

Understand the digital  
needs of your frontline  
workers

# Foreword

How can you communicate effectively with your frontline staff? **With 80% of the global workforce at the frontline,** they are the crucial connection with customers, the majority of the workforce, and can be oh-so challenging to reach and engage with.

At Open Communication Group we run field research to **look through the eyes of frontline employees to discover how to reach and communicate with them,** taking advantage of technology and streamlining operational efficiency.

Andreas Ringsted  
Chief Solutions Officer, Open Communication Group



# About Open

## Strategy meets Creative

We combine strategic and creative expertise to create engaging and effective communication.

- Leading global employee communications agency
- Founded in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2003
- Physical presence in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the US
- A multi-cultural team of 40+ specialists
- Working with global organisations across industries
- Strong focus on change and transformation



Strategy  
& Insights



Creative  
& Design



Digital  
& Virtual



Video  
& Animation



# Who are the frontline staff?

Top 8 deskless industries are agriculture, education, healthcare, retail, hospitality, manufacturing, transportation and construction

The frontline workers are often disconnected from the digital experience

Many frontline workers have tight shifts and work in environments that do not favor digital connectivity

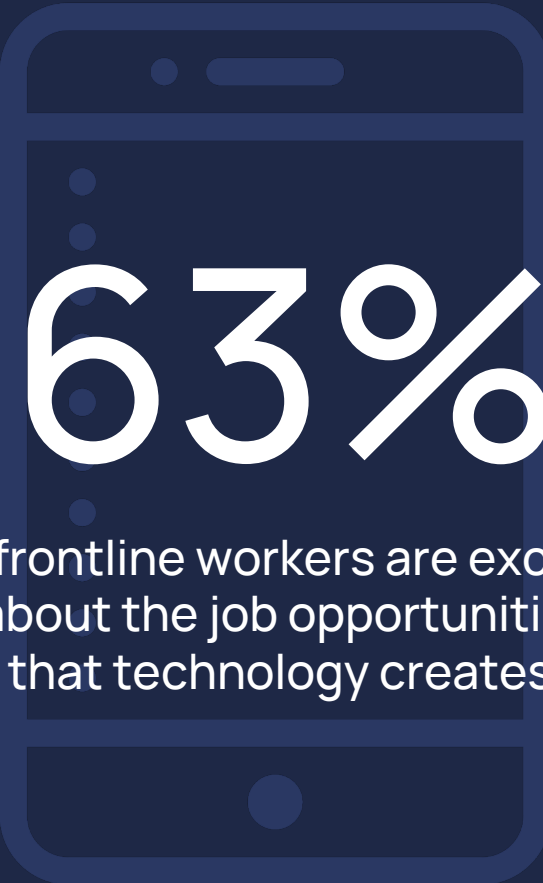


Gartner estimates that there are 2.7 billion frontline workers globally. Microsoft puts that figure at 2 billion – that's still a lot!



# Opportunity to improve frontline workers' digital experience

Research in a recent Microsoft report technology can help unlock a new future for frontline workers shows there is a hunger for new technology that can help them do their job better



of frontline workers are excited about the job opportunities that technology creates.



# The pitfall of digital enablement

Frontline staff do not always understand digital tools or how specific communication channels work.

Our experience and research shows that there's an extra need for adoption strategies. Promotion needs to be engaging, and training need to be tailored, and practical. We can support you with this.



55%

of frontline workers say they've had to learn new tech on the fly, with no formal training or practice (Microsoft 2022).



# Why you should optimize your digital experience

If you're relying on a manager to make sure all your company info and culture is getting through, then you've got plenty of weak links!

A frontline digital transformation can have a positive impact on several factors such as:

- Operational efficiency, productivity and time-saving
- Communication and information flows
- Organizational culture and sense of belonging



63% of all frontline workers say messages from leadership don't make it to them and 32% of frontline workers feel their voice is not being heard when communicating workplace issues (Microsoft 2022).



# Field studies help you understand your audience

A field study bridges the gap between assumption and data.

There're a lot of assumptions about how people work, what processes they follow and the best way to do things.

Going to the employee or manager, asking questions and observing their work can either confirm or de-bunk most of these and provide valuable insights to ensure informed decision-making that benefits both the employees and the organization.





# What we usually find...

1

No clear direction for daily information, communication and work processes

Causes confusion, errors, and inefficiencies, negatively impacting employee productivity and well-being.

2

Systems that are in place do not create a seamless work experience

Poor system integration results in inefficient workflows, errors, and delays, which can lead to decreased productivity and frustration.

3

Too many analogue and locally developed processes

This complexity can lead to inefficiencies, errors, and difficulties in scaling and standardization.

# This is how we do it...



- We try to establish relationship with employees through "Walk-and-talk" sessions.
  - We perform on-the-job observations to gain insight into employees' daily activities.
  - We conduct qualitative interviews that offer the opportunity for in-depth questioning and answering, potentially based on observations.
- The questionnaire contains questions regarding digital and analogue use and own perception of time spent
  - Questions for people managers is more focused on daily information needs, etc.
- The field study is complemented by an analysis of relevant internal data to provide comprehensive support.
  - Drawing upon the findings of the field study and quantitative analysis, we deliver a recommended solution that caters to the needs of both the organization and its employees.

# The 7 steps in our field studies

We truly listen to the employees about how they work and what they need.

We always partner with human resources, IT and internal communication teams within the organization to get the best results.

Assessments take 1 to 3 months depending on the availability of the frontline staff and how complex the situation is.

1. Assess risk & define value
2. Map existing communication channels and digital tools
3. Broaden understanding through qualitative, unstructured interviews
4. Observe wherever you can
5. Analyse and map the data
6. Make and shape recommendations
7. Create a roadmap



We've found that all 7 steps are necessary to get robust results that add value to both the customer and employee experience.



# Example of field study findings

At one high profile European supermarket chain, each of the stores were run independently at a store level. The frontline staff were the cashiers, shelf stockers and specialists in the bakery or dairy sections.

- Because they didn't have access to the right digital tools and corporate communication channels, there were huge challenges, and unnecessary time was wasted doing daily tasks such as employee shift planning.
- Communication and information flow was ad-hoc and siloed.
- Culture and knowledge sharing between stores was almost non-existent.

Based on data and input from employees we were able to recommend a one-stop-shop digital solution that would:

1. Save up to 30 minutes a day for each employee
2. Reduce platforms from 10 different local solutions to 1 global
3. Enable a one-company culture, uniting over a 1000 stores





# Conclusion

The greatest part of the global workforce is our frontline employees, who play a huge value role in most workplaces with direct revenue generation and customer interaction.

They are the least directly connected to corporate digital communication and organizational networks.

Frontline workers look for digital tools that can support them in their daily work, making it easier and more efficient to do their job. It's essential to understand their work processes in order to create the right digital employee experience for them.

Contact [Open Communication Group](#) to find out more.

