

Mobile apps have greatly enhanced CA Technologies' leadership development program, a 12-month experience during which employees from all over the world participate in virtual sessions, self-paced assignments, and peer group activities, and get together in a conference-like setting twice a year. With a holistic Net Promoter Score of 76 percent, more than six times the industry average, the program has gained significant traction within the company and is a cornerstone of talent development at CA. The program supports the company's efforts to attract, retain, and inspire top performers from within its base of more than 11,000 global employees.

Mobile is a means to increase engagement and interactivity; provide easier access to content, resources, and logistics; connect through social channels; and access program details using a modern and readily available platform. According to a 2015 Gallup poll, 52 percent of smartphone owners in the United States check their devices several times an hour, including 11 percent who check it every few minutes. Considering these data, CA Technologies provides an opportunity to leverage this engagement throughout its leadership development program experience.

Today, mobile technology serves as a thread that ties together different parts of the complete program. One of the tools used to make information easy to ingest and increase engagement is the Guidebook mobile app platform. Based on nearly two years of successfully integrating mobile technology into programs, here are six tips for using mobile apps to support talent development.

Look for the quick win

When introducing a new mobile app



WHEN INTRODUCING A NEW MOBILE APP TO TRAINING, START SMALL.

to training, start small. Identify a finite use case, such as an in-person event, where you can evaluate engagement and prove return on investment without massive investment in time and money. Once you get your feet wet, you can expand it incrementally to other use cases and program elements.

While initial use of the Guidebook app focused on in-person leadership development sessions, it is now used throughout the entire year-long program to help participants stay connected with one another and the full experience. The use of mobile technology has grown to now include a range of talent development and enterprise-wide initiatives.

Complement, don't copy

Don't make the mistake of replicating your website or intranet. A mobile-optimized webpage does not provide a comparable experience to a native mobile app.

Determine the information necessary to include in the app—for example, prework for an event, schedules, session descriptions, travel information such as restaurant recommendations and taxi services—and deliver those elements. Instead of trying to re-create web-based brochure-ware, give access to a portion of the material or embed web links to create a rich mobile experience. This will help streamline the user experience, ensuring the information is relevant and easy to consume on a mobile device.

The result? You'll see real engagement and high adoption rates. Overall, there has been a 98 percent adoption rate for the app within CA's leadership development program.

Build community with social features

Take advantage of inherent capabilities of the mobile device, such as the camera, to encourage participants to document and share experiences. Mobile platforms best suited to a learning environment are those that allow for photo sharing, posting, commenting, liking, and sharing of contact details directly within the app.

It's also important to be mindful of security. In our case, the goal was to create a tight-knit, internal community that would enable sharing among only those participants who have access to the app. This also helps with cultures outside of North America that might be more reluctant to engage in broader social activities, such as Twitter.

Make it fun

In talent development, there is a need for fresh approaches to make training fun and engage the audience. One way to do this is to create a game around the QR scanning built into mobile devices.

Employees respond positively to a QR code game, where they work in groups to unscramble a word and ultimately solve problems in groups. This kind of gamification creates an experience that is compelling and differentiating, encouraging people to interact with their peers in a new way and engage in higher-quality collaboration.

Learn from app metrics

Constantly monitor app metrics to see how your users access the technology. Identify how many times different

items were viewed, for example, and then modify app content accordingly.

When CA first launched its mobile app, it was unclear who, if anyone, would respond. Digging into the metrics revealed that, along with social sharing features, users most frequently accessed Leader Guides, a primary resource directly supporting the program experience. It was a pleasant surprise that people were engaging with content related to the session and not just checking out what was on the menu for lunch. If you can make this an ongoing priority, you'll stay well informed on what content is most relevant and valuable to support the experience.

Increase engagement with ongoing communication

Ongoing communication via the app offers an efficient, effective way to increase engagement with participants even when you're not face-to-face. Here are a few examples of how to make that happen:

- **Prework.** An activities guide is made available on the app to reinforce the program assignments introduced during the kickoff call and follow-up email communication. Through this, the app further supports the participants' connection and engagement, and sets them up for success throughout the program experience.

- **Surveys.** Don't wait until after a session to send out surveys. By asking participants to fill out surveys during the session (instead of responding by email after the fact), CA increased response rate by 17.4 percent.
- **Push messaging.** From welcome messages and reminders about precourse work, to follow-up on new content available, alerts are an excellent way to keep participants engaged during and after the formal program experience. With a short notification that pops up outside of the app, you can easily get their attention in a way that is nonintrusive.

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An essential tool

Deploying a mobile app embodies the progressive spirit of a modern business environment. Use of mobile fosters an innovative mindset within the company while providing an easy way for employees to stay connected on their leadership journey. Mobile has become a central support feature during the overall program experience and has helped to foster increased engagement.

Mobile apps are now an essential component of CA's talent development strategy. By integrating apps, talent development programs are more efficient, more sophisticated, and more credible. The world is primed for mobile, and the tools are available for low-cost, small-scale experiments, and large-scale company-wide deployments. There's no better time than the present to put mobile tech to work for you, your employees, and your business.

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