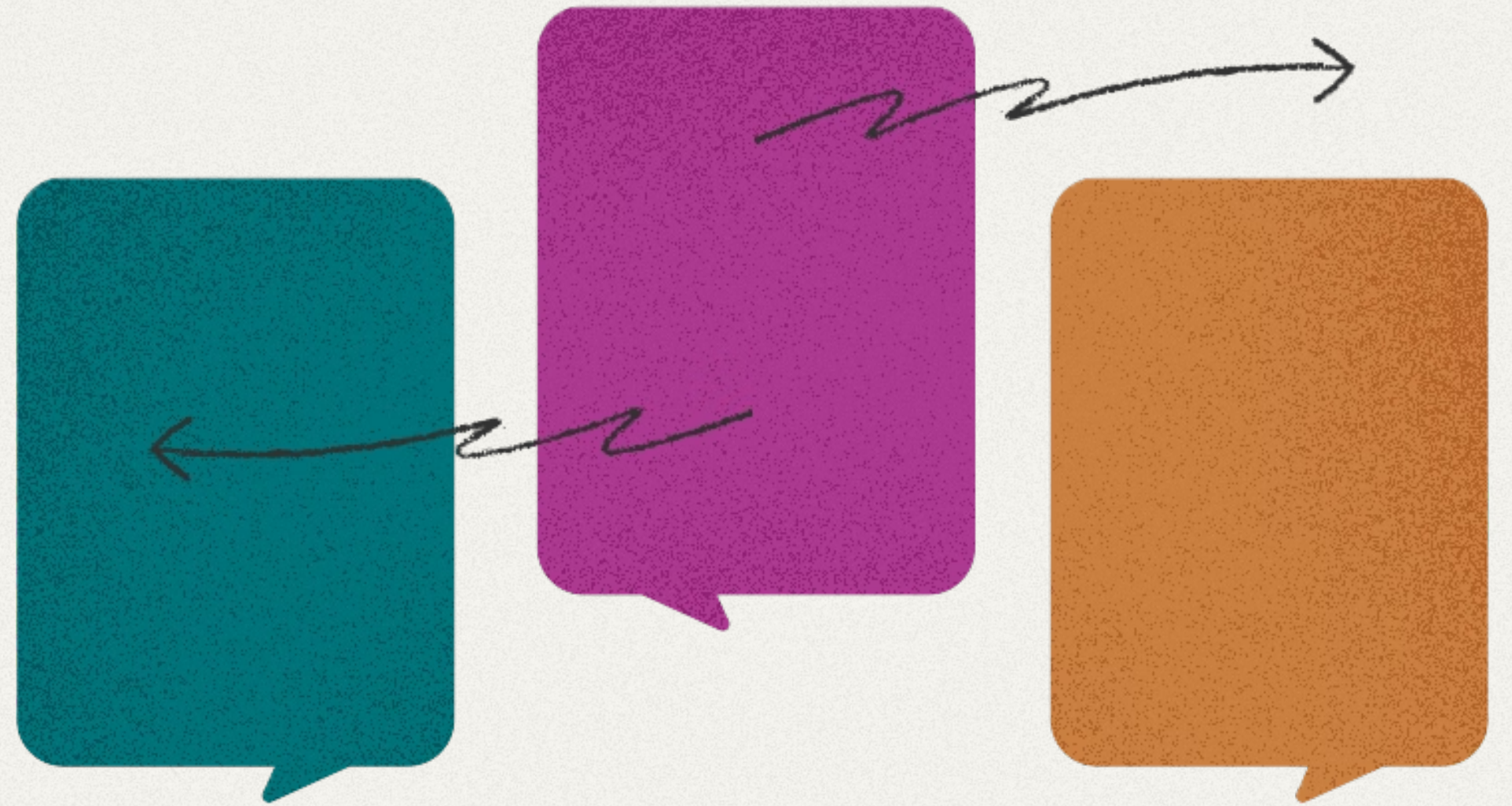


Workshop



AN ORIGINAL RESEARCH REPORT | MADE WITH LOVE BY THE TEAM AT WORKSHOP

State of Frontline Communications 2026

Most comms are built for inboxes (but your frontline isn't!)

A huge part of the workforce doesn't spend the day at a desk. They're on the sales floor, in the plant, on the road, or caring for patients, and reaching them takes a different approach.

This report brings together two sources of truth:

1. What hundreds of internal communicators around the world told us about their priorities and challenges
2. What actually performed across Workshop's platform, including more than 186 million emails and 1 million SMS sends.

You'll never reach 100% of your employees through one channel alone.

The best frontline teams build a simple, dependable mix of channels that back each other up!

The frontline reach gap

Frontline employee comms is one of the most-named priorities for communicators this year. And the challenge is *specific*:

- When we asked what holds communicators back, one theme came up again and again: **limited reach to frontline or deskless workers**. Broken lists, outdated tools, and channels that don't land away from a desk all add friction.

Good news: This is a solvable problem! The solution is all about matching the message to the moment and the channel to the employee.



38%

of communicators
say frontline comms
is a topic they want
to invest more into

The data at a glance

186 Million

emails analyzed
across Workshop

1 Million

SMS sends
analyzed

11%

average email click
rate across all sends

29%

average SMS click
rate across all sends



THE ONLY FOUR TOOLS YOU NEED

The frontline communications channel matrix

The teams who have found success reaching frontline teams have stopped asking any one channel to do everything. Instead, they build a small, reliable system — pairing push channels that reach out to employees with pull channels employees can come back to.

Reaching your frontline requires a simple system where each channel does what it does best: **email** as your foundation, **SMS** for urgency and reach, **instant messaging** for quick communication within teams, and **Pages** as the home base everything links back to.

1

Email platform

Your foundation for clear, targeted updates — with visibility into who's engaging.

2

Employee texting (SMS)

Quick, direct communication, especially for frontline or hard-to-reach teams.

3

Instant messaging

Teams or Slack, for real-time collaboration throughout the day.

4

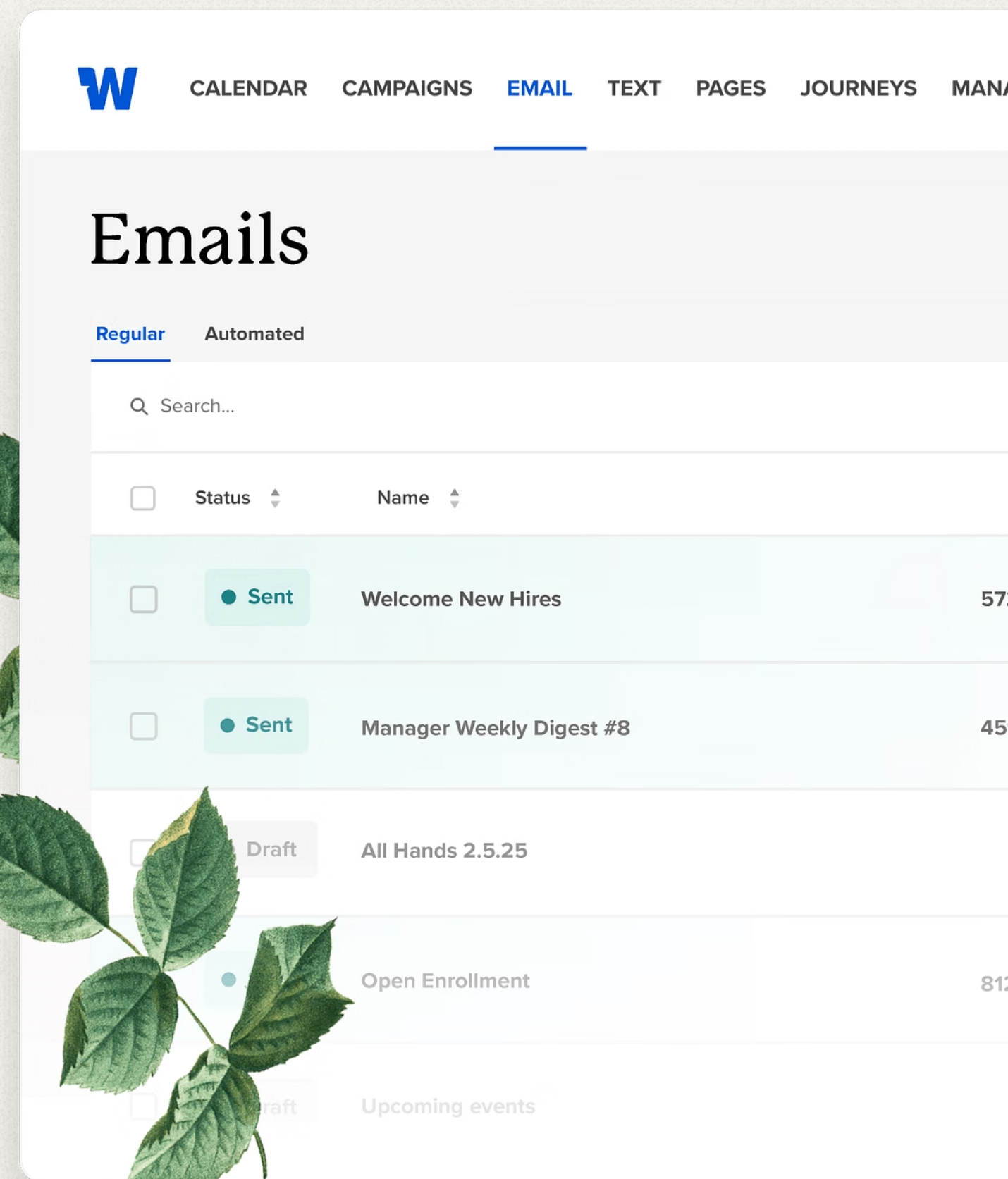
Intranet or hub

A dependable home base for the resources people need to revisit, we recommend using **Pages**!

Email: it still works, and it still matters

Email is the most-used and most-effective internal comms channel, and a median open rate of 73% is strong! But: you will never reach all of your employees by using one channel alone.

Many frontline and deskless employees don't check email often — some don't have a corporate address at all. A beautiful newsletter in an inbox they rarely open just won't land.



Email: it still works, and it still matters

95%

of teams use email
for internal comms

73%

median open rate
for email sends
with Workshop

20M

frontline emails
were opened on
mobile devices

TIP

Design for how they read

For frontline-heavy teams, a simple, text-based, mobile-friendly email paired with a quick “five things to know” works far better than a heavily designed layout. And for urgent updates, utilize SMS!

SMS: Your frontline power channel

SMS click rates are nearly 3× higher than email, which is exactly why text is so effective for reaching people who aren't at a desk.

29%

average SMS
click rate

18 sec

median time from send to
first click for SMS sends

5pm

best time to send frontline
SMS, end-of-shift window

11%

average email
click rate

3%

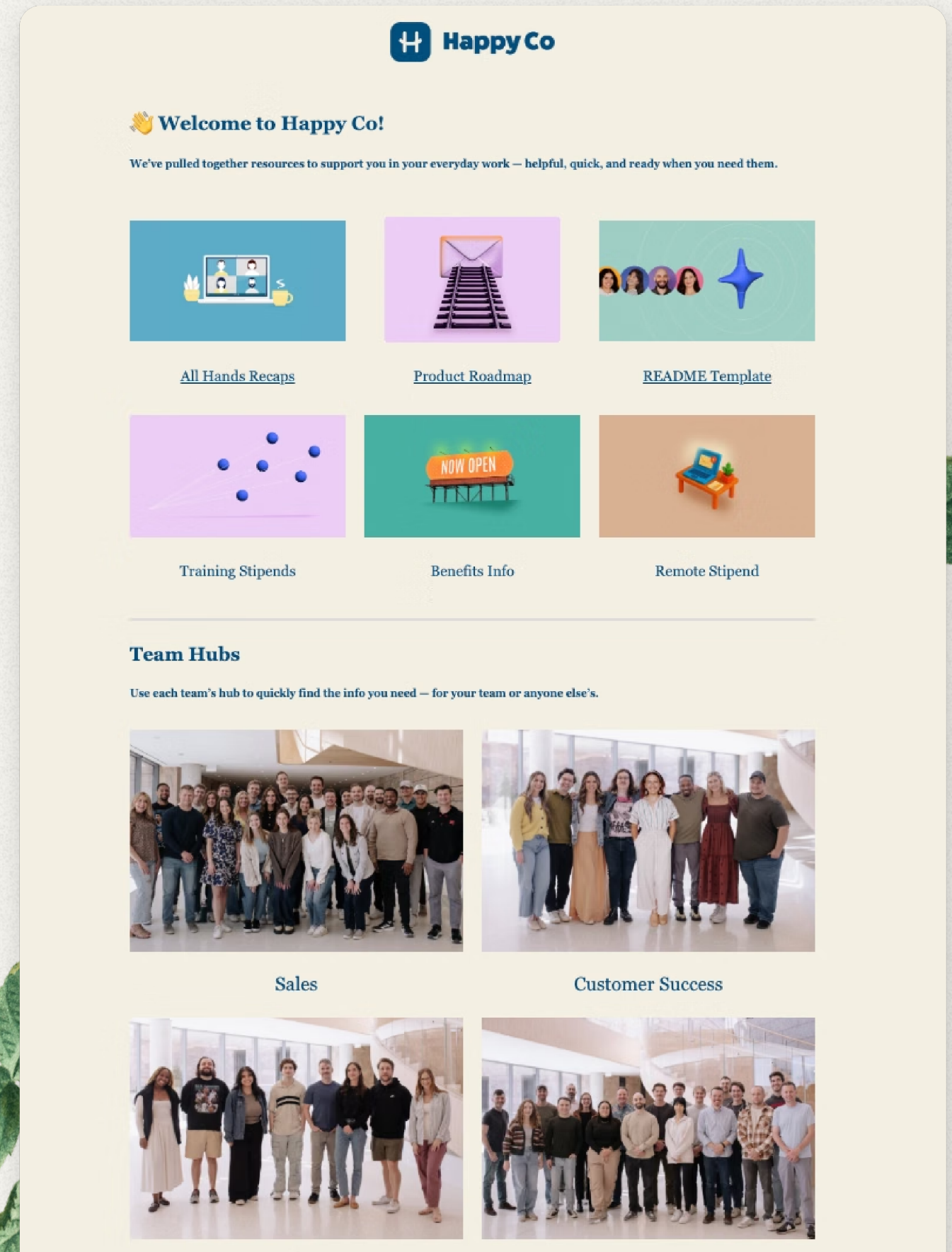
average opt-out rate —
people stay subscribed

Tues

the strongest frontline
SMS day (31% click rate!)

Pages: Give your messages room to breathe

Branded, mobile-friendly landing pages that extend your emails — so the message stays short and skimmable while the details live somewhere clean. Think of these as an *intranet-lite*! With [Workshop](#), there's no-code and no login necessary to view a Page. You can launch a branded page, embed it, text it to frontline teams, and edit it later, without breaking a single link!



Pages: Give your messages room to breathe

Use Pages for

- Company events
- Town halls
- Training guides
- Multilingual resource hubs
- New-hire onboarding hubs
- Benefits & HR resource hubs
- Safety, SOPs & compliance hubs
- Long-form memos & updates

Best practices

- Embed the link or preview card in your email
- Design for mobile-friendly users
- Place the primary CTA at the very top of the Page
- Share beyond email with QR codes, cross-posting, and digital signage



Reach every frontline employee with complete confidence

1. Treat phones as your frontline team's primary screen

For frontline and deskless teams, the phone is often the only screen they check during a shift. Design every email to be mobile-first with short, skimmable messages — and use texting for anything urgent or time-sensitive that *genuinely* can't wait.

2. Make SMS a two-way conversation

Let people reply! Inviting responses turns texting into a real feedback loop where employees can confirm they got the message, ask a question, or flag a problem in the moment. This matters most for teams who don't have a corporate email address to fall back on.

3. Reach the floor through managers

Create a manager-only segment and give team leads the context and talking points a day ahead of a big announcement. Frontline managers are your amplifiers! When they hear it first, they can carry the message in person (where it lands best!).

Reach every frontline employee with complete confidence

4. Segment your sends (instead of blasting everyone)

A relevant text to the right 200 people beats a generic one to 5,000. Targeting by role, site, or shift respects people's attention and keeps them opted in.

5. Confirm the message actually landed

Don't assume "sent" equals "seen." Check delivery and engagement data, then follow up specifically with whoever missed a must-know update — that follow-up is often the difference on compliance-critical messages.

6. Save SMS for the moments that earn it

Shift changes, urgent policy updates, benefits deadlines, onboarding nudges, and event reminders are ideal — anything employees need to see quickly. Protect the channel by not overusing it, so a text always signals "this matters."



BENCHMARKS

Frontline communications benchmark by industry

Check out how key frontline-heavy industries’ internal comms performed with Workshop!

Industry	Best email send time	Email open rate	Email click rate	SMS click rate	Best SMS send time	Mobile / Desktop email opens
Healthcare	Mon 9am	74%	10%	29%	Tues 1pm	7% / 93%
Manufacturing	Mon 9am	76%	10%	27%	Friday 1pm	13% / 87%
Restaurants & Food Services	Mon 10am	65%	12%	38%	Tues 5pm	32% / 68%
Travel & Hospitality	Thu 9am	71%	11%	21%	Mon 3pm	27% / 73%
Energy	Mon 10am	73%	13%	18%	Tues 5pm	20% / 80%
Consumer Goods	Tue 10am	64%	12%	33%	Tues 7am	23% / 77%
Government	Mon 9am	58%	7%	16%	Tues 5pm	24% / 76%

More frontline internal comms benchmarks

25,000+ Page views

Healthcare leads every industry in Pages published and Page views — an ideal way to reach employees who are rarely at a desk.

5,500 translations

Manufacturing leads all industries in AI translations, reflecting large, multilingual, and distributed workforces.

+12% open rate lift

Restaurants see open rates rise for after-hours sends — “business hours” mean little when your team works nights and weekends.



AI

The role of AI in frontline communications

How internal communicators are using AI today

For small teams stretched across a big, dispersed workforce, AI has moved from novelty to normal. Plus, it's especially useful for reaching multilingual frontline teams!

In the wild

42%

of communicators
use AI every day

31%

of communicators use
AI several times a week

Workshop users

75%

of Workshop users
used AI features in 2025

16,000+

emails translated with
AI within Workshop

3 ways to weave AI into your frontline comms

1. Build a prompt library for recurring sends

Save a prompt with your structure, voice/tone, and action items baked in for each of your repeat sends, like shift updates, safety notices, onboarding notes, and event reminders.

[TRY OUR PROMPT LIBRARY](#)

2. Let AI read your analytics

Instead of scanning screenshots and old sends by hand, let Cici surface the pattern so you can do the valuable part: deciding what it means.

[CHAT WITH CICI](#)



3. Translate & adapt across channels

For a multilingual, deskless workforce, this is a no-brainer! Cici can translate a message while keeping tone and nuance intact, and reshape one update for each channel.

[SEE MORE AI FEATURES](#)

Cici: the AI-assistant built for frontline communications

Reaching a frontline team is a big job for a small comms crew. Your people are spread across sites and shifts, and the message still has to be short, clear, and land fast. [Cici](#) makes that job feel *a lot* more doable!

Give Cici the bare bones of what you need to say, and it drafts the email, text, or Page for you. It rewrites corporate-speak into the plain, skimmable language your floor teams will actually read, translates messages into your team's preferred languages in a click, and spins up short SMS or Slack and Teams versions of the same update (so you're never rewriting from scratch). It can even suggest the best time to send based on how your people actually engage, because let's be real, "business hours" don't mean much to a night shift worker.

And because Cici works from your own campaigns, audiences, and engagement data, its suggestions get sharper the more you use it. For a stretched team trying to reach *everyone, everywhere*, **that's** the difference between a multi-channel plan on paper and one you can actually pull off.



Using AI for frontline communications

1. Write your message, then let AI tighten it

Frontline messages get read in seconds between tasks. Draft your point, then ask Cici to cut the jargon, shorten it, and reshape it into something skimmable — a "five things to know" beats a wall of text every time.

2. Translate for multilingual teams with a human spot-check

Many frontline workforces speak several languages! Use Cici to translate instantly into employees' preferred languages, then have a bilingual manager glance at anything safety- or benefits-related to make sure the nuance holds.

3. Adapt one message across every channel

Your frontline lives on SMS, break-room signage, and Teams or Slack — not just email. Instead of rewriting from scratch, have Cici spin a short SMS version and a cross-post summary from the same email, so the message stays consistent everywhere it lands.

4. Let real engagement data guide your timing

Frontline schedules aren't nine-to-five! Use Cici's send-time suggestions (based on your own engagement patterns!) to reach people when they're actually likely to look, not just when it's convenient for HQ.

Workshop

The best communications platform for frontline teams

CHAT WITH US



DASHBOARDCALENDARCAMPAIGNSEMAILTEXTPEOPLEMANAGE

Search iconCreate...User icon

Emails

Export CSVAny statusSearch emails...Create email

☐	Status	Name	Opens	Clicks	Campaign	Shared with	Owner
☐	Sent	Welcome New Hires	572	45			Carmen Pratt
☐	Sent	Manager Weekly Digest #8	459	121	Manager Monthly		Francis Carr
☐	Draft	All Hands 2.5.25			All Hands		Carmen Pratt
☐	Sent	Open Enrollment	812	336	-		Darlene Foster
☐		Upcoming events	0	0	-		

