

# HOW TO USE YOUR HR TECH STACK TO ENHANCE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



# SUMMARY

Deloitte's [Global Human Capital Trends Report](#) identified five Future of Work trends to watch for, one among those being an increased focus on building teams (or 'superteams') that use technology to enhance natural interaction and collaboration.

In early 2020, the escalating COVID-19 pandemic forced organizational leaders and their IT units to quickly reset business and workforce priorities. The pandemic's scale and severity challenged most organizations' views about what work was essential to deliver to their customers, shareholders, and stakeholders during a prolonged period of heightened uncertainty. To rapidly reorient their goals and operations, we saw that the most successful organizations turn to teams and teaming as the go-to unit for organizational performance.

Teams – newly forming, growing, and reconfiguring – were supercharging organizations' ability to pivot and get work done amid turbulent and demanding conditions. Teaming became an organizational life raft during COVID-19 because teams are often built for adaptability rather than predictability and stability. Teams can learn and adapt faster than individual workers alone, since teams of motivated individuals will challenge each other to come up with better, more creative ideas.

Much of the work to enable teaming within organizations was left to IT. As chief information officers and their teams figured out how to drive innovation amid uncertainty, many realized that effective digital transformation requires much more than just implementing new technologies or processes. In [IDG's Market Pulse survey](#), featuring data from 215 IT and operations leaders, respondents agreed that having "an organizational culture that doesn't easily adapt to changing business conditions" was named the top reason why digital transformation

efforts fail, beating out IT budget constraints and operations backlogs.

As workforce models have continued to evolve over the last three years, IT is now charged with partnering across functions with HR to support a modern, digital employee experience that enables productivity, teaming, and collaboration from wherever an employee works. And that could mean anywhere!

McKinsey's [American Opportunity Survey](#) of 25,000 American workers shows that 87 percent of people are looking for flexible, remote or hybrid working arrangements. This data suggests organizations should be investing in supercharging their teams – now in the context of permanently remote or hybrid work models – if they want to drive success and growth. To do it, future-thinking organizations have become increasingly determined to better support fully remote teams or teams that include both on-premise and remote employees – and this requires HR and IT to work hand in hand.

## Intended Audience

This guide is for HR and IT leaders looking to build, repair, or strengthen teams in order to boost team effectiveness and overall employee engagement. With the right strategies and technology in place, you can better support team members in remote or hybrid working environments, enable more effective collaboration, and increase engagement so that your organization's teams can power growth and success.

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>The State of Engagement &amp; Collaboration.....</b>                    | <b>03</b> |
| <b>Remote &amp; Hybrid Work .....</b>                                      | <b>06</b> |
| <b>Critical Areas to Address.....</b>                                      | <b>07</b> |
| <b>Maximizing Investment in<br/>Your Current Communication Tools .....</b> | <b>13</b> |
| <b>HR Tech Considerations .....</b>  | <b>15</b> |

## ABOUT HUMANTELLIGENCE

Humantelligence is a collaboration tool that helps remote & hybrid teams work together more effectively. It's based on the quickest, most comprehensive scientific personality assessment that measures behaviors, motivators, and work energizers. These assessment insights are then delivered through the communication tools you use everyday — email, meetings & chat — resulting in more meaningful collaboration, deeper engagement, and improved team performance. To learn more, visit [www.humantelligence.com](http://www.humantelligence.com).

# THE STATE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION



The way we work has changed. Distributed teams along with generational differences and diverse personalities make collaboration, connection & communication more difficult. We're also now living in a world spurred by digital transformation. As technology continues to evolve, work is no longer tethered to a specific desk, phone, or computer screen. New expectations are setting in, and workers are requiring the freedom to share their skills and pursue new opportunities across the globe, all with nothing but the right device and a cloud connection.

The result has been nothing short of a deluge of communication and employee management tools, designed for almost every touchpoint in the average business. So what's the problem? Could it be that we've shifted so fast that:

- 1) the sheer number of tools available is enough to overwhelm any IT team, and
- 2) we haven't paid enough attention to fostering the kind of team environment needed to support and sustain such increased freedom and globalized teams.

Now more than ever, HR's focus is on putting people first, and employee collaboration and engagement have become a priority. HR analyst and Chief Research Officer at Lighthouse Research & Advisory, Ben Eubanks points out that data continue to show that tailoring experiences to the unique "fingerprint" of your workforce can lead to better engagement, retention, and other KPIs.

**Engagement is the emotional commitment an employee has to their organization and its goals.**

Engaged employees aren't just working for a paycheck, instead they truly care about their organization's mission and are willing to go above and beyond. A highly engaged workforce results in higher productivity, more satisfied employees, strong retention rates, and a better ability to attract talent.

"There's not much that HR can do about the way technologies are rolled out, and there's not much that IT can typically do to influence the way HR is handled in the organization," said David Johnson, principal analyst of employee experience at Forrester.

However, working together, HR and IT can gain understanding and effectiveness they couldn't have alone. In your effort to redefine the workplace for your employees, you must innovate on how you deliver your services, and it all starts and ends with your HR tech stack.

## Human Resource Information System (HRIS)

Put simply, an HRIS is the integration of HR activities and information technology. Your HRIS is where it all comes together and serves as the system of record for people at your organization. It enables data entry and tracking and management for human resources, payroll, and accounting. Most HR teams use an HRIS to help them improve their processes and stay organized.

Using an HRIS that fits your needs has some very clear benefits. VP of Global People Operations for LRN, Tiffany Davis-Ransom, who has led the roll out of new HRIS at several companies cites the following:

- **Record-keeping.** An HRIS is a record-keeping system that keeps track of changes to anything related to employees. The HRIS can be seen as the one source of truth when it comes to personnel data.
- **Compliance.** Some data is collected and stored for compliance reasons. This includes material for identification and reporting purposes, emergency contact information in case of accidents, citizens identification information for the tax office, and expiration dates for mandatory certification. All this information can be stored in the HRIS.
- **Efficiency.** Having all this information in one place not only benefits accuracy but also saves time.
- **HR strategy.** The HRIS enables the tracking of data required to advance the HR and business strategy. Depending on the priorities of the organization, different data will be essential to track. This is where the HRIS comes in.
- **Self-service HR.** A final benefit is the ability to offer self-service HR to employees and managers. This enables employees to manage their own affairs. When implemented right, the HRIS can offer a good employee experience.

She reminds that not all HRIS offer this in a user-friendly manner, but some key features of any HRIS system you're assessing should include:

- time and labor management activities
- a payroll system
- benefits administration
- performance appraisals and management
- applicant tracking and succession planning tools

[Gartner's Magic Quadrant](#) lists the 11 best-known Human Capital Management or HRIS suites for midmarket and also large enterprises, including Workday, Oracle, SAP, ADP, Ceridian, Kronos (Ultimate Software), and more. In fact, [Ultimate Software](#) (now known as UKG) was ranked by Forbes as the 7th Most Innovative Growth Company. The company provides one system of record for HR, payroll, and talent management. Systems include time and attendance, onboarding, performance management, compensation, succession management, and more.

### **Pay & Benefits Administration**

The administration function of HR can be thought of as traditional, back-office HR responsibilities – benefits and payroll being two of the most important. Paying your people and providing them with health and other benefits doesn't

have to be challenging and it shouldn't be manual. HR SaaS tools for payroll and benefits that integrate with your HRIS aim to make administration easy for companies at any size.

[Payroll software](#) helps your business keep track of employee wage and salary rates and automates payroll runs. Payroll software calculates total compensation for a given pay period, debits the company bank account for that amount, and transfers funds to employees with one click. Many solutions also feature time tracking, tax management, and reporting functionalities.

Some examples include:

- **Payscale:** Payscale now offers an in-depth HR tool with the ability to track and analyze their compensation strategy with fresh salary data.
- **Gusto** Gusto offers payroll, benefits and HR tools for small to midsize companies. They have integrations with popular accounting software like FreshBooks and QuickBooks Online, as well as time tracking software.
- **Zenefits:** Zenefits has been providing payroll, benefits and more to small and mid-size organizations.

Benefits administration software makes enrolling in and managing benefits, such as health insurance or a 401k, an easy process for employers and employees alike. Typically, these solutions also track data for cost and compliance purposes. Benefits administration software manages the following tasks:

- Online benefits enrollment
- Health/life insurance administration
- HSA/FSA administration
- Retirement plan management
- Deduction management

For more guidance on how to select an HRIS that can integrate these essential core components, SHRM has put together [this comprehensive guide](#).

As strategic business partners for your organization, you work across the enterprise to optimize the entire employee lifecycle, so once you have your core HRIS (or HCM) and integrated pay and benefits administration system selected, it's time to consider the other critical component of your core HR stack that directly impacts the employee experience – collaboration and engagement.

How do you know if you need to invest in tools that can take your teams' collaboration to the next level? Davis-Ransom gives us two important questions to consider:

### **1. Are you trying to balance teams or change team dynamics quickly?**

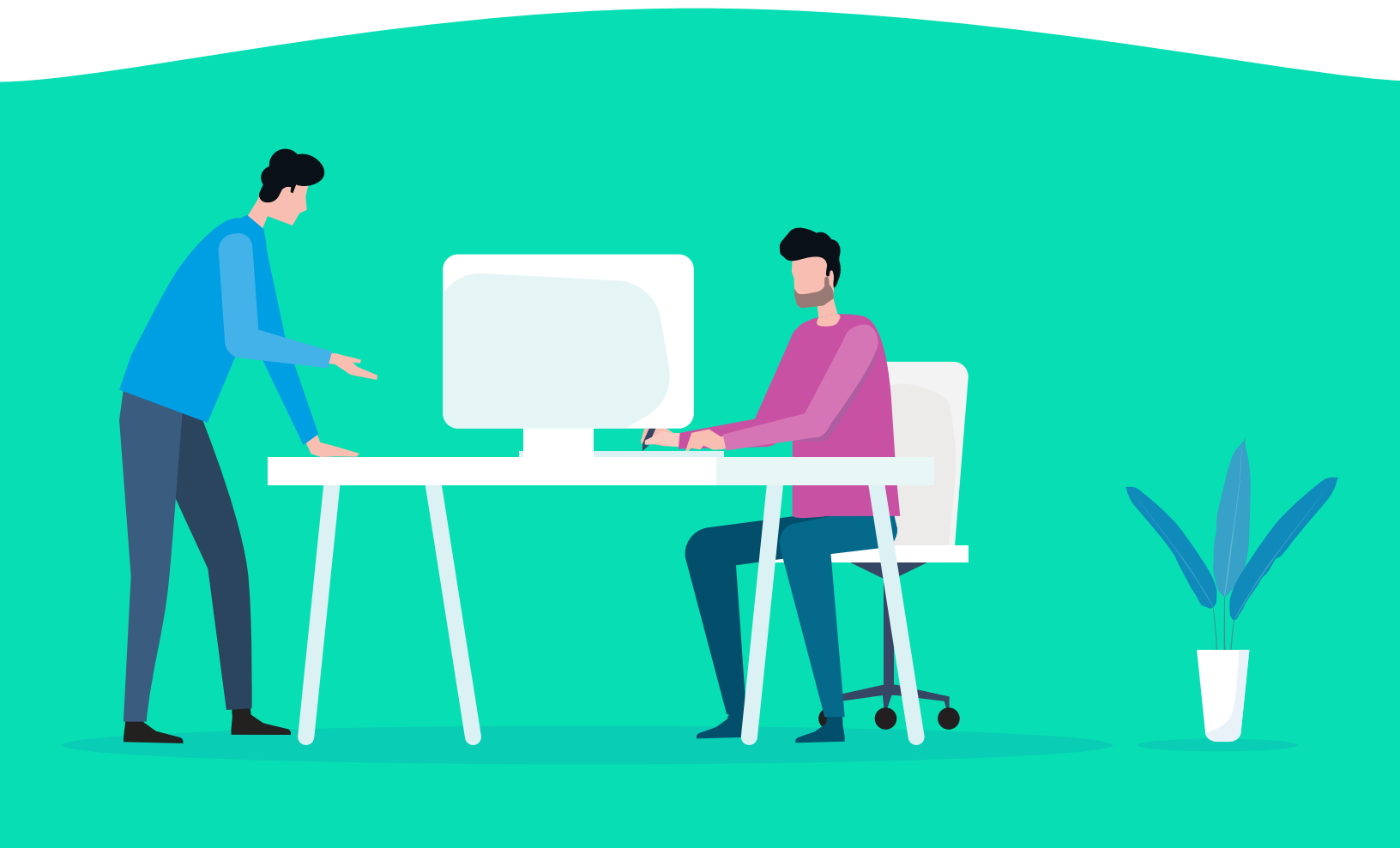
Although team dynamics are hard to measure and to control directly, leaders can execute some very tangible things to develop or course-correct a mis-aligned culture. The most important thing is to make sure that during business plan reviews, the culture of your team is aligned to your company's strategy – a simple but often neglected step.

Do you have everyone you need – all the skills, traits, styles, and values that will help your team work together effectively? This can be key as you go through growth spurts and need to determine if new hires are needed to amplify

aspects that made the organization successful or fill critical gaps. You can track multiple facets of the employee lifecycle, lay the groundwork for potential changes that will help drive growth, innovation, and team engagement, and finally be able to do the kind of analysis that examines the health of your teams.

### **2. Are your employees craving more meaningful collaboration and engagement but spend more time mis-communicating or going back and forth?**

It might be time to invest in a collaboration tool – one of the most important weapons in the healthy team toolkit. With permanently remote and hybrid work models here to stay, it's going to be imperative to put personalized communication insights at the fingertips of every employee, where they communicate most often – and for most of us now, that's in virtual meetings, emails, and chat tools.





# ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF REMOTE & HYBRID WORK ON TEAMS



Spoiler alert, the answer to better connection, collaboration and engagement is not in making employees return to the office! In the last two years, we have seen digital business initiatives accelerate and workforce models shift, and with it a resetting of long-term employee expectations. In Prudential's [Pulse of the American Worker survey](#) of over 2,000 full-time workers:

- **68%** of workers prefer a hybrid-work model, and
- **87%** want to continue to work remotely at least part of the time

That means your teams and organizations are going to become more distributed than ever. As businesses continue considering long-term strategies for remote and hybrid arrangements, some say IT holds the key.

Just ask computer solutions architecture and IT leader, Attaullah Malik, who says you'll also need to build and enable working environments that support these workforce models – office perks can no longer be charged with this

responsibility. Involving IT has become key to implementing an integrated tech stack that better supports these models in order to empower people with the kind of tools that enable more effective collaboration.

*“As your company grows or evolves, the key is to implement solutions that empower cross-functional collaboration and increased employee productivity.”*

There are ways now, using technology, to connect more meaningfully with one another, assess team members' ability to work remotely and where to focus training and support, as well as to get a pulse on how people are feeling.

# THE CRITICAL AREAS FOR BETTER EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



As organizational cultures evolve post pandemic, collaboration across teams, time zones, and lines of differences should be viewed as a driver for value.

As Eubanks puts it, “the average HR tech stack always looks at common elements like HRIS, recruiting, onboarding, performance, but they are missing a key element that tells them who people really are. Your employee communication tech stack – a subset of the HR technology ecosystem – can take this piece into consideration and better support employees in: learning & development, connection and recognition, as well as collaboration.”

Each has their own place in how an organization supports its workforce.

## Learning Development & Engagement

Running a successful business boils down to ensuring your workers are productive, happy, and actively engaged with activities that move the business forward.

Learning and development is one of the most effective strategies to boost engagement and minimize churn at your organization. In fact, there’s enough evidence now to show that companies that promote a culture of learning for employees perform better.

According to this [LinkedIn Learning course](#) (quoting a McKinsey report), companies that offer comprehensive training programs have higher income per employee by as much as 200%. And for millennials, learning opportunities at a company are now the top metric in their likelihood to stay at a company. [A PwC study](#) found the same – that “the current workforce is more motivated by personal and professional growth than they are by earning more money.”

New digital tools have dramatically altered how we learn. Here are some of the key features of the modern corporate learning experience.

### ***On-demand learning***

The brick and mortar professional development course is dead! Instead of the rigid classroom model, learning can be a part of employees’ daily workflow - at their desks, on their mobile phones, or from wherever they work.

### ***Consumerization of learning***

Just as apps have changed the way we call cabs or watch movies, new digital learning tools also offer the same intuitive, engaging, and easy-to-use experience for people at work.

### ***Agile, cost-effective learning***

In an era of rapid technological change, learning has become critical for companies to stay up to speed. A modern learning platform accelerates learning program delivery to ensure the most up-to-date training reaches your employees quickly and efficiently.

### ***Self-awareness & coaching***

L&D leaders are working to understand individuals and team cultures better – and ultimately create and deliver programming that leverages a psychometrics-based tool to improve managers’ coaching, increase understanding of their teams, pave a pathway to building a stronger, better-connected team for purposes of more meaningful collaboration – becoming more productive and delivering results faster.

**66%** of all employees are disengaged (Source: Gallup)

**87%** of highly engaged employees are less likely to leave (Source: The Muse)

**25%** of employers have an active engagement strategy (Source: The Muse)

According to Smarp, companies that have a high level of employee engagement are more profitable by a factor of 21 percent. So to more deeply understand what drives the engagement of your people, aside from skill building and growth opportunities, you also need to provide people with a centralized place to both give feedback to others and better understand themselves.

Consider tools that incorporate self-assessments designed to empower people with a better understanding of their work behaviors, motivators, and work energizers. When investing in engagement solutions, look for a centralized solution that consolidates key feedback-focused areas, such as:

#### ***Career & development feedback***

Knowing that coaching and feedback are key to ongoing performance management and engagement, provide an easy way for employees to obtain and manage peer, 360-degree, subordinate and manager feedback more frequently.

#### ***Pulse survey feedback***

Pulse your employees on important topics and get instant and consistent feedback to help you make informed operational, policy, programming, or strategy decisions. Be sure you can analyze data by different populations, as well as product, territory, and functional groups.

#### ***Performance management***

Use a centralized learning management system to track performance and provide actionable content and assignments to help employees track performance, growth, and any new performance management processes.

Be able to align and motivate employees around specific strategic goals, tasks, and actions – by company, by division, by territory, or by function – delivering fast, measurable business results.

When you focus efforts around learning & development programming for employees, you'll find team members getting more engaged than ever before. And when you invest in the kinds of solutions that can support those efforts, you'll also have the data needed to make more informed hiring and people-related decisions for your organization.

#### **Connection & Recognition**

Aside from technology that encourages learning and self-development, part of improving the employee experience focuses on enabling connection and sharing impact.

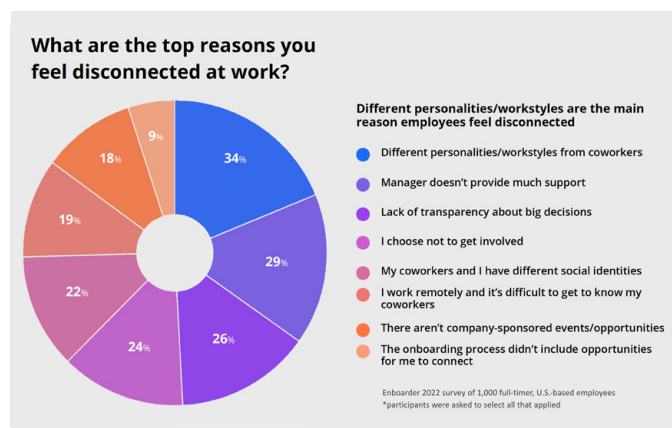
In the HBR article [\*Collaborative Overload\*](#), we learned that the time employees spent on collaboration in 2016 increased by 50% over the past two decades — and we can be sure this has only increased over the last two years. Researchers found it common for workers to spend a full 80% of their workdays communicating with colleagues in the form of:

- email (on which workers' spend an average of six hours a day)
- meetings (which fill up 15 percent of a company's time, on average)
- instant messaging apps (the average Slack user sends an average of 200 messages a day, though 1,000-message power users are "not the exception")





Of course, real-time communication can be the most efficient solution in many situations – and help you feel more connected to your colleagues and work. So while working remotely means you're not going to bump into co-workers around the water cooler, it certainly doesn't mean you're unreachable. It simply means we should shift how we communicate, leveraging all the tools at our disposal, if we want to enable better connection among teams.



Speaking of connection, the employee experience also centers on connection to the organization. Studies show that remote workers tend to put in more hours than their in-office counterparts, but they often don't feel part of the team. One solution is to make employee recognition a priority for all team members no matter where they work. The most successful businesses know that the more gratitude in a company, the more productive and engaged teams and the better it performs.

Organizations adopt employee recognition programs to raise employee morale, attract and retain key employees, elevate productivity, increase competitiveness, revenues, and profitability, reduce employee stress, absenteeism and turnover, as well as improve customer service. In a SHRM/Globoforce survey, [Using Recognition and Other Workplace Efforts to Engage Employees](#), 68 percent of HR professionals agreed that employee recognition has a positive impact on retention and 56 percent said such programs also help with recruitment. The results of recognition: morale goes up, employees create stronger social connections, and productivity increases.

Although organizations typically recognize employees' length of service as milestones and instances of strong individual or team performance, many organizations are beginning to

focus on other, less traditional areas for recognition because they acknowledge greater impact and reinforce the kind of behaviors the organization values. Among them include:

- The ability to manage or champion change
- Product innovation
- Fail-to-learn recognition for someone who took a good risk, went outside of their comfort zone, or created a new outside-of-the-box opportunity to pursue or learn from
- Systems improvements
- Customer or client retention
- Morale-building or culture championing
- Talent acquisition and retention
- Market diversification
- Technological advances
- Significant personal development
- Actions that embody the organization's core values

Authentic recognition serves three greater purposes:



### 1. Showcase Goal Achievement

Why does it feel so good to get a simple "thank you" from someone? All humans feel the need to be praised at some level. They want to know that their hard work and achievements aren't going

unnoticed. When a person achieves a goal, personal or work-related, they feel a rush of achievement, and that good feeling is only amplified when others recognize and acknowledge the achievement.



### 2. Motivate Effort

Celebrate when employees go above and beyond. This helps them develop emotional connections to the workplace which fuel future performance.



### 3. Reinforce Values

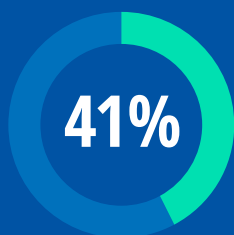
Achievements and actions that are recognized more frequently show employees what is valued by managers, leaders, and the organization as a whole.

When we receive positive recognition for an action, we tend to associate that action with a reward and try to achieve that feeling again in future actions. So recognizing certain actions can reinforce the values an organization wants.

## Types of Recognition

The “how” part of recognition is very important. Every employee embraces recognition differently. Some get a boost from public praise, while introverted workers prefer a subtle or private gesture. First, identify the employee’s personality type to determine the type of recognition that works best for them. Not sure how to do that? Use the [personality assessment](#) of your team’s collaboration plug-in tool! Then, encourage that team through the types of recognition and appreciation that mean the most to them. You can use the following types to create a recognition mix across your organization.

**Peer vs. Superior...** With peer-to-peer recognition, specific tools are used to provide a “communal forum” where workers of every level can come together, share their experiences, and assign rewards to or recognize their peers for their accomplishments. With employee recognition, workers recognize each other and make the workplace feel more inclusive and human. This kind of recognition is one of the most important factors in driving workplace engagement, productivity, and employee retention. Receiving positive feedback from a manager or executive is a validation of good work. Impressing a superior increases job security and the likelihood of future growth with the organization. Regardless of where it comes from, recognition feels good.



of companies that use peer-to-peer recognition have seen positive increases in customer satisfaction. (SHRM)

**Attributed vs. Anonymous...** Most recognition is given by a known party. There’s typically no reason to separate recognition from the giver. But sometimes an anonymous shout-out or thank you card on an employee’s desk can have just as much power. It removes the thought that the giver is doling out recognition to seem like a team player rather than authentically expressing appreciation.

**Social vs. Private...** As mentioned above, no two employees prefer recognition the same way. Some crave the spotlight; others avoid it like the plague and would prefer subtle

praise. Recognition should be tailored – when possible – to the preferences of each individual’s personality. But when in doubt, deliver it publicly if the only other alternative is not delivering it at all.

**Behavior vs. Achievement...** Recognition is often linked to metrics, such as hitting a sales goal or staying with an organization for 20 years. But praise can also be lauded for working extra hours, going above and beyond to aid a coworker, or for successfully organizing an awesome company party.

## The Organizational Benefits

Spotlighting strong performance transforms a satisfied employee into one who actively pushes for greater things. And here are just some of the other organizational benefits:



**1. Drives Excellence** – Employee recognition is the foundation for creating a high-performing team – one based on appreciation and empowering individuals. It strengthens relationships and provides a clear purpose aligned to achievable goals. Recognizing performance allows business leaders to drive toward key goals like retention, culture, and employee happiness by connecting people and culture to shared purpose.



**2. Increases Engagement** – Many people leave their jobs due to lack of recognition, while recognition is one of the top drivers for attracting candidates. Recognition not only reduces turnover by helping to stabilize your work environment, but it can help bring top talent into your organization. 84 percent of those surveyed in this [SHRM/Workhuman Employee Recognition Survey](#) said that social recognition measurably and positively impacted engagement.



**3. Reinforces Company Values** – Employee recognition puts the power of gratitude to work, aligning your people and culture to a shared purpose. Because employee recognition should be designed with rewards that map back specifically to each value, it integrates those ideals into employees’ everyday thoughts and actions.



**4. Nurtures Trust** – [According to a 2017 study](#), nearly 90 percent of employees who received recognition from their boss indicated high levels of trust in that relationship vs. just 48 percent for those who received no

recognition. Strong organizational trust is a key indicator for profitability. Research has shown that workers who trust senior leaders are nearly 2x as likely to be engaged and love their jobs.



**5. Impacts Bottom Line** – A Korn Ferry study estimates the cost of replacing an employee is between 50 and 150% of salary. For specialist, senior, and executive positions, the cost per employee rises to up to 213% of salary.

When you factor in the intellectual loss, and the time and productivity lost to vacancies and onboarding, you begin to see just how significant the “hidden costs” of employee turnover really are. Research overwhelmingly shows that recognized employees are more likely to stick with you. Organizations with formal recognition programs have 31% less voluntary turnover than organizations that don't have any program at all. And they're 12X more likely to have strong business outcomes.

Regardless of your workforce model – but especially if you are shifting to remote-first or hybrid teams – employee recognition is critical to connecting and engaging team members.

**The results of recognition: morale goes up, employees create stronger social connections, and productivity increases.**

## Communication & Collaboration

As most CIOs who weathered the initial stages of the pandemic for their organizations will tell you, enabling this area is key. As the technology experts of organizations, these executives stepped up to enable the quick work-from-home pivots and expanded e-commerce sales channels, and so now their roles have expanded into other areas – including pushing the employee experience to the forefront of where they are making significant impact.

**89%**

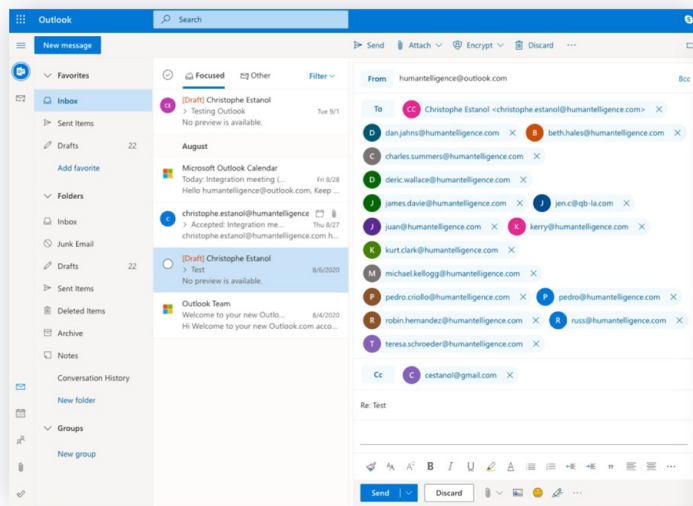
**of CIOs see themselves as change agents who play a role in improving the culture of their organization**  
(Adobe and Fortune)

“Particularly as remote work and hybrid work have become a new normal, we have embraced our enhanced responsibilities as an opportunity to further collaborate and succeed in today's new digital-first reality. It's become more critical than ever that CIOs prioritize and support any systems or business processes that improve collaboration, productivity and overall employee experience,” says Chief Information Officer, Wiktor Mikos.

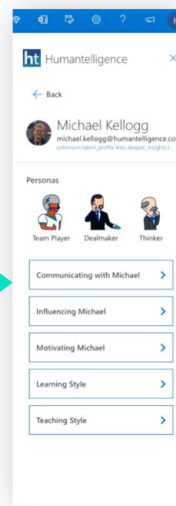
With remote work, employees' entire work experience may be consumed via technology – their computer and mobile technologies, along with project management, communication, and collaboration applications. And as teams become more and more distributed, collaboration applications have become most mission-critical apps to an organization's success. Organizations will continue to transition in how they operate, so it will be imperative for businesses to leverage tools that optimize collaboration on the spot to ensure teams remain engaged.

One of the most effective ways to do this – quickly and easily – is to use tools that plug into your already existing communication tools. These tools surface actionable insights – generated automatically from those self-assessments mentioned earlier – into the existing daily workflows of all teams — within chats, team channels, emails, and meetings. With a [simple plug-in](#) added to your organization's communication tech stack, your team can have access to the kind of information needed to better communicate and collaborate with one another.

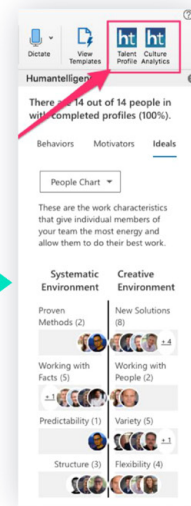
## Example: Outlook Integration



## Individual



## Meeting Team

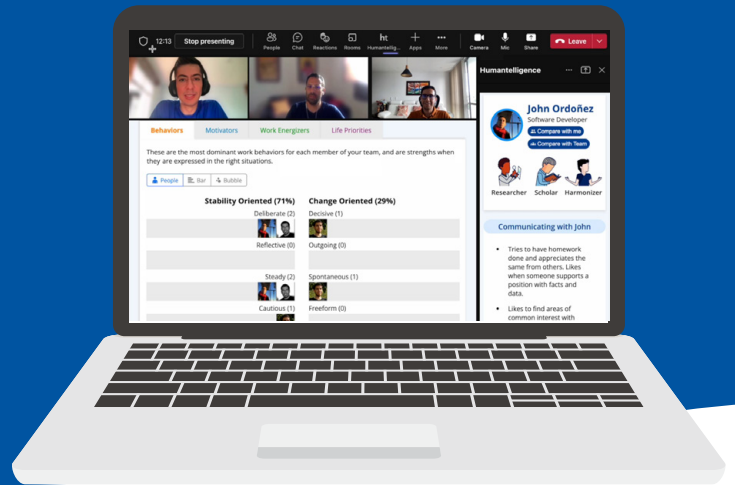


Ex: In this meeting invitation, you have communication and meeting culture insights available to everyone involved, resulting in more effective collaborative and improved productivity of meetings.

Whether working one-on-one or within and across departments or divisions, teams can have a deeper understanding of one another, and as a result, work together more effectively than ever before. As a result, employees remain more engaged from wherever they work. The best part of all, access to insights like this aren't housed in another system or require another tool to manage. They work in the background with the tools you already have, allowing you to maximize your investment in those tools.

A cost-effective way to think of this is to create a baseline KPI, such as profit per employee. As you invest in collaboration or productivity tools, your profit per employee has the ability to increase. This assumes you are growing the business. If revenue is consistent, then you would be looking at productivity solutions that allow you to reduce costs and overhead. In either scenario, a plug-in collaboration tool to your already existing tools can help you achieve either goal while encouraging more effective collaboration.

# MAXIMIZING INVESTMENT IN YOUR CURRENT COMMUNICATION TECH



In a study conducted by real estate property technology provider JLL Technologies, 55% of office-based employees are now in a hybrid working pattern. Still, companies on average have adopted only **four out of 15 recommended technologies** to address the hybrid work transformation. In its [Technology and Innovation in the Hybrid Age](#) study, JLL created a list of what it calls “anchor technologies” that employers should consider providing employees. They include technology that addresses remote working collaboration, workplace experience, digital connectivity and more.

## A Smarter Way to Collaborate

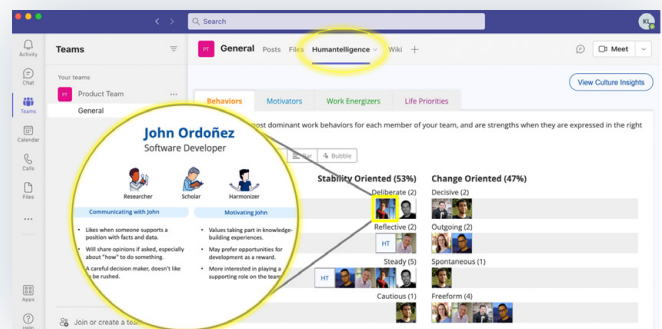
What does technology that supports remote collaboration and a more engaging employee experience look like? It can begin as easily as putting [personality insights](#) at the fingertips of every employee, where they communicate most often – think video meetings, email, and chat.

With a [Humantelligence plug-in](#), you can give your staff the kind of information needed to better communicate and collaborate with one another, taking all of the guesswork out of it and allowing them to spend time on the work that matters.

**Here's how it works.** Every team member takes a scientifically validated, 12-minute personality assessment. The plug-in then delivers those assessment insights through the tools you use everyday: Microsoft Teams, Outlook, Gmail, Zoom, Slack, Webex, and different calendars.

When drafting an email, chatting with a colleague, or joining a meeting, the plug-in automatically surfaces useful, customized tips for more effective communication with peers.

Imagine being able to click on meeting participants and see real-time tips and recommendations for communicating, motivating, and influencing. Imagine seeing this same information in aggregate for your meeting group. Imagine knowing who best to tap on for pre- or post-meeting action items, for helping leading certain initiatives while identifying those better suited to document or support, and who might benefit from a heads up on particular messages — all of which take into account your team members' behaviors, motivators, and work energizers in an easy-to-understand way.



In this Microsoft Teams example, see the dynamic of this meeting group, and be able to tap into the unique behaviors and values of certain participants.

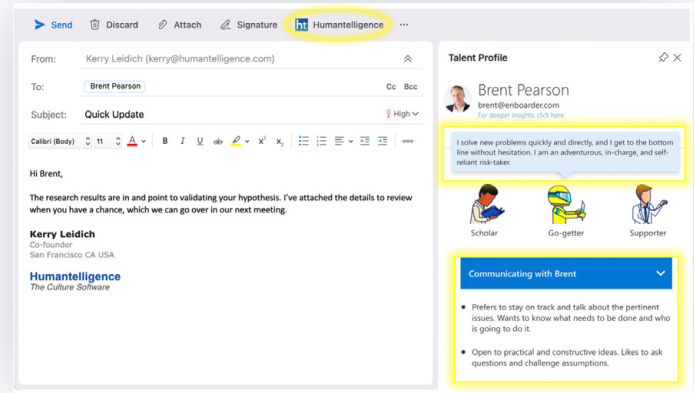
**As a team leader**, you're able to lay a strong foundation for more inclusive communication and belonging for team members, along with:

- Creating more balanced, diverse & agile teams
- Ensuring team members can work across teams more effectively
- Optimizing team members' impact by tapping into the unique behaviors, motivators & work energizers of each person
- Experiencing the increased productivity that comes from improved team effectiveness

**As a team member**, you're able to:

- Gain deeper understanding of one another, allowing better connection and ability to work through conflict
- Create deeper, more meaningful connection that translates into more effective collaborations and higher quality relationships at work
- Feel more engaged in your daily work

It's important to give your employees the opportunity to thrive and do the job they were hired to do – instead of requiring them to spend their valuable time figuring out how to work better with one another. The truth is, most people won't take their time to figure out how to collaborate better, and as a result, connection wanes, relationships are reduced to transactions, and performance suffers. Don't let team members go down this road when there are easier tech-enabled ways to do it. Doing so drives trust in your processes and leadership ability, and keeps employees engaged and performing at their highest levels.



Quick personalized tips when writing emails.

For more on Humantelligence,  
visit [www.humantelligence.com](http://www.humantelligence.com).



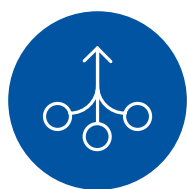
# TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS



In the end, it's essential that IT partners with HR to implement the solutions that work for the organization's objectives (a better employee experience should be on that list!) and addresses the needs that our new hybrid age requires. The right technologies and thoughtfully designed workplaces can create a more connected culture, support enhanced productivity, and drive employee retention.

And as you know, just as we begin this piece with, your company's HR tech stack is one of the most important points of intersection for HR and IT teams. One of the biggest concerns among HR and IT teams is that working with lots of different vendors means critical areas and the different tools used to support those areas aren't integrated, data gets siloed, and the tech stack becomes difficult to manage.

With these concerns in mind, here are some of the most important technical considerations when evaluating different tools for your HR stack.



## Data consolidation vs. separation

Building an effective HR tech stack means you're eliminating or reducing the amount of manual tasks on your plate while collecting meaningful insights that will help inform future organizational decision making. One of the most important parts of any HR tech project is ensuring data won't be stuck in one system, or the wrong system. To ensure data won't get stuck or not speak to other systems, select vendors that:

- Have an open API
- Don't charge for API consumption or access
- Have a growing ecosystem of integration partners

- Integrate with well-known and leading providers to enable onward integrations
- Are willing to build new integrations that benefit their customers at low or no cost

Most organizations will have a primary Applicant Tracking System, a core HRIS system for managing employees, and then a variety of tools for benefits, pay, recognition, collaboration and more. All of these should store but also integrate and share data as needed in order to consolidate manual processes.



## Cloud-based SaaS vs. On-premises

While common now, it doesn't go without saying that most modern HR software is cloud-based and provided by Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) vendors.

Essentially, the fundamental difference between cloud vs. on-premise software is where it resides. On-premise software is installed locally, on your business' computers and servers, where cloud-based software is hosted on the vendor's server and accessed via a web browser. This means that instead of installing and maintaining software on your own servers, you access it over the internet.

In the early days of cloud-based SaaS, IT and security teams were concerned about increased security risk. But over the past decade, cloud-based software has become the norm and companies have become more comfortable having their data hosted in the cloud.

Malik reminds us that most SaaS vendors use hyper-scale cloud infrastructure provided by companies like Amazon Web Services or Microsoft. These cloud service providers invest significantly more in security than any one

company could by trying to secure their own on-premises infrastructure and, as a result, cloud-based software that's been built in the right way is usually much more secure than an on-premises alternative.

Other benefits, according to Malik, that you should expect of SaaS providers include:

**Affordability** – Cloud requires no upfront costs. Instead you make regular payments which makes it an operating expense (OpEx). While the monthly cost adds up over time, maintenance and support services are included removing the need for annual contracts.

**Anywhere and anytime access** – You can access your applications anytime and anywhere via a web browser from any device.

**High levels of security** – Data centers employ security measures beyond the affordability of most businesses. Your data is often safer in the cloud than on a server in your offices. Data centers comply with the most stringent security standards – and you'll be able to validate that with the provider.

**Predictable costs** – Benefit from predictable monthly payments that cover software licences, upgrades, support and daily back-ups.

**Quick deployment** – You'll enjoy shorter (and less expensive) implementation timelines because cloud-based software is deployed over the Internet in a matter of hours/days – compared to on-premise applications which need to be installed on the physical server and each PC or laptop.

**Scalability** – Cloud technologies provide greater flexibility and can allow you to easily scale to meet demand, for example adding and scaling back licenses based on your headcount growth.

**Worry-free IT** – Because cloud software is hosted for you, you don't need to worry about the maintenance of your software or the hardware it resides on. Compatibility and upgrades are taken care of by the cloud service provider.

Additionally, software updates are managed by the vendor, and it's easier with cloud-based software to integrate your existing (and future) tools – ensuring further data consolidation.



## Configuration vs. customization

If your last HR software implementation project was long, drawn-out, and involved lots of custom development and consultants, you should know that modern people tech should offer a level

of configurability that makes implementation significantly easier.

In the past, an HR software implementation project would require a huge amount of work from a team of software developers, infrastructure engineers, and a team of external consultants to implement. That sounds expensive. There would also be a significant amount of customization work, servers to install, and QA testing to complete.

But almost all modern HR tech is now multi-tenanted SaaS. This means the same software with exactly the same code is used by hundreds of companies, all hosted on the same servers. To enable this, vendors have invested heavily in offering configurability. Rather than having software developers customize the software for you, there are enough built-in configuration options that you can make the software work in the way you need by changing the configuration options rather than having developers write expensive, time-consuming custom code.

This enables vendors to offer competitive pricing, gives you a certain level of control, and leads to faster, easier, and less expensive implementation.

Finally, as you think about evolving your HR tech stack, we recommend keeping the following set of product considerations in mind when it comes to vendor selection so that you can ensure your tech stack both withstands the test of time and can grow with your needs.

# Product Considerations

## 1. USER EXPERIENCE

Does the design and user experience feel like it's up to date, or does it feel like a blast from the past? If it still feels or looks like 1995 HR tech, it could be a sign that the product is not being developed to keep up with workforce changes and employee experience needs. The user experience should be easy, fun, and engaging.

## 2. CONSISTENT DEVELOPMENT

Ensure your vendors are investing at least 15-25% of their product development time in building their ecosystem of partners and integrations. Deep integrations between best-in-class tools and budding partnerships give you the most flexibility for the future and will allow you to move away from all-in-one vendors.

## 3. PRODUCT PRICING

Always ask about the model in place for current clients receiving access to future feature releases. Pay attention to language, such as features versus modules versus add-ons. They could mean the difference between receiving future releases and enhancements or having to pay extra. And what about headcount...if your teams are planning to grow, can you lock in price now or will you have to pay increases as your usage increases?

## 4. VENDOR LONGEVITY

Ensure your vendor's going to be around for the long haul. That doesn't mean you just choose the biggest. On the contrary, you may be better off choosing a vendor that's smaller but growing and focused on customer success vs. a larger vendor that might be unable to devote the time needed to help you be successful.



# CONCLUSION

In the end, your HR tech stack and the tools you employ to support a more engaging employee experience should empower your teams and encourage teaming across functions, time zones, and lines of difference. Doing so can result in superteaming – the combination of people and technology leveraging their complementary capabilities to pursue outcomes at a speed and scale not otherwise possible (Superteams: Putting AI in the group, Deloitte Insights).

Future-thinking organizations are investing in new technology that integrates with their existing HR tech and using it to change the nature of work so that it makes

the most of people's distinctly human capabilities. From collaboration tools that enhance teaming and connection to artificial intelligence technologies that can guide people in making decisions, technologies integrated with humans on teams can enable those teams to pursue new and better outcomes at greater speed and scale.

This investment combined with strategies to improve retention, connection, and recognition of employee impact could spell the difference between just surviving another year, or thriving, with your current workforce.

---

**humantelligence®**  
SMARTER COLLABORATION

#### LET US HELP!

Humantelligence is a collaboration tool that helps remote & hybrid teams work together more effectively. It's based on the quickest, most comprehensive scientific personality assessment that measures behaviors, motivators, and work energizers. These assessment insights are then delivered through the communication tools you use everyday — email, meetings & chat — resulting in more meaningful collaboration, deeper engagement, and improved team performance. To learn more, visit [www.humantelligence.com](http://www.humantelligence.com).