monday.com

Working from home amid COVID-19
a first look at emerging team challenges
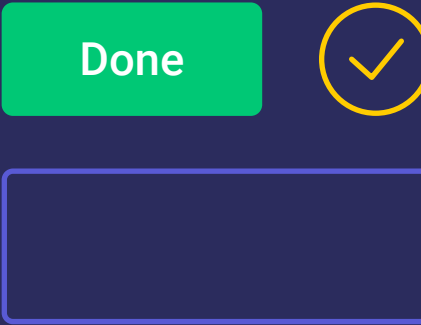
Executive summary

The social distancing requirements that were intended to curb the spread of COVID-19 introduced a broad range of challenges for businesses, which were tasked with becoming work-from-home (WFH) workforces overnight.

While business success during this time depends on organizations' ability to work fast and remain agile, **nearly one-third of employees (31%) struggle to maintain a fast pace of work at home**.

WFH workers say trouble collaborating (37%), less transparency (40%), and worse communication (36%) slow them down. With the intention of improving these shortcomings, the majority of teams (77%) have adopted online video conferencing tools, but this has only hurt efficiency more.

Most employees (59%) said they have more meetings in the WFH setting, while 37% say this increase directly reduces the amount of time they spend getting real work done.

The results of this survey reveal the challenges teams face while working from home and shed light on how team leaders can empower their workers to thrive, even amid these uncertain times.

Chapter 1

The state of working from home

A broad range of new obstacles threatens speed & agility

In the era of COVID-19, all businesses are facing unprecedented disruption. One thing that has remained constant is the need to work fast and stay agile in the face of drastic market changes. Amid great uncertainty and an ailing economy, organizations must strive to continue delivering stellar products and services.

Unfortunately, the abrupt onset of social distancing requirements and the subsequent transition to the WFH setting has made it difficult for many employees to maintain the desired levels of speed and agility.

Nearly one-third of employees (31%) believe the challenges of working from home prevent them from maintaining a fast pace of work.

WFH workers attribute this challenge to a host of obstacles that impede teamwork, waste time, and slow down core processes.
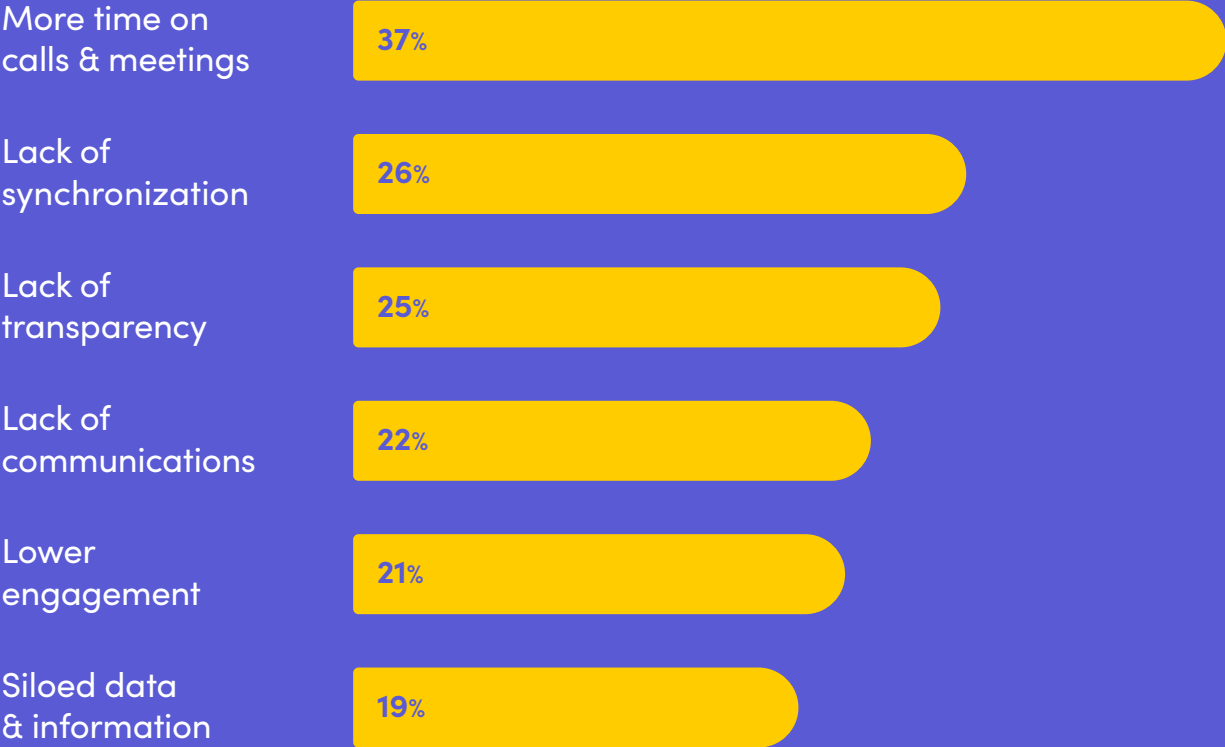
The combined effects of these challenges are less effective collaboration, fewer outputs, a slower pace of work, and worse performance.

Succeeding today demands a renewed effort on improving teamwork, where each team member is empowered

to operate at the optimal level, both individually and as a unit
By finding ways to encourage accountability, collaboration,
and engagement, team leaders can foster more effective
teamwork in the WFH setting and enable consistent levels
of speed and agility.

Most common obstacles employees face while WFH

Respondents could choose multiple answers

Obstacle	Percentage
More time on calls & meetings	37%
Lack of synchronization	26%
Lack of transparency	25%
Lack of communications	22%
Lower engagement	21%
Siloed data & information	19%

"The level of uncertainty in the current crisis is so high that it requires companies to respond extremely fast & effectively to the changing environment, & innovate on the fly.
A more agile mindset shift will enable companies to survive & thrive in this unfamiliar reality.

Meital Raviv | Director, Head of Fintech & Innovation, KPMG Israel

Teams need collaboration, engagement & accountability to thrive

Collaboration, engagement, and accountability are the three foundational attributes of effective teams. Whether each employee is sitting side-by-side in the office or they are working from their individual homes, teams that have cultivated these core traits will be equipped to maintain speed and agility despite emerging challenges.

Collaboration effectiveness is closely linked with speed

Collaboration is the most obvious requirement for effective teamwork. While each individual has their own function to fulfill, speed and overall team performance hinge on teammates' ability to work together.

When collaboration is effective, individual team members can seamlessly share ideas and data, pool resources, and communicate with ease. But without a framework that enables collaboration, business initiatives will inevitably be stalled by process inefficiencies and information gaps.

50% of employees who said that collaboration has become more difficult while working from home also said that they're

struggling to maintain a fast pace of work. On the other hand, **64% of WFH workers** who said that collaborating has become easier or hasn't changed also said they have no problem maintaining a fast pace of work.

Worse communication & less transparency while WFH fuel collaboration difficulties

Fragmented communication and diminished transparency are two common consequences of working from home. Unless teams can easily share information, sync on projects, and gain the necessary levels of transparency, the ability to collaborate efficiently is limited.

40%
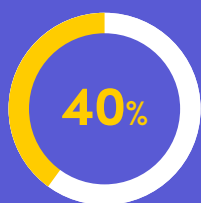
Nearly 40% of workers who transitioned to WFH said transparency into their team members' projects, tasks, and progress has declined in the WFH setting.

37%
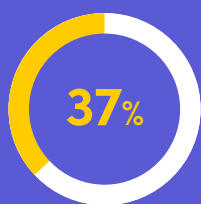
More than one-third (37%) of WFH workers reported that collaborating on projects and tasks has become more challenging since transitioning to WFH.

36%
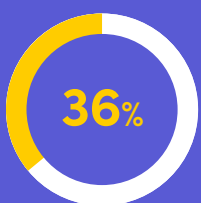
Another 36% of respondents said their team's ability to communicate while WFH is hampered and less efficient compared to the typical office setting.

It's not surprising that employees generally find it more difficult to collaborate, communicate, and maintain transparency into goals, projects, and progress while working from home.

When working side-by-side in the office, employees have the benefit of proximity to support teamwork. However, sharing the same physical space should not be the primary collaboration strategy.

Teams that rely on informal means of communication and ad-hoc collaboration styles face major obstacles in the remote setting. Only those that already have a solid infrastructure in place to promote teamwork will be positioned to maintain the speed and quality of work businesses need to succeed.

Employee engagement drives motivation & outputs

Employees who are highly engaged are well-positioned to maintain a "business as usual" speed and quality of work during these highly unusual and stressful times.

When faced with the challenges of working from home, engaged employees seek ways to operate at their best. They don't let obstacles become an excuse for inaction or hurt their performance. They're also naturally better at working independently and less reliant on being nudged by their teammates or managers to stay motivated.

Even though one's own home is presumably a more relaxed atmosphere than the office, engaged employees keep speed and agility top priorities while WFH. The opposite is also true — employees who feel less engaged in the WFH setting find working at the desired speed more challenging.

Over half of employees (51%) who feel equally or more engaged while WFH said they have no trouble maintaining a fast pace of work. Meanwhile, the **49% of WFH workers** who said that they feel less engaged also said that they're struggling to maintain a fast pace of work.

While WFH, employee engagement is even more vulnerable

Even during normal circumstances, a solution for keeping employees engaged evades many organizations. In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic swept the globe, 35% of U.S. workers were engaged — a record high.

While rising employee engagement is an improvement, the notion that 65% of U.S. workers are still not engaged or actively disengaged at work clearly shows how difficult it is to keep employees enthusiastic about and dedicated to their roles.
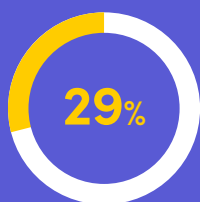
29% Nearly **one-third of employees (29%)** feel less engaged since transitioning to the WFH setting.

Add a global pandemic and all of its disruptive effects, and it's no surprise that employee engagement has already declined.

Decreased employee engagement can have broad-reaching consequences that managers cannot afford to ignore in the WFH setting. Employees who are disengaged are generally less motivated. They care less about meeting deadlines and the quality of their work, making it difficult to maintain an agile and productive workforce.

WFH teams and their leaders must continue to keep a pulse on engagement and take a proactive approach to prevent it from declining. Otherwise, upholding the desired pace of work will be a constant struggle.

Accountability fosters determination to perform at the highest level

Accountability is the third essential trait of effective teams. Employees who feel a strong sense of accountability and ownership over their work are more proactive and engaged in collaborative projects, they care a great deal about their performance, and they're motivated to work harder. All of these benefits naturally translate into a faster pace of work and more adaptable, agile mindsets.
We found the opposite is also true — employees who report decreased accountability have a harder time maintaining the desired level of speed.

50% of respondents who said that accountability has either increased or remained the same also said that WFH doesn't prevent them from maintaining a fast pace of work.
In contrast, **57% of respondents** who said that accountability has decreased also said that WFH prevents them from maintaining a fast pace of work.

Accountability slips when employees work from home

Maintaining a high level of accountability can be a challenge in the WFH setting.
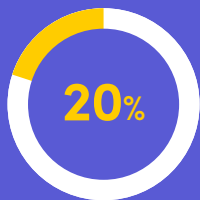
20% **One out of five employees (20%)** says the sense of accountability they feel over their work has declined since transitioning to working from home.

When everyone is present in the office, it's easier to observe each team member's effort, as well as the quality of the outputs. When everyone is working from their own homes, there is much less visibility into each person's daily work, which is a primary reason accountability tends to slip.

When accountability declines, team members begin to feel indifferent about the projects they're responsible for. They become less motivated to meet deadlines and more resistant to changes that might alter the strategy along the way. Lack of motivation and ambivalence regarding the outcomes of projects translates to sludgy processes and slower outputs.

An abundance of meetings & communication tools are draining valuable time & energy

We know that effective teamwork drives speed and agility. The challenge for most managers now is encouraging individual team members to continue operating as a team in the WFH setting. In pursuit of effective teamwork, many team leaders have ramped up efforts to increase communication.
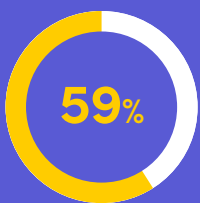
59% **The majority of employees (59%)** said the number of meetings has increased since transitioning to WFH.

In the same vein, teams have adopted video, chat, and remote project management solutions to enable employees to hold meetings and keep up communication while working from home.

**Teams are implementing
digital solutions to better support WFH**

Respondents could choose multiple answers

Online video conferencing	77%
Team chat platforms	67%
VPN	52%
Remote project management software	33%
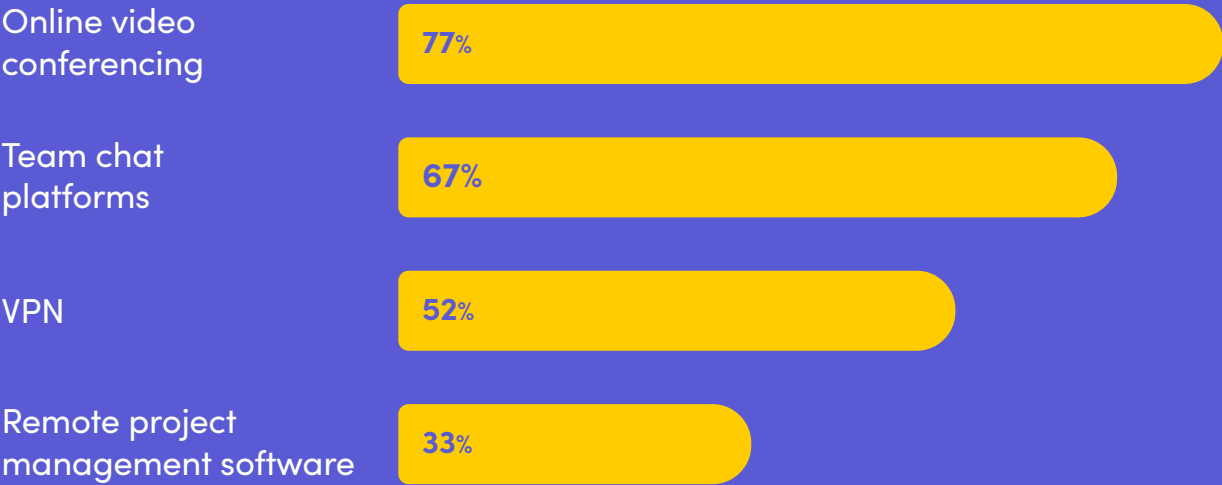
The prevalence of online video conferencing demonstrates that, to most managers, meetings are the go-to option for improving teamwork. The intention is good, but the execution is misdirected.

More frequent communication may seem like the most obvious way to get team members to sync, collaborate, boost engagement, and stay accountable, but excessive meetings tend to produce the opposite effect.

Too many meetings slow teams down — they consume valuable time and interfere with productivity. Engagement is also at stake. When employees feel unable to fulfill their responsibilities because of constant disruptions, they tend to withdraw. Too many meetings also damages accountability. Teams that rely on meetings to make decisions and provide status updates gradually become unable to take action without them. This subtle effect can have extreme consequences on team agility and the pace of work.

When the overarching goal is to maintain high speed and solid outputs, managers need solutions that are built to enable teamwork within the natural flow of work.

Data confirms that Work OS helps employees overcome WFH obstacles

Almost all employees experience greater challenges while working from home than in the typical office setting, which ultimately slows them down. However, digital tools that enable collaboration, accountability and engagement help reduce the impact of these challenges and enable consistent levels of speed and agility.

To understand the effect of the monday.com Work OS on the challenges of working from home and the pace of work, we segmented survey respondents into two groups: those whose teams use monday.com (monday.com users) and those who do not (non-users).

What is a Work OS?

A Work OS is an emerging category of software that enables organizations to centralize collaboration, information sharing,task management, and communication on one work system. Since a Work OS integrates with every platform teams use, all users can easily access information, publish status updates, answer questions, and share data seamlessly.

A Work OS allows users to automate processes on and across the platforms that it integrates with so users can save time on rote tasks and dedicate more attention to complex work. monday.com is a leader in this space.
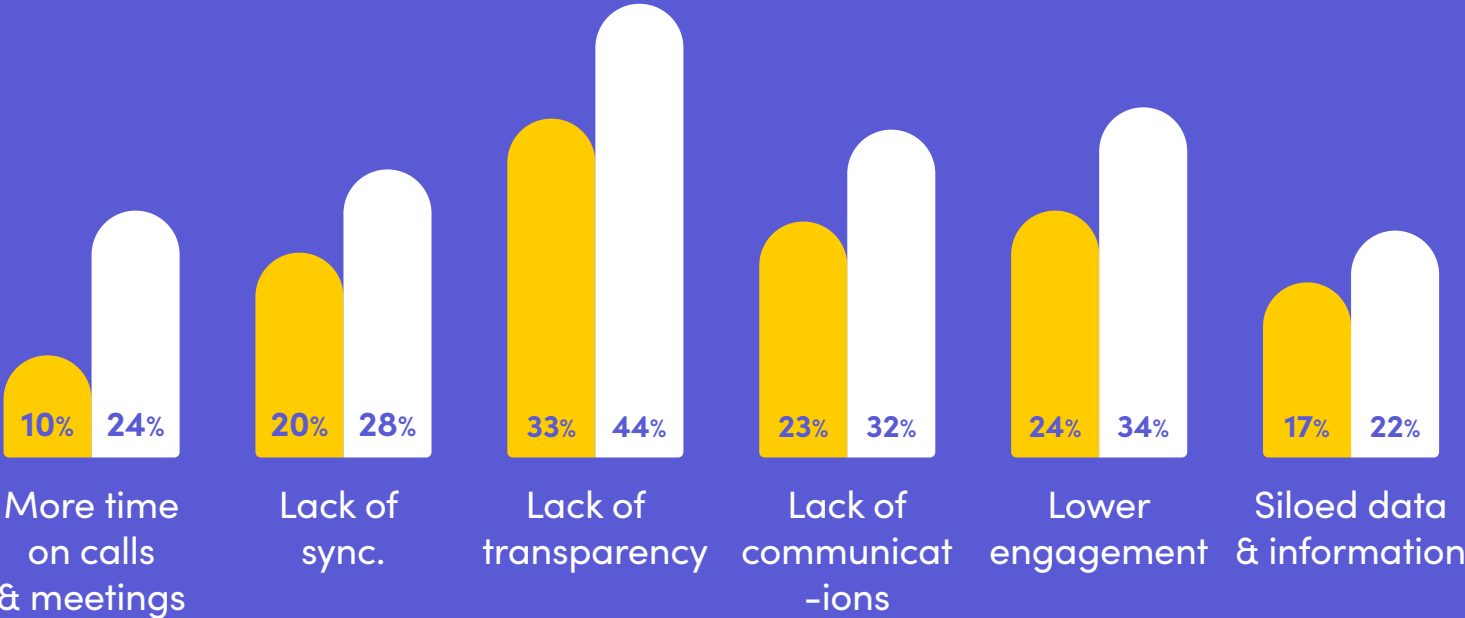
When asked to identify the most significant challenges they faced while working from home, monday.com users were **twice as likely** to say they didn't experience any new challenges compared to non-users.

Across the board, monday.com users experienced fewer of the most common WFH obstacles. It's clear that when equipped with a Work OS, teams can better mitigate these challenges, thereby reducing their impact on the speed and quality of work.

How users experience common WFH challenges

Respondents could choose multiple answers

● monday.com users   ● Non-users

	More time on calls & meetings	Lack of sync.	Lack of transparency	Lack of communicat-ions	Lower engagement	Siloed data & information
monday.com users	10%	20%	33%	23%	24%	17%
Non-users	24%	28%	44%	32%	34%	22%

## Teams that use a Work OS are better equipped to collaborate while working from home

Teams that struggle to collaborate while working from home will experience the greatest and most immediate impact on the pace of work. With each individual employee operating from their own home, lacking the ability to streamline and unify processes will create bottlenecks and inefficiencies.

Workers that struggle to collaborate while WFH

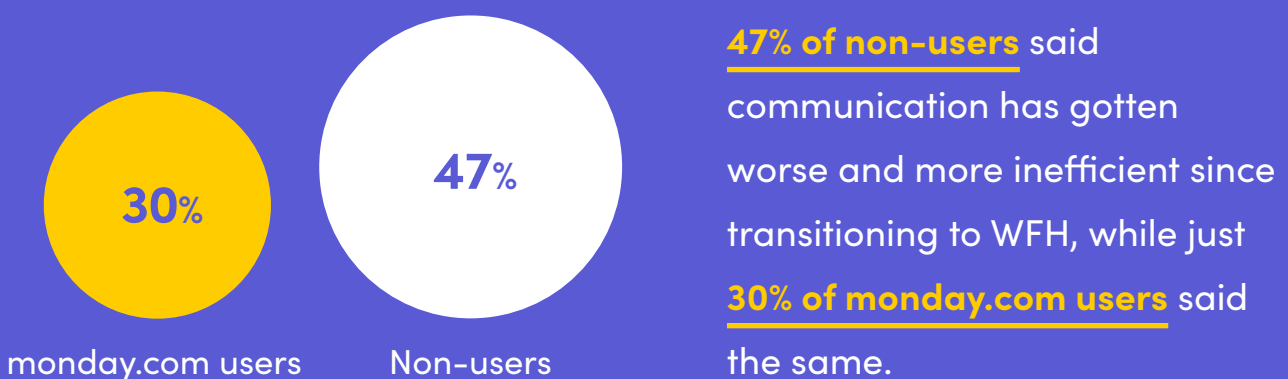**31%**

monday.com users

50%

Non-users

69%
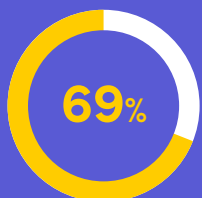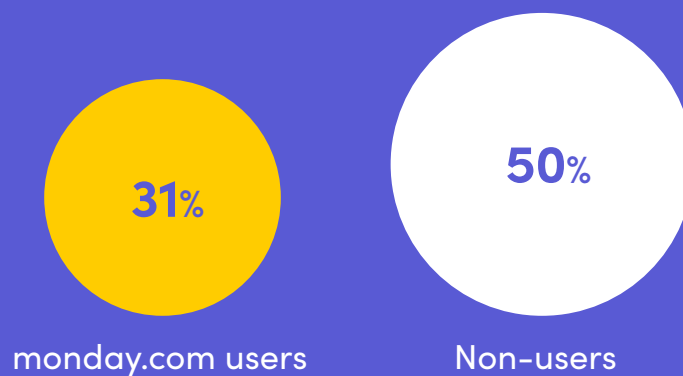
The **majority of monday.com users (69%)** reported no new challenges collaborating while WFH, which means the platform helps enable a consistent level of collaboration in any work.
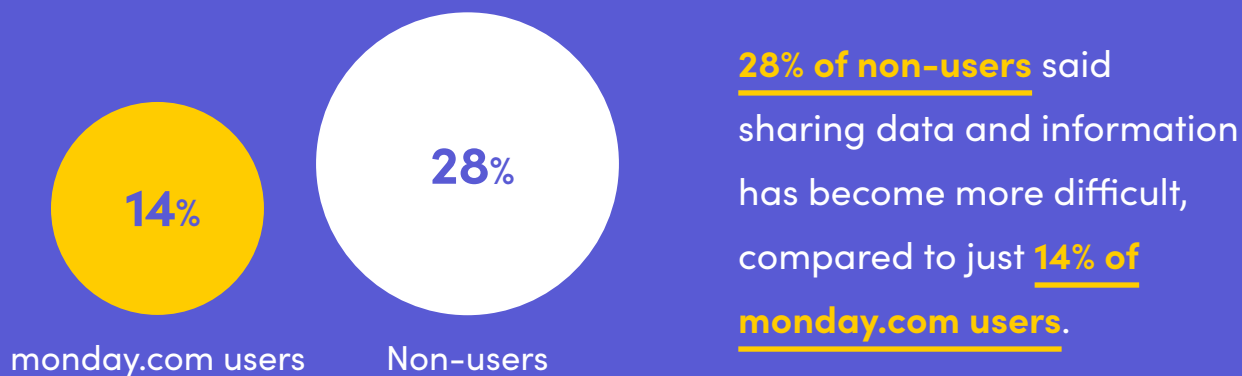
Because a Work OS is designed to facilitate seamless collaboration, teams that use one find it easier to work together in the WFH setting. While **half of non-users** said collaborating on projects and tasks while working from home has become a bigger challenge, **less than one-third of monday.com users** said the same.

Communication & information sharing are key pain points for teams without a Work OS

Effective communication is the linchpin of collaboration. It's what allows team members to convey ideas, answer questions, report on progress, share data, and ultimately work together. Although good communication is arguably even more important in the WFH setting, it remains one of the biggest team challenges. However, teams that use a Work OS are better equipped to stave off communication difficulties.

30%

monday.com users

47%

Non-users

47% of non-users said communication has gotten worse and more inefficient since transitioning to WFH, while just **30% of monday.com users** said the same.

When it comes to sharing information and data, non-users also struggle more.

14%

monday.com users

28%

Non-users

28% of non-users said sharing data and information has become more difficult, compared to just **14% of monday.com users**.
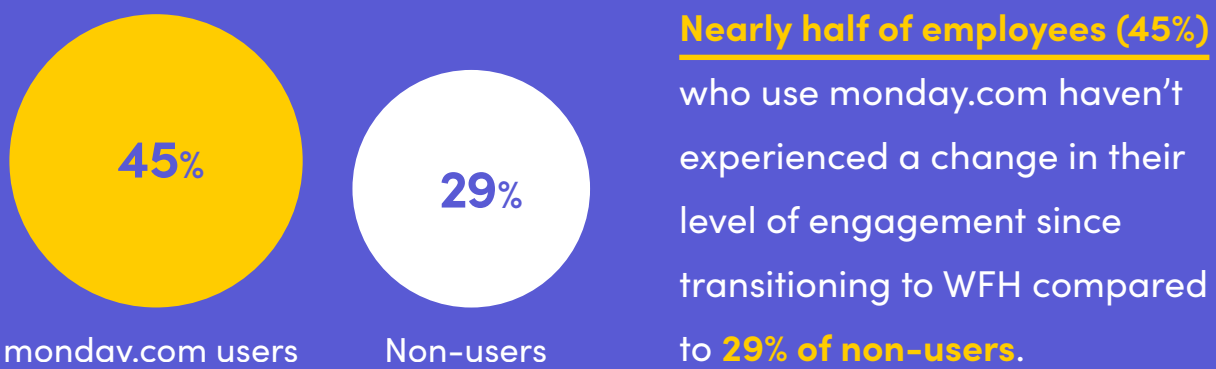
Teams today use a large volume of digital tools. While each team function may depend more on data from certain tools than others, the ability for each person to easily access any data and information at the time of need is paramount to effective collaboration. With almost half of non-users indicating greater challenges sharing information in the WFH setting, this is a clear opportunity for improvement.

Employee engagement hinges on both human & digital support

Many organizations struggle with employee engagement without a global pandemic. With 29% of all employees already

indicating they feel less engaged since the transition to WFH, we know that engagement is even more vulnerable now.

There are many factors that influence employee engagement levels, but in the WFH setting, the digital tools employees use have the greatest potential to keep engagement high. Specifically, teams that use a Work OS will find it easier to maintain engagement and motivation.

45% mondav.com users

29% Non-users

Nearly half of employees (45%) who use monday.com haven't experienced a change in their level of engagement since transitioning to WFH compared to **29% of non-users**.

Keeping employee engagement as high as possible during the period of social distancing is integral to maintaining in-office levels of speed and agility. With a Work OS, teams can achieve similar levels of employee engagement across the office and WFH setting because the platform offers a new level of visibility into team and organizational goals, projects, and progress. With a clear view into the objectives and initiatives driving the organization, WFH employees feel more connected to them, even from afar.

For teams that experienced a drop in engagement — the expected result while WFH — non-users reported larger declines.
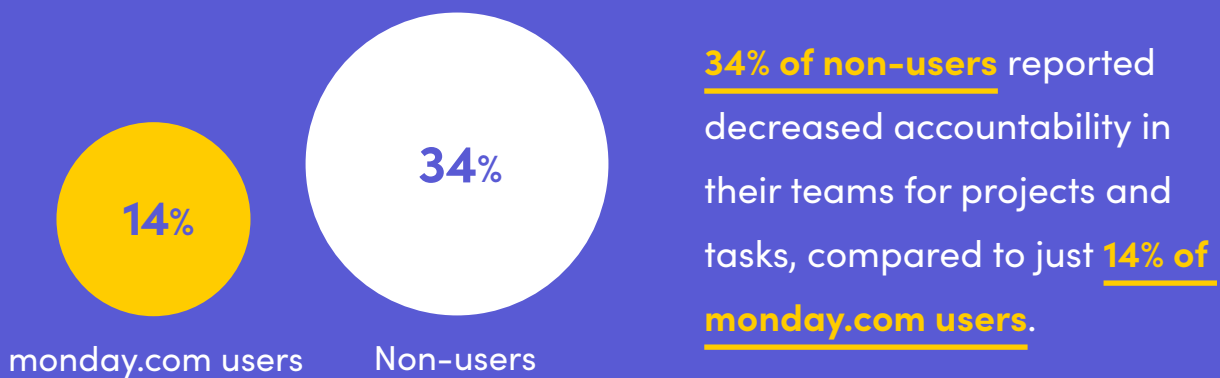
Employees report decreased engagement

24%

monday.com users

39%

Non-users
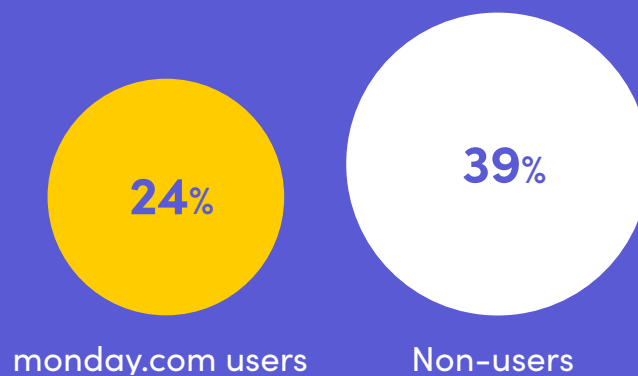
Accountability plummets without adequate digital tools

Once accountability begins to decline, it's difficult — if not impossible — to keep employees motivated. If employees feel less personal responsibility for their outputs or become indifferent about deadlines, maintaining an agile mindset and fast pace of work will be unattainable.

In the WFH setting, equipping teams with a Work OS helps prevent accountability from decreasing. It can even foster increased accountability, as indicated by 25% of monday.com users.

14%

monday.com users

34%

Non-users

34% of non-users reported decreased accountability in their teams for projects and tasks, compared to just **14% of monday.com users**.

There are numerous factors that ultimately determine the level of accountability an individual feels over their work, both intrinsic and extrinsic. The most significant factor that team leaders can influence in the current situation is transparency. Without transparency into the projects, tasks, and KPIs of everyone on the team, it's difficult for each participant to understand the bigger picture or the value of their individual contribution.

On the other hand, greater transparency supports higher accountability. This is one way a Work OS fosters accountability

among users. By making each team member's work more visible to all other participants, everyone not only gains greater clarity into the purpose of their work, but they also get a dose of healthy social pressure to step up their game.

35%

monday.com users

47%
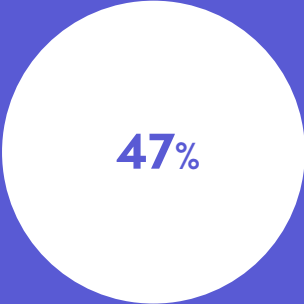
Non-users

Nearly half of non-users (47%) have experienced a decrease in transparency while WFH, compared with **35% of monday.com users**.

Chapter 3

Conclusion

The sudden transition from the office environment to working from home has introduced many team challenges and exacerbated existing ones. Despite all the obstacles that organizations are facing, business success depends on teams' ability to maintain "business as usual" as much as possible.

Remaining agile amid drastic market changes and maintaining a fast pace of work requires high levels of collaboration, engagement, and accountability. For many teams, achieving this is a struggle under normal circumstances — which makes it even more difficult while WFH. However, having the right tools can make a dramatic difference.

The survey revealed that a Work OS empowers teams to uphold the three core tenets of effective teamwork. It enables team members to communicate effectively, share information, manage projects, and share status updates. It eliminates the need for excessive meetings and frees up employees' time and attention to focus on important tasks. All of these benefits enable WFH employees to work together seamlessly, maintain a fast pace of work, and adapt to changes that arise.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many lessons. We are reminded that events beyond anyone's control can happen without warning, and we understand the importance of being prepared. By equipping employees with tools that make their work easier, more efficient, and more organized, they will

be prepared to continue performing at the highest level —
regardless of where they work.

Methodology

We surveyed a group of 207 employees who began working
from home as a result of government-mandated social
distancing requirements between March 23-30, 2020.

Here is a breakdown of the survey sample according to
organization size, industry, individual team role, type of
department, and size of team.

Industry

Construction, machinery & homes - (4%)

Education - (11%)

Finance & financial services - (7%)

Food & beverages - (3%)

Government - (4%)

Healthcare & pharmaceuticals - (8%)

Insurance - (5%)

Manufacturingb - (7%)

Other - (26%)

Retail & consumer durables - (5%)

Telecommunications, technology, internet & electronics - (16%)

Transportation & delivery - (2%)

Utilities, Energy & Extraction   – (2%)

Type of department

Creative – (10%)

Customer success – (5%)

Finance – (4%)

Human resources – (4%)

IT – (6%)

Marketing – (24%)

Operations – (17%)

R&D – (3%)

Sales – (6%)

Other – (21%)

Organization size

50–100 – (31%)

101–500 – (32%)

501–1,000 – (12%)

+1,000 – (25%)

Role

Team member – (26%)

Individual contributor – (12%)

Team leader/manager – (37%)

Senior management – (25%)