

# strategies to improve workplace communication

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Business

Workplace communication lays the foundation for employee satisfaction and well-being. Poor communication can hinder employee happiness; effective communication can amplify it.

Communicating in the workplace isn't just about exchanging ideas and information—it's also about fostering an open, nurturing environment where employees feel safe and supported.

When employees are satisfied with their workplace communications, they're<sup>1</sup>:

**177%**

more likely to be holistically well

**156%**

more likely to be feel valued and appreciated

**48%**

more likely to be resilient

# Effective workplace communication

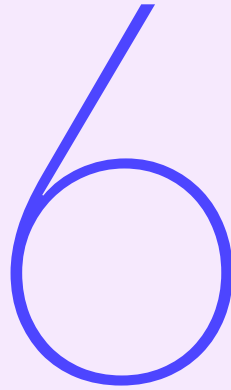
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- Compassionate, inclusive language
- Transparency
- Predictability
- Clearly defined rules and guidelines
- A friendly, approachable tone

# Poor workplace communication

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- Insensitive, exclusive language
- Ambiguity
- Inconsistency
- Conflicting rules and guidelines
- A dismissive or callous tone



# building blocks of workplace communication

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Each one affects employee well-being in a different way.

## 01 Openness

*The range of subjects discussed in the workplace*

Companies need to create space in the workplace to talk about mental health. Why? Stigma starts from the top down.

> 64%

of employees worry that reaching out to HR about a mental health issue would threaten their job security<sup>3</sup>

### Strategies

#### Solicit employee feedback:

Create an anonymous suggestion box, send out monthly surveys, or hold HR office hours for employees.

#### Initiate conversations on mental health:

Normalize talking about mental health by distributing a monthly newsletter or instating a company-wide mental health day.

#### Provide mental health resources:

Help reduce stigma by giving employees access to mental health tools, like Calm's comprehensive mental wellness platform.

<sup>2</sup>[2021 State of Workplace Empathy: Executive Summary](#), Businessolver, 2021.

<sup>3</sup>[Empathy: A Powerful Tool to Support Employee Well-Being and Resilience](#), Businessolver, 2019.

## 02 Tone

*The attitude employees and leaders adopt when speaking to one another*

The tone in a workplace can either help cultivate trust or cause tension. Whether your company prefers a casual or professional style of speaking, infusing compassion and kindness into your tone can help employees feel more comfortable at work.

### Strategies

#### Develop a training course:

Make it mandatory for employees and leaders to learn how to speak candidly and listen empathetically in the workplace.

#### Offer feedback and recognition:

Eighty-two percent of employees say they're happier at work when they're recognized<sup>4</sup>. Give managers and leaders guidance on how to deliver praise and constructive feedback.

<sup>4</sup>[Employee recognition report](#), Bonusly and SurveyMonkey Audience, 2019.







## 04 Frequency

*How often managers, leaders, and coworkers communicate*

Over-communicating can confuse and distract employees, but under-communicating can stress them out. The sweet spot is keeping employees informed but not overwhelmed.

# 47%

of employees say they experience anxiety about the future when their employers don't communicate effectively. Those people are nearly 3x more likely to experience burnout.<sup>5</sup>

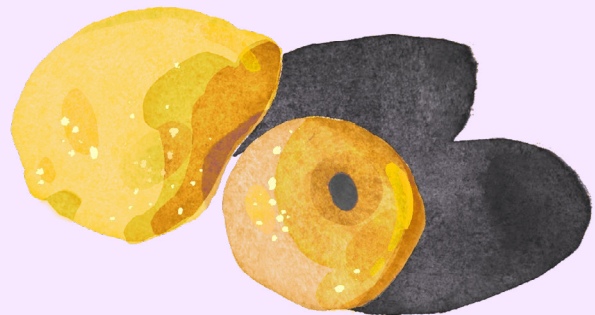
## Strategies

### Rethink channel effectiveness:

Determine how much value each workplace communication channel—from emails to apps—actually adds to the company.

### Establish a meeting policy:

Consider what types of meetings help your company achieve its goals, while still respecting employees' time and work preferences. Depending on the answer, you may need to minimize meetings or increase one-on-one check-ins.



<sup>5</sup>What employees are saying about the future of remote work.  
McKinsey, April 1, 2021.

## 05 Inclusivity

*How welcoming company language and employee correspondences are*

If you don't lead with inclusiveness in company communications, employees won't feel valued, respected, or supported. Inclusive communication welcomes everyone regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ability, or family structure.



The inclusivity gap: 96% of CEOs and HR leaders believe their organizations are inclusive of everyone, compared to just 80% of employees.<sup>6</sup>

## Strategies

**Evaluate company communications and policies:** Bring in a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) expert to help update company language and implement policies that support employees who are disproportionately affected by issues like racism, sexism, and homophobia.

**Promote Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):** ERGs help create a more inclusive workplace by involving employees in company-wide policies.



<sup>6</sup>2021 State of Workplace Empathy: Executive Summary, Businessolver, 2021.

## 06 Consistency

*How predictable workplace communication is*

When workplace communication is consistent in tone and frequency, employees have a better idea of what to expect and how to conduct themselves at work.

### Strategies

#### Create an internal communications plan:

Take the time to articulate your company's preferred communication style and goals.

#### Keep leaders accountable:

Train company leaders on effective workplace communication, and hold annual meetings to ensure they're complying with company rules.



# Want to learn more about employee well-being?

[Download](#) Calm's comprehensive guide to improving mental health in the workplace.



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