

# Bridging the Communication Gap:

Enhancing trust, connection  
and business results



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# Employee communication: the secret sauce

For more than a year, our research and insights at Reward Gateway | Edenred have reinforced one truth: Communication is a business imperative. And this is true not just in stable times, but also – and perhaps more importantly – during change.

In our [Appreciation Index](#) report, we highlighted its powerful impact: **Employees show a 43% increase in effectiveness when they feel appreciated.** Interestingly, our most recent findings reveal that **80% of employees**

**feel more appreciated when they receive the type of communication they want.**

Great communication can amplify every level of employee needs – from physical safety through a sense of belonging to self-actualization – making it a cornerstone of both engagement and performance. Our [Economic Value Study](#) further validated that both desk-based and frontline employees need strong communication to fully engage with their benefits and connect with their organizations.

## Communication is central in the hierarchy of employee needs



But clear and consistent communication isn't just about employee satisfaction – it also has a measurable impact on business outcomes. According to Grammarly's State of Business Communication report, **workplace miscommunication costs U.S. businesses \$1.2 trillion annually.** On the other hand, **effective communication is linked to a 64% boost in productivity**, a 51% rise in customer satisfaction and a 49% improvement in employee confidence.

# The power of trust

Transparent communication builds trust – and trust drives performance. Our research shows that **80% of employees trust their organization more when they feel that communication is transparent.** That number rises to 84% among managers and 89% for technology roles.<sup>1</sup>



**Trust isn't intangible** – it has real performance outcomes. Research from the [American Psychological Association](#) found that, among 32 NCAA teams, the one with the highest pre-season trust in their coach reached #1 nationally. The team with the least trust won just 10% of their games.

Employees also vote with their feet when it comes to trust: **30% say a lack of clear, honest communication would make them leave a job.**<sup>2</sup>

## So how do we build our capacity for strong and effective employee communication?

With this report, we've taken the guesswork out of employee communication by sharing highlights from our recent survey of 3,000 employees (either full- or part-time and living in the U.S.), combined with an overview of current industry insight on engaging your teams. Read on to find out how to improve workplace culture and motivate employees through excellent communications strategies, tools, content and platforms.

<sup>1</sup>RGER, 2025

<sup>2</sup>RGER, 2025

# Connecting employees with the company

Employees want to hear from their employer, preferably through in-person company meetings (52%), about topics that matter. The top five areas for insight?

- 1 Training and development opportunities
- 2 Policy changes or new procedures
- 3 Recognition of employee achievements
- 4 Changes to benefits or compensation
- 5 Company updates or announcements

Employees say they want in-person meetings and only 15% say they want virtual company meetings, but getting together may not be possible in many companies. In those cases, getting creative to bridge this gap is essential to retain connection with employees. One of

our clients would regularly post a blog to their site a week before a company town hall asking for desired topics and their CEO found this a valuable way to feel connected to the front lines. Another provides time for live Q&A so connection feels more genuine. Finally, SNHU posts video messages from the CEO to make connection feel more direct.

Topics of interest vary slightly among age groups and industries. Younger employees are especially interested in financial performance and company growth information. **Nearly 1 in 5 respondents said regular updates on strategy would increase their sense of connection**, and this jumps to 1 in 4 for 18-24 year-olds. This feeling is even stronger in the manufacturing (26%), public sector (26%) and real estate (28%) industries.



This broad range of communication needs can quickly overwhelm your comms teams, especially if they have to source it from multiple departments. And many factors can make frequent, in-person company-wide meetings unfeasible. Indeed, Gallagher found the top barrier to successful communication was lack of time and capacity<sup>3</sup>.

This is where employee engagement tools can effectively answer communication needs – and even enhance connections with employees.



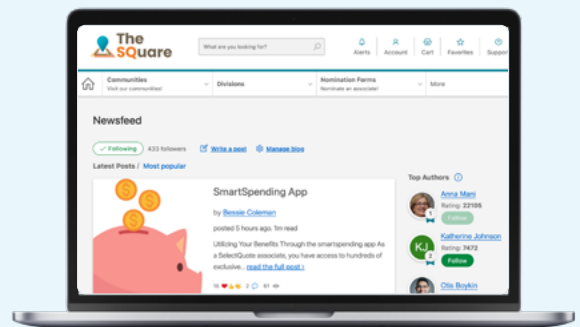
**Top Tip:** To get leaders more engaged with your communication efforts, ask leaders which topics they care about most. When they share what matters to them, the personal touch will help employees feel connected to leaders and the company as a whole.



## SelectQuote communicates all week

A direct-to-consumer distribution platform for insurance and healthcare, SelectQuote has responded to their associates' broad range of communication needs by empowering each department to create its own communications and distributes the information throughout the week:

- **Motivational Monday** for mission messages
- **Talent Tuesday** by talent acquisition
- **Wellness Wednesday** by the benefits team
- **Transformation Thursday** by talent management
- **Fun Friday** for company-wide announcements



*“We call this platform the SQuare, where you can get information in a structured, predictable and accessible way,” says Hiliary Miller, Culture and Wellness Program Manager at SelectQuote. “People can choose what to engage with and how often.”*

# Connecting employees with leaders

Having a manager who cares is a key employee value proposition that consistently tops the list of employee needs in our research. In fact, 46% say a great relationship with their manager is more important than a 10% pay raise. But **only 51% of employees feel listened to by their managers**. This number is highest in employees 18-25 (58%) and in Retail (55%) and Technology (63%), and lowest in employees 45-64 (47%) and in Education (45%), Healthcare (46%) and Hospitality/Tourism (47%). Unsurprisingly, feeling listened to falls to 42% for offline and deskless employees.

## What's the best way to ensure managers are listening?

When it comes to connecting with their managers, employees overwhelmingly favor in-person one-on-one meetings (48%), a trend consistent across generations. Ironically, C-level leaders are the least likely to prefer in-person meetings, but should be encouraged to lean into this format for the sake of their employees.

Email and team meetings follow closely in terms of communications preferences, while instant messaging is popular among younger workers and specific industries, such as media and entertainment.

**What kinds of information do employees need from their managers?** Our survey revealed the top three communication priority areas:

- 1 Performance feedback
- 2 Recognition of achievements
- 3 Training opportunities

Working with managers to include these topics in one-on-one agendas and providing training to more consistently and clearly explain goals and expectations is crucial. Connecting employees with the goals and interests of their leaders, while helping them understand their opportunities and roles in the mission, is a powerful outcome of excellent communication tuned to employee needs.

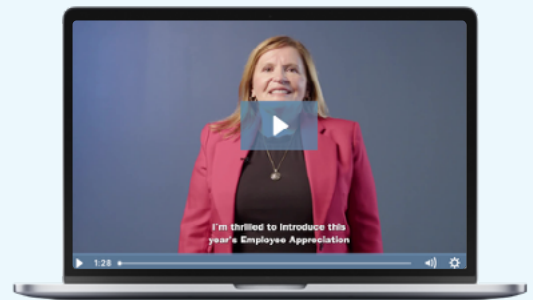


**Top Tip:** Include a recognition moment in every team meeting to reinforce recent successes. Recognition boosts energy and engagement for the rest of the meeting and makes it more likely all your messages will be heard.

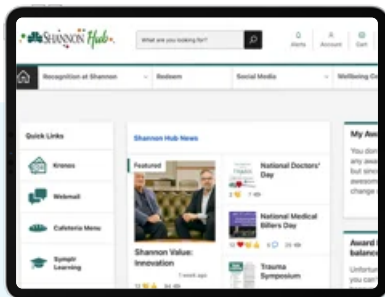


## A video tells a thousand words at Southern New Hampshire University

Human brains process visuals 60,000x faster than they do text.<sup>4</sup> Which is why organizations like Southern New Hampshire University drive leader visibility with multimedia efforts, such as launching their Employee Appreciation Week with a video from the president to improve workplace culture and motivate employees.



[Read the Full Story](#)



## Shannon Medical Center recognizes achievement

Sharing feedback and recognition is important for leaders at all levels. And getting these messages out is easier when leaders have formal tools like Shannon Medical Center’s Shannon Hub. Built on the Reward Gateway | Edenred Employee Experience Platform, the hub enables direct recognition, not only between employees, but also through a blog that regularly highlights above-and-beyond employee achievements.

*“Shannon Hub is empowering our workforce and breaking down barriers between staff and managers,” said their HR Director. “People can see that all of us, in every role, are united and working toward the same goal.”*

[Read the Full Story](#)



## Empowering peer-to-peer comms at Superior Plus Propane

Superior Plus Propane’s “Fueling Connections” blog gives employees and leaders alike a platform to share training opportunities, regional news, celebrations, shout-outs and company updates. The scheduled posts and town halls have given leadership the visibility needed to increase trust, connection and team spirit in times of change.

*“We’re seeing a steady stream of employees sharing updates and praise,” says Communications Manager Jennifer Wasilisin. “Our Reward Gateway | Edenred Platform has helped us create this space where people feel empowered to communicate, and we’re proud to see that engagement grow.”*

[Read the Full Story](#)

# Boosting productivity with AI: opportunity and risk

AI has become an everyday workplace tool supporting many efforts, from research to content creation to strategy. But its use often remains controversial and unregulated. While 28% of communicators use AI for drafting messages, only 5-10% disclose when they use it, and only 36% of companies have guidance on AI use.<sup>5</sup> While quality is improving, risks remain high, including:



**Bias:** A study out of Stanford University found that essays written by non-native speakers were more likely to be flagged as AI generated.



**Errors:** A KPMG report found that 60% of employees admitted to AI-generated mistakes.<sup>6</sup>



**Oversharing:** The same report revealed that 46% uploaded sensitive data and IP to public AI platforms.

Still, 67% say AI boosts their productivity. Adjusting an email for flow, for example, or creating a first draft for revision and fact-checking are both great uses of AI. Another excellent use case is Unmind's AI coach that offers real-time personalized wellbeing support to employees. **To benefit from AI while minimizing or eliminating risk, data breaches and embarrassing errors, clear usage guidelines are essential.**



**Top Tip:** Start the conversation. Even if no policy exists, regular team discussions help share AI experiences and identify risky behaviors before they become problems.



<sup>5</sup>Gallagher, 2025

<sup>6</sup>HRDIVE, 2025

# Five ways to increase your reach

When you make communications the cornerstone of your employee experience strategy, you'll improve employee engagement and see a boost in productivity and business results across the board. Follow these five tips for creating a great communication foundation.

## 1 Use your time wisely

Time is a precious resource. Yet **52% of communications professionals spend time on tasks that are not tied to core goals.**<sup>7</sup> Shift your time and energy away from mundane tactical work by repurposing existing content, using a wider group of authors and responsibly using AI when appropriate. Then you can invest the time you saved into more strategic impact, such as reaching underserved employee groups, building relationships, joining higher-level meetings and supporting new audiences and topics.

## 2 Make use of one-on-one meetings

Your messages will be better received if employees are also hearing them from their direct leader. Regularly share key topics to be reinforced in one-on-ones or with your leadership group. Remind managers that 80% of employees trust their company more when communication is transparent, and that trust is key to performance. One-on-one meetings, regular updates and active listening matter.

## 3 Build managers' communication skills

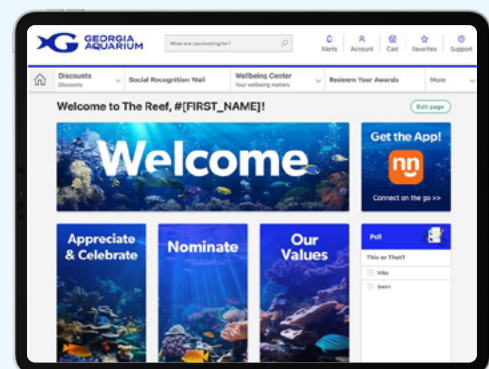
**At 40%, better communication skills top the list of what employees want to see from their leaders – ahead of flexibility, time management and empathy.** Millennials (45%) and healthcare employees (48%) feel even more strongly about the importance of communication skills. What existing or new training can help managers improve their ability to listen to employee needs and share corporate messages?

## 4 Make communication data-driven

Track clicks, opens and engagement reach on communication channels, alongside strategy awareness, to continuously improve. A client once told us their communication wasn't even worth trying to improve. But after a few years of following metrics, listening to employees and reminding leaders of communication's critical role, their survey scores for communication rose and employees saw and felt the difference.

## 5 Save time with HR tech

**Technology's main role is to free up staff capacity for strategic work – 79% of HR leaders agree.**<sup>8</sup> Effective internal communications tools can save on administrators' time, allow for easy sharing of work, track your efforts more effectively and feel like another full-time employee. A flexible platform lets you make it your own.



The Reef at Georgia Aquarium combines recognition, benefits, discounts and news in one place – saving time and boosting engagement by bringing multiple systems together.

<sup>7</sup>Gallagher, 2025

<sup>8</sup>Gartner, 2024

# Communication: the heart of engagement

Communication is no longer a support function – it's a strategic lever for trust, performance, retention and workplace culture. Improving communication is often at the top of the list of employees survey results, but making real change can feel unattainable. However, taking small steps like making town halls more conversational, adding recognition moments to the start of regular team check-ins, or adjusting the topics you cover to better support the team can culminate to real improvements over time. As change continues and expectations rise, now is the time to fully embed communication excellence across every level of your organization.



## About Reward Gateway | Edenred

Reward Gateway | Edenred helps companies engage, motivate and retain people – every day, all over the world.

Our unified employee engagement hub provides the best of recognition, reward, wellbeing, surveys, benefits and discounts that support talent acquisition, retention and values-driven growth.

Get in touch with us to learn more about Reward Gateway | Edenred solutions.

[Schedule a Demo](#)