

Mobile-First Learning and Communications For Engagement and Results

Early in 2015, Vodafone UK introduced a mobile platform to radically change their approach to both learning and internal communications across their Retail estate. The result had a direct impact on business.

The ambition was to change the way frontline employees learned and received content, whilst ensuring that the delivery was cutting edge, operational efficient, engaging and drove bottom line business results.

Fast forward nearly two years, and the results are startling. Vodafone now sees a direct correlation between the platform engagement and business results – on commercial, customer, operational and employee engagement metrics.



Challenges and goals

Prior to introducing the new approach, the core challenges that frontline retail staff faced were:

- 1. Inefficient learning:** a classroom-first learning strategy meant that all learning had to be conducted away from customers and staff. The result was learning always cost large sums of money and caused operational strain on the business because of the need to backfill staff and ensure customer demands were met.
- 2. Ineffective communications:** email through the management estate was the only form of delivering a message. Reliance on a store manager cascade led to a very inconsistent delivery method with minimal innovation in the distribution method.
- 3. Stores working in silo:** frontline content is often the best, however, it was also “ring-fenced” to the store that employees worked within. There was a need to offer a simple and effective way to extract this knowledge from a store and broadcast it to the wider estate.
- 4. Consistent conversations and coaching:** customer experience is at the heart of the Vodafone strategy. To manage this in store required regular coaching conversations to ensure that advisers were delivering the best customer experience possible and focusing on the most relevant commercial priorities.

In addition to the business challenges, there were many environmental considerations that needed to be addressed to allow for a successful implementation of a mobile platform.

- ▶ **Estate:** Vodafone’s retail estate consisted of around 4,000 employees based in over 500 stores across the UK, including many key time workers. These were grouped into 30 regions with each

- ▶ Give **real-time analytics** to the HQ administrator to measure the success of any piece of content being delivered through the platform.

How Vodafone transformed learning

A combination of elements was key to the successful implementation of the platform to the entire retail estate:

Structured blended learning programmes: making the classroom count is key

Classroom training was redesigned to be a blend of structured bite-size learning objects contained in formalised topics and learning plans. These were delivered directly to the retail colleague on their mobile device. This enabled a reduction in the number of training days to deliver retail learning programmes.

The bite-sized design of the learning was key to providing a flexible approach, as it could be consumed by the learner on their app at opportune moments in and around the busy store environment, both before and after the classroom session. Progress and learning assessment results were tracked to ensure the successful completions of the programme.

Several different video techniques were used to create programme content, including story-based animations to engage and contextualise the learning, along with live best-practice scenarios with deconstructed explanations of the techniques. These were supplemented with mobile compatible quick guides and mini interactive workbooks.

Training content was then kept alive by our internal communications framework.

Internal communications have forever changed

The reliance on store managers to print each document and place it on a notice board was removed. More importantly the platform allowed Vodafone to communicate messages to all employees instantly, meaning a removal of an inconsistent cascade approach. This meant managers could spend more time briefing the teams on behaviours and “the why” as opposed to just printing and reading the “what”.

Before the platform was implemented only text and office-based documents could be utilised. Now rich video content is delivered on a regular basis to enhance existing material, brief key messages from our leadership community and explain complex tasks and systems through our experts in the business.

Core messages are pushed to the end user and a regular drumbeat of communications is delivered on a weekly basis to keep users coming back for more knowledge.

A back catalogue of all content is available through the “Comms Vault” and all content is available on both the web and mobile apps for accessibility.

Performance improvement through observational assessment & coaching

An observation assessment tool was used within the app by the store manager to identify the strengths and weaknesses of advisors when applying the new sales methodology. This enabled the manager to provide the advisor with analysis and feedback on the customer conversation, providing the ‘how’ to go along with the ‘what’.

The data collated from the observation provided valuable management information for use at an individual, store, regional and estate wide level to provide targeted skill gap interventions through the platform.

Social learning, collaboration and recognition: no more “siloes” stores

To share the knowledge and expertise of talented individuals outside of their own store and across their region, Vodafone used the inherent features of the app to enable social learning, collaboration and communication.

Vodafone know that the best content is generated from the frontline and as such the frontline employees are the face of the weekly internal briefings. Rather than head office delivering the message for retail, the internal communications team work with the most successful stores to deliver a message that is broadcast to the whole estate.

Locally, within a regional community, the retail experts post the best practice hints, tips and briefs which are interacted with socially within their region. Head office broadcast the best messages so the cream always rises to the top.

Both national and local leaders now broadcast their weekly and monthly updates with video briefs that combine essential information mixed with good humour and their personality to drive engaging, consistent material for the end user.

Experts post best practice hints, tips and briefs which are interacted with socially within their region

Rich analytics: know what is working well

Vodafone can now understand the success of a piece of content when pushed to the retail estate. This now shapes the future delivery of training and communications initiatives – they know what content works for which audience.

Governance: working smarter with no extra headcount

The internal governance structure now spans across three different departments within the platform: L&D, internal communications and quality assurance. This virtual governance team meets on a weekly basis to review what’s coming up that week and to ensure they have a structured roadmap of content delivery for the weeks and months ahead. Decisions within this forum include strategy, roadmap, priorities, infrastructure, process, budget, benchmarking, best practice.

The Results

Over the course of a two-year venture with Fuse, both engagement and business benefits continue to increase for Vodafone. Employees now have access to all the tools they need to deliver against their objectives in the palm of their hand.

Employees can now digest training and communications when and how they want to. It is mobile-first, content rich, operationally slick and highly engaging to the end user. This has, without question, been a game changer for the retail arm of the UK business and is now being adopted by contact centre employees across the globe.

**95% of advisers
are active on
the platform**

The platform has allowed Vodafone to deliver content in a blended approach where internal communications directly complement and reinforce the training story.

Engagement

- ▶ Over **95% of advisers** are active on the platform and view content over 30 times in a month
- ▶ An average of **4,000** content views per day.
- ▶ Around **30%** of platform usage is conducted outside of core work hours
- ▶ **80%** of usage is on a personal device with zero resistance from the workforce

Employee Survey Results

- ▶ **9 out of 10** users would recommend the learning platform to a colleague
- ▶ **88%** of users said the platform has helped them apply learning to their role
- ▶ **90%** of users find content relevant and engaging

Business performance

- ▶ Individual **tNPS** is 14% higher for employees who engage with the platform
- ▶ Individual **revenue generation** is 13% higher for engaged employees
- ▶ New starter **customer performance** is 74% higher for engaged employees
- ▶ 6% increase in **customer lifetime value** since training initiatives were delivered via the platform
- ▶ Prediction of **colleague attrition** on the back of disengagement with the platform

Operational cost savings

Introducing a mobile-first solution has seen a huge reduction in classroom training sessions and enables advisors to spend more time with customers. Post-training events are subsequently embedded through internal communications via the platform to create a truly blended content

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solution and **reduced training delivery costs by 56%**.

Examples include:

- ▶ **Service programme:** reduced from 3 days to 1
- ▶ **Onboarding:** flipped and reduced by a day
- ▶ **Product proposition:** blended communications and training delivery
- ▶ **Paper costs:** a digital-first platform has reduced the need for paper and printing

Now every “training” event that needs to be delivered is managed through a blended solution. Vodafone knows it works for both employee engagement, operational efficiencies’ and business results. More importantly, it enables advisors to spend more time with customers.

Quotes from UK Retail employees

*“The word transformative is used far too often in modern business, but in this case, it’s wholly accurate.” – **Head of Retail***

*“The platform has been transformational. Whether it’s a motivational message from the management team, training with live video demonstrations, best practice shares or just a quick ‘have you tried this’? Simple, effective and adds huge value.” – **Divisional Manager***

*“The platform allows me to learn when I want to (on the bus), it gives me up-to-date information and because it’s on my phone, I know I can carry around all the information I am likely to need and access it quickly.” – **Advisor***

Tips for developing a digital-first learning strategy

1. **Solve business needs:** What will digital-first solve? Identify how the outcome will help your business achieve its objectives and goals.
2. **Leverage internal expertise:** Who do you need to involve and what are their roles? Involving internal experts can help you develop the right platform.
3. **Place learning at the heart of communication:** A learning platform tied directly into how the organisation communicates can enable a strong sense of community.
4. **Communicate success:** Develop a strategy for how you are going to communicate back to the business. What stories do you need to capture to maintain engagement with both learners and stakeholders?
5. **Enable managers to connect with their staff:** Having managers on the ground identify useful content for their employees can provide insights back to the L&D team if captured through a platform that records these actions.
6. **Establish clear governance** to maintain consistency and quality of content.