

Report: Global State of Internal Communications 2022



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1. Introduction

The past two years saw internal communications play a pivotal role in organizational success.

As companies grappled to adjust to new ways of working, they relied heavily on internal communications to manage and engage the workforce, maintain company culture, attract and retain talent, and ensure a smooth transition to remote or hybrid work.

The concept of "the new normal" is officially outdated - it is now just normal.

For most companies, 2022 is the time to elevate their internal communications strategy, adopt new tools and technologies, and create a future-ready workplace.



2. Executive Summary

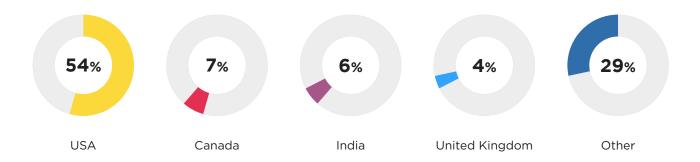
In this report, ContactMonkey highlights key trends shaping internal communications in 2022. The following insights come from our **Global State of Internal Communications 2022 Survey**, and are supported by secondary research sources.

Report Highlights:

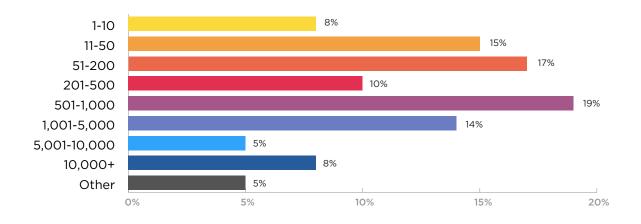
- Employee experience is the biggest trend shaping internal communications in 2022
- Higher employee satisfaction is a priority target among internal communicators
- "The Great Resignation" has made lowering attrition levels a key internal communications goal
- 47% of internal communicators grapple with low levels of employee responsiveness
- Fewer internal communicators face challenges with measurement than before, but 80% still find internal communications measurement challenging
- 77% of internal communicators struggle to showcase the impact of their efforts
- Email is considered the most valuable internal communications channel, followed by collaboration apps and video conferencing
- A growing number of internal communicators now have a long-term internal communications strategy in place
- 28% of companies have high employee engagement levels, while 24% of companies have low or very low employee engagement levels
- Email template builders and employee feedback tools are valued the most by internal communicators
- Communication issues and barriers were the biggest challenge of remote work in 2022
- Hybrid work models are the most popular workplace model in 2022
- 83% of companies already have a defined plan for returning to the office

3. Respondent Profile

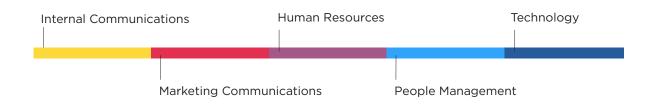
3.1 Geography



3.2 Company size

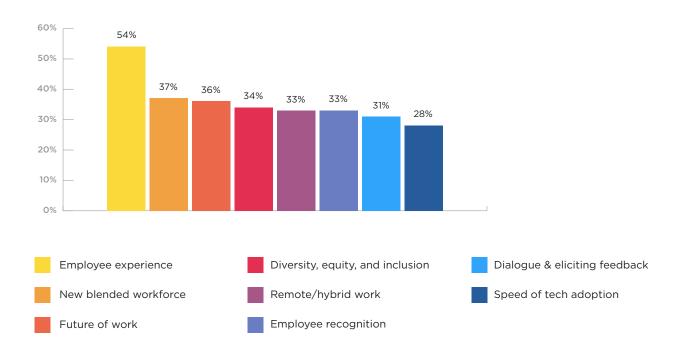


3.3 Departments of respondents



4. Trends

Most Popular Trends of 2022



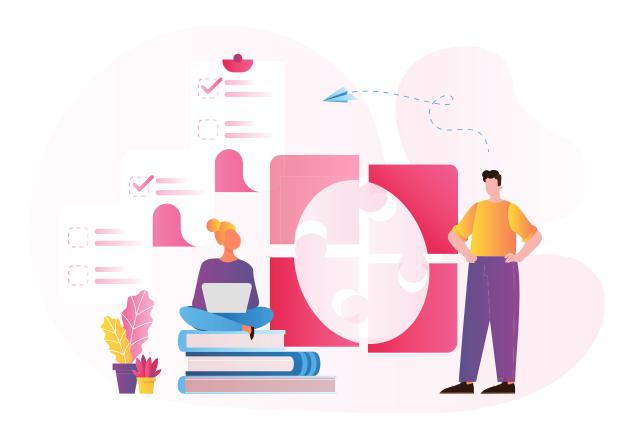
For the past 3 years, *Employee Experience* has remained a top priority for internal communicators. Employee experience is the cumulative experience an employee has from the first touch-point with an organization, right up to the last. A strong employee experience leads to lower turnover, higher job satisfaction, stronger productivity, and better customer service. These outcomes are closely tied to internal communications goals.

As of 2022, the *Blended Workforce* has become a defining trend for organizations as they manage a combination of full-time employees and transient talent. Business leaders and internal communicators will need to identify policies, procedures, and best practices to create an environment that fosters collaboration and engagement across the new blended workforce.

The *Future of Work* is another trend critical to internal communicators—but its definition continues to evolve. In 2022, the <u>future of work</u> for internal communicators involves deeper employee analytics and digital transformation of the workplace.

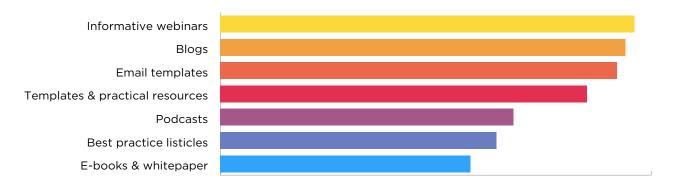
To achieve goals like improved retention, higher engagement, and better productivity, *Diversity & Inclusion (D&I)* has to become part of every company's growth strategy. While D&I has been a focus area for companies in the past, a <u>CNBC study</u> revealed that 1 in 4 employees don't think their company does enough on this front. Internal communications can greatly help create a stronger D&I culture by facilitating dialogue that brings awareness and fosters empathy around subjects like race, gender, equity, opportunity, and identity in the workplace.

- Employee experience is the biggest focus area for internal communicators in 2022
- The new blended workforce is a rising priority for internal communications
- Future of work is now all about digital transformation and employee analytics
- The onus of nurturing a more diverse company culture increasingly falls within the purview of internal communications



5. Content

Which of the following adds the most value to your work?

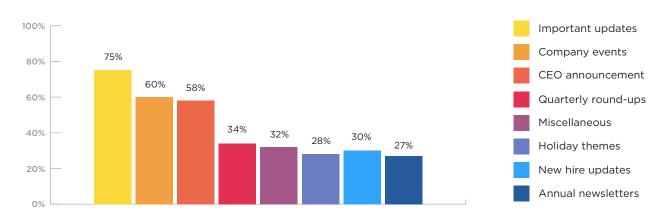


Webinars, blogs, and templates are most valued by internal communicators

Webinars are considered the most valuable source of content among internal communicators. With a wealth of material available online, interactive video content can be the easiest way to consume new information. Blogs and ready-to-use email templates are also highly valued forms of content, followed by practical resources and podcasts.

Download these must-have email templates for Outlook

What kind of communication/newsletters do you send your employees?



Internal communications was all about important updates, company events, and CEO office announcements

Important updates are the most common kind of email content for internal communicators. With a geographically spread workforce, and hybrid/remote workplace models, crucial company updates such as structural or cultural changes need to be communicated to every employee at the same time. Email is a reliable way to personalize communication, ensure consistent messaging across the organization, and schedule updates so they reach all employees at the right time, regardless of time zone differences. Email is also commonly used to keep employees informed on company events such as town halls, team-building sessions, information sessions, cultural events, and more. 2022 is seeing a rising emphasis on leadership communication. Email connects employees at every level to leadership by enabling direct communication from the CEO's office.

Here are 20 content ideas for your next employee newsletter

- Internal communicators derive the most value from informative webinars, blogs, and email templates
- The majority of internal communications content consists of important updates, company events, and CEO office announcements



6. Goals

Rank your internal communications goals in order of importance.



Top 6 internal communications goals of 2022

6.1 Higher employee satisfaction

Improving employee satisfaction has been a top internal communications goal for two consecutive years. Employee satisfaction is dependent on a variety of factors from job role and career prospects to quality of leadership and workplace culture. For internal communicators, creating an employee-focused culture through effective, engaging communication is a primary area of focus. As per Trade Press Services, effective internal communications motivate 85% of employees to become more engaged in the workplace.

6.2 Increased participation

Encouraging employee participation is another key internal communications goal. Involving employees in decision-making has become extremely challenging without daily workplace interactions. According to SalesForce, employees who feel their voices are heard are 4.6 times more likely to feel motivated and perform their best at work. Internal communicators are focused on building two-way communication channels in order to develop a culture where managers include employees in decision-making, and employees feel confident and driven to share their opinions freely.

6.3 Culture change

While culture change remains important, it has dropped in priority compared to the previous year. This is largely due to the fact that companies have now adjusted to new ways of working. The initial shock of shifting to remote work has now subsided. Most organizations now have clarity on whether they will continue remote, hybrid, or shift back to an in-office structure moving forward. For internal communicators, shifting to a digital workplace, restructuring organizational practices, fostering mental health and well-being, managing recruitment remotely, developing psychological safety, and engaging flexible workplaces are key considerations when it comes to culture change.

6.4 Improved productivity

Employee productivity is directly linked to employee engagement. According to Gallup, companies with higher engagement experience 21% greater productivity. With employee engagement being a key metric of success for internal communicators, it is no surprise that improved productivity is an important result to achieve.

6.5 Better leadership communication

Consistent and authentic communication from leadership boosts employee morale and helps build trust in the workplace. Internal communicators can play a key role in facilitating a dialogue between leaders and their employees. This can be achieved by building strategies that include 1:1 conversations with leaders, employee appreciation opportunities, and by enabling leaders to act on employee feedback.

6.6 Lower attrition

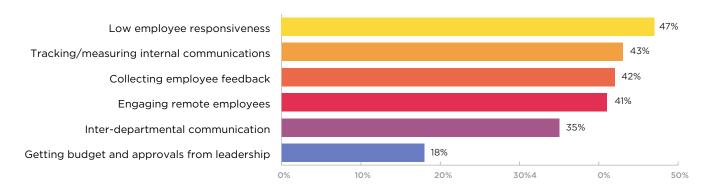
Starting mid-year, 2021 saw a wave of employee exits, now commonly termed as "The Great Resignation". This can be a huge cost to the company. According to Glassdoor, it costs organizations in the U.S. \$4000 to replace an employee. As employers seek to retain employees and reduce attrition, it will be essential for them to understand why employees are leaving in the first place. Some of the top reasons why employees leave their jobs are because they don't feel valued, don't see a future in the company, and don't feel heard. Internal communications plays a significant role in improving retention by fostering a transparent feedback culture, enabling a two-way conversation between employees and their leaders, or giving recognition to employees.

- Employee satisfaction is of highest priority among internal communicators
- Involving employees in decision-making will increase participation and improve performance
- Culture change is a less pressing issue than before, but still an important focus area
- Employee engagement is tightly linked to superior productivity
- "The Great Resignation" has made lowering attrition levels a key goal for internal communications



7. Challenges

What are your main internal communications challenges?



Top 6 Internal Communications Challenges of 2022

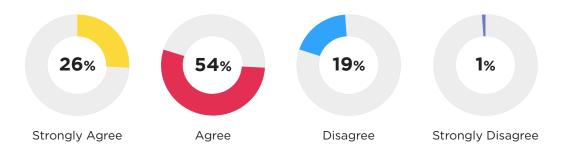
7.1 Low employee responsiveness

47% of internal communicators struggle with low levels of employee responsiveness. This can be hard, especially with limited face-to-face interactions between employees and their managers. It's also difficult for employees to feel psychologically safe expressing feedback when they're working from home. As per Gallup, only 3 in 10 employees feel that their opinions are valued at work. By increasing this number to 6, companies can expect to see a 27% decrease in turnover and a 12% increase in productivity.

7.2 Tracking and measuring internal communications

As of 2022, 43% of internal communicators consider measurement their biggest challenge – this number is the lowest it has been in the past three years (55% in 2021 and 72% in 2020).

"Measuring internal communications is the biggest challenge for me". To what extent do you agree with this statement?



That being said, an unequivocally large percentage (80%) of internal communicators agree or strongly agree that it is difficult to measure internal communications. This just means that while other challenges have taken precedence over the past year, measurement is still a crucial barrier that internal communicators need to tackle.

Email can help tackle this issue by providing data on your internal communication performance.

If you're struggling to measure the success of your internal communications, email is a great way to <u>get started with measurement</u>. With ContactMonkey, you get comprehensive internal email analytics, can learn what content your employees prefer, see email engagement levels by department, title, and geography, and collect employee feedback through email.

7.3 Collecting employee feedback

42% of internal communicators identify collecting employee feedback as a key challenge they face. This can be closely tied to low employee responsiveness. Internal communications has to work hard to foster a transparent feedback culture that encourages candid feedback and input from employees. That being said, there are several options such as pulse surveys, rating scales, eNPS, and anonymous comments that can help address this challenge. It's also difficult for employees to feel psychologically safe expressing feedback, when they're working from home.

7.4 Engaging remote employees

According to <u>Buffer</u>, 20% of remote workers viewed their existing internal communication as a barrier. Companies have had to rely almost entirely on communication to build and maintain their company culture, making remote worker engagement a top challenge for 41% of respondents. Internal communicators are tasked with creating a holistic strategy that supports virtual recruitment, fosters collaboration, provides employee recognition, and gathers employee feedback.

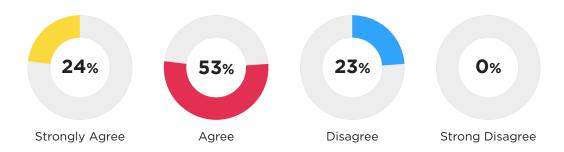
7.5 Inter-departmental communication

35% of internal communicators find inter-departmental communication their biggest challenge. With teams dispersed and unable to interact on a daily basis, workplace collaboration needs to be a more concerted effort than it previously was. Internal communicators need to constantly innovate, experiment with new tools and tactics, and get creative to bolster cross-departmental communication.

7.6 Getting budget and approvals from leadership

The percentage of internal communicators that face challenges getting budgets and approvals from leadership has reduced significantly (18% this year vs 31% the previous year) This strongly correlates to the fact that more internal communicators now have a long-term strategy and a defined budget in place. This circumvents the need to seek leadership approval on a need-basis.

"It is difficult to showcase the impact of internal communications in my organization". To what extent do you agree with this statement?



When asked, 77% of respondents stated that they find it difficult to showcase the impact of internal communications. However, 23% did not feel that way. A recurring theme is the lack of measurement solutions that make it difficult to prove internal communications ROI.

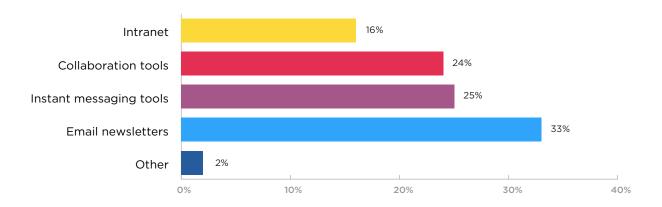
- 47% of internal communicators struggle with low levels of employee responsiveness
- Fewer internal communicators struggle with measurement than before, but 80% of responders still find internal communications measurement challenging
- Remote employee engagement remains a big task for 42% of internal communicators
- Poor inter-departmental collaboration is a problem that 35% of internal communicators strive to solve
- This year, fewer internal communicators face challenges around getting budgets and approvals from leadership
- 77% of internal communicators struggle to showcase the impact of their efforts



8. Channels

8.1 Most common internal communication channels

Which of the following do you rely on the most for your internal communications?



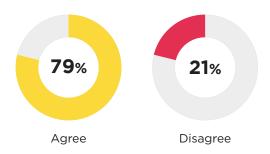
Email is the most commonly used channel for internal communications

Email is the most commonly used platform for internal communications, followed by instant messaging, and collaboration tools. With employee experience as a top priority, a multi-channel approach, supported by email is the strongest way forward for internal communicators.



8.2 Email

"I rely more on email to communicate with employees during COVID-19". Do you agree or disagree?



The reliance on email for internal communications has increased persistently since 2020. 79% of internal communicators said that they relied more on email during remote/hybrid than they did the previous year (70% in 2021). With a lack of in-person interactions, email proved to be an effective way to communicate consistently with a widespread workforce. Email is also one of the easiest internal communications channels to measure, helping internal communicators prove impact and ROI.

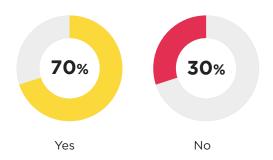
- Email newsletters are the most common form of employee communication
- 79% of internal communicators rely more on email now than before



9. Strategy & Culture

9.1 Internal communications strategy

Do you have a long-term strategy in place for your internal communications?

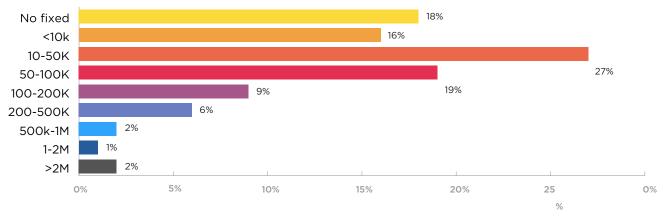


Majority of companies do have a long-term internal communications strategy

70% of respondents have a long-term internal communications strategy in place. This is a vast improvement from the previous year, where a majority (52%) of internal communicators did not have a long-term strategy.

9.2 Budget

Which range best describes your internal communications budget?

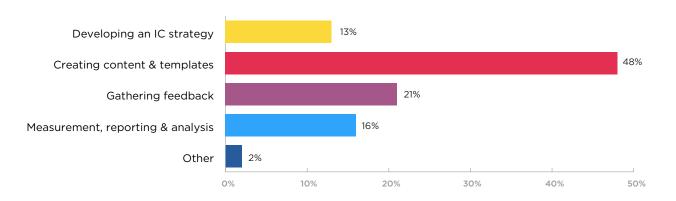


18% of respondents do not have a fixed internal communications budget

Over the past year, internal communications has established itself as a core function. As seen earlier, more internal communicators have a long-term strategy in place this year as compared to previous years. This also creates an opportunity to justify an internal communications budget. In 2022 only 18% of respondents have no fixed budget, compared to 42% last year.

9.3 Time investment

Which activities take up the most of your time?



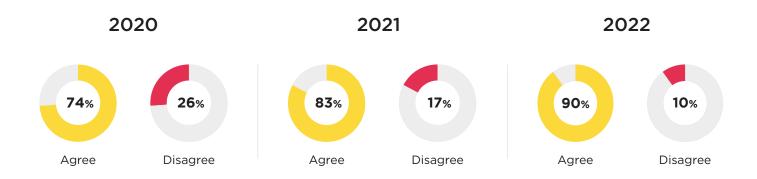
Creating content and templates is the most time-consuming area of work for internal communicators

48% of internal communicators find that creating content and templates takes up the majority of their time. Gathering feedback is the most time-consuming activity for 21% of respondents, followed by measurement, reporting, and analysis (16%). Only 13% of respondents spend the bulk of their time developing an internal communications strategy. It is evident that time-strapped internal communicators—who often face resource and budget constraints—are caught up with tactical activities most of the time.

This does not have to be the case. There are several useful tools available that can help internal communicators overcome this challenge. ContactMonkey is a onestop solution for creating email templates, measuring internal communication, and gathering employee feedback using surveys, eNPS, and emoji reactions. As per Mettler Toledo, "Once I started using ContactMonkey, I realized I was able to save 4 hours of work a week, which translated to 25 days saved per year!".

9.4 Leadership

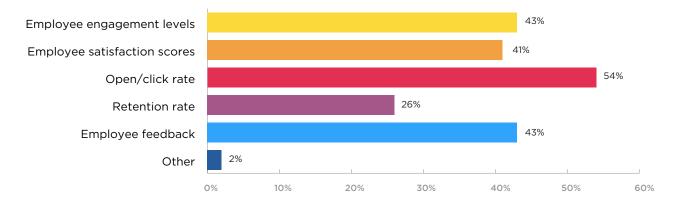
"Leadership recognizes the value of internal communications in the organization". Do you agree or disagree?



A positive trend is the increased focus on internal communications by company leadership. 90% of respondents (up from 83% the previous year) believe that leadership recognizes the value of internal communications in the company.

9.5 Proving the Impact of Internal Communications

How do you prove the impact of your internal communications?



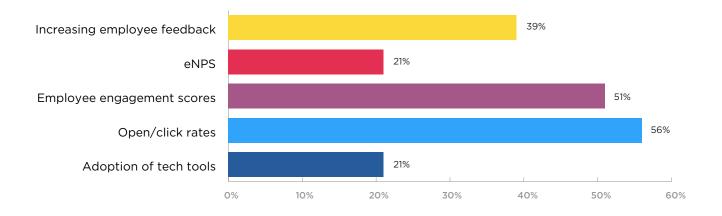
Email open and click rates are the strongest indicator of internal communications success

54% of internal communicators track email open rates and click rates to measure the impact of their internal communications (compared to 31% the previous year). This is unsurprising, considering email is the most commonly used internal communications channel, and email analytics provide an easy way to track and measure the ROI of your communication.

43% of internal communicators measure employee engagement to prove the impact of their efforts, and 43% rely on employee feedback to assess internal communication success. 41% use employee satisfaction scores and 26% look at the annual retention rate to gauge the success of their internal communications strategy.

9.6 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

What are your top internal comms Key Performance Indicators?



The five most common KPIs of internal communicators are:

Open rate & click rate: With email being the most common communication channel among internal communicators, email open rates and click rates are important metrics for internal communications measurement.

Employee engagement scores: An employee engagement score tells you how satisfied your workforce is. High employee engagement is correlated with better productivity, higher retention, and ultimately, an improved bottom line.

Employee feedback: The most vital measure of internal communications is employee feedback. All internal communications goals are ultimately geared toward creating

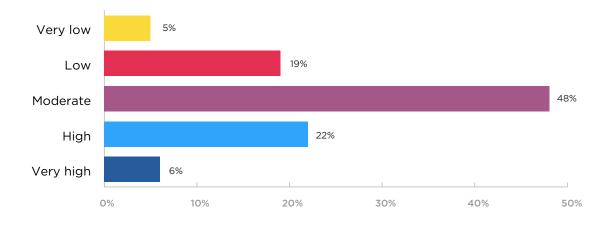
a positive work culture for employees. Understanding how your workforce feels is essential to learning if your internal communications efforts are achieving their desired goals.

eNPS: Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) is a metric used to measure your employees' level of engagement. An eNPS survey asks employees to respond to an engagement-related question using a scale of zero to ten. These responses are categorized into three different categories from which your eNPS is derived. The higher your eNPS, the more engaged your employees are.

Adoption of tech: Companies need to adopt new tech to stay relevant and competitive. However, training employees to learn and adapt to new technology can be a challenge – especially when your workforce is dispersed.

9.7 Employee engagement levels

How would you describe the current employee engagement levels at your organization?



28% of companies experience high or very high employee engagement levels, compared to 27% in the previous year, with 48% stating they experience moderate employee engagement. Although a greater percentage of organizations have high employee engagement scores, this year a larger portion have also seen low employee engagement rates. 24% of respondents said they experience low or very low levels of employee engagement, compared to 19% in the previous year.

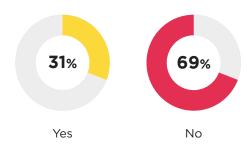
- A growing number of internal communicators have a long-term internal communications strategy this year
- 28% of the companies have high employee engagement levels, while 24% of companies have low or very low employee engagement levels



10. Software & Tools

10.1 Third-party software

Do you use any third-party internal communications solution?

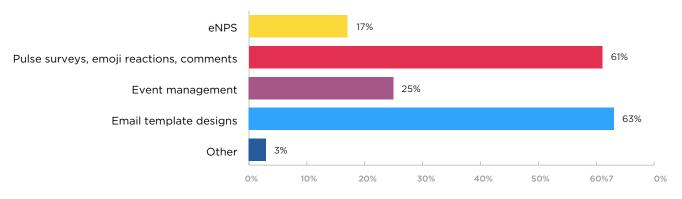


Most internal communicators do not use a third-party solution

69% of respondents do not currently use a third-party internal communications solution. This can explain certain challenges around measuring internal communications or gathering employee feedback, for which third-party tools can be a great solution. See how ContactMonkey solves the most pressing internal communications challenges such as lack of time and resources, difficulty collecting employee feedback, and issues around measurement.

10.2 Useful features

Which of the following would you consider the greatest value-add to your internal communications?



Email template design and employee feedback tools are most useful to internal communicators

63% of respondents consider email template design tools the most useful. This makes complete sense considering that content and template creation takes up the majority of an internal communicator's time.

61% of respondents echoed that low employee responsiveness and feedback are a major internal communications challenge, which can be overcome with tools that offer employee survey solutions.

Virtual events have steadily become the norm. 25% of internal communicators value event management tools the most.

17% of respondents found the most value in tools that offer Employee Net Promoter Score or eNPS, which is a great metric to measure employee engagement.

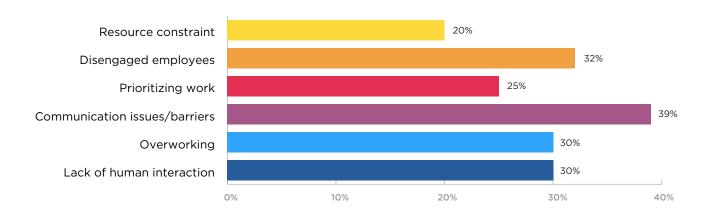
With a multitude of options available, solutions like ContactMonkey simplify internal communications by offering an email template builder, employee survey tools, eNPS, and event management all in one.

- 70% of organizations still don't rely on any third-party tools or software for their internal communications
- Email template builders and employee feedback tools are most valued by internal communicators.



11. Remote/Hybrid Work

11.1 Biggest barriers to adapting to remote work



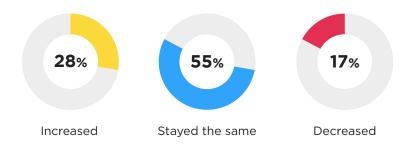
39% of respondents cited communication issues as the biggest drawback of remote work

Communication issues/barriers were cited as the biggest challenge to remote work. Without face-to-face interactions, companies in remote or hybrid environments rely largely on video conferencing and written communication to relay messages. The best way to avoid miscommunication is to adopt technology that supports a multi-channel internal communications approach. Depending on the kind of communication needed, one can rely on instant messaging, video, or email. Key information documented in email form can help provide clarity, serve as a reminder of key talking points mentioned during meetings, and ensure consistent messaging to all.



11.2 Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee engagement levels

How has remote work affected employee engagement levels at your organization?

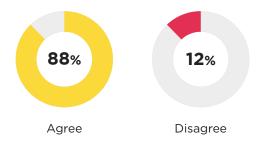


Employee engagement levels varied across companies

For majority responders (55%) employee engagement levels stayed the same over the past year (2021-2022), and for 28% employee engagement levels increased. 17% of responders observed a decrease in employee engagement over the past year - an improvement from the previous period (2020-2021), where 31% saw a dip in employee engagement. This indicates that companies have greatly overcome challenges they initially faced when transitioning to remote work in 2020.

11.3 The role of internal communications during COVID-19

"Internal Comms has been elevated to a more critical position at your organization in 2021". Do you agree or disagree?

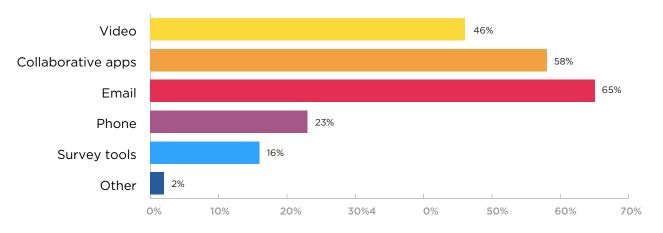


Internal communications continues to gain strategic importance

88% of respondents believe that internal communications has been elevated to a more critical position as of 2022 (up from 80% in the previous year). The steady rise of internal communications signifies the increasing reliance on communication as companies strive to manage a blended workforce, hybrid work models, and the adoption of new technology.

11.4 Most valuable internal communication channel in 2022

Which tools have been most valuable to your internal communications during the COVID-19 pandemic?



Email, collaboration apps, and video calls are the most valuable internal communications tools of 2022

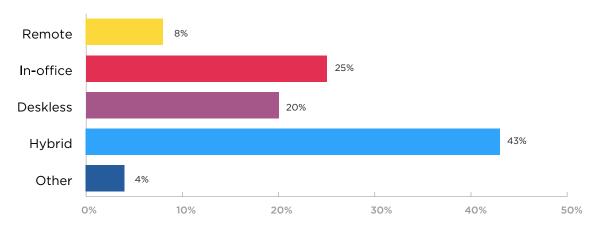
In a remote or hybrid environment, email proved to be the most valuable communication tool. Companies also relied heavily on collaborative apps to stay connected to their employees in real-time. Video conferencing platforms gained popularity in 2020, and have remained a frequently used channel for internal communication.

- Communication issues and barriers were the biggest challenge of remote work in 2022
- While employee engagement levels have stayed the same for 55% of responders, 17% still struggled with a drop in employee engagement levels
- Every year, internal communications becomes further established as a more critical business function
- Email, collaborative apps, and video conferencing platforms are the most valued internal communications tools

12. Returning to the Office

12.1 Office Structure

What kind of working structure/environment does your company have?

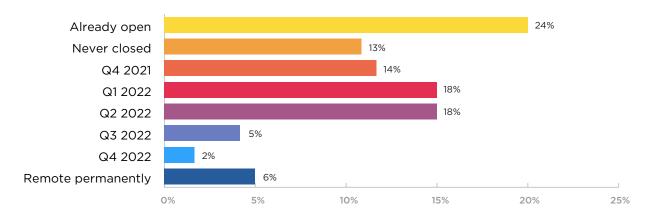


Hybrid work environments are now the most common

Remote - all employees work from home; In-office - all employees work from an office; Deskless - employees don't have a dedicated work space; Hybrid - employees work from home and on-site/in-office.

12.2 Office re-opening timeline

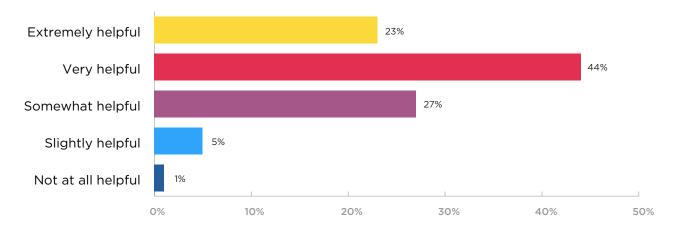
When is your organization planning to allow employees who shifted to remote work during COVID-19 to return to the office or worksite?



Companies have taken a mixed approach to re-opening their offices

12.3 Leadership support

How do you feel the business/leadership has responded to/planned for people returning to work?

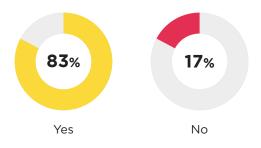


67% of respondents feel that leadership has helped ensure a smooth transition back to work

Leading an organization through a pandemic is no easy feat. Business leaders had to step up and turn into change management experts overnight. Our survey responses indicate that most of them managed to do a good job, while only 1% fell completely short.

12.4 Return to the office action plan

Do you have a return to office action plan for when offices open?



Most organizations have prepared for returning to the office

83% of companies have an action plan for returning to the office (compared to 65% the previous year). This tells us that most companies have clarity on their preferred work structure, and reopening timeline, enabling them to plan towards it.

- Hybrid work models are the most popular workplace model in 2022
- Worldwide, companies have taken a mixed approach to re-opening offices, with the majority of offices already open
- 67% of leaders have done a good job helping their companies plan and prepare for returning to the office
- 83% of companies already have a defined plan for returning to the office



13. Conclusion

After two whirlwind years of uncertainty, the internal communications function has found stable ground. Our study shows that internal communications has been established as a core functional area across companies globally. Long-term strategies, defined budgets, and fewer challenges indicate that internal communications now play a more strategic role in organizational growth and success than ever before. As companies move toward a more permanent state of work – hybrid, remote, or in-person – internal communicators need to dive deeper into analytics, get creative with their approaches, and explore new technologies to elevate their internal communications. Focusing on employee needs, improving leadership communications, and exploring a multi-channel communication strategy will be key.





About ContactMonkey

<u>ContactMonkey</u> is an internal communications and employee engagement tracking solution that integrates into Outlook and Gmail inboxes. We built our tool to help internal communicators transform employee newsletters into a two-way communication channel.

Use ContactMonkey to create, send, and track internal emails, collect employee feedback, measure the effectiveness of your corporate communications. Build beautiful employee newsletters with the easy-to-use template builder, manage company events from your inbox, gather honest employee feedback with various surveys and eNPS, and measure internal communications ROI with comprehensive metrics.

Ready to Elevate Your Internal Communication Strategy?

Book a Demo

