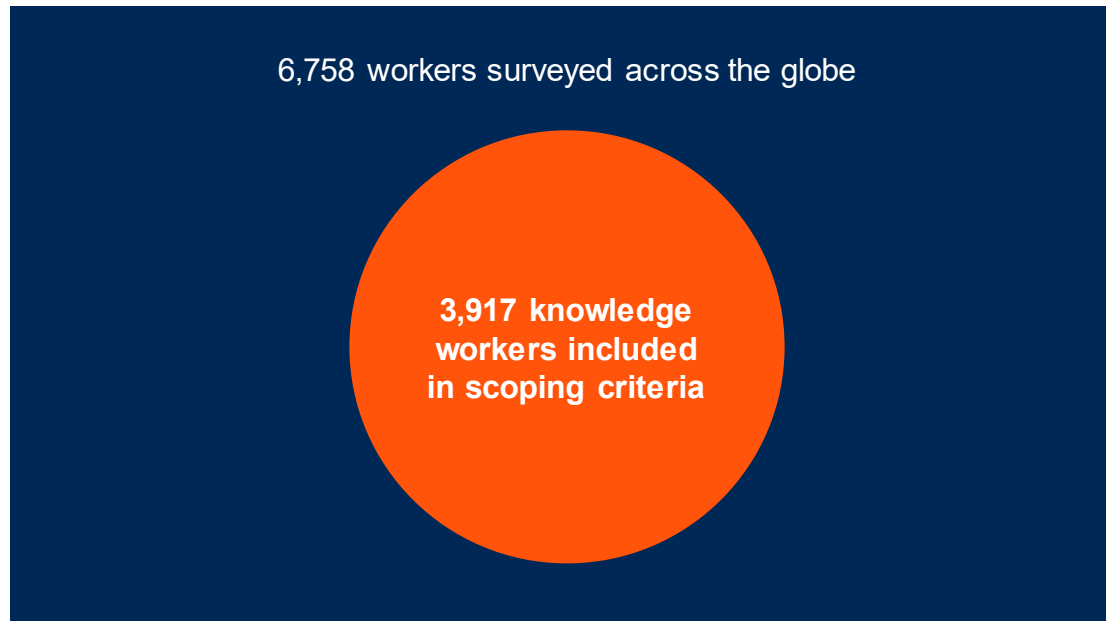# Culture in a Hybrid World

16th March 2022

Gartner®

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Scope of Our Data Population

Knowledge Workers[a] who currently work hybrid or have been working remotely since the pandemic

6,758 workers surveyed across the globe

3,917 knowledge workers included in scoping criteria

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

[a] Knowledge Worker is defined as employees whose majority of work can be done remotely.

What Is Culture?

How We Define Culture in This Study

"How we do things around here"

Source: Gartner

What Is Culture?

How We Define Culture in This Study

Identity
"Who we are"

Community
"How we treat each other"

"How we do things around here"

Purpose
"Why we exist"

Source: Gartner

What Is the Difference Between These?

Influence of the Environment on Behaviors

Football Culture at Home

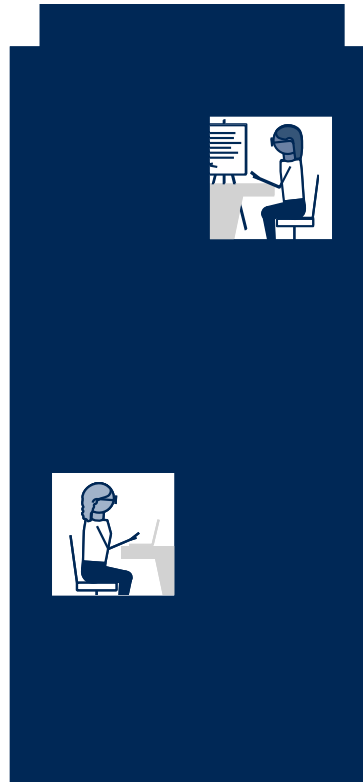**Football Culture in Stadium**

How did we experience culture pre-pandemic?

Our Pre-Pandemic Culture Experience

Key Attributes of the Pre-Pandemic Cultural Experience

Culture Diffused Through Offices
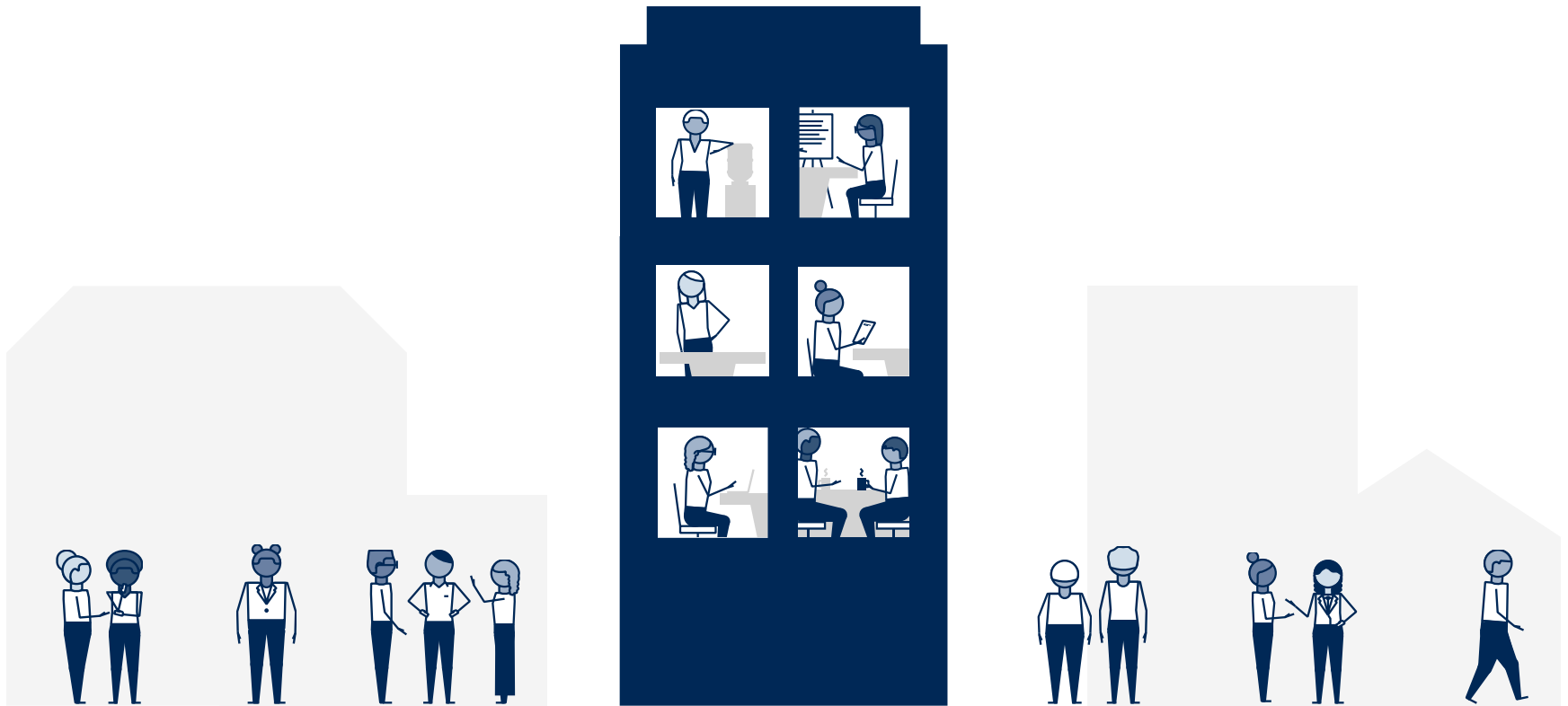In the **office**…

Source: Gartner

Physical Proximity
…mostly **in person**…

Our Pre-Pandemic Culture Experience

Key Attributes of the Pre-Pandemic Cultural Experience

Macro-Based Experiences
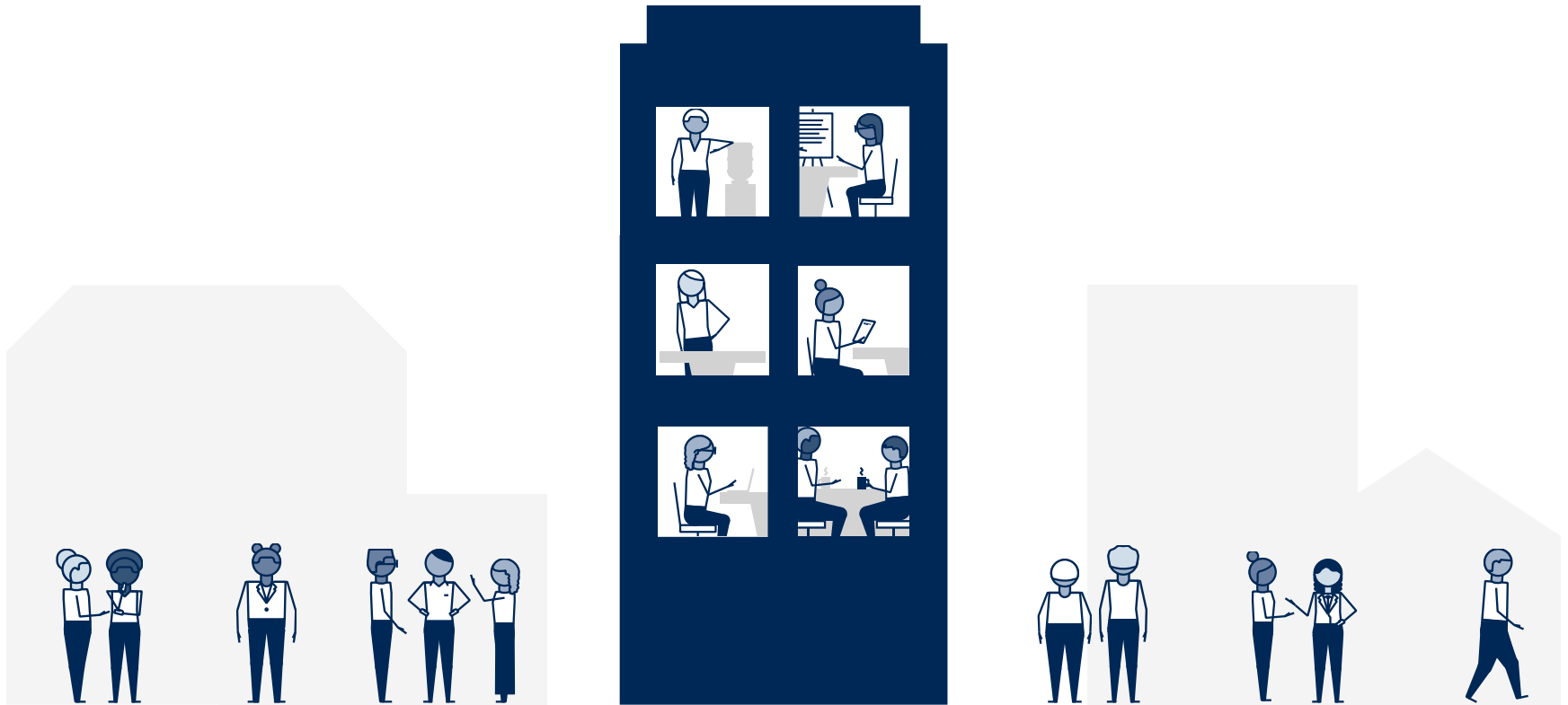…with **lots of people**.

Source: Gartner

Our Pre-Pandemic Culture Experience

Key Attributes of the Pre-Pandemic Cultural Experience

| **Physical Proximity**
…mostly **in person**… | **Culture Diffused Through Offices**
In the **office**… | **Macro-Based Experiences**
…with **lots of people**. |

Source: Gartner

Hybrid Disrupts Traditional Cultural Experience

Hybrid Disruptions of the Pre-Pandemic Cultural Experience

Physical Proximity
…mostly **in person**…

Culture Diffused Through Offices
In the **office**…

Macro-Based Experiences
…with **lots of people**.

⚠️

Shrinking Ecosystems

Employees are interacting once a week or less with their "weak ties[a]", compared to several times a week before the pandemic.

Source: Gartner

[a] Weak ties comprise: peers from your organization that you do not directly or indirectly work with; your manager's manager; managers outside your team; leaders of your team; leaders outside your team

Hybrid Disrupts Traditional Cultural Experience

Hybrid Disruptions of the Pre-Pandemic Cultural Experience

Physical Proximity …mostly **in person**…

Culture Diffused Through Offices In the **office**…

Macro-Based Experiences …with **lots of people**.

Fewer In-Person Interactions

Employees meet their teams in person two days a week, compared to four days a week before the pandemic.

Shrinking Ecosystems

Employees are interacting once a week or less with their "weak ties[a]", compared to several times a week before the pandemic.

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Hybrid Disrupts Traditional Cultural Experience

Hybrid Disruptions of the Pre-Pandemic Cultural Experience
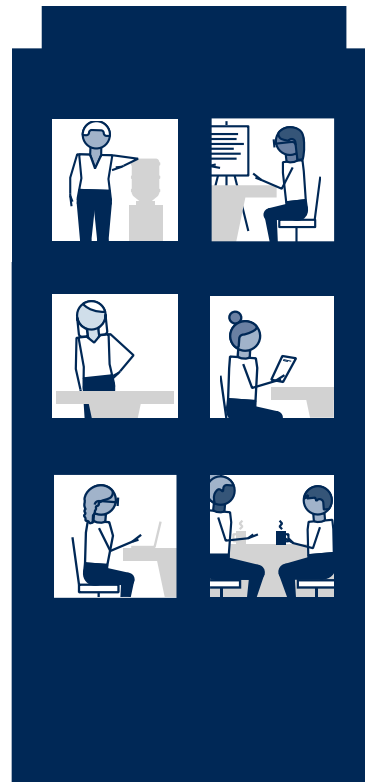
Physical Proximity
…mostly **in person**…

Culture Diffused Through Offices
In the **office**…

Macro-Based Experiences
…with **lots of people**.

Fewer In-Person Interactions

Employees meet their teams in person two days a week, compared to four days a week before the pandemic.

Less Time In Offices

Employees spend 65% less time in offices compared to before the pandemic.

Shrinking Ecosystems

Employees are interacting once a week or less with their "weak ties[a]", compared to several times a week before the pandemic.

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

As a Result, Leaders Are Now Worried

CEOs' Top Three Concerns About Office and Home Working Policy for Knowledge Workers

1 **Culture-Engagement and Morale**

2 Collaboration/Innovation

3 Well-Being, Fatigue and Safety

n = 374

Source: 2022 Gartner CEO and Senior Business Executive Survey

HR Leaders' Most Challenging Aspect for Setting Strategy for a Hybrid Workforce

1 **Adjusting Our Current Culture to Support a Hybrid Workforce**

2 Enabling Managers to Manage a Hybrid Workforce

3 Upskilling Leaders to Lead in a Hybrid Work Environment

4 Managing Employee Performance in a Hybrid Work Environment

5 Enabling Collaboration Across Teams

40% of HR leaders report an increase in their culture budget since the beginning of the pandemic.

n = 210; 235

Source: Managing Reopening Plans and Retaining Talent Amid New COVID-19 Variants and the Great Resignation (23 February 2022); 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World HR Leader Survey

With Good Reason

Q: To What Extent Do You Agree, Compared to a Fully Onsite Work Model, Culture Is More Important In a Hybrid Work Model to Achieve Organizational Goals?
Percentage of HR Leaders

9%
Disagree

30%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree

61%
Agree
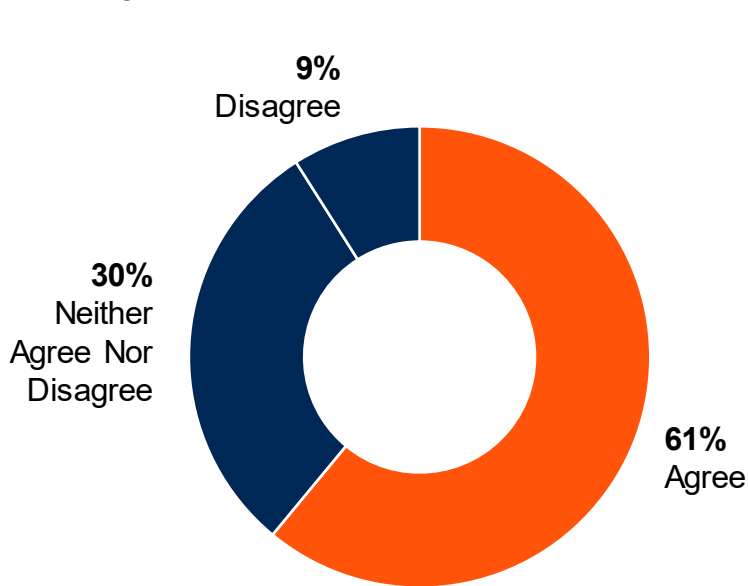
n = 235
Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World HR Leader Survey

Importance of Culture for Employees to Be Effective in Their Job
Percentage of Employees

5%
Not At All Or Not Too Important

19%
Somewhat Important

76%
Very Or Extremely Important
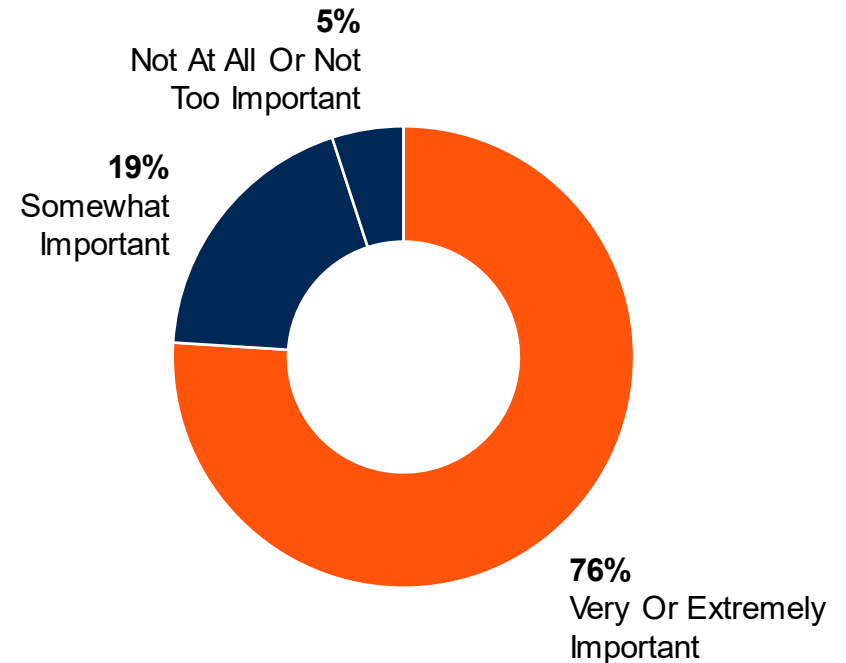
n = 1,779 employees worldwide
Source: Gartner Human Deal Benchmarking Survey (July 2021)

The Hybrid Culture Question

Key Question Leaders Ask About Culture in a Hybrid World

If culture is **"how we do things around here"**…

… what is it when there
is no one **"how"** and no one **"here"** anymore?

Source: Gartner

How to Make Your Culture Work

Two Essential Components to Culture Success

Alignment

1. I know what the culture is.

2. I believe the culture is right for us.

3. I demonstrate our cultural behaviors.

Source: Gartner

How to Make Your Culture Work

Two Essential Components to Culture Success

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3. I demonstrate our cultural behaviors.

Source: Gartner

Connectedness

1. I identify with the culture.

2. I care about the culture.

3. I belong within the culture.

How to Make Your Culture Work

Two Essential Components to Culture Success

Alignment

1. I know what the culture is.

2. I believe the culture is right for us.

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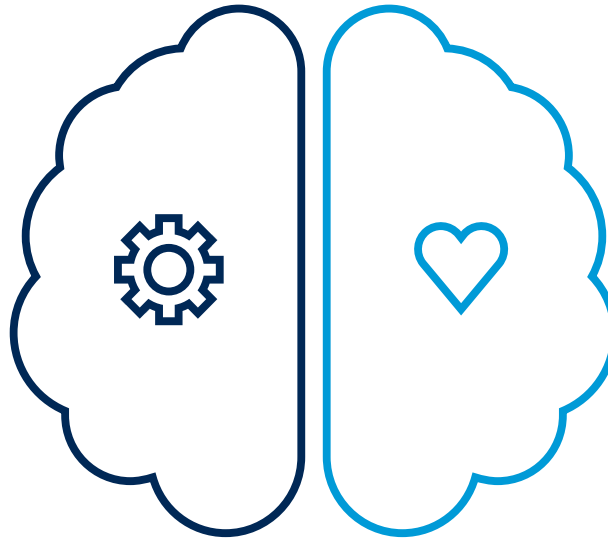
Connectedness

1. I identify with the culture.

2. I care about the culture.

3. I belong within the culture.

Both contribute to culture's impact on outcomes such as performance and retention.

Source: Gartner

**Thinking of the three "connectedness measures"…
how is YOUR organization doing with each of these?**

- ☐ Helping employees **identify** with your culture
- ☐ Helping employees **care** about your culture
- ☐ Helping employees feel like they **belong** in your culture

We Have Always Been Intentional About Alignment

Common Efforts to Build Alignment

Alignment

1 — Training Leaders to Model the Culture

2 — Delivering Leader/Manager-Led Culture Communications

3 — Cultural Onboarding for New Hires

4 — Recruiting for Cultural Fit

5 — Terminating Persistent Culture Violators

"Whatever the state of the changing cultural experience, we have and will continue to be **intentional** in teaching employees what our culture is and how to demonstrate it."

n = 190 HR leaders
Source: 2017 Culture Benchmarking Survey

But We Relied on Osmosis to Drive Connectedness

Pre-Pandemic Approach to Building Connectedness
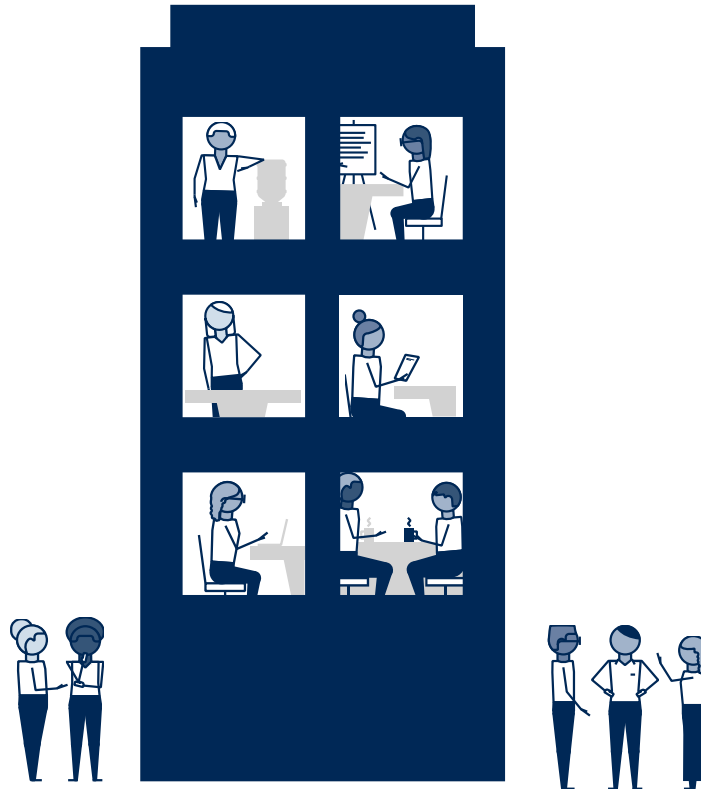
"Our prior strategy for driving connectedness was mainly just: **get employees aligned and connectedness will happen**. In essence, we left it to chance. There wasn't really much **intentionality** in it."

Source: Gartner

Which of the following experiences have most significantly driven employee disconnection from your culture?

☐ Less time in offices

☐ Fewer in-person interactions

☐ Shrinking ecosystems

Connectedness Is Now a Problem…

Connectedness in Distress

76% of HR leaders feel that hybrid work **challenges employees' connection** to organizational culture.

Only 1 in 4 employees are **connected to their organization's culture.**

Company Culture

n = 235; 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World HR Leader Survey; 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

...Impacting the Entire Workforce

Low Connectedness Does Not Discriminate

New Hires
23% are connected

Tenured Employees
26% are connected

Gen Z
25% are connected

Millennials
24% are connected

Individual Contributors
18% are connected

Managers
29% are connected

Women
23% are connected

Men
26% are connected
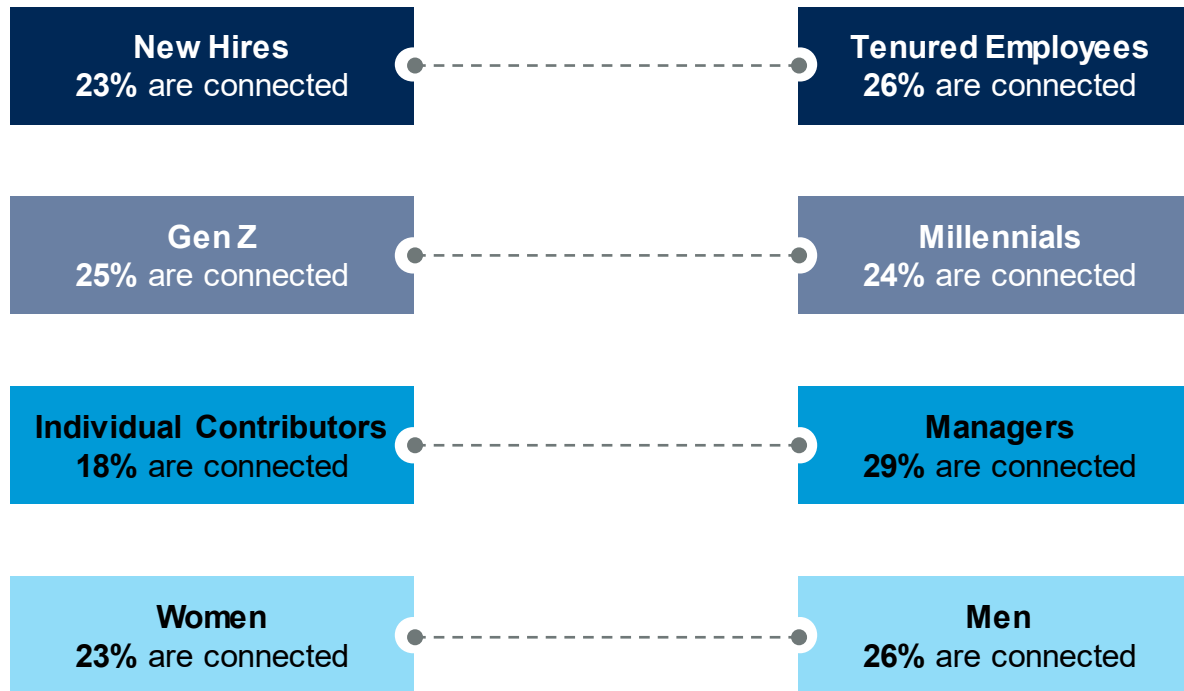
n = 232 to 2,320 hybrid/remote knowledge workers
Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

**How do we drive connectedness
in today's cultural experience?**

Hybrid Is an Opportunity, Not Just a Disruption

Your New Imperatives to Drive Connectedness

	Less time in offices	Fewer in-person interactions	Shrinking ecosystems
Hybrid disruption	Less time in offices	Fewer in-person interactions	Shrinking ecosystems
Hybrid opportunity	More time with work	Greater inclusivity	Intensified relationships
	Work replaces the office as the most common, constant cultural experience.	Rarefication of in-person interactions leads to less reliance on visual cues.	Employees' "strong ties" are getting stronger.
Your Imperative	How can we use work to drive connectedness?	How can we use greater inclusivity to drive connectedness?	How can we use intensified relationships to drive connectedness?

Source: Gartner

Culture Connectedness in a Hybrid World

Connectedness by Osmosis	Hybrid Shift	Connectedness by Intention
Diffuse Culture Through the Office	Work replaces the office as the most common, constant cultural experience.	**Diffuse Culture Through Work**
Connect Through Physical Proximity	*Being seen* becomes rarefied, placing greater weight on the need to *feel seen.*	**Connect Through Emotional Proximity**
Optimize a Macro-Based Experience	Culture is experienced in smaller ecosystems with intensified relationships.	**Optimize a Micro-Based Experience**

Connectedness by Intention Delivers

Maximum Impact on Employee Culture Connectedness

■ Connectedness by Osmosis ■ Connectedness by Intention

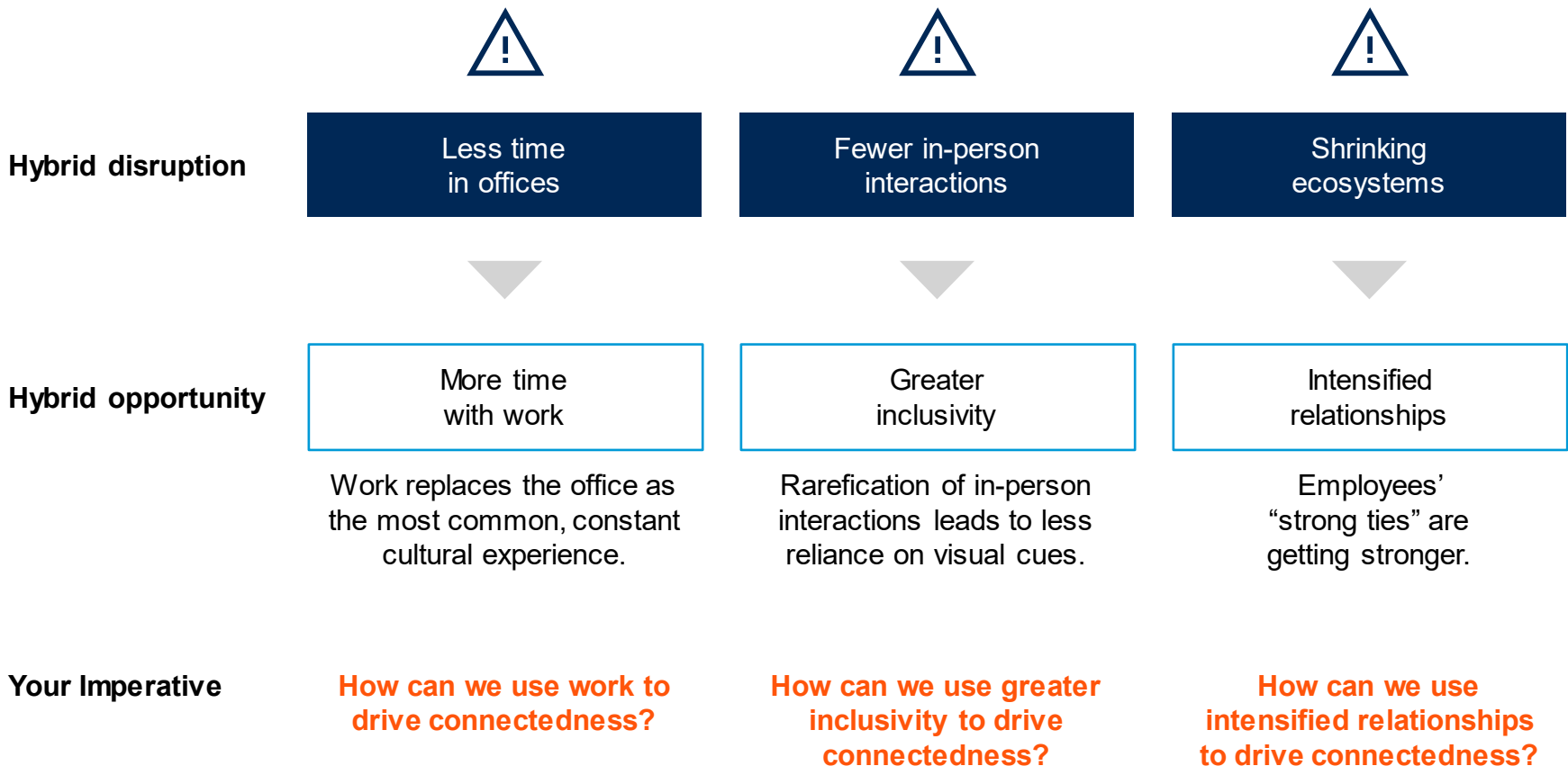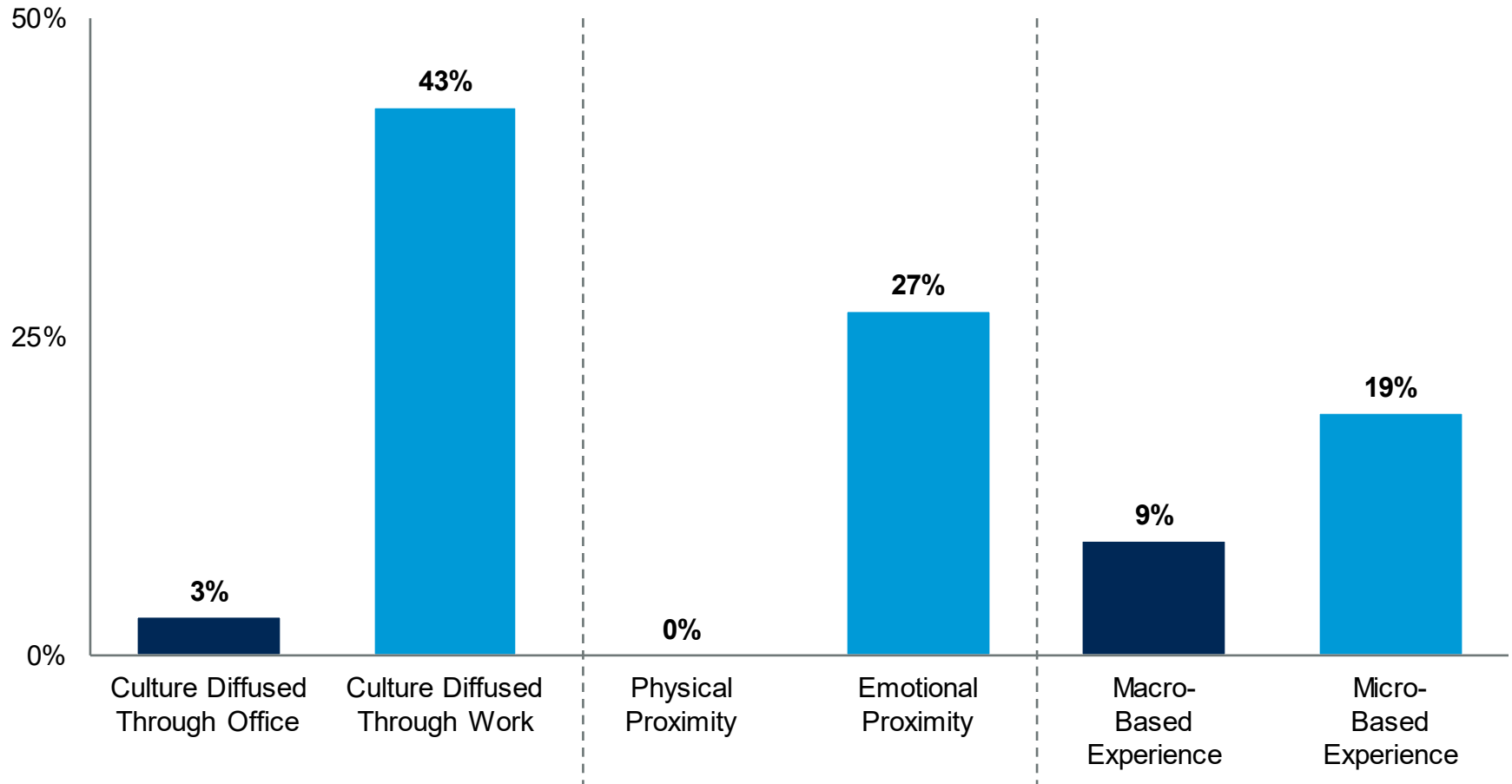|	
Culture Diffused Through Office	3%
Culture Diffused Through Work	43%
Physical Proximity	0%
Emotional Proximity	27%
Macro-Based Experience	9%
Micro-Based Experience	19%

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Culture Connectedness Drives Key Outcomes

Maximum Impact of Employee Culture Connectedness on Talent Outcomes

▲ **37%** Employee Performance

▲ **36%** Employee Retention

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers
Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Key Takeaways

1 Hybrid work has disrupted the way we **experience culture**.

2 Culture connectedness is important for culture success, and it is achieved when employees **identify** with the culture, **care** about it, and feel like they **belong** within it.

3 Traditionally, organizations have connected employees to culture through office spaces, physical proximity, and macro-based experiences – or "**osmosis**".

4 Employees have become **disconnected** from culture over the past two years.

5 The best organizations drive culture connectedness by intention through…
- **Diffusing culture through work.**
- **Connecting through emotional proximity.**
- **Optimizing a micro-based experience.**

Flowchart

1 Diffuse Culture Through Work	2 Connect Through Emotional Proximity	3 Optimize A Micro-Based Experience
Value-Driven Future of Work	Onboarding Experience for Emotional Investment	Culture for a Flotilla Future

Personalized Hybrid
Community Building
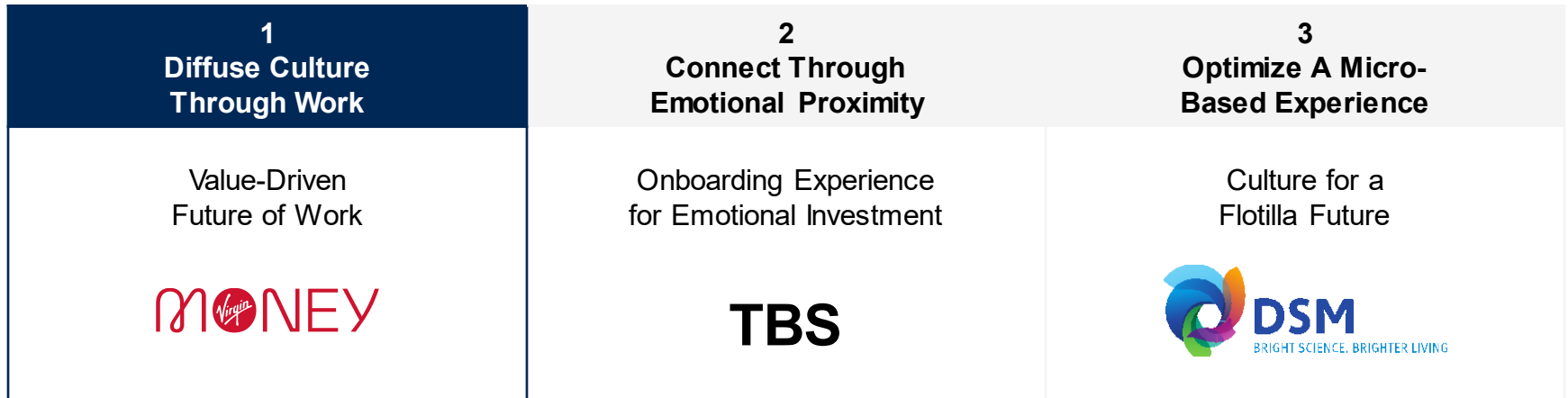
Employees Are Spending Less Time in Offices...

Distribution of Pre-Pandemic and Current Work Status of Employees
Percentage of Employees

Pre-Pandemic Work Status

Onsite

Hybrid

Remote

Current Work Status

Onsite
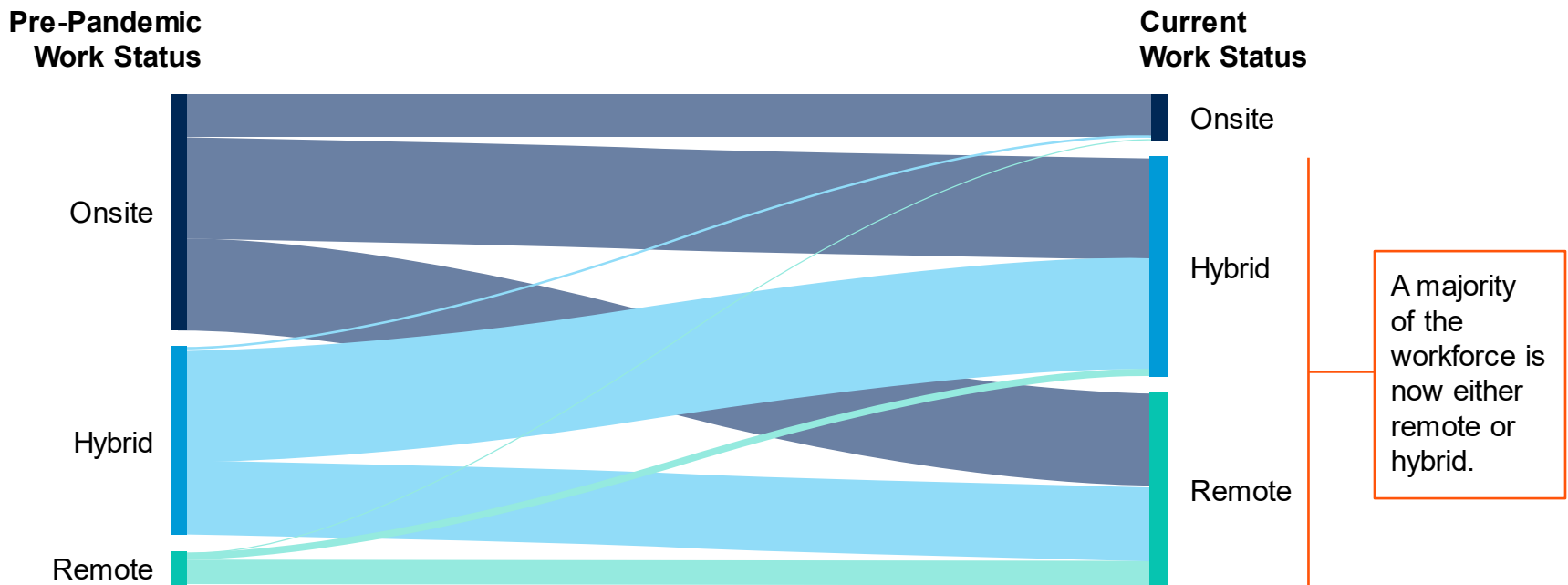
Hybrid

Remote

A majority of the workforce is now either remote or hybrid.

n = 4,362 knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

...And More Time at Home

Work Modes Ranked According to How Much Time Employees Spend in Each

	Synchronous Work	Asynchronous Work
Co-Located	**Onsite, In Meetings** — 4 (In-person meetings), 5 (Virtual meetings)	**Onsite, Working Alone** — 3
Distributed	**Remotely, In Meetings** — 2	**Remotely, Working Alone** — 1
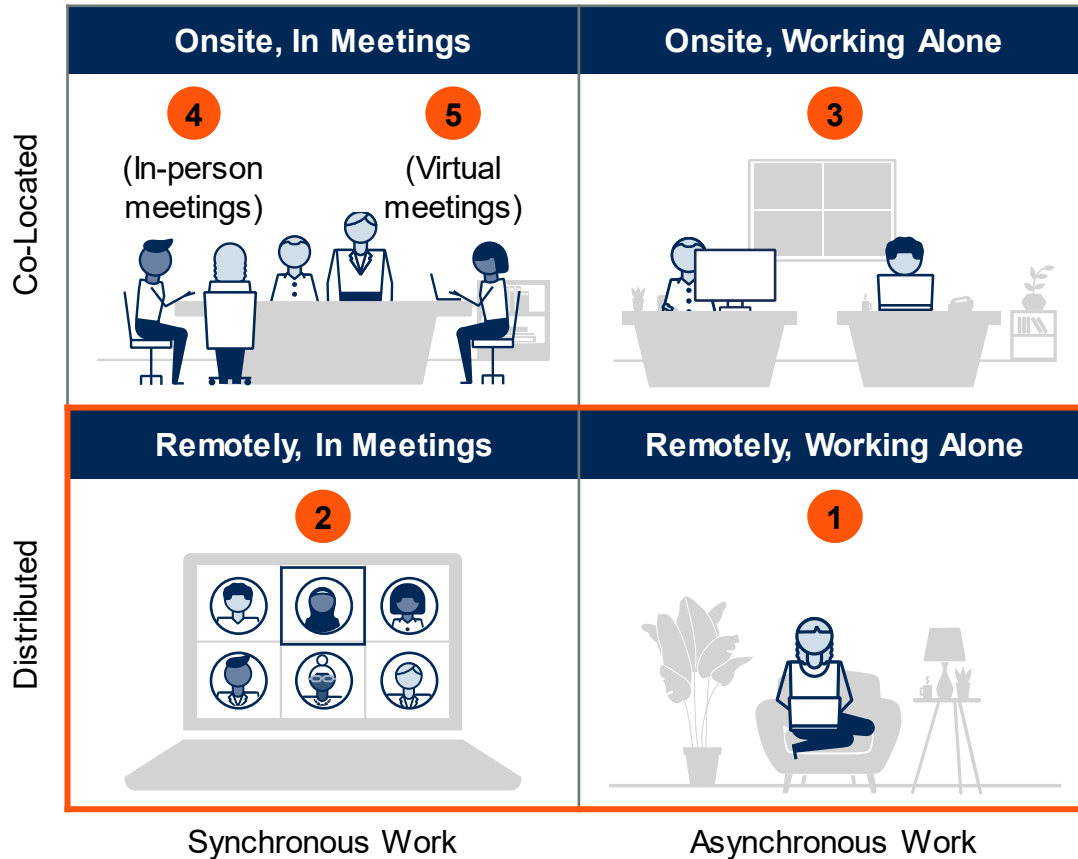
69% of employees spend most of their time working remotely.

n = 3,559 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

In which of these quadrants do you think employees feel they can get their work done the best?

	Synchronous Work	Asynchronous Work
Co-Located	**Onsite, In Meetings** (In-person meetings) (Virtual meetings)	**Onsite, Working Alone**
Distributed	**Remotely, In Meetings**	**Remotely, Working Alone**
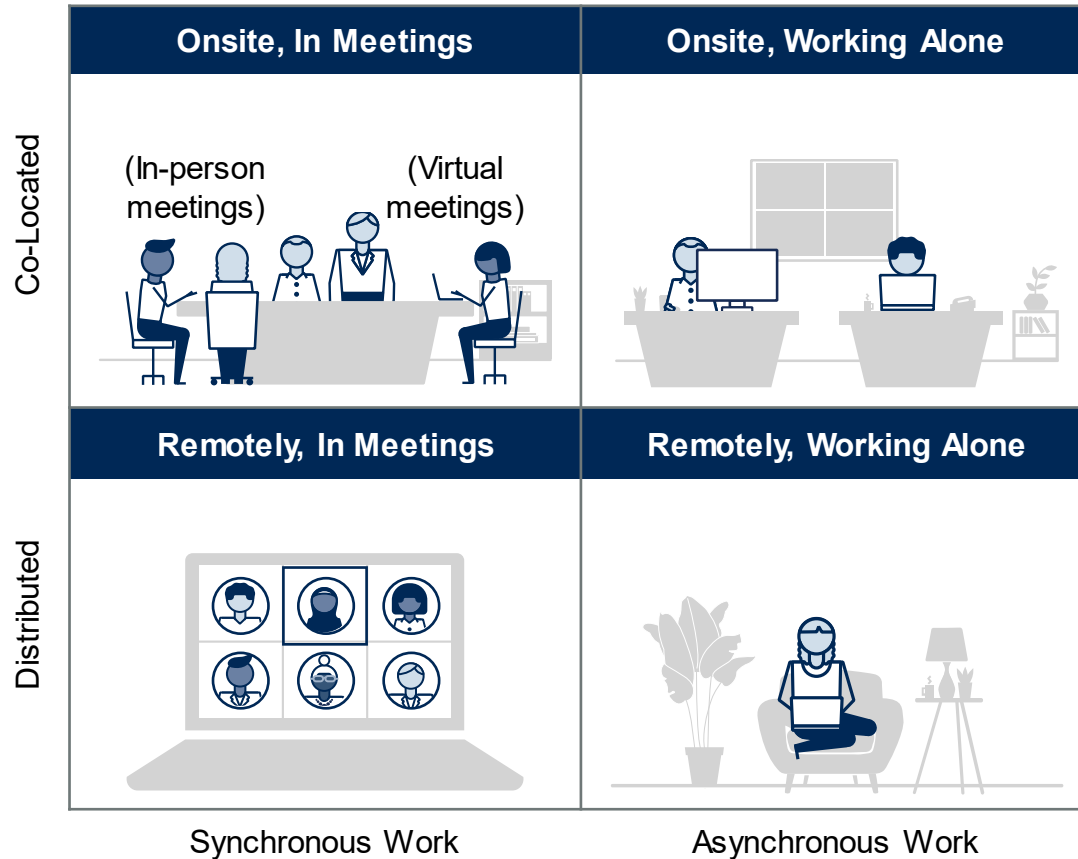
Our Relationship With Work Intensifies at Home

Work Modes in Which Employees Feel They Can Get Work Done the Best
Percentage of Employees Selecting

	Onsite, In Meetings		Onsite, Working Alone
Co-Located	(In-person meetings) **13%**	(Virtual meetings) **6%**	**16%**
	Remotely, In Meetings		**Remotely, Working Alone**
Distributed	**12%**		**54%**
	Synchronous Work		Asynchronous Work

n = 2,326 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

This Is an Opportunity to Diffuse Culture Through Work

Work as the New Cultural Constant

✓ Culture is felt through the **work processes** employees engage in.

✓ Culture is adapted to fit the employee's **work context.**

✓ Culture is linked with **day-to day work.**

Employee culture connectedness can increase by up to **43%** when culture is diffused through work.

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Diffuse Culture Through Work
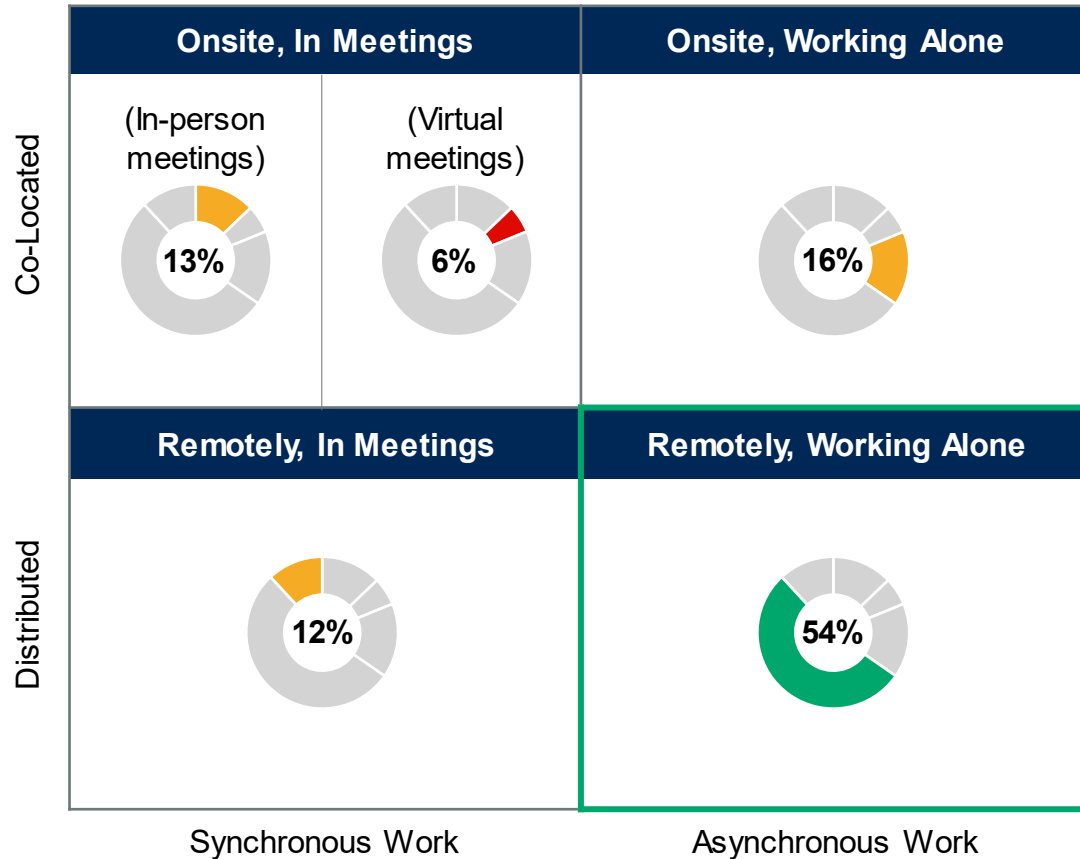
**How can we diffuse
culture through work?**

▼

Empower employees to identify the
value their work provides them as well
as the value they provide employers.

Value-Driven Future of Work

Virgin **MONEY**

Future of Work Presents New Risks

Virgin Money Identified New Risks That Come With Flexible Work

⚠️ **Flexible Work Creates a Two-Tiered Structure**
The workforce is divided into those who can work remotely and those who can't.

⚠️ **Employees Feel Disconnected From Each Other**
Increased time in virtual environments and less time in person together fractures relationships.

⚠️ **Flexible Work Becomes Inflexible**
A binary model[a] does not allow the workforce to capitalize on opportunities for flexibility.

⚠️ **Individual Preferences Create Inconsistency**
Employees' individual flexibility preferences lead to inconsistent employee experiences and siloed working.

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

[a] Binary model: 2 days in office/3 days at home or vice versa

Virgin Money's Value-Driven Future of Work

The Four Dimensions of Virgin Money's "A Life More Virgin" Framework

1 **Value-Based, Not Location-Based, Employee Personas:** Highlights the value each employee brings in their role

2 **Employee-Articulated, Not Leader-Articulated, Work Value:** Enables employee ownership of personalizing work experiences

3 **Team Rhythms, Not Manager-Led Norms:** Promotes collective flexibility patterns set by teams to balance team member and organizational needs

4 **Connections Based on Life Stages, Not Just Career Stages:** Builds connections across the organization based on position in career and life

OUR DIMENSIONS TO HIGH PERFORMANCE

TEAM ROLE

ME

TEAM RHYTHM

MY STAGE

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

"Our corporate culture is now in 8,000 homes."

Scott McNair, Leadership & Talent, HR, Virgin Money

MONEY

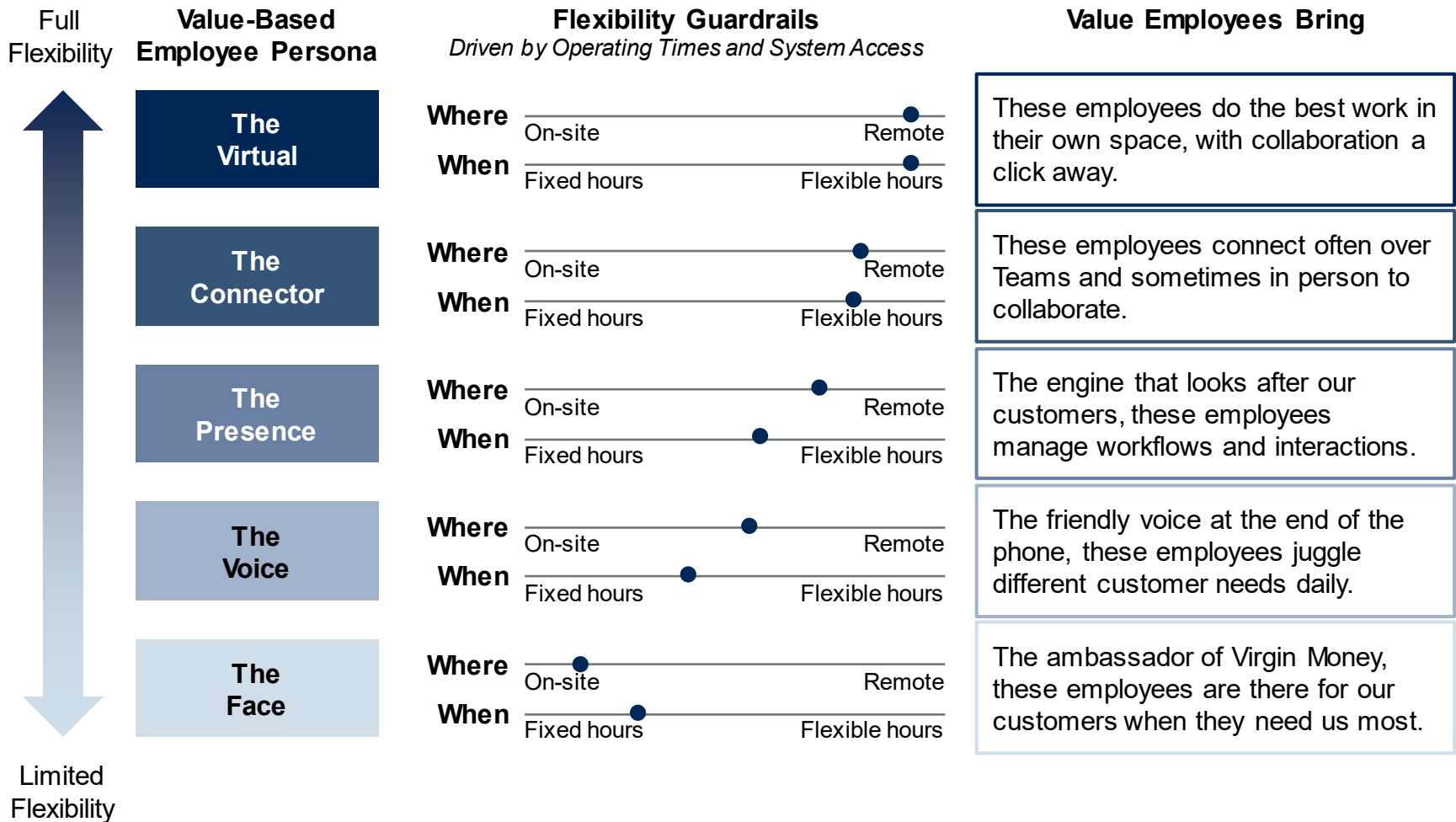# Value-Based, Not Location-Based, Employee Personas

Personas Highlighting Employee Value and Helping Embrace Flexibility Opportunity Across Roles

Full Flexibility

Value-Based Employee Persona	Flexibility Guardrails *Driven by Operating Times and System Access*	Value Employees Bring
The Virtual	**Where** On-site ——————————● Remote / **When** Fixed hours ——————————● Flexible hours	These employees do the best work in their own space, with collaboration a click away.
The Connector	**Where** On-site ————————● — Remote / **When** Fixed hours ————————● — Flexible hours	These employees connect often over Teams and sometimes in person to collaborate.
The Presence	**Where** On-site ——————● —— Remote / **When** Fixed hours —————● ——— Flexible hours	The engine that looks after our customers, these employees manage workflows and interactions.
The Voice	**Where** On-site ————● ———— Remote / **When** Fixed hours ———● ————— Flexible hours	The friendly voice at the end of the phone, these employees juggle different customer needs daily.
The Face	**Where** On-site ● ————————— Remote / **When** Fixed hours —● ———————— Flexible hours	The ambassador of Virgin Money, these employees are there for our customers when they need us most.

Limited Flexibility

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

MONEY

Employee-Articulated, Not Leader-Articulated, Work Value

Employee Self-Discovery of What They Value in Work and Life

Employees answer **diagnostic questions** in a Virgin Money application to **self-discover what makes them happy and productive** at work and in life.

Once employees score each question under these categories on **importance and satisfaction**, they get results on the values surfaced. Employees are then assisted by a coach bot to get more clarity on their core needs.

Discover What Makes You Happy

My Motivators

① ② ③ ④ ⑤   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
Importance   Satisfaction

My Wellbeing

① ② ③ ④ ⑤   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
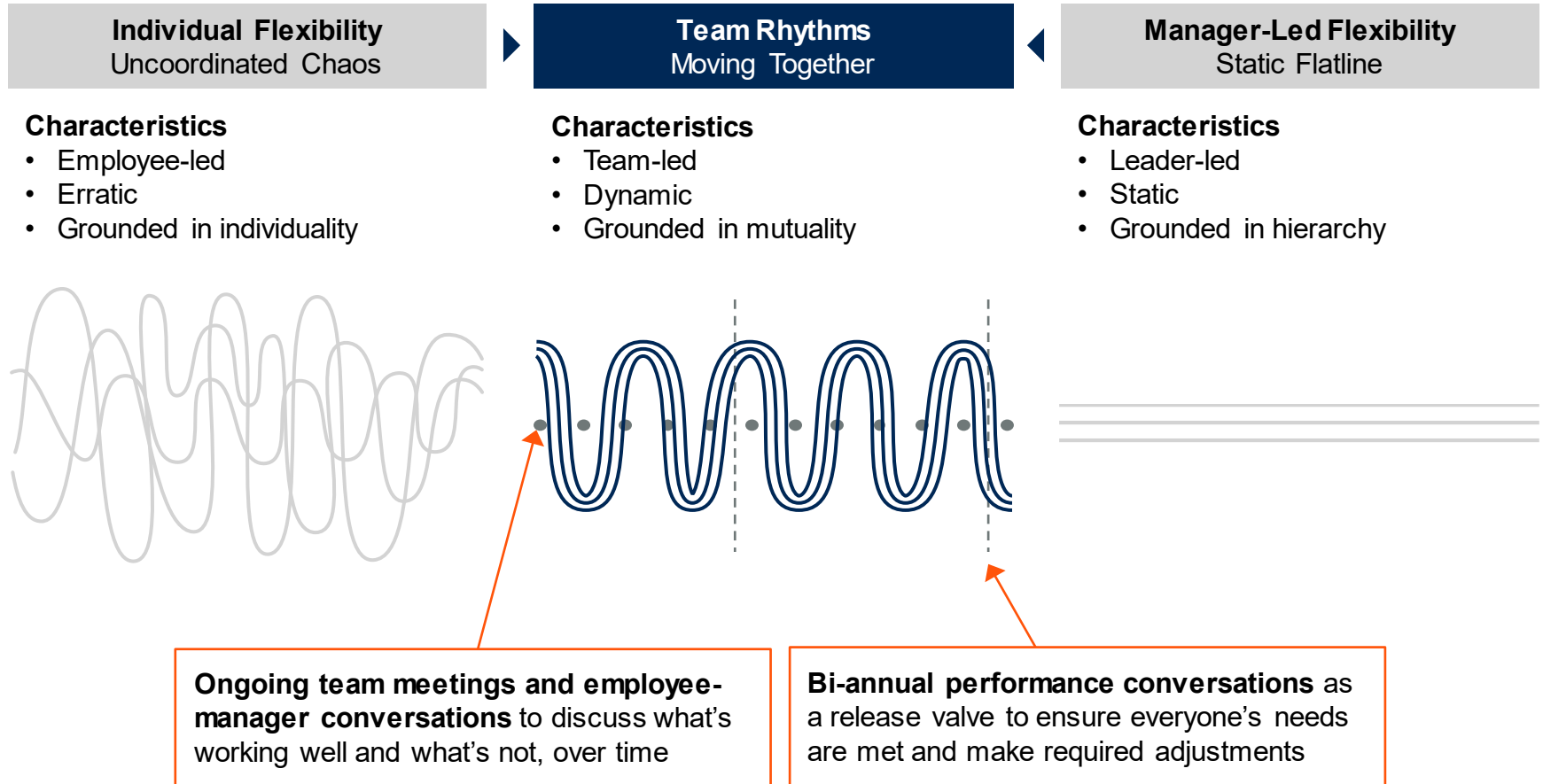Importance   Satisfaction

My Organization

① ② ③ ④ ⑤   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
Importance   Satisfaction

Employees **use these results to create an agenda for a discussion with their managers** about the changes they want in their **work experience**.

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money and Work-Happy

MONEY

Team Rhythms, Not Manager-Led Norms

Team Rhythms to Build Collective Flexibility Around How Employees Work Together Through Time

Individual Flexibility Uncoordinated Chaos	Team Rhythms Moving Together	Manager-Led Flexibility Static Flatline

Characteristics
- Employee-led
- Erratic
- Grounded in individuality

Characteristics
- Team-led
- Dynamic
- Grounded in mutuality

Characteristics
- Leader-led
- Static
- Grounded in hierarchy

Ongoing team meetings and employee-manager conversations to discuss what's working well and what's not, over time

Bi-annual performance conversations as a release valve to ensure everyone's needs are met and make required adjustments
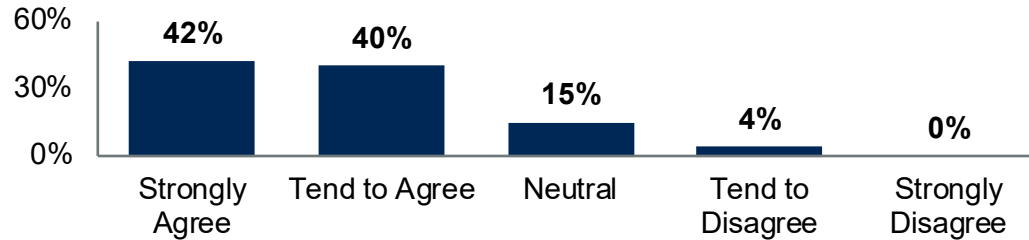
Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

Value-Driven Future of Work Shows Positive Outcomes

Talent and Other Business Outcomes

Engagement and Wellbeing

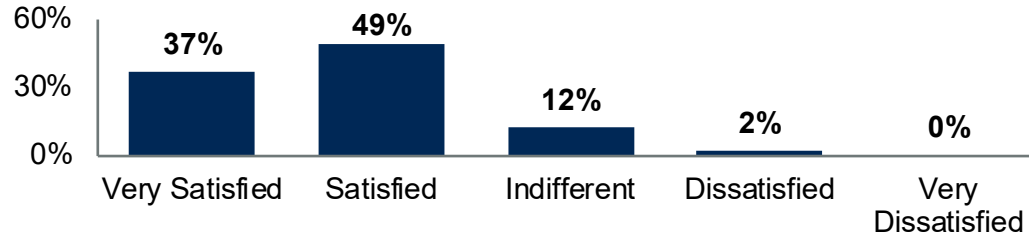Living a Life More Virgin will make me happier at work.

Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neutral	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
42%	40%	15%	4%	0%

Colleague Buy-In

How do you feel about embracing your persona?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Indifferent	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
37%	49%	12%	2%	0%

Overall Experience

How satisfied are you with the overall experience at Virgin Money?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Indifferent	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
23%	55%	20%	3%	0%

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

"Our HR systems, policies and processes support and reinforce the 'A Life More Virgin' framework."

Leadership & Talent, HR, Virgin Money

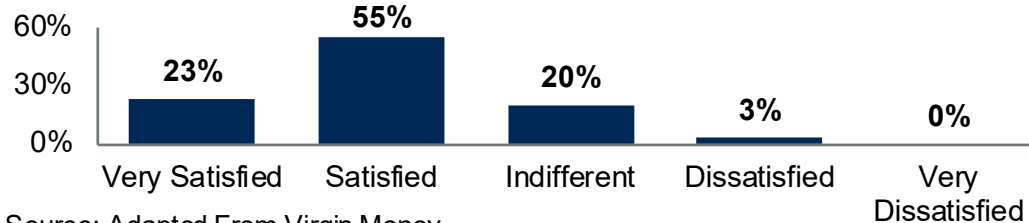"For the first time, I've been given freedom to work with my team to define what flexibility is for us. For too long, team members have been disengaged because of a no-trust mindset around flexible work hours."

Operational Team Leader, Customer Services, Virgin Money

"Team Rhythms put the colleague in the driving seat and gives them the scope and power to work within the parameters set but in a way they choose."
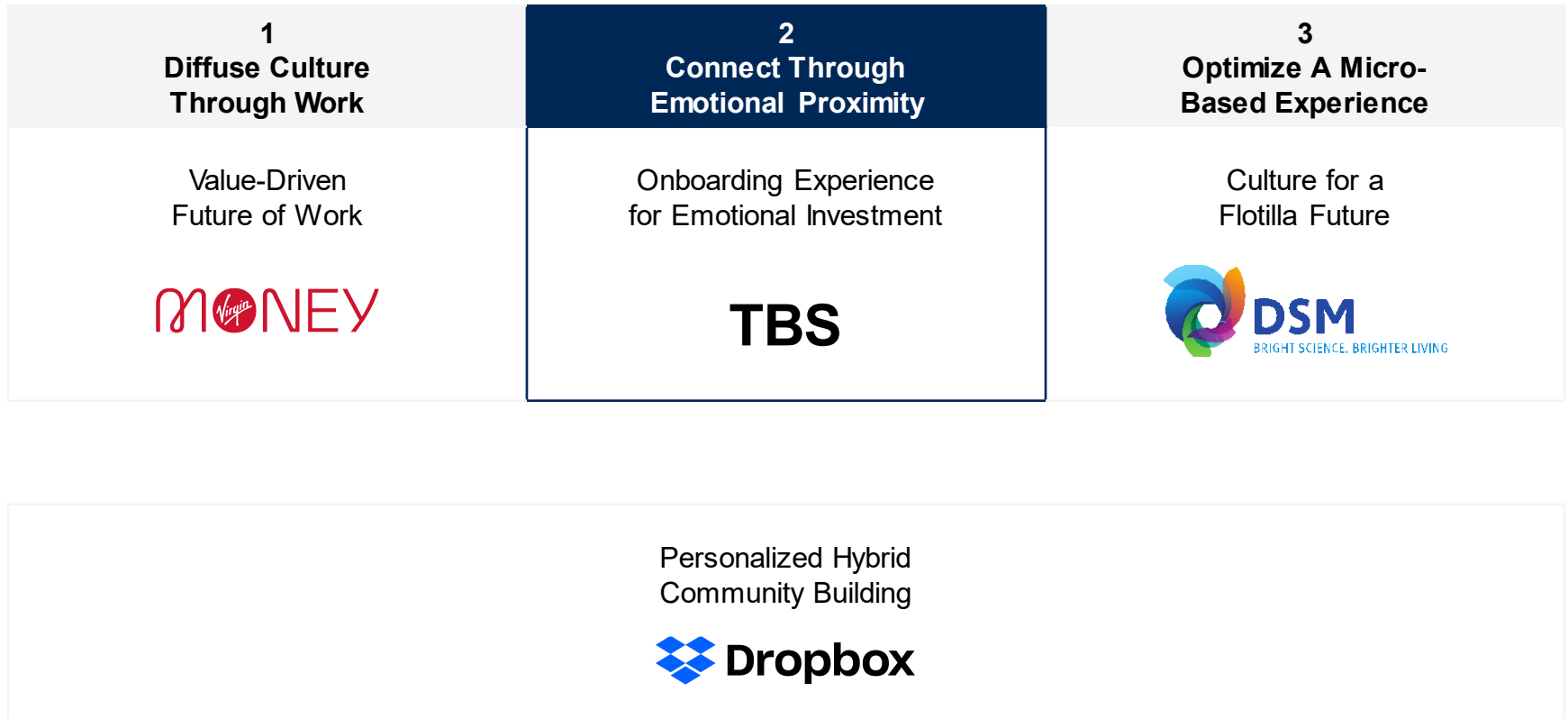
Analyst, Risk, Virgin Money

Key Takeaways - Diffuse Culture Through Work

1 Hybrid employees are spending more of their time **working remotely** and less time in offices together.

2 Employees are more focused on their work at home, creating a greater imperative for organizations to **diffuse culture through work**.

3 The best organizations diffuse culture through work by:
- Highlighting the value of each employee's work.
- Equipping employees to articulate the value they gain from their work and understand how it can support their goals.
- Enabling collective flexibility that balances team member and organizational needs.
- Building connections between employees based on life stages, not just career stages.

Flowchart

1 **Diffuse Culture Through Work**	2 **Connect Through Emotional Proximity**	3 **Optimize A Micro-Based Experience**
Value-Driven Future of Work	Onboarding Experience for Emotional Investment	Culture for a Flotilla Future
Virgin MONEY	**TBS**	DSM BRIGHT SCIENCE, BRIGHTER LIVING

Personalized Hybrid
Community Building

Dropbox

Using Proximity for Connectedness

Two Types of Proximity

Physical Proximity
"I am seen."

Emotional Proximity
"I feel seen."

Employees are in the same physical space at the same time.

Employees feel valued and that they have impact on others.
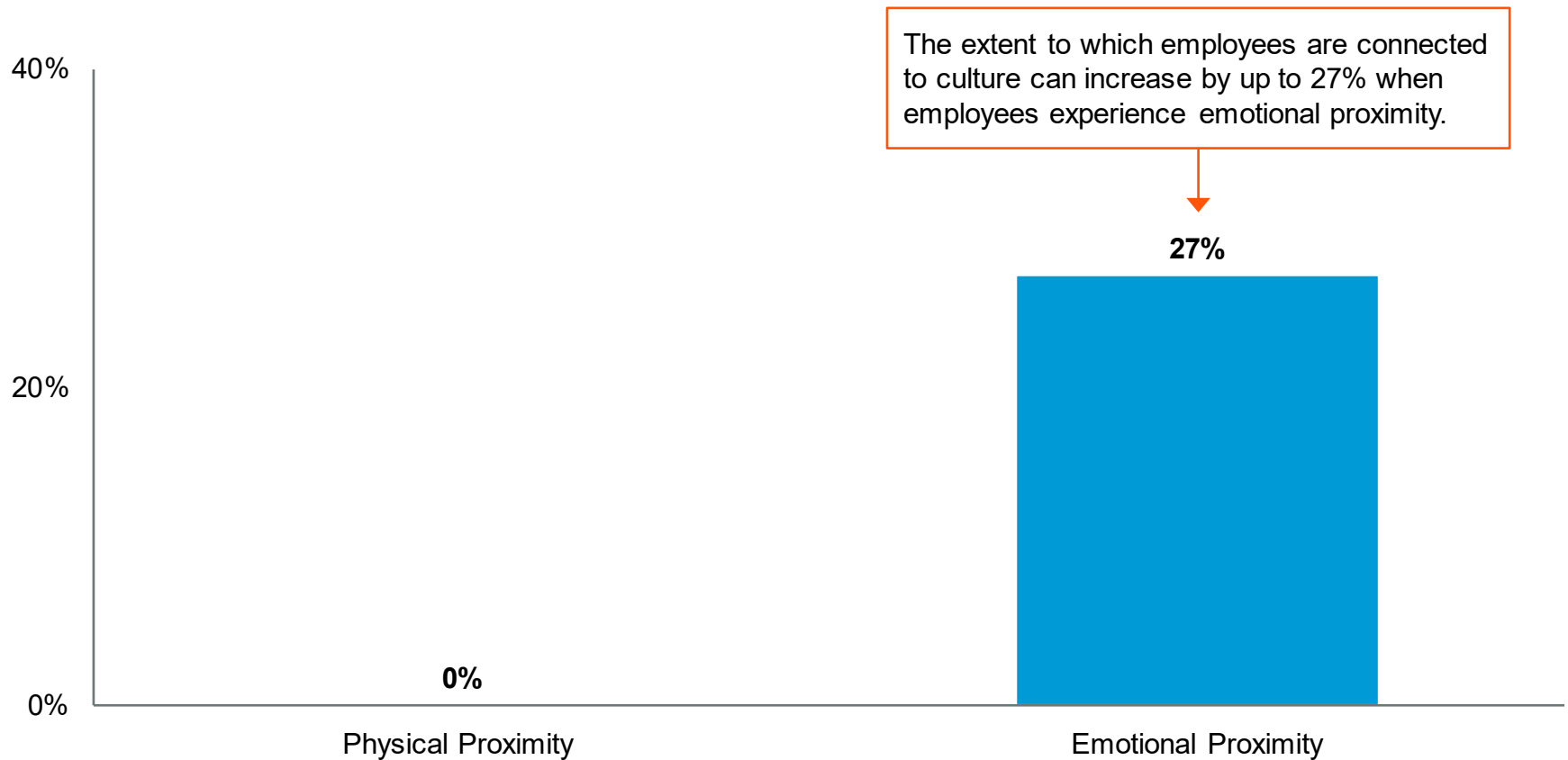
Source: Gartner

?

Which of these two types of proximity – physical or emotional – is most likely to drive cultural connectedness?

Emotional Proximity More Impactful on Connectedness

Maximum Impact of Physical and Emotional Proximity on Employee Culture Connectedness

The extent to which employees are connected to culture can increase by up to 27% when employees experience emotional proximity.

40%

27%

20%

0%

0%

Physical Proximity

Emotional Proximity

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

But Physical Proximity Helps With Emotional Proximity

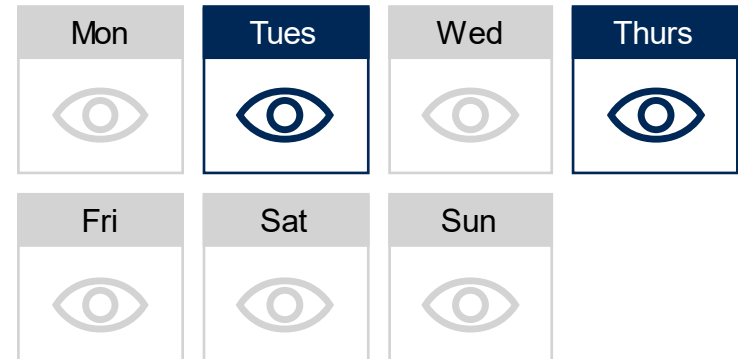## Link Between Physical and Emotional Proximity

Gartner data shows that employees are 2.8x more likely to **feel seen** when they are **being seen.**

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Scarcity of Physical Proximity

However, currently, employees on average only meet their teams in person **two days** a week.

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs
Fri	Sat	Sun	

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Connect Through Emotional Proximity

How can we connect employees through emotional proximity without relying on physical proximity?

▼

Foster emotional investment in the organization's mission throughout the onboarding experience.
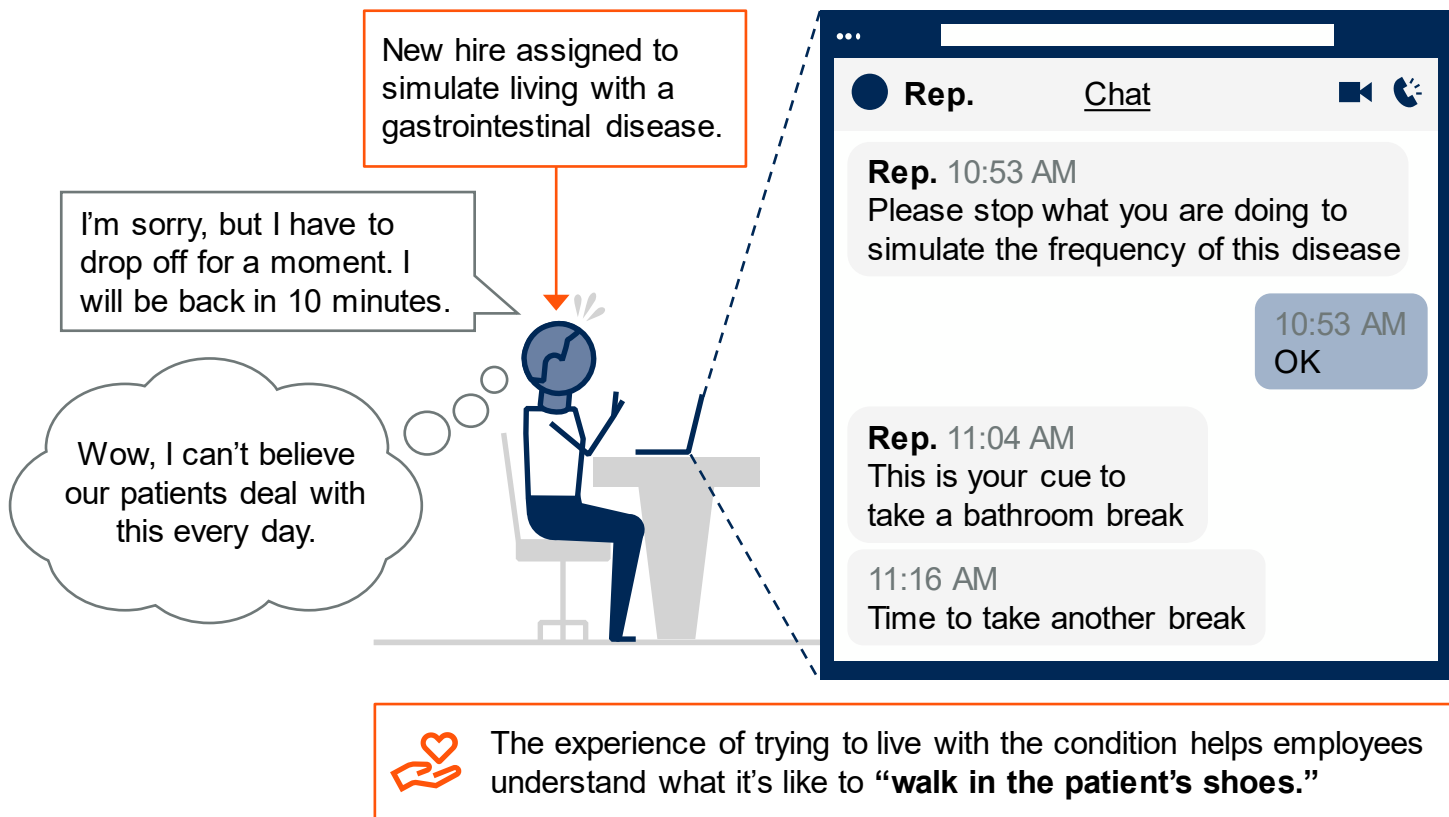
Onboarding Experience for Emotional Investment

TBS

Create Empathy, Not Just Interest, for the Mission

New Hire Patient-Roleplay Exercise
Illustrative

- **TBS assigns new hires a condition** experienced by a real patient that they have helped.
- New hires are **given tasks to perform** so they learn firsthand how the condition impacts their day-to-day lives.

New hire assigned to simulate living with a gastrointestinal disease.

I'm sorry, but I have to drop off for a moment. I will be back in 10 minutes.

Wow, I can't believe our patients deal with this every day.

Rep.   Chat

Rep. 10:53 AM
Please stop what you are doing to simulate the frequency of this disease

10:53 AM
OK

Rep. 11:04 AM
This is your cue to take a bathroom break

11:16 AM
Time to take another break

The experience of trying to live with the condition helps employees understand what it's like to **"walk in the patient's shoes."**

Make Mission Impact, Not Just Work Impact, Tangible

The Patient Connection Program
Illustrative

Interactive Patient Story	**Face-to-Face Patient Engagement**

New hires exchange messages with a patient.

New hires share their stories of roleplaying the conditions with a real patient, who shares their personal experience and how TBS helped them.

Day 3 — The Initial Diagnosis

Welcome back! I'll share a bit more of my story today.

It was 1995 and I was still a graduate student when I got diagnosed.

New hires of the global pharmaceutical company engage with real patients which humanizes the impact of their work and demonstrates the return on their emotional investment. It then takes advantage of the virtual environment to make these connections possible.
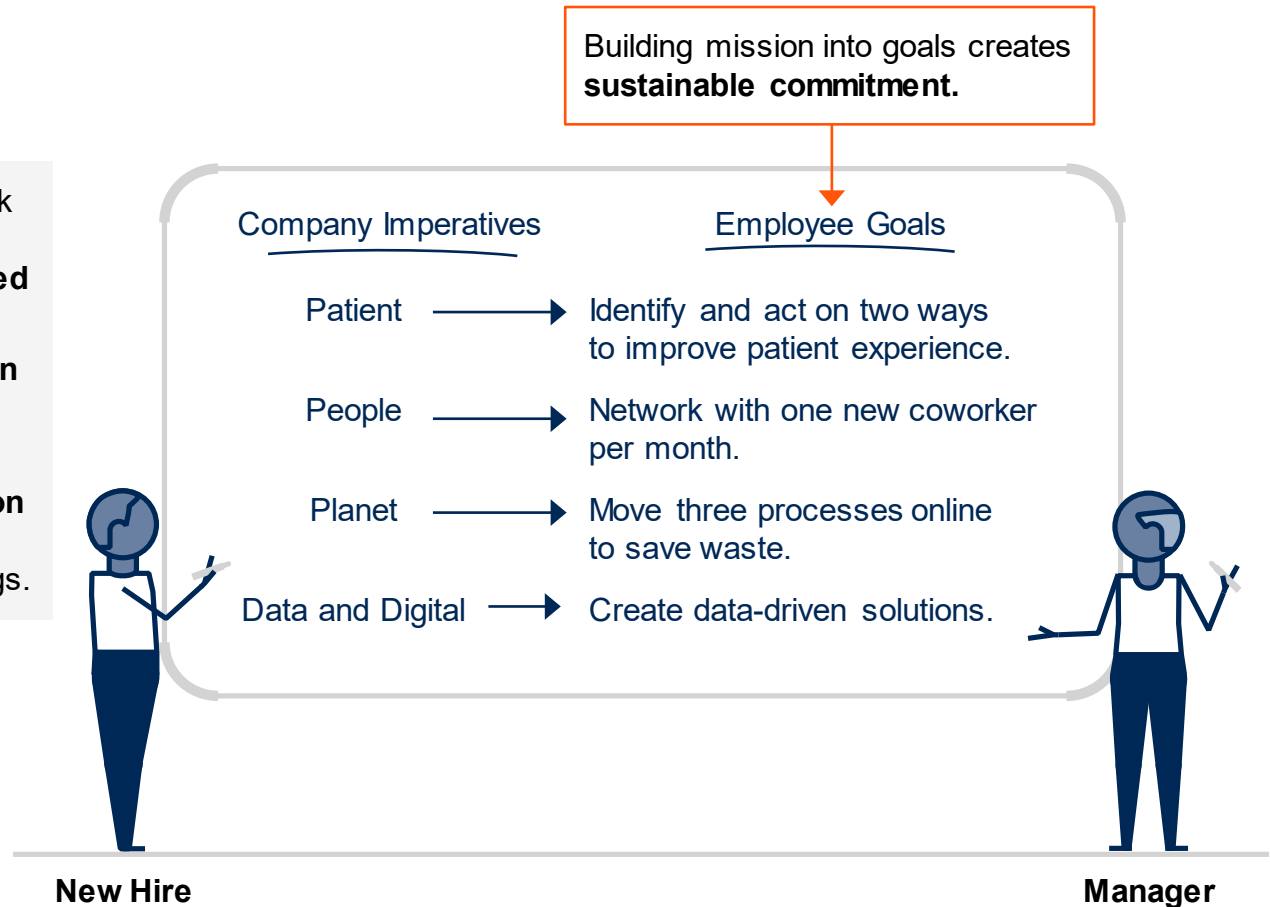
Source: Adapted From TBS

Link Goals to the Mission, Not Just to Outcomes

Mission-Based Goal Setting
Illustrative

Building mission into goals creates **sustainable commitment.**

- Managers and new hires work together to set new hire individual goals **directly linked to elements of the mission**.

- New hires **connect execution of the mission** to their own everyday tasks.

- Teams regularly make **mission top of mind** by featuring patient stories before meetings.

Company Imperatives   Employee Goals

Company Imperatives	Employee Goals
Patient →	Identify and act on two ways to improve patient experience.
People →	Network with one new coworker per month.
Planet →	Move three processes online to save waste.
Data and Digital →	Create data-driven solutions.

New Hire   **Manager**

Source: Adapted From TBS

Key Takeaways – Connect Through Emotional Proximity

1 There are two types of proximity that are often conflated: **physical** and **emotional**.

2 Physical proximity is "**being seen**": being in the same physical space.

3 Emotional proximity is "**feeling seen**": when employees feel they are valued, important and have an impact on others.

4 Emotional proximity drives **greater connectedness** than physical proximity, but emotional proximity is **more likely to happen** when there is physical proximity.

5 In a hybrid environment, the best organizations create emotional proximity without relying solely on physical proximity by:
- Building empathy in employees for the mission of the organization.
- Making the impact of employees' work tangible, regardless of role.
- Helping employees link their goals to broader organizational purpose.
- Guiding teams to identify which moments are important to share in person.

Flowchart

1 **Diffuse Culture Through Work**	2 **Connect Through Emotional Proximity**	3 **Optimize A Micro-Based Experience**
Value-Driven Future of Work	Onboarding Experience for Emotional Investment	Culture for a Flotilla Future
MONEY	**TBS**	DSM BRIGHT SCIENCE, BRIGHTER LIVING

Personalized Hybrid
Community Building

Dropbox

Micro-Based Experiences Now the Norm

Moving From Macro-Based to Micro-Based Experiences in a Hybrid World

Strong Ties — — — Weak Ties

Pre-Pandemic World

Hybrid World
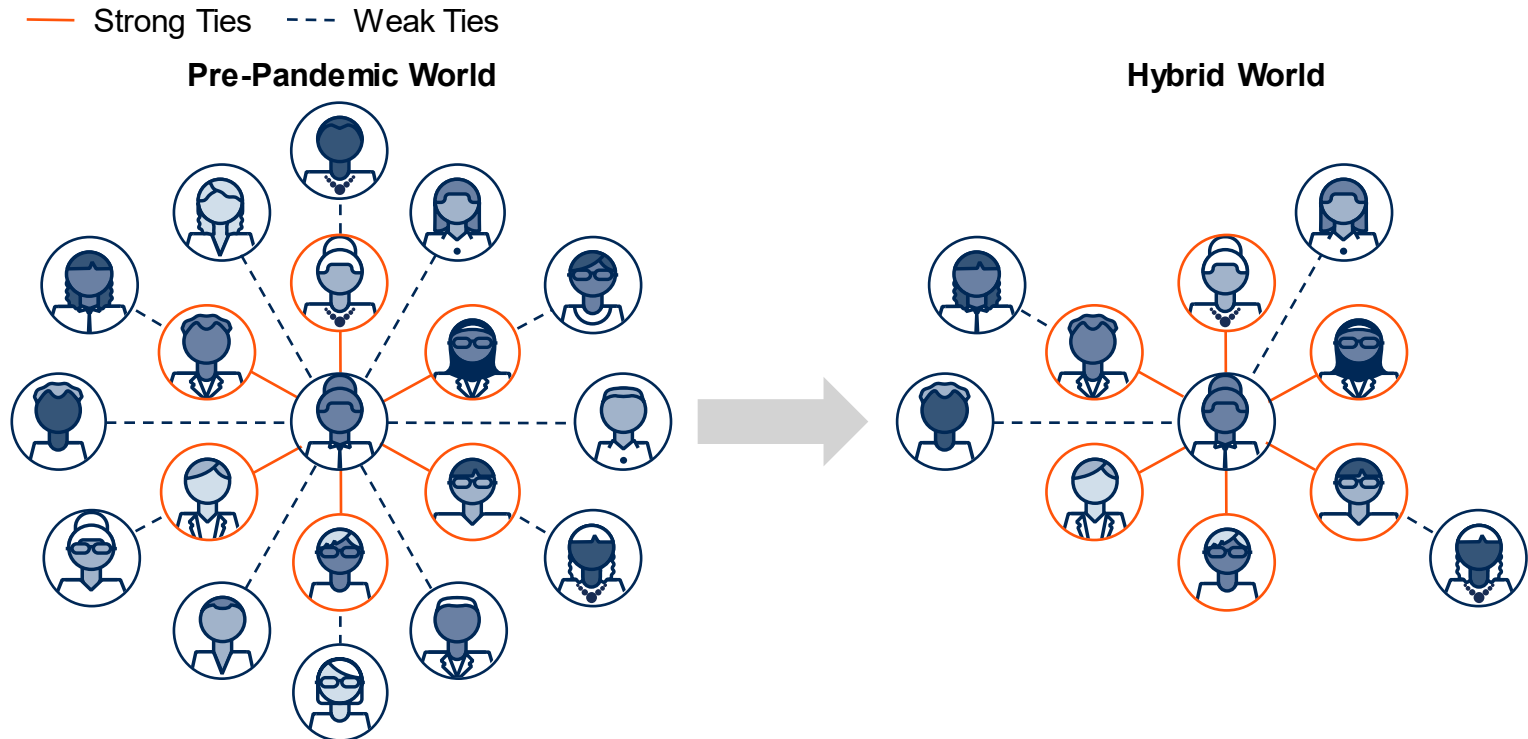
Shrinking Ecosystems

Employees **interact once a week or less with their "weak ties"** versus several times a week before the pandemic.

Intensifying Relationships

For most employees, **team members are the only people they interact with several times a day.**

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Which of the following do you think are most influential of employee cultural connectedness?

1. The CEO
2. The Chief Culture Officer
3. A senior leader (e.g. SVP)
4. A business unit leader
5. HR
6. Your direct manager
7. Your manager's manager
8. Your team
9. Your peers outside your team

Micro-Based Experiences Present Opportunity

Top Influencers of Culture Connection
Percentage of Employees Selecting

Influencer	Percentage
Your Team	65%
Your Direct Manager	60%
Your Peers Outside Your Team	51%
The CEO	48%
Your Manager's Manager	47%
A Senior Leader (e.g., SVP)	46%
An Executive Leader Other Than a CCO	43%
The Chief Culture Officer	43%
A Business Unit Leader	41%
HR	33%

0%   35%   70%

n = 3,129 to 3,876 hybrid knowledge workers
Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Legacy Attitudes About Micro-Cultures Persist

⚠ **Only 13%** of HR leaders say that at their organization, teams are encouraged to set their own behavioral norms.
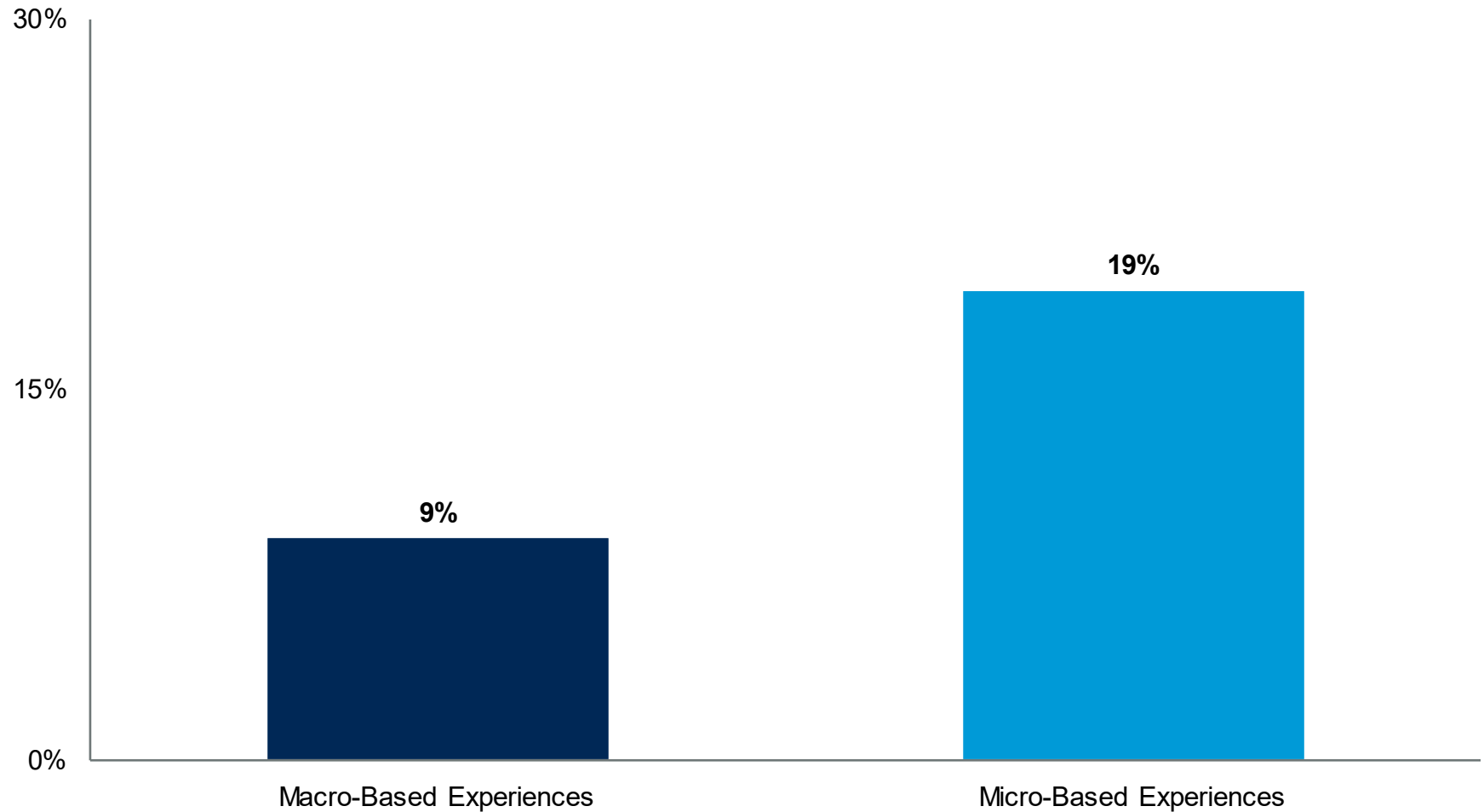
⚠ **Only 22%** of HR leaders agree that their organization encourages subcultures.

n = 235 HR leaders
Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World HOF Survey

Optimized Micro-Based Experiences Deliver

Maximum Impact of Macro- and Micro-Based Experiences on Employee Culture Connectedness

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Optimize a Micro-Based Experience

How should we optimize a
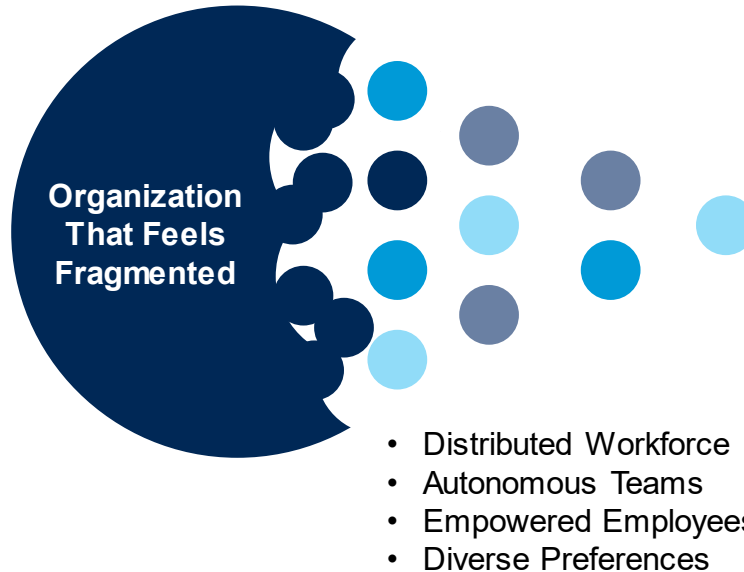micro-based experience?

▼

Adopt a minimalist approach to macro-culture
to allow micro-cultures to thrive.

Culture for a Flotilla Future

DSM
BRIGHT SCIENCE, BRIGHTER LIVING

Goal of Cohesive Culture Challenged by New Realities

Royal DSM's Culture Transformation Challenge

Organization That Feels Fragmented

Royal DSM's Culture Transformation Goal

*Create a **cohesive culture** that is in sync with new direction and future of business.*

- Distributed Workforce
- Autonomous Teams
- Empowered Employees
- Diverse Preferences

Background: The outgoing and incoming CEOs recognized the need for a culture refresh to align the company's new direction: focusing resources and capabilities to address the urgent societal and environmental challenges linked to the way the world produces and consumes food..

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM

DSM
BRIGHT SCIENCE, BRIGHTER LIVING

A Flotilla Allows Freedom Within a Framework

Two Possible Approaches to Culture

Tanker-Style Approach:
Forces common experience through
all-encompassing macro-culture

Flotilla-Style Approach:
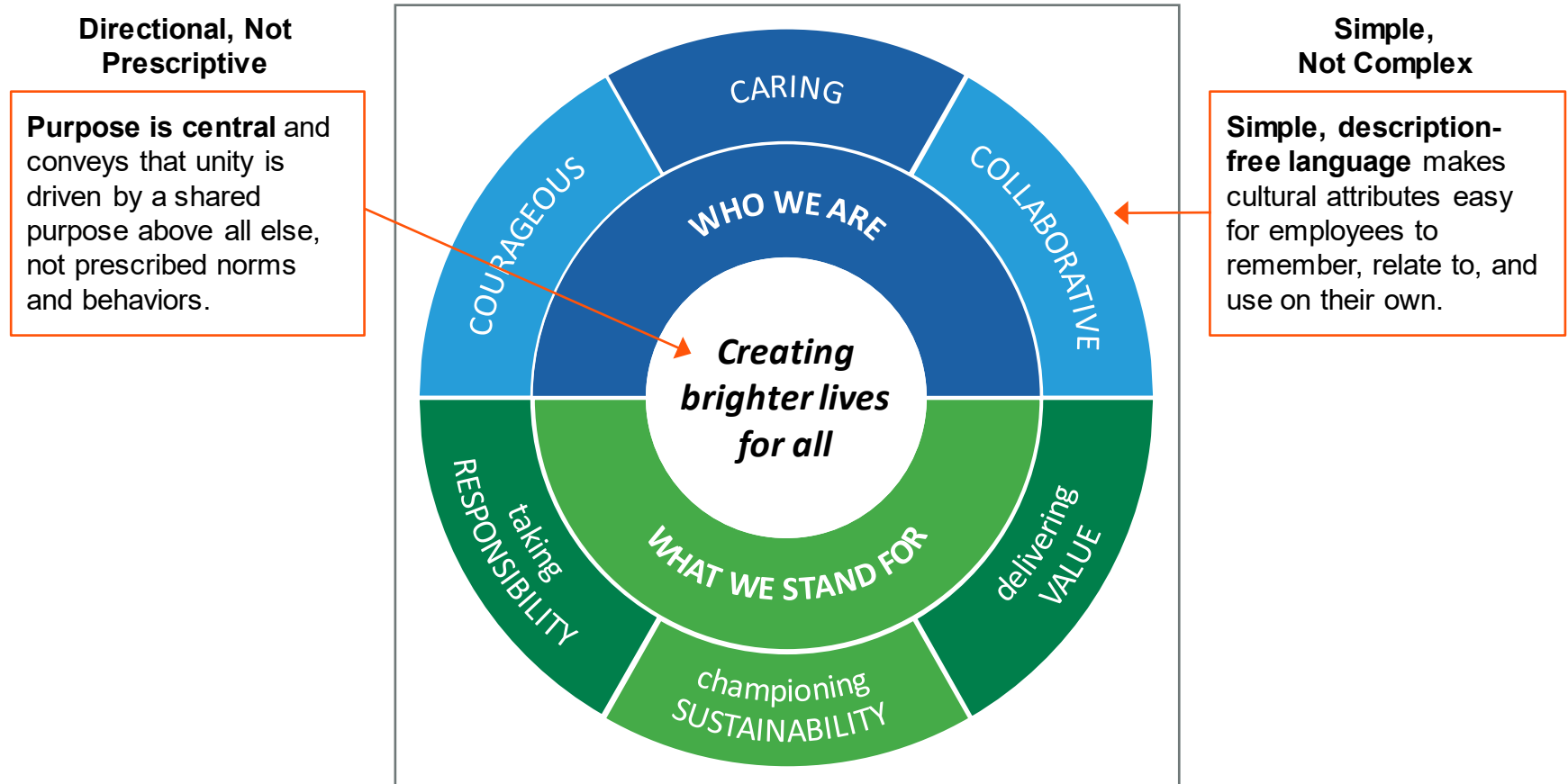Provides common direction through
light-touch macro-culture

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM

Take a Minimalist Approach to Macro-Culture

Key Characteristics of Royal DSM's Culture Compass

Directional, Not Prescriptive

Purpose is central and conveys that unity is driven by a shared purpose above all else, not prescribed norms and behaviors.

Simple, Not Complex

Simple, description-free language makes cultural attributes easy for employees to remember, relate to, and use on their own.

CARING

COLLABORATIVE

COURAGEOUS

WHO WE ARE

Creating brighter lives for all

taking RESPONSIBILITY

WHAT WE STAND FOR

delivering VALUE

championing SUSTAINABILITY

Source: Royal DSM

Use Macro-Culture as a Diagnostic, Not a Prescription

Royal DSM's "Leading Through Culture" Team Diagnostic

— Who We Are —

Courageous	Caring	Collaborative
▼	▼	▼
Loss aversion	**Correspondence bias**	**Similarity bias**
We are primed to focus on what we are set to lose, rather than what we might gain.	We assume that other people's behavior reflects who they are, but that our behavior reflects the situation.	We tend to work with, and prioritize the opinion of, people like ourselves.
I must align with everyone so that if it fails, it's not my fault.	It's okay that I'm feeling stressed. Once this project is over, I'll feel better.	I don't like working with them because they have a different opinion to me.

Royals DSM's "Leading Through Culture" Initiative
Encourages managers to diagnose what's getting in the way of their team living its culture to the fullest as opposed to prescribing norms and behaviors to do so
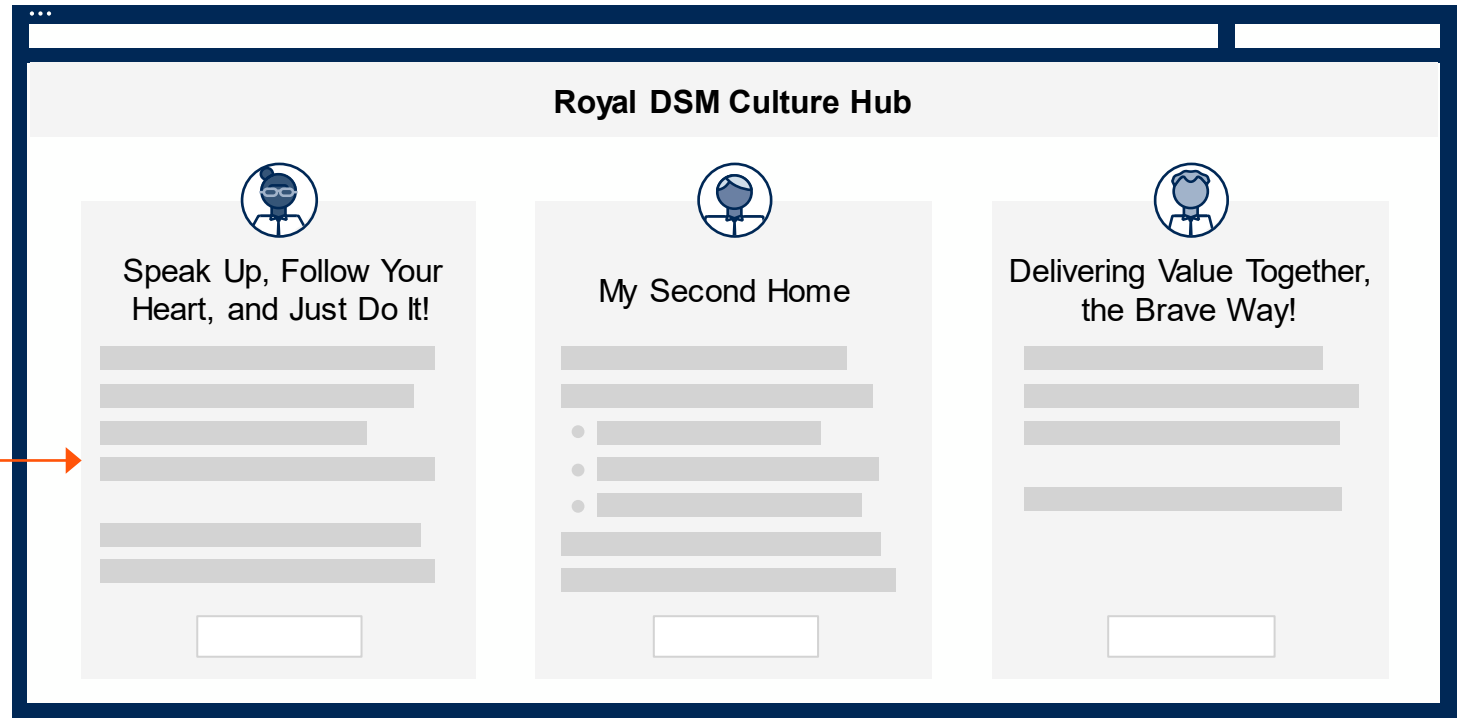
Benefits
- Connects teams to broader culture while simultaneously preserving **team autonomy**
- Makes space for **team-defined behaviors** to thrive
- Fosters **team ownership** over culture

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM and MindGym

DSM
BRIGHT SCIENCE. BRIGHTER LIVING

Recognize and Reward Individualization, Not Compliance

Royal DSM's Culture Hub

Royal DSM Culture Hub

| Speak Up, Follow Your Heart, and Just Do It! | My Second Home | Delivering Value Together, the Brave Way! |

Employee-submitted stories of living Royal DSM culture.

Benefits

Shows how enacting Royal DSM culture happens in diverse ways

Inspires readers to find new ways to bring Royal DSM culture to life

Validates that employees don't have to all be the same in order to fit in

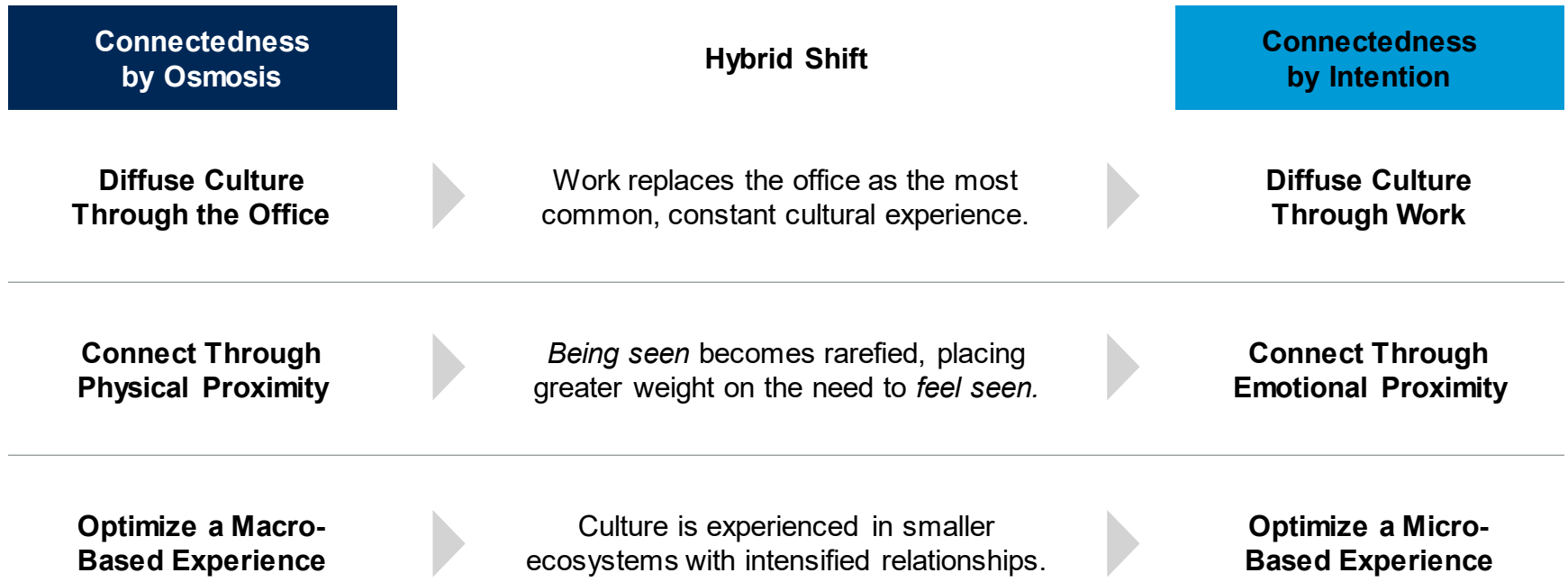Source: Adapted From Royal DSM

DSM
BRIGHT SCIENCE, BRIGHTER LIVING

Key Takeaways - Optimize a Micro-Based Experience

(1) **Ecosystems are shrinking** for employees, whilst relationships within those ecosystems are **intensifying**: weak ties are getting weaker and strong ties are getting stronger.

(2) Culture connectedness is **more likely to be influenced by strong ties**, so HR leaders must optimize a micro-based experience in the hybrid world.

(3) The best organizations optimize a micro-based experience by:
- Taking a minimalist approach to macro-culture to make space for micro-cultures to thrive.
- Using organization-wide values to help teams live the culture while preserving autonomy.
- Recognizing and rewarding individualization, not compliance, to validate that there is no single way to live the culture.

Culture Connectedness in a Hybrid World

Connectedness by Osmosis	Hybrid Shift	Connectedness by Intention
Diffuse Culture Through the Office	Work replaces the office as the most common, constant cultural experience.	**Diffuse Culture Through Work**
Connect Through Physical Proximity	*Being seen* becomes rarefied, placing greater weight on the need to *feel seen.*	**Connect Through Emotional Proximity**
Optimize a Macro-Based Experience	Culture is experienced in smaller ecosystems with intensified relationships.	**Optimize a Micro-Based Experience**

Plan for Action

Gartner.

Action Steps to Drive Culture Connectedness

Instructions: This plan for action includes recommendations for steps to take immediately, within the next 90 days and within the next 12 months, to drive culture connectedness by intention. For examples of how other organizations have taken action to drive connectedness, please refer to case profiles included in the study deck.

Recommended Steps to Drive Culture Connectedness by Intention

Monday Morning: Initiate Change	Potential Partners
Review and Reflect on Current Approach to Culture Connectedness ☐ Review the **imperative to drive culture connectedness in a hybrid world** with your organization in mind. Identify your organization's current approach to connecting employees to culture. ☐ Review the **modes of working in which employees feel most engaged with work**. Which modes of working does your current culture strategy focus on?	• HR leadership team • Senior business leaders (e.g. CEO, CFO, CIO, COO) • Representatives from HR, IT, Legal, Internal Communications
Start the Conversation ☐ Share key takeaways from this research study with senior leaders to generate support for and gauge organizational readiness to **diffuse culture through work**, **connect through emotional proximity,** and **optimize for a micro-based experience**. ☐ Identify leader and managers who can help champion efforts to drive culture connectedness by intention.	

Source: Gartner

Action Steps to Drive Culture Connectedness

Recommended Steps to Drive Culture Connectedness by Intention

Next 90 Days: Plan New Drivers for Culture Connectedness	Potential Partners
Identify Opportunities to Diffuse Culture Through Work ☐ Gather employee feedback regarding if (and if so, how) work processes conflict with the desired culture. ☐ Solicit employee suggestions for how to redesign the work processes that you have identified to increase their connection to your cultural values. ☐ Re-examine your flexible work approach to surface unintended constraints on employees' ability to adapt their work to their values and goals.	• Senior leadership • Business unit leaders • IT • Internal communications • Employees • Managers • HRBPs
Re-examine the Employee Lifecycle to Identify Moments That Matter for Connection ☐ Audit "moments that matter" (e.g. onboarding, coaching 1-on-1s, recognition, etc.) to evaluate when employees feel seen in remote and onsite work environments. ☐ Gather feedback from new employees to understand whether your current onboarding process builds emotional investment in your organization.	
Develop Leader Buy-In for Micro-Cultures ☐ Gather input from leaders to understand potential pushback against embracing micro-cultures throughout the organization. ☐ Share **Micro-Based Experiences Present Opportunity** with leaders and discuss which micro-cultures (e.g. team level, function level) are most salient in your organization. ☐ Review your organization's culture framework and look for opportunities to simplify it and make it less prescriptive, in order to make space for micro-culture as appropriate.	

Source: Gartner

Action Steps to Drive Culture Connectedness

Recommended Steps to Drive Culture Connectedness by Intention

Next 12 Months: Implement Culture Connectedness by Intention	Potential Partners
Redesign Work Processes to Reflect Your Desired Culture ☐ Establish a clear framework for work process redesign (consult Gartner's organization design resources for support). ☐ Help employees own the personalization of their work experiences by creating a questionnaire or assessment to help them surface their personal and professional values. ☐ Provide resources (conversation guides, FAQs, surveys, etc.) to leaders and managers so they can work with teams to co-create flexibility patterns.	• Cross-functional hybrid culture team • Senior leaders • Business unit leaders • Managers • Employees
Embed Emotional Proximity in the Employee Experience ☐ Connect employees to the stories of those positively impacted by your organization's work to create empathy and emotional investment in your mission. ☐ Provide guidance to employees and managers to help them link employee goals to the organization's mission and values.	
Rebalance Culture Ownership to Support Micro-Scale Experiences ☐ Create opportunities for employees and teams to share the diverse ways in which they are living the organization's culture. ☐ Use peer support to upskill managers on team culture by helping managers connect to one another and socialize insights and learnings as each oversees and evolves their team's desired set of norms, behaviors and rituals. ☐ Create a diagnostic based on your macro-culture principles so that managers can identify obstacles to their teams living their culture to the fullest.	

Source: Gartner

Thank You For Your Time!

- Please complete the evaluation by clicking on the link in the Chat

- Gartner will send you the complete deck within 24 hours via email

? Please contact your Gartner account manager to set up additional time with our advisors if you would like to dive into any of these insights and practices in more detail.

Appendix
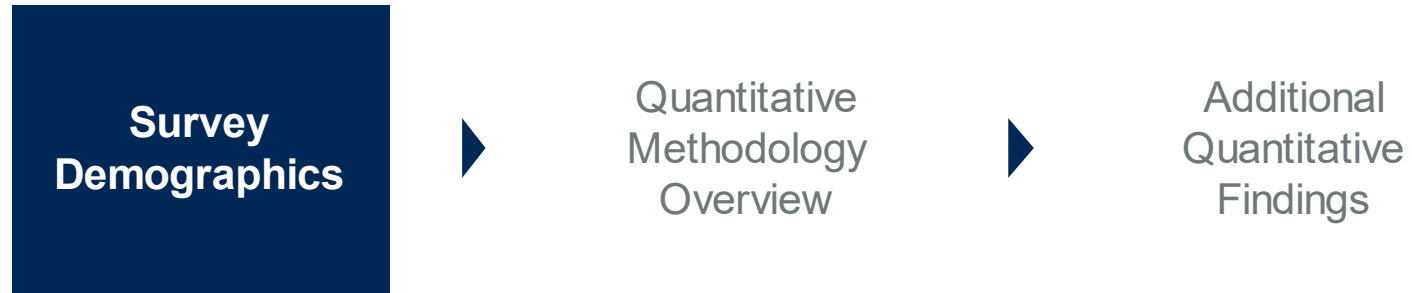
Gartner®

Roadmap

Survey Demographics ▶ Quantitative Methodology Overview ▶ Additional Quantitative Findings

2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Survey Demographics
Count and Percentage of Employees

Region	n	%
Asia	1,160	30%
North America	987	25%
Europe, Middle East and Africa	977	25%
Australia and New Zealand	408	10%
Latin America	385	10%

Number of FTEs	n	%
1,001 to 5,000 Employees	1,692	43%
5,001 to 10,000 Employees	817	21%
10,001 to 50,000 Employees	719	18%
50,000+ Employees	689	18%

Industry	n	%
Aerospace and Defense	30	1%
Construction	81	2%
Consumer Goods	96	2%
Education	270	7%
Financial Services	496	13%
Food, Beverage and Tobacco	58	2%
Government	429	11%
Healthcare	266	7%
Hotels, Resorts and Leisure	28	1%
Insurance	162	4%
Manufacturing, Materials and Heavy Industry	260	7%
Media, News and Entertainment	51	1%
Non-Profit/NGO	38	1%
Oil & Gas/Mining/Forestry	63	2%
Pharmaceuticals	52	1%
Professional Services	207	5%
Real Estate	53	1%
Restaurant	8	0%
Retail	139	4%
Technology	535	14%
Telecommunications	183	5%
Transportation and Shipping	108	3%
Utilities	91	2%
Other	213	5%

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Survey Demographics
Count and Percentage of Employees

Generations	n	%
Generation Z	232	6%
Millennial	2,067	53%
Generation X	1,299	33%
Baby Boomers	319	8%

Gender	n	%
Male	2,133	54%
Female	1,780	45%
Non-binary	3	0%
Prefer not to answer	1	0%

Level	n	%
Entry-level/first-level/junior	834	21%
Mid-level	2,243	57%
Senior	840	21%

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World HR Leader Survey

Survey Demographics
Count and Percentage of HR Leaders

Region	n	%
North America	126	54%
Europe, Middle East and Africa	48	20%
Latin America	30	13%
Australia and New Zealand	19	8%
Asia	11	5%

Number of FTEs	n	%
Up to 1,000 Employees	34	14%
1,001 to 5,000 Employees	78	33%
5,001 to 10,000 Employees	36	15%
10,001 to 50,000 Employees	64	27%
50,000+ Employees	23	10%

Global Reach	n	%
We operate in only one country	74	31%
We operate in several countries within one region	34	14%
We operate in several regions around the world	127	54%

Industry	n	%
Aerospace and Defense	1	0%
Construction	4	2%
Consumer Goods	16	7%
Education	4	2%
Financial Services	39	17%
Food and Beverage Services	10	4%
Government	13	6%
Healthcare	12	5%
Hotels, Resorts and Leisure	2	1%
Insurance	10	4%
Manufacturing	24	10%
Media and Entertainment	2	1%
Non-Profit/NGO	7	3%
Oil & Gas/Mining	8	3%
Pharmaceuticals	9	4%
Professional Services	5	2%
Real Estate	2	1%
Personal Services	0	0%
Retail	7	3%
Technology	27	11%
Telecommunications	9	4%
Transportation	2	1%
Utilities	4	2%
Other	18	8%

n = 235

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World HR Leader Survey

Culturally Connected Employees by Demographics

Survey Demographics
Percentage of Culturally Connected Employees

Region	%
North America	23%
Latin America	37%
Asia	27%
Europe, Middle East and Africa	19%
Australia and New Zealand	18%

Number of FTEs	%
1,001 to 5,000 Employees	25%
5,001 to 10,000 Employees	22%
10,001 to 50,000 Employees	24%
50,000+ Employees	24%

Industry	%
Aerospace and Defense	30%
Construction	35%
Consumer Goods	19%
Education	24%
Financial Services	25%
Food, Beverage and Tobacco	33%
Government	17%
Healthcare	26%
Insurance	19%
Manufacturing and Heavy Industry	27%
Media, News and Entertainment	20%
Non-Profit/Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	26%
Oil & Gas, Mining and Forestry	21%
Pharmaceuticals	25%
Professional Services	22%
Real Estate	26%
Retail	30%
Technology	27%
Telecommunications	23%
Transportation and Shipping	17%
Utilities	24%
Other	25%

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Culturally Connected Employees by Demographics

Survey Demographics
Percentage of Culturally Connected Employees

Generations	%
Generation Z	25%
Millennial	24%
Generation X	25%
Baby Boomers	24%

Gender	%
Male	26%
Female	23%

Level	%
Entry-level/first-level/junior	22%
Mid-level	23%
Senior	30%

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Roadmap

Survey Demographics ▶ **Quantitative Methodology Overview** ▶ Additional Quantitative Findings

Maximum Impact and Regression Methodology

Calculation of Maximum Impact

$$y = \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \ldots + \beta_n x_n + c$$

Outcome variable (y) Employee Culture Connectedness (ECC), Employee Retention, Performance, Discretionary Effort	Impact (b) Constant (c)
Drivers ($X_1 \ldots X_n$) • Culture Diffused Through Work • Emotional Proximity • Micro-Based Experience • Culture Diffused Through Office • Physical Proximity • Macro-Based Experience **Control variables** • Industry • Function • Organization Size • Region • Tenure • Age • Gender • Manager/Non-manager	**Multiple Regression** In order to compute the maximum impact of constructs on ECC, we calculated multiple regression models using an index for each outcome variable. We included control variables as part of each regression model to account for other factors that could influence employee outcomes, including industry, organization size, region, etc.

Source: Gartner

Quantitatively Defining Study Construct

Quantitatively Defining Outcome
Self-Reported by Hybrid/Remote Knowledge Workers

Employee Culture Connectedness

Employees were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree, on a 7-point scale, with each of the following nine statements:

1 I identify with the culture
- I identify with my organization's values
- I identify with the purpose of my organization
- I identify with my coworkers

2 I care about the culture
- How my organization defines itself matters to me
- I feel emotionally invested in my colleagues in the organization
- I feel emotionally invested in my work in the organization

3 I belong within the culture
- My personal values are aligned with those of my organization
- I feel like I am part of a greater mission at my organization
- I feel like I am a part of a community at my organization

Source: Gartner

Quantitatively Defining Variable
Percentage of Culturally Connected Employees

Culturally Connected Employees
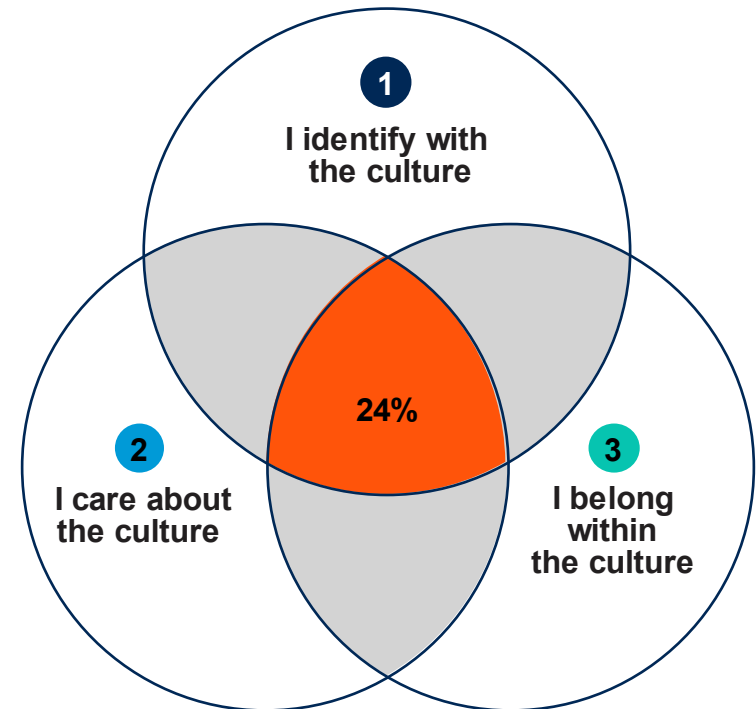
Employees who selected the 6 (Agree), or 7 (Strongly Agree) response option for all the nine statements are termed as culturally connected employees.

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Roadmap

Survey
Demographics

▶

Quantitative
Methodology
Overview

▶

**Additional
Quantitative
Findings**

Level of Connectedness Drives Talent Outcomes

Average Talent Outcomes Score by Level of Connectedness

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

We Need to Be Intentional About Connectedness, Too

Intentionality Key to Connecting Employees to Culture in a Fragmented Experience

Connectedness

Culture

1. I identify with the culture.

2. I care about the culture.

3. I belong within the culture.

79% of HR leaders agree that in a hybrid work model, leaders have to work more **intentionally** to connect employees to the culture.

Identity
"Who we are"

Community
"How we treat each other"

Purpose
"Why we exist"
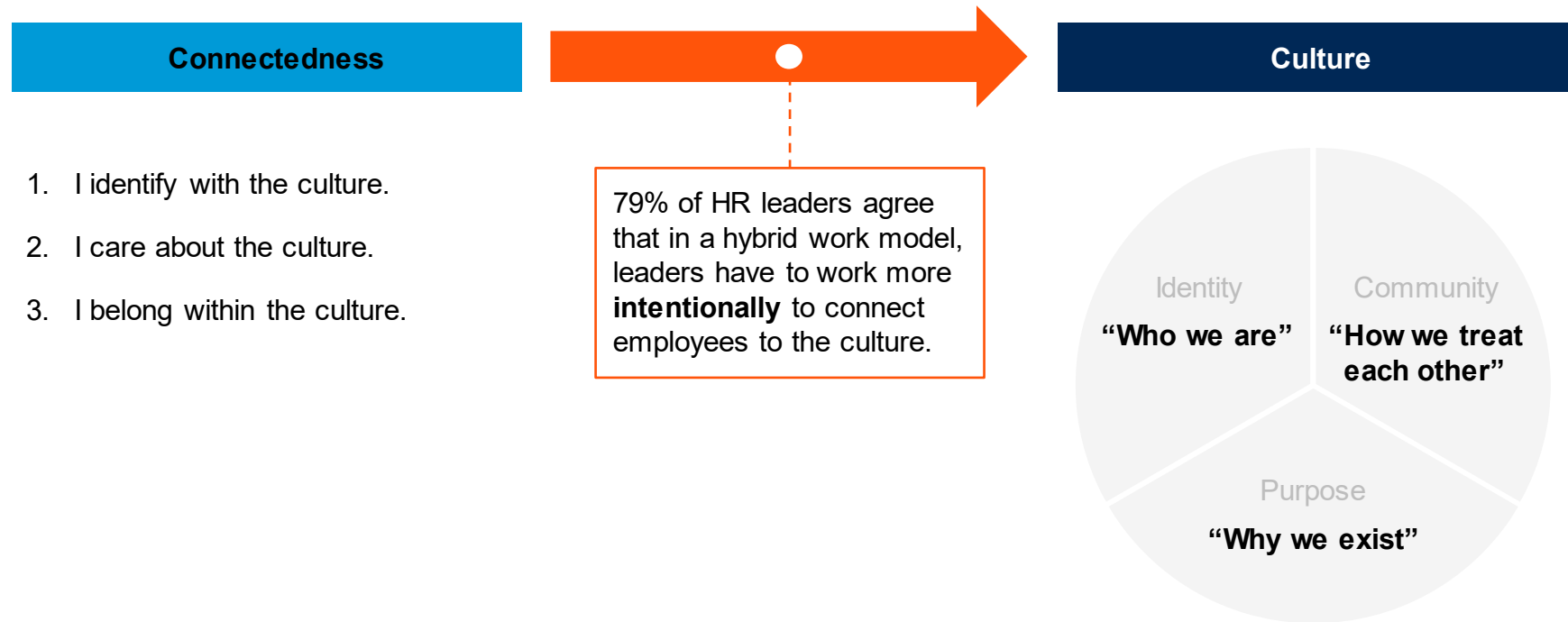
n = 235
Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World HR Leader Survey

New Hires Are at Higher Risk of Attrition

Median Turnover Rate by Organizational Tenure

Emotional proximity is especially important for new hires.

25%	New Hire (Tenure < 1 Year)
19%	Employees With Tenure at the Organization of 1-2 Years
14%	Employees With Tenure at the Organization of 3-4 Years
9%	Employees With Tenure at the Organization of 5 or More Years
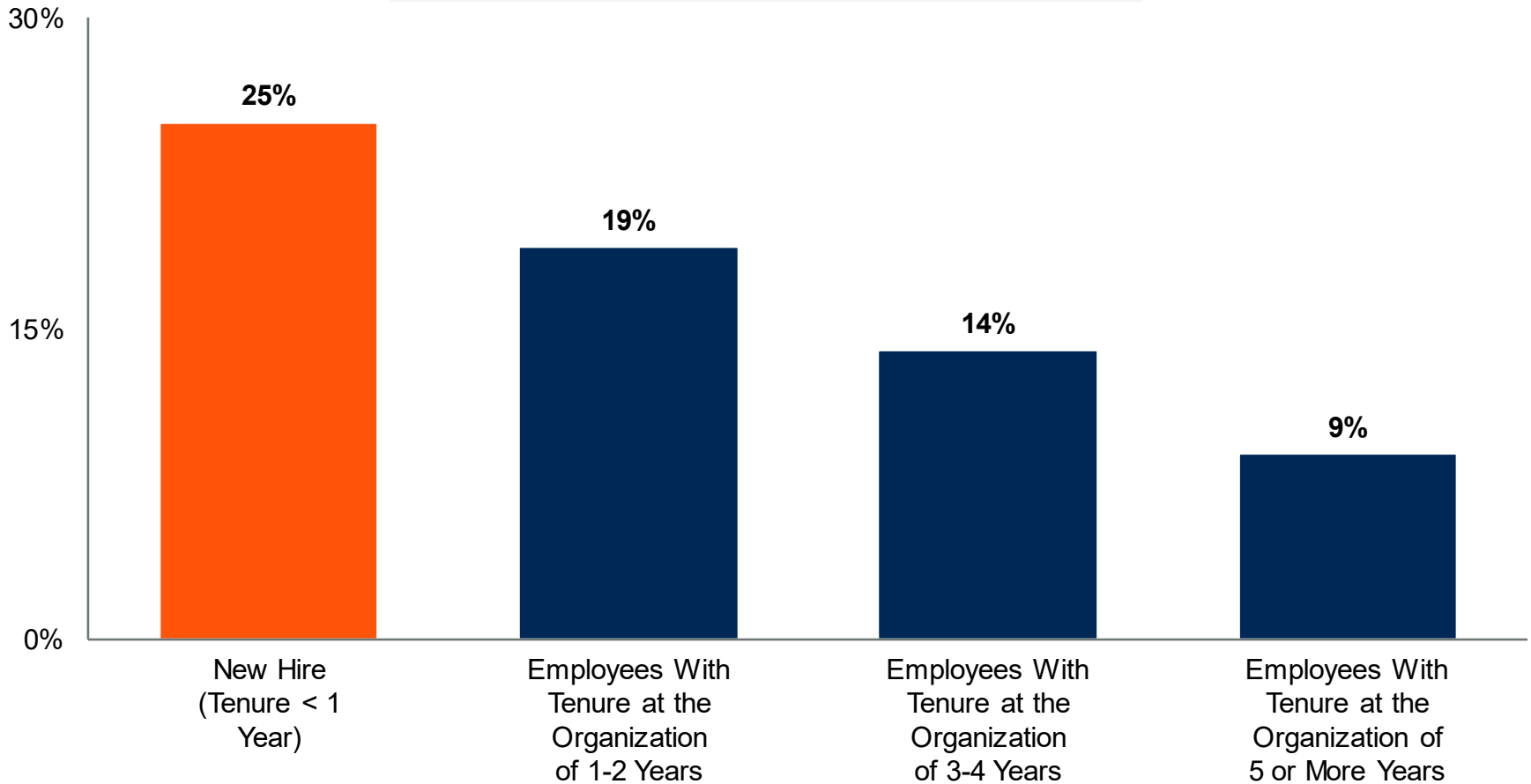
n = 380 HR Leaders

Source: Gartner 2020 Annual Turnover Survey

When Work Is the Constant, It Must Be Fulfilling

Prevalence of Work Fulfilment and Impact of Work Fulfillment on Culture Connectedness

Our Definition of Work Fulfillment

Vigor: "I feel energized by my work".

Purpose: "I find purpose in the work I do".

Dedication: "My job keeps me challenged".

Absorption: "I find time passes quickly when I am working".

Only 37% of employees find their work fulfilling.

When work is fulfilling, **employee culture connectedness can increase** by up to 72%.

n = 3,917 hybrid/remote knowledge workers
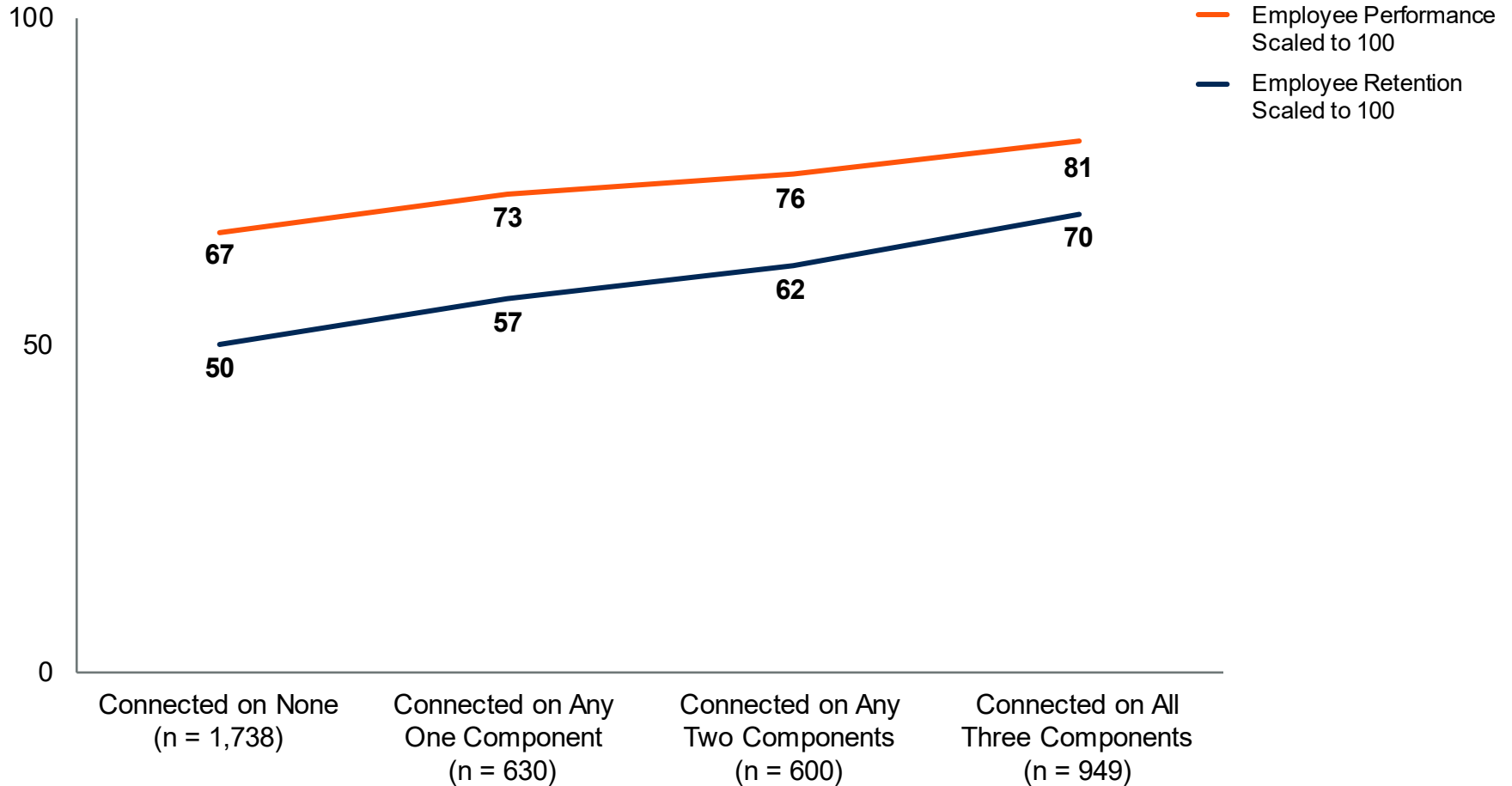Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Value-Driven Future of Work

Overview

To underpin a high-performance flexible work environment, Virgin Money redefines ways of working through its value-driven approach. It includes balancing flexibility at an individual level with responsibility around role demands at a team level and encouraging connections across the organization.

Solution Highlights

- **Value-Based, Not Location-Based, Employee Personas:** Create simple employee personas at a continuum of limited to full flexibility to highlight the optionality employees have for bringing value to the organization and its customers.

- **Employee-Articulated, Not Leader-Articulated, Work Value:** Enable employees to discover on their own what they value the most in work and life and encourage them to lead conversations to design working arrangements around those.

- **Team Rhythms, Not Manager-Led Norms:** Encourage team members to consider not just their individual flexibility needs but the team's flexibility and organizational needs to collectively design their ways of working.

- **Connections Based on Life Stages, Not Just Career Stages:** Connect employees to each other through shared experiences, circumstances and interests, not just in their careers but in their lives.

About the Company

Virgin Money

Industry: Financial Services
Headquarters Location: United Kingdom

Revenue: £1.6 bn
Employees: 8000

Future of Work Presents New Risks

Virgin Money Identified New Risks That Come With Flexible Work

⚠️ **Flexible Work Creates a Two-Tiered Structure**
The workforce is divided into those who can work remotely and those who can't.

⚠️ **Employees Feel Disconnected From Each Other**
Increased time in virtual environments and less time in person together fractures relationships.

⚠️ **Flexible Work Becomes Inflexible**
A binary model[a] does not allow the workforce to capitalize on opportunities for flexibility.

⚠️ **Individual Preferences Create Inconsistency**
Employees' individual flexibility preferences lead to inconsistent employee experiences and siloed working.

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

[a] Binary model: 2 days in office/3 days at home or vice versa

MONEY

Virgin Money's Value-Driven Future of Work

The Four Dimensions of Virgin Money's "A Life More Virgin" Framework

1 **Value-Based, Not Location-Based, Employee Personas:** Highlights the value each employee brings in their role

2 **Employee-Articulated, Not Leader-Articulated, Work Value:** Enables employee ownership of personalizing work experiences

3 **Team Rhythms, Not Manager-Led Norms:** Promotes collective flexibility patterns set by teams to balance team member and organizational needs

4 **Connections Based on Life Stages, Not Just Career Stages:** Builds connections across the organization based on position in career and life

OUR DIMENSIONS TO HIGH PERFORMANCE

TEAM ROLE

ME

TEAM RHYTHM

MY STAGE

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

"Our corporate culture is now in 8,000 homes."

Scott McNair, Leadership & Talent, HR, Virgin Money

Value-Based, Not Location-Based, Employee Personas

Personas Highlighting Employee Value and Helping Embrace Flexibility Opportunity Across Roles

Full
Flexibility

**Value-Based
Employee Persona**

Value Employees Bring

The Virtual	These employees do the best work in their own space, with collaboration a click away.
The Connector	These employees connect often over Teams and sometimes in person to collaborate.
The Presence	The engine that looks after our customers, these employees manage workflows and interactions.
The Voice	The friendly voice at the end of the phone, these employees juggle different customer needs daily.
The Face	The ambassador of Virgin Money, these employees are there for our customers when they need us most.

Limited
Flexibility

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

MONEY

Value-Based, Not Location-Based, Employee Personas

Personas Highlighting Employee Value and Helping Embrace Flexibility Opportunity Across Roles

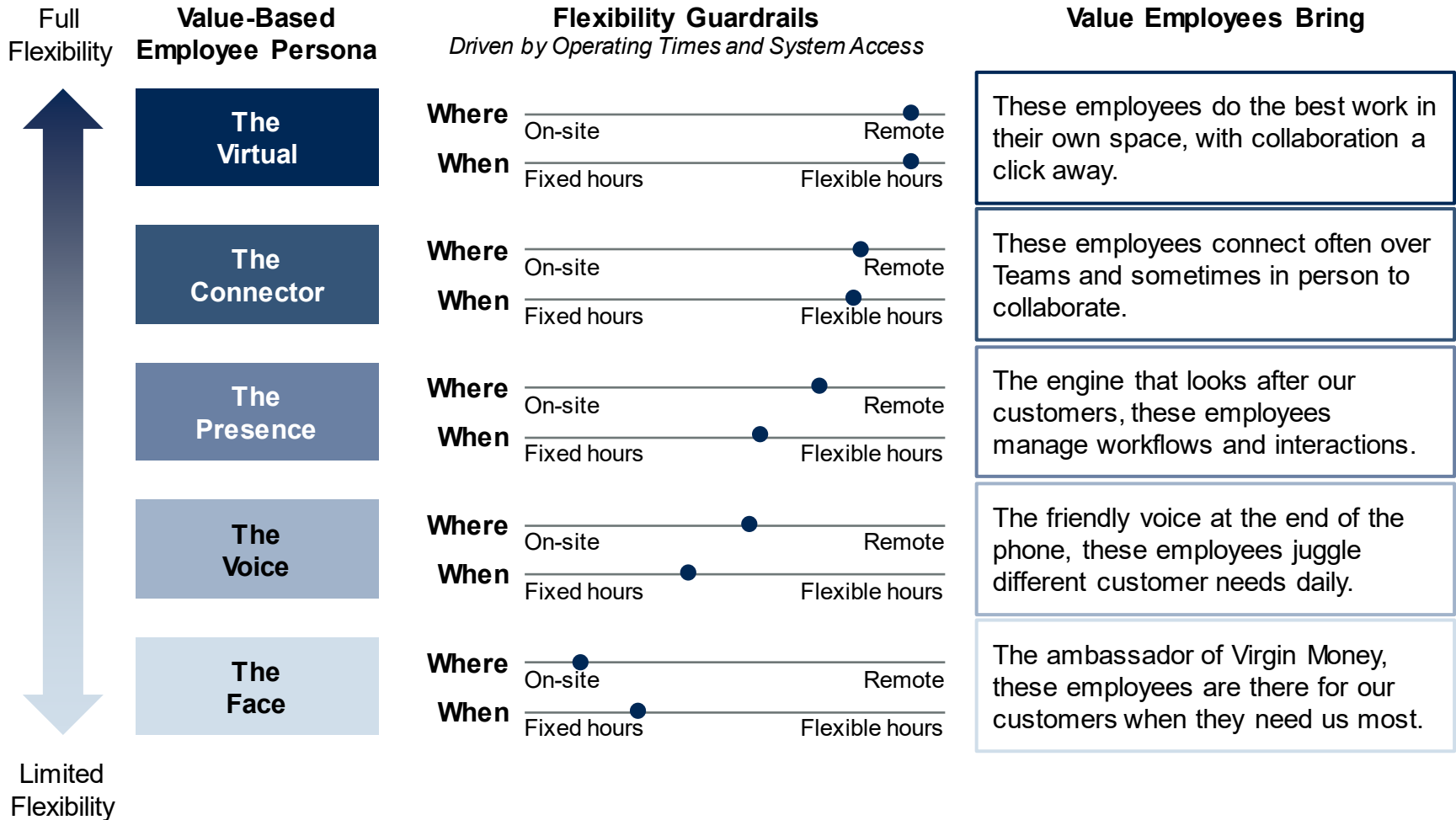| Full Flexibility ↑ ↓ Limited Flexibility	Value-Based Employee Persona	Flexibility Guardrails *Driven by Operating Times and System Access*	Value Employees Bring
	The Virtual	**Where** On-site ——————●— Remote **When** Fixed hours ——————●— Flexible hours	These employees do the best work in their own space, with collaboration a click away.
	The Connector	**Where** On-site —————●—— Remote **When** Fixed hours —————●—— Flexible hours	These employees connect often over Teams and sometimes in person to collaborate.
	The Presence	**Where** On-site ————●——— Remote **When** Fixed hours ———●———— Flexible hours	The engine that looks after our customers, these employees manage workflows and interactions.
	The Voice	**Where** On-site ———●———— Remote **When** Fixed hours ——●————— Flexible hours	The friendly voice at the end of the phone, these employees juggle different customer needs daily.
	The Face	**Where** On-site —●————— Remote **When** Fixed hours ——●———— Flexible hours	The ambassador of Virgin Money, these employees are there for our customers when they need us most.

Value-Based, Not Location-Based, Employee Personas

Personas Highlighting Employee Value and Helping Embrace Flexibility Opportunity Across Roles
Illustrative

1 Each persona describes role structure and flexibility requirements using data collected internally.

2 Each persona highlights the unique value contribution to achieving organization's purpose

Employee Persona — The Connector

Sam is a 35-year-old working parent, eager to flexibly manage home and work demands. At work, they want to be close to their business customers, while at the same time contribute to a new agile project.

Role: HR Business Partner
Work Location(s): Hub and Remote
Work Timings: 10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in Hub, in between school runs, agile stand ups and business customer meetings.
3:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m. at home doing focused work on the agile project and catching up on emails.

Where On-site ————————————●— Remote
When Fixed hours ———————————●— Flexible hours

Value employees bring in this persona:
These employees often connect virtually and sometimes in person to collaborate.

Benefits of Value-Based Employee Personas

- It is easier for employees to embrace their nature of work and flexibility feasibility in each role.

- Managers are able to create equitable, fair and transparent work environment in the world of varied employee experience.

- Leaders are better equipped to balance customer and operational needs with employee needs.

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

Employee-Articulated, Not Leader-Articulated, Work Value

Employee Self-Discovery of What They Value in Work and Life

Employees answer **diagnostic questions** in a Virgin Money application to **self-discover what makes them happy and productive** at work and in life.

Once employees score each question under these categories on **importance and satisfaction**, they get results on the values surfaced. Employees are then assisted by a coach bot to get more clarity on their core needs.

Discover What Makes You Happy

My Motivators

①②③④⑤   ①②③④⑤
Importance   Satisfaction

My Wellbeing

①②③④⑤   ①②③④⑤
Importance   Satisfaction

My Organization

①②③④⑤   ①②③④⑤
Importance   Satisfaction

Employees **use these results to create an agenda for a discussion with their managers** about the changes they want in their **work experience**.

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money and Work-Happy

MONEY

Employee-Articulated, Not Leader-Articulated, Work Value

Employee-Led Discussions to Design Preferred Work Experiences
Illustrative

I've realized that it's important for me to stay close to my family. Can I **work in our retail outlet in location X 2 days a week and 3 days here** so that I can spend more time with them?
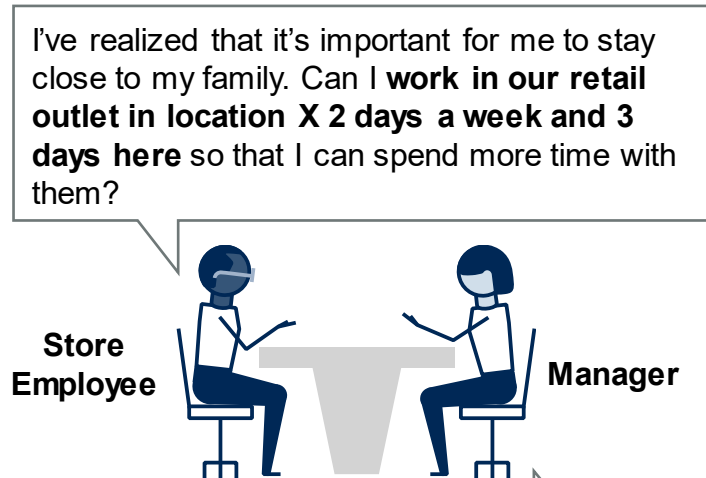
I feel it'd be good for me to work different hours when I'm more productive. But I understand my work requires collaboration with the team. So, **I'd like to do teamwork during the day and solo work at night**.

Store Employee

Manager

Finance Team Member

Manager

It will probably be hard to accommodate all of that, but let's see what we can try here. We can experiment and see if it works for your role requirements and business needs.
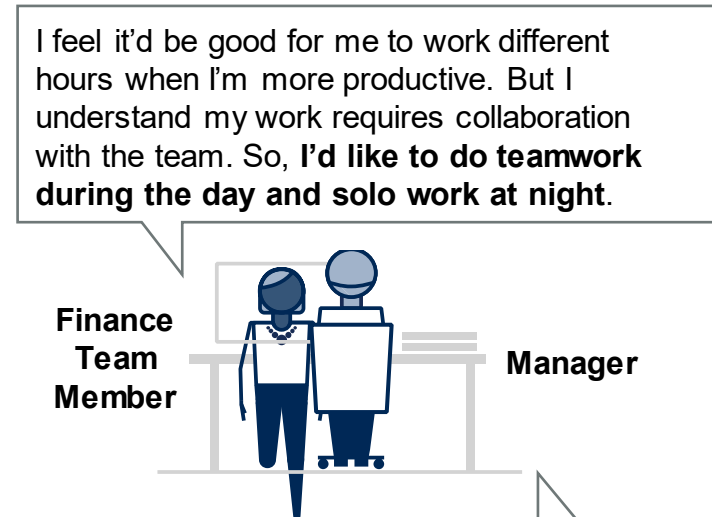
Let me check this out. We should be able to make this work. We will start slow because we need to make sure team needs are balanced with your preferences for work hours.

Benefits of Employee-Articulated Work Value
- Greater employee ownership in designing ways of working
- Creates connectedness to culture through work
- Enhanced engagement and productivity
- Reinforces a test-and-learn approach on changes employees value the most

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

Team Rhythms, Not Manager-Led Norms

Team Rhythms to Build Collective Flexibility Around How Employees Work Together Through Time

Individual Flexibility Uncoordinated Chaos	Team Rhythms Moving Together	Manager-Led Flexibility Static Flatline

Characteristics
- Employee-led
- Erratic
- Grounded in individuality

Characteristics
- Team-led
- Dynamic
- Grounded in mutuality

Characteristics
- Leader-led
- Static
- Grounded in hierarchy

Ongoing team meetings and employee-manager conversations to discuss what's working well and what's not, over time

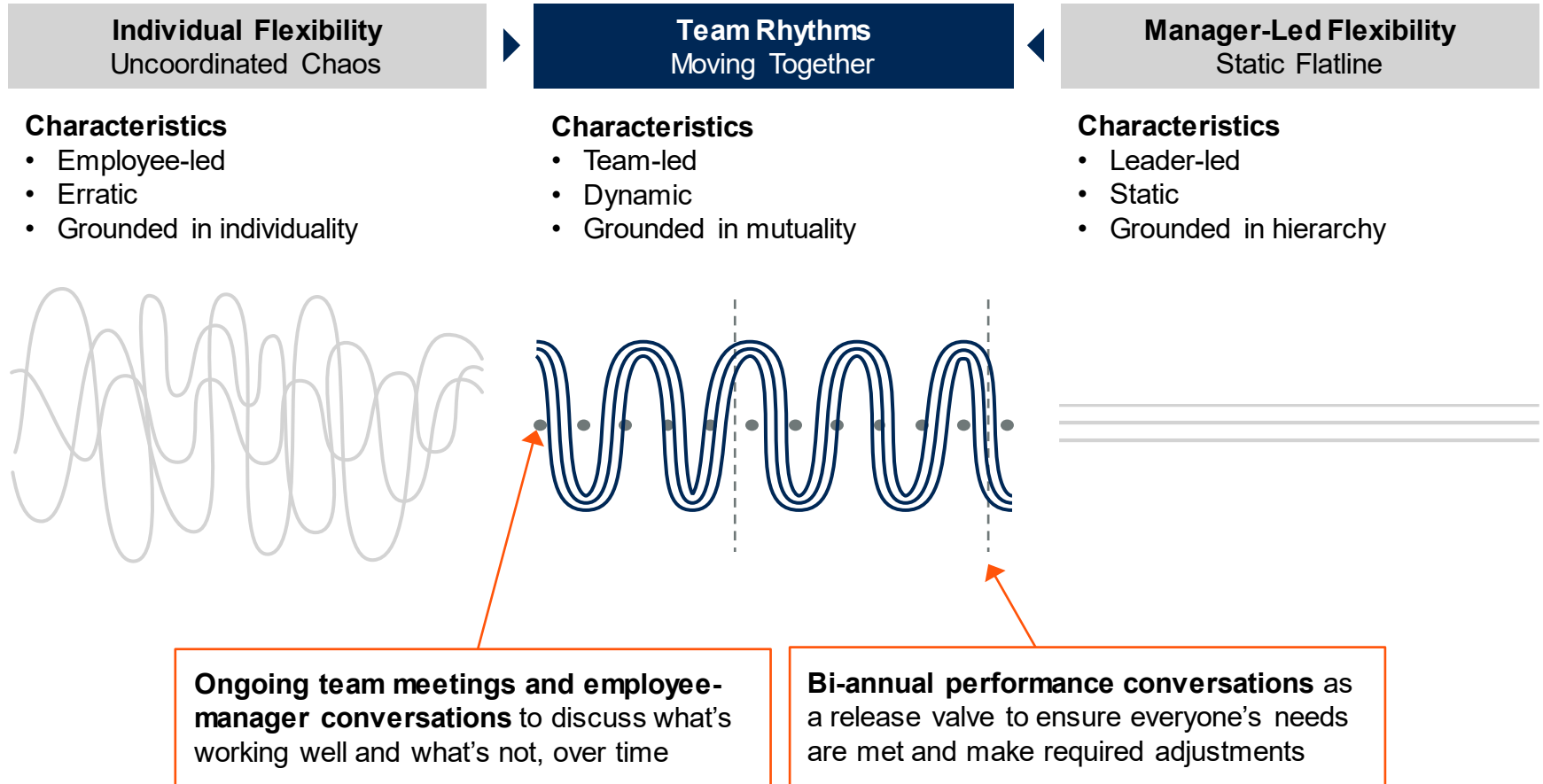**Bi-annual performance conversations** as a release valve to ensure everyone's needs are met and make required adjustments

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

Team Rhythms, Not Manager-Led Norms

Team Rhythms to Build Collective Flexibility Around How Employees Work Together Through Time
Illustrative

Parameters of Choice for Team Rhythms
- Operational requirements in the workflow
- Core working hours — social work and solo work
- Key meetings and communications

To make it easier to discuss ways of working, team rhythms include team-based activities, their frequency and the format.

To reduce the burden on managers to accommodate individual needs, team rhythms include rationale that all members agree with.

Frequency	Activities	Format	Comments/ Rationale
Annual	Team Event	Face to Face	Bringing everyone together for quality time
Quarterly	Performance Review Meeting	Face to Face	Review and planning
Monthly	Team Meeting	Digital	
Availability and Etiquette	• Meeting duration to be 50 or 25 minutes • Team's core working hours from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.	Face to Face or Digital	Creates space and time for planning and thinking

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

Connections Based on Life Stages, Not Just Career Stages

Virgin Money's Colleague Networking Initiative Based on Career and Life Stages

Career Stages	Life Stages

Retirement

Sideways Move

Management Roles

Internal Move

First Promotion

New Hire

Starting a Career

New Parent

New to the Company

Caring for Children and Dependents

New to the Location
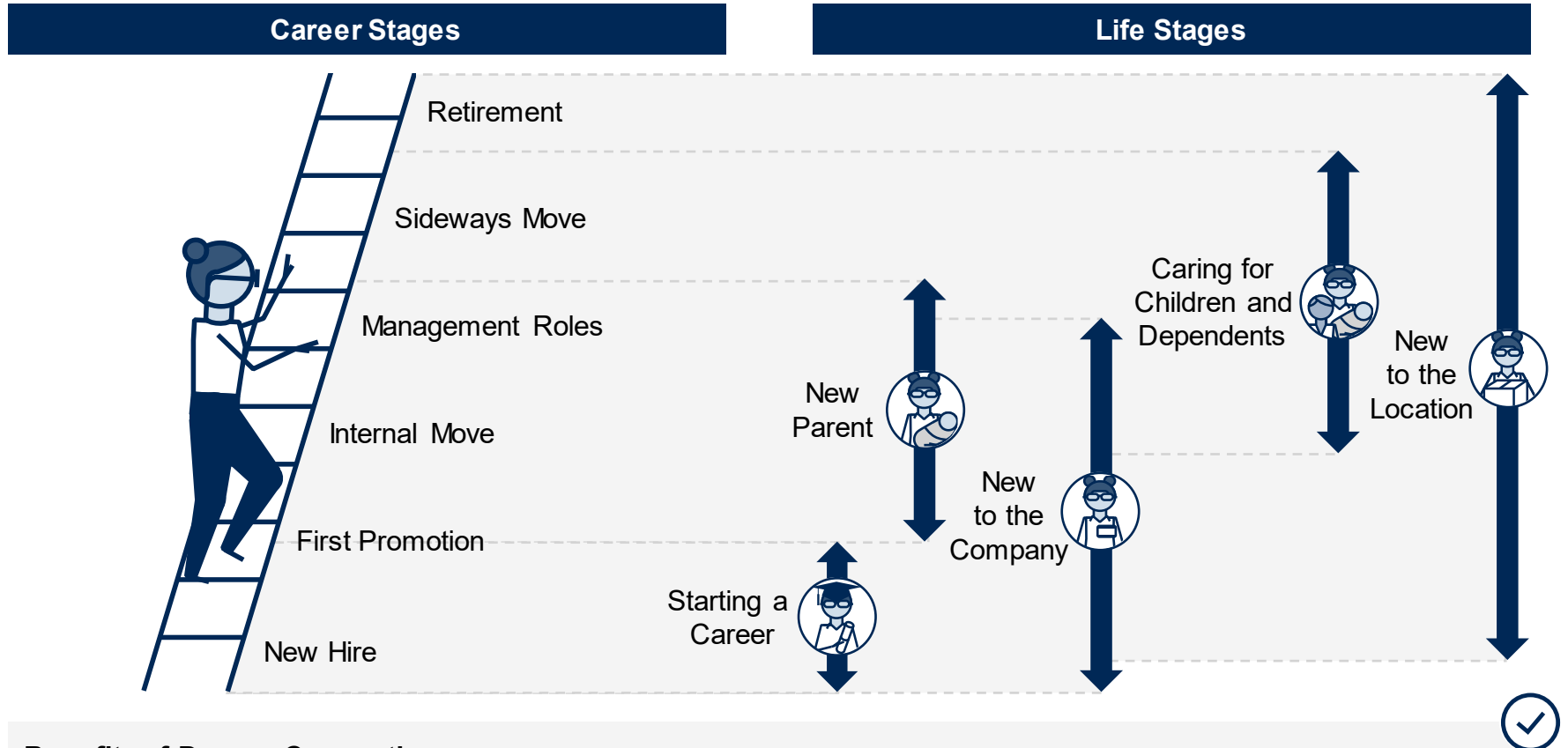
Benefits of Deeper Connections
- Intensified connections through shared experiences, circumstances or interests in career and in life
- Widened employee network both within and outside immediate teams
- Deepened sense of community and belonging

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

Value-Driven Future of Work Shows Positive Outcomes

Talent and Other Business Outcomes

Engagement and Wellbeing

Living a Life More Virgin will make me happier at work.
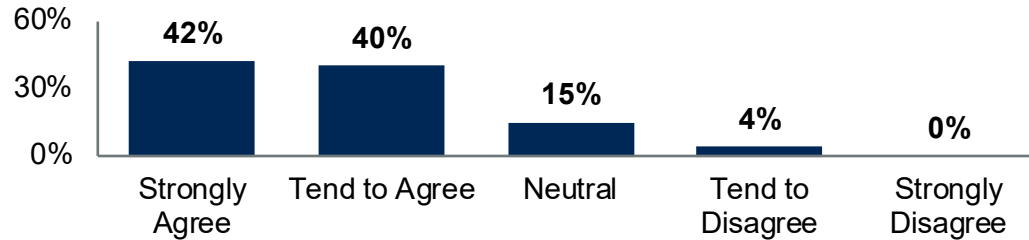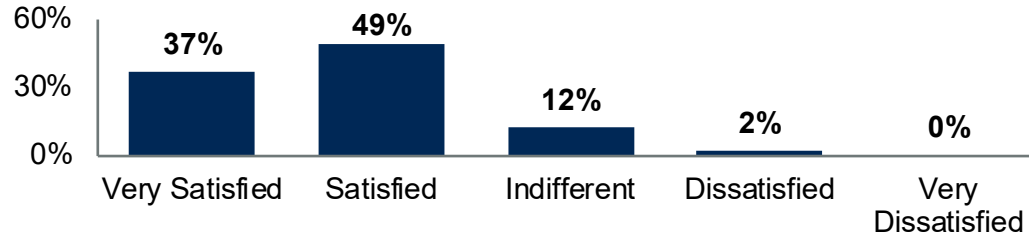
42%	**40%**	**15%**	**4%**	**0%**
Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neutral	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Colleague Buy-In

How do you feel about embracing your persona?

37%	**49%**	**12%**	**2%**	**0%**
Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Indifferent	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied

Overall Experience

How satisfied are you with the overall experience at Virgin Money?

23%	**55%**	**20%**	**3%**	**0%**
Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Indifferent	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied

Source: Adapted From Virgin Money

"Our HR systems, policies and processes support and reinforce the 'A Life More Virgin' framework."

Leadership & Talent, HR, Virgin Money

"For the first time, I've been given freedom to work with my team to define what flexibility is for us. For too long, team members have been disengaged because of a no-trust mindset around flexible work hours."

Operational Team Leader, Customer Services, Virgin Money

"Team Rhythms put the colleague in the driving seat and gives them the scope and power to work within the parameters set but in a way they choose."
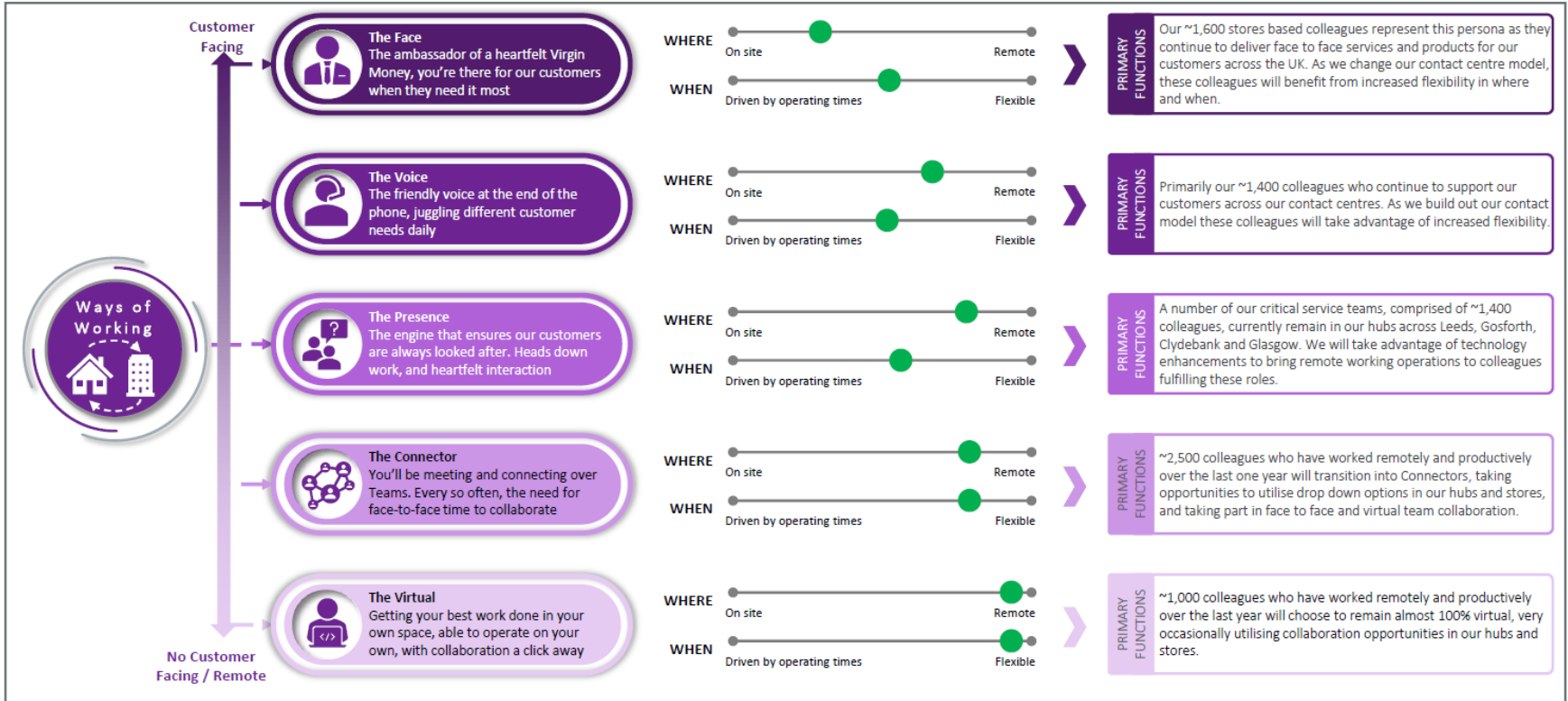
Analyst, Risk, Virgin Money

Virgin Money's Employee Personas

A Set of Personas to Act as a Framework for Manager and Employee Conversations

Customer Facing → **No Customer Facing / Remote**

Ways of Working

The Face
The ambassador of a heartfelt Virgin Money, you're there for our customers when they need it most

WHERE — On site / Remote
WHEN — Driven by operating times / Flexible

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS: Our ~1,600 stores based colleagues represent this persona as they continue to deliver face to face services and products for our customers across the UK. As we change our contact centre model, these colleagues will benefit from increased flexibility in where and when.

The Voice
The friendly voice at the end of the phone, juggling different customer needs daily

WHERE — On site / Remote
WHEN — Driven by operating times / Flexible

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS: Primarily our ~1,400 colleagues who continue to support our customers across our contact centres. As we build out our contact model these colleagues will take advantage of increased flexibility.

The Presence
The engine that ensures our customers are always looked after. Heads down work, and heartfelt interaction

WHERE — On site / Remote
WHEN — Driven by operating times / Flexible

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS: A number of our critical service teams, comprised of ~1,400 colleagues, currently remain in our hubs across Leeds, Gosforth, Clydebank and Glasgow. We will take advantage of technology enhancements to bring remote working operations to colleagues fulfilling these roles.

The Connector
You'll be meeting and connecting over Teams. Every so often, the need for face-to-face time to collaborate

WHERE — On site / Remote
WHEN — Driven by operating times / Flexible

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS: ~2,500 colleagues who have worked remotely and productively over the last one year will transition into Connectors, taking opportunities to utilise drop down options in our hubs and stores, and taking part in face to face and virtual team collaboration.

The Virtual
Getting your best work done in your own space, able to operate on your own, with collaboration a click away

WHERE — On site / Remote
WHEN — Driven by operating times / Flexible

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS: ~1,000 colleagues who have worked remotely and productively over the last year will choose to remain almost 100% virtual, very occasionally utilising collaboration opportunities in our hubs and stores.

Source: Virgin Money

TBS's Onboarding Experience for Emotional Investment

Overview

Recognizing that new hires were struggling to connect to the organization in the hybrid environment, TBS created a mission-driven onboarding program rooted in the people experience to build new hires' emotional investment in the organization and their roles.

Solution Highlights

- **Create empathy, not just interest, for the organization's mission:** TBS builds new hires' emotional investment by using role-play exercises that showcase the client journey.

- **Make mission impact, not just work impact, tangible:** TBS starts a dialogue directly between new hires and clients to show employees the return on their emotional investment.

- **Link goals to the mission, not just outcomes, for sustainable commitment**: New hires link their individual roles to organization priorities to sustain their emotional investment in the mission.
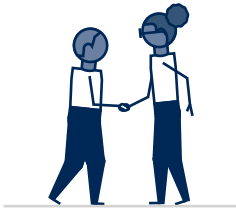
Not All Onboarding Charges Emotional Investment

Onboarding in an Onsite vs Virtual Environment
Illustrative

⚠️ Gartner research shows that only 32% of culturally connected employees felt culture was experienced strongly during the formal onboarding process.

Onsite Onboarding	Onboarding Moments That Matter	Virtual Onboarding
	Meeting my manager for the first time	
	Learning about the organizational mission	
	Having my first cohort happy hour	

n = 949 hybrid/remote knowledge workers

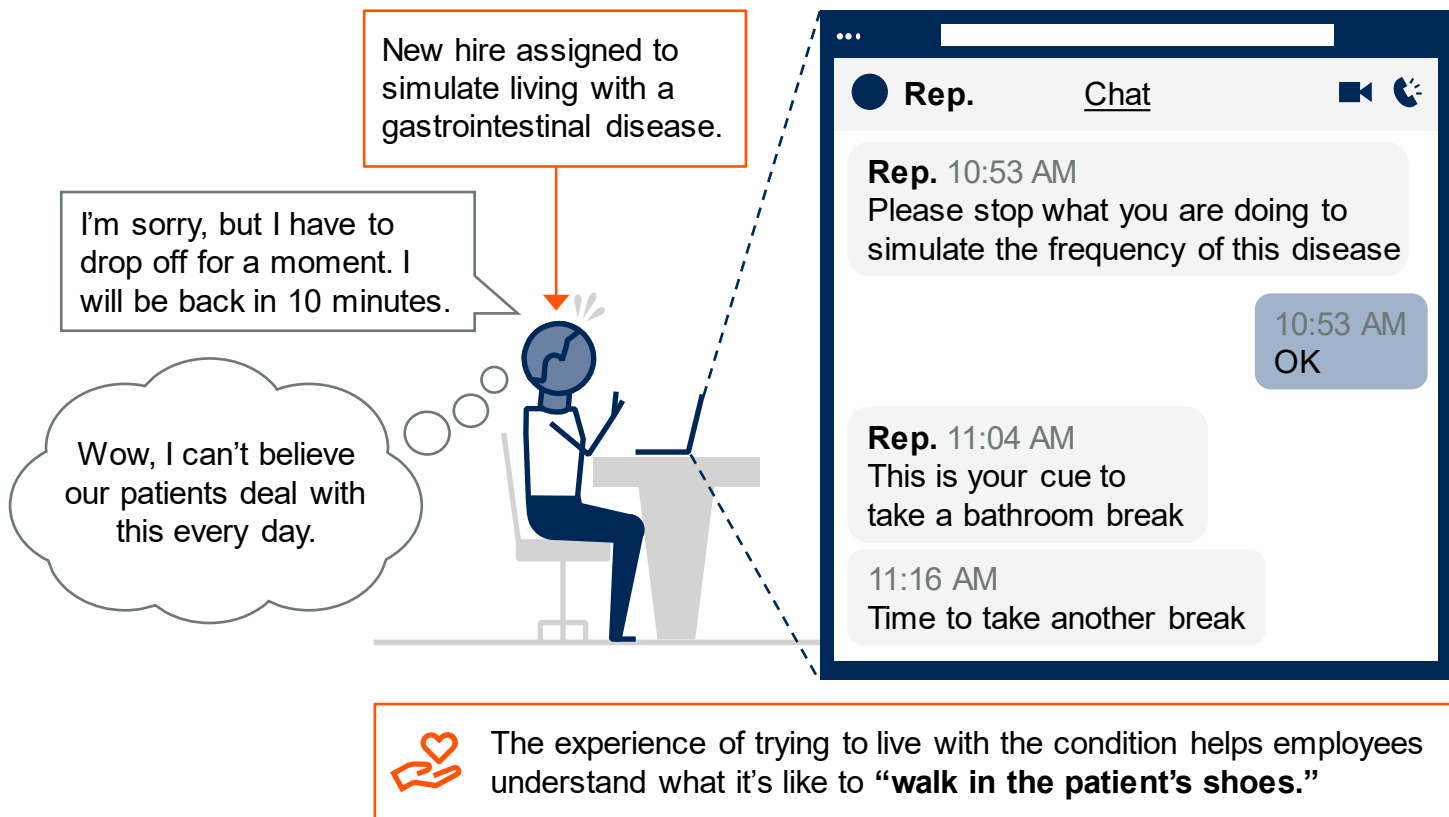Source: 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey

Create Empathy, Not Just Interest, for the Mission

New Hire Patient-Roleplay Exercise
Illustrative

- **TBS assigns new hires a condition** experienced by a real patient that they have helped.
- New hires are **given tasks to perform** so they learn firsthand how the condition impacts their day-to-day lives.

New hire assigned to simulate living with a gastrointestinal disease.

I'm sorry, but I have to drop off for a moment. I will be back in 10 minutes.

Wow, I can't believe our patients deal with this every day.

Rep.   Chat

Rep. 10:53 AM
Please stop what you are doing to simulate the frequency of this disease

10:53 AM
OK

Rep. 11:04 AM
This is your cue to take a bathroom break

11:16 AM
Time to take another break

The experience of trying to live with the condition helps employees understand what it's like to **"walk in the patient's shoes."**
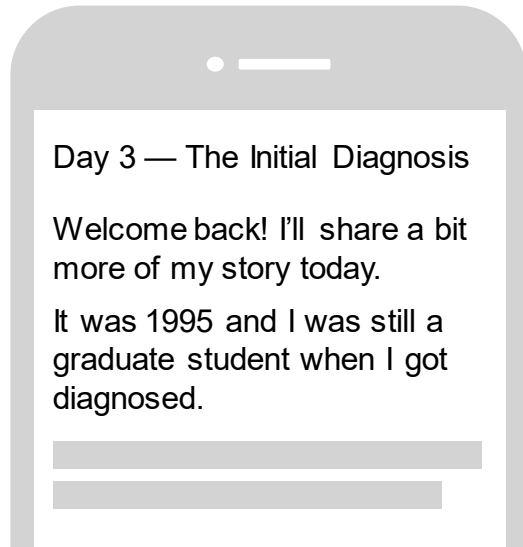
Source: Adapted From TBS

Make Mission Impact, Not Just Work Impact, Tangible
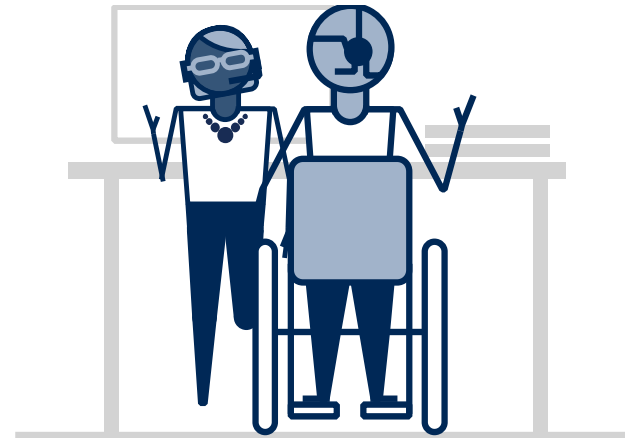
The Patient Connection Program
Illustrative

Interactive Patient Story

New hires exchange messages with a patient.

Day 3 — The Initial Diagnosis

Welcome back! I'll share a bit more of my story today.

It was 1995 and I was still a graduate student when I got diagnosed.

Face-to-Face Patient Engagement

New hires share their stories of roleplaying the conditions with a real patient, who shares their personal experience and how TBS helped them.

New hires of the global pharmaceutical company engage with real patients which humanizes the impact of their work and demonstrates the return on their emotional investment. It then takes advantage of the virtual environment to make these connections possible.
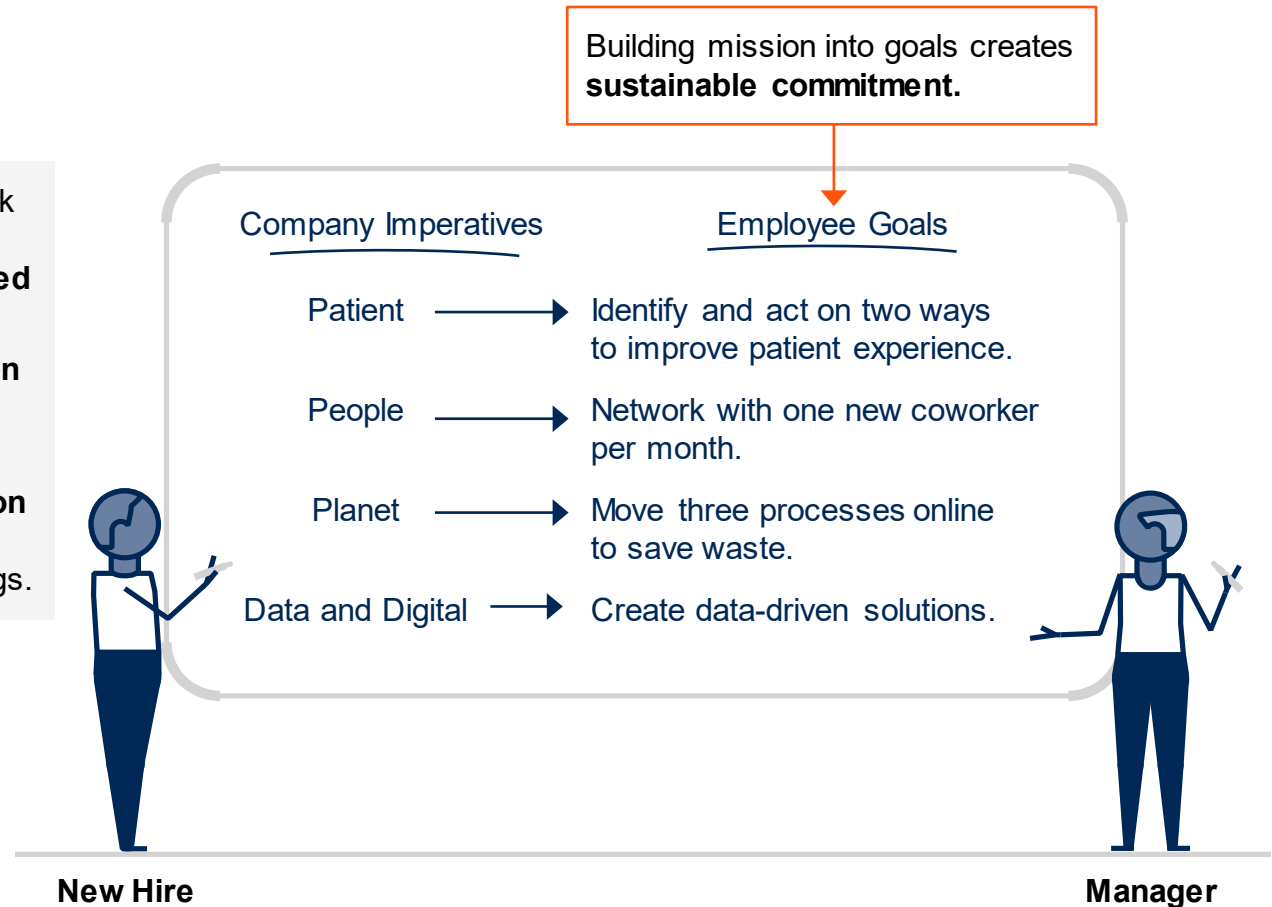
Source: Adapted From TBS

Link Goals to the Mission, Not Just to Outcomes

Mission-Based Goal Setting
Illustrative

Building mission into goals creates **sustainable commitment.**

- Managers and new hires work together to set new hire individual goals **directly linked to elements of the mission**.

- New hires **connect execution of the mission** to their own everyday tasks.

- Teams regularly make **mission top of mind** by featuring patient stories before meetings.

Company Imperatives	Employee Goals
Patient	Identify and act on two ways to improve patient experience.
People	Network with one new coworker per month.
Planet	Move three processes online to save waste.
Data and Digital	Create data-driven solutions.

New Hire

Manager

Source: Adapted From TBS

Develop, Don't Just Train, New Hires

New Hire Mind Development Strategy
Illustrative
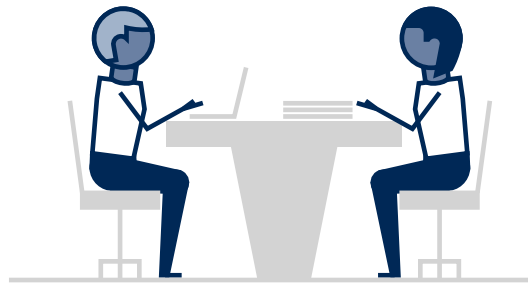
| Accountability	Development	Planning
New hire, manager and team will follow the onboarding plan which encourages and supports a successful probation period.	New hires will be given the opportunity to deep dive into their role and build on their skills/capabilities.	New hires will receive applicable training, systems, meetings and trainings as a part of their onboarding which allows all to plan accordingly.

Source: Adapted From TBS

Results

New Hire Understanding of Patient Journey

▲ **2x**

50%

100%

Before

After
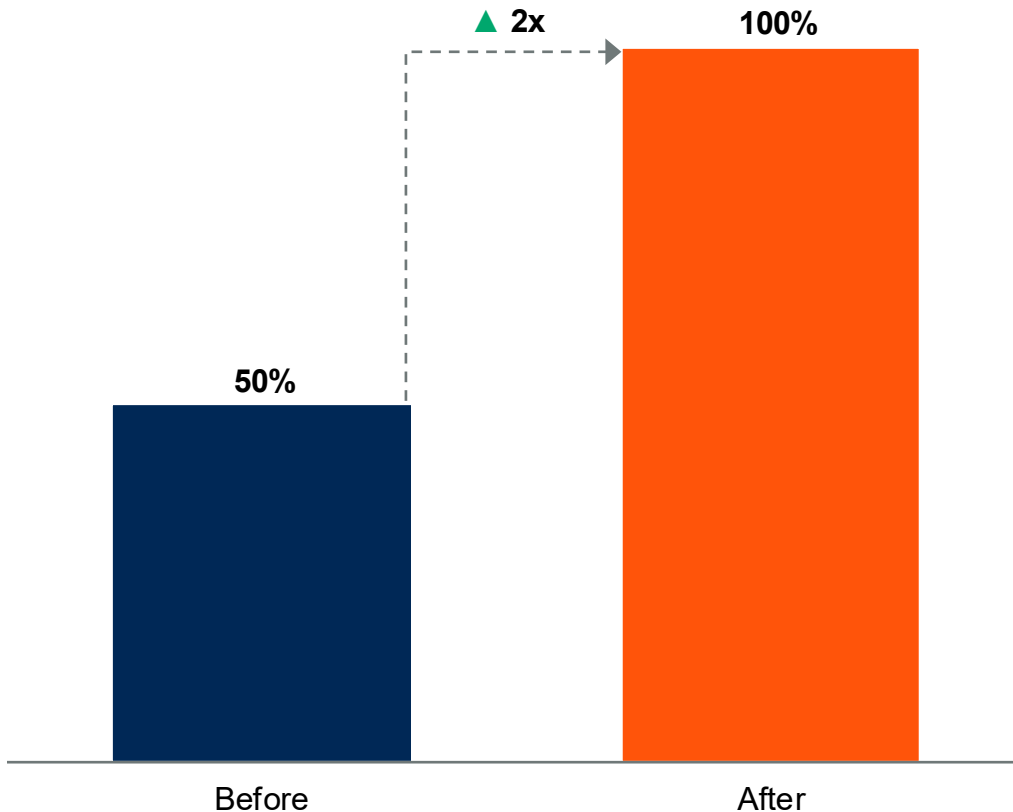
"**I'm really proud of being an employee of this company.** Your story encourages me to focus even more on providing exceptional experience of payroll delivery for our colleagues who have direct influence on patients' treatment."

Business Solutions New Hire

"I used text-based learning functionality for the first time. This opportunity helped to look at learning from different perspective. **It was very innovative and emotionally connecting experience.** I felt emotional bond, and because of that felt very engaged with the person I spoke to and our corporate values."

Business Solutions New Hire

New hire understanding of the patient journey increased from 5/10 to 10/10 upon completion of the global pharmaceutical company's Patient Connection Program.

Source: Adapted From TBS

Onboarding Centered Around Employee Experience

Overview of TBS Onboarding Program

Pilot Program for New Hires rolled-out through a 90-day plan and global/dept. trainings. Effectiveness measured through temperature checks; 100% of participants finding the pilot program was satisfactory.

Benefits

"The aim of our onboarding process is creating a consistent experience for all employees at TBS. All employees, externally and internally, should be engaged through their hearts and minds."

Employee Experience

Designed and implemented on a global scale

Engages leaders in employee experience and engagement

Improves job satisfaction and future performance

Create exceptional people experience

Best-in-class approach and scalable

Engage new joiners in a virtual setting

All employees experience consistent digital approach

Engaged through the heart and mind

Process includes external and internal new joiners
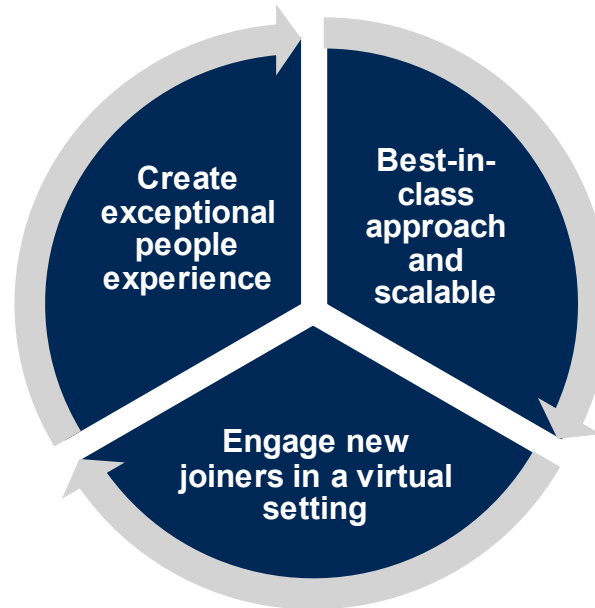
Source: Adapted From TBS

Onboarding Experience for Emotional Investment

Solution Overview

Key Questions

TBS's Strategy for Building Emotional Investment

How can we get employees to **emotionally invest** in the organization?	Create empathy, not just interest, for the organization's mission.
How can we show employees the **return** on their emotional investment?	Make mission impact, not just work impact, tangible.
How can we get employees to **stay** emotionally invested?	Link goals to the mission, not just outcomes, for sustainable commitment.

Background: TBS's team understood that to encourage new hires to emotionally invest in the organization, they had to engage with both their hearts and minds. They created a consistent, agile onboarding experience that engaged workers in a virtual setting.

Source: Adapted From TBS

Royal DSM's Culture for a Flotilla Future

Overview

To drive employee connection to culture, Royal DSM enables employee customization and ownership of culture by operationalizing a simple and adaptable organizational culture framework (macro-culture) that conveys the organization's shared direction without prescribing how to get there.

Solution Highlights

- **Take a Minimalist Approach to Macro-culture:** Ensure macro-culture resonates with all by crafting a simple and non-prescriptive organizational culture framework.
- **Use Macro-culture as a Diagnostic, Not a Prescription:** Help teams identify barriers to the culture they need, as they've defined it.
- **Localize, Don't Generalize, Cultural Meaning-Making:** Equip employees to have conversations with each other about what organizational culture means to them and how they live it on a daily basis.
- **Recognize and Reward Individualization, Not Compliance:** Create platforms for unique adaptations of culture to be shared and embed individualization into performance management.

About the Company

Royal DSM

Industry: Health and Nutrition
Headquarters Location: The Netherlands

Revenue: 9.2 billion EUR (2021)
Employees: 21,054

Goal of Cohesive Culture Challenged by New Realities

Royal DSM's Culture Transformation Challenge

Organization That Feels Fragmented

- Distributed Workforce
- Autonomous Teams
- Empowered Employees
- Diverse Preferences

Royal DSM's Culture Transformation Goal

*Create a **cohesive culture** that is in sync with new direction and future of business.*

Background: The outgoing and incoming CEOs recognized the need for a culture refresh to align the company's new direction: focusing resources and capabilities to address the urgent societal and environmental challenges linked to the way the world produces and consumes food..

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM

DSM
BRIGHT SCIENCE. BRIGHTER LIVING

A Flotilla Allows Freedom Within a Framework

Two Possible Approaches to Culture

Tanker-Style Approach:
Forces common experience through
all-encompassing macro-culture

Flotilla-Style Approach:
Provides common direction through
light-touch macro-culture

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM

Optimize Culture for a Flotilla Future

Key Questions and Solutions

Common Questions	How can we make sure teams engage with our culture without being overbearing?	How do we prevent teams from becoming too detached from our culture?	How do we make sure employees know how culture is relevant to them?	How do we encourage cultural behaviors if there is no one set of norms?
Royal DSM's Realizations	The less complex and prescriptive the macro-culture, the more adaptable it is.	Detachment stems from teams not being able to live culture in the best way possible for them.	Employees create culture in their own environments every day.	The same culture can and should be lived in myriad ways.
Royal DSM's Solutions	**1** Take a minimalist approach to macro-culture	**2** Use macro-culture as a diagnostic, not a prescription	**3** Localize, don't generalize, cultural meaning-making	**4** Recognize and reward individualization, not compliance

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM

Take a Minimalist Approach to Macro-Culture

Key Characteristics of Royal DSM's Culture Compass

Directional, Not Prescriptive

Purpose is central and conveys that unity is driven by a shared purpose above all else, not prescribed norms and behaviors.
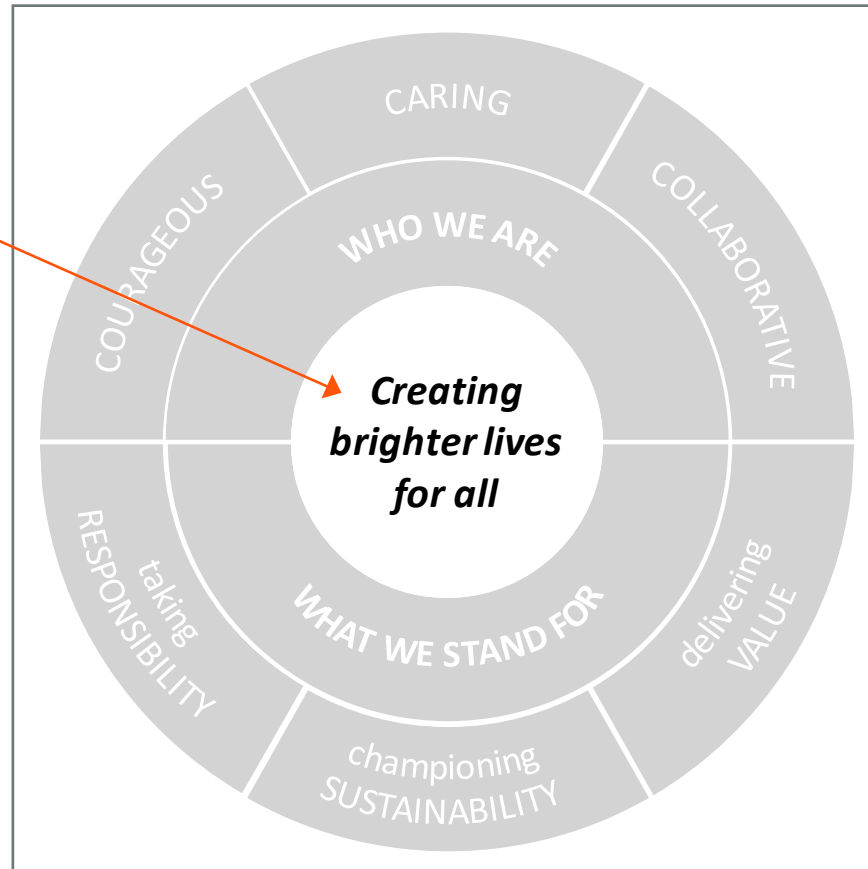

Source: Royal DSM

Take a Minimalist Approach to Macro-Culture

Key Characteristics of Royal DSM's Culture Compass

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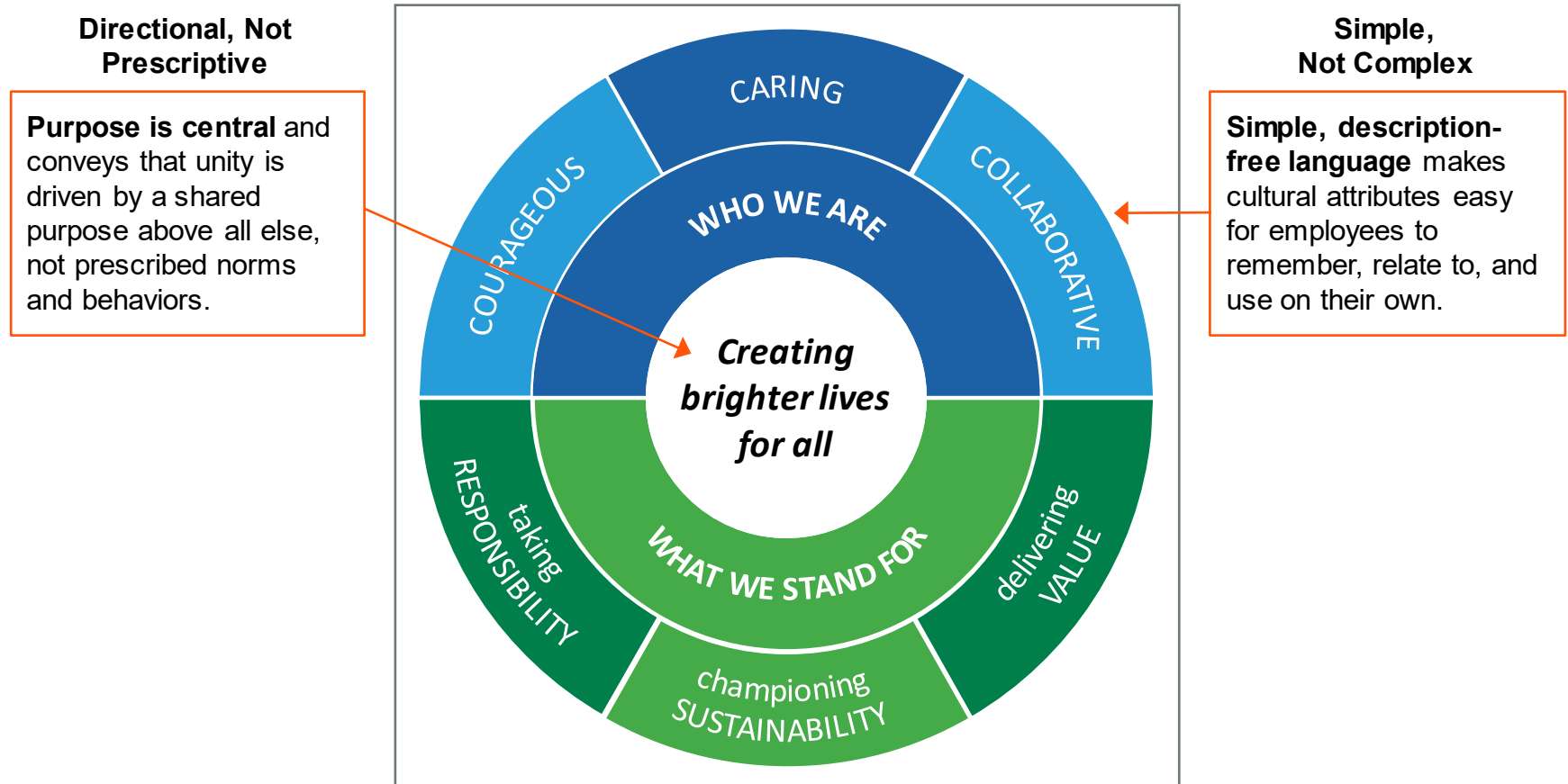

Simple, Not Complex

Simple, description-free language makes cultural attributes easy for employees to remember, relate to, and use on their own.

Source: Royal DSM

Use Macro-Culture as a Diagnostic, Not a Prescription

Royal DSM's "Leading Through Culture" Team Diagnostic

Who We Are

Courageous	Caring	Collaborative
Loss aversion	**Correspondence bias**	**Similarity bias**
We are primed to focus on what we are set to lose, rather than what we might gain.	We assume that other people's behavior reflects who they are, but that our behavior reflects the situation.	We tend to work with, and prioritize the opinion of, people like ourselves.
I must align with everyone so that if it fails, it's not my fault.	It's okay that I'm feeling stressed. Once this project is over, I'll feel better.	I don't like working with them because they have a different opinion to me.

Royals DSM's "Leading Through Culture" Initiative
Encourages managers to diagnose what's getting in the way of their team living its culture to the fullest as opposed to prescribing norms and behaviors to do so

Benefits
- Connects teams to broader culture while simultaneously preserving **team autonomy**
- Makes space for **team-defined behaviors** to thrive
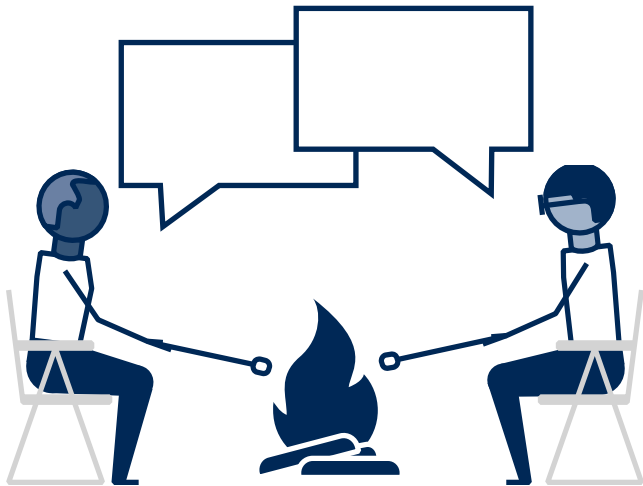- Fosters **team ownership** over culture

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM and MindGym

DSM
BRIGHT SCIENCE. BRIGHTER LIVING

Localize, Don't Generalize, Cultural Meaning-Making

Royal DSM's Culture Conversations

Background: Royal DSM used culture conversations primarily during the rollout of their new culture model in 2020. The conversations were based on a **campfire conversation model.**

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM

What
One-on-one or group conversations guided by question prompts that center on culture compass elements.

Who
Employees volunteer to be culture champions and initiate conversations with members of their team.

Where
Conversations can happen virtually or in whatever environments culture champions see fit (e.g., coffee shop, break room).

How
Culture champions ask conversation partners questions from guide and encourage partners to ask them reciprocal questions.

When
Conversations can be organized as events during the workday or happen during the course of normal work conversations.

Why
Conversations foster culture ownership and customization at the team and individual levels.

Localize, Don't Generalize, Cultural Meaning-Making

Royal DSM's Culture Conversations Sample Questions

One-on-One Conversations

- What do words like "courageous", "caring" and "collaborative", and phrases like "taking responsibility", "championing sustainability" and "delivering value" mean to you?
- How do they reflect or support your own values?
- How do they differ, and why might that be?
- How can they help guide your personal actions, interactions and decision-making?

Group Conversations

- What do we all value about our team and how we work together?
- How can the compass help in highlighting the positive things we're already doing, and identify new ways of working?
- How can we use the compass to improve our team performance?
- Which elements of the compass should we focus on, based on our team priorities?

Benefits of Culture Conversations
- Peer relationships are more open and candid, so conversations are more **authentic.**
- They highlight the sense of control and **autonomy** employees have over how they choose to live Royal DSM culture.
- They encourage teammates at all levels to **connect** over ways they enact culture, and how they can improve.

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM

DSM
BRIGHT SCIENCE. BRIGHTER LIVING

Recognize and Reward Individualization, Not Compliance

Royal DSM's Culture Hub

Royal DSM Culture Hub

Speak Up, Follow Your Heart, and Just Do It!

My Second Home

Delivering Value Together, the Brave Way!

Employee-submitted stories of living Royal DSM culture.

Benefits

Shows how enacting Royal DSM culture happens in diverse ways

Inspires readers to find new ways to bring Royal DSM culture to life

Validates that employees don't have to all be the same in order to fit in

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM

DSM
BRIGHT SCIENCE, BRIGHTER LIVING
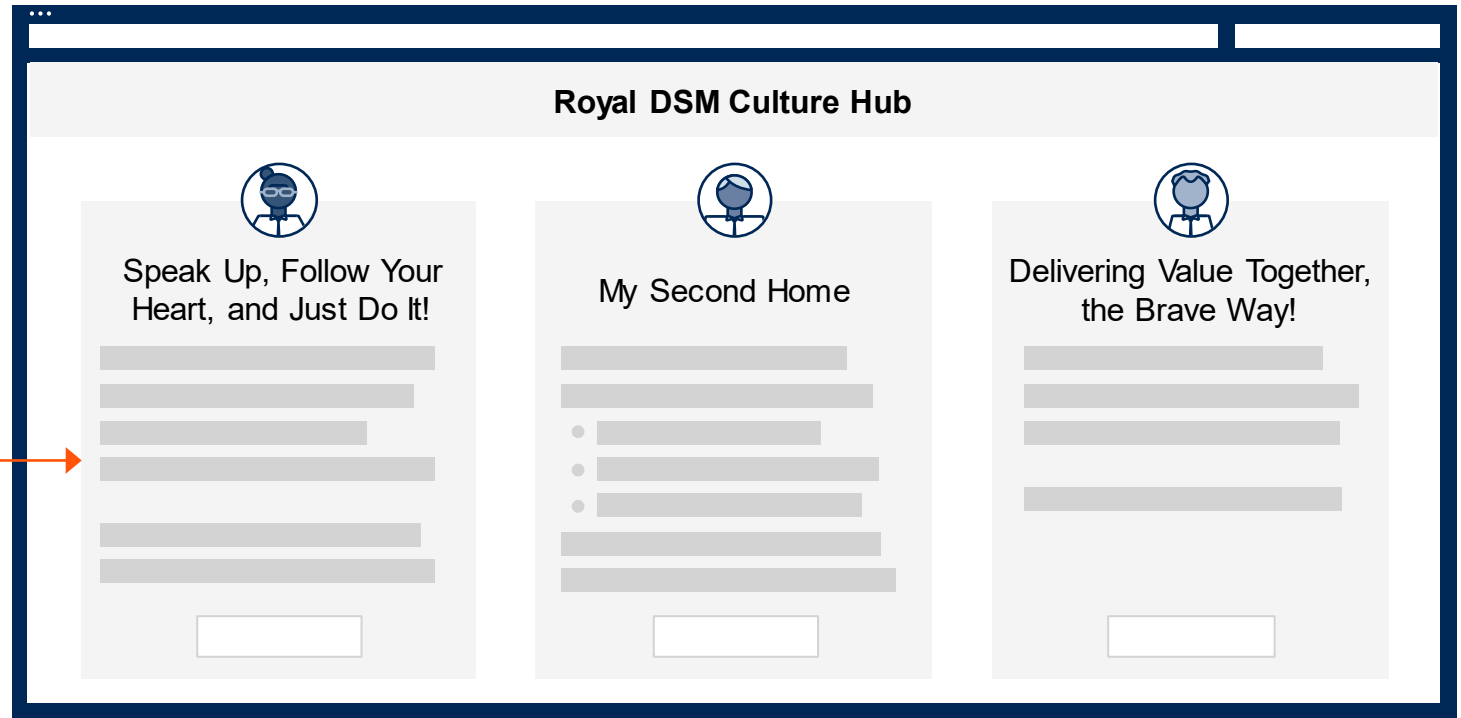
Recognize and Reward Individualization, Not Compliance

Culture Compass Guided Performance Review Conversations
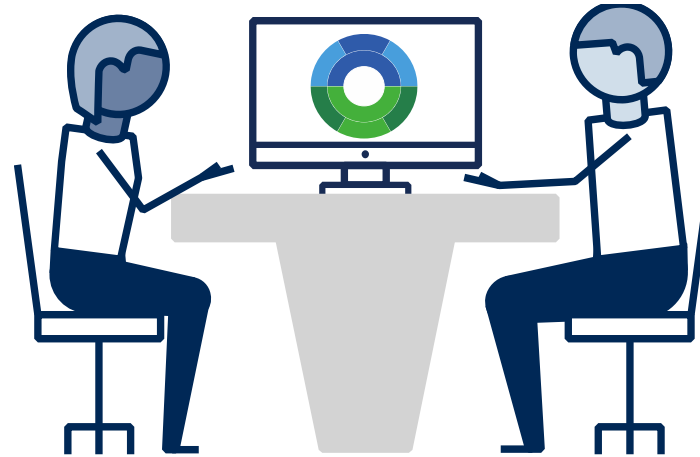
Before the conversation, employee completes self-assessment based on culture compass elements

During the conversation, manager and employee use self-assessment to discuss how employee brought culture to life

Qualitative approach conveys that employee's individualization of culture is valued

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM

A Flotilla Approach Fosters Inclusion and Satisfaction

Employee Survey Results
Before (2019) During (2020) and After Royal DSM's Culture Transformation (2021)

Inclusion Index	2019	2020	2021
In my unit, there is open, honest two-way communication.	74%	78%	80%
I am involved in decisions that affect my work.	71%	73%	74%
In my unit, I am comfortable voicing my ideas and opinions.	79%	82%	84%
My manager has invested time and effort in my growth and development.	66%	70%	73%
Royal DSM has a climate in which diverse perspectives are valued.	68%	71%	74%

Source: Adapted From Royal DSM

Royal DSM Glassdoor Reviews
Retrieved 26 January 2022

Culture and Values Trend

Culture and Values Distribution
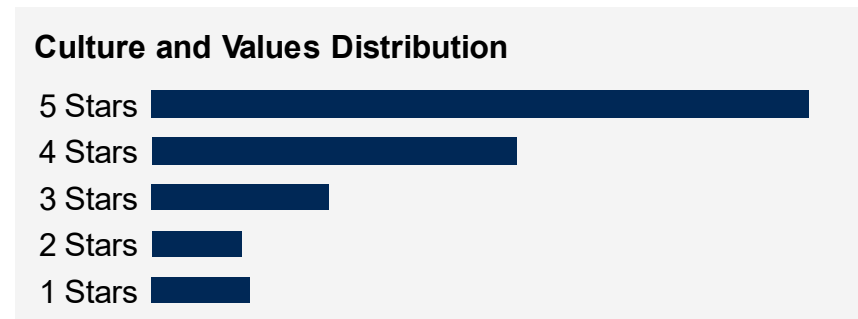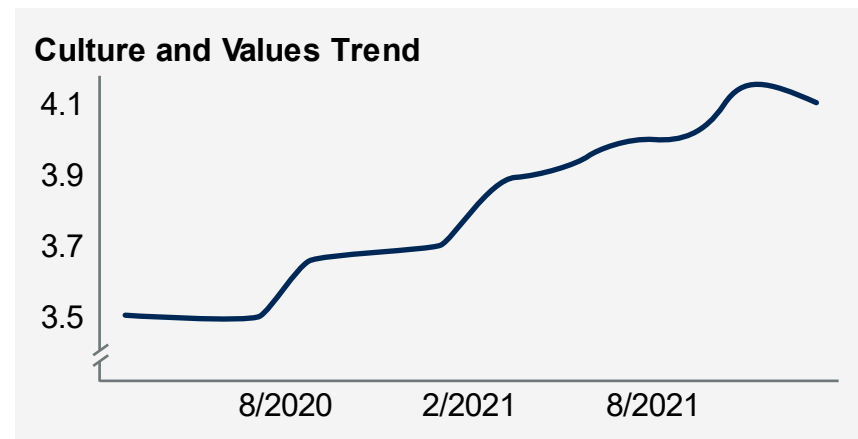
n = 955

Source: Adapted From Glassdoor

Personalized Hybrid Community Building

Overview

To drive connection to community in a virtual-first work environment, Dropbox equips employees to personalize their experience by helping each employee identify their unique connection preferences and optimize their individual community engagement.

Solution Highlights

- **Cultivate connection through an asynchronous, not meeting-first, mindset:** Dropbox uses an "asynchronous by default" approach to limit meeting frequency, so employees' time can be reoriented toward meaningful points of connection.
- **Start from connection needs, not connection touchpoints:** HR shifts ownership of individual connection to employees by helping them identify their unique connection needs or preferences and consider how to best meet them.
- **Facilitate, don't mandate, social connections.** Rather than engineering "organic" in-person connections by bringing employees back into existing office spaces, HR invites employees to own community-building efforts by facilitating informal social interactions in their cities.

About the Company

Dropbox

Dropbox

Industry: Cloud Storage
Headquarters: San Francisco, CA

Revenue: $2.2 Billion (2021)
Employees: 2,667
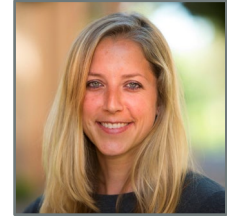
Allison Vendt
Head of People Strategy & Operations and Analytics

Danny Guillory
Head of Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Trey Castleberry
Director, Global Physical Security, Safety & Workplace Services

More Touchpoints ≠ More Connection

Increased Volume of Connection Touchpoints
Illustrative

From: <HR@Company.com>
Sent: November 12, 2021
To: All Employees List
Subject: Don't Miss Out on Virtual Trivia

From: <HR@Company.com>
Sent: December 13, 2021
To: All Employees List
Subject: Coming Soon—New Platform

From: <HR@Company.com>
Sent: January 14, 2022
To: All Employees List
Subject: Attend Virtual Concert

From: <HR@Company.com>
Sent: March 15, 2022
To: All Employees List
Subject: Register for Virtual Happy Hour

Dear Employees,

The remote world can be isolating. To help employees stay connected, we plan to do more. In the coming weeks, we'll roll out a series of activities and exercises for all…

> I love the one-on-one events, but **do I need to attend all** of these?

> Great, **more forced connection events**, but I don't see the value…

Source: Adapted From Dropbox

Dropbox

Personalize Community Building to Drive Connection

Key Shifts Underpinning Dropbox's Intentional Approach to Connection

Conventional Approach	Leverage a meeting-first approach to increase interactions.	Increase volume and availability of connection touchpoints to provide employees with more options.	Mandate in-person time spend to preserve existing ways of connecting.
Dropbox's Approach	**Cultivate an "asynchronous by default" mindset to drive connection.**	**Start from connection needs, not connection touchpoints to prompt employees' self-discovery.**	**Facilitate social connections to humanize the employee experience.**

Source: Adapted From Dropbox

Dropbox

Cultivate an Asynchronous, Not Meeting-First, Mindset

Low Meeting Frequency, High Connection Capacity
Illustrative

EST	Monday	Tuesday
8 a.m.	School Dropoff	School Dropoff
9 a.m.	Americas Core Collaboration Hours	Americas Core Collaboration Hours
10 a.m.		
11 a.m.		
12 p.m.		
1 p.m.		
2 p.m.		
3 p.m.		
4 p.m.		
5 p.m.	Exercise	
6 p.m.		
7 p.m.		APJ Meetings
8 p.m.		
9 p.m.		
10 p.m.		
11 p.m.		
12 a.m.		

I can slot in Jake's coffee request in my async work time block!

Dropbox's asynchronous by default approach frees up employee capacity to connect to work, one another, or unplug. Dropbox facilitates adoption by:
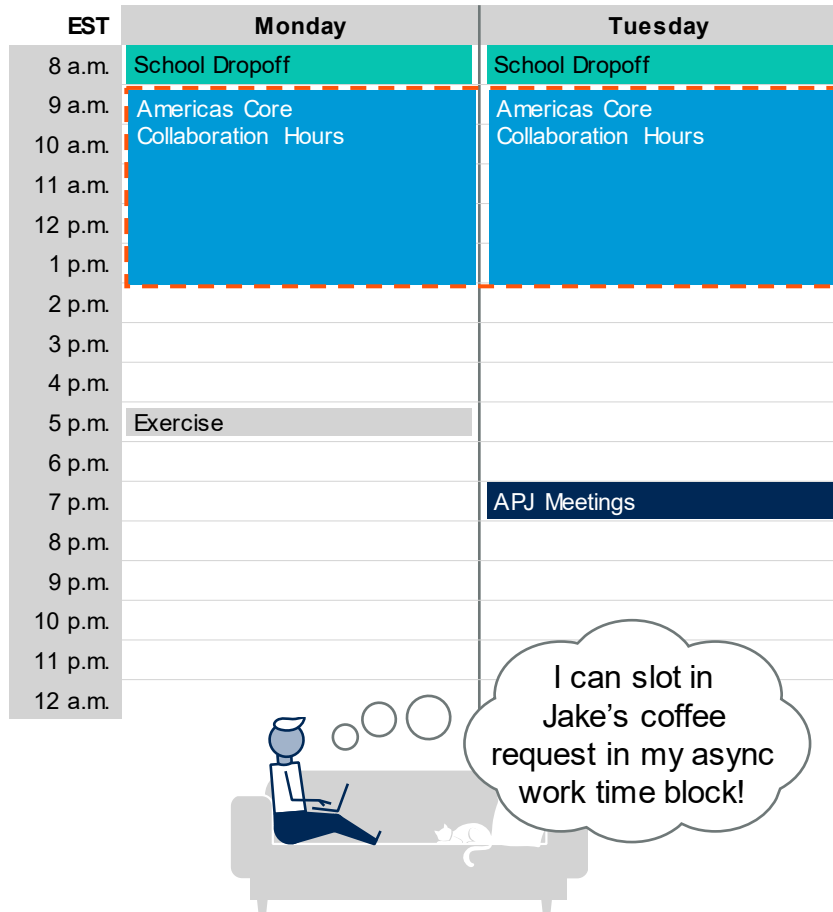
1 **Clarifying shared collaboration hours** based on regions and teams to maintain productivity and engagement.

2 **Avoiding false binaries through** recognizing there are multiple ways to get things done (whether with whom, what, where, or how).

3 **Embedding "async by default" into work processes** to incentivize adoption by employees across the organization.

4 **Leveraging internal communications** to reinforce the "why" behind the mindset shift.

Source: Adapted From Dropbox

Dropbox

Start From Connection Needs, Not Connection Touchpoints

Dropbox's Connection Preferences Guide

Dropbox Employee Connection Assessment
Demands of Current Role

To be successful in my role, I need to work with teams outside of my own business unit:
  a. Never (0 points)
  b. Occasionally (3 points)
  c. Often (5 points)

Importance of Dropbox Community

For my overall sense of social life and community, Dropbox is:
  a. Not important, my social life is centered outside of work (0 points)
  b. Somewhat important (3 points)
  c. Very important, my community has usually been centered on the workplace (5 points)

Career Ambitions & Mobility

The ability to work on a team outside of my immediate group at some point is:
  a. Not important (0 points)
  b. Somewhat important (3 points)
  c. Very important (5 points)

Time Commitment

On average, how many hours per month am I willing and able to dedicate to grow my network at Dropbox?
  a. 1 hour (1 point)
  b. 3 hours (3 points)
  c. 5 hours (5 points)

Scoring Guide	
0-9 points	**Low connection needs.** "I do my job well but like to leave it at the door."
10-14 points	**Moderate connection needs.** "I like to stay connected to what is going on at Dropbox and grow my network."
15-20 points	**High connection needs.** "Dropbox is an essential part of my community."

Source: Adapted From Dropbox

Start From Connection Needs, Not Connection Touchpoints

Dropbox's Connection Preferences Guide

Employee-driven: Employees are given permission to be introspective and calibrate their participation in community building activities based on their unique needs.

Connection Preferences Guide		
Dropbox Personas	**Low Connection Needs** (Only the basics)	**Moderate Connection Needs** (Strikes a balance)	**High Connection Needs** (All in)
Connection Touchpoints	• Company All Hands • Team Onsites/Offsites • DEI Town Halls • Quarterly Manager Summits (managers only)	• Droptalks • Event Team Events • Vibe Committee Events • Social Impact Days • Employee Resource Group (ERG) Heritage Month Events/ERG Membership	• Group or Individual Mentoring • ERG Co-Lead Role • Lead/Organize a Hackweek Project • Vibe Committee member • Dropbox LEAD Program (L3 only)
Outcomes	• Informed on company strategy and direction • Connected to team	• Network growth across the business • More social connections	• Long-term relationships • Volunteer positions
Time Commitment	2-5 hours per month	4-5 hours per month	6+ hours per month

Minimal connection requirement: Employees are guided to dial their connection up or down but cannot opt out of connection entirely.

Actionable: The guide directs employees toward available connection vehicles.

Source: Adapted From Dropbox

Dropbox

Facilitate, Don't Mandate, Social Connections

Dropbox's Holistic Approach to Facilitating Informal Connections Virtually and In-Person
Illustrative

1. Deepen employees' virtual connections.

Dropbox's "Connection by Roots" program invites employees to form new relationships across the organization and strengthen existing bonds on a messaging platform. Dropboxers can connect through shared passions or interests, participate in discussions around preset topic prompts, or interact with randomly assigned colleagues through meeting roulettes.

2. Rebuild employees' in-person connections.

"I'm a new grad and want to connect with others in the Dropbox community."

"I'm passionate about mentorship and miss informal connections with younger colleagues."

**Sales Team,
Nashville**

**Operations,
Nashville**

Contextualized Support from the Culture Team

- How are you hoping to connect to other Dropboxers in your city?
- What are you hoping to get out of establishing these connections?
- How can the culture team and your local community ambassador support you in achieving your goals?

Source: Adapted From Dropbox

Dropbox

Facilitate, Don't Mandate, Social Connections (Cont.)

Stakeholders' Roles in Employee-Sustained Community Building

Employee-Sustained. Employees are responsible for developing and sustaining their individual engagement with community and forming connections (virtual and in-person) with Dropboxers.

Community Builders (Employees)

Culture Team-Facilitated. This cross-functional team manages the programs and shares learnings and insights across different community ambassadors and community builders.

Community Ambassadors (Leaders)

Integrated Culture Team

Leader-Enabled. Community ambassadors serve as liaisons between the culture team and employees, helping to oversee communities and ensure employees have the necessary information and resources to build sustainable connections.

Source: Adapted From Dropbox

Dropbox

Personalization Drives Results

Dropbox's Increased Employee Engagement and Connection to Community

"By reducing unnecessary meetings, our team has made big strides in combating Zoom fatigue and freeing ourselves to focus on what matters most. That said, it's been important to recognize and hold onto the parts of meetings that still have value — especially the '3 Ds' (debate, discussion, and decision-making), as well as social connection."

    Dropbox Employee

"Although there's still a lot to figure out and iterate on, there's real attention being paid to issues of personal connection in a virtual first environment, especially around 'weak ties'… Even though these challenges are not easy to solve for, the [virtual first team's openness with lessons learned] give me more confidence that Dropbox is attuned to what's working and what still needs attention."

    Dropbox Employee

"I just took the [culture engagement] quiz and got 'moderate'! I really like how the participation column summarizes all the other ways I can stay engaged."

    Dropbox Employee

"We are working together to make [culture at Dropbox in a virtual first environment] successful. In a virtual world, connecting with people, even on your own team, can be hard. I think we are doing a good job of trying to connect people together and are all learning from which experiences we like and which we don't."

    Dropbox Employee

Source: Adapted From Dropbox

Dropbox

Ask the Experts

Q&A With Dropbox

1

What are some key lessons learned from implementing your virtual first approach?

Dropbox employees who have adopted virtual first (VF) practices have seen strong positive results, such as more heads-down working time, increased productivity, and fewer unnecessary meetings. Additionally, our hypothesis around the positive impact of operating in more geographies is being proved out — we have been able to hire top talent from outside traditional technology hubs that we may not have had access to pre-VF. While we've seen numerous benefits, connection remains a focus area to build on as things open up. Many employees reported a decline in "weak ties" — a network of people you may not know or work closely with — as they experienced stronger bonds with members of their immediate teams. So, we're particularly focused on the importance of "weak ties" for building community, intentional connections and energy. We believe weak ties are critical to idea- and information-sharing between people.

2

What's next as you think about ways to evolve your culture strategy specifically?

Key next steps will be continuing to refine and redefine our culture. We're kicking off more research on this in the coming months as we begin to see how the in-person element (via our Dropbox Studios) contributes to culture in a hybrid environment. We'll target further implementation and reinforcement of our culture through employee experience and programming. We'll focus on three key areas within this work:

- **Work-Life Balance:** Exploring mindset shifts that will help employees prioritize their individual wellbeing

- **Community & Connection:** Ensuring our culture can be experienced no matter where employees are located

- **Communication:** Revisiting how information is shared and reinforced — specifically focusing on reducing noise and increasing signal

Source: Adapted From Dropbox

Dropbox

Ask the Experts (Cont.)

Q&A With Dropbox

3

How do you plan to track success — what measures or key metrics will you monitor?

Though there are many ways we keep a pulse on employee sentiment and engagement, a critical tool is our twice-annual employee survey, which now includes questions that focus specifically on culture, employee experience and belonging. These anonymous surveys give us both quantitative and qualitative data to help us understand what's working and what needs improvement.

4

How did you arrive at your cross-functional culture team? What are you trying to drive with that structure?

There is not a single owner of "culture" at Dropbox, so a cross-functional team is a necessity. Many teams at Dropbox — from our internal communications to real estate and workplace teams have a major role to play in the success of culture in a VF world. We wanted to approach this as a collective, cross-functional effort to ensure we are multiplying one another's efforts rather than duplicating them or working in conflict.

Source: Adapted From Dropbox

Dropbox

Cross-Functional Culture Team

Dropbox's Cross-Functional Culture Team and Their Roles in Culture

HR Business Partners
- Drive organization effectiveness efforts (in partnership with L&OD and leaders)
- Support leaders in fostering a team culture that is inclusive, high performing and promotes belonging

Real Estate & Workplace Services
- Create and design opportunities, spaces and experiences for Dropboxers to have meaningful connections in person and virtually
- Facilitate employee community and culture building regardless of location (community hubs, virtual events, bi-annual regional gatherings)
- Develop unique programs to cultivate and promote community and culture globally
- Amplify community and culture priorities and promote engagement

Information Technology and Services
- Bring virtual first toolkit to life using technology
- Support "Connections by Roots"
- Leverage technology as an enabler (how employees find information, how they work in a virtual first environment, support DEI/ERG with Wordsmatter bot, ERG spaces in Slack, etc.)

Internal Communications & Culture Team
- Amplify culture and programs internally using relevant channels
- Reinforce Dropbox values and mission through strategic communications and through leadership

Virtual First Team
- Drive adoption of new workplace behaviors, based on identified 5 mindset shifts
- Enhance the workplace experience (WFH, Dropbox studios, local community and culture aligned to location strategy)

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Support campaign for Dropboxers to own their individual cultural experience
- Own efforts to help Dropboxers build their network of weak ties
- Drive initiatives to leverage mentoring, events and ERGs to build networks and connection

Learning and Organizational Development
- Drive desired behaviors through Dropbox's "core responsibilities" model, performance process and training efforts (coaching, leadership and individual contributor training)
- Drive organization effectiveness efforts, including initiative around manager effectiveness
- Create community and connection through shared learning experiences (e.g., manager summits, manager training cohorts, career days, onboarding, facilitated team building sessions)
- Support a culture of ongoing learning and growth

Source: Adapted From Dropbox

Dropbox

Underlying Tension Between Flexibility and Connection

Ambiguity About How to Maintain Key Relationships in Flexible Work

"We've always considered our **in-person relationships** to be what makes our culture special…"

"…but we can't go back to the way we used to work."

While embracing flexibility, how do we decide when we should meet in person?

52% of employees say the ability to work flexibly would affect whether they decided to stay at their organizations.

?

n = 3,408 employees

Source: 2021 Gartner Hybrid and Return to Workplace Sentiment Survey

Cornerstones for a Flexible Future

Goals of BlueMint's* Cornerstone Framework

Cornerstones: The in-person moments that are critical for living our culture together and working effectively

Source: Adapted From BlueMint*

* Pseudonym

Cornerstone Goals

Maintain strong relationships, from the organization level to the employee-manager level, while working flexibly

Improve **clarity** about which moments that matter are best shared in person

Guide employees and teams to **live BlueMint's* cultural principles** through shared moments that matter.

BlueMint *

Cornerstones for a Flexible Future

Cornerstones Approach and Framework
Illustrative

1 BlueMint* chose guiding values for cornerstones at each level of the organization, based on the company's **culture principles.**

2 Using the values, stakeholders at each level choose **which moments** are cornerstones and the **best way** to share those moments.

Organization Level	Guiding Values	Sample Cornerstones
Organization	**Organization-wide culture**	All-employee gatherings, staff recognition events
Department	**Community, Coaching**	Department gatherings, celebrations, team development meetings
Team	**Collaboration, Innovation**	Whiteboard sessions, cross-functional team meetings, brainstorming

There will be more cornerstone moments at the team level than at the organization level because team-level relationships are a greater part of employees' everyday work.

Source: Adapted From BlueMint*

* Pseudonym

BlueMint *