

eBOOK

How frontline & mobile workers can finally feel connected

A PIPCALL EBOOK

JUNE 2026



 PiPcall



When you're on the road all week or on your feet in a store, in warehouses, or tending to patients, it's nearly impossible to keep up with day-to-day communication.

Workers on the front line must prioritise communications and collaboration over catching up on emails, admin or scrolling through the internet.

The people in these job roles are some of the most important in your business. These are the people your customers and patients see and interact with. They are the first people who are called in an emergency and possibly the only face associated with your company.

Yet, they are the most disconnected and underserved when it comes to communications.

If you think that's something that should change dramatically in the next few months or years, you're not alone.

In this eBook, we discuss the following:

- The current state of frontline and mobile communications
- The desired future state for frontline and mobile workers
- What's holding up accelerated innovation and adoption?
- Immediate options for frontline and mobile workers

The current state of frontline and mobile communications

According to a study by Emergence, there are 2.7 billion deskless workers across the globe.

Another recent study by Microsoft suggests that of these, there are around two billion disconnected frontline workers.

If frontline workers, like police officers or social workers, for example, can't stay in touch with their office colleagues, how can we expect them to be engaged, well-informed or even up to date with a customer request or support issue?

Furthermore, their mobile communications with clients, patients, and other stakeholders will be disconnected from the rest of the organisation because these workers are just out of touch or use their personal devices and numbers for those communications.

For example, when community nursing staff are busy visiting patients all day, they are out of the loop with their colleagues and often miss important information, some of which is critical to their daily schedule and responsibilities. Without a desk, or the time to return to a desk, the consequence is to spend their personal time catching up listening to voicemails, reading text messages, and answering emails. The end result is often a disconnected, disengaged and unhappy frontline workforce.

Police officers and healthcare workers are extreme examples. We're also referring to workers whom you see day-to-day. They are the barista who makes your coffee, the inspector who comes to read your gas meter, or the Amazon driver with your latest order.

Beyond these frontline workers, numerous employees in many companies are frequently on the go, and rarely have access to a desk phone. People like field sales and on-site engineers are often classed as "deskless" workers. Their typical day involves travelling a distance to meet new or existing customers. If these people are literally sitting with your clients, there is an argument that they must be the most connected, not the least connected.

The forgotten frontline workers are the poor cousins when it comes to collaboration support to keep them connected



Reliance on desk phones



Poor tools with which to collaborate



Not provided with a company mobile phone



Infrequent or unreliable access to Wi-Fi

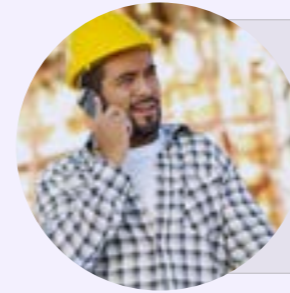


Infrequent access to the office

If you look at the typical day of a field sales technician, it goes something like this:

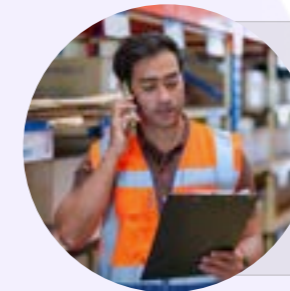


According to Gartner's Hype Cycle for Frontline Worker Technologies, we can split frontline and deskless workers into two categories:



Service Workers

Primarily spend their time performing client-facing activities. They typically represent the "face" of an organisation to customers.



Task Workers

Primarily spend their time performing operational activities. They typically represent the "heart" of the organisation.

According to the Microsoft Work Trend Index Report, a huge segment of the collaboration market remains mostly untapped at the moment.



"The frontline workforce, which represents nearly two billion people worldwide, is the backbone of communities and economies around the world. In fact, 88% of organisations employ people in frontline roles. When frontline workers say something's not working, we can't afford to ignore them."

– Emma Williams, Corporate VP of Modern Work Transformations at Microsoft



If these deskless workers aren't catered to by collaboration vendors, what is that doing for their productivity? Without a modern collaboration solution, they can only be behind their desk-based colleagues.

- Leaves the house and travels to a client site by car, train, bus, etc.
- Can't use the laptop to catch up on messages because of poor connectivity
- Can't use the mobile messaging apps because cellular data coverage is congested and there's no public Wi-Fi signal
- Arrives at their destination, ready to meet with the client
- The client cancelled the meeting 10 minutes after the Technician left the house
- The technician calls the client from their personal mobile to check the appointment. The client does not pick up, as it's an unrecognised personal number
- Time and money are lost on a wasted trip

This isn't just a story about time wasted. It's also about the monetary loss for the business. Not only will the employer have to pay the fuel and travel costs, but they will shoulder the opportunity cost of an employee not being productive that day. It is very inefficient for the business and not at all environmentally friendly.

There's also the even more important factor of employee morale. If this happens once, it's tolerable. But if situations like this keep occurring, your staff are always going to be behind the eight ball. They become disengaged, fall short on their targets and are constantly playing catch-up.

The impact on Productivity

Because deskless workers don't have regular access to a landline, they aren't connected to the rest of the business. If the very nature of their job means they don't have the proper means to connect with customers or their colleagues, we can't expect them to work as efficiently or be as productive as they could. They simply can't always move to the place where they can use a laptop, desk phone or get a good enough service.

Even cloud-based collaboration solutions such as Microsoft Teams, with its clear market



dominance, has yet to address the issue and deliver the experience demanded by workers who are constantly on the move.

The Teams mobile client, which runs as an app on any mobile device, provides remote workers a handheld connection where Wi-Fi or mobile internet service is good. But when it comes to making and receiving calls using the app, the experience is not intuitive and so often the user reverts to using the native phone dialler – which presents their personal mobile number, rather than the business number, to the person they are calling.

But that's not a reflection on the quality of Microsoft's app. The reality of working on the move

is that nobody likes using mobile VoIP apps for voice calls. In 2020, around a decade after mobile UC apps started coming into widespread use, industry analyst firm Nemertes Research conducted a survey of more than 525 businesses to learn how mobile UC deployments were progressing. The results were startling. Among companies where IT management directed users to operate UC VoIP apps on their mobile phones, the adoption rate was less than 6%.

The analyst firm's report detailed numerous reasons for this poor adoption, such as poor call quality because the apps are based on VoIP. Chief among the issues is simply that users prefer the native dialler because they find the app to be inconvenient, unreliable and difficult to use.

The practical implication of Nemertes' findings is that more than 94% of business calls taking place on mobile phones are using non-company numbers and identities and cannot be captured or recorded for archiving.

Voice calls made from an app can be unreliable because Wi-Fi and mobile data services are not designed for real-time voice communications. In cellular networks, voice calls get prioritised bandwidth allocation over data services, and that affects voice quality when making a call using the app.

Business calls require clarity and good QoS – so mobile workers often revert to making a call the old-fashioned way – often using their personal number on their personal phone. It simply gives them the same experience as a desk phone in the office.

According to [OpenSignal's Mobile Network Experience Report](#), the major US cell providers (AT&T, T-Mobile, and Verizon) all score below 80 out of 100 for "Voice Call Experience" when using a UC app to make voice calls.

While this may sound okay, it really isn't okay. If there is 20% worth of experience left to be desired, that's a significant improvement that can be made.

On the face of it, the figures seem okay. But the definition of "Acceptable" leads us to question the integrity of voice calling using apps.

"Perceptible call quality impairments were experienced by some users. Clicking sounds of short duration or distortion were heard, and/or the volume may not have been sufficiently loud. Listeners were generally able to comprehend without repetition."

A-Z



Is poor voice call quality acceptable if one of your staff is on the phone with your customer?

Is poor voice call quality acceptable if an emergency responder is being directed to a remote location?

Is poor voice call quality acceptable if a patient is in distress?

If key workers, who we know are the face or the heart of a business, aren't able to make and receive real-time calls with business-quality performance, how can we expect them to be satisfied or productive?

For frontline workers, "being productive" doesn't just mean doing their job on time. It means serving vulnerable people and working on client-facing activities. A lack of productivity here could have severe consequences not experienced by a traditional desk worker.

A-Z



"Opensignal's Voice App Experience measures the quality of experience for over-the-top using a model derived from the International Telecommunication Union approach for quantifying overall voice call quality and a series of calibrated technical parameters. This model characterises the exact relationship between the technical measurements and perceived call quality."

The impact on Staff Morale

If staff become disconnected physically, this can lead to feeling disconnected mentally.

First up, there's the social aspect. Being last to find out information can be disheartening. Being constantly last to respond to urgent communications can change a colleague's opinion of you.

If your job isn't communications-first, deskless staff are currently being punished for simply doing their job.

When team members are constantly on the back foot, last in the know, and are forever wrestling with call quality, playing an endless game of phone tag with clients and co-workers, it can lead to a toxic environment and employees can form bad habits. If not addressed swiftly, poor staff morale can spiral out of control, even leading to team members quitting.



The impact on The Bottom Line

A Pearson study worked out that a company with 10,000 frontline workers, who earn \$30,000 or less annually, could lose up to 85% of its workers each year.

The estimated cost to hire and train replacement workers came in at \$4,800 per employee, so losing a significant number of these employees has a very significant commercial impact.

There are, of course, some variables in play here. Not every business will lose 85% of its frontline workers. Some don't operate in remote locations and do have a "base" to return to each day, as well as the allotted time to do so in their working day.

Naturally, we must look to leadership to kickstart the move to a more desirable future state.

However, according to research by BeeKeeper, which calls itself an "All-in-One Frontline Success System," we learn that almost 75% of frontline corporate leaders believe that their organisation invests in new tech for frontline employees, yet only 39% of workers agree.



"The Frontline Disconnect often shows up when leadership teams overestimate how much effort they're putting into improving the frontline experience. Employers can work on bridging this gap between perception and reality by not only listening to their workers but adopting technology tools that allow for feedback and bottom-up communication."

– Jessica Ruane, Brand Marketing Manager, BeeKeeper



If the consequence of letting our deskless workers remain disconnected has a detrimental impact on productivity, staff morale, and the company's bottom line, we have no choice but to seek a better state.

Companies and frontline workers demand change

New research by Cavell Group reveals that companies are ready to solve the frontline and mobile worker disconnect.

Surveys by Cavell Group and commissioned by Tango Networks were conducted in the fall of 2023 and show a significant desire to move toward mobile-only communications in businesses.



A staggering 99% of IT managers at surveyed companies are inclined to replace landline phones with mobiles based on employee roles, particularly to address the disconnected frontline workers.

The first survey encompassed 400 telecommunication and communication decision-makers in businesses with at least 50 employees. The second involved 400 frontline healthcare workers.

The results overwhelmingly endorse the transition to all-mobile business communications.

The study indicates a readiness to adopt Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policies. Notably, 56% of employees already use personal phones for work. Presently, 76% of businesses allow mobile BYOD.

Security concerns have historically hindered BYOD adoption. However, the evolving work landscape, characterised by remote and hybrid models, has accelerated its acceptance.

The pandemic significantly influenced this shift, necessitating flexible work environments.

Frontline workers' need for effective communication tools is a primary driver, with 96% of IT managers emphasising its importance. Furthermore, 68% of workers now use collaboration tools like Microsoft Teams, necessitating seamless integration with mobile devices.



The desired future state for frontline and mobile workers

The detrimental consequences of the status quo mean that the needs of frontline and mobile workers can't be deprioritised.

We must get to a state where connectedness and quality of communications is a basic and realised need. This means deskless workers must be given an experience close to their desk-based colleagues.



We must also be realistic. Those who are desk-based will always have a more collaborative experience than their deskless peers, especially when it comes to real-time communications. But that's not to say there aren't processes and technology we can put in place to strive for better.

Before we explore new technologies that can join up the deskless and desk-based experience, it's important to identify what's holding up innovation and adoption in the first place.

¹ Source: Tango Networks Survey Report, February 2024 by Cavell. Based on two studies across UK, Germany, France, Spain and the Netherlands: the first with telecoms/communications decision makers within 406 organisations with 50+ employees; the second with 406 frontline workers.

What's holding up innovation for frontline workers?

There is a pressing need and awareness that there could be another way. But until vendors make mobile unified communications with frontline worker features a priority, little will change.

That time, however, is here. Following the pandemic and with today's hybrid working environments, many more workers are away from the office, which has significantly increased the market size and the demand for change. As the new Cavell research indicates, business demand for a solution to the frontline disconnect has hit critical mass.

Vendors like Microsoft are developing specific licences and solutions for frontline workers. The Microsoft Shifts program has proven popular in the nursing and call centre worlds. Apps with shared access for multiple users with infrequent access are a nod to the shared call appearance feature of VoIP systems of the past.

For workers on the move, mobile technology has remained stubbornly separate from fixed-line telephony.

Thanks in part to the introduction of Microsoft Teams Phone Mobile and in part to the clear demand from frontline workers, better, more integrated mobile solutions are now emerging.



What's holding up adoption?

While the latest research shows clear demand for a solution, the blocker to adoption of any technology is time and money: the perceived time it takes for someone to learn the technology; the time away from a core job function; and the cost to provide and implement the new technology.

In these cases, it's important to do one of three things:

- 1 Make a product so simple to use that it is intuitive
- 2 Mandate training where it is needed
- 3 Find a solution where the TCO justifies a large deployment

Simplified products, which reduce the training burden, must be desirable. In any form of technology, ease of use is crucial for adoption. For frontline workers, who are busy dealing with the public, with patients, and with time-based events, this need becomes more important.

Mandatory training often comes with pushback and team members are disengaged either thinking about or secretly working on what they're "supposed to be doing."

Cost-effective mass deployable solutions will often be determined by the calculation of the substitution of older technology for new, more efficient technology. In this instance, the retirement of desk phones and expensive company mobile phones could be key to balance this equation.



Immediate options for frontline and mobile workers

There is no one-stop, overnight cost-effective solution to empower and connect our frontline and mobile workers. However, thanks to innovations in collaboration technology and a desire to connect everyone inside an organisation, we are closer than ever to empowering frontline and mobile workers. To facilitate this, Microsoft has introduced flexible licensing for Frontline workers in the form of Windows 365 Frontline. At the same time, PiPcall's Mobile+ technology addresses the collaboration and communications challenges faced by frontline workers in their everyday working environments.



The desk phone in your pocket

PiPcall Mobile+ is built for business mobile communications.

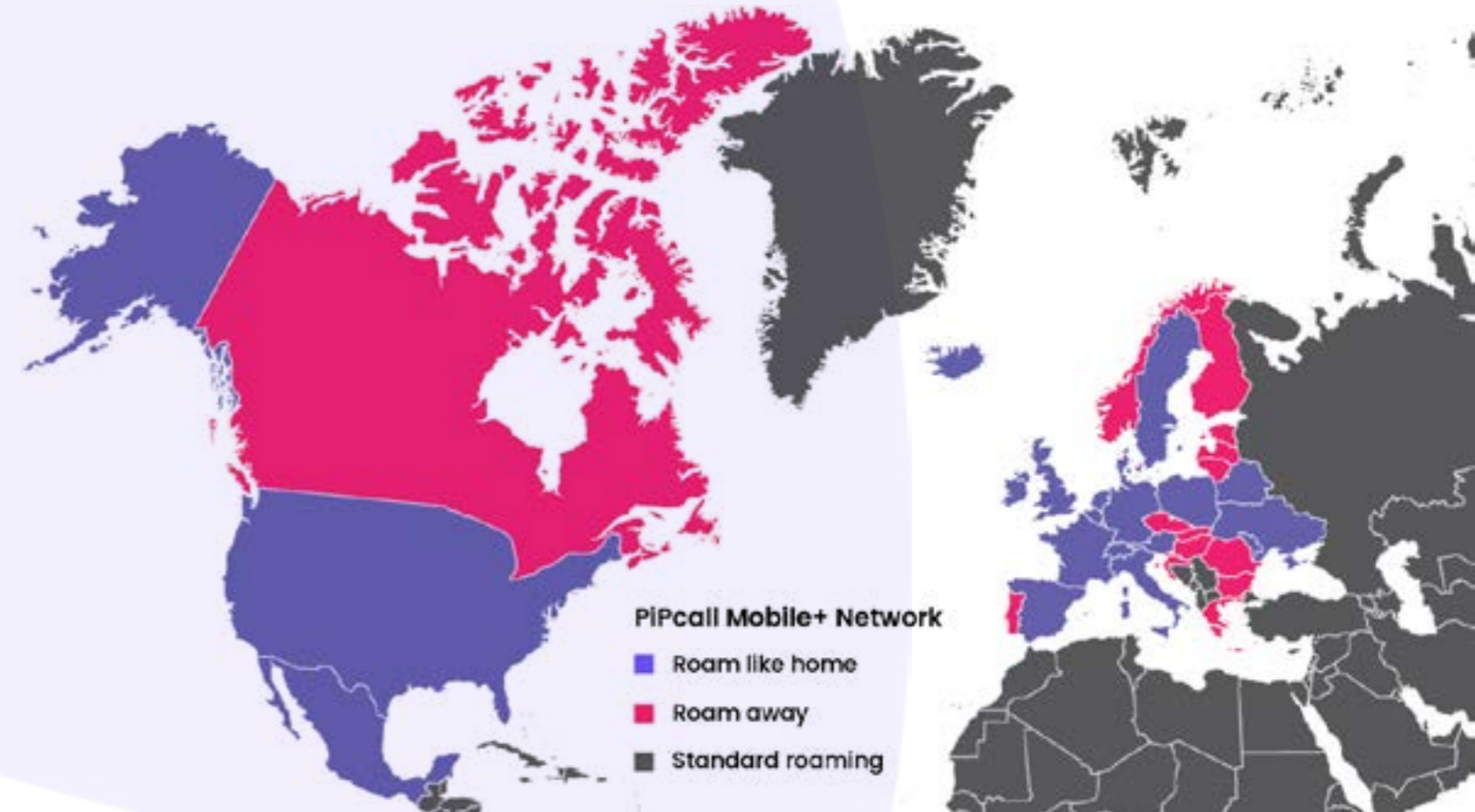
It gives organisations a dedicated mobile-first service designed to support business calling across business mobiles and personal mobiles, using SIM, eSIM or app deployment.

With Mobile+, users stay connected to the business phone system while benefiting from a network built for mobile working, business continuity and international use.

Mobile+ supports frontline and mobile teams wherever work takes them. Whether users are travelling between sites, working abroad, or supporting customers across multiple countries, Mobile+ helps keep their mobile connected to the central business phone system, with business numbers, call routing and company controls continuing to apply.

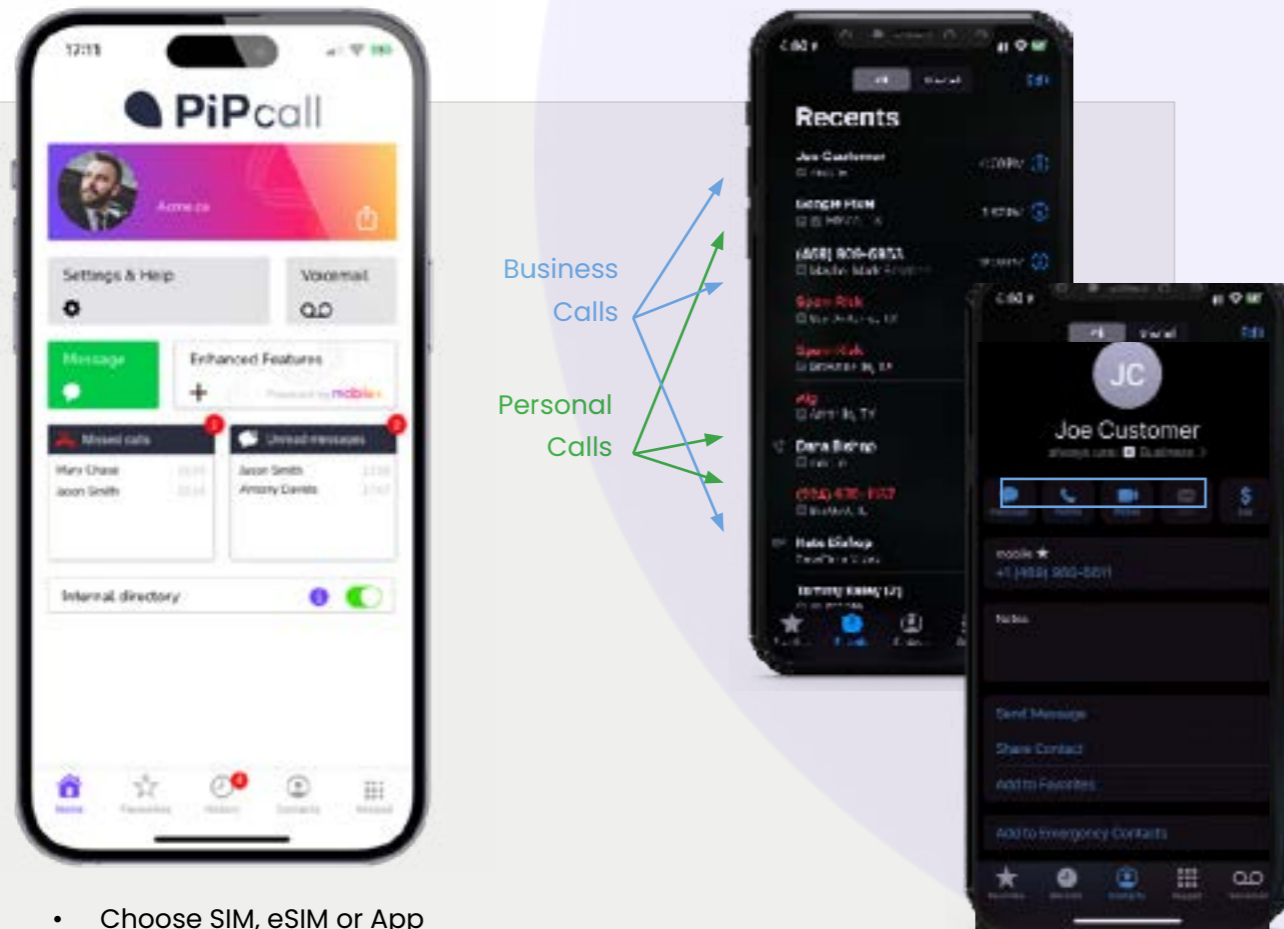


The Mobile+ Dedicated Business Mobile Network



PiPcall Mobile+ helps businesses connect mobile workers in the following ways:

- **Flexible deployment:** use a Mobile+ SIM, eSIM or App on business-owned or personal mobiles.
- **Mobile-first:** give users their business number and phone system features on the mobile they already use.
- **Mobile voice network calling:** SIM, eSIM and app users make business calls over the mobile voice network, not Wi-Fi or app-based VoIP.
- **Native dialler calling:** SIM and eSIM users make and receive business calls through the phone's normal dialler.
- **Business and personal separation:** keep personal calls private while business calls remain under company control.
- **Call recording and assessment:** capture and review business calls where required for compliance, training, quality or safety-critical processes.
- **Fast setup:** activate users by SIM, eSIM QR code or app, depending on their device and role.



- Choose SIM, eSIM or App
- Use the mobile as a business extension
- Route business calls through Mobile+
- Record and assess calls where required
- Keep personal calls private on BYOD devices

One business phone system. Multiple mobile options.

Call recording and assessment for important conversations

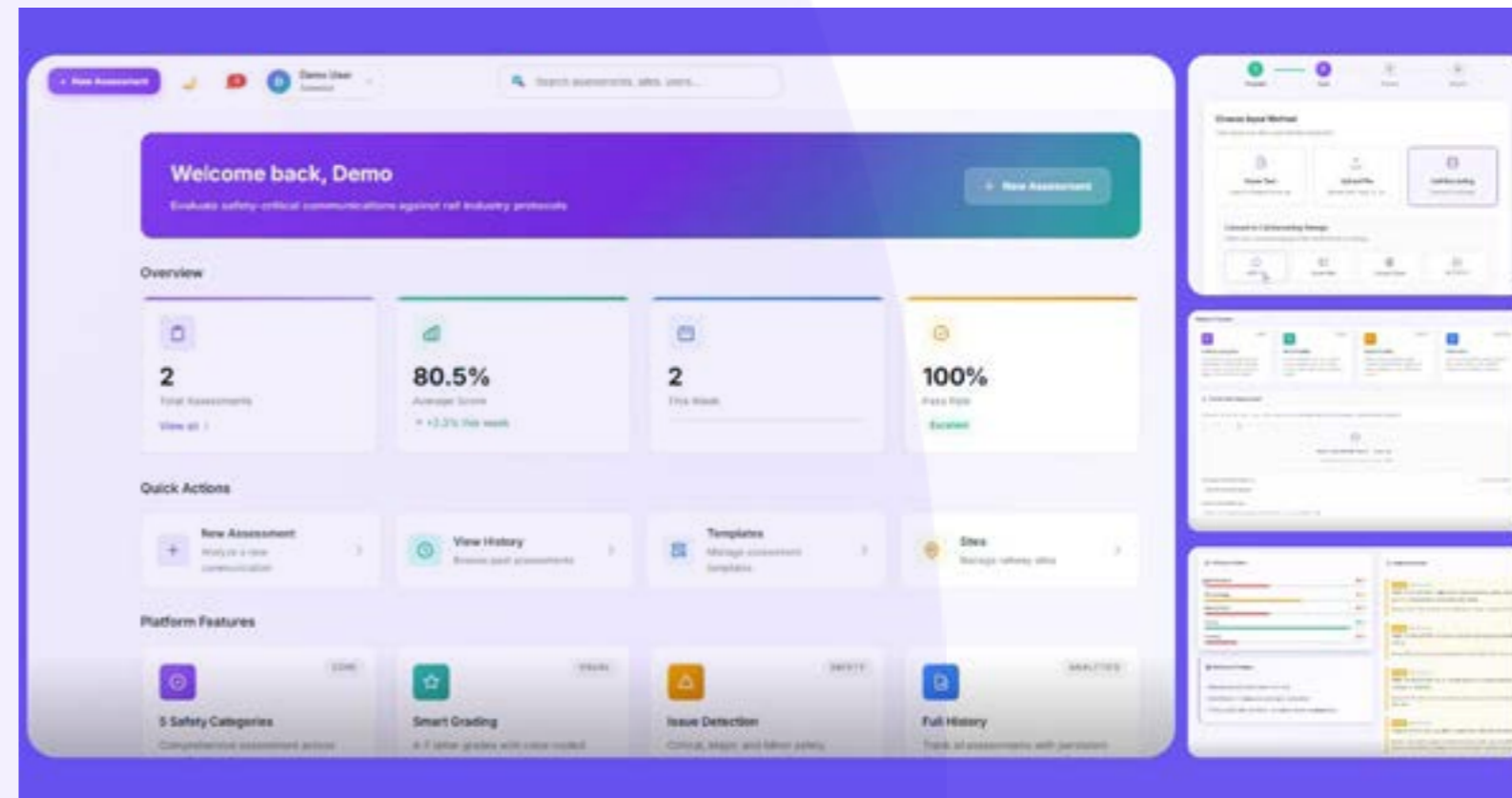
Mobile+ helps businesses bring mobile calls under the same control as the rest of the phone system.

Where required, business calls can be recorded for compliance, quality monitoring and training. Calls can also be assessed against agreed standards to help improve how important conversations are handled.

This is especially valuable for organisations managing:

- customer service calls
- field and frontline communications
- safeguarding or welfare calls
- escalation and incident handling
- safety-critical conversations

Call assessment can help teams review quality, consistency, escalation handling and duty-of-care processes.



Mobile+ helps make mobile business calls easier to manage, review and improve.

PiPcall Mobile+

Most employees use their mobile phones as their primary tool for business communications. The PiPcall Mobile+ service turns any mobile phone into a full-featured extension of your business UC platform.

The Deskphone in your Pocket

To find out more about Mobile+, visit pipcall.com



www.pipcall.com | sales@pipcall.com | +44 330 094 8080

Registered address: Lower Third Floor Evelyn Suite, Quantum House, 22-24 Red Lion Court,

London, United Kingdom, EC4A 3EB

Company No. 4994562