Why Slack is the future of remote collaboration
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The collaboration imperative

In March 2020, many companies switched suddenly to working remotely. In many cases, these companies made a literal overnight decision to close their physical doors and rapidly lean into a fully digital workplace out of necessity.

It’s tempting to think of this as an emergency situation; a temporary state of work that will return to “normal” in a few months. But the truth is the pandemic didn’t change the direction of work—it accelerated long-term trends that were already in play.

During this year’s Slack Frontiers virtual conference, global market intelligence firm IDC shared that all companies accelerated their plans to roll out digital technology—think tools crafted to help coworkers collaborate online—by five years in just the past six months.

And now that Pandora’s box is open, good luck getting it shut again. Global research firm Gartner found that a staggering 82% of company leaders will allow employees to work from home at least part-time, even after it’s safe to reopen offices. Slack’s own survey of global employees found that 72% of knowledge workers want a hybrid remote-office model, which is in line with leaderships’ plans.

This is a good thing.

Slack’s first quarterly Remote Employee Experience Index found that, in spite of the general upheaval of 2020, the remote work experience has been overwhelmingly positive in relation to almost every key indicator.

Remote workers are finding a better work-life balance, more satisfaction with their work arrangements, less work stress, and greater levels of productivity than they did when they worked in the office.

The single red flag in these trends is employees’ sense of belonging, which has decreased since moving away from an office setting.
The Remote Employee Experience Index measures perceptions of key elements of working life such as productivity, sense of belonging, and work-life balance.

Source: Slack-commissioned remote work survey with research firm GlobalWebIndex
A sense of belonging isn’t just nice to have. It’s critical to employees’ ability to do their best work long term—and their willingness to stay with your company.

Disengaged employees cost U.S. companies $483 billion to $605 billion each year in lost productivity.

Turnover costs an average of 50% of your employee’s salary.

In this new age of remote work, employees’ sense of belonging is as much a technology issue as it is a human resources issue.

The old way of working is no longer sufficient. As an IT leader, it’s up to you to respond to these trends with a solution that’s secure, reliable, and meets both the cultural and business needs of your company.

“The adoption of collaborative technologies alone accelerated by five years in only six months’ time.”


Move collaboration out of the office

The key to adapting to our new reality is to untether work from a physical location. People need to be able to do their work as productively and securely from their spare bedroom as they do from a downtown skyscraper.

To that end, IDC identified the seven most important technologies for creating this new workplace norm:

1. Team collaboration solutions
2. Management and security of devices
3. Video-conferencing applications
4. Traditional office productivity suites
5. eSignature software
6. VPN access to enterprise applications
7. Content sharing and collaboration


These technologies demonstrate a clear transition from in-office collaboration to digital collaboration. Conference rooms, onsite networks, device access and communications in general are moving out of the office and into the cloud.

But this shift is about more than just replacing office norms with digital clones. The move to remote work gives us all an opportunity to transform collaboration. We are collectively sharing a once-in-a-lifetime chance to redefine collaboration from something bound by time and location to something that can happen anywhere and everywhere.
To seize the opportunities of this transformation, you need software that supports an anywhere-and-everywhere way of working. But that software can’t exist in a vacuum. Fracturing your employees’ time and attention between different applications is a sure way to slow productivity and increase distraction.

Instead, you need a solution that underpins your tech stack and makes it seamlessly accessible to all remote workers in a single, beautiful application.

“Technology parity is the requirement that all workers have secure access to the resources they need to do their job on any device and from wherever they’re working.”


Think of Slack as your virtual office: Employees and leadership work side by side in a single digital space. Core applications and productivity software are woven into communication workflows without creating disruption. Teams collaborate in the digital equivalent of conference rooms. People get to know one another in community channels. And wrapped around all this are walls of enterprise-grade security and the stability of a 99.99% guaranteed uptime.

What’s more, unlike an office building, Slack is scalable to the needs of your workforce, whether remote, co-located or hybrid. Flexible administration tools, unlimited channels, and extensive software integrations make Slack completely customizable and scalable across your entire organization, regardless of size or complexity.

Slack solves the remote collaboration problem by providing a single platform that brings together the seven key technologies for digital collaboration—and helps you build a successful work culture in the process. It does this in three core ways:

1. **Employee engagement.** Slack aligns and connects your organization with free-flowing information, real-time correspondence and intuitive communication workflows.

2. **Interoperability.** Slack increases the ROI of your other software investments by making common tools fast and frictionless to access.

3. **Security.** Slack protects your data with enterprise-grade security, whether you’re working within or outside of to your company.

Here’s how.
Amplify employee alignment and engagement to boost business success

One of the major challenges of digital communication is just that—it’s digital. You can’t enjoy happy hour with your inbox, and your project management software won’t ask you about your weekend.

We’re not talking about intangible benefits here. Humans need community and a sense of purpose to stay engaged and do their best work.

Analytics and advisory firm Gallup found that the companies with the most engaged employees were **23% more profitable** and saw a 66% lift in employee well-being.

In contrast, disengaged workers cost **$483 billion to $605 billion** each year in lost productivity.

“Companies with highly engaged employees are 23% more profitable than low-engagement companies.”


Transparency is key to helping workers feel connected to the company. **Eighty-seven percent of workers** say they want their company to be more transparent. There’s a good reason for this: Slack’s State of Work survey identified insight and connection to organizational vision as essential to employees’ engagement and performance.

The same survey showed that employees who have this alignment with their company’s strategy and goals are **far likelier** to make strategic business decisions and to be more proactive and innovative at work in general.

So, when we talk about transparency, we’re not talking about regular company memos—we mean broad visibility into the company’s workings and easy access to information, colleagues and leadership.
The traditional system of office communication (emails, phone calls, meetings) creates a big disconnect when it comes to transparency. While 55% of business owners describe their companies as “very transparent,” only 18% of their employees agree with them.

In this new normal of distributed work, it’s not enough to upgrade old systems—we need a new way of approaching communication at work.

“55% of business owners describe their companies as ‘very transparent,’ but only 18% of their employees agree with them.”

Source: “Future of Work Study,” Slack

Slack opens communication channels across your organization

One-to-one communication isn’t sufficient for modern work. It creates silos, isolates workers from one another and is fundamentally inefficient for collaboration. Slack replaces the traditional approach with an open communication format, through which employees across teams and roles can interact on the projects and issues relevant to their jobs.

We accomplish this with channel-based communication. Channels are essentially dedicated spaces built around projects, topics or teams. Conversations take place in these channels, where relevant team members can be tagged into conversations, and everyone can follow the flow of communication.
Amplify employee alignment and engagement to boost business success

Channel-based messaging supports efficient, transparent communication in several key ways:

Channel-based messaging centralizes knowledge for projects, topics and teams

Status updates are no longer siloed in inboxes, where managers and teammates have to hunt down the information they need. Instead, all project communication is available in one central, searchable location.

Global hotel search platform trivago struggled to make the most of its internal communications tools before switching to Slack. Information was challenging—if not impossible—to find, as it was often buried in email threads and private conversations. Employees also had trouble knowing where to go for information, or whom to ask.

“[Before Slack] there were seven to eight communication tools in the company and each team used what they preferred,” says Tomas Schwaighofer Perez, the strategic project lead of the organizational solutions department at trivago.

Now teams at trivago all work in Slack. This has shortened the distance between trivago’s four offices in Düsseldorf, Palma de Mallorca, Leipzig and Amsterdam by transforming the way their teams work, communicate and innovate.

Channel-based messaging allows for faster collaboration

Channel conversations happen in real time. Instead of sending emails to several stakeholders looking for the right answer or information, employees can raise questions and issues to all relevant parties. Anyone can jump in to assist with an issue without hesitation.

When a technical issue is flagged, the engineering team at ticketing company Fandango creates a one-off, incident-specific channel to triage the issue. Here, relevant stakeholders collaborate to solve the problem as quickly as possible.

“The ability to jump into Slack to work an incident with a team and get a timeline view of all the communication that’s preceded is extremely helpful. Especially if you’re responding to a middle-of-the-night incident,” says Paul Zimny, the VP of engineering at Fandango.
Channel-based messaging makes the big picture of the company accessible to employees

Employees want visibility into their company’s operations and strategy. Slack provides that by allowing workers visibility across teams, as well as making it easy for leadership to engage with employees.

Home goods retailer Wayfair leverages Slack to keep teams closely aligned and maintain transparency while everyone is in different locations. Wayfair started a global announcements channel to share a newsletter providing company updates, information about resources like its employee assistance program, and technology tips for working from home. Wayfair also increased the frequency of executive "ask me anything" (AMA) sessions, held in a Slack channel, to foster executive engagement with the larger employee base.

In short, communicating via channels breaks down the barriers between roles and teams and unites your entire organization around the things that really matter: serving your customers and growing your business.

Community channels build a connected remote culture

Aligning employees with the company goes beyond work-focused communication, however. We’ve found that knowledge workers who communicate hourly with coworkers are the most likely to feel connected to and engaged with their company.

Slack users are highly engaged and active. The average Slack user spends roughly 120 minutes per workday actively using Slack to get their work done and connect with the company.

The power of human connection at work really can’t be underestimated. Gallup found a direct link between close working relationships with colleagues and increased profits: When 60% of employees identify as having a “work best friend,” the company could see a 12% lift in profits.

Slack makes it easy to build relationships, even from a distance, by facilitating an organic conversation flow. Channel-based messaging is more informal than email—people can interact in a way that feels natural to them. Features like emoji reactions and GIFs encourage people to be themselves at work and to have fun with their coworkers.
In a remote environment, where people can so easily become isolated, these little details make a big difference. We found that 88% of Slack users say that the tool keeps them in the loop with coworkers, and 87% say Slack has a positive impact on their work relationships.

In addition to streamlining work conversations and collaboration, Slack is also helping companies build communities within the workplace, where workers can support one another and build connections on shared experiences.

When Wayfair had to pivot to remote work, it found that working in Slack channels helped teams maintain a sense of community.

One example of this is its #wellness-at-wayfair channel, which promotes various health and fitness tips for maintaining mental and physical health while working from home. Parents have also created channels to post about the ups and downs of working from home with children.

This is the kind of community that’s necessary to combat the isolation of remote workers.

By breaking down communication barriers, Slack aligns and engages team members. Transparency empowers your employees to work as a single team, no matter where in the world they’re located.
Integrate systems and applications across your organization

Many businesses rely on dozens of apps just to operate. Video conferencing, project management software, productivity suites, customer relationship management systems—users throughout the organization are constantly using various pieces of software to get the job done.

This might not seem like a problem until you consider the amount of time it takes users to switch between all the various apps required to do their jobs. We found that 64% of knowledge workers spend 30 minutes or more every day simply switching between all the apps needed to do their daily work. That’s more than 130 hours annually per user.

If you have 2,000 employees, that’s 260,000 hours a year that your company spends on nothing but moving data and attention between apps. No value created; no traction gained.

But the problem of a fragmented software stack goes deeper than that. When both your team and your data are spread across a disjointed network of tools, key processes inevitably hit bottlenecks.

Let’s take the simple example of a prospective customer putting in a request for proposal (RFP). Your account executive receives the RFP in Outlook. Now, she has to gather the people and information needed to get that proposal to the customer.

First, your exec likely forwards the email to a distribution list of experts and stakeholders across the company, asking questions or requesting the data she needs to build her RFP. With this structure, she’s relying on the assumption that this generic distribution list includes all the right people for her specific deal. She also must rely on them checking their email and responding in a timely manner.

“64% of workers spend 30 minutes or more every day simply switching between all the apps needed to do their daily work.”

Source: “The State of Work,” Slack
Integrate systems and applications across your organization

When it comes to the information needed for this proposal, your account executive might not even have access to the critical files and data she needs to do her job. It’s possible the people on her distribution list don’t have that access either and will have to go even further up the chain to get it.

“Information is never all in one place just to gather up and send,” says James Colgan, director of product management at Slack. “It’s in email threads, personal OneDrive folders, SharePoint sites. And there’s valuable information in SaaS applications like Salesforce. Bringing all this data and knowledge together is time-consuming and error-prone.”

Time is lost as your team gets caught up reading long email chains, hunting down information and running approvals back and forth.

Maybe your account executive is more proactive and schedules a meeting to avoid the back-and-forth. The problem here is that your account exec can’t be expected to know every member of the team—there could very well be a key stakeholder who won’t be able to contribute due to being left off the invite.

This could result in more meetings (as someone in the first meeting points the account exec to another stakeholder) or simply important input being left out of the RFP. Either way, the sales deal moves much more slowly and with less precision than it should.

To work productively, your employees need to be on the same page. The keyword here is interoperability. Your systems need to speak to each other and share information. But, most importantly, your systems need to streamline the end user’s ability to take action.

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<th>Prospect collaboration delayed by email</th>
<th>Key data knowledge is spread across tools</th>
<th>Burden falls on the scheduler for productive meetings</th>
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This interoperability is essential to maximizing your software ROI. If your tech stack doesn’t integrate, it’s ultimately costing you in time spent toggling between apps.

That’s why we built Slack to be the single platform that unifies all the key applications you use to get work done. As Slack’s co-founder and CEO, Stewart Butterfield, often says: “We’d like to be the 2% of your software budget that is a multiplier on the other 98% of your budget.”

We accomplish this with a rich, easy-to-use App Directory and Workflow Builder.

“Information is never all in one place. It’s in email threads, personal OneDrive folders, SharePoint sites. And there’s valuable information in SaaS applications like Salesforce. Bringing all this data and knowledge together is time-consuming and error-prone.”

James Colgan
Director of product management, Slack

Slack connects all your tools in one place

Slack breaks down information silos by integrating your business applications and communication tools right into our collaboration platform. Our App Directory features over 2,300 integrations with the software that powers businesses around the world.

These integrations let you run critical software tasks from within Slack, such as finding data, triggering workflows, even reading emails.
Integrate the software you use every day

In addition to greatly reducing time spent switching between apps, Slack integrations let you keep work transparent and collaborative.

Salespeople can work together on a deal in real time instead of spending time working across organizational silos, as in our earlier example. With just a couple of keystrokes, they can access or update Salesforce data, start a conversation thread around an Outlook email, even create tasks in Jira or Asana, all directly from Slack.

Little wonder, then, that sales teams using Slack see a 13% shorter overall sales cycle (versus teams that don’t use Slack).

“The combination of Slack and Google Docs has proved very powerful,” says Will Sprunt, the CIO of Deliveroo. As soon as someone comments in a document, the comment appears in Slack, so everyone can work together to get it across the finish line. “That instantaneous communication goes back and forth, and you can see how both things work in tandem. It’s a great method of collaboration.”

Deliveroo also relies on a Slack integration with the business intelligence platform Looker to highlight data points that need attention. When a new client places an order for the first time or an account manager has a great revenue week, for example, the account management team receives an automated ping in Slack.

This helps the team focus attention on what really matters, instead of being overwhelmed with data points. Deliveroo says this helps it gain a lot of efficiency because it knows where to focus its efforts.

| 21% faster response time to sales lead |
| 16% quicker to issue sales offer |
| 13% shorter overall cycle |

Source: The business value of Slack

But sales teams aren’t the only ones to benefit. Across industries and disciplines, teams are seeing the impact of Slack interoperability.

For food delivery service Deliveroo, Slack integrations with Trello, Google Calendar and Google Docs provide a connected ecosystem that makes global collaboration easy.
Integrate systems and applications across your organization

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Software company Autodesk uses Slack to make real-time triage a reality. Its engineering teams rely on Jira and PagerDuty integrations in Slack to make their process as fast as possible.

When an alert is sent out from the PagerDuty integration, a Slack channel is created using the incident outage number. Engineers who see the outage jump into the channel to test different solutions and relay results back to the group until the incident is resolved.

“The ability to have this real-time tool is hugely impactful,” says Guy Martin, the director of open source at Autodesk. “And the results of those outages are archivable, which has helped engineers solve future issues quickly.”

No matter what your team is working on or what software it uses, there’s a Slack integration to help everyone do their job faster, better and smarter.

“We’d like to be the 2% of your software budget that is a multiplier on the other 98% of your budget.”

Stewart Butterfield
Slack co-founder and CEO

Growth platform HubSpot uses Slack integrations and channels to streamline the process of working in Jira. Its software engineers and product managers interact with customer support teams via Jira, but Jira notifications tend to flood inboxes and can quickly become a burden.

Now, people are notified in their Slack channel when they’re mentioned on a Jira ticket. “The point there was to try and help our project managers and engineers sift through some of the noise to make sure they’re aware of and responding to the most urgent customer issues,” says Ryan Ward, the vice president of business technology at HubSpot.

The customer service team also uses Slack’s native Twitter integration to monitor the @HubSpotSupport handle, which posts into a Twitter support channel with a claim button. This helps the team organize and prioritize responses to customers.

Key integrations used with Slack:

- Google Calendar
- Google Drive
- Trello
- Looker
- Salesforce
- GitHub

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Integrate systems and applications across your organization

Automate workflows within Slack

But Slack's interoperability doesn't stop at third-party integrations. With Slack's Workflow Builder, anyone can create custom Slack bots that work across apps to automate your work. Workflow Builder is a visual, no-code tool. This relieves the burden of automation from strained IT departments and puts the power in the hands of the user.

Once your workflow is set up, it only takes a couple of keystrokes to do tasks that once required switching between apps and communication tools—such as updating a ticket, collecting data or feedback via forms, or pulling key information from a business intelligence tool or CRM.

These workflows take the form of bots within Slack.

E-commerce platform Shopify built a bot called “Spy” to give teams visibility into support tickets, shop traffic and sales data, incidents and more. With the simple Slack command “/spy [action],” employees can access the data they need from within their Slack workspace.

“The main reason for building this Slack tool was to operationalize it, make a very consistent flow that all our incidents go through. The tool helps us make sure we do all the right things,” says John Arthorne, a production engineering lead at Shopify.
Here at Slack, we have our own bots to make our lives easier. One of our favorites is our custom Midas Touch app, which saves our sales team 5,000 hours every month.

To help customers understand the impact of Slack on their business, our sales reps used to sift through various apps, dashboards and spreadsheets to find high-quality data they could use in customer presentations. Midas Touch works between Salesforce, Looker and Google Slides to generate data-filled presentations in a few minutes versus the hours it used to take our sales reps.

“[Bot workflows] saved our employees literally thousands of hours of manual work every month, and also kept our employees engaged in the process!” says Stephen Franchetti, the head of business technology and IT at Slack.

This is just a small sample of the interoperability you can create with Slack. It’s more than a collaboration tool—it’s a fully customizable headquarters for your business.

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Stephen Franchetti
Head of business technology and IT, Slack
Protect your remote workplace with enterprise-grade security

The sudden shift to remote work is making security extra challenging for many IT departments. Businesses that once had close control over devices and network access now scramble to provide the same level of security to their distributed employees—many of whom are working on their own devices.

This is an industrywide issue. Eighty-four percent of IT leaders find it more difficult to protect against data loss with a remote workforce, and 48% of employees admit to being more lax with data security practices while working from home.

And while many IT departments favor the enhanced security provided by VPNs, they can sometimes create more productivity barriers for remote workers. In The Mobile Employee Experience Report, NetMotion found that over 41% of mobile workers say connectivity issues are their No. 1 frustration—and many of these issues are due to VPNs.

This leaves IT leaders to strike a balance between user experience and data security. The Zero Trust model offers a promising compromise, leaning on cloud-first architecture and user authorization to provide both security and connectivity.

A Zero Trust approach means setting micro-perimeters around individual resources instead of trying to fit everything inside a single trusted network. This allows for greater security at each point of access while also lessening the burden on internal servers.

So, if this model works so well for business applications and proprietary data, why not apply it to communication? Email is still the go-to communication tool for most organizations, even though 90% of data breaches start on email. And for every data breach, you’re looking at an average total cost of $3.86 million.

Your security is only as good as its weakest link. Don’t let your collaboration tool become that weak link.
Slack offers secure, frictionless communication

Enterprise-grade security is part of Slack’s DNA because true collaboration can’t take place without trust. We provide a rich suite of features, encryptions and management tools that allow you to make your Slack workplace as secure as your physical HQ.

Slack offers an industry-leading security program that meets and exceeds some of the most widely recognized security and compliance standards. Major organizations in the highly regulated financial, health and public sectors trust Slack to protect their data and secure communication within their companies.

Oscar Health, a direct-to-consumer health insurance provider, relies on Slack for the easy collaboration it needs to work remotely while meeting the rigid security requirements of HIPAA.

“We needed to enable fast-paced collaboration internally and share sensitive patient information with doctors securely, and Slack allowed us to do that,” says Sam Gross, a senior technical product manager at Oscar Health.

And this level of security isn’t limited to internal conversations. Slack Connect allows you to work with partners, vendors and customers within an external Slack channel. These channels fall under the same strict compliance and security standards.

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Sam Gross
Senior technical product manager, Oscar Health

Slack certifications and attestations

- ISO/IEC 27001
- ISO/IEC 27017
- SOC 3
- EU/U.S. Privacy Shield
- Swiss/U.S. Privacy Shield
- ISO/IEC 27018
- SOC 2
- CSA
- FedRAMP Moderate

Slack supports customers’ compliance with

- HIPAA
- FINRA 17-a4 configurable
- GDPR
- Data residency
Admins have complete control over their organizations’ data, in addition to tools that let them monitor external access, manage the permissions of every external user and audit interactions. Identity must be verified by Slack admins at both ends, so every user is approved by both parties. No more unknown senders cropping up in inboxes—with Slack Connect, you know exactly who’s on the other end of the conversation.

Knowledge management software Guru trusts Slack Connect to handle sensitive communications with its board of investors. “Because Slack’s security features and compliance standards extend to Slack Connect, I didn’t even question creating a secure channel with my board,” says Mitch Stewart, the chief technology officer at Guru.

For him, Slack Connect is far more secure and reliable than email while also delivering all the other benefits of fast, open collaboration.

“But this is just the foundation. In the age of remote work, data and device control are more important than ever before. For even greater data security, we have Slack Enterprise Key Management (EKM).

We call it a “bring your own key” model. With Slack EKM, you can protect data in Slack with your own encryption key. With Slack EKM, you can revoke access for users, files, windows of time, even specific messages. This provides enterprises with enhanced security by giving you greater data control—and far more peace of mind as your workplace evolves outside the office firewall.

But what’s the good of data security if a user’s device is compromised or stolen? In addition to the basics of identity security, like two-factor authentication, Slack provides Enterprise Mobility Management. With this feature enabled, you have a non-invasive way to ensure that only authorized users have access to your Slack workspace. You can also enable added mobile controls that disable copying information in Slack and only allow company access via whitelisted mobile browsers.

Slack’s security features are robust, but none of them create friction between your employees and their work. Security should be a barrier between your company and bad actors, not a barrier between your company and your employee experience.

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Mitch Stewart
Chief technology officer, Guru
The future of work is already here

To say we live in uncertain times would be a major understatement. But we also live in exciting times. The way we work is changing rapidly, and it’s changing for the better.

Employees are more productive, more satisfied and less stressed than they were in their offices. Remote work can work—or it can crash and burn. The difference lies in the technology you use to support your workforce.

Collaboration tools are the new office buildings. Is your office secure? Is it designed to facilitate conversations and teamwork? Does it have a break room where employees can build relationships? Or is it full of walled-off cubicles and sound-proof conference rooms?

If you're going to reap the benefits of remote work, you have to build a digital workplace where employees can work in a way that feels natural.

Slack is the fast, natural collaboration solution that allows enterprises to make this transition smoothly and productively—as it did for global software company TIBCO, which transitioned nearly 4,000 employees to working from home in only 72 hours.

“Slack brings everyone in our TIBCO community together for both work and a dose of normalcy. People are creating their own communities, sharing their work-from-home and wellness tips, challenges and shared experiences,” says KimLoan Tran, the head of global learning and development at TIBCO.

What will Slack do for your future of work? Set up a consultation with one of our experts today to find out!
About Slack

Slack makes work simpler, more pleasant and more productive. It’s a channel-based messaging platform for the enterprise that brings the right people, information and tools together to get work done.

From FTSE 100 companies to corner shops, millions of people around the world use Slack to connect their teams, unify their systems and drive their business forward.

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