ClearBox CONSULTING

2022
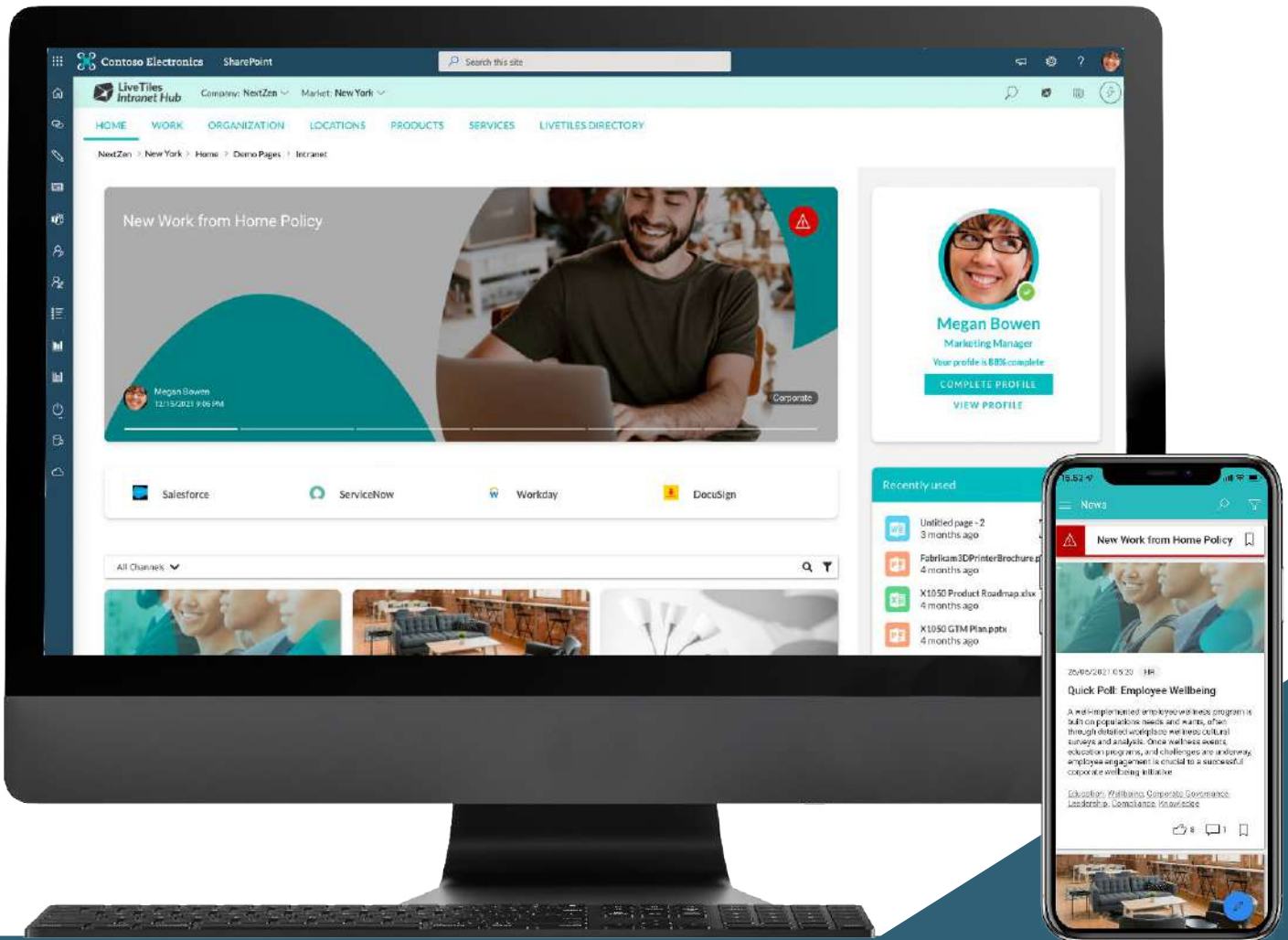
INTRANET AND EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE PLATFORMS

Reviews of the best products on the market

v1.0

LiveTiles

Our view in one tweet

The @LiveTiles platform offers intuitive ways to improve your SharePoint intranet out of the box and Reach engages frontline staff who don't need an M365 licence.

LiveTiles Employee Experience Platform

LiveTiles offers a mature platform and range of products that have evolved since the company was established in 2014. The LiveTiles platform includes a SharePoint intranet module and an independent intranet module, which is optimised for mobile use and is called Reach. Both can be purchased as separate products, but LiveTiles say that enterprise businesses often use both modules, which is what was presented to us and is included in the scenarios. LiveTiles includes other modules too, such as the excellent People Directory, and 'LiveTiles Vibe' for polling. Some of these were presented to us and have been included in relevant scenarios.

The standalone communications platform and app, Reach, provides an easy way to reach frontline workers without the need for a SharePoint licence. The People Directory product offers customers a way to manage their Active Directory, whilst offering users an organisational chart and phone directory they can use on the go. The search works well, and despite the coming together of different products the overall user experience is good.

There are differences and some inconsistences with the ways the products work, however. Given there are overlaps with what products can do, customers should take some time to work with LiveTiles or a partner to understand the range of services. A clear content strategy is also needed to make sure users have a smooth experience.

Overall, LiveTiles offers a good modular approach to customers. The Enterprise solution presented here would appeal to larger or more complex organisations, especially as it is offered at a good price-point.

Summary table of scenario scores

NO.	SCENARIO/SCORE
1	User experience and visual appeal
2	Mobile and frontline support
3	Internal communication
4	Community and engagement
5	Information finding and knowledge management
6	Admin experience and governance
7	Analytics
8	Digital workplace integrations
9	Microsoft 365 integration
10	Wildcard

Pricing

PRICE BAND

250 users	$ $ $ $
1,000 users	$ $ $ $
5,000 users	$ $ $ $
20,000 users	$ $ $ $

PRICING MODEL

Subscription – price band based on number of users

PRICING NOTES

Discounts available for: Charities and non-profit organisations, Schools and Educational Institutes, Multi-year commitments, Businesses over 20,000 users

Price includes: LiveTiles SharePoint product, Reach, LiveTiles Directory, customer success services, Maintenance, Product support, Updates and upgrades, Choice of modules / add-ons, Access to a community & webinars

Key benefits

- The user experience across the modules we reviewed works well.
- Searchable mega menus add a nice touch for organisations with complex information architecture – and for users who want to get to the content they know, quickly.
- The Reach product can be used with or without SharePoint; it offers a way to connect users from multiple active directories and provides access for frontline staff without the need for Microsoft 365 licences.
- The search experience in and between the SharePoint and Reach modules works well.
- The additional LiveTiles Directory module is excellent, offering some of the best people and expert finding tools we've seen.

Improvements and considerations

- LiveTiles offers a consultative approach, which is good as there's a range of products for organisations to understand and choose from; intranet teams need to ensure they select the right package.
- The different modules do behave in different ways, so admins will need to acclimatise to more than one.
- With two publishing platforms (Reach or the SharePoint intranet module), communicators will need to consider their content strategy to make sure the right information is published to the right audience.
- While there's good integration with Power BI, out of the box the analytics don't offer as much as other products in this report.

Product type

Majority ready-to-run

Branding opportunities

Ready-to-run, installed in hours

Target businesses

	SMALL
	less than 1,000 people

	MEDIUM *
	1,000 to 5,000 people

	ENTERPRISE *
	over 5,000 people

* The suite of products we were shown was aimed at the enterprise, although the Reach product may be suitable as a lightweight intranet for smaller organisations too.

Base systems

Fully standalone	Requires SharePoint	Optionally works with SharePoint	Other

Sectors

Business, consulting and management	Engineering and manufacturing	Retail	Public services, government and administration	Healthcare

You may also be interested in...

Beezy   **Staffbase**   **happeo**

LiveTiles
Intranet Hub   Company: NextZen ∨   Market: New York ∨

HOME   WORK   ORGANIZATION   LOCATIONS   PRODUCTS   SERVICES   LIVETILES DIRECTORY

NextZen > New York > Home > Demo Pages > Intranet

New Work from Home Policy

Megan Bowen
12/15/2021 9:06 PM

Corporate

Megan Bowen
Marketing Manager
Your profile is 88% complete

COMPLETE PROFILE

VIEW PROFILE

Salesforce   ServiceNow   Workday   DocuSign

Recently used

	Untitled page - 2
	3 months ago
	Fabrikam3DPrinterBrochure.pptx
	4 months ago
	X1050 Product Roadmap.xlsx
	4 months ago
	X1050 GTM Plan.pptx
	4 months ago
	Pricing Guidelines for X1050.docx
	4 months ago
	Contoso Purchasing Data - Q1 KJ copy....
	4 months ago

VIEW ALL

All Channels ∨

06/26/2021 5:20 AM

HR

Quick Poll: Employee Wellbeing

A well-implemented employee wellness program is built on populations needs and wants, often through detailed workplace cultural surveys and analysis. Once wellness events, education programs, and challenges are underway, employee engagement Education, Wellbeing, Corporate Governance, Leader ...

👍 8   💬 1

06/26/2021 4:59 AM

Marketing

Launch of the new Office-Showroom

We are strengthening our market presence in the South of England: the interior furnishing professional invites you to London for the opening of a new showroom. The final countdown has just started. The due date is September 14th: we will open our Marketing, London

👍 1

06/26/2021 4:04 AM

Marketing

Office LED floor lamp

Thanks to its location on the desk's front side, the floor lamp impresses with the homogenous illumination of the complete workstation even without overhang. This homogeneity is achieved by micro-facetted asymmetrical reflectors. They direct the light Research and Development, Marketing, Production, S ...

👍 7   💬 1

More >

LiveTiles on Twitter

LiveTiles
@livetiles
Step into 2022 with better digital employee experience, a key component to engage and empower employees. 📘 Read about it in our blog: livetilesglobal.com/three-ways-to-...#engagement #employeeexperience #digitalemployeeexperience

Three Ways to Improve Employ...
In the 2010s, a digital employee e...
livetilesglobal.com

♡   ↗   2h

LiveTiles
@livetiles
As we enter 2022 and bid goodbye to 2021, we'd like to thank everyone who has been with LiveTiles every step of the way!

We couldn't have made it this far without your support! Looking forward to a productive year ahead with you this 2022! #community #livetiles #happynewyear

Happy
New Year!
2022

♡   ↗   2h

LiveTiles
@livetiles
How empathetic is your organization? ❤️

Read our blog to see how you can build and maintain strong work relationships through empathy: livetilesglobal.com/why-empathy-ma ...#empathy #employeeexperience #diversity #inclusion #hr

Events

Agenda ▼

< Thursday, January 6, 2022 >

9. January 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM
HR Update Call
Location: Teams Meeting

8. February - 10. February
Company excursion - Lake Lucerne
Location: Vierwaldstättersee

REGISTER   Registration deadline: in 24 days

19. March 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM ↻
Training - Spesi for expense accounts
Locations:
Basel
Mircosoft Teams online
There are 10 seats of total 20 seats left

REGISTER

16. May 5:00 AM
Office Planner & Configurator
Locations:
Zürich
Teams Meeting
Contact: Nestor Wilke

Posts

MB **Megan Bowen**   4 hours ago
New post blah
↩ 1 Replies 0 📎 0 🖼   ↗ 0

NW **Nestor Wilke**   4 months ago
Our CRM system is temporarily unavailable due to important maintenance work. Should be available again in 10 minutes. We apologize for the inconvenience! Your IT Team
↩ 1 Replies 0 📎 0 🖼   ↗ 0

AV **Adele Vance**   3 months ago
Medieval Museum on a warm summer day
↩ 1 Replies 0 📎 1 🖼   ↗ 0

MB **Megan Bowen**   3 months ago
Share your best idea: How do we become the best version of ourselves?
↩ 2 Replies 0 📎 0 🖼   ↗ 0

MB **Megan Bowen**   3 months ago
What Is Supply Chain Management (SCM)?
Supply chain management is the management of the flow of goods and services and includes all processes that transform raw materials into final products. It involves the active streamlining of a business's supply-side activities to maximize customer value and gain a

Policies

🔍

Reach Knowledge Base

Communication Guide

Employee Handbook

Training Videos

Process Manual

Compliance & Policies

COMPANY AND PRODUCT

Company details

Company
LiveTiles

Company founded
2014

Company locations
Victoria, Australia (HQ), USA, Ireland, Denmark, Switzerland, Romania

Customers
Clients include: PepsiCo, Virgin, Entain, Ministry of Defence, Legal & General, Creditsafe, Deakin University, Danish Ministry of Foreign affairs, DBO, Zurich Airport. Please see their website for more.

Typical client size
1,000-10,000 employees

Largest deployment so far
325,000 employees, dozens of countries

Partner locations
Please see their website for details

ISO 27001 certified
Yes

Other products in their range
LiveTiles Reach, LiveTiles Intranet, LiveTiles Everywhere (SharePoint and MS Teams navigation panel), LiveTiles Directory, LiveTiles Intranet Governance (for SharePoint and Teams), LiveTiles Vibe, LiveTiles Analytics, LiveTiles Policies (policy management tool).

Product and technical details

Name of product	LiveTiles Employee Experience Platform
Product launched	2014
Current version	40.2.308
Accessibility	WCAG 2.1 compliant

Stack solution

LAMP	WINS	MEAN	XAMPP	Other *

*   WINS + MEAN

Deployment

Client on-premises	Client private cloud	Microsoft Azure	Amazon Web Services	Vendor-hosted	Microsoft 365 tenant	Other

Data residency

Western Europe (Dublin and Amsterdam), Switzerland, United States, Australia, any other Microsoft data centre region upon request.

Client data encrypted

In transit only	In transit and at rest	At rest only	No encryption

Authentication supported

Azure Active Directory	ADFS	Open ID	Oauth	Amazon Cognito	G Suite	Other *

* Azure AD B2C

Search Technology

Apache Lucene/ Solr	Apache Lucene/ Elastic	Microsoft	Vendor's own	Other *

* Coveo

Document library sources integrated

Box	Dropbox	Google Drive	SharePoint	Other

SharePoint/O365 versions supported (if applicable)

SP Server 2016	SP Server 2019	SP Server Subscription Edition	SP Online	Viva Connections

Mobile app deployment

Google Play store	Apple store	MDM	Other

Reverse-out options

A database export of data is transferred to the client upon request and before all client data is deleted.

Languages supported

English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese (China), Chinese (Taiwan), Japanese, Turkish, all other languages upon request at no additional cost

Machine translation

Yes – via the product

Right to left script

Yes

Set-up and support

Set-up process for new clients

Depending on the features chosen the setup can be anywhere from a one-click installation for a standalone deployment (as per the free trial on the LiveTiles website), or up to 3 months for comprehensive platforms including Microsoft Teams and SharePoint integration with consulting engagements. Typical deployments leveraging standard features, without customisation but including integration with Microsoft 365 can be done within 2-4 weeks.

Product updates

LiveTiles provides 3 to 6 updates per quarter.

Product update process

LiveTiles offers 3 options: all customers updated at once, customer decides timing only, customer can opt-out.

Technical support

LiveTiles provides up to 24-hour support (Monday to Sunday) with a 'follow the sun' model. Their support team is based in USA, Denmark, Ireland, Switzerland, and Australia. LiveTiles provides support in multiple languages including English, German, French, Spanish, and Danish.

User community

LiveTiles has a customer community and knowledge base, they run a Customer Advisory Board (CAB) for select customers, and also run user conferences such as 'LiveTilesX', 'Love Your Work' and the 'Let's Connect Conference' with Simon Sinek.

In their own words

LiveTiles says: "LiveTiles provides a holistic employee experience platform for both frontline and knowledge workers, combining a light-weight app focusing on connection, engagement and well-being with a turnkey intranet for more customized comms and collaboration applications and integration capabilities."

Their view of the marketplace

LiveTiles says: "The LiveTiles platform helps to connect people to an organisation's purpose, brand and vision, to engage employees around goals and values, to enable people to perform at their very best, to be healthy and happy at work and in life so that they're motivated to contribute to organisational success and inspired to find new and more innovative ways of working."

Voice of the customer

With reference to the SharePoint intranet product, customers say that LiveTiles offers a "decent product, out of the box" that provides some very good functionality. It offers "easy administration, without needing to be a developer" with "better options for corporate news than SharePoint online" too. One customer praised the "Global elements – the navigation and toolbar (mega menu and 'LiveTiles Everywhere' panel)". Another customer highlighted how well LiveTiles integrates with Power BI, as they use their intranet to host data, analytics, and insights.

Using the "easy and intuitive editor" of the Reach platform means communicators can offer targeted, regional, and themed content easily to frontline staff around the world. One person said that Reach has "significantly increased engagement with our distributed network". One customer praised how the interface is easy enough to use that the Reach channels can be managed locally. Customers like how the people directory product can be used to update Active Directory (AD) and "keep it correct" while giving end users a phone directory and org chart.

Customers welcomed the recent improvement in the LiveTiles admin reporting module, although would like to see better usage analytics available out of the box for the intranet. One customer remarked that they would like to see "increased stability after code deployments". Another customer would like to see additional document management functionality within the Reach app so they're able to get rid of their intranet altogether; LiveTiles has recently improved this functionality, but we've not seen it in action yet. For the People Directory customers would like more detailed reporting available, without needing to "go to AD and run PowerShell scripts".

While it was acknowledged that the company has been through changes over the years, customers welcomed the responsive and knowledgeable support they receive from LiveTiles. One customer said "the overall experience was very good, we had professional and quick support with all our questions and requests. The flexibility and willingness to help was much appreciated."

REVIEW

1. User experience and visual appeal

SCORE 3.5

The LiveTiles platform encompasses two different intranet experiences: Reach – an independent product; and one based on SharePoint. Both are available separately of each other or a combined solution. Whether using the SharePoint intranet module or Reach, the interfaces have been developed to provide an enhanced experience for users.

In the SharePoint intranet module, the mega menu is not dependent on the SharePoint hub infrastructure – it's available anywhere the LiveTiles experience is deployed. We like the searchable navigation option which can help users find the content they need, quickly. Additionally, there is an 'everywhere panel' (also available as a separate product), which is a vertical floating navigation bar that is customisable with shortcuts to content and intranet functionality. Its current default position is on the left-hand side although it's easy to switch to the right; it's worth considering how this will work alongside the new M365 app bar in your organisation. Improvements to this is on their roadmap.

There are a range of options to style a SharePoint intranet, including one that offers a full-screen experience. LiveTiles, or their partners, will work with clients to design and configure the site themselves. It's easy to change the theme to create an attractive look-and-feel without in-depth technical knowledge (more in Scenario 6). It's also possible to target styling to specific links, which would be useful for organisations who have multiple companies or brands hosted on the same tenant.

Reach has been optimised for a mobile experience, although is available on desktop and can be integrated into Microsoft applications (more later). The default style of Reach feels a little sparse, for example there is a lot of white space if the news description is short, which is particularly noticeable on the desktop.

While LiveTiles does a reasonably good job of maintaining a consistent user experience across the products, they do behave differently. Customers using both tools would need to think carefully about their content strategy, see Scenario 3 for more. However, the intranet universal web part provides a way to integrate content sources, including from Reach, and users can manage their news channels via a web part within SharePoint, helping connect what could otherwise be a disjointed experience between platforms. Both platforms display notifications from both sources, although in different menu areas. Finally, the navigation in Reach is based around simple left-hand navigation, so users accessing both products are likely to see different content, and a different navigation experience.

2. Mobile and frontline support

This scenario broadly covers Reach functionality, which is what LiveTiles would recommend for any mobile requirements. For those wanting the SharePoint intranet product on mobile there is no native app, but the site is fully responsive, and it provides a prompt for users to download a shortcut onto their device. Admins can select which web parts do and don't appear and set the responsive order of objects.

Reach is primarily an employee mobile app product, so it works well on mobile devices. First, there are several options available to give users access. Users don't require a Microsoft 365 licence, and Reach can be configured to accept and connect users from multiple tenants, which is helpful for complex businesses. It's also possible to upload a list of users, or users can be invited or self-register via a link or QR code and update their details themselves. External users can also be invited in. Removing users can only be done within Reach – there's currently no way to bulk remove or disable users who have left.

Reach's layout is responsive, with full access to the desktop menu available in-app. The layout can be configured within the admin pane, although as mentioned in Scenario 1, the default style feels a little sparse so is something to consider as part of editorial guidelines. Admins can control what content is displayed within mobile navigation, and decide what functionality is available within the Reach application. Custom branding for apps in the official iOS and Android app stores is available at a cost, as are vanity URLs. Please see Scenario 5 for information on the Reach search.

News posts can be added from the Reach mobile interface; although the styling for the editor interface isn't perfect, it's certainly good enough to update content on the go. Users receive notifications when new content is published, whether added on mobile or desktop. If an organisation has a lot of frequently updated content, we could see that get overwhelming for some. However, users are able to update their push notification preferences in quite granular detail, so can control some aspects of this. Alternatively, admins can disable notifications altogether for a short time, which could be helpful for bulk content uploads but doesn't feel like a good workaround day-to-day.

Reach offers a basic chat feature, which works on mobile, the browser, or available via MS Teams. This would be valuable to organisations who don't have M365 or need to communicate with staff without a Microsoft licence. Another tool only within Reach is an integrated service called 'Roll Call', which asks users to confirm they're alright in case of emergency.

3. Internal communication

There are two publishing experiences as part of LiveTiles' offering. First is the Reach product, where a news template offers a clean and consistent look and feel. The Reach news editor links with Unsplash, which offers different stock imagery to the standard Microsoft offering, and it's easy to drag and drop to change the image focus. There's also a Canva integration, which would be useful for communicators. Reach doesn't offer the ability to add alt text on images, although captions are available for images in the body of an article.

It's possible to publish news on behalf of another user, where desired. Out of the box a

simple role-based approval workflow is available, for approvers and creators; more complex or individual workflows would need to be set up via MS Flow or Zapier. It's easy to add appropriate tags for targeting, which is done via channels and is useful to define content via location or topic / theme. Communicators can set channels to be mandatory, such as 'corporate news', while users are able to subscribe to the news that's relevant to them or see channels based on information stored in their profiles. The LiveTiles audience engine in both products can retain user information in the user profile, enabling targeted content without the need for parameters in AD.

In Reach, news articles can be set to show as a promoted 'alert' for a set period, before it drops back to being a regular news article or archived altogether. Mandatory read functionality, or 'confirmation', can be used to push content out to mobile users, who get a notification that there's an article which requires their attention. It's not possible to amend the confirmation notice wording, which we feel would be a helpful feature. An API is available to consume information externally, for example to publish relevant information on an external website.

The SharePoint intranet product offers web parts and templates but doesn't offer any other functionality for content creation. There is a web part that will integrate Reach news inside the SharePoint solution (please see Scenario 9 for more), but SharePoint content is only accessible in Reach if the user has a license. Communicators will need a careful content strategy to avoid a disjointed experience where news is created on both platforms. However, we understand that some customers get around this by creating two audience-targeted intranet experiences, for example to make sure frontline workers / Reach users aren't presented with content they're unable to access.

4. Community and engagement

SCORE
2.5

The Reach product offers some simple but pleasant community features. Please see Scenario 2 for details about the chat tool (which is available via Reach within the browser or app, or within Teams), although it is not available within the SharePoint intranet yet.

Reach also offers events functionality, where publishers complete a simple template and share into relevant channels. The events can be surfaced within the SharePoint intranet too, within LiveTiles web parts. Users may register attendance in advance and access moderated chat before, during and after events too, although any conversations take place separately in the respective platforms.

Users can like and comment on Reach news articles and it's simple for publishers to turn off these features at article level where wanted. There are currently no comment moderation tools out of the box but this is on the roadmap. When looking at content published from Reach but viewed within SharePoint, the Reach reaction functionality is available and users can see colleagues' reactions no matter where they're viewing that content.

Users may add their own content in Reach 'Groups' (where allowed). This uses the same template that publishers have access to, which is simple enough for any user to complete. There are currently no moderation tools for approving or monitoring user generated content, however a feature to report content is coming soon.

Included within the price provided for this report is an additional poll and wellbeing product called 'LiveTiles Vibe'. Vibe offers interactive (and optionally anonymous) polls which can be responded to via a link in a news post, within email, Viva Connections, or highlighted via a MS Teams bot. There are some interesting icons and templates available to run short polls on how people are feeling right from their email. If organisations are already implementing Viva Insights

we're not sure if this would be the right add-on, but we can see value in it as a standalone product that complements Reach and the SharePoint intranet product nicely.

5. Information finding and knowledge management

SCORE 3+

LiveTiles offers a searchable navigation option as part of the SharePoint intranet product, which we think will be particularly useful for complex organisations or those with a lot of pages. The main search icon gets a little lost among other menu symbols and isn't as prominent as the Microsoft search bar. When a user does look for something, the experience is good with content from Reach indexed along with Microsoft content. Results are presented on attractive cards, with thumbnails to reflect the type of content displayed, and users can filter results using tabs and then subsequent appropriate on-page filters.

LiveTiles also offers a Coveo-based search product which gives more granular configuration options and an interesting overlay (see Highlights), along with detailed search analytics. Clients will need to purchase a separate Coveo licence to make it work.

Reach offers an integrated third-party enterprise search as standard, which indexes content outside of Reach. The results presentation is basic and could use a little styling, although it does offer filters by author, as well as document type, channels, and keywords. The Reach enterprise search can also be used as a source for search-based web parts in the SharePoint intranet.

Reach allows for a simple, consistent IA with static pages and sub-pages of content. Within the pages themselves, there's a table of contents template, which allows for sections and subsections, which we can see would be useful to present a lot of information in one place. This content can also be fed into SharePoint, if required.

Within Reach, the People Search can take information from Active Directory, Azure Active Directory, Office 365, Delve, or the Graph API – while the user profile is hosted within Reach. The LiveTiles Directory, with a customisable org chart, is a separate product but is included in the pricing submitted for this review. It's among the best people finding tools we've seen in this report, please see Scenario 10 for details.

We like that it's possible to search external users and those without an M365 licence via the People finder; however, there's no org chart functionality for those not in Active Directory and they wouldn't appear within SharePoint intranet searches.

Overall, there are multiple search experiences within LiveTiles, depending on what you're looking for or where you start. It's not a completely consistent or seamless journey, although we expect that with a little training and time users will be able to have a good experience.

6. Admin experience and governance

SCORE
3+

You don't have to be a technical expert to use the site or page-level admin functionality within LiveTiles products. However, the experience between Reach and the LiveTiles SharePoint modules isn't identical, and so training will be needed to make sure admins and communicators make the most out of the product suite and know what to use when.

The LiveTiles SharePoint admin interface offers drag and drop functionality, making it easier to configure pages than standard SharePoint. There is a range of SharePoint-based web parts to make it easier to present information in an engaging way. We particularly liked the directory web part, which brings the org chart to pages, and the universal web part that will bring Reach content into the SharePoint platform.

Within the SharePoint product there is a 'governance dashboard' that provides a simple interface to manage content. This includes assigning permissions, which then gives editors more visibility of their published pages. Reminders can be sent to content owners when their content is due to expire, which is a feature missing from Reach. Admins can also easily edit elements such as templates and metadata; as well as the mega menu and everywhere panel, with a straightforward interface to add or edit links. Note that the structure of the SharePoint intranet is likely to be different from the structure of Reach, see Scenario 9 for more.

The admin interface for Reach is simple, found within a 'settings' menu that contains a list of options available. Within each menu option are a series of cards and toggles, such as to 'allow posts in this Group'. Clear icons accompany actions, giving admins visual cues as to how to edit content (via a pencil) or add new elements (via a plus sign). Reach offers a straightforward interface to control access rights, and permissions for group and channel content, as well as options to tag content.

Users can translate content of Reach posts with one press of the world icon, which uses Azure translation services to translate on-the-fly. Publishers can also choose to manually add translations of content that are saved alongside the original language version. There aren't any tools to notify a translator if the original is updated, which would be a helpful addition. The SharePoint intranet product relies on Microsoft's tools for translation.

7. Analytics

SCORE
2.5+

Analytics is an area of development for LiveTiles at present, although what's there offers a promising starting point. Reach has built-in analytics which show the number of active users, and adoption of the product itself. Admins can see information such as number of articles published, views, likes and comments over the last 30 days. Admins can't manipulate the data on-screen or create their own reports, and data on usage of features such as chat is missing, so there is much room for improvement.

Out-of-the-box the SharePoint intranet product relies on Microsoft analytics. However, there is a separate advanced analytics product that is currently undergoing an overhaul. We liked what we saw though, with built-in heatmaps that show which web parts are popular on the intranet. Admins can see which web parts have been clicked by users and use the tool to do an intelligent rearranging of web parts. It would be nice to see this extended to more granular

levels of detail.

Reach will track stats for news content whether viewed in Reach or SharePoint, which is helpful although data is limited, such as to the number of views or likes. There are no dedicated communications statistics or testing.

Mandatory reads functionality is available via 'confirm' in Reach, with a downloadable list of users who have confirmed they've read the content. There is no equivalent in the SharePoint product, although Reach news stories can be displayed within universal web parts and the 'confirm' functionality will work.

There aren't any search analytics within Reach, which is something we think would be a very useful addition. The SharePoint intranet product relies on search analytics from Microsoft, however.

The current analytics offering out-of-the-box is somewhat limited for both products when compared to others in this report. With recent improvements to what's available within SharePoint Online analytics, LiveTiles are looking at their analytics suite on their roadmap to make sure it adds value for customers.

8. Digital workplace integrations

SCORE
2.5+

Across both products, LiveTiles has a range of integrations already built for ServiceNow, Workday, Salesforce, Workplace from Meta (Facebook) and others, along with an API which allows for partners to build more. There's a fairly straightforward interface to enable integrations, although they're largely one-way without custom development or configuration. Integrations can be surfaced within web parts or the everywhere panel within the SharePoint product, such as through RSS feeds or iframes, and linked to from Reach. Zapier, Power Automate and Apache Camel integrations are supported to set-up additional forms and workflows.

We saw an example where it's possible for users to create a Service Now ticket from mobile, and users are then able to see a list of their open tickets within the Reach app. Although the user can see updates to the progress, responses come via email and any links would take users to log into the ServiceNow platform. Another example was where Workplace from Meta (Facebook) content had been displayed within web parts and within the 'everywhere' vertical panel. The Workplace groups were displayed as a simple list to click-through to and the activity feed was displayed within a web part. We also saw how one client has created a chatbot to help users raise a ServiceNow issue.

It's possible to store 'Quick Links' in the admin interface, whether to external applications or internal shortcuts, and surface them in multiple areas of the intranet. This is something we know is welcomed by customers as an improvement on Microsoft's own functionality.

The Events module within Reach integrates with Microsoft Teams, as well as Zoom and WebEx to be able to create online events outside the M365 environment, which we can see will be beneficial for some organisations. The SharePoint module integrates with Box, Google and other libraries, displaying content within dedicated web parts. The search in both modules doesn't federate content from outside the organisation's environment.

9. Microsoft 365 integration

SCORE
3.5

The depth of integrations with Microsoft applications varies between the SharePoint intranet module and Reach. For example, the 'My Work' icon in the SharePoint everywhere panel has strong integration with Microsoft 365, such as showing a user's MS Teams, Outlook, documents, and more. The M365 integrations in Reach aren't quite as deep, however.

The Reach app can surface SharePoint content, published as an external Reach page and viewed in an in-app browser experience. News can be cross posted too, using Power Automate. It's worth bearing in mind that it relies on users having a M365 licence to be able to read beyond the teaser, which could present a disjointed user experience (unless SharePoint content is only published to a group of Reach users with a licence). Additionally, the hero web part on the home page of the SharePoint intranet can display content from Reach, SharePoint, and RSS feeds at the same time, which is a nice way to bring together information from multiple sources in a clean interface.

Reach is available as an app within MS Teams and the SharePoint 'everywhere panel' can also be accessed there. The Reach chat is accessible from MS Teams, bringing all company chat via one tool. It's possible to bring content from Reach into Teams, but there's no content from Teams available in Reach.

In the SharePoint intranet, LiveTiles has created a MS Teams provisioning engine that we think works well. A wizard takes users through simple steps to request a site, which, in our demo, included the type of Team, business unit, location and owner. This provides configurable metadata inherited by content, which is useful in future searches. The team is created using a service principal in the backend, which will help in the future for administering the site, particularly if the administrator leaves.

There's a standard SharePoint Yammer web part that can be used on the intranet, and with configuration Yammer could be used for commenting. It would be possible for partners to build an integration between Reach and Yammer, but LiveTiles say this may add more confusion for users than it would benefits, given it is adding another social channel.

The SharePoint intranet works with Viva Connections, feeding content into the display. As Reach is built using adaptive cards, LiveTiles expect that content will be made available within Viva as Microsoft makes connectors available. Viva Topics is on their roadmap. Videos from Stream can be used as a banner news story and can be played from cards in Reach; the Everywhere panel can also play videos from Stream.

The enterprise search in Reach will federate content from M365, while the SharePoint intranet has M365 search federation as standard. Overall, the M365 integrations across both products are well considered and implemented, however we would like to see more consistency in approach.

10. Wildcard

SCORE
4.5

LiveTiles showed us their People Directory product as their wildcard. The Directory is an additional product (but was included as part of the pricing in this report) and is accessible in both Reach (where AD is used to populate user profiles) and the SharePoint intranet. The People Directory helps organisations keep people data up-to-date, while offering a directory and organisational chart that include features that end-users, communicators, and tech teams would welcome.

When looking for a colleague, users are presented with attractive and detailed cards of people data. There's also a straightforward exportable table view, which offers a tidy list of relevant people results along with contact number and location. Each profile includes a nice, explorable org chart within a contemporary interface.

The Profile Directory encourages users to update their profile information, either when they visit their page or via email. The email notification is triggered by a bot, where the frequency and tone of messages can be configured. Admins choose whether users manually type information or select from a list, such as skills or interests. Fields can be configured to auto-approve, or if admins want to double-check what someone has entered as their local office or line manager then they may. There are also settings for automatic profile photo approval, where admins choose whether a photo with 'multiple faces' is acceptable, for example.

Admins choose the frequency that profile validation is run, prompting users to check their information. There's a percentage complete health checker which shows how many users have completed their profiles, with a score for each field available. We see this would be useful functionality for communicators to see progress and adoption. We would like to see more detailed reporting functionality within the product itself, a sentiment echoed by a customer who must go to AD and run PowerShell scripts.

Overall, the People Directory offers more profile information than many others out –of –the box. It delivers people information in an attractive format, and the tools available to encourage profile completion are likely to result in more accurate directories.

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

Reach - connect frontline users

Reach gives customers the ability to connect with frontline staff and external users who don't necessarily have a Microsoft 365 licence. Some clients have taken this even further and used the Reach publishing platform to create a light extranet – publishing articles internally and then tagging content to allow for access by the general public. This could also be of interest to organisations that are happy for all, or a large section, of their intranet to be open to all, rather than behind a login.

Reach offers a link for users to self-register and get set up, without needing a specific invitation. Each client gets a custom link, which can be included in email communications or printed out (or even set as a QR code) to encourage people to sign up.

Users can self-register to access Reach.

The Reach native app offers news, posts, pages, events, a people finder, and chat as core navigation options out of the box. The push notifications are a useful way for communicators to draw attention to recently published news and users can update their preferences easily via the mobile interface. The chat functionality provides a way for frontline teams to keep in touch with each other and with desk-based colleagues too. The chat removes the need for shadow tech like WhatsApp or needing expensive Microsoft licenses for the frontline. The chat is also accessible via MS Teams, bringing company chat tools together for desk-based users.
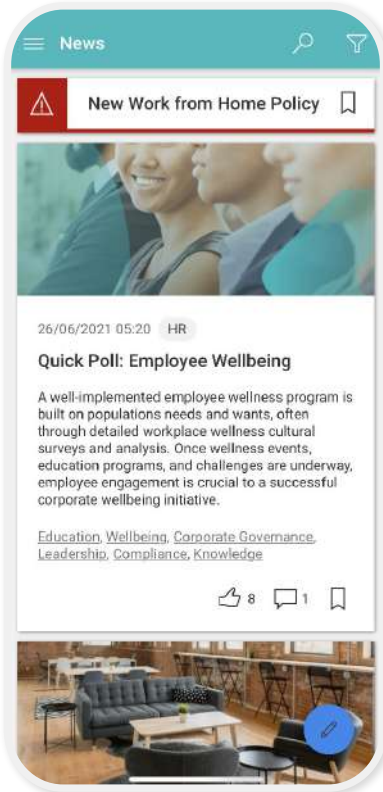
Reach provides an attractive interface with a good user experience.

We think communicators and HR teams will value the events functionality.
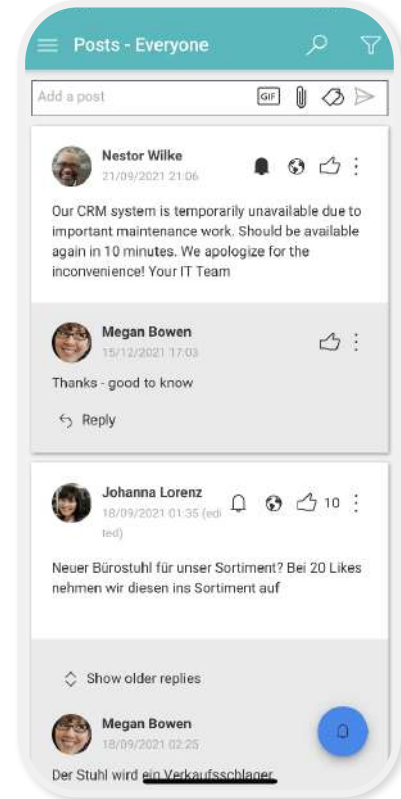
The chat tool is simple, but effective.

LiveTiles People Directory

The LiveTiles People Directory is an additional product but is accessible in both Reach (where AD is used to populate user profiles) and the SharePoint intranet. The People Directory helps organisations keep people data up to date, while offering a directory and organisational chart that include features that end-users, communicators, and tech teams would welcome. It also offers targeted content capabilities without needing the data upfront in Active Directory.

Profiles are detailed and show the percentage complete.

The People Directory encourages users to update their profile information either when they visit their page, or via email. The email notification is triggered by a bot, where the frequency and tone of messages can be configured. It's also possible to select users who would not receive automated updates, which we can see would be useful to protect important stakeholders! Email content is editable and tailorable. Users are able to confirm their details via the link or reply by email to say that details aren't correct, too. There's a percentage complete health checker which shows how many users have completed their profiles, with a score for each field available.
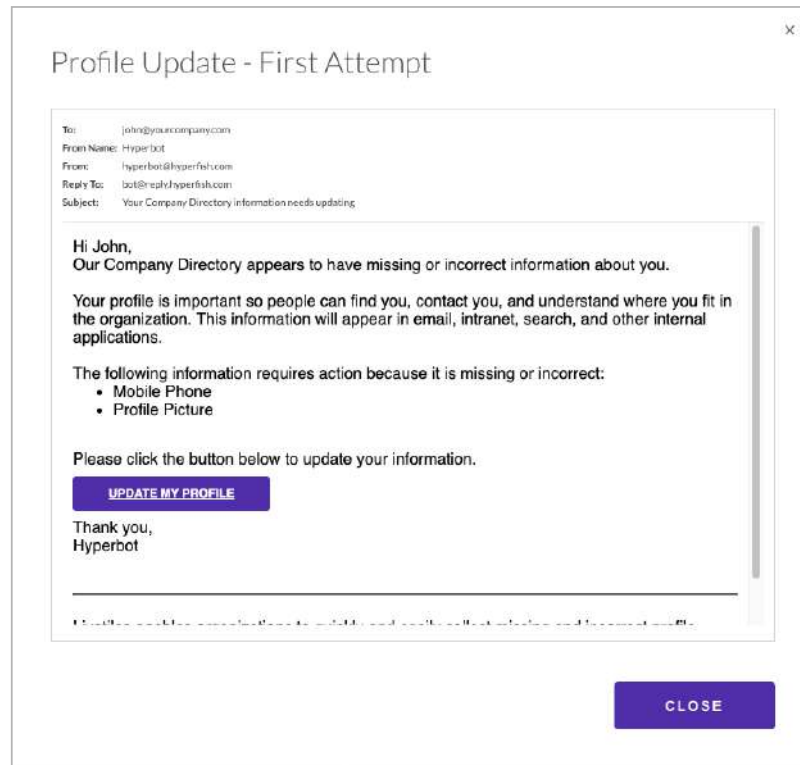
Emails detail which fields need to be completed by a user.
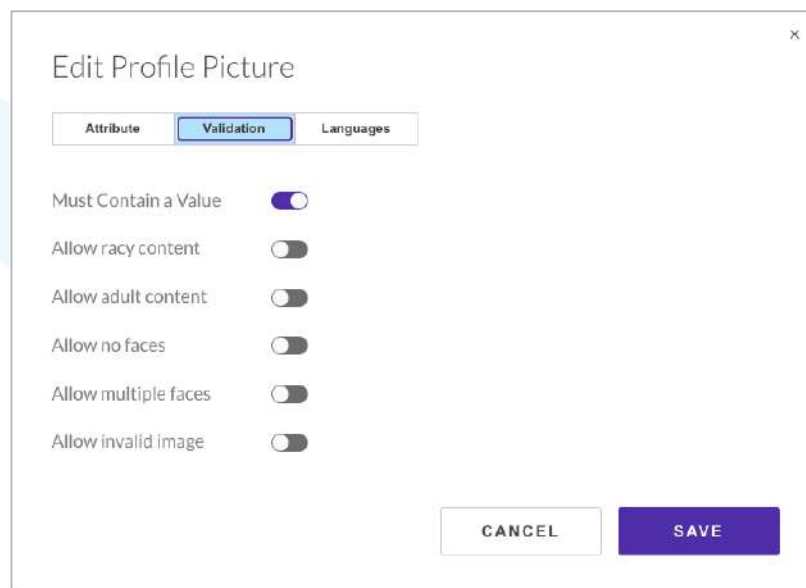
Admins choose what sort of photo is acceptable.

Admins choose whether users manually type information or select from a list, such as skills or interests. Fields are configurable to auto-approve, or if admins want to double-check what someone has entered as their local office or line manager then they can. Approval workflows are set-up via the admin interface and information is stored temporarily within the Directory app, before it's written back to AAD.

The bot is highly configurable, including its tone and tenacity.

Admins set the frequency that profile validation is run, prompting users to check their information. There are also settings for automatic profile photo approval, where admins configure whether a photo with 'multiple faces' is acceptable, for example. This allows the tone of profile photos to be centrally set, giving admins control over whether it's more like LinkedIn or more like Instagram.

All profile data is stored in the customer's Active Directory, Azure Active Directory, and M365 tenant. Information for external users and those outside AAD etc. can be stored within Reach; they are then searchable in both products but won't be displayed within an org chart. The directory can be configured to display or hide certain individuals, and the hierarchy levels can be set.

It can be hard to provide targeted communications without a comprehensive data clean-up, particularly when user details are stored in multiple tenants. The People Directory offers a way to communicate with users based on data they have selected or confirmed within their profile, which is incredibly valuable. By encouraging users to update their profiles, colleagues can be confident that they will find the right people when they search.


The people search results page is attractive and users can trust the information is accurate.

Integrations with MS Teams

The LiveTiles platform offers several ways to work with Microsoft Teams. First, both the SharePoint and Reach products are available as apps within MS Teams, where all menu options are accessible by users. Notifications from Reach are integrated inside MS Teams too, and the chat tool is also accessible here. For businesses that use Reach and MS Teams, this integration brings all tasks together into one platform. There's no need for a desk worker to use the Reach interface if they don't want to, as they can get everything they need inside MS Teams.
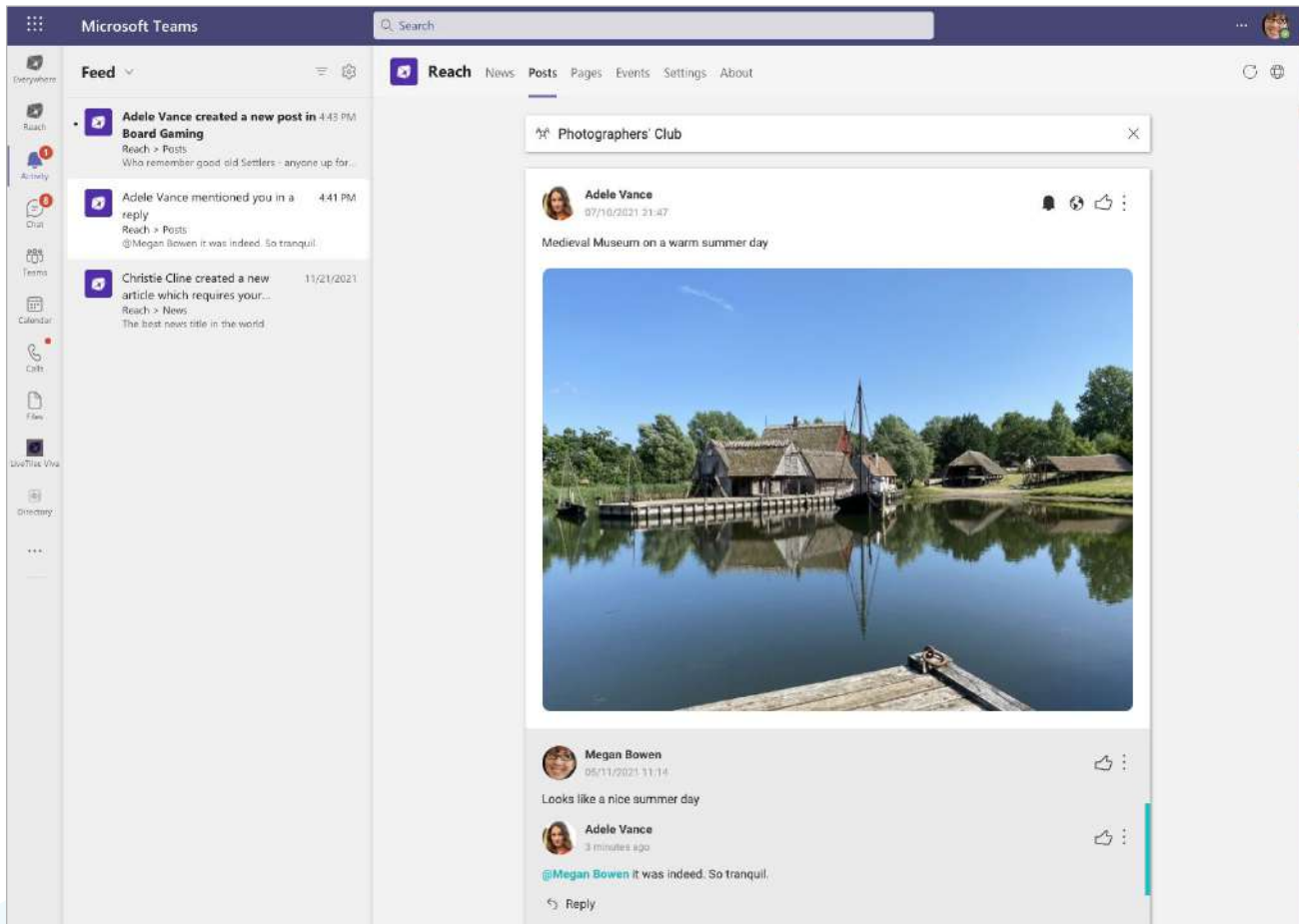
Reach is available as a MS Teams app, bringing through notifications and chat.

In the SharePoint intranet, LiveTiles has created a MS Teams provisioning engine that we think works well. A wizard takes users through simple steps to request a site, which includes the type of MS Team, business unit, location and owner, which provides metadata useful in future searches. This metadata is configurable and is added automatically to future content. The team is created using a service principal in the backend, which will help in the future for administering the site, particularly if the administrator leaves.

Included within the price provided for this report is an additional poll and wellbeing product called 'LiveTiles Vibe'. Vibe offers interactive (and optionally anonymous) polls which can be responded to via a MS Teams bot. Admins use Vibe to issue short pulse surveys that track how a user feels working from home, or what their energy levels are. The functionality is basic but offers a simple way to monitor this information and show employees that the business is listening.
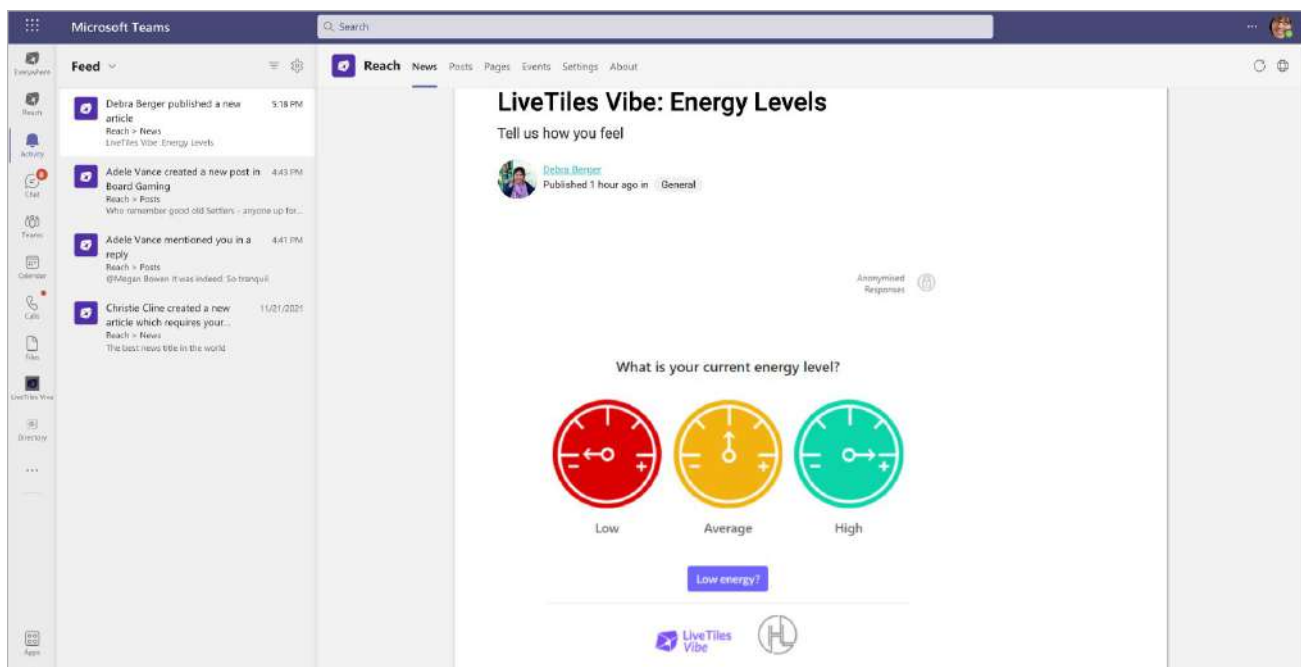
'LiveTiles Vibe' in MS Teams.

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

The LiveTiles platform offers a wide range of modules that do different things and perform in different ways, sometimes with inconsistencies across them. Despite this the user experience is good, the modules do work well together, and there are a lot of features to like across the platform. Customers will need to consider needs and objectives to make sure they select the right combination of tools, although LiveTiles will offer advice of course.

The Reach app has nice features that would add value to frontline staff, but communicators will need to make sure they're using appropriate groups to target content if some staff do not have M365 licences. News creation across both products is more limited than other products we've seen in this report, but for Reach this could encourage user generated content and build a sense of community. The analytics across both products is also fairly basic, although LiveTiles is currently working on developments.

LiveTiles is an experienced vendor with mature products; it also has knowledge and experience from acquisitions of companies founded in 1999 and 2001. The market has moved rapidly in the last few years as Microsoft keeps adding new functionality to SharePoint Online. LiveTiles has worked closely with Microsoft in the past and we look forward to seeing how they evolve to support the Viva suite and further integrations.

Overall, the LiveTiles platform offers a flexible set of modules that can be configured and joined to offer businesses a suite of tools to match their needs. Given the range of modules presented to us, the price point would be attractive to enterprise customers. The differences in experience between products does need to be considered, however.

Vendor roadmap

LiveTiles are working on an overhaul of their advanced analytics package to make sure they're adding value on top of what now exists within SharePoint analytics. As mentioned, they're working on a reporting and moderation tool for user-generated content. They're improving the display of the Everywhere panel, adding Marketplace functionality in Reach and working to improve their policy management and asset library. They're working on integrations with Linius and Soundbite around personalised video and meeting functionality. They're also working on additional functionality to better integrate with Viva Connections and will be looking at how to integrate with Viva Topics when that becomes available as an option. We know they're also working on accessibility as there are features we'd expect to see, like alt text for images, coming soon.