Automated: Adds Jira, Figma, Amplitude access → Email notification → Priya checks dashboard → Sees 'Product Manager Starter Kit' → Explores 5 additional recommended tools → Requests 2 specialized tools → Onboarded to new stack in 48 hours.

System Intelligence: Role-based automation reduces manual provisioning, proactive recommendations accelerate role transitions, clear communication prevents confusion.

2.4 Mobile Experience

Given that 40% of access requests occur outside office hours:

- **Mobile Layout:** Optimized for smaller screens with prominent search, 'My Apps', 'Requests', and 'Browse Catalog' sections.
- **Mobile Optimizations:** Minimum 44px touch targets, swipe gestures for navigation, biometric authentication, offline catalog browsing, and push notifications for approvals.

3. Success Metrics & Measurement

These metrics will evaluate the effectiveness, adoption, and impact of the Employee App Catalog.

3.1 Metrics Framework

Tier 1: User Adoption Metrics

Metric	Calculation	Target	Why It Matters
Monthly Active Users	Unique catalog visitors / Total employees × 100	60% by Month 3	Indicates whether employees see value in self-service discovery.
Catalog Engagement Rate	Users viewing ≥3 apps per session / Total users × 100	40%	Shows depth of engagement beyond superficial visits.
Self-Service Adoption	Catalog requests / Total app requests × 100	65% by Month 6	Measures channel shift from IT helpdesk to self-service.
Mobile Usage Rate	Mobile sessions / Total sessions × 100	30%	Validates anywhere/anytime access need.

Data Sources: Google Analytics, Mixpanel, native app telemetry

Tier 2: Business Impact Metrics

Metric	Calculation	Target	Why It Matters
IT Ticket Reduction	(Baseline tickets - Current) / Baseline × 100	40% decrease	Direct operational cost savings for IT department.
Time to Provision	Median(Request time → Access granted)	<24 hours	Employee productivity and satisfaction.
Shadow IT Detection	Unauthorized apps found / Previous audit × 100	50% reduction	Security risk mitigation and compliance.
License Utilization	Active licenses / Purchased licenses × 100	>85%	Cost optimization through visibility.

Data Sources: ServiceNow, Jira, Zluri provisioning logs, Security audits

Tier 3: Quality Metrics

Metric	Calculation	Target	Why It Matters
App Satisfaction Score	Average star rating across all apps	>4.0/5.0	Indicates quality of available tools.
Review Participation	Users leaving reviews / Users with >30 days access × 100	20%	Validates peer review system value.
Search Success Rate	Searches resulting in app view / Total searches × 100	75%	Measures discovery effectiveness.
Request Approval Rate	Approved / Total requests × 100	85%	Shows alignment between employee needs and IT policies.

Data Sources: In-app analytics, review database, search logs

3.2 Implementation Timeline

- **Months 1-3: Foundation**
  - Core catalog launch
  - 50 initial apps
  - Basic search/filter
  - Measure: 40% adoption
- **Months 4-6: Enhancement**
  - Peer reviews
  - Mobile app
  - 200+ apps
  - Measure: 60% adoption
- **Months 7-12: Intelligence**
  - AI recommendations
  - Workflow automation
  - 500+ apps
  - Measure: 75% adoption, 50% ticket reduction

3.3 ROI Calculation

For a 5,000-employee organization:

Cost Savings	Annual Amount	Calculation
IT Ticket Reduction	$480,000	40% × 12,000 tickets × $100/ticket
Shadow IT Reduction	$200,000	50 unauthorized apps × $4,000 risk/app
Productivity Gains	$500,000	5,000 employees × 5 hours saved × $20/hour
Total ROI	**$1,180,000**	**3.9x return on $300K investment**

4. Strategic Recommendations

4.1 Implementation Priorities

1. **Start with High-Impact Apps:** Focus on the top 20% of apps that generate 80% of requests.
2. **Build Trust Through Transparency:** Show real costs, availability, and peer experiences.
3. **Emphasize Mobile:** 40% of requests happen outside office hours.
4. **Gamify Participation:** Implement a badge system for reviews and power user recognition.
5. **Iterate Weekly:** Ship improvements based on user feedback continuously.

4.2 Bonus Features for Differentiation

- **Personalization Engine:** Role-based recommendations, 'Apps like this' suggestions, personalized onboarding flows.
- **Feedback Loop System:** Quarterly app reviews, 'Request new app' workflow, power user identification.
- **Workflow Integration:** Slack/Teams bot, browser extension, calendar integration.

4.3 Risk Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Low adoption	Mandate for new hires, gamification for existing.
Poor data quality	Auto-import from vendors, admin verification.

Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Review gaming	Verified user requirement, helpfulness voting.
Integration complexity	Phased rollout, standard APIs.

Conclusion

The Employee App Catalog transforms a fundamental enterprise challenge into a competitive advantage by combining consumer-grade user experience with enterprise governance. It empowers employees with self-service discovery, enables IT by automating and deflecting requests, protects organizations by increasing visibility and reducing shadow IT, and drives value through operational efficiency and risk reduction. Success depends on treating this as an organizational transformation that prioritizes user experience while maintaining security and governance.