

**Putting people  
first in digital  
transformation**



# Technology's impact on employee engagement

The transition to remote working and prospect of widespread blended working has put HR leaders in the driving seat of digital transformation like never before. Not only does the right technology facilitate productivity and keep businesses operational wherever their workforce is based, it has become essential to maintaining morale and unlocking the flexibility that much of the workforce is craving.

However, research from Ricoh Europe has shown that a poor tech experience could be eroding employee engagement and a sense of company culture. We spoke with 632 workers at organisations with 250-999 employees, and the results uncovered three key insights into a workforce that's still finding its feet amidst new ways of working.

Above all, it was clear that employee expectations have changed – what they want from their employer now and in the coming months and years as they develop their careers has shifted. And when organisations fail to deliver, many are starting to consider a move elsewhere.

With an uncertain year ahead, the quality of the workforce and its ability to work well could make or break businesses. The lot, therefore, falls to HR leaders to address these issues now, if they're to keep their best people on board, attract new talent, and remain competitive.



# 1. Impact on company culture



Our research found **31%** of employees find it difficult to feel motivated and engaged in their work due to technology and communications challenges.



What's more, **30%** have felt pressured by their employer to be online more frequently, while working remotely.

Issues such as these undoubtedly place a strain on company culture, and if not addressed, can cause employees to become disengaged with their work and the wider organisation. It's perhaps no surprise then that



**42%** of employees believe their company culture has suffered during the coronavirus restrictions.

This poses a problem for HR leaders as a breakdown in company culture, or the support structures that employees relied on before the pandemic, can seriously impact employee happiness and productivity.

But, while technology can often be perceived as a hindrance to company culture, diluting the face-to-face interactions that can shape employee experience, when used correctly, it can be a vehicle for improvement – even driving company culture to the next level.

It's essential that HR leaders equip their teams with the right tools to maintain a strong sense of culture and allow people to connect with their colleagues when they're not working side-by-side. This starts with identifying existing pinch points and choosing solutions that allow people to be managed effectively and positioned for future success, while increasing productivity and staff morale. Solutions can range from communication technologies that allow people to speak and work on projects in real-time wherever they are, to HR management systems that enable employees to report on relevant metrics such as engagement and employee satisfaction.

These tools play a vital role in keeping the workforce engaged and trust between management and employees high. Moreover, making it easier to connect will empower senior managers to see how their people are performing and increase access to support for those feeling stressed or lacking motivation.



## Communicating culture through safe working

For some employees, the ability to work from the office and alongside colleagues will remain an essential part of their day-to-day and where they experience the benefits of company culture most keenly. To ensure that people feel confident to come back to the workplace as part of a blended working approach, HR leaders must create an environment that puts safety first. From mobile-based desk booking systems, to temperature scanners and smart lockers, creating a space that adheres to safety guidance and allows people to work in a low-risk setting will ensure employees feel safe and valued by the company, and comfortable returning to the office – whether full or part time.

Customer focus:



**B&M Retail,  
UK**

B&M Retail is a discount retailer in the UK. The company's growth strategy was held back by its manual HR onboarding process, which was time consuming and failing to meet audit and compliance requirements. Ricoh helped B&M Retail to digitise the process by deploying DocuWare and several other products, which enabled the company to complete forms online and quickly export them to existing HR systems for instantaneous review and approval. Shifting from paper forms to a blended paper and electronic solution has expedited the onboarding process and increased information tracking and security, allowing B&M Retail to put renewed focus on its plans for commercial growth.



## 2. Flexibility – one size does not fit all

Evolving ways of working throughout the pandemic has put flexibility irrevocably on the table. Employees want to work in a way that best suits them and their needs. For some, this will mean working remotely on a permanent basis.



**57%** reported feeling less stressed while working at home due to external factors such as avoiding the commute.

Others, however, are desperate to return to the office, with



**31%** feeling more stressed by remote working due to issues such as family responsibilities and other personal pressures.

For other workers, a blend of office and remote-based working may be their preference.

The working world of 2021 and beyond cannot take a 'one size fits all' approach – flexibility must be at the core of the way people do their jobs. And it's an issue that must be addressed now, or companies risk facing losing their best people. In fact,



one in four (**24%**) employees are considering a job move because they believe their company will not provide enough flexibility, post lockdown.

It's clear that approaches to work must become more personalised and that relies on HR leaders to give their people the tools they need to do their jobs from anywhere. For example, they should be able to access key information on the cloud, no matter where they are, or use automated processes that help reduce time spent on administrative tasks. This will naturally free up more time for employees to deal with external pressures such as family responsibilities or their commute.

If employees are empowered to work more easily, from anywhere, they're much more likely to have a satisfactory work / life balance and feel fulfilled in their roles. Not only does this boost productivity but it prioritises employee happiness and helps to retain the best performing talent too.



## 3. Attracting the best talent



The pandemic has not dented employee ambition. Indeed, **66%** are optimistic about the opportunities technology can bring to their career and work.



And almost three quarters (**73%**) feel they have the skills they need to work remotely from anywhere and continue to develop their career.

Employees have planted their flag. They are comfortable in a digitally led world and are eager to thrive within it. But that requires working in a way that suits them. For all its disruption, the pandemic has demonstrated that a different way of working is entirely possible. And now employees are looking to their organisations to support them in this, helping them to work easily and develop their careers against this new backdrop.

### Career development for the blended workforce

For HR leaders, general career training and development may have taken something of a backseat in 2020 while the business world responded to unforeseen disruption. Instead, re-skilling and remote work training, maintaining employee wellbeing, creating a safe work environment, and managing furlough and redundancy schemes became top priorities.

However, as businesses look to shake off these challenges and lay the foundations for future growth, HR teams are once again turning an eye to career development – 54% of people feel their company has set out a clear training plan amidst new ways of working.

The success of delivering training programmes and initiatives across a blended workforce relies on having the right technology to ensure that learning opportunities are seamless, consistent, and relevant for those in the office and at home. With employee expectations around this clear, a robust and tech-backed training experience could play a significant role in attracting new talent.



It's up to HR leaders to put the technology in place that facilitates this and delivers the experience that people expect. That means adopting the communications and cloud-based tools that allow people to perform to the best of their ability, no matter where they are. It also gives them the support and space to progress their career and personal development on their terms.

It's something the employees will increasingly demand from prospective employees. Prioritising the technology approach now, will ultimately play a significant role in helping companies to keep pace with the competition and win over the best talent.

## A make-or-break role

*"More than ever, HR leaders have the power to truly shape an organisation's direction and play a make-or-break role in its success. Seizing this opportunity requires an in-depth understanding of what the workforce wants, and the technologies people need to flourish in the digital age."*

**Caroline Bright, SVP Marketing, Ricoh Europe**

Employees must have the solutions to work flexibly, engage with colleagues and the wider business, continue developing their skillset and strike a good work / life balance.

Empowering a workforce in this way sends a clear message about a business and shows both existing and prospective employees that it has understood the importance of digital transformation in addressing the needs of its people.

Delivering on this will require close collaboration across the business, between HR leaders, IT leads, facilities teams, and the C-suite. And it's a job that must be done now. Embracing it and equipping people to thrive in the age of blended working is essential to keeping up with the competition, attracting and retaining the very best talent and encouraging a high quality and productive output from employees.

# About Ricoh

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services that enable people to work smarter.

Whether in the office or working remotely, we can help businesses of any size deliver and manage a consistent end-to-end experience that can be easily scaled to support business growth across multiple locations.

With secure, stable, scalable, and simple solutions that seamlessly integrate into existing IT infrastructures, we help build resilience to future disruption by accelerating digital transformation and helping organisations get closer to their customers.

We work closely with business leaders to understand their organisation and empower employees to connect and collaborate with each other whether in the office or working remotely.

With over 80 years' experience developing the technology that shapes how people work, Ricoh is the ideal partner to support businesses with remote and blended working solutions. Our solutions provide security assurance as standard, privacy by design and comply with all required security standards.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group operates in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2020, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 2,008 billion yen (approx. 18.5 billion USD).



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