

How internal communications and mental health are changing through remote working

COYO study: Internal communication as a game changer in an age of global crisis

- 79 percent have introduced digital tools such as social intranets since the start of the crisis
- 82 percent believe that internal communications will play a more important role
- Managers see remote working much more positively than before the pandemic (75 percent)
- Mental health: Employees see a positive effect on mental health from remote working (57 percent), but overtime is on the decline (21 percent)

Hamburg, June 2, 2021 – Over the last year, companies have been confronted with unimagined challenges as a result of COVID-19: working from home, remote working, etc. have also made it clear once again how important reliable internal communication is for a successful company. **COYO**, the leading German provider of employee communication software, has carried out a study with the School of Communications and Management on internal communication, involving a survey of the status quo of internal communication in these extraordinary times with employees, communications decision makers and managers and thereby gaining new insights.

Internal communication at a time of crisis-driven change

The pandemic has brought new challenges to companies in terms of internal communication in particular. A third of those surveyed (33 percent) stated that the workload in this area has increased and over half (53 percent) have noticed changes and additional tasks. To make internal communication easier, 79 percent have introduced new digital tools such as social intranets since the start of the crisis. A challenge for many communication experts, however, has been to bring an openness to new communication solutions into their own companies: while over half of those surveyed (57 percent) are themselves very open to new tools for internal communication, only slightly more than 11 percent consider that their own companies to be very open in this connection. The respondents agree, however, that internal communication will play a much more important role in future (82 percent).

Better management through internal communication

Functioning internal communication also supports management communication: 90 percent state that it leads to an increase in employee satisfaction, productivity (67 percent) and business success (79 percent). Internal communication gives managers greater scope to cooperate with employees: over half (64 percent) of respondents identify a cooperative management style in their company, which in turn is the preferred variant (86 percent). Interestingly, over 22 percent of those surveyed seem to have authoritarian management, while not a single person regards that form of management as desirable. Accordingly, there is a large discrepancy between aspiration and reality when it comes to the various management styles.

Social intranets are among the most popular tools

The unforeseen urgency of facilitating working from home has forced many companies to become digital. As personal interaction largely disappeared and could only take place virtually, digital communication options had to be created. A popular tool in this connection is an intranet: half of employees surveyed stated that they like using a conventional intranet (52 percent) or a social intranet (48 percent) for information and participation in internal communication. Communication experts also agree with this and enjoy using conventional intranets (52 percent) or social intranets (45 percent) for internal communication. At the same time, the newsletter is almost equally popular with employees (48 percent).

Remote working now perceived more positively than before

Nearly everyone surveyed (97 percent) now has the opportunity to work remotely. For 29 percent, their opinion of this has changed: they now see working from home more positively than before the pandemic. Companies have also changed their opinion, with 75 percent regarding working from home more positively than before the pandemic. Only 9 percent had a positive attitude to it before the pandemic. According to the respondents, the most important factors in internal communication for supporting remote working are a conscious approach to the corporate culture (49 percent) and the provision of digital platforms and tools (38 percent): a functioning platform for internal communication and digital interaction is very important for more than two thirds of those surveyed (65 percent say very important, 16 percent important).

Working from home: a curse and a blessing for mental health

Remote working affects mental health both positively, as employees have greater flexibility (57 percent), and negatively, because of taking on more work (21 percent). The results of the study show that the mental health of employees was actively supported in only 45 percent of cases – 41 percent of respondents state that this does not happen in their company. Measures to improve mental health include, for example, flexible working hours and working from home (93 percent), relaxation techniques such as yoga (55 percent), workshops and scope for private interaction (50 percent), subsidized sport (48 percent) and healthy eating in the workplace (45 percent). In the view of those surveyed, internal communication also has an impact on the mental health of employees: around three quarters of respondents see this as (somewhat) significant to very significant, while only just under one percent consider that internal communication has no influence on mental health. From the point of view of companies, mental health can be improved in particular by appreciation (86 percent) and cohesion among colleagues (67 percent), flexible working hours (55 percent) and a constructive feedback culture (50 percent).

Methodology:

The study was carried out by the [School of Communications and Management](#) on behalf of COYO. The field work took place between October 2020 and February 2021. The sample consisted of 337 participants in Germany, 41 percent of whom are in executive and management positions. A broad spectrum of organizations is represented in the survey: the largest proportion comprises small companies with fewer than 300 employees at 36 percent, followed by companies with 300 – 999 employees (20 percent) and very large companies with over 10,000 employees (14 percent).

About COYO

COYO is the leading German provider of employee communication software and is based in Hamburg. COYO offers companies an intuitive and centralized software solution that makes it easy to reach out to all employees in the company, connect them with each other and promote both feedback and corporate culture. With COYO, employers can create a communication channel that is independent of device and location for company-related information and social interaction. From clinics to railroad companies – over a million users in firms such as Deutsche Bahn, Ritter Sport, Asklepios and E.ON have found their Digital Home in COYO. Further information is available at www.coyoapp.com.

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