The Evolving Workforce & HR's Identity Crisis

Key Highlights

Digital tools will make or break the future of work. According to the 255 HR leaders we surveyed, the technology used for collaboration became increasingly more of a challenge as the pandemic progressed. At the same time, 95% of HR leaders agree that the pandemic has made digital tools that support employee communication and productivity *more* essential to overall success.

The Great Resignation is just the beginning. 61% of HR executives surveyed feel that retention rates for employees hired during the pandemic will be lower than pre-pandemic rates, and over three-quarters have experienced higher turnover rates in the past year.

A recruitment red flag? Although turnover rates are expected to rise, only about one-third of HR leaders are focused on recruitment and onboarding processes as a top objective for improving employee experience in the year ahead.

Remote or on-site? It doesn't matter: Meetings aren't working. 67% of HR executives strongly agree that empowering employees to have full decision-making authority on whether or not to attend meetings would improve productivity.

Executive Summary

The last two pandemic-filled years have forced companies of all sizes to adapt to a fundamental upheaval in the way people work.

We wanted to go directly to HR professionals to discover the challenges they face in employee engagement, retention, onboarding, and more.

The results were eye-opening for us at Time is Ltd., and they should serve as a wake-up call for businesses struggling with collaboration tool sprawl, inefficient and ineffective meetings, and high turnover.

As our survey results make clear, there is a fundamental measurement issue when it comes to employee experience.

Navigating remote and hybrid teams presents unique challenges (and unique opportunities), but in-person offices require the same depth of analysis and optimization.

Thank you for reading.

How would you rate the importance of employee experience at your organization?

EXTREMELY UNIMPORTANT
1%

SOMEWHAT UNIMPORTANT
5%

SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
26%

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
68%
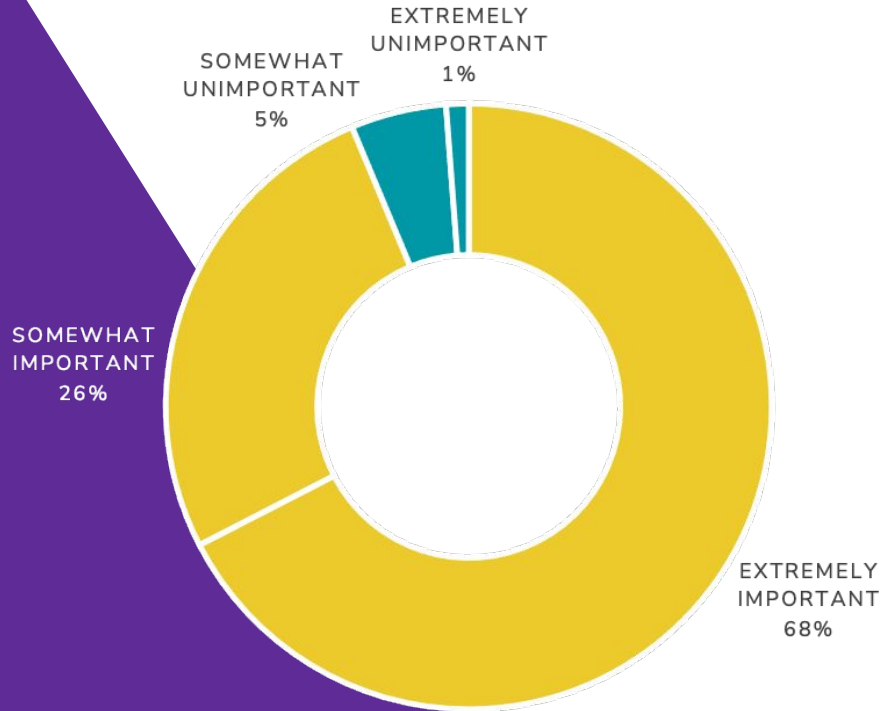
Employee Experience
IS EVERYTHING.

Employee experience matters. **Nearly all (94%) of HR leaders** surveyed consider employees' experience at their organization to be important, with over two-thirds reporting that it is *extremely* important.

But, there is a fundamental gap between what HR leaders say is important, the current realities of today's workforce, and their stated future priorities.

High turnover, poor onboarding processes, and a lack of focus on retention are just a few areas of opportunity for HR leaders. Right now, companies are ill-equipped to handle what's next, and they underestimate the need to get it right.

Poor Employee Experience is Leading to
# HIGH TURNOVER.

Turnover rates are up, and a majority of HR leaders think that trend will continue. Over 75% of respondents experienced an increase in turnover in the past year, and nearly one-third report a current turnover rate of 16% or higher.

61%

76%

68%
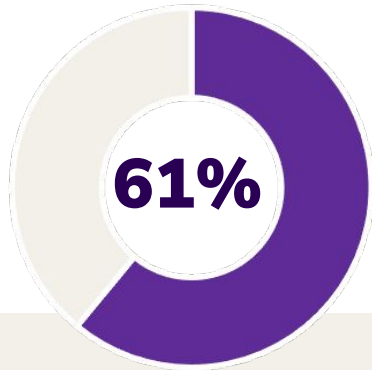
61% OF HR EXECUTIVES BELIEVE RETENTION RATES FOR THOSE HIRED **DURING THE PANDEMIC** WILL BE **LOWER THAN PRE-PANDEMIC RATES**
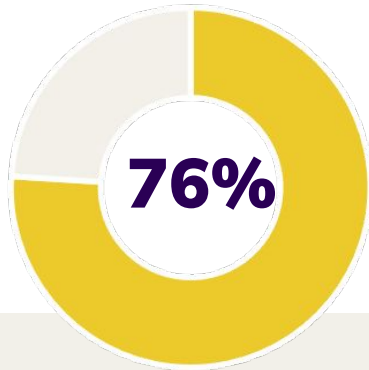
76% OF BUSINESSES ARE EXPERIENCING **MORE YEAR-OVER-YEAR TURNOVER**
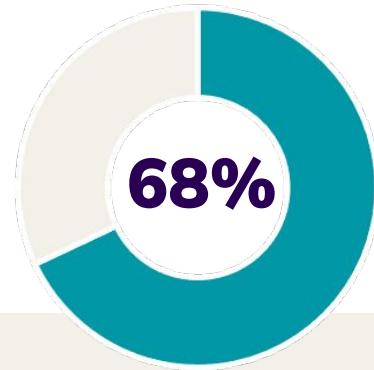
68% OF ALL ORGANIZATIONS SURVEYED CURRENTLY HAVE A **TURNOVER RATE ABOVE 10%**

Improving Employee Experience
STARTS AT THE TOP.

72% of executives feel strongly that their current workplace dynamics (meeting culture, work environment, etc.) are sustainable for the next three to five years...

...BUT only 42% of those in non-executive roles — managers, directors and VPs — feel the same. That's a significant disparity in perception of what's sustainable. So how can executives get a clear picture of the true employee experience to better align goals to the needs of their workforce?

46%
46% of HR execs say **meeting culture** is a top challenge in the workplace, but only 33% say they struggle to measure meeting efficiency.

Accurately gauging meeting efficiency should be a top priority.

77%
77% of execs strongly agree that the pandemic has made tools that support effective communication **more essential,** but 61% also find that managing this technology is a top challenge.

Taking control of collaboration tools is critical to success.

88%
88% of execs report a higher turnover in the last year, but only 41% say that a top objective for improving the employee experience in the year ahead will be improving recruitment and onboarding.
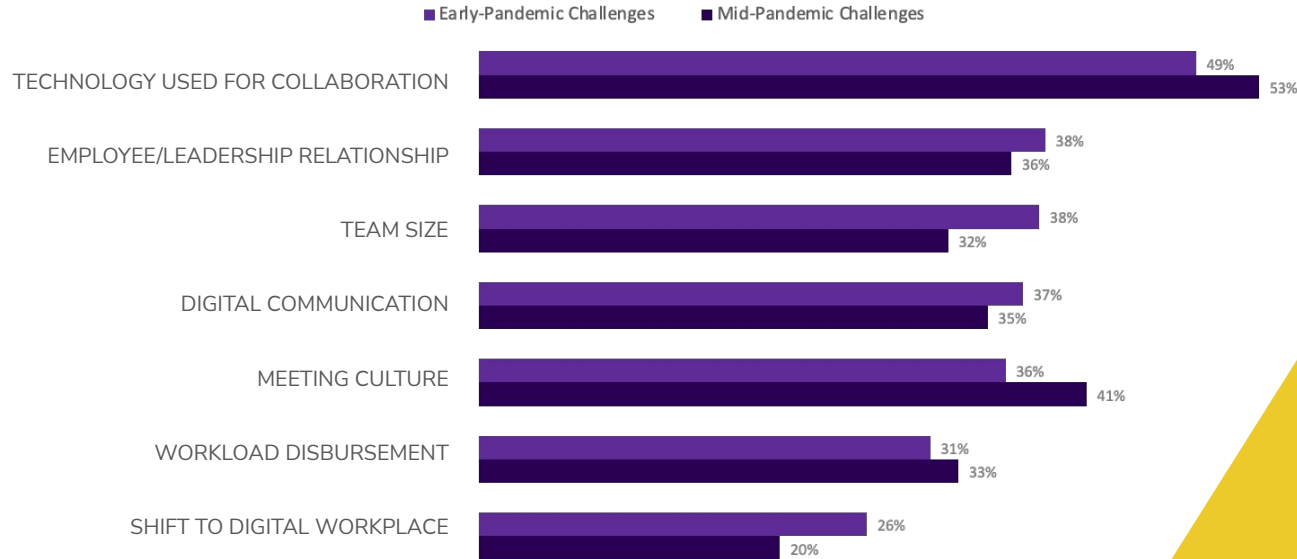
Retention starts with onboarding.

What is Getting in the Way of
EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

Collaboration. Communication. Meetings.
ALL MORE DIFFICULT DURING THE PANDEMIC.

Technology used for collaboration was the top employee experience challenge in the early months of the pandemic, and it only became more challenging as the pandemic progressed. Layer in increased difficulties with meetings, employee/leadership relationship issues, and large team sizes, and it's clear that HR leaders need to analyze and act on collaboration data.

Greatest Challenges to a Successful Employee Experience (Early vs. Mid-Pandemic)

■ Early-Pandemic Challenges   ■ Mid-Pandemic Challenges

Challenge	Early-Pandemic	Mid-Pandemic
TECHNOLOGY USED FOR COLLABORATION	49%	53%
EMPLOYEE/LEADERSHIP RELATIONSHIP	38%	36%
TEAM SIZE	38%	32%
DIGITAL COMMUNICATION	37%	35%
MEETING CULTURE	36%	41%
WORKLOAD DISBURSEMENT	31%	33%
SHIFT TO DIGITAL WORKPLACE	26%	20%

EVOLVING CHALLENGES

Technology used for collaboration, meeting culture, and workload disbursement each became more challenging for organizations as the pandemic progressed.

Getting Collaboration **UNDER CONTROL.**

95% of HR leaders say the pandemic has made digital collaboration tools more essential to overall success. Email, video communication tools, instant messaging (Slack, Teams, etc), and file-sharing have become the core components of the average workday. The pandemic not only accelerated the adoption of new tools, but also increased reliance on older ones.

% of respondents **who saw an increase** in use of collaboration tools during the mid-pandemic months:

EMAIL	INSTANT MESSAGING	VIDEO COMMUNICATION	FILE SHARING
84%	**80%**	**83%**	**77%**

Email overload is real, and more emails are sent during meetings than ever before. Get email under control.

Slack and instant messaging didn't replace email, they added to it. Encourage focus time, and limit redundant channels.

Video communication has become the norm, but it isn't the same as in-person interaction. Focus on length and frequency of video calls.

File sharing was common before the pandemic, and now it's become standard. Work with teams to find the tools and platforms that work best.
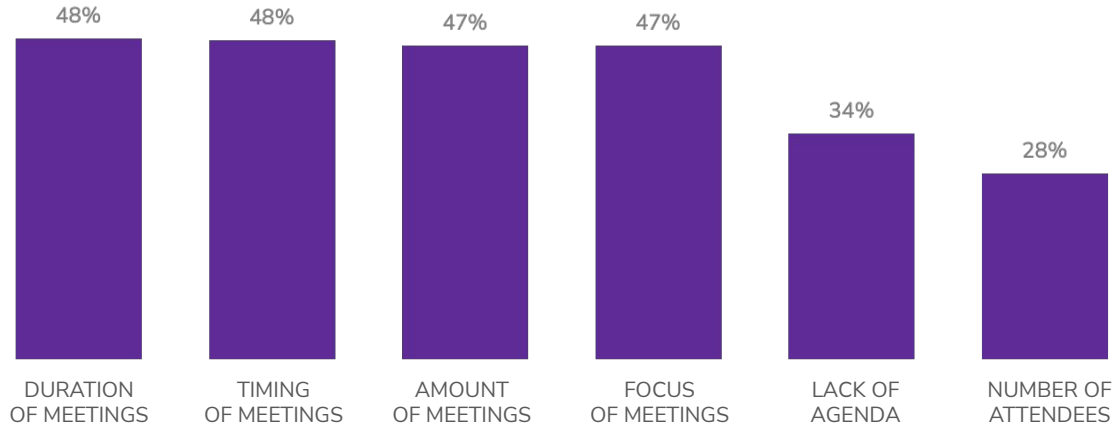
IMPROVE COLLABORATION, CHANGE YOUR COMPANY.

MEETINGS:
Too Many. Too Long. Poorly Timed. Lacking Focus.

Meeting culture - the length, frequency, and outcomes of meetings - has been a considerable challenge throughout the pandemic. But what makes meetings so unproductive? According to nearly half of those surveyed: there are too many, they are too long, they are poorly timed, and they lack agendas. **Ineffective meetings are killing engagement and productivity, and it's an eminently-fixable set of problems.**

What are the most significant challenges to meeting productivity?

48%	48%	47%	47%	34%	28%
DURATION OF MEETINGS	TIMING OF MEETINGS	AMOUNT OF MEETINGS	FOCUS OF MEETINGS	LACK OF AGENDA	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES

41%

OF HR LEADERS LIST
MEETING CULTURE
AS A TOP CHALLENGE TO A SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Empowering employees with full decision-making on whether to attend meetings would improve productivity.
[Executive Segment]

STRONGLY DISAGREE
5%

MODERATELY DISAGREE
2%

MODERATELY AGREE
26%

STRONGLY AGREE
67%
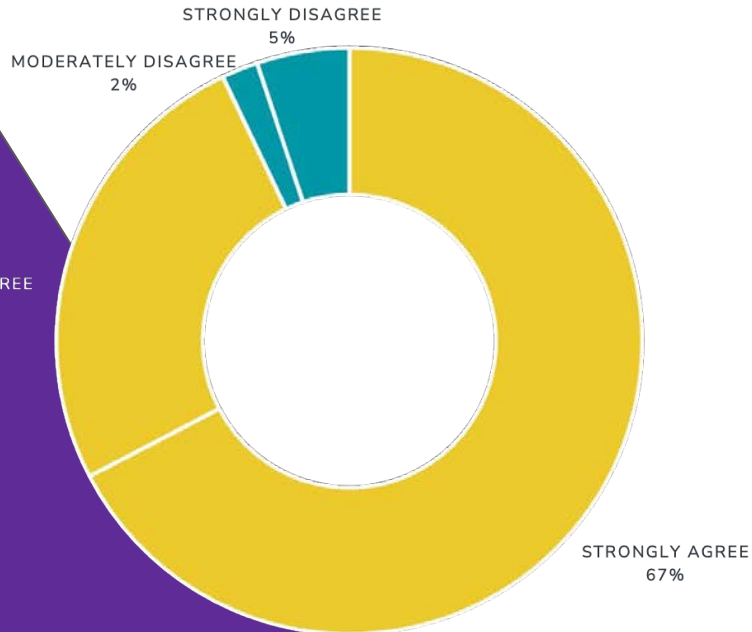
MAKE EVERY MEETING COUNT.

The core issues behind meeting culture are clear: Quantity, length, and focus all need to be improved — and employees need to be empowered to make every meeting count. One surefire way to improve things is to give people more autonomy over the meetings they attend.

Improve Your Meetings,
IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS.

Building a more effective meeting culture means measuring, analyzing, and acting on key data points that cover every aspect of how your teams meet. Look at the types of meetings your people have, how many of them are recurring, how long they are, how much time employees have between them, and when they are happening.

What to measure to make meetings more effective:

FREQUENCY
How many recurring meetings actually need to be recurring?

LENGTH
Can that 1-hour meeting be 30 minutes? Can that 30-minute meeting be a 15-minute stand-up?

1:1 MEETINGS
Redundant and inefficient meetings cut into 1:1 meetings, which are crucial to building internal relationships.

AFTER-HOURS
The more meetings, the greater need for meetings after normal working hours. This leads to disengagement, burnout, and more.
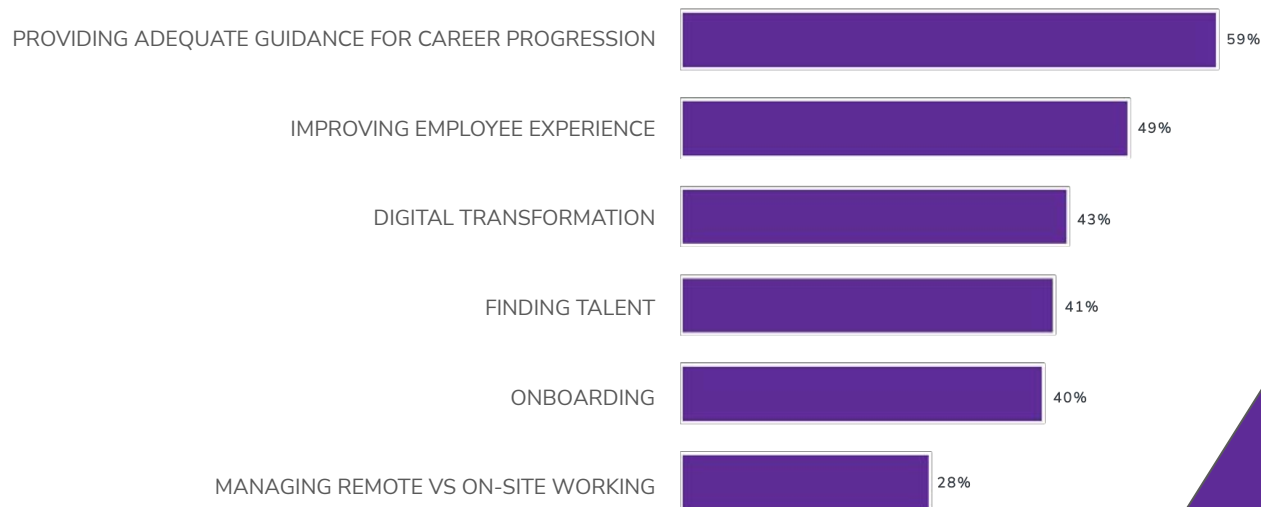
38%
OF HR LEADERS LIST
MEETING EFFICIENCY
AS A VERY DIFFICULT AREA TO MEASURE

Employers Understand What Drives Attrition,
BUT AREN'T FOCUSING ON IT ENOUGH.

Employees feel more empowered than ever before to leave jobs that don't match their expectations. HR leaders identify career progression and improving the employee experience as key drivers that affect retention issues, and it appears they understand the root causes of attrition.

What will the greatest challenges to improving employee retention be in the year ahead?
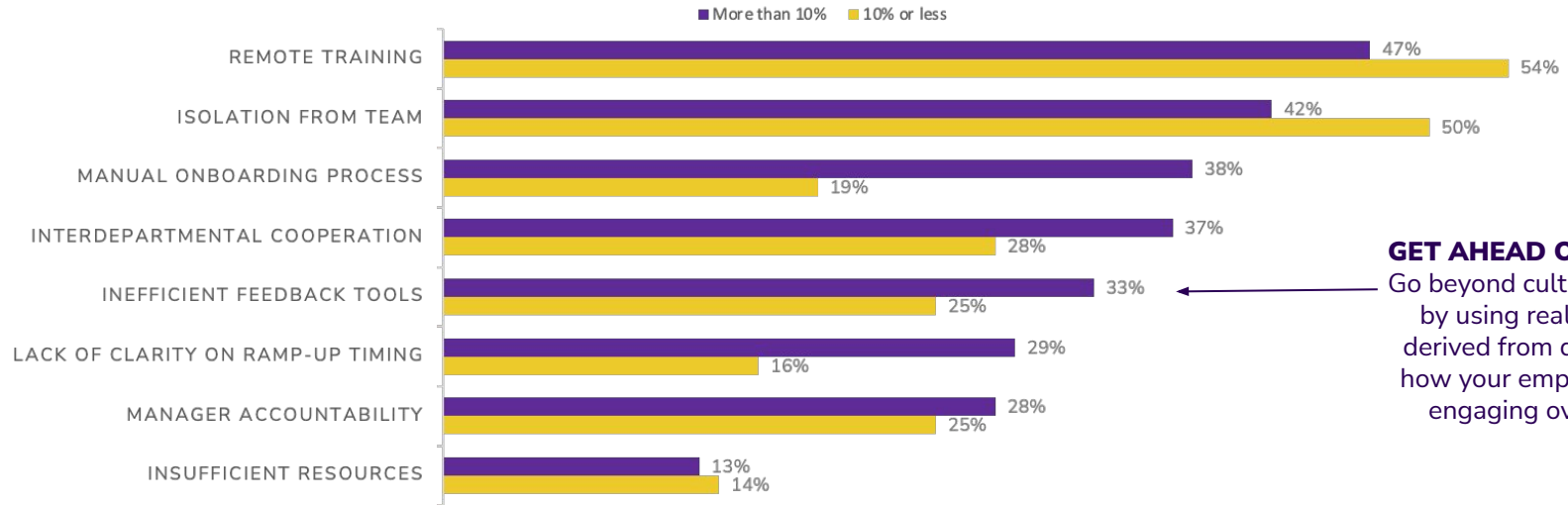
Challenge	Percentage
PROVIDING ADEQUATE GUIDANCE FOR CAREER PROGRESSION	59%
IMPROVING EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE	49%
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION	43%
FINDING TALENT	41%
ONBOARDING	40%
MANAGING REMOTE VS ON-SITE WORKING	28%

ONLY

39%

OF HR LEADERS LIST **IMPROVING RETENTION** AS A TOP BUSINESS OBJECTIVE FOR 2022

The Impact of Onboarding
ON RETENTION.

40% of HR leaders say that onboarding is key to improving employee retention in the year ahead. Poor and insufficient onboarding processes leave employees without strong internal networks - important relationships that help people navigate processes, tools, and company culture more broadly. **In many cases, companies with higher turnover rates are more likely to be impacted by the significant challenges facing successful onboarding.**

Greatest challenges to successful employee onboarding during the mid-pandemic months.
(Segmented by Company Turnover Rates)

■ More than 10%   ■ 10% or less

| Challenge	More than 10%	10% or less
REMOTE TRAINING	47%	54%
ISOLATION FROM TEAM	42%	50%
MANUAL ONBOARDING PROCESS	38%	19%
INTERDEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION	37%	28%
INEFFICIENT FEEDBACK TOOLS	33%	25%
LACK OF CLARITY ON RAMP-UP TIMING	29%	16%
MANAGER ACCOUNTABILITY	28%	25%
INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES	13%	14%

GET AHEAD OF CHURN.
Go beyond culture surveys by using real insights derived from data about how your employees are engaging over time.

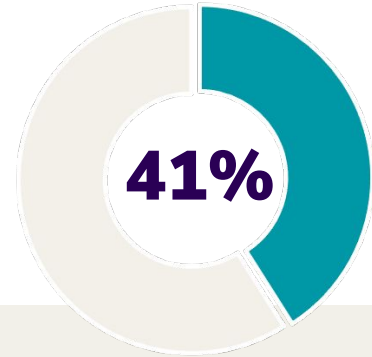# HR Leaders Know that Low Employee Engagement
HURTS BUSINESS.

59% of HR leaders say that effective employee engagement improves productivity, and close to half also identify employee motivation and retention as areas impacted by effective engagement.

59%

45%

41%
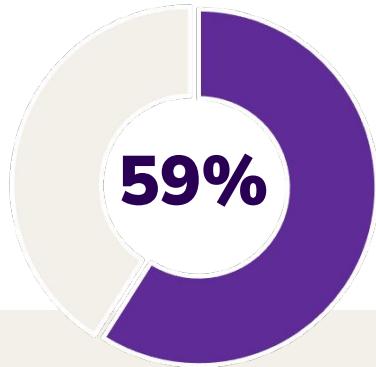
59% OF HR LEADERS SAY THAT EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPROVES **PRODUCTIVITY**
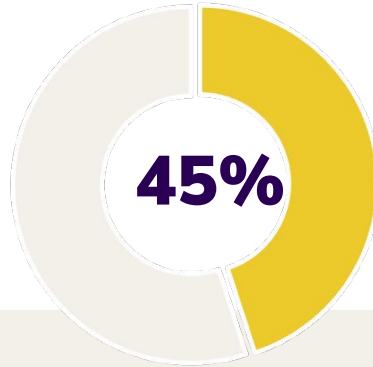
45% OF HR LEADERS SAY THAT EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPROVES **MOTIVATION**

41% OF HR LEADERS SAY THAT EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPROVES **RETENTION**

Improving Employee Engagement.
WHERE TO START?

Optimize collaboration. Take control of tool sprawl & over-communication. Let people focus on doing their best work.

Improve meeting culture. Create more effective meetings by leveraging insights that pinpoint inefficiencies.

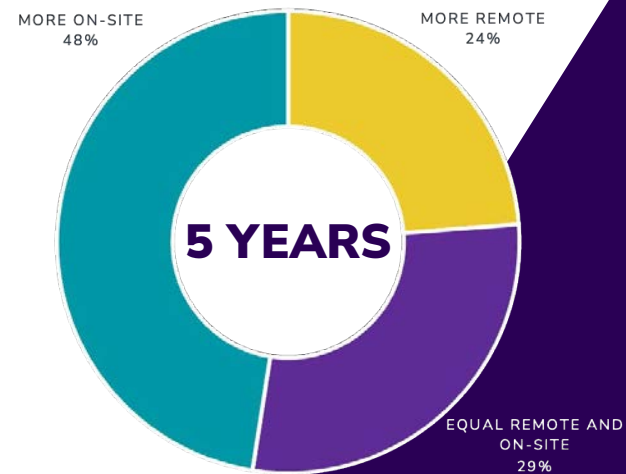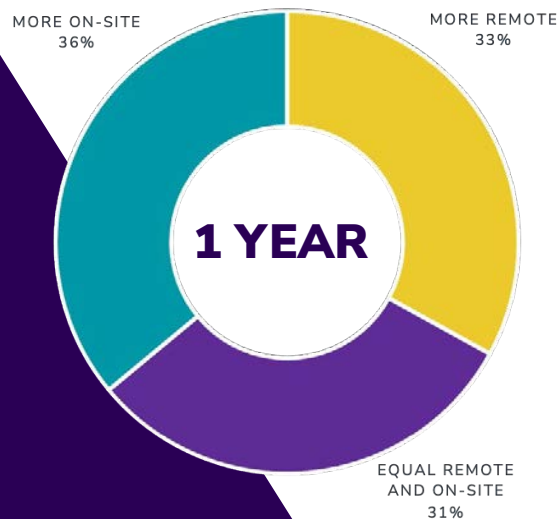**Get onboarding right.** Set the tone when employees start at your company.

Empower team leaders. Give team leaders the data and tools they need to improve employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention rates by identifying & resolving sources of disengagement.

Remote, Hybrid, and In-Person Offices:
THE FIVE YEAR VIEW

Hybrid Offices are Here to Stay, but There's a Strong Desire to
RETURN TO THE OFFICE.

Nearly half of HR leaders surveyed believe their employees will be mostly entirely on-site in three to five years. There is a clear divide here, as organizations with more remote employees tend to feel that they will remain that way for the next five years, and companies with more on-site employees tend to feel that they will remain that way over the same span.
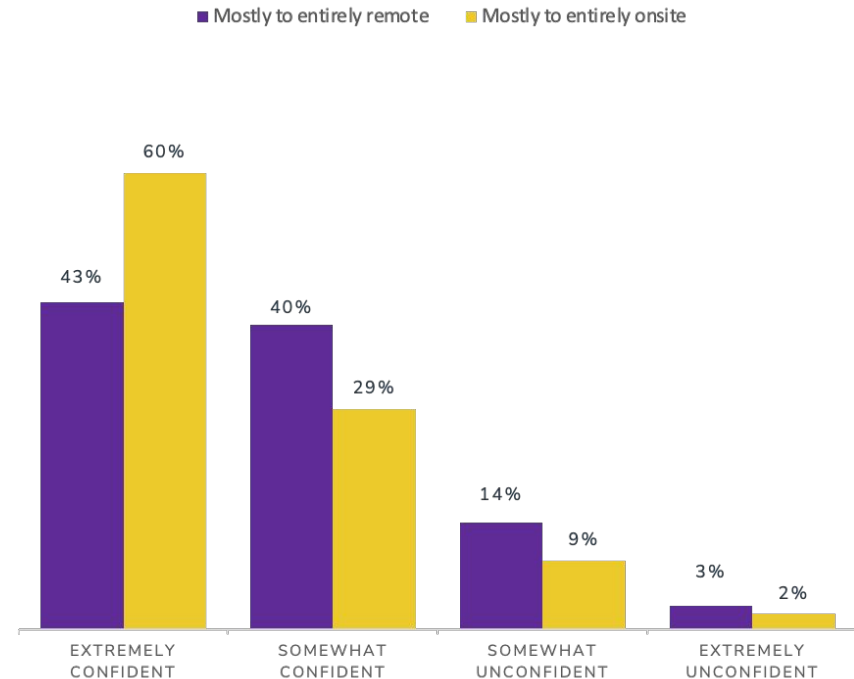
1 YEAR

MORE ON-SITE
36%

MORE REMOTE
33%

EQUAL REMOTE AND ON-SITE
31%

5 YEARS

MORE ON-SITE
48%

MORE REMOTE
24%

EQUAL REMOTE AND ON-SITE
29%

Managers Influence
More Change
IN PERSON.

We asked HR leaders to rate their confidence in management's ability to influence change within their team. While the majority are confident, that confidence declines when comparing more-remote workforces to more-onsite workforces. **HR leaders representing organizations with more onsite employees feel significantly more confident in management's ability to influence change.**

Our key takeaway is that teams need to be empowered to improve the way their team members collaborate and engage no matter the work environment. As our survey shows, remote, hybrid and in-person workplaces all have their own unique set of challenges and always with the same issues — focus time, after-hours meetings, and team communication.

Rate your confidence in management's ability to influence change within their team.
(More Remote vs More Onsite)

■ Mostly to entirely remote   ■ Mostly to entirely onsite

|	Mostly to entirely remote	Mostly to entirely onsite
EXTREMELY CONFIDENT	43%	60%
SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT	40%	29%
SOMEWHAT UNCONFIDENT	14%	9%
EXTREMELY UNCONFIDENT	3%	2%

Insights into the Employee Experience
WILL BE CRITICAL TO SUCCESS.

With more remote work, the influx of technology that keeps us connected all the time, and a culture that has accepted instant gratification as the norm, it is no surprise that 37% of HR executives saw a significant decline in employee productivity during the pandemic.

If team leaders were given the means to discover the nature and scope of this problem, would this help improve productivity? A whopping 93% of survey respondents say "yes."

93%

of HR leaders agree that **PROVIDING DATA-BACKED INSIGHTS ON COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION** would help managers improve productivity

DISAGREE
7%

AGREE
93%
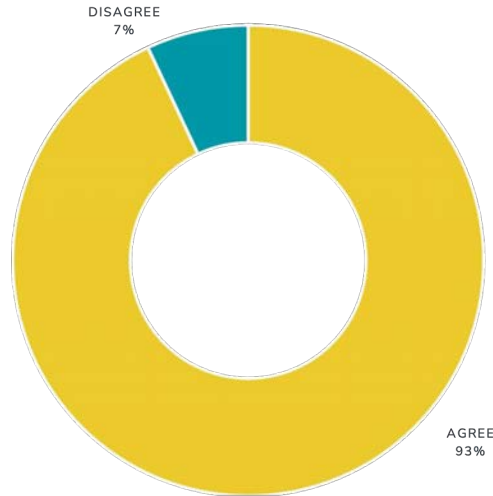
**Which areas are most difficult to measure?**

Employee satisfaction 45%

Employee productivity 41%

Meeting efficiency 38%

Employee engagement 37%

Red Flags Regarding the Future of the
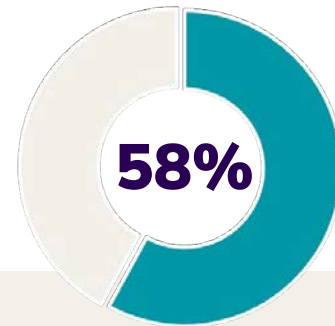# EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE.

HR leaders recognize that employee experience and wellbeing drive productivity, collaboration, and more. However, the majority still fall back on antiquated HR objectives like improving employee satisfaction and company culture. **There are major red flags in HR leaders' responses when asked how they will improve employee experience in the coming year.**

32%

24%

58%
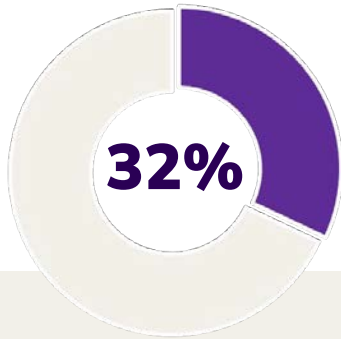
RED FLAG #1: With turnover rates expected to rise, it may be a red flag that **only 32% of HR leaders are focused on recruitment and onboarding processes** as a top objective for improving employee experience in the year ahead.
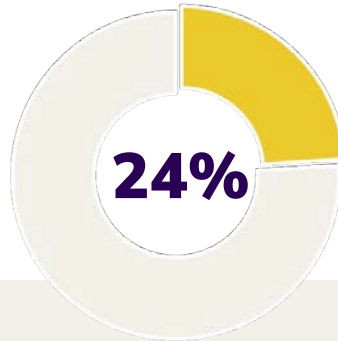
RED FLAG #2: Less than one-quarter (24%) of those surveyed report **improving the employee engagement** is a top priority for improving the employee experience in the year ahead.

RED FLAG #3: Improving employee satisfaction is the top objective for improving employee experience. But, employees expect more concrete solutions, and are resigning at a much higher rate.

How Time is Ltd.
CAN WORK WITH YOU.

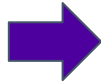| Better Meeting Culture		Eliminate redundant meetings to save an estimated 118,800 work hours per year
Increased Focus Time	Stronger Collaboration	Improving collaboration to increase productivity by 25%
Higher Engagement	Increased Productivity	Better Wellbeing — Companies that focus on employee wellbeing outperform the S&P 500 by 220%

Improved Team Performance → **Stronger Company Performance**

⧗ Time is Ltd.

Time is Ltd. enables companies to visualize their digital communication and collaboration ecosystems and drive bottom-up change with an intuitive team-leader coaching solution.
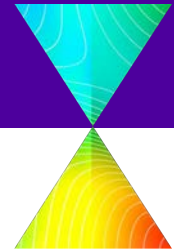
Ready to become a leader in
EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE?

Contact **solutions@timeisltd.com**

Participants

N = 255 Human Resources Professionals

PRIMARY ROLE

Executive	38%
Vice President	12%
Director	19%
Manager	31%

REGION OF US HEADQUARTERS

West	18%
Northwest	19%
Midwest	15%
Southwest	18%
Southeast	17%
Mid-Atlantic	11%
New England	2%

INDUSTRY

Agriculture	2%
Banking/Finance	10%
Education	7%
Entertainment	2%
Government/Public Sector	4%
Healthcare	15%
Hospitality	3%
Manufacturing	19%
Personal Services	4%
Professional Services	10%
Retail	6%
Technology/IT	17%
Telecommunications	1%
Transportation	1%

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

500 - 1000	31%
1001 - 2500	22%
2501 - 5000	27%
More than 5000	20%

Methodology

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of business strategies, and the tactics and technology that drives them. With a custom online questionnaire, this survey was fielded to a panel of 255 human resources professionals in the USA working for organizations with 500 or more employees. The responses were collected throughout the month of December, 2021.