

How to get started with an employee app

What you need to create the most value



What makes a good employee app

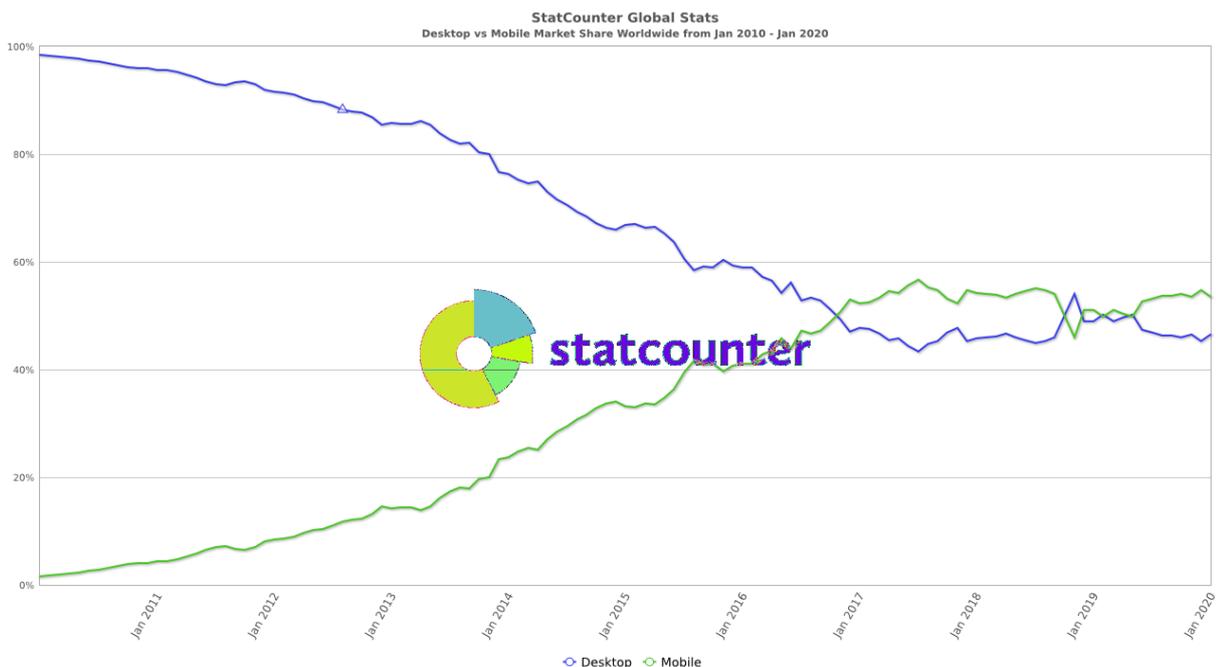
In many fields of technology, increased consolidation, personalization and mobility are trending strongly. For example, look at how ecosystems like Google and Microsoft are increasingly consolidating everything you could want and need in one place. This saves the user the trouble of having to open and switch between several applications and of having to spend the time to learn how to use many different interfaces.

88% of users reported that they saved time by having all their solutions in one place – “The Total Economic Impact of Microsoft Teams” by Forrester

In today’s digital age, we are inundated with an overflow of information and struggle to sift through too much of it that is irrelevant. As a result, we either lose valuable time or miss out on vital information that has seeped through the cracks. Personalization enables tailored information flows and increases relevance, thus saving time for users. This particularly applies to internal communications even though most of the research involves customer-facing communications.

98% of marketers think personalization can advance customer relationships and 85% believe their prospects and customers expect a personalized experience – Everage’s “2019 Trends in Personalization Survey Report”

Over the course of a decade, mobile device use has grown from next to nothing to overtake desktop as the most used form of device. At the same time, advances in cloud computing now allow users to access files, information and applications on the go. This enables people to be connected anytime and anywhere, giving them opportunities for work and convenience that they have never experienced before.



A branded employee app takes to heart these three trends in a way that is uniquely suited to the deskless force. It consolidates files, features and processes, personalizes information and communications, and makes this all accessible from a mobile device anytime and anywhere – regardless of operating system (iOS or Android) or internet connection.

A branded employee app is a powerful tool for reaching your ever-elusive deskless workforce. This guide will show you how to use it to add the most value and how to get started.

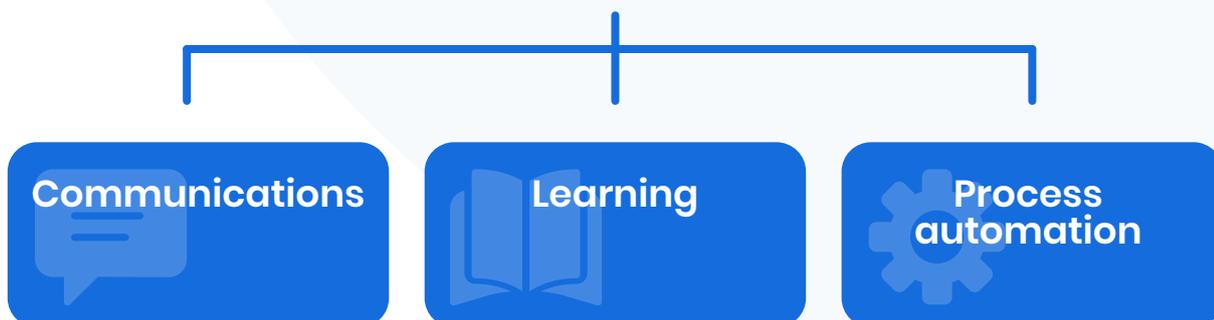
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When using a branded employee app adds value

Everything has a time and a place, and there are some situations where a collaboration tool like Slack or a group chat on a messenger like WhatsApp will do just fine. However, if you have a high percentage of deskless workers and need to centralize and tailor internal communications, provide training on the go and streamline cumbersome processes like expense approval, then a branded employee app really outshines other solutions.

Add value with an employee app for



Tying together Internal communications

An effective employee app takes the guesswork out of internal communications and helps everyone get on the same page.

An employee app empowers top management to communicate with deskless workers better and helps them find the right information at the right time. You'll know what your employees think, and they'll know what you expect of them. By bringing together all the files and employees in one place, it's easy to share documents securely within the company without having to switch between apps and mess around with emails. The app also reduces the stress of uncertainty and miscommunication caused by the old way of doing things – scattered, unorganized and irregular internal communications over intranets, emails and uncoordinated chat groups, which all fall flat when it comes to deskless workers.

Simplifying learning

Deskless employees usually require their fair share of training. After all, working in the field may require the use of heavy machinery, advanced medical devices and other complex equipment. New equipment and its inevitable updates added to the equation necessitates even more training, and there can be a myriad of certifications and regulations governing work with such equipment, posing ever new training challenges.

Employees want more mobile learning

- 5% year-on-year increase in mobile learning¹
- 94% of employees would stay at a company longer if it invested in their learning and development¹
- 64% say learning from a mobile device is essential²
- 80% see how online learning can help them further their career²
- 70% think online learning has a positive impact on job performance²

1 LinkedIn 2019 Workplace Learning Report

2 "The Consumer Learner at Work" by Laura Overton for Towards Maturity

While there are other apps for learning, the beauty of a branded mobile app is that it's easier to get your employees to use it, especially if you've already started off with internal communications through the app and your employees have already downloaded it. Then you can simply link the learning functionality to the company objectives communicated and the documents shared in the app. This feature in an employee app can make it much easier for deskless workers to learn on the go and help you stay compliant with certifications and regulations.

Streamlining processes

It's all well and good if your deskless workers can use technology to communicate and learn. But what's the use if they still must wait until they have access to a computer and/or printer to do a bunch of cumbersome administration? Why not use the same technology to lighten their administrative load and let them at their leisure knock out these repetitive tasks straight from their employee app?

For 60% of occupations, at least one third of activities can be automated – McKinsey & Company

Many processes are ripe for automation. Smartsheet's report "Automation in the Workplace" found that more than 40% of employees spend at least a quarter of their week on repetitive tasks, with nearly 70% saying the biggest opportunity for automation lies in cutting the time



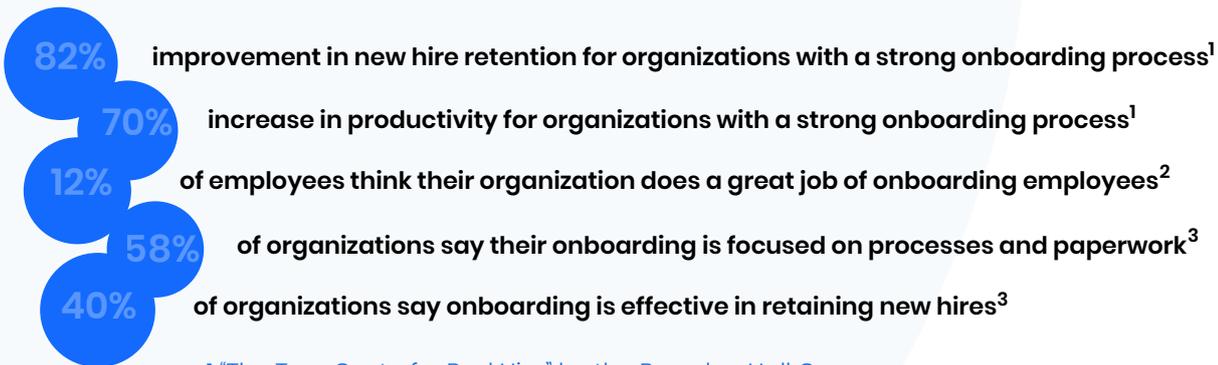
they spend on these tasks. A solid employee app can be used to customize and manage processes. For instance, PDF scan and upload features could save a lot of time for processes like expense reports.

Approvals are also a great example: read, sign and – voila! You're done – all from within the employee app. Your deskless workers will love you for this, given that 36% of the respondents of the same Smartsheet report listed approvals as one of the three biggest productivity killers, putting the automation of approvals, sign-offs and confirmation requests high on their wish list.

Case in point: Onboarding

One powerful way you can leverage the functionality in an employee app is for onboarding. Why bother with the trouble of manually going through the ropes with every single employee and making new hires complete page after page of paperwork? Industries with a high percentage of deskless employees typically have high employee turnover, which means inefficient onboarding can add up over a year. For example, Emergence Capital's website "The Rise of the Deskless Workforce" points out that, over the course of one year, supermarkets and quick service restaurants will have a 100% turnover rate.

Vast room for improvement in onboarding



1 "The True Cost of a Bad Hire" by the Brandon Hall Group

2 "State of the American Workplace Report 2017" by Gallup

3 "Bridging the Skills Gap with Workforce Development Strategies" by HCI and SkillSurvey

Onboarding has a strong bearing on retention rates and productivity, and many employees are less than impressed with their organization's onboarding program. This is where an employee app can save the day and simplify onboarding. It leverages the learning, document sharing and process automation functionalities to set up a repeatable onboarding process tailored to the needs of deskless workers.

You never get a second chance to make a first impression, so wow your employees right from the start with an outstanding onboarding experience.

Checklist for how to get started with an employee app

Now that you know when to use a branded employee app to add value, you may be tempted to just dive right in. Or you may think it sounds great but are unsure of exactly how to get started. Either way, it's important both to get it right from the start and move forward decisively without falling into analysis paralysis. Use the following 4-step checklist to strike a good balance and improve your employee app's chances for success.



Needs analysis

- What's the split between desk and non-desk workers?
- What's the purpose of your employee app? Communication, training and process automation, or all three?
- Do you have content formats in place, and how much will you rely on user-generated content (UGC)? Content types: audio, video, text and images. Make sure you take your staff's needs into consideration as well: If 90% commute to work by bike or car, audio might be more useful than video or text.



IT infrastructure and platform selection

- Do you have a BYOD policy, or does everyone have corporate smartphones? Do you have control over company data on them, and can you protect them from security threats?
- Does the workforce operate in an environment with a poor internet connection? If so, make sure the platform supports offline content.
- List all external systems (HR, CRM ERP) that should interoperate with the app.
- Make sure that your company is the owner and publisher of the app on App Store and Google Play.
- Choose a platform that leverages a hybrid app technology to achieve the best user experience and cost ratio.
- Discuss with IT if you will use a phone number or an email address (personal or corporate) for signup. From an adoption perspective, phone numbers are the hands-down best choice.



Launch and enablement

If you work for Acme Inc., which app would you be more likely to download? The "insert random software vendor here" app or the Acme Inc. app?

- Make a truly branded app – It can be found in App Store and Google Play under your name, and you own it.
- Use onboarding screens at startup that clearly and concisely explain the purpose of the app to your workforce.
- Create incentives to use the app, such as contests, and consider implementing payslip and compensation functionality in the app.
Does your staff work in shifts? Then plan for that and make sure notifications are tailored accordingly to maximize open rates and avoid annoyance.



Follow-up and improvement

- Use an analytics tool to help follow up on KPIs.
- Track adoption and usage rates immediately after launch and over time.
- Conduct recurring surveys in the app.
- Provide microtraining at regular intervals in the app to show employees what they can do with it.
- Try A/B and split testing.

Own your app and you'll have a bright future

An employee app is something you can own both literally and figuratively. Once implemented, you can do whatever you want with it. Just like when you own your own domain name, you are free to move it to another provider down the road or make changes to it without any hassle for your users at all. You are empowered to take ownership of how the app is used and make it a success. With the ability to reach your entire deskless workforce and shape a positive employee experience, you'll be in the driver's seat with the power to shift your business into high gear to create substantial value over time.

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