

BRIEFING NOTE ON EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION APP FOR DANCO PETROLEUM COMPANY LTD.

Strategy and Governance in IT

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**Executive Summary**

Employee communication apps are digital communication tools that are used as a method for corporate information gathering and sharing in order to facilitate communication, interaction and collaboration. There are many benefits to using employee communication apps for bridging the internal communication gap between organizations and their dispersed employees. In recent times, the value of employee communication apps has widely been recognized, instigating an upsurge in its use across many organizations and business enterprises. The upsurge underscores the fact that organizations have a real need for emerging technologies. Thus digital tools are no longer an option for our employee experience. Nevertheless, the reliance on these emerging trends in technologies, which is employee communication apps, is certainly not without challenges for internal communication such as ethical considerations with employee privacy and employees data analytics. In the light of the aforementioned, this briefing note aimed to help the Chief Information Officer of Danco Petroleum Ltd to understand the need to deploy employee communication apps within the dispersed employees across its retail service outlets in Nigeria. The briefing note recommends among others Microsoft Team, Slack, Basecamp or Firstup to be deployed for increased employee engagement which in return offers financial benefit for the company.

# Profile of Danco Petroleum Ltd

The Danco Petroleum Ltd is a private company limited by shares incorporated on February 20th 2018 (B2BHint, 2022) with headquarters in Child Avenue, Apapa Lagos, and a subsidiary of the Danco group. The primary activity of the company is oil and gas services. To help provide cleaner energy to meet the needs of Nigerians, the company currently boasts 20 retail outlet services across the states of Nigeria (Danco, 2020). The company uses its service station to offer quality petroleum products to motorists and other end users of petroleum products (Perfectjob, 2022). To be a customer-centric organization, Danco Petroleum seeks to foster best practices by building a culture of integrity, service excellence, innovation and performance.

Danco is engaged in every aspect of the oil and gas industry, including a truck holding bay capable of warehousing up to 100 trucks at a time. The company is also engaged in lube services such as vulcanizing, balancing and alignment of tyres and other mechanical works. Danco Petroleum also delivers clean and efficient LPG and energy solutions across Nigeria. At the same time, the company’s workforce of over 500 employees seeks to build enduring relationships that exceed customers’ satisfaction and offer superior value to all stakeholders

(HeyPlaces, 2022). Danco’s slogan is “Quality in our DNA” (Danco, 2020).

# Impacts of Employee Communication App for Danco Petroleum Ltd

An employee communication app contains communication tools that can provide and secure channel of communication for all employees within an organization (Farquhar, 2002). The use of employees’ communication apps such as Slack, Flock, Connecteam, Google Drive, Basecamp, Help Scout, Zoom, Freshteam, LumAppa etc, all offer more benefits to build alignment, reliability and transparency in the entire workforce (Peek, 2022).

In a related development, it is to give facilitation of corporate information sharing, foster alignment and engagement, and create a positive workplace culture of collaboration (Jackson, 2007). Additionally, employee communication helps organizations create and sustain mutually agreed cultural values (Grover, 2015).

Several implications exist for adopting employee communication apps in Danco Petroleum Ltd. Without mincing words, digital transformation has revolutionised the way organizations operate the business (Sward & McArthur, 2007) and creates new opportunities for conversations and actionable feedback from workers (Tyler, 2012). Organizations use technology to communicate within their structures, which allows for multidimensional and multidirectional work experience.

The long traditional channel of communication and interaction had been faced with face communication, letters, telephone calls, courier services and so on. In today’s digital world, well functioning digital tools such as conducting meetings through computer-based platforms, or other software platforms (Delone & Rice, 2008). It can be seen that the way of communication is a change that Danco Petroleum Ltd cannot ignore.

It is significant to note in this regard that allowing for the constant, uninterrupted and safe transfer of information and data is the core of employee communication apps, as Danco

Petroleum Ltd needs to communicate strategically and frequently with her dispersed employees (Dave, 2009).

Using an employee communication app, according to Bryan (2015) can impact every area of business activities such as productivity, efficiency and quality in an organization. It can be argued, that employee communication app tends to enhance efficiency and productivity as well as profitability in Danco Petroleum Ltd.

Research on employee communication apps shows that computer-based communication or virtual interaction among employees causes a reduction in its user’s social abilities due to less face to face interaction with other workers (Stich, 2014). In addition, as argued by Cole (2009), it remains unknown the extent to which virtual interaction can impact employees' well-being and the work done.

This submission demonstrates that the ease that employee communication apps offer may lead to weaker social ties in the real world because employee have fewer reasons to move from one department to another and interact face to face with other co-workers.

In terms of ethical implications, no doubt that with employee communication apps, a bunch of data regarding employees’ app usage, location, and productivity (Chu, 2022) can be gathered. Similarly, it is considered unethical and illegal for employers to gather data about an employee without their consent (Porteous, 2020). Way of contrast the best ethical practice will be for employers to be transparent in data collection, minimally invasive and show respect for employee privacy.

**Benefits in the Deployment of Employee Communication App for Danco Petroleum Ltd**

The benefits between employee communication apps and the organization are a vital aspect to be considered. As posited by Patmos (2008) effective internal communication can ensure that the whole organizations work towards a common goal and assist each other effectively. In the same frame of mind, employee communication apps are now a priority for organizations (Martynenko, Nevalainen, Krug, & Orna, 2014).

To begin with, employee communication apps create a positive workplace culture, the need to create and cultivate a digital communication culture in Danco Petroleum Ltd is an integral part of retention and engagement (Grover, 2015). The overall positivity in creating a mobile engagement among employees gives employees a better, bigger and more detailed picture of the organization and the people they work together (Cole, 2009). Notably, creating a common understanding of Danco Petroleum Ltd's vision is key to achieving a successful digital workplace that drives long term productivity.

Next, employee communication apps provide a single source of streamlined and relevant content. Even though frequent and consistent business interaction is important to employees, nevertheless too much irrelevant information can mitigate productivity. Therefore, with employee communication apps, if adopted Danco Petroleum Ltd can thrive, removing complex or unnecessary processes in the workplace and improving workflow efficiency (Editorial Team, 2021).

To state further, streamlining business communication requires the usage of digital tools to increase cost efficiency, improve productivity, improve communication, better time management in project completion, and minimize risk (Sward & McArthur, 2007). With employee communication apps, it is very important that business information is well managed, well-designed and organized to engage the users and avoid communication bottlenecks (Cirilo, 2021).

Also, employee communication apps meet the unique needs of today’s modern workforce, in this age of information-rich environment, organizations need to reach and engage the entire workforce with accessible internal communication that cut across organizational silos and language barriers (Spotcues, 2021). In today’s digitalized world of connectivity, employees' communication tools if rightly deployed can improve employee communication skills and enable transparent and honest communication (Peek, 2022).

Lastly, employee communication apps enhance the employee experience, as rightly pointed out by Farquhar (2002) an effective employee communication platform that allows employees to be well informed and enlightened regarding the organization's vision, mission, strategies and objectives creates a sense of belonging and commitment to the work.

It is identified by Bell, McLean, & Bagozzi (2001) that, with employee communication apps, employers can gain insights into how employee gives feedback to information, make an informed data-driven decision and maximize workplace engagement with the employees. To a real degree, therefore, an employee communication app can boost employee motivation and morale when such an employee's achievements are recognized and endorsed for a job well done on the company’s social platform.

# Recommended Vendors for Employee Communication Apps for Danco Petroleum Ltd

For many years, traditional methods of internal communication had been an effective means of sharing information internally with employees, this includes face to face interactions, the use of emails, intranets and internal memos.

From the foregoing, this briefing note recommends switching to an internal communication tool Microsoft Team, Slack, Basecamp or First up. One of the biggest benefits of either of these vendor choices is that it allows employee engagement at all levels of operations, and with increased employee engagement comes cost reduction (Stidworthy, 2021). Notably, this makes a lot of business sense whereby one message can be sent to every employee at a click of a button, putting the right information in front of the right people at the appropriate time and mitigating against false information sources.

# Challenges in Deployment of Employee Communication App for Danco Petroleum Ltd

Despite employee communication apps having proven capabilities for enabling speedy widespread of information and encouraging employees to contribute to organizational strategy, internal communication and robust work experience, these digital communication apps can, at first glance, be seen as effective and a way to improve the organization, but it has been discussed that these digital tools should be considered and chosen carefully (Gross, 2019).

As indicated by Cook (2008) getting a user of traditional communication habits to adopt the use of new digital communication tools poses a big challenge to the implementation of digital tools in the workplace. The adoption of employee communication tools is not without several challenges

* **Lack of Feedback**

The world of communication in the real world is different from the virtual world with communication apps. As a result, employee communication apps e.g. Zoom, Skype, Slack and Microsoft Teams can never match the face to face feedback and emotional touch of the real world (Kashyap, 2021).

Delivering feedback remotely can be irregular, inconsistent and untimely and this is a major problem in the deployment of employee communication apps (Bell & Scott, 2004). As opined by Ambrose, Hopkins, & Cotton, (2009) employee communication apps often show lower performance levels concerning decreased or delayed feedback.

* **Lack of Empathy**

There is a strong possibility that with the deployment of employees’ communication apps, a lack of empathy becomes inevitable, and may impact workers’ productivity and cause intra-team conflict (Kashyap, 2021). It’s becoming increasingly common for co-workers to communicate almost entirely through computer-based platforms and on rare occasions interact face-to-face (Forsey, 2019). This lack of facial conversion does not help employees experience what the other person feels.

Here is the point, communication apps are not going away, while there are plenty of opportunities for Danco Petroleum Ltd, there is an equally long list of challenges our businesses could face as a result of its deployment.

* **Lack of Control**

As more organizations switch to deploying employee communication apps, this makes employees more mobile in their approach to work (Duncan, 2022). On the contrary, each employee may have a preference for app usage and some may be uncomfortable with other platforms.

Ultimately, this leads to inefficiencies due to a lack of control. However, Danco needs to adopt one or more communication apps to maintain business agility and ensure meaningful workplace collaboration, interaction, management of projects and connections (Buffington,

2022).

* **Lack of Emotion**

Despite the numerous logistical advantages of employee communication apps, they lack emotional interaction (Terry & Cain, 2016). Similarly, many communication apps have introduced *emojis* to help express the feelings behind our words (Morgan, 2018), but

an *emoji* does not do it well.

* **Lack of Connection and Commitment**

Every form of employee communication app can be managed but not controlled (Wright, 2012). Though employee communication apps have made tremendous headway, the limitations of employees' communication apps include lack of network connectivity, and denial of service, which are posing a challenge to employee communication apps.

In addition, employee communication apps can contribute to workplace coordination but the tools can also shift employee attention from more important activities (Gary, Veronica, & Mark, 2015) and on the other hand, leads to minimal commitment to project and timely delivery of services.

# Business Management of Employee Communication App for Danco Petroleum Ltd

The various challenges of employee communication apps can be solved easily with improved policies and effective management.

To just implement a digital tool and expect it to give results with no further training is not the solution. A well-function employee communication app has to be linked with the organization's mission, vision and core values and provide productivity for the employees to start using it.

Employees at Danco Petroleum Ltd can be more productive when they are better connected to the organization (Buffington, 2022). Hence, Chief Information Officers and other major stakeholders are responsible to set the tone (Mark, 2022) by making information clear, concise and consistent on the workplace communication app adopted by Danco Petroleum Ltd.

Conversely, although organizations are adopting employees’ communication apps, nothing beats face-to-face communication.

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