



# EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

2025  
**WORKFORCE  
TRENDS**  
REPORT SERIES

Featuring findings and insights from the  
State of the Sector 2024/25 survey

**Global edition**



# Navigating business mega trends: The communicators' perspective

**Seventeen years since its launch and we are still completely humbled and appreciative of the effort and time communicators contribute to making State of the Sector the definitive report for internal communications and employee experience. Thank you to the 2,000 respondents who shared a slice of their day-to-day reality. Your data helps us to tell the story of employee communication.**

In 2024, State of the Sector reflected on the strategic, advisory and supporting influence of communication practitioners, examined responsibility for the people manager 'problem' and uncovered how communicators were feeling about Artificial Intelligence.

In the consumer world, the use of AI has exploded over the past year, yet it seems that at an organizational level, with the exception of a few market leaders, implementation has been slow. While the revolution may not happen within the next year, an AI-driven market shift is upon us. From an organizational perspective, the race for the 'benefits' of AI has somewhat overshadowed the need to focus on governance, compliance and employee education to support a risk-managed and seamless integration into new ways of working. For employees, the initial hype-driven threat has likely subsided, yet there is no doubt that they are harboring (perhaps subconsciously) longer-term concerns about what this will mean for their jobs. This all poses a great risk to business performance, workforce transformation and long-term employee engagement, in all of which the comms function can play a critical role in mitigating future risks.

And AI implementation was just one type of transformation that we heard about in the industry this year. The organizations we work with are navigating new strategies, transforming operating models, merging, acquiring and more. Critical needs for organizations to stay competitive in their markets, however, must be well-considered from a people perspective, in order to enable ongoing success whilst transformation is underway. With much of this responsibility falling to communicators—who, at times, took on additional roles of change managers and change communicators—while balancing business-as-usual, will these lines continue to become more blurred, or will businesses identify transformation as a risk and invest more thoroughly in the people side of change?

Speaking of investing in people—this year's report proved definitively how crucial the relationship is between IC, HR and C-suite when it comes to delivering impact against the business metrics that matter. With so many shared focus areas, it becomes all the more apparent that there's not one single owner of the employee experience, reinforcing the case for a considered and joined-up employee value proposition that holistically unites an organization's stance on AI, the direction of the business and what that means to the employee 'deal'.

This year's report considers:

- How does the organizational environment shape communicator success?
- Do strong relationships and shared accountabilities help or hinder comms' position as a critical business function?
- Are communicators equipped with the right tools and technology to drive business impact?
- Considering the data, market forces and communicator views, where should businesses focus their attention in 2025?

This year we've not only analyzed survey data, we've engaged more than 60 communicators in discussion to add a qualitative dimension to our research. And from that analysis, emerging from this year's report are two key competencies that consistently correlate with successful communicators: first, the ability to collect, synthesize, and leverage data that connects to business impact, and second, the ability to build and maintain productive relationships across the organization.

We hope you find this year's report not only an insightful read, but also a useful document for improving your employee experience.



**Ben Reynolds**

Managing Director  
Global Communication Consulting

## Join the conversation

Share your insights on this year's results by tagging us on [LinkedIn](#) and using the hashtag **#StateOfTheSector2025**

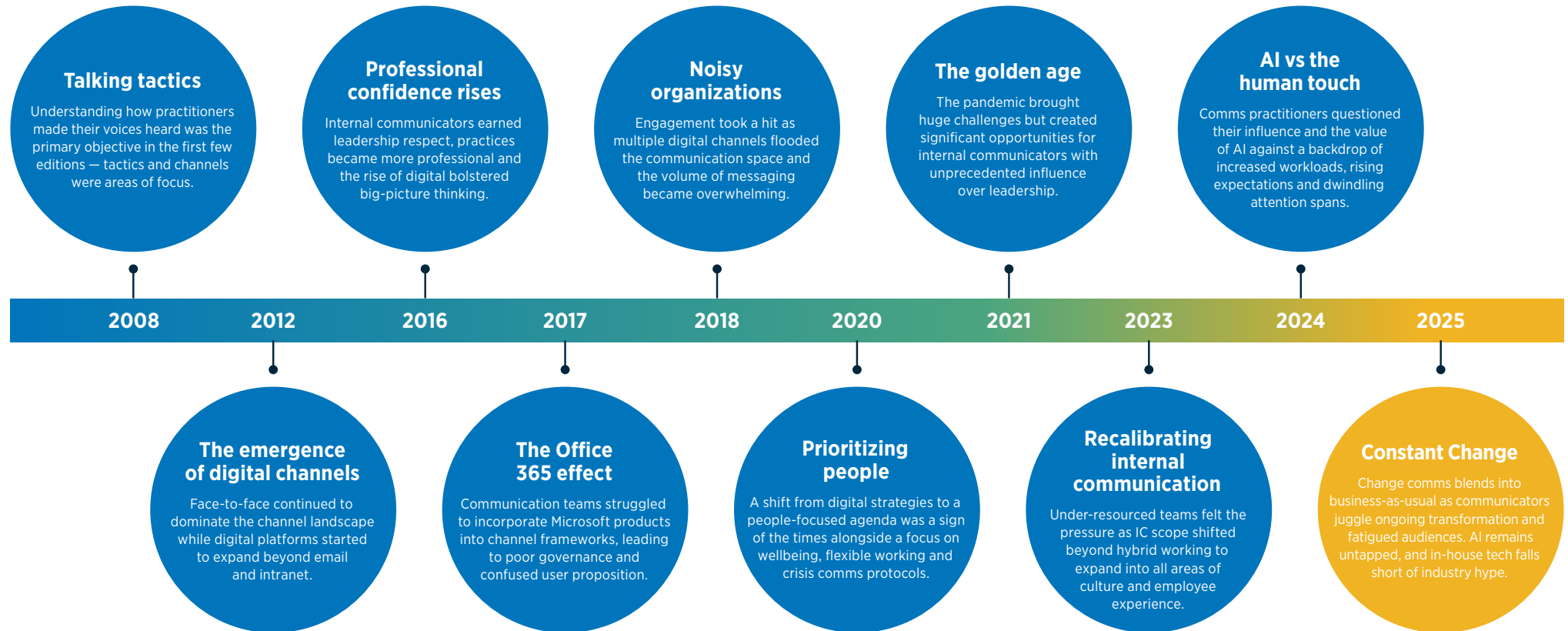
## Lead partners

## Supporting partners



# 17 years of insights

Since 2008, State of the Sector has painted a fascinating picture of the evolution of the internal communication and employee experience landscape.

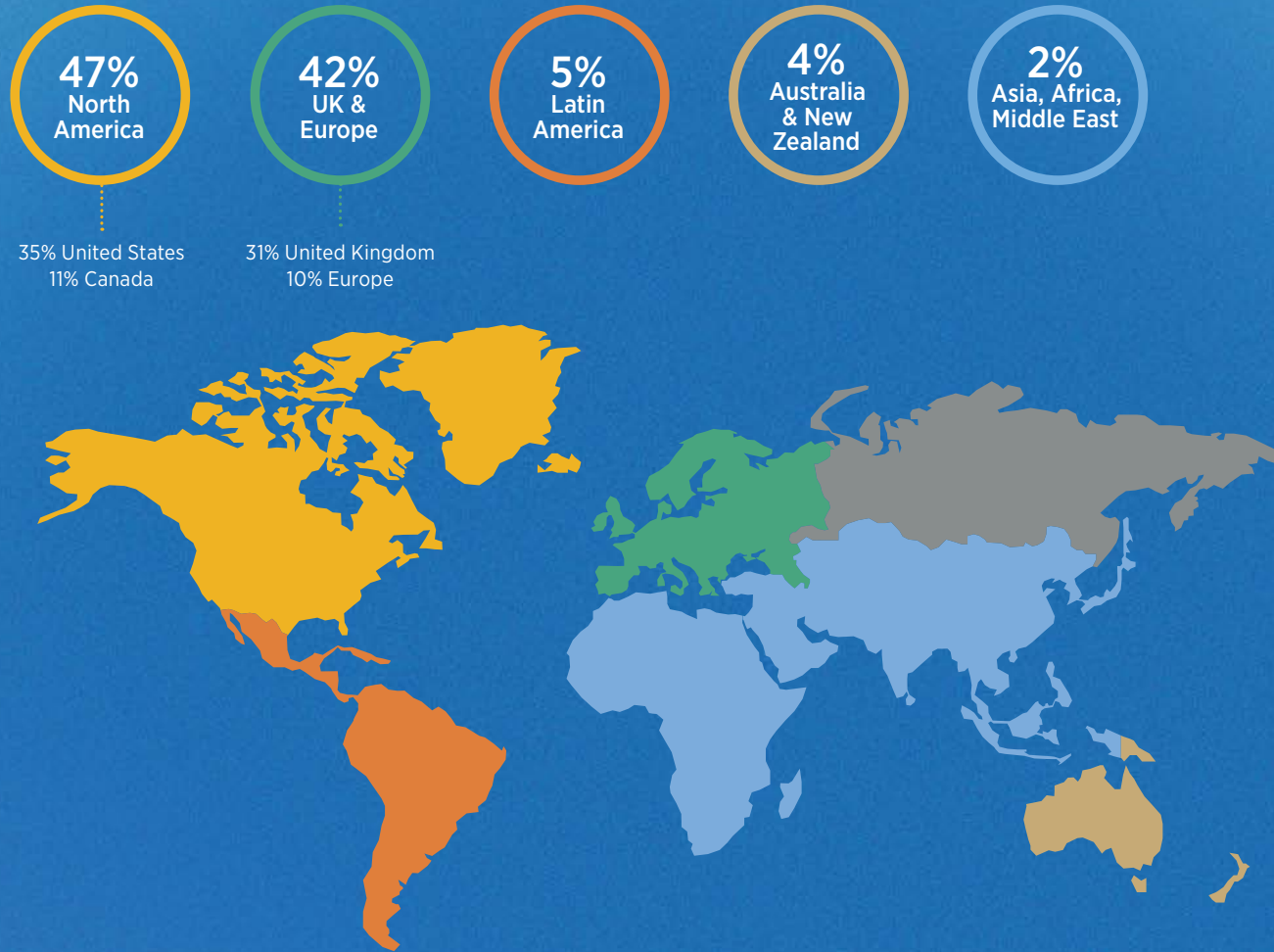




# Who responded?

We ran the survey from October to November 2024.

**More than 2,000 respondents from all over the world took part.**



## Respondent Role Type

- 42% Internal Comms
- 27% Human Resources / People / Talent
- 14% Corporate Comms & PR
- 6% Leadership & Management
- 4% Marketing & Branding
- 2% Employee Experience
- 2% Operations

## Industries Represented

- 8% Healthcare
- 8% Technology, excluding hardware
- 7% Public Entity / Local and Central Government
- 7% Charity / Not for profit
- 7% Banking & Finance (excluding Insurance)
- 6% Professional Services and Consulting
- 6% Education

## Organization Size

- 30% <500 employees (small)
- 16% 500-1,499 employees (medium)
- 20% 1,500-4,999 employees (large)
- 9% 5,000 - 9,999 employees (very large)
- 24% 10,000+ employees (enterprise)

## By Generation

- 4% Gen-Z
- 41% Millennial
- 45% Gen X
- 9% Boomer

## By Seniority

- 38% Individual contributor
- 33% Manager
- 24% Leader
- 5% Other

44% International comms responsibility

56% Domestic comms responsibility

55 countries represented



# Methodology

**Welcome to this year's report. As communicators we play a vital role in shaping the employee experience. The skills and competencies required of a modern communications function are always changing given the demands of the environments in which we operate. Each year we provide analysis, opinion, and insight from across the world of communication.**

Sharing insights and learning from each other is essential for growth—and it's what drives real organizational impact. This report is designed to inform and enhance key areas of organizational performance, such as navigating change, influencing strategic direction, managing complex relationships, and guiding critical commercial decisions.

Our 2025 analysis identifies patterns, draws comparisons, and reveals opportunities, providing actionable insights. By segmenting responses into key dimensions, scales, and scores, we explore areas such as Data Effectiveness, Communicator Confidence, Relationship Quality, Channel Satisfaction, Purpose Progress and Overall Performance. This year we've also introduced Communicator Profiles, adding a new layer of insight that highlights intriguing findings.

As always, we'll continue to share key insights throughout the year, focusing on specific and relevant themes. In addition, our updated digital dashboard provides personalized insights and performance metrics, allowing you to compare your results with others'.

## Approach overview

The research was carried out between August and December 2024 using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods including:

- 2,000+ survey responses
- Steering committee (8 attendees), 'Dashboard Discussion' group (20 attendees), 6 focus groups (37 attendees)
- Where appropriate, any statements that relate to a specific analysis have a short explanation and group size.

We have included quotes from our qualitative analysis throughout. These have been edited for clarity.

## About the numbers

- Where data is visualized, some numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole number for clarity.
- Where appropriate, we have included information where questions were combined when creating scales and scores, along with size of the response.



# What's in this year's report?

## Introducing our Communicator Profiles

From use of measurement data to reported performance against targets, our analysis provides an alternate lens to view this year's report—through the eyes of comms Thrivers, Strivers and Survivors. **8**

### Performance against key measures **9**

*How are certain groups able to meet and exceed their targets?*

### The nature of their relationships **9**

*Just how collaborative do communicators need to be and with whom?*

### Balancing tactics and strategy **9**

*How do some groups create the critical space for growth and what gets in the way?*



## Setting the scene

What is the purpose of comms, what's being communicated to employees, and what's keeping communicators up at night? **10**

### Purpose **11**

*How are communicators defining and prioritizing their purpose?*

### Priorities & Barriers **13**

*What's keeping communicators busy in 2025?*

### Most-communicated topics **15**

*What did businesses communicate about in 2024?*

### Activities **16**

*How are communicators spending their time, and is AI likely to aid efficiency?*

## CHAPTER ONE



## Driving business impact through intersectional accountability

Does the interconnectedness of communications across an organization help or hinder its positioning as a critical business function? **18**

### Success indicators **19**

*What do businesses hold comms accountable for, how is that accountability shared, and is comms delivering success?*

### Measurement **20**

*Are communicators tracking the right business metrics, and how are they applying meaning to measurement?*

### Interdepartmental relationships **22**

*How do relationships between comms and the rest of the organization influence success, and what role does C-suite play?*



## CHAPTER TWO



### Enabling and investing in communications

Do communicators have the right tools and tech to reach employees and drive business impact? **24**

**Channel satisfaction** **25**

*Who decides the comms channel mix, and does it meet communicators' requirements?*

**Listening methods** **27**

*Which methods are communicators utilizing to enable two-way conversation, and how well are they working?*

**Artificial Intelligence** **28**

*Are organizations prepared for AI, and are communicators role modeling AI uptake?*

**Budget** **29**

*How are businesses investing in communications resource, and where do communicators want more funds?*

## CHAPTER THREE



### Critical growth areas

Which growth areas are business leaders likely to be navigating in 2025? **30**

**Skills** **31**

*Which skills and competencies are communicators prioritizing in 2025?*

**Change** **32**

*How can communicators navigate the blurring lines between change management, change comms and business-as-usual communication?*

### Conclusion

Where are communicators going, and what should they focus on in 2025? **34**

**Wellbeing** **35**

*How are communicators faring and what influences their wellbeing?*

**What next for communicators?** **36**

*What is the communicators' career trajectory and what have they learned along the way?*

**Key takeaways** **37**

*Your 2025 to-do list.*



# Introducing our Communicator Profiles

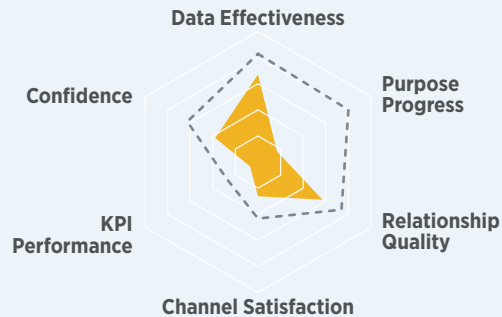
Our analysis revealed distinct response patterns enabling deeper segmentation and comparison of the data. From these patterns three communicator profiles emerged: Survivors, Strivers, and Thrivers. We'll first examine their representation in the data and defining characteristics, laying the foundation for their role throughout the report.



**Survivors: 11%**

## Operating in tough conditions

The work environment is particularly challenging, with limited structures, channels, and leadership direction. Efforts are reactive, targets are hard to meet, and there's no capacity for growth or future planning. Progress toward the organization's purpose feels unsatisfying—this group feels like they are constantly treading water.



### Key Attributes

**Survivors** are most likely to be an individual contributor. Typically working in an enterprise organization (more than 10,000 employees).

**Top Activities:** Meetings, admin, copywriting

**Main Barriers:** Lack of direction and structure, disengagement, and change fatigue

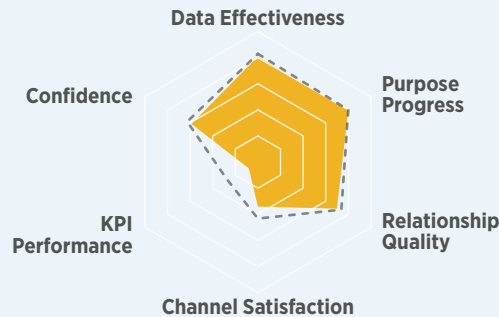
**Skills Priority 2025:** Stakeholder and change management



**Strivers: 55%**

## Resilient and building momentum

Progress toward the organization's purpose is satisfying, though challenges remain in meeting KPIs. Improvement is possible with persistence and strategy, but progress depends on the environment and the ability to be proactive. Despite growing change fatigue, this group is building a strong foundation for growth.



### Key Attributes

**Strivers** typically work in medium or large organizations (5-10k employees), and have a wider employee experience function. Often part of a growing team.

**Top Activities:** Meetings, content creation, comms strategy and planning

**Main Barriers:** Change fatigue, lack of measurement, high volume of communications

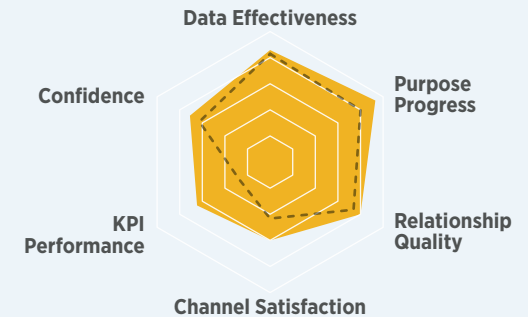
**Skills Priority 2025:** Stakeholder and change management



**Thrivers: 34%**

## Aligned and future-focused

This group is confident and aligned with the organization's vision, excelling at navigating the corporate landscape. Strategic relationships and broad access across the business keep communications and leadership in sync. Consistently exceeding targets, they have the ability to thrive in any conditions and leverage their resourcefulness to adapt to challenges.



### Key Attributes

**Thrivers** are most likely to be a leader (managing people with direct reports) in a smaller organization (fewer than 1,500 employees).

**Top Activities:** Comms strategy and planning, meetings, supporting leaders

**Main Barriers:** Manager communication, leader support, and change fatigue

**Skills Priority 2025:** Stakeholder management and leadership coaching

Profile % is an overall representation across all respondents. Each dimension (e.g., Data Effectiveness) is a summary scale created from responses to groups of questions and displayed as a %.

-- Overall average





# Performance against key measures

**Performance against KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) was the biggest differentiator between profiles. Additionally, a communicator's overall environment had quite an impact, whether through constant change or strained relationships.**

The Thriving group significantly outperformed across the majority of our measures including overall satisfaction with progress on their purpose. While Strivers were consistently meeting targets, they were less likely to exceed them. In particular, Strivers struggled with talent attraction, retention and internal mobility—metrics that likely require cross-departmental measures (relationships will be a theme throughout this report). Our Survivors were significantly more likely to have *not met* key targets at all.

## How are they performing?

Thrivers are more likely to exceed (by far) on all their targets, and consistently scored high on meeting targets related to communicating vision and strategy.

Our Survivors were significantly more likely to have *not met* key targets including communicating vision and strategy (+35pt) and employee engagement (+29pt) compared to the average.

Strivers were consistently meeting targets, but less likely to exceed them.

## How are they utilizing data?

Thrivers showed a consistently high usage of data. For this group, using data to show value was strongly correlated to their relationship with leaders and their impact.

For the Survivors, we saw a large variance in their success with using data. High scorers were matching the Thriver group, but the overall average was dragged down by some very low scores. However, we saw no correlation between Survivors' data usage and their ability to show the value of communications highlighting inconsistencies.

Strivers sit squarely in the middle.

## What's the nature of their relationships?

One notable feature of our Thriver profile was the presence of strategic relationships. Thrivers boasted higher channel listening abilities which impacted their ability report communications impact. These relationships benefit Thrivers in various ways, specifically showing up in their higher rates of leadership buy-in.

While there were varied relationship dynamics across the Strivers, they were not far behind Thrivers. Lower scores in this group are likely a result of environment.

Even leaders in the Survivor group don't have the collaborative sway of individuals in the Thriver group. Environment plays an influential role for Survivors as well. On a positive note, Survivors prioritize stakeholder management skills over any other, showing an awareness of opportunity for improvement.

## Striking the balance of tactics and strategy

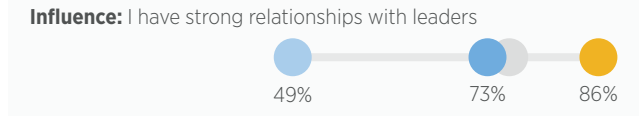
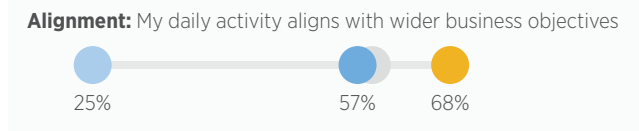
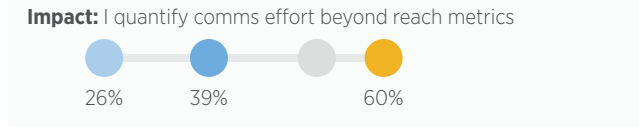
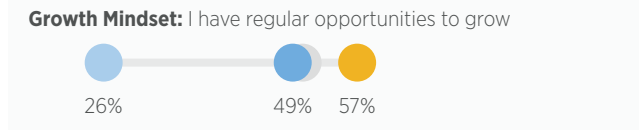
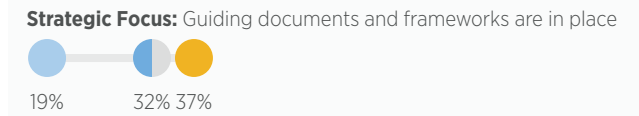
Survivors are less likely to have personally reviewed any strategic documents in the past year. While they tend to be tactic-heavy and highly organized, they remain stuck in the weeds.

Thrivers are future-oriented, focusing less on specifics or tactical plans and putting more work into overarching documents (like comms strategy, annual master plan, or audience personas).

Like Survivors, the Strivers are spending more time on tactics and specific comms (likely due to the environment and high rate of change in their organizations) but spend slightly more time with key documents, specifically channel frameworks.

## Overall how confident do communicators feel?

As you will see throughout the report, our communicator profiles differed in their responses. An example of this was for overall confidence across high-level communication areas.



Survivors | Strivers | Thrivers | Overall average

% Favorable (strongly agree and agree) for communicator confidence statements and core document review, n=811



## SETTING THE SCENE

# The purpose vs. perception paradox

**The perception of communications as a business function often stems from questions of purpose and priorities, which is where we begin our 2025 report.**

Unlike other departments with universally understood roles, the purpose of internal communications shifts from business to business—as does the nature of communicators' interaction with other parts of the organization.

Which is why, as a communicator, driving impact only happens by aligning what your business needs to communicate with your purpose, priorities and your day-to-day activities. So where are communicators committing their focus in 2025?

In chapter one we take a closer look at how the intersection of success indicators, interdepartmental relationships and measurement influence communications performance.

Chapter two explores how communications is enabled by businesses via tools, technology and investment—do they have what they need to deliver with impact?

We look at critical growth areas in chapter three; where communicators see the need to upskill and how communicators are dealing with change, which we believe requires urgent business attention.

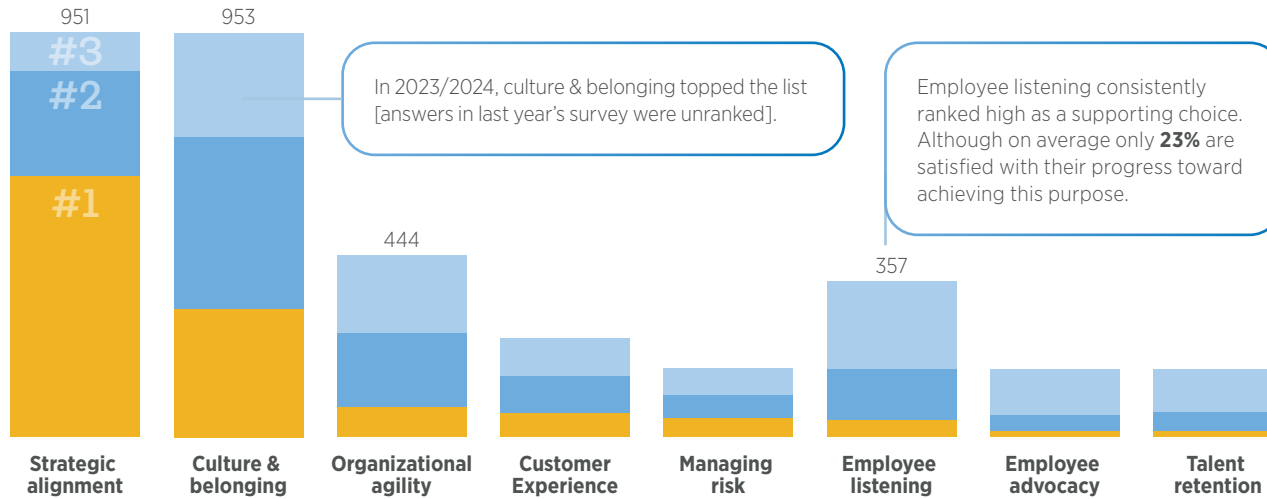
Finally, we reflect on how wellbeing has changed, the communicator's ambition for career progression, and share the two key areas in which communicators should focus for the year ahead.



# Purpose

## What is the purpose of internal communications in 2025?

This year, we asked respondents to identify and rank the purpose of communications in their business.



What is the purpose of internal communication in your organization?, n=1,464

The top three answers for 2025, by volume and ranking were:

1. Strategic alignment (creating clarity around company purpose and vision)
2. Culture & belonging (fostering an inclusive culture where employees feel valued)
3. Organizational agility (supporting the adoption of new behaviors)

While not ranking in the top three, employee listening plays a key enabling role across the top purposes; representing employee needs and wants in the business—solidifying the role of the communicator as “connective tissue” across the business, as described by a focus group attendee.

Communicators told us that organizational agility meant reducing friction, collaborating across departments, creating alignment and increasing efficiency across the business in readiness for change.

**2 in 3** respondents were satisfied with the progress they were making towards strategic alignment and culture and belonging as their purpose(s).

## Is purpose autonomy a risk to business and communicators?

Communications lacks the static, universally understood purpose that other functions like finance or operations enjoy. This flexibility can be an asset, allowing the function to adapt to business needs. In some cases, communicators themselves are empowered to determine and articulate their own purpose.

All focus group attendees had proactively discussed their team's purpose in the past year. They felt that this was necessary to set direction and also protect their time in pursuit of what they were trying to achieve.

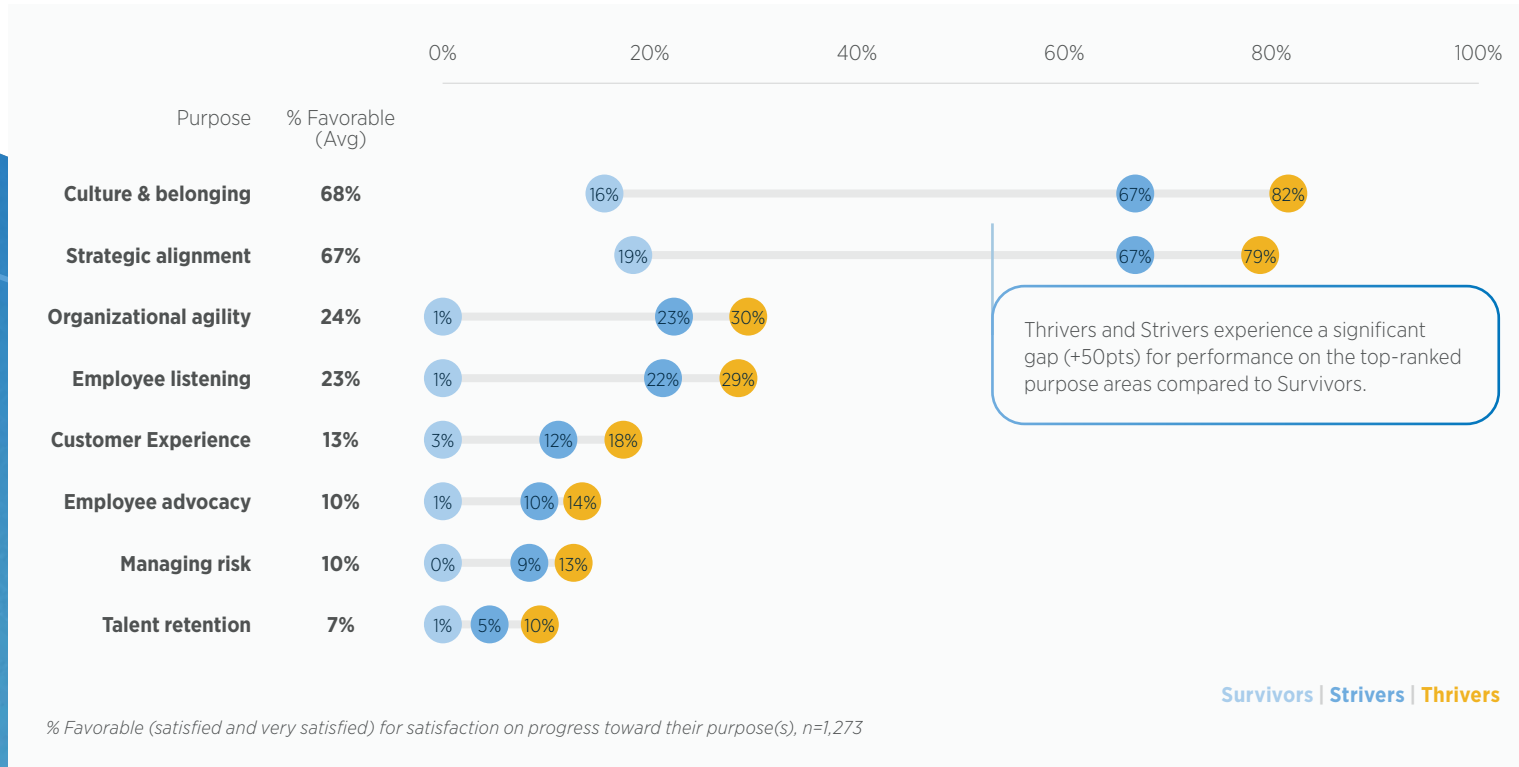
**“ You need to articulate your purpose, otherwise you suffer from perpetual scope creep. ”**

However, self-determinism may make it harder for businesses to regard communications as indispensable. Without a purpose directive from the top, the unique value of communications risks being underestimated.



## Are communicators making progress toward their purposes?

In addition to asking communicators to select and rank the purpose of comms as a function, we asked how satisfied they were with their progress toward their selected purposes. We take a look at this level of satisfaction across our three communicator profiles.



### Top tip: Articulate and align your purpose

Carve out time with your comms team to discuss your purpose and be sure to engage leadership. By defining and articulating your purpose as a team, you'll create alignment and be better prepared to prioritize your work so that you make progress toward your purpose. At the same time, it will ensure your purpose supports business outcomes, and in turn reinforce comms' role as a critical function.



# Priorities & Barriers

## Are leaders listening to communicators' advice?

Poor communication from both managers and leaders appeared in the top five barriers list for 2025. So it's no surprise that **1 in 3** respondents said that leadership comms coaching was a top priority for 2025 with **45%** saying leadership comms coaching was a highly important skill for communicators to have in 2025.

While **87%** of respondents said they proactively approach leaders with advice on how to communicate, fewer (**70%**) said that leaders implement their advice—with communicators who interacted with leaders more frequently, and had a collaborative relationship with leaders, more likely to have had leaders heed that advice.

## Is comms finally getting enough investment?

'Lack of budget and resources' has appeared in the top five barriers year after year. In 2025, financial resources were a high impact barrier for only **36%** of respondents, and **12%** said 'building a case for more resources' was not a priority at all with the majority marking it low priority.

However, **Thrivers** listed building a case for more resources as their top priority. Does this group have the ability to ask for more resources due to their previous success, or is their success is partially a result of being able to get the resources they need?

## Are leaders lacking direction on change?

'Change fatigue' was a new entry to the success barriers this year and shot straight to the second spot with **44%** of respondents rating it most impactful.

Employees are tired of endless change and leadership visibility is pertinent for maintaining engagement and productivity during times of transformation. Boosting leadership visibility was high priority for **47%** of respondents, and yet **39%** of respondents said they were highly impacted by a lack of direction from the top.

Without clarity of direction or visibility from leaders, change fatigue presents a risk to businesses in the shape of lost productivity and engagement during times of transformation.

## Have digital channels solved the deskless divide?

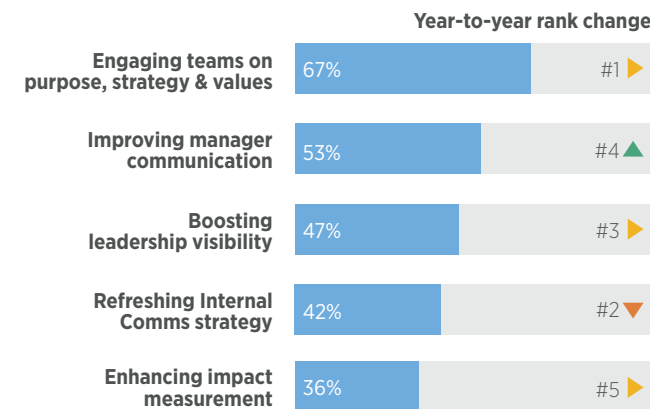
**Half** of communicators were dissatisfied with their channels' ability to reach all employees, regardless of location or work type.

And yet that doesn't seem to have been reflected in this year's barriers with **21%** saying that having non-wired / deskless employees was not a barrier at all, and **half** rating hybrid working and remote employees as a low impact barrier.

Communicators know their channels aren't living up to expectations, but this data could suggest that over time they've developed work-arounds to ensure their reach isn't impeded.

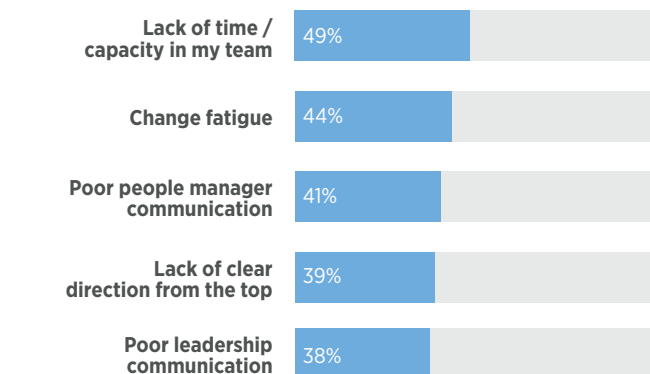
## What's keeping communicators busy in 2025?

### Top five high priorities



What level of importance (% high priority) are the following priorities? Multi-select, n=1,010

### Top five most impactful barriers



What impact (% high impact) will the following barriers have on your success in 2025? Multi-select, n=1,010



## Delivering for the business: top 5 blockers

We wanted to understand the connection between the barriers (rated low to high impact) and how well communicators are doing across the board.

We found five barriers that, when rated 'high impact' correlated with a negative effect on a communicator's 'confidence' or overall ability to deliver\*.

All five barriers revolve around senior leadership: having a seat at the table, clear direction and support, and the ability to prove value through data.



Being able to navigate the corporate landscape through leaders and relationships is a key attribute of **Thrivers**.

*\*Communicator confidence is an aggregated score comprised of agreement with statements about progress on purpose, alignment with business priorities, leadership relations, ability to quantify impact, dedicating time to develop, and how they apply their expertise.*

## Communicator Confidence Impact by Top Barriers

Those with **Low Barriers** have higher communicator confidence compared to those with **High Barriers**.



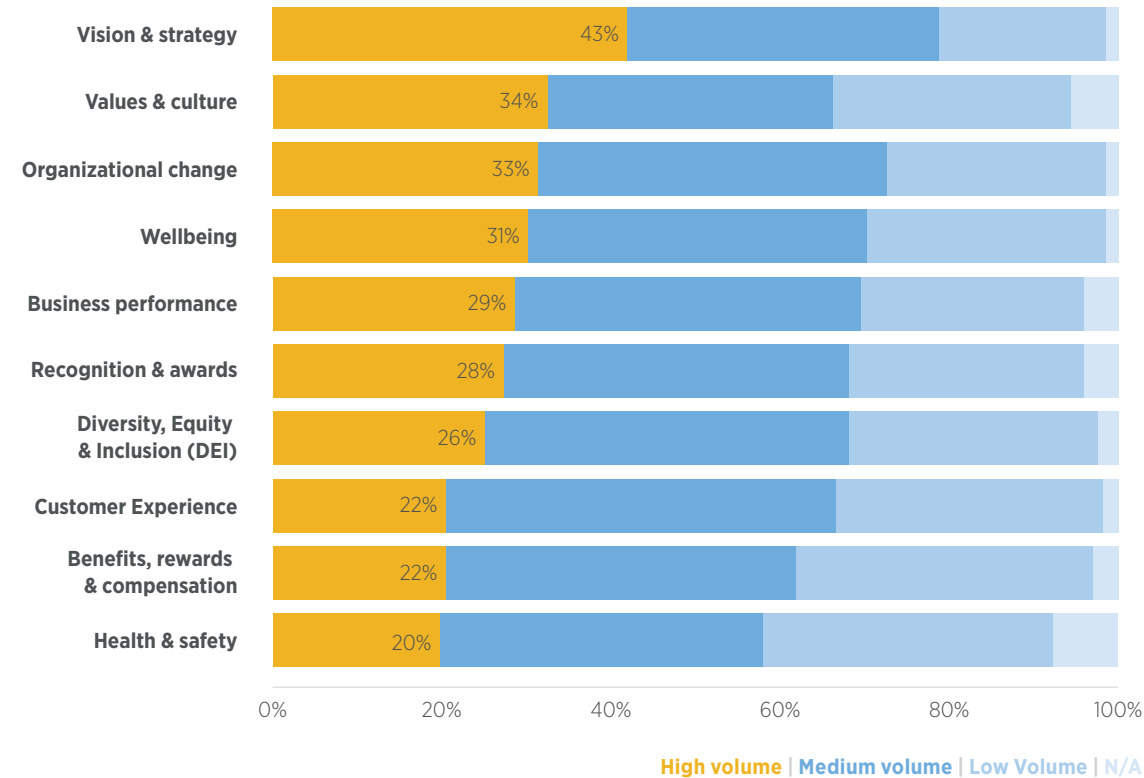
Communicator confidence scale (% favorable), n=811



# Most-communicated topics

## What did businesses communicate about in 2024?

The top 10 topics rated high volume have remained mostly consistent year to year, with just a few reshuffles on rankings.



How much has your organization communicated around the following topics this year?, n=969

**Wellbeing** (and mental health) rose from **9th** in 2023/24 to the **5th** most-communicated topic in 2024/25.

While the volume of wellbeing comms was high for **31%** of respondents overall, there was a 13pt gap between the UK and the US in high volume ratings.

- United Kingdom** 37% (+6pts)
- United States** 24% (-7pts)

**Organizational change, integration or M&A activity** (11pt gap)

- United Kingdom** 40% (+7pts)
- United States** 29% (-4pts)

**Customer experience, brand reputation and new products & services** (15pt gap)

- United Kingdom** 17% (-5pts)
- United States** 32% (-10pts)

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** (13pt gap)

- United Kingdom** 34% (+8pts)
- United States** 21% (-5pts)

**Benefits, rewards and compensation** (14pt gap)

- United Kingdom** 18% (-4pts)
- United States** 32% (+10pts)



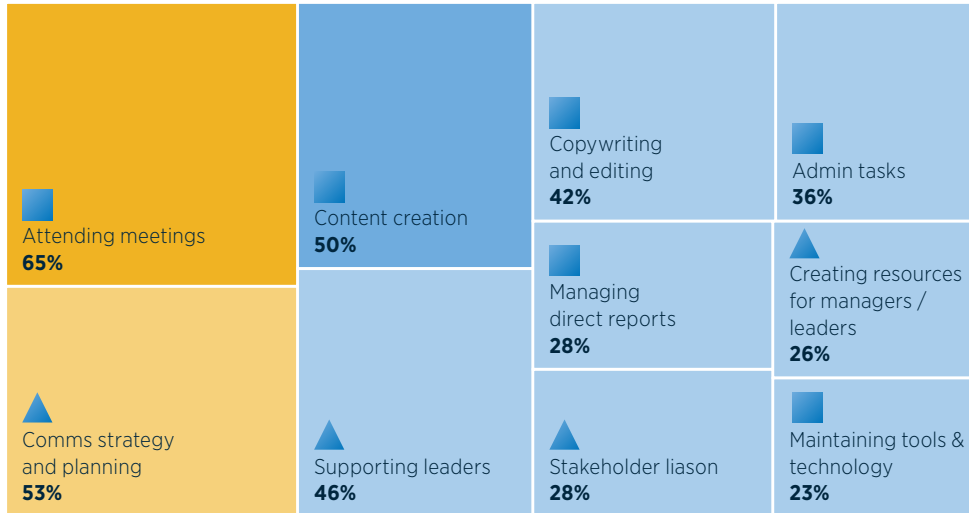
# Activities

## How are communicators spending their time?

We divided communicators' daily tasks into two categories: foundational and architectural. Think of the foundational work as the machine; these are the tasks necessary to keep workflow moving. The architectural work is the driver—the future-focused work that impacts the direction in which you are heading and how you get there. You need both to achieve your goals, but you want to spend more time and focus driving than on maintaining the machine.

## Where do communicators spend their time?

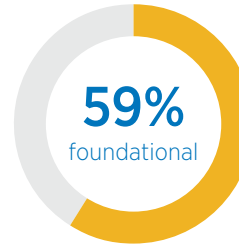
■ Foundational ▲ Architectural



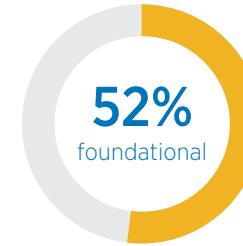
Select the five activities that take up the most working time. % of respondents selected (Multi-select n=946)



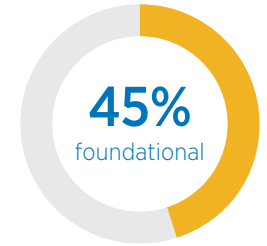
Survivors



Strivers



Thrivers



We asked survey respondents which five tasks took up the most of their working time. Surprising no one, attending meetings topped the list.

On average, **52%** of what communicators spend most time on strays away from the architectural activities that align with their priorities, success indicators, and purpose.

Surprisingly, the order of this list didn't change much based on seniority. It seems leaders, managers, and individuals alike all share similar day-to-day activities.

What was interesting, however, was that activities changed based on communicator profile. **Thrivers** spent more time on architectural tasks like planning, strategy, and relationships. **Survivors** spent twice as much time on admin tasks compared to Thrivers.



**Thrivers** spend **2x more** of their time on employee listening and contributing to business decision-making than Survivors.





### How are communicators leveraging AI efficiencies?

We asked how comfortable respondents would be with AI helping out with their most time-consuming tasks—either assisting or doing it for them.

**Eight in 10** communicators were happy for AI to assist with content creation and copywriting, and **1 in 10** were happy for AI to take it over entirely—suggesting that there are potential efficiencies to be made across the top five time-consuming tasks.

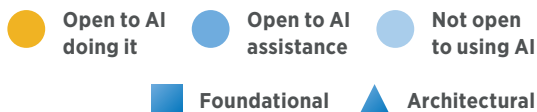
When it came to admin, **24%** said they're happy for AI to do admin tasks, but surprisingly, **19%** were not comfortable with any AI intervention at all.

Is this discomfort with delegation to AI due to a lack of knowledge about how AI tools could help, a lack of AI skills, or are communicators held back by their organization's stance on AI (though this is less likely as **38%** say there is no guidance on AI and no group responsible for AI within their organization at all)?

With the advent of Agentic AI (wherein AI will take on the ability to reason and take action) we hope to see communicators safely leveraging AI to create efficiencies that will allow them to prioritize architectural activity.

Task (% selected)	Type	Attitude toward AI usage		
1. Attending Meetings (65%)	Foundational	3%	40%	57%
2. Comms strategy and planning (53%)	Architectural	4%	69%	27%
3. Content Creation (50%)	Foundational	9%	80%	11%
4. Supporting Leaders (46%)	Architectural	2%	50%	47%
5. Copywriting and editing (42%)	Foundational	10%	80%	10%
6. Admin tasks (36%)	Foundational	24%	56%	19%
7. Managing direct reports (28%)	Foundational	2%	15%	83%
8. Stakeholder liaison (28%)	Architectural	1%	33%	66%
9. Creating resources for managers/leaders (26%)	Architectural	6%	80%	14%
10. Maintaining tools & technology (23%)	Foundational	13%	57%	30%

Of the activities listed, select the five activities that take up the most working time. (Multi-select n=945)



### The great meeting paradox: time wasters or connection builders?

While **65%** of communicators said attending meetings a top-five time consuming activity, there's no way to quantify if these meetings are productive or not; whether they're recurring or milestone meetings, or whether they had a clear agenda.

Granted, conversations that would have been held as an ad-hoc, passing interaction in an office hallway in 2019 must be formally scheduled in 2025 due to the prevalence of hybrid working post-Covid.

When we consider our activity list, it's possible that meetings overlap with other activities like strategic planning and managing direct reports. Meeting with a senior leader? Is that classified as a 'meeting' or as 'stakeholder liaison'? Semantics aside, is there a way to reduce time spent on this task?

It's not as simple as avoiding meetings altogether.

Communicators told us that while many meetings weren't necessarily directly productive or valuable, being present in meetings enabled them to build goodwill and strengthen stakeholder connections that might prove useful in future. Most focus group attendees felt that at least **half** of their meetings were productive or valuable. They were willing to gamble on attending an agenda-less meeting if it meant being in the room where decisions were made or employee voices needed representing.

As one communicator put it: **It's the meeting that you're not attending where something becomes a comms problem.**

**Top tip: Keep a timesheet**

With the number one barrier for communicators being a 'lack of time and capacity in my team' for the past few years, you might often be wondering where all your time goes. We suggest keeping a timesheet for a discrete period, perhaps a month, and recording the tasks you've been asked to complete and the time they take. At the end of the month, reflect on whether the tasks you've completed align with your priorities and purpose. Are they 'foundational' or 'architectural'? This data can also help identify areas to improve efficiency as well offering helpful data if you are looking to request extra resources.



## CHAPTER ONE

# Driving business impact through intersectional accountability

### **Does connectedness help or hinder comms' positioning as a critical business function?**

As a function, comms plays a unique role—one that comes with both strengths and challenges.

Unlike other departments, the success of internal communications is intertwined with multiple teams through shared goals and success indicators. Joint performance indicators act as incentive to prioritize building relationships across all areas of an organization and success hinges on a communicator's ability to connect—frequently and meaningfully—with other departments.

As well as departmental connections, communicators must build strong relationships with senior leaders to ensure success; relying heavily upon their ability to curate and leverage data—which communicators may not be able to access.

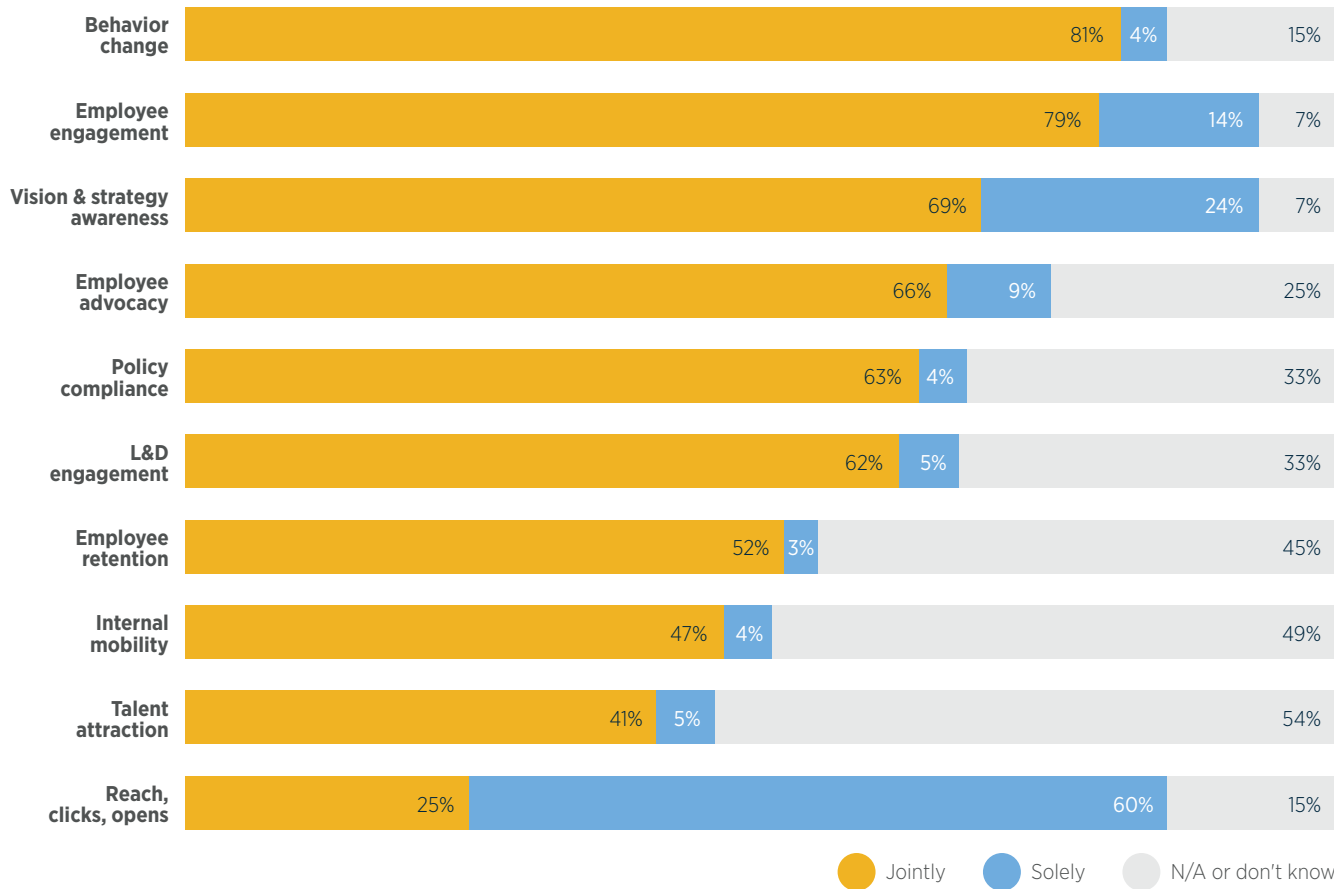
Navigating shared accountability strengthens the fabric of an organization, but weakens the ability to demonstrate the unique value that communications brings in its own right—leaving the function vulnerable in times of organizational upheaval.



# Success indicators

## What do businesses hold communications accountable for?

In 2023/24 we asked communicators to share their success indicators for the first time. This year, we dug a little deeper, and asked whether accountabilities were solely owned by communicators, or were shared with other departments. Here we use “success indicators” and “KPIs” (Key Performance Indicators) interchangeably.



What success indicator(s) is your internal communication solely or jointly accountable for? (Multi-select n=1,273)

The most prevalent sole KPI was reach metrics, with **60%** of respondents being solely responsible for clicks, opens, comments (e.g., on emails and intranet). Fewer than **1%** of communicators had *only* sole success indicators.

While the question was structured differently this year, it was interesting to see accountability figures increase on two key KPIs. Awareness of company strategy increased from **70%** accountability in 2023/24 to **93%** accountability (**69%** joint / **24%** sole) in 2024/25. Similarly for employee engagement, we saw **74%** accountability rise to **93%** accountability (**79%** joint / **14%** sole).

Of the **14%** of respondents that indicated comms was solely responsible for employee engagement, only slightly more reported into HR than into IC.

### The average communicator:

- Has 7 KPIs
- On average, shares 5 KPIs with HR and 3 with C-suite
- In conversation, we heard the ideal number of KPIs is 3-5

### The more KPIs, the better?

When it came to meeting and exceeding targets against success indicators, it seemed that the number of KPIs did not affect performance. In fact the more KPIs communicators were accountable for, the more respondents were meeting or exceeding their targets.

Fewer KPIs meant better wellbeing, unless you were in a small organization or an individual employee (with no direct reports).

# Measurement

## What data are communicators tracking?

### Top 5 business metrics tracked by communicators

1. Employee engagement	71%
2. Workforce size	47%
3. Employee turnover / attrition	44%
4. Employee retention	40%
5. Budget	35%

Which of the following general business metrics do you regularly monitor as a communicator? (Multi-select n=767)

We asked communicators which general business metrics they regularly monitored. We were surprised that the results did not align with their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Furthermore, there was some interesting nuance within the data, depending on location and reporting structure.

Despite **92%** of respondents having some accountability for employee engagement, only **71%** regularly monitor employee engagement rates.

Just **7%** of respondents had “engagement” in their job title.

**56%** of respondents were accountable for employee retention, yet just **40%** were tracking it as a business metric.

### UK top 3

1. Employee engagement (**87%**)
2. Workforce size (**45%**)
3. NPS (Net Promoter Score) (**39%**)

### US top 3

1. Employee engagement (**59%**)
2. Workforce size (**56%**)
3. Employee retention (**53%**)

### IC-reporting comms functions

1. Employee engagement (**80%**)
2. Workforce size (**45%**)
3. Employee turnover / attrition (**33%**)

### HR-reporting comms functions

1. Employee turnover / attrition (**75%**)
2. Employee retention (**68%**)
3. Employee engagement (**60%**)

## Are communicators applying meaning to measurement?

### Top 5 use cases for data

1. Demonstrate the value of communications	81%
2. Inform decisions about future tactics	81%
3. Understand the effectiveness of communications sent	81%
4. Evaluate performance of tactics – continuous improvement	77%
5. Evaluate our channel framework	73%

% Favorable (strongly agree and agree), I use data to... n=801

Year-to-year, we have seen consistent, incremental increases across data use cases. In 2024/25, we see an **11%** increase in communicators using data to provide evidence of value, **+9%** are using data to make changes to their channel framework, **+9%** are using data to inform an audience-specific content approach, and **+6%** are using data to build business cases.

Using data is one thing, but curating and presenting it to leaders in a meaningful way is another. The majority of communicators agreed that when sharing measurement reports and data, they provide context and explain the ‘why’ behind the numbers (**83%**), identify trends, patterns and relationships (**79%**) and create actionable recommendations (**82%**).

But that leaves **1 in 5** communicators submitting reports to leaders who are likely scratching their heads and wondering, “so what?”

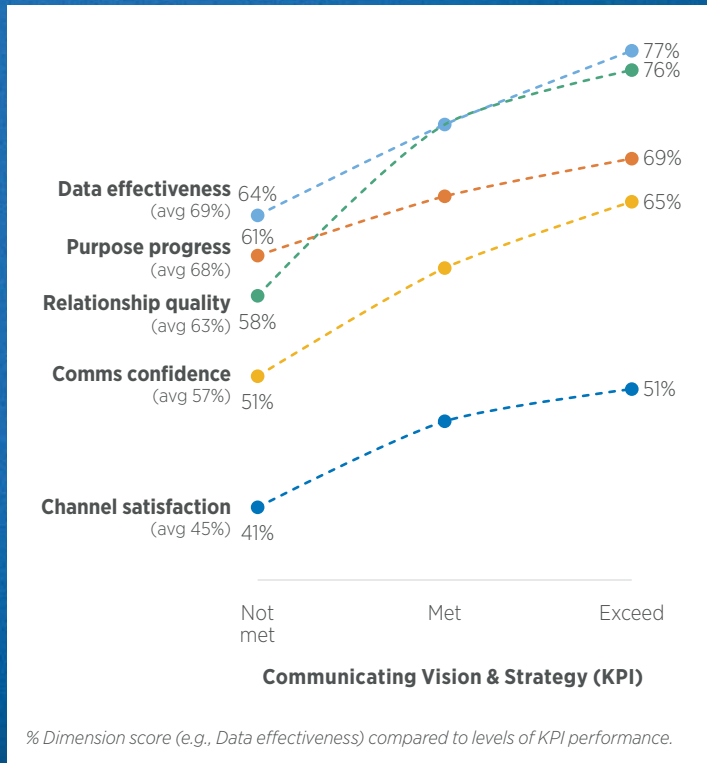
This is where data literacy comes into play: the ability to read, analyze, work with, and communicate data. Data literacy helps people ask questions, build knowledge, make decisions, and share meaning with interested stakeholders. This applies not just to interpreting data, but curating it, too. As one communicator put it, “Amongst the wealth of data we have, we need to choose the information that matters most to leaders. All the other stuff we need to keep for ourselves. Don’t overwhelm people with numbers.”

**38%** of respondents said data literacy was a highly important skill for 2025. Of those, **20%** said they already had these skills in-house, while **58%** planned to train their team in data literacy.

## Are communicators meeting (or even tracking) their KPIs?

We found a strong correlation between positive performance against Key Performance Indicators and the utilization of data specifically to measure the effectiveness of comms.

Those likely to exceed targets better leveraged data, had effective relationships, were satisfied with their progress on overall purpose and satisfied with their channels as shown below.

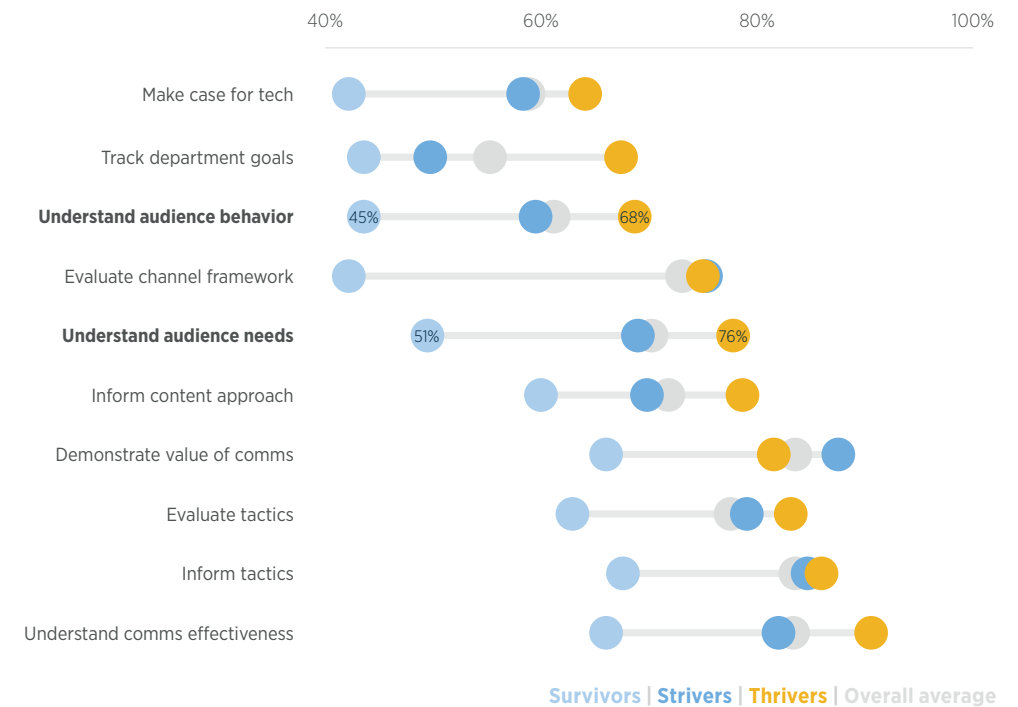


Surprisingly, many respondents, although accountable for a success indicator, were not tracking it. For example, **49%** of respondents were accountable for candidate attraction and **51%** for internal mobility. Yet of this cohort, **1 in 3** or more weren't even tracking performance against these measures. These particular metrics are likely to be HR-led, and so respondents might be assisting with the communications but not in charge of measuring success.

## How does data utilization influence success?

We found a strong correlation between the usage of data and the ability to exceed targets on success indicators. This is an obvious link, but matching metrics to specific targets creates a commercial language that leaders understand: performance.

However, some of the largest gaps in our communicator profiles were around prioritizing audience knowledge and needs.



*% Favorable (strongly agree and agree), I use data to ... n=801*



**Thrivers'** employee listening ability was higher than other profiles, and we found significant differences in how each of our communicator profiles tracked department goals.

# Interdepartmental relationships

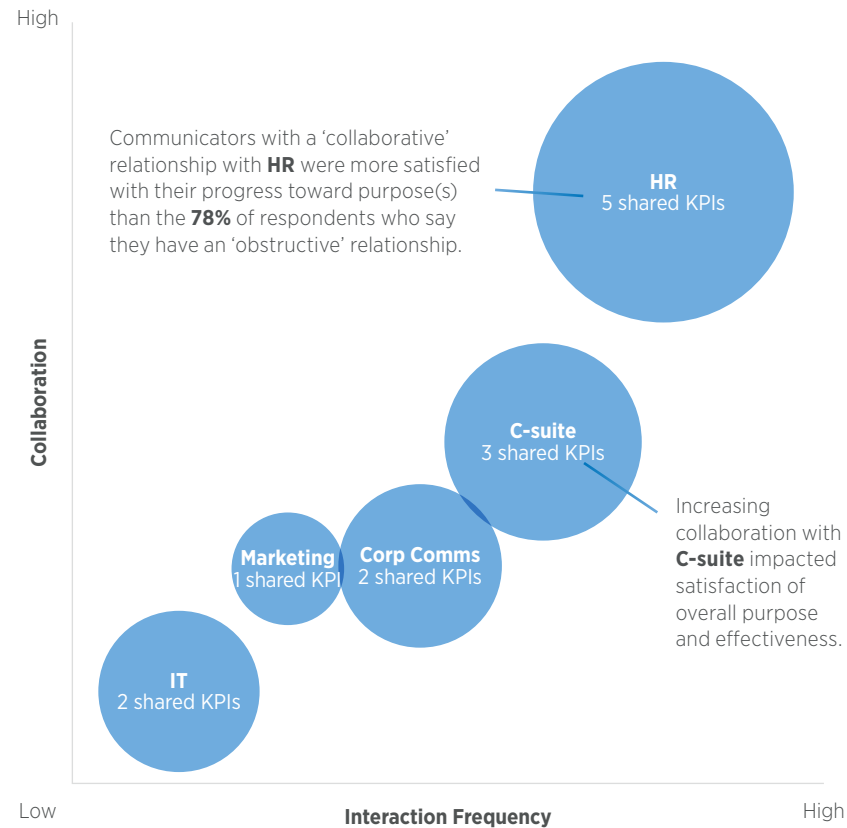
## How is comms connected across the organization?

Along with asking about shared success indicators, we surveyed communicators about the frequency of interaction and quality of relationships with each department.

The average communicator is accountable for 7 Key Performance Indicators: of which 6 are joint KPIs with other departments, and 1 is a sole KPI.

Respondents were most likely to share accountabilities with HR (5) and C-suite (3), with Operations & corporate comms tying with a mean of 2 shared KPIs each.

When KPIs are jointly accountable, understanding performance is nuanced and needs explicit translation, agreement and responsibility – which is how relationships become key critical.



While communicators boast positive relationships with HR and C-suite, other relationships are more nuanced. This could pose a risk to achieving business outcomes if not addressed in the long term.

Comms interacts the least with:	Comms has 'obstructive' relationships with:	Comms are most 'transactional' with:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investor relations</li> <li>Product management</li> <li>Sales</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IT</li> <li>Purchasing / Procurement</li> <li>Sales</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchasing / Procurement</li> <li>Product Management</li> <li>Investor relations / Finance &amp; accounting</li> </ol>

The data suggests that interdepartmental relationships are critical to being an effective communicator. We found strong positive correlations\* between the prevalence of collaborative relationships and:

- A communicator's ability to use data**
- Performance across success indicators**
- Satisfaction with progress toward purpose(s)**

*\*When comparing relationships type (Collaborative, Transactional, and Obstructive) to Data Use effectiveness, KPI performance and Purpose progress, The Collaborative group outperformed other groups.*

## Does interaction frequency make a difference?

Frequency matters in meeting with C-suite and HR, however with some other departments, like IT and Operations, you are golden as long as you're not *never* interacting.

## The criticality of C-suite relationships

Communicators who have a ‘collaborative’ relationship with C-suite and those who met with leaders ‘all the time’ were more satisfied with their progress towards achieving the purpose of communication in their organization, and were more likely to be meeting or exceeding their success indicators.

**86%** of respondents who were ‘collaborative’ with leaders had higher satisfaction with their overall comms purpose than those with ‘obstructive’ relationships.

Communicators with collaborative C-suite relationships have **8x** better wellbeing than those with obstructive relationships, and **2x** better wellbeing than those with transactional relationships.



**Thrivers** interacted with C-suite more frequently. Interacting frequently with C-suite correlated with a higher proportion of time spent on ‘architectural’ activities.

Our data showed that communicators work often with leaders, proactively and reactively, in almost equal measure. In conversation, communicators told us that being reliable and reactive gave them more agency to be proactive with leaders.

When it came to leadership implementing communicators’ advice, **70%** of respondents answered favorably, with only **6%** saying leaders ignored their advice.

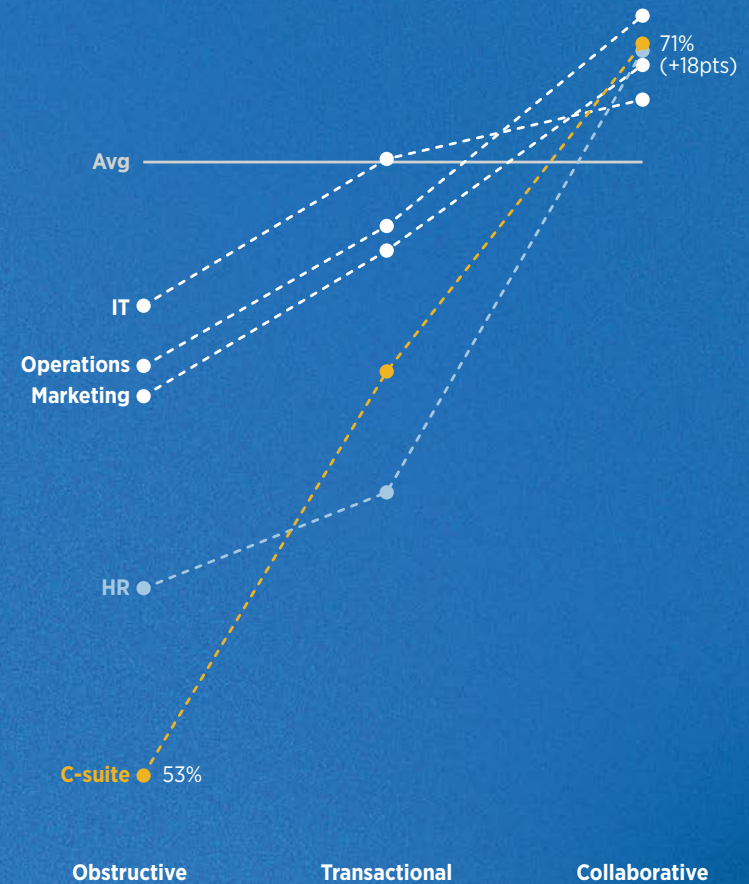
### Top tip: Leadership relationships

When dealing with senior leaders, communicators told us:

- You must be visible at a time that’s convenient and meaningful to them, not you.
- The onus is always on comms to do the work and maintain the relationship. We always need something from leaders—but they might think they don’t need us.
- Leaders have more power to opt out of the relationship.
- Comms’ role is to give honest feedback—presenting this as “what employees are saying” can be more influential to leaders.

## The impact of collaborative relationships on progress against purpose.

It was clear from the data that a ‘collaborative’ relationship impacted core areas of communication. Some ‘obstructive’ relationships hindered progress more than others. The chart below shows the impact of poor relationships with stated satisfaction on overall progress against the purpose of the communications function.



Relationship type compared to satisfaction of progress on purpose (% satisfied).



## CHAPTER TWO

# Enabling and investing in communications

### Do communicators have the right tools and tech to reach employees and drive business impact?

The impact of communications depends significantly on how well organizations enable and invest in the function. While most respondents have dedicated budgets, many share resources with other departments or rely on ad hoc funding.

Effective communication strategies require fit-for-purpose tools. Although most communicators influence channel decisions, dissatisfaction with current channel capabilities remains widespread.

Employee listening is a key priority for many, but are communicators using the best methods to gather feedback and foster dialogue? Organizations are balancing digital channels with in-person approaches, yet gaps persist between what's being used and what's proven effective.

Despite growing interest in AI, little progress has been made toward organizational readiness. Few communicators have addressed transparency in AI usage, raising the question: how can they role model and advocate for AI adoption when their organizations and teams aren't prioritizing it?

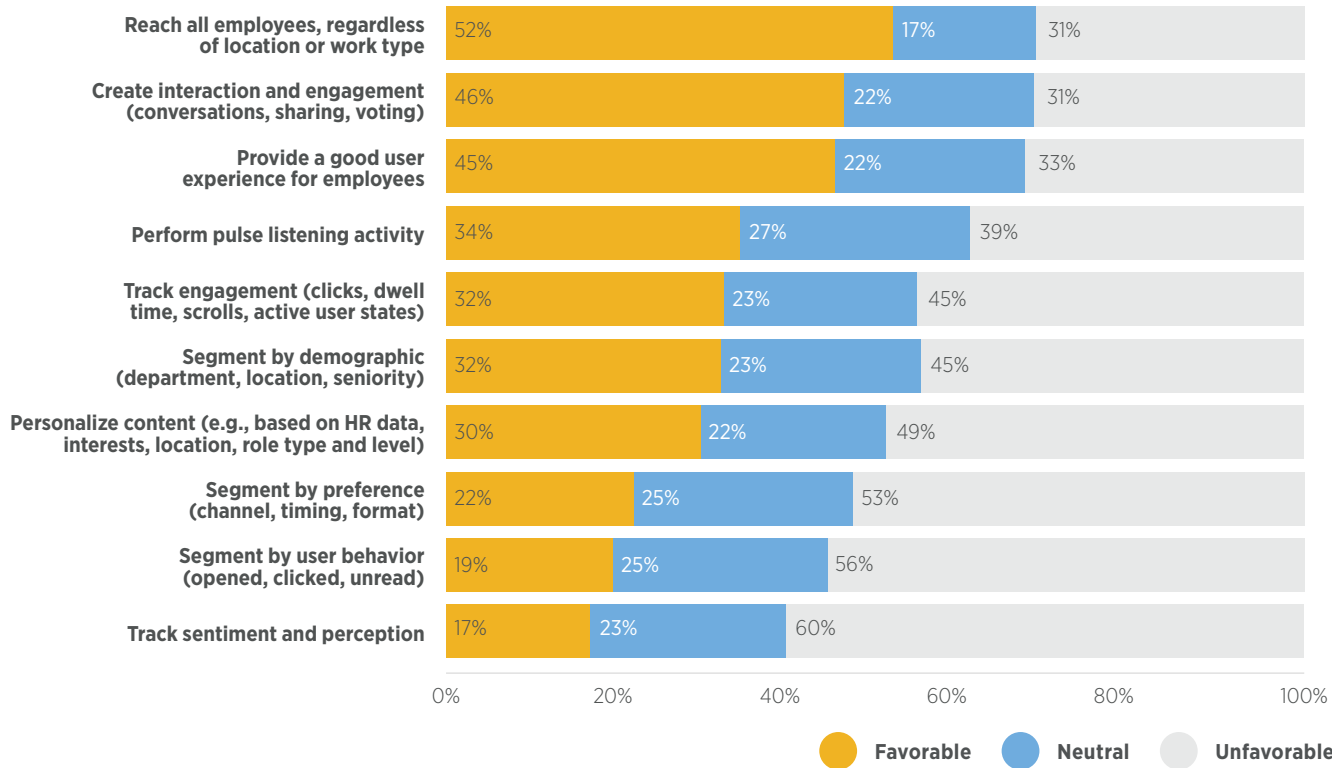




# Channel satisfaction

## Do communicators have the right tools for the job?

We asked communicators how satisfied they were with the capabilities of their channels.



How satisfied are you with your channels' ability to ... (n=874)

## Are segmentation and personalization all they're promised to be?

With the advent of AI usage in communications, we've heard a lot about hyper-personalization (in last year's report, **48%** of communicators said this technology would be of high importance of the next five years). Despite this, the foundations are not yet in place, with low levels of satisfaction around personalization of content (**30%**) based on HR data, interests, location, role type and level, and half of respondents are dissatisfied with their channels' ability to segment employees by demographic (**45%**), preference (**53%**), and user behavior (**56%**).

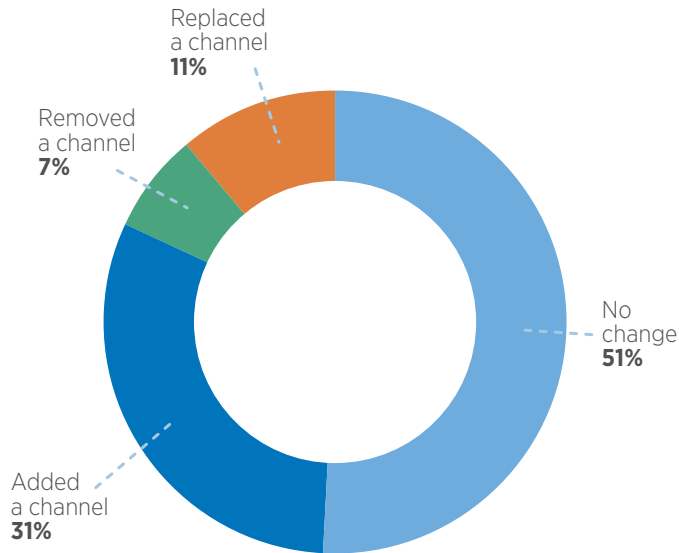
It seems that despite a desire for change, broadcast comms are the stark reality for many. But is personalization through channels the best way forward? As one communicator told us in conversation:

**“ In the past, organizations did have the ability to personalize on preferences – they were called line managers. ”**



## Who is responsible for channel mix changes?

### What (net) changes have you made to your channel mix in the last year?



**Just over half** of communicators made no changes to their channel mix in the past year.

Of the communicators who made a change, the majority said it was due to 'better meeting business needs' (31%).

The stakeholders responsible for decision-making around channel changes were most likely to be Internal Communication (71%), C-suite (37%), IT (31%), and HR (30%).

Communicators who added a channel in the past year were more satisfied with their channel mix across the board.

A collaborative relationship with IT correlated with improved channel satisfaction for communicators who changed their channel mix.

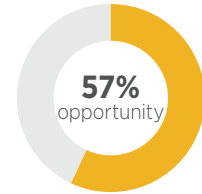
## Channel usage and effectiveness highlights

You'll find a full breakdown of channel usage and effectiveness in the appendix. Here we highlight the channels with the most opportunity; where usage is low, but effectiveness is high.

### Leader to employee channels

Leader blog to employees

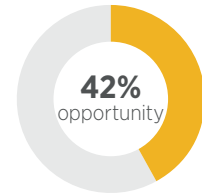
17% usage | 74% effectiveness



### Company to manager channels

Manager-specific in-person events

43% usage | 85% effectiveness



### Company to employees channels

Text messages / WhatsApp / Viber

12% usage | 75% effectiveness



### Employee to employees channels

Social and engagement platforms

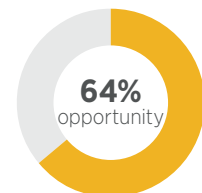
16% usage | 68% effectiveness



### Employee self-service channels

Extranet

4% usage | 68% effectiveness





# Listening methods

## Listening highlights

- **Most divisive:** Email, with **29%** saying it generated low value feedback, **25%** saying it was valuable, and **46%** giving it a moderate value for usefulness.
- **Most useful:** Focus groups. Only **41%** of communicators utilize this format. However, **4 in 5** of those who did found it valuable.
- **One to watch:** This year ‘independent audit’ was found to be one of the most valuable listening methodologies. **Three in 4** communicators who ran an audit with an external party found it useful; but only **8%** of respondents used this service.

## Mixed satisfaction with pulse surveys

The most divided area of channel satisfaction was the ability to perform pulse listening activity: **24%** were satisfied, **39%** were dissatisfied, and **27%** were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

However, of the **48%** of communicators who utilized pulse surveys as a listening channel, **60%** said this channel was valuable in providing usable feedback to enable decisions. So, while the process of implementing pulse surveys could be improved, they are worth the effort.

### If employee listening is important, why don't comms have a listening strategy?

Employee listening debuted in the ‘purpose’ list this year with **31%** of communicators selecting it in their top three.

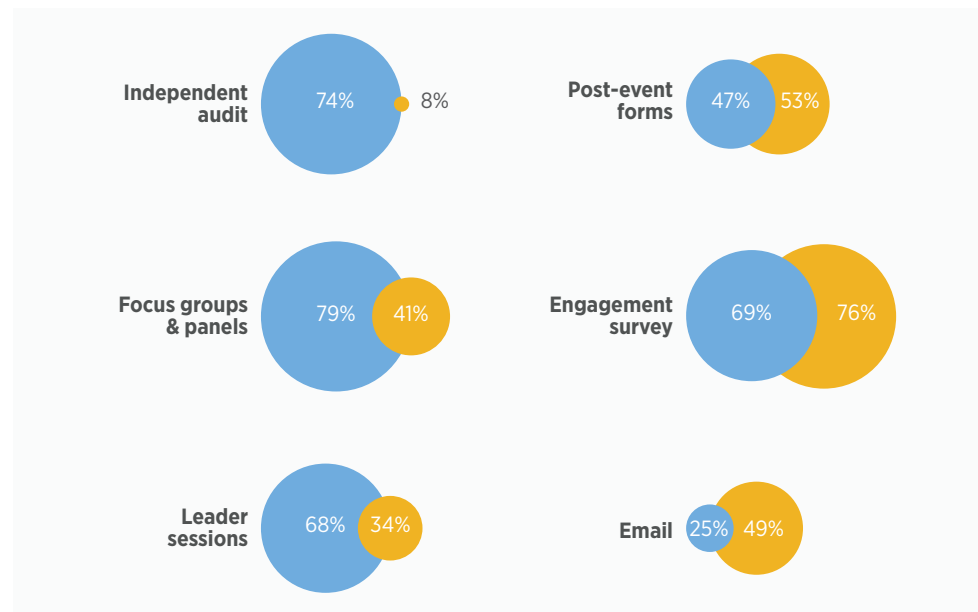
However, only **2 in 5** of those respondents had personally reviewed a listening strategy or plan in the past year. **One in 3** said their business didn't have their listening strategy or plan documented at all.

In conversation, communicators confirmed that very few had a defined listening ‘strategy’. They said listening was not a separate workstream, but an integral part of their everyday role. Most said they actively gathered feedback as part of their workflow and shared it with leadership as needed.

They also revealed that the size and shape of their organization and communications team can affect their ability to run focus groups. For larger organizations, this task would often have to be packaged up and disseminated for managers or leaders to run, which could explain why only **2 in 5** communicators were leveraging this valuable listening method.

## Which listening methods offer the most value?

We asked communicators which listening methods they utilized, and how valuable they perceived them to be.



Value % | Usage %

% Usage (multi-select), % Valuable (% very high value and high value), n=819

**Thrivers** utilized a wide range of listening techniques and were more likely to derive value from leader listening sessions and manager feedback.

We found a **32pt** gap between Survivors and **Thrivers** when it came to leveraging managers as a listening channel.

**Survivors** preferred utilizing champion networks over managers, which could be indicative of the environment in which they work—more likely in enterprise organizations with **10,000+** employees.



# Artificial Intelligence

## What’s changed in the last year?

When it comes to using AI, we asked communicators what they had in place in their organization.

	This year	Comparison to 2023/24
We have a dedicated group or individual with responsibility for AI within the business	36%	+2%
We have guidance on what AI tools and systems we can use	41%	+6%
We have guidance on when / where / how to use AI	36%	+7%
We have training and / or resources on the limitations and risks associated with AI	30%	+8%
None of the above	38%	N/A - new for 2025

It’s promising to see an increase in AI maturity across the board, but concerning that **2 in 5** communicators report having no governance or guidance in place.

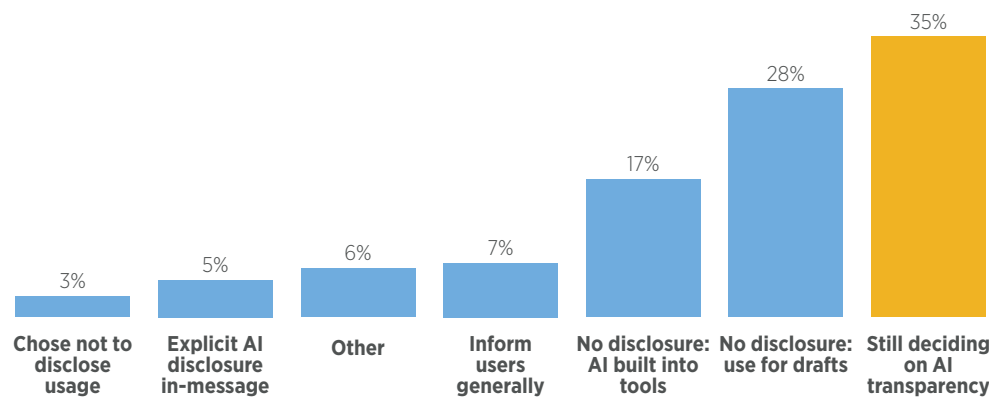
While we acknowledge that communicators may not be privy to the AI provisions that exist within their organization, one could argue that if a communicator isn’t aware, then it’s very unlikely that employees will be either.

### **Top tip: Carve an AI niche for comms**

In conversation with communicators, we heard that many are responsible for encouraging AI usage within their organizations. This can mean sharing suggested use cases for the technology with employees. Prompt engineering is the process of designing inputs, called prompts, to guide AI models to produce specific outputs. This could be an area where comms proves itself invaluable to the organization. Getting the best out of Large Language Models (LLMs) doesn’t come naturally to some, and with skills in copywriting and content creation, who better in an organization to create a prompt library than comms?

## How transparent is comms about its AI usage?

This year we were curious about the level of transparency communicators were applying to their communications. How much were they sharing with employees?



How transparent are you about using AI in your communications?, n=796

In conversation with communicators, we heard that for some communicators in the **5%** who explicitly disclosed AI usage, this transparency was about role modelling. Their organizations had made large investments in AI, and it was comms’ job to encourage employees’ usage and showcase AI’s potential. This could be as simple as stating “Created with AI” in an email footer they sent out. By highlighting comms’ usage, they could encourage others to utilize it, too.



**Thrivers** were more likely to have considered AI transparency.

Others told us they were hesitant to disclose their use of AI tools for varied reasons—taking away the humanity of comms, demonstrating a lack of authenticity, and even calling into question their personal value as a content creator.

We also spoke to members of the **28%** who said they used AI for drafts and the **17%** who said it was built into their tools. They didn’t feel the need to disclose its usage, likening it to simpler tools like spelling and grammar checkers. The line between their work and AI’s assistance was too blurred.

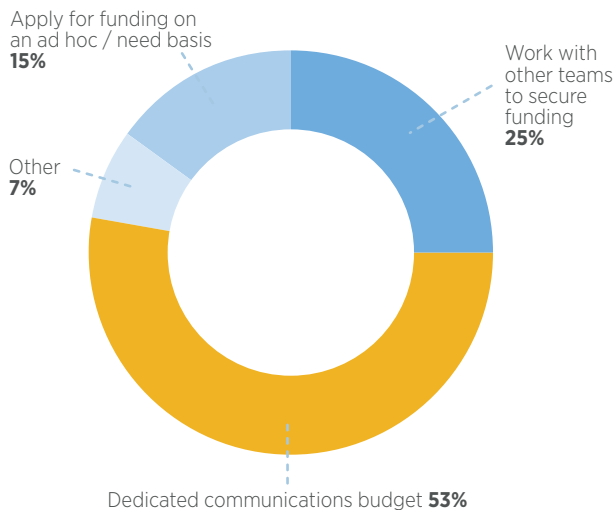
What is most concerning is the **1 in 3** respondents who had not made any decision about AI transparency at all. Communicators hold a unique position in the organization, with the ability to influence employee attitudes and perceptions. Not having a stance poses a risk to businesses in how employees navigate this new technology, which is why governance provisions for AI are key critical for 2025 and beyond.



# Budget

## How are businesses enabling and investing in communications resources?

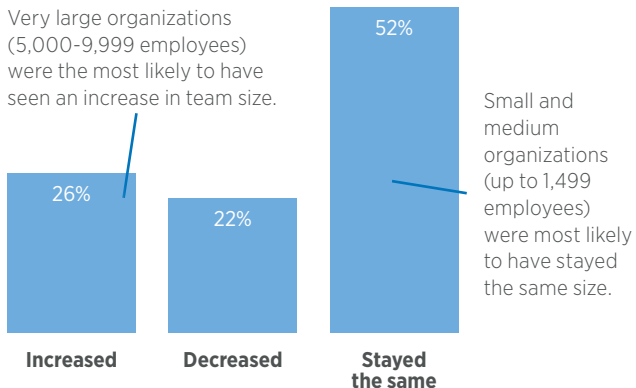
This year, we wanted to better understand where investment comes from and how it is administered, rather than just how much of it communicators were expecting to have.



While **53%** of respondents have a dedicated budget for communications, **25%** worked with other teams to secure funding. For instance, if the reward and benefits team wanted to promote a new benefits offering with a communication campaign, the comms function would secure funding via the Human Resources budget—reinforcing the criticality of collaborative relationships.

A further **15%** said they must apply for funding on an ad hoc basis. This is concerning when only **60%** of communicators say they use measurement data to create business cases, meaning **2 in 5** communicators are not well equipped to work within an ad hoc model, which demands data literacy and business acumen to secure funding.

## How have team sizes changed in the last year?



Respondents with an ad hoc budget model were less likely to agree they could 'demonstrate the value of communication' than those who had a dedicated budget.

## What would comms do with a sudden windfall?

### Just for fun, in conversation we asked communicators how they'd spend a sudden budget injection of \$100,000.

Their answers were varied, but two key themes emerged: people and technology.

Many desired tech solutions to better reach employees, automate listening, alleviate administration, and support their measurement efforts: **An employee app that everyone can access and digital signage. If we had good digital signage in lunchrooms and warehouses, we could do great stuff.**

Others mentioned increased headcount or training and development for their own team or for managers and leaders in their organization: **I'd spend it on verbal briefings; time out for the frontline to be able to speak to their management. We rely on a cascade, but we don't give people the time to do it.**

### We also asked: if they could reallocate funding from another department, which would it be?

Marketing, sales, and IT were the most dominant answers with one communicator explaining: **It seems like those teams have less trouble getting buy-in because their spend is more tangible.**

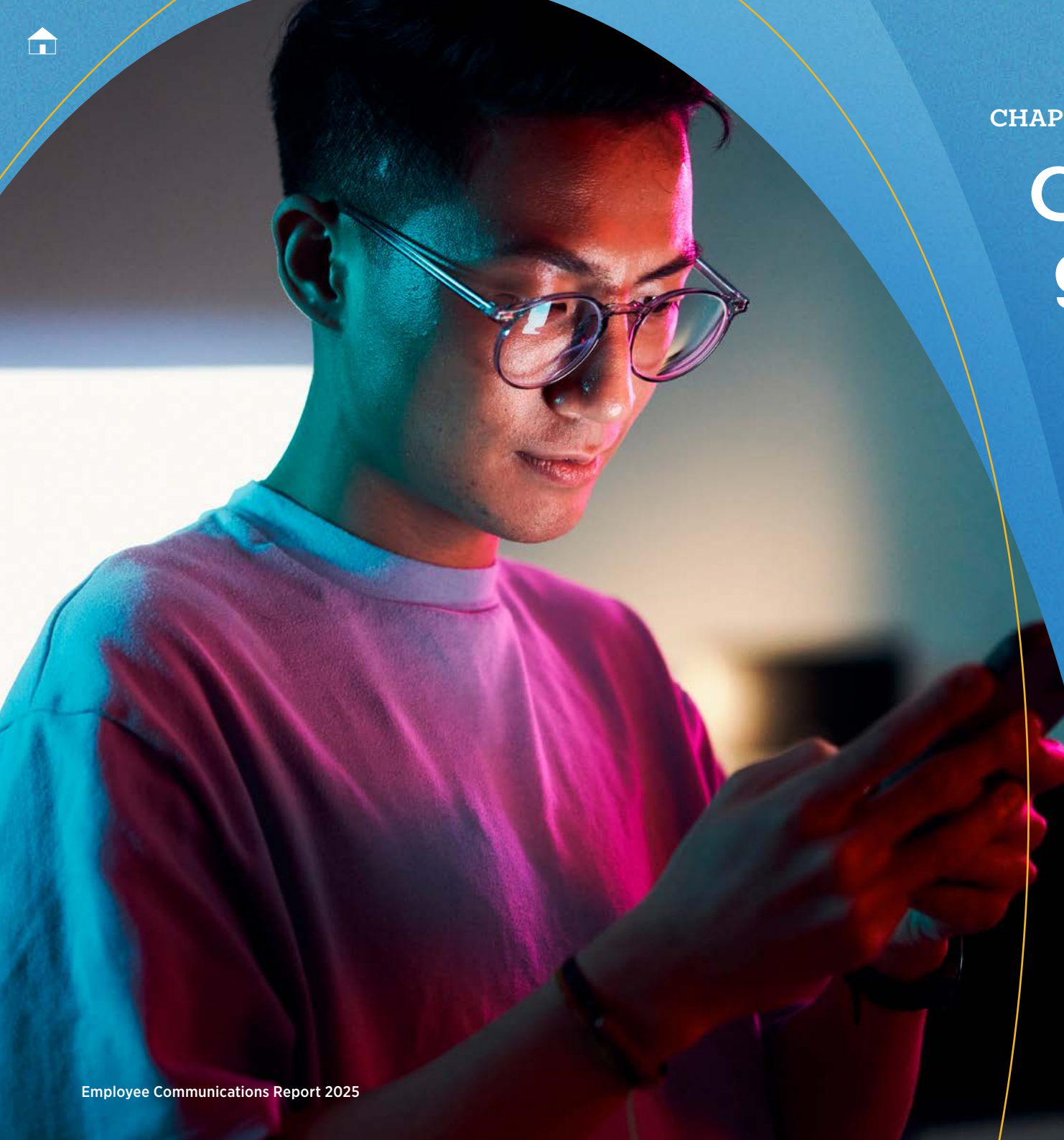
Sales and IT were two of the most 'obstructive' relationships for communicators.

“ I'd take it from finance—the only people with money!

Marketing: I've seen them waste a lot of money on different campaigns. I'd love to waste the way they do.

Many other departments are also struggling for budget. It would have to come out of internal catering—no more tea and biscuits in meetings!

”



## CHAPTER THREE

# Critical growth areas

### Which growth areas are business leaders likely to be navigating in 2025?

As organizations navigate a constantly shifting economic landscape, the comms function must evolve to remain relevant and impactful. This evolution can be viewed through dual lenses; the critical skills identified by communicators as critical in the near future, and the direction in which our data and market forces indicate a short to mid-term shift.

From strategic thinking to data literacy and relationship building, we uncover the competencies and skills that communicators are prioritizing, and how they plan (or not) to acquire these capabilities within the business.

We also examine the increasing complexity of change and transformation. With the lines between change management, change communications, and business-as-usual messaging continuing to blur against a backdrop of change fatigue, how can communicators maintain clarity and focus while driving organizational alignment?





# Skills

## Critical skills and competencies for organizations in 2025

Skills and competencies (% selected)	How will you ensure you have the skills in your business?				
1. Stakeholder management (59%)	50%	37%	2%	11%	
2. Change management (55%)	34%	48%	5%	4%	9%
3. Leadership coaching (46%)	27%	47%	1%	18%	7%
4. Message and tone personalization (43%)	40%	46%	2%	3%	8%
5. Data literacy (39%)	20%	58%	5%	3%	13%

● We have it  
 ● Train our people  
 ● Hire it in  
 ● Outsource  
 ● No plan

Topping the list of critical skills and competencies is **stakeholder management**. Given the critical nature of relationships repeatedly showing up in this year’s data, perhaps not surprising. Interestingly, respondents who selected stakeholder management as a highly important skill had a higher influence with leaders. Perhaps this reveals a correlation between what communicators value and the impact they have.

 **70%** of UK respondents rated stakeholder management as highly critical compared to;
   
 **42%** from the United States.

It’s also not surprising to see **change management** pop up as the second of the highly important skills, given all the talk around constant change. What is curious is how this reflects what we’ve started to hear about the blurring lines between change management, change communications, and business as usual (BAU) comms—all of which, in change management models, are different roles entirely.

Of the top five, the most likely skill to be outsourced is **leadership coaching**. **One in 5** of those who said it is a highly important skill suggested that they’d seek external support, while **half** said they’d train their existing team. In conversation, communicators told us that an external coach was sometimes useful for objectivity—as long as they were pre-vetted to support and align with what comms had already been sharing with leadership!

Coming in fourth: **message and tone personalization**. In previous years, we’ve seen employee disengagement rise alongside an increase in communication volume. Avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach becomes even more important for communicators when trying to cut through all that noise. This competency goes hand in hand with the unrequited desire for channels that offer segmentation and personalization capability, which we discussed in the channel satisfaction section.

Finally, the critical role of **data literacy** is reflected in the emphasis on measurement and leader relations throughout this year’s findings. If you can get measurement right, and speak the language of the C-suite, you’re on your way to success. What is worrying, however, is the **13%** that have no plan for securing this skill in 2025.

Considering the most impactful barriers for 2025, the skills prioritized here directly reflect the current need for comms to succeed in the business as a critical function.



**Survivors** prioritized stakeholder management and message personalization.



**Strivers** were more likely to rate business acumen as a critical competency.



**Thrivers** prioritized leadership coaching more than the average communicator.

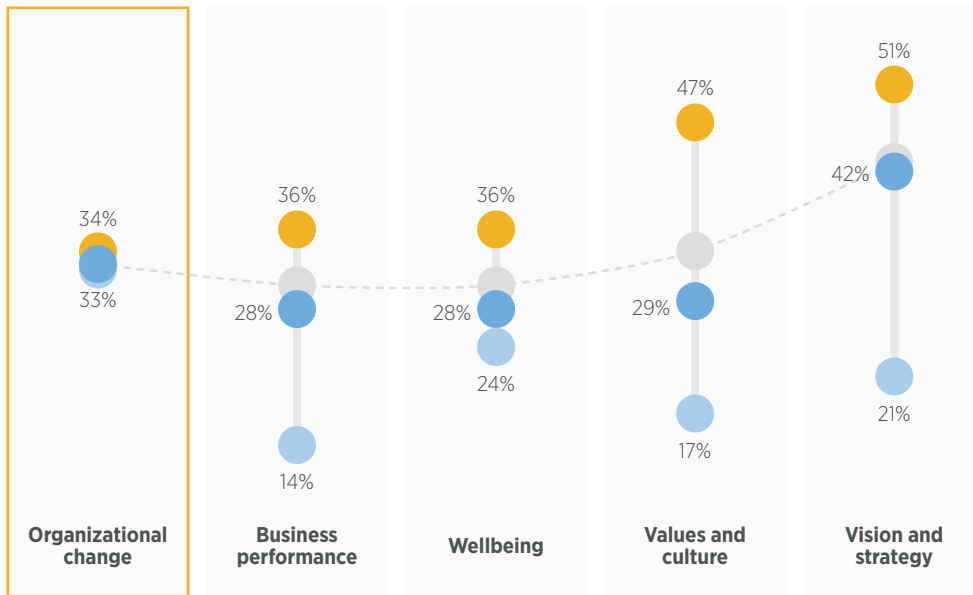


# Change

With major elections in the UK, US, and beyond, the continuation of armed conflicts across the globe, and economic pressures felt by businesses and individuals alike, 2024 saw a lot of uncertainty. For employees, this formed a backdrop for ongoing transformation at work.

“ The last four years has been full of change. If you really think about it in the global history of the world, there has been an unprecedented amount of change and for much of that, organizations just had to be reactive to the world. ”

While vision and strategy was the most-communicated topic, all communicators agreed consistently on the volume of change communications.



Survivors | Strivers | Thrivers | Overall average

% High volume topics, n=970

‘Organizational change, integration or M&A activity’ was one of the top three topics communicated about at a high volume; trending even higher (+14pts) for respondents whose communications function reported to Internal Communication as compared to Human Resources.

With a high volume of change communications, it’s perhaps no surprise that change fatigue—a new entry to the barrier list this year—was the second-most prevalent barrier to success for 2025, with 44% of respondents saying it would have a high impact.

## What do employees really need to know?

In conversation with communicators, we asked if they believed that the change fatigue they were experiencing in their organization was due to outside forces or the change activity within the business. Most agreed it was internal, with multiple change initiatives ongoing within their business.

“ Because we’re doing a ‘big’ change—all the small changes just feel out of proportion because of what else is going on. ”

This meant employees were often subjected to communications from multiple stakeholders, each insistent that their change was important enough for all-employee comms. They expressed frustration that “what employees need to know” was rarely considered in contrast with “what leaders felt they needed to tell them”. And often, change comms were not connected. One communicator cited two major changes going ‘live’ on the same day for the same group of impacted employees with no coordination.

“ It’s gone beyond fatigue. It’s change exhaustion; disconnection; denial. ”





## Change Management vs. Change Comms vs. Comms

Only **2%** of communicators have 'change' or 'transformation' in their job title, and yet the lines between communication, change communication, and change management seem to be blurring.

Many communicators told us they had change managers within their organization. Yet the presence of a specific change communications person or team was inconsistent. Communicators are being expected to communicate change activity alongside business-as-usual communications.

**56%** of respondents had personally reviewed a change communications plan in the past year; and this increased to **67%** for those who said they communicated 'Organizational change, integration or M&A activity' at high volume.

**18%** of respondents said their organization didn't have a change communications strategy, despite **95%** communicating about change activity in 2024.

**1 in 4** respondents knew a change comms plan existed but hadn't personally reviewed it.

Change management was the second-ranked highly important skill for 2025 with **1 in 3** of respondents saying they already had the skill in-house, and half saying they would train their existing team. Only **4%** were likely to outsource what is a distinct skill set (and often a formal qualification), separate from communications.

Communicators must continue to steel themselves against the ever-blurring lines between communications, change comms and change management. As organizations reshape in order to be future-fit, change will continue to be constant. This means communicating new strategies, new structures, navigating mergers, welcoming acquisitions and the continued focus on embedding new technologies across employee populations.

### **Top tips: Getting a handle on change**

While each organization is unique, our advice to all communicators when it comes to change is similar.

- **Purpose:** Be clear on your purpose as a function. This will help you determine what is within or outside of your responsibility when it comes to business-as-usual versus change communications.
- **Change management:** Educate yourself on basic change management principles to better understand the formal process that has likely been a precursor to the communications you are asked to deliver.
- **Employee-centricity:** Advocate for employees by helping change owners navigate the difference between what they want to say and what employees need to know.
- **Coordination:** Leverage stakeholder relationships to identify clashes in timing and be sure to alert them of employee sentiment. This will help prevent their messages from falling flat or overwhelming employees.
- **Leadership:** Encourage and enable leaders to be visible during times of change, support them in sharing their vision with employees, and ensure you are feeding back employee sentiment.



# Conclusion

## Where are communicators going, and what should they focus on in 2025?

Communicators enter organizations believing that hard work, dedication, and a willingness to help will lead to success. And while being helpful and indispensable may ensure you're needed, it doesn't necessarily mean you're valued—or positioned for growth.

Along with investigating how wellbeing has changed over the last year, we asked communicators to share where they were heading next in their career, and how they were self-developing in their craft. We collated advice from hundreds of communicators on what they'd tell their younger selves—providing a framework of personal priorities you can apply to your own career.

In this year's report, we found two key competencies that consistently correlate with successful communicators: first, the ability to collect, synthesize, and leverage data that connects to business impact, and second, the ability to build and maintain productive relationships across the organization.

With this and our report data in mind, we share your to-do list for 2025 to optimize your impact as a communicator.






# Wellbeing


## How are communicators doing?

Wellbeing saw a mild improvement this year, with a slight shift away from deteriorating to maintaining wellbeing across 2024.

Like last year, the data showed that freelancers had the highest level of wellbeing, followed by agency, then finally in-house communicators—but all rated their wellbeing slightly higher than the previous year on average.

Despite an increase in their overall wellbeing score, **16%** fewer freelancers said their wellbeing improved over the past year, compared to 2024. **One in 4** freelancers saw their wellbeing deteriorate in the past year, an increase of **6%** from 2024. They were the only group who reported an increase in deterioration. Perhaps due to the instability of securing freelance work against challenging economic headwinds?

 Brits were more likely to say their wellbeing had deteriorated in the past year (**38%** vs **29%**).

 In-house communicators in the United States had a slightly higher wellbeing score than those in the United Kingdom.

## What's affecting communicators' wellbeing?

We asked respondents what was contributing to the improvement or deterioration of their wellbeing.



### What contributes to deteriorating wellbeing?

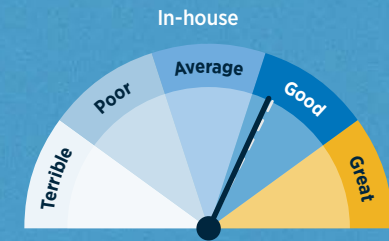
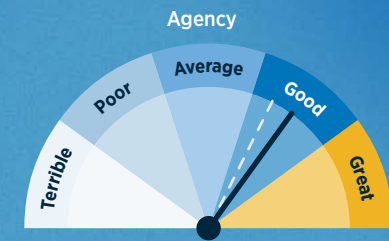
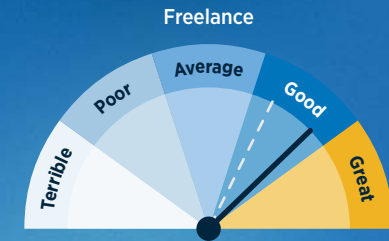
1. Lack of resources like headcount, budget or time to complete tasks (**39%**)
2. Change and uncertainty, including restructuring (**26%**)
3. Leaders: reporting into a poor manager or leader (**23%**)



### What contributes to improved wellbeing?

1. Better working conditions, more team members and managing workload effectively (**23%**)
2. Getting a new job or working situation (**21%**)
3. Having (or acquiring) a good leader or manager (**19%**)

## Wellbeing by comms role type



--- Overall average wellbeing across all respondents

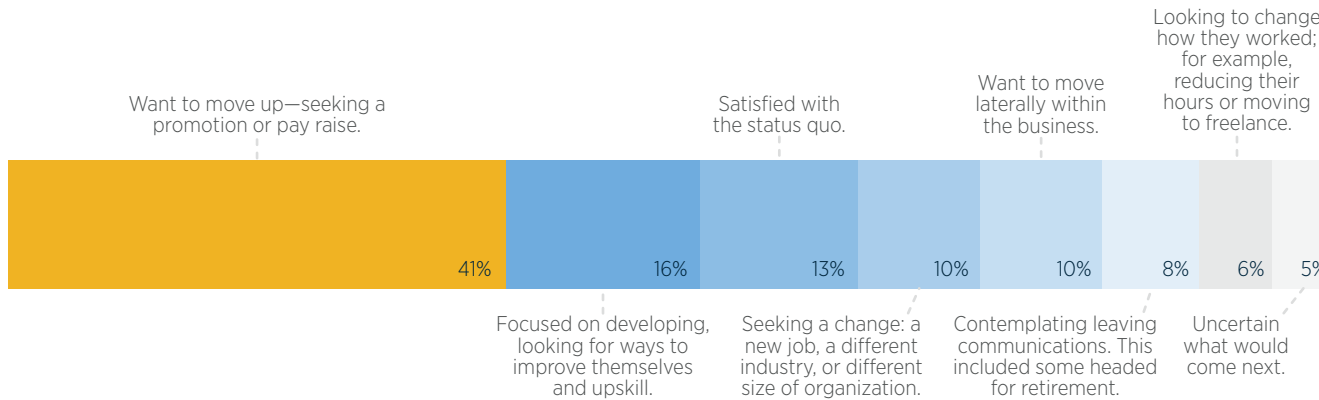
Communicators with collaborative C-suite relationships have better wellbeing than those whose relationships are transactional or obstructive.

**2x** as many Baby Boomer respondents reported improved wellbeing, compared to Gen X or Millennial communicators.



# What next for communicators?

## Where do in-house communicators see themselves heading in their career?



## How are communicators staying connected to their craft?

Communicators are a curious bunch—they value learning and growth and keeping up-to-date with industry trends and knowledge—but they often have to do this on a shoestring budget. We asked which activities they’d done to aid their growth and development in the past year.

Live webinars were the most popular method (**81%**), followed by formal learning experiences (**71%**), and pre-recorded online talks and presentations (**67%**).

**British communicators** were more likely to have participated in in-person networking events (+6pts) and to have listened to a podcast (+7pts).

**American communicators** were more likely to have undertaken formal learning (+6pts), read a business book (+7pts) and tuned into online talks and presentations (+13pts).

## Advice to younger selves

We asked communicators what advice they’d give to their younger selves. Their answers were diverse, but some key themes emerged. Comfortingly, only **2%** of communicators told their younger selves to avoid communications entirely!

### **Top tips: Advice for up-and-coming communicators**

#### **1. Be bold and own your own journey (34%)**

The most common advice for younger communicators was to believe in yourself and know your worth—your voice matters, so speak up and take initiative. Don’t let the fear of failure or the need for perfection hold you back; mistakes are just opportunities to learn.

#### **2. Stay curious to keep growing (25%)**

Cultivate a curious mindset—ask questions, seek inspiration, and never stop learning. Listen intently to others, keep up with trends, and explore ways to grow your expertise. Don’t be afraid to ask for help or feedback; every conversation and resource you engage with contributes to your development and strengthens your personal brand.

#### **3. Think strategically then act purposefully (16%)**

Ground your work in strategy by aligning with business goals, understanding your audience, and focusing on outcomes. Use data to guide your decisions, measure your impact, and adjust as needed.

#### **4. Embrace change and stay adaptable (14%)**

Change is inevitable but that’s where growth happens. Seek out the right leaders and opportunities, consider formal qualifications, and don’t hesitate to move on.

#### **5. Grow through connections (12%)**

Relationships are the foundation of success—invest time in building meaningful connections that will not only open doors, but also enrich your growth and perspective throughout your career.



# Key takeaways

## Communications success = hard data + soft skills

Throughout our analysis of this year’s research, two key areas consistently correlated with success. If there are two things you should focus on in 2025, they are:

### 1. Using data effectively

Proving the value of communications, creating business cases for more resources, supporting conversations with leadership, and honing communication tactics are all made possible through the collection, analysis, curation, and communication of data. Raw numbers alone are useless without the experience, intuition, and business acumen that allows you to provide meaningful insights and actionable advice to your organization.

**Be clear on the metrics that matter most to your business, and measure how you contribute and deliver against these.**

### 2. Fostering stakeholder relationships

While “big C” communications are all about enabling an organization’s employees through timely and relevant messages, “small c” communications are how you personally interact with leaders, stakeholders, peers, and your team day to day. People skills are arguably less tangible and more intuitive than ‘hard’ skills, but any investment in relationship building will pay dividends in progressing toward your purpose and performing against your success indicators—particularly when so many of those indicators are shared with other departments.

**“ You can have the conversations with leaders because you’ve built the networks, connections, trust, relationships—but always come armed with data to prove your point and create a layer of credibility. ”**

## Your 2025 to-do list

Discuss your purpose with your team, and ensure it’s approved by leadership. Use it as a decision-making framework for what you will and won’t work on.

Learn the basics of change management to aid in change communication.

Look into AI prompt engineering as a niche for comms to own.

Keep a timesheet to understand where your time is spent and to help justify investment in comms support.

Institute meeting hygiene: provide agendas, timely pre-reads, and sanction meeting-free periods to ensure your time in meetings is well spent.

Be visible to leaders and ensure you are working on their terms, using their language, and keep tabs on their visibility with employees.

Upskill in the non-technical side of data literacy: critical thinking, communication, business acumen and domain knowledge.

Find out what impact measures your C-suite cares about, and ensure your language and data are aligned when speaking to them about the impact of communications.



# Appendix

## Channel effectiveness compared to usage

Leader to employees	% Usage	% Effective	Opportunity
Email announcements (appear to come from leader)	84%	80%	
Leader blog to employees	17%	74%	
Leader podcast to employees	9%	64%	
Leader video to employees	48%	79%	
Leader email newsletter / regular announcement / column to employees	47%	77%	

Company to managers	% Usage	% Effective	Opportunity
Manager-specific virtual conferences / roadshows / town halls	44%	84%	
Manager-specific in-person conferences / roadshows / town halls	43%	85%	
Manager-only communication forum	50%	75%	

Manager to employees	% Usage	% Effective	Opportunity
Manager toolkits or resources for team meetings run by people managers (e.g., conversation guides)	59%	64%	

Company to employees	% Usage	% Effective	Opportunity
Email announcements	92%	78%	
E-newsletters	65%	75%	
All-employee virtual conferences / roadshows / town halls	68%	86%	
All-employee in-person conferences / roadshows / town halls	52%	87%	
Employee or staff forum / Work councils	36%	68%	
Text messages / WhatsApp / Viber	12%	75%	
Digital employee magazine	12%	74%	
Printed employee magazine / newsletter	10%	57%	
Letters / printed materials sent to employees' homes	12%	53%	

Employee to employees	% Usage	% Effective	Opportunity
Enterprise chat tools (Microsoft Teams, Slack, etc.)	75%	75%	
Enterprise social networks (e.g., Viva Engage)	34%	68%	
Informal get-togethers and social events (in-person or virtual)	63%	75%	
Knowledge-sharing / Lunch and learn / Brown bag sessions	49%	75%	
Employee Resource Groups / Topic-based committees	46%	67%	
Online peer-to-peer recognition platforms	38%	72%	
Ambassadors / Communications champions	26%	69%	
Social and engagement platforms (e.g., Workvivo, Unily, Haiilo, etc.)	16%	68%	

Employee self-service	% Usage	% Effective	Opportunity
Chatbots	10%	53%	
Employee communication app(s)	17%	70%	
Employee portal(s) (e.g., for benefits, wellbeing, learning and development)	71%	70%	
Extranet	4%	68%	
Intranet (informational - professional knowledge management)	72%	69%	
Intranet (editorial - repository of newsletters and stories)	67%	71%	
Social Media (e.g., LinkedIn posts that employees can re-share to their network)	61%	62%	



# Your people are your organization's greatest asset.

But daily hardships — like economic uncertainty, personal and family health concerns, and insufficient resources or staffing at work — can take a toll on your people and leave your business struggling with hindered productivity, heightened disengagement, and strained retention.

That's why every aspect of your benefits and compensation program needs to work in concert to promote overall employee wellbeing. Offering robust medical coverage and a competitive retirement plan isn't enough in today's hyper-competitive labor market.

As employees across all geographies, industries, and employer types navigate the ever-changing world, organizations must critically evaluate their people's experience in the workplace — finding unique ways to engage teams, establish authentic connections, and support employee wellbeing overall.

Doing so can help your business attract top talent, motivate employees, and shift the organizational culture so employees feel differently about their work. When organizations find ways to reduce burnout and increase productivity among their people, business performance can soar.

This is why your people are at the center of what we do. Gallagher offers a comprehensive approach for strategically investing in benefits, compensation, retirement, employee communication, and workplace culture so you can support your people's physical and emotional health, financial confidence, and career growth at the right cost structures.

From evaluating the demographics of your workforce to surveying and analyzing competitor trends, Gallagher offers you data-driven insights — allowing you to make the most of your investment in talent, deliver a better people experience, and reduce organizational risk.

Even in times of uncertainty, Gallagher's consultants are here to help you optimize your profitability with a strategy rooted in the wellbeing of your people — so you can face the future with confidence.

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