



The Evolving Employee Communications Landscape

Are You Ready for Changing Workplace Communications?

In today's world, communicating in the workplace is more challenging than ever. The sheer number of ways to connect and interact with others continues to expand, and that means critical communications from employers can get lost in the shuffle. On top of that, Kollektive research shows that approximately half of U.S. workers are dissatisfied with the way their senior management communicates with them. Statistically, that means half of your employees are unhappy with how you share information--a clear demand for a better approach.

From that collection of challenges, a new breed of vendors has arisen to support the communication needs of the workforce. While communications have always been a need for large employers to coordinate information and share resources, this demand is also making its way downstream to smaller employers as well. Instead of relying on a newsletter or bulletin board to reach their employees, companies are turning to purpose-built systems and applications that promise to cut through the noise and create greater engagement with messaging. Usage is common upstream as well, obviously, with companies supporting tens of thousands of workers looking for ways to improve their communications with smarter tools and technology.

This report is our first deep dive into these types of technologies, and we'd love to hear from you about how you are using this as a resource to help explore options, make decisions, and improve communications within your own organization.

Communicate well,

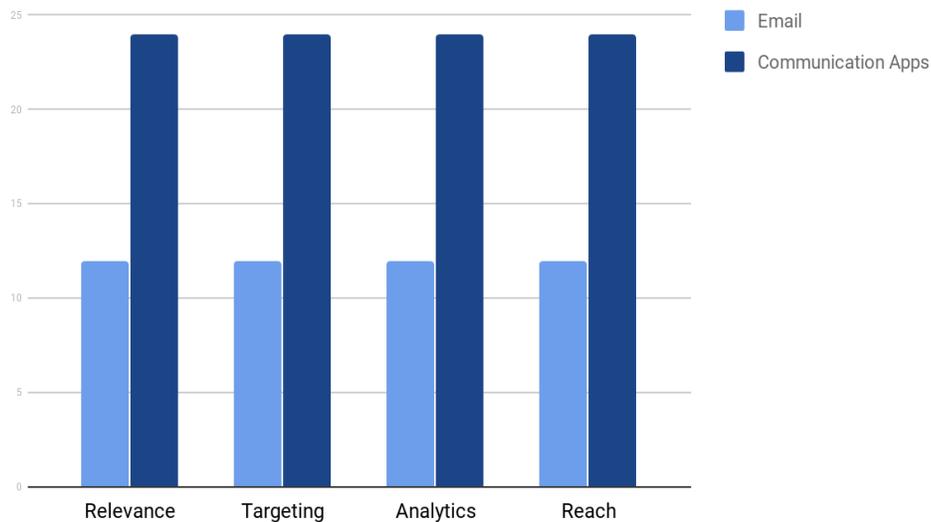


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Communication on a Spectrum: Email Isn't the Answer

Communications at work happen on a spectrum, but the thing we know is that top-down communications can't rely solely on email as the distribution channel. As the graphic below shows, email's value proposition for corporate communications is inferior when it comes to relevance (right message), targeting (right audience), reach (right time/place), and analytics. Email simply can't match purpose-built technologies for getting the right information to the right people at the right time. The graphic below, offered for illustrative purposes, shows how much more value communication apps can offer.

Value Proposition of Dedicated Communications Platforms



Perhaps most importantly, these systems often include measurement tools to support the analysis of messaging performance. For instance:

- Do you even know if your company's last communication was read?
- If so, what percent of the employee population read it?
- What percentage took action on the information?

Put simply, the number of capabilities is impressive. This isn't "just another communications channel," as some might think. These systems are designed with mobile in mind (or mobile first, in some cases), creating opportunities to interact with employees across the organization. And for those deskless workers that are often forgotten or pushed to the side in terms of technology resourcing, these systems offer a valuable, yet affordable, mechanism for creating better connections.

Define: Deskless Workers

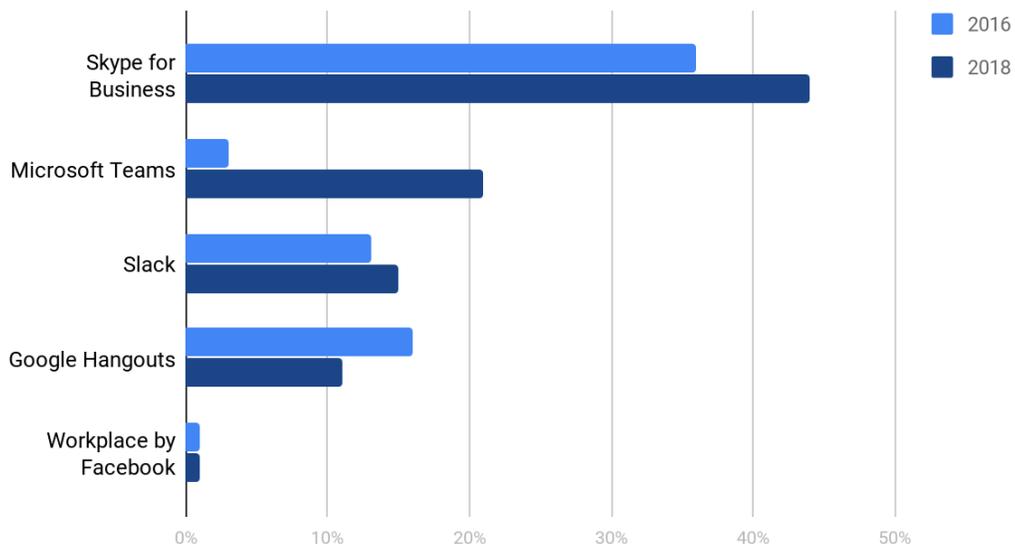
Deskless workers are often found in professions and industries where employees are naturally more mobile in the performance of their duties. For example, retail, healthcare, and hospitality are all industries with considerable populations of non-desk workers. The key differentiator is that these workers often do not have computers, and sometimes they don't even have company email addresses to receive information. There has to be a better way to communicate with this significant population of the workforce.

Beyond taking a deep dive into the trends in employee communications, this report will offer a series of profiles highlighting some of the key providers in the industry as well as key strengths of each system. Because we are an independent firm we do not recommend the “best” application, so each will be framed by specific differentiators to help you determine which might be best fit for your needs.

What This List Is Not

There are amazing technologies being delivered today to help workers collaborate. According to a recent report, the ranked list of popular chat applications to support workplace collaboration for office workers include Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams, Slack, Google Hangouts, and lastly, Facebook Workplace. See chart for additional details on adoption of these types of tools.

Adoption of Enterprise Collaboration Tools (Source: Spiceworks)



To be fair, these applications are used by tens of thousands of companies to solve their internal peer-to-peer collaboration needs, but these firms are not the focus of this report. These tools may not **require** a worker to be physically at a desk, but when you look at the industries where adoption is highest, those tend to have higher populations of desk workers (technology, financial services, etc.)

In addition, one of the biggest differences is that the vendors featured in this report are approaching employee communications from a top-down perspective. While some of them have specific features for peer-to-peer collaboration, you'll quickly see that they go beyond the simple chat functionality you can expect from the applications listed above.

Buyer's Guide

The three criteria we looked at when examining systems were fairly simple. The tools needed to be able to:

- **Create communications:** develop messages within the system
- **Send communications:** deliver information to various audiences
- **Measure communications:** determine the reach, impact, and activity of messages

If you're looking for technology to support this, there are several options in the market. Additionally, the following checklist is offered as a basic outline of components you might consider asking questions about when evaluating a communications technology provider:

- Does it have a mobile or app-based interface?
- What platforms is it available for? (iOS, Android, Windows, etc.)
- What capabilities does it have around analytics and measurement?
- What options, if any, are available to support content development?
- Are there tools to support campaign management?
- How can audiences be segmented to reach the right group with the right message?
- Are there any key partnerships or third-party integrations worth noting?
- Is the system secure, allowing access only for authorized users?
- Are there options for single sign on or Active Directory integration for ease of use?

While not an exhaustive list, it offers a good starting point for finding the right solution for your business within the broader technology selection process.

Conclusion

It is our hope that you walk away from this report not only better informed about the types of technology available, but also the value that they can bring to your ongoing communication needs as an organization. Regardless of your industry, size, and mission, communications are the lifeblood of how the business operates.

It's no longer enough to hope that a "send to all" email is going to communicate the right information effectively. Communications is a strategic enabler that enables employers to serve customers, support employees, and deliver value every day.

Profile: Guidespark

Founded: 2008

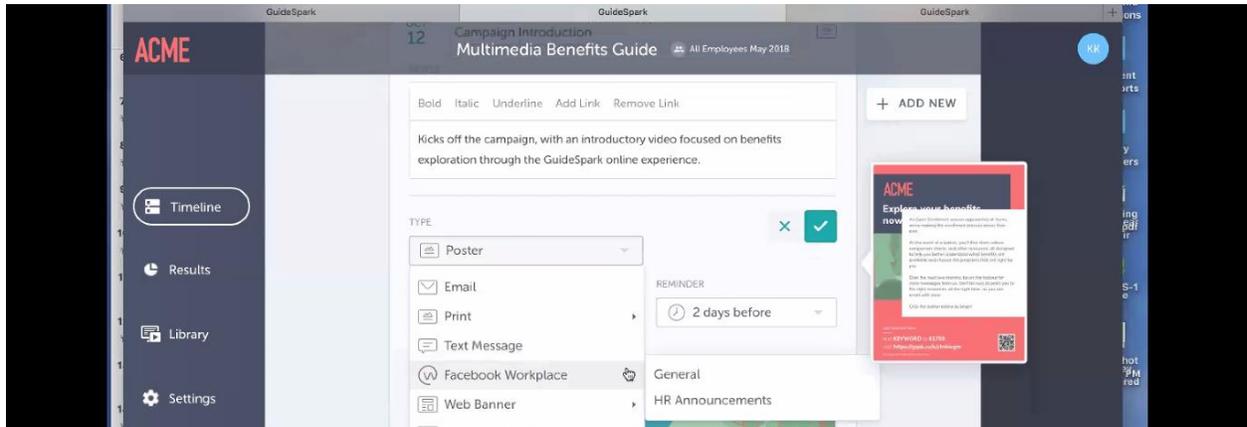
Key Customers: Adobe, Salesforce, eBay, Corning

Website: <https://www.guidespark.com/>

Tagline: “Create great employee experiences”



Product Screenshot:



Analyst Notes:

I have met with the GuideSpark team several times over the years, and I always walk away feeling like they are improving the professional capabilities of HR and communication leaders with their work. They have an impressive customer list of enterprise firms, and it's apparent why when you dig into the features. The core of Guidespark is Communicate Cloud, a top-down communication solution which enables employers to plan, create, distribute, and measure the reach and impact of employee communications.

The screenshot above is pulled from the Communicate Cloud Campaign tool, which allows users to create a wide variety of employee communication campaigns from stock campaign templates and a variety of media, including everything ranging from simple SMS text messages to high-resolution posters with a few clicks. This is powerful for administrators because they have limited time to create and share these resources, but it's also powerful for their audiences, because they can receive the communications in the channels that matter most to them. Users can easily swap from the message to the web experience and don't have to download anything in order to receive this information, which can sometimes be a barrier to adoption.

The dashboard also shows metrics at a quick glance so administrators can tell if their messages were on point by examining how many engaged with important communications. In short, it's a proven system and a great team behind it. Pricing is per employee, per year for the core system. Additional content experiences and employee journeys are available at tiered rates for firms that want off-the-shelf content for plug and play.



About GuideSpark

To be successful in today's dynamic and ultra-competitive business environment, organizations must be able to efficiently implement new strategies and processes, and employees must be engaged. Engaged employees are more productive and are drivers of change. Effective employee communications is critical to changing behavior and having an engaged workforce.

GuideSpark is the leader in employee communications. GuideSpark Communicate Cloud and Communicate Journeys connect employees to critical initiatives, driving productivity and ROI, particularly during times of business and cultural change. The GuideSpark Communicate Cloud software platform enables communication journeys - experiences and campaigns that engage and inspire employees and lead directly to action and results. It leverages data to drive continuous improvement and personalization across diverse audiences. GuideSpark brings experience from helping more than 1,000 US enterprises create ROI from employee communications.

GuideSpark Communicate Cloud software, Communicate Journeys, and services enable organizations to drive engagement around strategic initiatives and important programs. GuideSpark software provides campaign design and delivery capabilities to orchestrate communications and effectively reach employees and capture their attention. This includes tools to define audience segments, personalize messages, structure communications for delivery over time, and deliver messages across multiple channels. The content experience engages employees by presenting videos, graphics, and documents, in a consumer-like interface that makes it easy to get the information that is most relevant to them. Analytics capabilities measure engagement with campaign messages, content, and embedded calls to action, so you know what's working and what's important to employees.

About Lighthouse Research

[Lighthouse Research & Advisory](#) is a modern, independent analyst firm dedicated to setting the standard for excellence in talent, learning, and HR with practical research and a hands-on approach. By providing compelling research and actionable insights, our team enables HR, learning, and talent leaders to deliver more value to the business. Our research examines competitive practices, cutting-edge technologies, and innovative strategies.

Ben Eubanks is the Principal Analyst at Lighthouse, providing insights for today's talent leaders and vendor partners. His book, [Artificial Intelligence for HR](#), was published in 2018. This was the first piece of in-depth research on the topic published anywhere in the world and helped to solidify Lighthouse as a leading analyst firm.

Prior to joining Lighthouse, Ben worked as a researcher, writer, and speaker for nearly more than 10 years, focusing on learning, talent acquisition, and talent management. During his tenure as a researcher, he has published more than 1,000 reports, case studies, and articles in addition to providing advisory services to executives from some of the largest and most respected organizations in the world.



He also has hands-on experience working as an HR executive, leading both strategic and tactical talent practices and giving his research a distinctly practical perspective. Ben has interviewed business leaders from notable organizations such as Southwest Airlines, H&R Block, and AlliedUniversal in his role as the host of [We're Only Human](#), a podcast focused on the intersection of people, technology, and the workplace. In addition, he founded and operates [upstartHR.com](#), a community serving HR leaders that has reached more than one million readers since its inception.