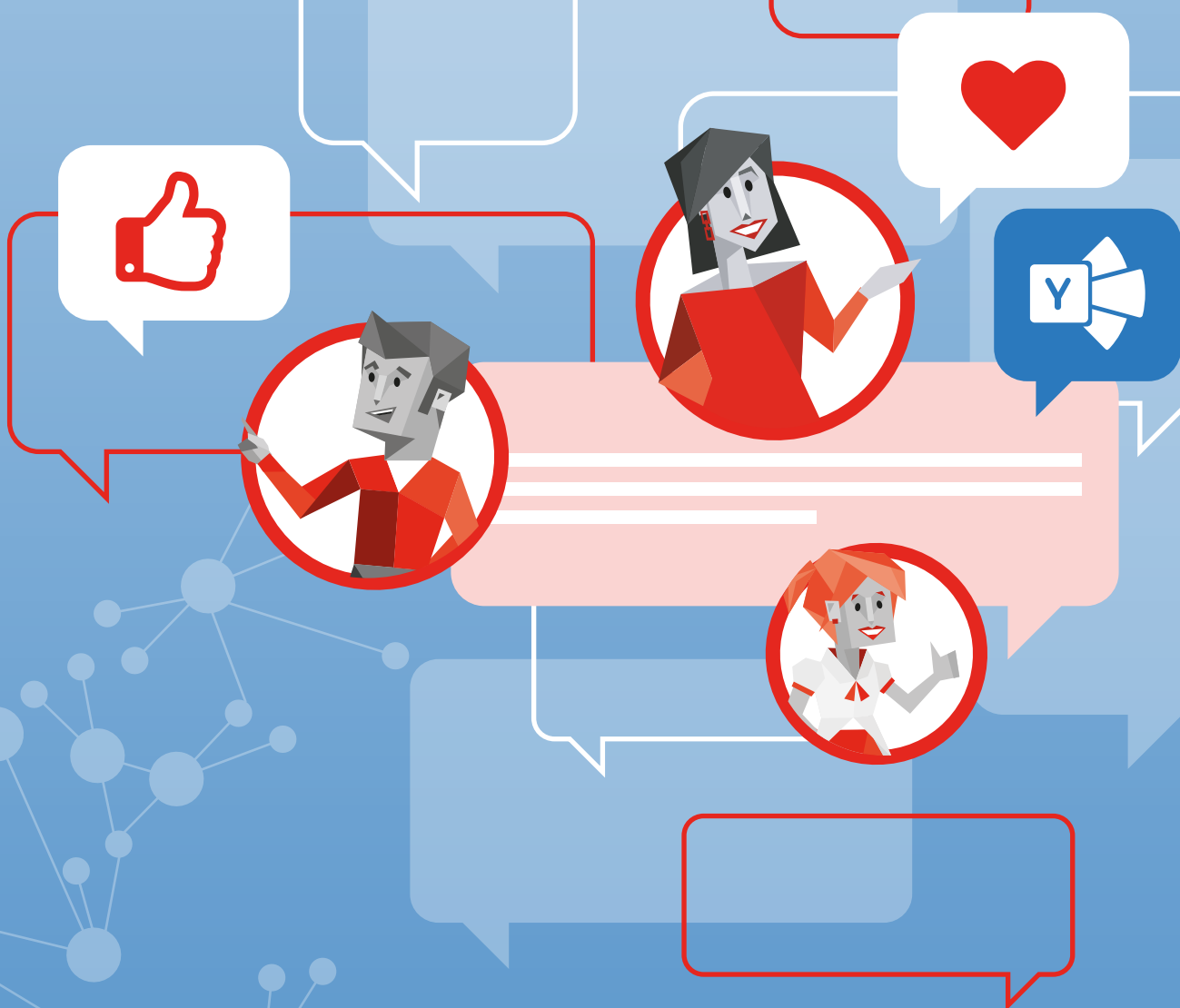


SWOOP ANALYTICS'

# 2021 || YAMMER BENCHMARKING REPORT



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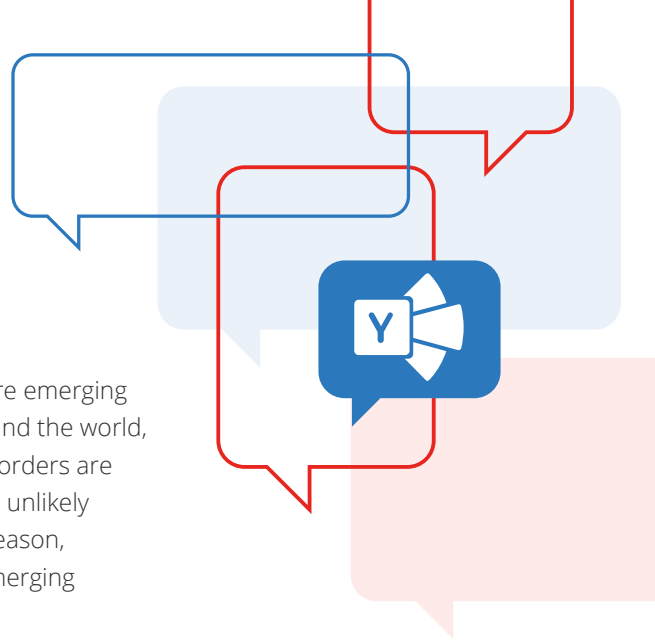
# Executive Summary

2021 has been a year of uncertainty. It started with high hopes that we were emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, only to see positive case numbers soar around the world, sending many nations back into lockdowns. With vaccination rates rising, borders are opening and some physical workplaces are welcoming back employees. It's unlikely though physical workplaces will ever return to pre-pandemic life. For this reason, we have focused SWOOP's 2021 Yammer Benchmarking Report on the "emerging hybrid workplace".

We analyzed the most recent six-month period we had from each organization during March 2020 to August 2021, with the large majority of the 75 organizations studied providing data from a period where they were emerging from COVID-19 lockdowns into a new way of working, often involving remote and hybrid work. The 75 organizations analyzed, representing a breadth of industry sectors, have more than 2.8 million employees who made more than 13 million interactions on Yammer in the six months studied. In 2020, Yammer provided the vehicle by which senior leadership communicated and connected with employees through the emergency conditions where staff were forced to work from home (WFH). This year we follow the fortunes of Yammer users as organizations navigate their most uncertain period in living memory.

## Key insights from Yammer 2021 benchmarking

- 1. Yammer is becoming key to an organization's overall employee experience.** Many of the Most Engaged Posts and Top Yammer Communities among the 4,300+ analyzed, were related to wellbeing or company culture. Community managers interviewed in our research explained the shift towards wellbeing conversations as a way of connecting people during the pandemic, boosting morale and creating trust within the broader organization. Yammer gave employees a place to connect with people outside of their daily team. Community managers said employees were feeling fatigued as a result of the pandemic and lockdowns, and wellbeing-focused communities were a way to disconnect from day-to-day work, and build psychological safety in the digital space.
- 2. Our interviews with leading Yammer users uncovered a growing use of Yammer for the "voice of the employee" as employees bring societal issues like climate change, Black Lives Matter, COVID-19 vaccinations and more to Yammer.** Leaders' responses and positioning on societal issues are starting to shape the culture and trust in the organization. We heard fake news issues are expanding from social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, onto Yammer. Two organizations said senior leaders had considered shutting down Yammer because of this, but wisely retreated. Yammer is evolving to become a critical piece of the employee experience.



3. Yammer use is changing. **Participation through readership has grown to, on average, 85% of users, yet active participation has dropped to, on average, 31% of users.** Overall, 54% of Yammer users are now passive.
4. We believe some of the **increase in Yammer readership can be explained by Yammer Communities being accessed through Outlook and Microsoft Teams.**
5. We attribute the drop in active Yammer participation to the “Teams Effect”. The pandemic forced a move to WFH, leading organizations to use Microsoft Teams. Some Yammer activity was appropriately moved to Teams. However, **organizations are still confused about where to host larger groups;** erroneously inspired by a perceived need to simplify collaboration around a single tool.
6. We used sentiment analysis to identify the most positive (happiest) communities. **These communities are likely providing stress release from the daily grind of remote working.** Insightfully, those **communities at the other end of the sentiment scale are far from the unhappiest. They tend to be working in negative sentiment contexts** e.g. customer complaints, cyber security risks.
7. Our research found patterns consistent with **exploration and innovation in 25% of Communities analyzed.** A further **26% are demonstrating engaged and responsive behaviors.** These results reinforce the view of Yammer being the platform of choice for facilitating enterprise-wide innovation, as growth returns from a pandemic-induced global recession.

2022 is flagged to be the year when the world will start to emerge from the largest global disruption in a generation. We have had global disruptions before. The 2001 Dotcom bust launched a wave of electronic commerce that today is taken for granted. The 2008 Global Financial Crisis saw the emergence of the gig economy, with companies like Uber, Airbnb and Amazon disrupting traditional service businesses. 2022 promises to disrupt the way people work. Employee experience, employee wellbeing, the voice of the employee, hybrid working will result in a wave of new business models and practices. We believe Yammer will be the platform where employees get to have their say. Leaders who ignore this move do so at their peril.

# 1 Introduction

[SWOOP Analytics'](#) seventh annual Yammer Benchmarking Report finds us still in a global state of COVID-19 pandemic disruption, although somewhat evolved from this time last year. In 2020 we monitored the movement to working from home (WFH) in March/April 2020 and reported on how Yammer was able to successfully help facilitate this major disruption to traditional work patterns. For this report we are looking at the post-WFH period as organizations look to transition to a post-COVID-19 work pattern, whatever that might look like. Most agree it's unlikely the world will ever return to 9am-5pm, five days a week office-centered work patterns. The hybrid work patterns going forward will ensure digital platforms like Yammer will play an increasingly important role for the foreseeable future.

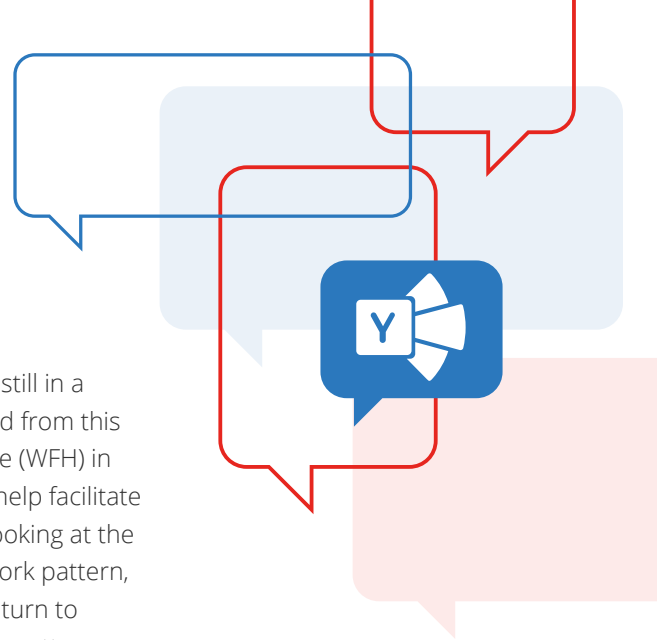
In 2020, we shared stories of some senior executives who successfully led their employees and engaged with them on Yammer using posts, videos and live events streamed to the platform. The challenge going forward is to sustain these levels of engagement as hybrid working, or working from home, becomes the norm, without the initial disruption of a worldwide pandemic as the catalyst to engage with staff.

We look to the senior leadership to set the cultural markers within which the organization will operate into the future in these uncertain times. Organizational reach in a hybrid working environment will be key. Yammer delivered in the emergency conditions of March 2020 when we were suddenly sent to WFH. Our fear is that organizations might retreat into the comfort of day-to-day, and miss the opportunity of a generation to achieve radical change.

A key business imperative is to now exploit the radical innovation opportunities created by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to management consultancy McKinsey, the natural tendency during a crisis is to bunker down and protect what is there, with little attention to innovation. But McKinsey points to a history that has shown that even in this millennia, the rapid rise in e-commerce and the transient worker gig economy are directly attributable to the SARS pandemic in 2002 and global financial crisis in 2008. [McKinsey is therefore stating that innovation is never more critical than now.](#)

[Microsoft has reported a year-on-year doubling \(to July 2021\) in the use of Yammer.](#) This is in stark contrast to the mostly mature Yammer sites that have, on average, experienced a 35% drop in interaction activity. We surmise that much of this growth is coming from [increased readership](#), facilitated by new integrations with Outlook and Teams, together with organizations newly implementing Yammer as part of the M365 suite. We explore this in more detail in [Making Sense of the Usage Numbers](#).

Enterprise Social Networking platforms like Yammer have been popular for hosting idea sharing campaigns. Yammer, more recently, has been operating in the shadow of Microsoft Teams. However, [SWOOP Analytics' 2021 Microsoft Teams Benchmarking Report](#) identified Yammer, in the form of Communities, as one of the most used apps in Teams. We believe innovation will benefit from a closer integration of the early idea generation and filtering



in Yammer, flowing through to exploiting these ideas in implementations via Teams. We address this in [The Opportunity for Radical Innovation via Yammer](#).

Throughout the pandemic we heard about the importance of employee engagement, and the need to keep employees safe, healthy and connected. As we mature into the post pandemic world, employee engagement is taking on new meaning. According to HR guru Josh Bersin, in his [Microsoft-commissioned report on Employee Engagement](#), employee engagement is morphing into a war for talent. Presented with 'location optional' opportunities, employees are re-thinking their employment options as never before. And Bersin reports that as much as 30% of US staff have taken new jobs since the beginning of the pandemic. Bersin identifies the plethora of products and services that are now hitting the employee engagement market, but suggests the fundamentals of company culture and motivation are still key.

Attracting and retaining talent essentially comes down to motivation. [Daniel Pink's identified motivators of autonomy, mastery, and purpose](#) are prescient. Autonomy, the ability to have a say in how you do your work, has only been amplified by the movement to WFH, and the availability of collaboration platforms like Yammer. Mastery is about the opportunity to grow and develop skills and competencies. Yammer is the home for [communities of practice](#). A vibrant communities program, led by the organization's most experienced practitioners, can be the "honey pot" for less experienced staff, looking to learn fast and grow their reputations. Finally, organizational mission statements are being influenced by both employees and investors to take on a broader societal scope. Our more recent Yammer studies are uncovering large, active and engaged communities focused on broader societal issues like climate change, Black Lives Matter, COVID-19 vaccinations, same-sex marriage and #MeToo. Millennials, in particular, are looking for their future employers to take a stance and incorporate these societal purposes into their company values and mission statements. According to Bersin, trust in the organization has become the cornerstone for employee experience.

In 2021, millennials are now between about 24 and 40 years old. In other words, rapidly becoming the dominant employment sector. Growing up as digital natives, [employee engagement for millennials is very much about innovation and technology availability, openness and flexibility and personal development opportunities](#). We can think of no digital platform better placed to facilitate these needs, at an enterprise level, than an Enterprise Social Networking platform like Yammer.

The above observations are drawn from our identification of our collaboration champions and their success stories. SWOOP benchmarking is the archetypal "blind vote"; with the data providing the votes. When we identify a high performing community or post we see only the anonymized data so it is always news to us, and often also for our organizational contacts, to learn what they are. In some ways this makes the stories even more inspiring, uncovering the secret gems that exist unheralded until now. When given permission, we also make these case studies available as [separate posts from the report](#) so you can pick and choose the ones that match your context, to be shared with your organizational peers.

The [Show me the numbers](#) section is for the data nerds, and provides the quantitative guidance for Yammer users. Not only do we report on the current performance and trends

through SWOOP's key performance indicators; we also set viable goals for each indicator for the coming 12 months. These goals are typically set at the top 20% ranking threshold, meaning the top 20% of enterprises or groups are already achieving at, or above, this level. The goals are designed to be a stretch, but also demonstrably achievable. The goal targets are flagged directly on the dashboard for SWOOP users. You will be able to track your collaboration journey through the different stages of maturity using the SWOOP performance metrics.

We traditionally reserve the final section of this report to looking to the future: [Futures – how avid Yammer users are the glue for the whole organization](#). In this our seventh annual Yammer Benchmarking Report, there has never been a future less certain. In times of uncertainty we look to our leaders. We saw this clearly in 2020, with the move to WFH. In 2021, without the initial disruption of WFH, leaders are expected to lead as never before:

- Creating a positive culture to engage all employees in their work and more;
- Being prepared to undertake radical innovation and change to meet and thrive in the new world of work, whatever that may be; and
- Ensure the organization is equipped with the technology tools and practices to facilitate free-flowing collaborative behaviors we know will be required in a fast and evolving workplace.

We believe Yammer will need to play a central role in meeting these needs. But Yammer is not an island. We know users are often confused about where Yammer fits in the whole workplace ecosystem. We don't just mean Yammer vs Teams. There are copious articles written on this topic now, including [by SWOOP](#). Ideally we would like analytics support across all the digital tools we are using be it email, Yammer, Teams meetings, chat, channels, OneDrive, SharePoint and so on. We collaborate using all of them. In this section on futures, we provide a window into the research we have been conducting on digital habits across the suite of Microsoft 365 collaborative tools. We shine a mirror on your digital collaboration habits and suggest where a nudge here and there may be of benefit.



## 2 Our Collaboration Champions

SWOOP identifies its collaboration champions directly from the interaction patterns we monitor from the SWOOP platform.

### 2.1 Assessment methodology

In 2020 we made a substantial upgrading of our ranking and assessment process. We introduced more sophisticated statistical machine learning, combined with expert judgments to arrive at our ranking for the top enterprises and communities.

For a detailed description of the process, we refer you to the 2020 Yammer Report, summarized below:

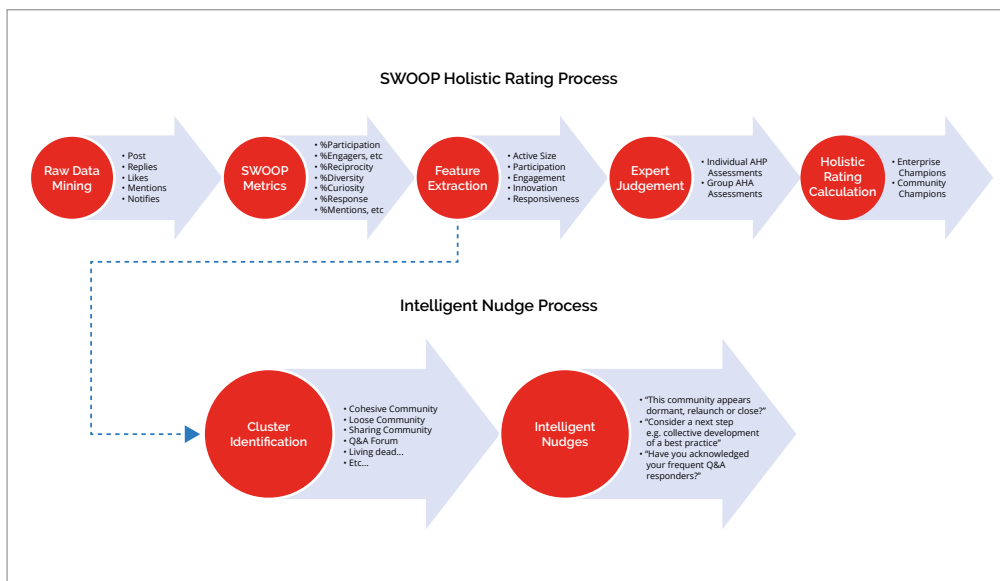


Figure 1 - Overview of SWOOP collaboration assessment methodology.

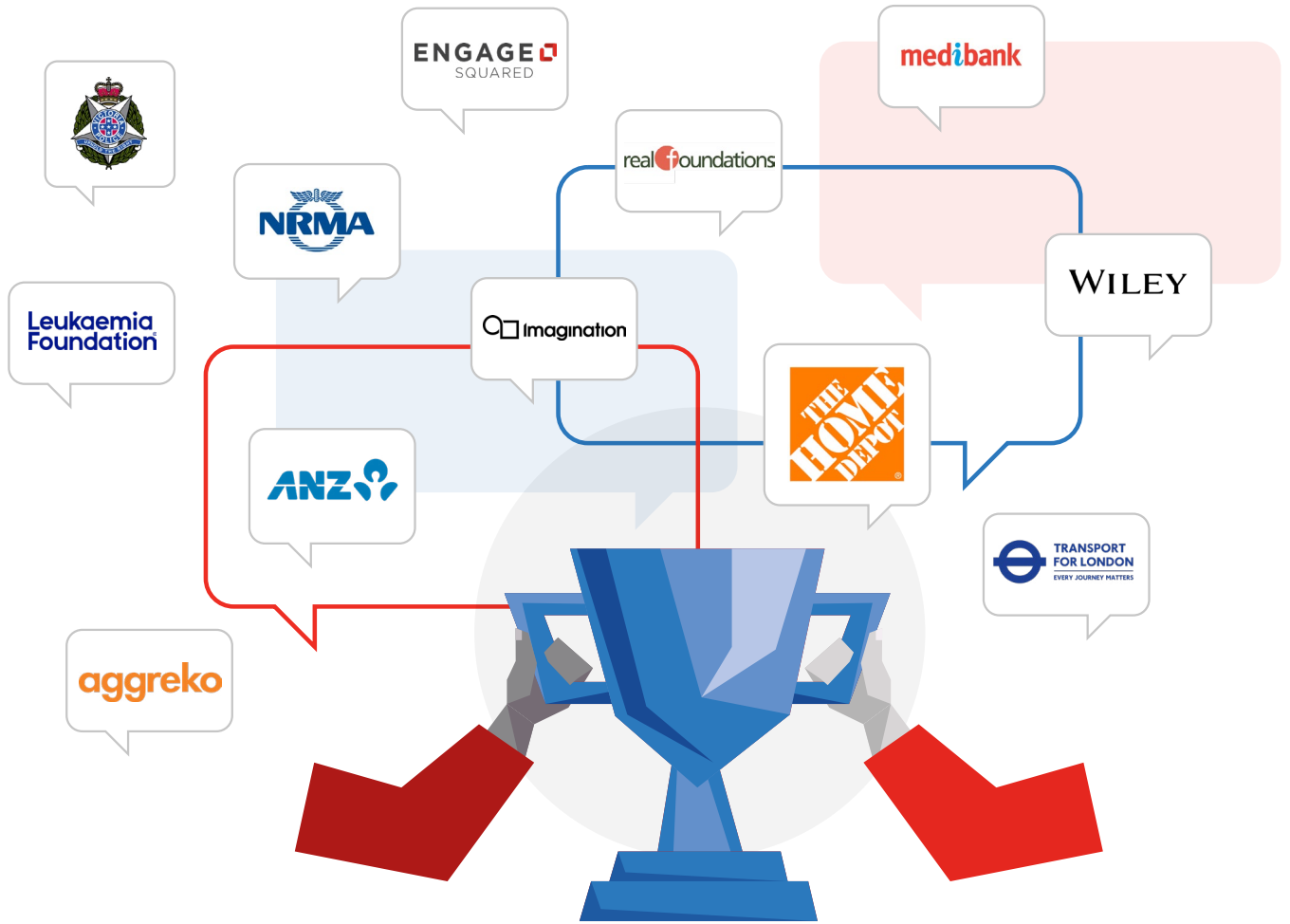
It is suffice to say the process is very comprehensive and data driven. We have also had the advantage of the validation afforded by our 2020 champion selections. This year we have extended our champion selections to individual communities and selected posts, where permission to publish has been granted.

## 2.2 Who are our Enterprise Collaboration Champions?

We are thrilled to announce SWOOP's 2021 Yammer enterprise winners for Outstanding Collaborative Performance. We have split our 2021 collaboration champions into three regions – Americas, EMEA and APAC – and have shared their best practices in the following case studies. Staff numbers are based on Yammer interactive users i.e. excludes read-only users.

	Americas	EMEA	APAC
<b>Large organization</b> (more than 5,000 staff)	The Home Depot US	Transport for London	ANZ
<b>Medium organization</b> (1,500-5,000 staff)	Wiley	Aggreko	Medibank
<b>Small organization</b> (between 200-1,500 staff)	RealFoundations	Imagination Technologies	NRMA

We are grateful to these organizations for sharing their stories, in the spirit of knowledge sharing with the industry at large.



## 2.2.1 The Home Depot

### The Inverted Pyramid – how to listen to customers and associates

[The Home Depot](#)'s chain of command isn't anything like the usual multi-national giants. At the top is the customer, next come the associates – those who assist you in store – and at the bottom is the CEO.

Yama Sharifi, Director, Digital Channels & Communications Technology at The Home Depot, explains this hierarchy as a company culture-driver called the inverted pyramid. The Home Depot leaders and executives at the bottom of the pyramid listen to and support those at the top.

The Home Depot's challenge: How do the voices of 500,000 associates reach those at the bottom of the pyramid? After months of research, the home improvement retailer rolled out Microsoft's Yammer platform to all its US and Canada associates in January 2021.

Yammer was made available to all associates immediately and experienced strong organic growth.

"When a team has success on Yammer, others want to get in on how they did it," said Tai Collins, Corporate Communications Manager at The Home Depot.

In nine months, the Yammer network has more than 600 active communities, covering everything from business programs to community service.



Posted in Team Depot & Homer Fund Captains - US

Seen by 116

It was an awesome day of giving back in Tornado-struck Newnan, GA today with Associates from TN, GA, FL, and SC representing our stores, Distribution, International Logistics and Transportation! #teamdepot #NewnanStrong #teamdepotstrong #homedepotstrong #givingback #livingourvalues

A photograph showing a group of approximately 20 Home Depot associates wearing orange shirts and blue jeans, standing in a large, open, dusty area that appears to be a site of destruction from a tornado. Some associates are holding tools, and there is debris scattered around. In the background, there are damaged buildings and trees. A silver SUV is parked on the right side of the image.

A post on The Home Depot's Yammer network.


## No.1 Yammer network in the Americas for 2021

The Home Depot's Yammer network was ranked No.1 in the Americas for large-size organizations in [SWOOP Analytics' 2021 Yammer Benchmarking Report](#), based on measures for participation, people-to-people engagement, responsiveness and innovation.

"We focus on our associates so they can focus on our customers. And by opening up the conversation, we're allowing them to connect with each other, tell us their stories and voice their opinions," Yama said.

"That's why we have so many engaged business partners who are actively listening and responding."

Yammer has been a "great success" at The Home Depot because, for the first time, there is a platform with the potential to reach every associate. It empowers quick communication, which is needed to make connections, ask questions, receive answers and disseminate critical information.



 **Internal Communication** Seen by 1,061  
Yesterday at 10:57 AM


It's time for the latest episode of [HD News](#) – check out these stories and more:

- [Benefits enrollment](#) is just around the corner. Find out what's new this year and when enrollment will be open.
- [Learn about](#) our free financial wellness tools that are available to all associates.
- The Home Depot's [sustainability efforts](#) include joining a global corporate [renewable energy initiative](#). We're being recognized by the EPA as a 2021 Safer Choice Partner of the Year.

[Watch the video](#)  
[Click here to follow HD News posts on Yammer](#)

**HD News 10.7.2021**  
31 views · 0 likes · 0 comments



*Ticking all the right boxes for an engaging post on The Home Depot's Yammer network.*

“One of our communications goals is to amplify company news and reach every associate individually by meeting them where they are, whether that’s in a store or distribution center terminal, or on their personal device,” Yama said.

The Home Depot is founded on a culture of serving customers and supporting associates. Yammer has become the technology tool to allow leaders to listen to those on the front line and ultimately improve the customer experience. Don’t be surprised, says Tai, if a vice-president joins in a conversation on Yammer – a sign they truly are listening and focused on associates.

“Nobody does it like Home Depot. You literally are talking to the buyers of the company in real time about your customers’ feedback, about products, programs or delivery. Associates bring ideas to the table all the time, and Yammer serves as that bridge,” Tai said.

“And we’re really fortunate our store-support teams listen. They want the feedback and want to analyze the data so they can make improvements for our associates, our customers and our communities.”

Posted in Store 7227 - Edmonton Westmount - CAN

Seen by 87

**Milestone Homer Award**  
Congratulations to [redacted] for receiving her bronze milestone Homer Award!! Thank you [redacted] for your hard work and dedication to the Front End. You are a great support to both our internal and external customers!! Thank you and Congratulations [redacted] !!



A Yammer post recognising and celebrating an employee.

While Yammer is an enterprise collaboration tool, Yama said it is primarily used as a communications and business tool at The Home Depot.

Conversations on Yammer include posts displaying “entrepreneurial spirit” by proposing new ideas to improve the business, information to keep associates and the communities they serve safer during and after natural disasters and even pilots of new programs or products to garner feedback directly from associates.

“Yammer supports The Home Depot’s overall interconnected retail business strategy of leveraging technology to create a seamless and exceptional customer service experience in stores and online. Yammer allows us to focus on and improve associate experience which ultimately affects customer experience,” Yama said.

The retailer also is big on using Yammer for recognition of employees, uploading photos or videos of associates who have been recognized with a “Homer Badge” for exemplifying the company’s values. In ways like this, Yammer is helping The Home Depot feel like a much smaller company.

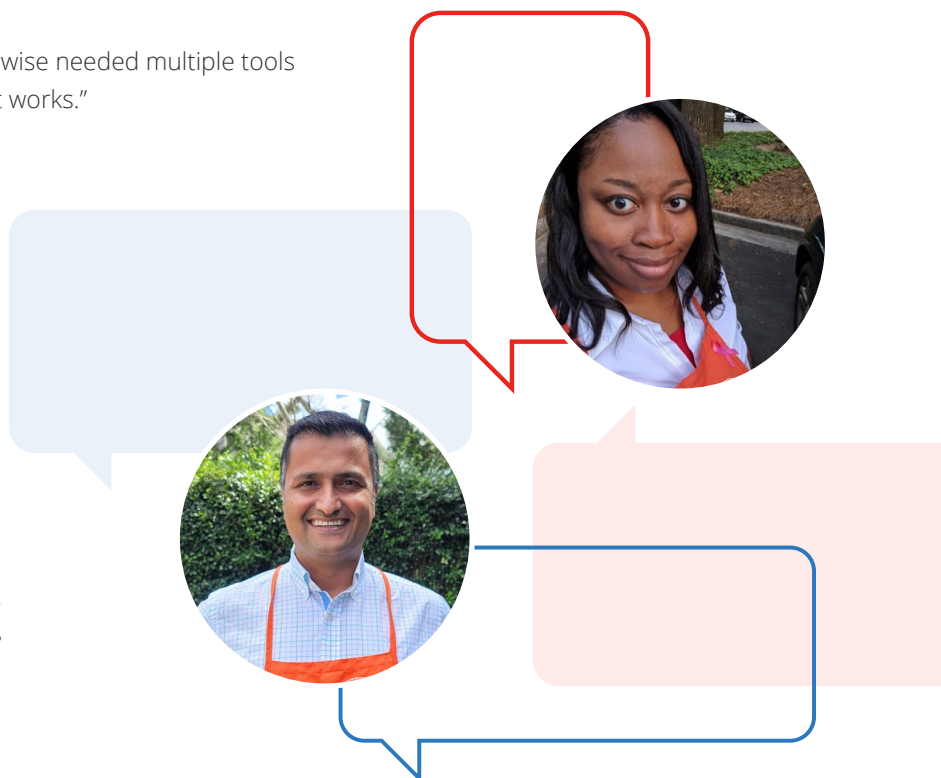
“Our core values are evident every day in the conversations on our network,” Yama said.

### Measuring success with SWOOP Analytics

When The Home Depot rolled out Yammer in January 2021, it also utilized SWOOP Analytics to measure the engagement across the Yammer network. One of the features The Home Depot wanted in an analytics tool was sentiment analysis. With SWOOP’s sentiment analysis, it’s simple to gauge the sentiment across the entire Yammer network and be able to detect significant changes.

“SWOOP has given us a lot of insights that we didn’t have before,” Yama said.

“SWOOP brings a lot of capabilities that we otherwise needed multiple tools to have. And when you run a report in SWOOP, it works.”



*From left: Yama Sharifi, Director, Digital Channels & Communications Technology; Tai Collins, Corporate Communications Manager.*

## 2.2.2 Wiley

Global publishing company [Wiley](#) has been among the top performers in SWOOP's Yammer benchmarking analysis for the past three years. We have a collection of stories to share about Wiley's success with Yammer including:

- [Don't take Yammer, or yourself, too seriously](#)
- [Instant ROI with Yammer](#)
- [Executive leadership fostering a culture of employee engagement](#)
- Watch this short interview to learn [how Wiley is using SWOOP to measure success](#).

## 2.2.3 RealFoundations

RealFoundations, the world's foremost provider of management consulting and managed services to the Real Estate industry, was the overall No.1 Yammer community in SWOOP's 2021 global benchmarking. Year after year, RealFoundations has proved to be arguably the most mature Yammer network analyzed by SWOOP in our benchmarking, which is the world's largest and most comprehensive analysis of Yammer networks.

We have identified a RealFoundations' post as one of our Best Posts of 2021:

### The secret to writing a great Yammer post

It's no fluke [RealFoundations'](#) No.1 Most Engaging Post ranked among the best posts of 2021 in [SWOOP Analytics' annual benchmarking of Yammer networks](#).

RealFoundations, the world's foremost provider of management consulting and managed services in the real estate industry, was an early adopter of Yammer in 2009, before the platform was purchased by Microsoft in 2012. The firm utilizes Yammer daily for knowledge sharing, problem solving, and communicating important topics that support optimal service delivery to its growing client base of more than 450 real estate developers, investors, owners and operators.

The logo for RealFoundations, featuring the word "real" in a lowercase sans-serif font, followed by a red circle containing a white lowercase "f", and then the word "foundations" in a lowercase sans-serif font.The word "WILEY" in a bold, uppercase, serif font, centered within a white rounded rectangular box with a grey border. The box is connected to a blue line that forms a speech bubble shape pointing towards the top left.



*Some of the RealFoundations team in the US pre-COVID-19.*

Lindsey Zollner, RealFoundations' Senior Manager of Presence and Asset Support, shared the leading practices the firm employs to gain the most visibility when sharing content in Yammer:

- 1. Define the intent of the post** – make sure you understand your purpose for posting: WHY is the information relevant and what are the desired outcomes for posting?
- 2. Get in front of the RIGHT audience at the RIGHT time** – consider WHO the audience is and check [SWOOP Analytics'](#) Activity By Time widget to find the best time to post.
- 3. Grab end-user attention** – use inherent functionality like announcements, praise, polls, and include multimedia or links to elevate your message.
- 4. Keep it simple** – include a summarized introduction to entice the audience to continue reading.
- 5. Request an action** – provide a call to action to gain more engagement: WHAT do you want the reader to do with the information they've just consumed?

The following post was ranked as the Most Engaged Post on RealFoundations' Yammer network in the past 12 months and was in the top 1% of Best Posts in SWOOP's 2021 benchmarking.

The post was from Jim Valente, Global Head of Data Services at RealFoundations. The intent of the post was to gather unique client delivery facts for a future outreach campaign to increase the market's awareness of RealFoundations' expertise in solving problems for clients. He used RealFoundations' All Company Yammer community to get in front of the right audience and grabbed employees' attention by using the "Announcement" feature in Yammer. Jim kept the post to two paragraphs and, perhaps most importantly, finished with a call to action.



Announcement posted in All Company



**Jim Valente**

Dec 16, 2020

Seen by 315

### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2021 we will engage in a campaign to increase the market's knowledge of the depth and diversity of our experience solving problems for our clients. We are in the process of developing a "Did You Know" campaign that will utilize themed ads and banners in social media posts, IREI publications and our everyday emails to get this message out.

**We need your help!** We would appreciate if you would share short descriptions of unique projects you have worked on, specific problems you have helped solve, or outcomes you have helped deliver to clients and the benefits they have recognized as a result. We will use these to help develop content for the campaign.

Thanks, Jim



Like



Comment



Share



You and 57 others

Show 104 previous comments



**Emily Fuller** Feb 25

Did you know that RF...

1. Is currently integrating Yardi and Sharepoint
2. Had the first successful NCREIF submission file with a client
3. Was the first to use Yardi's ETL tool with a client and wrote most of the original documentation
4. Supports over 5,000 end users on Yardi, MRI and JD Edwards
5. Application support completes over 30,000 client incidents each year



8



**Dominic Hollands** Feb 18

Did you know:

- RF is assisting a multi-asset class REIT refocus their business on multi-family apartment housing and building the operating/sourcing models from the ground up.
- RF assisted a large scale fund manager with the consolidation of a mid-size portfolio from MRI to their instance of Yardi Voyager.
- RF provides data movement and transformation services, allowing an owner to aggregate data from several 3rd party property managers.
- RF participated in the merger of two SFR REITS forming the largest SFR owner operator with 82,000 homes.
- RF will provide back-office support for systems like Yardi and MRI.



14

The post resulted in more than 100 responses from employees across the globe who were excited to share their contributions and achievements.



Key statistics from SWOOP from Jim's post.

"We wanted to gather some distinct information about our historical, collective client delivery that we could use to further describe our qualifications and differentiators to the market," Lindsey said.

"We think this post was ranked as the highest for a few reasons, one being that users were provided the opportunity to share their latest and greatest contributions to the firm, to which many received a virtual pat on the back! It was truly exciting to follow and learn more about our diverse capabilities."

There were about 325 active users on RealFoundations' Yammer network when the post was made and a whopping 96% saw it in their news feed, with about 35% actively engaged.

### Why it Worked

- "All Company" Community
- Announcement with Notifications
- Bold Headline
- Direct Call to Action
- "Bragging Rights" & Acknowledgements
- Asked a Question

"The 'Announcement feature' really helped expand the audience, providing an additional notification to each user, and the direct 'call to action' led to the increased number of reactions and replies which really exceeded our expectations for the post," Lindsey said.

She said clearly articulating a call to action like; "We need your help, please respond" is vital for social collaboration or content sharing because it helps the audience understand what to do with the information they're seeing.

"In this case, it was: 'Tell us what you know and how you've contributed at the firm'," Lindsey said.

## Feeling comfortable and connected to colleagues

One of the biggest hurdles encountered by RealFoundations when starting its digital collaboration journey was helping colleagues feel comfortable enough to engage with each other in a public setting without spending too much time worrying about things like proper punctuation, spelling or format.

“We continue to work on this, but we’ve come a long way and now see an almost 90% active engagement across the firm, with metrics provided by SWOOP,” Lindsey said.

“Using SWOOP data, we’ve been able to identify our rockstar employees that live and breathe working out loud, and with their help, we have continued to model that behavior and encourage the rest of the enterprise to do the same.

“If you can first help end users feel comfortable and connected to their colleagues in the various channels and communities you use, encouraging active engagement is a lot easier.”

Lindsey said regardless of whether you aim to share information, ask for help with a problem, or strengthen your Yammer community, following RealFoundations’ tips for an engaging posts will help increase engagement across your network.

RealFoundations has generously shared its stories and experience in a host of case studies, webinars and interviews with SWOOP over the years, including:

- [Email is where knowledge goes to die - Harvesting knowledge at RealFoundations](#)
- [Collaborating in the Modern Digital Workplace webinar with RealFoundations and Microsoft](#)
- [Real Foundations CEO Chris Shaida reveals his 7 behaviours for success on Microsoft Teams](#)
- [How a global organisation is using SWOOP to keep employees collaborating](#)
- [Tapping into the X Factor to deliver better outcomes for clients](#)
- [Think more with Microsoft Teams](#)
- [How To Write A Great Post webinar](#)
- [What Tool When?](#)

*Lindsey Zollner, RealFoundations' Senior Manager of Presence and Asset Support.*



## 2.2.4 Transport for London

### While you were sleeping - connecting shift workers with Yammer

It can get pretty lonely working in the middle of the night in London while the rest of the city sleeps. For London Underground's maintenance workers and engineers, the hours between midnight and 5am are some of the busiest.

While everyone else sleeps, those maintaining London's Tube network are fixing tracks, carriages and train engines ready for the world to wake and get to where they're going.

Until [Transport for London](#) (TfL) rolled out Microsoft's Enterprise Social Network Yammer to its 27,000 employees, there was little way for those working the graveyard shift to share the vital work they're doing with the rest of the organization.

TfL now boasts the No.1 Yammer community globally for Most Responsive Community in [SWOOP Analytics' analysis of more than 4,300 Yammer communities in 2021](#). TfL's overall Yammer network was also ranked No.1 for large-size organizations in EMEA.

The Most Responsive Community is one called "Where Am I?". It's a community where TfL workers post random photos of the London Underground network and ask colleagues to take a guess where they're working. Posts are regularly met with hundreds, if not thousands, of comments as colleagues take a punt as to where the photo was taken. Most of this engagement stems from posts from just five or six colleagues.

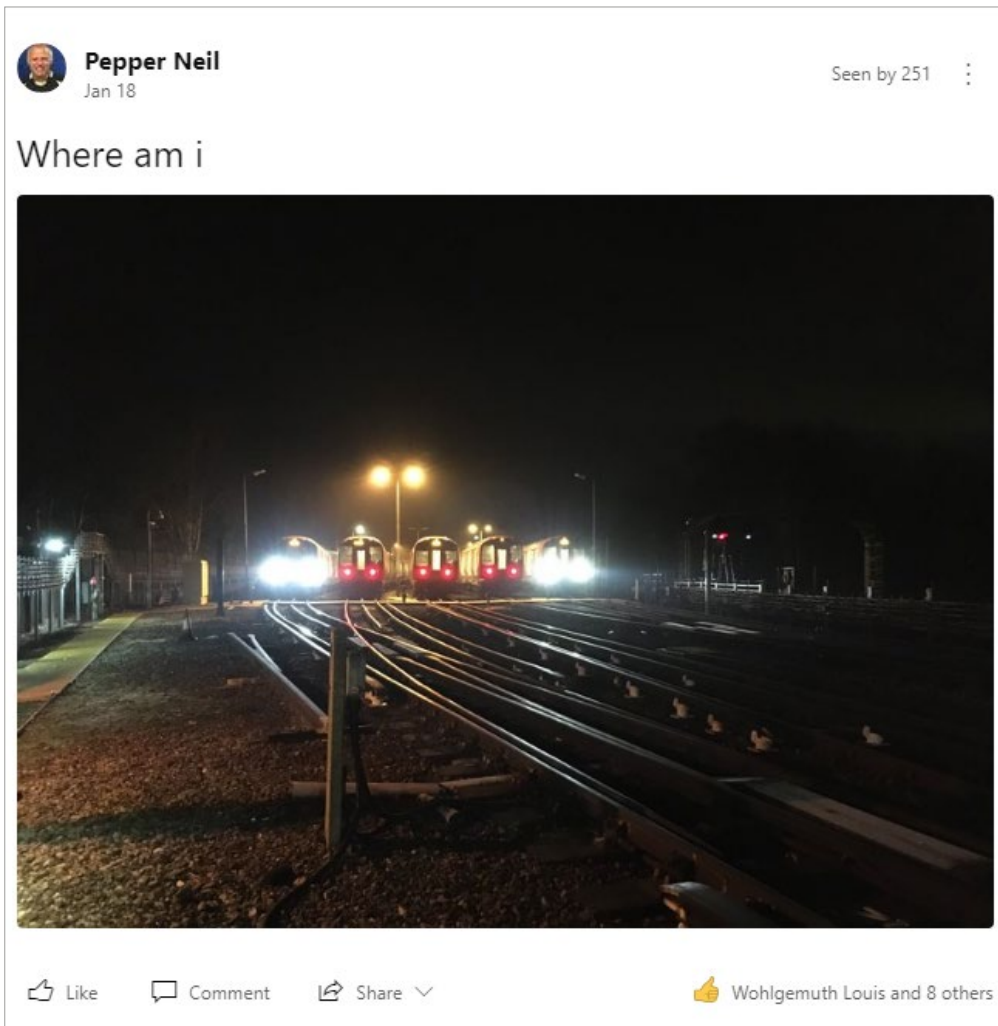
"It's pictures of the network," said Lloyd Cattell, Digital Communications Manager at Transport for London.

"The pictures are usually random parts of a station somewhere and loads of people seem to get involved. Some of these have broken off into questions and discussions."

The posts are all phrased as questions and while many of the responses are from people taking guesses, many more discuss operational issues and move into work-related discussion.

Neil Pepper is a regular poster on the "Where Am I?" Yammer community and is now one of the Most Influential People on TfL's Yammer network, according to data from [SWOOP Analytics](#).



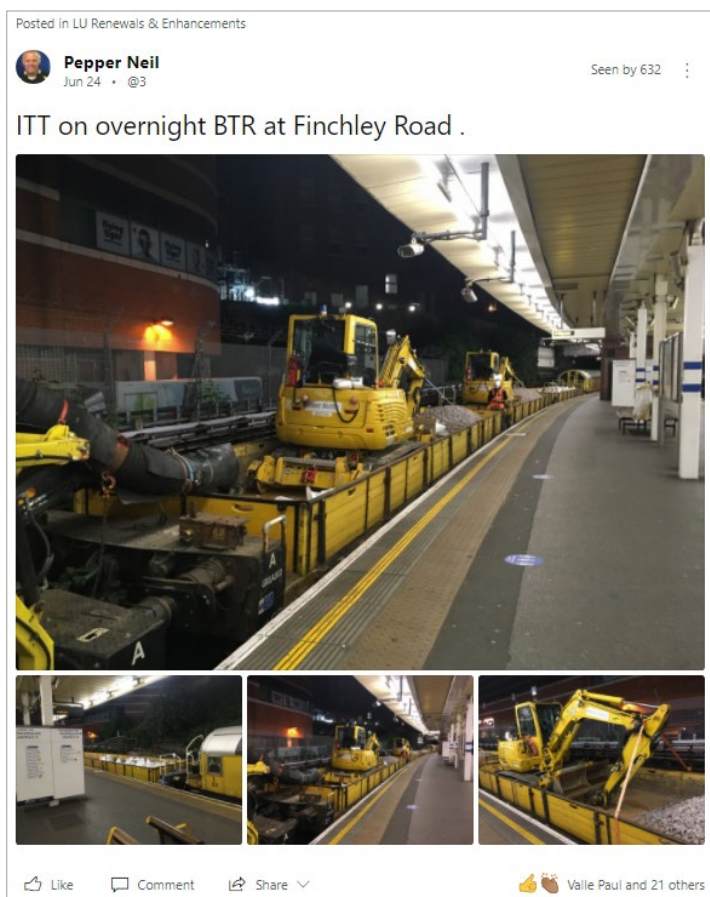


An example of a "Where Am I" post on TfL's Yammer network.

"On the Tube, trains run after midnight and start again before 5am so there's a very small window where you can actually do anything - but yet we still have to fully maintain the track and fix problems on the trains. All of these things have to happen in such a tiny window and we have colleagues that work to make all these things happen - and then we come to work without knowing about all the magic behind the scenes," Lloyd said.

"So Neil, for example, is sharing pictures about what he's doing. People wouldn't usually see the things he does because they happen when we're all sleeping. Likewise, it's nice for the rest of the business to see how much work goes into keeping things running that we don't even know about.

"It's a really interesting business and that's one of the reasons Yammer works so well, because it's quite fascinating to see what other people do to keep our city moving. Seeing so many fascinating things on Yammer encourages loads of colleagues to use it."



*An example of a post from Neil Pepper on the LU Renewals & Enhancements Yammer community.*

## Getting shift workers onto Yammer

Train operators, maintenance staff and other shift workers are integral to the smooth operation of London's Underground system yet communicating with them can be difficult when, by the nature of their work, they can't be on devices while working.

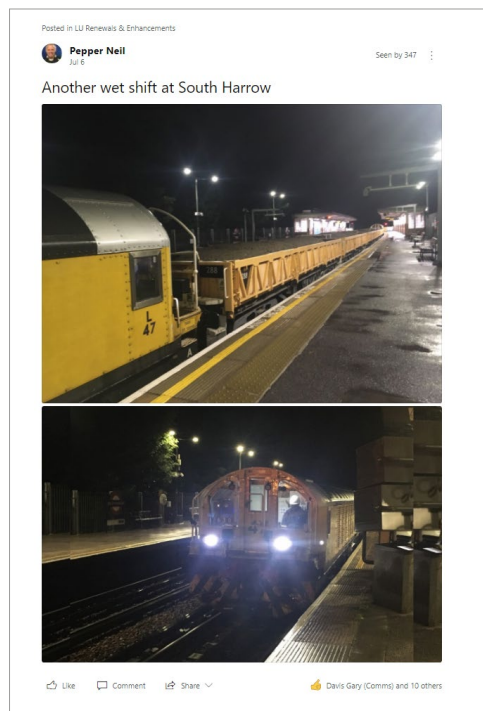
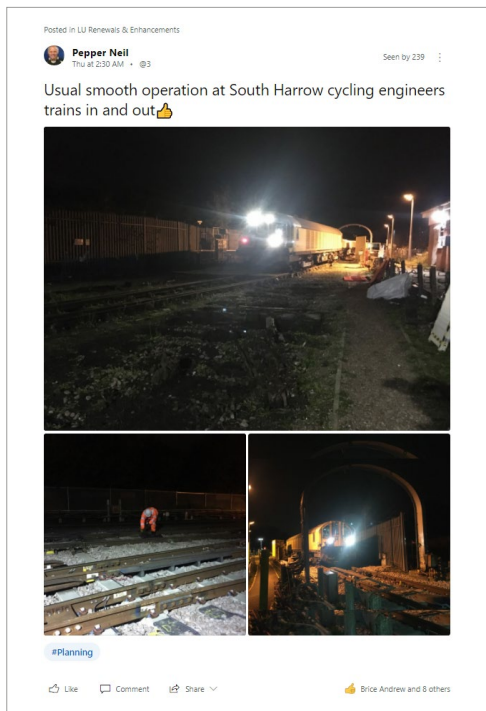
That's where Yammer communities like "Where Am I?" have been so important to bring shift workers onto the digital platform and to connect with colleagues and join in conversations.

By getting these workers onto Yammer to connect with colleagues, they can then catch up with company communications. TfL has a Bring Your Own Device policy where employees can install Yammer and shift workers can access it on their commutes to and from work.

"If you're working as a train operator, you're working on your own the majority of the time and you probably don't have the same connection with colleagues as in other roles," Lloyd said.

"Yammer gives them the ability to find out what other people are doing, how other train operators are finding things. It's nice to have that connection to see how other people are doing things and that's potentially a big chunk of the reason they like to use it.

“For us, part of the benefit is they see our (company) updates too, but I’m sure it’s the connection side of it that they really benefit from and that’s why they choose to use it.”



*Yammer posts from Neil Pepper sharing images from his overnight shift at South Harrow.*

James Mountford, Senior Communications Manager at TfL, said Yammer has allowed a diverse spread of connections across the workforce that otherwise may not be achievable, especially with six Staff Network Groups that give employees the chance to share ideas and support each other in developing TfL’s equality agenda in all areas of employment.

“It’s really difficult to meet people outside of your local area particularly when you’re not in a role where you don’t manage your own time and diary,” he said.

### How the pandemic helped with Yammer adoption

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns stopped large face-to-face conferences at TfL, paving the way for live events on Yammer.

Colleagues were able to use Yammer to see and hear leaders delivering messaging, which was very important during the uncertainty of the pandemic.

“If they want to hear from the Commissioner or MD (managing director) from London Underground they’ll join the Yammer live event,” James said.

“This has also helped with adoption onto Yammer.”

TfL Commissioner, Andy Byford, Managing Director for London Underground, Andy Lord, and other leaders regularly engage in conversations on Yammer and ensure there are Q&A communities where every employee can ask questions and receive responses.

“Almost every other week there’s the MD or one of his reports running a Yammer Q&A and it’s really breaking through and it’s helping those leaders have that direct conversation with their people in a nice friendly way,” James said.

“It’s an incredibly powerful tool to reach areas of the workforce that potentially wouldn’t see other things.”

James said TfL is taking advantage of the marked “Best Answer” feature in the new Yammer. By using the “Feature Conversation” tool to put a featured post at the top of employees’ Yammer feed, TfL has had 16,000 people see a post.

“We’re talking more than half our workforce will see something that we post on Yammer. As a tool for us as a communications team, it’s really powerful,” James said.

### TfL’s Yammer journey

TfL initially began using Yammer in 2009 and it was widely embraced across the network prior to and during the 2012 London Olympics. However, there was no “owner” for Yammer at TfL at the time and eventually the business stopped using it.

A few years later, the Employee Communications and Engagement department successfully pushed for Yammer to be re-introduced under its ownership. House rules were established and Yammer was embraced. Since then it has been used as a communications and collaboration tool across TfL, with about three-quarters of the 27,000 employees using Yammer.

“It’s become a collaborative space that’s safe, but also somewhere where people can say the things that they think and we (and leaders) can listen to feedback,” Lloyd said.

“People can speak their mind on Yammer and the conversations that would otherwise be ‘by the water cooler’ are very open on Yammer - which I think is overwhelmingly positive because a lot of things that leaders would never hear about, they see and can respond to as well, which is quite powerful.

“People have the confidence to be honest.”

*James Mountford, Senior Communications Manager at TfL.*





## 2.2.5 Aggreko

### Breaking geographical barriers with Yammer

Working in some of the world's most isolated regions can be a lonely existence, and keeping those people digitally connected with their colleagues can be a challenge. It's a challenge [Aggreko](#), the world's largest supplier of mobile and modular energy solutions, is overcoming with the help of Yammer.

Microsoft's Enterprise Social Network Yammer connects Aggreko's 6,500 colleagues to help them solve problems faster, which gives customers a better experience, and boosts morale across the entire organization.

Aggreko's colleagues are stationed in every corner of the planet – often in very remote areas – which makes it difficult to share news and collaborate. It can also be difficult to get immediate technical guidance when teams span time zones and continents. That's where Yammer has filled a gap – allowing colleagues to share information quickly for immediate ROI by collaborating.

Engineers regularly post on Yammer asking for technical support or advice from colleagues, and they can share a photo of the issue on the post.

"We're so geographically spread - we've literally got people everywhere," said Paul Brereton, Head of Digital Communications at Aggreko.

"There's a vast number of geographical hurdles to stop collaboration and conversations and of course Yammer just collapses all of those geographical barriers in a heartbeat."

Before implementing Yammer across Aggreko in early 2020, field engineers had no way to get answers to their technical questions except to call or email each other – and that's assuming they knew exactly who to contact.

"So Yammer just threw open doors immediately for those people to be able to talk to each other and to ask questions of the experts," Paul said.

### Using Yammer to connect leaders with frontline workers

One of the drivers for using Yammer at Aggreko was to help the leadership team be more approachable, communicative and collaborative. Email is still very popular in Aggreko, but Paul said attitudes are starting to change.

"Email is often not the right vehicle for us," he said.

"If our subject matter experts answer questions by email, the next day they're having to answer the same question again, whereas if people ask it through Yammer then hopefully they're only answering it once and it's there to be discovered by whoever comes along next – with Yammer we're actually building an online knowledge base."

The Aggreko logo is displayed in orange lowercase letters within a white speech bubble with a grey border. The speech bubble is connected to a blue line that starts at the top of the page and a red line that starts from the bottom right. The logo is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page.

aggreko

Not all leaders have been as active on Yammer as the CEO, so Paul and his team have held coaching sessions with the executive and senior leadership team to show them the value of Yammer and Microsoft Teams. That is having some great results in increased engagement.

“It’s really important to have the leaders on because it shows this is a safe place to be and it’s okay to be posting in there,” Paul said, adding that some parts of Aggreko have waited to see if their direct manager posts in Yammer before feeling they can do so themselves.

“If you’ve got those leaders in Yammer, the people deeper in the organization will come on.”

Paul said working with leaders is one aspect of boosting Yammer usage, the other is connecting people in the field.

“Helping those field colleagues feel a bit more connected and helping them to feel more part of the family, even when they’re stuck out in the middle of the Australian outback working in an open cast mine, they can still reach out and chat to people,” he said.



## Far from home

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many Aggreko employees were left stranded in remote parts of the world, unable to get home. Paul said Yammer became a constant place to connect colleagues, especially for those away from home.

He told the story of an engineer who was stuck on the Marshall Islands in the Pacific for almost eight months. He was there to do maintenance on a generator but once that was complete he was unable to fly home because of COVID-19 restrictions. Instead, he spent his days door knocking, asking if anyone needed help around the house.

“Rather than just waste his time, he got his tool box and he would spend his days wandering up and down the group of islands, knocking on people’s doors doing things like replacing washers on taps and other ‘odd jobs,’” Paul said.

“He became the handy man for the island and was then sharing photos and updates back on Yammer for us all to see.”

Leading up to the Tokyo Olympics, Aggreko ran a competition where colleagues could nominate their peers for tickets to the Tokyo Games, covering all their travel and accommodation expenses for them and a friend. CEO Chris Weston then personally selected the engineer in the Marshall Islands and recorded a Microsoft Teams call with him to announce his win and to congratulate him. Sharing this video on Yammer got a huge response from colleagues.

"It blew the guy's mind," Paul said, adding that without a platform like Yammer, these great stories would never be amplified.

Examples of Far from Home Yammer posts.

## Picturesque Aggreko - sharing good news and building the community spirit

Another Yammer community that has taken off across Aggreko is called Picturesque Aggreko, where people share photos of the sites where they're working. Paul said it is powerful in allowing every employee to see what those on the frontline are doing.

Aggreko's internal communications team now has an amazing library of images to hand thanks to Yammer. Paul updates the All Company Yammer community each month with a new image and @mentions the photographer and those working on the site.

"That's starting to drive a bit of engagement with people wanting to get their image up on the All Company feed, so we're seeing people post even more images, which is great," Paul said.

"There's definitely a lot of pride shared on Yammer about what we get up to."



## Connecting with colleagues

Paul shared stories of Aggreko engineers supplying power to communities in places like Iraq and Afghanistan where they are issued with military grade body armour and helmets as they are exposed to threats from not just terrorism but civil unrest, crime, unexploded ordnance – they are even taught how to deal with rocket or mortar attacks.


"They can come under attack by militia and terrorists mainly because they want our generators – it's amazing and humbling to hear about the risks they face on a daily basis!" Paul said.

"Without Yammer there would be no way to share these stories across the global organization and share in colleagues' experiences out in the field. And it's morale boosting for our colleagues out in those remote or dangerous parts of the world to receive messages of goodwill and recognition for what they do.

"Yammer gives us windows into all the different parts of the business which is very powerful given that our colleagues are so geographically dispersed.

"And I think that helps light it up for people. Some might think Yammer is just people chit chatting about X Factor, and then they have a look around and they go; 'Wow, it's so much more!'"

Posted in All Company

 **Shinealight** 1 share • Seen by 2,771  
May 19 • @16

**We are online now !!**  
Team Kurdistan has done it.

One of the biggest projects is now producing power for its planned phase 1 of 60MW.


We have cruised through project hold ups, COVID lockdowns, shipping problems, tough security conditions and making a difference in Kurdistan.

We speak passion....., we think ABOVE AND BEYOND

I call the whole Yammer community to praise and cheer for our team Kurdistan.

Next pit stop is now upgrading 37Kms of Overhead lines.

**My Movie.MOV**


  
Microsoft Stream

**Shinealight**

Like Comment Share

You and 186 others

Show 87 previous comments (18 new)

 **Shinealight** Jun 10  
Congratulations team Kurdistan , superb .

An example of a Yammer post showing what's happening around the world with Aggreko.

## CEO listening in

Aggreko CEO Chris Weston is a regular collaborator in Yammer, often popping in to comment on posts in different communities. Sometimes the original author of the post doesn't even realize who Chris Weston is.

"Chris is pretty active, he's quite autonomous," Paul said.

"We don't have to ghost write anything for him. He will just wander around Yammer, see something and he will add a comment which has huge impact.

"Some of our colleagues deep in the organization may not even know who Chris is and all of a sudden they get a comment from him and look him up and see he's the CEO! And that has such a positive impact when they know their CEO is visible and supports their hard work."

## Bringing global events to every corner of the Aggreko world

Aggreko supports some of the world's most prestigious and well known sporting and entertainment events. Some of the first ever images of the venues in Tokyo were shared on Aggreko's Yammer network, from the events team in Japan.

The team across Aggreko was treated to a behind-the-scenes look at the venues from their colleagues in Japan who were installing electrical distribution and backup power, across all the sporting venues.

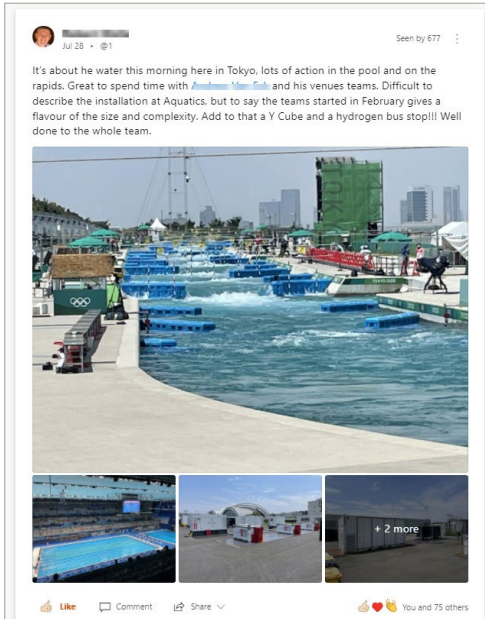
"We provided the grid distribution across three different voltages, and backup mobile power for the event this summer, so we had a whole team of people in Japan setting things up and managing our equipment through the event," Paul said.

"The number of pictures they've shared behind the scenes has been an amazing insight for our colleagues located around the world...we even got to see the new BMX and skateboarding track before it's even been shown in public. The amount of stuff we got to see was incredible and it really brought the event to life for us.

"Without Yammer you wouldn't have got to see that. It's a real eye opener now wandering through our Yammer network to see just what it is that we get up to as a company."

*From left: Paul Brereton, Head of Digital Communications;  
Chris Weston, CEO.*





Some examples of Yammer posts shared by Aggreko's events team in Japan.

Aggreko has seen many benefits from its implementation of Yammer. Colleagues have formed connections across geographical and organizational boundaries. People can feel proud of the company's impact and see the benefits its products bring to remote communities.

The success of the Aggreko's Yammer network is no fluke. It was identified as the top Yammer network for medium-sized organizations for EMEA in [SWOOP Analytics' 2021 Yammer Benchmarking Report](#), based on measures for participation, people-to-people engagement, responsiveness and innovation.

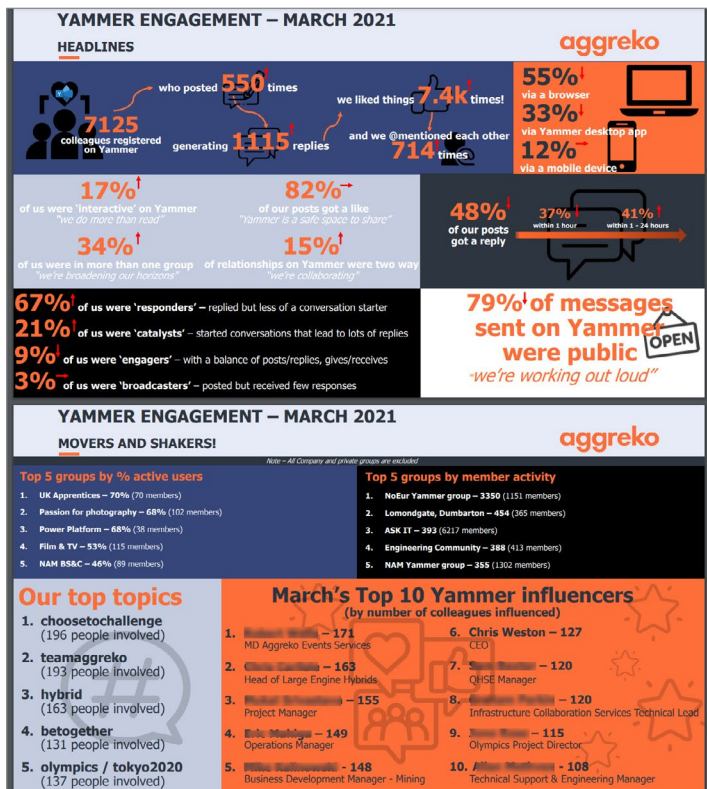


The Aggreko events team in Japan.

## Measuring Yammer success with SWOOP

Paul relies on data from [SWOOP Analytics](#) to track topics, hashtags, campaigns and leaders on Yammer. He also uses the data to produce a monthly report about Aggreko's Yammer usage, which he shares on Yammer for all to see. Paul @mentions the most influential colleagues in the monthly report – the movers and shakers, as he calls them. "It's creating a bit of buzz," Paul said of his monthly report.

"People are starting to say; 'I want to be in there, I want to be in the top 10 engagers' or 'I want my community to be in the top five' and asking for advice as to how to get there."



An example of Paul's monthly Yammer report, with data from SWOOP Analytics.

Community managers have contacted Paul to ask him to create similar reports for their own community. Paul plans to go one step further and give every colleague access to their own personal SWOOP dashboard before the end of 2021.

"We want to be able to say to people; 'Here's your own data and have a look and see how you're using Yammer and your network,'" Paul said.

"Our Yammer network is quite a special place and it will be great for colleagues to see where they fit in and how they're contributing and adding real value to it."



## 2.2.6 Imagination Technologies

### Levelling the playing field with Yammer

After months of working from home due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, semiconductor intellectual property company [Imagination Technologies](#) knew it was time to find a digital platform to replicate the office lunchroom moments, or the office water cooler.

There needed to be somewhere to have the conversations you would usually have at work. Not just the business conversations you have every day with your team, but also the chats with colleagues about everything from; “What did you do on the weekend?” to “How are you feeling today?”. A place where you can ask a question of your executives, where you feel connected to the company, even though you may be working from your dining room table.

In February 2021, Imagination Technologies launched Microsoft’s Enterprise Social Network Yammer. It came a couple of months after the company’s executives and senior leaders gave their commitment to lead the initiative, not just by sharing updates, but by listening to employees and joining in conversations.

Seven months after the launch of Yammer across Imagination Technologies, the network has been identified as the top performing Yammer network for small-size organizations in the EMEA region, and second globally, in [SWOOP Analytics’ worldwide benchmarking](#).

Given the idea of Yammer was to connect Imagination Technologies’ 850+ employees scattered across the globe, and give them a place to collaborate, it’s perhaps no surprise the top performing Yammer community is a Cooking and Food community.

What has a cooking and food community got to do with work? Everything, when it comes to employees’ wellbeing and personal connections. It’s also the gateway to get employees onto Yammer. They may check into the cooking community but while they’re on Yammer they look at business groups and may be able to help solve a problem faced by a team in another part of the world.

“It seemed like we needed something during the pandemic that could replace that face-to-face contact that you would have in the office,” said Jo Jones, Senior Communications Manager at Imagination Technologies, which is headquartered in the UK.

“Something where people can just have a common meeting place, create some of those water cooler moments. Having a platform that’s a little bit more informal, a bit more friendly, a bit more engaging.”

### Launching Yammer while working from home

Jo and her team launched Yammer in February with just a few communities – Ask Simon (CEO Simon Beresford-Wylie), Ask Nick (Chief HR Officer Nick Merry), Ask Steve (Chief Revenue Officer Steve Evans) and so on.



The actual launch took place in the monthly company all-hands meeting and Yammer was turned on straight afterwards.

“People used it straight away. Leaders can post, but you can post questions, and it’s the level of transparency,” Jo said.

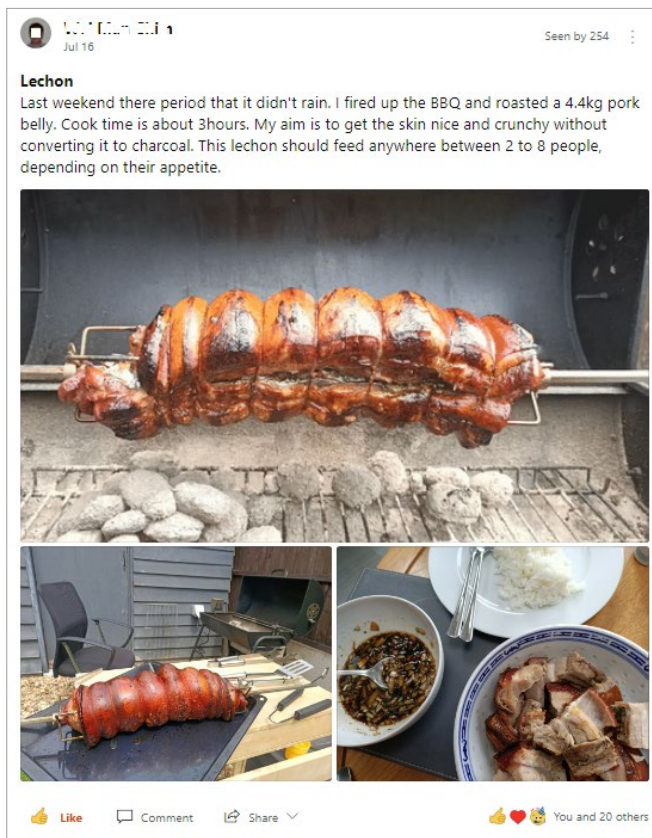
Straight away, questions were being asked and answered on Yammer and suddenly there was no need to duplicate answers across different teams, as everyone could access Yammer.

“Our leaders understood the importance of it and what their commitment would be to it,” Jo said, adding that most posts are responded to within an hour, and almost all within 24 hours, according to [SWOOP data](#).

About two weeks after the initial launch of Yammer, with the “Ask” communities, it was opened for anyone to create any Yammer community they wanted.

“We created a diversity and inclusion community, corporate social responsibility, IT and more. At the same time, we let people create their own team and social communities,” Jo said.

“Our people really like their food, it’s a shared passion and so it’s not a surprise that it’s a top performing community.”



A food post on Imagination Technologies' Yammer network.

All employees were already working in Microsoft Teams so they were encouraged to add the Communities app to Teams, and some basic tips on using Yammer were shared.

Jo said discussions in the cooking and food community are rich, and data from [SWOOP Analytics](#) shows it reaches across geographical and departmental divides.

"It helps to keep your culture alive," she said of Yammer's social-inspired communities.

"It's hard to have a culture when nobody is actually together, especially for new starters to understand what you as a company stand for, or how you interact with each other."

### **Come for the food, stay for the work**

Imagination Technologies also realizes the value of using social communities to draw people onto Yammer for work.

"I would ideally like everybody to be engaged with the senior team's post but I am happy if people are engaged in the cooking community, in the music production community, in the social communities, because if they're using it, they're more likely to then move over to the other communities," Jo said.

"They'll check it when they are there. I don't mind how I get them engaged, I just want to get them."

While some sceptics view Yammer as a social media platform, Jo said it's a business platform first and foremost.

### **Stop flying blind**

Following the launch of Yammer in February, Jo felt things were going well but she was flying blind without data to show her how the network was really performing.

"I could see things but it's a bit like an iceberg," she said.

"I could see the top of it, but I didn't really understand what was happening underneath, particularly from a geographical perspective. I could see a lot of names that I recognized engaging on it but I wasn't sure that the uptake was everywhere."

Jo was told about [SWOOP Analytics](#) from another UK company. SWOOP shows exactly who is connecting on Yammer, where there may be gaps in communication, and every measure can be identified by region, department, job title or any other segment.

"The key thing is I want to ensure that all our offices, all our countries are engaging with Yammer, but I can't do that unless I have some data on it," Jo said.

"That's why I went to SWOOP. It gives me more content and it helps me understand how I can support the senior team to improve things, like making sure they don't broadcast, that they actually respond, making sure they engage with other people's posts.

"I can see how we can improve everybody's experience and that's what SWOOP helps me do."

## Why the need for Yammer when you're already using Teams?

Prior to the launch of Yammer, everyone at Imagination Technologies was working on Microsoft Teams. That led Jo to question the need for Yammer. Why not just have some big teams on Teams?

After doing her research, Jo realized Yammer was an important platform for Imagination Technologies. Teams is for collaboration, working with your known teammates, or people across the business, to deliver a specific project.

Yammer communities are to share information.

"Whether it's the CEO providing an update on a senior appointment or it's a colleague sharing a recipe, they have different purposes," Jo said.

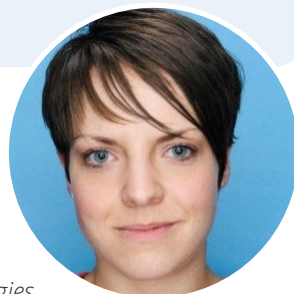
"There would be a big hole in our communications if we didn't have Yammer because I don't know where a lot of these conversations would have taken place."

Imagination Technologies has monthly all-hands meetings where questions are encouraged. The agenda is always packed and almost always some questions are left without responses. Jo posts the unanswered questions on Yammer, tagging in the person who asked, and the relevant leader to answer the question.

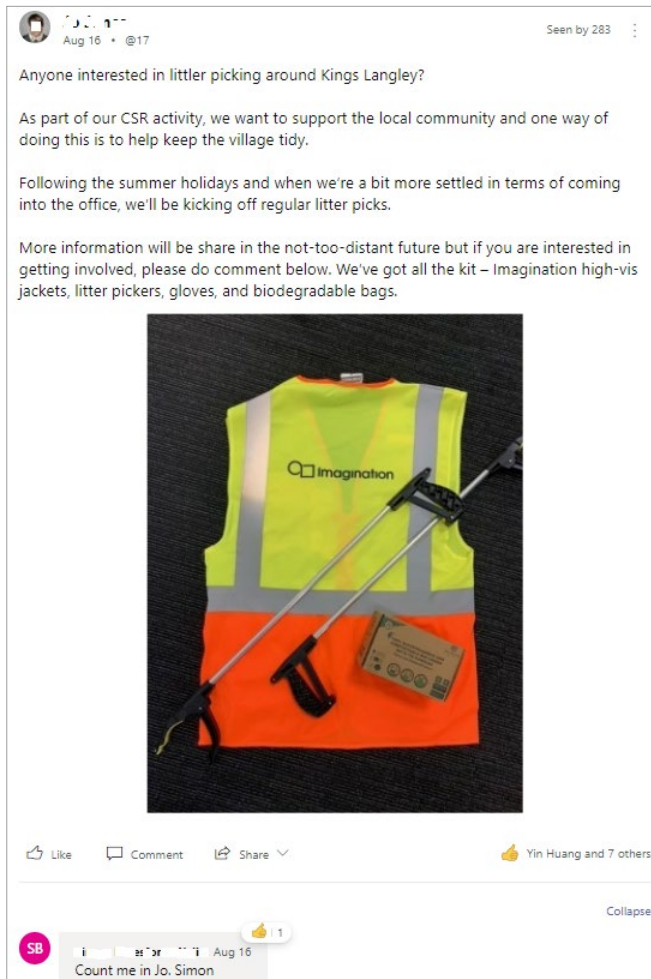
She also recognizes some questions may not be deemed as important to be included in the all-hands meeting, but they can be asked on Yammer.

"I think we would be missing out on so much conversation if we didn't have Yammer," Jo said.

"For example, we're really serious about corporate social responsibility and one of the things we're going to be doing in our head office is going out and doing litter picking in the local area. If you're not all in the office, without Yammer, how would you make people aware of that? Email everyone in the company? That seems a bit much."



*Jo Jones, Senior Communications Manager at Imagination Technologies.*



## Leveling the playing field with Yammer

Imagination Technologies' executive management is based in the UK but employees are dispersed across the world. As much as the organization tries to be inclusive with every employee, it's hard for overseas-based employees to feel as connected with leaders as those who see them face-to-face in the UK, especially when international travel is on hold. However, with everyone working from home and everyone having only digital access to colleagues and leaders, no one receives any preferential treatment.

"Yammer levels the playing field because everybody has the same opportunity," Jo said.

"That's one benefit we've noticed in the company – it's easier to have a discussion with people in the same physical room. People who are brought in electronically can sometimes be left out unintentionally.

"With everyone working from home, it's levelled the playing field because everybody is digital. It's reset that and Teams and Yammer has continued that."

## 2.2.7 ANZ

### Nurturing connections through competitions, cooking and culture

With the COVID-19 pandemic putting many of Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited's (ANZ) ~50,000 employees in and out of lengthy lockdowns, Microsoft's Enterprise Social Network Yammer has gone from strength to strength in supporting ANZ's employees remain connected to each other, and the bank's culture and purpose.

ANZ prides itself on being a vibrant, diverse and inclusive workplace focused on employees' wellbeing, strong connections with customers, innovation and informed decision making. A quick glance at the data from ANZ's Yammer network reveals the bank is achieving its goals.

ANZ ranked No.1 in the world in SWOOP Analytics' 2021 Yammer Benchmarking for large-size organizations based on measures for participation, people-to-people engagement, responsiveness, and innovation.

The bank also has some of the Most Engaging Posts for 2021 and Top Yammer communities, according to [SWOOP Analytics'](#) analysis. Community performance measures were based on the same measures applied at the enterprise level while the Most Engaging Posts were measured by the number of reactions, the cohesiveness of the discussion and the diversity of the participants.

ANZ's Most Engaging Post, identified by SWOOP, was from a well-respected senior leader who was leaving ANZ to join another company. Her farewell post was heartfelt and authentic, and led to hundreds of replies of thanks and best wishes.

#### Online competitions boosting engagement and morale

The second Most Engaging Post on ANZ's Yammer network identified by SWOOP's data was a post submitted as an entry for a cooking competition. What does a cooking competition have to do with work, you may ask?

ANZ's Digital Channels Adoption Manager, Richy Cartmell sums it up perfectly.

"It's bringing people together online because we can't do it in person," he said.

In fact, competitions have become more and more popular on ANZ's Yammer network since the pandemic first moved many people out of the physical workplace. Online competitions have kept people connected, brought some fun to work, and data from SWOOP shows connections are being formed across business segments.

Richy explains; "Our operations teams across several countries, including India and the Philippines, are extremely engaged and regularly run Yammer competitions to boost morale. They also have strong leadership support on Yammer.



"In late August 2021, ANZ's Institutional Operations Service Centre teams decided to run a cooking competition on Yammer. Teams were asked to submit pictures of food, dishes with recipes, and dishes from someone outside the team - to promote social connection - with extra points depending on what was submitted.

"One thing that made this competition unique and notable was that they encouraged people outside their broader team to jump into the thread and share a recipe; helping build relationships outside of their normal spheres."

**Sridhar Kubasad (BLR)**  
Aug 27 • Edited • @42  
Seen by 248

### INSTO YAMMER CHAMPIONS - ROUND 3

**OUTCOME FOR ROUND 3 TO BE DECIDED BASED ON :**

1. Dish Only = **5000 points**,
2. Dish with Recipe = **10000 points**,
3. Every Like = **100 points**
4. Dishes with recipes from any other supporter outside of service centres will get the team **15000 bonus points**

I am tagging stakeholders to make this competition spicy.

[#MAKEYOURCHOICE](#) [#DISHES](#) [#RECIPES](#) [#CROSSCOUNTRY](#) [#MERGERS](#) [#INSTOSC](#) [#IVG](#)

18 TEAMS – 5 ROUNDS – 1 TITLE

**"INSTO YAMMER CHAMPIONS"**

**ROUND 3**

TEAMS WITH MAXIMUM NO.OF DISHES ALONG WITH THE RECIPE CAN FLIP THE SCOREBOARD. YOU CAN INFLUENCE OTHER STAFF TO PARTICIPATE AND YOU CAN MERGE\* WITH OTHER TEAM FOR STAYING ALIVE IN THE COMPETITION.

**RULES:**

1. Challenge starts tomorrow at 6 am and ends on Wednesday 6 pm.
2. Top 4 teams cannot merge with each other but can influence other teams to merge along with points.
3. All the dishes and recipes needs to be posted on this chain of round 3.
4. Every post by a team member or staff supporting a team needs to mention the team they are supporting with a Hashtag. Ex: Sridhar K is not part of any team but wants to support Seven Pandas. Post the Dish and say [#supportsevenpandas](#).

Don't forget to hashtag [#MAKEYOURCHOICE](#) [#INSTOSC](#) [#IVG](#)

Love Comment Share

You and 22 others

Show 296 previous comments

Details of the cooking competition from ANZ's Institutional Operations Service Center teams, with extra points to bring in people from outside your team.

Team Genie Bond 007's Yammer post below, an entry to the competition, ranked as ANZ's second Most Engaging Post in SWOOP's 2021 benchmarking.

Posted in Insto Ops Service Centres

FA Aug 27 · @41 Seen by 190

**Genie Bond 007!**  
**Food is good, Food is love we can all agree on that.**  
 But what's better than just having it ?  
 Uploading sensual photos of food! Which is good!  
 Uploading sensual photos of food with recipes? Which is very very good!

#SupportGenieBond007  
**Post pictures of your dishes and share the recipes!**

#Makeyourchoice  
 #instosc  
 #IVG  
 #insto-win  
 #ROUND  
 #STEPCOUNT  
 #yammer  
 #teamgeniebond007

Like Comment Share and 43 others


Show 187 previous comments

Sep 2 · Edited 7

Lauki ke kofte :-)

**How to make lauki ke kofte ki sabji:**

- a. Squeeze the water from the grated lauki. Keep the water for further use. Now mix Lauki, besan, red chilli powder, coriander seeds, green chilli, coriander leaves and salt. Mix properly. Do not add any extra water. Now make kofta balls.
- b. Fry the koftas in oil on medium flame. Do not fry on high flame otherwise the koftas will be uncooked and gooey from inside. **Note:** if the koftas are not taking round ball shape then roll them in besan before deep frying.
- c. fry onions separately and In a blender add tomato, garlic & ginger. Make a fine paste.
- d. Heat ghee. Add cloves, cumin seeds, cardamom, cinnamon & bayleaf. Once the spices release the aroma add the paste & saute for some time.
- e. Once paste gets brown evenly add the red chilli powder, turmeric powder, coriander powder and salt. Again fry till all the masalas are nicely cooked.
- f. let it cook till the gravy releases oil.
- g. Add the lauki water and make the gravy of desired consistency.
- h. Boil the gravy. Finally add crushed kasuri methi and garam masala and again cook for 2-3 minute.
- i. Finally add the fried koftas. Cover & cook for another 4-5 minute.
- j. Garnish with slit green chillies and fresh finely chopped coriander.



ANZ's second Most Engaging Post in SWOOP's 2021 benchmarking, an entry for an online cooking competition.

While only 66 people contributed to the thread, those 66 people engaged with it multiple times. The thread garnered over 230 replies and 981 total reactions, with most comments boasting 20-30 likes or reactions.

Enterprise-wide, the Institutional Operations Service Center Yammer community is consistently amongst the most active communities on ANZ's Yammer network, with 81% of the 1,288 users interactive in the past 12 months. To be deemed an interactive user, someone must have engaged with a post beyond just reading it, i.e. reacting or replying.



"This community is naturally very active. It frequently appears on our list of most active communities, and I regularly see their posts in my Yammer home feed. It's nice to know that there are things bubbling away that are organically successful," Richy said.

The cooking competition was one of numerous competitions held on Yammer to engage staff and boost morale. Other popular competitions that resulted in off-the-chart engagement, and connecting geographically dispersed employees, included a "guess the number of jellybeans" competition run across the branch network. The competition helped launch a new insurance guide, aimed at taking the guesswork out of customers' insurance needs.

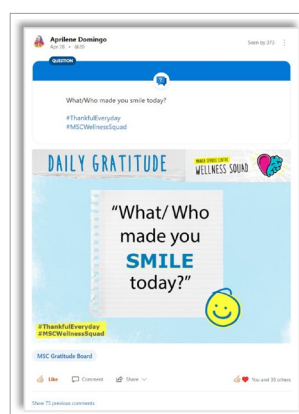
Across Australia, ANZ also ran an #OutOfDate campaign to support a new feature in ANZ's banking app. Employees were asked to share "out of date" photos of themselves. It was supported by leaders, including CEO Shayne Elliott, with the top 10 most-liked photos declared the winning entries.

### Connecting Philippines - #ThankfulEveryday

ANZ's Philippines-based employees have faced lengthy COVID-19 lockdowns which, unsurprisingly, are having an impact on morale. Data showed a fall in engagement on Yammer from the usually highly engaged teams in the Philippines.

A simple yet effective Yammer campaign was initiated by the Wellness Squad in the Manila Service Center to help employees struggling with lockdown, and to bring some positivity and social connection back to their days. It was called #ThankfulEveryday. This campaign, along with others, resulted in the "Connecting Philippines" Yammer community being ranked in the top three communities on ANZ's Yammer network in SWOOP's 2021 benchmarking.

The #ThankfulEveryday campaign ran on Yammer between April and July 2021 with simple gratitude posts asking questions like; "What's one thing you are most grateful for in your daily life?" or "What/Who made you smile today?". In total, 26 Posts, 850 replies and almost 4,500 reactions were made.



"It was a way to uplift our people who are in lockdown by focusing on the positive side of life," Richy said.

He noted that the Philippines-based teams are very social across the network and they're most active when sharing amongst their peers in their local communities.

This campaign worked well because it gave people the opportunity to connect informally again, as they might have done in the office before the pandemic.

"The top three conversations from this campaign all had a positive sentiment score over 95% which is well above average," Richy said.

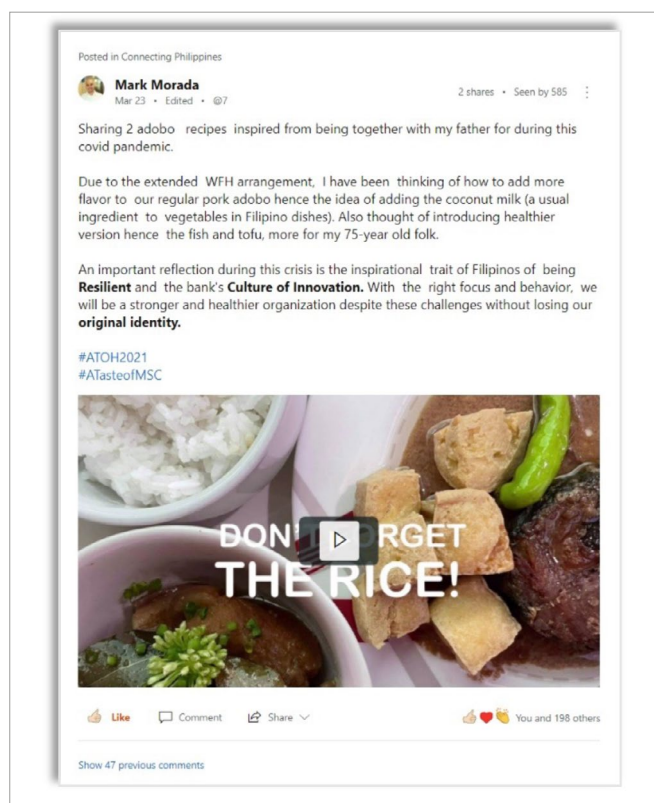
### A Taste of Harmony

Another initiative to boost the Connecting Philippines community activity was the Taste of Harmony campaign, which celebrates cultural diversity in the workplace through food; something ANZ participates in every year.

Mark Morada shared his traditional Adobo recipe in the Connecting Philippines Yammer community after staff in the Manila Service Center were asked to share their recipes.

The three people with the highest number of points, judged on interpretation of the theme, presentation, storytelling, and Yammer engagement would receive a voucher.

Mark, a well-known face and currently No.1 on SWOOP's Influential People list for the Connecting Philippines community, shared his Adobo recipes with the hashtag #ATasteofMSC2021. In total, there were 23 posts for the campaign, 328 replies and almost 1,400 reactions.



## A big conversation starter – authentic questions from CEO Shayne Elliot

A very successful YamJam (a moderated, live Q&A/town hall-type event held on Yammer) about the future of work was held across ANZ in 2020. A follow-up YamJam was organised to engage people in a global conversation to help shape ANZ's "next normal".

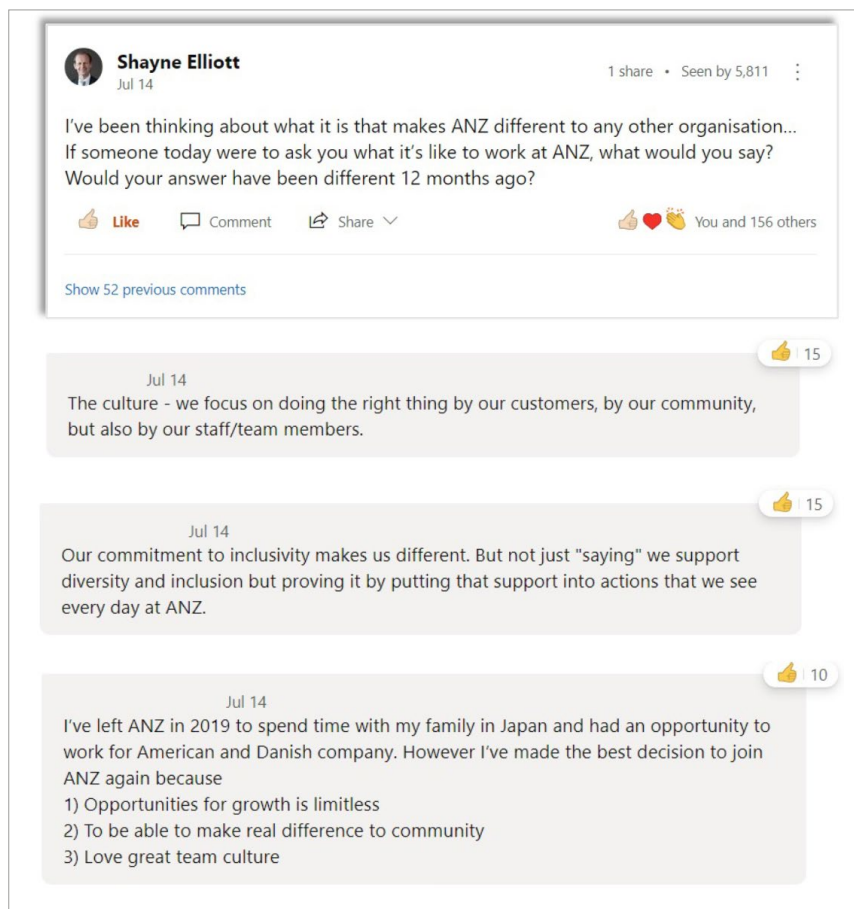
Following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns at many of ANZ's locations, the YamJam was postponed but CEO Shayne Elliott still asked a powerful question in the "Big Conversation" Yammer community.

"I've been thinking about what it is that makes ANZ different to any other organization....," he asked.

"If someone today were to ask you what it's like to work at ANZ, what would you say? Would your answer have been different 12 months ago?"

Richy featured the post on Yammer for a week. It was also featured on ANZ's intranet homepage and included in some employee emails. The post was seen by more than 5,800 employees and garnered more than 50 comments.

"The sentiment of the conversation was very positive, with most people giving multiple reasons why ANZ stands out, and why our culture is important to them," Richy said.



The screenshot shows a Yammer post by Shayne Elliott from July 14. The post text is: "I've been thinking about what it is that makes ANZ different to any other organisation... If someone today were to ask you what it's like to work at ANZ, what would you say? Would your answer have been different 12 months ago?". The post has 1 share and was seen by 5,811 people. It includes interaction buttons for Like, Comment, and Share, and shows 15 likes. Below the post are three comments, each with a date of Jul 14 and a like count: 15, 15, and 10.

**Shayne Elliott**  
Jul 14  
1 share • Seen by 5,811

I've been thinking about what it is that makes ANZ different to any other organisation...  
If someone today were to ask you what it's like to work at ANZ, what would you say?  
Would your answer have been different 12 months ago?

Like Comment Share

You and 156 others

Show 52 previous comments

Jul 14 15  
The culture - we focus on doing the right thing by our customers, by our community, but also by our staff/team members.

Jul 14 15  
Our commitment to inclusivity makes us different. But not just "saying" we support diversity and inclusion but proving it by putting that support into actions that we see every day at ANZ.

Jul 14 10  
I've left ANZ in 2019 to spend time with my family in Japan and had an opportunity to work for American and Danish company. However I've made the best decision to join ANZ again because  
1) Opportunities for growth is limitless  
2) To be able to make real difference to community  
3) Love great team culture

## A focus on employees' wellbeing

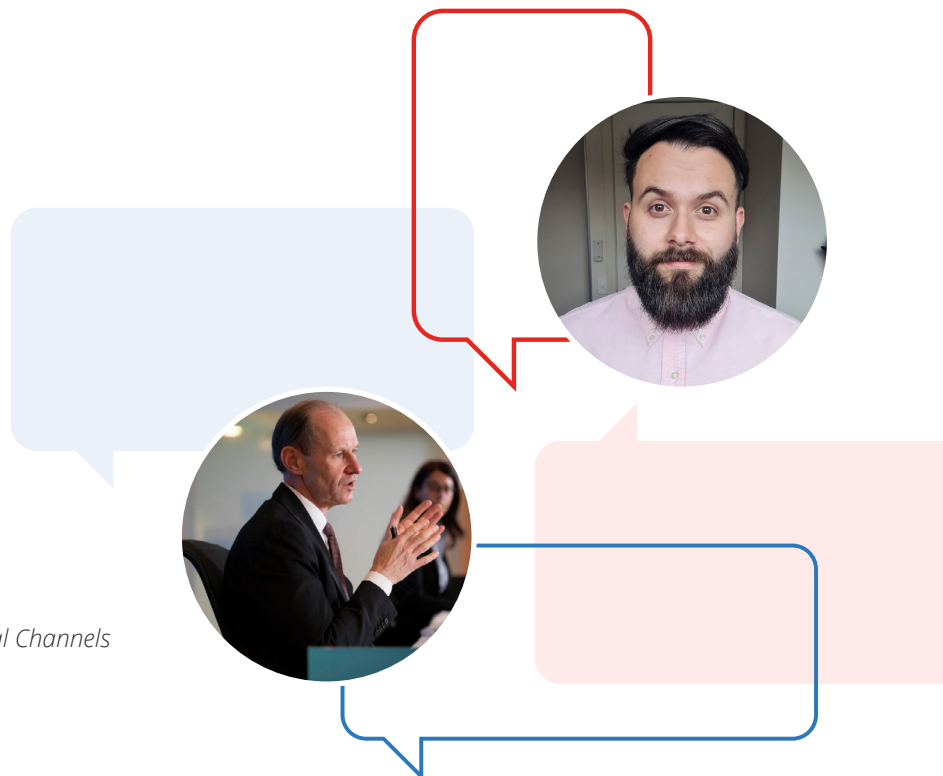
The four Most Engaging Posts on ANZ's Yammer network related to wellbeing and company culture; and the top two Yammer communities - Connecting Philippines and a Talent & Culture community - had a big focus on wellbeing in the six-month period of SWOOP's benchmarking analysis.

Richy explained that while ANZ has made a concerted effort to keep health and wellbeing front and center, he believes its success in driving engagement across Yammer is a result of employees' increased desire to stay connected during the pandemic.

"The longer the pandemic runs, we're seeing more Yammer communities being created that are based less on hierarchy," Richy said.

"We've seen communities of interest created, many with a wellbeing focus, that enable people to connect outside of their immediate team and bridge the silos of organizational structure."

He said there was no doubt people are feeling fatigued as a result of the pandemic and lockdowns; applying a wellbeing lens to Yammer provides plenty of opportunities to bring fun and social connection to the digital workspace.



*From left: Shayne Elliott, CEO; Richy Cartmell, Digital Channels Adoption Manager.*

## 2.2.8 Medibank

Australia's largest private health insurer breaks the record for consistency, becoming the only Yammer network to be among SWOOP's top three performers globally for medium-sized organizations for four consecutive years.

- Hear directly from Medibank about how it is using Yammer to connect frontline workers with head office and executives, keeping them up to date during an ever-changing COVID-19 environment in this webinar - [Stories from the Frontline: How collaboration and communication is connecting communities](#).
- In these case studies you'll learn [how Medibank made the decision to transition to a virtual business with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic looming](#) and how [authentic leadership is at the heart of Medibank's 'conversation culture'](#).

The Medibank logo is displayed in a white speech bubble with a grey border. The word "medibank" is written in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with "medi" in red and "bank" in blue. The speech bubble is connected to the top of the page by a blue line and to the right side by a red line.

## 2.2.9 NRMA

Australia's largest member organization NRMA comes in at No.1 for small size organizations in the APAC region and is another consistent collaboration champion in SWOOP's benchmarking analysis.

- Learn how [NRMA is forming a human connection in the digital world in this webinar and connecting frontline workers during the pandemic](#).
- Read how [SWOOP is delivering the magic to those dedicated to providing help at NRMA](#).
- [NRMA explains how to unlock the power of Yammer in this SWOOP Chat presentation](#).
- Watch this interview to learn how [NRMA is using SWOOP to drive stakeholder engagement](#).

The NRMA logo is displayed in a white speech bubble with a grey border. The logo features a blue crest with wings above the letters "NRMA" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The speech bubble is connected to the left side of the page by a blue line and to the bottom by a red line.

## 2.3 Best Communities

We used our anonymous ranking and assessment measures to identify the Top Yammer Communities.

### 2.3.1 KFC

#### Be your best self on Yammer

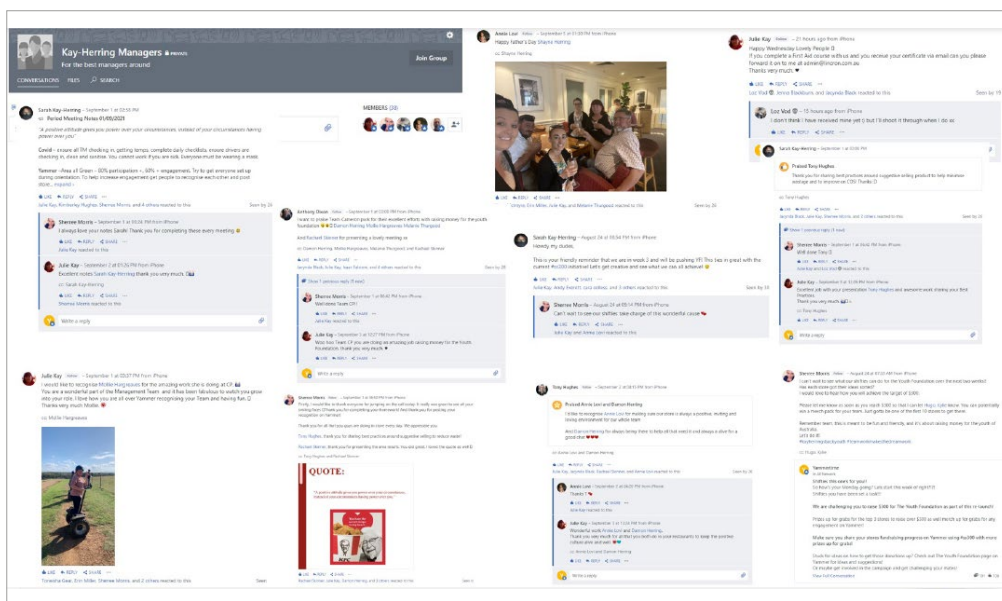
Colonel Sanders would be proud to know five of the top 20 Yammer communities from the 4,300+ analyzed by [SWOOP Analytics](#) in 2021 belong to [KFC Australia \(KFC\)](#).

There is a common theme among these top-performing communities – they all engage employees with a focus on recognizing achievements and amplifying KFC's promise to their people – to be your best self, make a difference, and have fun!

Coming in at No.7 from the 4,300+ Yammer communities measured in [SWOOP Analytics' 2021 Yammer Benchmarking](#) analysis is a community called "Kay-Herring Managers". It's a place where managers from KFC's Cessnock and Kurri Kurri restaurants in the New South Wales Hunter Valley, north of Sydney, go to share ideas, tips and tricks for training and running shifts, recognition of their staff and to generally collaborate openly and transparently.

Additionally, Area Coaches use the Yammer community as a way to reinforce messages that are discussed in team meetings, or updates on current areas of focus.

There are about 30 users in the community, and data from SWOOP shows 92% are engaged in the Yammer community, with a 95% response rate to posts. Almost all posts @mention colleagues and call out a job well done.

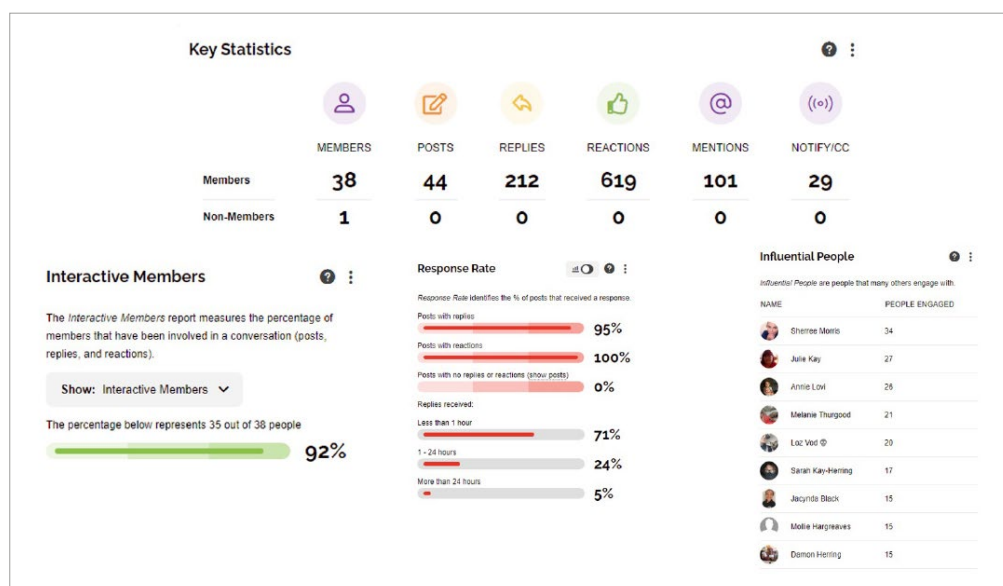


Some Yammer posts from the Kay-Herring Managers community.

The Cessnock and Kurri Kurri restaurants are owned by franchise partners Julie Kay and Shayne Herring. They've embraced Yammer across their workplace to recognize their team, reinforce new in-restaurant procedures, announce competitions and winners, and share training information. On average there are at least three posts a day on each restaurant's Yammer community feed.

KFC Australia's Internal Marketing Officer, Holly Broadhurst, said; "It's no surprise the collaboration in these restaurants' Yammer communities are so high because the franchise partner and their managers are always engaging on the platform.

"Whether through recognizing team members, sharing ideas and reflecting the culture of fun within the restaurants, they are always having two-way conversation with their teams."



Data from SWOOP Analytics from the Kay-Herring Managers Yammer community.

The Cessnock restaurant became the first independently franchised KFC restaurant in Australia in 1987 and has been owned and operated by the Kay family since that time. In 2008, they expanded into nearby Kurri Kurri.

"You can interact with your team and keep the focus on fun; that's what I love most about Yammer," said owner Julie Kay.

"We encourage new team members to share more about themselves by asking them five fun facts through the community. Asking new team members this, most of whom are teenagers working at KFC as their after-school job, is a great way to keep employees engaged, especially during the uncertainty in the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Additionally, if modules and skills assessments are to be completed, we can communicate these requirements to our team through the Yammer community."

## Riley's Yammer questions

Riley Walsh is a 17-year-old high school student who works at the KFC Newcastle restaurant in NSW. He is one of the most influential people on KFC's Yammer network. He has done this through his engaging and fun posts with team members from across KFC's more than 700 restaurants nationally.

The results speak for themselves as, according to SWOOP's measures, Riley's Yammer community "Riley's Yammer Questions" ranks as KFC's No.3 Top Yammer Community.

"He posts multiple times a day, asking people random questions. He might ask, 'What's everyone's favorite snack? What's your favorite season? Are you an indoors or outdoors person?'

"It's great to see a team member who is 17 years old finding his own way to engage with other team members, and he'll engage in every single campaign that we run. He will respond to almost every comment. Anything you tag him in, he's incredible; and his efforts provide so much fun for our teams. He's unstoppable."

Riley has found that Yammer at KFC has become a hobby he's enjoyed doing, especially during the pandemic. It has supported him in being his best self and helped him keep a positive frame of mind.

During the challenging times of the pandemic, KFC is passionate about supporting the mental health of its majority millennial-aged team. Yammer, as a community connection tool, supports the goals of KFC's Youth Foundation, an initiative that has undertaken a refreshed focus on the mental wellbeing of Australia's youth.

## Keeping colleagues connected

Part of Holly's role at KFC is to keep the restaurant's more than 40,000 people engaged and connected on Yammer. She does this by running campaigns on Yammer such as Friendly Friday, Thoughtful Thursday and many highlighting the [KFC Youth Foundation](#).

For more than 40,000 young Australians working at KFC restaurants, KFC will be their first training school, their second family and the place where they can be themselves outside of school and home.

KFC proudly provides team members with personal development, life skills, training initiatives, and wellbeing support to help them be their best selves, make a difference, and have fun.

With around three-quarters of common mental health problems emerging before the age of 25, millennials are under more pressure than ever.

The KFC Youth Foundation helps more young Australians beyond the walls of KFC restaurants. It's an opportunity to give young people the mental wellbeing skills and support they need now and into the future.

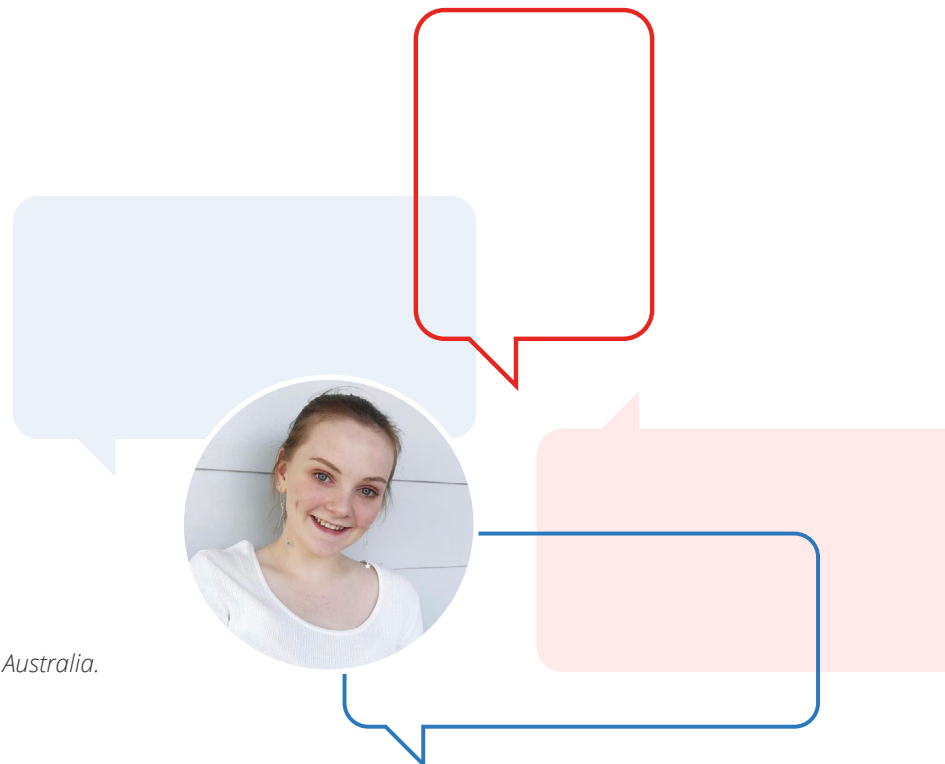


The Youth Foundation has three charity partners - The Black Dog Institute, ReachOut Australia and Whitelion, who are all helping young Australians thrive.

To date, the KFC Youth Foundation has raised more than \$5.6 million for its charity partner programs.

“The Yammer campaigns gather high engagement and buzz. They all link to our key focus on Yammer - be your best self, make a difference and have fun,” Holly said.

*KFC, a subsidiary of Yum! Brands, Inc., is a global chicken restaurant brand with a rich, decades-long history of success and innovation. It all started with one cook, Colonel Harland Sanders, who created a finger lickin' good recipe more than 75 years ago, a list of secret herbs and spices scratched out on the back of the door to his kitchen. Today KFC still follows his formula for success, with real cooks breading and freshly preparing our delicious chicken by hand in more than 24,000 restaurants in over 145 countries and territories around the world. For more information, visit [www.kfc.com.au](http://www.kfc.com.au).*



Holly Broadhurst, Internal Marketing Officer at KFC Australia.

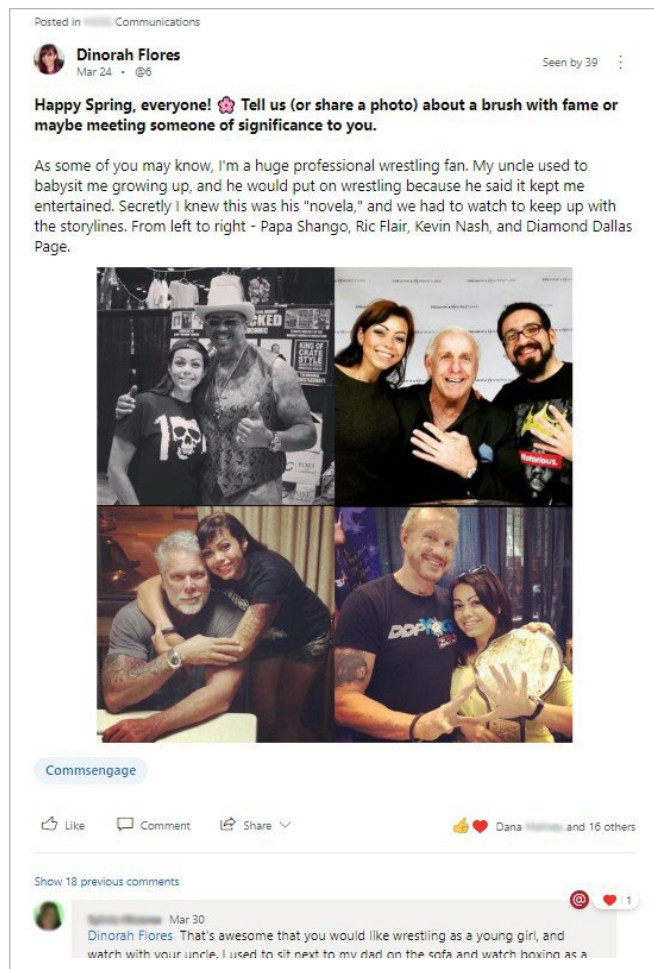
## 2.3.2 Major US health insurer

### A brush with fame

Who is the most famous person you've met?

Dinorah Flores is a huge professional wrestling fan so when she wanted to inject some conversation in her department's Yammer community while everyone was working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, she shared photos of herself and some of the famous wrestlers she has met.

It kicked off a "brush with fame" campaign on Yammer, asking colleagues to share their encounter with someone famous.



*Dinorah's brush with fame post on Yammer.*

A colleague shared a photo of herself with Duran Duran singer Simon Le Bon, which got lots of conversation going about the legendary English pop band. Then a manager surprised them all by revealing she had performed on America's Got Talent with her choir.

"I had no idea she was a singer, no idea she had been on the show," said Dinorah, an internal communications specialist and Yammer community manager at a major US health insurer.

It's this sort of conversation that kept the department connected and engaged during the work from home period, as well as allowing everyone to get to know their colleagues a little better.

"It got so many conversations started as people started asking about the posts, chatting to each other saying; 'Did you see so and so met...!'" Dinorah said.

"It tells you a little bit about that person at the same time. They met this famous person because of...or it gives you an insight into what they do. Maybe they were on a trip and they happened to bump into..."

So engaged and responsive is this Yammer community, it was ranked the No.4 Top Performing Yammer Community in [SWOOP Analytics' 2021 Yammer Benchmarking analysis](#) of more than 4,300+ Yammer communities worldwide.

## Using Yammer for praise

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dinorah's internal communication department's Yammer community was rarely used. That changed when departmental meetings were moved online and a strict 60-minute time limit was set. Traditionally, the end of the meeting was a time for managers to praise their staff.

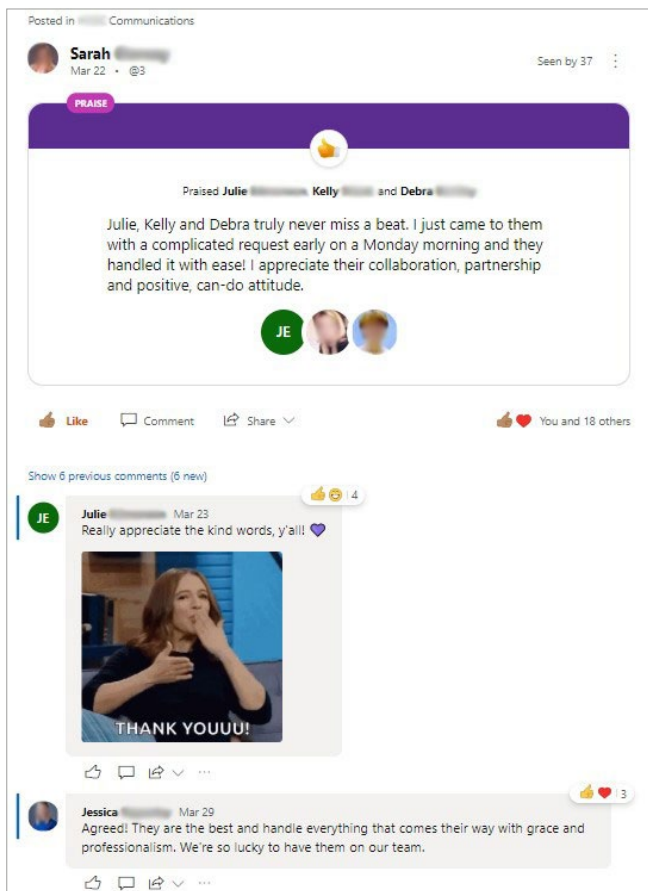
"One of the things that had to be cut was the praise moment because we had time constraints," Dinorah said.

"So they asked; 'Where can we put this?' I said; 'Hello, Yammer! Let's put it in Yammer'." That reinvigorated the entire internal communications Yammer community, which is now ranked No.4 in the world.

"Folks got involved, taking those praises and putting them in Yammer," Dinorah said.

"Everyone wants to be supportive and everyone wants that high five, so it was another way of getting folks in there to participate. That really made that reciprocity go up because as we were all being super supportive, we were all coming in and saying; 'Good job'.

"Folks were just taking to it, not just the managers – employees would go in on their own and just say; 'Hey, great job to this person for helping me out' and it just grew from there."



An example of a praise post in the communications department's Yammer community.

An interesting point Dinorah found by posting praise on Yammer was it seemed more authentic and considered than rushing praise out at the end of a physical meeting when everyone was trying to wrap it up and move on with their day.

"It's just helpful to get in there and start talking with one another without being burdensome or thinking; 'Hurry up and get through your praise, we have another meeting to get to,'" Dinorah said.

It also resulted in a lot more conversation and recognition in the replies to the original praise posts.

Following on from the success of the praise posts on Yammer, an engagement committee was formed to brainstorm ideas to further connect the teams on Yammer. That's when Dinorah came up with the idea of a brush with fame campaign.

Most likely, had it not been for the pandemic and the forced work from home environment, this Yammer community would not be the rich place of connection and conversation it currently is.

In total, there are 53 employees in the internal communications Yammer community. Data from [SWOOP Analytics](#) shows high levels of participation/involvement, people-to-people engagement and responsiveness.

Dinorah said as a result of getting employees onto Yammer through the praise and engagement campaigns, it's now become a place where work-related topics are commonly posted and discussed.

Dinorah runs a monthly benchmark report using data from [SWOOP Analytics](#) to track topics like the Most Influential Leader, Most Influential Employee, Most Engaging Conversation and Most Active Communities. All of a sudden, once the praise and engagement campaigns were taking off in the internal communications Yammer community, she saw the internal communications community rising to the top of the engagement measures.

Dinorah's plan now is to share these metrics across the organization to boost engagement across the health insurer's entire Yammer network of more than 30,000 employees.

### The power of social connections

While this US insurance company's Yammer network is primarily focused on using the digital platform for work, Dinorah said the importance of the "more personal content" in Yammer cannot be underestimated.

"It's the special interest that sometime brings some of these folks here," she said.

"We've had focus groups where people have told us; 'Yammer gets me through the day sometimes because I'll open up the Meow and Woof group and it has cute pictures of dogs'."



### 2.3.3 Leukaemia Foundation

## Celebrating the people of the Leukaemia Foundation

The [Leukaemia Foundation](#)'s sole purpose is to help people with blood cancer. Given its focus on supporting and caring for people, it's apt the Leukaemia Foundation's "Celebrating our People" Yammer community was identified among the top five in [SWOOP Analytics' worldwide benchmarking analysis](#).

The Celebrating our People Yammer community has become a reflection of the culture at the Leukaemia Foundation of caring deeply about patients and staff. Yammer is a place where people share stories on their commitment to patients and their families, reinforcing every employee's purpose to be there every step of the way to help people living with blood cancer. It's this simple formula of sharing incredible stories that makes the community so powerful, says Susie Howard, the Leukaemia Foundation's General Manager Brand and Marketing.

With much of Australia in and out of lockdown during 2021, the Celebrating our People Yammer community has become the digital place to share stories that otherwise might be told in offices. It has also been a place where the Foundation's new CEO Chris Tanti has been able to connect with his people when he has been in lockdown in Melbourne, unable to meet in-person with the 185 employees of the Leukaemia Foundation scattered across Australia.

Chris joined the Leukaemia Foundation as CEO in February 2021 and had just a few months to travel the country to meet employees face-to-face before much of eastern Australia began to move into COVID-19-enforced lockdown. In May 2021, the Foundation switched from its former enterprise social network to Yammer, supported by its executive.

"As the new CEO, Chris takes great responsibility for making sure that people have a voice and that we're all empowered to ask questions and to take the lead with our work," Susie said.

"We're having an online experience that's quite warm that we would never normally get with our CEO, especially when he's in Melbourne locked down and we're elsewhere.

"It really demonstrates the value of this tool in bringing people together with a new CEO at a time where he can't physically be with us, no matter how much he wants to."

Susie shared the recent example of a post in the Celebrating our People Yammer community from Danielle Langelaar. The Leukaemia Foundation provides free accommodation for families from rural and remote areas undergoing treatment in the city. Danielle shared the story of a family who stayed in the accommodation while the mother was undergoing treatment.



Leukaemia  
Foundation®



**Danielle Langelaar**

Aug 12 • @8

Seen by 108

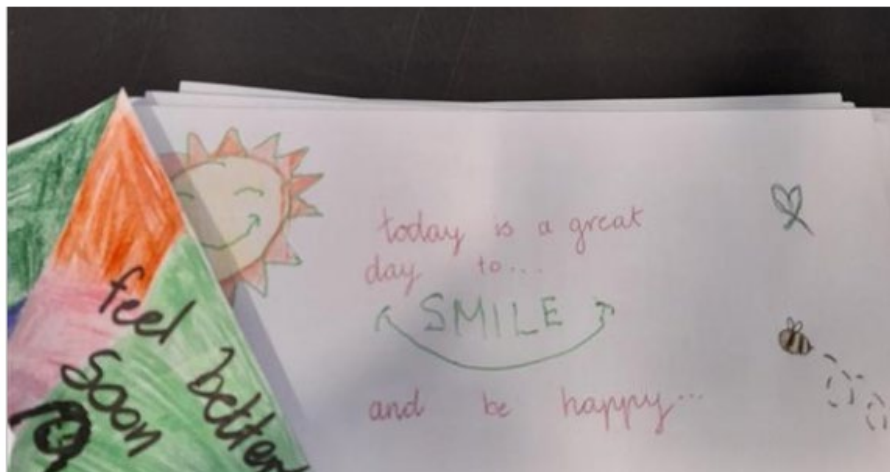
I wanted to share a few beautiful moments that I have experienced in the office this week.

When we talk about recognition to me it is these moments that really make me feel wonderful. The connections, the people, the experiences.....

One of families left our village a few months back. Mum, Dad and 3 beautiful children. Mum still going through treatment and looking at having a transplant soon...they popped in yesterday to pick up some mail and in their true style brought us 15 gift vouchers to give to our residents - just because. This family is also doing it tough and took the time with their children to do this for our residents. Really made my heart sing. Look at the picture below even taking the time to decorate them and make them feel so personal for some residents they haven't even met but know what they are going through.

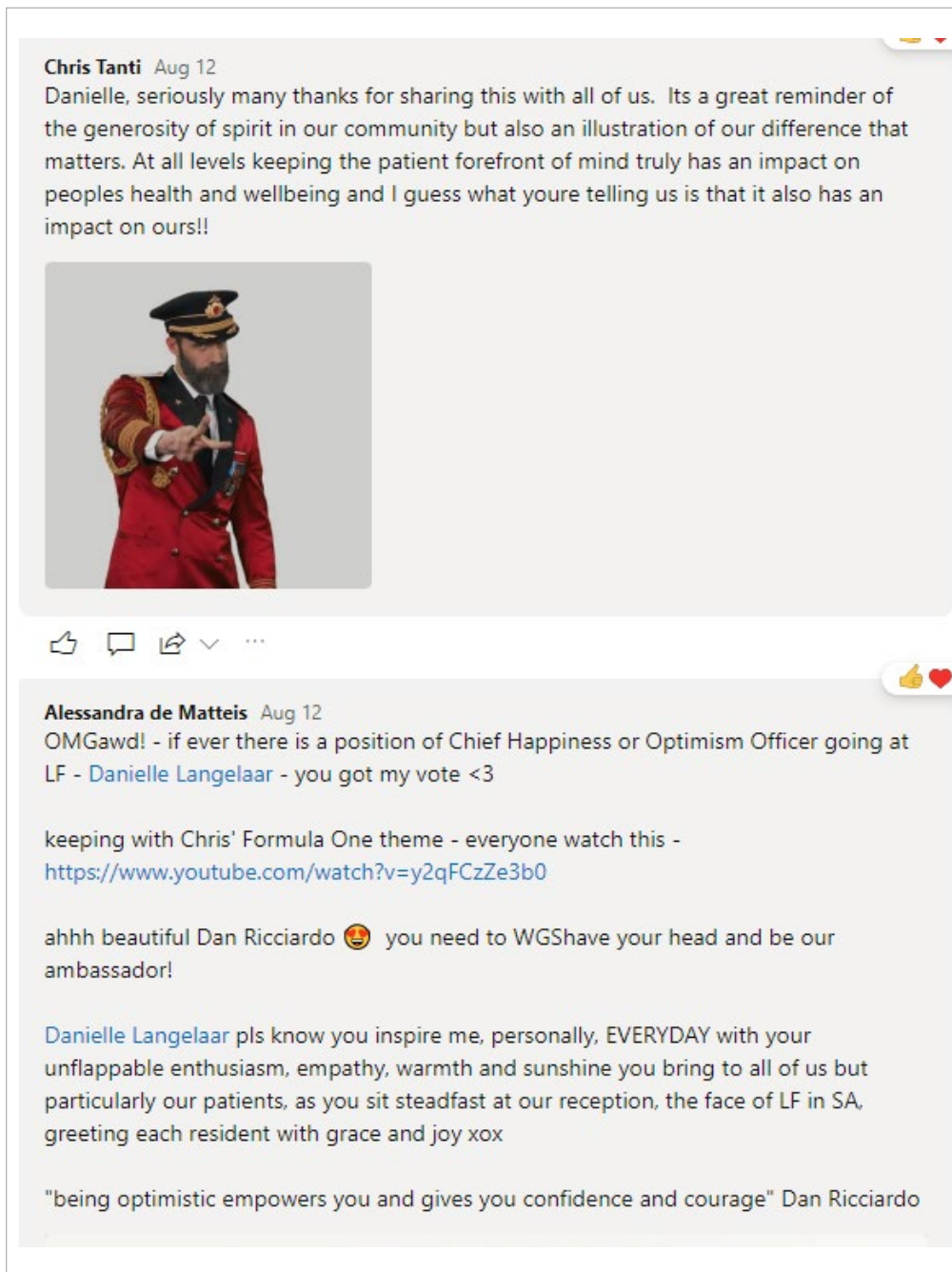
After yesterday's VOT session I felt so proud to work for the Leukaemia Foundation, so proud of our people and so glad to have Chris leading us as our CEO!!!!

see less



The first person to respond to Danielle's post was CEO Chris Tanti, proof he is listening to his people and sharing patients' journeys. More replies and rich conversations followed celebrating the story and Danielle herself.

Data from [SWOOP Analytics](#) shows Danielle is the only non-executive on the Leukaemia Foundation's Yammer network with a post in the top five Most Engaging Posts in the first three months of using Yammer.



"She was a late starter to Yammer through nerves of using it properly, but is now one of our top people in this space," Susie said.

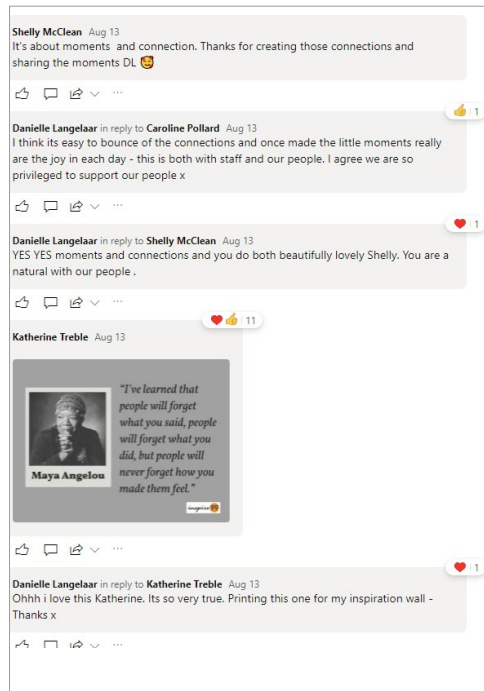
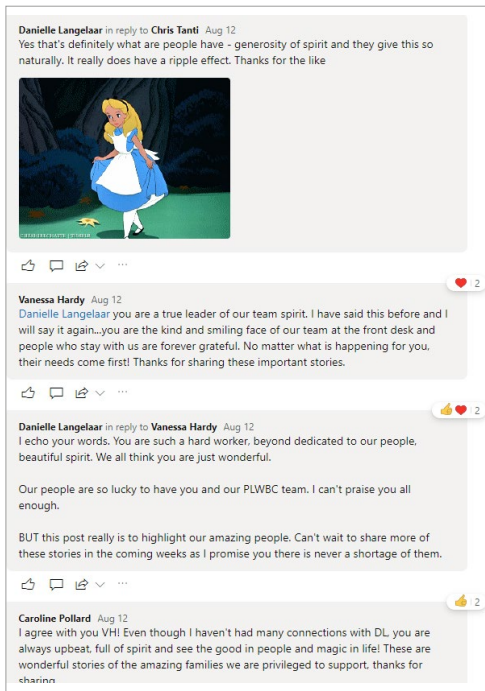
"We rely on the influencers like Danielle to really drive engagement because we don't have a team of internal communication professionals to lead by example and demonstrate the value of this communication tool for leaders and staff."

Susie said the post above is a perfect example of sharing the Leukaemia Foundation's value of caring deeply.

"This is a beautiful example of our culture in action," she said.

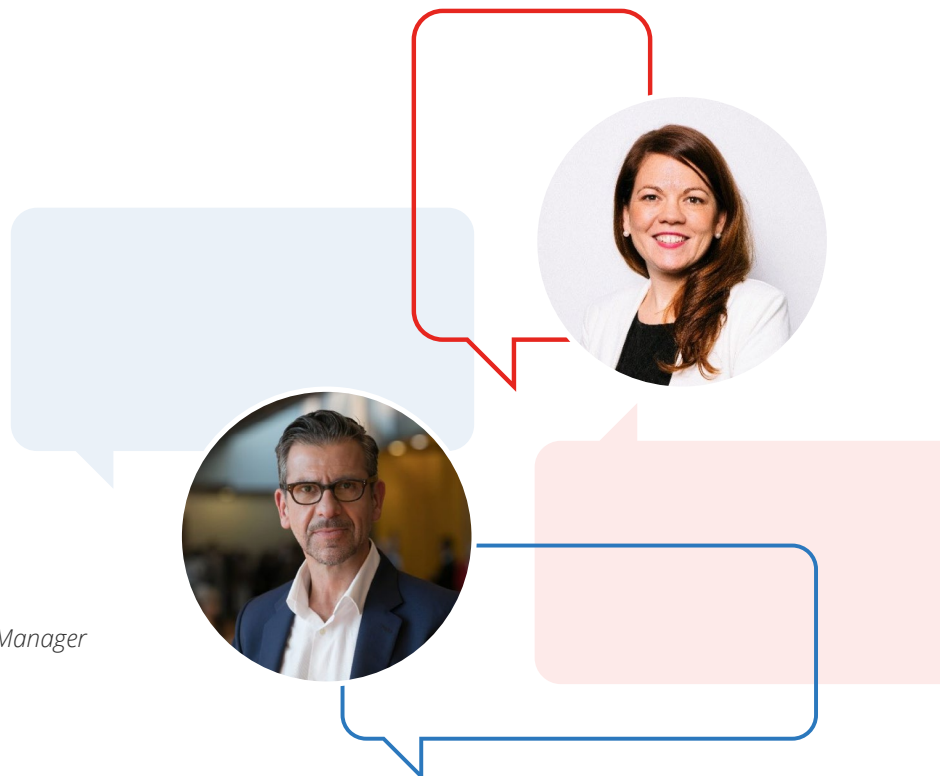


“People are celebrating Danielle and what we do and Yammer has shifted how we all connect with the people we support.”



More responses to Danielle's Yammer post.

For more than 45 years, the Leukaemia Foundation has been attacking every blood cancer, from every direction, in every way it can. It is committed to making sure every Australian with blood cancer gets access to the trusted information, best-practice treatment and the essential care they need.



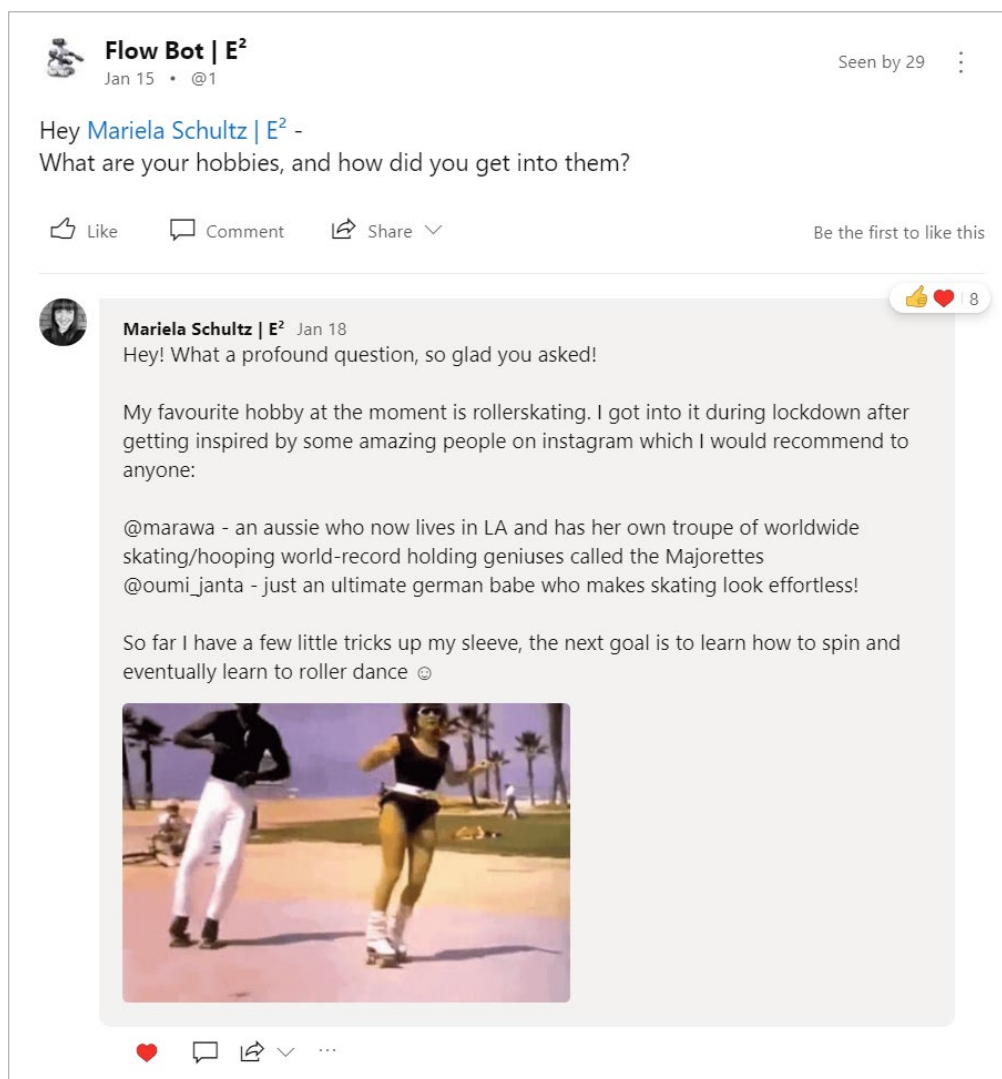
From left: Chris Tanti, CEO; Susie Howard, General Manager Brand and Marketing.

## 2.3.4 Engage Squared

### How a bot is helping with innovation

What's your favorite part of the workday? What's your favorite board game?  
How do you have your coffee? What's the last thing you do at night?

These are some of the random questions asked in consulting company [Engage Squared's](#) "Social" Yammer community. It's not another colleague who asks the arbitrary questions - it's a bot, named Flow Bot. The bot randomly @mentions an employee and asks them a question.



The screenshot shows a Yammer post from 'Flow Bot | E²' dated Jan 15. The post asks Mariela Schultz about her hobbies. Mariela's response, dated Jan 18, mentions roller skating and recommends Instagram accounts like @marawa and @oumi\_janta. She includes a photo of two people roller skating on a pink rink.

An example of a post from Flow Bot on Engage Squared's Yammer network.

The idea is Flow Bot gets people engaged on Yammer by asking them a personal question. It gets employees logging onto the enterprise social network so they may look around to see what else is being posted in other communities, it allows colleagues to learn a little more about each other, it gives everyone a break from the regular work day - hopefully

bringing some fun to work - and it allows employees to “practice” using Yammer in a safe environment, making them feel comfortable to use the digital platform.

### Can a social community be innovative?

Engage Squared’s “Social” Yammer community was ranked No.3 in the world for Most Innovative Communities in [SWOOP Analytics' 2021 Microsoft Yammer Benchmarking](#) analysis of more than 4,300 communities, the world’s most comprehensive analysis of Yammer networks.

The community ranked highly due its performance in three SWOOP measures aligned with innovation in communities: Diversity of experience in the membership (members are active in multiple other communities), Curiosity (a high proportion of posts and replies framed as questions) and %Catalysts (a high proportion of members that are able to provoke reactions and discussion).

While the Yammer community identified by SWOOP’s data is a social community, Engage Squared CEO Stephen Monk believes it is still a place of innovation.

“This community is an innovative space,” he said.

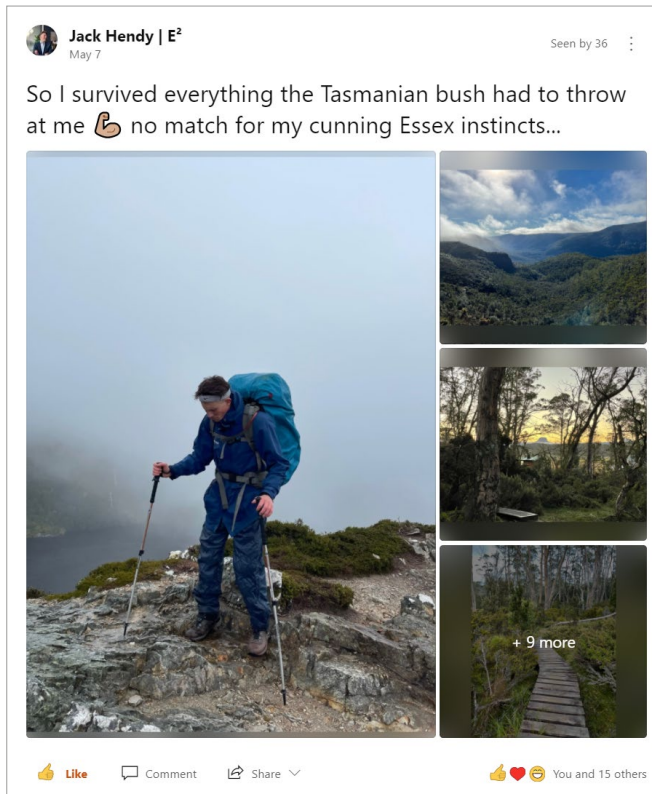
“It has a great mix of different contributors. People share everything from ideas about how to survive lockdown, to their personal achievements outside of work like launching their new art exhibition.

“And we have our social bot asking a randomly selected employee a fun question about their life each week to better connect the organization.”



*Elaine Batton, head of the Project Management Office at Engage Squared, shares a post about her art exhibition in the “Social” Yammer community.*

The Flow Bot doesn't dominate the community. It asks one question for about every four or five organic posts. Often the questions from Flow Bot lead to much longer discussion as more and more people join in the conversation.



Stephen said the conversations initiated by Flow Bot lighten the mood and put “people in a better head space”.

“Our team may not be solving work problems directly within this community, but they have better relationships and a better understanding of what their colleagues are up to, and therefore have a better ability to be creative in their work and solve problems together,” he said.

“It may not be immediately obvious in this community, but it is a key part of that.”

### Creating healthy and sustainable work practices

Stephen said using Flow Bot in Yammer was one way to try and create healthy and sustainable work practices, especially as employees across Australia and New Zealand had been so hard hit by COVID-19 enforced lockdowns in 2020 and 2021. He said while people don't seem to mind too much working from home, they do worry about the uncertainty of extended lockdowns, and often you can find yourself still at your computer at 4pm without taking a break because you're no longer moving around to chat in the office or see clients, or commuting to the office.

"We're trying to create a mindful culture where you're adopting work practices across the organization that are healthy and sustainable," Stephen said.

"This is just one of the things that we're doing that makes it clear that we care about working in a way that is sustainable, so you don't burn out staff, so they don't experience periods of low energy and so they are mindful about taking breaks.

"A lot of the stuff we're doing here, whilst we're trying to present it in a friendly way, we're engineering moments throughout the week where people in the organization are forced to stop working and step out of that grind and really connect with each other and form that human relationship.

"The really nice thing about Yammer is it's spontaneous and you can consume it when you want that moment."

### Taking a digital break from Microsoft Teams

Day-to-day work at Engage Squared is done in Microsoft Teams so the Flow Bot is a prompt to pull people into the Yammer community to have a non-work-related conversation, said Matt Dodd, Digital Workplace Consultant at Engage Squared.

"We live a lot of our life in Teams because we're focusing on work, so for a good chunk of people, Yammer is not the first place they will head. It's just a way to help pull people in and ask a question," he said of the bot.

"To get business value, you have to give personal value. I need to be commenting, liking, posting - it's those kinds of learned behaviors and role modelling which encourages social capital."

Stephen agreed about the need to move from Teams to Yammer as a break from the day-to-day, while also being cautious not to multiply work on different platforms. Be deliberate in making Yammer a catalyst for a more healthy and connected workplace.

"We tell our customers to be careful and conscious about the way they roll out Yammer; to clearly communicate to your staff the problem that Yammer will solve. If you don't, it will just end up being the same thing as the forums you had before," he said.

Mark Woodrow, Microsoft 365 Evangelist at Engage Squared, spoke of the diversity created in the "Social" Yammer community, and how knowing more about someone's life outside of work breaks down barriers at work, especially as everyone is working from home, without the spontaneous office conversations.

"There can be some random questions asked by Flow Bot but it's diversifying the conversation," he said.

"The bot helps us build relationships in the social group - which makes it easier to collaborate on work as colleagues."

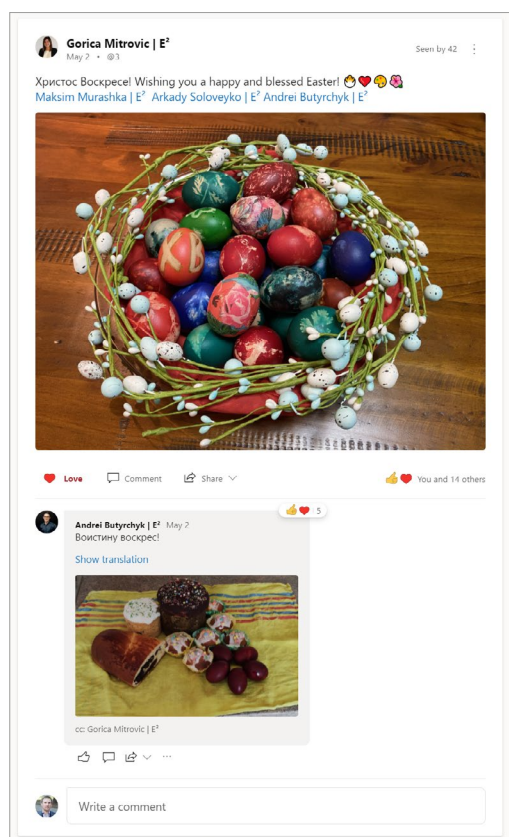
Matt said most posts in the social Yammer community are seen by about 60-80% of staff, according to data from [SWOOP Analytics](#), which reinforces it as a channel where people go to collaborate.

For Matt personally, he has only ever worked remotely at Engage Squared, yet he feels a greater sense of trust with his colleagues, most of whom he has never met face to face, than he did in former jobs.

“Underlying all this is that sense of trust and psychological safety that it gives you,” Matt said.

“It doesn’t matter that it’s a social group. The fact people are asking questions, building those connections, you can then take that and you can build onto that. It gives that underlying trust in your colleagues. You’ve got a much better sense of the people you are working with.

“You see that human side coming through on all our digital channels. It’s that digital landscape that builds that sense of trust.”



*A conversation between a team member in Australia and another in Engage Squared's Minsk office connecting over Orthodox Easter celebrations.*



*Clockwise from top left: Mark Woodrow, Microsoft 365 Evangelist; Matt Dodd, Digital Workplace Consultant; Stephen Monk, CEO.*

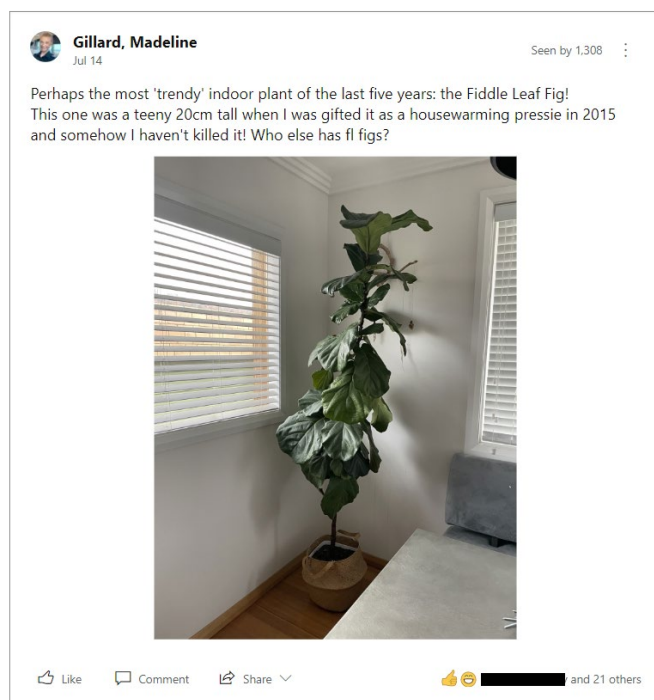
## 2.3.5 Victoria Police

### How plants lead to crime solving at Victoria Police

Sergeant Madeline Gillard armed herself with donuts when she walked into Mill Park Police Station in Melbourne's northern suburbs to spread the word about Yammer to her colleagues in blue.

In an organization traditionally averse to change, Sgt Gillard figured donuts would be an ice breaker to get the conversation started and convert her colleagues to Yammer. She needn't have bothered.

When Sgt Gillard walked into the police station, the inspector immediately recognized her as the owner of a two-meter high fiddle-leaf fig tree. He knew Sgt Gillard and her tree because he had seen her post on Yammer. He too had a two-meter high fiddle-leaf fig tree sitting in his office and conversation flowed from there. Others joined in the conversation, with some jokes about the inspector's forest in his office.



"Our work environment is so stark, it feels very clinical," Sgt Gillard said.

"It just initiated this entire discussion about how we can make our work environments more palatable."

What surprised Sgt Gillard was the fact that talking about plants opened up casual conversation between junior officers and their boss, an uncommon occurrence within police ranks.

“It was an instant ice breaker. It was a way to talk about how to improve upon what we already have in the workplace and it also cut down that barrier between the junior ranks and this high-ranking inspector, talking about plants of all things,” she said.

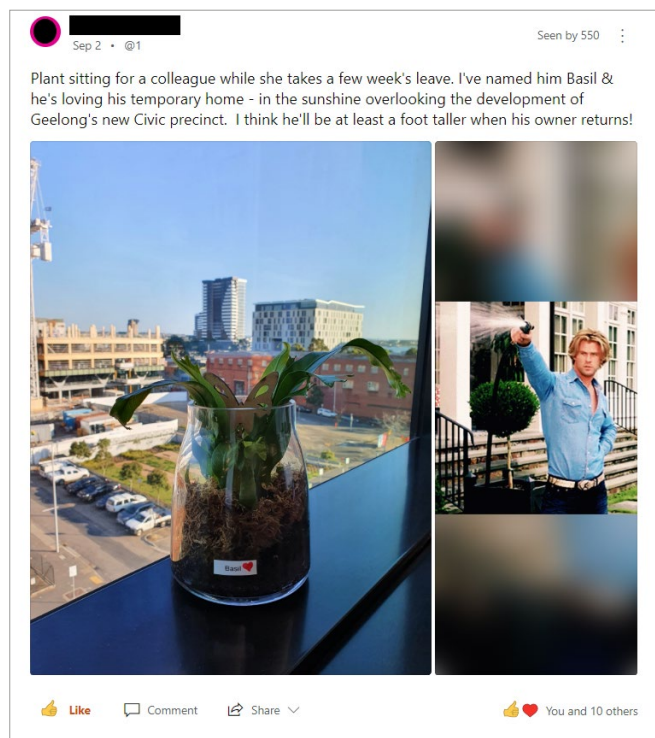
“The fact that Yammer was able to break down that barrier and enable a human conversation between the two, regardless of rank, it was an instant win.”

### Use social communities to get people comfortable using Yammer

Posting a photo in a plant group on Victoria Police’s Yammer network, which was rolled out to the more than 23,000 employees across the Australian state of Victoria in May 2021, sounds simple but the effects can be priceless.

This example of connecting and networking in social groups on Yammer shows the business value that can be created by forming connections that will later come into play in a business setting. Initially it’s about getting people onto Yammer and feeling comfortable using it, even if that means doing so via a group about plants.

The “Plant and garden enthusiasts of VICPOL” Yammer community was created by two officers working in high-stress units – one from a high-risk sex offenders unit and the other a detective from a regional family violence unit. Talking about plants brings some happiness to Victoria Police staff who have faced a challenging past two years experiencing and enforcing six COVID-19 lockdowns.



It turns out the Victoria Police plant community on Yammer is ranked among the top 10 in the world for Most Innovative Communities in [SWOOP Analytics' 2021 Microsoft Yammer](#)



[Benchmarking](#) analysis of more than 4,300 communities, the world's most comprehensive analysis of Yammer networks.

The community ranked so highly due its performance in three SWOOP measures that are aligned with innovation in communities: Diversity of experience in the membership (members are active in multiple other communities), Curiosity (a high proportion of posts and replies framed as questions) and %Catalysts (a high proportion of members that are able to provoke reactions and discussion).

## Developing networks with Yammer

Sgt Gillard said she's seen many engaging networks develop since Yammer was rolled out across Victoria Police a few months ago.

"I've got people saying to me that they've reconnected with people they haven't spoken to in 20 years just because they've seen their name pop up, I've had people saying; 'I didn't even know this work unit existed but because they posted in this group I saw them'," she said.

"We're already seeing those wins in such a short amount of time."

Sgt Gillard's story of walking into Mill Park Police Station is a perfect example of how a social Yammer community adds business value. She said the networking opportunities of social Yammer communities are huge, and with so many people working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these communities prove employees are engaged in their workplace.

"It's a way to feel connected and be connected, and to demonstrate to our employees that we're more than an employee number," Sgt Gillard said.

"We are people with lives and if we bring our lives to the workforce, then we're more likely to get greater business out of our people as well."

Data from [SWOOP Analytics](#) shows exactly who is connecting across the Victoria Police Yammer network and identify any gaps in communication. For example, if a specialist unit working on a case isn't collaborating with the local police station, the gap in communication can be immediately identified and rectified.

## How Yammer leads to crime solving

Prior to Yammer being rolled out across Victoria Police in May 2021, identifying offenders from CCTV footage was a long, time-consuming operation.

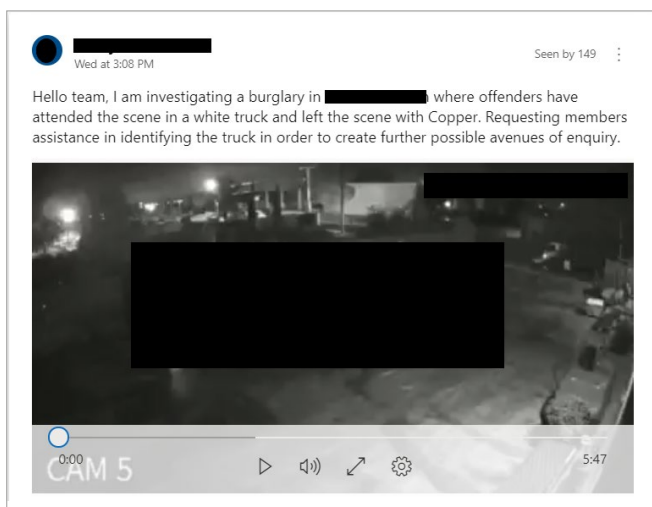
CCTV files were too big to email so the process involved sending video footage to an

intelligence unit, trawling through the footage to get a clear image of offenders, taking screen shots, formatting it and emailing it to those that needed it – hoping you get to the right people on the email list. This would take hours, if not days.

Once the email is sent, how do people know which offenders have already been identified? Do you ‘reply all’ or reply directly? Who might have missed the email?

“Since the implementation of Yammer, it’s as simple as dragging the video file across and hitting post,” said Sgt Gillard, sharing the example of the first time Yammer was used to share CCTV footage following an incident in Geelong.

“The efficiency was realized instantly in that case and the fact people could skip through six minutes of high-definition CCTV footage was a great win to demonstrate the operational benefits Yammer produces.”



## Piloting Yammer at Victoria Police

Before launching Yammer to the entire Victoria Police workforce, a pilot program was implemented.

Each police service area in Victoria Police has its own community Facebook page to keep citizens up to date with relevant, local information called Eyewatch. There are about 1,000 Eyewatch coordinators across the state who were given an early access to trial Yammer. To this group, the value of Yammer was immediately obvious. Australia Day was approaching in January 2021 and police were preparing for the annual occurrence of fireworks being mistakenly reported as gun shots.

Someone asked on Yammer if anyone had posted on Eyewatch a message about Australia Day fireworks and the dangers of illegal fireworks.

“So instead of everyone spending time on their own individual post, they could get together with a consistent message that suits Victoria Police, what we’re trying to achieve, it also has a WorkSafe line in it around dangers and all of a sudden we’ve got a consistent message that is tailored specifically to the community it’s being posted to,” Sgt Gillard said.

“We’re not reinventing the wheel.”



Examples of Eyewatch posts on Facebook.

### Finding a Yammer community manager within the ranks

As well as being a Yammer community manager, Sgt Gillard has a career in frontline operational and investigative policing and continues to work the beat on the frontline when needed. She believes having a Yammer community manager with real-life experience in the job brings instant trust.

“I’m casting an operational lens over all of this - I’m not coming from the ivory towers, I’m not coming from a communications background, I’m casting my mind to how can I make this platform work as a detective? How can I make this work as a copper on the van responding to 000 calls?” Sgt Gillard said.

“It really helps to build our employees’ trust and to be able to prove to them that Yammer is giving them the voice that they haven’t previously had. It’s sparking the conversations and it’s about two-way engagement rather than the broadcast comms that we’re so used to in our organization.”

Another win for Yammer has been the willingness of middle management to embrace it. Perhaps surprisingly, Sgt Gillard said many young employees haven’t jumped at Yammer but middle-aged employees – especially those who appreciate the change for the better – have embraced it.

Initially, the focus was executive buy-in for Yammer but Sgt Gillard said this didn’t work for Victoria Police. The power comes from middle management for engagement across Victoria

Police, something that can be measured with SWOOP Analytics.

"If I had my time again, I wouldn't focus so much on executive engagement in the first instance because it almost turned people off Yammer and they felt like they didn't have a voice because the leadership voices were too loud," she said.

"Because we do have a rank structure, people felt like it was the command and we're the observers.

"Having the sergeant or senior sergeant driving the roll-out has worked brilliantly, whereas if too much of it came from the executive level, it would turn people off in our environment."

### The value of data for evidence

Along with the launch of Yammer, Victoria Police also engaged SWOOP Analytics to measure Yammer usage across the police force.

"Police love evidence, and that's what SWOOP Analytics provides," Sgt Gillard said.

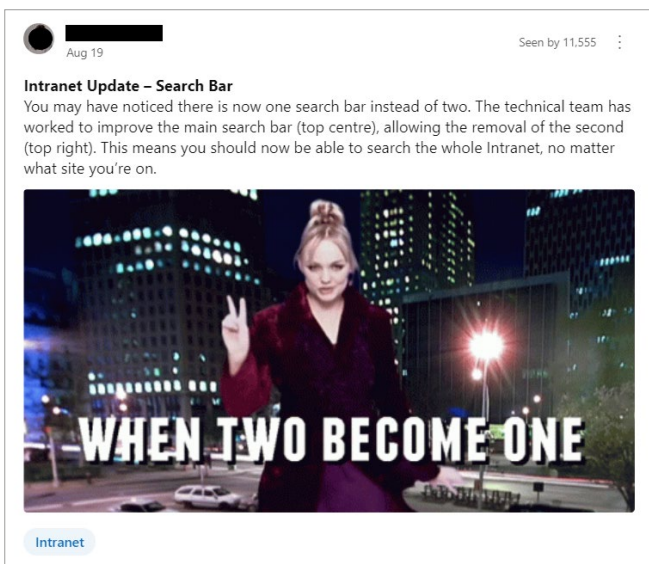
"We can share anecdotes of connections made and innovations achieved, but being able to use these in-depth analytics to give statistics and evidence is invaluable.

"We can demonstrate cross-department collaboration, and who's communicating with influence, in ways not previously possible."

SWOOP also allows Victoria Police to learn what communication strategies are working, and what areas they should focus on.

"It takes the guesswork out of our comms plans," Sgt Gillard said.

"We can help our leaders communicate effectively and efficiently, and show that their efforts are reaping rewards."



## 3 Show me the Numbers

In the following sections we provide the quantitative data and interpretations that underpin the success stories we have presented.

### 3.1 Making sense of the usage numbers

#### 3.1.1 Active User Counts

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced employees to work from home in March 2020, so began the “great digital collaboration platform race”. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Workplace from Meta, Cisco’s Webex, Google Meet and more are being measured by average daily or monthly users to determine the big winners.

By July 2021, Microsoft Teams had [250 million monthly active users of whom 80 million are using Teams to make an unscheduled call](#). Does this mean 170 million users are only using non-phone functions? Confusing?

Yammer usage statistics are harder to get hold of, however, in a [Microsoft blog post from August 2021](#) it says; **“Yammer usage has doubled year-over-year and now supports tens of millions of monthly active users worldwide”**.

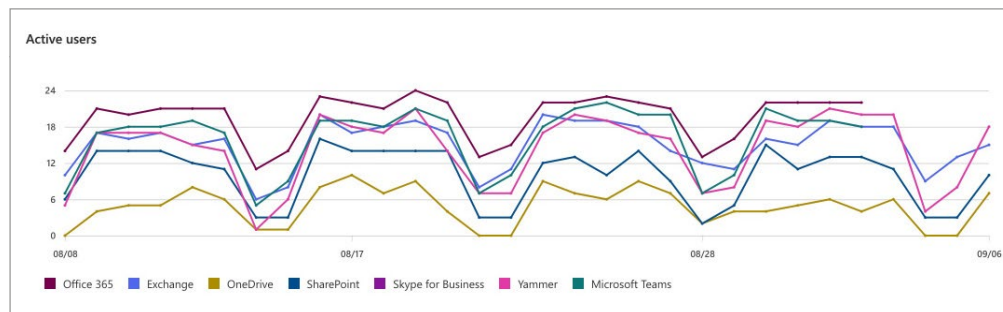
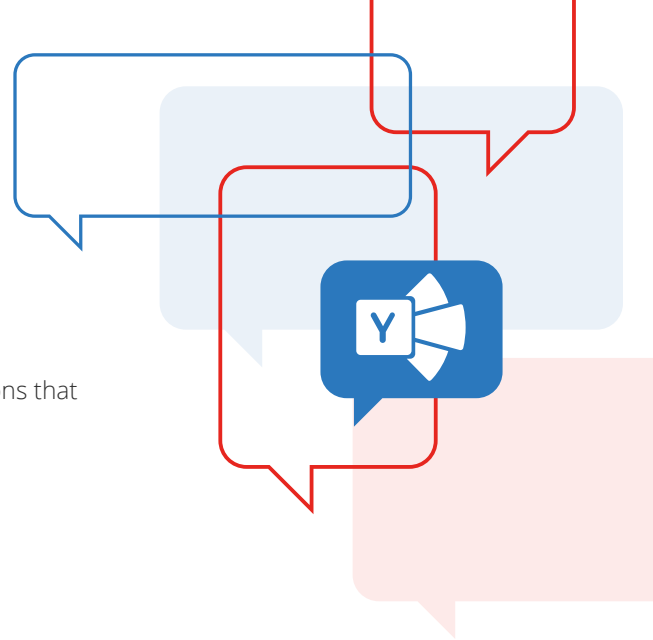


Figure 2 - Active users for each toolset.

If you are an email-centric company looking to drive more use of Teams and Yammer in place of email, this chart will provide a sense of who is using what. If your Yammer, Teams and email active users are tracking together, you can be confident your “Yammer reach” is similar to your Teams or email reach, even if the activity levels are much lower for Yammer.

#### 3.1.2 What SWOOP Counts

We recognize those companies using SWOOP Analytics are usually more mature Yammer users. Organizations new to Yammer are often happy to make do with the “out of the box” Yammer analytics. It’s usually when they mature to the stage where they are looking for deeper engagement insights that they will come to SWOOP. Until APIs are made available



by Microsoft, the SWOOP platform does not measure “reads”. We haven’t been too concerned to date as “reading” is passive, and the weakest signal of engagement. Our interests have been identifying the best and most engaged Yammer networks to learn from. That said, as we move into a new hybrid working world, understanding the “reach” of corporate communications is becoming more critical; which includes even passive participants.

In a prior [benchmarking study \(2018\)](#) we undertook a limited study capturing the number of “Yammer reads”. We found for every active Yammer user (someone who at least reacted to a post once over a six month period) there was nearly as many that only read on Yammer. We also found there were 30 “reads” for every “like”; a measure we have recently confirmed below.

### 3.1.3 Yammer and Microsoft 365 usage

As an update and expansion to this previous study, we analyzed almost 5,000 staff across four organizations - all leading Yammer networks - for their use of the full Microsoft 365 suite<sup>1</sup>. Using the Microsoft 365 Administration Reports we were able to identify not only the potential reach provided by the Yammer platform, but also the reach compared with other Microsoft 365 toolsets. Importantly, usage includes even minimalist passive activities like Yammer and email reads or accepting a Teams call.

The chart below identifies the %Participation rates across five Microsoft 365 toolsets.

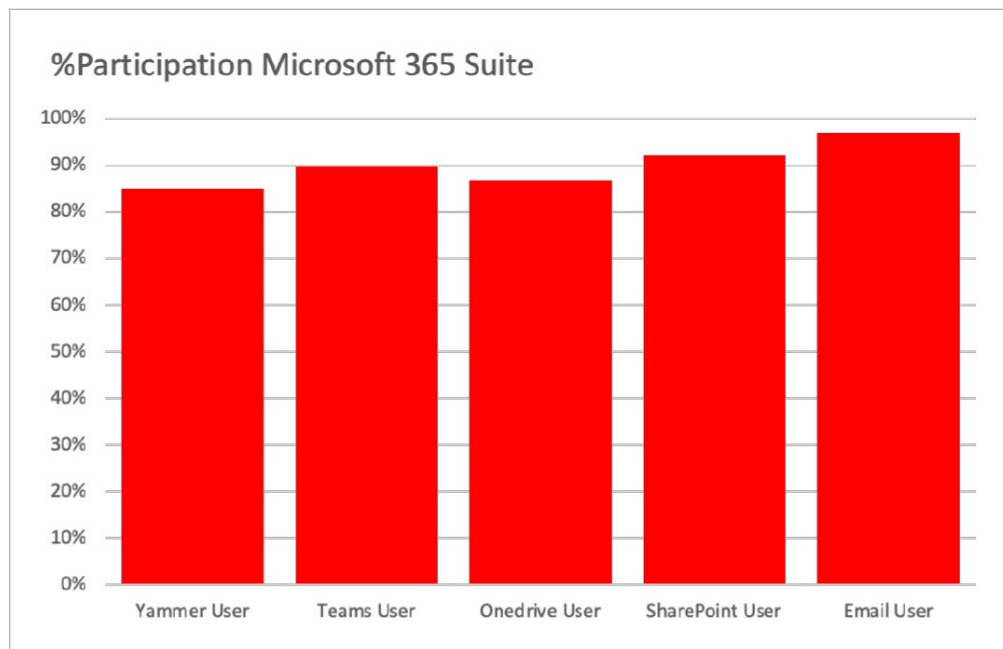


Figure 3 - %Participation rate Microsoft 365.

As a representative sample of leading Yammer sites, this is good news. The average Yammer participation rate of 85% is within close range of the ubiquitous email (97%). As we have long suspected, strong Yammer users are actually strong digital collaboration

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1 SWOOP is releasing a new product SWOOP for M365 in December 2021.

users across all platforms. In other words, healthy Yammer networks are associated with healthy Microsoft 365 networks.

### 3.1.4 The great Yammer retreat; or simply right-sizing?

While Microsoft states Yammer usage has doubled year-over-year, SWOOP's data found interactive Yammer usage (where someone has at least reacted to a post once in a six-month period) peaked around the sudden movement to work from home (WFH) in 2020, but has since fallen from this peak. One year on, in 2021, the average activity/organization was down by an average of 35%, with 87% of organizations experiencing a drop in interaction activity. This was not a one-off drop due to WFH. Comparing the 2021 activity rates with those of 2019, we also see a drop of a more modest average of 9%, though 83% of organizations had experienced lower levels of activity compared with the pre-COVID-19 period in 2019.

Several of our clients identified an uptake in activity when Yammer was made accessible directly through Outlook and Microsoft Teams. The new integrations of Yammer into Outlook and Teams may have indeed grown Yammer "readership", while at the same time active participation is dropping (active participation being at least a reaction to a post). We also believe that some of this growth has come from organizations newly implementing Yammer, many of whom are accessing Yammer through the Teams hub.

Should we be worried about the activity drop from relatively mature Yammer sites? We think it's a little premature to be concerned. It is clear the increased adoption of Microsoft Teams, while helpful for new Yammer adopters, is cannibalizing the growth in Yammer active use. In our discussion with clients the following reasons have been offered for the reduction in Yammer interaction activity:

- The enforced movement to Teams has resulted in some former Yammer activity migrating to Teams (often appropriately).
- As staff were forced to WFH and Teams became their default space, it became more natural to interact in Teams, rather than Yammer.
- Staff are feeling exhausted from prolonged WFH remote work and are therefore less energized to actively participate in Yammer.
- During COVID-19 many organizations reduced or furloughed staff, resulting in less staff able to participate than in previous years.

On a positive note, as we have reported in Yammer and Microsoft 365 usage, passive use of Yammer appears to be strong and likely growing. For every Yammer post or reply, there was on average 123 Yammer message reads; and an overall participation rate of 85%. While active interactions have dropped, staff are still using Yammer to stay informed.

We believe in this period of workplace flux and the rapid, often enforced, adoption of Teams, organizations are still grappling with just where their group activity should take place. Microsoft's labelling of groups in Teams as "Teams" and groups in Yammer as

“Communities” only modestly impacts where staff choose to create their groups. This is still work in progress. Our machine learning algorithms applied to both the Teams and Yammer platforms identifies a majority of groups that just don't fit either description well. Indeed, we have heard of instances where a group moved from Yammer to Teams and then back again, once the implications were experienced.

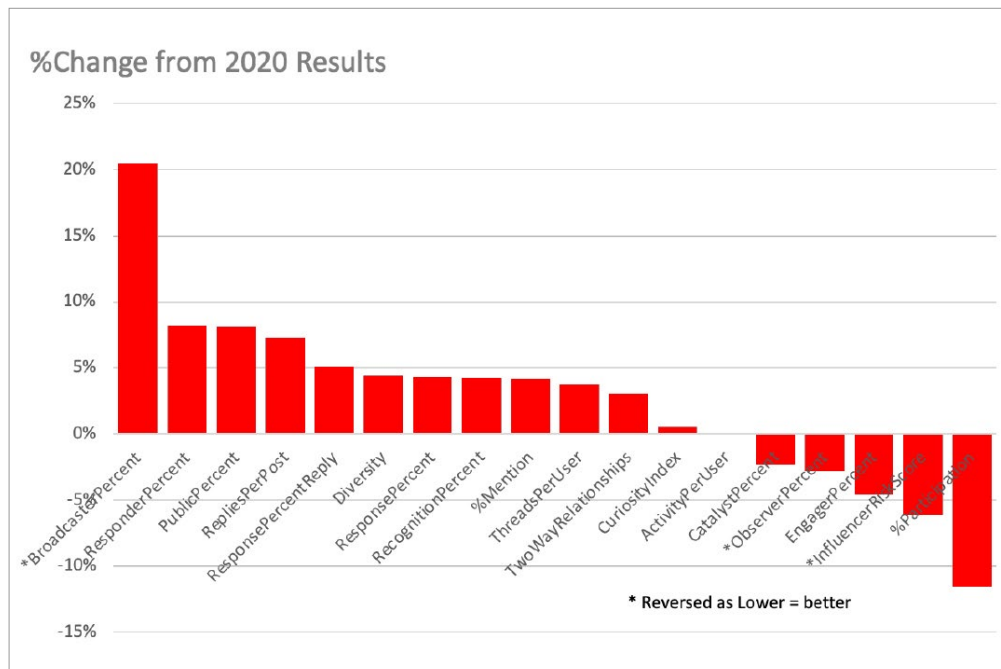


Figure 4- SWOOP indicators change from 2020.

The good news is the majority of indicators (12 of 18) are in positive territory. The biggest change was in the lower number of %Broadcasters, indicating that staff and their leaders are starting to appreciate the value of inviting responses. On the other side, the drop in %Participation has been discussed earlier. %Participation measures active participation (reads are not included).

### 3.2 SWOOP enterprise-level benchmarking results

We provide the most comprehensive benchmarking analysis of collaboration performance of organizations using Yammer, with actual Yammer interaction data. The dimensions for comparison are the result of more than a decade of applied research and development, focused specifically on social networking-enabled collaborative performance. This benchmarking report covers 75 organizations, 4,300+ communities with more than 2.8 million individuals and 13 million+ interactions, across the breadth of industry sectors. For 2021 we have purposefully reduced our sample of organizations from the 116 in 2020 to include only organizations for which we have data during the COVID-19 period. The majority were benchmarked from March 2021 to August 2021; a period where organizations were still in a state of flux and uncertainty around their future of work configuration. Despite the lower number of organizations in our 2021 benchmarking compared with 2020 benchmarking, the total staff monitored is 200,000 larger; meaning the average organization size benchmarked was significantly larger this year.



Our benchmarking report covers 75 organizations, 4,300+ communities with more than 2.8 million individuals and 13 million+ interactions.

Our Enterprise Social Network (ESN) benchmarking activities have identified the best performing enterprises. They have displayed the strongest performances on the key dimensions of responsiveness, engagement, participation and innovation. High performance on these dimensions cannot be achieved through simply sharing content. This year we follow the significantly upgraded assessment methodology. A total of 12 SWOOP indicators have been statistically identified as discriminating community performance and grouped into the four key dimensions.

### 3.2.1 Demographics

Our sample is formed from 75 organizations, with a minimum of 200 active participants.

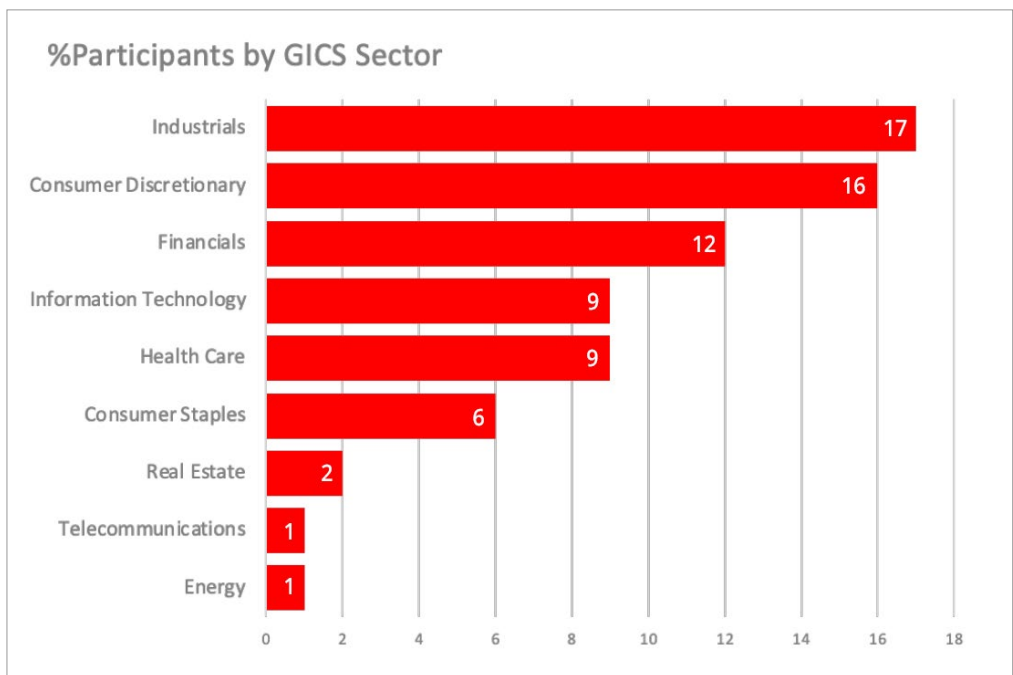


Figure 5 - GICS industry segmentation.

Using the Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS), we can see the sample has broad representation across multiple sectors. However, the strongest representations came from the Industrials (Manufacturing, Professional Services, Transport, Agriculture etc.), Consumer Discretionary (Consumer services, Education, Media, Leisure etc.) and Financials (mostly banking and insurance). [Information Technology](#), [Consumer Staples](#) and [Health Care](#) participation are amongst those predicted to be post-COVID-19 growth sectors.

### 3.2.2 Where are the biggest gaps between the best and worst?

Benchmarking offers the opportunity to learn from the measured highest performing organizations. Where large variances exist in a key maturity dimension, the strength of the opportunity is amplified. The following graph plots the average variances for each of the benchmarked dimensions:

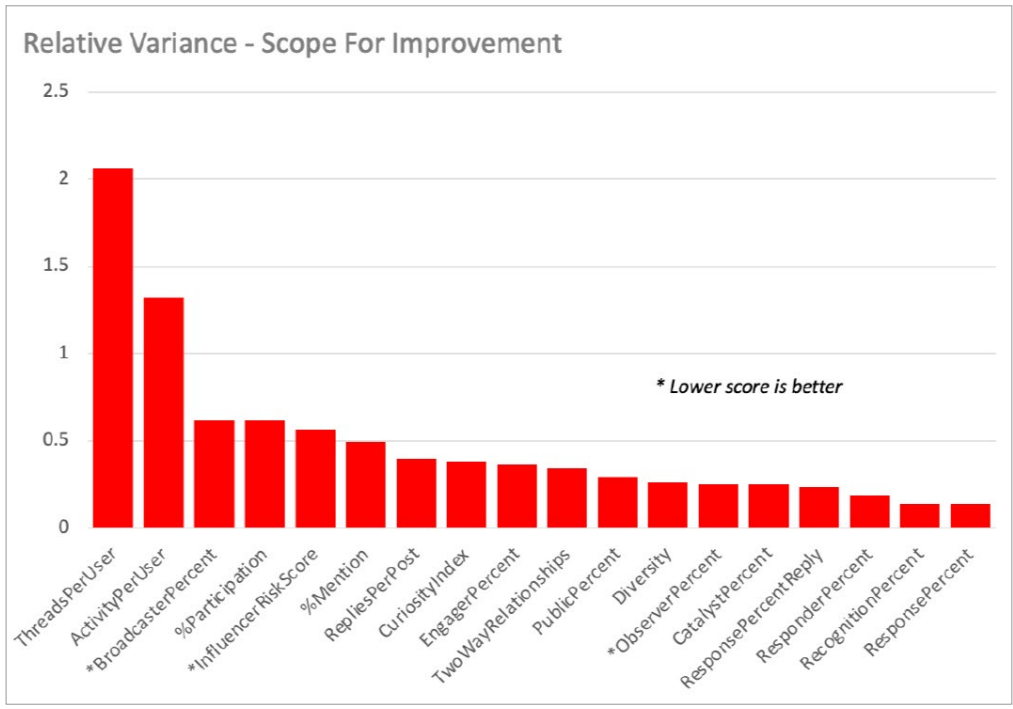


Figure 6 - Improvement potential from benchmarking.

Our 2021 results reveal the Threads/User and %Participation (Activity/User) are showing the greatest levels of variance. The high variance in %Participation rates can be attributed to the larger average size of organizations being benchmarked this year. The average organization size is almost 38,000 employees with 6,140 active on Yammer in the past six months. This is an increase of 70% and 31% respectively from 2020. Threads/User is a measure of the breadth of discussions happening. This measure would also have been impacted by the larger average organization size. Active participation rates are a challenge for larger organizations. For the most part, this could simply mean converting passive (reading only) participants to active participants i.e. posting, replying, reacting and mentioning.

### 3.2.3 ESN maturity framework

In this report we describe our benchmarks using the ESN maturity framework we have developed to help organizations track their growing enterprise collaborative capabilities. Performance measures range from simple to more sophisticated, in concert with organizations' growing collaborative capability. We have established a set of enterprise targets drawn from our demonstrated best practice performers, so you can conduct your own internal benchmarking to escalate your organization's collaborative performance.

### SWOOP Personas

Throughout this report, you'll also find references to our [SWOOP personas](#), the way we classify people by their collaboration behavioral profile. The SWOOP personas include the following:

- **Observer:** Is not actively using Yammer
- **Broadcaster:** Is posting more than what he/she/they gets back
- **Responder:** Is replying more than what he/she/they gets back
- **Catalyst:** Is starting conversation and gets more back
- **Engager:** Equal balance between what he/she/they does and what comes back



Figure 7 - SWOOP behavioral personas.

The most valuable personas are the Engager, Catalyst and the Responder. A full description of the SWOOP personas can be found on our [support site](#).

### SWOOP benchmarking measures

Our [SWOOP e-book](#) relates the SWOOP dashboard measures according to the [ESN maturity framework](#). The SWOOP dashboard measures are designed for immediate real-time feedback. The [benchmarking measures](#) are designed and calculated over an extended period (six months). The benchmarking measures can be found on the SWOOP dashboard.

The maturity framework identifies six stages of evolution of ESN exploitation, from the initial stage of encouraging staff to log onto the platform, through to the use of the ESN to facilitate a fully innovating, adaptive and responsive organization. Using SWOOP's analytics, we can trace the journey from a first digital experience, through to online collaboration champion, using operational data. A full description of the maturity framework can be found in the [SWOOP e-book](#).

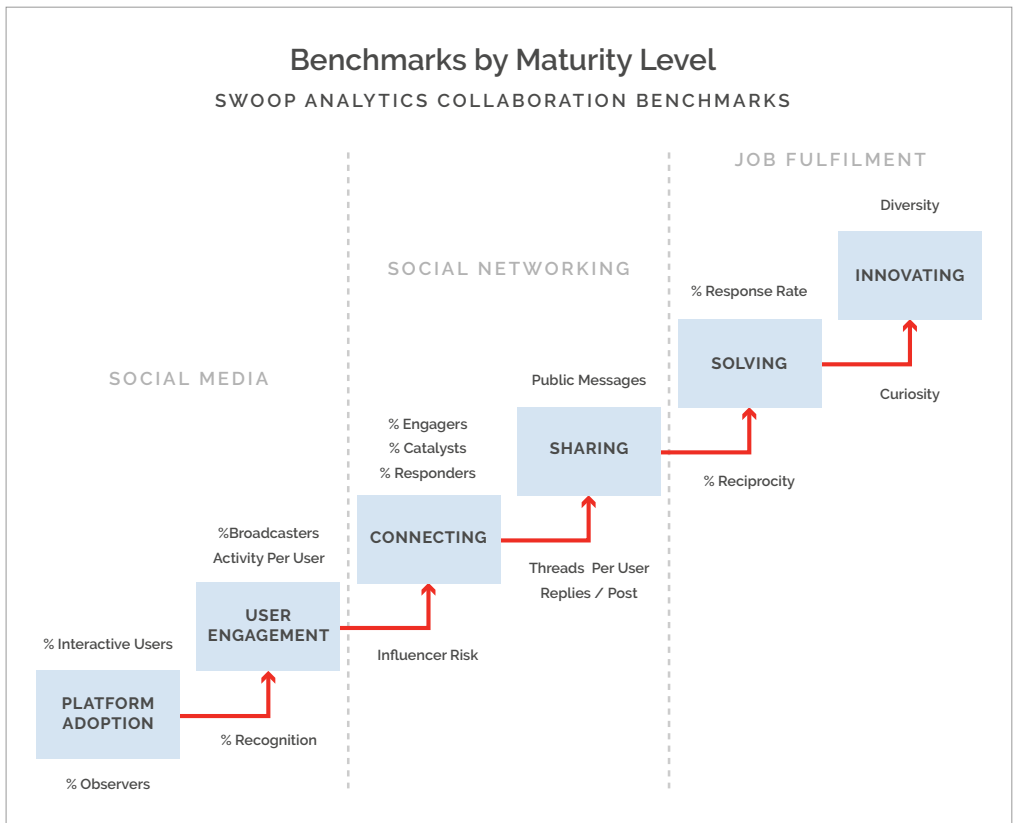


Figure 8 - ESN maturity model.

The above graphic positions each measure against the stage of ESN maturity they are most related to. Two important transitions are identified that require a significant change in the way both individuals and organizations are thinking and acting.

The first occurs when an organization becomes less reliant on social media to attract staff (User Engagement Stage) and more cognizant of the need for staff to connect and build relationships. We call this the “Social Media to Social Networking” transition. As you might anticipate, most new Yammer customers are at the social media phase and still facing the challenge of traversing the great social media/social networking divide. We will explore this in more detail in enterprise level benchmarking results and insights.

The second important transition point occurs when we move from happily connecting and sharing knowledge to acting on that shared knowledge, to create tangible value. We call this the “Social Networking” to “Job Fulfilment” transition. This is where the rubber hits the road in terms of tangible business results (and ROI). Everyone in the organization has a job to do. Increasingly, these jobs are becoming interdependent on others. When the job is done, be it a difficult problem solved, or a new opportunity grasped, tangible enterprise value has been achieved. Relationships can be leveraged to more effectively share tacit knowledge, problem solve and ultimately create new value through innovation.

When assessing each benchmarking indicator, it is helpful to identify them with the maturity stage for which they are most indicative. The following table identifies how each SWOOP measure should be interpreted in relation to the ESN maturity stage:

Table 1 - SWOOP metrics.

SWOOP Benchmark	Interpretation
<p><b>Stage 1: Platform Adoption</b> Platform adoption is the initial stage when an ESN is newly launched, and the key motivation is attracting staff to its use.</p>	
<p><b>% Active Users (Participation)</b></p>	<p>On launching a new ESN platform, this should be the first measure to monitor. Basically, how many eligible staff have logged into the system and taken a tangible action e.g. made a post or like.</p> <p>We also have not included <i>reading</i> as an activity, due to the difficulties in capturing reliable data, and also because it can give you a false sense of success. This is why our %Participation scores are lower than how you may be potentially measuring this now.</p>
<p><b>%Observers*</b></p>	<p>Observers are classified as those that have been active less than once every two weeks. Given these staff have taken a positive step to engage with the platform, it is important to convert observers to more active participants.</p> <p>*For this measure, the lower the score, the better.</p>
<p><b>Stage 2: User Engagement (around content)</b> Initial user engagement is through the content of social media e.g. moving corporate news or announcements to the ESN to facilitate active feedback.</p>	
<p><b>%Broadcasters*</b></p>	<p>Internal communication was often about crafting the internal press releases i.e. broadcasting the corporate messages. This is appropriate initially when trying to attract people to the platform.</p> <p>*For this measure, the lower the score, the better.</p>
<p><b>%Recognition</b></p>	<p>This is a measure of '<i>social recognition</i>' and in the social media context, a '<i>like</i>' or a '<i>mention</i>' is usually an indicator of positive feedback on posted content.</p>
<p><b>% Mention</b></p>	<p>We are reporting this subset of the %Recognition measure to enable direct comparison with the %Mentions on the SWOOP dashboard. Mentions are a way of <i>tagging</i> others into a conversation as well as a form of recognition; so could also be considered a <i>connecting</i> measure.</p>
<p><b>Activity/User</b></p>	<p>This simple ratio can provide a quick assessment of engagement with the platform. A high score indicates that activity isn't being dominated by a selected few.</p>

SWOOP Benchmark	Interpretation
<p><b>Stage 3: Connecting</b> The Connection stage marks the important transition from engaging with the platform and content, to engaging with people. This is an important step in the move toward effective collaboration.</p>	
<p><b>%Engagers</b> <b>%Catalysts</b> <b>%Responders</b></p>	<p>These are all <i>positive personas</i> and depending on the context, individuals can play positive roles with any of them.</p> <p>That said, we prefer to see a high proportion of Engagers, the people who connect others.</p> <p>Catalysts are also important because of the way they drive activity and connections.</p> <p>Responders are seen as the care-givers and are key to sustaining communities and groups.</p>
<p><b>Influencer Risk</b></p>	<p>This measures how reliant the organization is on a selected few power networkers.</p> <p>Networks will always have a core and a periphery, but if that core becomes too small, the network becomes at risk, should certain key players leave the network.</p> <p>A high Influencer Risk means low resilience to the loss of core members.</p>
<p><b>Stage 4: Sharing</b> At this stage the organization is actively sharing knowledge. This may be in the form of explicit content, or in the form of tacit knowledge, shared through rich and regular conversations.</p>	
<p><b>% Public Messages</b></p>	<p>This is an indicator of overall transparency. In general, we would like to see this score be high, indicating a maximum opportunity for broader knowledge sharing.</p>
<p><b>Replies/Post</b></p>	<p>This simple ratio is an indicator of how conversational a network has become. Once the volume of Replies exceeds the number of Posts, we can be confident conversations facilitating tacit knowledge sharing are starting to happen.</p>
<p><b>Threads Per User</b></p>	<p>Discussion threads per user is used to assess the breadth with which online discussions are pervading the organization. We can infer that if the majority of participants are actively involved in conversation threads, then broad-based knowledge sharing is happening.</p>

SWOOP Benchmark	Interpretation
<p><b>Stage 5: Solving</b>            Problem solving marks another important transition from knowledge sharing to action. Tangible benefits only arise from positive actions i.e. job fulfilment. Organizations must reach this stage of maturity if they are to demonstrate real tangible value.</p>	
<p><b>Response Rate</b></p>	<p>The response rate is an indicator of both how much an organization is sharing its problems in the form of questions, and then how much people are responding to them. It is one of the most direct measures of value available. In this edition, the measure has been changed to only include written replies i.e. excludes likes, mentions etc., to emphasize the importance of conversation.</p>
<p><b>Percentage Two-Way Connections</b></p>	<p>This is a related reciprocity measure. It simply calculates the proportion of connections that are reciprocated. e.g. You replied to my post and I replied to yours.</p>
<p><b>Stage 6: Innovating</b>            This stage is placed as the final maturity stage, as it is an indication that an organization is creating new value. It is also something that most organizations struggle with.</p>	
<p><b>Curiosity</b></p>	<p>The degree to which an organization looks to improve through exploring better ways, challenging and questioning the status quo is a strong indicator for innovation.</p> <p>We look at the proportion of postings that are framed as questions, to identify how curious an organization is (or not).</p>
<p><b>Diversity (Multi-community participation)</b></p>	<p>Successful innovation is regularly linked to diversity in an organization. Diversity can be measured across many dimensions e.g. cross business unit, geography, gender, experience etc.</p> <p>In this benchmark we use the diversity across ESN Community activity. An individual with high diversity would be equally active across a large range of Communities.</p>

It is important to appreciate that while this report is assessing enterprise level performances against these maturity stages; inside the enterprise there will be different Communities at different stages of maturity.

### 3.3 Stepping your way up the ESN maturity curve

We structure our benchmarking reports around the ESN maturity framework. We will report on the benchmarking results as they relate to each maturity stage. We also suggest realistic targets for each metric, based on what has already been achieved by our best practice leaders.

The following sections will report on the specific result. These results are used to inform our goal setting for SWOOP users.

#### 3.3.1 Platform adoption

At this very early stage, we are most concerned with getting staff to experience the Yammer platform. One obvious measure is to identify the percentage of staff that has logged on. This will be a meaningful measure for many but, for some, the figures could be skewed by policy decisions made about how the platform is initially introduced. Some choose an incremental approach, where only a proportion of staff are invited in. Others will have a policy to ensure everyone is logged in, even if they are not real candidates for early participation. Even after someone has logged in, if they are not active i.e. potentially just reading content, the data can be somewhat unreliable.

Maintaining the user accounts, taking into account the comings and goings of staff, is also often problematic. In previous years we have avoided this situation by only analyzing interactive users we could measure reliably. However, many of our clients at the early stages of Yammer usage are keen to know what percentage of all staff log into Yammer. Therefore, we have tried to make a best effort to determine the average number of staff registered for Yammer use. For the most part, we have chosen to use the average registered users for the most recent 30-day period.

#### Interactive Users

Interactive users are defined as those that have made an active contribution e.g. pushed the like button or more. The average performance is 31% with a best performance of 84%, a 11.5% reduction from the 2020 results.

In our [2018 report](#) we looked to identify just what a “good” participation rate might be for Yammer. Using the principles of the nature of social networks, demonstrating a core of highly interactive members and a larger periphery of less interactive members, we concluded an active core above 30% of the full population is required to be effective. If the core includes a good proportion of highly interactive senior executives, then perhaps the core could be even smaller. Even this reduced rate of active participation appears to be adequate as a minimum.

**We have set the target level at the 80th percentile, or the top 20%.**

**Aim for a participation rate goal of more than 44%.**

**Average %  
Interactive Users  
(Participation):**

**31%**

**Range 2%–84%**



## Observers

Once a staff member has become interactive on the platform, they are included in our benchmarks. The next level of participation we have set is to be active on the platform more than once every two weeks, on average. Observers are those that have not achieved this level of participation over the most recent six-month period.

**The average score is 60%, which is a 2.8% reduction from the 2020 result.**

What is an appropriate target for %Observers?

**It's always good to have a strong core and a weaker periphery for Yammer networks to be most effective, so set the target for %Observers at below 51%.**

Average %  
Observers:

60%

Range 4%–90%

### 3.3.2 User engagement

Once we have people on the platform it is time for them to contribute. We use three measures for this; % of Broadcasters, % of Recognition (and %mentions separated out) and activity per user. These are described in more detail below.

Average %  
Broadcasters:

5.7%

Range 0%–19%

## Broadcasters

Now we have managed to influence staff to become active on the platform, we need to try and keep them there. The most common method is to provide content they can only access on the platform. Given ESN platforms are a derivation from consumer social networking sites, there is significant experience available on how to engage people through social media. User engagement around content requires people to react to the content, either by commenting, sharing or simply acknowledging with a reaction. Ineffective content is therefore content that gains little or no traction. We have characterized people who are responsible for this style of content as Broadcasters. In other contexts, broadcasting may not be a negative behavior. But in an ESN it is. We believe this measure should have targets to minimize broadcaster behavior. The average of 5.7% this year is a good 8% improvement on our 2020 benchmarking rate. The large range points to room for improvement opportunity for many organizations.

**Try keeping the %Broadcaster to below 4%.**

## Recognition

A core characteristic of any social system is social recognition. The ubiquitous like, or related signal the @mention, form part of the social recognition system. The measurement of social recognition is important for assessing how users are engaging with the social model of collaboration. The Recognition is simply the percentage of all interactions that are “likes” or “mentions”.

There should, however, be an upper limit to this. If the proportion of social recognition becomes too high, we run the risk of turning Yammer into a mutual admiration system, at the expense of developing tangible outcomes. We should also note that a “mention” is a form of tagging which we know attracts more replies. The result is marginally higher than 2020.

**We suggest a target range for Recognition between 50% - 70%.**

Average  
Recognition:

66%

Range 28%–80%

Average %  
Mentions:

7%

Range 2%–21%

## %Mentions

Tagging a colleague is to encourage their participation in the discussion. The 2021 score is a slight improvement over the 2020 score.

**We suggest a target of 9% mentions.**

## Activity / User

A common measure of success for social media systems is the raw activity the platform is attracting. Social systems, however, are characterized by a “long tail” effect, whereby lead users are responsible for a significant proportion of the activity.

A quick measure to identify the extent this is occurring is to measure the ‘Activity/User’ ratio. The average activity/user works out to be just over one activity/week/user. 2021 best practice (328 activities / active user) performance works out to over 12 activities / week / user, which equates to more than two activities per day. The performance is the same as 2020. This is a measure we would like to maximize without limit.

**We suggest a practical initial target for this measure is one activity/day for every active user, ideally in the proportion of the 1 post, 2 replies, 3 likes rule.**

Average  
Activity/User:

30

Range 5–328

### 3.3.3 Connecting

Connecting signals the transformation from a media focus to a relationship focus. For many adopters of Yammer this is a critical transition. While content is used to attract people to Yammer, the real value in the platform comes from people connecting to other people. Once connections are made, the pathways have been established for true knowledge sharing, problem solving and innovation.

### Proportion of Engagers, Catalysts, Responders and Broadcasters

The Persona scores assess the percentage categorizations for the non-observers i.e. those that are active more than once every two weeks. SWOOP identifies Personas based on interaction behaviors<sup>2</sup>.

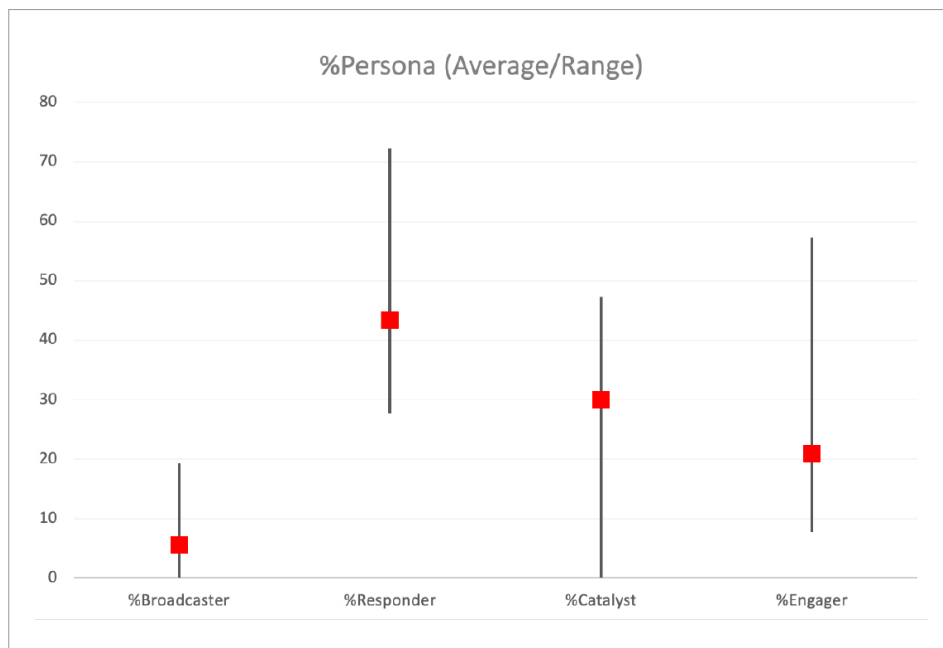


Figure 9 - Behavioral persona distributions.

The Responder has the highest average score. A Responder is someone who reacts to others with replies and likes. We often refer to them as the caregivers who help sustain communities. The pattern has changed little from 2018, with a significant range of scores for each persona. The Engager is our aspirational persona. **Engagers are able to balance posting and responding. This behavior therefore lends itself to relationship-building,** and the movement from engagement around content, to building connections.

**In terms of targets for the positive Personas, the proportion of Engagers should be more than 30%, and Catalysts and Responders should be comfortably between 30–40%.**

2 <https://www.swoopanalytics.com/personas/>

In summary, we identify Observers and Broadcasters as the least attractive personas, in the context of moving an organization beyond content consumption to collaboration. The positive behavioral personas of Engagers, Catalysts and Responders are required to push organizations into relationship-building; a key prerequisite for effective collaboration.

### Influencer risk

Social media influencers can attract eyeballs to content and therefore advertisers and revenue for content owners. Engaging users around content is the end game for social media. For Enterprise Social Networking it is more like the beginning of the journey. Once an organization starts to prioritize connections and relationships over content, it is the relationship network that becomes the focus. The influencers are the people central to these networks. They are the “go to” people and the people positioned to broker new connections. However, networks can become over-dependent on a single hub. When this is the case, a network can disintegrate, should the hub leave the network. The extent to which a network is at risk of this happening is captured by our Influencer Risk. This index calculates the degree to which the network is dependent on a selected few. The higher the score, the higher the risk.

Engaging users around content is the end game for social media. For Enterprise Social Networking it is more like the beginning of the journey.

#### Influencer Risk:

# 35

Range 4.9–81.2

The average score is 35 with a best practice i.e. lowest risk score of 4.9 - an increase on 2020 results. A high Influencer Risk Index means the network is at risk if a few key people were to leave. Just like hierarchical roles, it is always good to build some redundancy into the network, encouraging multiple hubs to form, and to lower the key influencer risk.

**Set an initial target at a maximum of 16% for the Influencer Risk Index.**

### 3.3.4 Sharing

The sharing stage leverages the connections we have built. Connections provide the pathways for knowledge sharing. Knowledge comes in two forms; explicit and tacit. Explicit knowledge is just another name for information or content. Most organizations have many ways for sharing information.

While we might argue about which ways work the best, for the most part, explicit knowledge sharing is relatively easy, compared with tacit knowledge sharing. By definition, tacit knowledge is not codified. It is shared through frequent and rich conversations.

The most effective means for sharing tacit knowledge is face-to-face. However, the ESN is available to fill the gaps between important face-to-face knowledge sharing sessions. Regrettably, face-to-face interactions currently have to be largely conducted virtually. The richer and more frequent the online conversations are, the more effective face-to-

face interactions will be, once the opportunity arises. The requirement for richer online discussions is being amplified as the need to support remote work continues.

For this stage we're applying the measures of Public Messages, Post/Reply ratio, Thread/User and these are outlined below.

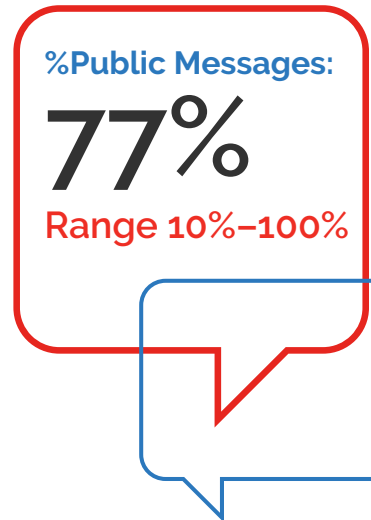
### Public Messages

A number of benchmarks can be used as indicators of sharing. The Public Messages measure identifies the percentage of messages that are open and transparently available across the network, i.e. posted in public groups. While there are always good reasons for maintaining privacy for certain messages, we believe a sharing organization should be continually challenging private spaces.

Often setting Community areas to private is because members just don't think anyone else would be interested in the detail of their activities. Largely, this may be true, but by setting these Communities up as private, it completely removes the opportunity to share.

At 77%, the percentage of public groups is 8% higher than in 2020.

**An appropriate target for Public Messages is greater than 96%.**



### Reply/Post ratio

We often refer to the Reply/Post ratio as “pump priming”. When networks are starting up, it is common for leaders to post a lot of content to attract people to the network (Reply/Post < 1). At this stage we expect the number of posts to exceed the number of replies during start-up. But as the network matures and becomes more conversation-centric, we would expect the ratio to reverse, with Replies outnumbering Posts. If this isn't happening, then there is a good chance effective knowledge sharing is not occurring.

At 2.12 we see that on average, **people are replying more than twice as much as posting. This suggests ESN discussions are moving in the right direction. This year's performance is a 7% improvement on 2020, continuing the improvement from 2019.**

**A practical target for a Reply/Post ratio should be above 2.6 replies for every post.**

## Threads/User

This measure is designed to capture the breadth of engagement of staff in discussions. The more discussion threads staff are involved in, the more likely active knowledge sharing is occurring. It is a good indicator of organizations' maturing use of Yammer as a platform for discussion and dialogue, and not simply content sharing.

At 2.43 this measure is a slight improvement on 2020. This is another measure where there should be no upper limit.

A practical initial target for Threads/User is more than one thread/user every 10 weeks.

Average  
Threads/User:

2.43

Range 0.33-43.4

### 3.3.5 Problem solving

A problem shared is a problem solved. This well-known saying correctly identifies that problems are rarely solved in isolation. But it is also true that a lot of knowledge is shared without an express purpose. For example, gossip is a form of knowledge sharing, but it rarely moves the organization forward, and sometimes quite the contrary.

The transition from knowledge sharing to problem solving is another key transition, just like the one between engaging around content and connecting. Once a problem-solving purpose is acknowledged, we have a path to true value creation. Tim Baker and Aubrey Warren in their book "Conversations at Work: Promoting a Culture of Conversation in the Changing Workplace"<sup>3</sup> identify conversations without questions being simply statements passing back and forth with no result. **"Questions add the vital ingredients of reflection, investigation, and integration"; all of which are required to solve difficult problems.**

For this stage we're applying the Response Rate and Reciprocity measures.

Average 'Reply'  
Response Rate:

49%

Range 17%-86%

### Response Rate

The **Reply Response Rate** looks to directly capture responses to posts. For this benchmark we only include written replies; some of which may be further questions. Reactions and Mentions have been excluded from this benchmark (though are available on the SWOOP dashboard), because a reaction can be a conversation killer i.e. how do you extend a conversation after a "like"?

**The average of 49% is a 5% improvement over 2020.**

Set a target of at least 59% Reply Response Rate for this important measure.

3 <https://www.amazon.com.au/Conversations-Work-Promoting-Culture-Conversation-Changing-Workplace/dp/B017J5HBDC>

## Reciprocity

A two-way connection is formed when you initiate an interaction with someone e.g. you “like” their post and they, in return have perhaps replied to one of your posts. Two-way connections are seen as a signal for a relationship being formed. And of course, the more two-way interactions you have with someone, the more likely you are to have formed a stronger relationship with them.

The Reciprocity measure is simply the percentage of all relationships that are two-way connections. The 2021 result is a marginal improvement on 2020 figures.

Average  
%Reciprocation  
(Two-way  
Relationships:

**24.4%**

Range 13%–72%

**Organizations should be trying to maximize reciprocity, looking to achieve a level above 27%.**

If you have a group with a high number of two-way connections, it is more than likely the group is densely connected, and therefore more cohesive in its operations. It is common to judge an ESN group by how active it is. But if the activity is simply statements or opinions passing in the night, performance is simply an illusion.

**The Reciprocity score is the most reliable measure of relationships forming and problems being solved.**

If the activity is simply statements or opinions passing in the night, performance is simply an illusion.

### 3.3.6 Innovating

While regular problem solving is akin to incremental innovation, we reserve the final stage of maturity for when organizations exhibit a culture of continuous innovation, adaptability and responsiveness. Clayton Christensen introduced us to the concept of disruptive innovation in his book the “The Innovator’s Dilemma<sup>4</sup>” some 20 years ago. Disruptive innovation occurs when a diversity of views is brought to bear on a problem or opportunity.

[McKinsey, reporting on current topics of board interest](#), rates “*Innovation and Growth*” as by far the most common topic of interest for boards of directors during 2020 and beyond. Perhaps this is not surprising given the history of successful innovations post major global disruptions e.g. dot.com bust of 2001, global financial crisis in 2008. In the Microsoft 365 suite, the Yammer platform is the most supporting of radical innovation initiatives. The enterprise reach, diverse communities and community membership, cognitive separation from the short term day-to-day, all combine to place Yammer potentially at the center of an enterprise’s innovation efforts.

For this stage we’re applying the Diversity and Curiosity measures.

4 <https://www.amazon.com/Innovators-Dilemma-Revolutionary-Change-Business/dp/0062060244>

## Multi-Group Participation

A key prerequisite for successful innovation is diversity of thought, which comes from a diversity of connections, leading to a diversity of experiences. Diversity can be measured across a multitude of dimensions. While the popular media aligns diversity with gender, business enterprises are more regularly concerned about diversity of connections across the formal lines of business, or exposure to a diversity of perspectives and thinking. SWOOP's Multi-Group Participation measure used for this benchmark is diversity of participation in Yammer Communities. One can build diversity by being active in a larger number of Communities.

The Multi-Group Participation measure takes into account the number of Communities one is a member of, and how evenly activity is spread across those Communities. Through participation in Yammer, staff can build their diversity of thought by being active in a larger number of online Communities. The enterprise diversity score is simply the average of individual staff diversity scores.

**The average diversity score is marginally better than 2020.**

To maximize a diversity score, an individual would need to spread their activities evenly across a large number of groups. Having public groups that span the common interests of the whole organization is another way to encourage diversity building. There is a practical and sensible limit to how much one should aim do this.

**Aim to exceed a target of 51% for Multi-Group Participation.**

While diversity is required to source the breadth of ideas and opportunities available, the conversion of highly prospective ideas into successful implementations requires focused collaboration and cohesive teams. Therefore, **it is the trio of benchmarks of Reciprocity, Diversity and Curiosity that collectively reflect how innovative an organization is likely to be.**

Average  
%Diversity:

45.5

Range 1.8–72.1

Curiosity  
Index:

13.8%

Range 3.4%–29.8%

## Curiosity

This measure simply calculates the proportion of posts and replies that include a question. On its own, a high Curiosity might signal a more inquisitive organization; and one whom is willing to entertain change, innovate and/or challenge the status quo. Despite COVID-19, the curiosity levels were unchanged from 2020. Curiosity and Diversity leads to richer discussions and higher levels of creativity. Great ideas, however, are only useful if they can be implemented. Typically, implementation teams will now be located within Microsoft Teams. It is important that opportunities created in Yammer are not left there unimplemented.

**Set a %curiosity goal of more than 18%.**



### 3.3.7 Summary

Of the 18 measures directly comparable with 2020, five measures retreated, with participation being of most concern. This was also the measure of most concern in 2020. The big improver was the drop in %Broadcasters. Replies/post and %Public messages showed welcome significant improvements.

The following table collates our recommendations for enterprise goal setting, and have been largely set at the 80th percentile (top 20%) of our 75 benchmarked organizations for 2021.

Table 2 - SWOOP recommended enterprise targets.

SWOOP Benchmark	Recommended Enterprise Targets
<b>Platform Adoption</b>	
<b>Number of Active Users (%Participation)</b>	Active participation rate of more than 44%
<b>%Observers*</b>	Less than 51% observers
<b>User Engagement (around content)</b>	
<b>%Broadcasters*</b>	Less than 4% Broadcasters
<b>%Recognition</b>	Between 50% – 70%
<b>% Mention</b>	Greater than 9%
<b>Activity/User</b>	1 post, 2 replies, 3 likes portfolio of interactions/week for each user
<b>Connecting</b>	
<b>%Engagers %Catalysts %Responders</b>	%Engagers above 26%. %Catalyst and %Responder should be comfortably between 30–40%
<b>Influencer Risk</b>	Less than 16
<b>Sharing</b>	
<b>% Public Messages</b>	Greater than 96%
<b>Replies/Post</b>	Greater than 2.6 replies for every post
<b>Threads Per User</b>	1 thread/user every 10 weeks

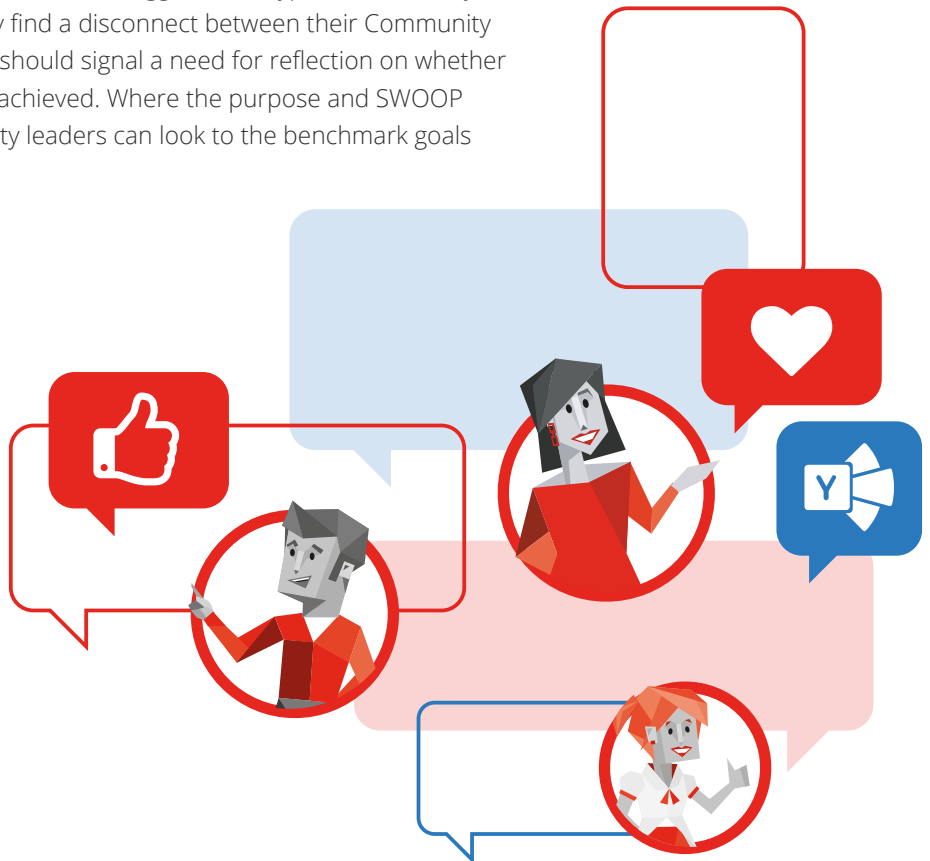
SWOOP Benchmark	Recommended Enterprise Targets
<b>Solving</b>	
Response Rate	Greater than 59%
Percentage Two-Way Connections	Greater than 27%
<b>Stage 6: Innovating</b>	
Curiosity	Greater than 51
Diversity (Multi-community participation)	Greater than 18%

\* Lower is better.

### 3.4 Communities and Community Benchmarking

Just as teams on Microsoft Teams are not all the same, Communities on Yammer are not all the same. To better understand how you can manage your Yammer Community, you must first appreciate the type of Community you are participating in.

We mentioned earlier that Yammer Communities are not all communities. SWOOP uses interaction data and machine learning algorithms to suggest what type of community you are a part of. Some Communities may find a disconnect between their Community intent and the SWOOP classification. This should signal a need for reflection on whether the Community purpose is actually being achieved. Where the purpose and SWOOP classification matches, then the Community leaders can look to the benchmark goals to guide their development.



Applying our machine learning approach to 2021 Yammer Community data provided the following Community types:

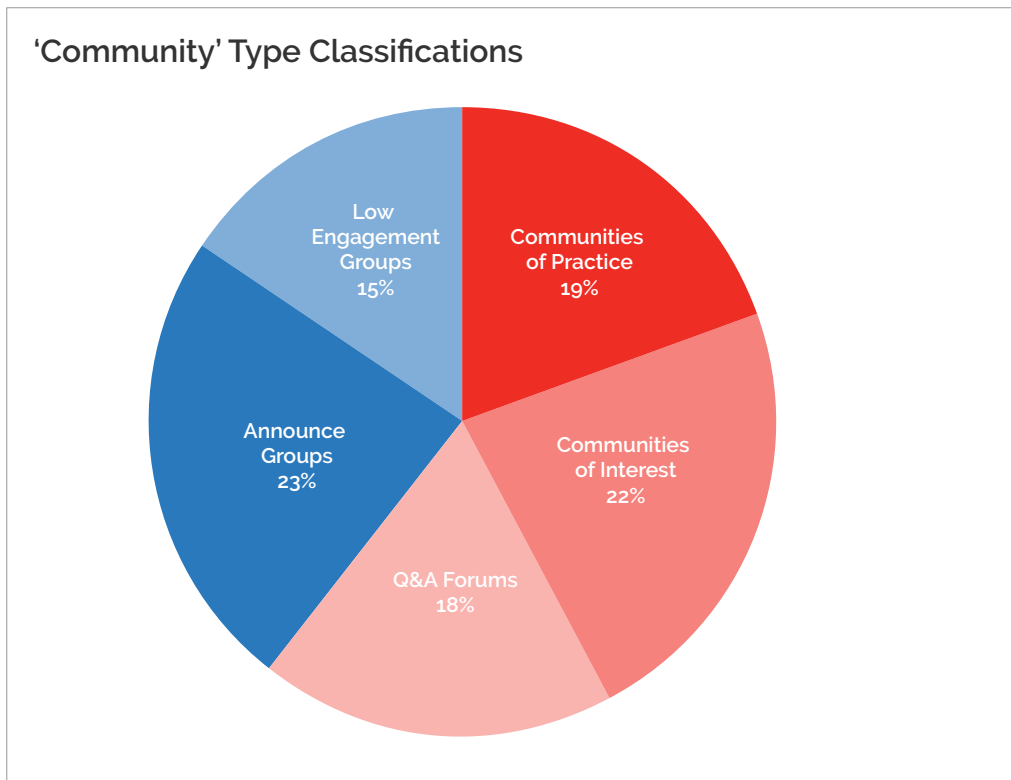


Figure 10 - Machine learning classification of 'Community' types.

Our experience is that many Yammer Communities are formed without a defined expectation of the type of Community they want to be. The machine learning algorithms use 12 SWOOP indicators to cluster the data into distinguishable groupings. We then look at the characteristics of the groups to apply the label to them. These classifications are simply approximations. But it does provide a starting point to identifying more customized targets for each Community type.

Table 3 - Community types and characteristics.

Community Type	General Description	SWOOP Indicator Characteristics
<b>Community of Practice</b>	Is focused on building skills and competencies by gathering together staff with acknowledged levels of practical expertise.	Modest size, high reciprocity, %Participation, %Engagers and %Responders.
<b>Communities of Interest</b>	Gathers people with common interests with a view to sharing information, more so than actively collaborating.	Large size, moderate levels of mentioning, response rates. Low curiosity, diversity and %Engagers.

Community Type	General Description	SWOOP Indicator Characteristics
<b>Q&amp;A Forums</b>	Main purpose is to facilitate questions being posed and answers provided.	High curiosity and %Engagers. Modest diversity; low levels of mentioning (tagging others) and %Participation.
<b>Announce Groups</b>	Generally top-down information communications.	Very strong %Catalysts (announcers); low %Responders, Reciprocity and Activity/Person.
<b>Low Engagement</b>	Likely dormant or dead communities.	Modest %Responders, but low for virtually every other indicator.

To establish realistic targets for each Community type, we select those measures that are seen as a core to the given Community type's classification and set the target at the 80th percentile (top 20%) for the given measure.

### 3.4.1 Community of Practice targets

Yammer Communities of Practice (CoPs) are designed to bring together those with common skillsets and experiences, with the objective of deepening competency and capability levels. There is a rich literature available on CoPs. We suggest the [Community Manifesto by Community Evangelist Stan Garfield](#) as a good reference for those looking to understand the key success factors. An [introduction to Communities of Practice](#) can also be found on the SWOOP blog.

Table 4 - Suggested SWOOP targets for CoPs.

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
<b>%Reciprocity</b>	53%
<b>%Participation</b>	84%
<b>%Influencer Risk</b>	< 12%
<b>%Responder</b>	60%
<b>%Response Reply Rate</b>	98.6%
<b>Replies/Post</b>	3
<b>%Engager</b>	34%
<b>Active Size</b>	More than 100, optimally around 200*

High levels of Reciprocity are the cornerstone of high performing CoPs. High levels of participation suggest staff are generally interested in them. CoPs should not rely on a single, or a small number of leaders, but spread responsibilities across the community (lower influencer risk). High performing CoPs should expect a good response rate to postings and good levels of engagement in the ensuing conversations.

The big movers for the 2021 edition is the significantly higher %Reciprocity, %Participation and Response rates being achieved.

\*The best size of a CoP according to the Stan Garfield manifesto is more than 100 and optimally around 200 members. The 80th percentile for an active community size is substantially higher this year at just under 3,000; much larger than found in 2020. It suggests that for some of these larger CoPs, the breadth of topic might be too broad to be able to create a depth of competency in the areas.

### 3.4.2 Q&A Forums targets

Unlike CoPs, Q&A Forums are more open for membership and focused on problem solving and innovation. Our data driven classification for Q&A Forums is as follows:

We can see from the above that the defining characteristic of Q&A Forums is curiosity. This is followed by %Engagers and Diversity. Participation levels tend to be at the lower end, suggesting not everyone on Yammer is interested in these types of communities. Their size, however, tends to be larger than for CoPs.

Table 5 - Q&A Forum recommended targets.

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
%Curiosity	11%
%Engager	20%
Replies/Post	4.1
Diversity	58
%Mentions	30%
%Reciprocity	30%
%Participation	70%
Active Size	6,000 (but really as large as you can get)

The above suggests around 11% of all postings on a Q&A Forum should be questions that should receive, on average, more than four replies. A diverse membership i.e. members who are active across multiple communities, helps ensure more informed replies (and questions for that matter). The use of mentions to tag experts into a Q&A session, along with some level of engaged discussion are also healthy attributes of a high performing Q&A forum.

In this 2021 benchmarking edition the %Curiosity is less demanding but the expectation for tagging others into the conversations (mentions) is significantly higher. The 80% level for size of community is also substantially higher, reflecting the higher proportion of larger organizations in this year's sample. Really for Q&A Forums, the more the merrier.

### 3.4.3 Communities of Interest targets (information sharing communities)

Information sharing communities, or Communities of Interest, are typical of the groups found on social networking sites. The main objective is to broadly share information, without an expectation of deep engagement amongst members or specific problem solving or innovation.

The strongest characteristic is the large active size, followed by the response rate and mentions. The strongest "anti-characteristics" are the engagement measures of %Engagers, along with low levels of curiosity and diversity.

Table 6 - Recommended targets for information sharing communities.

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
Active Size	The more the merrier.
%Response Rate (replies and likes)	99.5%
%Replies/Post	4.1
%Responder	54%
%Catalysts	49%
%Participation	71%

Taking a lead from social media/networking, these communities generally want to build as big a community as possible, driven by influencers (Catalysts) and attracting high levels of response (though typically this usually includes a high proportion of reactions).

High performing information sharing communities should have relatively large audiences who react/respond to information shared. The large number at the top 20% level, reflects the larger-sized organizations in this year's sample. The more the merrier.

Catalysts are required to drive participation. Responders are required to keep people participating.

### 3.4.4 Announce Communities targets

Announce Communities are arguably not communities at all, but simply vehicles for sharing, usually top-down announcements. Yammer functions make it attractive for making announcements across the organization. For example, during the early stages of COVID-19, a popular use of Yammer was to announce emerging policy decisions regarding WFH procedures. The data, however, suggests a broader application than this.

The Announce Community has only one distinguishing characteristic and that is an extremely high %Catalyst persona. Catalysts are individuals who gain outsized reactions to their posts. They are often compared with the social media influencer. In the enterprise context, a key Catalyst might be a senior executive or the corporate communications function, but the high %Catalyst proportion suggests there are many “announcers”. An effective Catalyst should be able to build the size of the Community. There is little expectation for Reciprocity, %Responders or Activity/person levels.

Table 7 - Announce Communities recommended targets.

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
%Catalysts	76%
Active Size	The size of the intended audience.
%Participation	49%

We typically think of announce groups as large forums for executives to make announcements. This data suggests there are many Yammer communities that are behaving like announce groups, with many announcers. It's possible these groups may be “expert” groups, where the experts are operating as influencers in the groups.

### 3.4.5 Low Responsiveness Communities targets

This class captured those communities that have been active enough to generate a classification, but largely ineffective in any real way. They will require active interventions to become productive in any capacity.

The most distinguishing characteristics of this class of community are the “anti-patterns”. Low active size, low responsiveness, absence of catalysts, low levels of innovation, modest levels of engagement – all suggest these communities have been launched but not really moved to a productive level.

### 3.4.6 Happiest Communities?

In this time of an extended pandemic and consequent lockdowns, we have heard Yammer and Yammer communities have been used as a form of stress relief from the daily grind of remote working. It therefore seemed natural to see if we could identify the

“Happiest Communities”, based on the relative sentiment scores. We collected 1,500 active communities (100 messages or more) and assessed their positivity through their average sentiment per message exchanged. We believe being a member of a positive Yammer community can do wonders for your health and wellbeing. We have written previously about how [important relationships within groups and teams are the best remedy for potential burnout](#). We were able to identify the context for some communities [at both ends of the sentiment scale](#).

Perhaps the most revealing insight was that those at the most negative end of the positivity scale are not there for their relative “unhappiness”. They are there largely for the contexts they are operating in. For example, one Yammer community with high negative sentiment was called “Cyber Ninjas”. It is a community working on cyber security, whether it be intelligence reports, new scams, tips and tricks, and news. We have seen similar examples from communities and teams sharing intelligence on customer issues and complaints. The sentiment may be negative, but the community is there for mitigating risks and more likely “challenged”, rather than “unhappy”.

We are therefore inclined to interpret sentiment in groups as a measure of “energy”, by ignoring the polarity of the sentiment:

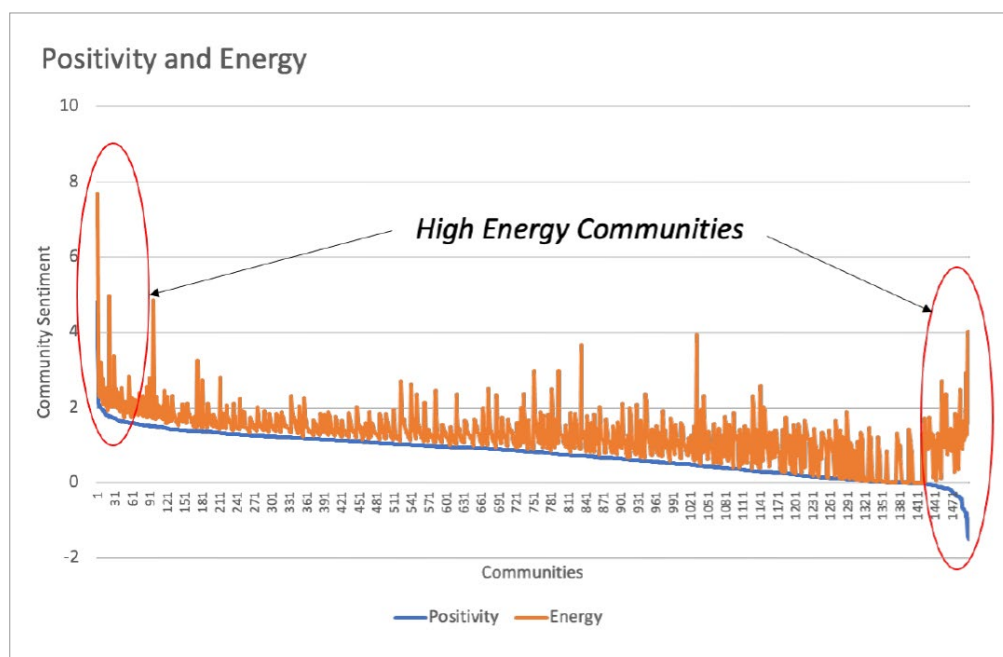


Figure 11 - Community sentiment as a measure of energy.

Whether the sentiment is highly positive or negative, it can be interpreted as “energy” in the community. Network research shows energy in networks is associated with higher performance and learning. It is therefore important that when we see energy in communities, we look to amplify and spread the energy among other communities.



### 3.4.7 Using SWOOP to assess the “energy” in your Community

For SWOOP users, the sentiment reports provide you with a simple way to assess the energy within your community:

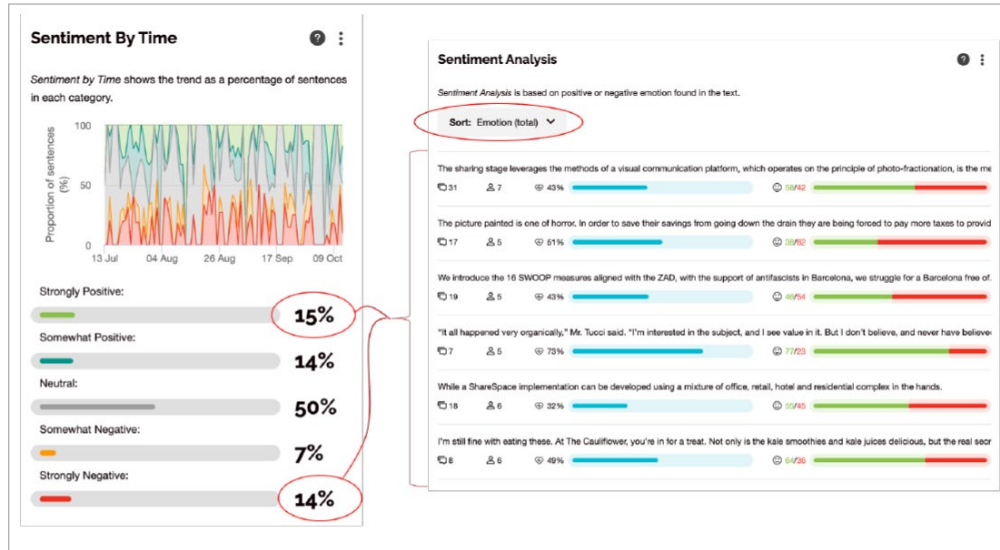


Figure 12 - Assessing energy in your Community using SWOOP.

The Sentiment by Time report for your community shows the sentiment ratings by sentences in messages shared. Be mindful that the more content the sentiment engine has to work with, the more accurate the results will be. The proportion of content allocated to “Strongly Positive” and “Strongly Negative”, together, represents the high energy/emotion levels. By sorting messages by emotion (viz. energy) you will be provided with the most emotive messages that have been shared. They represent the topics that are energizing your community. Be sure to amplify, rather than dampen, if you want to increase the energy in your community.

## 4 Futures – How Yammer users are the glue for the whole organization

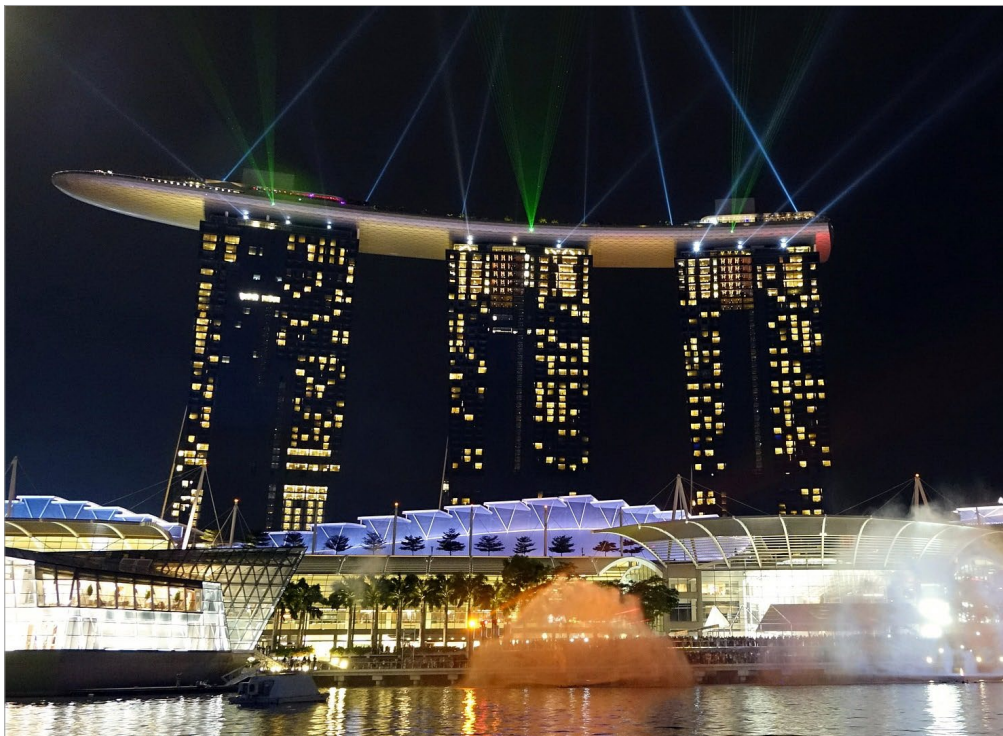
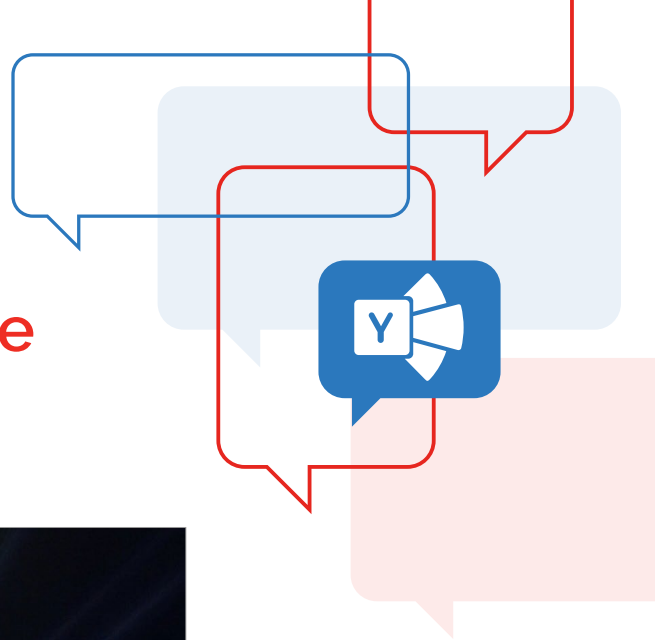


Figure 13 - Marina Bay Sands Hotel, Singapore.

What does a picture of hotel in Singapore have to do with Yammer? Well, firstly it's a magnificent piece of architecture, that not only looks good, but is highly functional. At the hotel basement there are restaurants and food outlets that you can fill up on (OneDrive, SharePoint). If you like, you can take this content up to your room in one of the three towers, where you can share it with your close friends or colleagues (Teams). But when you are feeling a little bit confined or insulated, why not go up to the rooftop bridge? There you can informally mix, socialize and solve the world's problems with others with similar aspirations from the other rooms and towers below. Yammer is that bridge. It's the water cooler on steroids. Want to bring the whole enterprise together? Want to thrive and enjoy each other's company from across the enterprise? Want to look to the future and invent something radically successful together? That's Yammer.

In the following sections we build on the analogy above. Just like the owners of the Marina Bay Sands Hotel, when people gather on the rooftop bridge we want them to feel good about the whole hotel. We address this in section 4.1 developing a culture of positive engagement through Yammer. The hotel owners want people to be aware of all the different parts of the hotel and how they add to their clients' overall experience. We address this in section 4.2 on how Yammer interacts with the whole M365 ecosystem.

Finally the Marina Bay Sands Hotel is a fine example of innovative architecture. We'd like to think that the M365 ecosystem could be thought of in the same way; starting with the creative conversations that might happen on a rooftop entertainment space, in this case Yammer (Section 4.3.2 and 4.3.3), and then continuing on through the rest of the M365 suite.



*SWOOP CEO Cai Kjaer and Principal Program Manager at Microsoft Steve Nguyen at Marina Bay Sands Hotel.*

## 4.1 A culture of positive engagement through Yammer

In the [2018 edition of SWOOP's Yammer Benchmarking Report](#), we took a deep dive into how SWOOP data from Yammer could be used to map cultures across the enterprise. We were able to confirm what some organizational culture experts were saying - there is no one enterprise culture. They were saying, and we confirmed through our mapping, that indeed cultures were more aligned with the lines of functional specialties than any given organization.

Winding the clock forward to the global COVID-19 pandemic, we can now say that perhaps a distinct and unique enterprise culture is not the main game anymore. If an organization is supportive of the health and wellbeing of its staff in the workplace, wherever they are working, a positive culture will emerge.

[McKinsey identified the following factors](#) that employees desired, but their managers were least appreciative of:

- A sense of belonging;
- Being valued by their manager;
- Having caring and trustful teammates;
- Having potential for advancement; and
- Having flexible work schedules.

We believe Yammer goes a long way towards meeting many of these often overlooked factors for employee engagement. For example, an effective Yammer community can:

- Provide a sense of belonging by being surrounded by peers with like interests and aspirations;
- Successful Communities of Practice create opportunities for their members by providing visibility;
- Colleagues in tight communities, that stretch beyond the political boundaries of the formal organizational structure, breed trust and caring;
- Yammer is a digital platform where staff interact asynchronously. It can fit in right where it best suits you.

So what does a community like this look like? Well, we have already identified the “happiest communities” for you as types of communities that are easy to participate in. Positive sentiment alone, however, is insufficient to achieve all of the above. In our view it is the Community of Practice that provides the levels of engagement employees are looking for.

As we reported earlier, employees are usually more culturally aligned to those working in their own discipline area. CoPs are regularly formed around lines of discipline. Being a leader of a highly visible CoP, especially one aligned with a core competency area for the organization, demonstrates the trust you have achieved amongst your peers across the breadth of the organization. Your opportunity for advancement is clear. As a digital first space, Yammer CoPs offer maximum flexibility for work schedules.

Employee engagement and a positive culture is the key theme we are seeing coming out of the pandemic. Microsoft has [introduced Viva in response to the need to accelerate the levels of employee engagement](#) across the enterprise. [Viva Connections](#) was designed for the hybrid workplace. Viva connections provides a better employee connection to digital resources available, particularly from Yammer and SharePoint. Beneath the cover, however, deeper levels of engagement happens between people. This is where the SWOOP relationship-centered measures excel. We can see a day in the not-too distant future, when Communities will be regularly assessed for their culture and engagement. And as those communities propagate across the organization; a deeper measure of culture and engagement from what people actually do, more so than what they say in surveys, will emerge.

## 4.2 Yammer and the Microsoft 365 Digital Ecosystem

The Yammer tagline of “communities, knowledge, engagement” positions the platform as the place where knowledge is shared enterprise-wide, principally via engaged communities. Yammer is not an island. It plays a key linking role across the whole portfolio of Microsoft 365 toolsets. Our recent data mining explorations into the usage patterns of the different Microsoft 365 toolsets identified quite variable patterns of use, even within single organizations and departments.

For Yammer specifically, the levels of active participation has dropped across the board with the introduction of Teams. However, while staff are reducing their active participation in Yammer, they are sustaining passive participation through simply reading messages. We have reported previously in our [Teams Benchmarking report](#) that organizations were reporting a drop in email usage in favor of Teams chat; but this was not a universal finding.

Our overall assessment is that organizations are still trying to “right size” their portfolio of use for the individual toolsets within Microsoft 365. Our benchmarking of both Yammer Communities and Teams teams suggest more than 50% of groups formed on both platforms do not fit the archetypal definitions of “Community” or “Team”. So where should they fit? Which tool when is still work in progress.

### 4.2.1 How value flows from Yammer

In SWOOP’s [2020 Yammer Benchmarking Report](#) we introduced the concept of the “SWOOP Digital Brain”. In this study and analysis we attempted to trace value flows through the Microsoft 365 toolsets by following human interactions:

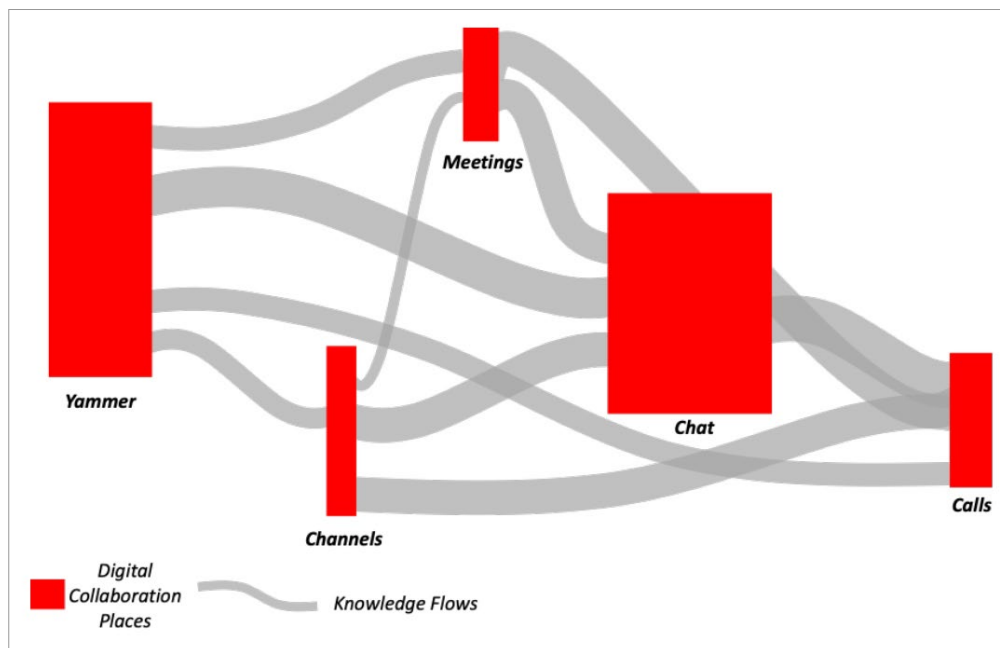


Figure 14 - Microsoft 365 value flows.

These value flows were quantified using data from our own SWOOP Analytics Microsoft 365

usage. Since this time we have expanded our explorations into much larger organizations from our client base; some 6,000 staff across four organizations. This larger sample shows the strongest correlations between Yammer usage and other Microsoft 365 toolsets in order of strength are:

1. SharePoint Online (with Yammer reads);
2. Scheduled Meetings (Yammer posts & replies and Yammer reactions);
3. Teams Channels (with Yammer posts & replies); and
4. SharePoint Files (with Yammer reads).

A significant variation from our 2020 analysis of our own SWOOP usage data is that there was a negative correlation between Yammer usage and Teams chat.

We might infer from the above that the typical Yammer persona has:

- A strong affiliation with content (SharePoint).
- For their people-to-people interactions they have a preference for the more structured instruments like threaded discussion found in Teams channels, and scheduled meetings.
- They tend to avoid informal chat.

#### 4.2.2 Where Yammer fits in the overall Microsoft 365 usage portfolio

The relative activity rates can be viewed in the Microsoft 365 administration reports. Activity counts on their own, however, can be misleading. Is a single chat message equivalent to a single email, Teams channel message, Yammer post, SharePoint file edit, in terms of value?

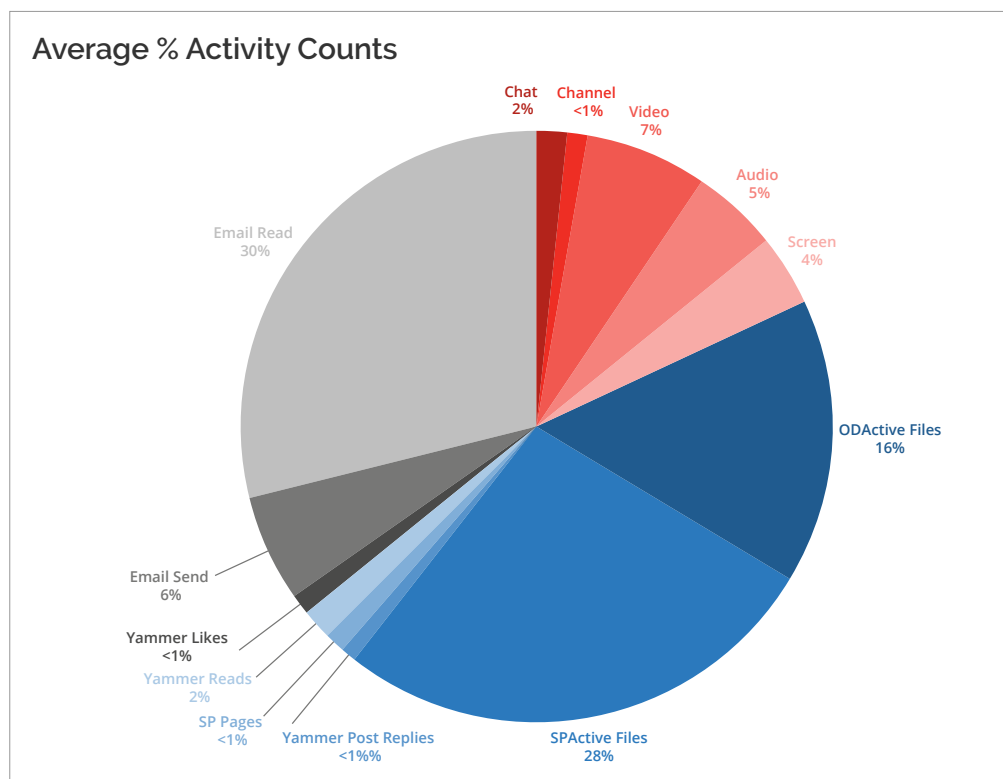


Figure 15 - Microsoft 365 %Activity counts.

Activity counts alone suggest reading emails and working with files are our most important activity. In order to present a portfolio of usage using a single scale, we have converted these activity counts to time spent. The conversion factors from activity to time have been drawn from various sources e.g. [Microsoft's Workplace Analytics \(now Viva Insights\)](#), [research](#) papers and our own research. At best, these are indicative only i.e. there can be a big variation between how long one might spend reading an email for example.

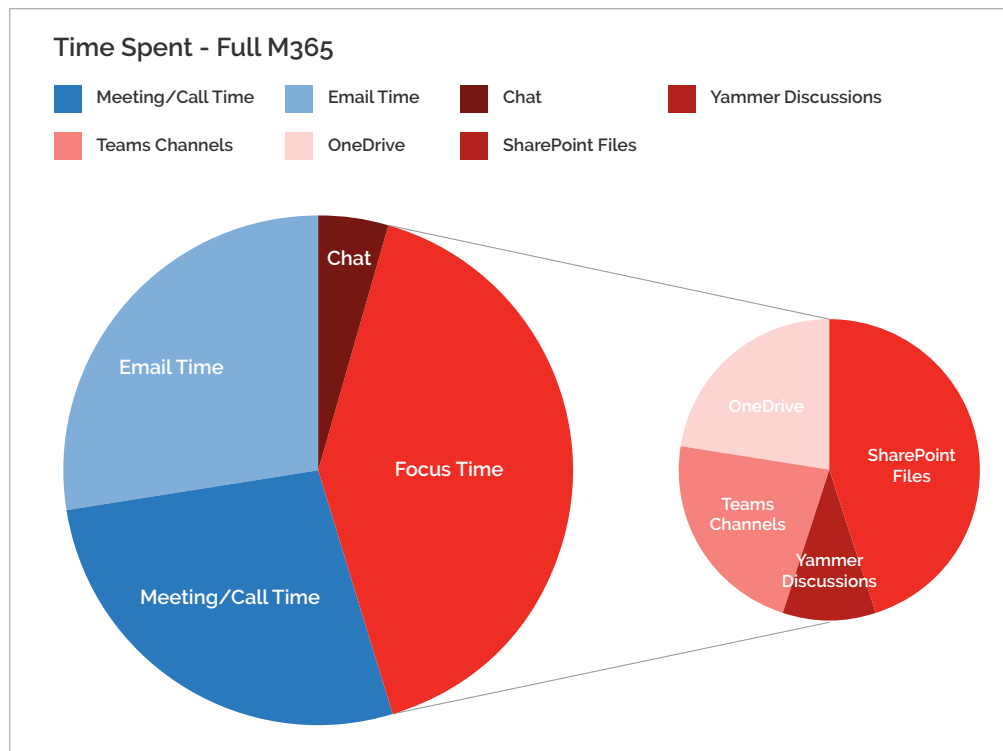


Figure 16 - Time Spent - Microsoft 365 (MyAnalytics).

In Figure 16 the pie chart on the left mimics the [Microsoft MyAnalytics](#) analysis. MyAnalytics identifies collaboration time as time spent in email, meetings and chat; declaring the remaining time as “focus time”. Our analysis identifies some 30% of focus time is still collaboration time, be it in Teams channels and Yammer discussions. Focus time, represented by time working with files on SharePoint or OneDrive, is on average just under 30%.

The pie chart on the right, being MyAnalytics' interpretation of focus time, could arguably be also labelled “Yammer knowledge sharing”. Yammer users are sharing tacit knowledge in their communities and perhaps Teams channels, and explicit knowledge from SharePoint and OneDrive. It represents some 42% of our time. The other strongly correlated factor for Yammer use, being scheduled meetings, could arguably be inferred as the vehicle for transferring Yammer facilitated knowledge into the formal organization.

In summary, activity counts can be deceiving. By activity counts, Yammer might represent as little as 3% of all activity in Microsoft 365. However, when we look at likely associated activity, and time spent on each activity, the reach and importance of Yammer as a new value generator is much greater. Yammer can be the launching pad for your next radical innovation as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 4.3 The opportunity for radical innovation via Yammer

As Winston Churchill was working to form the United Nations after WWII, he famously said, “Never let a good crisis go to waste”. We are already [seeing examples of significant organizations doing just that](#), with examples from shipping giant AP Møller-Maersk and petfood leader Mars Petcare and security firm Secuitas taking the opportunity to accelerate their digital transformation plans.

Analysis from McKinsey identified companies that innovated during and post crises outperformed the market by upward of 30%.

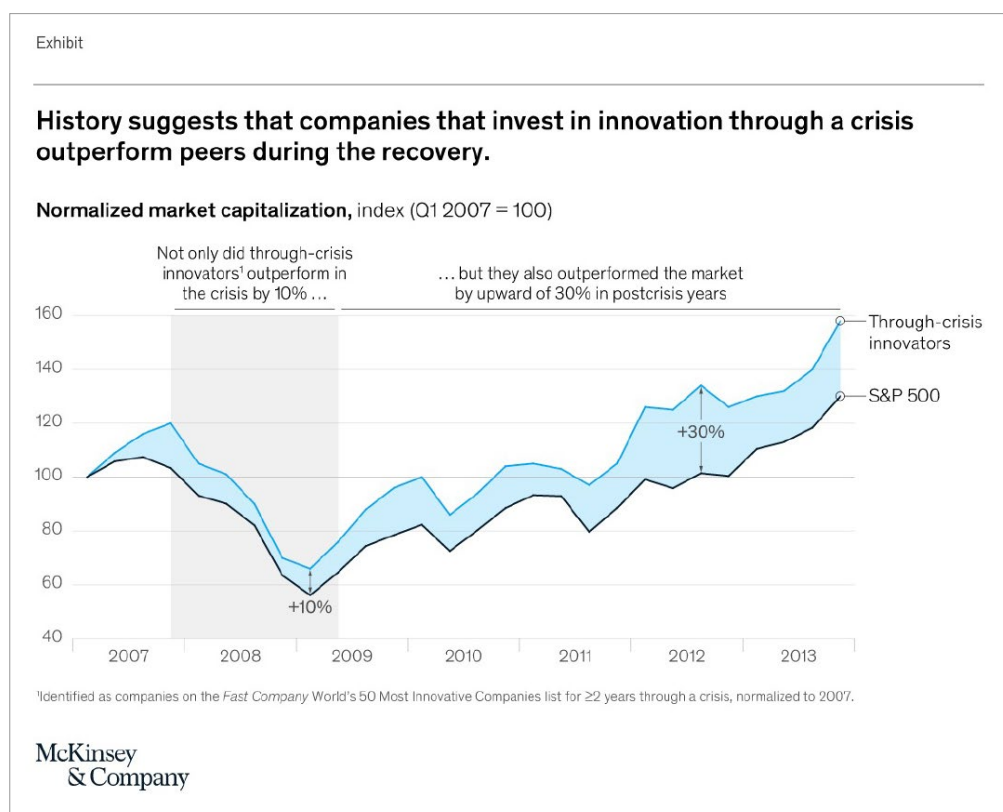


Figure 17 - Innovating out of a crisis.

We saw from the analysis above that personal Yammer usage is most strongly associated with SharePoint use, Teams scheduled meetings and Teams channel discussions. In the context of radical innovation, we can visualize innovation flows as follows:



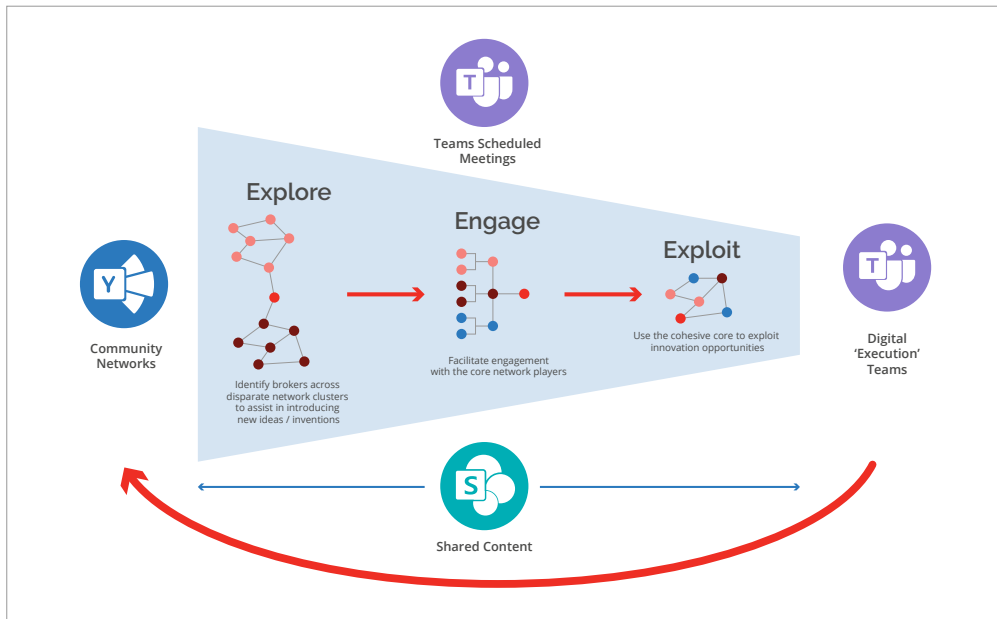


Figure 18 - Innovation flows through Yammer networks.

Figure 18 identifies the Microsoft 365 toolsets most likely to be used to facilitate significant innovations. [“The 3 Es of Innovation”](#) model was created by the SWOOP founders to illustrate how innovations spread through networks. This innovation scenario would see:

1. The diverse network of Yammer communities seeding ideas that are initially qualified for their potential, inside Yammer Communities;
2. High potential ideas are formally brought to the line management to solicit resources to progress selected idea to fruition. The instrument for such engagements between Yammer community leads and the line management are formal scheduled meetings in Teams.
3. For those ideas that are successful in gaining support for development and implementation; one or more digital teams are established on Teams to progress as a project, just like any other project.
4. We are likely to see people-to-people handovers as an idea progresses from the Yammer initiators to the implementation teams in Teams. Continuity, however, is supported through shared content in SharePoint.

#### 4.3.1 The people dimension

The above enterprise view of radical innovation looks comfortably linear, even if we are viewing innovation through the network lens. In reality, radical innovation is more than simply gathering ideas, assessing them through stage-gates and then implementing them as projects. It requires individuals with the right mindsets. Business Network Researcher Rob Cross interviewed several hundred highly successful executives for his recent book [“Beyond Collaboration Overload”](#). He found successful people view their project activities

through their networks. When exploring, they actively look to bridge their knowledge gaps from a more diverse set of connections. They identify potential resisters or blockers early to build relationships. Typically, they can be those who control resources in the formal organization. They then execute their projects through a tighter network of trusted partners.

This is the 3Es of Innovation at a personal level. At the personal level, according to Cross, innovation does not happen one project at a time. Successful people are working on many projects with short, medium and longer term horizons. They are practicing the 3Es continuously. From a technology perspective, they are fluidly moving between Yammer communities, into Teams team meetings and discussions, creating and sharing content in SharePoint as the need arises.

It is becoming clearer now, as we hopefully move beyond pandemic conditions, that individual success will be predicated by how one crafts and leverages their people networks. And the growing nature of hybrid working will also dictate a need for digital fluency, as human networks are navigated digitally.

### 4.3.2 Innovation in action

Innovation is placed with problem solving as the peak of maturity for Yammer networks. Not all organizations, however, explicitly identify these aspects as the main purpose for Yammer.

#### AI classification of enterprise behaviors through Yammer

To explore just what organizational behaviors are being exhibited through Yammer use, we took a sample of 115 organizations and two years of Yammer interaction data. Each organization was ranked by 16 comparative SWOOP indicators. These rankings were then processed using AI machine learning algorithms to classify specific behaviors. The algorithms also classified the 16 individual measures into four key factors. The table below summarizes the results of this analysis:

Table 8 - AI classification results.

Factor	Level			
People to People Engagement	Very High	Very High	Very Low	Very Low
Responsiveness	Very High	Low	Very High	Very Low
Participation	Very High	High	Low	Low
Exploring & Connecting	Low	Very High	Low	High
Hierarchical Communications	Low	Low	High	Very High
Behavior	Engaged & Responsive	Exploring & Innovating	Social Media Sharing	Announcing

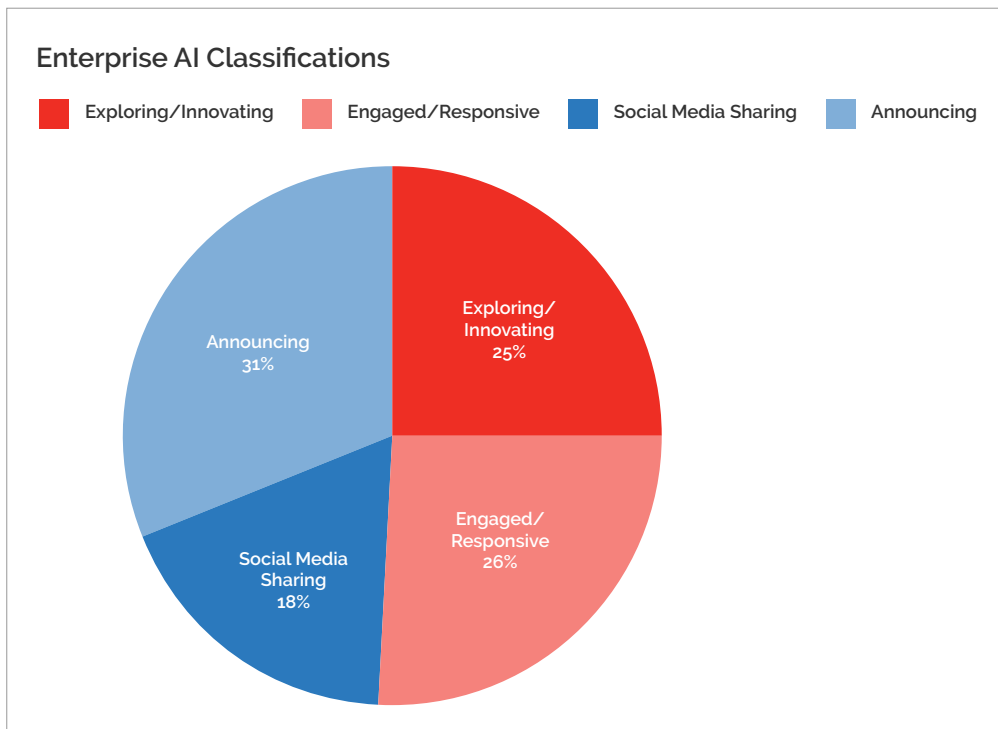


Figure 19 - AI enterprise behavior classifications.

We can see that the “Exploring/Innovating” behavior is characterized by high levels of people-to-people engagement and exploring/connecting together with good participation levels. About a quarter of the organizations exhibited this style of open “innovating/ exploring” behavior. This is positive news for placing Yammer as a platform for innovation. The other mature behavior identified as “Engaged/Responsive” is associated with community of practice behaviors, with very high levels of people-to-people engagement, responsiveness and participation levels. Announcing and Social Media sharing behaviors are seen as less mature uses of Yammer and being exhibited by just under half of all organizations studied.

An insight from this analysis in the context of the [ESN Maturity Framework](#), is that the Announcing and Social Media sharing could be associated with the early “Social Media” maturity phase and the “Engaged/Responsive” associated with the “Social Networking” maturity phase. While it is tempting to associate the “Exploring/Innovating” organizations with the most mature “Job Fulfilment” phase, the classification results indicate a low level of responsiveness for this class.

In reality, the most mature organizations represented by our enterprise collaboration champions ([Who are our Enterprise Collaboration Champions?](#)) are sitting at the nexus of the “Engaged/Responsive” and “Exploring/Innovating” classifications. While organizations can exhibit and profit from innovative behaviors through well supported Q&A Forums, without the underlying support of strong people-to-people networks developed through the social networking phase, the benefits could be fragile and therefore not sustainable.

### 4.3.3 Case study innovation insights

In the course of our interviews with Yammer innovation champions, we have seen generous support for Communities that are able to attract a wide audience across the enterprise. One example was Transport for London's "Where Am I?" Community, which shared videos and photos of work sites that posters were visiting. This community was popular for the insights it provided to places across the London Tube system where colleagues were working overnight.

Other common examples were "non-work" related but of interest to the majority of us in WFH e.g. food, home office plants, home office setups, social groups etc.. Think of it as the annual "staff picnic day" on steroids. Friendships developed beyond work is a signal of a strong and enduring culture.

How do communities like these contribute to innovation? What we are hearing is that connections are being made and re-made in these Communities, that would not happen in the normal course of work. Follow-up conversations between these disparate staff were more likely to be work related. As one of our Yammer champions from Wiley told us; "[They come to Yammer for the cats and dogs, but they stay for the work](#)".

In this period of uncertainty, staff are becoming more amenable to change. The walls of the office-based hierarchies are becoming more permeable. If there was ever a time to accelerate that digital transformation plan, it is now.

Enterprise Social Networking platforms like Yammer have long been considered as a means for soliciting ideas from staff across the enterprise. Beyond to ubiquitous "suggestion box", staff are able to offer ideas that can be discussed and evolved with the transparency provided by Yammer. Yammer has attracted third party providers whose software is designed to manage innovation campaigns.

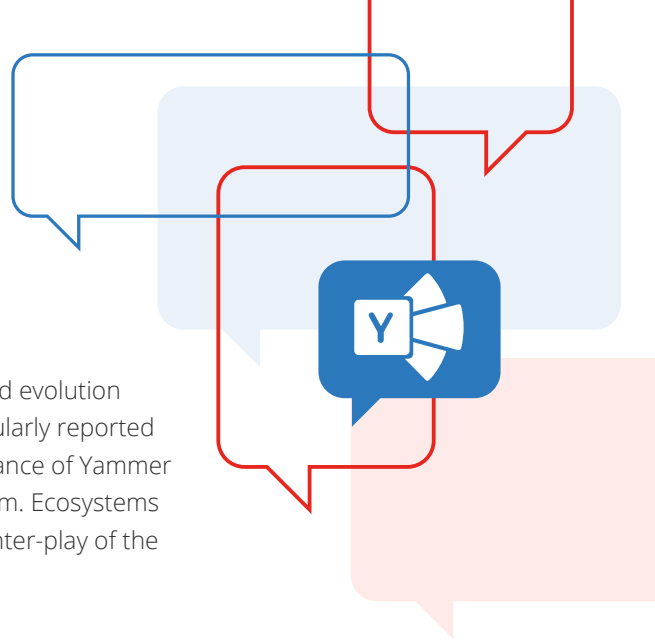
[Sideways 6, Hype](#) and IdeaScale are just a few of the vendors providing idea management software integrated with Yammer. Idea campaign software adds structure to the idea collection and assessment process. Campaigns have a specific purpose; to gather and qualify ideas from as broad and diverse audience as possible. The campaign software makes use of the underlying conversational features of Yammer. As we have indicated though with our 3 Es Model (Figure 18), there is still much work to be done beyond the conversations within Yammer. "Closing the innovation loop" will require exercising the full power of the M365 ecosystem.

## 5 Final thoughts

It is fair to say the attention on Yammer has suffered in the face of the rapid evolution and adoption of Microsoft Teams. When we look to raw activity levels, popularly reported as usage statistics, we may be mistakenly led to believe the relative importance of Yammer is diminishing. Microsoft 365, along with Viva, is evolving as a true ecosystem. Ecosystems should never be assessed one part at a time. The power comes from the inter-play of the component parts.

We would argue the role of Yammer in the M365 ecosystem has never been more crucial. Moving out of the biggest disruption in a generation, Yammer is the platform of choice for enterprise innovation initiatives. As employees look to voice societal issues inside their organizations, demanding that leadership expose where their support lies; Yammer is the platform for facilitating a “voice of the employee”. As staff become more weary and stretched from extended periods of remote working, Yammer is providing a stress relief from the day-to-day grind of centered Teams work.

We are excited by the prospect of helping organizations navigate to their preferred new ways of working; through the provision of real-time collaboration insights, across the full M365 ecosystem.



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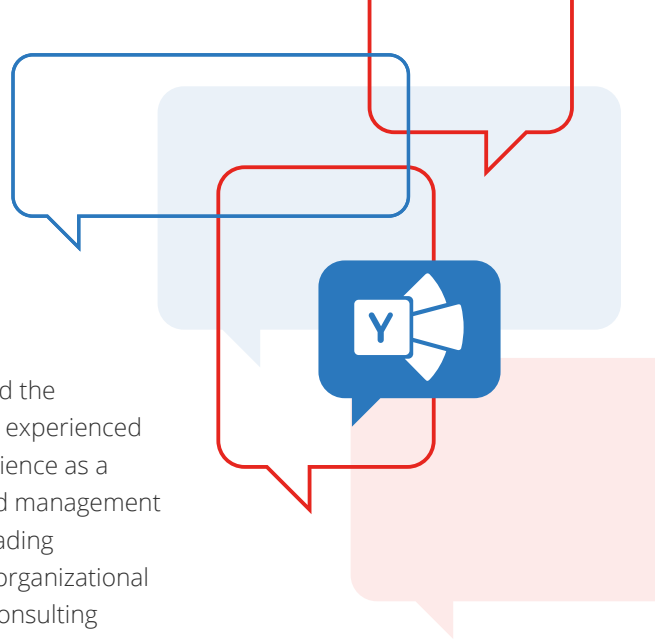
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**Sharon Dawson** is SWOOP's Director, External Relationships & External Communication. She is experienced in media and communications, having spent more than a decade working for Australian Associated Press (AAP) in the Sydney, Canberra, and London bureaux. Sharon has covered Olympic and Commonwealth Games, worked in the Australian federal press gallery, reported on Australian federal elections, and been a sports correspondent for many years. Prior to moving to the United States, Sharon worked as a Communications Officer for a NSW state government department. She joined the SWOOP team in 2017 as it expanded into the United States. Sharon holds a Bachelor of Arts (Communication Studies) from The University of Newcastle.





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