

## 3 tips to keep your company culture flourishing while working remotely

How has your internal communication and workplace culture changed during lockdown? Do you think it has changed or has it remained the same? What systems do you have in place to gauge and keep track of your team's morale, engagement and culture? It is important to remember, that your employees are the ambassadors of a company's reputation. Their behaviour and interactions with others are a direct reflection of your company, which ultimately impact your reputation. Do their actions reflect one of pride for the company or are their comments rather snide? "What gets built on the inside, gets reflected to the outside world," shares Chris Bischoff, reputation manager at Reputation Matters. "Reputations are an inside out approach. You can't build a solid reputation by only focussing on external stakeholders and communication channels."



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Since most people have started working from home, it is an important time to assess whether your internal communication initiatives are working to create a cohesive team culture even though team members are not seeing each other as regularly.

"Now is not the time to neglect internal communication, don't assume that your employees are 'fine', and target all your attention and communication efforts on external communication initiatives," says Bischoff. "Do a quick exercise; ask your colleagues how they would describe the team's culture in three separate words. See whether these words differ or if they are consistent. If the words are vastly different, it will be an indication that everything is not quite as aligned as you may have thought it was. It may now be the perfect time to reevaluate how to tackle your internal communication, so that you can end the year off with a brand new and improved communication strategy for 2021."

To start, Reputation Matters recommends these three simple yet effective ways that you can encourage a healthy and productive organisational climate:

### 1. Using the right communication channels.

Internal communication is one of the biggest factors that contributes to an organisation's internal climate and reputation.

Remember your average workforce could consist of four generations, Generation Z (18 to 24 years), millennials (25

to 39 years), Gen X (40 to 54 years) and baby boomers (55+ years); all of which have their own preferred ways of communicating.

“Our research has highlighted some interesting communication preferences among the different generations,” says Bischoff. “Give a baby boomer a choice between a Skype or face-to-face meeting, they will most likely opt for face-to-face. While some employees may like a quick WhatsApp message, others may feel like it is too personal. It is important to understand these differences to keep your employees engaged to make sure that you are using the best possible channel of communication to get your internal messages across. Instead of assuming what your employees’ communication preferences are, consider running a short poll to find out what their preferences are.”

## **2. Have regular huddles.**

It has become increasingly important to find new ways to keep your team’s motivational levels up and to always make sure that everyone feels supported. A daily or even weekly huddle is a short meeting, no more than 15 minutes long, to touch base with the team. Having these quick check-in sessions will help bring your team closer together while working apart. During the huddle allow each team member to touch on their most immediate deliverables within the next 24 hours, their bottlenecks and where they may need support. You may even want to consider including a daily aspiration or to celebrate a win from the previous day. It is important that these huddles don’t turn into brainstorming sessions, they are there for quick check-ins. If more time is required on a specific item, then a separate meeting can be set up for it.

## **3. Do internal climate research.**

When last have you checked in with your team to get their feedback on what they think about the company’s internal communication and culture? Instead of guessing, conduct a climate survey for your team to find out what factors are positively contributing to your organisational climate and what factors are breaking it down.

“At Reputation Matters, we have developed an organisational climate survey (OCS) to help companies understand how their employees experience their working environment. Our OCS research model is a lot more than just an internal communication or ‘just another’ employee engagement survey; it looks at all the internal elements that contribute to a team’s success, motivation and productivity. It includes your company’s culture, engagement as well as helping you to identify your reputation that gets built from the inside.

“Understanding your internal climate by doing research can provide you with a strategy to build an internal ‘family’ culture that your team enjoys being a part of,” says Bischoff. “An internal ‘family’-like culture is the type of environment that will lead your employees to be the proud ambassadors of your company’s reputation.”