



Top 10 Annual Campaigns to Communicate

STRATEGIES & TEMPLATES



Top 10 Annual Communication Campaigns

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Top Ten Annual Campaigns to Communicate

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Introduction

Planning your internal communication strategy in advance is ideal. But, unfortunately, with increased expectations, workloads, and “unprecedented” things to communicate, few communications professionals have the time to get ahead. This leaves many of us always feeling like we’re playing catch up and being reactive rather than proactive. This also means that many of the culture-building or nice-to-know campaigns get missed. And the opportunity cost of not acknowledging things like Employee Appreciation Day adds up.

It is our hope that this guide helps you create a framework for these annually occurring events that you can easily add to your content calendar. We will talk about the top ten holidays and events that happen annually and share a calendar template for these campaigns. But you can use this template and guide to include holidays specific to your organization—like your company anniversary or key milestones.

And remember, you are just one person or one team. Start by choosing one or two of these campaigns to take on this year. Over time, you’ll be able to expand and incorporate more of these culture-building, values-oriented campaigns into your strategy. But start small and make sure the campaign is a success!

Building a Strong Culture Results In:

25%
growth in workforce over a three-year period

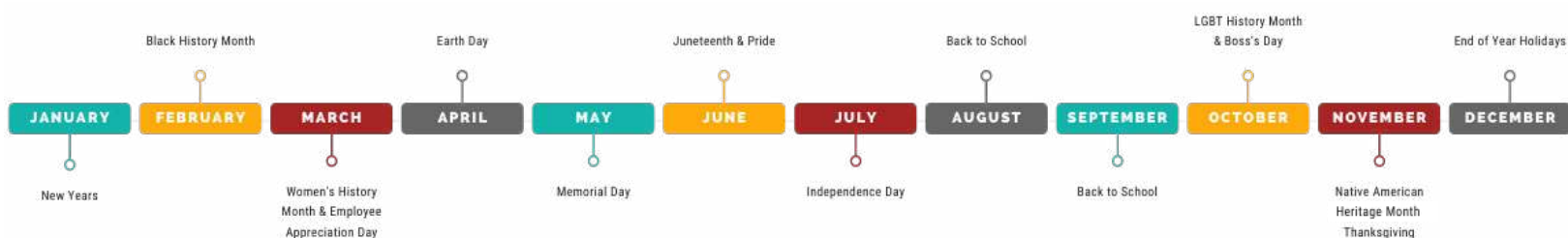
85%
net profit increase over a five-year period

138%
improvement in patronage over a five-year period

Source: Gallup

Top 10 Annual Campaigns to Communicate

Many communications professionals often want to run campaigns that promote culture, employee voice, and the organization’s values. But we don’t always know where to start or what will resonate with people. If you are able to, we recommend including questions about the campaigns you want to run in your pulse or annual engagement surveys. That said, we will provide ideas for each campaign to help inspire you.



Black History Month + Juneteenth

The Objective

If you don't already acknowledge and communicate about Black History Month, Juneteenth, or diversity, equity, and inclusion at your organization, odds are, your employees are expecting you to. This is a really great step forward for the workplace because DEI matters. It's not just the right thing to do for the people who work at your company, but it's actually the right thing to do for your business.

And every campaign you take on has to serve a purpose. If there's no objective or reason for communicating something, you shouldn't do it. But here are the facts:

Inclusive workplace cultures are...

- 2x as likely to meet or exceed financial targets
- 3x as likely to be considered high-performing
- 6x more likely to be innovative and agile
- 8x more likely to achieve better business outcomes

Source: Deloitte

Given the data, communicating about DEI initiatives or celebrating Black History Month is an important step on your journey to being a more diverse and inclusive company. NOTE: just communicating something once is not a DEI strategy. It's merely a piece of one. But we do believe that what you acknowledge, celebrate, and communicate repeatedly becomes part of your culture.

And your goals with doing a Black History Month campaign should include things like:

Opening up more accepting and authentic dialogue
Helping diverse members of your employee populace feel more connected to your organization and their peers
To create a psychologically safe environment for all employees
To amplify diverse voices across your organization

At the end of the day, this campaign is all about culture, employee wellbeing, and giving your employees—the lifeblood of your organization—a voice.

Black History Month

CONTINUED

Campaign Ideas

Employee Resource Group

If you don't already have an employee resource group (ERG) for your black employees, there's no better time to kick off this initiative. [Employee resource groups](#) are employee led groups within an organization that are completely voluntary to join. The point of ERGs is to foster a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Pro Tip: Do your research! There are so many great resources out there right now that can help you get ERGs and your DEI initiatives right. Definitely learn what the [ERG best practices](#) are and apply them to your organization.

Commit to Real Change

Instead of just celebrating Black History Month or just sharing articles about what this month is all about, make some real changes to support black employees at your company, to hire more diverse candidates, and create a culture of inclusion. Committing to different processes at your organization that are actively anti-racist will mean a lot more than a half-hearted attempt to celebrate Black History Month.

Bring in Speakers or a Workshop Facilitator

Education and empowerment are great ways to observe Black History Month. There is no shortage of [authors](#) and [activists](#) that you can find to come speak at your company. You may also consider an [unconscious bias workshop](#).

Better Allies Book Club

White people who want to be allies need to educate themselves. As communicators, you are in a unique position to help make those resources available to your employees. Here is a [great list of books](#) to get started with.

Pro Tip: We recommend starting with educating yourselves and checking out some of these amazing resources from Brilliant Ink:

- [Workplace Diversity, Anti-Racism, and Allyship Resource Center](#)
- [Say This, Not That: A DEI Style Guide to Inclusive Communications](#)

Women's History Month

The Objective

Inclusion and empowerment of women should certainly be a part of your diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. And just like with Black History Month, you want to make sure this isn't all talk. You want to create real meaningful change at your organization that gives women equal opportunities.

We think that a Women's History Month campaign should embody the spirit of the celebration, which is to highlight the contributions of women. This is a great opportunity to recognize, celebrate, and continue to empower the women at your organization. And it's great to take this a step further, especially if you aren't as diverse in this regard as you should be. Can you make it a goal to create an employee resource group for women? Or can you create a mentorship program where female leaders lift up and help other women?



MARCH IS
WOMEN'S
HISTORY MONTH

Women's History Month

CONTINUED

Campaign Ideas

Women Leaders Spotlight

This is a great month-long option that is in the spirit of what Women's History Month is all about. You can make this one spotlight a week (~4 features) or you can be more ambitious than that. But this is an opportunity to give these female leaders a voice and a chance to inspire other women at your organization.

An alternative approach to this would be to not limit it to just those in leadership positions. A great way to find some interviewees is to ask for nominations from leaders across your organization.

Format: These can be written interviews, as Q&As, first person perspectives from the leader, or a third person news article-styled piece. You can also adapt their interview/story as a video or podcast episode. No matter what, share it in a way that all your employees can see it.

Pro tip: Try to think about all elements of diversity in your campaign. Can you showcase female leaders from multiple levels of the organization? It doesn't just have to be a senior leader or member of your C-suite that makes the cut. In fact, it's better if you show some middle managers as well and sample from multiple departments.

Employee Resource Group for Women

ERGs are a great tool that you can help start at your company and then take a back seat so it's a safe space for employees to openly share. We'll mention ERGs A LOT throughout this document—many of our clients have had tremendous success when they've supported the creation of ERGs, so we highly recommend this as a tactic.

Format: These are typically in person, but with more employees working remotely and with frontline workers being so dispersed, we think you may want to consider virtual or regional chapters of your ERGs.

Pro Tip: ERGs really work when it feels like a truly safe space to share one's experience. You may want to find a champion at your company to spearhead this who is trusted and respected by their colleagues. Also remember that an ERG for women should include anyone who identifies as a woman. Though you may want to consider an ERG for LGBTQ+ employees as well (but more on that soon).

Employee Appreciation Day

The Objective

At theEMPLOYEEapp, we love Employee Appreciation Day because your people are essential to what you do and your success. In fact, companies who have formal recognition programs have **31% less voluntary turnover** and are 12 times as likely to have better business outcomes ([Quantum Workplace](#)). But despite such overwhelmingly positive outcomes, **only one third of workers in the US strongly agree that they received some form of praise or recognition in the past week** ([Gallup](#)).

With stats like that, we should be celebrating and acknowledging our employees everyday, but this annual holiday is a great reminder to do so and a chance to go big. The key objective here is fairly obvious: **to help your employees really feel valued.**

To do that, let's break down what makes employees feel appreciated and what forms they like that recognition to come in. Employee recognition programs are successful when the recognition is:

- Specific and relevant
- Timely
- Given in a variety of ways (i.e. isn't just cash rewards or a pat on the back every time)
- Connected to the bigger picture (i.e. tie the recognition to a key business outcome or your company's values)
- Given for small things, not just the big rocks

Source: [Great Place to Work](#)

And there are many forms of recognition that can be effective. We recommend a mix of these when you build your employee recognition program and plan campaigns like Employee Appreciation Day. And there are two ways to think about this: who the recognition comes from and what form the appreciation comes in.

Sources of Recognition:

- Recognition from the employee's direct manager. Note this is reported to be the most memorable form of recognition.
- Recognition from a high-level leader
- Recognition from a customer
- Peer recognition

Employee Appreciation Day

CONTINUED

Forms of Appreciation:

- Public acknowledgment (e.g. awards, shout outs on Town Halls or team meetings)
- Private recognition (e.g. a boss or peer sharing appreciation in a one to one conversation)
- Formal recognition through a performance review
- Promotions, raises, and/or entrusting an employee with additional responsibilities
- Monetary awards or prizes

Source: [Gallup](#)

Your Employee Appreciation Day campaign should keep all of this in mind. At the end of the day, you want employees to feel cared for and appreciated for their hard work, which ideally will lead to better outcomes for your business. Your campaign can be single-faceted such as a gift for all employees or it can be more complex like the CEO giving out Values Awards and managers making a point to celebrate their teams.

Campaign Ideas

Anonymous Peer Appreciation

Peer appreciation is a great, localized way to celebrate Employee Appreciation Day. Your managers will help facilitate this, so be sure to loop them in!

Format: There are so many ways to do peer appreciation well. But here's an idea that is fairly simple to pull off. Over the course of a few days (or a week) employees write anonymous notes of gratitude or appreciation for their coworkers and drop them in a box. On Employee Appreciation Day, those notes can either be handed out to the individual or read aloud. We recommend having managers write a note of appreciation for everyone on their team (if possible) so everyone receives one. If you're strapped for time, instead of collecting the notes over a few days, you can also use the shift meeting that day for everyone to write their notes and then hand them out after the fact.

Pro Tip: Don't let your employees do all the work for you! We recommend pairing this campaign idea with a message from the executive leadership team and a message from managers. But we get it. If you work at a really large company, a peer appreciation campaign can be really difficult because the teams are SO large. If that's the case, there's no reason to limit this to one single day. You can use Employee Appreciation Day as a kickoff for a year-long campaign where you share positive peer feedback about team members weekly in shift meetings. Bottom line: do what works best for your teams. You don't want your appreciation campaign to feel stressful or like more work.

Manager-Led Appreciation

Managers should be showing appreciation all year long. But if they aren't, this is a great chance to start the habit. If they already do this well, make Employee Appreciation Day a chance to say something special to the whole team. In small teams, this is a chance to publicly recognize team members.

Employee Appreciation Day

CONTINUED

Format: This really is best done face-to-face, but virtual meetings still get the job done. And we recommend sending talking points and ideas to your managers for having these conversations, keeping in mind that not all managers are great communicators. For leaders who aren't comfortable speaking, for larger teams, or for employees who aren't comfortable with public recognition, you might even consider asking your managers to write thank you notes to their employees and give them out that day.

Pro Tip: It has to come from the heart and be authentic to mean anything. Because we know that not all managers are created equal, you really shouldn't rely solely on managers showing gratitude on Employee Appreciation Day.

Values Awards

Recognition is always best when it ties to the big picture. What better way to do that than to start a Values Awards campaign. At least annually (we've had luck doing this quarterly), you'll accept nominations for employees to win an award based on living one or more of the company's values. These awards can be purely words of appreciation from the executive leadership team, but it can also come with a small raise or prize as well. Winners can be announced via a video message in your app and/or during a Town Hall that all employees are invited to.

Pro Tip: Make sure you're recognizing people from all levels of the organization. We also think it's great to scale the number of awards given based on the size of your company. If you have 50,000 employees, but only 5 values, you might want to consider awarding more than one person per value. Maybe you break it down by region, so you have five winners per region each time you do this.

Employee Gifts

A bit on the expensive side, there is always an opportunity to give all your employees a small gift. Maybe it's a new piece of company swag. Maybe it's a DoorDash gift card with a note saying "You're amazing, so lunch is on us!" The options on this one are really endless.

Format: It takes a bit of planning ahead to get this one right, but you'll likely want to ship the giveaway item to each location. Office-based workers should find their gift on their desk when they come in. Remote employees should have it shipped to their house. And frontline workers should receive the gift at the location they work at. Naturally, there can be some logistical headaches here, so consider carefully if this is the route you want to take. Since it's likely that not everyone will get their gifts at the same time, you'll need to also have a message from leadership sent on Employee Appreciation Day and heads-up messages to anyone that will have the gifts shipped to them for distribution.

Pro Tip: The message that you associate with the gift is just as important, if not more important, than the gift itself. So, don't leave that for the last minute. You should think about:

- What is your CEO going to say the day of?
- What messaging and talking points you'll give to your managers?
- What separate message, if any, do you share with managers ahead of time?
- Will you include a physical note with the gift?

Earth Day

The Objective

You might be reading this and wondering why we included Earth Day in the list of important campaigns for a communicator. But there is a purpose here.

Over the past several years, people have been more selective about where they work. They want to find companies whose values align with their own. And Edelman has found in their annual Trust Barometer that employees highly value their CEO and company taking a stand on social issues. And for many, a company's stance on things like Climate Change falls into that category.

However, like with any other campaign we recommend, we don't recommend including an Earth Day campaign if your company really hasn't taken a stance on this issue. If you don't have a formal program to decrease your carbon footprint or make an impact on sustainability, then anything you do for Earth Day won't come across as genuine or authentic. However, if you are making a concerted effort to make this part of your strategy or are already doing a great job with sustainability and environmental protection, Earth Day is a great chance to share that with your teams.

We think **the primary objective here is to educate** employees on what you are doing well with regards to the environment and get them excited about how they contribute.

Campaign Ideas

Sustainability Video

Our client ELLWOOD did a great example of an Earth Day video for their company. They recycle steel in their manufacturing process, and they realized that very few of their employees were aware of this fact. To share how they give back by recycling and reusing steel, they created a short, animated video that put the volume of recycled steel into perspective (e.g. how many Eiffel Towers worth). It was a short video, but it was a great way to acknowledge Earth Day in a way that was meaningful to their company specifically.

Pro Tip: Make it meaningful to your company and your purpose. Don't force it! If there isn't a strong message that makes sense, then we recommend trying something more like a volunteering event or fundraiser.

Philanthropic Event

If you don't currently have great stats or involvement in environmental or sustainability efforts, it's never too late to start. There are countless chances to get involved in your community and volunteer or donate to causes related to protecting the environment.

Memorial Day + Veterans Day

The Objective

While these holidays are not the same, we think that the approach can be similar. If you don't already acknowledge these days at your company, this is an important chance to provide support and empathy to those who might be directly impacted by these holidays and what they represent.

Memorial Day is a federal US holiday for mourning members of the military who died while serving. It is observed on the last Monday of May. The objective should be to provide support to those who may have lost a loved one who served in the military. This is important for employee wellbeing and mental health and should go beyond words (e.g. we suggest sharing resources for employees who might be impacted).

Veterans Day is a federal US holiday that is observed on November 11th to honor military veterans. The objective here should be exactly what the holiday is about: honoring, thanking, and celebrating any veterans who work at your organization.

Campaign Ideas

Of course, for both of these holidays, it's a great start to at least share a message internally and to express your appreciation for those who serve and their families. But you can take each of these a step further to show your people that you really care.

Memorial Day Observance

This federal holiday is about mourning, and it's likely that this is a painful day for employees who have lost loved ones who have served our country. That makes this time of year a good time to remind employees of the mental health benefits and services that you provide.

Pro Tip: If you don't currently include mental health support in your benefits, perhaps [it's time to change that](#).

Veterans Day Observance

It's always good to thank the veterans who work at your company on Veterans Day, but it's great to take it one step further. It takes a little preparation, but can you get a list of who is a veteran at your company from HR and (**with their consent**) thank them by name or even do spotlights on them?

Pro Tip: Definitely gauge what these employees are comfortable with before you do anything since Veterans Day is literally for them. If they aren't comfortable with public recognition, doing something privately is a great alternative.

LGBT History Month

The Objective

This month is an observance of LGBTQ+ history and the history of gay civil rights movements. Like with other observances, we do recommend educating yourself before participating in it. Even better, this could be an opportunity to help create an Employee Resource Group (ERG) and partner with them in how you should celebrate or acknowledge this month.

The goal of this campaign should be **inclusion and creating a culture that fosters psychological safety**.

Heads Up! LGBT History Month is different from Pride Month. Pride Month takes place in June and is when parades, events, and celebrations take place. LGBT History Month is a time for education and reflection on our progress and the work that is left to be done.

Campaign Ideas

Behind the Scenes: Review Current Policies and Protections for LGBTQ+ Staff

This one is very important because it is the best way that you can support your employees and create safer, more inclusive work environments for them. There is no reason to wait for LGBT History Month to do this, however, so don't put it off just to have this campaign land exactly in October. Meaningful policy change is MUCH more than the timing being "cute."

Speaker Series

Whether it's [webinars](#) or live [speakers](#), there are many great speakers to choose from who can speak on this topic. You can also look within your organization and see if any of your employees would be willing to share their stories and experiences. Do not force this though!

Boss's Day

The Objective

Managers have a very difficult job. And frontline managers have it harder than most because they don't always have the same level of support and training as their deskbound counterparts. Boss's Day is an opportunity to celebrate your managers.

Just like Employee Appreciation Day, we can take a lot of these ideas and make them year round initiatives, which would improve retention, morale, and performance.

Campaign Ideas

Thank You Gifts

Just like you might give gifts to employees on Employee Appreciation Day, we see Boss's Day as a chance to celebrate your mid-level and frontline managers. They have a very difficult job and often don't get the support they need. A "thank you" gift or message can go a long way. And since Boss's Day isn't widely celebrated, it will probably be a nice surprise and delight for your managers.

Pro Tip: Although the executive leadership team are bosses, we think this day really should really be about managers.

Peer Recognition

You can't force this one, but you might consider letting your employees all know that Boss's Day is coming up. Many employees will probably want to celebrate their manager on that day—and some won't. Let it happen organically.

Invest in Training

We think the big opportunity around Boss's Day is to make a point to invest in manager training. And announcing your new training program or kicking it off on Boss's Day can be a meaningful way to celebrate this holiday.

Training all managers at your company is a big undertaking, but it can be worth it:

A formalized approach to management development is worth the effort because well-trained managers can play a key role in the organization's success and future development by, for example, allowing them to do the following:

- Have a major impact on employee performance and morale
- Revitalize unmotivated employees and thereby avoid the disruption and costs of turnover
- Act as translators between levels and groups of employees and with other organizations.

Source: [SHRM](#)

Native American Heritage Month

The Objective

If you're wondering if Native American Heritage Month is something you ought to be celebrating, this is a great reminder to partner with your HR team and look at your company's demographics. Ideally, we're all hiring diverse talent and creating a culture that celebrates that diversity. But, realistically, most companies have a very long way to go.

Getting a sense of the demographics of your organization will not only help you target and craft messages better, but it will help you understand how you could be better at celebrating the diversity that you do have. And it might be a great chance to raise a red flag that your company might not be as diverse as it should be.

But the likelihood that you have people who are Native American at your organization is high. Like any holiday or month of observance that you haven't celebrated before, don't go into it blindly. Educate yourself and your leadership team on what it means and why it matters. Don't celebrate things because you think you should, really make an effort to understand and understand that many of these months of observance come with very difficult histories and feelings associated with them.

We think that you should always ask your people what they think and what they want—and this doesn't just go for Native American Heritage Month.

Campaign Ideas

Attend Events

The [Native American Heritage Month website](#) has a great collection of events that you can attend both virtually and in person. We encourage you to look at the events available and encourage attendance or to at least let your employees know about the option to attend.

Better Allies Book Club

Extend your [Book Club reading list](#) to include works written by Native Americans and about Native American history and culture.

Thanksgiving

The Objective

We're all probably guilty of sending a "Happy Thanksgiving" message that doesn't go very far beyond expressing that sentiment and sharing wishes that everyone enjoys some time off with their families. If we're lucky, we get the CEO to record a quick video saying just that. But keep in mind that many frontline workers still have to work Thanksgiving and/or Black Friday and don't get the same opportunity to spend this holiday with their friends and family. So these messages might fall flat and not feel meant for them.

We believe that since Thanksgiving is a day all about gratitude and there's so much opportunity to craft a message that is more than the staid "Happy Thanksgiving" greetings that we're used to.

The objective of these messages could include many things, but we think it's an opportunity for:

- Employee recognition
- Client appreciation
- Sharing successes from the year
- Reminding employees of what you value

Campaign Ideas

Food Drive

Hosting a food drive around Thanksgiving is a great way to involve your employees in something meaningful and giving back to the community/communities you work in. They are also common enough around Thanksgiving that you could easily find a local food drive for your frontline teams to participate in even if you are spread out across the country or span multiple countries.

Pro Tip: Don't go this alone! Create a team to help pull this off. Human resources, internal communications, and even operations could pull together to make this kind of event go smoothly.

Executive Team Video

We think it's a big miss to not send a video message to your teams this time of year telling them what you're grateful for: them. If you have employees working Black Friday, acknowledge that and thank them for keeping business going.

December Holidays

The Objective

Too often, companies only acknowledge Christmas in December. While a large number of people celebrate Christmas, it is not the only holiday that falls at the end of the calendar year. And while we understand there are some strong feelings about saying Merry Christmas vs. Happy Holidays, we believe that when communicating to a diverse group of people, your language matters. And, often, even when we say Happy Holidays, we share that message on Christmas or Christmas Eve.

We believe there is power in acknowledging the December holidays individually and not just looping them all together as “Happy Holidays.” There is no reason why you can’t schedule a message for Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa this time of year and that you can’t be understanding if an employee wants to take time off to celebrate the holidays they observe.

The objective of this is to be inclusive. And small changes in how you celebrate the holidays at your organization can add up to a big difference in how your employees feel.

Food For Thought

We think it’s important to note that this time of year, where so many holidays are celebrated, can actually be a very difficult time for some people. When everything is all merriment, it can be very difficult for these employees to feel included and want to participate in whatever festivities you plan. We suggest that separate from your celebration of holidays, that you consider sharing some mental health and support resources just in case someone needs them.

December Holidays

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Campaign Ideas

Giving Tree or Adopt a Family

What we love about doing a Giving Tree or adopting families at the holidays is that it's a great way to give back to families in need. While it does slant towards Christmas in its theme, giving back to people in your community is a worthwhile cause.

CEO Video(s)

Just like with Thanksgiving, this time of year is a chance to reflect, show appreciation, and inspire. Instead of a simple "Happy Holidays" message, talk about what you've accomplished and your goals for the new year.

Pro Tip: If you do want to celebrate each holiday that falls in December, by all means go for it! Create separate video messages that you can share on or around each holiday.

Ugly Sweater Contest

We like this one because it's an easy way for everyone to get involved, have some fun, and get to know each other better. There are many ways to accept entries, depending on the communication channels that you have at your company. At our company, we have employees post their own photos in our employee app so everyone can see them and engage in the likes and comments. But you can also have a dropbox for submissions or an email address they should be sent to. The options really are endless here for how to go about this!

Pro Tip: if you are a large organization, break this into several regional contests.

Editorial Calendar

Keeping track of everything you need to communicate is difficult. That is why an editorial calendar is an essential communication tool.

We like to break things down in two ways: the bird's eye, annual view and then also the weekly view. The monthly calendar view is great to get a sense for all the big events or milestones you have to communicate. It helps remind you of the big rocks that are coming, so you can brainstorm the campaigns for that event well in advance rather than at the last minute. This will result in better quality campaigns and should be far less stressful for you.

The weekly editorial calendar gets into the details. This is where you keep track of action items, due dates, who needs to approve the content, what channels it will go on, etc.

[Download Template](#)



About theEMPLOYEEapp

theEMPLOYEEapp was created by communications and HR professionals to address the challenges organizations face communicating with a dispersed and deskless workforce. theEMPLOYEEapp is an internal communication and engagement solution that allows workers to have fast and easy access to the information, documents, and resources they need to succeed in their work.

Our app allows you to target information to your employees when and where they need it on their smartphone, tablet, or computer, and empower leaders and frontline managers to engage and activate employees across the organization. Unlike most traditional communications channels, theEMPLOYEEapp creates a customized, branded experience for employees, encouraging your workforce to join together in a single, centralized channel.

Our Mission is to enable the effortless flow of meaningful information for organizations driven by frontline workers.

[Request a Demo](#)

