Preserving Corporate Culture in a Distributed Landscape

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The coronavirus irrevocably changed the workplace. **Five years of digital transformation and evolution occurred in less than five weeks.** Now, one year into the pandemic, many have begun to wonder how a return to work will look, and how a post-COVID world might impact communication, collaboration, and culture.

We've gathered research from multiple sources to help you understand how your own culture might be impacted. More importantly, we'll also walk you through what you can do about it.
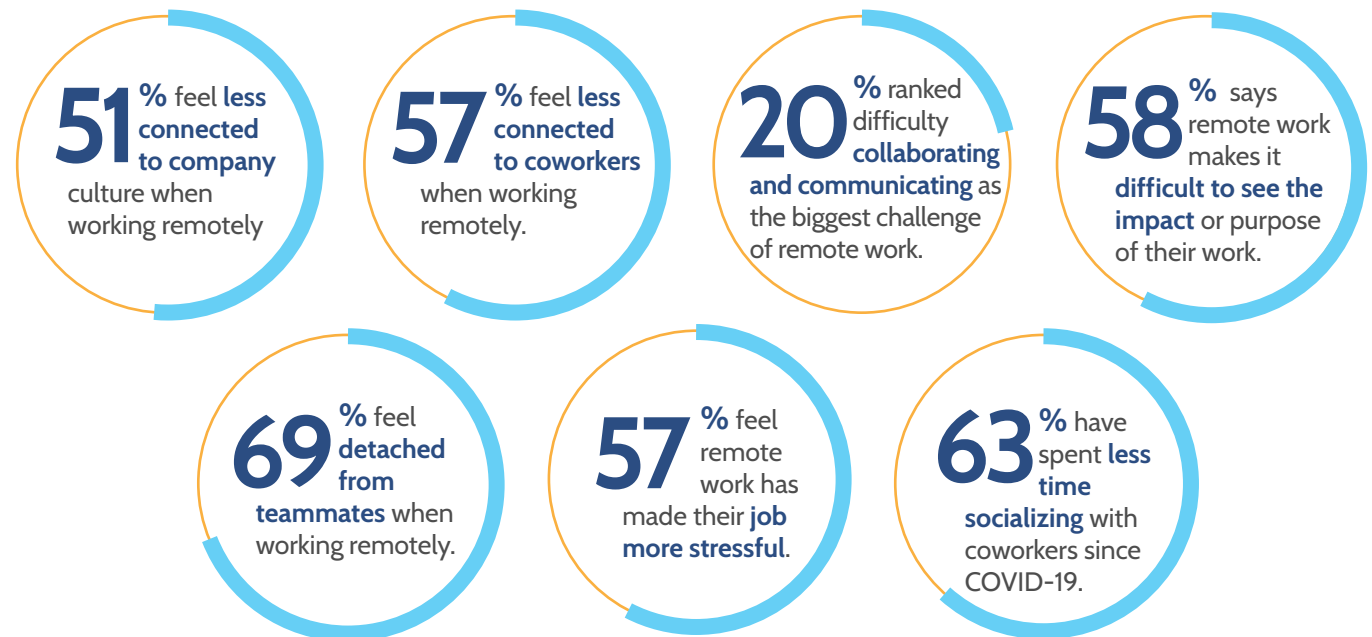
People Are Feeling Disconnected

Unfortunately, for all its benefits, distributed work suffers from just as many problems. In businesses that have not yet gotten a handle on remote communication, employees may feel increasingly isolated and disillusioned. And even for those businesses that have made an effort to address this, there are multiple unexpected roadblocks.

Of Employees...

51% feel **less connected to company** culture when working remotely

57% feel **less connected to coworkers** when working remotely.

20% ranked difficulty **collaborating and communicating** as the biggest challenge of remote work.

58% says remote work makes it **difficult to see the impact** or purpose of their work.

69% feel **detached from teammates** when working remotely.

57% feel remote work has made their **job more stressful**.

63% have spent **less time socializing** with coworkers since COVID-19.

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Loneliness Has a Very Real Impact

Disillusionment and declining productivity are not the only things employers must contend with. The prolonged isolation that often results from remote work, especially during COVID, can be devastating to the health of your workers. Mental illnesses aside, effects include...

Increased risk of premature death on-par with smoking, obesity, and inactivity

50% increased risk of dementia

Impaired decision-making and declining productivity

A weaker immune system, resulting in more sick days

Significantly increased stress

Cognitive decline

And Their Mental Health Has Suffered For It...

"Working from home for many people in our society is a risk for further alienation and feeling very lonely and distant. Going to work is not just getting a paycheque ... it's also a sense of being connected."

Roger McIntyre, Professor of Psychiatry & Pharmacology, University of Toronto

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Which Employers Must Do More To Address

80%
of people will have a diagnosable mental health condition within their lifetime

95%
of employees who've taken time off due to stress named a different reason, such as physical illness

60%
say their workplace productivity has been impacted by their mental health

86%
of people believe a company's culture should support mental health

29%
of employees reported experiencing worse overall mental health during COVID-19

Employers lose an average of **217 million days** a year to absenteeism

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Workplace Communication Was Flawed Even Prior to COVID-19

Businesses spent an average of **17 hours per week** clarifying previous communication

70% of employees had issues dealing with the high volume of communication

Workers spent an average of up to 60 minutes a day navigating between apps and toggled between them **up to 10 times an hour**

Miscommunication cost businesses an average of **$37 billion a year**

74% of employees felt they were missing out on company information/news

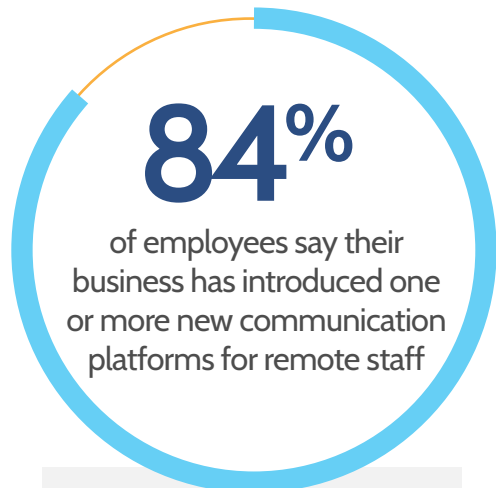**62% of emails** received by employees were either unimportant or irrelevant.

"We see [messaging] fatigue becoming a real growing problem, triggered by the way companies are organized, with siloed systems and siloed departments and a lack of coordination...You have people doing messaging in silos and then they are all trying to work on multiple channels at the same time."

Steve Dille, Senior Vice President of Marketing, Message Systems

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And Remote Work Only Exacerbates The Problem

"Before COVID-19, the average knowledge worker in the U.S. used 10 apps at least 25 times per workday...[Now] the number of apps has ballooned to 13, checked at least 30 times a day."

Fortune Magazine

84% of employees say their business has introduced one or more new communication platforms for remote staff

but **56%** say these new tools add more than four hours to their workweek

41% feel there are too many communication apps
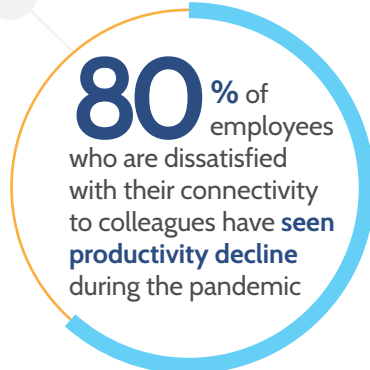
50% receive 20+ emails a week

32% struggle with miscommunication between teams

32% feel there's now too much correspondence

34% feel there's not enough IT support

42% % of employees feel their **company communicates effectively**

39 % of employees **don't receive enough information** about what's happening in their business

50 % of managers **do not have the necessary tools** and resources to support remote workers

80 % of employees who are dissatisfied with their connectivity to colleagues have **seen productivity decline** during the pandemic

The Road to a Better Distributed Workplace

As the world embraces distributed work, businesses need to be aware of the problems it creates for employees. People are stressed. They're uncertain where they stand with their employer, and they're unclear on company culture.

Worse still, they're overwhelmed. There are too many messages, too many apps, and too many emails to contend with. Unless you address these issues, distributed work carries no benefits – only bottlenecks and drawbacks.

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A Recipe for Successful Remote Culture

Companies that retained a strong company culture during the pandemic shared the following traits in common.

Effective top-down communication

Transparent leadership and management

Clearly-explained and understood strategies and values

A focus on employee health, safety, and mental well-being

Flexible working hours and family-friendly policies

Willingness to experiment with new ways of working

Attunement to outside factors
(ie. changing quarantine requirements)

Business agility

Low process and policy complexity

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Break Down Communication Silos

Give employees a place where they can **communicate openly and honestly**

Promote a **collaborative** mentality, not a **competitive** one

Establish **common goals**

Give different teams and departments **reasons to work together**

Understand Your Employee's Needs

- Software
- Equipment
- Information
- Mental Health
- Work Hours
- Social Interaction
- Collaboration

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Connect Leadership and Staff

- Support, not micromanagement
- Make leadership reachable and relatable
- Ensure easy availability
- Congratulate employees on successes
- Give advice, not criticism
- Congratulate employees on successes
- Give advice, not criticism
- Engage with employees in decision-making

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Consolidate Your Tools

Eliminate unnecessary apps

Reduce your number of communication channels

Centralize your business communications

Replace tools that don't support a hybrid workforce

Focus on user experience, engagement, and easy onboarding

Create a Sense of Community

Promote open conversation	Allow everyone to feel heard	Prioritize employee well-being	Humanize management and leadership

Work smarter and faster with Unio

Keeping a distributed workforce connected starts with bringing people together onto a single platform. Unio can be that platform. Book a demo to see how - and why.

Get in Touch

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