Sift

How Modern Companies Connect

A Data Study of
Modern People Directory Usage

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High Performing Organizations are Struggling to Connect

As the world becomes increasingly digital, organizations are facing a growing imperative to move faster, adapt more quickly, learn more rapidly, and embrace the dynamic nature of the modern world.
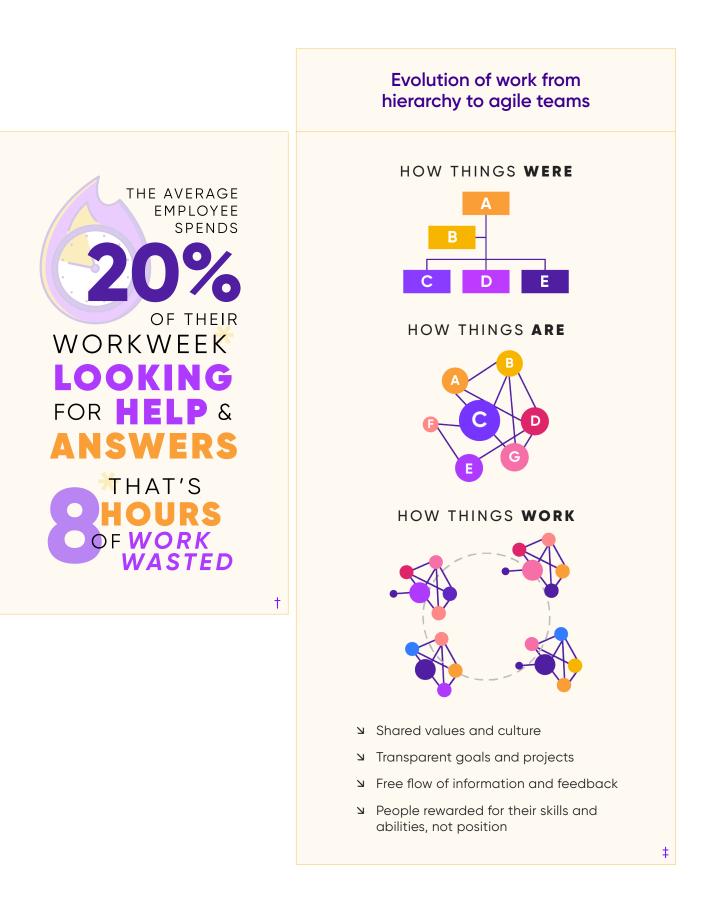
The workforce today is more collaborative and distributed than it has ever been—with teams working across continents, time zones, and functional areas to collaborate.

A host of new digital tools has made communications between these agile teams possible in ways never before imagined. In fact, the ability for a workforce to instantly communicate across the globe is now ubiquitous. The challenge for modern organizations has shifted from ensuring that employees can communicate, to empowering team members to leverage the full power of their network of colleagues.

While the digital communication tools organizations now leverage have changed drastically in the past decade, the way organizations leverage their talent has not kept pace. Even in the most progressive companies the size of an individual employee's internal network is often a function of how long they have been in the organization. In fact, tribal knowledge is often the default way critical information including skills, experience, and education are "stored". Finding the right person(s) is done by asking around the proverbial water cooler to see who holds the key piece of knowledge needed to move a critical task forward.

Navigating these tribal knowledge networks takes time. A lot of it. A recent **McKinsey Global Institute** report highlighted the scope of this challenge, finding that employees spend an average of 20% of the work week looking for help and answers.

THE AVERAGE EMPLOYEE SPENDS **20%** OF THEIR WORKWEEK **LOOKING** FOR **HELP** & **ANSWERS** THAT'S **8 HOURS** OF *WORK WASTED*

†

Evolution of work from hierarchy to agile teams

HOW THINGS **WERE**

HOW THINGS **ARE**

HOW THINGS **WORK**

↘ Shared values and culture
↘ Transparent goals and projects
↘ Free flow of information and feedback
↘ People rewarded for their skills and abilities, not position

‡

If the digital collaboration tools organizations leverage are the modern iteration of the telephone (allowing our team members to communicate), what is the modern equivalent of the phone book?

The reality is that many organizations don't yet leverage a dedicated tool to help their employees explore their knowledge, skills, and experience of their talent network. While organizations maintain rudimentary employee directories, these tools don't expose each team member's unique skills and experience. LinkedIn likely knows more about the skills of an employee than their employer does.

Companies Adopted the Modern People Directory to Connect Their People

Organizations looking to become adaptable and team-centric have begun adopting modern people directories. These tools combine critical administrative information—such as contact and organization information—with user generated details on skills, past project experience, and other individual details. These people directories are much more than simply rosters of names and faces, they are the portal through which employees can instantly access the collective knowledge of their organization.

In order to understand the value of the modern people directory in connecting team members, this study looked at 6 months worth of data from the Sift people directory. Real-world usage data from over 130 companies leveraging Sift was analyzed to determine usage trends across business areas and employee levels and to understand how end users were using their modern people directory and organizational chart.

Study Scope

- ↘ Study based on data collected from Sift's modern people directory
- ↘ Six months of consecutive data collected from September 2019 through February 2020
- ↘ Companies on the Sift platform range from small (100 employees) to large enterprises (10,000 plus employees) in a wide range of industries

Key Findings

- ↘ The modern people directory is used by every team member.
- ↘ The ability to discover unknown or semi-known team members is the primary usage.
- ↘ Access to an organizational chart is not just a nice to have.
- ↘ Game changing data is now available to improve experience.

> " My company is rather large, which can lead to team members feeling disconnected, especially since we've got offices across the country and remote team members in other countries. Having a professional networking capability solves for real time problems. "
>
> **Ashley A. | Reviewer from G2 Crowd**

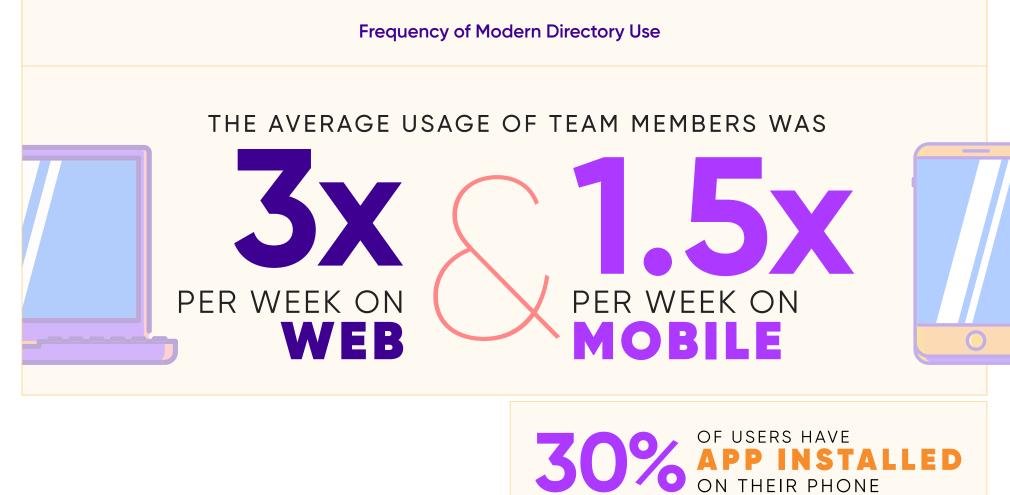## Usage Shows The Modern People Directory is Essential

A modern people directory is one of the few tools that everyone in an organization uses—and the data proves it. Over 99% of employees leveraged the people directory during the study period.

> I literally could not do my job without it. Search is very intuitive and makes finding people and information I need quick and easy.
>
> **Joel A. | Senior Business Analyst**

> Sift saves my a** on the daily.
>
> **Michael V. | Sales Director**

> Can't express how much I love this tool. Yesterday, I had a client who needed a licensed banker for a particular state, but the banker needed to be based in Cleveland, Ohio. Ask me how hard it would have been to track someone down with that criteria two years ago. In Sift, it took two minutes. Well done, well done.
>
> **K'lynn B. | Client Advocate**

Frequency of Modern Directory Use

THE AVERAGE USAGE OF TEAM MEMBERS WAS

3x & 1.5x
PER WEEK ON **WEB** PER WEEK ON **MOBILE**

30% OF USERS HAVE **APP INSTALLED** ON THEIR PHONE

Every Department Uses the Modern Directory

Unsurprisingly, the usage of the modern people directory scales in relation with department size. The major exception to this is human resources. This makes sense as the people data in a modern directory is critical to their daily work which would account for their jump in usage by department.

These exceptions make sense as marketing and communications is a more collaborative role than finance. As for human resources, the people data in a modern directory is critical to their daily work which would account for their jump in usage by department.
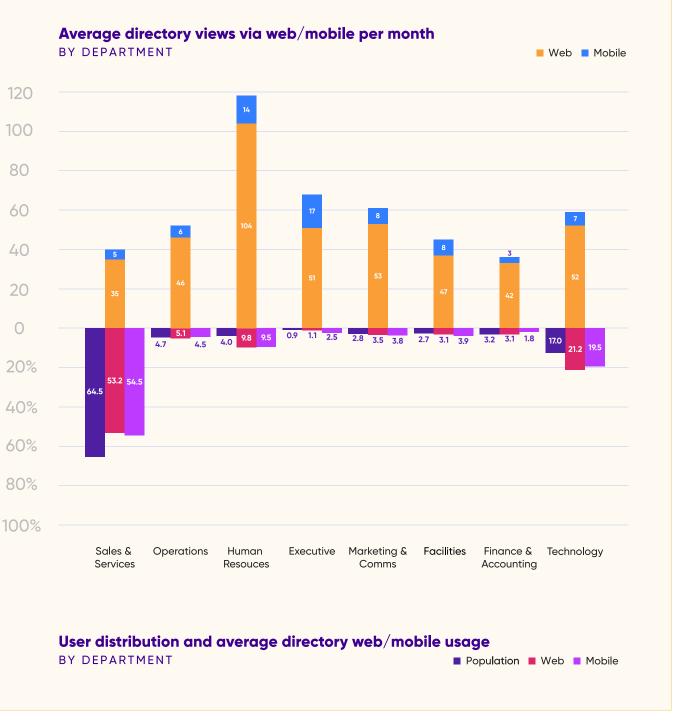
Web Usage by Department

This fact is further emphasized when looking at the web usage per month per user. Human resources accesses the people directory most often with 104 views per month per user. Internal recruiting, people trends, and people profiles are just some of the functionality that helps human resources to do their jobs.

The lowest number of views per month is from sales and services at 35 views per month per user but volume of use should not be conflated with value. Quite the opposite as sales and services is the frontline to customers and business is won and lost based on their ability to find the person with the right expertise to help them answer customer questions.

Mobile Usage by Department

Mobile usage by department highlights some interesting differences from the web: Executives sky rocketed to the top position with 17 views per month per executive. Many executives travel and are in meetings frequently, so it is reasonable that their usage would be primarily via mobile devices.

Average directory views via web/mobile per month
BY DEPARTMENT

Legend: Web, Mobile

User distribution and average directory web/mobile usage
BY DEPARTMENT

Legend: Population, Web, Mobile

Facilities also climbed up in mobile usage compared to other departments. This is likely due to the fact that many facilities positions involve moving throughout a building where mobile access is their only option.

These changes also point to the criticality of the modern people directory for other workers who travel or are away from their desk often: without a modern people directory, how do people perform these types of searches while on the go?

Sales and Services were near the bottom of the list for mobile access which is surprising. That said, many sales organizations have reduced or eliminated the need for on-site visits. Accounting and Finance also dropped off versus desktop usage, however their roles are often office based on relatively static teams.

Comparing Web and Mobile Directory Usage

Comparing the data for web access versus mobile access to the modern directory reveals three points of interest.

↘   There is high usage of human resources in both web and mobile.

↘   There is surprisingly high usage of mobile and average usage of web amongst executive users.

↘   Every department is a frequent user of the modern directory.

> My role has a lot of internal communication involved, and I use Sift every single day multiple times an hour. It's amazing. I honestly don't know how I used to do my work without Sift and I am forever grateful.
>
> **Crystal F. | Internal Recruiter**

> So handy for me to use in my daily work as a copywriter. Not only can I find contact information, I can easily get the background information I often need for a project. It saves me hours (maybe days) in research work.
>
> **Marge S. | Senior Copywriter**

> Sift has allowed me to track down dependencies on projects that were otherwise roadblocked. Through "systems I support", the org chart, and skills section; I was able to locate and get in touch with key subject matter experts that otherwise would be extremely labor intensive to find.
>
> **Matt D. | Product Owner**

Discovering Colleagues is Priority One

The most common use case for the modern people directory is to find a person within the organization. The need to find a colleague can happen for a variety of reasons such as:

- ↘ To find contact information
- ↘ To learn more about a person before taking action
- ↘ To find an expert to help solve a problem
- ↘ To internally recruit

People Search Happens Daily

Looking at the people searches executed on both web and mobile and dividing that by unique users equates to 92.2 searches per user during the period. This means users are searching the modern people directory almost daily with an average of 4 searches per week.

The most common search term was a person's name—typically only their first name, then filters were used. This is a simple illustration of the failure point in traditional employee directories where it is extremely difficult to find a person with only a first name. The second most common search was to discover people by searching on a skill, job role or department.For example, "JavaScript", an in-demand skill, was searched 79.5 times per month or almost 20 times per week.

USERS SEARCH THE MODERN PEOPLE DIRECTORY AN AVERAGE OF **4X WEEK**

"JAVASCRIPT" WAS SEARCHED ALMOST **20x WEEK**

MOST COMMON SEARCHES

1 First Name + Filter
2 Skill or Job Role + Filter

" Someone else at my company saw Power BI in my list of skills, and reached out to see if I could help him solve a problem. The report I created is now being used by many other teams!

David R. | Logistics Coordinator

Sift is an amazing way to solve for "who knows about x or y" and allows you to find the subject matter expert. It's an indispensable resource to in seconds, whether on the app or desktop site, you can find folks who are able to help with translation, with technology, and with necessary expertise to complete projects and achieve client goals.

Ashley A. | Reviewer from G2 Crowd

I needed a notary today, searched for "notary" and found over 100 people!

Bill P. | CEO

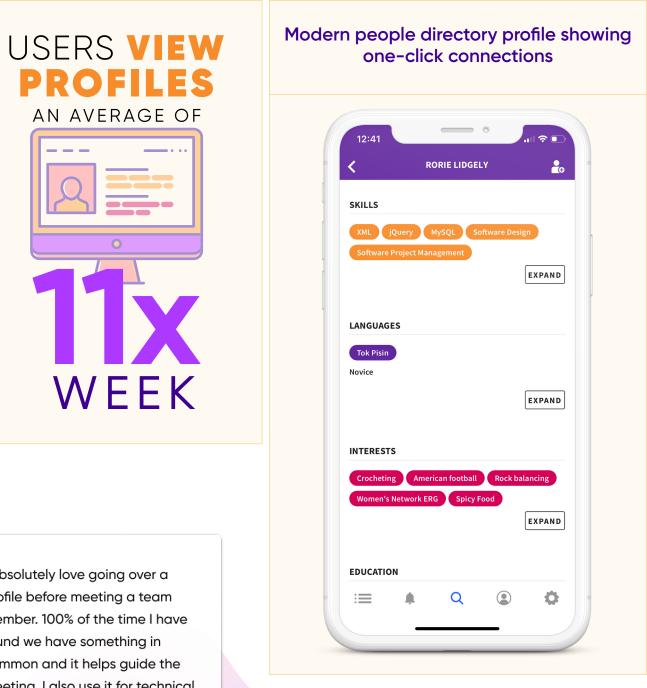Sift is the best... I can find anyone in a matter of 10 seconds.

Jake P. | Team Leader "

After Discovery Comes Connection

Team members, particularly in a distributed workplace, want to be able to humanize their interactions. Reviewing the profile of a team member provides a better understanding of who they are working with and ways to connect on a professional and personal level.

The data collected reveals that users viewed colleague profiles an average of 261 times during the period. This boils down to an average of 11 profile views per user per week.

Another way people use the directory to connect is to find the most up-to-date contact information for the people they want to communicate with. Those users end up making a list of email addresses. While mostly a feature used by those in communication roles, 2.2% of unique users utilized this function to create email lists during this 6 month period.

USERS **VIEW PROFILES** AN AVERAGE OF

11x WEEK

SKILLS

XML   jQuery   MySQL   Software Design

Software Project Management

EXPAND

LANGUAGES

Tok Pisin

Novice

EXPAND

INTERESTS

Crocheting   American football   Rock balancing

Women's Network ERG   Spicy Food

EXPAND

EDUCATION

" I absolutely love going over a profile before meeting a team member. 100% of the time I have found we have something in common and it helps guide the meeting. I also use it for technical reasons such as where they sit, how long they've been in the company and what business area they operate in.

Maria S. | Market Manager

Sift makes it easy to contact and connect with team members, add them to my phone contacts (one-click!), and find common interests.

Brennan S. | Director, State and Local Government Affairs "

Interactive Org Chart Highly Popular

Organizations are complex. The way one department is arranged may be completely different to another—especially when considering a global organization. The ability to browse through the organizational chart is key for new team members as they seek to understand the new network of team members that they've entered into.
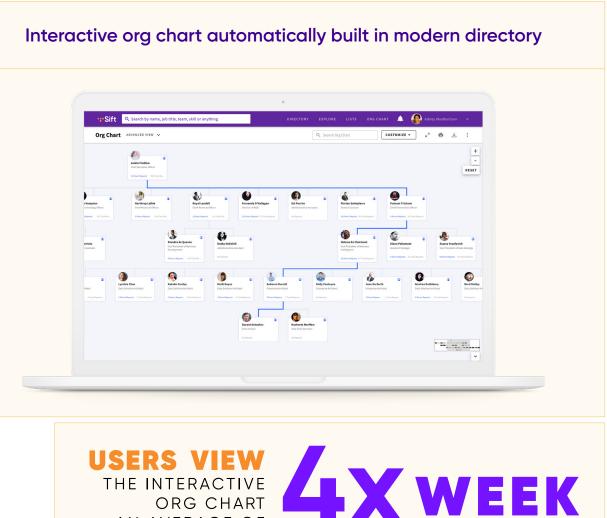
The fact that the modern people directory automatically creates an interactive org chart that is always current and trusted makes it highly valuable across the organization. Team members utilize the organizational chart to:

↘ Learn who's who

↘ Understand structure and responsibility

↘ Find a team member based on the department or supervisor

The organizational chart is also critical for human resources and operations leaders as they seek to better understand the organizational balance and impact of change.

Org Chart Used as Much as People Search

The expectation here might be that the org chart is used only occasionally or frequently by a few power users. However, the data tells a different story. Looking at the org chart views per unique user results in 98 views during the period for an average of 4 org chart views per week per user. This means that the organizational chart is just as valuable to users as the people search capability. One reason for this could be that some users are more visually inclined and prefer this method for finding a team member.

Interactive org chart automatically built in modern directory

USERS VIEW THE INTERACTIVE ORG CHART AN AVERAGE OF **4X WEEK**

Org Charts are SO HELPFUL and easy to navigate.

Allison E. | Training Consultant

I love how easy it is to navigate with the Org chart. It's the easiest way to see the interconnections with everyone. It also shows you how large of a network we are. I feel more connected to the team members in Cleveland and Arizona, too. I love it. :)

Mike E. | Document Resolution Specialist

I use Sift everyday!! It has accelerated my onboarding, allowing me to better understand the complexities of [my company]. It helps make a company of 18,000+ feel small and accessible!

Sarah K. | Program Manager

The Modern People Directory is Flourishing

This in-depth report makes clear how pervasive the usage of Sift's modern people directory is in organizations where it is deployed. Regardless of department or employee level, Sift was a critical tool used by nearly everyone to efficiently execute their role.

As outlined by both the Deloitte Human Capital and McKinsey Global Institute reports cited at the beginning of this study, in modern organizations, the ability to collaborate cross-functionally is key. Sift's modern employee directory fills a key void found in many enterprise organizations: simplifying the process of searching for the right person to help.

Key Findings

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↘   Access to an organizational chart is not just a nice to have.

↘   Game changing data is now available to improve experience.

See the modern people directory in action.
Request a demo of Sift today.

Get started

Sift