



Loneliness in the Hybrid Workplace

Your Practical Guide



What impact has remote working had on our mental health?

The pandemic has forced many of us to adapt our working habits but it definitely comes with its challenges. That's why we studied the impact that hybrid working has had on our mental health, combining a survey with insight from industry experts to answer some of the key questions around loneliness in the digital workplace. We'll also provide you with practical tips on how to adapt your internal comms strategy to help employees feel more connected.





Over a third of remote workers (35%) admit that working from home has dramatically affected their mental health.



42% aged 16-24 fear being overlooked for pay rises in favour of people who work in the office.



Half (50%) of remote workers feel more isolated and lonely working from home, with young workers (those aged 16-24) most likely to be affected.



Half (50%) of remote workers feel disconnected from the rest of the business working from home.

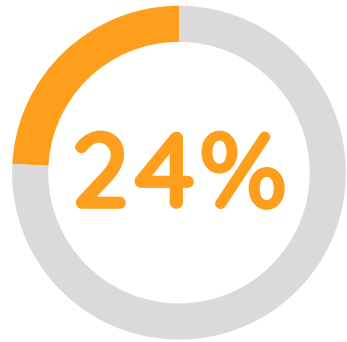


42% of employees are concerned with workplace exclusion.

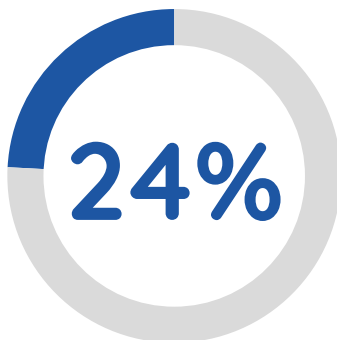
What are the top challenges employees are facing?



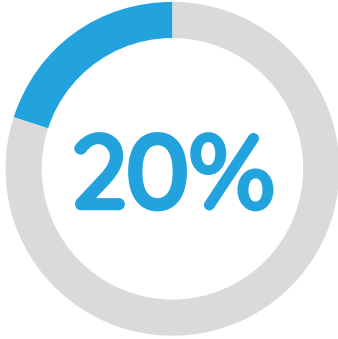
Work-life balance



Loneliness



Isolation



Increase in virtual meetings



Lack of communication



How can we combat these challenges and make employees feel more connected?

1.

Create a positive work environment



Lisa Seagroatt, Workplace Culture Expert, Lecturer and Author said:

“Every single one of us has both mental as well as physical health needs. The only difference is that physical health needs are often more obvious so it’s important for employers to create a culture where employees feel able to seek support when they need to. Business leaders and people managers play a key role here in ensuring they create working environments where employees feel ‘safe’ to raise any issues linked to mental health. A healthy workplace culture of openness, transparency and good communication from the top down helps to create safe working environments.”



Will Murray, CEO at Oak Engage adds:

“**Recognition is a key motivator and provides people with a sense of accomplishment.** Appreciation makes employees feel more confident and improves productivity, a simple thank you goes a long way. Initiatives such as days without meetings and mental health days also play a huge part in creating a positive working environment. We offer holidays whenever people need them and ‘Oak Bank Holidays’ to ensure employees are getting the rest they deserve.”

2. Encourage flexible working

Aoife O'Brien, Employee Engagement & Retention Expert and Podcast Host comments:

“People are looking to work in organisations that are doing good in the world, with a clear purpose. Employees are also seeking out a greater deal of flexibility in their work - to be able to spend more time doing the things they enjoy. Companies that are offering some sort of remote working or hybrid working option are fairing the best in this difficult situation - this will be the future of office-based work.”



Will Murray, CEO at Oak Engage said:

“Employees should be able to design their own working patterns based on what works for them, this will play an important role with organisations looking to be more outcome based as opposed to hours based and breaking free from the ‘9-5’ culture. Flexible working arrangements that give workers more choice and control over their workplace are likely to have a positive impact on people’s wellbeing and mental health.”



3. Open communication

Lisa Seagroatt, Workplace Culture Expert, Lecturer and Author said:

“Strong leadership and good communication are more critical to creating healthy workplace cultures in a physical and digital sense. The key to ensuring that a lack of workplace visibility doesn’t have a negative impact as a result of remote working is communication. Anyone managing a team of people remotely needs to ensure that they ‘check in’ regularly with their team members no matter how ‘remote’ they might be.”



The key to ensuring that a lack of workplace visibility doesn't have a negative impact as a result of remote working is **communication.**



Will Murray, CEO at Oak Engage adds:

“Employees need better communication tools now more than ever. With employee updates, news and culture stories, modern social mentions and likes and interactions to engage everyone in the conversation, we can ensure a constant stream of two-way communication. Good communication is crucial. If management isn’t communicating with their workforce about key objectives and how well they’re performing, it can often lead to confusion. Furthermore, if your company doesn’t have an effective means of communication, employees will struggle to connect with you.”

Suzanne Benoit, Human Behaviour & Social Dynamics Expert adds:

“Every manager/employee interaction should include check-ins. They should factor in how the employee is doing with their work, barriers, frustrations, alongside wins and feeling proud of their results. In addition, a check-in for feelings about the company and their work is essential. Do they feel heard? **The most important factor for a successful communication system** is for **leadership to hear from and listen to employees about their concerns** and needs relative to their work. Employee communication platforms are a helpful tool to foster these conversations.”



4. Embrace technology



Will Murray, CEO at Oak Engage said:

“The current tools that businesses are using to connect with their staff just aren’t cutting it. That’s why organisations are looking for new solutions to engage their employees. 2021 was a difficult year for everyone and as working from home continues, not only are employees feeling isolated, they can also feel anxious, stressed and burnt out. Products like Oak Engage’s intranet can help businesses connect their people by using adaptive intelligence to boost employee engagement and promote wellbeing. Today’s teams need a new way to communicate that reduces noise and avoids duplication which is what we’re focussed on.”

Methodologies

The research was conducted by Censuswide on behalf of Oak Engage, with 1,253 remote workers from a nationally representative sample of UK adults aged 16+ across the UK between 16/12/2021 - 20/12/2021.

About Oak Engage

Oak Engage is the adaptive intranet that connects your people. They improve wellbeing and productivity through better communication and engagement.

Oak Engage have been helping employers engage and connect with their employees for nearly 25 years. Working with some of the world's biggest brands including Aldi, Five Guys and ITV to name a few, Oak helps their customers connect teams, engage their people and work better together through its mobile app and SaaS (Software as a Service) platform on the cloud. As a result, Oak have become intranet software experts and thought leaders within the internal comms industry. This success has been achieved by listening to their customers, taking their feedback, ideas and suggestions and developing applications that provide genuine value within the Digital Workspace.





Oak removes the complexity of communicating strategic, tactical and crisis messaging to hybrid teams across your business. You focus on the message, the audience and the priority, and Oak does everything else. Their in-product analytics also provide insights on how businesses reach their intended audiences.

Oak's executive team and board is highly experienced and comprises of serial entrepreneurs from both the SaaS world and Intranet sectors.

If you'd like to find out more about us, or how we can help you improve your people engagement, please get in touch.

Contact



Michael Ross

Senior Enterprise Account Manager

michael.ross@oak.com

07763875512



www.oak.com

oak
engage 