



The real,
actual,
no BS
state of
teamwork
in 2024.

Mural



Teams — the foundational unit of the enterprise — have been put through the wringer. First, they were sent home “temporarily.” Then, the temporary became the “new normal.” Then, they were told they could come back when/if they felt comfortable. And then, they were just forced to come back, whether they liked it or not. Today, some have to work in-office, others get to choose, and still others don’t even have offices to go into, spending their days in a weird digital netherspace where only one person can comfortably speak at any given moment and everyone is trapped inside little rectangles.

Nearly four years out from that time, we wanted to know how teams were holding up. We surveyed 1,000 knowledge workers to do a temperature check on the current state of teamwork. And, shocker: *years of back and forth with no consistent structure for how to work together has really taken a toll.*

Most knowledge workers aren’t very happy with how they work together, *regardless* of where they work.

*Previous pages:
AI generated rendering
of a typical modern
workplace, circa 2024.*

Why workers
leave (p6)

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meetings
fail (p26)

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Introduction

66% of workers say they're only "somewhat happy," or worse, not happy at all. Nearly a third regularly experience hiccups with their team or struggle to work well together—in some cases, a struggle they may never overcome. Over half of knowledge workers say poor teamwork has led to employee burnout, while 45% say it has led to employee turnover.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. In this report, we'll share our findings on some of the biggest issues facing teams in the enterprise:

- Is poor teamwork really that big of a deal?
(*Hint: Yes.*)
- What are the barriers to good teamwork?
- Shouldn't being remote make work easier?
- Why aren't meetings doing their job?
- How might we solve for poor teamwork?
- Just what exactly are we doing here, people?

Let's get the conversation started around what might need to change to get teamwork in fighting shape again. 'Cause if teams can't work together, then the enterprise just can't work.

A Black woman with her hair pulled back, wearing a blue denim jacket over a white t-shirt and large hoop earrings, is smiling warmly at the camera. She is sitting at a wooden desk, typing on a silver laptop. In front of her is a white coffee cup. In the background, a blonde woman with glasses and a man are working at another desk. A whiteboard with colorful sticky notes is visible in the far background.

Is burnout
in my job
description?

Why workers leave

Why workers leave

The way we're working isn't working ... and knowledge workers know it. If you don't fix broken teamwork, your team's liable to leave you in a real fix.

Newsflash: your coworkers are looking for a better deal.

Due to bad teamwork, nearly 3 in 5 knowledge workers have actively thought about leaving their current positions or already applied for new jobs.

No one wants to play for a losing team, and if teamwork challenges aren't addressed, your star players might not make it to next season. (We promise, that's the last sports metaphor.)

When teamwork struggles are ignored ...

52% of workers have experienced burnout

45% of workers have experienced turnover

A riddle: which team is less productive — one full of workers who hate their jobs or one that doesn't exist because everyone is gone?

Time is of the essence.

63%

Why workers leave

of knowledge workers are eyeing the exit when they haven't seen teamwork improve in the past year.

Workers aren't going to wait around forever for companies to get their acts together. If teamwork ain't improvin', they're gonna get movin'.

**If one quarter
of your
leadership
team is busy
looking for
another job,
how much
time do they
have to
actually,
uh, lead?**

38% of non-management employees have thought about quitting due to poor teamwork. And if that's not enough, 25% of senior executives have already applied for other jobs.

The cost of bad teamwork?

52% say employee burnout
45% say employee turnover
31% say missed goals
30% say missed deadlines
18% say lost business

Translation: if you don't support your teams, your company's going to suffer.

Poor teamwork is more likely to cause burnout for women than men.

56%

of women experience burnout due to poor teamwork.

49%

of men experience burnout due to poor teamwork.

Typical.

**Burnout:
it's not just
for older
workers
anymore!**

In fact, 55% of employees under 40 say they've experienced burnout ... as compared to 49% of employees 40 and over. So great news if you're about to turn 40 — there's 6% less burnout in your future!

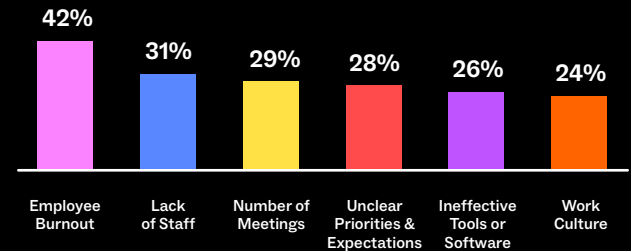
Ineffective
teamwork



Turnover
& burnout

It's the *circle* of work: bad teamwork leads to turnover and burnout, and turnover and burnout lead to bad teamwork. Nearly half of knowledge workers say that burnout is a roadblock to effective collaboration, followed by a lack of staff and the number of meetings held. Unclear priorities and expectations also stand in the way.

As a result, burnout and turnover, which both cause ineffective teamwork, are also the leading outcomes of it. This creates an ongoing cycle of poor collaboration across organizations.



You mean, remote work isn't the solution to everything?

Afraid not. 57% of remote workers are not very happy with how their teams work.

Wherever workers sit, teams have to be supported to feel productive — otherwise they're just trading the same water in a different pond.

Why workers leave

49%

of remote workers say teamwork has declined or remained the same, as compared to in-office workers (46%) and hybrid workers (40%).

So okay, maybe this whole remote thing isn't quite figured out after all.

Dude, where's my team?

Why workers leave


**“Lack of staff” is cited
as a major cause
of poor teamwork among**

37% of in-office
workers

29% of hybrid
workers

24% of remote
workers

We know how it goes ... you were hired to be a designer and now you're also in charge of product marketing, sales, and cleaning the bathrooms. It's hard to have great teamwork when you're the only one left on the team.

A man with dark, wavy hair and a beard, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt, is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. His hand is resting on his chin. Another person's hand is visible on his right shoulder, suggesting a supportive or guiding interaction. The background is a blurred indoor setting with large windows.

Why do bad meetings happen to good people?

Where meet- ings fail

Where meetings fail

OMG, we have to stop meeting like this!

No, seriously. We *have* to stop meeting like this.

71%
**of knowledge
workers
believe
meetings
are not the
best way
to collaborate
and align
on work.**

The numbers don't lie: people are really sick of meetings. But is the problem meetings themselves or the way they're being run? Or both?

**Around 1 in 5
knowledge
workers spends
11+
hours
a week
in meetings,
including 36%
of senior executives.**

Honestly, it's maybe more surprising to learn that 64% of senior executives spend less than 11 hour per week. Have you seen these people's calendars?

**Average hours spent
in meetings per week:**

7.6 Remote workers
7.9 Hybrid workers
5.3 In-office workers

Just a heads up: if this data is convincing you that back-to-office is the solution, remember those two hours you aren't sitting in meetings are more than made up for by the hours you're sitting in traffic.

50%

50%

Where meetings fail

On average, workers believe only about half of their meetings are important.

Even worse, a sizable number of mid-level and non-management employees (about 1 in 4) estimate that less than 20% of their meetings are productive, compared to about one-eighth of senior executives. When the person at the top is saying “that meeting was productive” and everyone below them disagrees, something’s amiss.

“Company-wide meetings?” *Biggest* waste of time.

Which meetings are the worst?
Around 2 in 5 knowledge workers rank company-wide meetings as the biggest waste of time.

Waste of time? Really? When else are you supposed to catch up on emails?

Where meetings fail

According to knowledge workers, the biggest signs that a meeting is going to be a waste of time are:

42% People having side conversations

42% Lack of agenda

41% People multitasking

39% Lack of participation

And if all four of those factors are present, that's what we call a “Yahtzee!”

28%

of meeting owners don't feel fully prepared to run meetings.

And this is on you, *managers*, since you make up 88% of the meeting owner population.

But don't get too cocky, individual contributors — 25% of meeting attendees say their lack of participation derails meetings. Which would make them more like individual *non-contributors*, really.

Where meetings fail

And it all boils down to an awful lot of time wasted and an awful lot of ...

awkward ...

silences.

Are
meetings
the most
effective
way to
align and
collaborate?

Where meetings fail

NO

82% of non-management knowledge workers agree — meetings are not the most effective way to align and collaborate. Mid-level knowledge workers and senior execs like them a little more ... only 2 out of 3 think meetings are ineffective.

Still, those results are pretty staggering ... large majorities of people at all levels of the enterprise think meetings are a waste of time. How do we fix this predicament?


Let's have a meeting about it! ;-)

So yes, there's a lot going wrong. But what do knowledge workers want? Instead of focusing on the things that don't work, what could we be doing better?

"Move fast and break things" has been a rallying cry for awhile now, and guess what? They did it. Things are broken.

**So let's
turn it
around.**

Let's
move
smart
and fix
things



What if
Monday
was the
best day of
the week?

What workers need

What workers need

It's not all doom and gloom.
Workers know what they
want. Leaders, are you
listening?

Where could we improve?
Let's start with work/life balance.

41% of managers want a better work/life balance.

33% of individual contributors want a better work/life balance.

Managers might get a lot of the blame, but they're also taking on a lot of the stress. Building a work culture that takes the burden off of managers could have a ripple effect that impacts the entire organization for the better.

Sliced another way, who has the best work/life balance?

66% Remote workers

63% In-office workers

60% Hybrid workers

Not surprisingly, remote workers are feeling the best about their work/life balance. But that's still a big percentage of the workforce that's feeling overworked and under-rested — especially in a world where going to the dentist or picking your kids up from school is put in the "life" category.

Could AI be the answer?

Nearly 3 in 5 knowledge workers are optimistic AI will improve teamwork. That includes 27% who say they're very optimistic.

Now that the hype and fear around AI have started to die down, workers are realizing it's more likely to bring us together than tear us apart. Even if that means coming together to fight the robot uprising, we still consider it a win for humanity.

Managers think AI can help their teams by improving knowledge and data sharing (50%) and reducing repetitive tasks and automating processes (49%).

Managers are putting a lot of hope in AI as a potential solution to the problems their team are encountering. And it could be — if used properly — not as a replacement for human workers, but as an enhancement. If SkyNet has taught us anything, it's that you can't just point AI at a problem and expect it to be fixed. Lasting solutions take care, understanding, and quite a bit of very confusing time travel.

Gartner predicts the social and collaboration software market will grow from \$3.5 billion in 2019 to

**\$6.9
billion
in 2024.**

Great news for people who make collaboration software (*looks around room sheepishly*), but clearly companies understand broken teamwork is a growing problem and they're looking for ways to fix it.

**And yet 1 in 3
knowledge
workers have seen
no change in how
their teams work
together over the
past year, and over
1 in 10 have seen
a decline.**

So just throwing money at software isn't the answer ... it has to be the right software with the right features (*looks around the room sheepishly, again*), as well as a clear plan for implementation and training.

63
%

of individual contributors think managers should help their teams learn collaboration skills.

According to our [2023 Collaboration Trends Report](#), a majority of workers believe managers should help their teams learn how to collaborate better.

And strong collaboration skills can make a big difference, because ...

**Knowledge workers
who are intentional
with collaboration
are nearly**

2x

**as likely to say they're
happy with how their
team collaborates
than those who
don't collaborate
intentionally.**

If there's such a thing as "one simple trick!" to fixing broken teamwork, it's this:

intentionality.

When people collaborate with purpose, they enjoy work more and have better results. Why leave teamwork up to fate when putting in the effort to build your teamwork practices can double your chance of success?

What are the top ways we can fix teamwork?

More transparency from leadership (42%)

Building trust and empathy (39%)

Better cross-functional alignment (38%)

We've said it before and we'll say it again: people want to work together well. They're eager to have strong connections with their teammates and to do their jobs in environments that feel supportive, respectful, and honest. Maybe one of the best ways to improve teamwork doesn't involve any investment at all: *just treat people like adults.*

**Fix
teamwork,
increase
job
satisfaction.**

What workers need

1 in 3 workers wished they enjoyed their job more and that things could work better at their organization. Ergo: better teamwork, happier workers.

It's not rocket science ... although to be fair, if there's one group of people who should know how to deal with burnout, it's rocket scientists.

So, where does that leave us?

The last hard truth for you: no one knows... yet.

We don't want to be just another company funneling you to a place that doesn't really have the answer.

We want to get this right. We want to listen. We want to continue to gather data. And most importantly — we want to make a difference in teams.

Mural was built to help make work make sense, so these are issues we're thinking about and working on every day. We know how much better work can feel when teams are actively engaged, because we've seen it and experienced it ourselves. And we're determined to find new ways to fix broken teamwork so everyone feels more connected, productive, and fulfilled.

Something is brewing,
and we plan to take
you along.

Let's figure out how
to fix it and **make**
work **make** **sense**
for everyone.

Methodology

Mural partnered with Wakefield Research to collect responses from 1,000 knowledge workers in the United States. Respondents were recruited through an email invitation to complete an online survey. Data was collected between September 22 through October 1, 2023.





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