BEEKEEPER

Case Study

**German
Red
Cross**

*"With Beekeeper, our communication is now easier and more transparent."*

**Jose Morla**
Deputy Rescue Services and IT/Data Protection Officer

### About
The Säckingen County Association is part of the German Red Cross (DRK), an organization with four million members in total. The Red Cross is committed to global health, well-being, and crisis management. The DRK Säckingen County Association has roughly 80 full-time employees across several departments, including rescue, crew duty, mobile social, and home care emergency services.

### Challenges
Due to the time-sensitive nature of emergency aid services the DRK provides, the ability to communicate with all employees in real-time is critical. For example, street closures, vehicle servicing, instructions for new devices, and process flows need to be communicated effectively.

The DRK Säckingen's internal communication faced two main challenges:

**1. Reaching employees**
The association consists of independent departments that have minimal daily interaction. The lack of interdepartmental communication was a major issue. Most employees don't have email addresses associated with the DRK, making it hard for managers and other employees to get a hold of their staff. They had to contact each other via personal phone numbers and even send physical mail to home addresses. Given the fact that the rescue and driving staff frequently work in the field, communication with employees that aren't regularly in the office was even more challenging.

## 2. Making information visible to all employees

Previously, it was the employee's responsibility to find the materials they needed since there wasn't a centralized database. To find relevant information, DRK workers relied on word of mouth and other old-fashioned forms of communication. News like plans for blocking off streets or holding obligatory members' meetings were published on several bulletin boards, which took a lot of effort to maintain. Field workers couldn't even view this information, so this practice wasn't sustainable.

An antiquated in-house service platform was in place to reach employees on their computers and wasn't efficient. Management could send out news, but employees had to painstakingly log in via an outdated web interface and filter through all the messages to find the ones they were interested in. If they didn't do that, they wouldn't have a way of receiving updates. Additionally, they couldn't be reached by mobile and the system was inflexible and rarely used. In search of a better solution, the association switched to WhatsApp and DRK employees exclusively communicated through the app. However, WhatsApp had numerous disadvantages.

### WhatsApp Limitations
- For employees without a smartphone, it's difficult to receive information.
- Data security isn't available.
- The ability to structure employees in groups isn't well-defined.
- When someone logs out of a group, they don't get any information at all.
- There is only one chat view and it's unclear. Employees constantly complained that it was hard to find information.
- It's viewed as a leisure platform. Staff members were unhappy using a system which was also heavily used for personal communication. Employees received business intel during their free time and vice versa. The separation of personal and working time with WhatsApp wasn't regulated.

### Goal

The DRK Säckingen was looking for a platform with the desired security features, as well as the flexibility to categorize information and spread it deliberately. Management wanted an intuitive user interface comparable to consumer products like WhatsApp, but without the aforementioned limitations.

## Solution

With Beekeeper, the DRK Säckingen has found a platform that fulfills the communication requirements and has none of the previous limitations.

- Data and privacy is always protected with best-in-class 256-bit TLS encryption and advanced firewall protection
- The platform reflects the DRK brand and offers a more professional appearance so it's not perceived as a leisure app.
- Employees without a smartphone or PC can log in to the Beekeeper platform to retrieve workplace information.
- Different types of groups and communication streams make relevant content easily accessible. Administrators can create streams that display pertinent messages within each department. The platform is also used for permanent and everyday messaging, individual or group chats, and direct messages to all employees for important updates and surveys.

Beekeeper was successfully introduced to the Rescue Services and Mobile Social Services departments. The Beekeeper team supported the DRK Säckingen during the rollout to all employees. Every staff member was invited to an event where the system was presented and implemented.
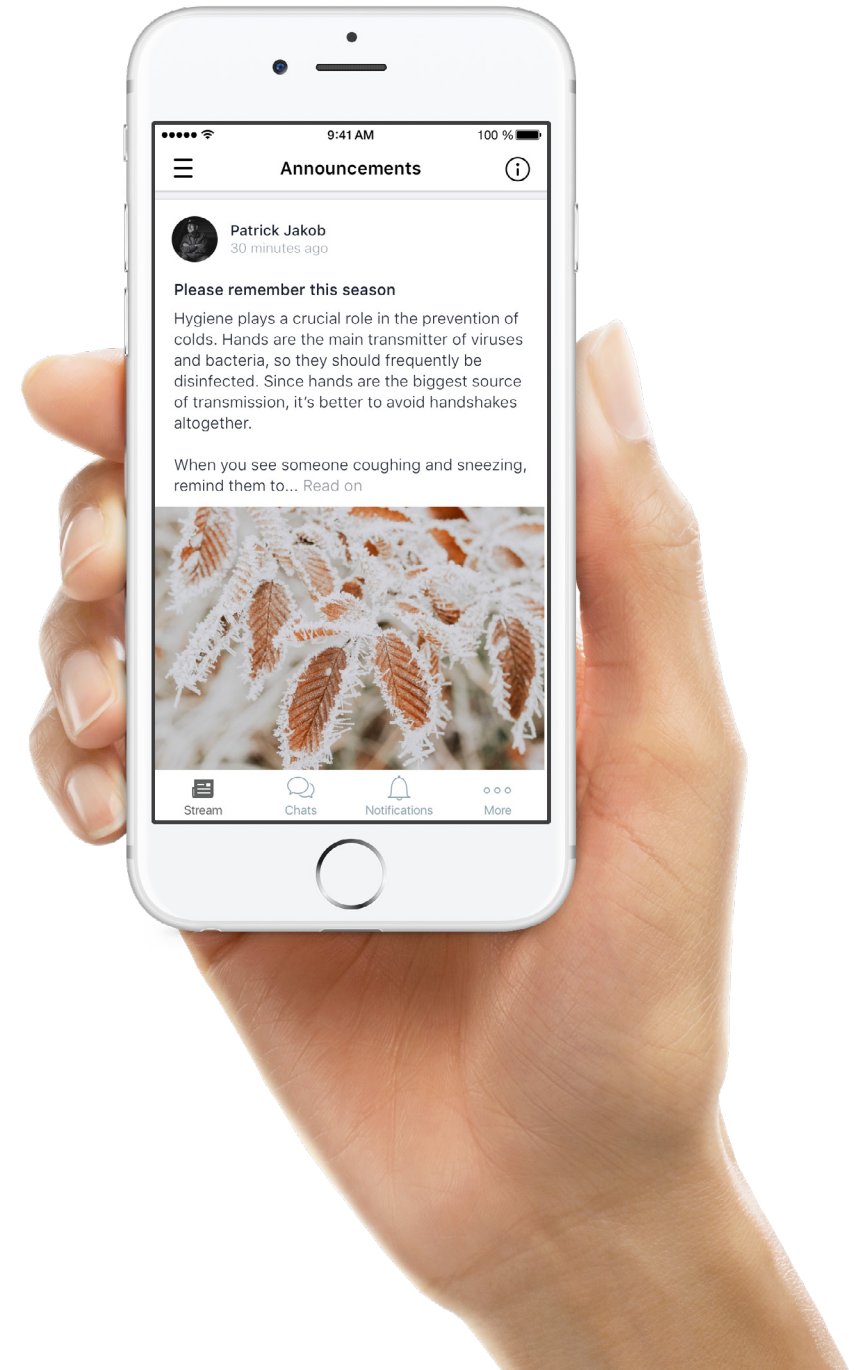
*"There were employees who had previously refused to use WhatsApp. Those people now have Beekeeper on their mobile phones and are involved in information exchange, which is a big advantage for us as a company."*

**Jose Morla**
Deputy Rescue Services and IT/Data Protection Officer

## Beekeeper Effect
Thanks to Beekeeper and the Säckingen team, the association now has a cost-effective internal communication solution that reaches and informs all employees faster, more reliably, and more efficiently.

**Direct interdepartmental communication**
Beekeeper allows the DRK Säckingen to have uniform and interdepartmental communication. Contacting an employee from another department is now quite simple. Every employee is represented on the Beekeeper platform and can be messaged directly. For example, the DRK Säckingen can now reach ambulance drivers directly to communicate emergencies, maintenance issues, and road blocks. Individual employees communicate with one another via group chats and can organize shift covers.

**Easily accessible information**
All messages on the platform are categorized and easily searchable. Administrators set up communication streams and chats for individual departments that allow for an easy flow of organized information. For instance, the Rescue Services department uses its own communication stream and chats so they only see the urgent information that is relevant to them.

**High satisfaction rate among employees**
The platform has a high satisfaction rate among employees—much better than the previous platform—because of the professional and user-friendly layout. Almost all employees think the user interface is intuitive, specifically the "liking" and commenting functionality. The survey feature promotes two-way communication within the association, so employees are more heavily involved on a day-to-day basis.

*"We think very highly of Beekeeper. Overall, communication is much easier. It's a great platform and is also fun to work with."*

**Matthias Nobs**
Head of Rescue Services

### More employees reached in a more effective way

Meeting notes are now distributed to employees via communication streams and group chats. Using the platform's analytics, the sender can track who has opened the files and who hasn't. Before Beekeeper, only about 80% of recipients opened the files and the read rate has now increased to 98%. As Jose Morla puts it: *"For us as line forces, it's critical we know whether or not employees have read information."*

Response rates have significantly improved and response times are much quicker than they were with email. Email volume has been greatly reduced, freeing up more time for other tasks.

### Substantial savings

The survey feature saves employees' time, as well as management's. Prior to Beekeeper, employees had to manually prepare questions on paper, distribute to the team, compile the feedback, and give it to management. With Beekeeper, one click is enough to submit feedback.

Before Beekeeper, new content for bulletin boards was processed and printed eight times per message once or twice a week. These were distributed to all boards, and to all external paramedics within a 13 mile radius. Distributing this news was an enormous effort. Now, important messages are communicated to all employees digitally. Various file types, including PDFs and image files, can be used as attachments. Employees are presented with information clearly and can access it at any time.

Bulletin boards are now only occasionally used for secondary, long-term information, resulting in significant cost savings, especially in labor, transport, and printing costs. And there have been tremendous time-saving benefits from not having to reach out to employees individually.

*"In the past it was much more complicated to inform employees. Today, it's simpler, more transparent, and encouraging employee involvement isn't as challenging. The acceptance is high, and therefore it's a valuable platform."*

**Jose Morla**
Deputy Rescue Services and IT/Data Protection Officer

### The Future

The DRK Säckingen already has big plans for Beekeeper on the horizon. The organization wants to utilize their custom Beekeeper app in other departments, as well as the entire circle of associations, so all employees can be completely in sync.

Other associations have noticed the DRK Säckingen's success with Beekeeper and showed interest in adopting the platform based on DRK Säckingen's recommendation.

**158 users**
across several departments

**99%**
activated users

**76%**
daily users

**20%**
increase in read rates

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## About Beekeeper

Beekeeper is an award-winning digital workplace app that digitizes the non-desk workforce by connecting operational systems and communication channels within one secure, intuitive platform. Beekeeper connects colleagues across locations and departments in real time via mobile or desktop devices, and includes an intelligent dashboard to help companies improve internal communication and streamline business processes. Secure, automated, and relevant information is readily distributed, searchable, and measurable in one central hub for an efficient digitized workflow. The company is based in Zurich and San Francisco and supports users in more than 130 countries.

**For more information, visit  www.beekeeper.io.**

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