

How to digitally recreate company culture in a hybrid work environment

 By [Andrew Bourne](#)

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Most businesses today understand, at some level, that seamless internal collaboration is key to business success. Research shows that high levels of collaboration result in more engaged employees, who communicate openly and don't fall prey to bottlenecks (such as managers taking overly long to sign off on projects). That, in turn, results in better service delivery and improved customer experience.



Image source: Anna Shvets from [Pexels](#)

However, when it comes to setting up a facilitative environment that encourages employee collaboration online and offline, many companies still fall short and continue to operate in restrictive silos. In today's age, with hybrid working taking off, companies need to think about implementing effective collaboration platforms that can connect teams easily, irrespective of employees working in-office or remotely. With the right tools at one's disposal, building a solid digital collaborative culture becomes a great deal easier.

The power of collaboration

Before digging into what enterprises should look for in collaborative online tools, it's worth taking a deeper dive into what makes collaboration so powerful.

Besides the increased employee engagement mentioned above, effective collaboration also improves the flow of information across the organisation and fosters better communication. That, in turn, results in faster problem-solving. Employees recognise this too. According to a study, 86% of employees pin workplace failures on a lack of collaboration and ineffective communication.

When people work collaboratively, they're also more likely to see a task through to completion. Collaboration is, in other words, crucial for any organisation looking for long-term success.



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As many organisations have learned over the past couple of years, the general assortment of tools that they previously relied on simply won't cut it anymore. Hopping between different instant messaging services, meeting platforms, and productivity solutions means that vital information is bound to get lost at some point. Context carry-over, informational continuity, and service uniformity become challenges for employees when they are forced to use a bunch of non-integrated tools for their everyday work. When employee experience drops, it has a direct effect on customer experience.

Thus, as the virtual world takes over the workplace and becomes a permanent part of it, organisations need to think about implementing a company-wide collaboration and connectivity platform that enables both inter- and intra-team communications, breaks down silos, and helps sustain employee productivity levels. In particular, productivity platforms or suites that bring together essential office productivity needs such as email, instant messaging, internal forums, A/V conferencing, word processors with live-collaboration features, etc, with tight integrations and consistent interfaces enable these applications to become all the more powerful and offer contextual relevance across services.

For instance, when email and instant messaging applications work together, employees have an easier time converting email conversations that warrant live discussions into chat threads and port relevant information into the chatbox. Based on chat discussions, employees can also add final deliverables as personal tasks directly from the chatbox. And online word processors that facilitate live collaboration, allowing multiple people to contribute and comment simultaneously can be convenient and life-changing for remote workers. Not to mention the version control issues that can be averted by freeing employees from having to email documents back and forth.



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Another aspect to look for in collaboration suites is the ability to fold this internal collaboration into business applications like CRMs. Say, the capability of an instant messaging tool to contextually integrate with an organisation's CRM platform will enable executives to discuss a certain ticket via chat or a quick audio call before responding to the customer. Collaboration-conducive elements like these can further elevate productivity levels and get work done faster as well as make the experience of working across multiple services a smooth-sailing experience for employees.

Mindset shift

To help fuel the mindset shift needed to ensure that digital collaboration becomes ingrained in a company's organisational culture, it's equally critical that managers adopt, and are seen to adopt, the platform. If they're getting full use out of it, their team members will also be spurred to. At the same time, employees all over the world are also experiencing digital burnout and virtual fatigue as their entire work schedules shift online. So it's vital that managers balance empathy and humaneness with the usage of such tools in a non-intrusive way.

No going back

It should be clear now that there is no going back for the organisations that have digitised so rapidly over the past couple of years. They can, however, go forward in a way that encourages collaboration and cultural retention, no matter where their employees are working from.

ABOUT ANDREW BOURNE

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