



EBOOK

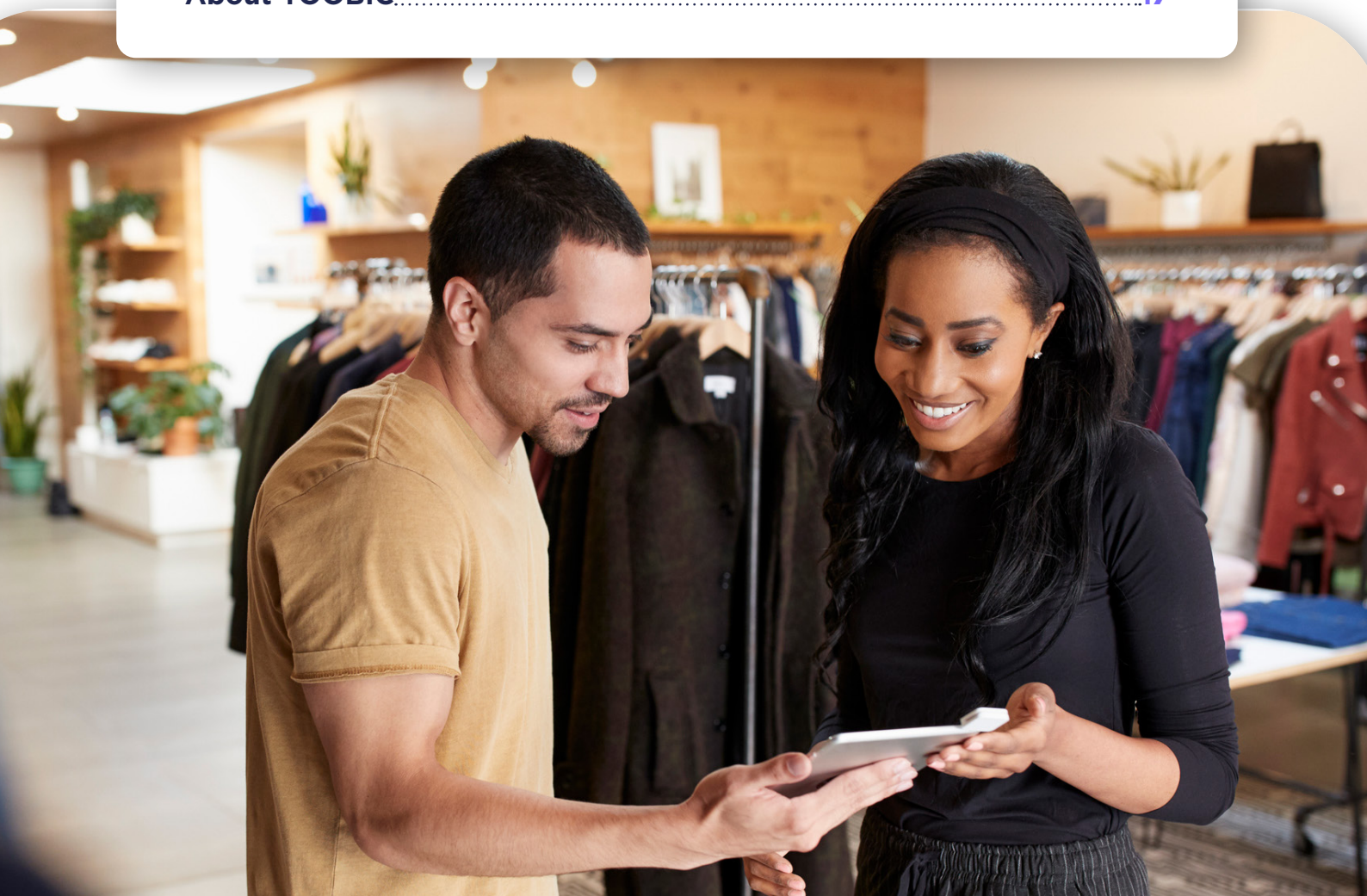
THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE RETAIL STORE COMMUNICATIONS

YOOBIC

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Good communication is the secret to any successful collaborative community, be it a social group, a sports team or in the workplace.

Yet ineffective company communication causes workplace anxiety [for 80% of US employees](#).

In the world of retail, without clear lines of communication between HQ and stores, it's impossible to be proactive in responding to problems. Weak store communications mean that shoppers should expect disorganized product displays, inefficient processes and frantic store associates.

So where is it going wrong?



This guide will explain exactly:

- How good store communications contribute to success.
- Common store communication pitfalls retailers encounter.
- How to fix them.

1. What are store communications?

Store communications connect a retail business. Put simply, they are the sharing of information between all store associates and office employees working for one retail company.

They can function like a spider's web: an invisible thread connecting the CEO to the delivery driver to the employee serving customers at the checkout. Strong, agile, and sensitive to the slightest turbulence. Store communications translate HQ's vision for stores into a physical reality. The vision may be perfect, but if it isn't communicated correctly it's impossible to bring it to life.

They can also function like a cheap announcement system in an airplane cabin. A nasally, incomprehensible growl that causes mass confusion and irritation until most people start to ignore it. When this happens, important updates like company news, process guides and policy changes get lost in transmission.

A sturdy yet dynamic web of store communications is crucial in the unpredictable retail market of 2021 and anything less can be fatal for a business.

Store communications include:

- Company updates
- Industry news
- Success stories
- New initiatives and campaigns
- Social events



2. Why are effective store communications critical for success?

Store communications should align with a brand's values and ensure that all employees are empowered and working towards a brand's mission every day.

When store communications work well, teams are engaged, reactive and have the tools to provide a better, more consistent experience for customers. Imagine an olympic rowing team: good communication allows the coach (in this case HQ) to direct all the rowers to paddle at the same time in the right direction.

Good store communication allows:

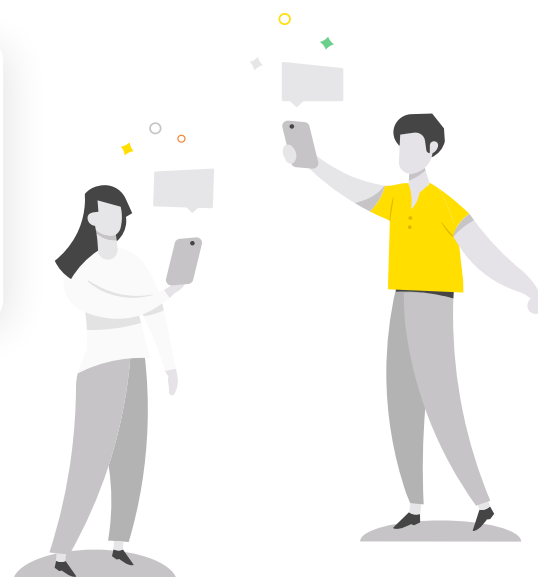
- ✓ HQ to quickly deliver instructions, training and feedback across all store locations.
- ✓ Employees to confidently prioritize tasks, work autonomously, receive feedback and share their ideas.
- ✓ Customers to experience better quality, consistent service in every store.
- ✓ The whole company to be more agile in operations and faster to react to challenges.

A retail brand is only as strong as its worst performing store, so ensuring that every employee is in the loop with updates and instructions is paramount.



Related content:

[6 Ways to Support Frontline Employees with Internal Communications](#)



3. Where are retailers getting it wrong?

While on average COVID accelerated the digitization of businesses [by seven years](#), many retail businesses are lagging behind when it comes to store communications by failing to prioritize investing in workers on the frontline and keeping stores in the loop.

YOOBIC's 2021 [Frontline Employee Workplace Survey](#) found that 34% of frontline employees feel disconnected from HQ. This means that they don't feel invested in the company culture and values and are less likely to perform their best.

34%
of frontline employees
feel disconnected
from HQ

Resources which are not instantly accessible, such as an intranet on a computer in the back office, leave some employees out of the loop. [Nearly 1 in 5 working adults](#) has a disability and 73% experience barriers on more than a quarter of websites they visit. Research has found that [frontline employees discount online platforms as resources](#) if they're not easy to use.

Companies are stalling employee communications because the tech provided to mobile workers isn't user-friendly. Employees want to be able to communicate using tech that is intuitive and doesn't require a lengthy signing in process. Not only does this under-serve employees, but it also means that the time and money funnelled into producing these online resources goes to waste.



4. The impact of poor communication.

The impact of weak communication systems is costly.

X Decreased productivity

Productivity nosedives, as employees have to scramble to find the right information. The average employee spends over [25% of their working day searching for the information they need to do their job](#).

X Unengaged employees

Poor communication crushes engagement levels and [disengaged employees have a 60% higher error rate](#) than engaged employees, stalling productivity and tarnishing the customer experience. Employee engagement translates into business success, companies with highly engaged employees [have 21% greater profitability](#).

X Poor collaboration

Many retail employees **don't get to meet** the majority of their peers within the company, leaving them feeling isolated in their role. Feeling alienated from the rest of the company makes it more difficult for employees to work collaboratively as part of whole company campaigns and initiatives and **see the impact of their work**.

X Lack of agility

A weak communication network also means that **it takes longer** for HQ to share updates, stores to implement instructions and be agile in response to problems. These delays make it more difficult to provide and monitor a consistent, **high quality customer experience** across all stores. In-store experience matters - it's what keeps customers coming back.



Related content:

[How to Engage Your Deskless Workers With Internal Communications](#)

X Poor workforce retention

The cost of bad communication continues to mount when it comes to employee retention. Retail is an industry with a notoriously high turnover of frontline workers, and employees who don't feel connected to their company values are even less likely to be retained by employers. [73% of disengaged employees are looking for a new job](#). Without accessible communication promoting brand values to every employee, businesses are spending a fortune in hiring and training new frontline employees.

X Security and privacy risks

Another result of businesses lacking a designated digital space for employee communications means employees are more likely to use personal Whatsapp and Facebook accounts to connect and share work-related information, which is a data privacy risk.



Related content:

[Frontline Employee Communications:
3 Reasons Not to Use WhatsApp](#)



5. Best practices to improve store communications

So now that we've explored why retailers get it wrong, let's unpack how to do it right.



Start from the bottom

A bottom-up approach to communication creates empowered, autonomous employees. An **effective communication system** should include space for store associates to share their ideas, feedback and opinions. The traditional top-down approach to store communication doesn't resonate with employees as it's easy for them to take a backseat when carrying out impersonal orders from a vague authority figure. **Effective store communications put employees front and centre.** Both employers and employees need to be able to continuously feed back to each other.



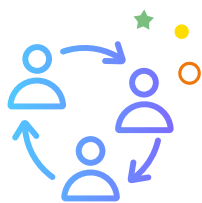
Measure engagement

Good communication has **measurable effects**. Company HQs need to be able to assess their communication strategies by observing the percentage of employees who have read an announcement, watched an instructional video or liked/commented on an update on the company newsfeed.



Make it mobile

If an employee needs to wait for the one ancient desktop computer in the stock room to be free in order to find out how to organize a window display, there's a high chance of them winging it and hoping for the best. **Employees need information now.** 76% of frontline teams agree that they would feel more connected if they could use a mobile app for workplace communications. Companies are missing a trick by not taking advantage of this and **investing in a platform that offers mobile communications** so workers on the shop floor can grab the right information instantly.



Cultivate a community

Connecting the whole organization through mobile communications **strengthens the culture of the company**. Mobile features such as forums and comments sections encourage social learning and a sense of community. This matters because collaborative workplace tools are linked to a [20% increase in employee satisfaction](#) and happy employees provide better customer service.



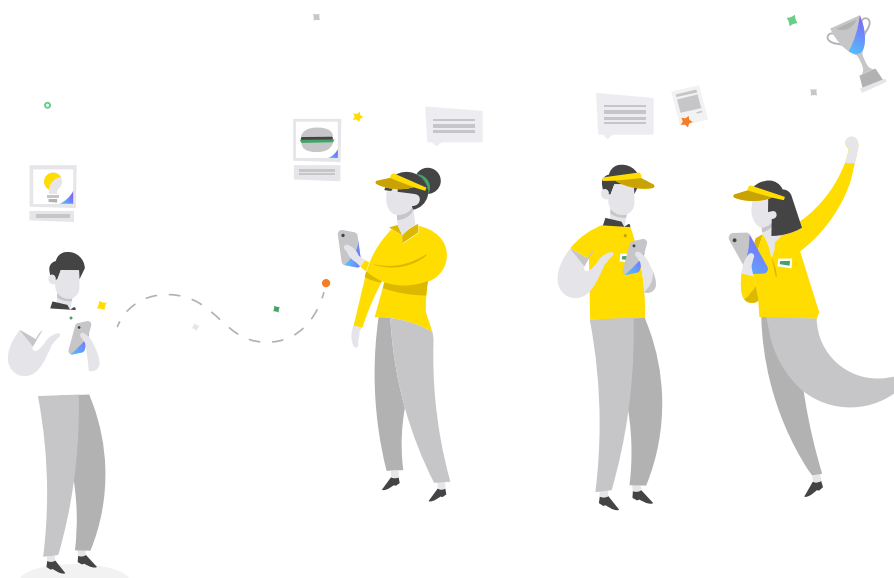
Find the right tool

Using multiple platforms for emails, announcements, instructions and workplace socialising can be frustrating and confusing for employees. Employees are **more likely to use communication tools if they are engaging and fun**. Investing in one, user-focused tool modelled after a social media platform makes communication frictionless, boosts engagement and keeps employees coming back for more.



Direct the flow of information

Keep all employees engaged and in the loop by sending them information that is **most useful to them**. This might mean coupling an announcement about a new product with a bite size training about it, video announcements about company updates, or weekly posts celebrating high performers or new team members. Keep things interesting by using a range of communication styles like memes, gifs, photos and polls.



6. Where do I start?

A good starting point for improving store communications is putting the right structure in place. This involves several steps:

1.

Take stock of what platforms are already being used for communication - this could be email, intranet, fax etc.

2.

Consolidate everything into one tool that streamlines all communication.

3.

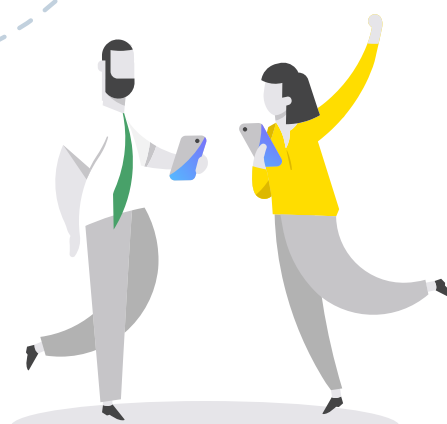
Make the tool accessible for the whole company by implementing a BYOD policy or ensuring all retail employees are equipped with a mobile device.

4.

Make sure information is relevant - stores should be getting info that concerns them, if there's too much they zone out. Get a platform that supports sending communications to relevant groups and tailors employees' news feeds to show them the info most relevant to them first.

5.

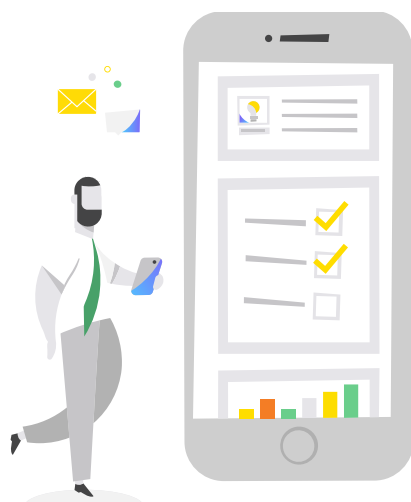
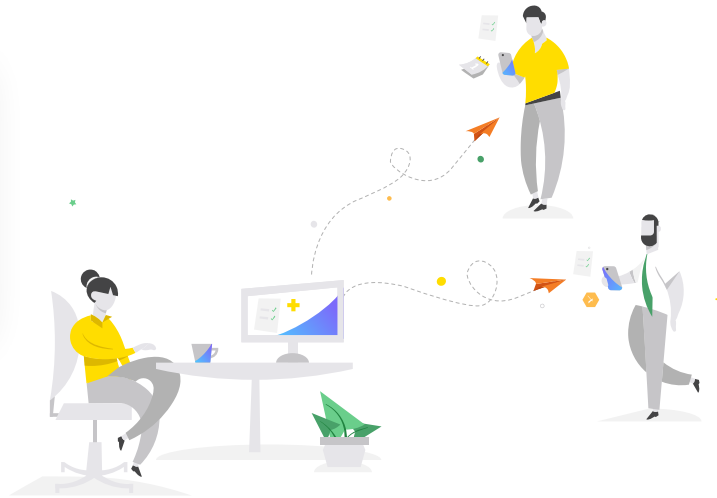
Put yourself in store teams' shoes. Nobody wants to read endless blocks of text. Change things up with emojis, polls, infographics and videos to keep things dynamic.



Here's an example of what effective store communications can look like:

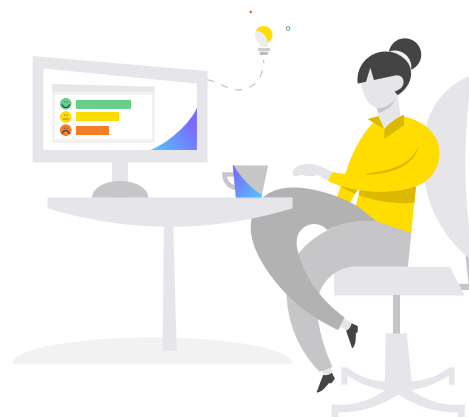
Mo works in a hardware store. The company HQ realizes that an electric drill is faulty and needs to be re-called as it could be a safety risk.

HQ **instantly sends an alert** to all store employees coupled with a training video about how to correctly remove products from shelves and a checklist to complete and submit.



Mo gets a **push notification** on his phone and opens the app, he watches the **video demo** and follows the instructions to remove the drills from the shelves. He completes the **checklist** and submits it to HQ along with a photo of the newly arranged shelves to be approved.

HQ now has **clear visibility** into which stores have correctly completed the recall and employees have the tools to be **confident** that they've done the job properly.



7. How other retailers did it

ADORE ME

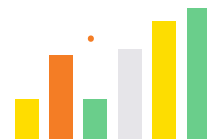
Previously online-only intimates retailer Adore Me knew that a strong communication network would be critical as they scaled up their brick and mortar presence.

By using a dedicated store communications app to share updates, news and celebrate success across the entire store network, Adore Me keeps store teams engaged, motivated and working towards the same goal.



This really brings alignment and a feeling of oneness that helps boost sales.”

Paula Angelucci, District Manager
Adore Me



ADORE ME

[LEARN MORE >](#)

GANT

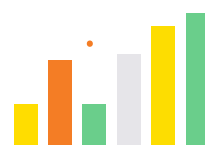
By implementing a digital workplace app with a newsfeed which automatically translates comments into the user's native language, fashion retailer GANT has built a global digital community of employees across their 750 locations.

Employees can share knowledge, communicate and learn from each other, no matter where they are in the world.



We have our store associates in Shanghai giving tips and engaging with our store associates in Paris. We truly believe this creates a sense of belonging and being part of a greater community.”

Maria Klingh, Global Retail Director
GANT



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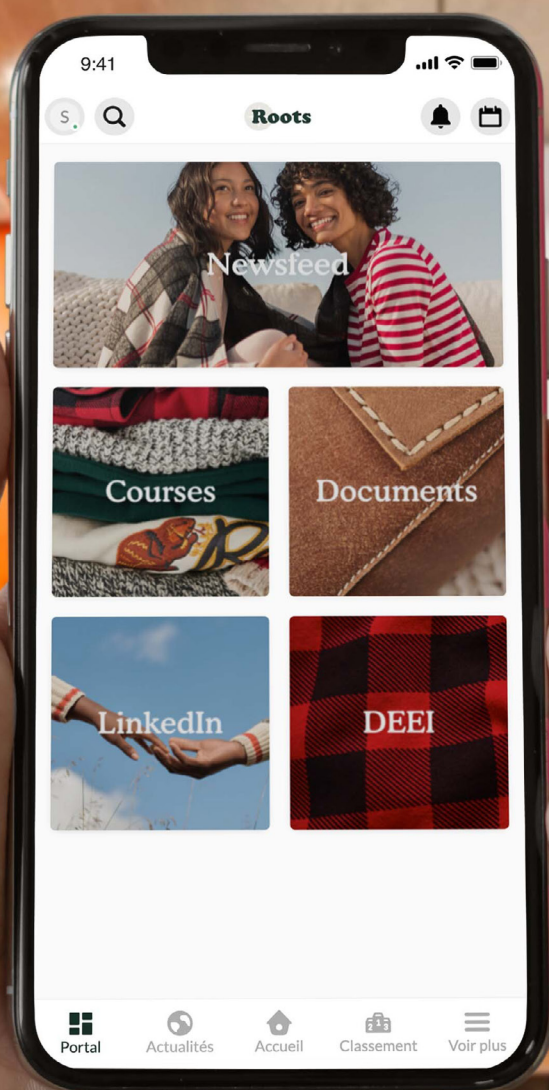
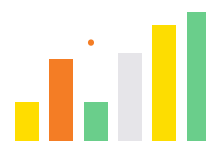


Outdoor lifestyle retailer Roots use a communication tool with a social media-style user experience to motivate employees to engage with the rest of the organization and access the latest corporate news and policies.



The solution gives us the connective tissue we need to keep our employees energized and in sync with one another.”

Michelle Lettner, Senior VP HR
Roots



8. Key Takeaways

No retail company can afford to get it wrong when it comes to communication. It's crucial to put a structure in place that:



1. Is accessible on the shop floor and mobile user focused.



2. Is engaging and rewarding.



3. Gives HQ clear insight into store activities.



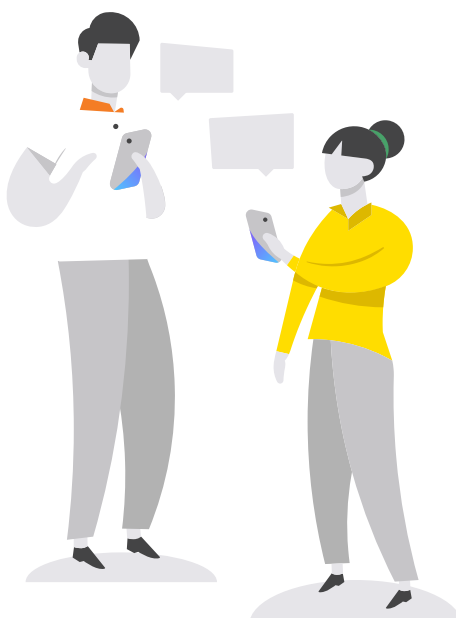
4. Empowers employees to feed back to HQ about how they're feeling.



5. Keeps information secure but easy to find when needed.



6. Builds a sense of community by connecting employees and teams that might not regularly meet in person.



ABOUT YOOBIC

At YOOBIC, our mission is to give frontline teams the better every day working experience they truly deserve, while helping retailers drive performance at scale.

The YOOBIC Digital Workplace gives business leaders and store teams the performance tools they need to communicate, learn and work - all in one place.

GET A DEMO



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