



Better workplace collaboration.

Expert tips to enhance productivity and morale by working better together.



Collaborative working in Australian workplaces.

Workplace collaboration is viewed as a critical component of a successful business as organisations become more global and cross-functional.

According to one study published by the Harvard Business Review, the time spent by managers and employees in collaborative activities has inflated by 50% or more in the last two decades. The same study found that at many organisations, more than three-quarters of an employee's day is spent communicating with colleagues¹.

Creating an environment that helps teams to collaborate more effectively is important for businesses looking to save time and money by improving their organisational productivity and efficiency.

With collaboration more important now than ever, we completed a research project to better understand how organisations are grappling with thriving in the face of the post-pandemic truths.

The research was conducted by YouGov between 28 June – 5 July 2022 and canvassed the opinions of 1,000 Australian office workers.

Co-authors: Allan Ryan and Tess Julian.

Allan Ryan is a highly respected and experienced thought-leader, facilitator and innovation coach with a unique ability to “demystify innovation”. Inspired by Lawrence Hargrave’s “willingness to share experience for the benefit of others”, Allan founded Hargraves Institute as a community of practice for innovation and collaboration.

Over many years, Tess Julian has explored the people side of collaboration and innovation. She is an experienced program developer and facilitator with a commitment to creating diverse and dynamic organisational cultures. The Hargraves team offers extensive experience working both in and with leading organisations, with expert partners who complement and collaborate with our community.



¹ Harvard Business Review, 2016, 'Collaborative Overload',
<<https://hbr.org/2021/09/collaboration-overload-is-sinking-productivity>>



Collaborative working in Australian workplaces.

According to our findings, an overwhelming majority of Australian office workers believe they can be more productive with their time throughout the workday if they work in a more collaborative setting.

The current environment

The emergence of flexible working allows organisations to be strategic about how and when to collaborate, and the challenge for employers is to provide both flexible and collaborative working. In June 2022, our research found that over one third (36%) of Australian office workers feel that collaboration with team members is challenging in their present working environment, with 12% strongly agreeing. Furthermore, Millennials and Generation X are more likely than Baby Boomers to say that collaborating with team members is difficult in their current workplace (39% and 37% respectively compared to 28%). Interestingly, full-time in-office workers (46%) are more likely than hybrid (27%) and remote workers (28%) to say that collaborating with team members is more challenging in their current working environment.



85%
of Australian
office workers
think they can be
more productive
with their time
within a workday.

The real-time issue

While the benefits of collaboration are widely recognised, the costs are sometimes underestimated. Workflow inefficiencies and employee burnout occur when collaboration needs are too high or not distributed fairly throughout the organisation. The opportunity is now for organisations to focus on reconciling the demand for flexible working with collaborative working.

The effective solution

Our findings show that 85% of Australian office workers believe they can be more productive with their time during the workday, with more than a third (37%) believing this is possible if they collaborate more with the team and focus on team culture and processes internally (35%). Ultimately, organisations must prioritise collaborative work by examining their processes, investing in the tools and practices needed to ensure effective and productive collaboration, and fostering a collaborative culture.



The value of investing in collaborative working.

Save time and money, increase productivity

Teams that collaborate effectively can improve both organisational processes as well as individual workflows. Collaboration can boost your team's productivity and free up time for other responsibilities. Furthermore, a recent study found that collaboration affects an employee's experience and decision to stay or go². Leaders must prioritise team collaboration while also investing in technologies and creating culture to help with staff retention, which may save organisations as much as \$23,800 per vacant role³.

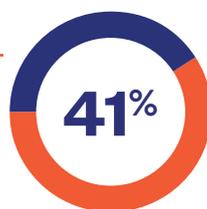
Build high performing teams

Establishing a workplace environment in which employees are willing (and able) to collaborate effectively with their colleagues can positively impact the success of their projects and the organisation.

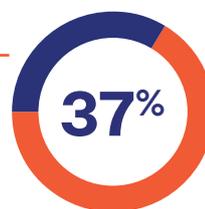
Increase employee morale

According to our results, more than two-thirds (68%) of Australian office workers say they feel more like a team when/if they come into the office, with nearly a quarter (24%) strongly agreeing. Furthermore, one study found that happy workers are 13% more productive, and socialising is one of the most effective ways to boost happiness levels⁴. When people work together, teams can establish strong relationships that allow them to work to their full potential while also fostering a deeper feeling of connection and reliability.

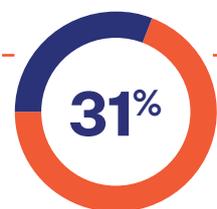
Which, if any, of the following do you believe would allow for you to be more productive with your time at work?



Improving individual/overall workstation technology



Utilising overall workspace (e.g. home office/ office layout)



Improving individual/overall workstation set up

² Human Resources Director, 2022, 'Collaboration is key to employee retention – here's how to harness it', <<https://www.hcamag.com/au/specialisation/employment-law/collaboration-is-key-to-employee-retention-heres-how-to-harness-it/403636>>

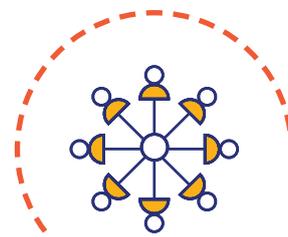
³ IT Brief, 2022, 'The cost of hiring new workers doubles to more than \$23,000', <<https://itbrief.com.au/story/the-cost-of-hiring-new-workers-doubles-to-more-than-23-000>>

⁴ University of Oxford, 2019, 'Happy workers are 13% more productive', <<https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2019-10-24-happy-workers-are-13-more-productive>>

Tips for effective collaborative working.

Build a culture of collaborative communication

There was an unexpected decline in connectivity when businesses transitioned to remote working at the start of COVID-19. Businesses must now prioritise team social connections. Failure to develop a thriving business culture may be holding your company back. According to one study, organisations fostering highly collaborative cultures are five times more likely to be top performers⁵. Leverage your technology and physical space to make informational and social resources more accessible and transparent.



Make short collaborative meetings the default

According to our results, nearly a third (30%) of office workers believe some meetings are unnecessary or irrelevant to them. Meetings that could have been avoided with an email or a chat message can positively influence employee productivity. Building a collaborative environment and utilising collaborative communications solutions can save time and prevent meeting build-up.



Encourage solo or concentrated work

According to our research, Australian office workers spend almost six hours (5.90) on solo or concentrated work in a typical work week, with 40% spending eight hours or more. Team members must have time alone to focus on their specific professional activities, such as writing, designing, researching, reflecting, and performing routine tasks.



Prevent digital fatigue

Remote working can increase emotions of loneliness and isolation. When interacting with others in a shared area, many people benefit from exposure to variety and external stimuli. Meeting rooms, collaborative spaces, and even the workplace kitchen can help build social connections and reduce digital fatigue⁶.



Reduce emails

While email is an excellent way of communicating, it can also be an obstacle to your team's productivity when it comes to collaborating on projects and getting work done. In fact, one study revealed sifting through an inbox of unanswered emails is one of the most tiresome components of working remotely, with 38% admitting that 'email fatigue' is likely to prompt their resignation⁷. Prevent miscommunication and scheduling issues by deploying workplace project management tools to streamline processes.



⁵ Atlassian, 2021, 'How to create a collaborative culture', <<https://www.atlassian.com/work-management/project-management/project-execution/collaborative-culture>>

⁶ Deloitte, 2020, 'Collaboration at a distance', <<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/signals-for-strategists/virtual-team-collaboration.html>>

⁷ Forbes, 2021, 'Survey Finds Email Fatigue Could Lead 38% Of Workers To Quit Their Jobs', <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/edwardsegal/2021/04/21/survey-finds-email-fatigue-could-lead-38-of-workers-to-quit-their-jobs/?sh=4d72b3f25d9e>>

How to set up a collaborative workplace environment.

Adequate workspaces

A quiet workspace and ergonomic furniture are often overlooked, but are important factors to consider when encouraging collaborative work. Design workspaces that are well-lit, properly ventilated and free from distractions. Research shows that 32% of workers are more productive when they can have flexibility and control over the design and layout of their workstations⁸. Therefore, it's important to offer a set up that fits their requirements. This could mean offering a range of options for team members to choose from and setting up different spaces designed for collaboration or quiet deep work.

Have a well-stocked kitchen

The workplace kitchen has evolved into a major hub where employees can get to know one another. Ensure your workplace kitchen facilitates a welcoming and relaxed environment where employees can connect. Having a well-stocked snack station in open areas for easy access to foster casual office interactions can result in fresh ideas, improved problem-solving skills, and more empowered decision-making.

Provide flexible furniture

The continuous shift towards modular workspaces promoting flexible and agile working styles is a prominent workplace trend. Access to suitable furniture such as desks and chairs will directly impact employee comfortability and productivity. Adjustable lighting and technology, as well as modular furniture maximises the use of your space and provides teams with the freedom to meet, work comfortably in private, or collaborate on projects.

69% of Australian office workers say their organisations invests in tools that help them collaborate effectively.



Office supplies



Workstation technology



Workstation set-up



Stocked kitchen

Most common solutions

State-of-the-art technology

Collaborative working becomes productive when teams are provided with proper digital tools for successful communication and project management. Providing hardware, project management tools, and other digital resources helps ensure employees are adequately supported in their ability to communicate with one another. It is also critical to set up software and other online management tools for assigning tasks, communicating with employees, tracking progress, and exchanging files.

Create dedicated spaces for collaboration

The emphasis on appealing workspaces is a critical aspect in fostering collaborative work. Installing flexible collaboration areas as well as specialised video rooms for brainstorming sessions, team meetings, and seminars with simple plug-and-play technology is key for boosting employee collaboration. Casual chats in social locations such as the kitchen or corridor can also lead to spontaneous collaboration.

Stock up on stationery supplies

Whether work is done at the office, at home, or both, having the correct office supplies and stationery basics is essential. Ensure that the workplace and employees have adequate stationery for collaborative work and productivity.

⁸ Haiken, 2021, 'How office furniture can improve productivity in the workplace', <<https://www.haiken.com/insights/how-office-furniture-can-improve-productivity-in-the-workplace>>

Collaboration checklist: do you have all the essentials?

Winc provides everything a workplace requires to connect and collaborate. Whether you need assistance designing your technological setup from the ground up or are looking to optimise your current ways of working, here are our must-have recommendations:



Nescafe Blend 43 Mandura
Instant Coffee Sticks
25185614



Jabra
UC Stereo Headset
18998061



Post-It Super Sticky
Easel Pad White 635 x 762mm
19022059



Kensington
Auto Focus Webcam
25186715



Stabilo Boss Highlighters
Assorted Pastels
25138143



Rapid Line
Cardinal Lounge Chair
25168626



Staedtler Lumocolor Whiteboard
Marker Bullet 2.0mm
19026178



Marbig Document Wallet A4
Pastel Assorted
25171469



Twings English
Breakfast Tea Bags
87008969



Need help?

If you need assistance in optimising your workplace for effective collaboration, Winc is here to help.

Our **Furniture team** can help you create dynamic COVID-safe spaces with leading furniture solutions from reputable Australian and European brands. Whether your space needs a simple refresh or a complete office fit-out, our team of specialists have experience in a wide range of sectors including commercial, health, government, and education. We can design spaces that encourage employee connection, collaboration and celebration while adhering to COVID protocols such as social distancing.

Our **Technology experts** can equip you with the end-to-end technology solutions, products and accessories your team needs to stay connected and productive, no matter where you choose to work. We understand technology is crucial in getting things done and hybrid teams require a reliable and seamless online experience. Whether you need help engineering your technology setup from the ground up or are looking to optimise your current ways of working, we have a technology solution that will work for you.

Our **Health, Hygiene and Safety (HH&S) specialists** can provide you and your workplace with products and services from leading global suppliers and offer your team training to ensure products are used correctly and safely. Our specialists have dedicated knowledge on cleaning products, cleaning consumables, chemicals, safety signage, PPE, first aid and more. We can identify risks associated with your specific workplace environment and offer consolidation, cost savings and fit-for-purpose product recommendations that comply with legal requirements, health rating requirements, TGA approvals and more.

We can also assist with a range of collaboration tools to help people work together effectively in the physical and online workspace.

For more information, please reach out to your Winc Account Manager.

Note: All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1037 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 28th June - 5th July 2022. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Australian hybrid/ full-time in office/ remote workers who work in E6+ businesses.

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