

Employee Engagement, Motivation, and Productivity in the New Workplace

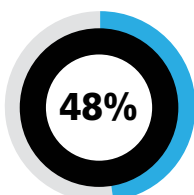
Fostering a Sense of Belonging and Shared Purpose Among Remote and Hybrid Workers

Widely embraced by both small businesses and major corporations—Capital One, Dropbox, Ford Motor Company, Intuit, Reddit, Siemens, and Twitter among them—remote work is here to stay. Among the benefits of working from home, employees consistently cite no more commuting (and the related time and money saved), a more flexible work schedule, and the freedom to live anywhere they want (as long as it has Wi-Fi). Companies that adopt either a fully remote or hybrid work model typically reduce their real estate and facility maintenance costs, sometimes substantially, as well as gain access to a larger and more diverse talent pool. Still, despite its advantages for many workers and organizations, the remote or hybrid workplace is a work in progress, with questions about its long-term effectiveness and impact on employee motivation and productivity.

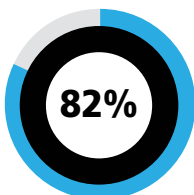
In October 2021, AMA surveyed members and seminar participants nationwide about their level of engagement with work and how that engagement affects both their individual output and their organization overall. Based on the responses of more than 680 participants, people are now working more and producing more but feel less engaged with the work they are doing, with their closest collaborators or teammates, and with other workers

KEY FINDING

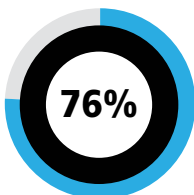
Workers today feel less connected to their co-workers, overwhelmingly due to their company's shift to a fully or partially remote workplace.



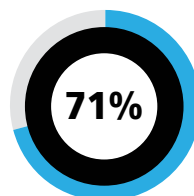
48% of participants said they feel less connected to the people they work with regularly.



82% said they feel less connected to co-workers they work with occasionally.



76% said that feeling less connected to people they work with often or daily has the greatest impact on their sense of belonging.

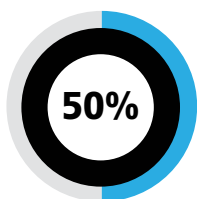


71% said that feeling less connected to people they work with less often most affects their sense of belonging as well.

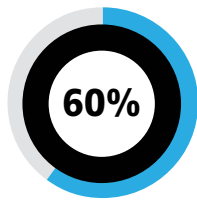


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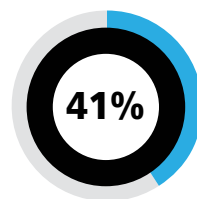
Maintaining employee engagement is a critical challenge for the new hybrid workplace.



50% said the overall productivity of their organization has increased since the pandemic.



60% agreed that overall employee engagement in their organization needs improvement.



Only 41% said their company is focusing on initiatives to drive engagement.

across the organization than they did before the pandemic.

Nearly two-thirds of survey participants said their workload has increased from what it was prior to Covid-19, and slightly over half said their productivity has increased as well. Yet, less than a third said their motivation to

deliver results for their organization has increased. However, among the 27% who reported an increase in motivation, a significant majority—77%—also noted an increase in productivity. Clearly, increasing motivation is crucial to sustaining high productivity among a remote and hybrid workforce. And

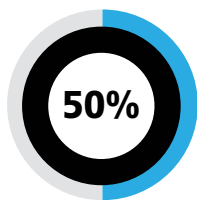
as the responses strongly suggest, the key to increasing both motivation and productivity is keeping employees engaged in their work while reinforcing a shared purpose.

KEY FINDING: Workers today feel less connected to their co-workers, overwhelmingly due to their company's shift to a fully or partially remote workplace. Nearly half of the survey's participants said they feel less connected to the people they work with regularly, if not on a daily basis, than they did before the pandemic, and 82% said they feel less connected to co-workers they work with occasionally. Nearly three-quarters of respondents attributed this loss of connection to working in a hybrid or remote work environment.

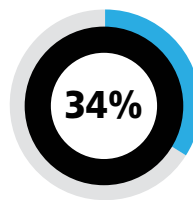
How does the loss of connection with co-workers affect remote workers and their work? Not surprisingly, employees' "sense of belonging" suffers, significantly. Among participants, 76% said that feeling less connected to people they work with often or daily has the greatest impact on their sense of belonging, and 71% said that feeling less connected to people they work with less often most affects their sense of belonging as well. This finding not only affirms the importance of maintaining strong ties among remote and hybrid workers who collaborate on a day-to-day basis—it also supports the importance

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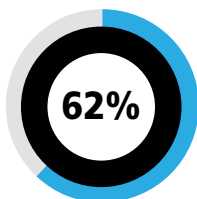
The level of employee engagement has a strong correlation with a company's ability to attract and retain top talent.



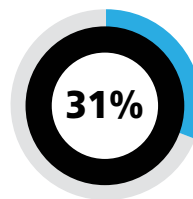
50% of participants said their organization is having difficulty with both attracting new talent and keeping good people.



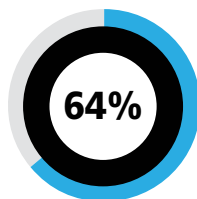
Among respondents who said engagement is better than it was pre-pandemic, just 34% of organizations struggle with recruiting.



62% of those same organizations have problems recruiting quality workers.



31% have an issue with retention.



64% struggle to retain them.

of strengthening the weak ties between employees who seldom work together. When they no longer work in the same building on the same schedule, employees in different departments or divisions rarely cross paths and get the chance to connect. As a result, workers lose the opportunity to create bridges to workers with ideas, perspectives, and access to information beyond their immediate team.

After sense of belonging, participants cited "motivation" as the area most impacted by loss of connection with both close team members (60%) and occasional collaborators (52%). Close to half of the respondents also stated that feeling less connected to co-workers has an impact on their productivity.

KEY FINDING: Maintaining employee engagement is a critical challenge for the new hybrid workplace. Among participants, 50% said the overall productivity of their organization has increased since the pandemic. While less than half noted a decrease in workforce motivation, 60% agreed that overall employee engagement in their organization

needs improvement. Yet only 41% said their company is focusing on initiatives to drive engagement. When asked if their organization is currently holding social activities to keep employees connected, the answer for 55% of participants was no.

KEY FINDING: The level of employee engagement has a strong correlation with a company's ability to attract and retain top talent. More than 50% of participants said their organization is having difficulty with both attracting new talent and keeping good people. Among respondents who said their organization needs to improve employee engagement, 62% of those same organizations have problems recruiting quality workers and 64% struggle to retain them. However, among respondents who said that employee engagement is better than it was before the pandemic, just 34% of those organizations struggle with recruiting and 31% have an issue with retention.

Along with calling attention to the need to foster connection and engagement among remote and hybrid workers, responses shed light on how

the nature of work has changed from pre-pandemic days. In addition to handling a heavier workload while often feeling isolated from their co-workers, today's employees are often compelled to be more efficient and more creative in getting work done. Fifty-four percent of participants said their need for project management skills has increased, and 66% said their need for creativity and innovation skills has increased as well.

As this survey confirms, the transition to remote or hybrid work comes with considerable challenges for both employees and employers. Most notably, when people do not work together in the same actual place and time, and deal with increased responsibilities and pressures, engagement and motivation are bound to suffer. From the essentials of project management for the non-project manager to workshops on coaching and leading virtual teams, AMA offers resources and tools to help both individual contributors and managers rise to those challenges and thrive in the new workplace. [AQ](#)