

FLIP GUIDE

A man with short brown hair and a beard, wearing a black t-shirt and black work pants with a tool belt, is standing and looking down at a smartphone in his hands. He is positioned on the right side of the frame, leaning against a white wall with a metal railing. The background is a blurred, light-colored wall.

HOW TO DIGITALISE

DESKLESS EMPLOYEE

COMMUNICATION

Flip guide: how to reach deskless employees digitally

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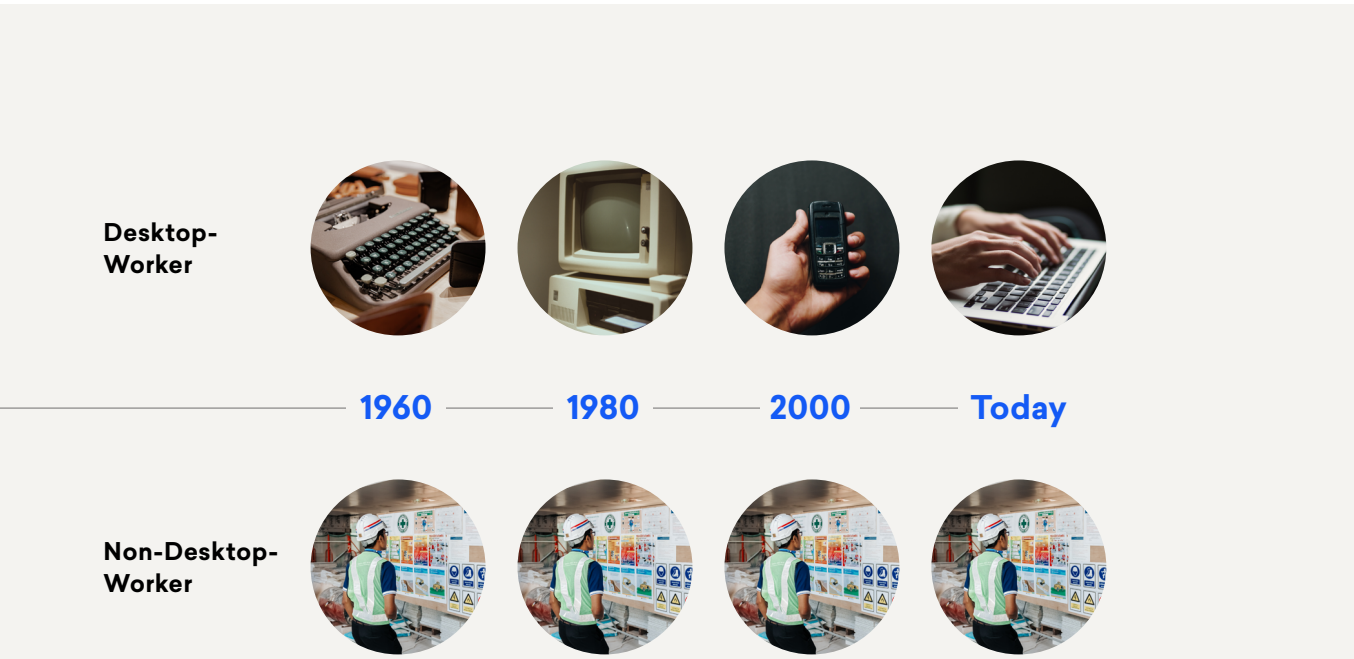
“Companies today use yesterday’s tools to communicate with the generation of tomorrow”

Prof. Dr. Bernd Rall
The Baden-Wuerttemberg
Cooperative State University

Why your internal communication has long been competing against WhatsApp

Employees devote almost an hour a day during working hours to private content on their smartphone ([Source](#)). Your message about your corporate strategy has thus long been competing against the messages in their family WhatsApp group, all of the TikTok videos from their friends and their football club's Instagram stories. This is particularly a problem away from workstations: while **private communication habits** via chats, newsfeeds and video content have become part of office workers' everyday lives, time seems to have stood still for deskless employees. Digital formats are hardly ever used for communication within the company.

Left behind on the noticeboard
For decades, companies have been using circulars, employee magazines and notices to reach frontline workers. Although deskless workers make up 80 percent of the global workforce, only 1 percent of software investments flow into their area. At Flip, we help companies like **EDEKA, MAHLE, Bauder, McDonald's and Porsche** to make internal communication fit for the future and to reach all of their employees digitally – with tools and content capable of competing against social media. We have put together recommendations and checklists from over 200 projects for you.



Three ‘solutions’ that are not actually solutions for deskless employees

1 Terminals & info screens: digitalisation from a business perspective

We often come across terminals that offer employees that don't have their own PCs access to the intranet. Some companies install screens in break rooms or in the cafeteria. From a business perspective, this is an advantage: information reaches frontline workers quickly and with little effort. However, the result is that companies are digitalising the weaknesses inherent in notice and bulletin boards. Information still needs to be actively sought out and is distributed based on the watering can principle.

Weaknesses of terminals and info screens:

- Actively seeking information out: employees usually need to go to the terminal or screen during their breaks to see whether there is any relevant information for them.
- Overload: employees receive more information than is relevant compared to the bulletin board because digital sharing is easy. Office workers are familiar with this phenomenon from e-mails sent to half the company as ‘CC’ and ‘fyi’.
- Man v. technology: info screens present information in a similar way to the digital billboards found at train stations. It's not a person but technology that determines the sequence and the speed.
- Measurability: does your information actually reach people or does it just reach devices? This question usually remains unanswered.

2 (Social) intranet: no trace of ‘mobile first’

According to an [SCM study](#), only around 57 percent of communications managers assume that they are able to reach all employees via the intranet. This scepticism is understandable, as intranet content isn't really accessible to employees who don't have a workstation. What's more, while external communication via social media and rating platforms is becoming ever more dialogue-oriented, internal communication often only flows in one direction. **The intranet is partly to blame for this one-way street.**

The basic idea behind the **social intranet** is to overcome these shortfalls and establish contemporary features like a newsfeed, a messenger and groups in everyday company life. The catch for companies who also want to reach deskless employees is that the use of the social intranet is often limited to company devices or linked to an overarching Office licence, which is often not beneficial for deskless employees. Irrespective of this, social intranet is optimised for the office. When it comes to mobile use in the warehouse, in production, on the ward and at the checkout, the most important thing is offering users with a little affinity for IT and older smartphones the best user experience and fast access to information, even with poor reception: requirements that are not met by a social intranet.



3 Communication chains: broken telephone is not child's play

When you pass on 30 pieces of information to others verbally, only 13 pieces of information will be received correctly by the second person. When shared for the tenth time, only three pieces of information will still remain, but they'll be wrong. This is the finding of an experiment that scientifically investigated the broken telephone phenomenon. **In everyday company life, the same thing happens as during the children's game:** firstly, a lot of information is lost in the communication chain between headquarters, site management, team management and the team member. Secondly, those involved make up new details and pass them on as facts.

When we apply this to internal communication, it means that out of a 30-point plan for company repositioning, only three points reach the production hall or warehouse in the worst-case scenario. And these three points aren't even part of the plan. What's more, the people working in the office find out things earlier thanks to push notifications from Teams, Yammer and other Office tools. This imbalance within the company fuels rumours – **the office grapevine is always broadcasting, even on the front line.**

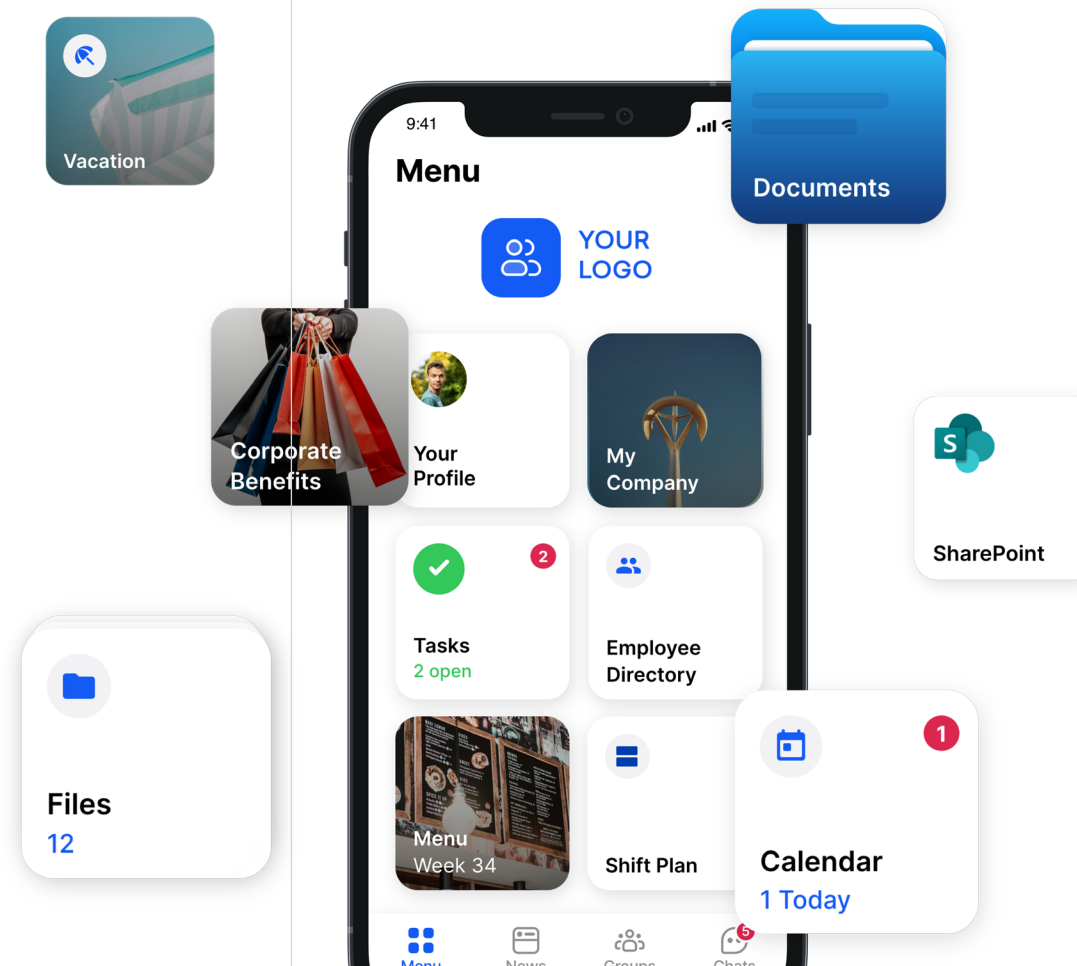
Employee app: hype or communication tool of the future?

What is an employee app?

An employee app is a communication and collaboration tool for companies that have a large number of deskless employees. Chat, newsfeed, shift planning, time recording and much more are merged into one operating system for everyone who doesn't have a PC workstation. An employee app is interactive like a social intranet, easy like a messenger app and secure like a password safe. On private smartphones and on company PCs.

Employee app benefits often cited by Flip customers:

- All employees can be reached, regardless of whether they are in the office or on the front line
- High usage rate because communication is as easy as with private apps
- Targeted information via a group structure which corresponds to the structure of the company
- Employees can provide feedback in seconds via likes, reactions and surveys
- No hardware costs because the app runs securely on your private smartphone



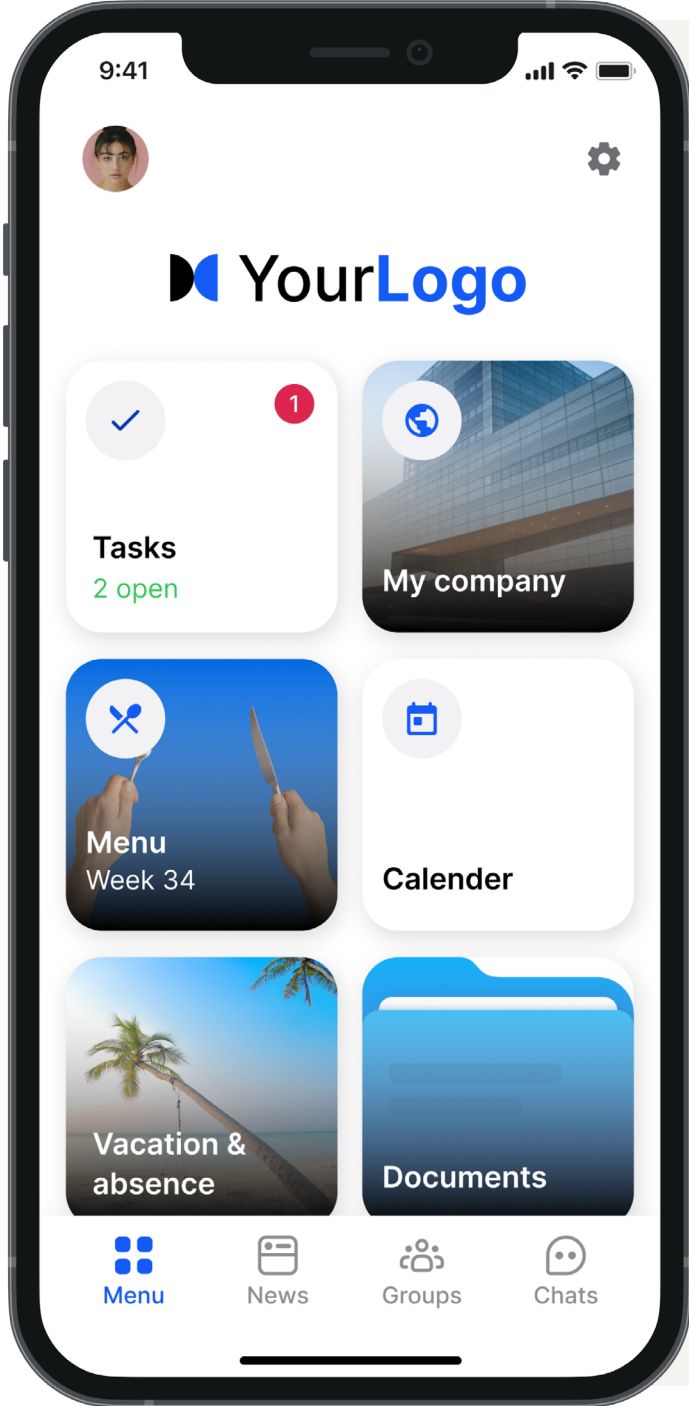
MAHLE

"The employee app from Flip is part of our toolbox for modern employee communication – especially from the viewpoint of our employees."



Wiebke Wöllner
MAHLE

Connect four: what makes the perfect employee app



Inform

Easily reach everyone – not with everything, but in a targeted way.

- Personal newsfeed
- News groups
- Live translation
- Push notifications
- File manager

Communicate

Those who share knowledge multiply it – and overcome challenges in the team.

- 1:1 chat
- Group chat
- Video conferencing
- Employee directory

Activate

Cooperation becomes participation: all employees can get involved.

- Surveys
- Likes and reactions
- Comments
- Ideas management

Organise

Integrate all of the processes that are important for deskless workers

- Shift planning
- Time recording
- Holiday requests
- Sick notes
- E-learning
- Task management

“I’m thrilled. 97% of employees are using the employee app every day”

Benedikt Paul
Managing director
EDEKA Paul

Comparison: social intranet vs. employee app

A social intranet is developed for office workers and is often squeezed into a mobile format as an app. An employee app turns the tables on this and is aligned to the needs of employees who don't have a PC: **communicating instead of configuring, features with added value instead of more functions, overview instead of overload**. The difference between a social intranet and an employee app is like the difference between 'mobile availability' and 'mobile first'. After all, for companies that have a lot of frontline workers, an intranet only becomes social when it's 100% mobile.



"We announced the rollout of the employee app on the intranet. That was the last intranet post"

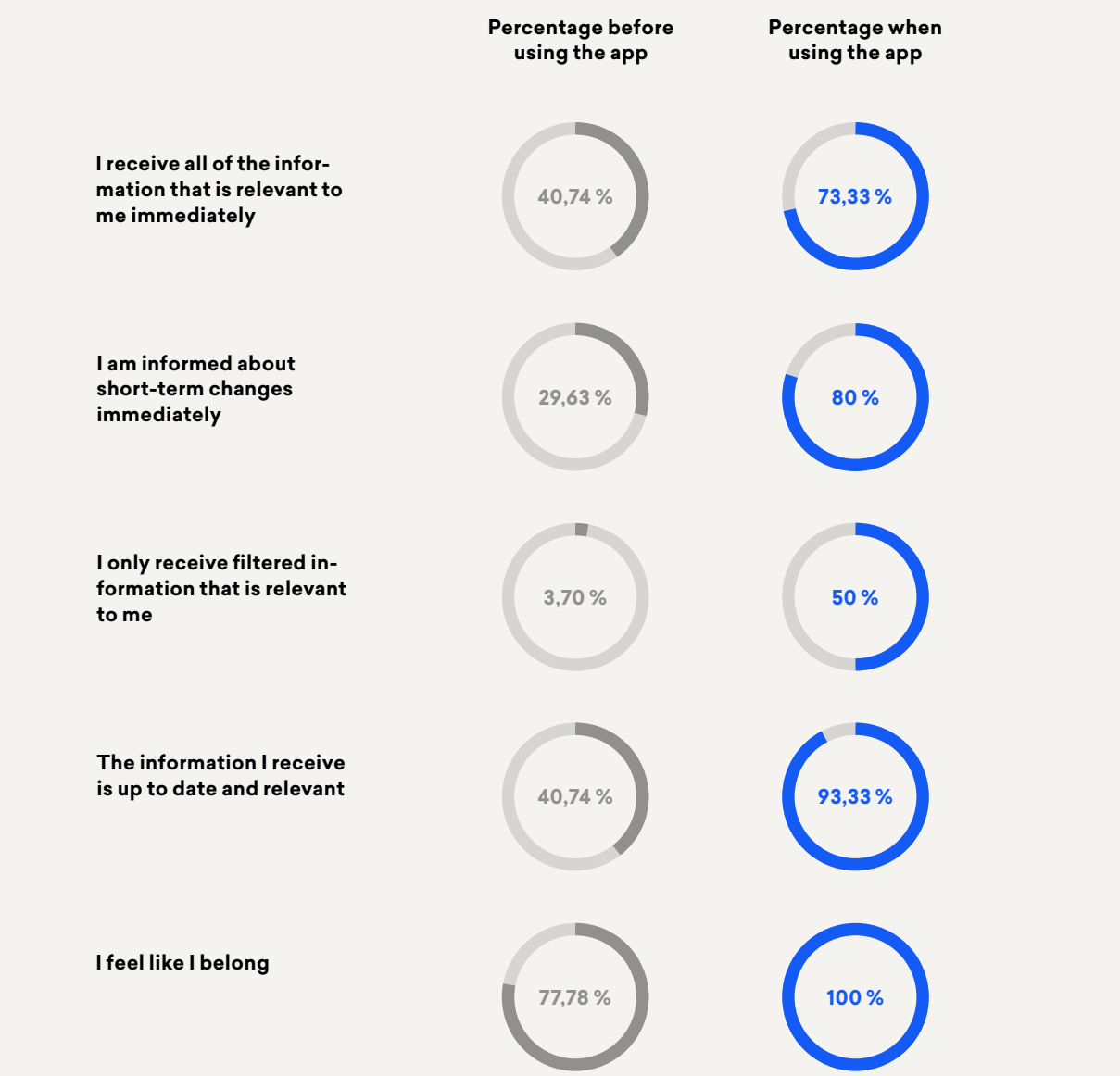


Ellen Scheibl
Elasto

	Social Intranet	Employee app
Developed for mobile use 'Mobile first': the tool offers an optimum overview, even on smartphone screens.		
Offline capability Users can access content and create messages even without a data network.		
Optimised for deskless employees It's so easy to use that everyone feels like a digital native, regardless of their affinity for IT.		
Intuitive to use: no configuration necessary Users can get started straight away and are automatically part of the groups that are important to them.		
Mobile platform for integrations The tool is suitable as a mobile all-in-one platform that is integrated into shift planning and time recording, among other things.		

How apps change internal communication

In a study conducted by the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University Stuttgart, subjects provided the following information – before and after the employee app rollout.



“There is a huge amount of transparency, from management and the various departments through to the logistics areas and individual stores.”

René Haßfeld
CEO of toom

Practical test: does an employee app help to overcome these 5 challenges?

1 Irrelevant content: who can process everything?

Does official company information actually reach employees who don't have a PC? In the absence of measurability, hope reigns in many companies. And, as we know, hope dies last. But still, it does die – as soon as you look through the lens of the workforce. This is mainly due to two frustrating factors for deskless employees: they have to constantly look to see whether there's any new information. Which there often isn't. And if there is, the information is only important for individual professional groups.

The solution is to segment information:

In an employee app, groups ensure that information only reaches those to whom it is relevant – categorised by countries, locations, professional groups, shifts, etc. A newsfeed brings together all of the news from these groups like a digital, personalised bulletin board – with the simplicity that users love about Facebook, Instagram etc., and so secure that it gets data protection specialists excited.



74 % of employees assume that they are missing out on company information.

[Source](#)

2 Workload: who should control everything?

The bulletin board acts like a black box for internal communicators. Whether and how deskless employees process the information usually remains unknown. The high workload involved is obviously a drawback. What happens if you want to communicate an urgent piece of information to your employees via a notice board, but that information needs to be in multiple languages? Often where businesses have a three-shift operation across multiple locations, this job is near impossible.

With an app for internal communication, you spare managers this workload.

Features that are particularly valued:

- In just two clicks and in real time, information reaches precisely those to whom it is relevant
- Translation into the native language happens automatically
- Posts can be planned in advance and automatically published at a selected time
- Responsibility is shared amongst numerous people at different levels of the business and is managed through permissions and a role-based process



59 % consider the biggest challenge to be information actually reaching employees.

[Source](#)

3 Employee involvement: permanently on mute

Time and time again, we hear doubts as to whether employees on the production line, in the warehouse or at the checkout actually want to get involved. In our experience, they want to, as long as they are given an easy way of doing so and can actually make a change. This is one reason why the survey function is especially popular among many Flip customers. However, daily employee involvement is even more important.

Here's an example from one Flip customer that shows how quickly feedback can pay off:

In one of our retail clients, their employees found that soap was leaking as a result of faulty packaging. One of the employees posted this issue which very quickly caught wind and a large number of employees from other stores reported the same experience. This gave the business an opportunity to relay information to their supplier and the product was taken off the shelves and replaced within a week - something the chain admitted would have taken months to solve previously.



63 % of employees feel ignored by their employer.

[Source](#)

4 Identification: working by the book instead of full commitment

When someone hands in their notice, it isn't usually because of their salary. Employees who want to hand in their notice don't feel like they're appreciated enough (76 percent), have experiences with poor internal communication (70 percent) and identify deficiencies within the corporate culture (43 percent), as compiled by consulting company Harbinger. Although an employee app doesn't solve this problem by itself, it lays the necessary foundations.

Two successes that wouldn't have been possible without the app:

- **Taking on responsibility:** wine experts from the Precht! grocery stores communicate across all stores via their own group and solve problems together. "Employees no longer just follow orders - they also take on responsibility without having to go through headquarters. This takes things to the next level," says Simon Mareth, a member of the management board.
- **Innovation management:** Europart employees have submitted 150 suggestions for improvement via the employee app over a period of 12 months.



A lack of identification costs the German economy 122 billion euros per year.

[Source](#)



5 Inefficiency: meeting marathons and floods of e-mails

The frontline workforce receives relevant information in dribs and drabs, while their colleagues in the office are drowning in a flood of e-mails. In internal communication, managers report to us that up to 80 percent of their e-mails come from internal sources. Things don't look much better when it comes to meetings - ultimately, they are indispensable when it comes to sharing important information with employees who don't have a PC or an e-mail address.

An employee app comes very close to face-to-face communication:

Information reaches those to whom it is important in a fast, direct and targeted way. Emojis, which are familiar from private messengers, compensate for the loss of facial expressions and body language. Long e-mails and meetings are a thing of the past.

Figures that confirm this effect:

- 25% less meetings due to the Flip employee app at mhplus
- 50% less e-mails at the advertising specialist elasto
- 25% less journeys between locations in the W&W Group



Employees check their e-mails 36 times an hour.

[Source](#)

Checklist: IT security & data protection

Deskless employees have long since taken the digitalisation of internal communication into their own hands: in WhatsApp groups, they discuss shift planning, talk about work and share pictures or videos relating to internal company matters. When it comes to efficiency, shadow IT easily eclipses the official, analogue communication methods. The price of this is incalculable security risks. Those who want to combine the convenience of private tools with IT and data protection standards at an enterprise level will find the right solution in an employee app – as long as it ticks the following boxes.

- ☐ Company data is saved securely in the cloud and not locally on private devices
- ☐ Hosting takes place in data centres with ISO 27001 and C5 certification
- ☐ Independent third parties regularly test platform security
- ☐ You have complete control over access rights and roles
- ☐ The transmission of data between devices and the data centre is encrypted
- ☐ The provider offers information about technical and organisational measures (TOMs) to protect the data
- ☐ All processors – the provider's partners, for example – process the data in a GDPR-compliant way
- ☐ There is a template for commissioned data processing
- ☐ The app does not access private smartphone data, such as the user's contacts
- ☐ The user ID and password are all that is required for user data
- ☐ Private contact details are not requested for registration
- ☐ No 'Always on' feature: the app stays quiet in the evenings after work and when employees are away
- ☐ Use of the app is voluntary
- ☐ No performance monitoring: messages cannot be read, nor can conclusions be drawn about working hours



“Flip makes us easy to reach and keeps us well informed. It is very user-friendly”

Christina Bäuerle
Works council member
Porsche

Inspiring content: how to reach people instead of devices

Our tips can help your employee app achieve high usage rates among your employees.

1 Outline rights and obligations in a user agreement

To create clarity for users and to eliminate employees' fears of being monitored, you should draw up a user agreement to regulate the respective rights and obligations arising from the use of the employee app. As an example, this might include a reference to app use being on a voluntary basis. A clear distinction between work and leisure can also be defined here. The user agreement should also state that no customer data or sensitive data will be disseminated via the app.

2 Smart content strategy: targeted and location-independent

As mentioned before, one of the main problems with the intranet is that content is distributed to anyone and everyone. Content cannot be distributed to target groups. An employee app does not have this limitation and you should use this to your advantage! Offer your employees appealing, relevant content that supports them in their daily work and creates added value. It is important that you aim the right content at the right target groups and include entertaining elements such as images and videos in addition to the informational content. Video content is also perfect for conveying information in a compact and emotional way. With a well thought-out content plan, you can approach this task in a structured way.

Content ideas for your employee app

- Updates from the CEO don't just create a closer bond with the company – leadership can set a good example and encourage employees to use the app.
- Internal disseminators who share interesting content like tips & tricks on specific topics ensure a higher usage rate among their colleagues in a personable way.



3 Nurture and maintain the app – avoid a ‘sink or swim’ scenario

To achieve a high usage rate, you can't leave your employees alone with the new tool. Instead, engage with everyone in the company from the very beginning. Promote and distribute the app across the company in an attention-grabbing way, encourage the active use of the app and set an example. Keep employees up to date about new features and encourage them to communicate on the new platform. After the initial hype, engagement can just as quickly drop off again. Employees have fixed contact persons who take care of the new tool based on previously defined responsibilities. This allows you to ensure that interaction within the employee app remains high. With the option to like, share and respond to posts, everyone can actively contribute to the flow of information, which creates an active feedback culture.

Promote usage rate and interaction

- Regular surveys on the use of the app, requests and suggestions or general topics not only ensure that interaction remains high, but also give you valuable feedback regarding the mood among employees.
- Prize draws and competitions are fun and motivating. This also strengthens the bond with the company. For example, how about a design competition for new company merchandise?
- App-exclusive posts, surveys, prize draws or games establish the employee app as the sole communication tool and highlight how important it is.

4 Signal proximity and accessibility

You can show your appreciation and gratitude for your employees through an employee app rollout. Help employees to feel like they are being heard and have a voice within the company. This has a positive effect on employee satisfaction and efficiency and thus on the company’s success. So let employees know that you are approachable and available to deal with any problems or requests they might have. Promote a trusting relationship in the team, and make sure this is also expressed outside the app.

 Use the employee app to bring the company closer together

- Feedback rounds via video: video conferencing can be initiated in the app at any time, giving you a powerful tool to connect with other colleagues, e.g. with deskless staff.
- Use the task management function and group chats: encourage employees to work better together by bringing the task management feature closer to them and by promoting regular exchange, e.g. in group chats.

5 Create real added value for daily work

Desk employees in particular use a wide range of software solutions and tools – often for the same area of application. Don’t give employees the impression that the employee app is just another tool that will require additional effort. It should primarily replace other tools, provide relief for employees and offer them added value in their daily workflow. How about moving holiday requests and sick notes to the app? Tasks can be easily distributed, managed and processed thanks to integrated task management tools. Employees can access a number of features all in one place, thus contributing to a high usage rate.

 Rely on the new tool

Gradually get rid of redundant tools and use the many features offered by the employee app instead. You can also digitally outsource entire processes such as holiday requests to the app. Employees are able to find all the features they need in just one tool, making processes significantly faster and ensuring that the new program is greatly appreciated.

You should ask every tool provider these 12 questions

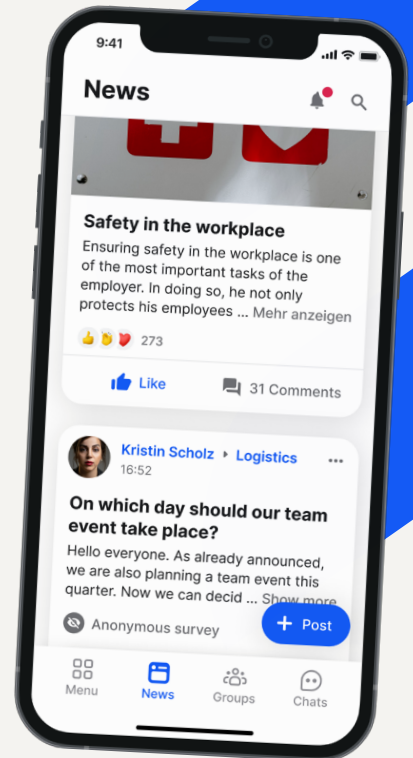
- 1 Is your tool developed together with deskless employees?
- 2 Has your tool met the strict data protection requirements and passed security checks applicable to large companies?
- 3 Is your service hosted exclusively in the EU?
- 4 Do you offer an all-in-one solution where all features are available in a single app?
- 5 Is your tool ready to use within 10 seconds – even on a private device?
- 6 What usage rates does your tool usually achieve?
- 7 Can employees use the tool without having to go through training?
- 8 Has your tool already been tried and tested in international companies?
- 9 Can the tool also be used without an Internet connection?
- 10 Is branding using our own corporate design free of charge?
- 11 Do you use a single code basis for all platforms (no matter whether Android or iOS) for faster development?
- 12 Do you offer customers a permanent customer success manager and 1:1 support?

Free potential assessment: is an employee app worth your while?

Communicating more directly and efficiently, sharing knowledge, motivating deskless employees: whether and how you can achieve these goals with an employee app depends on the industry, the size of the company, the culture and the current tool landscape.

With a free potential assessment, you can spare yourself the work that we have already done for others. We don't need a crystal ball to look into the future of internal communication, as we are helping shape the future for **toom**, **Porsche**, **EDEKA**, **MAHLE**, **McDonald's** and many more every day. We look forward to hearing about your use case – the virtual coffee's on us!

[Go to potential assessment](#)



Companies that rely on our expertise



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