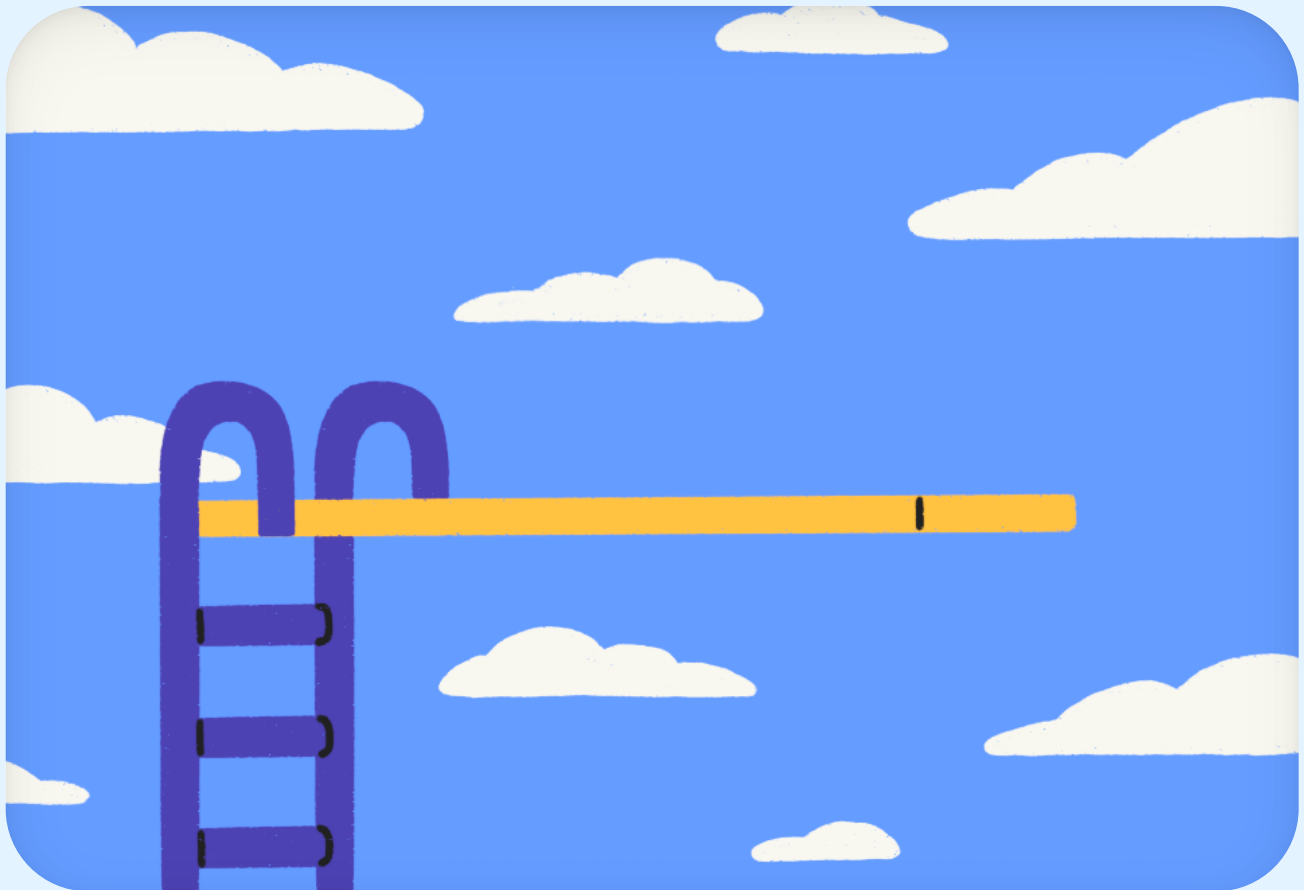




# Building Connection in the Post-Modern Workplace

Exploring the changing ways leaders and employees  
communicate and collaborate.



## FOREWORD

### To Return or Not to Return: Why It Doesn't Matter

After two years of uncertainty, teams across the country are finally starting to see signs of work life returning to “normal.” But not everyone agrees on what normal means anymore nor how we get there. The tension between old and new ways of working is split down the middle, which may offer hope: 50% of [leaders say](#) they'll bring teams back to the office full-time this year while 52% of [workers say](#) they want remote or hybrid jobs.

Whichever route an organization takes for employee distribution, one thing is clear: the work world has permanently changed. Seventy-four percent of companies plan to make hybrid work permanent. But where you work is only one piece of the puzzle. There's a much larger story being written about the modern workplace — and it centers around communication and connection.

### Communication Will Never Be The Same

Summer 2022 is shaping up to be a pivotal moment — the first real test of whether teams will forge ahead with building a post-modern workplace or hurry back to the old status quo. Communication and connection at work have changed and will continue to evolve. To adapt, leaders will need to be open to new tools, new norms, and a reimagined work culture.

Loom surveyed 3,000+ working adults in the US and UK to uncover attitudes around digital communications tools in the workplace, exploring how those tools can help build relationships, improve employee engagement, and enhance virtual connections. This report outlines how communication at work is evolving, what employees want in a post-modern workplace, and what companies can do to stay ahead of the curve.



# Traditional Tools are Eating the Clock

Regardless of where people work, the reliance on old tech in addition to adjusting to new tools is sapping focus time. Despite the influx of new solutions, employees report they continue to spend much of their time in meetings and are frustrated with traditional comms tools — channels like email, phone calls, video conferencing and more.

Office workers are **wasting an average of one hour and 42 minutes per week** simply scheduling and rescheduling calls — **costing businesses in the U.S. \$1.85 billion dollars** weekly.



## Most used workplace communication tools

- 98% Email
- 93% One-on-one phone calls
- 89% Instant messaging / online chat
- 88% Text messaging

## The average office worker's daily message counts

- 32 Emails
- 21 Instant messages / chats
- 13 Text messages
- 12 One-on-one phone calls

Three in four (74%) office workers use group video conferencing at least once a week and 63% use group phone calls without video for meetings.



## When Tools Don't Work

Traditional comms tools aren't keeping up with the needs of workers in the modern era. Seventy-two percent of office workers are frustrated with their digital communications tools. The primary annoyances they cite:

- **Software that doesn't work consistently**
- **Audio/video quality issues**
- **Lack of tone of voice and personal expression**

## Miscommunication = Stress, Job Loss, & More

Tech functionality isn't the only thing taking up time and productivity. Office workers also spend time worrying about potential misunderstandings, overthinking messages, and engaging in "Slack-splaining" — the practice of over-explaining digital communications to ensure they aren't misunderstood. And it's all costing businesses dearly.

### The Numbers on Misunderstanding

The data points to a need for solutions that enable greater clarity in communication. Here's what office workers said about misinterpreted messages:

- 91%** have had digital messages misunderstood and/or misinterpreted at work.
- 47%** overthink emails and messages they send.
- 20%** say that miscommunication and/or misinterpretation has caused them to get reprimanded, demoted, or **even fired**.



## Stressing Over Mixed Signals

According to 62% of office workers, miscommunication and/or misinterpretation of digital messages at work affects their mental health. We asked them how:

**“I am constantly worried I am going to type or say the wrong things. It puts a lot of stress on me daily.”**

**“I do find myself thinking and rethinking what the intent of the sender was. It can cause me to worry.”**

## The Side Effects of Slack-Splaining

In order to clarify tone and preempt confusion, office workers are overthinking what they say almost all of the time.

- 97%** feel the need to add something extra in digital communication to clarify tone.
- 93%** have felt the need to write multiple sentences to fully explain something.
- 82%** have felt the need to use extra punctuation (e.g. !!, !?!, ...).
- 77%** have felt the need to use emojis, with 25% saying they do so often.



# Time is Money – A Lot of Money

U.S. businesses lose at least \$128 billion each year due to employees wasting time trying to communicate effectively.

## Incident 01

Rereading and/or overthinking emails and instant messages.

**Time spent** 19 minutes per day on average.

---

**Cost to U.S. businesses** \$337M per week.

## Incident 02

Resolving confusion after a misunderstanding or miscommunication over a digital platform.

**Time spent** 18 minutes per incident on average.

---

**Cost to U.S. businesses** \$361M per week.

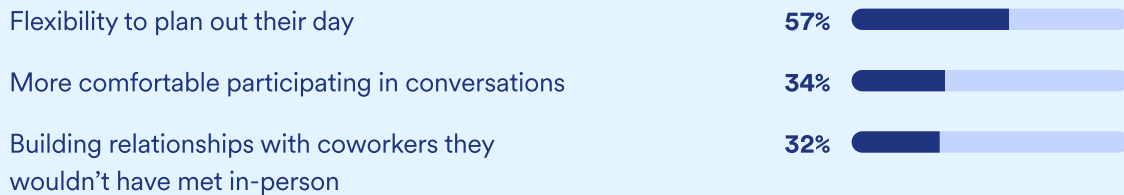


# New Tools are Improving the Workplace Experience

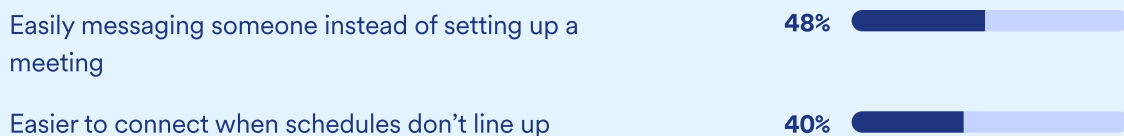
The shift to a hybrid work environment has had some unintended effects on office culture. The ways in which we build relationships and have “watercooler conversations” at work look different today than two years ago. While opinions on the quality of workplace communication vary, many people are seeing benefits from turning to new tools to forge connections and cohesion with coworkers.

## Improving Jobs & Relationships

Most office workers (87%) can identify ways that working remotely and using digital comms tools have **improved their job**. When asked how, the main reasons they listed were:



When asked how working remotely and using digital comms tools have **improved relationships with their coworkers**, the main reasons they listed were:



## The Power of Personality

Digital communications tools have empowered some employees to thrive and show their personality more than in traditional office settings, with **58%** saying that showcasing their personality at work helps them stay engaged and motivated.

But while the vast majority of office workers agree that hybrid work and digital tools have improved relationships with coworkers, **49%** still say those tools don't cut it — at least not yet.



## Live Video Meetings: Our Work Frenemy

According to the data, almost all of us have a love/hate relationship with live video meetings. We love the benefit of additional tone and context, but the stress of a live video conversation is too much for some. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of office workers admit to multitasking during video calls — a quarter (28%) even do it on calls they're expected to speak in.

### Video Conference Anxiety

- 32%** say the majority of digital work meetings could be replaced by recorded/asynchronous video.
- 29%** experience tech issues, slowing everything down.
- 90%** of remote leaders in tech also don't like video meetings at work.
- 98%** of office workers experience stress from group video conferencing, coming in as the most stressful form of communication.





## Love for Video Messaging

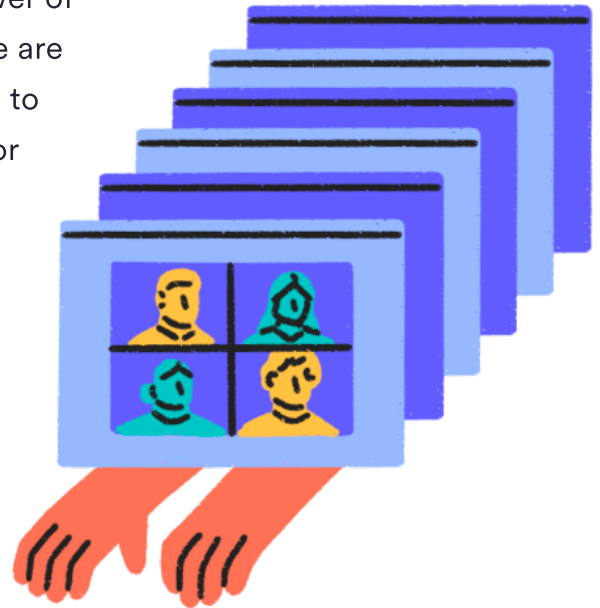
Workers are taking notice, however, of the power of video recordings, or asynchronous video. Some are already using it for work, while others are open to the emerging trend — either as a supplement or replacement to live video calls.

**81%**

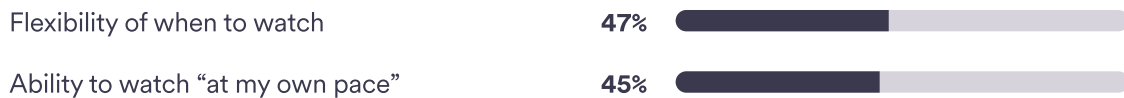
of workers say their workplace currently uses asynchronous video.

**36%**

say that recorded meetings have been **the best** side effect of remote work.

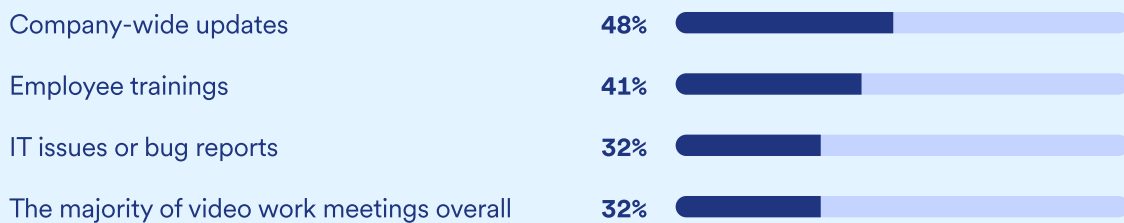


The top benefits office workers see from using recorded/asynchronous video are:



## Adopting Async

Office workers identified which meetings they thought could be replaced with a video recording. The top meetings they would replace are:



# What's Ahead

As this year unfolds, leaders will have a unique opportunity to design a new kind of work experience — one with communication and connection at its core. This data sheds light on clear patterns that can help guide organizations as they adapt to a new environment.

First, the report makes it abundantly clear that people still want and need to connect with one another at work. Team connection is critical for productivity and collaboration, but it also allows for better interpersonal relationships, more job satisfaction, and the peace of mind that comes from expressing your true self at work. To that end, leaders must prioritize building a culture of belonging, regardless of where their teams are located.

**"It's not about the office, it's about belonging: To retain employees, organizations need to evolve their approach to building community, cohesion, and a sense of belonging at work."**

(MCKINSEY & COMPANY REPORT, JANUARY 2022) [↗](#)

The data also points to the fact that people want to be seen, heard, and understood. Though an increasing number of workers now enjoy the benefits of working from home, many still want the interpersonal benefits that come from the ability to colocate as needed. A recent [report from Deloitte](#) states that belonging is not only good for workers but for business too. Belonging can lead to a 56% increase in job performance and a 50% reduction in turnover risk. This means forward-thinking leaders need to bridge the gap between the flexibility of a modern workplace, while still investing in connection-focused activities and opportunities for in-person collaboration when possible.



As we enter a new era of work, how we understand one another in the workplace will fundamentally change. The most successful companies will be the ones that adapt to new modes of communication and connection. Managers will need to be open to experimentation with how their team members collaborate, and consider what tools will best meet the needs of their organization. The goal? Greater flexibility and better communication — this year and beyond.

## Methodology

Loom conducted this research using an online survey prepared by [Method Research](#) and distributed by [RepData](#) among n=3,019 adults 18+ in the United States (n=1,514) and the United Kingdom (n=1,505). All respondents work full-time in a desk job setting, with a subset of n=1,005 whose title is team lead or above, works with technology at their job and leads remote/hybrid teams between 50-1000 employees. The sample was equally split between gender groups, including representative age groupings and a nationally representative geographic spread of respondents. Data was collected from March 9 to March 30, 2022.

**Ready to improve how your  
enterprise communicates?**

[Contact Sales](#)

