

## Office Miscommunications Impact Bottom Line

A new report indicates that poor communications at work can lead to stressful work environments, stalled careers, missed performance goals, and lost sales. The "Communication Barriers in the Modern Workplace" report, published by The Economist Intelligence Unit on behalf of Lucidchart, includes responses from 403 senior executives, managers, and junior staff in the US.



Results from the survey suggest that companies of all sizes struggle to understand and remedy the problem of poor communication in the workplace. The consequences of communication breakdowns in the workplace can be seen through increased stress levels (52% of respondents), delay or failure to complete projects (44%), low company morale (31%), missed performance goals (25%), and lost sales (18%). Respondents reported that nearly a third of sales lost due to communication breakdowns were valued between US\$100,000 and US\$999,999 (SG\$132,000 and SG\$1.4 million).

Key findings from the report include:

- Visual-based communication tools are effective but underutilised.

While email is the most heavily used tool of daily communication, less than half (40%) of respondents view email as a very effective means of communication. On the other hand, a majority of respondents rated presentation decks (60%) and whiteboards or sketch pads (50%) as effective tools, but in both cases, only 9% of respondents reported taking advantage of them at work.

- Millennial communication styles cause tension with older generations at work.

One in three millennials (33%) consider themselves functional communicators and prefer to focus on process and steps needed to achieve an outcome. Many baby boomers (34%) and Generation X (39%) respondents, on the other hand, consider themselves personal communicators, focused on human connection and personal relationships.



These differences in communication styles dictate each generation's nuanced approach to workplace communications. For instance, about a third of millennials (31%) use social media and instant messaging to communicate daily with colleagues and clients, compared to 12% of baby boomers.

- Poor communications have the largest impact on mid-level managers.

Directors and middle managers are the corporate roles most frequently affected by communication breakdowns. Nearly half (49%) of director-level respondents claim that miscommunications happen frequently or very frequently at work.

With the need to communicate upwards to the C-suite, downwards to direct reports, and laterally to different departments, mid-level managers tend to require more tools to communicate than any other title in the organization.

- Women have unique challenges when it comes to workplace communication.

When asked to define their personal communication style, over a third of male respondents (37%) identified as personal communicators who are focused on human relationships and connections. But only 27% of female respondents identified as personal communicators, defying the stereotype that women lean more towards human relationships versus analytics or data to relay complex ideas. Further, more than half of female respondents more likely to feel stressed from critical feedback from managers (51%), compared to only 41% of male respondents.



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"Our study with the Economist Intelligence Unit confirms that communication breakdowns have a profound impact on everyone in the organization, regardless of gender, generation, or seniority within the company," said Nathan Rawlins, chief marketing officer at Lucidchart.

"By understanding the causes and impact of poor communications, business leaders can focus on creating strategies for building inclusion and cognitive diversity in the workplace," he added.

Source : <https://tinyurl.com/ycthdxaq>