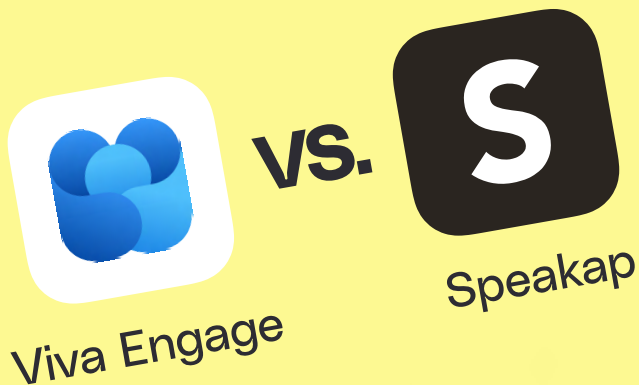


WHITE PAPER

Why Viva Engage Isn't the Right Tool for Frontline Teams

And What to Use Instead.



It's hard to believe how Viva Engage has taken the workplace by storm. In its short lifespan, it's gone from being solely an internal communications tool for companies with remote teams to an extremely popular communication tool that is used by a variety of business types.

Now, we're not here to debate whether Viva Engage is good or bad for the average employee in an office environment.

But in this white paper, we're going to focus on why Viva Engage isn't the right tool for frontline teams.



Understanding the different needs of desk-based vs frontline workers

Office-based teams often have dedicated workspaces with access to computers and desks throughout the day. Their communication needs typically involve:

- **Real-time messaging:** Tools like instant messaging and chat platforms facilitate quick and efficient communication with colleagues.
- **Video conferencing:** Virtual meetings allow for face-to-face interaction regardless of location.
- **Collaboration tools:** Shared documents and project management platforms streamline teamwork and information sharing.

Frontline teams, on the other hand, typically spend most of their time away from desks, often in dynamic and fast-paced environments. Their communication needs differ significantly:

- **Mobile-friendly experience:** Tools need to be accessible and usable on smartphones and tablets, allowing for on-the-go communication.
- **Personalized experience:** Information needs to be relevant and tailored to specific roles or locations.
- **Short-form content:** Bite-sized information like news updates, safety reminders, or task instructions are more readily consumed in short bursts.
- **Operational work:** Tools should enable functionalities like scheduling, task management, and reporting directly within the communication platform.
- **Location-based communication:** Features like geofencing or location-specific announcements can be crucial for geographically dispersed teams.



Here's Why Viva Engage Isn't the Right Tool for Frontline Teams

While Viva Engage can be a good communication tool for a desk-based workforce, it falls short when it comes to managing and empowering frontline teams. Here's a closer look at why.

#1

Setting up Viva Engage throws your frontline managers into the labyrinth world of Azure permissions

Setting up groups in Azure requires extensive permissions, a non-starter for organizations without dedicated IT staff. Imagine frontline managers struggling with complex access controls – not a recipe for success.

#2

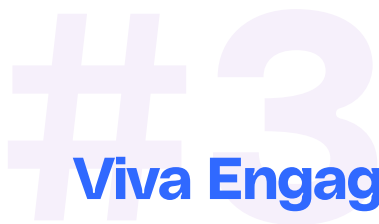
Too many apps, not enough clarity

Frontline employees have distinct needs – their priority lies in easy access to critical updates, shift schedules, and company announcements. The fragmented nature of Viva (Viva itself has 9 (!) sub-apps underneath it) can create a complex information landscape. Some parts of Viva (like Connections) are accessed within the Teams app, while others, like Engage, are standalone apps.



This can be confusing for any user, but even more so for frontline workers who may need to switch between Teams and various Viva apps to access critical information and be able to do so quickly.

Imagine a busy retail worker constantly switching between different apps: Teams for some communications, Viva Engage for announcements, and potentially other Viva apps for tasks or time management. This fragmented approach will lead to confusion and hinder overall productivity for frontline staff.



Viva Engage boasts self-joining communities, but the initial setup requires significant effort

While Viva Engage boasts self-joining communities, the initial setup requires significant effort. Organizations might need to pre-create groups or force enrollment, adding another layer of complexity for frontline managers. Think about a bustling restaurant during peak hours – the last thing they need is the added burden of managing group memberships.



#4

Getting started with Viva Engage hinges entirely on email activation

Getting started with Viva Engage hinges entirely on email activation. This presents a major obstacle for frontline workers who might have limited or infrequent access to email. A factory worker without a company email address will be unable to join the work community.

#5

Viva Engage's user interface is designed for desktop users

The design prioritizes desktop users, neglecting the mobile experience crucial for frontline workers who are constantly on the go. Think about construction workers struggling with a cluttered interface on a tiny phone screen. Not ideal.



The bottom line: **you need to find the right tool to keep your frontline teams organized; it should be easy to use, affordable, and keep everyone in sync.**

You can point out the problem of communications with frontline teams all day long, but you need to find the right tool that actually works for them. How do we define the “right tool?” We mean a tool that is easy to use, affordable, and keeps everyone in sync.

Unfortunately, Viva Engage doesn't fit the bill. Viva Engage's channel-based messaging relies on users being able to keep track of multiple channels and threads at once, which usually isn't possible when you're working on a shop floor or running a gym. It also requires all the teams to be plugged in simultaneously to be a reliable communication solution for many frontline teams.

Finally, while Viva Engage's starting price of \$2.00 per user per month might seem attractive, it can be misleading for frontline teams. The base plan offers limited communication features, and functionalities like task management and analytics, crucial for frontline workflows, require additional licenses within the Microsoft Viva suite. These add-ons, along with potential integration costs for essential tools, can quickly inflate the overall price, exceeding the budget for some teams seeking a comprehensive frontline communication and management solution.



Consequences of choosing a comms tool, like Viva Engage, for the frontline workers

While tools like Viva Engage offer excellent communication solutions for desk-based workers, they fall short when it comes to catering to the needs of frontline teams. Implementing these office-centric tools for frontline workers can lead to several detrimental outcomes:

- 1 Low user adoption and training challenges:** These platforms are often designed with features and functionalities optimized for office workflows. Such complexity can overwhelm frontline workers, hindering their ability to grasp the platform and use it effectively.
- 2 Low perceived value:** Frontline workers might not see the value proposition of a complex platform that doesn't directly address their daily communication needs, leading to a lack of motivation to learn and use it.
- 3 Ineffective communication:** The features and functionalities of these platforms are not well-suited for the fast-paced, dynamic communication needs of frontline workers. This can lead to delays in information sharing, misunderstandings, and confusion, ultimately impacting their individual and team output.
- 4 Disrupted workflows:** Switching between different platforms and navigating complex interfaces can disrupt the flow of work for frontline workers who often have to juggle multiple tasks and responsibilities simultaneously.



- 5 **Lack of task management features:** These platforms might not offer features specifically designed for frontline work, such as scheduling, task management, or shift coverage, forcing them to rely on additional tools, further increasing complexity and hindering efficiency.
- 6 **Feeling disconnected:** Frontline workers who struggle to use or find the platform irrelevant to their daily needs might feel isolated from their peers and management, leading to a sense of disconnection and disengagement.
- 7 **Information silos:** Complex platforms can create information silos, where crucial information gets trapped within specific channels or teams, hindering smooth information flow and collaboration across the organization.
- 8 **Lack of visibility:** Managers and supervisors might lack real-time visibility into team communication and progress, hindering their ability to provide timely support and address issues effectively.
- 9 **Missed opportunities:** Ineffective communication can lead to missed deadlines, delayed responses to customer inquiries, and ultimately, missed opportunities to optimize operations and improve the customer experience.



What to use instead of Viva Engage?

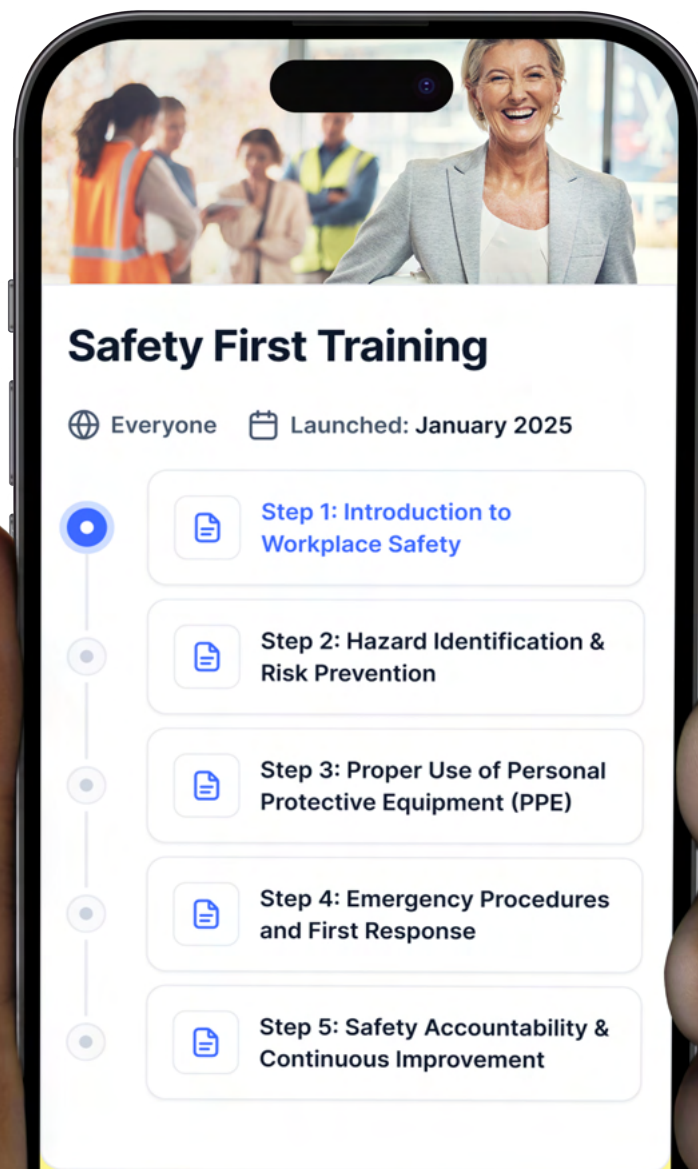
Ultimately, Viva Engage is not designed for the daily workflows of frontline teams. It isn't cost-effective, as it doesn't provide you with enough functionality to handle all of your frontline management needs from within one application. At the end of the day, you're left with a cluttered inbox that's even more difficult to navigate than email.

Speakap, on the other hand, is built specifically to address the needs of frontline teams. With Speakap, you can improve communication, streamline operations, and boost employee engagement. Here's how Speakap can help:

- **Task management:** Unlike Viva Engage, Speakap allows you to assign and manage tasks. This gives frontline managers the ability to coordinate activities and track employee progress.
- **Real-time communication:** Speakap goes beyond threaded communication, offering options like polls, videos, and images to keep everyone informed and engaged, even if they work different shifts.
- **Improved visibility:** Speakap provides managers with a full and accurate view of what their staff is doing. This allows for better support and coaching.
- **All-in-one platform:** Speakap consolidates communication, scheduling, and task management into one easy-to-use platform. This eliminates the need for multiple tools and cluttered inboxes.



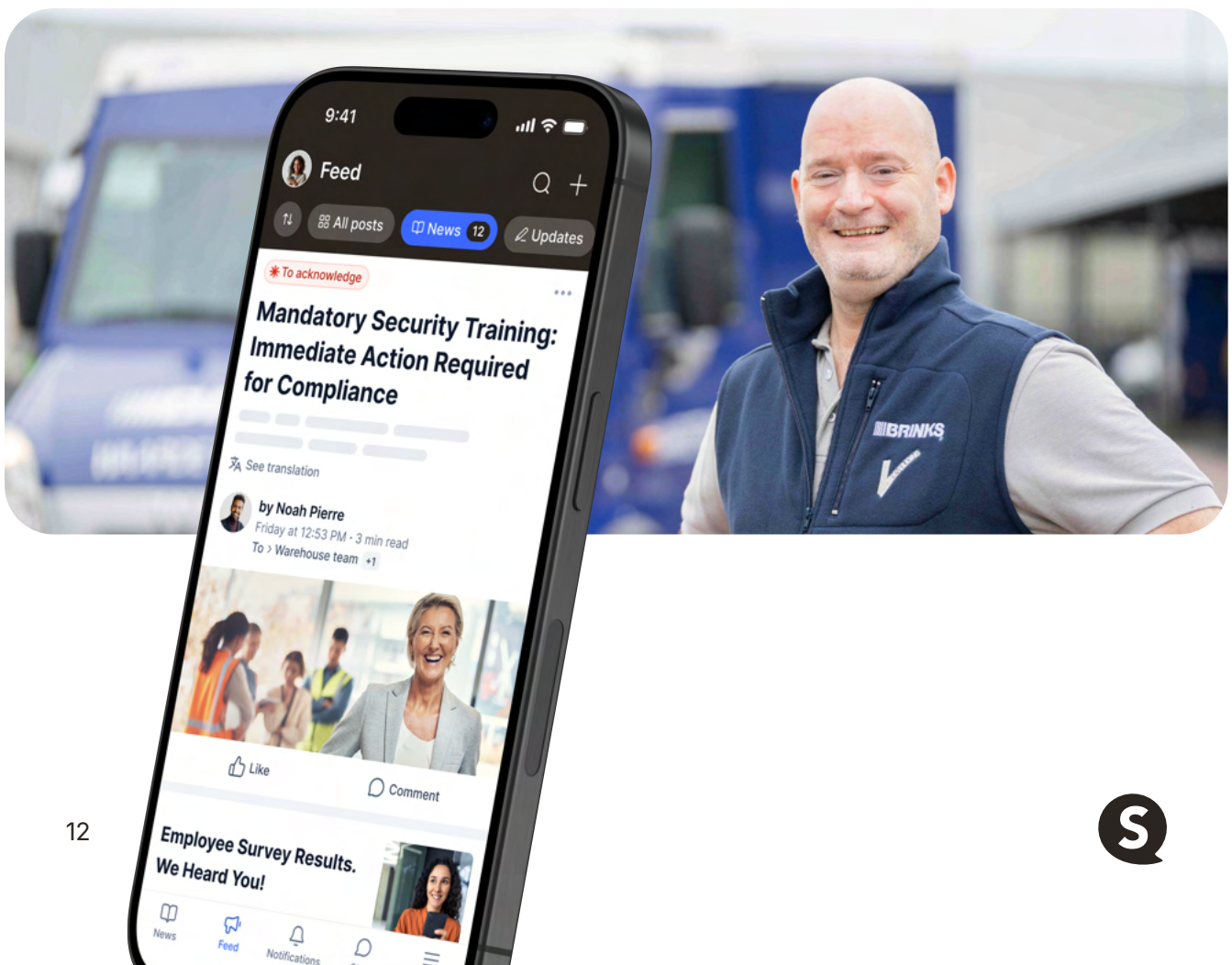
- **Cost efficiency:** a single tool can reduce subscription costs, IT infrastructure complexity, and maintenance overhead.
- **Unified workforce analytics:** understand the different behaviors and needs of employees, and enable communicators and HR to tailor their strategies and comms, while simultaneously gathering insights about each part of the workforce. Desk-based and frontline.
- **Streamlined employee journeys:** whether it be onboarding, training, learning and development - it all can take place within one tool. Making it more simple for you, and your employees regardless of their working location.



Real life success stories from retail & logistics

Nexeye, a leading European optical retailer with over 4,000 employees, uses an employee experience platform to bridge the gap between its desk-based and frontline staff across five countries. The platform fosters a more connected and agile workforce by enabling employees to share news, stories, and feedback

Brink's, a global security company, implemented an employee experience platform to improve communication between its desk staff and security officers in the field. The platform facilitates quick, secure, and two-way communication, leading to increased information sharing accuracy, a more engaged workforce, and improved operational efficiency





Learn more about Speakap

If you're interested in learning more about how Speakap can help your frontline team, book a demo with us here.

www.speakap.com

