



WHITE PAPER

Reimagining Work Models in the Life Sciences: Implications for the Future of Work

Kristin Scott • Julianna Cirafesi • Courtney Spitko • Naira Vardapetyan



The Changing Work Model for Life Sciences

When considering a work environment that will be sustainable in this new working world, life sciences companies have been examining policies and addressing how and where employees should work though lack objective sources of data to make informed decisions. The life sciences industry as a whole lacks work-model data. Like many organizations globally, certain work-model assumptions need to be validated or debunked. For example,

- » Employees should be at company headquarters if or when key stakeholders are.
- » Supervisors should be at company headquarters if or when their direct reports are.
- » People receive more effective and frequent development from supervisors when both are at company headquarters.

A significant challenge for organizations is loss of talent acquired during the COVID-19 pandemic and acquisition of new talent post-COVID, further constrained by relocation requirements to company headquarters (HQ) that are in geographic locations with negative cumulative net flows of populations (such as San Francisco and New York City). Commercial Operations executives from mid-large size life science companies listed complexity of hybrid work teams and career development as their most pressing challenges. Specifically, the main barrier to developing their most critical commercial capabilities was talent. Half had already increased salary levels and elevated role levels and titles to fill Commercial Operations vacancies.¹

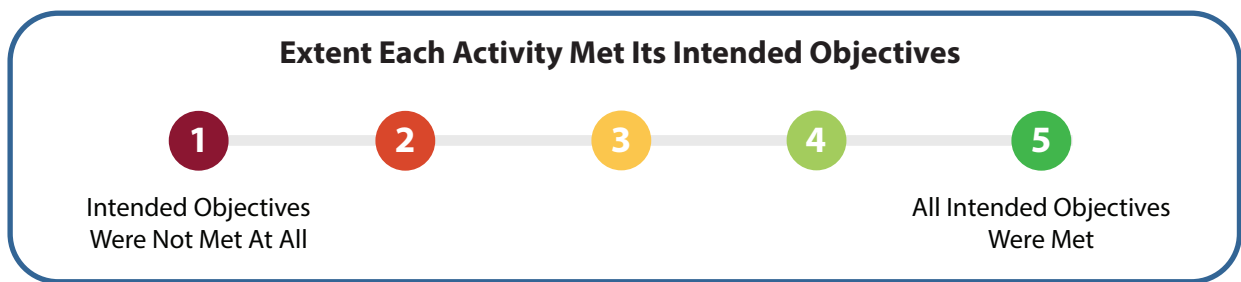
To ensure that future policies about where and how employees in the life sciences will work are based on sound, objective sources of data, TGaS Advisors, a division of Trinity Life Sciences, led an in-depth study for a pharmaceutical company that selected a functional department within Commercial Operations to participate in a research pilot to evaluate both Achievement of Intended Outcomes of work and impact on personal factors.

¹ TGaS CCO Survey, May 2022. N=14

Understanding the Life Sciences Work Model: Study Approach

A Commercial Operations functional department of **20 full-time staff** participated in survey submissions over a **five-month period (November 2021-March 2022)**. Surveys were designed to evaluate three common work model scenarios for that area, including Collaboration and Individual Task or Activity from remote and company headquarters (HQ) locations.

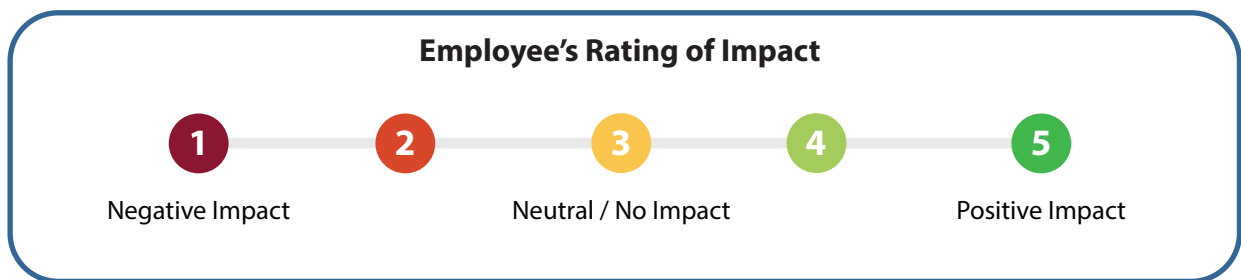
Outcomes for work were defined as “Extent Each Activity Met Its Intended Objectives” rated on a scale of one to five where one represented “Intended Objectives Were Not Met At All” and five represented “All Intended Objectives Were Met.”



Each Collaboration or Individual Task or Activity submission also included the employee’s rating of impact on his or her sense of five factors:

1. Connectedness
2. Contribution
3. Work-Life Balance
4. Development
5. Autonomy

Using a scale of one to five where one represented a negative impact, three represented neutral or no impact, and five represented a positive impact.



A total of **545 unique survey submissions** were evaluated during the five-month period. **Seventy-seven percent** of 545 unique survey submissions were working remotely or virtually, which reflected the actual percent of staff working remotely or virtually on a weekly basis.

TGaS Advisors' robust industry benchmarking database of life sciences companies was also leveraged in the research. The survey data collected from the pharmaceutical company participating in the study was compared to data collected from commercial employees at other life sciences companies in the TGaS member network. The data was used to inform how the functional area participating in the study could modify ways of working.

Additionally, TGaS referenced its landscape study of Chief Commercial Officers to inform research findings.

More than 10,000 data points are represented in the study findings.

Detailed data captured from the pharmaceutical company participating in the study included:

- » **Types of Collaborations:** emailing, using shared documents, spontaneous, and meetings

Meeting Types included:

- » **Relationship Building:** small group team-building session
- » **Working Session:** real-time collaboration using shared documents or resources
- » **Review:** presenting content and facilitating discussions
- » **Brainstorming:** real-time idea generation and problem solving
- » **All-Hands:** one-way information sharing or awareness to large groups of people

Types of Individual Tasks or Activities included:

- » **Reading/Reviewing/Editing**
- » **Creating/Developing**
- » **Organizing/Prioritizing/Planning**

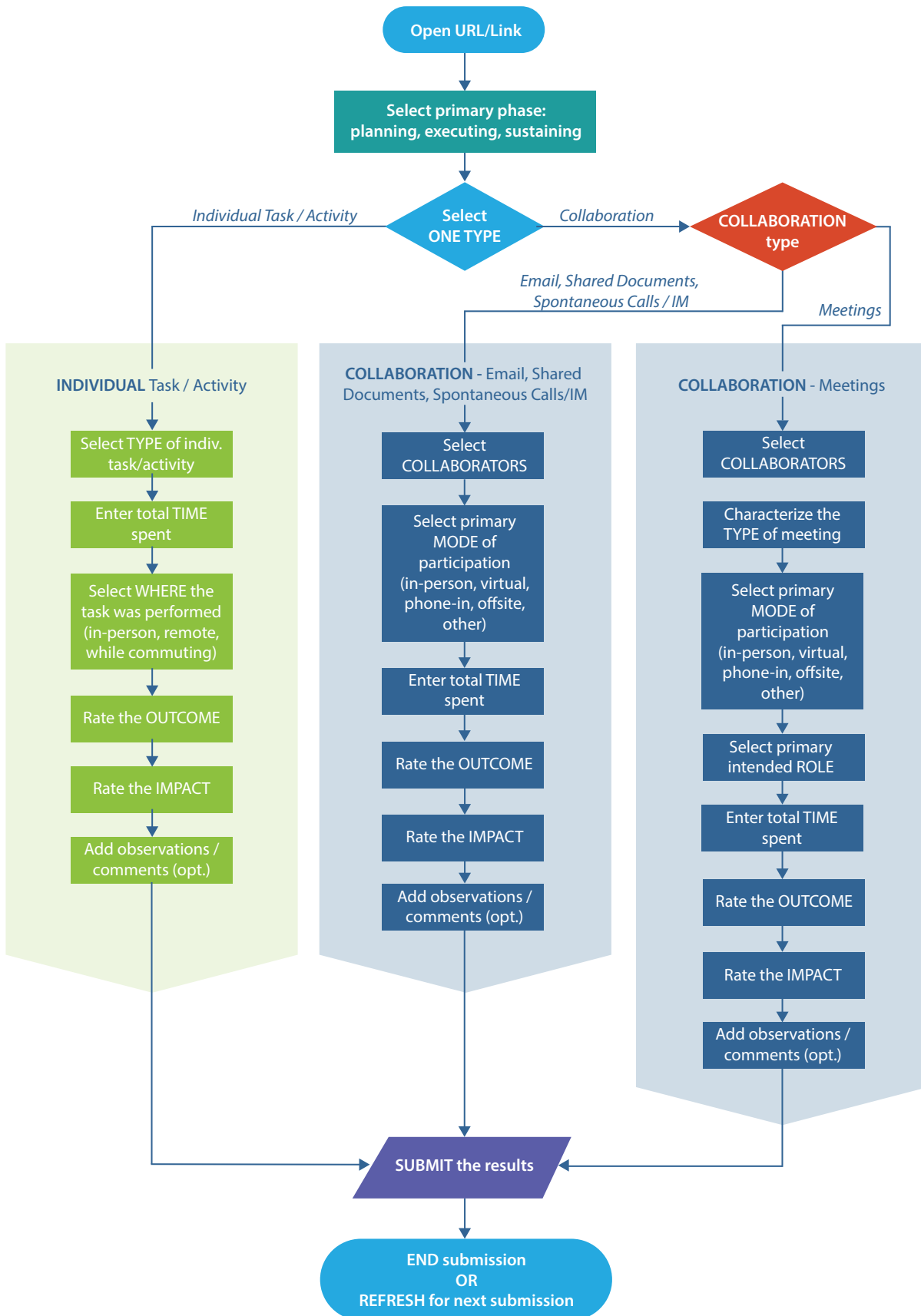
Primary Locations and Channels of Collaborations included:

- » **Remote/Virtual:** off-site or home using virtual platforms (Zoom, Shared Drives, Chat)
- » **HQ/Live:** at Company HQ with ≥1 live collaborator
- » **HQ/Virtual:** at Company HQ using virtual platforms from office or open space (Zoom, Shared Drives, Chat)

Channel Terminology included:

- » **Single-Channel:** defined as all participants using the same channel
- » **Multi-Channel:** defined as participants using a mix of above collaboration channels

Additional data captured is represented in the graphic below:



Key Findings That Inform Work Model Policy Decisions

1. Remote Working

Working remotely or virtually did not have any negative impact on Achievement of Intended Outcomes nor any employee factors.

The findings below compare the company participating in the study to data collected from commercial employees at other life sciences companies:

Overall, Intended Outcomes of Collaborations were Achieved (≥ 4 on scale of 1-5)

- » **69%** from Company HQ using virtual platforms, (similar to 67% from additional life science commercial employees asked to rate perceived Achievement of Intended Outcomes²)
- » **86%** from Company HQ with ≥ 1 live collaborator, higher than 64% from additional life science commercial employees asked to rate perceived Achievement of Intended Outcomes²
- » **95%** Remote or Virtual: off-site or home using virtual platforms higher than 77% from additional life science commercial employees asked to rate perceived Achievement of Intended Outcomes²

Overall, Intended Outcomes of Individual Tasks or Activities were Achieved (≥ 4 on scale of 1-5)

- » **79%** from Company HQ, higher than 69% from additional life sciences commercial employees asked to rate perceived Achievement of Intended Outcomes²
- » **98%** from Remote Office, higher than 76% from additional life sciences employees asked to rate perceived Achievement of Intended Outcomes²

The findings below are specific to the company participating in the study:

- » **Work-Life Balance** positive impact ratings (≥ 4 on scale of 1-5) were **54%** higher when working remotely or virtually vs. in-person or at Company HQ
- » **Development** positive impact ratings (≥ 4 on scale of 1-5) were **29%** higher when working remotely or virtually vs. in-person or at Company HQ
- » **Autonomy** positive impact ratings (≥ 4 on scale of 1-5) were **38%** higher when working remotely or virtually vs. in-person or at HQ
- » **Connectedness** positive impact ratings were **21%** higher when working remotely or virtually vs. in-person or at HQ
- » **Contribution** positive impact ratings (≥ 4 on scale of 1-5) were **17%** higher when working remotely or virtually vs. in-person or at HQ

² TGaS Survey Data, 2022. n=124

2. Locations, Channels, Choice

Collaborations had the lowest Achievement of Intended Outcomes with Multi-Channel locations, meaning some employees were in a shared space at Company HQ and others were in remote locations using virtual tools.

Employees that had Autonomy to choose location or channels reported higher Achievement of Intended Outcomes working at Company HQ and remotely than those who lacked the choice. Employees also reported that being with teammates offered immediacy, spontaneity and access to Collaborations without formal invitations.

External data: Additional WFH Research data supports these findings and shows that choice can increase team-collaboration. Employees deliberately choose to work from home on the same day their coworkers do. Decisions about where, how and when individuals work should be at the discretion of functional teams and team leaders based on the Intended Objectives and Outcomes of the work. A team is defined as a group of people that all have commitment to a set of shared values and objectives, together with an acceptance of how those objectives are to be met.³

Not surprisingly, employees rated low Achievement of Intended Outcomes for activities performed while traveling or commuting (though number of submissions were relatively low). Some supervisors flew to and from the Company HQ, but the majority of employees that commuted lived within a one-two hour drive, which limited type of work that could be safely performed while commuting via automobile. Companies that are located with generous access to trains or rail might anticipate different commuting productivity and Outcomes.

External data: Other studies recognize that saved commute time averages 70 mins/day, of which 40 percent (30 mins) is applied to extra work.⁴

³ WFH Research.

⁴ WFH Research.

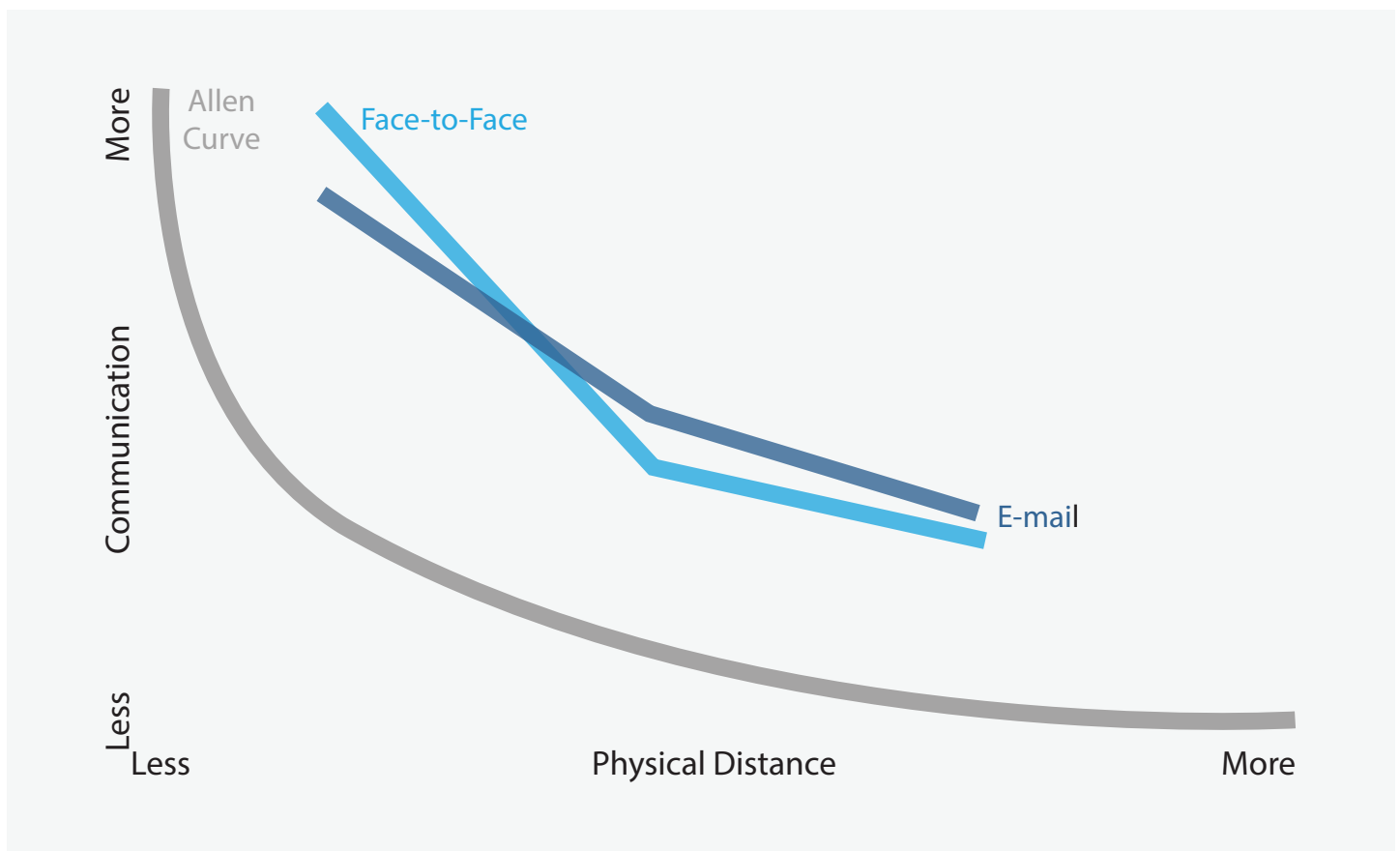
Key Takeaway

- » If planned and designed intentionally to include all locations and channels of participants using combination of chats, breakouts, white boards, etc. collaboration equity can be achieved. Until all employees learn to plan, design and facilitate Collaborations to improve collaboration equity, using the same channel (i.e., all remote or all in person) is a strong indicator of outcomes and impact.

A Hot Topic in Life Sciences: Should Employees be at Company Headquarters If or When Key Stakeholders Are?

Though survey submissions included options for reporting spontaneous Collaborations both from Company HQ and remote or virtually, only one via IM or Chat function was submitted and therefore no insights can be drawn.

The well-recognized Allen Curve⁵ demonstrates that daily interactions between workers diminish when distance is greater than 24 feet. Updated research has validated that the Allen Curve still applies even with daily digital interactions.⁶ The Allen Curve estimates that we are four times as likely to communicate regularly with someone sitting six feet away from us as with someone 60 feet away, and that we almost never communicate with colleagues on separate floors or in separate buildings.⁵



A watch-out for organizations includes the dynamics of those who come to Company HQ and those that do not (or cannot). Specifically, proximity bias defined as preferential treatment shown to workers who are physically closer.

External Data: Of all demographics, white male workers spend the most amount of time in the office while people of color, women and working mothers embrace the hybrid work models more.⁷

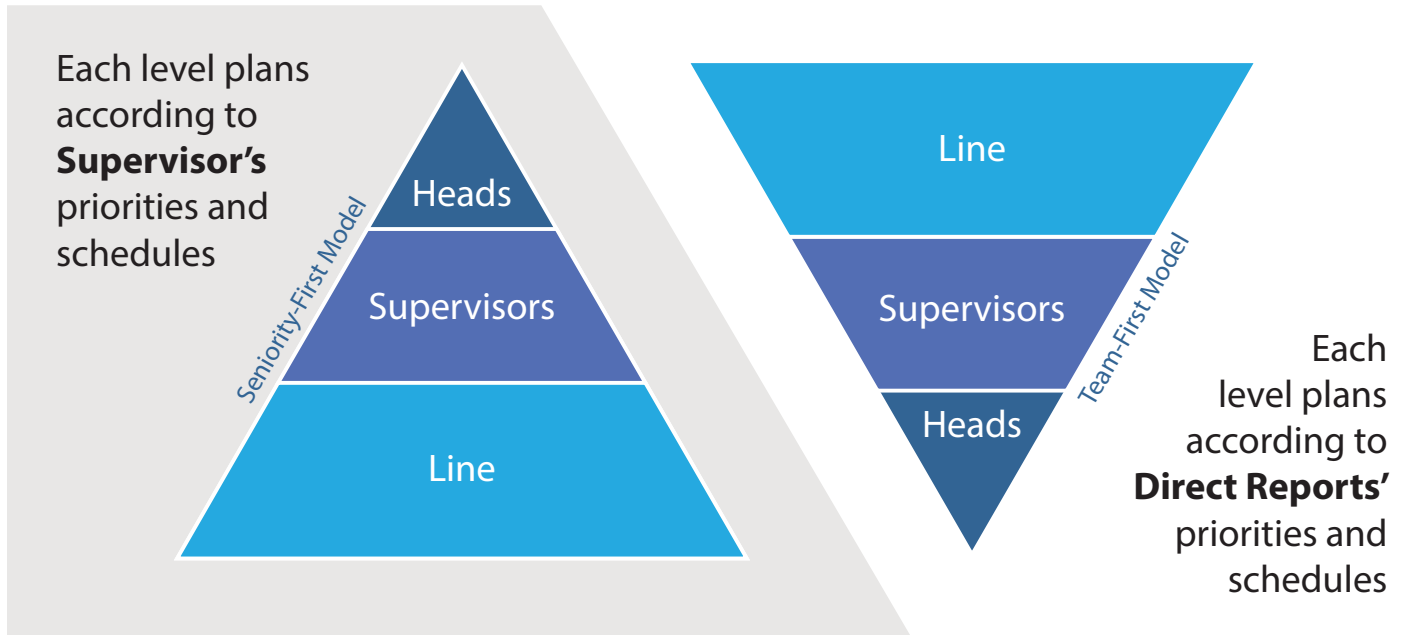
⁵ Allen Curve, MIT Press 1977 and 2006. The Allen Curve and Hybrid Work.

⁶ Ben Waber, Jennifer Magnolfi and Greg Lindsay, "Workspaces That Move People," Harvard Business Review. (October 2014)

⁷ Future Forum, Slack Technologies. 2022.

Finally, if companies or functional business units do create work model policies based on proximity, a provocative question that deserves further consideration is, “Whose schedule is the default from which all others adjust their own?” At the conclusion of this research, two concepts were presented for consideration: Seniority-First and Team-First.

Prioritizing Team-Based Working Models - Policy Considerations: Whose Schedules Take Precedent?⁸



A Team-First approach might be more effective when those teams are customer-facing or training employees, for example. The Team-First model then operates like the inverted pyramid attributed to Jan Carlzon, former CEO of Scandinavian Air Systems (SAS) whose corporate redesign resulted in a USD 74 million turnaround in one year.⁹ Presently, the head of this functional department is traveling to HQ when his or her supervisor and leadership team is, and thus his or her own direct reports are defaulting to his or hers. Though perhaps unintentional, this dynamic makes it difficult for a line manager or individual contributor to implement a Team-First (or Customer-First) approach. Current and future individual contributors have the option of working from anywhere (“WFA”).

⁸ Prentice Hall. Carlzon, J. (1987). Moments of Truth.

⁹ Robbins, S.P. (1990). Organization Theory: Structure, Design and Applications. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Key Takeaway

- » Companies will need to evaluate objectively the mix of models that optimize team-based performance and employee retention or recruitment and subsequently demonstrate flexibility throughout the organization to create policies and procedures that accommodate variable dynamics within functions and business units.

3. Focus

Survey results reveal employees spent significant time* focused on:

- » **Creating Content: 4.6 hours** were spent on submission of work, therefore Creating was negatively correlated with Connectedness but positively correlated with Development resulting from a greater ability to focus.
- » **Organizing: 4.1 hours** were spent on submission of work.
- » **Reading and Reviewing Content: 2.8 hours** were spent on submission of work.

**average time/submission activity*

Survey respondents rated Development higher for tasks or activities that take longer than three hours. A consideration for this could be due to the ability to focus and feel satisfaction with subsequent output. Virtual Collaborations were longer than in-person Collaborations, perhaps as a result of availability of spaces, interruptions, distractions, etc. at Company HQ.

Key Takeaway

- » Overall, dedicated, focused time for Creating, Reading, Review and Organizing was optimal working remote or virtual, even for collaborating with others.

4. Meetings

External Data: 70 percent of all meetings keep employees from working and completing all their tasks. Reducing meetings by 40 percent leads to 71 percent higher employee productivity.¹⁰

Brainstorming meetings for real-time idea generation and problem-solving conducted all in-person at Company HQ correlated to higher Achievement of Intended Outcomes than all Remote/Virtual or HQ/Virtual. However external data offers mixed insights regarding enjoyment of the brainstorming process vs. generation of ideas as a group and per person, and final decision quality.¹¹

Working Sessions, which included real-time collaboration using shared documents or resources, correlated with highest Connectedness when working remotely or virtually, and Working Sessions from Company HQ or virtually had the lowest. (statistically significant $p \leq .05$). Furthermore, All-Hands meetings, a regular company-wide gathering that brings the entire organization together to share updates correlated with lower contribution impact.

Hosts or leaders of Collaborations rated the highest Achievement of Intended Outcomes and listeners or observers rated the lowest, possibly due to degree of collaboration vs. copresence.

¹⁰ HBR: You're Holding Too Many Meetings, Laker, Ben. March 2022.

¹¹ HBR, Why Virtual Brainstorming is Better for Innovation, Tsipursky. Feb 2022.

Key Takeaway

- » Companies might want to encourage a culture where everyone is comfortable being intentional and clear about inviting and attending meetings, using best practices that include specifying type of meeting, clear objectives and outcomes, decision-making authority and expectations for follow-up.

5. Managers

The results of TGaS's study show that supervisors reported lower Achievement of Intended Outcomes than individual contributors for Collaborations and Individual Tasks or Activities (statistically significant $p \leq .05$). Intended Outcomes Achieved were greater for individual contributors when supervisors were involved, though involvement of supervisors in those same scenarios did not correlate to positive impact on personal Development.

External data: Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of managers say **they don't have the influence or resources they need to make changes on behalf of their teams**. 54% say that leadership is out of touch with employee expectations.¹²

Redesigning the Future of Work in Life Sciences

From the study, data indicates that careful attention should be given to workplace policies about where and how employees work with a focus on the variables within functions and teams. Additionally, common work-model assumptions should be either validated or debunked prior to designing and communicating policies. Objective data helps to make informed decisions and can support companies as they seek to modify and communicate work models that will optimize both outcomes and retention or recruitment goals.

Evaluations should include both achievement of intended work outcomes as well as cumulative impact on employee and teams over time.

¹² Great Expectations: Making Hybrid Work, Microsoft. 2021.

Key Work Model Considerations

- » Overall, working remotely or virtually did not have any negative impact on Achievement of Intended Outcomes nor any personal factors. Work-Life Balance, Development, Autonomy, Connectedness and Contribution impact ratings were 17%-54% higher when working remotely or virtually vs. in-person or at Company HQ.
- » Employees that had Autonomy to choose location or channels reported higher Achievement of Intended Outcomes working at Company HQ and remotely than those who lacked the choice.
- » Dedicated, focused time for Creating, Reading, Review and Organizing was optimal while working remote or virtual, even when having to collaborate with others.
- » Using the same channel (i.e., all employees working remotely or all in person) proved to be more important to driving outcomes across employees, stakeholders and supervisors.
- » Perception of effective employee Development was not negatively impacted when working remotely.

A noteworthy caveat of this study is that the findings are based on self-reported data from the respondents' selection of work scenarios, work locations and channels, and own perceptions of Achievement of Intended Outcomes.

All employees will need to learn to plan, design and facilitate work engagements across multiple channels to enable collaboration equity. Until this is achieved, working through the same channel (either all virtual or all in person) will remain a strong indicator of both Achievement of Intended Outcomes and impacts on employee Connectedness, Contribution, Work-Life Balance, Development and Autonomy.

Questions?



Kristin Scott | Executive Director, Learning and Development Solutions

Kristin has over 25 years of pharmaceutical and healthcare market experience with specialization in institutions, integrated delivery systems, strategic marketing, reimbursement, operations, performance improvement and KPI/metrics. Kristin brings a record of success in pharmaceutical Sales, Learning & Development, Reimbursement, and Marketing roles with Janssen Pharmaceuticals. Prior to joining TGaS, Kristin worked directly with life sciences brands, medical affairs, market access teams and institutional sales leaders to assist and advise them on accessing and penetrating the acute care market space. Kristin obtained her Six-Sigma Greenbelt certification leading a pharmaceutical improvement project. She has published several articles in trade magazines, including Pharmaceutical Representative, Life science Trainers Education Network (LTEN) and Medical Marketing & Media. Kristin received her BBA in Marketing and Management from Loyola University in Maryland and also studied International Business in Belgium. She earned a Certificate in Strategic Management: Competitive and Corporate Strategy from The Wharton School and Business Process Management from Villanova University.



Courtney Spitko | Service Director, Learning & Development Practice

Courtney Spitko is currently the Learning and Development Service Director at TGaS Advisors where she identifies and implements process efficiencies and innovations using continuous process improvement principles to achieve significant business results. With over six years' experience in the industry, Courtney identifies internal and external process improvements that can be leveraged by her clients for creation of high impact business strategies. In addition to process improvement, she brings her background in project and account management to her team and client deliverables.



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For more information, please contact us at info@trinitylifesciences.com.