

Kahoot!



# Kahoot! 2021 Workplace Culture Report

Unlocking success in  
the hybrid workplace

# Unlocking success in the hybrid workplace

## Tech that includes and engages employees regardless of location will be vital to healthy hybrid corporate culture and better business outcomes

We almost all agree: remote, or at least hybrid work, is here to stay. Yet while that reality begins to settle for many, some interesting cultural challenges that may result from this new way of work are beginning to become apparent.

To learn more about how the hybrid model will affect company culture, Kahoot! partnered with research firm Workplace Intelligence to survey 1,626 full-time employees and HR leaders in the United States. The survey assessed challenges to corporate culture in balancing hybrid and remote workplace realities, and how technology can help put employees on a level playing field while also building emotional connectedness regardless of location.

**Kahoot! 360 is an inclusive technology solution which engages every employee equally, whether they are working in the office or remotely.**

**James Micklethwait, VP Kahoot! at Work**

### Key findings include:

- ▶ 77% of employees want to work remotely at least part of the time after the pandemic.
- ▶ The hybrid model could create a two-tier system favoring those who go into the office. Case in point: 83% of HR leaders say face-to-face communication is important to be successful at their company.
- ▶ With remote work here to stay, 84% of HR leaders say that workers will use collaboration and employee engagement technologies more over the next year.
- ▶ But for the hybrid workplace to succeed, technology that supports efficiency won't be enough — technology that drives emotional connectedness regardless of location will be key, since 91% of employees want to feel more connected to their teammates.
- ▶ The ability to socialize also contributes to employee connectedness, according to 72% of employees who say it's important that they can have fun with their colleagues during the workday.
- ▶ Companies who leverage best-in-class technology to bridge the divide between remote and office workers will enjoy additional benefits. At these companies, around 9 out of 10 employees say they're productive and engaged, versus less than 4 out of 10 employees at companies where the tech is unsatisfactory.
- ▶ However, some companies might not be aware that they're missing the mark with their existing technologies. Just 57% of workers (but 79% of HR leaders) rate their collaboration and employee engagement tools as "excellent" or "above average."

Overall, the survey highlighted how technology, particularly inclusive technologies, should be an integral part of a holistic package of measures to build and maintain a healthy corporate culture in the hybrid workplace. And since businesses who improve their "cultural tech stack" will also enjoy other notable benefits, there's simply no reason not to take action. The future of the hybrid model and the success of your business may depend on it.

## Without careful strategic planning, the hybrid model could exacerbate traditional biases against remote workers and create a two-tier system favoring those who go into the office.

It is true that the mass transition to working from home during the pandemic helped eliminate some of the misconceptions about remote work. According to PwC, 82% of employers now say the shift to remote work has been successful for their company, up from 73% in June 2020.

Despite this progress, Kahoot!'s survey revealed that more favorable perceptions and better treatment of office workers persist. For example, over 6 out of 10 HR leaders say that employees who work in an office are more likely to get promoted and receive regular raises, and they are seen as harder workers and more valuable. Notably, younger leaders were much more likely than their older counterparts to identify that these issues exist.

There is also general consensus that in-person interactions are still needed to get ahead at work. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of employees and 83% of HR leaders say face-to-face communication is important for an employee's ability to be successful at their company.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the hybrid model could put office workers and remote workers on a very uneven playing field. This may be especially true at businesses that adopt a flexible hybrid approach where employees have the freedom to select how often they go into an office. The result could be a two-tier system where staff who choose to work on-site are able to successfully advance their careers while those who elect to work remotely see their career trajectory limited.

Not only is this unfair and detrimental to employee morale, but it could also prove to be a significant impediment to the success of the hybrid work model. Staff will surely notice the preferential treatment of on-site workers, and in turn feel that they have no choice but to go into the office. And as fewer employees choose to work remotely, we may eventually return to a model where on-site work is prioritized and remote work is seen as a benefit only to be used occasionally.

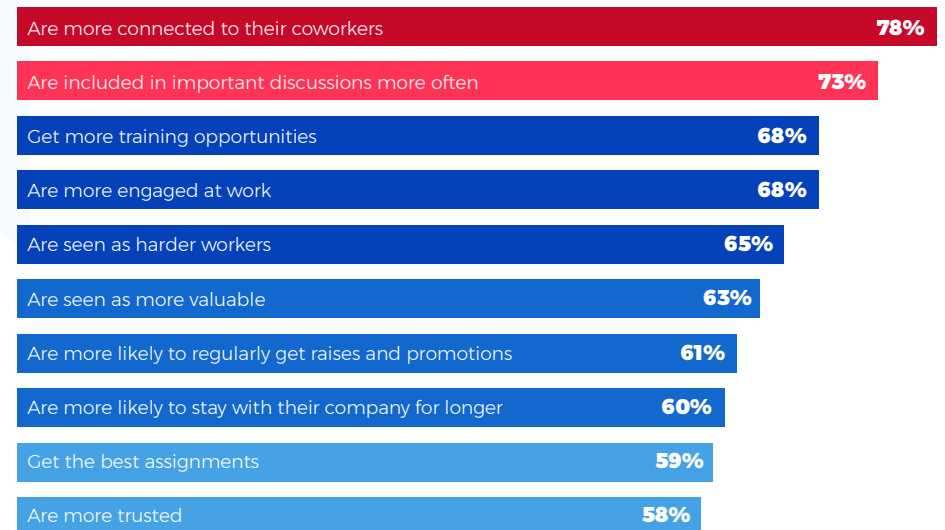
### How important is face-to-face communications for employees' ability to be successful at your company?

% who say "very" or "somewhat"

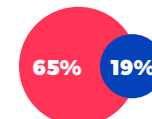
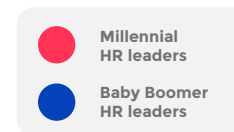


### HR leaders: Compared to remote workers, employees who work in an office...

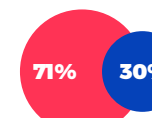
% who "strongly agree" or "agree"



### The generational divide among HR leaders



HR leaders that say office workers are more likely to get regular raises



HR leaders that say office workers are seen as harder workers



## Despite the more favorable perceptions of office workers, employees show a strong preference for remote or hybrid work arrangements after the pandemic.

Post-COVID-19, the majority of employees (77%) say they would prefer to work remotely at least part of the time. Over half (53%) would prefer hybrid arrangements that combine remote and on-site work, while nearly one-quarter want to work remotely 5 days/week. Even with the lingering misconceptions about remote staff, it is clear that employees believe that the advantages of remote work — better work-life balance, a greater ability to focus, and no commute, to name a few — strongly outweigh the disadvantages.

In fact, employees say they would make significant sacrifices to work remotely at least part of the time. To avoid having to go into an office full-time, around 4 out of 10 respondents would give up learning and development opportunities, regularly work

overtime with no extra pay, give up promotion opportunities, receive lower or less frequent raises, or take a pay cut.

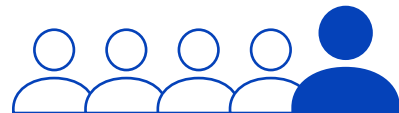
Notably, Millennials were much more likely to say they would make these sacrifices than Baby Boomers. This makes sense when you consider that these young workers, often known as the “sandwich” generation, are likely to be caring for their own children as well as their aging parents. For many Millennials, therefore, remote work is an immensely valuable benefit as it gives them the ability to balance the demands of their work and personal life. However, if the issues around remote worker perceptions remain unresolved, this generation may find themselves left behind at work while their older and younger counterparts successfully advance their careers.

The generational divide among employees



**1 in 2**

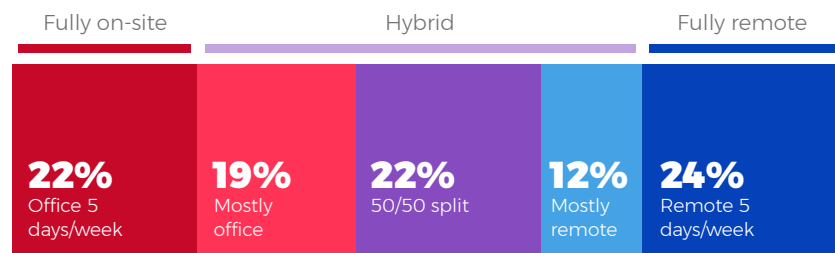
Millennial employees would make sacrifices to avoid full-time office work



**1 in 5**

Baby Boomer employees would make sacrifices to avoid full-time office work

### Employees' preferred work arrangements after COVID-19



### Employees: To avoid having to go to an office full-time, how likely is it that you would do the following?

% who say “very” or “somewhat” likely



## With remote work here to stay, technology and the virtual environment will continue to grow in importance.

There is no question that a wide range of technologies, especially collaboration and employee engagement tools, were essential in enabling the transition to remote work during the pandemic. Almost overnight, there was an explosion in the demand for tech products such as Zoom, Slack, and Microsoft Teams as businesses sought to maintain their operations amidst stay-at-home orders and widespread fears around COVID-19.

Among those we surveyed, all HR leaders and 95% of employees reported that collaboration and employee engagement technologies have benefited workers during the pandemic. For example, respondents highlighted that these technologies have helped employees feel included in team discussions and decisions, communicate and share knowledge with their teammates, be more visible at work, and provide feedback and input to their company. Respondents also noted that these technologies have been key for employee engagement, motivation, and productivity.

As employees resume on-site work at least part of the time within the hybrid model, business leaders may wonder whether the use of collaboration and employee engagement technologies will begin to drop off. However, our survey revealed that the opposite will be true: 84% of HR leaders and 65% of employees say that staff will use these technologies even more over the next year.

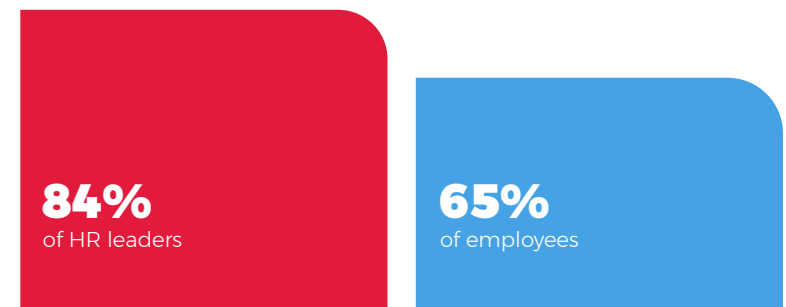
HR leaders also predict that the virtual workplace (i.e., online platforms, tools, and technologies) will have a stronger influence on their business than ever before. The vast majority (86%) say that the virtual environment will play an important role in defining company culture after COVID-19 — a 20% increase from before the pandemic. However, despite the increased significance of the digital workspace both during and after the pandemic, only 2 out of 3 employees say that their company’s virtual environment represents their company culture well.

**Kahoot! 360 became popular as an “in person” experience. But since the pandemic, our customers have turned to Kahoot! as a way for remote teams to share knowledge and build team spirit. This means Kahoot! is uniquely placed to help our customers transition to hybrid ways of working.**

**James Micklethwait, VP Kahoot! at Work**

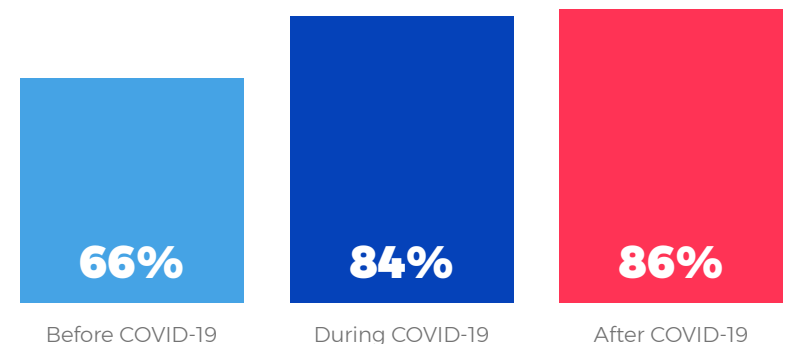
**Compared to before COVID-19, how do you think the use of collaboration and employee engagement technologies will change over the next year?**

% who say “much more” or “somewhat more”



**HR leaders: How would you rate the importance of the virtual environment/workplace in defining a company’s culture?**

% who say “very” or “somewhat”



**For the hybrid workplace to succeed, technology that supports efficiency and productivity won't be enough. Inclusive and engaging technology that drives emotional connectedness, both in person and remotely, will be key for a great company culture.**

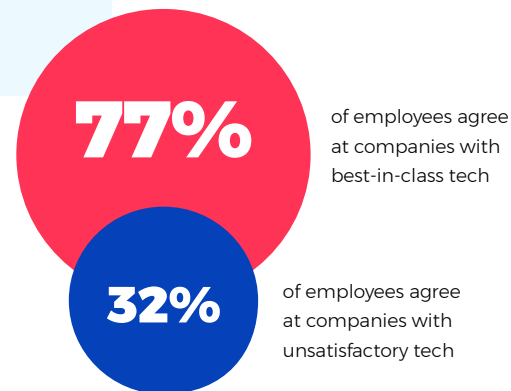
Although respondents indicated that workplace tech will continue to grow in importance, the survey revealed that the technologies at many organizations aren't fulfilling deeper employee needs around connectedness and inclusion. This is illustrated by the fact that over 9 out of 10 employees selected at least one way they would feel more connected to their coworkers, including more frequent communication with them, more technology-based collaboration and employee engagement tools, and more opportunities for social or fun interactions.

Yet while it is evident that technology can boost connectedness, few studies have examined its ability to address fairness issues in the workplace. Technology alone is not a panacea for company culture issues, but according to our survey there is a clear link between best-in-class tech and the fair treatment of remote staff. Specifically, at companies whose collaboration and employee engagement technologies were rated "excellent," 77% of employees say that remote workers are treated fairly compared to their office counterparts. At companies where these technologies are "poor" or "below average," just 32% say that remote workers are treated fairly.

**You can bring out a good sense of your organizational culture while playing kahoots.**

*Emily Zachariasen, National Sales Training Manager, Guild Mortgage*

**"Remote workers are treated fairly compared to workers who go into the office."**



**Employees: What would make you feel more connected to your teammates?**

91% selected at least one option, including:

- ▶ More frequent communication with my teammates
- ▶ Being able to easily share knowledge with my teammates
- ▶ More technology-based collaboration and employee engagement tools
- ▶ Being able to provide input that affects team decisions
- ▶ More opportunities for social or fun interactions with my team
- ▶ Being able to recognize the achievements of my teammates

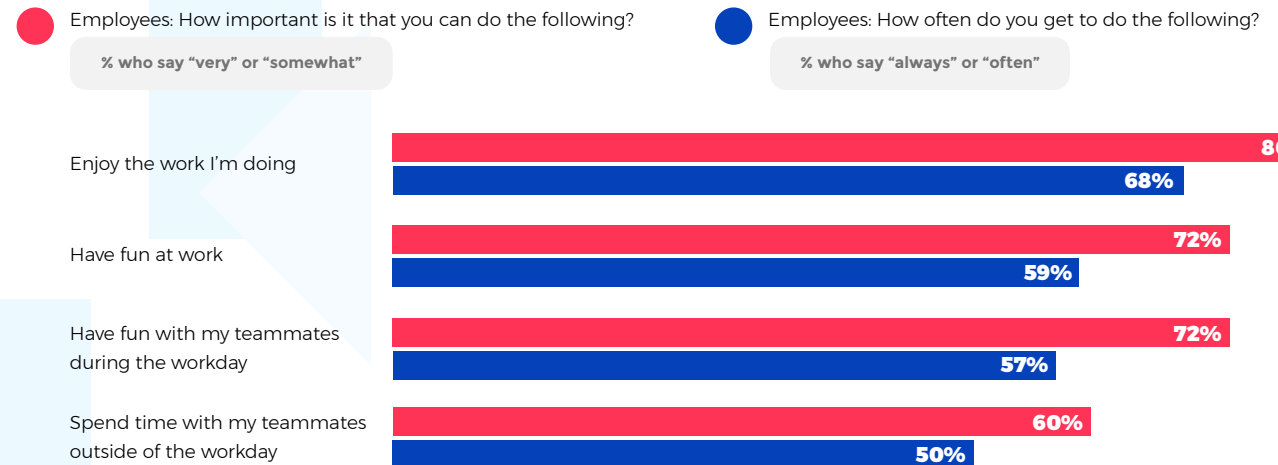
## The survey also revealed that the ability to socialize and have fun is an important driver of employee connectedness – yet many workers aren’t getting enough opportunities for this.

According to survey respondents, employees’ ability to informally spend time with their teammates is an essential part of their workplace experience. For example, over 7 out of 10 employees say it is important that they can have fun with their colleagues during the workday and 6 out of 10 would like to spend time with them after working hours.

The majority of HR leaders also recognize how important it is for employees to enjoy their work (87%), have fun at work (80%), and have fun with their teammates during the workday (81%) and after hours (71%). But despite the widespread agreement around this, many workers reported that they aren’t engaging in these activities as often as they’d like to. Adding to this issue is a notable perception gap: compared to employees, a higher percentage of HR leaders believe that workers “always” or “often” enjoy the work they’re doing (78%), have fun at work (73%), and have fun with their teammates at work (69%) and after the workday (64%).

Employers should take note of these gaps as they consider how to create an inclusive culture where all employees, regardless of their location, feel a sense of connectedness. Companies may believe they’re promoting a culture that prioritizes fun, but little will come of their efforts if staff do not have the right tools to help them connect or if managers do not allow for social time during the workday.

### The importance and frequency of opportunities for fun for employees



**Kahoot! 360 Spirit is our flagship plan for Enterprises for building employee engagement by helping organizations and large teams connect with every employee. Contact our sales team today for a demo: [360@kahoot.com](mailto:360@kahoot.com).**

## Companies leveraging technologies that bridge the divide between remote and office workers will realize a more fair workplace for their people with additional benefits.

“I am more likely to stay at my current employer if my company implements more technology-based employee engagement activities (e.g., games, game-based learning or training).”

**74%**  
of highly engaged employees agree

**70%**  
of highly productive employees agree

**34%**  
of highly disengaged employees agree

**33%**  
of highly unproductive employees agree

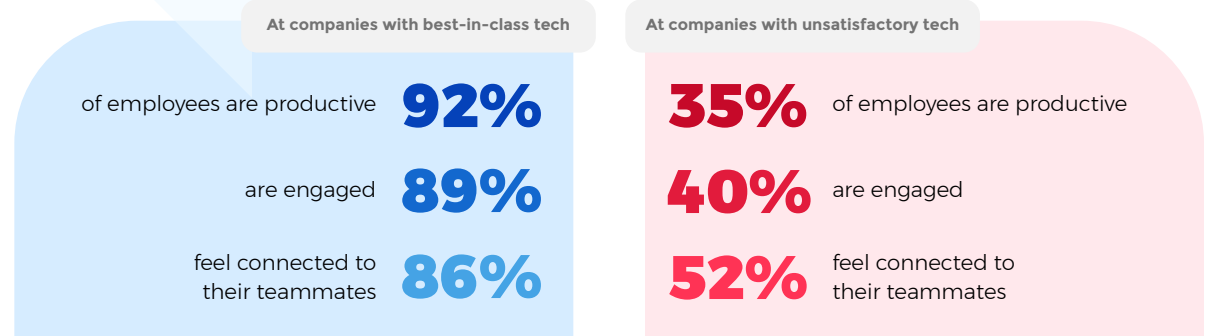
The survey revealed a strong link between best-in-class technology and several key employee outcomes. Among employees who rate their collaboration and employee engagement technologies as “excellent,” around 9 out of 10 say they are “highly” or “somewhat” productive, connected, and engaged. Among those who rate their technologies as “below average” or “poor,” a much lower percentage of respondents report these outcomes.

In addition, the vast majority of employees agree that better tech would improve their engagement and motivation at work. Nearly 9 out of 10 selected at least one form of technology that would boost these outcomes, including collaboration and employee engagement

tools, tech-based employee engagement activities (e.g., games, game-based learning or training), and tech that supports social or fun interactions at work.

The survey also found that tech which includes and engages employees regardless of location can help employers retain their top talent. A notable 74% and 70% of highly engaged and highly productive employees, respectively, would be more likely to stay with their employer if it implements more technology-based employee engagement activities. However, only around 1 in 3 highly disengaged and highly unproductive employees agree.

### Why best-in-class collaboration and employee engagement technologies matter



### Employees: What technologies would make you feel more engaged and motivated at work?

88% selected at least one option, including:

- ▶ Technology-based collaboration and employee engagement tools
- ▶ Technology-based employee engagement activities (e.g., games, game-based learning or training)
- ▶ Technology that supports social or fun interactions with my teammates
- ▶ Technology that allows me to easily give and receive recognition
- ▶ Technology that allows me to easily provide input and ideas to my company



## However, some companies aren't aware that they're missing the mark with their existing technologies. This, and other notable perception gaps, could hinder the success of company culture in the post-COVID hybrid workplace.

It is critical that employers closely listen to and understand employee needs when it comes to the technologies that can optimize their experience, be that remote, office or hybrid. But according to the survey, HR leaders have a far more positive view of their tech than employees. Nearly 8 out of 10 HR leaders say their collaboration and engagement technologies are "excellent" or "above average," while just 57% of employees agree.

There are also gaps when it comes to how well businesses are addressing key post-COVID priorities. Just 57% of employees, but nearly three-quarters of HR leaders, say their company is doing an "excellent" or above "average" job at fostering trust and cohesion among teams, and leveraging technology to drive collaboration among teams.

However, among both audiences there is widespread agreement

that employers could improve their cultural tech stack. Fewer than half of HR leaders and employees say that staff have everything they need when it comes to the collaboration and employee engagement technologies that workers need to perform their jobs.

Outside of technology, there are other perception gaps that employers should take note of as they develop their post-COVID priorities and strategy. Specifically, the survey revealed that employees feel far less engaged, connected, and satisfied than their companies realize. Businesses that take the time to determine why there is a disconnect in these areas will be more likely to pinpoint how they can address these issues. And that is a key ingredient for success in tomorrow's hybrid workplace.

Do you feel like your organization offers the right collaboration and employee engagement technologies for employees to perform their jobs effectively?

% who say "Yes, employees have everything they need"

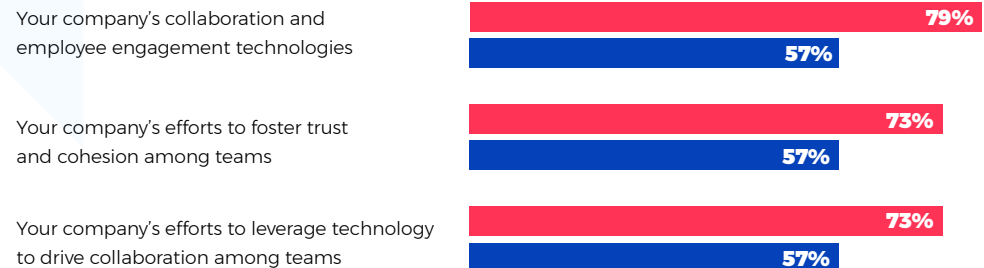
**45%**  
of HR leaders

**47%**  
of employees

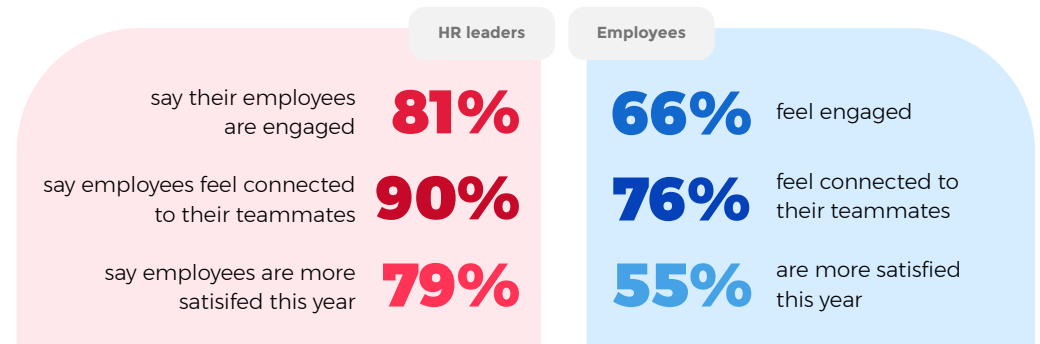
How would you rate the following?

● HR leaders ● Employees

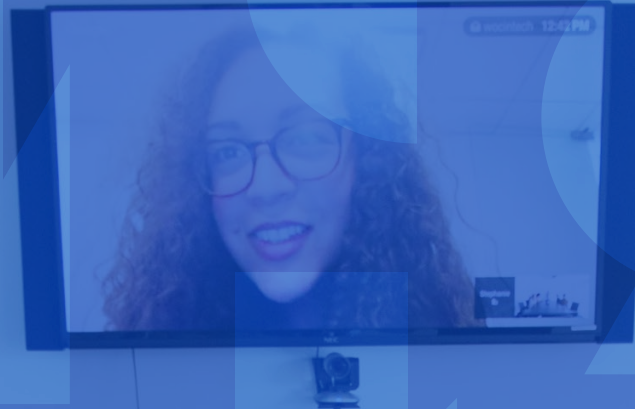
% who say "excellent" or "above average"



### Differing perspectives on key workplace outcomes



# Tech that includes and engages employees regardless of location will be key in tomorrow's hybrid workplace



There's no question that technology will remain essential after the pandemic, but the post-COVID workplace will require new solutions to bring distributed teams together. In the remote and hybrid work future, tech can't just be deployed to solve practical needs; a new breed of emotionally engaging tech is required. In fact, company culture, employee retention, and other business outcomes may depend on it.

Tools that connect employees both practically but also emotionally, such as those within Kahoot!'s suite of offerings, will be ideally placed to enable corporates and HR professionals in managing this shift and seeing-off some of the inevitable challenges inherent in a remote or hybrid future of work. In fact, many businesses are using Kahoot! to engage and connect remote teams, as well as teams that continue to work onsite. Currently, 97% of Fortune 500 companies use Kahoot! to improve many aspects of the employee experience

from onboarding, to receiving training to sharing knowledge and connecting with colleagues. There were more than 20 million participating players across organizations in the last 12 months.

"We can see that the hybrid workplace will present cultural challenges for employees and employers", said James Micklethwait, VP Kahoot! at Work, "but this research also points to genuinely viable solutions to this with inclusive, emotionally engaging technology at the forefront. While Kahoot's core strength has always been connecting people in person, the pandemic experience has shown just how successful Kahoot! is in driving the same inclusivity and emotional connection remotely. What we're really looking forward to now is seeing tools like Kahoot! 360 Spirit not just connecting remote and office workers, but also bringing them together emotionally and in a fun way to the benefit of company culture and business outcomes."

## Methodology

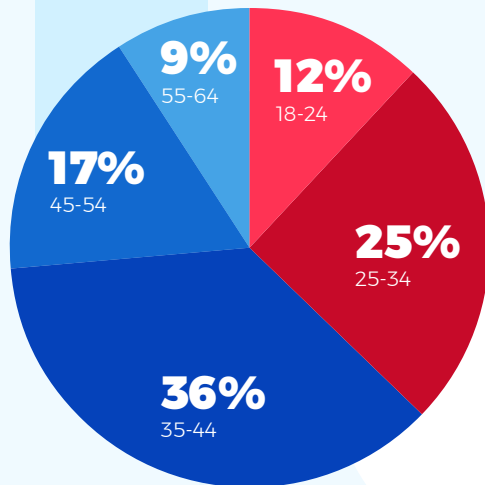
Research findings are based on a survey of 1,626 HR Leaders and employees conducted by Savanta, Inc. between July 6 – July 16, 2021. The study targeted individuals who were working full-time, 18 to 65 years of age, and living in the U.S. Respondents were invited to take part in the survey via email and were provided with a small monetary incentive for doing so.

For general inquiries, email [360@kahoot.com](mailto:360@kahoot.com)

For press inquiries, email [press@kahoot.com](mailto:press@kahoot.com)

## Demographics

### What is your age group?



### What is your gender?

