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# Boosting the Connection Between Collaboration and Employee Experience

*Behavioral insights from collaboration apps can guide productivity, engagement, and well-being improvements*



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*Behavioral insights from collaboration apps can guide  
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## Executive Summary

As organizations are now faced with the challenge of enabling both remote and in-office workforces, a renewed focus on employee experience has emerged. Optimizing employee-experience strategies to deliver a seamless workplace dynamic is imperative for an organization's success. After all, there is little wonder around leading enterprises seeing the value of using insights gleaned from their collaboration environments to drive measurable improvements in employee experience. Optimizing employee experience for today's dual workplace requires company leaders to:

- Complement traditional HR insight tools, such as pulse polls and periodic surveys, with behavioral data from collaboration applications.
- Provide employees with individualized action plans gleaned from their use of collaboration tools to guide improvements in productivity, engagement, and well being.
- Aggregate insight data from collaboration tools to provide team leaders, managers, company leaders, and peer champions the ability to pinpoint and encourage positive behaviors among employees.
- Rely on IT to vet HR tools and technology and guide strategic thinking on how best to use collaboration insights to advance employee experience.
- Leverage enterprise collaboration monitoring tools to manage digital sprawl and overall platform use, with a focus on improving employee experience.

## Work-from-Home and Hybrid Work Challenges

The initial shock of the pandemic-spurred global office shutdown has long since passed, but many companies still find themselves coping with challenges associated with the work-from-home scenario. The challenges affect employees, managers, and an organization's overall well being. A global research study from Metrigy delves into how companies are supporting remote, in-office, and hybrid collaboration. In *Unified Communications Management and Endpoints (UCME): 2021-22*, 35.2% of the nearly 400 participating companies reported that managing remote employees remains a prominent issue, and 33.1% see a lost sense of community and culture as a top challenge (Figure 1). Productivity continues to take a hit for 25.4% of companies, with contributing factors including inadequate performance of home Wi-Fi; poor Internet connectivity; a lack of cameras, headsets, and other accessories for the all-digital workstyle; and unsuitable workspaces.

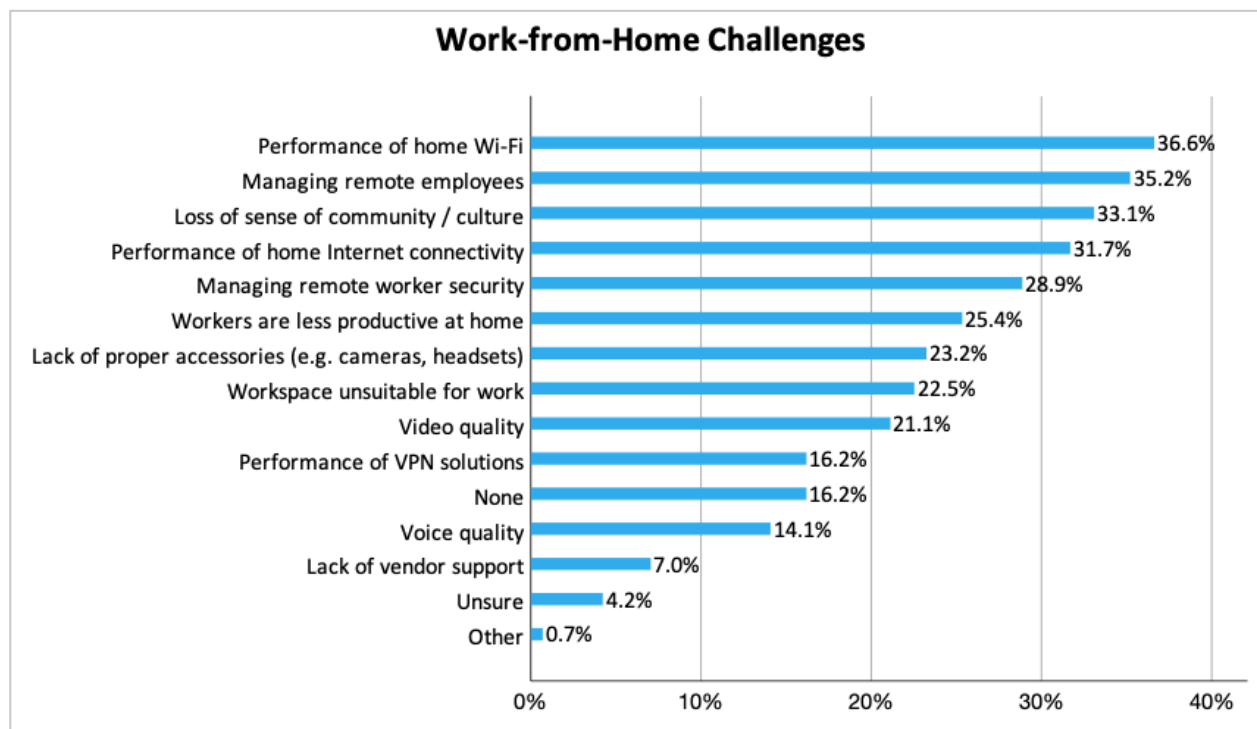


Figure 1: Work-from-Home Challenges (UCME: 2021-22)

Digital sprawl can be a culprit as well, leading to time wasted jumping from one app to the next in search of the right team notes or project resources. Lastly, as companies normalize a remote and in-office work combination, video burnout remains a real concern. In the Metrigy study, 43.8% of companies cited video fatigue as one of their top challenges.

These issues aren't trivial. Companies have spent much of the past two years trying to figure out how to achieve a balance between remote and in-office workplaces while fostering connectivity among employees, maintaining desired productivity levels, fortifying their corporate cultures, and ensuring employee well being. The imperative is clear: Do this well and thrive. Fail at this

and you could lose competitive advantage, see revenue shrink, and watch costs grow as employees burn out and leave for companies better able to meet their new workplace ideal.

Today's cloudy economic outlook ups the ante. It's more important now than ever for companies to preemptively manage workplace issues before they cost them additional time and money.

## Focus on Employee Experience

With the mandate to optimize hybrid work comes renewed focus on building a positive employee experience. Metrigy's *Employee Experience and Workplace Engagement (EX/WE): 2022-23* global research study found that more than half (52.3%) of 250 participating companies have revised their employee experience strategies to address changing workplace dynamics, while 26.6% having launched new programs to do so. Technology adoption—in the form of employee experience applications, tools, and platforms—is essential to employee experience optimization programs, Metrigy found. Virtually all companies in our study are either already using, planning to adopt, or evaluating employee-experience technology (Figure 2).

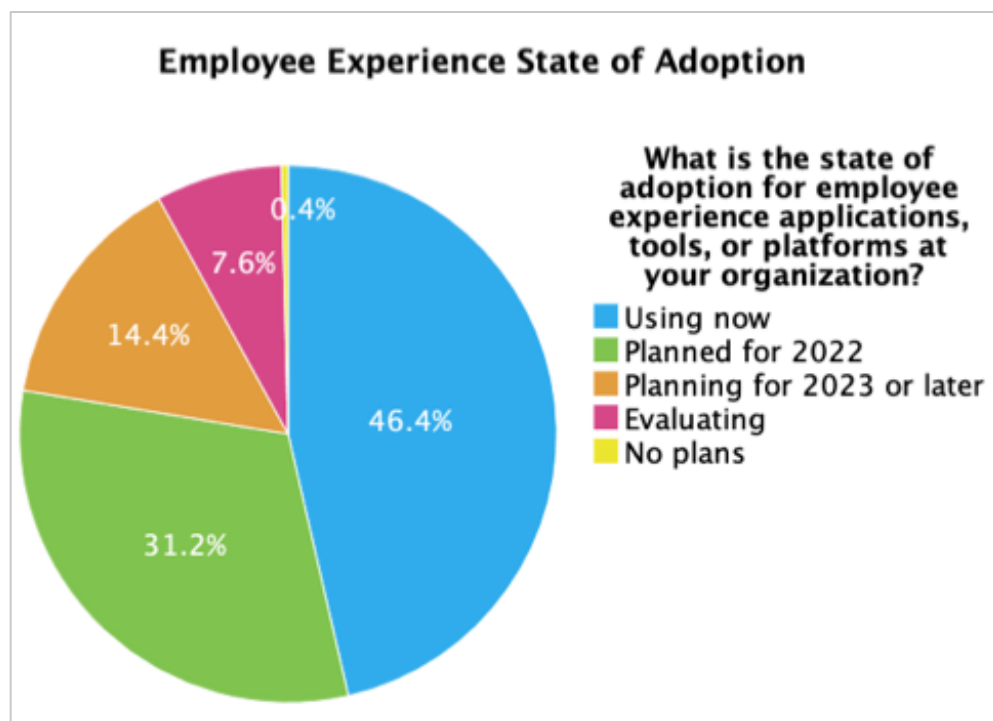


Figure 2: Employee Experience State of Adoption (EX/WE: 2022-23)

When considering employee experience technology and forging optimization plans, companies should keep in mind five primary elements. At a minimum, employee experience strategy and technology should enable companies to:

- Measure employee engagement and provide actionable insight.
- Encourage engagement among employees, including outside the bounds of traditional team and project structures and across all layers of a company.
- Keep employees informed about company activities, strategy, and other matters.
- Manage content and knowledge for employee access as needed.
- Enable collaborative goal setting so all employees are fully vested in the company's development.

These elements coordinate with strategic goals around employee experience, such as addressing big challenges including loss of community and reduced productivity. Fostering connectivity among employees is a top employee experience goal, with 93.3% of companies in the Metrigy study seeing this as vitally important or nice to have. Similarly, facilitating the ability to build communities of interest at all employee levels and outside departments is vitally important or nice to have for 92.3% of companies. And, more than 90% consider the same for measuring employees' use of communications and collaboration or productivity applications to guide improved productivity.

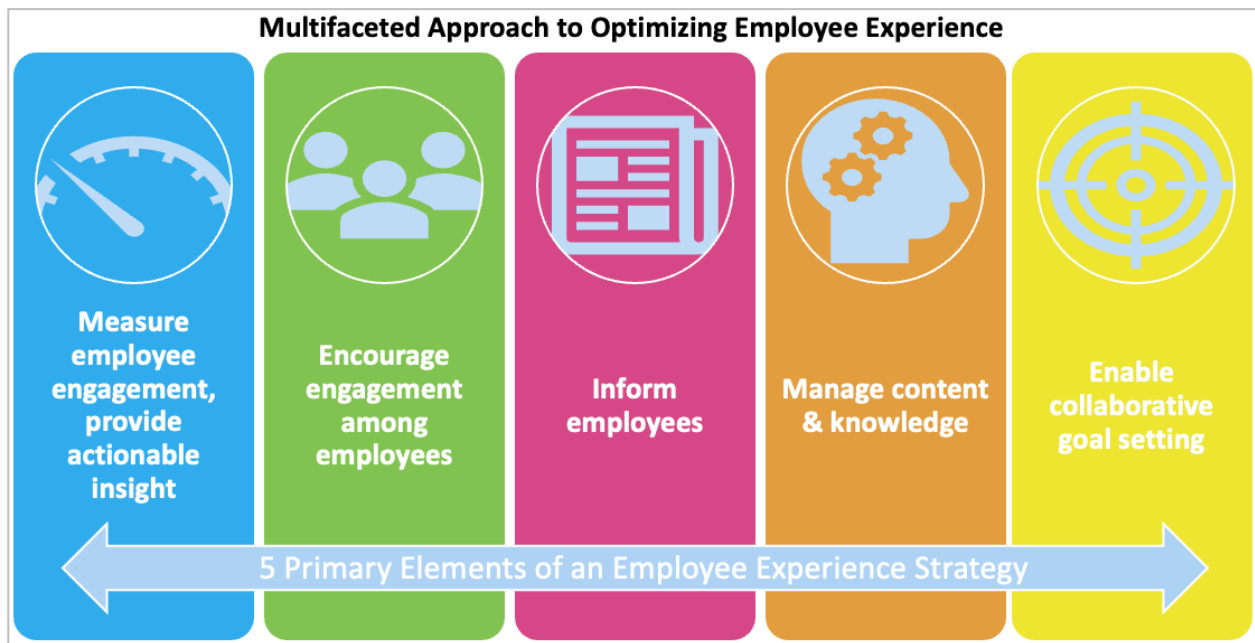


Figure 3: Multifaceted Approach to Optimizing Employee Experience (EX/WE: 2022-23)

## The Collaboration Connection

Companies have long recognized the value of communications and collaboration applications in delivering on core employee-experience goals. Back in the day, instant messaging provided a way for peers to get quick answers regarding tasks at hand, helping to improve productivity.

Likewise, chat apps empowered employees to keep in touch and build camaraderie throughout the day, enabling engagement and instilling a sense of community and culture. Today, chat within team collaboration apps, which also can serve as central repositories for content and project resources, support these goals. Video meetings bring people together for collaborative work, although overuse is a challenge.

While they already had been increasing in popularity prior to the pandemic, the mass move to remote work propelled collaboration applications into mainstays for most companies. Team chats are used by 81.7% of companies in the Metrigy study, and video meetings by 87.7%. When considered for employee-experience optimization, the use of collaboration apps improves productivity, enables employee engagement, and facilitates collaboration (Figure 4).

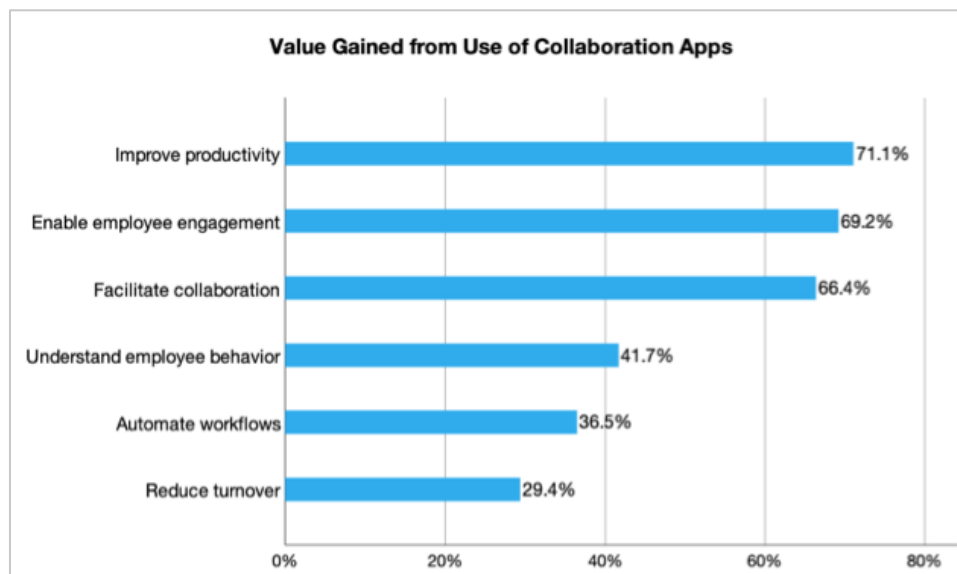


Figure 4: Value Gained from Use of Collaboration Apps (EX/WE: 2022-23)

Likewise, most IT and business leaders recognize that collaboration equipment is highly important for delivering good employee experience. Conference room devices—such as webcams and other video meeting equipment for in-office use—are also considered important for 72.2% of companies, in addition to personal video devices, headsets, or earbuds that improve voice and video quality for employees working from home. Half of the participating companies see desktop video devices as important in delivering a positive employee experience, and just shy of that number say the same of professional-grade headsets.

### *Collaboration App Insights*

Over the last two years, especially as they look to assuage video burnout and address loss of productivity, companies have started focusing on another value of collaboration applications: the ability to understand employee behavior. Based on data culled from collaboration applications, companies can learn whether employees' overuse of meetings prohibits them from

being able to dedicate enough time to heads-down productive work. Conversely, being able to assess behavioral patterns can help a company discover that employees aren't meeting enough, and as a result are potentially missing out on collaborative workstreams that will move projects forward or fuel innovation.

More than 65% of companies in the Metrigy study say they are already applying collaboration behavior insights, with another 24.6% planning to do so this year or next. Most companies already receive or plan to receive data from their team collaboration (58.3%) and video meeting apps (52.2%). Nearly 42% of all companies see high value in understanding employee behavior, as seen in Figure 4 on the previous page. The percentage is even higher, at 55.2%, for the most successful companies, as determined by four success factors: revenue growth, operational cost reduction, increase in employee satisfaction, and improvement in retention.

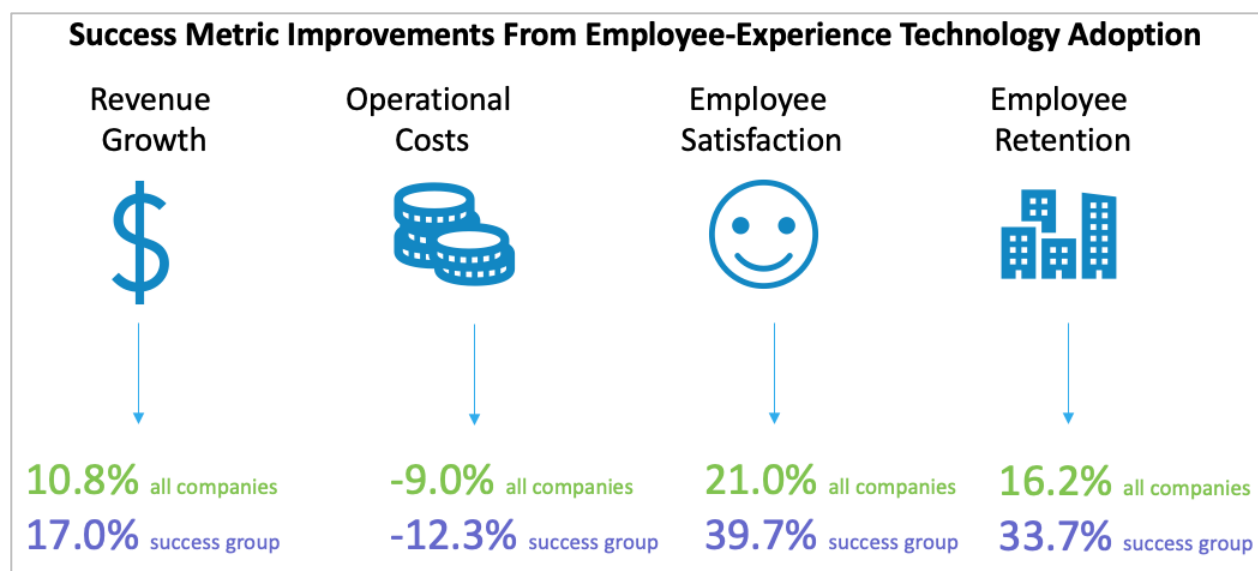


Figure 5: Success Metric Improvements From Employee-Experience Technology Adoption (EX/WE 2022-23)

Usage data from collaboration gear is proving an important source of insights as well, with 40.8% of all companies and 96.5% of the success group already using it to assess meeting trends and determine impact on factors such as engagement, productivity, and well being. With usage data from collaboration equipment such as conference room devices, companies can learn the average number of attendees per meeting, total meeting attendees, number of meetings per hour and per day, average and total meeting duration, meeting trends over time, and more.

Depending on the tools in use, companies can make this behavioral insight and guidance available at an employee level, or they can pool the data for use in aggregate for team, departmental, and organizational decision makers. Most companies do both (Figure 6).

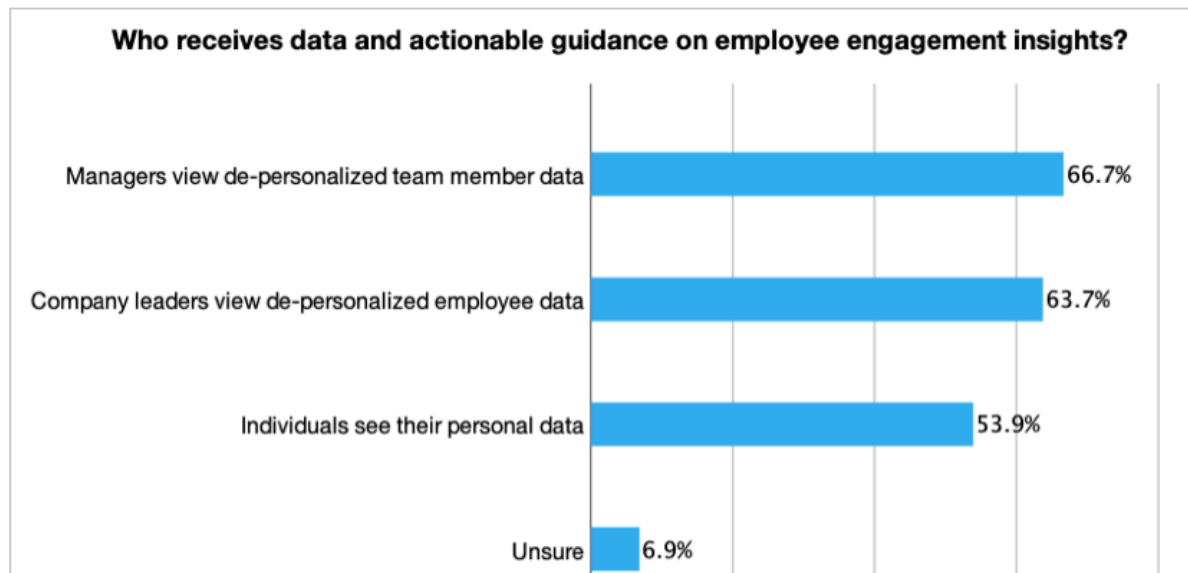


Figure 6: Who receives data and actionable guidance on employee engagement insights? (EX/WE: 2022-23)

### Complementing HR Tools

With behavioral insights gathered from the collaboration environment, companies can extend visibility into employee experience beyond the view gained from traditional HR tools, such as in-the-moment pulse polls or periodic surveys. Whether gleaning insights using traditional HR tools or collaboration apps, the goals are the same: assessing engagement levels, measuring productivity, determining employee well being, and providing guided action recommendations for improvement. However, the value propositions vary:

- **Pulse polls** – HR gains an understanding of employee sentiment, typically on a particular topic or issue, in the moment.
- **Periodic engagement surveys** – HR conducts these surveys at set intervals, such as quarterly or annually, to assess how engaged employees are over time.
- **Personalized insights from collaboration apps** – These, particularly when coupled with guided action recommendations, can empower employees to self-improve on factors such as engagement, productivity, time spent in meetings, and well being.
- **Aggregated behavioral insights** – Team leaders, managers, and other leaders can learn how employees collaborate throughout the day, pinpointing positive behaviors they can then encourage among all employees. Companies that have a champions program can drive change from the bottom up using these insights.

Given the prevalence of collaboration platforms used in the new workplace paradigm, and the availability of behavioral insights from the applications themselves as well as from collaboration management and monitoring tools as a new data source, it's incumbent upon business and HR leaders to bring IT into their conversations on optimizing employee experience. IT not only should vet technology features and capabilities of traditional HR-oriented employee-experience tools and platforms, but also guide the thinking and purchasing decisions around the use of data

from collaboration applications and collaboration management and monitoring tools, as well as productivity apps and other digital activities. Already, 47.1% of companies in Metrigy's study see IT's role as such.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

As companies face the challenge of supporting remote and in-office workforces, optimizing employee-experience strategies around the dual-workplace model is crucial. This cultural shift has led many companies to renew focus on the apps that employees use throughout the day for communicating and collaborating. Reducing friction around the use of these apps can lead to improved productivity, better engagement, and increased well-being. Indeed, as Metrigy found in its employee-experience research, collaboration effectiveness is an oft-used measure of the effectiveness of employee-experience initiatives, noted by 46.2% of companies.

More than that, companies must recognize the value of behavioral insights available from within the collaboration ecosystem. To optimize employee experience for today's remote and in-office workplace, company leaders must:

- Complement traditional HR insight tools, such as pulse polls and periodic surveys, with behavioral data from collaboration applications.
- Provide employees with individualized action plans gleaned from their use of collaboration tools to guide improvements in productivity, engagement, and well being.
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ABOUT METRIGY: Metrigy is an innovative research firm focusing on the rapidly changing areas of Unified Communications & Collaboration (UCC), digital workplace, digital transformation, and Customer Experience (CX)/contact center/CRM—along with several related technologies. Metrigy delivers strategic guidance and informative content, backed by primary research metrics and analysis, for technology providers and enterprise organizations.