



THE MOBILE EMPLOYEE APP EVALUATION GUIDE



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THE EVOLVING ROLE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS 01

Whether you are evaluating technology to improve internal communications, to support your frontline workers, or you want to integrate your frontline workers into your digital workplace, you need to ask yourself a set of questions to get the best outcome. What should you be focusing on, and why? How should you build your evaluation agenda when investigating the tech best suited to your needs?

Our employee app discovery questionnaire collates important insights learned from supporting customers to evaluate tech for internal communications across a variety of industries, including marketing, communications, HR, or IT. These insights will help you select the right technology to improve communication and engagement across your organization.

In the past frontline workers have been poorly serviced by digital communications and services, cutting them off from the corporate news stream, making it hard for them to feel part of a corporate culture, and affecting their ability to access information and employee services.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the enforced shift to remote work and hybrid workplaces that followed stressed the need for a more inclusive workplace and levelled-up the roles of internal comms and HR in supporting employee engagement and wellbeing. If you find yourself dealing with these challenges, this guide will help you evaluate the workplace tech that will offer you the best support.

Digital Workplace Trends 2021

In a recent interview in 2021, Satya Nadella talked about employee experience and its importance for corporate strategy: “Employee experience should have always been a priority. But when you’re remote in particular, you want to be staying engaged with your business and your company and its sense of purpose and mission.”

While organizations try to recognize what this means for their digital workplace, we tried to summarize in our recent “Trend-Report 2021” the most relevant workplace trends into three overall themes impacting employee experience and forming the challenges for internal comms specifically.



The connected organization

Extending access to the digital workplace to frontline and deskless employees, principally through personal devices and continuing to support remote working, while optimizing physical workplaces to navigate new challenges.



The human-centered workplace

Prioritizing employees’ health and wellbeing, reflected in tools and content across the digital workplace while reimagining and evolving internal and leadership communications, with greater emphasis on personalization and targeting and informality and dialogue.



Enabling productivity

Using technology and tools to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of an increasingly dispersed workforce and moving towards a single coherent digital workplace experience targeted to the needs of each employee which is available across different applications.

As no one can predict how the “new normal” for common workplace models will look like, reflecting on those trends to find the sustainable benefits for your business and working in your own learning over the past 12 months is a good start to reshaping your corporate vision for employee experience and the strategy for your digital workplace evolution.



Read the full report

“Digital Workplace Trends 2021”:

<https://livetilesglobal.com/digital-workplace-trends-2021>



THE EMPLOYEE APP EVALUATION PROCESS

Employee experience platforms and employee apps are part of a relatively young and evolving category of workplace technology. The fast-paced evolution of solutions and underlying platforms suggests a dialogue-oriented evaluation process rather than a formal procurement process.



To determine and test your requirements priorities involve your business stakeholders in the selection process and run them through a set of discovery questions outlined in this guide, to determine platform requirements in context of the employee experience ecosystem of your organisation.

Asking for a demonstration linked to your requirements and a safe sandbox environment to test it with your users and stakeholders (including the capability to seamlessly transform to a production environment) is a good early step to refine a well-informed requirement list.

Define the common use-cases as basis for your formal RFP or check with the vendors in scope, whether they can extend the early demonstrators into a “proof of concept” (POC), as modern software as a service (SaaS) solutions are easy to configure to reflect common use cases, branding and platform integrations.

Who is buying an employment app?



The Common Business Stakeholder Challenges

Your first reference point to workout requirements is your company strategy. All employee apps offer fast and easy ways to deliver news to users but depending on your company strategy they are also spanning elements of your communications, digital workplace, HR/people and operations strategy. The typical business challenges can be broken down to the following four categories. Depending on your business priorities, define your specific requirements:

- 1 Communications**
Covering internal news and communications out to users plus the way users can engage with those messages.
- 2 HR & People**
Putting people at the heart of the app starting with engaging people directories, employee engagement and training and wellbeing related functionality.
- 3 Digital Workplace and IT**
Embedding an employee app into your enterprise intranet and employee experience ecosystem or using it as a pocket-intranet for all employee types and locations.
- 4 Operations**
Integrating with business tools like Microsoft Teams and SharePoint Online and reliably deploying native apps to the workforce corporate infrastructure or BYOD consumer tools of employees, contingent staff and non-corporate communities and partners.

Choosing a Vendor

Once you have nailed down your solution requirements you probably run some market exploration and have a dialogue with vendors, exploring the product fit, but equally as well the main vendor differentiators, which can we be:

1 Sustainability

Your employee app is going to be a crucial element of your employee experience; what is a vendor's ability in future development of the core product and agility to adapt to your evolving company strategy and toolset?

2 Integration and platform completeness

There is no one app doing everything well, therefore every solution you consider should be built on core workplace principles (meta-data driven, M365 integration, multilingual support, ever-presence of content across all your comms-channels and ways to work standalone without the requirement of third party license.

3 Customer services and support

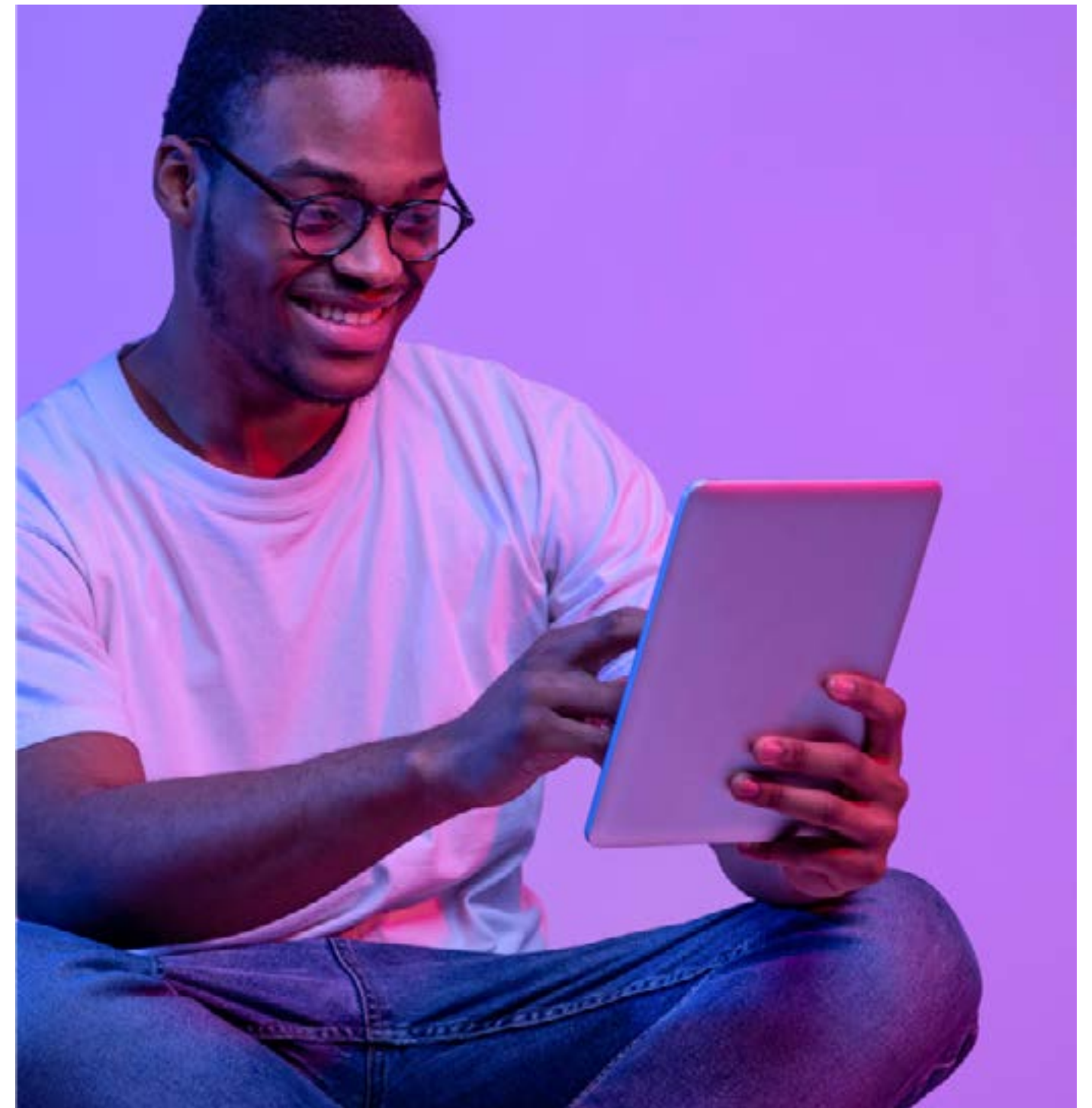
The vendors ability to provide required genuine or partner delivered professional services to customize the employee app experience to your requirements and deliver high quality product support, if required around the clock and globally.

4 Licensing and pricing flexibility

Modern employee apps are delivered as Software as a Service (SaaS) with pay-as-you go models which can be extended with other digital workplace technologies like enterprise intranets, people directories, analytics services and more.

5 Cultural fit

While modern employee apps are typically easy to install, the vendor's ability to support your company communication culture through customization and adoption services is crucial for success. An agile project delivery method helps to keep requirements and implementation in sync while your key users already work with the technology.



THE EMPLOYEE APP DISCOVERY QUESTIONNAIRE

03

In the market for digital workplace tools and employee experience platforms, there are myriad checklists available. But what might work for others might not be right feature requirements for your communications challenges. Your strategic focus might be more on the communications while others focus more on IT integration or HR processes.

Mapping features to your individual pain points or corporate priorities can be difficult for communications managers who deal with technology platforms for the first time. On the other hand, IT may not have experience yet with consumerized UIs and employee engagement tools.

A well-chosen set of discovery questions for your key stakeholder groups is a very effective way to evaluate the best solution for your specific priorities. Below you will find a selection of questions, depending on which primary stakeholder audience you want to engage. Going through these questions with your cross functional team will help you come up with a prioritized feature checklist enabling your top requirements.

The discovery questionnaire shares 13 common challenges most organisations share, grouped into three distinct audiences or stakeholder groups:

1. **Internal Communications** - [page 13](#)
2. **Human Resources** - [page 18](#)
3. **IT and Operations** - [page 23](#)






Q1

CONTENT TARGETING AND DISCOVERY

Is it important to you to segment communications through audience targeting and do your users complain that they can find what is relevant for their job?

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

-  **Passive targeting with channels, user-groups, locations**
-  **Active targeting through user subscriptions to channels**
-  **Multilingual search experience optimization (SEO)**

Why it matters:

An app for everyone is an app for no one. If users sense that content is not relevant to them they will switch off, adoption will be low and ROI on communications will be poor. Ensure your people get what matters to them with role-specific content and improve findability of content and people through curated keyword sets. Adoption scores will improve, if you allow users to make their choice and subscribe to channels and groups they are interested in.

Q2



BRANDING AND CUSTOMIZATION

Do you need to spend money to have your vendor implement branding, taxonomy and information architecture changes?

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

- ✓ Customize the in-app experience according to your CI
- ✓ Customer managed changes to user and content taxonomy
- ✓ Branded app customization and delivery

Why it matters:

To maximize connection of users to your organization and trust in your brand, an internal communications solution needs to reflect your corporate identity, but also your business and organizational reality in terms of structure, language and taxonomy. Enterprises of all size require a flexible setup and customization of design, structure and taxonomy to support their identity and culture. Agile organizations need to change those elements on the fly with their own staff as needed.

Q3

DIGITAL NATIVES BORN ON MOBILE

How important is the mobile experience to your people?
Do the digital natives in your business complain about the mobile experience.

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

- ✓ Consumer grade mobile UX
- ✓ Native iOS and Android apps
- ✓ Mobile notifications across devices and apps

Why it matters:

“Companies that are highly connected are twice as likely to have a favorable market position compared to those who are not.”*

Organizations that give their people the information and tools they need to work effectively are more efficient and productive. The lion’s share of workplace solutions are design for desk usage rather than the small form factor of mobile screens.

The majority of your users is or soon will be digital natives and simply don’t accept mobile experiences that are not living up to the standards of major consumer apps.

*Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, The Connected Workforce Pulse Survey, 2018

Q4

USER ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

If you are an organization with a multilingual workforce, how much time or money do you spend translating content und trying to understand which content is liked?

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

- ✓ Social likes and comments, sharing and P2P communication
- ✓ User generated content and auto-translation
- ✓ Polls, surveys, events and chats
- ✓ Content and engagement analytics



Why it matters:

Reach people with the information they need in their preferred language for maximum effectiveness and engagement. In many countries it is also a legal requirement (e.g. Canada) to provide multilingual content.

Social interactivity is prove n to improve engagement with the workplace tools and your organisation and brand.

Q5

CORPORATE EVENTS

How does your organization manage staff events? Can you provide an aggregated view of important dates and events? Is it important to understand who is and isn't attending an event or training in advance for planning purposes?

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

- ✓ Overview of one-time and recurring corporate events
- ✓ One-click registration and cancelation
- ✓ Filter on and subscribe to townhall and training events
- ✓ Event surveys and polls, moderated event Q&A

Why it matters:

Disparate business units and geographies need to be aware of what is happening in other parts of the business to ensure alignment with execution of strategies and avoiding duplication of effort. Townhall events and trainings, whether physical or virtual, are an important channel in your internal communications mix.

Q6

WORKFORCE WITH NO CORPORATE DIGITAL ID

Is it difficult for you stay connected with a fast-changing remote workforce and keep them aligned to regulations or have them timely informed during emergency situations?

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

- ✓ Simple personal email authentication via Azure B2C
- ✓ Self-registration login or QR code authentication
- ✓ No additional (Microsoft) licenses required

Why it matters:

Companies with a fast turnaround of workforce (health, retail, hospitality, NGOs) lack of tools to inform and engage this part of their workforce and keep their staff list current. This can negatively affect trust and security and result in costly offline list management. How can you ensure that the policies provided are being followed, even for staff you actually never see or that are working only part-time?

Finding effective and cost efficient ways to connect users without a corporate digital ID and include them in your comms and onboarding experience can be complex and costly. Modern employee apps can provide those benefits with simple email-invite on users' personal devices.



“Engagement and connection are vital for reasons both inside and outside a company. But avoiding preventable turnover may be one of the biggest incentives of all to focus on strong communication inside of your business.”

Forbes.com, “How better communications prevents painful turnover”

Q7

MULTILINGUAL AT CORE

If you are an organization with a multilingual workforce, how much time or money do you spend translating content and how many languages can you afford to support?

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

- ✓ Multilingual user interface based on user preference.
- ✓ Curated content in selected languages
- ✓ 100% machine on-the fly translated content

Why it matters:

Reach people with the information they need in their language for maximum effectiveness and engagement. In many countries it is also a legal requirement to provide multilingual content. Using machine translation not only saves cost, but is essential for an inclusive workplace giving everyone access to content, process and information regardless of their location and language skills.

Q8

KNOWLEDGE SHARING & COMPLIANCE

How do you connect your people to the expertise and regulations they need and do you need to service different channels reaching external employees?

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

- ✓ Mobile front door or pocket intranet functionality
- ✓ Build in user and experience directory
- ✓ Content access based on security group membership
- ✓ Content update notifications and read confirmations

Why it matters:

It is essential in a large organization that people can locate the right person based on role or experience for a job. Having a one-click access to product or process documentation and corporate regulations boosts adoption and usage and adding measures like read confirmations enables policy governance.

Q9

THE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS

Do you have a frontline workforce you need to reach with information and alerts? Is it frustrating to recreate content across channels for non-MS-licensed users at the frontline?

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

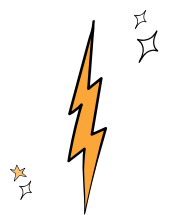
- ✓ Wide device support on iOS and Android
- ✓ Bring your own device (BYOD)
- ✓ Single Sign On (SSO)
- ✓ Easy built-in user access and rights management tools

Why it matters:

Frontline workers are the public face and heart and soul of your organization. Ensure they have what they need to work effectively and can stay connected with your brand and strategy. Avoiding duplication of effort in creating information in multiple systems save cost and increases quality and consistency.

Q10

UNIVERSAL USER ACCESS



Does your organization have a need for formal/curated (non-email) based communication with partners, suppliers, contractors, freelancers etc.? If yes, how do you do that today?

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

- ✓ Email authentication via Azure B2C
- ✓ Content sharing in Intranet, SharePoint + 3rd party apps
- ✓ Web-UI and mobile apps

Why it matters:

Effective communication with third party partners, suppliers, contractors, and the growing gig-economy is critical. Their success is your success in an increasingly networked economy.
Inviting new employees to your employee experience platform even before they get a corporate ID improves the employee onboarding experience.

Q11

DIGITAL WORKPLACE & MS TEAMS INTEGRATION

How strong has the MS Teams adoption been since the shift to working from home? Are your people living in MS Teams but it's difficult to use MS Teams chats for well-crafted and audience specific comms?

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

- ✓ Native MS Teams App for Readers + Publishers
- ✓ Unified push notifications settings including MS Teams
- ✓ Create content once, publish to SharePoint, Teams, Slack, etc.
- ✓ Multi-tenant external sharing of content from MS Teams

Why it matters:

Reach your people at the digital place where they are already working. Avoid pushing users to another app and lose time and focus due to app-switching and content search.

MS Teams is a tool optimized for collaboration but was not designed to support content creation and targeted communication. Rather integrate that to happen in a MS Teams app.

Q12

MANAGING SECURITY & PERFORMANCE

Are scarce IT resources and long project cycles a reason for postponing required enhancement of tools for employee communications?

If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

- ✓ Out of the box, geo-redundant cloud infrastructure
- ✓ Azure AD option to enable all M365 users with one click.
- ✓ Externally reviewed security and privacy by design
- ✓ Private cloud

Why it matters:

If you want to focus your budgets on content and user adoption rather than IT project cost, then build on top of standard SaaS solutions. Project cycles can be dramatically shortened and the dependencies on legacy systems are reduced to simple connections to your existing employee directory.

Q13

COMPANY MERGERS & COMMUNITIES

Does your company own multiple companies with disconnected Microsoft 365 tenants or different Active Directories? How do you communicate a common message across disparate domains and entities?

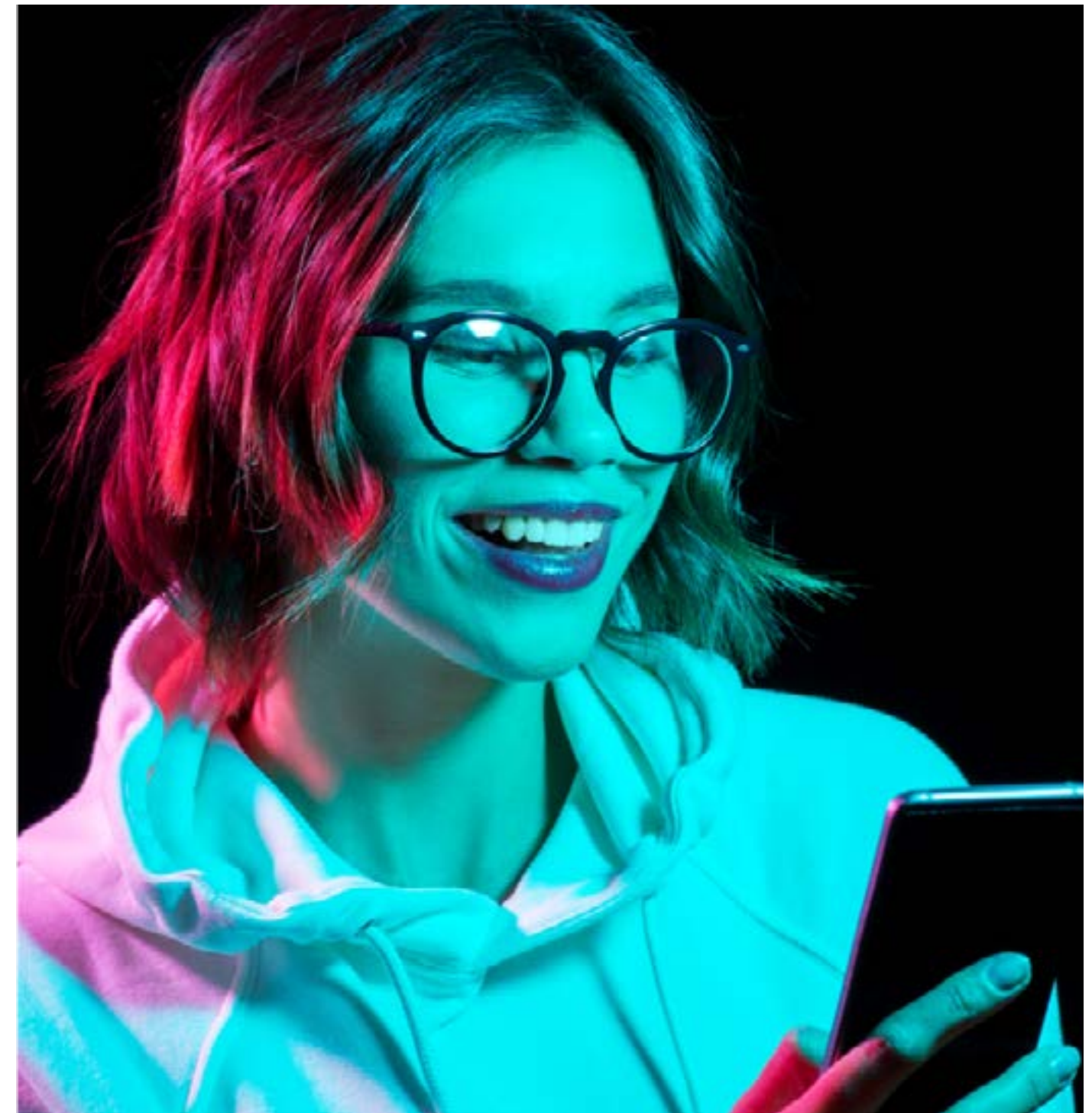
If your answer is “yes”, look for the following capabilities:

- ✓ Integration of multiple legal or technical organizational entities
- ✓ Multi Azure AD support
- ✓ Email invitation or bulk import of users across organizations

Why it matters:

Bringing together users of separate Microsoft tenants is difficult and has to deal with many infrastructure dependencies. Integration of new organizational parts into your communications is a frequent key leadership challenge and should not be limited by IT infrastructure.

Community organizations like NFPs or NGOs tend to work across many physical and legal entities and can save significant amount of time and resources to keep contact lists up-to-date and functional.



EMPLOYEE APP CAPABILITY CHECKLIST

04

On the next pages we have summarized the discovery questionnaire by stakeholder group. Collect your assessment and indicate per question, whether this particular challenge is a priority for your organisation and whether your current technology platform or any other solution you are reviewing can sufficiently provide the required capability.

For your reference, we have added the qualification for LiveTiles Reach, our internal communication platform. You find a short description of Reach on page 32 in this “Employee App Evaluation Guide”.

“In the past firstline workers have been poorly serviced by digital communications and services. Frontline workers have often been without digital identities, access to corporate owned devices, and with limited or no opportunities to access a desktop device during the working day. [...] Thankfully, this is now changing. For the first time businesses are in a position to ask all employees to use personal smart-phones for work-related activities.”

Cleabox Consulting, Employee App Report, 2020

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES

	Your current tool	Your priorities	LiveTiles REACH
CONTENT TARGETING & DISCOVERY			
Passive targeting with channels, groups locations			yes!
Active targeting thru user subscriptions			yes!
Multilingual search experience optimization (SEO)			yes!
BRANDING & CUSTOMIZATION			
Customize the in-app experience and app branding according to your CI			yes!
Customer managed changes to user and content taxonomy			yes!
DIGITAL NATIVE - BORN ON MOBILE			
Consumer grade mobile UX			yes!
Native iOS and Android apps			yes!
Mobile notifications across devices and apps			yes!
USER ENGAGEMENT TOOLS			
Social likes, comments, sharing and P2P communication			yes!
User generated content and posts			yes!
Polls, surveys, events and chats			yes!
Content and engagement analytics			yes!
CORPORATE EVENTS			
Overview of one-time and recurring events			yes!
One-click registration and cancelation			yes!
Filter on and subscribe to townhall and training events			yes!
Event surveys and polls, moderated event Q&A			yes!

HUMAN RESOURCES CHALLENGES

WORKFORCE WITH NO CORPORATE DIGITAL ID	Your current tool	Your priorities	LiveTiles REACH
Simple personal email invitation			yes!
Self-registration login			yes!
No additional (Microsoft) licenses required			yes!
MULTILINGUAL AT CORE			
UI and content language based on user preference			yes!
Curated content in multiple languages			yes!
100% machine on-the fly translated			yes!
KNOWLEDGE SHARING & COMPLIANCE			
Mobile front door or pocket intranet functionality			yes!
Built in user and experience directory			yes!
Content access based on security group membership			yes!
Content update notifications and read confirmations			yes!
THE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS			
Wide device support on iOS and Android			yes!
Bring your own device (BYOD) support			yes!
Single Sign On (SSO)			yes!
Easy built-in user access and rights management tools			yes!

IT & OPERATIONS CHALLENGES

UNIVERSAL USER ACCESS	Your current tool	Your priorities	LiveTiles REACH
Email authentication via Azure B2C			yes!
Content sharing in Intranet, SharePoint + 3rd party Apps			yes!
Web-UI and Mobile Apps			yes!
DIGITAL WORKPLACE & MS TEAMS INTEGRATION			
Native MS Teams App for Readers + Publishers with rich content editing and audience targeting			yes!
Unified push notifications settings including MS Teams			yes!
Create content once, publish to SharePoint, Teams, Slack, Mobile, etc..			yes!
Multi-tenant external sharing of conversational and structured content beyond in MS Teams			yes!
MANAGING SECURITY & PERFORMANCE			
Out of the box, geo-redundant cloud infrastructure			yes!
Azure AD option to enable all M365 users with one click			yes!
Private cloud and data residency options			yes!
Externally reviewed security and privacy by design			yes!
COMPANY MERGERS & COMMUNITIES			
Integration of multiple legal or technical organizational entities			yes!
Multi Azure AD support			yes!
Email invitation or bulk import of users across organizations			yes!

Livetiles Reach is an internal communication tool and pocket intranet that connects desk- and non-deskworker with your digital workplace and keeps everyone informed and engaged, on any device. Reach comes with the best integration in Microsoft O365 and MS Teams but runs also stand-alone. **Start your trial today.** <https://livetilesglobal.com/products/livetiles-reach>



ACCESS FROM MOBILE, WEB & MS TEAMS APPS

Reach is available across all devices - from Android, iOS, MAC, and PC via the web, mobile and Microsoft Teams applications.



CREATE TARGETED & MULTILINGUAL CONTENT

Target communications to audiences you specify. Effortlessly translate content into more than 60 languages and reach staff across locations and linguistic backgrounds.



UNIQUE CAPABILITIES TO INFORM & CONNECT

Inform with alerts and quick access to knowledge, procedures, and guidelines. Engage with targeted news, social comms, chat, events, and a mobile-first optimised user experience.



EASILY DEPLOY IMMEDIATE USE

Create your own Reach subscription and onboard users in minutes. Our multitenant SaaS architecture minimises maintenance efforts and provides user adoption insights.



EXPERT SUPPORT & WORKPLACE INTEGRATION

LiveTiles offers Reach users expert support, including workshops to help connect your frontline workers and build staff engagement. We can also help you set up Reach so it's personalised with your company branding.



INTEGRATES PERFECTLY WITH MICROSOFT TEAMS

Integrate with Microsoft 365 through SharePoint Online and Teams. Connect Reach to collaboration platforms, HR systems, and 1000s of other apps through its API or Zapier.

ABOUT LIVETILES

In 2014, Karl Redenbach and Peter Nguyen-Brown co-founded LiveTiles with the intention of disrupting the status quo and leading organizations into a new era of digital transformation. After 20 years of working in the tech space together, including running their own SharePoint consultancy firm, they realized that end users needed to be empowered to build their own intelligent workplaces without relying on the expertise of others.

From the beginning, Karl and Peter envisioned a different kind of company, based on mutual respect, where employees enjoy an inclusive workplace that is open to forward-thinking ideas and tolerant of diversity. These core principles have guided Karl and Peter's decision-making and helped establish LiveTiles as one of the fastest-growing SaaS companies in the world.

With an office network across North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific, LiveTiles is a global software company that provides solutions and tools to build intelligent workplaces through AI, analytics, and user interface design. What began as a friendship between two aspiring entrepreneurs has evolved into one of Australia's most accomplished tech companies. LiveTiles is rapidly growing to serve global customers across all industries and its intelligent workplace design suite has been adopted by some of the world's most iconic brands.

Discover more about LiveTiles' intelligent workplace solutions at www.livetilesglobal.com



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