



Engaging Your Distributed Workforce Through Technology

 **TEAM** Software

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As a leader in the janitorial or security industries, you're called on to provide essential services, whether that be in times of uncertainty or in times where our global economy is operating business-as-usual. No matter what the environment, you face a unique challenge with engaging employees as you manage workforces that are distributed across cities, states or a global scale. It can be easy to overlook the importance of connecting with your workforce — from management, to back-office staff, to cleaners and guards in the field — simply because of the variance in how often you're able to interact with them face-to-face. No matter where your customers take your workers, it's important to keep them engaged in what they are doing and why. A 2019 report on [The Engagement Framework by the Macrothink Institute™](#) details employee engagement as a critical driver of organizational performance. As such, engagement with your employees is a critical driver of organizational performance and is crucial to your company's overarching strategic success.

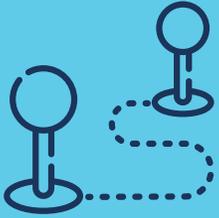
But how can you keep your employees, especially your cleaners or guards, engaged when so many of their day-to-day tasks and responsibilities are handled independently and offsite from a centralized office? Enter technology. With the advancements in industry-specific workforce management solutions, technology offers collaborative tools for a connected workforce environment with your cleaners or guards no matter what their location. We've compiled this guide to show you how technology can help keep your distributed workforce motivated and engaged.



Technology Provides Open Communication Channels

A workforce management solution created specifically for your industry is designed to handle the challenges of communicating with a distributed workforce. From supervisors, cleaners and guards in the field to back-office staff, employees across your business need to be able to receive and send messages across all platforms. Key functionalities to look for include messaging tools that can send informative (one-way) communications, or responsive (messages meant to elicit a response) communications, with sub-messaging feature support based on responses received. This fosters a communication channel where cleaners and guards can ask questions, reply to work site instructions, manage safety and job site checkpoints and have a direct line of communication with their supervisor, and vice versa. From the back-office side of the technology, communications should be able to be monitored and tracked. Technologies can take your management abilities one step further when they can confirm message delivery, so managers and supervisors know if a message has been received and read. Depending on what kind of solutions are available to your field-based cleaners and guards, look for technologies that can deliver messages via SMS text or push notifications. Technologies with messaging functionalities should also be filterable, so you can target your messages to the appropriate audience depending on subject matter to individual staff, groups or your global workforce based on location, employee classification, job name or other criteria.

Technologies with built-in employee communication tools create open channels for information flow throughout your distributed workforce. Look for messaging tools that can be informative or responsive, with monitoring or tracking capabilities that can be targeted and filtered to a given audience.



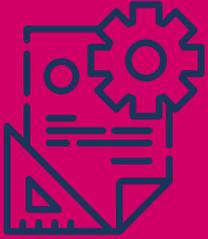
Empower Employees Through Technology- Driven Access

One of the best ways to engage your employees is to provide them access to information, tools and resources that allow them to do their job better. A 2018 report from [Harvard Business Review](#) states that a truly connected workforce isn't just about connecting employees through communication, but also establishing a connection between employees and the data or tools they need to bring insights and improved job performance into their day-to-day workflows. In fact, according to a survey conducted by Harvard Business Review, 63% of employees want to be able to access data on their own. Workforce management technologies that use intuitive and user-friendly employee self-service (ESS) portals empower your employees to effectively manage their personal information, time, payroll and work details. An effective ESS portal enables your employees to access this information themselves, without having to go through tedious or time-consuming work required by manual processes or back-office channels. This portal acts as a hub of information, providing HR policies, corporate standard operating procedures or guidelines, work site orders, compliance and safety requirements, and special announcements all in one centralized place along with employee pay stub and benefit information. Use technology to make your employees' access to information easier. Keep in mind that to actually add value for your workers in the field, they need to be able to navigate these tools on their own, so proper training and the selection of technology solutions that deploy a user-friendly interface are important. Involve your frontline workers in the implementation process of technology solutions, so they have a stake in its success along with first-hand user experience.

Your technology should also meet your cleaners and guards where they are in terms of accessibility. In other words, use technology as a convenient, point-of-contact tool to help them get their assignments done more efficiently and effectively. For example, using an intuitive time and attendance tool that streamlines clock-in and clock-out processes helps your cleaners and guards get to their worklist quicker. If adjustments need to be made, they can be handled by requesting an adjustment, rather than having to wrestle with antiquated punch clocks. Advancements in technologies have created alternatives to monitoring your employees at their job sites through tracking and touring systems using GPS, QR Codes, beacon, near-field communication (NFC) and Bluetooth positioning. These GPS monitoring technologies allow your business to have a clear visual of operations at job sites, promoting accountability through your workforce and allowing both your management and frontline workers flexibility to adjust workflows for process improvements in real-time to better achieve results.



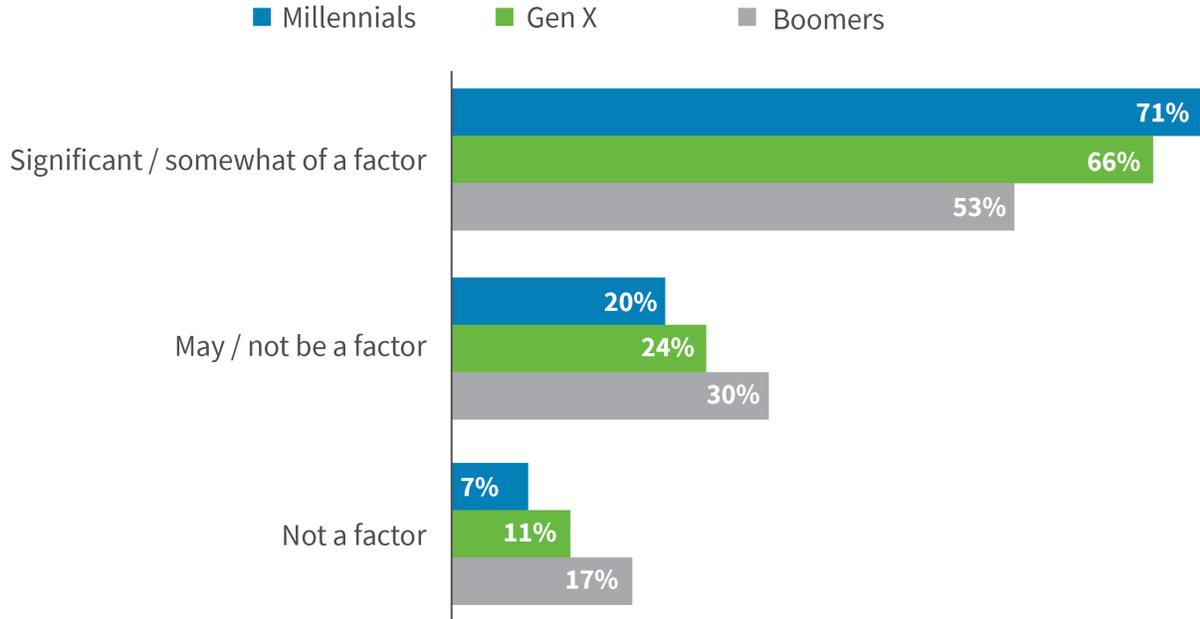
Using technologies that drive efficiencies help keep your employees engaged by helping them get their jobs done quicker and with better results.



Leverage Technology as a Tool to Attract and Keep Your Workforce

As the global workforce becomes more used to having access to technology in their day-to-day lives in general, it only makes sense that their demand for user-friendly, skill-building and efficiency-driving technology in their work life also grows. Technology can be a defining variable in attracting the right talent to your business, and then retaining that workforce due to positive engagement. According to a 2018 study by [CompTIA](#), over half of workers in Boomer, Generation X and Millennial generations view technology as a significant or somewhat significant factor in their job acceptance process, with this number being an overwhelming 71% in the younger, Millennial category.

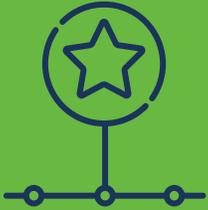
Role of Technology in Shaping Views of Employers



Source: CompTIA's Managing the Multigenerational Workforce study

In the janitorial and security industries, technology investments should drive business operations and support data integrity, time and attendance reporting, job site requirements and communications — everything your workforce needs and regularly uses. Technologies can serve as a means of reminding your guards or cleaners why the work they're doing is important, past the obvious paycheck, while motivating them to do more for your customers, your company and themselves. In the long-term, this should positively correlate with retention of employees who are using these technologies.

Technology is important to consider when attracting new talent and retaining talent you don't want to lose.



Use Technology that Works in Good Times — and Uncertain Times

A technology solution worth its salt can respond to your business needs at any given moment. While that includes periods of growth and expansion, it should also be able to meet your needs in times of uncertainty. Whether your industry is faced with economic, natural, or societal times of crisis — anticipated or unanticipated — it's likely your workforce could be faced with extra variables acting as stressors against them. In times like these, your guards and cleaners need proactive, regular and transparent communication, and technology is an important tool to providing a link between guards or cleaners on the frontline, your back-office and your C-Suite executives. With real-time, targeted messaging, you can touch base frequently, letting your workforce know how you're handling a given situation or to relay important legislative information, forms or changes in policies as they become relevant.

Uncertain times cause disruptions to your workflows, policies and profit margins. Often, crises happen suddenly, leaving your business to play catch-up to protect your employees, maintain customers and re-budget, adjust or implement Plan B measures. Industry-tailored technology solutions can help navigate uncertain waters by streamlining data, leveraging reports and deploying analytics that can help identify short-term or long-term expense adjustments, and provide visibility over company operations until you're able to find solid ground. At the very least, technology should be used to digitize as much paperwork and processes as possible, with the capability of housing information on a software as a service (SaaS) network, so your business can stay afloat should access to servers or data become compromised or your office staff are shifted to working remotely.

Instead of treating technology solutions like a lifeline, treat them as a necessary improvement to business operations and a proactive precaution against crisis. Plan for periods of implementation, iron out any bumps and become super-users in your technology to keep your business up-and-running when uncertainty hits.

Use technology to engage with your employees, then leverage across your entire business.

The janitorial and security industries rely on a distributed workforce for business operations, so it's important for you to treat an investment in technology as an investment directly into your frontline cleaners and guards. Once implemented, technology can be used to create open lines of communication, increase access to information, and attract and retain talent. With the right technology solution, these are just the starting benefits. When implemented appropriately, benefits like improved processes and cost savings can be leveraged across your entire business.

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TEAM Software develops market-leading financial, operations and workforce management solutions for contractors with distributed workforces, with a focus on the cleaning and security industries in North America, Australia and the U.K. and Ireland. TEAM's fully integrated, holistic technology reduces risk and costs and drives efficiency, profitability and growth. Founded in 1989, TEAM is headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska, US. For more information, visit teamsoftware.com.
