



**Ardent Health Services**

**Supporting Frontline Healthcare Teams During COVID-19**

# The Situation

## A Modern Internal Communication Tech Stack



Ardent Health Services launched theEMPLOYEEapp in 2017. They already used many traditional internal communication channels, including email, flyers and newsletters, an intranet, digital displays, team huddles, and so on. But they knew that something was missing in their comms tech stack. They needed a direct way to reach caregivers in the field.

Like most healthcare systems, a majority of Ardent's employees are deskless. Nurses, physicians, and other clinical staff spend most of their time caring for patients.

"Unless they are charting in Epic, which is our electronic health record, nurses aren't on a computer during their shifts. And it's very unlikely that they check work email when they get home. They may miss our newsletter altogether," says Amanda Armstrong, AVP of Talent Marketing.

But Amanda knew the risks of not figuring out how to connect with their frontline staff. It would mean missed messages from leadership, missed safety information, and miscommunication. It would cost the organization...and it would take a toll on the employees themselves. This reality made it easier for Amanda's team to get approval to introduce an employee app into their comms tech stack.

And when COVID-19 struck in early 2020, they were glad they did.

# The App

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Our employees don't always have time to read email, attend a town hall meeting, or read a monthly newsletter. So, we leverage theEMPLOYEEapp to share updates, resources, and encouragement.

— Amanda Armstrong, AVP of Talent Marketing

Ardent Health Services selected an app to give their frontline teams a primary communication channel that was convenient to them and accessible on and off their shifts. And since March 2020, it has been a primary method for communicating about COVID-19.

They have communicated policy changes, rising COVID-19 numbers, and safety information on a daily basis. With cases rising again in many of the communities they serve, there hasn't been a break for their teams. This has emphasized the importance of communicating about HR benefits, wellness resources, and other mental health support services that Ardent provides.

In addition to sharing the rapidly changing visitor, travel, and PPE policies, the communication team made a concerted effort to connect their caregivers with good, uplifting news using theEMPLOYEEapp:

- **Community Support.** This comms campaign highlights stories of how the community is giving back, specifically to COVID-19 patients and their caregivers.
- **Special Employee Benefits.** Throughout the pandemic, there have been opportunities for healthcare employees to benefit from additional resources, like free laundry. Ardent made it easy for their teams to find how they could take advantage of these special perks.
- **Vaccine Distribution.** Once the vaccine was available for healthcare staff, Ardent used the app to let employees know how they could access it and where they could get the shot.
- **Leadership Appreciation.** Members of senior leadership use the app to publicly recognize their teams and share their messages of appreciation.

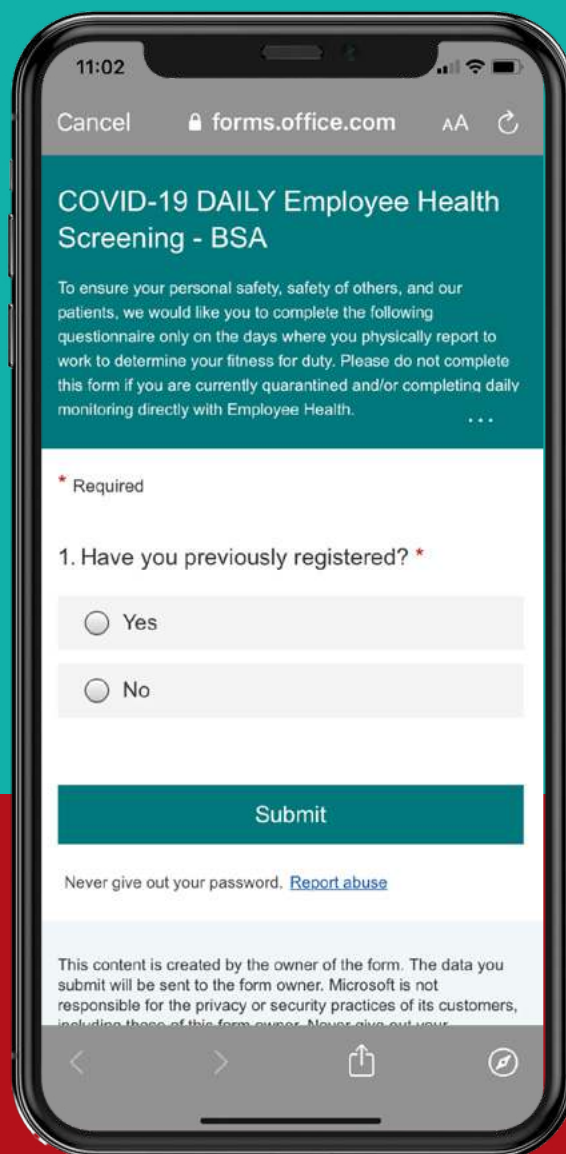
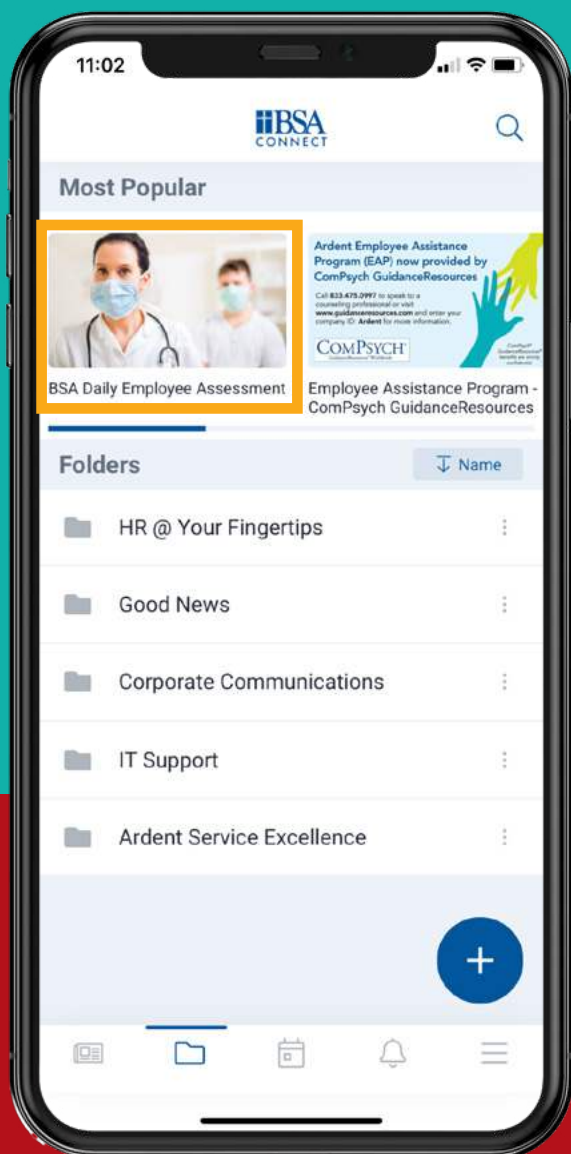
“We really came together as one company during the pandemic, and we wanted to share those stories to help our caregivers feel supported by one another. We had 83 nurses, respiratory therapists, and pharmacists take assignments at sister hospitals to help out during the first surge of COVID. Additionally, we stood up a distribution center in Amarillo out of an empty building so that we could house all that PPE and distribute it. Sharing these stories was another way we could show we were fulfilling our purpose of caring for one another,” says Amanda Armstrong.

# App Spotlight: Daily Health Checks



“theEMPLOYEEapp was more than a communication tool,” says Armstrong. “We also used it to implement daily health assessments for all employees. We were able to link employees to their online assessment tool through the rotating banner up at the top—so that would be the first thing they would see when they’d open the app. It was easy to navigate and use this daily assessment. So far, it’s been used over 40,000 times and has been established as a best practice across our markets.

— Amanda Armstrong, AVP of Talent Marketing



## Successes:

"I've looked back over the last year and a half, and the top viewed content was all about helping employees connect with resources available to them," says Armstrong.

Prior to COVID-19, the top content on the app included paystubs, cafeteria menus, information on key systems, fun contests, general news, and employee recognition. But during COVID-19, of course, information about the pandemic shot to the top of the list. As more and more employees use the app, content creation is following suit. In 2020, content production on the app increased 14% and it is already up 18% in 2021 from the previous year.

Adoption of the tool has also continued to climb. The app isn't just nice-to-have. It's a necessity. One of Ardent's markets in particular has seen exponential growth with their adoption going from 20% to 60% in just one year.

"The main driver for our adoption growth was communicating how easy it is to download the app. One thing I did was create business cards that we handed out to employees with three steps of how to download. And then just communicating what the benefits of the app are," says Cole Rommel, Digital Data Analyst.



## Company Background:

Ardent Health Services is a premier provider of healthcare services. They have thirty hospitals across six states, with over 26,000 employees. Learn more at [ardenthealth.com/](https://ardenthealth.com/).

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HEALTH SERVICES

Interested in learning more about how theEMPLOYEEapp can help strengthen communications at your organization? Schedule an online demo today.

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