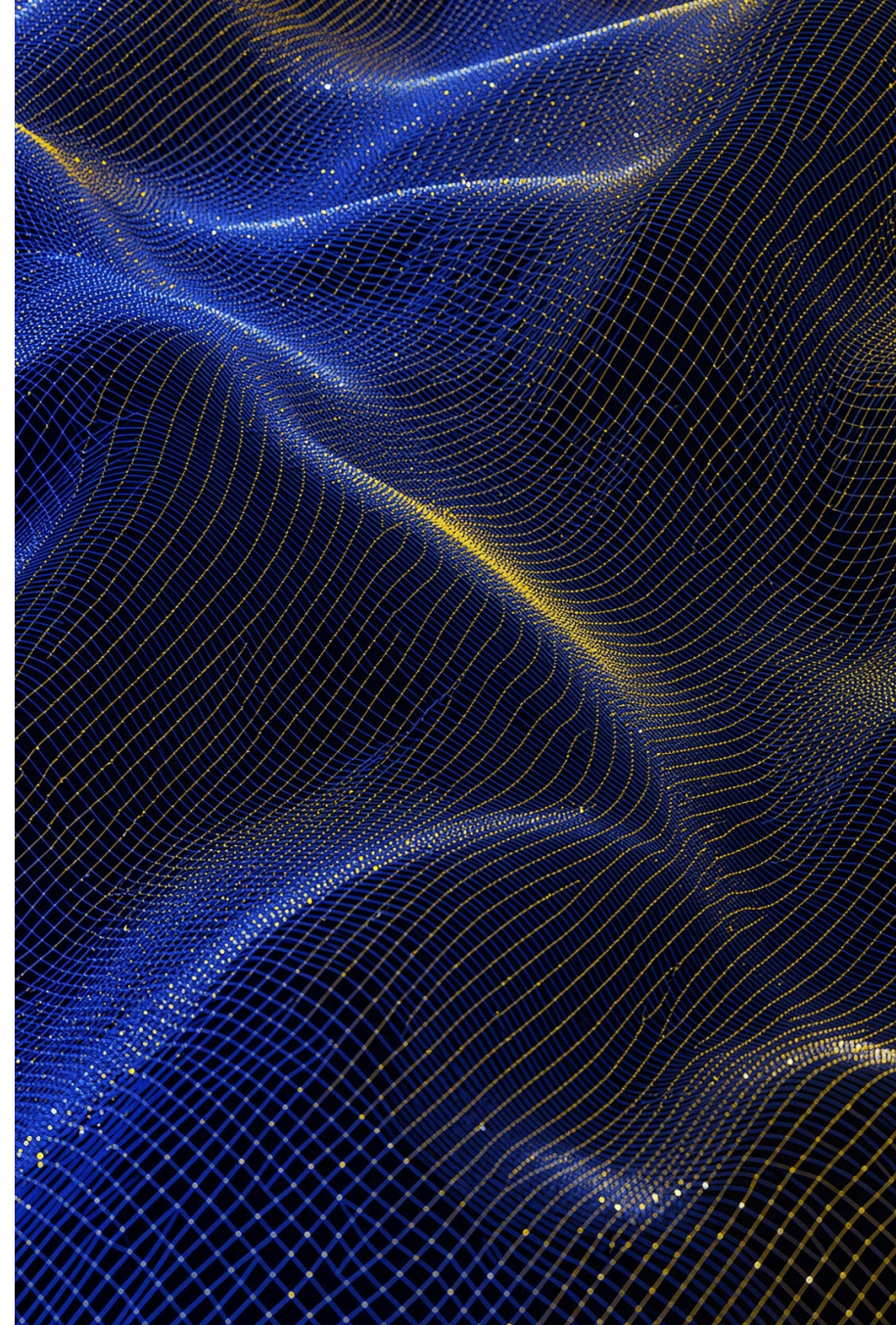


Your Employees Are Drowning in Communication

How to Cut Through the Noise in the AI Era

A working session for HR leaders, managers, and internal communicators. You'll leave with data you can show your leadership team and actions you can start this week!

RecognizeApp.com



Alex Grande

Your Guide to All Things Recognition & Rewards



CEO,
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Alex Grande is a web developer with a passion for motivation and human behavior.

As the CEO of Recognize (RecognizeApp.com), Alex has spent over a decade engineering the "Human API", using technology to scale the fundamental psychological need for appreciation.



Agenda

01

The Scale of the Noise

What the data actually shows

02

Why Employees Tune Out

Relevance, not volume, drives engagement

03

The AI Factor

"Workslop" and the authenticity gap

04

Clear Messaging and Trust Habits

For distributed teams

05

The Manager's Playbook

5 techniques to filter signal from noise

06

The HR Playbook

Policies, programs, and what to measure

07

Your 30-Day Reset

A time-bound action plan

The Communication Paradox in the AI Era

Speed Outpaced Clarity

AI, chat, and always-on tools made sending instant, but understanding didn't get faster.

More Channels Than Ever

Slack, email, Teams, wikis, video: each a new place messages get lost.

AI Added Volume Before Meaning

Generative tools produce more content, not clearer content.

The Real Crisis Is Comprehension

The problem isn't access to information. It's knowing what matters.

We optimized for speed and volume. We're paying in clarity.

By the Numbers: The Scale of the Noise

270

Interruptions per Day

Employees interrupted every 2 minutes during core hours

+16%

Meetings After 8pm

The workday no longer ends

25%

Workweek Wasted

Leaders and teams spend a quarter of their week just searching for information

\$1.2T

Annual Cost

Estimated cost of poor communication to U.S. businesses (up to \$2T)

The average employee receives **117 emails + 153 Teams messages** per workday. These numbers come from actual Microsoft 365 telemetry, not self-report. This isn't a feeling; it's measured.

📄 Sources: Microsoft Work Trend Index 2025; Atlassian State of Teams 2025; Grammarly/Harris Poll; Axios HQ.

Why This Is Accelerating Right Now

AI Lowered the Cost of Sending

A polished-sounding update takes seconds to generate, so more get sent.

Hybrid Added Channels

New tools were layered on top of existing ones, not instead of them.

"More" Replaced "Better"

Output became the default measure of good communication.

1 in 3 employees say the pace of work over the past five years makes it impossible to keep up (Microsoft WTI 2025). 60% of meetings are now ad hoc: the system is running everyone by interruption.



Why Employees Tune Out

The Headline Stat

Up to 71% of employees don't read company emails (Korbyt 2026 Workplace Communication Survey).

It's not just volume. Employees engage with what's timely, useful, and specific. They tune out what's repetitive, generic, or disconnected from their work.

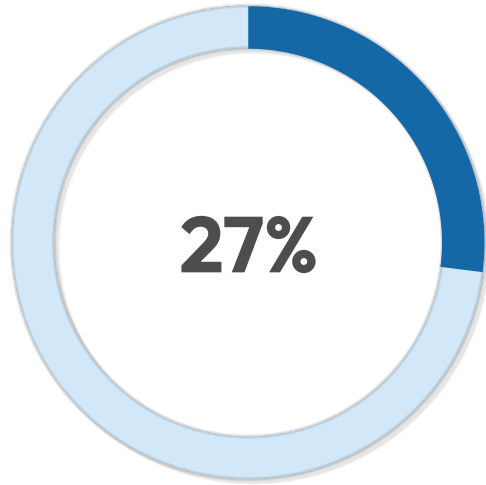
The Core Problem

No clear signal to act on: people can't tell "action required" from background noise. When everything is flagged urgent, nothing is.

Do This

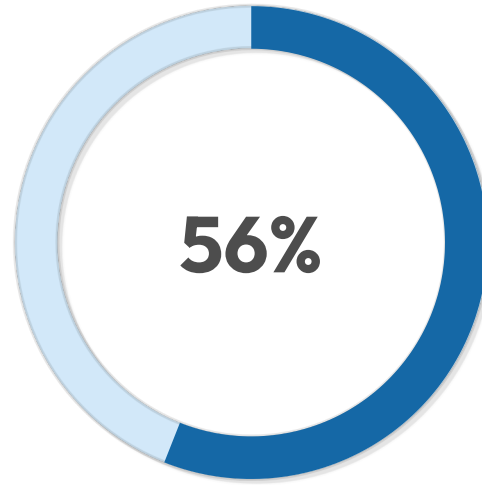
Before sending, answer: *"Who needs to act, on what, by when?"* If no one, don't send it company-wide.

The Alignment Illusion



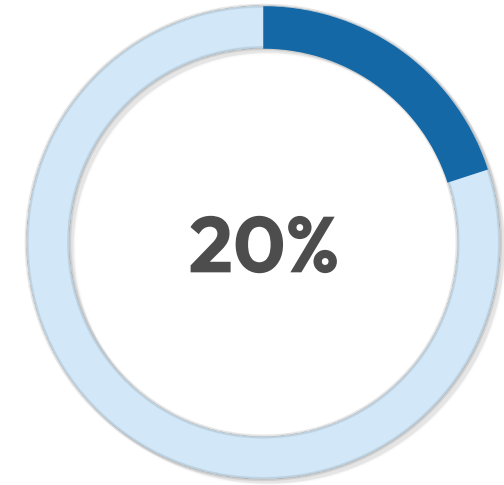
Leaders Believe Alignment

Only 9% of employees agree



Must Ask to Get Info

The only way to get key project info is to ask someone or hold a meeting



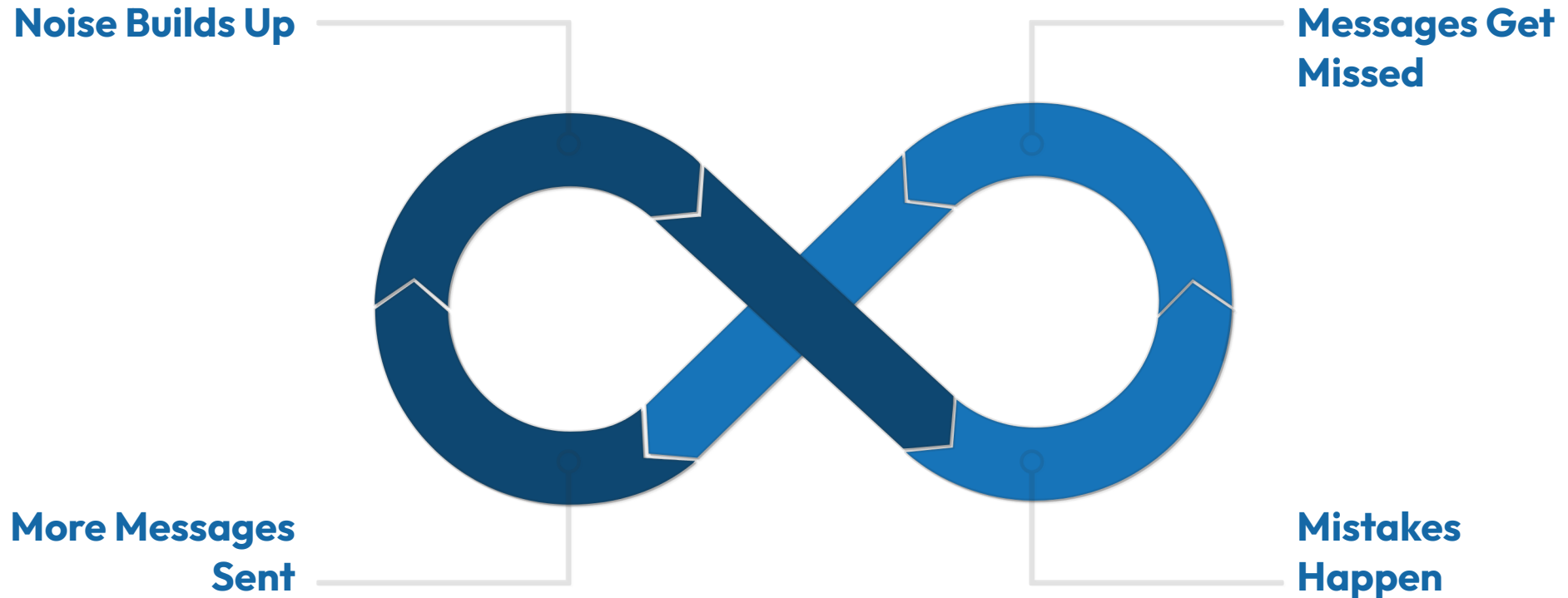
Confident in Process

Feel confident in their team's process for sharing decisions

100% of knowledge workers report miscommunication at least weekly, with 1 in 4 experiencing it multiple times a day. Leaders think the message landed. The data says it didn't. **Sending is not the same as alignment.**

- Do this: for every major initiative, publish a single source of truth, one page with the decision, owner, and dates, instead of relying on cascading messages.

The Trust Erosion Loop



Gallagher's 2026 data quantifies it: **high-volume communication environments show a 30% increase in leadership trust risk and 24% higher audience burnout.** Only 1 in 3 employees strongly agree they trust their organization's leadership (Gallup), and 29% say they lack clear, honest, consistent communication from leaders. More volume doesn't just waste time; it measurably erodes trust.

AI Made Writing Effortless and Reading Exhausting

→ **Anyone Can Generate Polished Updates in Seconds**

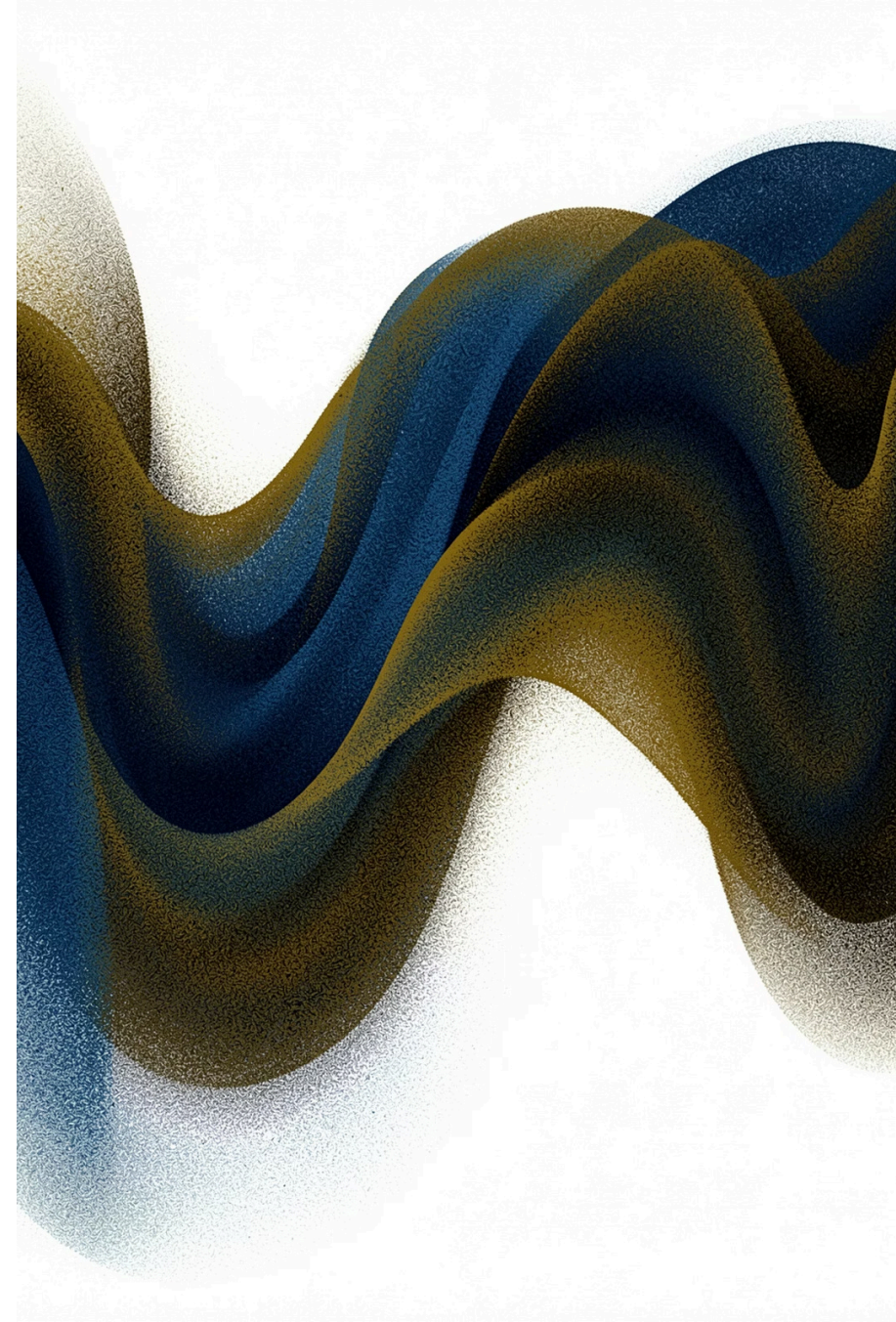
Content volume has grown faster than the time available to read it.

→ **Ease of Production Does Not Equal Ease of Comprehension**

The effort didn't disappear. It moved to the reader.

→ **No Strategy in Place**

75% of comms functions are still stuck in ad-hoc AI experimentation with no strategy (Gallagher 2026).



"Workstop": The Hidden Tax of AI-Generated Content

41%

Received "Workstop"

U.S. full-time workers who received AI content that looks complete but lacks substance, in the past month

~2hrs

To Resolve Each Incident

Average 1h 56m lost per workstop encounter

\$186

Per Employee/Month

Invisible cost: ~\$9M/year for a 10,000-person org

53% were annoyed to receive workstop; **22%** were offended. About half viewed the sender as less creative, capable, or reliable afterward. The time AI saves the writer gets shifted onto the reader, with interest and reputational damage.

📄 Source: BetterUp Labs & Stanford Social Media Lab, published in Harvard Business Review (survey of 1,150 workers).

The Authenticity Gap: Hidden AI Use Erodes Trust

The Numbers

- **57%** of employees hide their AI use and present output as their own
- **66%** rely on AI outputs without checking accuracy
- **48%** have pasted sensitive company data into public tools
- Only **47%** have received any AI training
- Only **40%** say their workplace has a genAI policy

Why It Matters

Readers don't need proof a message was AI-written. A vague feeling of inauthenticity is enough to disengage. The secrecy is a governance failure, not a character failure. People hide AI use because no one set the rules.

That's an HR problem.

Do This

Normalize disclosure: *"Drafted with AI, reviewed by me"* beats getting caught.

📄 Source: KPMG & University of Melbourne, "Trust, Attitudes and Use of AI" global study 2025 (48,000+ respondents, 47 countries).

Remote & Hybrid: Where Clarity Breaks Down Fastest

No Hallway Conversations

Body language and informal check-ins used to fill the gaps writing leaves.

Time Zones Add Latency

A quick question becomes a 24-hour wait.

Async Gets Skimmed

Updates compete with a dozen tabs and rarely get read fully.

Writing Carries All the Weight

Tone that came through voice must now be built into the words.



Principles of Clear Messaging

1

Lead with the "So What"

Open with what the reader should do or know, not the backstory.

2

One Message, One Purpose

Don't bury an action request inside a status update.

3

Be Specific

Names, dates, owners, next steps. Vague messages generate more questions than they answer.

4

Write for Skimming

Headers, short paragraphs, bold key terms.

5

Label Every Message

[ACTION], [DECISION], or [FYI] in the subject line.

 Do this: adopt the "BLUF" standard (Bottom Line Up Front) org-wide. It's teachable in one 30-minute session.

Channel Strategy: Match the Message to the Medium

Situation	Best Channel	Why
Urgent + personal	Call or live conversation	Tone and nuance matter; writing risks misreading
Important + needs context	Structured written update	Complex info needs to be referenceable, not just heard once
FYI + low stakes	Async channel, no @mention	Doesn't warrant an interruption
Decision needed	Doc with deadline + named owner	Prevents the "meeting to schedule a meeting" trap

77% of workers say they're frequently in meetings that end by scheduling a follow-up meeting (Atlassian). Channel-fit is the most underused lever.

 Do this: publish a one-page channel charter covering which channel for what, and expected response times per channel.

Two-Way Communication: Make Listening a Habit

Why Employees Go Quiet

Overload, not indifference: employees stop reading before they stop caring. Build feedback loops through pulse surveys, AMAs, office hours, and skip-levels.

Close the Loop Publicly

"You said, we did" is the single fastest trust-builder. Ask "did this land?" to measure understanding, not just delivery.

Recognition as a Listening Signal

Publicly recognizing people who ask good questions or flag confusion makes speaking up safe, and signals that two-way communication is valued, not just tolerated.

Do This

Add one comprehension question to your next pulse survey: *"Do you know what your top priority is this month?"*

Managers Are the Signal Filter: 5 Techniques

Employees trust their direct manager's voice more than company broadcasts, yet **87% of comms professionals call manager communication capability a significant risk** (Gallagher 2026).

1

Translate

Turn company messages into "here's what it means for our team."

2

Set a Rhythm

One clear weekly update beats a stream of pings.

3

Flag Priority

Mark "action needed" vs. "FYI" explicitly.

4

Protect Focus

Batch non-urgent messages; don't interrupt deep work.

5

Close the Loop

Confirm the message landed, not just that it was sent.

Manager Habits to Retire

Retire This	Do This Instead
Forwarding every company email with no context	Translate it into what it means for your team
Using urgent channels for non-urgent updates	Reserve @here and calls for the truly time-sensitive
Communicating only when there's a problem	Keep a steady rhythm, especially when things are fine
Assuming "I sent it" means "they got it"	Confirm understanding, not delivery
Sending raw AI drafts to the team	Edit until it sounds like you, and disclose AI assistance

Managers who master communication training see up to **18% engagement lift** on their teams (Gallup).

HR Move #1: Become the Communication Architect

HR owns the *system*, not just the messages. Three concrete actions:

Run a Communication Audit

Inventory every recurring email, meeting, and channel. Kill or merge anything with <30% engagement. 70% of comms teams measure only clicks and opens. Be the 12% that measure impact.

Publish a Communication Charter

Org-wide norms: which channel for what, response-time expectations, when @mentions are appropriate, and quiet hours.

Govern the Calendar

Cap default meeting length at 25/50 min, require agendas, make "decline with reason" culturally safe. 60% of meetings are ad hoc, and that's a norms failure HR can fix.



HR Move #2: Protect Attention Like a Resource

No-Meeting Days

Institute focus blocks: protected, calendar-enforced, and leadership-modeled.

Notification Norms

Async-first defaults, no expectation of after-hours replies. Meetings after 8pm are up 16%, and boundaries need policy, not suggestion.

Burnout Monitoring

Include communication load in burnout monitoring. Message volume and after-hours activity are leading indicators HR can already see.

Microsoft CoreAI case (2025): Clustered meetings into windows, required agendas, and protected deep-work blocks. In 8 weeks: +2.1 hours of focus time per person per week (2x control), "bad days" down 25%, output up 13%, equivalent to roughly 350 additional engineers.

HR Move #3: Set the AI Rules and Equip the Messengers

Close the AI Governance Gap

- Publish a genAI usage policy (only **40%** of workplaces have one)
- Deliver AI training (only **47%** of employees have received any)
- Set a disclosure norm, "AI-assisted, human-reviewed," so the 57% hiding their AI use don't have to
- Add "quality of communication" (not volume) to performance expectations to stop rewarding workshlop

Equip Managers: The 87%/21% Gap

87% of comms pros say manager capability is a top risk, but only **21% of orgs give managers toolkits**. Be the 21%: talking points, "what this means for your team" templates, cascade briefings before big announcements.

Train managers in the 5-technique playbook. Gallup links manager training to up to **18% team engagement gains**.

Your 30-Day Communication Reset

Week 1: Audit

Inventory channels, recurring meetings, and messages. Measure open/read rates. Kill what isn't read.

1

2

Week 2: Charter

Publish channel norms, response-time expectations, and [ACTION]/[FYI] labeling. Set the AI disclosure norm.

3

Week 3: Managers

Train the 5-technique playbook. Ship the first manager toolkit alongside a real announcement.

4

Week 4: Listen and Measure

Launch a pulse with comprehension questions. Report baseline metrics. Pick one focus-time experiment to run next month.

Weeks 1–2 are HR/comms-led. Week 3 is manager-led. Week 4 makes it measurable so it survives past day 30. The goal: **less noise, more trust, communication people actually read.**

Closing & Next Steps



One Thing Tomorrow

Audit one recurring message. If it isn't read, stop sending it.



30-Day Reset Checklist

Grab the full checklist [link/QR] to take these actions back to your team.



Questions?

Open Q&A: bring your toughest communication challenges.

Appendix — Source List

Microsoft Work Trend Index 2025

"Breaking Down the Infinite Workday," microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index

KPMG & University of Melbourne

"Trust, Attitudes and Use of AI" global study, 2025 (48,000+ respondents, 47 countries), kpmg.com

Atlassian State of Teams 2025

12,000 knowledge workers, 200 executives, atlassian.com/blog/state-of-teams-2025

BetterUp Labs & Stanford Social Media Lab

"AI-Generated 'Workslop' Is Destroying Productivity," Harvard Business Review, Sept 2025, hbr.org/2025/09/ai-generated-workslop-is-destroying-productivity

Gallagher State of the Sector 2026

Employee Communications Report (1,300+ comms & HR professionals, 40 countries), ajg.com/employeeexperience/state-of-the-sector

Additional Sources

Grammarly & Harris Poll State of Business Communication · Axios HQ internal communications research · Gallup State of the Global Workplace 2025 · Korbyt 2026 Workplace Communication Survey · Microsoft CoreAI / EngThrive focus-time initiative (arxiv.org)

NEXT WEBINAR

Recognition and Influence: Making Your Manager Work With You - a conversation with Corey Crapella



WEBINAR

Recognition and Influence:
Making Your Manager Work
With You

Tuesday, July 14th

1PM - 2PM EST

Guest Speaker

Corey Crapella
Founder of CORE
Coaching & Consulting

Tuesday, July 14 | 1 PM ET | 10 AM PT

A candid conversation about one of the most important (and often overlooked) career skills: **how to succeed when recognition, alignment, and feedback don't naturally flow through your manager.**

Key Takeaways:

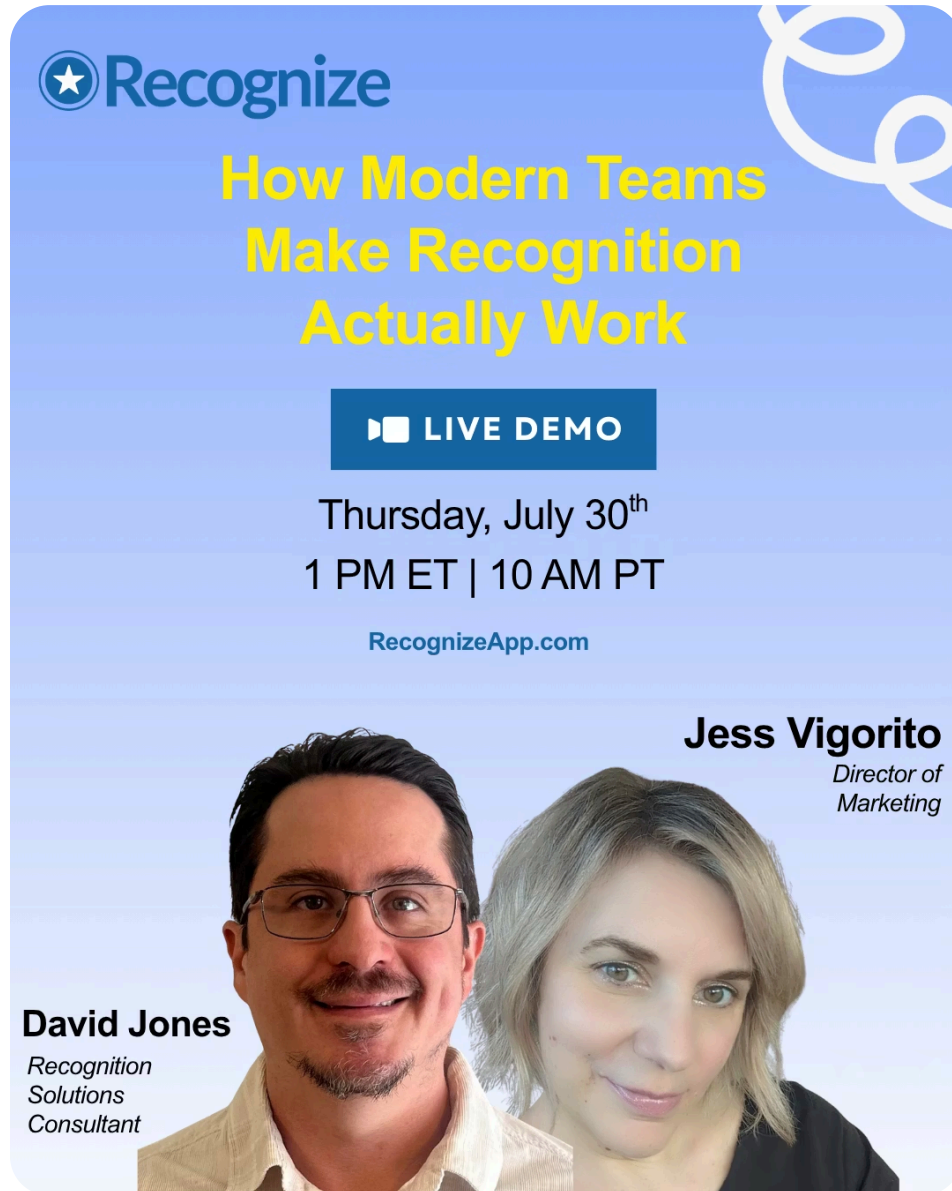
- How to align with your manager's real priorities (not just stated ones)
- Simple ways to make your impact more visible and easier to advocate for
- How tools like **Recognize** help turn everyday work into visible appreciation signals
- Practical shifts that build trust and improve communication flow
- How to turn friction with leadership into forward momentum
- How to take ownership of your growth, regardless of who you report to

REGISTER HERE:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8117815396495/WN_TIDpcL8LRmailP9J9UE0aw

LIVE DEMO

How Modern Teams Make Recognition Actually Work



Recognize

How Modern Teams Make Recognition Actually Work

LIVE DEMO

Thursday, July 30th
1 PM ET | 10 AM PT

RecognizeApp.com

David Jones
Recognition Solutions Consultant

Jess Vigorito
Director of Marketing

👉 **If improving engagement and retention is on your radar, this will be a high-value 45 minutes for you!**

Thursday, July 30 - 1 PM ET | 10 AM PT

What you'll see (driven by YOUR questions):

- A live demo of Recognize in action
- How recognition flows across real teams in distributed environments
- How organizations drive consistent participation
- What managers actually see in their day-to-day dashboards
- How teams launch and sustain adoption without complexity

Bonus:

- Live Q&A
- \$100 gift card raffle
- 🎁 \$1,000 in rewards credit for new customers

Register here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/7WljpEvrRciXSdmK57jV3Q>