

Three Ways Technology Can Improve Operational Efficiency for Frontline Workers



The importance of operational efficiency in frontline technology

The benefits of technology for office workers—both on-site and hybrid—is well acknowledged globally. Technical applications are an obvious must-have for those employees. However, there's a tremendous portion of the workforce that is largely neglected when it comes to integrating technology into their daily work life.

Frontline workers make up employees across a wide range of industries, from retail and infrastructure to healthcare and manufacturing. In fact, more than 2 billion workers around the globe can be identified as frontline employees. While technology can undoubtedly provide renewed levels of productivity and efficiency for frontline workers, it historically hasn't been implemented to unlock this population's fullest potential.

How can technology help employees who primarily work without a desk? The applications can vary as greatly as the industries and roles in

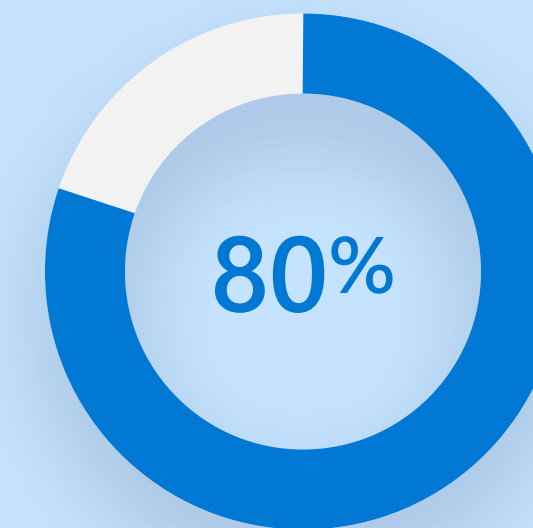
which these workers serve.

Implementing technology tools for frontline workers can optimize operational efficiency, which is necessary to improve overall customer experience and drive business results. Successfully doing so creates a waterfall effect. Improved operational efficiency can transform your employees' experience by:

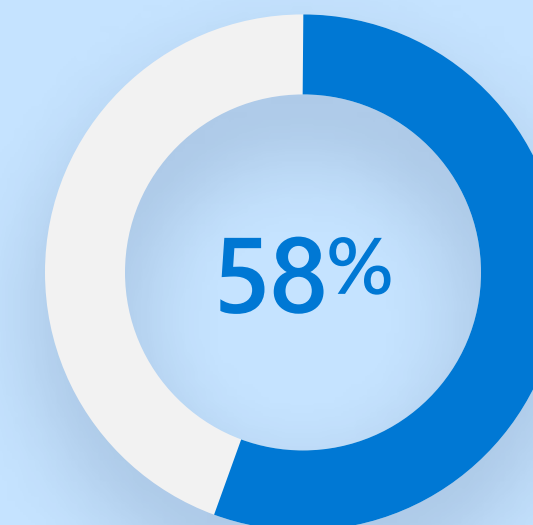
- reducing shadow applications
- enhancing collaboration and communication between corporate and frontline teams
- safeguarding your business so you can prioritize more time with your customers

One study found that the use of Microsoft Teams for frontline workers improved customer experience and led to an increase in revenue worth \$2.7 million in incremental profits.²

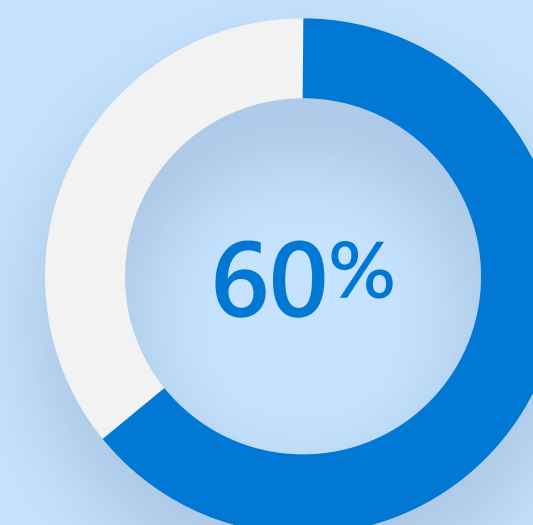
The frontline breakdown¹



Frontline workers represent **80 percent** of the global workforce.

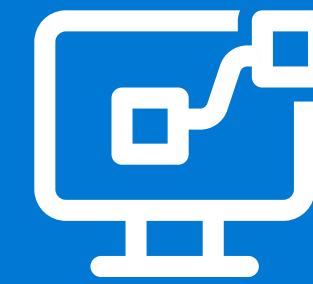


58 percent believe workplace stress will stay the same or worsen in the next year.



60 percent say their company could do more to prioritize culture and communication from the top.

There are three areas to examine when assessing how to implement the right technology solutions to improve frontline operational efficiency:



01

Digitize manual processes



02

Create a culture of accessible technology



03

Gain operational visibility

Digitize manual processes

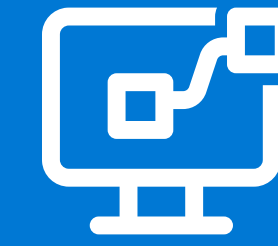
A great deal of processing in frontline roles is still done manually, either through outdated computer systems or simply by hand. After the pandemic, it became increasingly important that these processes be optimized for safety and efficiency. In terms of both safety and customer population increase, digitization of processes was especially critical in industries that bore the brunt of the pandemic's consequences.

Because physical or face-to-face contact has been at least somewhat limited indefinitely, businesses need to find a way to personally engage with customers and serve them with care and efficiency. For those frontline workers seeing more customers than ever, there's an additional need for organization and control of information.

Customers also expect the same level of customer experience and attention they received before the pandemic. With a global shortage of frontline workers and more customers to serve, there is an urgent need for solutions that can thoughtfully and quickly attend to customers.

When frontliners implement Microsoft applications, they're able to quickly and seamlessly empower their devices, third-party apps and processes for more effective performance.

Microsoft 365 for frontline workers is equipped with existing templates and custom-built apps to help track and organize information effectively. This helps to keep customer profile and account information accessible and accurate, which allows frontliners to serve their customers more quickly and effectively.



Digitized processes using Microsoft Teams for frontline workers reduced human errors resulting from misinformation, which leads to \$6.1M in improved outcomes.³



Microsoft 365 can also automate processes with flows, which helps to standardize operating procedures and policies that might be more difficult to adhere to with manual processes in a busy frontline environment. This makes it easier for workers to know their role within the flow and attend to customers with proficiency and ease.

To help mitigate the shortage of frontline workers, Microsoft 365 can employ AI-driven chatbots that mimic the conversational flow of human agents. This frees up frontline workers for higher-value tasks while still offering customers the attentive experience they deserve.

L'Oréal uses Remote Assist to optimize workflow and collaboration⁴

L'Oréal is a leading global beauty provider with employees working together across more than 160 countries every day.

The need

To help employees working across geographic locations work more productively and efficiently together.

The solution

Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Microsoft Teams

The result

With the virtual capabilities of Microsoft Teams, L'Oréal is empowering employees to host meetings, tour factories and other sites and collaborate collectively in real time with colleagues across the globe. This helps L'Oréal reduce costs, optimize operations and minimize travel, serving the company's dedication to sustainability and a reduced carbon footprint.



"Hybrid work is the new norm, and that's why we chose to work with Microsoft. Microsoft Teams is the best way to support this new way of working."

Etienne Bertin, Chief Information Officer, L'Oréal

Create a culture of accessible technology

Working on the frontline without technology can be especially challenging, which is why many companies are offering digital solutions. The problem is many of these solutions are not specifically designed to work with each other or integrate into existing systems, creating more work rather than less. To resolve this obstacle, companies need to consider a digital ecosystem: technological solutions that are packaged together and designed to integrate into and optimize your current processes and systems.

A key challenge of working on the frontline without a digital ecosystem is the lack of easy access to data or knowledge resources. For most industries, this can have an

immediate impact on frontline workers' ability to do their jobs successfully. For some, the consequences can be dire.

In addition to having customer information secure, organized and easily accessible, frontliners need organizational information at the ready, as well as SOPs, policies and up-to-date changes that could alter or block their workflow. The consequence could be a failure to support customers effectively or burnout and turnover for employees. Just as critical is having this access in real time. A lack of easy access in the moment information is needed can have time-saving impacts that scale across the frontline, negatively impacting business in an immediate and direct way.



With Microsoft Teams for frontline workers, instant communication and access to information through a digital landscape results in a better customer experience worth \$2.7M in incremental profits.⁵

Without a digital ecosystem not only can organization leaders struggle to communicate with their frontline workers effectively, but frontliners also may be unable to convey critical information to each other. For example, one team may need to alert the next shift to time-sensitive information or tasks and being unable to do that digitally can impact whether the data is shared accurately or on time.

Internal efficiency relies on more than just organizational information and real-time communication. Daily tasks are a critical component that could be greatly improved by effective technology integration. With a powerful digital ecosystem, frontline supervisors can spend less time on internal tasks, messaging, shift management and other day-to-day necessities that can drag down productivity when done manually.

With the ability to schedule, adjust and communicate between shifts, Microsoft 365 for frontline workers eliminates the risk of critical information being lost between workers. This way, employees just coming to work are able to quickly absorb what needs to be prioritized so their time is spent more productively.

Similarly, frontline workers who are able to operate within a digital ecosystem have the added benefit of reducing time spent switching between digital and manual contexts. With everything unified in Microsoft 365, the focus can return to the customer, improving business outcomes, customer experience and revenue.





Boots Opticians digitizes vital workflows⁶

Boots Opticians is an optical provider in the United Kingdom with 388 core stores and 160 franchise locations.

The need

To improve frontline workforce communication and collaboration for nearly 6,000 team members.

The solution

Microsoft 365, Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Tasks

The result

Before Teams, communication between central operations and frontline stores was a challenge. Teams helped in a couple of key ways:

- Once Microsoft apps were implemented, crucial corporate information, like policies and announcements, was centralized.
- Action plans previously printed and handed out were disseminated easily through Tasks to both core and franchise stores to communicate vital information and essential tasks.



“With Tasks in Teams, we can create a culture of relentless customer care and make sure that the right behaviors are in place in the pursuit of that goal. If we get the customer care element right, the business result will speak for itself.”

Cahir Mullan, Franchise Partner and Optometrist,
Widnes Boots Opticians

With Microsoft 365, frontline employees see a twofold benefit: empowerment over their own contribution and impact and better engagement with their team.



Gain operational visibility

Operations in frontline industries move quickly and there often isn't time to gather or explore insights until the immediate challenge has passed. This slows an organization's ability to adapt and stay ahead of change. The impact these delays can have on the employee and customer experience can be immense.

Employees are more satisfied with their jobs when they know what their impact is. For frontline workers, this can prove especially challenging because of the fast-paced and complex nature of their work. The divide created by many organizations' lack of a unified system only complicates that feeling of being siloed further.

Without visibility into their company's operations, such as shift schedules, performance reviews and more, employees also find it harder to communicate with colleagues or leaders about their needs and wellbeing.

A comprehensive digital solution shared by all members of an organization allows for streamlined communication, higher productivity and efficiency. With Microsoft 365 F3, employees see a twofold

benefit: empowerment over their own contribution and impact and better engagement with their team. Not only are they able to better serve their customers—and know the impact of doing so—but they also have the opportunity to share their experiences with team members and leaders.

Shift and workforce management through Microsoft 365 for frontline workers allows both leaders and employees to see how they're being scheduled, who they're working with, and allows them to more easily adjust their schedules or make requests for coverage and time off.

Streamlined data capture and insights also gives employees a broader look at the role they play in pursuing and succeeding at business goals. This helps them understand their performance, develop their skills and grow with the company. The result is a more satisfied and productive workforce, which in turn promises higher retention and more consistent business outcomes.





Kendra Scott highlights teamwork⁷

Kendra Scott is a luxury lifestyle jewelry brand based in Austin, Texas.

The need

To communicate quickly and effectively with managers and associates about key operational information, allow employees to engage with each other and celebrate great work, and gain visibility into their role and performance.

The solution

Microsoft Tasks and Teams

The result

Kendra Scott is built on the belief that happy, healthy and engaged employees do their best work and serve customers more successfully. With Teams, and particularly with Tasks, the Kendra Scott team is able to collaborate instantaneously on new projects or goals, share trends and styles customers love and post celebratory notes for teammates who do great work. Employees can also see what they need to prioritize, who they can contact for assistance and check on the status of performance updates like promotions.

"We're all moving at lightning speed to meet our customers' needs in the moment, and we use Teams to get communications out to our teams as quickly as possible. Teams probably saves me at least four or five hours a week."

Courtney Eladasari,
Senior Store Manager, Kendra Scott

The real ROI of Microsoft 365

Whether measurable by insights or impact, the benefits of implementing a unified digital ecosystem with Microsoft 365 F3 are shared by all members of companies in frontline industries. The empowerment and efficiency enjoyed by the frontliners themselves is especially impactful for a group traditionally overlooked by technology.

Microsoft 365 for frontline workers gives you the advantage of improved operational efficiency and a more efficient and successful frontline experience—all in one solution. Try a [guided simulation](#) on how to improve frontline efficiency by automating task and service processes with configurable apps.

[Learn more about Microsoft 365 for frontline workers.](#)

Microsoft Teams for frontline workers ROI by the numbers⁸



Digitized processes reduce human error resulting from misinformation, which leads to **\$6.1M** in improved outcomes.



Instant communication and access to information results in a better customer experience worth **\$2.7M** in incremental profits.



Three-year ROI of **345 percent** with payback in fewer than six months.