

Lumi Say Gathers Views Across Africa and the Middle East for MTN

"Having this mobile link with our staff helped us bring the sentiment of our staff and leadership cadre to life" says Charl Cuyler, GM: Talent, Learning & Career Management at MTN."

Charl is more aware than most of the problems large corporations face trying to keep in touch with their staff when they are dispersed over a wide geographic region. MTN is the leading telecoms company in Africa and the Middle East, operating in 22 countries, with around 250 million customers and 22,000 staff. So it's no wonder that listening to everyone's views is a challenge.

Challenge – Making everybody's views important

Every year MTN invites its 250-strong leadership team to its head office in Johannesburg for a two-day gathering to help alignment around strategic priorities and touch base on how the company's vision of leading Africa into a bold new digital world is progressing. However, the company recognises that to be successful in this ambitious aim it needs to engage all of its staff and not just the leaders.

As employees are working across such a broad region extending from Nigeria and Ghana to Iran and Afghanistan this was not a straightforward call.

"We wanted to bring the voice of the staff into the meeting," explains Dané Osborne, SM Culture, Change & Engagement. "Candour is one of our vital behaviours and we recognised that only when we engaged everybody in the ongoing dialogue about our strategic plans would we be able to move forward and demonstrate that everyone's opinion matters."

Solution – Lumi Say encourages staff to speak up.

Dané explains that the company hadn't used an engagement app before. However, they chose Lumi Say as, with an average employee age of around 35 and a policy of keeping with their digital vision, they thought that a mobile app would be the most appropriate way to reach out to staff.

Lumi was chosen over other competitive solutions for key reasons. It includes the intuitive user interface and the fact that the platform could be customised with MTN's branding. But mainly, she says, it was Lumi's support.

"They were a very agile and service-orientated team. They quickly got their head around our business requirements and were able to respond to us in a very short space of time. In fact, they were able to accept and customise our content in what we felt was record time," she says.

"Then, of course, there was their professionalism in understanding our information security and corporate governance requirements – they met these effortlessly," she adds.

Lumi Say was re-branded as MTN's Speak-Up app, underlining the importance the company attaches to both honesty and engagement. Using the app they invited all staff to share their views and sentiments about the company's strategic direction using polls, rankings plus qualitative questions which could be answered using voice clips. MTN territory embraces many languages, but they made the decision to stick to English as most staff have at minimum basic English proficiency.

Results – thousands of voices brought to the meeting

The two-day Group Leadership Gathering was enhanced through the inclusion of staff sentiment and including the richness of staff viewpoints. During the event, Lumi's conference app, Lumi Show was used to give the leaders a chance to interact with the key note speakers, to pose questions and add pop-up comments throughout the event. The leaders could move around between breakouts seamlessly because of the up-to-date info and announcements received via Lumi Show.

The live voting and discussion facility of the app ensured that they could give their opinions in the moment, when it mattered. Logistical information (like bus transfer schedules and travel documents) was also loaded in the app for them to refer to. It's use further promoted MTN's digital vision and helped engage the leadership team before, during and after the conference.

However, it was really the voices of employees that stole the show. MTN took all the data received from Lumi Say, animated it and presented it to the conference.

"This gave the leaders an important context for considering our future direction," says Dané. "It helped them to understand our current position and make better-informed decisions about where we want to be in the future."

"It meant we really extended the reach of the meeting beyond the leaders and, by using more than one Lumi solution, we got so much more value from our investment in the event. When you think about it, the scope of this engagement was huge, giving thousands of employees the chance to have their say and be taken along the same journey as our leadership team."

