

# How Connectedness drives engagement and organisational effectiveness



## Undeniable Shift – workplace advancement

**Whether or not the term 'new normal' resonates, what is clear is that the way we all work and interact fundamentally shifted in 2020.**

There's no question COVID-19 has upended the working world and prompted a number of changes. A recent McKinsey & Company study revealed that 93% of the organisations they surveyed reported an increase in remote working.

PwC agree that most companies are moving to a hybrid workplace model where office employees rotate in and out of offices, starting the most advanced level of thinking and fresh approaches to the workplace for decades.

Staying engaged in a dispersed work environment is a challenge many employees have faced in the past few months — especially with the many disruptions of at-home work set-ups including lack of suitable working spaces, home schooling and sharing space - and WiFi! - with family members.

**And workplace change is here to stay. LinkedIn research suggests that of those employees that have a choice, only 35% would willingly return to the office full time.**



## Why is Connectedness important – and even more so now?

A recent Gallup poll indicated that 21% of remote workers felt lonely and isolated. Lockdown is also impacting employee wellbeing. Deloitte's recent working from home study indicates that 38% of respondents say that lockdown has had a negative impact on their wellbeing.

In addition to wellbeing and morale, employee connection can impact how team members view your organisation. If they aren't connected, there's

a good chance they won't feel connected to you or your company mission, which can ultimately lead to low engagement and negatively impact organisational effectiveness.

**How organisations support and connect those dispersed employees, and how they increase their level of connectedness will be key to their organisational success and competitive advantage.**








# How to build connectedness in a distributed workforce

Over the last year, we've had the privilege of working alongside some great employers, large and small, who are going the extra mile to connect with their employees, despite challenging circumstances.

## Here are the lessons we've learned

**#1 Lean in and listen.** In our experience, the most important thing to build connectedness is to lean in. Listen to your employees, empathise with their greatest concerns, communicate frequently and confidently, and be flexible and supportive to meet their needs. Open up the listening channels that make it easy for them to raise issues and concerns – and ensure you take action as a result.

**#2 Empower** your line managers to support your efforts to build connectedness. A Harvard Business Review study asked survey respondents to describe the attributes of managers who were especially good at managing remote teams. The most successful managers ...

-  **Check in frequently and consistently**
-  **Use face-to-face or voice-to-voice contact**
-  **Demonstrate exemplary communication skills**
-  **Make expectations clear**
-  **Are available when their people need them urgently**
-  **Are tech savvy, and**
-  **Prioritise relationships that focus on the whole person – not just work**

In our experience, managers who practice these types of intentional behaviours increase the likelihood that being out of sight does not lead to feeling uncared for.

So give them the tools that empower them to take ownership and action.

**#3 Stay positive.** As Daniel Goleman says, "Optimism is a choice." Whilst it's important to stay grounded, being enthusiastic and being positive is particularly important right now because

there's so much negativity out there. Leaders and managers are role models, we connect with them for guidance, so it's really important that they maintain a level of balanced positivity and reframe negative perceptions. Encourage social connection between teams. We're seeing lots of creative ways that employers – and employees – are bringing fun into the virtual workplace.

**#4 Connect digitally.** Make sure employees working remotely have the tools they need to communicate, collaborate, and provide feedback – and know how to use them!

McKinsey and Company report that the adoption of technology in the workplace have leapfrogged seven years of progress in a matter of months, yet many employees are being asked to engage with unfamiliar tools with little training. So choose your tools wisely, minimise the training overhead. As Josh Bersin puts it, we need to shift from buying the right product, to buying the right platform. Platforms that are adaptable, flexible, reliable and configurable,

**#5 Connect employees to organisational mission and purpose.** Reminding employees of why we are here and the difference we make can have a profoundly positive impact on resilience and mindset.

## How can Peachy Mondays support you?

We're here to help you **Listen better, Act faster, and Drive engagement & effectiveness.** If you'd like to learn more about how Peachy Mondays can work with you to understand levels of Connectedness and – most importantly – increase Connectedness in your organisation, **get in touch.**

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