

2021 state of hybrid work report

How small businesses are managing a partially remote workforce



With 3 in 5 businesses partially remote, it's critical to understand the current state of hybrid work and how to set up your small business for success.

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Diving in

Did you know nearly 1 in 10 employees have a coworker that has moved as a result of COVID-19?

It's clear that employees and business owners have been forced to become comfortable with change. Businesses across multiple industries, including professional services and retail, have learned to adapt to new environments, shifting from in-office to remote. Now, almost a third of businesses have already returned to the office. As the landscape continues to change, business owners are being forced to manage a more complex hybrid work model.

Knowing how to successfully navigate hybrid work is key to maximizing productivity and building resiliency. To better understand the current landscape of hybrid work, we interviewed 1,000 individuals at US companies with 1–100 employees. In this report, we will uncover key findings from our hybrid work survey and share tips on how to level up your business strategy.



Highlights overview

Highlight 1

Businesses are shifting to hybrid work

The majority of businesses are shifting to hybrid work, and most employees expect their organizations to return to work in a less office-dependent way.

Highlight 2

Remote work isn't entirely going away

Attitudes towards remote working have improved, especially among companies with 51 to 100 employees, where only 1 in 3 employees feel it's viewed negatively by their organization vs 3 in 5 prior to COVID-19.

Highlight 3

Disconnection at work is on the rise

In-person interaction with coworkers and customers has dropped significantly, with more than a fourth of employees stating they have less work interactions.

Highlight 4

Productivity remains a top focus

Productivity takes a hit, with only 16% of businesses stating their productivity levels have increased in recent months.

Highlight 5

Businesses are using a variety of communication tools

Businesses are using phone calls, texts, team messaging, and video conferencing more frequently.

Highlight 1

Businesses are shifting to hybrid work

Most businesses were either completely or mostly in-office pre-COVID-19, but now 3 in 5 are at least partially remote.

3 in 5



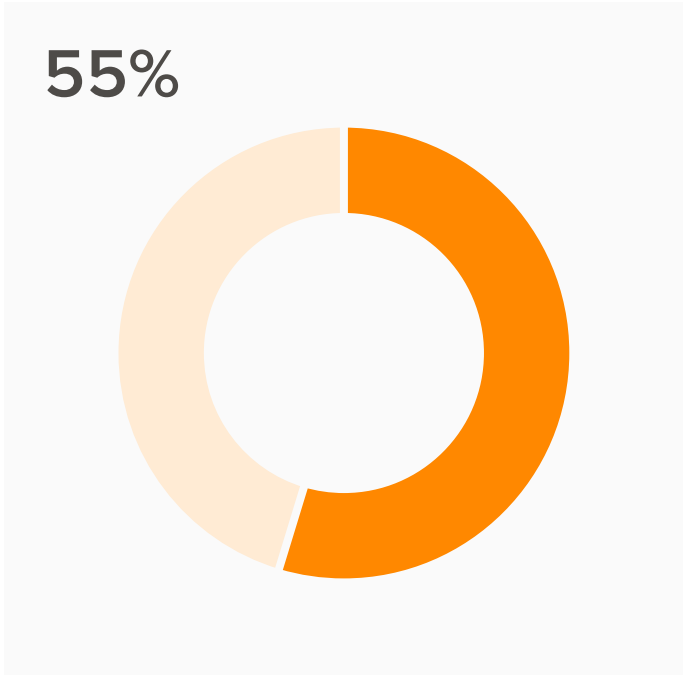
2 in 5 businesses work mostly in an office setting.

2 in 5

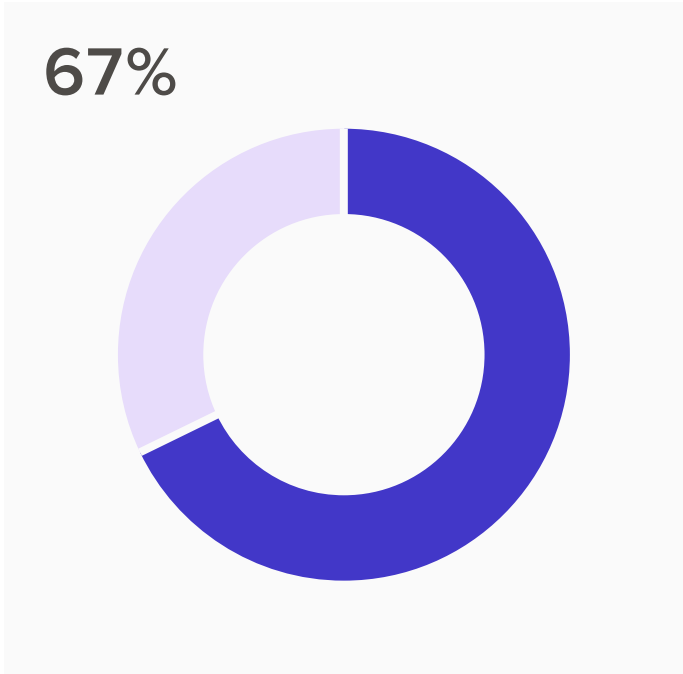


Highlight 1

Most employees expect their organization to be back in the office in a year, but in a less office-dependent way. 55% of employees expect their company’s work environment to be a mix of office and remote work, mostly remote, or completely remote.



67% of businesses don’t expect to return to the office 5 days a week, with 27% expecting to go back to the office anywhere between 1–4 days per week.



Highlight 1

Key insight

Given 95% of businesses see their organization returning to the office in the future, it's important to build a hybrid work plan. Prepare your business to partially return to the office with a mobile-first mentality. With a tech stack that's mobile-friendly, you won't feel tied to a desk and can easily work on the go, switching effortlessly from desktop to mobile and vice versa. Evolve your business model with the times and start managing your business from anywhere.

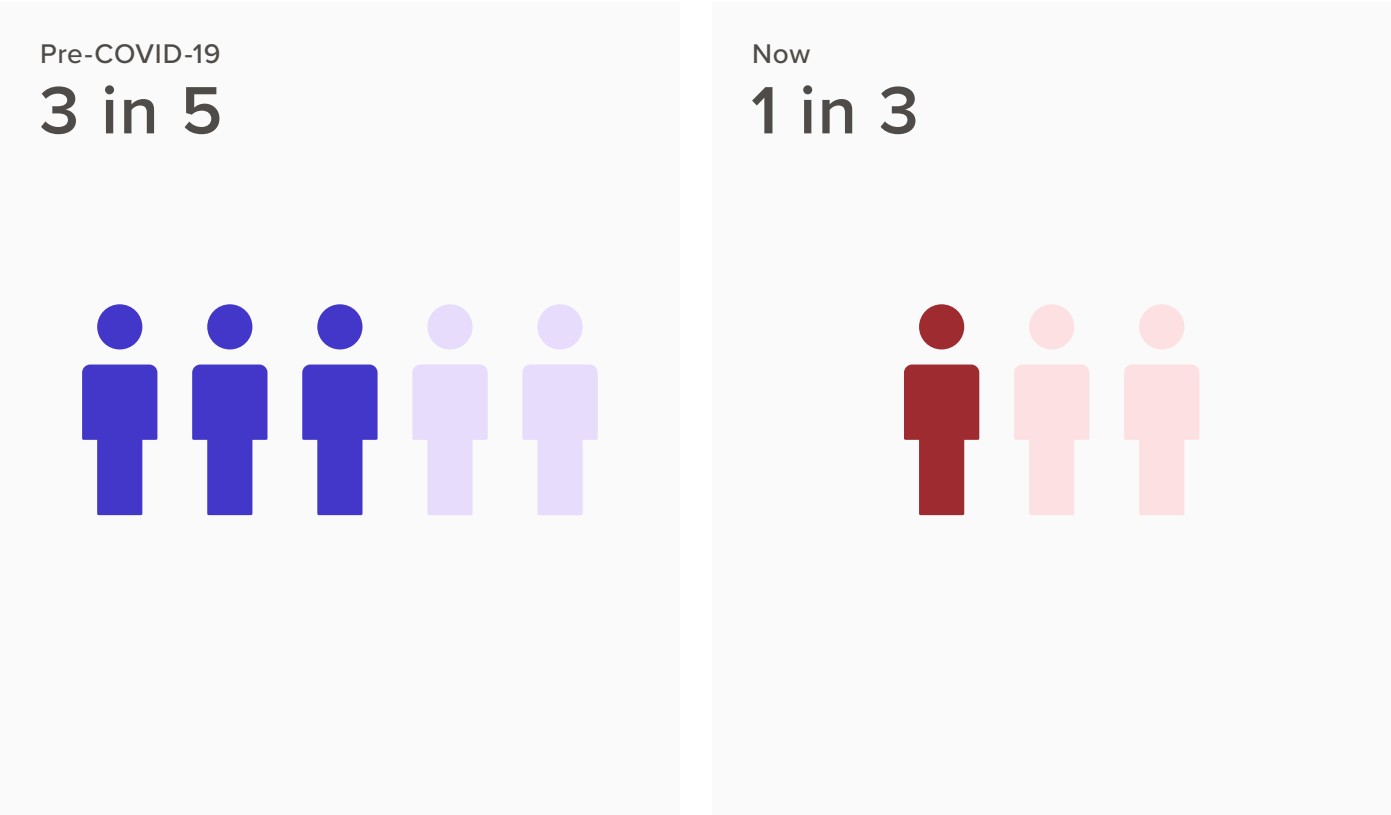
Action items

- 💡 Get your hands on a single app for messaging, video meetings, phone calls, texts, and faxes so you can manage all your business communications on the go.
- 💡 Research business management tools with advanced mobile capabilities.
- 💡 Build a roadmap for your business on when and how you plan to shift from remote work to an in-office environment.

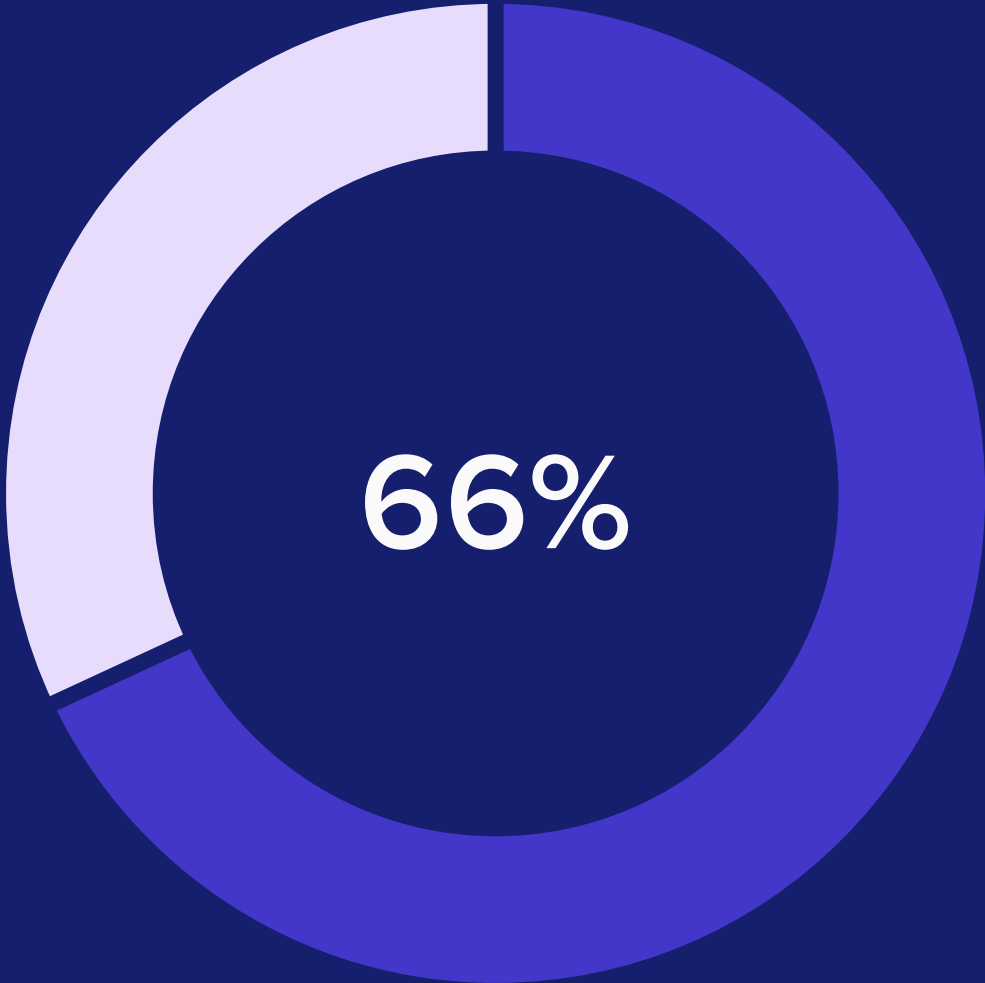
Highlight 2

Remote work isn't entirely going away

Attitudes towards remote work have improved, especially among companies with 51–100 employees, where only 1 in 3 feel it's viewed negatively by their organization vs 3 in 5 prior to COVID-19.



Highlight 2



of businesses view
remote work positively

Companies with 1–100 employees

Highlight 2

1 in 3 employees say their organization is “extremely remote-friendly,” while 1 in 5 are “not at all remote-friendly.”



More than a fourth of employees have enjoyed an increase in time spent with family or friends.



Highlight 2

Key insight

Business owners and employees are seeing the benefits of remote work. Those working from home say that eliminating commute time is the biggest positive, especially among companies with 51–100 employees. With remote work growing in popularity and becoming the new normal, it's important to have the right work-from-home setup. Don't let your business fall under the 1 in 5 companies that are “not at all remote-friendly.”

Action items

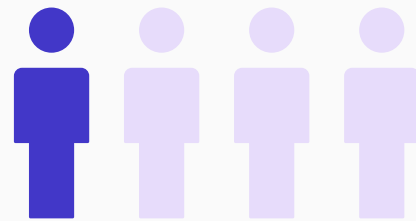
- 💡 Equip your business with top tier software and hardware that's remote-friendly.
- 💡 Assess the cost savings your business will gain from offering remote work and readjust your budget.
- 💡 Define guidelines for yourself and your employees when it comes to working remotely and in the office.

Highlight 3

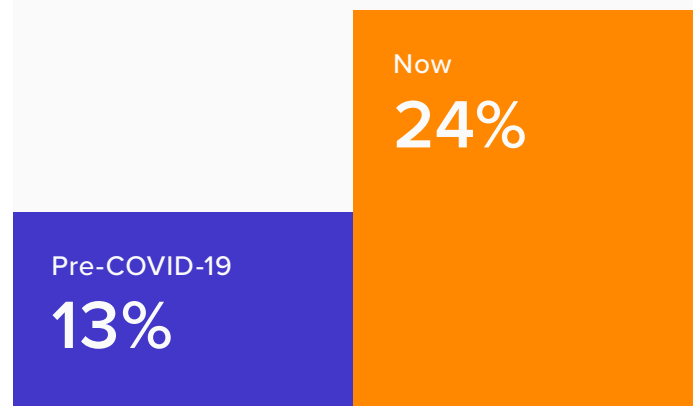
Disconnection at work is on the rise: How can hybrid teams stay connected?

More than a fourth of employees say they have less frequent interactions with coworkers, customers, and prospects.

1 in 4

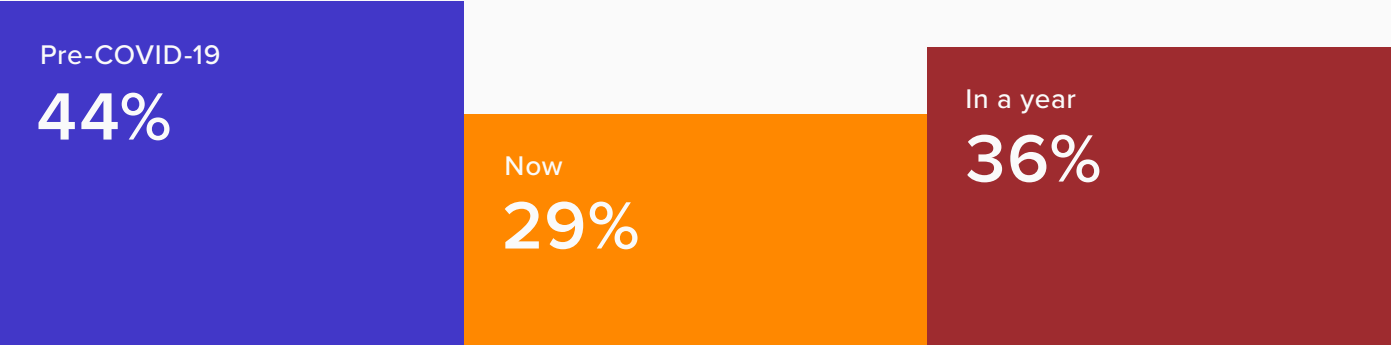


In-person interaction with coworkers and customers has dropped noticeably, with the biggest drop among companies with 51–100 employees. Pre-COVID-19, only 13% of employees at companies with 51–100 employees said less than 25% of their job involves interacting with coworkers and customers in person. Now, it's up to 24%.

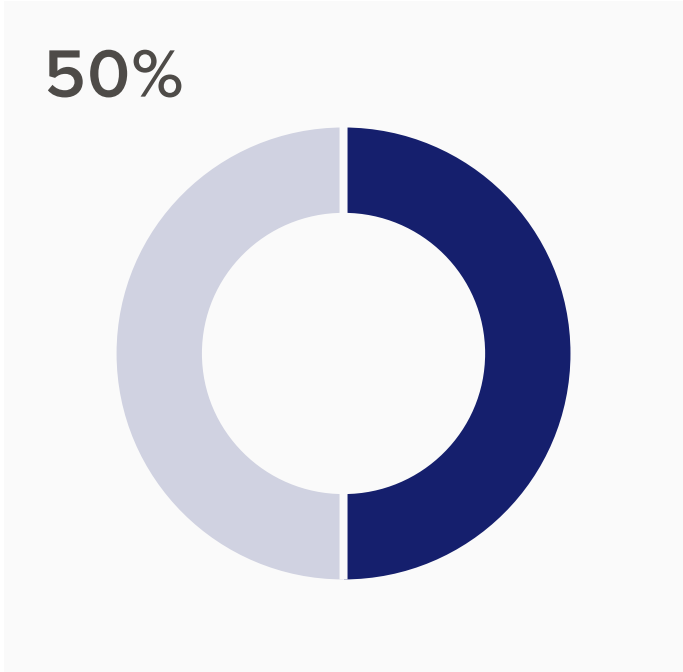


Highlight 3

Employees expect an increase with in-person interaction in a year, but not a complete return to pre-COVID-19 levels. Pre-COVID-19, 44% of employees said that more than 75% of their job involves interacting with coworkers and customers in person. Now, it's dropped to 29%, and employees expect it to go to 36% in a year.



50% of employees agree that being in the same location as coworkers is important, with companies with 11–100 employees agreeing more strongly.



Highlight 3

Key insight

With employees having less frequent interactions across the board, business owners need to find impactful ways to strengthen connections for their hybrid workforce. Make it easy for employees to connect with another through a variety of digital channels and real-time communication tools. It's also important to note that employees ranked email (18%) as the top choice for communicating socially with coworkers, followed by phone calls (15%) and text messaging (13%).

Action items

- 💡 Implement a modern email and cloud phone system to easily connect with coworkers, customers, and prospects.
- 💡 Schedule a series of video meetings focused on team bonding.
- 💡 Create fun, non-work-related group chats in your team messaging platform.

Highlight 4

Productivity remains a top focus

1 in 4 businesses are experiencing a decrease in productivity over the last few months.



3 in 5 businesses feel their productivity has remained the same over the last few months.



Highlight 4

Growing organizations are much more likely to report an increase in productivity than those at no-growth companies.



Highlight 4

Key insight

Productivity is top of mind for any business owner. Boost productivity and maximize collaboration between employees, vendors, and stakeholders by letting your employees collaborate seamlessly across team messages, video meetings, and phone calls. As productivity rises and your business grows, make sure you implement tools that are scalable and can grow with you.

Action items

- 💡 Get your hands on collaboration tools that are unified, intuitive, and scalable.
- 💡 Use your business phone number on your cell phone to stay connected and productive at all times.
- 💡 Take advantage of analytics to increase sales and service productivity.

Highlight 5

Businesses are using a variety of communication tools

When it comes to communication tools, 33% of employees are using phone calls and texts more frequently, and 23% are using team messaging more frequently.

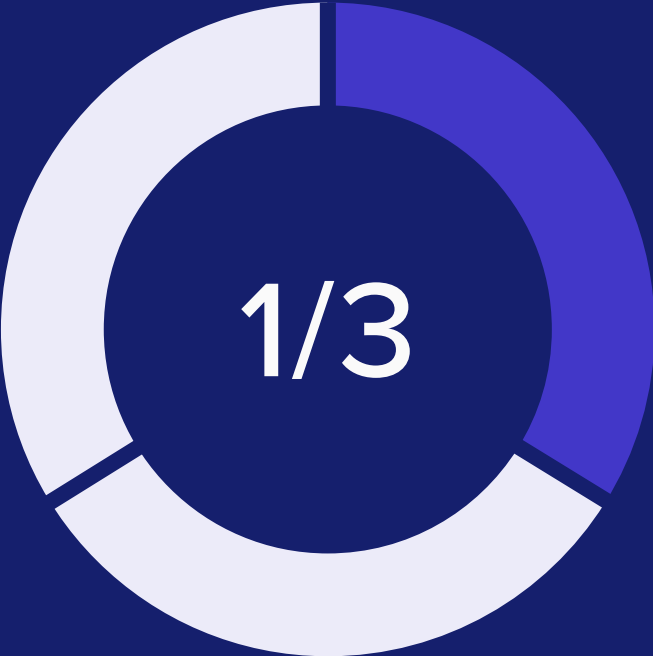


Video conferencing has seen the greatest increase in usage, with 2 in 5 businesses using it more frequently.

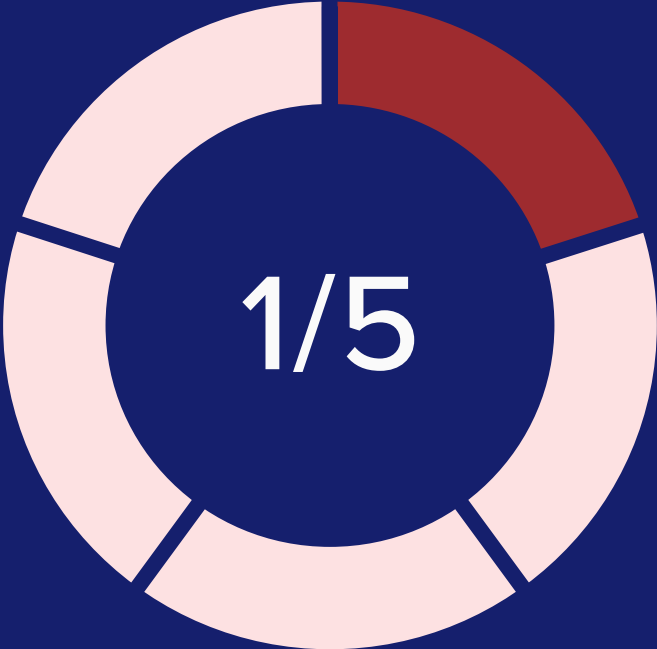


Highlight 5

Almost a third of businesses have a more positive view of video conferencing and a fifth have a more positive view of team messaging vs 6 months ago, with the largest improvement among companies with 51–100 employees.



More positive view of video conferencing



More positive view of team messaging

Highlight 5

Key insight

Business owners and employees are turning to a variety of communication tools to get work done. Companies with 11–100 employees are significantly more likely to prefer video meetings and team messaging than companies with 1–10 employees. In addition, employees who are 18 to 39 years old are significantly more likely to rely on video meetings and team chat than their older peers; employees over 55 years old are more likely to rely on email and phone calls. To cater to a diverse workforce, offer unified communications tools that simplify video conferencing, team chats, phone calls, texts, and email.

Action items

- 💡 Upgrade to communication tools that are rated #1 by industry experts, easy to set up, and reliable with 24/7 support.
- 💡 Partner with one vendor for all business communications needs, including phone calls, video meetings, messaging, texts, and fax.
- 💡 Make sure your communication tools have an API integration that lets you develop custom apps for your business.

Summary of key findings

- 3 in 5 organizations are at least partially remote.
- 55% of employees expect their company’s work environment to be a mix of office and remote work, mostly remote, or completely remote.
- 67% of businesses don’t expect to return to the office 5 days a week.
- 66% of businesses view remote work positively.
- 1 in 3 employees say their organization is “extremely remote-friendly,” while 1 in 5 are “not at all remote-friendly.”
- More than a fourth of employees say they have less frequent interactions with coworkers, customers, and prospects.
- 1 in 4 businesses are experiencing a decrease in productivity over the last few months.
- 33% of employees are using phone calls and texts more frequently, and 23% are using team messaging more frequently.
- 2 in 5 businesses are using video conferencing more frequently.
- Almost a third of businesses have a more positive view of video conferencing vs 6 months ago.



Methodology

- RingCentral and Bredin Inc. conducted an online survey among US companies with 1 to 100 employees.
- A total of 1,000 individuals completed the survey.
- Research was conducted between October 8–19, 2020.
- Characteristics of survey respondents:
 - The majority of respondents hold a principal position or are individual contributors.
 - Companies fully open for business represented 61%, companies open on a limited basis represented 34%, and companies closed with plans to reopen represented 5%.
 - 62% of respondents are aged 56–74, 18% aged 40–55, 10% aged 24–39, 9% aged 75+, and 1% aged 18–23.
 - The majority of respondents represent companies that are 2–20+ years old.
 - Industries represented include professional services (32%), retail/wholesale (27%), personal services/training (22%), and manufacturing (19%).

For more information, please contact
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RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of business cloud communications and contact center solutions based on its powerful Message Video Phone™ (MVP™) platform. RingCentral offers three key products in its portfolio including RingCentral Office®, a unified communications as a service (UCaaS) platform including team messaging, video meetings, and a cloud phone system; Glip®, the company's free video meetings solution with team messaging that enables Smart Video Meetings™; and RingCentral Contact Center™ solutions. RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading third-party business applications and enables you to easily customize business workflows. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, and has offices around the world.



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