

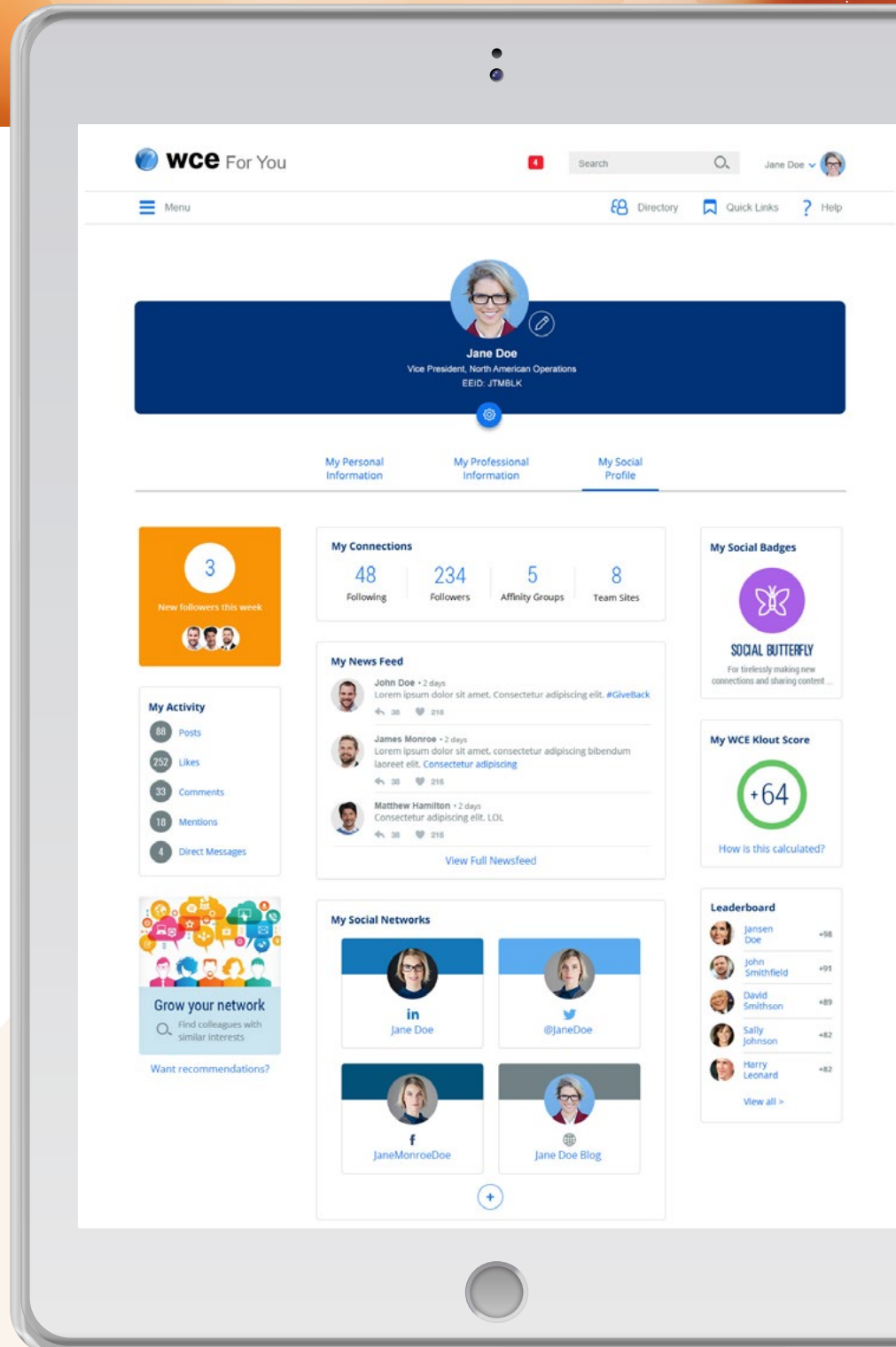
# Making the Case for the Universal Employee Profile

The most influential organizations are [undertaking transformational shifts in their work practices](#), adopting new digital capabilities that empower employees in practices they've already adopted as consumers. Many large organizations are focused on mobilizing existing talent in newly productive ways through digitalization – a strategic priority that also necessitates understanding their talent on individual and systemic levels. To mobilize digital-first talent programs, companies should start by reimagining the employee profile as a single, data-rich entity that can drive engagement, fuel connectivity, and power business intelligence.

As organizations move to digital-first solutions via acquisition of capable vendor and cloud-based services, there is an opportunity to look across the business ecosystem and normalize the numerous fragmented employee profiles that are found in so many individual applications. From the ERP to directories, learning solutions, job posting sites, social platforms – even candidate and new hire apps – many key properties have employee profiles as part of their functional capability. And while some variability exists in terms of what data is associated with what profile, it's fair to say there is too much redundancy and a dearth of standardization.

Beyond the governance challenge and data integrity issues this implies, employees have little incentive to maintain all this data on any regular basis. As a result, profiles age, data is of questionable usefulness, and businesses can't rely on any intelligence beyond the most fact-based, evergreen data about their people.

It's an age-old problem that few businesses would say they have effectively solved. In today's push to go digital, it's high time not only to address this pain point but also to create new value for the business and for people. *Continue on page 3.*



# How much employee data in the Employee Experience?

As important data and services move to the cloud or become logically consolidated in constructs like a unified employee profile, it seems intuitively true that these elements should be removed from other properties in the ecosystem. On the surface, it's sensible to allow each piece of the employee experience to focus uniquely on its own scope of capabilities and avoid redundant functionality. But before subtracting data from any one piece of the experience (or deciding to keep it out if it's not already there), it pays to consider whether some elements can bring broader value without creating unnecessary redundancy.

While each piece of the ecosystem plays a unique role in the digital employee experience, it's the interoperability of these pieces that creates the connective tissue that is the basis of context and usefulness. Thoughtful designs incorporate key data from across the ecosystem, based on anticipated good outcomes for people. This might be, for example, an attention management mechanism that alerts employees to issues requiring action and suggests opportunities for participation. Just-in-time business intelligence could provide key guidance, decision support, and insight during a scenario or event. Data can even serve purposes of influence when the design is functioning as a channel of change.

So, before eliminating employee data to avoid redundancy, consider experience-first ideas:

#### ▼ **Manage attention & awareness**

Can the data highlight a situation that requires attention or awareness, where action is needed or participation suggested?

#### ▼ **Guide cultural alignment:**

As an embedded part of the experience, does the data help to change mindsets, support a social engagement strategy, advance a collaborative network, model good leadership, or encourage innovative participation?

#### ▼ **Build organizational capability**

Does the data drive engagement, reinforce an idea or behavior, or present a learning opportunity that shouldn't be missed?

#### ▼ **Provide critical context**

Is there a context in the experience in which the data is highly relevant or guiding, and particularly useful in the moment?

#### ▼ **Realize ROI of existing assets:**

Does the data help encourage or direct someone with a clear purpose to a property or resource they might not have otherwise visited?

With considerations such as these in mind, we begin to see how leveraging key data in highly relevant contexts can enhance the employee experience. One consideration that may deter such an approach is the level of effort to incorporate this data into the experience. Fortunately, the trend has been towards increased interoperability, with many cloud vendors offering web services and programmatic interfaces that are geared toward enabling precisely the type of seamless integration that is needed to support a digitally-enhanced employee experience.

A thoughtful examination of what data from across the ecosystem to mobilize is key to the design process. Moreover, while incorporating raw data shows promise for the near term, as we look ahead we can imagine intelligent systems that leverage machine learning and AI to reason about data, predict intent, and drive recommendation engines, thus driving hyper-personalization and enabling more relevant contextualization of the experience.



## The opportunity for organizations

The value proposition for businesses is the prospect of building a powerful and competitive digital ecosystem in which a reliable, standard employee profile connects people to others, to knowledge, and to opportunities both inside and outside the organization. New connectivity enables a more adaptable workforce that self-organizes through convergence of employees with common purpose and interests. These flatter, networked, less rigid organizations can innovate and ideate at scale and quickly. Knowledge-sharing behaviors proliferate beyond the trap-store-disseminate models of the past.

Profiles allow people to find and be found throughout the organization, empowering them to collaborate and share interests, expertise, and lessons learned. Organizations can invite this participation with rewards that incentivize aligned behaviors and recognize top contributors for sharing their passions and stories, benefitting individuals and the business at large.

## What's in it for people

A robust profile allows employees to brand themselves, advertise their expertise and accomplishments, and engage with others across the globe who are like-minded or share interests. Personal development can be self-directed and tailored to an individual's aspirations and goals. Experiential opportunities build leadership and create exposure through channels and affiliations previously unavailable or difficult to find. More avenues for participation create an environment differentiated by broad exposure to career and mobility opportunities, where talent is challenged, engaged, and fulfilled.

A universal employee profile – one designed as a digital utility in an employee experience – is a win-win for the organization and for people. Far-reaching benefits and capabilities are at stake, and it's time to get this right.



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## Enabling purposeful confluences of employer/employee brand

Employees respond intuitively to experiences that are hyper-personalized and individually meaningful in context across large business ecosystems. When these experiences are realized, businesses deliver cultural and brand alignment and execute digital business strategies, while the digital utility itself becomes a place where each employee's personal and unique brand can flourish alongside (and inside) the organization's. As employers strive to deliver rich, modern digital experiences that are expected by people and anticipated by consumer trends, **the employee profile as a digital utility paves the way for cohesive individualized journeys and enables a purposeful confluence of employee-employer brand – a win-win for organizations and people.**