



Is employee disengagement the next pandemic?

Your best strategy for taking remedial action now



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Introduction

The disengagement pandemic and what it means for your business

According to Gallup's 2020 **State Of The Global Workplace** report, employee disengagement results in an annual loss of more than £5 trillion worth of productivity for businesses around the world¹. That includes your business and each and every business you come into contact with.

Employee disengagement is a pandemic and it's only going to get worse in a world of hybrid and distributed teams unless we use technology to redress the balance and cultivate new cultures of **community**, **inclusivity** and **engagement** that extend beyond siloed communication tools like Teams, Yammer, Slack and Zoom.

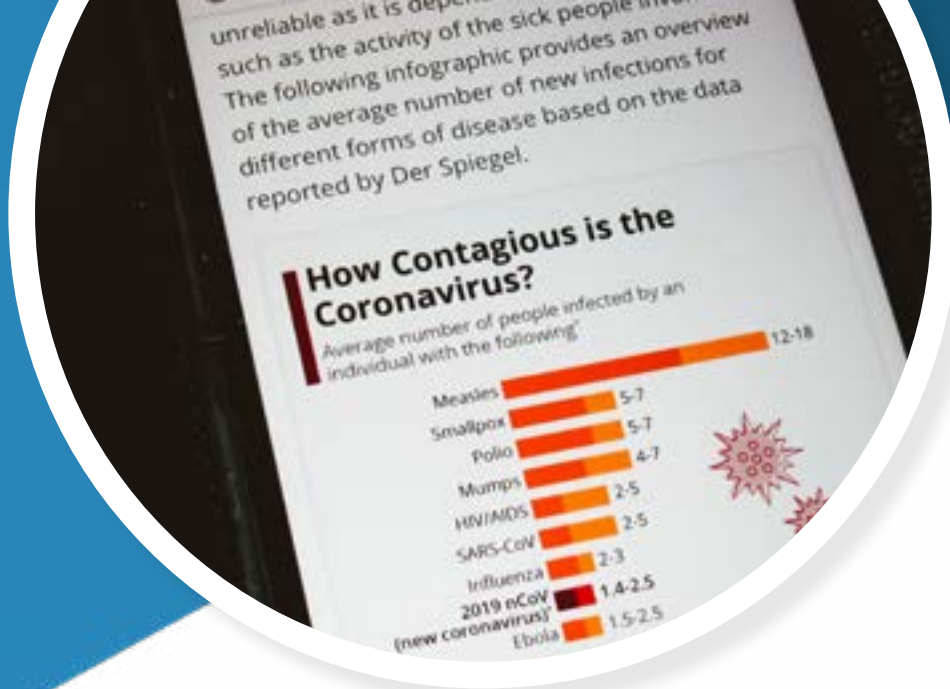
Your business needs more from technology than the ability to communicate and project manage; it needs to be able to create and maintain an entire working culture.

What do we mean by employee disengagement?

When we talk about a 'pandemic of employee disengagement', we're talking about something much bigger than individual employee performance; we're talking about the loss of entire company culture from managerial blindspots and missed opportunities, and the impact of this could be felt most strongly in the months and years to come as we continue out of the coronavirus pandemic.

*Since the pandemic, employee disengagement has resulted in an **annual loss of more than \$5 trillion for businesses around the world**, largely due to disengagement, low productivity and poor communication. Is your business prepared for what's next?*

¹ [gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace.aspx](https://www.gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace.aspx)



The first nail in the coffin of engagement comes when employees feel like they have lost their voice within an organisation. The fallout from the distancing and isolation experienced by everyone throughout COVID-19 makes this a very current and real threat to business owners.

A quiet exchange of views over Slack or Yammer might be enough for your team members to get something off their chest, but what value is that to your business overall? Imagine what your business could do if it could channel those whispered words between employee cliques and translate them into real, actionable feedback?

As we inch ever-closer to a new world of hybrid working and distributed teams, those digital cliques are likely to grow and valuable organisational feedback will fly under the radar, deepening inefficiencies, entrenching low morale and leaving your business in a form of post-pandemic malaise where employee retention becomes increasingly difficult.

But this does not need to be the way! On the contrary, employees who feel that their voice is heard are five times more likely to feel empowered and motivated to deliver their best work.² When you ensure your team is engaged, connected and **heard**, high performance will inevitably follow.

This short eBook will help you better understand the threat of employee disengagement so that you can anticipate it and take remedial action now, before it's too late. The reward: an empowered and motivated workforce that is built to thrive, whatever challenges might lie ahead.

² salesforce.com/blog/2018/02/why-equality-and-diversity-need-to-be-priorities

Did you know that employees who feel they are listened to are five times more likely to feel empowered and motivated to deliver their best work? How does your business ensure its employees' voices are heard?



Rules of disengagement

Have your employees lost their voice?

Communication is a two-way street. That's as true in business as in any other aspect of life, so why are so many companies unwittingly limiting their employees' ability to speak?

If this was a problem prior to the pandemic, our accelerated switch to digital has thrown up even more barriers for less digitally mature businesses, but that doesn't have to be the case. In fact, appropriating digital solutions in the right way could actually open up more avenues of conversation and make inviting employee input and involvement even easier.

Opening up digital channels that allow your team to share their thoughts, views and expertise on matters relating to the overall running of the business could help to shape your organisation for the better.

The artificial barrier that exists between management and staff needs to be torn down, and that can be achieved without disrupting the natural hierarchy or chain of decision-making thanks to new technologies.

In a distributed environment, business leaders have to work twice as hard to ensure staff are heard and feel a sense of community with their peers, but it's worth it.

Connected teams that are made to feel part of a community, even when working remotely, see productivity increases of more than 25%. Are Zoom chats or Teams meetings really enough to help you create a culture of community in the new normal?



Even organisations with distributed teams have been able to demonstrate productivity increases of more than 25% by ensuring their teams are well connected and able to share knowledge - not just in terms of work collaboration but in terms of community and interaction³.

This is all good and well, but like most businesses trying to navigate the post-pandemic world, you're probably wondering how all of this can be achieved and why individual tools such as Slack, Zoom and Teams aren't already fulfilling that need. The truth is, they're not, and we're about to explore why.



³ mckinsey.com/industries/technology-media-and-telecommunications/our-insights/the-social-economy



Consolidation

Why a unified approach to engagement is needed

Engaging employees and lending them a voice in the noisy digital landscape we all now inhabit is easier said than done. Remember, employee engagement isn't just about opening a channel, it's about fostering a sense of community with as few barriers and as little friction as possible.

A daily video check-in over Zoom has most likely become an established part of work life for many, or the regular pop-up alerts of a new message on instant messaging apps like Slack now punctuate the day with updates on projects from colleagues⁴.

There's no doubt that these tools have become entrenched into our work life, but in terms of creating culture and community, herein lies their limits - they have become tools for the nine-to-five; they are there to simply help you do your job.

Nearly all businesses are guilty of investing in disparate tools to fulfil the productive needs of their operations, from Microsoft Teams and Slack, to Yammer and WhatsApp chat groups. The average remote working employee is expected to use more than eight apps daily throughout the course of their job just to stay in touch with their colleagues.

Did you know the average remote working employee is expected to use more than eight different apps to communicate and collaborate with their colleagues?

⁴ blissfully.com/saas-trends/2019-annual/



That's a lot of touch-points to solve what is essentially a single problem - communication - and it's not even the biggest problem your business is facing in the disengagement pandemic. These apps make effective communication tools, but how do they help to evolve and maintain your company culture?

Instead of taking a proactive approach to finding an all-encompassing solution that fits the cultural needs of a business and can scale with it, businesses are instead choosing to simply add more apps as they grow and their needs develop. This results in a kind of Frankenstein-like solution that's expensive, bloated and an endless source of daily frustration for your staff.

In a recent survey, more than 53% of workers said consolidating this "mess of software" into one single platform or mobile app would make them far more likely to share their ideas, and 55% said a mobile app in particular would make them feel more connected and engaged at their company⁵.

So the real question becomes, what are businesses waiting for? Should your focus still be on throwing additional apps into the mix for productivity, collaboration and communication, or should you be looking for a way to create a new technology-based culture for your workforce?

55% of employees say consolidating all business communications, including onboarding, engagement and feedback, into one mobile app would make them feel more connected and engaged to their company

⁵ resources.dynamicsignal.com/news-room/your-biggest-brand-champions-are-missing-out-new-research-from-mindshare-na-and-dynamic-signal



In the past, businesses might have turned to Facebook to solve this problem, creating groups that employees can join for a more informal place to engage with work and colleagues.

However, we hear time and time again that this does not work because so many people view Facebook as their personal space away from their professional life.

A line is drawn between the two so that Facebook is just not the right platform for employee engagement strategies.

So how can you find a technology solution that captures the right elements to bridge the gap between work life, communication, engagement and a positive company culture?





The ultimate tool

Finding the ultimate engagement tool

Uniting distributed workforces and building a company culture remotely isn't a new challenge. Around 80% of the world's workforce is already comprised of teams that work in a distributed fashion, from hospitality and retail to transportation and construction⁶. These so-called 'deskless' teams have been grappling with hands-off employee management and engagement forever; you could argue that the prospect of hybrid working for desk-based businesses is simply levelling the playing field.

Regardless of whether your team is deskless or desk-based, the time has come for a unified solution to keep your workforce connected and engaged, whilst also developing and maintaining the cultural glue that gives your employees a sense of purpose and direction. Businesses simply cannot afford to take the same 'Frankenstein' approach to culture and engagement that many have already taken to communication and remote collaboration.

What is needed is a fully customisable platform that offers a way to connect, onboard, unite and retain your employees, creating a fully digitalised culture that's suited to modern demands.

⁶ desklessworkforce2018.com



What a technology-first approach to culture might look like

In today's environment, your team should feel connected wherever they are.

But that extends beyond basic communication and video check-ins. An entire company's culture can't rest solely on daily Teams meetings, Facebook groups and Slack channels. While useful, these individual tools aren't a replacement for the kind of culture you might cultivate in a static office environment.

They don't generate feedback, they don't invite constructive criticism, they don't engage people or unite a team - they don't add anything to your company's culture. Instead, your business needs to look beyond having 'just another tool' to communicate at work.

How about running surveys and polls to get your employees' input on game-changing business decisions? Or being able to reward your employees publicly when they achieve their goals, inviting others to comment and offer a virtual pat on the back? What about setting up virtual environments where employees can share experiences and pick up new skills?

How a technology-first approach might shape the employee experience

The employee experience is something that is relatively easy to shape in an in-house office environment. But what happens when members of your team start hybrid working, or when you want to on-board new team members remotely?



The chances are that the processes you have in place will be unfit for purpose, and you'll muddle through with a combination of emails, passing attachments back and forth while you hash out details over Zoom chats and phone calls.

Will that member of staff ever feel culturally absorbed in your business? What will their experience be like?

Part of solving the technology-culture puzzle is making processes like onboarding and retention more seamless while outwardly projecting your company's values and wearing its culture like a badge of honour.

Instead of littering a new starter's desk or filling up their inbox with countless contracts, handbooks and training documents, your business should be looking to digitally house everything in one, easily accessible place.

Happy employees are engaged employees and first impressions are everything, so starting your people journey on the right foot will be invaluable in ensuring long-term engagement.





Engagement

It's more than a conversation; it's a culture

Having the technology in place and successfully wielding it are two separate things entirely. In order to be successful, a culture of communication needs to be fostered where employees feel able to share what's on their mind.

Employees need to know that they can share open and honest feedback about their roles, including the challenges and difficulties they're facing, without feeling like they're painting a target on themselves or lining themselves up for demotion.

Shockingly, one-third of employees say the lack of an open and honest communication culture has the biggest impact of all on their own morale. That means that even with the right technology in place, your business still needs to work hard to ensure the door is open and the welcome mat is out.

Does this kind of solution already exist?

The above are all cultural processes that require a more nuanced solution than a chat box or a video call, and are vital to ensuring your employees feel connected, heard and engaged.

Engage4 has been created as the ultimate employee engagement tool for this very purpose, leveraging the benefits of technology to build an appealing and inclusive culture for your organisation in ways that other tools fail to do.

More than a third of all workers say the lack of an open and honest 'culture of communication' has the biggest impact of all on their own morale. How is your business working to leave the door open for its staff?



Engage4 is a mobile app that can help your business to connect closer to its employees and navigate the engagement gap that's beginning to form. More than this, Engage4 will help you champion a positive company culture that defines new ways of working.

To find out more about Engage4 and how it can help to protect your business against the disengagement pandemic and connect, unite, onboard and retain your teams in a more agile and engaging way, why not find out more about Engage4 today?





Summary

Key takeaways

Your business needs more from technology than the ability to communicate and project manage; it needs to be able to create and maintain an entire working culture.

Employees who feel that their voice is heard are five times more likely to feel empowered and motivated to deliver their best work.

Appropriating digital solutions in the right way could actually open up more avenues of conversation and make inviting employee input and involvement even easier.

A fully customisable platform that offers a way to connect, onboard, unite and retain your employees will create a fully digitalised culture that's suited to modern demands.

Bridge the gap between work life, communication, engagement and a positive company culture with Engage4

