

Remote Work Research Reveals Importance of a 'Connected Culture' for Knowledge Workers



Creating frequent opportunities for both social and professional remote interactions leads to more engaged, productive workforce, according to new study

RingCentral Australia Pty Ltd, a leading provider of global enterprise cloud communications, collaboration and contact centre solutions, and a wholly owned subsidiary of RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG), today released the findings of its Connected Culture Report, a new study that explores how remote work impacts employee productivity and well-being. According to the report, employees working for companies that foster a “connected culture” are twice as likely to be productive when working from anywhere, compared to those whose companies don’t foster that culture. The study defines companies that foster a “connected culture” as those that blend effective technology that helps teams stay connected with a commitment to supporting work/life balance, and frequent opportunities for people to interact and engage with one another.

During the pandemic, the majority of knowledge workers (defined as those always working on a laptop or computer and collaborating with others at least some of the time) moved from working in an office to working from home. Across Australia, 78% normally worked in a company office before the pandemic and at the time of the survey 68% were working from home full-time.

At a high level, the survey uncovered a number of insights into worker productivity and wellness, and factors that have had both positive and negative influences on the employee experience. As positive news about a vaccine emerges, the survey findings reiterate the important role employers play in building a culture that encourages employee productivity and well-being – key factors for an engaged remote and hybrid workforce working from anywhere.

Rise of the 'remote champion'

According to the Connected Culture Report, one of the biggest positives from RingCentral’s survey was the discovery of the ‘remote champion’ – those people who have been more resilient while working remotely. Almost one in ten workers (8.6 percent) reported feeling more productive, physically active, emotionally well, and more connected to colleagues during the shift to remote work.

80% of employees reporting high levels of emotional well-being said they are the same or more productive working remotely. 58% of employees who said their companies are making an attempt to help them connect said they feel physically healthy. 75% of employees reporting high levels of emotional well-being said they feel more connected to their colleagues. “Overall, mental and physical wellbeing has taken a significant hit during the pandemic. Businesses should be assessing and planning for how they will operate post-pandemic, and how they will manage their workforce. They need to consider a larger and more permanent remote and hybrid workforce working from anywhere, enabled by the right technology and support,” said Peter Hughes, Regional Vice President Sales at RingCentral.

“It is really important that businesses identify their remote champions because these are the people who have thrived during the crisis and are likely to continue to thrive working remotely in the longer-term. From there, it remains critical that businesses continue to focus on the total employee experience – their systems of experience – for all staff, no matter where they are working. That includes constantly improving their remote workers’ access to resources and collaborative tools, so that they continue to feel connected to their company’s culture and their colleagues,” Hughes continued.

The shift to remote work has not levelled the playing field for women.

Correlating with a lot of other studies conducted into the impact of the pandemic on our global and local workforce (see further for example Workplace Gender Equality Agency’s ‘Gendered impact of COVID-19’), in RingCentral’s report women were found to have been more adversely affected than men in switching to remote working arrangements.

Group work (defined as any tasks performed among teams) was the least productive task for women, with 46% saying they struggle with it compared to 37% of men. Women also reported lower levels of happiness and emotional well-being than men while working remotely, with 48% of women compared to 58% of men reporting good or better mental health.

One of the factors at play might be their access to a closed office space or a door to a dedicated workspace at home, with 53% of men compared to 39% of women citing this as the reason for higher productivity levels.

The overall conclusion: Embracing a connected culture leads to significant gains in employee productivity and well-being.

On the positive side, some businesses and individuals are thriving, which can be attributed to a ‘connected culture’. Employees at companies that promote a connected culture cite better physical (58%) and emotional well-being (55%) than employees of companies that do not promote a connected culture (50% and 48%, respectively). Of those who reported working at companies that foster a connected culture, 34% say they are more productive working remotely. Of those who reported working at companies that don’t foster a connected culture, only 15% said they were more productive working remotely.

The survey found that there are a number of aspects Australian organisations can focus on to improve the remote working experience. The top factors

cited by workers that make them feel more connected are talking to people (67%); a sense of productivity (65%); fulfilment from the work they are doing (64%); and collaborating (47%). The dominant top-ranked feature Australian respondents missed about the physical office culture was face-to-face communication (39%).

When asked what their company was doing to help them feel more connected while working remotely, Australian knowledge workers chose frequent communications (50%); enhanced collaboration tools (28%); and virtual happy hours (25%) as the top three. Also, 58% were satisfied with the actions of their company to connect employees, with just 15% unsatisfied with their company's efforts.

Survey Methodology

Conducted by CITE Research in partnership with Kaleido Insights, the study polled 4,000 knowledge workers in Australia, the US, UK and Canada (1,000 per country). The research was conducted between 15 to 23 July 2020.

The screening criteria:

Workers on a laptop or computer alwaysCollaborates with others constantly or sometimesWorks at a company with at least two employeesAges 18+, although 35-44 was most common response groupAbout RingCentral

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of cloud Message Video Phone™ (MVP™), customer engagement and contact center solutions for businesses worldwide. More flexible and cost-effective than legacy on-premise PBX and video conferencing systems that it replaces, RingCentral empowers modern mobile and distributed workforces to communicate, collaborate, and connect via any mode, any device, and any location.

RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading third-party business applications and enables customers to easily customize business workflows.

RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, and has offices around the world.

© 2020 RingCentral, Inc. All rights reserved. RingCentral, Message Video Phone, and the RingCentral logo are trademarks of RingCentral, Inc.

Contacts

Martin Aungle

+61 2 48724981

mailto: maungle@explorecomms.com.au