Reflektive

The Future of Teamwork

2020 Reflektive Trends Report

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Introduction

The importance of teamwork and collaboration continues to grow in our modern workplace.

Cross-functional alignment (when people across teams contribute to a common goal or project) has a meaningful impact on employee productivity and engagement. In fact, 40% of employees agree that being part of a team inspires them to perform better. Successful teamwork also makes employees stronger advocates of their companies. Employees in teamwork-driven organizations—or companies that promote and enable cross-functional collaboration—are almost 1.5x more likely to recommend their company to friends and family.

Despite the benefits of teamwork, it can be difficult to drive successful collaboration, both within and across departments. Communication, equitable distribution of workload, and accountability are major challenges for employees working on teams.

We've surveyed over 1,000 employees across the U.S. to explore the relationship between teamwork and performance. This report will uncover key challenges impacting team collaboration and the strategies, resources, and technologies that successful organizations use to measure and improve team performance. If you're interested in learning more, email us hello@reflektive.com.
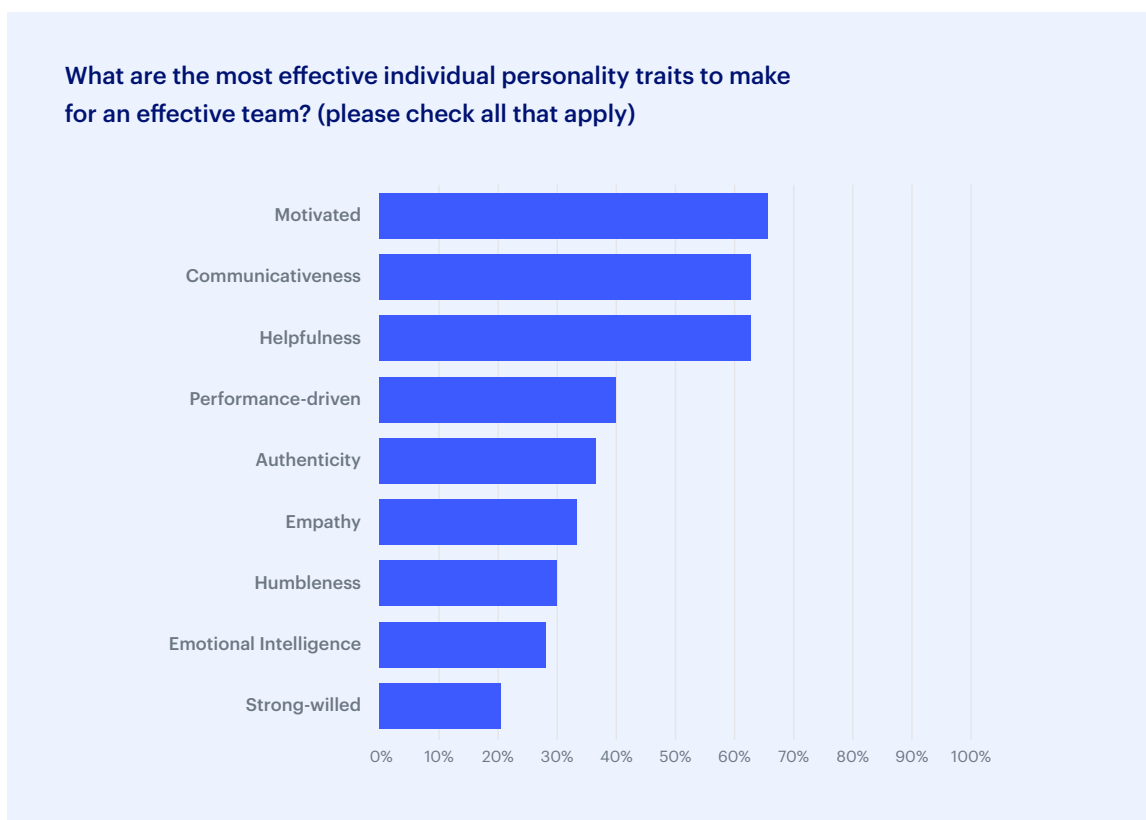
Teamwork Today

Teamwork is more common than ever in offices across the U.S.

Over 81% of survey respondents say they work frequently in teams at their company. Employees see the value of teamwork and how they can accomplish more with their colleagues; 45% of survey respondents agree that both their departmental and cross-functional teams are equally imperative to their success.

Per the diagram below, motivation, communicativeness, and helpfulness are the most desired personality traits for a teammate. Employees place significant value on their teammates' ability to get things done, rather than on emotional intelligence, humbleness, or other traits.

What are the most effective individual personality traits to make for an effective team? (please check all that apply)

Trait	
Motivated	
Communicativeness	
Helpfulness	
Performance-driven	
Authenticity	
Empathy	
Humbleness	
Emotional Intelligence	
Strong-willed	

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Team Alignment

Productive teamwork starts with visibility.

Sixty-nine percent of employees surveyed said that company-wide goal alignment is paramount to their success. However, this reality does not align with the way business is currently conducted:

Almost

36%

of survey respondents **do not** personally **keep track** of their team's goals.

Over

53%

of employees have **partial to zero visibility** into other teams' goals.

As a result, more than 35% of survey respondents say alignment is the biggest barrier to successful business execution. Forty-one percent of employees believe it's more difficult to work cross-functionally than with other teams in their own department.

Transparency into other teams' goals can make a monumental impact on how employees work together.

With goal visibility *and* cross-functional alignment, there are even more benefits for organizations — happy, productive employees.

Those who have visibility into other teams' goals are:

81%

more likely to agree that there is **good alignment** between their team and other teams

161%

more likely to **feel excited** when they learn about a new team project

136%

more likely to **prefer working on a team** vs. working on their own

Those who have good cross-functional alignment are:

180%

more likely to agree that being part of a team **inspires** them to do their best

101%

more likely to **prefer working on a team** vs. working on their own

98%

more likely to **recommend their company** as a great place to work

The Importance of Feedback

Employees across the U.S. also indicated that feedback is a critical element of high-performing teams.

More than 74% of survey respondents agree that high-performing teams share constructive feedback and commit to continuous improvements. Over 72% of employees say that constructive feedback helps their team execute on their business strategy more effectively. It's clear that employees want more peer feedback. But many companies lack the technology and programs to create a culture of continuous feedback. In a similar vein, many companies struggle to enable *all* team members for success. Inclusivity—and ensuring equal access to information and resources— continues to be a challenge for organizations. Read on for more insights on diversity and teams.
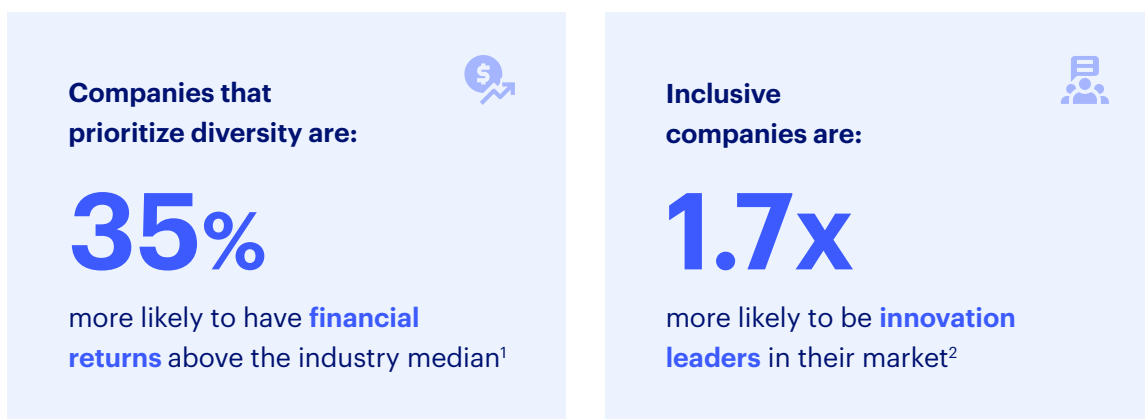
Many companies lack the technology and programs to create a culture of continuous feedback.

The Value—and Barriers— in Achieving Team Diversity

The business benefits of diverse teams are clear.

<div>

Companies that prioritize diversity are:

35%

more likely to have **financial returns** above the industry median[1]

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<div>

Inclusive companies are:

1.7x

more likely to be **innovation leaders** in their market[2]

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However, there are significant discrepancies in how different demographics *view* teamwork.

For instance, women are twice as likely as men to feel anxious when they first hear about a new team project. In addition, workers over the age of 65 respond more positively to new team projects; they are 114% less likely to be concerned, and 20% more likely to be excited, compared to their younger peers.

We also discovered discrepancies in the resources and organizational transparency available to team members. Women are thirty-eight percent more likely to not have visibility into other teams' goals. Older workers are ninety-four percent more likely to report that they don't have the tools they need to work with other teams effectively. To enable success among diverse teams, companies need to ensure that all team members have the resources and information that they need to be successful. By creating an even playing field across the company, HR leaders can create a more engaged and inclusive workforce.

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[1] Diversity Matters, 2015, Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton, Sara Prince

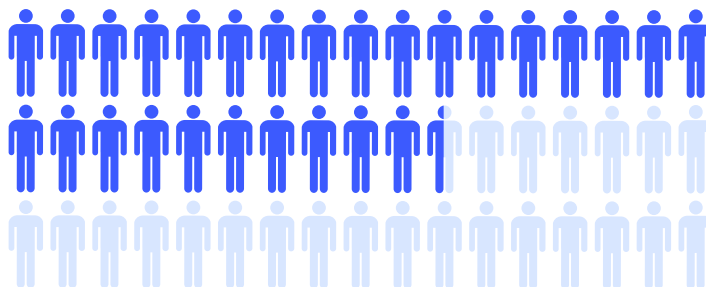[2] Why Diversity and Inclusion Has Become a Business Priority, 2019, Josh Bersin

Employee Attitudes About Team Diversity

DIVERSITY PREFERENCE

54%

of employees surveyed **prefer to work with diverse teams**

Younger workers aren't as concerned about diversity.

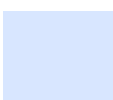**21%**

less likely to prefer a diverse team at work

232%

more likely to prefer **all-men** teams

146%

more likely to prefer **all-women** teams

IMPACT ON TEAMWORK

Youngest workers (18-24 y/o)

106%

more likely to **strongly disagree** that being part of a team inspires them to do their best.

EASE OF COLLABORATION

Gen X-ers are the **easiest** to work with

★★★★★

Millenials + Post Millenials are the **hardest** to work with

★★★★★

Key Challenges for Teams Today

The most pervasive obstacles for individual team members are communication, equitable distribution of work, accountability, and trust.

One of the drivers of these issues is simply personality differences; forty-six percent of survey respondents reported working on teams is difficult due to different working styles. Frequent communication and greater visibility into colleagues' goals and projects can help alleviate the inherent challenges of teamwork. While it's up to companies to create an open and collaborative culture, technology platforms that enable ongoing team feedback and team goal alignment can help mitigate these issues.

Size Matters

At larger companies, employees struggle with cross-functional alignment. **Workers at larger companies are less likely to:**

Track goals for their team and other teams

Prefer working on teams

Believe that their leadership team encourages effective teamwork

While employees do attribute team challenges to their peers and leadership, they also acknowledge their own limitations.

More than 90% of workers find it difficult to contribute in a meaningful way in teams of six or more people. Forty percent of employees agree that new technology, culture change, and improved cross-functional communication would allow them to work better with other teams. Implementing these desired practices would enable employees to feel more confident and empowered when working on a team.

90%

of workers **find it difficult to contribute** in a meaningful way in teams of six or more people

40%

of employees agree that **new technology, culture change, and improved cross-functional communication** would allow them to work better with other teams

Measuring and Improving Team Performance

Many HR leaders have told us they don't know how to improve team performance.

They also struggle to articulate what team success looks like. Adding to the complexity, employees provided different definitions of high-performing teams:

Accountability

Those aged 18-24 are 125% more likely to believe that accountability is the most important element of high-performing teams.

Frequent communications

People at companies with **1,000 to 5,000 employees** are 108% more likely to cite this as an indicator of high performance.

Praise from leadership

Similarly, workers at **big companies** are 117% more likely to believe that praise from leadership is indicative of strong team performance.

So, what are high-performing teams?

And how do we know if they're actually successful? Reflektive's Vice President of Employee Success, Rachel Ernst, said that high-performing teams: "first and foremost have mutual trust. They're able to have open, candid dialogue on their project and work styles. Team members on high-performing teams also value accountability, and follow-through on what they say they'll do. Finally, these impactful teams succeed because they're able to put the company's interest ahead of their own personal interests, and take the right actions to move the organization forward."

Managers and directors generally evaluate team performance based on the group's completion of its objective. However, Rachel Ernst recommends that leaders also, "observe how team members encourage each other, and talk about their win as 'the team's win'. This indicates a culture of collaboration and employee willingness to work towards big-picture goals instead of individual achievement."

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Rachel Ernst
Vice President of Employee Success
Reflektive

Manager Best Practices

Thanks to the nature of their work, managers spend more time partnering with cross-functional teams.

In fact, they are 127% more likely to report spending all or most of their time working cross-functionally.

In comparison to individual contributors, managers are:

36%

more likely to **prefer diverse teams**

32%

more likely to say that they're **most productive** when they give and receive team feedback

Reflektive CEO Greg Brown recommends that leaders, "help define the outcome and what success looks like. They should identify the ideal end state, but give the team autonomy on how they want to get there. This helps the team feel they have more ownership of their work." Greg also recommends that leaders strive to create diverse teams to bring in different perspectives, strengths, and skillsets.

For data-driven insights on team performance, Reflektive recommends a people analytics solution that highlights leaders' most important metrics and enables them to take action as well. Specifically, teamwork-driven companies benefit from technology platforms with performance management, employee engagement, and analytics all in one place to drive continuous productivity improvements and powerful people insights.

Greg Brown
CEO, Reflektive

Improvements in Teamwork Needed for the C–Suite Too

With greater visibility and decision-making power, the c-suite has power to lead by example and encourage teamwork across all levels in the organization.

However, company leaders often encounter the same collaboration roadblocks as managers and individual contributors: While 84% of directors know their team's goals, only 67% of c-level executives have the same visibility. We found that 40% of c-suite leaders believe that they could work together more effectively if they had new technology.

While 84% of directors know their team's goals, only 67% of c-level executives have the same visibility.

40%

of c-suite leaders believe that they could work together more effectively if they had **new technology**

Rachel Ernst recommends that c-suite leaders work on improving cross-functional communication to drive alignment on top organizational priorities.

Rachel recommends incorporating methodologies from *The 4 Disciplines of Execution:*

1. Create and share one company-wide wildly important goal (WIG)

This helps drive corporate alignment, as all c-suite leaders, managers, and employees will be working toward one shared goal. *(Example: Increase revenue by 20% over the next year)*

3. Hold monthly executive team meetings about WIG progress

The purpose of these is to share updates on the company-wide WIG, as well as department-specific goals, wins, and challenges.

2. Ask each department to create one goal that supports the company's WIG

This helps drive corporate alignment, as all c-suite leaders, managers, and employees will be working toward one shared goal. *(Example: Marketing team to generate 100 marketing-qualified leads each quarter)*

4. Ensure that each team or department has a weekly WIG session, in which employees hold each other accountable

Leaders are encouraged to join these meetings for increased visibility into employee milestones and key roadblocks.

Rachel also recommends that c-suite leaders use a flexible technology platform to view goal progress, performance, and feedback across the company.

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[1] *The 4 Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals*, 2012, Chris McChesney, Jim Huling, Sean Covey

Teamwork Headwinds for Individual Contributors

ICs Struggle with Cross-Functional Work, Leading to Lower Workplace Satisfaction

The issues facing c-suite leaders and managers are amplified for individual contributors. With less visibility and support, individual contributors are far more likely to experience negative emotions - and worse outcomes - in their team collaboration.

In comparison to managers, individual contributors are:

105%

more likely to **disagree or strongly disagree** that there is good alignment between their team and other teams

66%

more likely to be **anxious or concerned** when starting a new team project

50%

less likely to understand how their work impacts the company's **business goals**

As a result of this teamwork experience, ICs are 65% less likely to recommend their company as a great place to work. However, there are ways for HR leaders to help improve teamwork and satisfaction among individual contributors. For instance, ICs are more than twice as likely to say that they don't have the tools they need to work with other teams effectively. A performance solution that drives communication and alignment — and meets your employees where they work — would help meet this need. Additionally, Rachel Ernst recommends providing ICs with the opportunity to give feedback and voice opinions. Anonymous pulse surveys enable employees to provide honest assessments of what the company is doing well, and where change is needed.
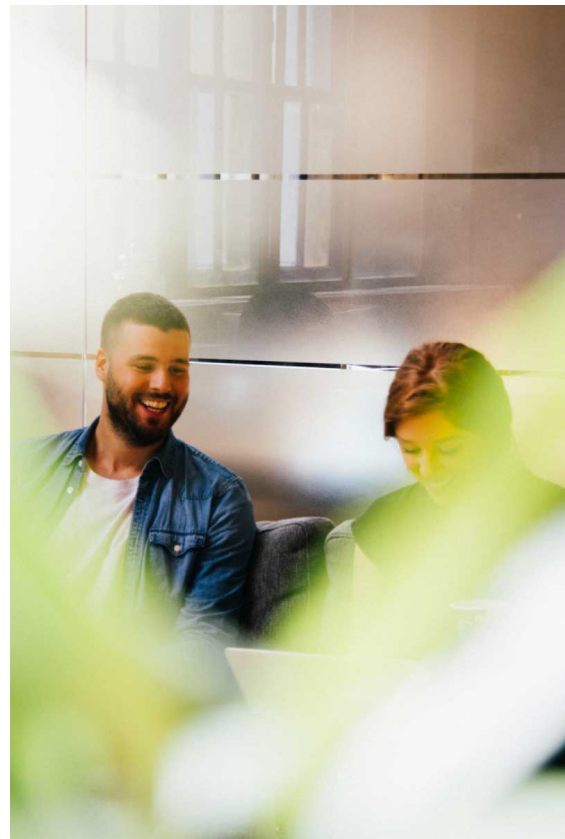
Individual contributors are:

65%

less likely to recommend their company as a great place to work.

2x

more likely to say that they don't have the tools they need to work with other teams effectively

Parting Thoughts

Performance Management as a Team Sport

This report highlights the many reasons that **teamwork is crucial to business outcomes and employee productivity.** The role of teamwork in the workplace continues to expand, with over 81% of employees frequently working in teams. But performance conversations are still not supporting teams effectively. Why? First, traditional performance management solutions focus on past performance, rather than continuous improvements. Second, performance technologies and programs are centered on the individual, rather than the team. To support the new ways in which people work, **companies need programs and technologies built for teamwork and collaboration.**

The right performance management solution enables teams to embrace continuous feedback and improvement. Team alignment and visibility can help individuals find meaning and purpose in their work, and can help them see their direct impact on business results. With better processes for feedback and goal-setting, employees are almost 2.4X more likely to work at their company two years from now.

Clearly, increased transparency and visibility can make a big difference — for teams and the people that work on them. By promoting these values in your culture, and by bringing the values to life with the right performance management solution, HR teams can have an even bigger impact in driving company success.

Survey Methodology and Audience Demographics

We surveyed 1,143 employees and executives across the US, covering a wide range of industries and company sizes.

Top Industries
Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals
Education
Retail & Consumer Durables
Manufacturing
Technology & Software
Professional Services
Food & Beverages
Government
Finance & Financial Services
Nonprofit
Entertainment & Leisure
Real Estate
Insurance
Advertising & Media
Automotive

Gender
54.31% women
45.42% men
0.26% other

Age groups
18-24 y/o 5.52%
25-34 y/o 21.19%
35-44 y/o 20.84%
45-54 y/o 22.68%
55-64 y/o 19.96%
65+ y/o 9.81%

Company Size
1-200 employees: 50.27%
201-1000 employees: 21.31%
1001-5000 employees: 11.81%
5001+ employees: 16.61%

Seniority
Associate 46.12%
Senior 9.46%
Manager 25.87%
Director 7.76%
VP 2.85%
C-Suite 7.94%

Role
Manager 48.99%
Individual Contributor 51.01%

Employment Status
Employed, working full-time 76.41%
Employed, working part-time 16.81%
Other 8.78%

About Reflektive

Reflektive

Reflektive is the leading People Management Platform empowering companies to get the most value from and for their employees.

Its comprehensive yet agile suite of solutions enables easy analysis of employee data to drive performance and inform strategic people decisions for better business results. The platform for continuous performance management is composed of Performance, Engagement and People Intelligence solutions that contribute to increased employee retention and productivity. More than 500 forward-thinking customers trust Reflektive to modernize people and performance management, including Allbirds, Comcast, Dollar Shave Club, Pinterest and Privia Health. Backed by Andreessen Horowitz, Lightspeed Venture Partners and TPG Growth, Reflektive has raised more than $100 million to date and was ranked the 13th Fastest Growing Company in North America on Deloitte's 2018 Technology Fast 500™.

For more information, please visit **www.reflektive.com.**

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