Microsoft Viva

Driving Adoption of Microsoft Viva

Best practices and tips from Microsoft's own internal adoption of Viva

Find more Viva adoption resources at
adoption.microsoft.com/viva

About this guide

We started deploying Microsoft Viva, the first employee experience platform (EXP) built for the hybrid era, during the spring of 2021. In the years since, we've learned a thing or two about adopting a new solution in a completely new category of technology. This guide passes those learnings along to you.

This isn't an instructional manual; it doesn't offer a rigid, step-by-step approach for adopting Viva. Instead, it's a set of best practices we discovered when deploying Viva at Microsoft. The guide follows the flow of a typical technology adoption, which means the best practices in Section 1 are generally the best practices you'll want to consider first. There are five sections:

1. **Define the change management process**
2. **Understand opportunities for value across roles**
3. **Launch**
4. **Activate Viva sponsors and champions**
5. **Drive ongoing engagement**

HR: your new best friend

IT should lead the deployment and adoption effort for Viva—just like most technology solutions. But HR is just as critical for success; in fact, you'll see that IT and HR need to act as one, cohesive team to drive Viva adoption. With that in mind, the very first thing you need to do is prove the value of Viva to HR adopters. It's crucial to show how Viva integrates into existing HR programs to enhance the HR function, not replace it. Viva supports HR's remit to boost the employee experience and, as such, the bottom line. Best practices on employee signals and proving value can help you prepare for that first HR conversation about Viva.

Resources

There are loads of resources for you to read, watch, and listen to throughout this guide. But since most of those are specific to a best practice, here are some high-level Viva resources to get you started.

- **Adoption guidance**
  adoption.microsoft.com/viva
- **Technical documentation**
  learn.microsoft.com/viva
- **Support for users**
  support.microsoft.com/viva
- **Stories about Microsoft and Viva**
  Select to read the stories
- **Microsoft's adoption framework**
  Select to access the framework

Define the change management plan

1

2

3

4

5

Define the change management plan

Even at Microsoft, adopting Microsoft Viva was (and continues to be) an enormous effort. John Cirone, Director of Global Employee and Executive Communications, puts it best: "It takes a village to deploy a product of this scale to a company this size." Viva adoption requires a thoughtful change management plan that enables IT, HR, and partners from each business unit to drive the transformation. But don't get too rigid: good ideas and unforeseen challenges will surface from unexpected places. The best plan sets strong guiding principles and allows for flexibility.

Support IT to take the lead

- Establish the right team with HR and the business
- Set the approach

Ensure a tight partnership between IT and HR

- Define each role to play to its strength
- Approach the business as one team

Embrace the challenge

- Incorporate lessons from Teams deployment
- Share best practices across business units
- Plan to be flexible

Even with rapid grassroots adoption of Viva at Microsoft, we can accelerate the value that employees receive through a structured change management program."

Keith Boyd
Senior Director of Business Programs,
Microsoft Digital

Microsoft

1

2

3

4

5

Support IT to take the lead

The decision for IT to lead Microsoft's adoption of Viva was unanimous—and for good reasons. "That's IT's superpower: seeing how things work end-to-end and helping drive consistency across the platform," says Amy Ceurvorst, Senior Business Program Manager for Microsoft's Employee Experience Success team. From a technology perspective, no department is as well positioned as IT to deploy Viva. But success can't happen in a silo, which is why HR and our individual business units partnered with IT throughout the adoption process at Microsoft.

- **Establish the right team with HR and the business**
  Viva itself won't transform your employee experience. It's a tool that requires thoughtful planning to use right. That's where our so-called "three-in-a-box" approach comes in. The "three" refers to a dedicated group of IT, HR, and business unit professionals—one from each department—who think critically about Viva and help recruit champions. At Microsoft, each Viva app had its own three-in-a-box team, but that's not a hard-and-fast rule. What's important is that each team works hand-in-hand to set the Viva strategy and steps for achieving it.

- **Set the approach**
  The three-in-a-box teams at Microsoft were responsible for

setting all our goals, timelines, and success measures for Viva. Critically, this meant top-level IT and HR goals were fused with bottom-up goals from the business. These IT-HR-business teams should set these parameters for the entire org *and* their own departments. Getting these specifics right up front helps ensure everyone pulls in the same direction when the real work starts.

Set goals, succeed together: ideas for goals across the org

Enterprise goals
- Employee engagement
- Meeting effectiveness
- Employee thriving
- Productivity

IT goals
- Monthly active usage
- User satisfaction
- User feedback volume

HR goals
- Manager effectiveness
- Employee retention
- Perks consumption

Business unit goals
- Training completion
- Key results (KR) achieved
- Focused-work optimization

1

2

3

4

5

Ensure a tight partnership between IT and HR

"It can't be HR vs. IT," says Rich Kaplan, General Manager of HR Digital Employee Experience. "You have to show up together." IT and HR are *the* key adoption stakeholders, representing both sides of the equation (the technology and the user). But they can't work in silos: their success together will define the success of Viva.

- **Define each role to play to its strengths**
  If goals define the end adoption result, then roles define the means for getting there. Distinguishing those roles was critical to the success of our "three-in-a-box" teams. Here's how we broadly defined each one, with specifics to the right.

  - **IT**: lead the technical deployment and adoption effort; plus, drive change management communications with HR

  - **HR**: act as the "voice of the customer," bringing feedback to IT and sharing value and usage scenarios with employees

  - **Business unit**: serve as the liaison between employees and IT and HR to ensure specific business priorities are met

- **Approach the business as one team**
  Despite the distinct goals and roles, it's critically important IT and HR act as one team. They should meet regularly, share a single list of blockers, and work with the business in lockstep.

Who's who in Viva adoption: the IT and HR alliance

IT manages the deployment, integration, feedback, and support experience for Viva in the enterprise

Testing
- Facilitate pilots and validate employee experience

Technical deployment
- Manage deployment and administration inclusive of local compliance requirements
- Define and manage support model

Change management
- Partner with HR to produce localized comms, training, and learning assets, and to collect and evaluate feedback

Define value
- Identify and establish success measures (OKRs), report out to key partners and stakeholders, and share learnings across the enterprise

HR aligns and leverages Viva to accelerate and promote cultural outcomes and goals in the enterprise

Alignment with HR initiatives
- Define/recommend usage scenarios by connecting with HR process(es) and company culture initiatives

Sponsorship and amplification
- Align HR comms with Viva solutions in global and local HR messaging
- Adopt Viva first within HR to provide early feedback, show commitment
- Partner with corporate/IT comms to craft and send employee messages in the right channels

Advocacy
- Collect feedback to advocate for employees and business units
- Partner with IT on recommendations to improve core experiences

1

2

3

4

5

Embrace the challenge

"Even though Viva is part of Microsoft 365, it's more of a business change than other Microsoft technology rollouts that customers have experienced in the past," says Marcus Young, Director of Employee Experience Success. EXPs are disruptive solutions (in the best kind of way), and Viva won't succeed if the business considers it an after-thought. Leadership must support transforming long-held processes and habits to get the most out of Viva, which makes this adoption particularly challenging. But if you're willing to embrace that challenge, the payoff for your people (and your bottom line) is worth it.

2X Organizations that doubled down on employee engagement in times of economic uncertainty **performed twice as well financially** as those that deprioritized it.[1]

- **Incorporate lessons from Teams deployment**
At Microsoft, the most comparable adoption effort to Viva in recent years is Microsoft Teams. It was a huge launch that changed many of our fundamental work practices. But that adoption was also hugely successful—so much so that we incorporated those best practices into our Viva launch. If your org also uses Teams, dig up those adoption plans. The systematic approach to Teams adoption can serve as your baseline for launching Viva too.

- **Share best practices across business units**
There's no better teacher than first-hand experience, which is how Microsoft's marketing org became the go-to resource for Viva adoption tactics. That org is led by Jared Spataro, who's enthusiastic and programmatic approach to Viva resulted in some of the best adoption numbers at the company. Naturally, other Microsoft orgs wanted marketing's secret sauce—and marketing was all too willing to share. The moral of the story is this: one team's success can help other teams succeed too, so share best practices liberally.

- **Plan to be flexible**
Given its complexity, there's no one-size-fits-all approach for adopting Viva. To reiterate an earlier point: you need a change management plan, but it should be flexible. Don't be afraid to adjust on the fly, especially as best practices surface. When you're ready to build that (flexible) plan, consider starting with the Microsoft Adoption Framework, a three-step approach (Envision, Onboard, Drive Value) designed for Microsoft 365.

[1]Microsoft. The New Performance Equation in the Age of AI. April 20, 2023.

Understand opportunities for value across roles

Understand opportunities for value across roles

1

2

3

4

5

The pandemic forever changed the things people value. According to our 2022 annual Work Trend Index report, 53% of employees are more likely to prioritize health and wellbeing over work than before the pandemic. We took this finding to heart and set out to understand the very specific employee priorities that Viva could support. By listening to our people, we tailored the Viva experience and adoption process to ensure it would add the most value for our people. Viva is designed to fit naturally into existing work habits, but it's still something new for employees to understand and embrace. That's why its critical to build confidence around the product through experiences that address their top priorities.

Gather employee signals

- Collect qualitative and quantitative data for the big picture

Tailor Viva to add immediate employee value

- Focus on managers and other key roles
- Start with the most impactful apps
- Leverage out-of-the-box app customizations

Address regional requirements

- Ask about regional preferences and customs
- Prepare for works councils

> For Viva to be successful, it must tie to company needs."

Rene Sanchez Almaguer
Senior Product Manager
Microsoft

1

2

3

4

5

Gather employee signals

Since Viva is still a new tool in the entirely new EXP category, proving its value to your people is one of the most important steps in the adoption process. The core value of technology is solving problems and streamlining processes—and that's true with Viva too. But you need to understand those problems and processes before addressing them, which is where employee signals come in. IT and HR should lead the charge in collecting employee data to both tweak the Viva experience and communicate its value at launch. Without that data, you'll be left to guess what's important to your org's employee experience.

- **Collect qualitative and quantitative data for the big picture**
  At Microsoft, we collected both qualitative and quantitative data to understand how Viva would add the most value for our people. The qualitative data, which is where we started, came from surveys and one-on-one conversations with different employee groups. For the quantitative data, we used telemetry tools to get a more nuanced view of how people use their technology, like which content searches fail the most in anticipation of rolling out Viva Topics. Asking questions with specific Viva apps in mind was particularly helpful for eventual launch activities. Collecting this data was a team effort, with IT, HR, and data analysts all helping on where to focus Viva value.

Asking the right questions: suggestions for collecting qualitative and quantitative data

Questions for surveys and employee conversations

- Viva helps me *(use an agree/disagree scale)*:
  - Feel more connected to my company and its mission
  - Be more productive
  - Thrive in a hybrid workplace
- What could Viva do to help you be more productive or feel more connected?
- The training collateral provided for Viva is adequate (true/false)

Tools and ideas for collecting data

- Usage data (via Microsoft 365 admin center)
- Analytics on top of survey data to identify themes/trends
- Interviews for key roles across regions and business units
- Early adopter programs and initiatives
- Champion and support communities

Remember, this is a **listening exercise**. Go with an open mind and expect the data to contradict preconceived notions about what's important to employees.

Tailor Viva to add immediate employee value

Viva is a robust EXP, with capabilities that touch almost every facet of the employee experience. The trick is determining which parts are most important to your org. This is where those employee signals pay off. Use that data to focus your Viva rollout on the right apps, people, and customizations to prove immediate value.

- **Focus on managers and other key roles**
Managers are hugely important to the employee experience and, likewise, to the Viva adoption process. They can act as trusted Viva champions for their team—so long as they see its value. Managers are constantly balancing their team's needs with leadership priorities, so Viva won't get much traction if it seems like another to-do. You can overcome this with targeted content that speaks directly to manager challenges. Consider a similar approach for other manager-type roles, like comms leads and knowledge managers, who are just as critical.

  Helpful resources: Work Trend Index report about managers, Viva guide for managers e-book

- **Start with the most impactful apps**
At Microsoft, we used our employee signals to decide which apps to rollout when—and to which business units. This meant some business units started with Viva Goals, while others deployed Viva Engage first. Starting with apps that brought

immediate value set first good impressions of Viva with our people, giving us a leg-up when deploying the entire suite.

- **Leverage out-of-the-box app customizations**
Viva is loaded with app customizations. Use them to your advantage during adoption: add high-impact cards to Viva Connections or frequently requested content to Viva Learning at launch to prove the solution's value right away.
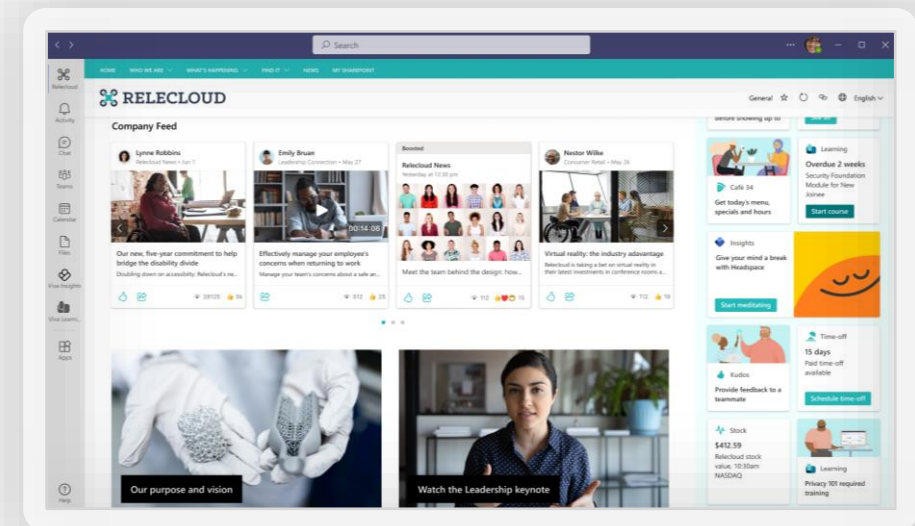
Choose Viva Connections cards—they're on the right side of this screenshot—that will most positively impact employees at launch.

Address regional requirements

1

There's no one-size-fits all approach for adopting Viva, and that's especially true at the regional level. Considering local preferences and regulations will go a long way in driving org-wide adoption.

2

- **Ask about regional preferences and customs**
  Every geography will value Viva differently, so ask about local preferences and customs while gathering employee signals. Then, tailor Viva accordingly to ensure it adds the most value for people in each location where your org operates.

3

- **Prepare for works councils**
  Coordinating with works councils is unavoidable in certain countries, especially when deploying Viva. Works councils are especially interested in technologies like Viva that could be used for performance or behavior monitoring and control. It's important to start your engagement early—it could take more than a year for approval—and to come prepared. The more information you share, the more likely you'll expedite the process. It's good to keep an open mind too: works councils can be a rich source of feedback since their members are the very people who will eventually use Viva.

4

5

  Helpful resources: Tips from Microsoft for partnering with works councils, Boost product and service rollouts through works council partnerships

Partnering with works councils: tactical guidance

Viva will likely require a **comprehensive works council review** because it could be used to:

- Monitor or control the performance or behavior of employees, like with Viva Insights
- Survey employees for feedback or workplace experiences, like with Viva Glint
- Enable training assignments, including mandatory training, and completion reporting, like with Viva Learning

Initiating a consultation with a works council typically involves three steps:

- Presenting a proposed version of the tool or feature
- Preparing to receive and consider the works council's feedback before implementation
- In countries that require co-determination (i.e., agreement from the works council is required), addressing feedback and making modifications

Before engaging a works council about Viva:

- Contact your HR, privacy, and legal teams to head off unforeseen blockers
- Determine whether a privacy or GDPR review is required

1

2

3

4

5

Launch

Launch

1

2

At Microsoft, we understood that launching Viva isn't the end of Viva adoption; instead, it's the beginning of an ongoing journey to prove value. This is where all those employee signals come in: when people see that the value of Viva aligns to their needs, they'll be much more willing to try it. So, we put as much effort into communicating the value of Viva as we did defining our change management plan. To do this, we tapped into a variety of methods and people, from internal research to top-level leaders, to keep the value of Viva front and center—all with the singular purpose of proving to our people that Viva will help them thrive.

3

Showcase value

- Present role-specific opportunities
- Validate value with ongoing Microsoft research

Get started!

4

- Broaden your reach
- Encourage leaders to take an active role
- Leverage Viva to launch Viva

5

"You need to make Viva about people. If you lead with tools, adoption will fall flat."

Maryleen Emeric
Chief of Staff, Modern Work & Business Applications
Microsoft

1

2

3

4

5

Showcase value

"If the tech helps you to better engage with your people—if you're thinking about org health, employee engagement, employee awareness—then it's a win and worth doing," says Jennie Locati, Chief of Staff for Collaborative Apps and Platforms. Before deploying a single Viva app, you need to communicate its value to your people. Viva is new technology in a new category of technologies, so while it's easy to use, it's not always obvious how employees can get the most out of its experiences. Fortunately, those hurdles can be your greatest advantage: Viva helps surface professional and personal opportunities that uniquely mesh with today's work.

- **Present role-specific opportunities**
  All good adoption programs start with the question, "What's in it for me?" People need to believe new technology will bring value to their specific role; otherwise, it's just another to-do. That's why our first launch step was to define high-impact employee experience scenarios for each role using employee signals. Some roles, like marketing, wanted more learning opportunities, while others, like operations, needed more efficient communication methods. Armed with those scenarios, we approached each role with Viva scenarios that unlocked specific opportunities to build excitement for launch.

- **Validate value with ongoing Microsoft research**
  In addition to work-specific opportunities, we also tapped into the emotional impact of Viva. The latest research, including our own, is clear that today's work is unprecedented, and people are still trying to navigate the change. Pair this research with role-specific opportunities to prove Viva can help employees find balance and wellbeing while continuing to excel on the job.

Modern history: resources for studying today's employee experience

- **WorkLab**
  The latest science and thinking from Microsoft and others about how, why, and where people work

- **Work Trend Index**
  A subset of WorkLab focused on research and data

- **Digital Transformation**
  Industry resources for unlocking value amid economic uncertainty

- **Josh Bersin**
  One of the leading thinkers on employee experience

1

2

3

4

5

Get started!

It's time to put all the planning to work and deploy Viva to your employees. But launch doesn't end after Day 1; it's an ongoing process of explaining how to use the solution and the value it brings to each role. Viva is a transformational technology, so use every means at your disposal to keep adoption top-of-mind.

- **Broaden your reach**
  When you adopt Viva, you adopt a new mindset about the employee experience. Such a significant technology requires creative methods to make it stick. Here are some of the tactics we used to help our people get started with Viva and understand its value for their role.

  - **Pilots** among small, representative employee groups; consider the Microsoft Early Adopter Program too

  - **An IT partnership with operations** to help onboard communication leads even faster

  - **Existing org-wide comms** with nods to Viva; align these to other related company moments to maximize reach

  - **Local communities**, like office hours, focus groups, all-hands events, and Yammer or Viva Engage groups; tap into communities with overlapping goals too

- **HR-led comms** to encourage specific activities, like booking Focus time or taking Viva Learning courses

- **Encourage leaders to take an active role**
  Microsoft's leaders were the No. 1 advocates for Viva, taking an active, hands-on approach throughout the adoption process. Just like others in the org, leaders need to understand the value Viva brings to get on board. Once they're bought in, encourage them to start using apps like Viva Engage and Viva Amplify to scale their adoption messaging on a more personal level. This is a great time to pull in an executive's operations team to build the right comms strategy. Executives are excellent Viva advocates, of course, but don't ignore leaders at other levels of the org too, especially if they have employee experience expertise. There's even more detail about engaging leaders as adoption sponsors in the next section.

- **Leverage Viva to launch Viva**
  A great way showcase the value of Viva is through the solution itself. For example, consider leveraging Viva Goals to set your adoption OKRs and Viva Engage to communicate upcoming changes (instead of email). In fact, if those apps align to employee signals, deploy them first with an official launch announcement of Viva all-up. Seeing how Viva works in real life can reassure employees and help drive adoption.

1

2

3

4

5

Activate Viva sponsors and champions

1

2

3

4

5

Activate Viva sponsors and champions

"It's really important to give people a reason to believe," says Emeric, who works specifically with Jared Spataro, Microsoft's Corporate Vice President for Modern Work, in her role. Jared is the executive Viva sponsor for our marketing org, which hit 80% adoption shortly after launch. Emeric attributes much of that success to the org's programmatic approach to promoting Viva. It was a serious, structured project that engaged people at every level, with Jared at the helm, to get the rest of marketing excited about Viva.

Build a structured program around champions

- Treat the champions program like other high-impact projects
- Recruit enthusiasts at every level

Tap top-level executives

- Engage the CEO's direct reports
- Kick-off adoption with an executive-led event
- Encourage executives to use Viva publicly

Expand your champions network

- Steer people to Viva through employee help services
- Organize a team of adoption experts for each business unit
- Evangelize Viva using rhythm-of-business comms

The most effective way of driving adoption is through sponsorship."

Marcus Young
Director of Employee Experience Success
Microsoft

1

2

3

4

5

Build a structured program around champions

Given all the other planning and technical considerations of adopting Viva, it might be tempting to skimp on the champions program. But it's impossible to overstate the importance of sponsorship—just see Young's quote on the previous page. Our champions program at Microsoft was the No. 1 driver of Viva adoption, especially when leaders got involved. Take champions seriously and your people will do the same with Viva.

- **Treat the champions program like other high-impact projects**
  Your champions program should follow the same process as other critical projects: set goals, define roles, create a timeline, host a kick-off call, etc. You'll also want to determine success metrics—we'd recommend daily usage—to track over time, as well as a rewards system, like digital badges, for champions. You'll recruit more champions if there's something in it for them, even something small. Regular leadership check-ins are a good idea too, which could even lead to more sponsors.

- **Recruit enthusiasts at every level**
  The best champions are those who would promote Viva anyway, like existing people champions and early tech adopters. You should also ask leaders for nominees, as well as consider people in support roles. Ideally, try to find at least one champion for each general manager-led team.

A reason to believe: qualifying the value of Viva to recruit champions

The idea of an EXP is very new, which can make it difficult to prove the value of Viva. And if you can't prove value, you'll struggle to recruit sponsors, especially among leadership. "With executives, being able to make your point quickly and bring deliberate value to generate sponsorship is very, very key," says Jason McWreath, Director of Business Programs for Microsoft Digital Employee Experience. Here are a few tips for giving potential champions a reason to believe in (and sponsor) Viva.

- **Create curated content**
  Everyone is busy, so broad communications about Viva won't land. Instead, use the opportunities from Step 2 to create targeted messaging about value, especially for leaders and managers.

- **Zero-in on specific apps**
  Every Viva app has unique value—and can be uniquely valuable to certain roles. Determine which roles benefit the most from each app, then promote *that* value to *that* role (instead of approaching every role with the same broad value of the entire Viva suite).

- **Compare and contrast**
  If Viva is replacing a long-used solution, continuously demonstrate the benefits of Viva compared the legacy product. Don't stop after the initial push; keep the value of Viva top-of-mind.

1

2

3

4

5

Tap top-level executives

"You need a solid sponsor—and it really helps if it's someone at the top levels of leadership," says Ceurvorst. Executives are often at the forefront of transformational change, and Microsoft is no exception. There was a direct link between leadership involvement and the success of Viva adoption at Microsoft. That's why it's nonnegotiable for your top-level leaders to take an early, active role in the adoption process.

- **Engage the CEO's extended network**
  There's no getting around it: adopting Viva is a major undertaking. It's the kind of project that needs engagement from the highest levels of leadership. From Satya Nadella, Microsoft's CEO, to corporate vice presidents of Modern Work and IT, our executives are either leading adoption workstreams or strategically promoting Viva among their teams. It's critical your executives do the same.

- **Kick-off adoption with an executive-led event**
  Transforming the employee experience is a big deal, and the announcement needs to match. Some of our leaders hijacked their annual all-hands meeting to kick-off adoption; others organized an entirely separate event (complete with Viva-branded T-shirts). Whatever you decide, make a big splash, and make sure your top-level leaders are the face of it.

- **Encourage executives to use Viva publicly**
  One of the best ways to endorse a solution is to use it. Our executives understand this and actively leverage Viva for their day-to-day work. Encourage your executives to replace (or combine) traditional tools for things like communications, knowledge sharing, and goal setting with Viva. Doing so will give others the confidence to follow their lead.
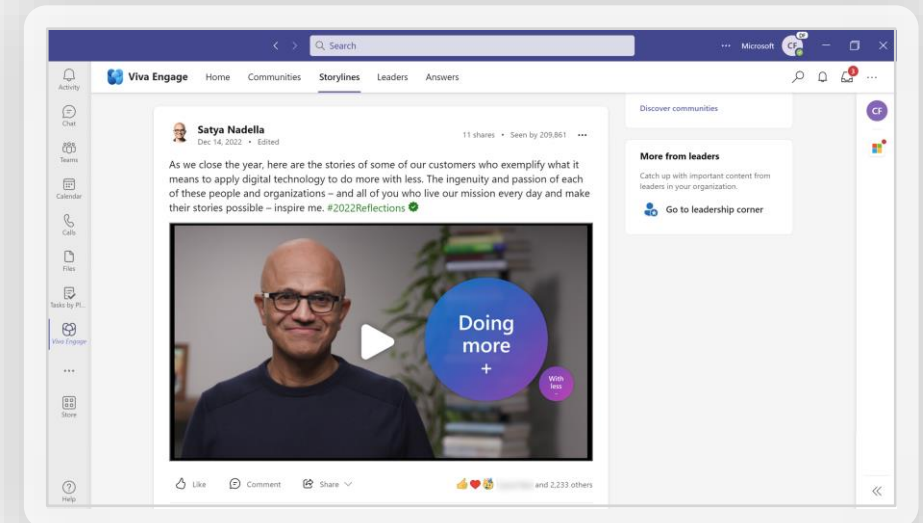
Satya launched his #2022Reflections campaign through Viva Engage instead of an email blast to connect more personally with employees.

1

2

3

4

5

Expand your champions network

Viva adoption is an all-hands effort, which is why we engaged every facet of Microsoft's business to support it. From business managers to the Help Desk, everyone can (and should) help spread the word about Viva. The expanded champions network can serve the dual purpose of app experts too. Dedicated, enthusiastic SME groups are perfect for sharing the value of Viva while also helping teams get started with the solution.

- **Steer people to Viva through employee help services**
  Just like leadership's support staff, Microsoft's IT and HR support groups are on the frontlines of Viva adoption. Viva is a new solution in a new category of solutions, so there are a lot of employee questions about how it works—and support teams, like the Help Desk, are the first people to hear them. With a little training, and possibly help from Answers in Viva, those teams can promote Viva and encourage employees to switch from a legacy solution during routine support calls.

- **Organize a team of adoption experts for each business unit**
  Our champions often had the most technical expertise about Viva too. So, we organized these Viva enthusiasts/experts into dedicated SME groups that supported each business unit. Those groups led the adoption process for their respective units, helping employees configure and get started with Viva.

They implemented best practices for each app too, helping drive process consistency across Microsoft. Of all the practices we heard while creating this guide, establishing a dedicated adoption team was among the top suggestions.

- **Evangelize Viva using rhythm-of-business comms**
  The 900 or so people who support Microsoft leadership are at the forefront of our adoption effort. These chiefs of staff and business managers are the voice of our executives, which makes them powerful allies for talking about Viva. We worked closely with this group to infuse Viva into their everyday communications, which, of course, carry leadership bylines. They are also a great resources for understanding how Viva can address specific executive challenges—without asking the actual executives, who keep very busy schedules.

Viva in the flow of work: places to promote Viva

- Leadership comms, like newsletters, town halls, and all-hands calls
- Yammer and Teams channels, especially for usage tips
- New employee onboarding sessions and org-wide wellbeing days
- Tech support calls and posters around the Help Desk office
- In-app notifications in legacy solutions

1

2

3

4

5

Drive ongoing engagement

1

2

3

4

5

Drive ongoing engagement

At Microsoft, one of the hardest part of adopting Viva was the resistance to change. Microsoft is a big company with lots of history of how things should be done. But the transition to hybrid work and evolving work-life priorities demand we reevaluate those long-held habits—and employee engagement is one of the best ways to do this. Continue to champion the value of Viva, send helpful content, and take feedback after launch. This doesn't mean IT and HR need a long-term Viva taskforce; instead, expand on what you built during adoption and bake that into the regular rhythms of business.

Help everyone overcome long-held habits

- Embrace change, even if it contradicts old processes

Reassure your people

- Address data privacy concerns upfront
- Offer regular guidance

Continuously monitor and adjust

- Incorporate employee feedback to improve the experience
- Quantify and share success

> Viva has an opinion about things, and you have to listen and act."

Rich Kaplan
General Manager of HR Digital Employee Experience
Microsoft

1

2

3

4

5

Help everyone overcome long-held habits

"One challenge with Viva is that it sometimes brings a point of view about best practices, which can differ from current processes," says Young. This was certainly true at Microsoft, where some of the best practices from Viva differed from our established internal processes and solutions. To address this, we worked with internal process owners in HR and other groups to find a solution before landing Viva with employees. If you run into the same problem, remember to take it slow, be flexible, and continue to prove value.

- **Embrace change, even if it contradicts old processes**
  There are two opposing examples at Microsoft that accentuate this dilemma. The first is about Viva Learning, which replaced our legacy LXP that served more than 300,000 people who had adopted its rhythms. On the flip side was Viva Topics. Unlike our strong learning culture, knowledge management has been much more haphazard at Microsoft. Despite their differences, these use cases teach the same lesson: long-held habits can form around a defined system (our legacy LXP) or no system at all (our knowledge management approach).

  Luckily, reshaping old habits, defined or otherwise, requires a similar approach. First, don't move too fast. We ran our legacy LXP in tandem with Viva Learning for several months to help employees transition. Flexibility is also key. In another example,

our business unit leaders, not our executives, decided if replacing Azure DevOps with Viva Goals was the right decision for their teams. And finally, keep proving value. Highlight the general benefits of Viva (e.g., discoverability, navigability, etc.) while focusing on the perks of each app. For us, that was automatic scheduling for Viva Learning; centralized knowledge management for Viva Topics; and, cross-org transparency for Viva Goals.
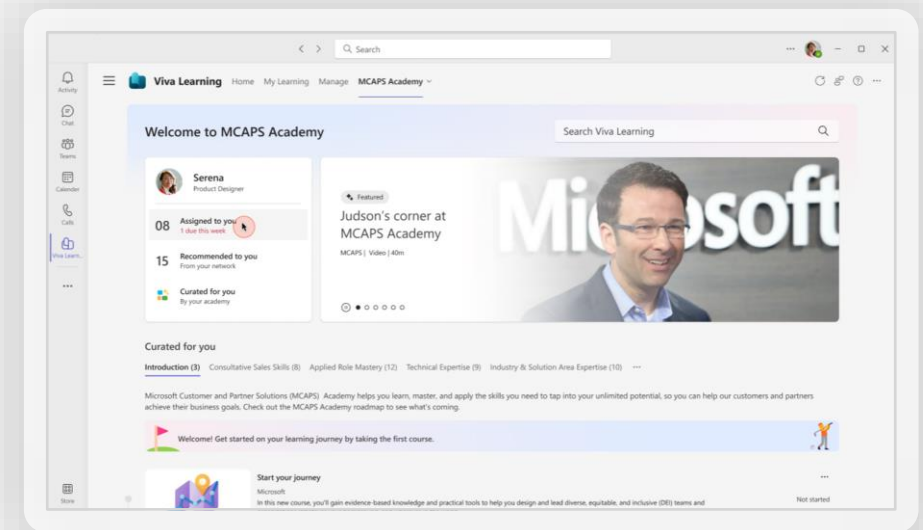
Viva Learning gives teams like MCAPS, our sales org, more options, like automatic scheduling and role-based academies, than our old LXP.

1

2

3

4

5

Reassure your people

Adopting Viva is a big ask for employees, especially if it's replacing a legacy system. Keeping a regular comms cadence that addresses concerns and offers tips can reassure your most hesitant adopters.

- **Address data privacy concerns up front**
  "There's always the question around privacy, and rightly so," says Kanwal Safdar, Senior Director for Microsoft's HRBI group. "But it's not a blocker per se; it's just a challenge." Viva, and particularly Viva Insights, relies on personal sentiment and behavioral data to deliver the right experiences. To prevent undue stress—people might worry that their individual work data could be used against them—it's critical to explain Viva's privacy safeguards to employees early. You can use our privacy by design page as a starting point. Additionally, if you're concerned about negative preconceptions around artificial intelligence, our article on responsible AI can help. Ultimately, the benefits from data insights and AI greatly outweigh the concerns, so long as you address those concerns up front.

- **Offer regular guidance**
  When we deployed Yammer at Microsoft more than 10 years ago, it was a haphazard affair. Like Viva, Yammer is easy to use but needs a purposeful approach to use well. There are now thousands of unstructured Yammer groups at Microsoft—the

result of deploying a big solution with no guidance. We didn't make the same mistake with Viva. Long after launch, we're still sending regular guidance to our people, technical and otherwise. We've found that it's especially valuable to pair wellbeing advice with enabling Viva features. For example, we'll remind employees and managers about the wellness and productivity benefits of Focus time in Viva Insights. Messages like that promote feature usage and continue to keep the value of Viva front and center, both of which drive adoption.

Privacy by design: how Viva Insights surfaces data-driven insights without infringing on individual privacy

- Individual privacy is built around data aggregation, de-identification, and differential privacy

- Personal insights, which are based on work patterns from emails, meetings, calls, and chats, are only accessible to that specific person

- Manager and leader insights leverage differential privacy to ensure individuals cannot be identified

- Since Viva Insights is built on Microsoft 365, it meets requirements for compliance standards like GDPR

1

2

3

4

5

Continuously monitor and adjust

The employee experience is constantly evolving. What's important today could change next year—or even next month. By continuing to solicit feedback and quantify success, you can stay on top of those changes and adjust Viva accordingly.

- **Incorporate employee feedback to improve the experience**
Collecting feedback about Viva after launch serves two purposes: it helps you improve the experience and proves you're listening to and invested in your people's wellbeing. We solicit most of our post-launch feedback through surveys—but thoughtful, timely surveys. Too many broad-brush surveys can lead to fatigue, so we typically survey on specific events. Asking about Viva in the context of a recent campaign, conference, or announcement produces more actionable responses. For the surveys themselves, we use Viva Glint for its quantifiable data around employee signals.

- **Quantify and share success**
Everyone loves a feel-good story, especially when it impacts their wellbeing. So, share those Viva success stories! Tell your people how it's going, using metrics like monthly active users, engaged quality learners, or the number of new Viva Topics pages to drive home the success. Constant encouragement through verifiable success is a huge boon to adoption.

Wrap-up resources

Viva has a lot to offer to every role. As you work through your adoption journey, use the following resources to determine which apps and capabilities make the most sense for your people.

- **Viva Goals** for aligning employee's work to team and organization goals

- **Viva Glint** and **Viva Insights** for transforming employee feedback and insights into action

- **Viva Connections** and **Viva Engage** for modernizing how you communicate and engage

- **Viva Learning** and **Viva Topics** for helping your workforce learn, grow, and succeed

- **Viva Sales** for turbocharging sales productivity with an AI-driven assistant in the flow of work

We also invite you to join the **Microsoft Viva Community** to connect with employee experience experts and peers.

Microsoft Viva