THE STATE OF MISCOMMUNICATION

6 INSIGHTS ON EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

QUANTUM
WORKPLACE

fierce.®

CONVERSATION & ENGAGEMENT

Research from Quantum Workplace and Fierce Conversations reveals trends around miscommunication in the workplace and finds that quality workplace conversations are linked to employee engagement.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE REPORT:

• Great conversations impact engagement but don't happen regularly.

• Employees don't take responsibility for miscommunication.

• Technology can create obstacles to communication.

• Voice empowerment and engagement are linked.

• Miscommunication in meetings has one leading source.

• High quality one-on-one performance conversations are connected to engagement.

fierce.®

QUANTUM WORKPLACE

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Quantum Workplace is a human resources technology provider, equips workplaces with the smartest talent solutions so that they can grow and succeed. Quantum Workplace helps leaders connect the dots between engagement and performance with intuitive and user-friendly tools—including comprehensive and automated employee surveys, goal setting and tracking tools, peer-to-peer recognition, real-time feedback, continuous one-on-one conversations, smart talent reviews, and robust people and business impact analytics. With 12,000 organizations surveyed annually, Quantum Workplace has grown into North America's largest database of employee engagement data—through its core engagement and performance platform and nationally recognized Best Places to Work contest.

Learn More

Fierce Conversations is a training company that teaches you how to have effective conversations. Fierce has taught thousands to become expert conversationalists who save their organizations time and money by knowing what to talk about, how to talk about it, and why it matters for the bottom line. Fierce programs have been successfully implemented at bluechip companies, nonprofits, and educational organizations worldwide, including Amazon, Capital One, Wal-Mart, CHRISTUS Health, Coca-Cola, CARE, and Crate & Barrel. The company has been honored as an Inc. 500|5000 company six times, named to TrainingIndustry.com's "Companies to Watch" list twice, and has won numerous awards for top companies to work for in the state of Washington.

Learn More

ABOUT THE SPONSORS

Quantum Workplace and **Fierce Conversations** designed a survey to capture perceptions on workplace conversations, miscommunication, and employee engagement.

This study used Quantum Workplace's e9 model, which measures engagement using a set of nine survey items that tap into work, team, and organizational engagement. Between June 6 and June 16, 2017, 1,344 employees took the survey.

CONVERSATIONS
## ONLY 50% ARE GREAT

fierce.®

QUANTUM
WORKPLACE

ONLY 50% OF CONVERSATIONS ARE GREAT.

Walk into any workplace and you are just as likely to run into an employee who's having high-quality conversations as one who isn't.
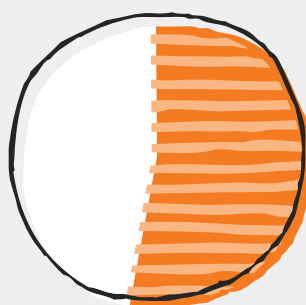
Half of survey respondents reported having great or excellent conversations at work, regardless of whether it was with their peers or managers. The reverse is also true: Half of employees rated their conversations as less than great.

HOW MANY EMPLOYEES ARE HAVING GREAT OR EXCELLENT CONVERSATIONS?
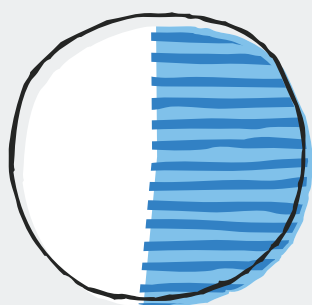
50.3%
With Immediate
Coworkers

51.9%
With Managers

WHY ARE HIGH-QUALITY CONVERSATIONS CHALLENGING?

Learning the skills necessary to have effective conversations is critical if we want to create change and produce real results, both inside and outside the office. These survey results make it clear that once this skill is learned, it plays out with everyone we work with.

For many of us, the biggest barrier to having high-quality conversations is that we're afraid to share what we're really thinking and feeling. We chicken out and don't step up to the plate when the opportunity is on the table to voice our concerns. Being real is scary, but it's the unreal conversations that should scare us because they're incredibly expensive.

A problem exists whether we talk about it or not. Every organization should be providing their employees the tools, and the opportunities, to have meaningful and productive conversations.

fierce.®

QUANTUM
WORKPLACE

GREAT CONVERSATIONS ARE LINKED TO HIGHER ENGAGEMENT.

The study showed a positive correlation between employee engagement and the quality of workplace conversations. Engagement was higher among employees who rated conversations with coworkers and managers as great or excellent. Employees who rated conversations with coworkers as bad had a particularly low level of employee engagement.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGAGEMENT AND QUALITY OF CONVERSATIONS

Engagement Level

	Bad	Poor	Mediocre	Good	Great	Excellent
Coworker Conversations	19.4%	44.4%	38.0%	64.1%	79.5%	92.0%
Manager Conversations	41.9%	45.0%	45.4%	66.0%	79.0%	87.9%

Quality of Conversations

■ Coworker Conversations
■ Manager Conversations

fierce.®

QUANTUM WORKPLACE
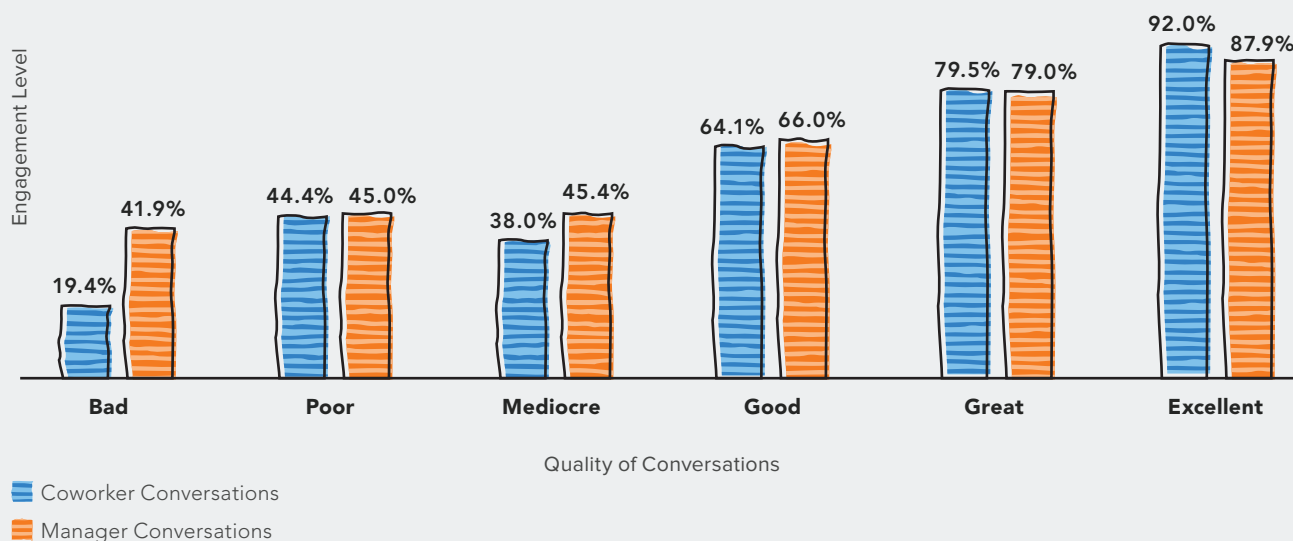
WHAT ROLE DO CONVERSATIONS PLAY IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

"Quality conversations build trust, empathy and clarity, which are all key ingredients for healthy relationships. If you look at common road blocks to employee engagement, many of them revolve around poor communication.

Disengaged employees don't understand how they fit into the future, how managers view their performance, or where the company is headed. It's not surprising that those who have high quality conversations have a better connection to their teams, the work they do, and the organization as a whole."

ANTHONY EDWARDS
Director of Customer Success

"At the most basic level, conversations indicate that you care about employees. Taking time to meet with them, ask them how they are doing, ask them what they need, and give them an opportunity to share ideas, concerns, or questions indicates you truly care about them as people.

Additionally, when employees understand what is expected of them, feel their opinions matter, receive helpful feedback or recognition, and can talk about their career aspirations, they are more likely to be engaged. High quality work conversations allow these topics to be covered."

ANNE MALTESE
Director of Insights

fierce.®

QUANTUM WORKPLACE

MISCOMMUNICATION
IT'S NOT ME, IT'S YOU

fierce.®

QUANTUM
WORKPLACE

IT'S NOT ME, IT'S YOU.

Employees know miscommunication happens across their workplace, but they don't think they're a part of the problem. In other words, when it comes to miscommunication, "It's not me; it's you."

Nearly 81 percent of employees indicated miscommunication occurred in their organization very frequently, frequently, or occasionally. But only half admitted that they were directly involved in miscommunication as often, while the other half said they were never, almost never, or rarely directly involved in workplace miscommunication.

It's not me.

50% of employees say they're never, almost never, or rarely directly involved in workplace miscommunication.

It's you.

81% of employees say workplace miscommunication occurs very frequently, frequently, or occasionally.

WHY DON'T PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES AS PART OF THE PROBLEM?

"People are inclined to believe "it's not me, it's you" because of self-serving bias and defensive attribution. The self-serving bias is a tendency for people to distort their perceptions to maintain or potentially enhance their self-worth. People often want to have a favorable view of themselves, so distancing themselves from a problem — such as miscommunication at work — allows them to reason that they're not to blame: other people are.

Relatedly, defensive attribution is the self-serving bias in action. In other words, if a problem emerges, then blame can be attributed to other sources (e.g., coworkers, another position level) so as to defend one's sense of self-worth."
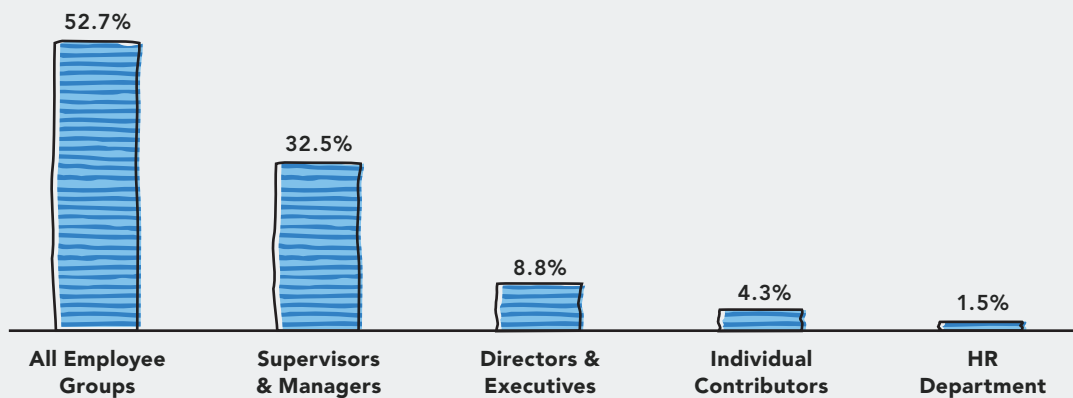
AARON BROWN
Senior Insights Analyst

fierce.®

QUANTUM
WORKPLACE

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR REDUCING MISCOMMUNICATION?

Survey respondents were asked which group of employees they thought were most responsible for reducing miscommunication in an organization. More than half (52.7 percent) thought all employee groups were responsible, followed by supervisors and managers, who 32.5 percent of respondents thought were most responsible.

WHICH GROUP OF EMPLOYEES ARE MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR REDUCING MISCOMMUNICATION?

52.7%	32.5%	8.8%	4.3%	1.5%
All Employee Groups	Supervisors & Managers	Directors & Executives	Individual Contributors	HR Department

WHO CARRIES THE MOST RESPONSIBILITY FOR REDUCING MISCOMMUNICATION?

While miscommunication can and does occur at every level, it becomes a bigger issue in organizations where open and honest conversations are the exception, not the rule.

Company cultures are developed from the top down, in both favorable and unfavorable situations. It is critical that leaders not only hold themselves able to prevent and resolve miscommunications that happen within their own teams, but also those that occur company-wide.

This can be a systemic issue that will only be solved if and when the root cause is determined — which can only surface through deep and meaningful conversations.

fierce.®

QUANTUM
WORKPLACE

TECHNOLOGY
MORE SCREENS, MORE CHALLENGES

MORE SCREENS, MORE CHALLENGES.

Though technology has enabled communication in many ways, it also has created opportunity for miscommunication.

Almost half of survey respondents (46 percent) thought technology-assisted communication (email, texting, phone, etc.) was more susceptible to miscommunication than in-person communication. However, almost as many respondents (43.3 percent) believed both were equally susceptible.

As companies continue to trend toward globalization, telecommuting, and work-life balance, tech-enabled communication isn't going anywhere. This indicates that organizations need to invest in training around technology-assisted communication and provide guidance on when phone calls or face-to-face conversations are most appropriate.

WHICH IS MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO MISCOMMUNICATION?

46%
Tech-Assisted

11%
In-Person

43%
Both
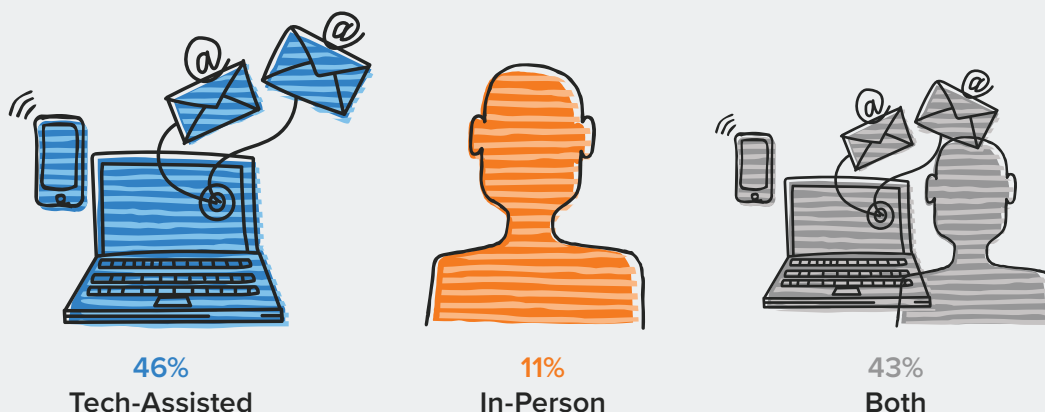
WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES USING HR TECH AS A PLATFORM FOR CONVERSATIONS AND FEEDBACK?

"Communicating digitally is fraught with risk of miscommunication. So much of communication is delivered non-verbally. And unfortunately, emojis don't make up that gap. Good HR tech tools for feedback don't replace face-to-face communication. They help prepare for it, record it, and turn it into data that can be integrated with other organizational metrics.

These types of tools haven't been around long enough to be smart about how they're shaping the communication itself. But it does slow it down. It allows two parties to be more thoughtful, and edit ideas, rather than real-time conversation, where we may be quicker to blurt something out without thinking."

GREG HARRIS
President and CEO

WHY EMPLOYEES STRUGGLE WITH TECH-ASSISTED COMMUNICATION

Here are a few thoughts from survey respondents about the problems they run into.

"Technologically-assisted communication does not always offer clarification and leaves the topic to be interpreted by the reader."

"People conducting virtual meetings are not aware enough of the limitations put on the regional offices even though they have been reminded many times. The meetings sometimes end up feeling like broadcasts instead of interactions."

"If you are not able to see how the other person is reacting to what you are saying, you cannot be 100% sure that they completely understand…anything could be taken the wrong way because you are not hearing the correct voice inflection of the conversation."

"Emails are not detailed or specific enough."

"Many of our team members have English as a second language, so nuance is lost when communicating by email."

"Facial expressions, gestures, and intonation are lost in the most common technologically assisted communication channels — chat and email. Without those added layers helping to convey meaning, words can easily be misinterpreted."

"I believe it is easier to misinterpret another's tone of voice or intentions behind an email or text message rather than an in-person conversation. When we are able to see others' reactions, hear their tone of voice, and see their body language, it is much simpler to communicate effectively."

HOW TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO HELP RATHER THAN HINDER COMMUNICATION

When making a decision about whether to use technology, ask yourself the following: Does the time on screen add more value to your relationships? Or does it detract from it?

USE TECHNOLOGY TO:

- Communicate logistics and simple directives

- Share small praises and appreciation

- Touch base on plans

- Share a personal idea or accomplishment

- Talk through simple scenarios

- Summarize a conversation

DON'T USE TECHNOLOGY TO:

- Respond to criticism (especially if emotional)

- Connect on a deeper level

- Coach an individual or team

- Convey anger or other complex emotions

- Attack, berate, mock, or blame

- Confront or gossip

Using technology when communicating can offer convenience and save time, but it's important to consider the nature of the communication that needs to take place and whether technology will be an effective channel. The effect of our communication is amplified when all we have are words on a screen because we will put our personal spin on everything sent our way. We make up stories and behave as if our stories are true, and we often go to the dark side, attaching meaning, agenda, and intent that may or may not be anything close to what the sender had in mind.

Source: Huffington Post

fierce.®

QUANTUM WORKPLACE

SUPPRESSION OF SPEECH
THE SILENT CULTURE KILLER

THE SILENT CULTURE KILLER.

Roughly half of employees aren't regularly speaking their minds at work.

Slightly more than half of survey respondents (52.3 percent) said they always or almost always speak their minds when having work-related conversations with their immediate manager. Even fewer (47.5 percent) said they speak their minds always or almost always when talking to their immediate coworkers.

Interestingly, this suggests that slightly more respondents are more frequently open with their managers than their coworkers.

DO EMPLOYEES ALWAYS (OR ALMOST ALWAYS)
SPEAK THEIR MINDS?

47.5%
With Immediate
Coworkers

51.9%
With Managers
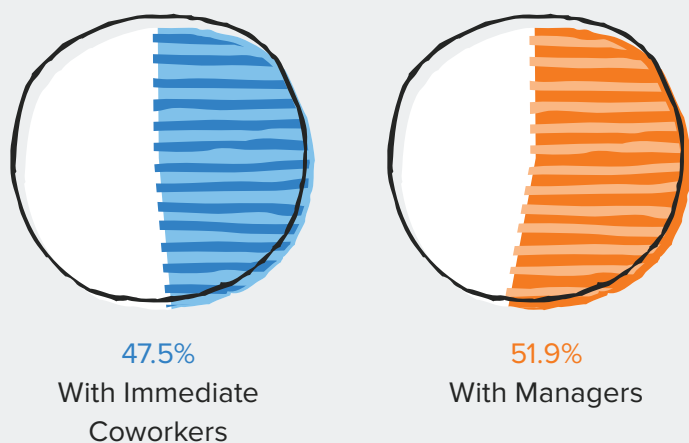
6 TIPS FOR TELLING THE TRUTH AT WORK

There are times in our lives when speaking the truth doesn't just make our voice shake, but we also get teary-eyed. Truth is so full of emotion it can often take our breath away. We value authenticity because there is something so refreshing about people who show up like this; it's like fog lifting and the sun shining, straight down.

If there is something that we genuinely want to say, chances are there is someone who genuinely needs to hear it. But too often we choose the path of safety and give up the possibility of addressing issues that undermine our relationships, limit our productivity, chip away at self-confidence and constrain opportunity. Conversations are powerful.

The following practical tips will guide you through the challenging task of speaking

1. RECOGNIZE YOUR FEAR.

You may have had an experience in the past where telling the truth didn't go over well. How has it held you back? Now is your opportunity to break the grip the past has on today's communication.

2. CONSIDER THE COST OF SILENCE.

What are you holding back, and what is it costing you? How might telling the truth improve the situation or prevent it from worsening?

3. SET AN INTENTION.

Go into the conversation envisioning a positive outcome. Setting an intention will keep you focused on the results you want to produce from the conversation.

4. OBEY YOUR INSTINCTS.

Trust your instinct and verbalize your concern to the person you are speaking with, so you can learn what is really happening — the ground truth.

5. PRACTICE.

Don't enter an important conversation cold turkey. Think about what you want to say and how you want to say it.
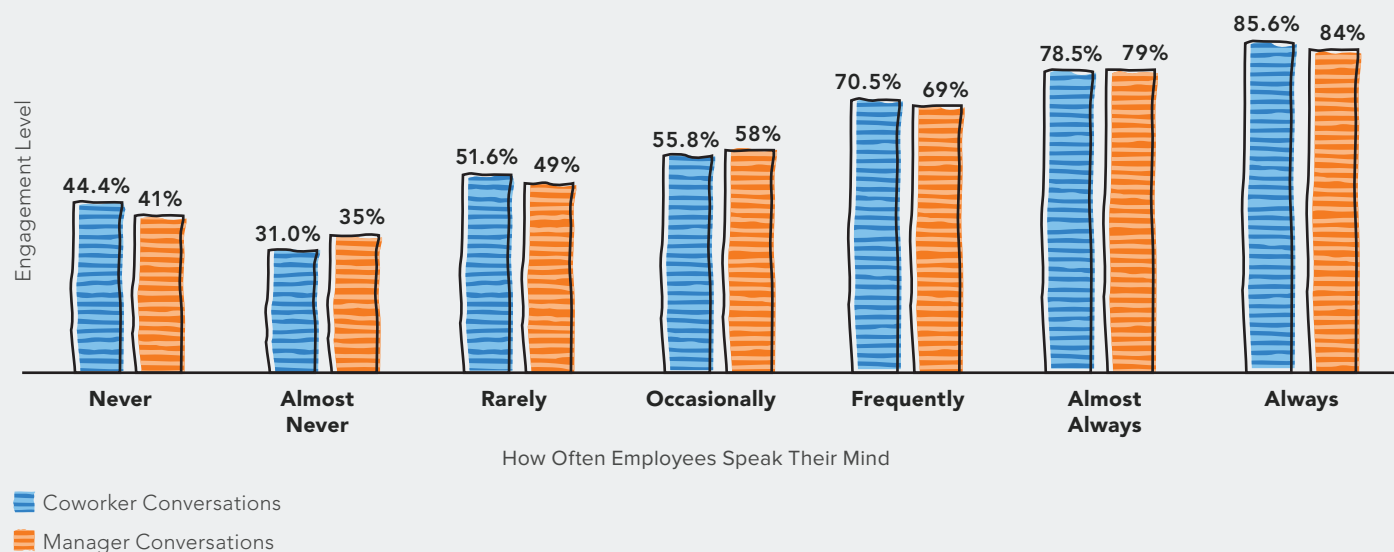
6. ASK QUESTIONS.

By asking questions, you are gathering more information, eliminating assumptions, and exploring what's possible. Questions help eliminate the "right vs. wrong" attitude and pave the way for solutions.

fierce.®

QUANTUM
WORKPLACE

VOICE EMPOWERMENT IS LINKED TO ENGAGEMENT.

If employees aren't speaking their minds, you might have a culture problem.

The study showed a positive correlation between employee engagement and the willingness to speak one's mind. Engagement was higher among employees who said they always or almost always speak their minds in work-related conversations with managers and peers. Employees who said they never or almost never speak their minds had particularly low levels of employee engagement.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGAGEMENT AND SPEAKING YOUR MIND

Engagement Level

	Never	Almost Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always	Always
Coworker Conversations	44.4%	31.0%	51.6%	55.8%	70.5%	78.5%	85.6%
Manager Conversations	41%	35%	49%	58%	69%	79%	84%

How Often Employees Speak Their Mind

■ Coworker Conversations
■ Manager Conversations

This finding aligns with Quantum Workplace's Annual Employee Engagement Trends Report, which found the survey item, "My opinions seem to count at work," to be a top driver of employee engagement.

fierce.®

QUANTUM WORKPLACE

5 LEADERSHIP LESSONS FOR CREATING A VOICE-EMPOWERED CULTURE

Your business is at its best when employees can speak their minds. Your employees have different perspectives, ideas, and knowledge that can push your business forward, help you avoid the wrong risks and take the right ones, and positively impact your bottom line. But even the most confident employees will have trouble speaking their minds in an unsupported culture. Here are five lessons that will help:

1 BUILD A FOUNDATION OF TRUST.

A voice-empowered culture cannot exist without a trusting culture. Organizations where employees feel free to speak their minds actively pursue a trusting environment and integrate demonstrations and reinforcements of trust into everyday operations.

Here are a few tips on building trust:

Communicate transparently and authentically.

Detailed communication prevents employees from making assumptions. Acknowledge uncertainty or if plans might change.

Stay visible.

When employees can see, get to know, and relate to leadership, they are more likely to trust them. Use social or philanthropic events to interact with employees.

Live your values.

Use your values as a compass. Explain how goals, decisions, or actions align with your values. Recognize employees when you see them living the organization's values.

Be fair.

Processes should be consistent. Interactions should be respectful. Outcomes should be predictable to employees.

> Building a trust-based culture doesn't just happen; it is the result of strategic choices that foster employee confidence.
>
> For more on this topic, read the **5 Essential Qualities of a Good Leader**.

fierce.®

QUANTUM WORKPLACE

2 CREATE SAFETY.

Are there consequences for speaking up? If employees fear that sharing their thoughts has the potential to come with professional, financial, social, physical, or emotional risks, then they are unlikely to share different perspectives or opinions.

When employees know they're safe to share their thoughts (respectfully) without fear of punishment, it gives them a figurative green light. Foster a safe space for voices by paying attention to the way you react to feedback and ideas. If employees witness leaders shutting employees down or retaliating in some manner, don't expect them to share in the future.

3 BE OPEN AND SUPPORTIVE OF IDEAS.

Often times, employees don't speak up because their input or idea is partially complete, and they fear that an imperfect idea won't be well-received. Create a trusting and supportive environment where incomplete ideas or thoughts can be fostered.

You can do this by recognizing someone for sharing an idea in its infancy or sharing your own idea for early feedback. Be open to having others critique your ideas. Show your vulnerability by admitting when you're wrong or unsure.

4 RESPOND.

It's not enough to simply receive opinions and hear the voice of employees. The most important thing you can do is respond. Employees need to see the impact their voices can make. If you don't respond with action or answers, employees will begin to realize that their voice really doesn't matter and think, "What's the point?"

Within your organization, close the loop by illustrating how employee feedback is used, recognize great ideas or critical times employees spoke up. On the flip side, if an employee's idea or feedback can't be put into place, acknowledge what was said and explain why it can't be put into place, so they know they were heard, have context, and are more likely to speak up in the future.

5 PROVIDE GUIDANCE.

In the best organizations, feedback is welcomed, but it is expected to be respectful and professional. Provide direct feedback to employees if they use language that's not appropriate, make other employees feel uncomfortable, or if feedback disengages others. While the feedback is still valuable, the employee can learn how to share it in a way that better aligns with the organization's code of conduct.

fierce.®

QUANTUM
WORKPLACE
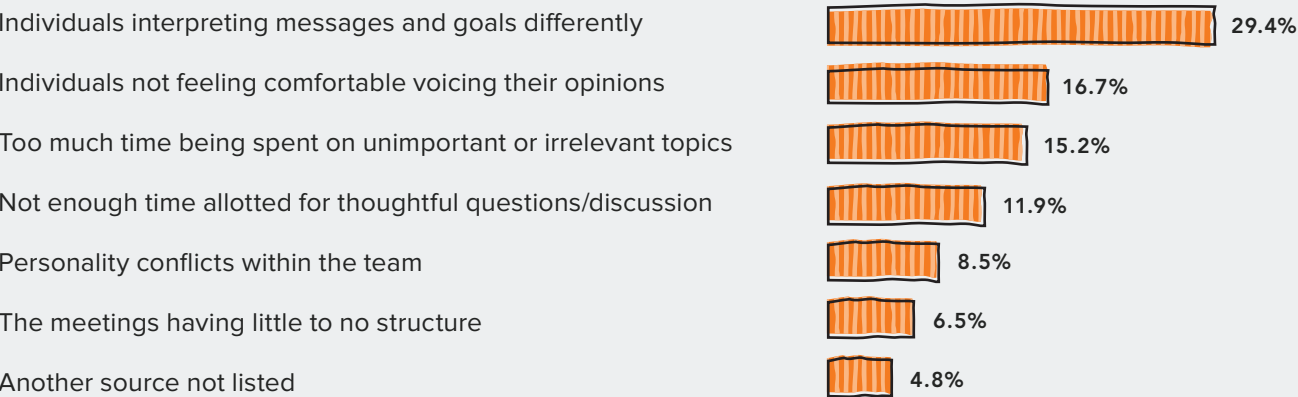
MEETINGS
CURB COMMUNICATION

MEETINGS CURB COMMUNICATION.

Group conversations and meetings present unique challenges for high quality conversations, as more people are communicating and interpreting what has been said.

Survey respondents agreed: 55.7 percent said miscommunication is more likely to occur in group conversations than in one-to-one conversations.

The study concluded the number one source of miscommunication during team meetings is individuals interpreting messages and goals differently. This was the top reason by a wide margin, with almost one-third of survey respondents in agreement.

WHAT CAUSES MISCOMMUNICATION IN TEAM MEETINGS?

Individuals interpreting messages and goals differently	29.4%
Individuals not feeling comfortable voicing their opinions	16.7%
Too much time being spent on unimportant or irrelevant topics	15.2%
Not enough time allotted for thoughtful questions/discussion	11.9%
Personality conflicts within the team	8.5%
The meetings having little to no structure	6.5%
Another source not listed	4.8%

Percent of Employees Who Selected the Miscommunication Source

fierce.®

QUANTUM
W O R K P L A C E

MEETING MISCOMMUNICATION AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

As seen in the previous chart, not all employees selected "interpreting messages and goals differently" as the biggest source of miscommunication in meetings. The below chart looks at the engagement level of employees based on which source of miscommunication they selected as the biggest source of miscommunication. For example, of the employees who said the biggest source of miscommunication was "not enough time allotted for thoughtful questions and discussion," 76.6 percent were engaged.

Employees with the lowest levels of engagement said the most frequent sources for miscommunication in meetings were:

1. Meetings have little to no structure

2. Individuals not feeling comfortable voicing their opinions

3. Too much time spent on unimportant or irrelevant topics

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT LEVEL BY SOURCE OF MEETING MISCOMMUNICATION

Not enough time allotted for thoughtful questions/discussion	76.6%
Individuals interpreting messages and goals differently	74.5%
Personality conflicts within the team	67.7%
Too much time being spent on unimportant/irrelevant topics	66.2%
Individuals not feeling comfortable voicing their opinions	66.2%
The meetings having little to no structure	64.4%

Engagement Level of Those Who Selected the Miscommunication Source

3 WAYS TO IMPROVE MEETING COMMUNICATION

Even at the best companies, meetings are often dreaded. People are unprepared, bored, or disengaged for any number of reasons. And the same people always seem to talk, with little room for new ideas, even if they are requested. Meetings can be intimidating, especially if there are individuals from all levels in attendance. Meetings can also take us away from a project just as we get in the zone.

The good news is, if the right conversations are taking place, meetings can be a productive use of time and help organizations achieve their goals. They can also provide opportunities for effective collaboration, innovation, and team building. And when executed well, meetings can last 15 mins or less and still be effective.

1 SET AN INTENTION.

While there may be some housekeeping issues or topics that need to be addressed and opened up for questions, meetings should have a purpose of collaboration. Send this purpose out beforehand, either as the agenda, or at least as part of it. This will help attendees be prepared for what will be discussed, and also come with ideas already flowing.

2 ALLOW OPEN DIALOGUE.

Allow each employee's perspectives on the topic to be heard. If they are attending, they should be prepared to speak up and have an opinion on the topic at hand. If employees expect they will be called upon, they will not only be more present, but more prepared. It also means with more perspectives, meetings are more interesting, and thus engaging. As a leader, your goal is to facilitate this conversation by listening and helping your team solve the current challenges.

3 CREATE AN ACTION PLAN

Great ideas may be flowing, but how are you turning these into actions? Before the meeting adjourns, make sure you leave time to discuss next steps, specifically what is everyone committing to do over the next week, month, and year. Get specific! Assign responsibilities and schedule a time for everyone to reconnect on progress. This may lead to more meetings with smaller groups, or getting the group together at another time to continue the conversation. But make sure those are scheduled immediately, to avoid losing momentum.

fierce.®

QUANTUM WORKPLACE

ONE-ON-ONES
## WHEN CHECK-INS BREAK DOWN

fierce.®

QUANTUM
WORKPLACE

WHEN CHECK-INS BREAK DOWN.

One-on-one conversations, particularly performance conversations between managers and employees, are critical points of communication in any organization.

Although most survey respondents thought miscommunication was more likely to occur in a group conversation, those who thought one-on-one conversations were more susceptible to miscommunication had lower engagement (63.1 percent engaged), compared to those who selected group conversations (73.0 percent engaged). This suggests high quality one-on-one conversations are important to having highly engaged employees.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT LEVEL BASED ON WHICH TYPE OF COMMUNICATION WAS BELIEVED TO BE MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO MISCOMMUNICATION
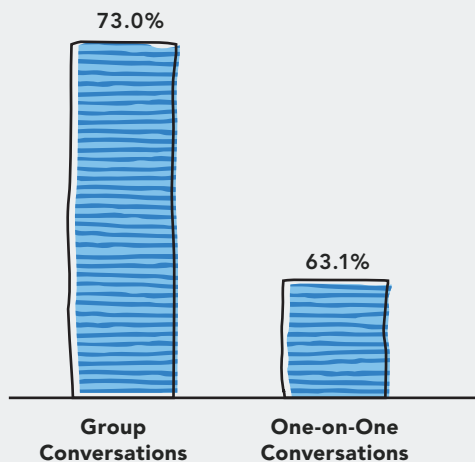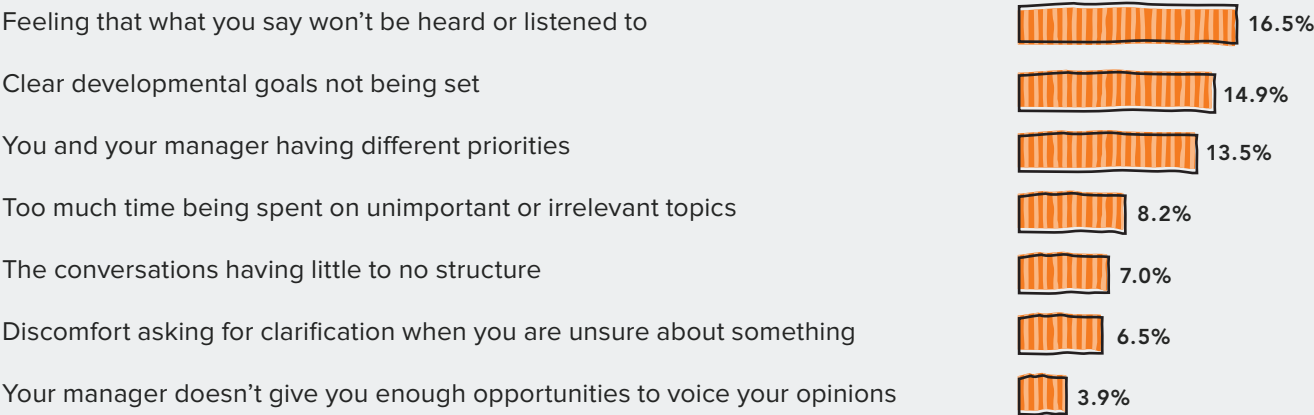

Engagement Level of Those Who Selected Group Conversations Versus One-on-One Conversations

Survey responses were more mixed on the causes of miscommunication in one-on-one performance conversations, compared to the responses about team meetings. The study identified most frequent sources of miscommunication during a one-on-one meeting were:

1. Not feeling that what you say will be heard or listened to

2. Clear development goals not being set

3. You and your manager have different priorities

As you can see in the chart, there's not a wide margin differentiating the top causes of miscommunication.

WHAT CAUSES MISCOMMUNICATION IN ONE-ON-ONE PERFORMANCE CONVERSATIONS?

Feeling that what you say won't be heard or listened to	16.5%
Clear developmental goals not being set	14.9%
You and your manager having different priorities	13.5%
Too much time being spent on unimportant or irrelevant topics	8.2%
The conversations having little to no structure	7.0%
Discomfort asking for clarification when you are unsure about something	6.5%
Your manager doesn't give you enough opportunities to voice your opinions	3.9%

Percent of Employees Who Selected the Miscommunication Source

ENGAGEMENT IS LINKED TO HIGH-QUALITY ONE-ON-ONES.

The below chart looks at the engagement level of employees based on which option they selected as the biggest source of miscommunication. The most commonly selected option, "Not feeling like what you say will be heard or listened to," also had the lowest level of engagement.

So not only is feedback receptivity top of mind as a reason for miscommunication with immediate managers, but having low-quality feedback receptivity is a huge driver of disengagement.

The two options with the lowest engagement levels are both related to the theme of employee voice empowerment.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT LEVEL BY SOURCE OF MISCOMMUNICATION IN ONE-ON-ONE PERFORMANCE CONVERSATIONS

Discomfort asking for clarification when you are unsure about something	75.4%
Too much time being spent on unimportant/irrelevant topics	71%
Clear developmental goals not being set	69.9%
You and your manager having different priorities	68%
The conversations having little to no structure	67.7%
Your manager not giving you enough opportunities to voice your thoughts and opinions	66%
Not feeling that what you say will be heard or listened to	59.2%

Engagement Level of Those Who Selected the Miscommunication Source

fierce.®

QUANTUM WORKPLACE

HOW TO DECREASE MISCOMMUNICATION AND HAVE MORE EFFECTIVE ONE-ON-ONES

One-on-ones are incredibly important to driving engagement and performance. But miscommunication during these interactions can have the reverse effect. Below are tips for decreasing miscommunication in general and reducing the likelihood of common miscommunications.

GENERAL TIPS

1. Prepare and share.
Have managers and employees each prepare an agenda of the items they want to discuss and then share those items in advance. This gives each person time to prepare their thoughts and consider where there might be disconnects.

2. Take notes.
Clearly document what is said. Both managers and employees need to feel comfortable with writing down what was said. This also helps ensure that both parties walked away with the same, clear understanding of what was discussed.

IF YOU'RE NOT SURE WHAT YOU SAID WAS HEARD:

3. Ask for a follow-up after 24 hours.
This can be a brief check-in or a more robust conversation depending on the type of conversation that was had.

4. Set follow-up discussions and due dates.
If I ask my manager a question, when should they get back to me with a response? If they ask me to my progress with them on a particular task, by what date should I share that information?

5. Recap in the next one-on-one.
Take the first 5-10 minutes of the next one-on-one to discuss progress and results from the most recent one-on-one.

IF CLEAR DEVELOPMENT GOALS AREN'T SET:

6. Write a development goal together.
Encourage both the employee and manager to develop a SMART goal that will achieve the same development.

7. Document and set due dates.
Select due dates, metrics to measure, tasks to be completed, etc. and document these.

IF YOU AND YOUR MANAGER HAVE DIFFERENT PRIORITIES:

8. Summarize at the end.
What are the top three to five priorities or take-a-ways? Often times during one-on-one conversations, many topics and decisions are made or discussed. Bring clarity by reciting the top three to five and gaining a verbal confirmation.

9. Hear each other out.
Make sure each person gets a chance to be heard. Set additional time to make a decision if needed. Don't feel as if you have to come to a decision right then and there — give each other 24 hours to chew on it. Then each party can present what they feel the best route is. Use third-party mediation as a last resort.

READY TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION IN YOUR WORKPLACE?

WITH QUANTUM WORKPLACE:

- Capture, listen to, and act on employee feedback
- Align individual and team goals with business objectives
- Encourage frequent check-ins to increase clarity and communication
- Recognize and celebrate employee success
- Make data-driven decisions with integrated employee success initiatives
- Leverage technology to stay focused on business success

Learn More

WITH FIERCE:

- Avoid pointless conversations
- Save time and money
- Have productive, inclusive meetings
- Strengthen relationships, at work and at home
- Move the needle and get results

Learn More

fierce.

QUANTUM WORKPLACE