

PARK | COMMUNICATIONS
CONSULTANCY

Return to the Office Insights

Your most valuable asset

A few weeks ago, one of my clients gave a virtual presentation to his employees. Within the presentation he had a slide showing the number 130 created using the headshots of each of his 130 employees. It appeared in the middle of the slide for everyone to see. He said to them: “When clients appoint our company, they are appointing you. You are the company.”

The shared internal experiences and daily exposure to company values and behaviours reinforce corporate culture and identity. Over the past 12 months, companies have been dismantled and their most valuable asset distributed across the UK. As one respondent described it, “*it’s as if the arms, legs and head of an organism have been all over the place.*”

Introduction

On March 29, the Stay at Home order will end. Although the Government states that people ‘should continue to work from home where possible,’ businesses will start to encourage people back to the office. How this will be received and how employee expectations are managed alongside business requirements will determine whether the transition is successful.

This Return to the Office report provides insight into the challenges business leaders have faced in maintaining their corporate culture over the past 12 months, the impact the lockdown has made on their teams, and how they are preparing for a return to the office.

Insights include the channels through which senior leaders have communicated with their employees to keep them informed, motivated and engaged and how this communication has initiated and or influenced return-to-work strategies for businesses.

Method

These insights have been developed using a sample of 23 business leaders across the built environment. It is not to be regarded as representative of the sector, or wider business community.

Instead, this report offers an honest narrative about the past 12 months from those at the very top of their business. The aim is to share knowledge at a time of challenge and when the future landscape is relatively unknown. These leaders were chosen to take part due to previous conversations about lockdown and corporate culture and/or because of their commitment to engagement and the value they place on communications and communication strategy.

The business leaders who have contributed hold the titles:

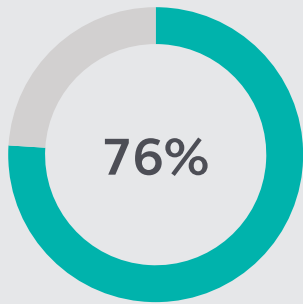
- > Board director / Company director
- > Chief Executive
- > Managing Director
- > Founder

The survey is anonymous as some information may be regarded as sensitive. The number of employees within the organisations that have contributed span 30 to 300 employees.

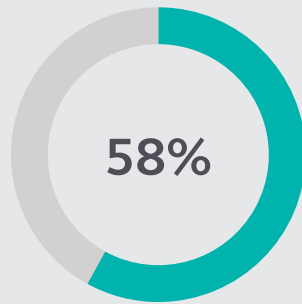
Qualification

Sarah Park, founder and director of Park Communications Consultancy carried out telephone interviews with business leaders to gather insights for the report. She is CIPR qualified in strategic communications, digital communications and is a qualified journalist. Her experience delivering internal and external insights surveys on behalf of clients is part of her expertise as a strategic communication consultant working across the built environment.

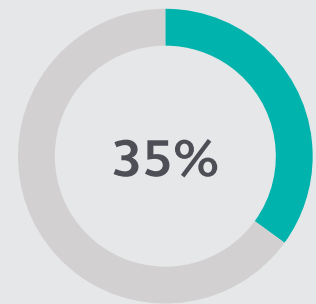
Overview of findings



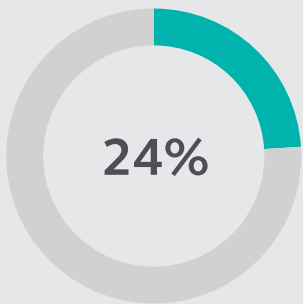
Of respondents reported they were more positive about the return to the workplace.



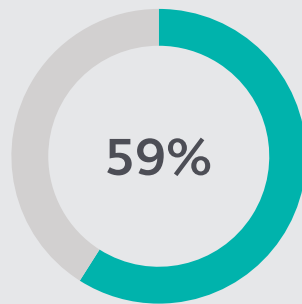
Believe their communications over the past 12 months has been consistent and effective.



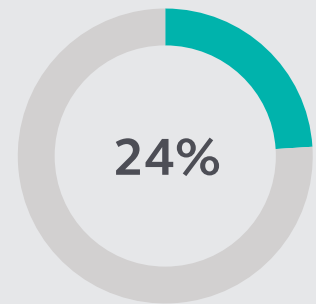
Say low motivation and morale has been the biggest challenge to culture.



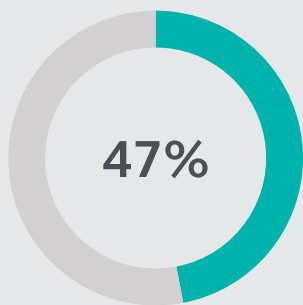
Are unsure of how communication has been received across their business.



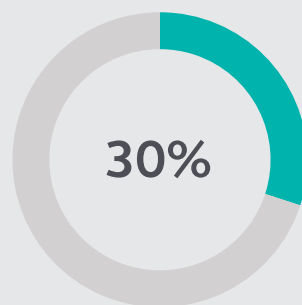
Reported an improved two-way dialogue overall but many said workload in lockdown three had caused communications to lessen.



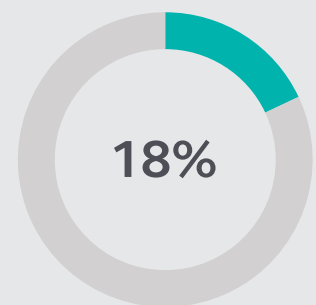
Have kept offices open for some or all of lockdown and all reported more confidence in getting the team 'back to the office' and the future culture of the team.



Of senior leaders are considering changing to flexible working patterns.



Are readdressing their culture, values and strategy as part of their plan for a return to the office.



Say communications could have been better over the past 12 months.

Asking the right questions

How would you describe your organisation's culture after 12 months of remote working?



"People have been stressed and some have clearly struggled with self-motivation."

Architecture practice

"Our offices have been open so we have a sense of normality in the office. But these lockdowns have made a massive impact on people. Shared experiences and social interaction are fundamentally important to mental wellbeing. The face-to-face communication is more important than people realise."

Construction company

"Diarising virtual coffee was really important to keep up team morale. Everyone's experience working remotely is massively different. That personal approach and interaction has been taken away and it has been hard for many people."

Real estate investment

"The younger people want to be in every day. We had people kicking the door down in January. There's a lot of things you can do at home, but people need to be together to be creative."

Architecture practice

"It is pretty good, but I do believe people are being effected by home working and the pressures they are under, we can see that. We have come to accept a different way of working, and there have been some positives, but it is impacting wellbeing and this is a concern."

Construction company

"60% of offices have been open for with a select few people in. The extraverts have really needed this. There are some struggling with lack of social interaction. The biggest challenge has been with management struggling with work and schooling."

Ground surveying company

"We've seen a lot more sharing on Yammer, people are being more creative in how they are engaging and using social media and have been more creative in sharing information internally and with residents. But the last lockdown has affected the younger members of staff detrimentally, especially those who are single as they can't see anyone. The office is part of their social environment."

Residential management

Analysis

- > Just over half of the organisations interviewed feel their team is positive and still engaged.
- > Employers have an authentic appreciation of the personal and individual struggles of employees and are aware this needs to be managed as part of a return to the office.
- > Employers are aware of the need to create social cohesion amongst employees as soon as possible.
- > Organisations who have requested employee feedback over the past 12 months have the advantage of knowing what the situation is now, with the 'collective group' therefore what they need to do to maintain or improve current sentiment.
- > Organisations who sense low motivation and morale should be looking to positively contribute to wellbeing through leadership and messaging.
- > Naturally communicative organisations have gravitated to increased creativity and innovation in communication to better manage the challenges of a disconnected workforce.
- > Organisations with younger teams have reported an increase in use in social media – this has been regarded as positive but also identified as a potential challenge for the future.
- > Employers have been given insight into the robustness of their organisation's corporate identity and how it works in times of challenge and change. Organisational behaviours and communication strategy during this time is an indication of how a company engages its (most important) stakeholders and seeks to create a positive impact.

Asking the right questions

What impact has the past 12 months made on the organisation's culture?

Positive Impact

18%

24%

18% Increased creativity and innovation in communication

24% Initiated a re-evaluation of culture, vision and values

"I don't feel it has changed and if anything we probably have more people speaking to each other across the offices who wouldn't normally do so, because they recognise the value of dialogue and interaction. People calling each other across the regions and having personal conversations. And while we have retained our culture it has also strengthened the camaraderie."

Project management consultancy

Biggest challenges

35%

23%

35% Perceived employee low morale and lack of motivation

Other 23% (mental health, recruitment, work winning)

"The internal challenge has been continuously reaching out and supporting everyone because they have all had very different needs. We've not been able to replace those incidental conversations or learning moments that you get when you swing around in your chair and speak to your colleague or overhear a conversation. But I think we have managed it quite well."

Architecture practice

"We have used this time to look at rebuild our culture and understanding what we want and who we are. We have spent a lot of time talking to people who we really like and who share our values."

Architecture practice

"The biggest challenge has been keeping people suitably communicated and motivated and feeling part of supportive teams. They have needed self-discipline and routine. If you're not careful there's suddenly a lack of distinction between 'you' time and working time and it is a very individual experience for people."

Project management consultancy

"We have an egalitarian, collaborative and open spirit but no real processes in place. Remote working has made us realise the infrastructure for knowledge share is not there; we have an Intranet but not fully blown. Teams has stepped in well but it has been difficult to share information between teams and across the company."

Architecture practice

"We have communicated far more and this has changed us too much to go back. People have found it easy to reach each other and talking to 300 people at once has been far more doable. This has given us the chance to now do something quite good for the business in terms of how we engage."

Construction company

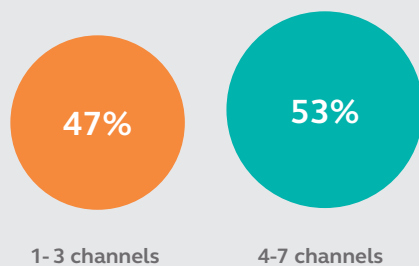
Analysis

- > Employers have been able to take a step back over the past 12 months and observe the strength of relationships and engagement between senior teams and employees, and between employees themselves.
- > This insight has encouraged organisations to re-evaluate corporate and cultural values and behaviours and develop new ideas for their business and communication strategies.
- > 18% of organisations immediately recognised the challenges that a separated workforce presents to business continuity and used innovation and creativity to maintain communication channels.
- > The success of this has encouraged them to build on the changes in internal communication and engagement for the future.
- > The organisations with a high portion of younger employees have been more adept at turning to digital and social tools to create connections and innovate how they communicate.
- > This has led to an increased positivity and socialisation amongst employees.
- > However, the use of social media has also raised concerns about the number of independent WhatsApp groups across businesses and how to manage these when 'back in the office'.
- > Those groups who are weary and are experiencing a lack of motivation will need strong leadership and positive and honest messaging that supports them in a return to the workplace.
- > Organisations have recognised the potential impact of the past 12 months on mental health and are putting new support structures in place to support employees longer term.

Asking the right questions

How have you maintained communication and engagement across the business?

The percentage of organisations who have implemented:



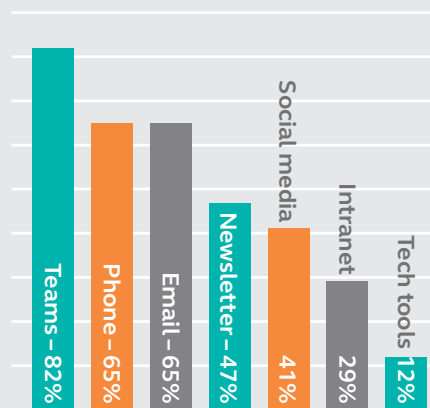
"[As a management team] we discussed those who didn't attend meetings on a regular basis, some were on furlough for six to eight months, so we made our calls and checked they were OK. Zoom is not for everybody so we also spent a lot of time on the phone."

Ground surveying consultancy

"A lot of the employees have started WhatsApp groups."

Engineering consultancy

The most popular channels:



"We communicate within our project teams but there's a lack of communication between the teams. We haven't done any newsletters; we tried some social media, but it hasn't been great. The office has been open and I have been in every week in some capacity so have a lot of one to ones, but our communication has not been done corporately. Something every couple of weeks would have been better."

Architecture practice

"We have updated all staff at least once a month, at the beginning of lockdown it was every two weeks. We provide an update on financial resilience of the company, new services we are offering to the market, how clients were behaving, any trends we were noticing. We covered as much as we could to reassure staff. Any time there was a government announcement we would issue a note to all staff in a regular formal email update. KIT has been our best friend – internally and externally."

Project management consultancy

"The MD and Chair hold a monthly live Q&A session – any questions can be asked and we provide a business update. We have a weekly round-up newsletter which lists our project wins, initiatives, spotlights employees, highlights competitions etc. Each studio holds a weekly regional staff meeting where we share news, projects and any regional challenges or opportunities."

Architecture practice

"It has been far busier in lockdown three and we're more used to it so people have been left more to their own devices and our practice-wide communication has tapered off. We probably need to do more."

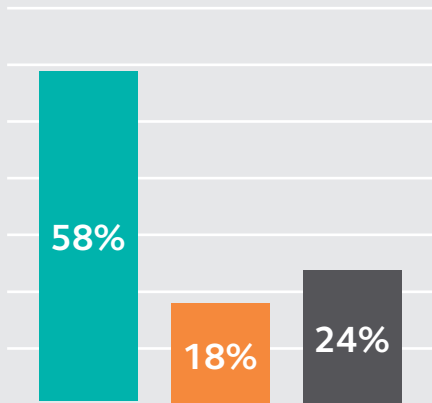
Architecture practice

Analysis

- > Teams has 'stepped' in and replaced face-to-face communication with such success that it could be regarded as a catalyst for the lockdown one debate - 'the death of the office.'
- > However, while it has proved invaluable in a transactional capacity, the references to incidentals, socialisation, collaboration and creativity reveal many believe it does not replicate the valuable experience of the office.
- > The 65% of phone and email contact relates to the senior teams that have implemented regular 'keep in touch' phone-calls and emails to employees and used it as a main channel of communication.
- > A lack of corporate communications within some architecture practices means there has been a reliance on individual project leaders to engage and communicate with their teams. This has led to inconsistency in communications across the practice as it depends on the communication style of the project lead.
- > WhatsApp as a communication channel has been met positively by employers who encourage cross-company communication. While employers do not want to monitor or control these groups there is concern about potential mis-messaging if it remains a long-term channel.
- > Many employees have had greater and more direct access to their MDs and senior boards than ever before. Employers need to consider how this is managed when back in the office, a return to the status quo or continued access to the senior team?

Asking the right questions

How effective do you think the communication has been?



58% It has been effective

18% We could have done better

24% It feels OK, but we don't really know

"[The outreach has been] generally good but I cannot gauge 'how good' without some sort of measure."

Construction company

"We shifted our fortnightly newsletter to weekly and encouraged employees to send in their own pictures of where they were working and what they were doing. We had some great responses. That helped keep people positive."

Construction company

"[Our communication] has been much more considered, nuanced and more sophisticated. It has been genuine and authentic. It isn't 'I just have 10 calls to make.' It has been something more substantive. I don't doubt the feedback will instigate change."

Engineering company

"I don't manage the information gathering. The Intranet is interactive, and it subtly encourages people to make an effort. But there has been mixed feedback. Some people contribute, more people don't. It is a concern. I would rather people be back in the office though there will be some adjustment to the way we work."

Construction and infrastructure consultants

"Outreach has been quite good, although difficult to say. Our company has a tremendous output of communication although it's hard to know if people really listen/take in/ appreciate the effort. I am not aware of complaining or dissatisfaction with communications so perhaps it's doing the job for those most interested."

Engineering consultancy

"We've been getting constant feedback on our communications, either we've asked for direct responses through email, one line text messages or dropping it into conversations. It has been critical to their peace of mind, as reassurance and keeping them confident. People before profit. That message is consistent."

Project management consultancy

"It has been good. People have fed back they felt we were doing everything we could. I've had departmental meetings and people have said they are happy there is a lot of correspondence and they appreciate that we've had to deal with pay cuts and furlough."

Ground surveying consultancy

Analysis

- > The higher number of communication channels does not mean more effective communication if employers do not know if information has been received and understood.
- > The organisations who have a 'listening culture' where feedback is part of the corporate communication process have proactively sought employee insight over the past 12 months.
- > The senior leaders who are involved in corporate communications were more knowledgeable about the status of the company culture and more confident about, either:
 - > A positive return to the workplace, or
 - > Developing a plan to achieve the culture they want.
- > The MDs of organisations with fewer employees were able to rely on phoning them as an effective channel to provide information and receive feedback.
- > However, the size of the organisation does not impact an organisation's ability implement effective two-way communication. Larger organisations can use mass communication channels, such as regular newsletters, with opportunities for feedback and the monitoring and analysis of responses.
- > Those acting on intuition rather than insight will not have the same opportunity address specific concerns and develop a plan that is responsive to requirements.

Asking the right questions

How has two-way dialogue fared?



59%

“It has definitely improved. There is more frequency and it has been relevant and tangible. People don’t have three layers of management to get to me, they can pick up the phone. I don’t think you can overdo these things at the beginning. We phoned every single member of staff in the first few weeks.”

Project management consultancy



29%

“I have called individual members of the team and some days I had to make 15 calls and have the same conversations and explain things time and again. We haven’t been perfect. There has been one negative situation where I sent something over email and it wasn’t great. I should have called them. In hindsight I would have done it differently.”

Ground surveying consultancy



12%

“It depends on the strength of team. If there is a strong collaborative project team, there is a strong structure. If not, there is less of that natural engagement. Those people will feel more isolated.”

Architecture practice

“Most methods are ‘information out’ and are one way, my breakfasts are two-way, but I get little direct feedback and few questions. This is something to do with the culture (I have inherited) and will change over time.”

Construction company

“We’ve done more outreach now than ever before. People have been able to feedback at our Q&A sessions. We’ve done four surveys with employees during lockdown. The senior team is always available on Teams and been more visible to more people.”

Architecture practice

“It has worsened over the past 12 months and this will make an impact on return. The level of underlying uncertainty has been individualised, so each person has their own different view of it and although we’ll come back into a more regular pattern, people will be coming from multivarious positions.”

Project management consultancy

“We have learnt from COVID how important it is to ensure these channels of communications are open.”

Real estate investment

59% Improved

29% Worsened

12% Stayed the same / unsure

Analysis

- > Employees within a ‘listening culture’ are more likely to feel as though they play an active role within the business.
- > Two-way dialogue does not mean one-way channels of corporate information are redundant – and it is not expected that every corporate communication makes a request for feedback.
- > Surveys have taken into account the opinions, judgements and feelings of employees within the context of the current environment.
- > Senior leaders are using this internal research to shape future plans regarding values, culture and strategy.
- > Where possible and appropriate, employers need to act on responses (it is not possible to act on everything) so the request for active engagement is not viewed as an empty gesture.
- > Employers should share details of where employees have helped shape the business so they can see where and how they make a difference.
- > Respondents have admitted that as workloads increase, communication and engagement has decreased with employees left to ‘their own devices.’

Asking the right questions

Are employees still aware of business priorities?



59% Yes



41% Don't know

"The message is a little lost at the minute; when you're WFH, you definitely don't benefit from the conversation at the coffee machine, project wins, what we're bidding for, who is busy. That is certainly lost."

Engineering consultancy

"We have learnt from other organisations the mistakes that we shouldn't make, like keeping people in the dark. Our employees know all about when we're opening offices before anyone else. We're well ahead of the game about business strategy."

Project management consultancy

"I think they know, but equally we should be more explicit about this. Updates about the business shouldn't be by Osmosis. It needs to be done so there is synergy and consistency in messaging."

Architecture practice

"They wanted to know more about our parent company and what they were doing. They wanted to know the bigger picture."

Residential management

"It has been difficult to convey our business plan to staff due to uncertainty during the pandemic. Management of costs and debt collection have been priorities."

Project management consultancy

"Business strategies and change are not going to come solely from the top. It'll come from the bottom when employees ask for better working conditions and practices are forced to change their strategies."

Architecture practice

"They [employees] probably need to be refreshed. The business plans need to be updated but we have fallen behind."

Construction and infrastructure consultants

"We created videos explaining what we were doing as a business and we did a lot of them. It was very stop start at first and people didn't know what was going to happen in our industry. The senior team was also calling their different departments as much as they could to inform them of what we were doing."

Construction company

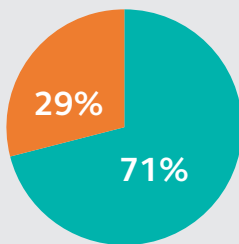
Analysis

- > Organisations who surveyed their employees were surprised to find they wanted to know more about 'general' business priorities and direction, outside of the current situation.
- > Just over half of organisations say they are reinforcing a shared ambition and a positive vision for the future through regular updates around business strategy, finances and direction.
- > Those who need to update their teams are inadvertently keeping their external audiences uninformed as conversations are shared between employees and clients.
- > The pandemic has forced / encouraged organisations to re-visit their business and corporate strategies to make changes that more reflect the organisation after a year of significant change.
- > Respondents who were themselves unsure of what the immediate future looked like were reluctant to raise the issue with employees and intend to when they know more.
- > However, people will fill vacuums with whatever information they hear from the grapevine when the 'expected' information is not available.

Asking the right questions

What is the employee feedback on a return to the office, and what does a return to the office look like to you as an employer?

Employee feedback

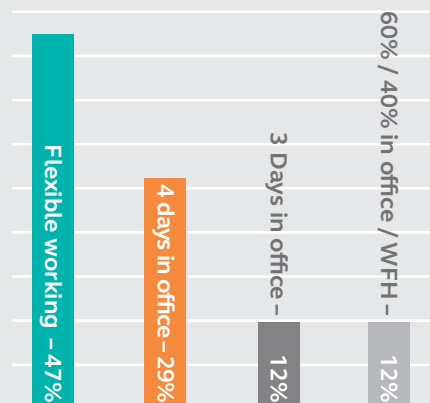


71% Enthusiastic
29% Mixed response
(24% Office has been open)

“Generally, we are back at work and only a very few appear reticent to return. This is mainly support staff.”
Construction and infrastructure company.

“With the exception of a handful of individuals – 10% tops – that have reasons for being concerned about coming back to work, whether it be for shielding relatives or underlying health conditions, most people seem to want to return.”
Project management consultancy.

Employer feedback



“Most people are wanting to come back, but some individuals feel quite negative about it and don’t want to be in the workplace.”
Residential management

“We were able to remain open and we have done. People have said that it has given them some normality coming into work.”
Construction company

“In summer employees were saying, ‘I won’t come in until public transport is safe.’ I’ve had a lot more conversations about, ‘when can I come in now?’”
Architecture practice

“Some are desperate to come back but no one will come back five days a week. I don’t want them to.”
Ground surveying consultancy.

“Some do wish to return although others feel they are managing perfectly well WFH!”
Engineering consultancy

“We have different feedback from different offices. In London 100% are working from home. In our regional offices more people want to come back. Perhaps it is a regional v city thing. The regional guys are maybe less worried about travel.”
Engineering consultancy

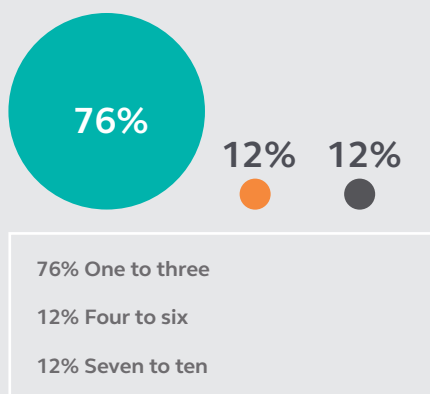
Analysis

- > Employers have seen the benefits of reducing commuting time and people spending time out of the office to think. However, initial plans confirm that employers are still keen to make the workplace central to business.
- > For individual organisations, the impact of changed work patterns on productivity, client engagement, workplace culture and employee equality under long-term ‘business-as-usual’ conditions is yet unknown.
- > Organisations will need to develop plans with integrated teams of communications and marketing, HR, legal and IT to ensure a robust and fair plan that works for the business internally and externally.
- > For those organisations who feel home working is not viable, clear messages need to be articulated to employees who feel they have worked well from home over the past 12 months.
- > Clients’ needs should be taken into consideration as part of the process through insight gathering and research on what the future looks like for them, and what they may need from your business.
- > It will be essential that organisations make their expectations clear about what new working practices and structures look like for the future.

Asking the right questions

How concerned are you about your employees' return to the office and what are your biggest concerns?

1 least concerned
10 most concerned



"I think we'll all have to learn new skills and fight some ingrained assumptions. My main concern is how individuals stay connected with each other. We've all been working within the same parameters, from a level playing field. We will need to make sure we have good working practices embedded, e.g., including others in conversations and decisions when they might not be sat next to us so everyone feels included and not isolated."

Architecture practice

"We need to be able to manage teams in a manner that protects the team and the business and makes sure employees don't all go off at once."

Construction company

"Our business is based around collaboration between staff members, engineers and technicians and other different teams. You can manage it up to a point working from home but there are large elements that don't work."

Engineering company

"When they get back into the swing of things, they will be a home worker or an 'in-office' person. As we have stayed open you can already see the split. That will need to be managed."

Construction company

"How we manage the flexibility. There will be those who are happy to come in for most of the time, but there are murmurs from a few who want to be at home. It is how this gets managed fairly and also in regard to business."

Architecture practice

"The problem is we're a face-to-face company and work in a collaborative industry."

Architecture practice

"Mental health is a worry. We won't see it until people start to come back. My biggest challenge for the management team is motivation. The team is exhausted."

Ground surveying consultancy

"The biggest concern is a lack of cohesion, people not wanting to be there; resentment because everyone's had a different experience and everyone has been working outside the structure of a 9-5 job."

Architecture practice

"When the first lockdown lifted, we opened offices and kept them open because staff appreciated being able to drop in when they needed to. We don't have that massive a job to do when they return."

Engineering consultancy

"You lose money by people wandering off in the long grass."

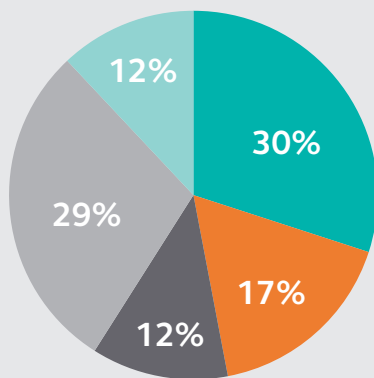
Architecture practice

Analysis

- > A strong majority of senior leaders feel positive about employees returning to the workplace.
- > No respondents have insisted a return to the office is a return to pre-pandemic structures and practices.
- > There is an acceptance that changes have taken place and the appropriate changes to working practices will need to be made.
- > However, challenges raised are around managing expectations regarding employee working patterns and flexible working.
- > Employers are concerned about a disconnect between what an imagined flexible working environment may look like, and what is best for business.
- > There are concerns around a disconnect between employees themselves due to the different and very individual experiences people have had.
- > It has been acknowledged that the WFH structures have been predominantly successful, and this may create a divided workforce between those who want to continue WFH and those who want to be in the office, and how to manage this.
- > Direct and transparent corporate communications articulating the plan for a return to work and an opportunity for dialogue is key in creating a message that is consistent and understood.

Asking the right questions

What plans do you have to re-establish a cohesive company culture and prepare for employees returning to work?



- 30% Improved communication
- 17% Mental health support
- 12% Planned away days
- 29% Re-shaping values and strategies
- 12% Hotdesking / changing office interiors

“This has been a great opportunity for innovation and communication. Both should continue more strongly than before. We will look to break down the silo working that is across the business and to introduce inter-site visits.”

Construction company

“We have a collaborative spirit but a lack of infrastructure and this time has given us the space to see that. Putting more infrastructure in place and a knowledge platform is the key for us. A source of discontent has been not sharing information because one knows where anything is.”

Architecture practice

“We are changing working practices, especially how we do our financial monitoring. We’ve been holding virtual meetings about being more commercial. We’re going to continue those.”

Architecture practice

“We’ll be more relaxed about business attire and open to more flexible working. We’re changing the office and adding hot desks that people can book as well as the office hours, people don’t necessarily have to work 9-5 but choose other core hours. This will be for central service rather than site teams.”

Residential management

“As long as you produce work to the standards we expect, we don’t mind how you work. The office environment will change; it will be less about workstations, a lot more meeting space and social space is how the office will work.”

Property management consultancy

“We had plans to change the way we communicate with our teams before COVID and this was for the employees to have more face-to-face time with the senior team. We believe being in the office reinforces collaboration. Especially when over 50% of our employees are on site so have to come in every day.”

Construction company

“One of the initiatives we have instigated during lockdown is members of staff have received training for dealing with mental health issues in the workplace. We have set up a mental health policy ambassadors and we will prioritise this coming out of lockdown.”

Project management consultancy

“This has forced us to focus on our five-year delivery plans and what that now looks like. There has been a coalescence of loose ideas into something that has more of a structured narrative.”

Engineering consultancy

Analysis

- > 12% made specific references to away days to bring regional offices and employees together, but most respondents referenced some form of social night out for employees as a first response.
- > The past 12 months have encouraged a more communicative culture for many and organisations are proactively developing ways to continue this longer-term.
- > Senior leaders have responded to the past 12 months in a way that is authentic to their business values, behaviours and beliefs; some want to build on this and implement more, for others it has inspired change.
- > There was enthusiasm for change; there was no indication of respondents ticking boxes.
- > Conversations around mental health came from the top; senior leaders want to do more to support their employees; this will become integral to the culture of organisations in the future.

What can we take from this?

- > There has been an unprecedented breaking down of barriers between home and office and employers have been more exposed to the lives of their employees than ever before.
- > This may have considerable impact on the employer – employee relationship, especially in the short term, as the challenges of employees' personal lives become more recognised within the workplace.
- > Whether this re-shaping of relationships will contribute to changes in organisational cultures and structures remains to be seen but it has created a foundation for more open communication.
- > Social media and next gen propensity for agile working practices is already shaping internal cultures and communications. The past 12 months may have accelerated changes that were inevitable.
- > The value of consistent, corporate communications and its impact has been further recognised by employers. Lack of communication has been driven by a focus on external and/or financial concerns and/or being unsure of what to communicate.
- > Employers are confident about a return to the office but are concerned by a potential disconnect between those who want to come in and those who may not. Government announcements and progress of vaccinations will play a key role.
- > It will not be possible to undo improved communications. The internal communication strategy needs to adapt to accommodate new channels in a way that supports the business.
- > Individual WhatsApp groups have the potential to place employees and social media at the heart of an organisation's internal communications. Organisations need to ensure this is a benefit rather than a challenge.
- > Mental health is receiving greater focus than it did pre-pandemic and has become a more important issue for business leaders and the workplace. This will surely develop as part of the conversation around employee wellbeing.

Planning communication for the future

Employees are an organisation's most valuable asset but only one group amongst many that are critical to the successful operation of a business. How organisations communicate with all their stakeholder groups and how they are viewed in response, are key to their success.

Investors, clients, supply-chain and partners across the built-environment will be implementing their own changes, adapting strategies and re-shaping values and this will generate opportunities for businesses to build new relationships and strengthen existing ones. Now is the time for organisations to develop robust communication strategies for all their stakeholders, assert their position in the market and tell their best stories in a way that is meaningful to others.

Successful Communications

About Sarah Park

I am a communications specialist operating at board and senior level to help clients develop positive corporate behaviours and communication strategies.

I launched Park Communications Consultancy to offer clients a partnership model of public relations and communications advisory working with them as consultant, advocate and as a committed member of their team on a project or retained basis.

I work with clients to:

- > Turn the great work of their business into compelling stories to share across the most effective channels
- > Develop engagement programmes that align with their business values and maintain their corporate social responsibilities
- > Carry out Insight surveys to gather honest feedback on their business practices and behaviours from the people who mean the most to them, so they are informed about what they can do to be better
- > Support business strategy and objectives where improved communications can make a difference to engagement, perception and reputation, internally and externally

As an agile consultancy, I am supported by a network of smart people who provide digital, design and copywriting services and who I call upon when appropriate. I also work with my clients' internal marketing teams developing communication strategy while they implement the day to day running of campaigns.

Park Communications Consultancy is based in London.

Contact

To discuss any information within the insights report, how to implement corporate communications and robust communication strategies, or for support conducting internal and external insight surveys, contact me on:

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