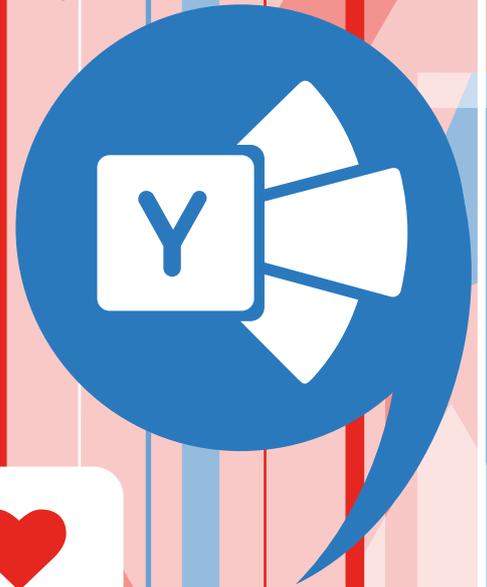


SWOOP Analytics'®

# 2022/23

## Yammer & Viva Engage Benchmarking Report



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## Key insights from SWOOP Analytics' 2022/23 Yammer benchmarking

Yammer participation continues to grow, doubling since 2020, but the majority are passive users.

While 80-85% of staff are accessing Yammer, almost 60% are reading only - they don't post, comment or react. 17% are mildly active "observers", leaving just 10% with active personas (Engagers, Catalysts, Responders, Broadcasters).

The flood of new Yammer users has resulted in a slide in most of the SWOOP measures for the first time in 8 years.

Having a large number of new joiners is a positive. The impact on average performance scores has seen a retreat in the key relationship measures across the board for the first time. We therefore need to go "backward to go forward" with a larger cohort of Yammer users.

The challenge is to transition Yammer activity from passive consumption to active participation.

The good news is, high performing Yammer communities are performing as well as ever, providing role models for new participants. We continue to identify inspiring case studies of communities using Yammer to deliver extraordinary organizational value.

Our analysis of Thriving Communities suggests Yammer is fulfilling the socialization gap created by remote working.

We identify a new "hybrid working leader" who engages in reciprocal relationships on Yammer and Microsoft Teams, while actively working with shared content on SharePoint. These leaders are setting the benchmark for effective leader behavior under a new flexible working regime.

The new "hybrid working leader" connects effectively across Yammer, Microsoft Teams and SharePoint.

The addition of sentiment and growth measures to our community performance measure identified many large, diverse and thriving communities. These communities are likely bridging the socialization gap created by remote working. Notably, many of these thriving communities are "purpose driven", discussing topics including environmental sustainability, LGBTQIA+ support, COVID-19 vaccinations.

# Executive Summary

As this report goes to press, we are finally seeing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions being lifted in most parts of the world. With this comes the realization of what experimental work practices will likely form part of the “new normal” ways of working. What has become clear is that hybrid and flexible ways of working are here to stay. The need for leaders to be even more focused on employee engagement, health and wellbeing has demonstrated its value during the pandemic. And [according to leading industry commentator Josh Bersin](#), any retreat from these pandemic-inspired work practices will likely have large negative consequences for the perpetrators.

The good news for Yammer and its new Microsoft Teams front door, [Viva Engage](#), is that these platforms will be front and center in facilitating the next generation of work practices. Yammer is now stepping up to fill the workplace socialization gap left by the partial retreat from the physical proximity afforded by the office. Viva Engage is building on the Yammer foundations to address the demands of a new generation of workers in what promises to finally deliver the human-centered workplace that has been in the making for decades.

The 12th-century English proverb; *“You can lead a horse to water but can't make him drink”* is now playing out with Yammer. The paths to the well that is Yammer have been broadened in recent times to the extent that some 80-85% of staff have reached it. Of those, some 68% are staring at the water, 20% have dipped their toes in by reacting to messages, yet only a small 12% have fully dived in to appreciate its full benefits by actively posting messages.

We have seen a 20%+ increase in the average size of organizations joining our benchmarking. A large proportion of new Yammer users are passive consumers of content, as indicated above. The larger proportion of “new to Yammer” participants has resulted in a retreat in the majority of [SWOOP Analytics'](#) relationship-centered measures for the first time since we began our annual benchmarking eight years ago. While on the surface this may appear disturbing, our interpretation is one of *“needing to go backwards to go forward”*, with a now larger suite of users. This drop in SWOOP measures compared with previous years' analysis can be explained by an increase in Yammer usage through readership but a drop in participation, meaning the percentage of those interacting on Yammer has actually fallen, even if raw numbers for Yammer usage have increased. **The challenge is to transition Yammer activity from passive consumption to active participation.**

This year we analyzed the most recent six-month period from 97 organizations between March 2020 to August 2022. For a majority of organizations, the period covered was February to July 2022. These 97 organizations represented more than 4.7 million staff across a breadth of industries, engaging in more than 21 million interactions on Yammer in the six-month period studied. Organizations had between 200 to more than 800,000 users with a Yammer account that was active for at least one day during the six-month benchmarking period.

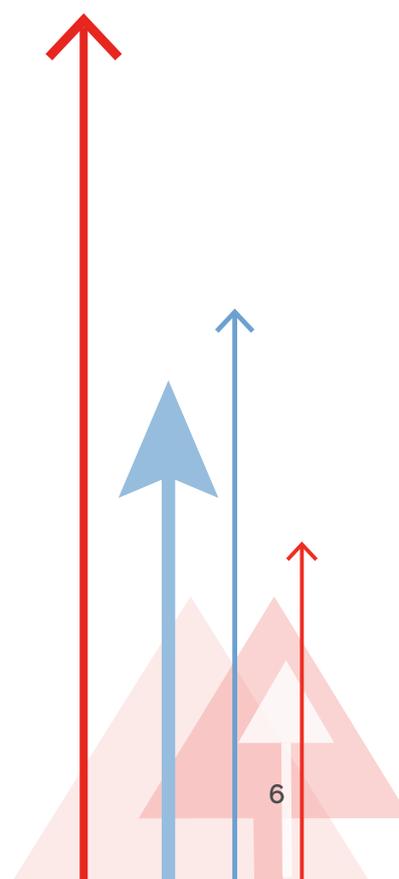
Additionally, we analyzed more than 3,200 Yammer communities, seeking out the most thriving using an enhanced Yammer community performance measure incorporating sentiment analysis (energy) and community growth.

With the recent introduction of [Viva Engage](#), we are seeing Yammer move closer to consumer platforms like Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Our view is that Yammer can and must be more than a Facebook-like social media platform. In 2021 we reported a retreat in active participation in Yammer, but with a large growth in readership. If we can take one lesson from knowledge management initiatives of the late 20th century, it's that communities can, and should, be used for collaborating on social learning (and innovation). As workplace analyst Simon Terry writes, "[Communication is not Collaboration](#)".

Social learning is where organizations develop the "deep smarts" that can distinguish themselves in the marketplace. Dorothy Leonard and Walter Swap in their [HBR article on "Deep Smarts"](#) suggest the; "*most valuable part of deep smarts is the tacit know-how (and often, know-who) that a person has built up over years of experience. This knowledge cannot be easily documented and handed over in a filing cabinet*".

Communities of Practice hosted by Yammer is where an organization's domain experts should congregate. Tacit knowledge can only be shared by direct interaction (collaboration) between people i.e. social learning. In this report we took a deep-dive into communities looking for where social learning may be taking place. *We contend that communities rich in social learning will also be where employees are most thriving.*

The scope for knowledge sharing and collaboration is now expanding beyond traditional work practices associated with functional disciplines like IT, HR, legal, Sales etc.. We identified thriving purpose-driven communities for diversity, equity and inclusion, sustainability and climate change and workplace health and wellbeing, where staff are actively engaging with their subject matter experts to collectively arrive at or support bespoke policies for their respective organizations. Unlike the functional disciplines, appropriate practices are still being discovered, with Yammer communities providing the platform for shared learning and development of key policies for these areas. The additional value in hosting "purpose driven" communities is the breadth and diversity of the members they attract. Sharing on topics they are passionate about provides the sense of belonging within the community, and ultimately the organization as a whole.



# 1 Introduction

[SWOOP Analytics'](#) eighth annual Yammer Benchmarking Report finds us starting to emerge from the global state of COVID-19 pandemic disruption. This is the third of our Yammer benchmarking reports to be published since the pandemic started. While we have a sense that employees have returned to the office for at least part of their week, the weight of opinion now is that hybrid working is here to stay.

As for Yammer, as always, reports of its demise are grossly overstated. Product leader for Viva Engage [Dan Holme recently wrote](#): ***"Say it with me: Yammer is not going away. In fact, we're investing more deeply in Yammer services and experiences in Viva Engage and across Microsoft 365"***.

The [recent announcement of the Viva Engage Teams app](#), replacing the Community app, and gateway to Yammer, may not appear such a big deal on the surface. We would expect in the not too distant future a re-branding of Yammer to Viva Engage, in the same way that recent Microsoft acquisition [Ally.io is now Viva Goals](#).

So, what's in a name? In our view, it sets the aspiration. Yammer was created when there was a paucity of internal online discussion platforms. Microsoft is sending the message with Viva Engage that cross enterprise connections, or the [Outer Loop](#), working has become even more important for hybrid work. Microsoft research had identified it was [these weaker cross-organization connections which had suffered most during the pandemic](#), resulting in a loss of "social capital" within the organization. Other [independent research reinforced this finding, especially amongst leaders and the bridging connections that leaders are relied upon](#).

Microsoft's ambition does not stop at employee engagement though. Writing for the Harvard Business Review, [people analytics leads Dawn Klinghoffer and Elizabet McCune reported that Microsoft is now preferring to measure "Employee Thriving" over "Employee Engagement"](#), finding the latter measures insufficient. They define thriving as; *"to be energized and empowered to do meaningful work."* Their investigations also noted that those employees reporting to be thriving talked about; *"a collaborative environment and teamwork with colleagues, an inclusive culture with autonomy and flexibility, and well-being support"*. Additionally finding; *"the most common thread among those who were not thriving was a feeling of exclusion — from a lack of collaboration to feeling left out of decisions to struggling with politics and bureaucracy"*. It is clear from these statements that employee thriving and inclusive collaboration cannot be separated.

The Gallup organization has also identified how employees could be "engaged" at work but not "thriving". [Gallup found employees who were engaged but not thriving, have a 61% higher chance of suffering burnout at work](#). Gallup uses a more holistic "best possible life" scale to measure "thriving". Additionally, [Siobhan Fagan from CMSWire and Reworked also argues that 'employee thriving' is a better measure of engagement](#).

We are happy to say we were ahead of the curve on this one; having measured and reported on “Energy in Communities” in our [2021 Yammer Benchmarking Report](#). Last year, like Microsoft, we used sentiment to assess the energy inside communities. We feel SWOOP is well placed to develop a continuous measurement framework for “Employee Thriving”, with the addition of sentiment and growth to existing measures of inclusion; reciprocity (two-way relationships), %Mentions, %Participation within groups. You will find our “thriving communities” assessments in section 4.

The other movement we have seen in the past year from Microsoft, and the industry at large, is the re-emergence of “Knowledge Management (KM)”. SWOOP as a company can trace its roots back to the KM movement in the 1990s. Knowledge Management can be simply stated as a combination for “collections and connections”. Technology support for managing informal information (collections) has dominated the KM market, even today. For our part, we focused on the people-to-people connections. Microsoft, through the facility of the Microsoft Graph, is now bringing connections and collections together, largely through [Viva Topics](#). A search for knowledge no longer limits you to faceless documents. IT research organization [Gartner has also flagged this re-emergence of KM in what it is calling “Modern Knowledge Management Architecture”](#).

Having been heavily involved in the first generation of KM in the 1990s and early 2000s, it feels odd to include a section on KM in our Futures chapter (section 5). In this report we will reflect on what might be different and what should be sustained with KM this time around. We follow this by exploring the archetype “*Hybrid Working Leader*”; leaders that can connect on their outer loop (Yammer), Inner Loop (Microsoft Teams), while sharing information (SharePoint).

We begin the report by celebrating our collaboration champions in section 2. We start by celebrating organization-wide performance using our standard assessment methodology. This year we will also be assessing collaborative performance using an enhanced “thriving community” assessment.

The “Show me the numbers” (Section 3) is our regular quantitative benchmarking section. Some 18 SWOOP measures are assessed against prior years in order to detect major trends we should be mindful of. The SWOOP Yammer dashboard goals are adjusted each year, based on these results. Many of our longer-term clients rely on these results to assess their own performances, on an annual basis.

Community-level benchmarking, started in 2020, is continued in this edition in Section 4. Community benchmarking recognizes not all communities have the same function<sup>1</sup>. Specific Yammer community targets are therefore created for Communities of Practice, Information sharing (Communities of Interest), Q&A Forums and Announce groups. To continue the theme of measuring thriving groups, we have extended our community health measure to reflect this.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of users are calculated by totaling everyone who has had an active account on Yammer at any stage during the six-month benchmarking period, and may therefore exceed the total number of employees.

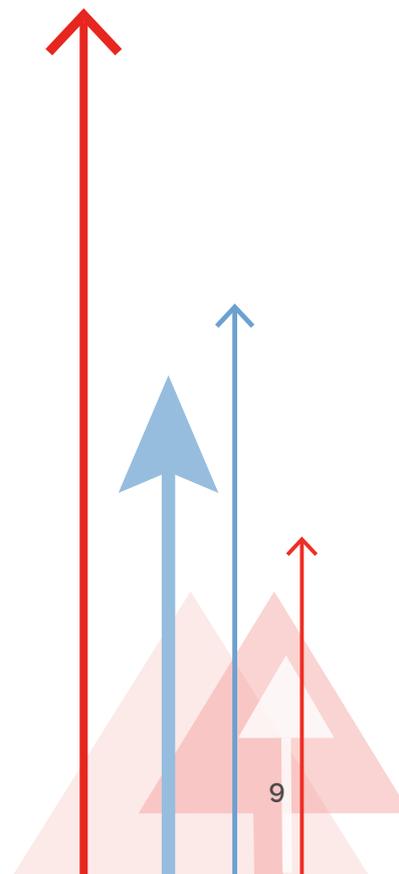
Our Futures section (Section 5) takes Microsoft's lead at looking beyond "engagement". We are paying particular attention to not just thriving communities, but thriving employees, demonstrating digital collaboration leadership through Yammer, Microsoft Teams and SharePoint. We feel the collaborative leadership behaviors demonstrated could go a long way towards addressing the "productivity paranoia" identified in [Microsoft's 2022 Work Trends study](#).

The value SWOOP can bring is the ability to assess employees continuously, rather than only at survey points. Klinghoffer and McCune's research identified that thriving is not always associated with health and wellbeing. In our 2021 report we identified how staff were using Yammer as a "stress relief"; by participating in non-work communities. [HR specialist Josh Bersin describes this as "belonging" and the secret to diversity and inclusion](#). Perhaps "Viva Engage" is already outdated as a label and should instead be called "Viva Thrive".

In this Futures section we will also be looking to identify those digital leaders who we anticipate will lead the way in the new world of hybrid work. Some of these leaders will be visible in the formal hierarchy. Others will be a complete surprise to their organizations; the unsung "quiet achievers". Where we are able to, we will aim to share their stories and experiences.

We include a section on our speculations on the future of the newly introduced stories and storylines feature in Yammer and Viva Engage. This is a topic we are aware our readership is keenly interested in.

Finally, we'd love for you to participate in next year's Yammer benchmarking so you can see how your organization compares with the best in the world. We share all the details for you to receive a free custom benchmark report from SWOOP and to participate in the 2023/24 Yammer Benchmarking study.



## 2 Who are our enterprise collaboration champions?

SWOOP identifies its collaboration champions directly from the interaction patterns we assess 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:

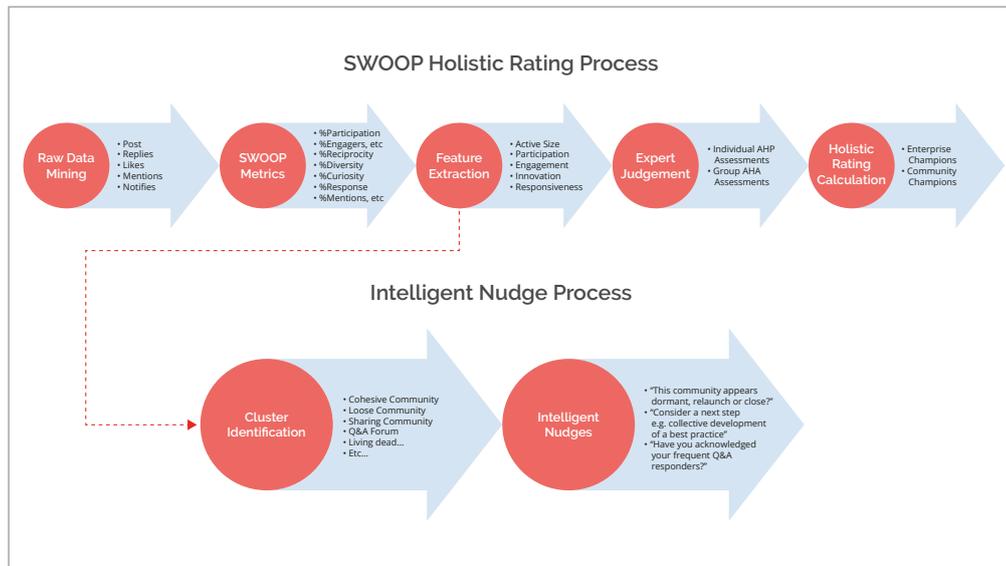


Figure 1 - Overview of SWOOP collaboration assessment methodology

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. In 2021, we extended our champion selections to individual communities and selected posts, where permission to publish had been granted. This year we have again extended the community assessment process to explore the concept of "Employee Thriving". Our selected champion Yammer communities have been assessed by this new community measure.

## 2.2 Who are our enterprise collaboration champions?

### 2.2.1. Large organizations (more than 5,000 active staff)

It was tough competition to grab the top spot for large-size organizations across all three regions. In fact, in the Americas, No.2 ranked The Home Depot was a marginal 0.0022% behind the overall winner! In ranking the overall collaboration champions, all Yammer communities are analyzed across the entire network – the high and low performing communities – with the data from each community combined to give the organization an overall ranking. The collaboration champions for large-size organizations are:

- » **APAC - ANZ** (also No.1 for large-size organizations worldwide)
- » **Americas - US health insurer** (*chose to remain anonymous*)
- » **EMEA - UK retailer** (*chose to remain anonymous*)

Read [ANZ's](#) story:

### How a thriving Yammer community helped us through tough times

The Philippines endured one of the world's longest running, strictest COVID-19-enforced quarantines. For close to two years, many residents had to stay indoors unless they could produce a pass enabling them to go out and buy essential items.

Needless to say, the restrictions impacted the mental and physical health of many Filipinos. One woman has gone above and beyond to ensure her colleagues can continue to work from home during the pandemic, access fresh food, feel motivated and connected, and help others in need. She's done all this via Yammer.

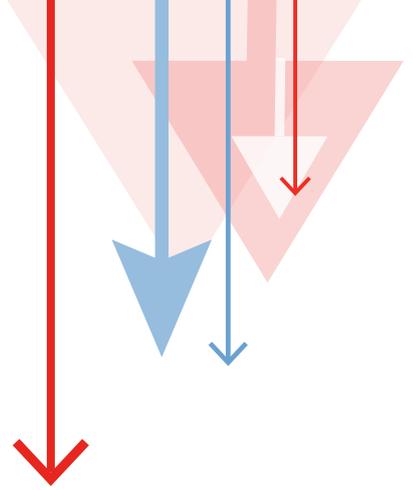
Virginia Ballerda, Engineer Chapter Lead at [ANZ](#), uses ANZ's "Connecting Philippines" Yammer community to keep her colleagues engaged and motivated, with the purpose of bringing happiness and a sense of connection.

The extent of Virginia's dedication was uncovered when [SWOOP Analytics'](#) analysis of more than 3,200 Yammer communities ranked ANZ's Connecting Philippines as No.7 in the world for the Most Thriving Communities, based on the measures of community performance, energy (sentiment) and growth (activity and members).

"During the pandemic there was a lot of concern about mental wellness and a lot of people here in The Philippines were affected," Virginia said.

"Most people weren't able to go into their workplaces, and while I was lucky to be working at a global organization like ANZ, some Filipinos, particularly those working for local companies, lost their jobs. I used Yammer to ensure my colleagues and peers had a place to connect."

Virginia's primary role at ANZ involves helping employees with their technology, so her first priority when posting on Yammer during the pandemic was to share work from home tips. These included practical tips on how to update software or do minor fixes to hardware. Remember, Filipinos couldn't just go to their offices to get the tech team to update their computers.



Virginia Ballerda,  
Engineer Chapter Lead, ANZ.

Posted in Connecting Philippines

 **Virginia Ballerda** Nov 18, 2020 • @13 3 shares • Seen by 345 ...

**---Do's and Dont's While Using ANZ connect---**

Happy Wowee Wednesday. As we are already in our 8th month for the new normal, the chances of getting notification for ANZ connect certificate expiration is high. To ensure that you can continuously work from home using ANZ connect, please **renew ANZ connect before it expires**. You will be seeing notification once ANZ connect ID is expiring. You can renew it **while connected using ANZ connect**. ANZ connect certificate is good for **365 days**. Attached is a guide on how to renew ANZ connect certificate. It is very important to renew it before it expires. Once ANZ connect certificate is expired, **site visit is required** to do the re-initialization. Please see attached for more details.



**TECHBAR - Do's and Don'ts while using ANZ**  
Connecting Philippines > Files ...



**Tech Self-Help - Seeing expiration notice for ANZ**  
Connecting Philippines > Files ...

 Like  Comment  Share ▾   You and 36 others

[Show 8 previous comments](#)

 **Virginia Ballerda** Sep 28, 2021  1
 

We received 2 concerns regarding ANZ connect issue after end user changes their display name today. To ensure that you can connect to ANZ connect, please do not make any changes with your LAN ID, display name, and email add while you are working from home. Please cascade to your team mates. Thank you.

cc: Gari Quidangen, Gino Gabriel Rivera, Jonathan Laygo, Karen Calma, Yolanda Velarde, John Zalesco Coquilla, Ian Clet, Rodolfo Borigas Jr, Kevin Mingcay, and Bryant Tan

*An example of a tech help Yammer post from Virginia.*

### Motivation through recognition

This story is about much more than just helping people with their technology. One of the ways Virginia worked to keep the 1,000+ ANZ employees in the “Connecting Philippines” community connected and motivated was to encourage regular recognition and praise posts on Yammer, especially peer-to-peer posts, like calling out a colleague or a team for a job well done.

“I also encourage my colleagues to recognize their peers because I believe in the power of recognition,” Virginia said.

“When you recognize your team or peers, it boosts motivation.”

### Learning to grow food – via Yammer

Just as some of us got swept up in the sourdough making craze that came with the pandemic; Virginia, passionate about environmental sustainability, created a craze of her own by teaching her colleagues how to grow their own food and plants.

"During lockdown here in the Philippines, if you didn't have your own car it was difficult to go to the supermarket and buy food," Virginia explained.

"So I showed people how to grow food from what they already have at home. I believe this was also positive for people's mental wellbeing and provided something else to focus on other than just the pandemic."

Virginia shared her green expertise on Yammer, including how some vegetables can be soaked in water to grow shoots which can then be planted and eaten soon afterwards. Many ANZ employees who began to grow their own food shared photos and progress on Yammer.

"I also used Yammer to coordinate providing seedlings to my colleagues. At one point I think around 50 of my peers were growing their own food and sharing their progress on Yammer," Virginia said.

"People from around ANZ also reached out to ask me about the initiative, hoping they could do the same thing in their communities.

"We also had employees that wanted to grow flowering plants, so I gathered a group of volunteers to propagate plants and then give them out to people for free. I would announce on Yammer, using #AdoptAPlant, that I had some free plants to give away and they would quickly all be taken up. It makes people happy and people would always be looking out for my posts so they could take some freebies!"

The #AdoptAPlant campaign initiated by Virginia has been one of the Hot Topics on ANZ's Connecting Philippines Yammer community over the past year, according to data from [SWOOP Analytics](#).

Posted in Connecting Philippines

 **Virginia Ballerda**  
Jan 19, 2021

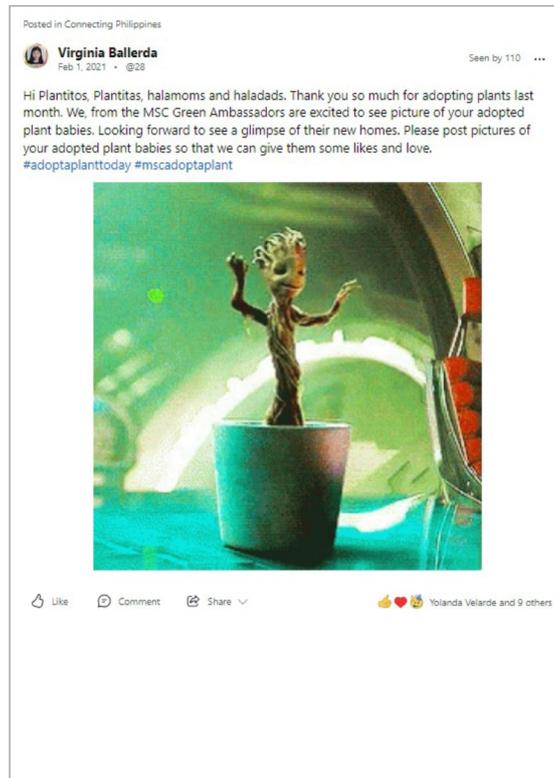
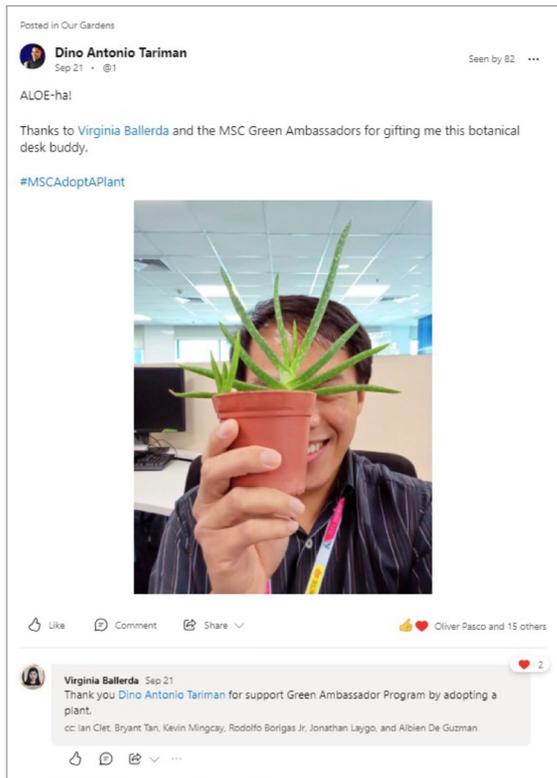
To promote Environmental Sustainability and Greening of our Community, we from MSC Green Ambassador would like to encourage all plant lovers, plantito, plantita, halamoms and haladads to share picture of their gardens. The top 3 pictures that receives the highest number of likes will be announced as winners.

**Mechanics:**

- Post a picture of your garden by replying to this post.
- Post your entry from January 20, 2021 to February 12, 2021.
- Have as many likes as possible
- Use [#MSCGoGreenWFHedition...](#) see more



Showing 3 of 24 replies • Last reply 4h ago



Some examples of #AdoptAPlant posts on ANZ's Yammer network.

"These sorts of initiatives might seem like a bit of fun, but I believe they go a long way towards helping people with their mental wellness, it helps people feel more connected to work and their colleagues," Virginia said.

### Years cultivating community via Yammer at ANZ

The thriving Yammer communities at ANZ didn't just happen overnight. ANZ has consistently ranked among the top Yammer networks in the world in SWOOP Analytics' Yammer Benchmarking Reports based on measures for participation, people-to-people engagement, responsiveness, and innovation. In this year's analysis of more than 21 million Yammer interactions from 4.7 million employees, **ANZ was ranked No.1 worldwide for large-size organizations.**

Yammer has become a part of the culture at ANZ, after years of cultivation. In the early days of Yammer, it was fostered by CEO Shayne Elliott, who used it as a [tool to listen to his employees](#).

What's interesting since the pandemic is that peer-to-peer engagement has risen significantly, it's not only leaders who generate significant engagement and conversation when they post a story, a question or an experience.

Ryan Crocker, Adoption and Communications Lead, ANZ, said almost every time an employee perspective or experience is featured on Yammer using the [Featured Conversation](#) function, it breaks ANZ's record for the most seen by and engaged post.

ANZ's Yammer team uses Featured Conversations thoughtfully and sparingly, and tracks engagement with SWOOP. The most recent post had more than 25,000 views, almost half of ANZ's workforce.

"What we're finding works really well is if it's an employee story," Ryan said.

"If it's an employee sharing a personal experience, a perspective or opinion on something it works really well. Some recent conversations that generated a lot of engagement have included a banker that shared a story about a customer who came into a branch with a unique situation, the banker talked about how they were able to make a significant difference for that customer. Another was a powerful personal story about mental health and wellbeing - that one really resonated with our employees.

"All that kind of content just goes nuts. It shows that our employees really value the opportunity to hear and share stories and engage directly with their peers on Yammer.

**"Yammer creates a strong sense of community and connection. Now we're not connecting in our workplaces as often, I think people are increasingly looking for digital ways to bridge that gap."**

Ryan said the examples Virginia shared are great examples of community and connection in action.

"The richness of the activity in the Connecting Philippines community was born out of the difficult situation people were facing in the Philippines," Ryan said.

"Yammer provided a great place for people to connect and share the love. It's that sense of community and connection where employees can talk about what's important to them and how they can support one another."

*Ryan Crocker,  
Adoption and  
Communications  
Lead, ANZ.*



## 2.2.2 Medium organizations (between 1,500 and 5,000 active staff)

For the first time in SWOOP's eight years of benchmarking, a medium-size organization outperformed all small-size organizations to take out overall honors as SWOOP's No.1 collaboration champion. A huge congratulations to financial services company Westpac New Zealand! A consistently high performer in SWOOP benchmarking, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, took out the No.1 spot for medium-size organizations in the EMEA region. The collaboration champions for medium-size organizations are:

- » **APAC - Westpac New Zealand**  
(also No.1 collaboration champion worldwide from 97 organizations)
- » **Americas – US company** (*chose to remain anonymous*)
- » **EMEA - KLM Royal Dutch Airlines**

Read [Westpac New Zealand's](#) story:

### Banking on Yammer and SWOOP Analytics to achieve top collaboration

When [Westpac New Zealand's](#) internal communications team is about to launch a campaign, engagement on Yammer is a priority. It's a deliberate move away from traditional communication channels, like the intranet, to a platform where employees can engage in the content.

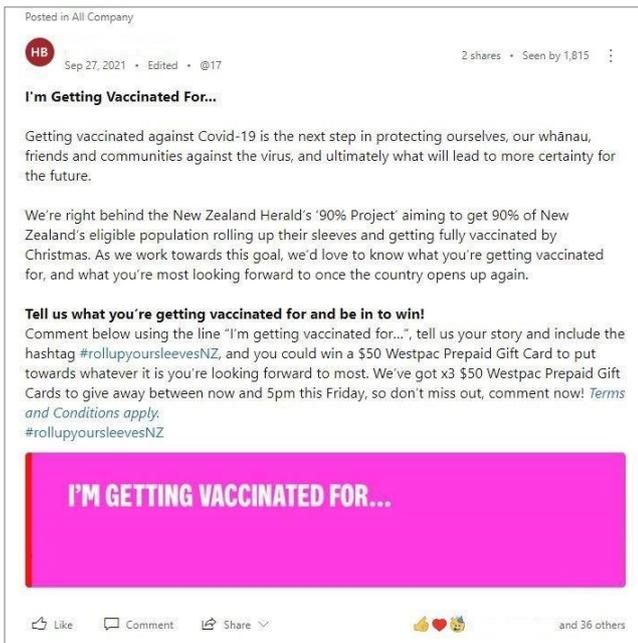
Take for example the Most Engaging Post on the bank's Yammer network for the past 12 months. It was a post informing people that Westpac NZ was behind a country-wide campaign to get 90% of the eligible population vaccinated against COVID-19 before Christmas. The Yammer post asked employees what they were getting vaccinated for, and what they were most looking forward to once New Zealand came out of lockdown. Also on offer were three \$50 gift cards as an incentive to get people engaged.

Westpac NZ deliberately chose Yammer as the primary channel to support the vaccination campaign so people could engage and share their stories, many of which became personal and emotional.

"We chose Yammer for this campaign because we needed to get everyone behind vaccination. Given its importance, we wanted our people to be able to have a conversation and share their perspectives on a highly relevant and emotional topic," said Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager at Westpac New Zealand.

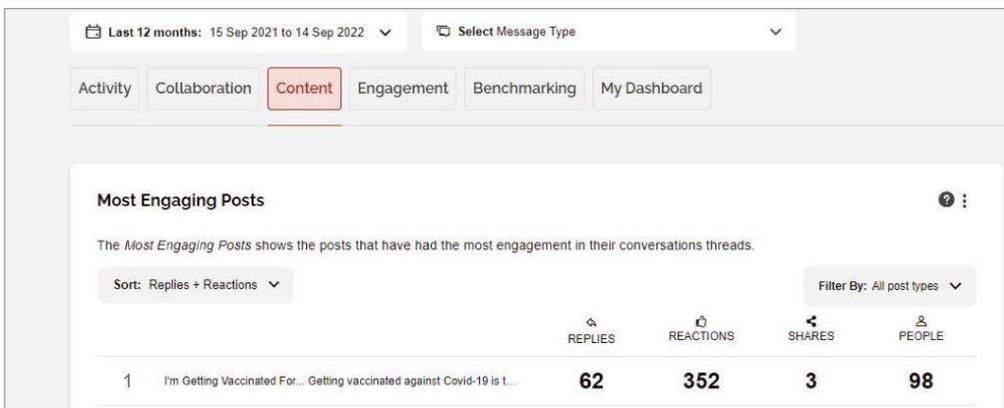


*Fiona Roberts,  
Senior Digital  
Engagement Manager,  
Westpac New Zealand*



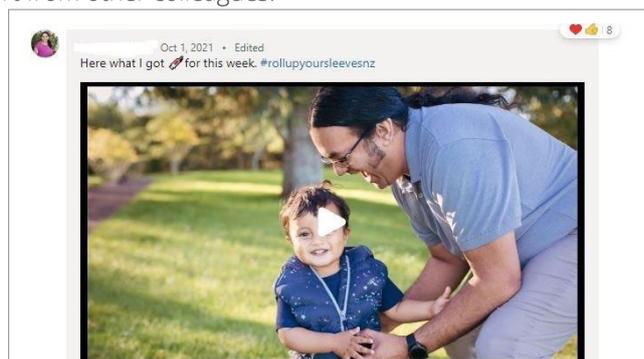
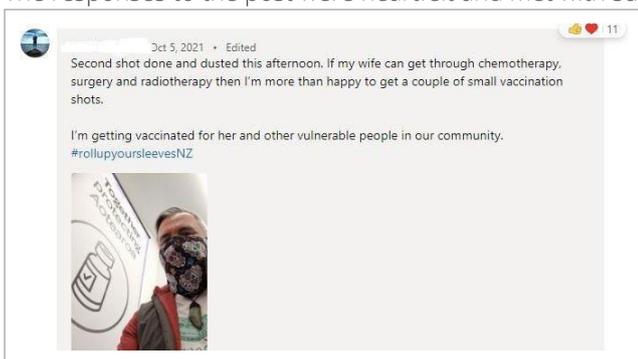
The Most Engaging Post on Westpac NZ's Yammer network for the past 12 months.

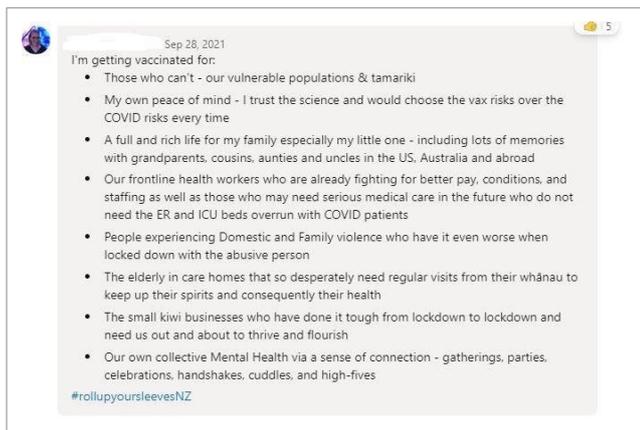
The post was viewed by more than 1,800 people, almost a third of the entire workforce at Westpac NZ, with more than 350 reactions, including reactions to comments, and more than 60 comments, according to data from [SWOOP Analytics](#).



A screenshot of Westpac NZ's Most Engaging Posts measure from SWOOP Analytics.

The responses to the post were heartfelt and met with support from other colleagues.





*Some of the replies to the original Yammer post.*

This campaign is a perfect example of how the Corporate Communications teams at Westpac NZ intentionally use Yammer as an employee engagement tool.

"We're quite purposeful with how we use Yammer," Fiona said.

"We don't think of it as social media, we think about it simply as a channel with which to communicate. What we've seen is a really deliberate move away from the intranet, and of pushing news and information, to using Yammer quite a lot more as our primary channel so we've got an opportunity to create news and information and campaigns that engage people."

It may come as no surprise then to learn Westpac NZ was ranked the No.1 Yammer network across the world in [SWOOP Analytics' 2022/23 Benchmarking analysis](#) of 97 organizations. It was also the first time a medium-sized organization (between 1,500 and 5,000 active staff) has taken out top honors in eight years of SWOOP's benchmarking. Usually it's a small-size organization that tops the rankings as it's often easier for smaller sized organizations to perform better.

"Our internal communications team has got Yammer as top of mind so when they're creating a campaign ... they are constantly thinking about how to use Yammer to engage people," Fiona said.

"That's probably what we're seeing as the key driver and the key shift. The team are now corralling behind Yammer as that primary communications channel."

The shift Fiona refers to has been from thinking of Yammer as just another communications channel to now deliberately planning how initiatives can be brought to life through Yammer.

"It's much easier to try and get people to engage with the topic when they are allowed to talk about it and ask questions," Fiona said.

"It's much harder when we're pushing it in one-way communication via email."

## Rise in Yammer readership, a dip in participation

Despite the impressive result from Westpac NZ's benchmarking data, some of its SWOOP measures have dropped compared with previous years' analysis. This is a reflection across the entire global analysis which can be explained by an increase in Yammer usage through readership but a drop in active participation, meaning the percentage of those interacting on Yammer has actually fallen, even if raw numbers for Yammer usage have increased.

Fiona believes that as more and more people use Microsoft Teams for everyday work at Westpac NZ, along with Viva Engage or the Communities app in Teams, Yammer readership is increasing. However, after two years dealing with COVID-19 lockdowns and huge changes to the financial services industry, there can be an overload of communications, and fatigue is setting in.

"It's no wonder people are looking at Yammer but not necessarily participating," Fiona said.

That's why Westpac NZ values SWOOP's global benchmarking.

"We always like to know what else can we do, where our gaps are, where the opportunities are, or where we need to focus," Fiona said.

"We like to see how we compare with others. It's really important for us to know if we are using this channel to its best capacity and the way that we can make it not just engaging for our people but that we're using it to its fullest.

"We love the benchmarking report; it gives us a really good platform to springboard off for the year and it helps us to set those goals and gives us a clear vision of where we want to go for the year."

For other internal communications specialists feeling disparaged by a drop in Yammer participation, take heart from Fiona.

"It's a very communication-intensive environment that we live in at the moment," Fiona said.

"Yammer is just one platform in which our people communicate so it gets harder and harder to get them to focus on one particular channel."

Fiona acknowledges it takes hard work and constant stoking of the fire, even though she counts herself lucky that in a country like New Zealand and a company like Westpac, everyone works together as a community and Yammer has become an extension of that supportive community.

"It does require constant effort," Fiona said of Yammer.

"You do have to keep stoking the fire to make sure things are going the way they should,"

"Most of the time the community is just great, they rally in behind each other but it still needs work."

## **Using Yammer to help with hybrid work**

The city of Auckland, where about half of Westpac NZ's 5,500 employees are based, was locked down from August to December 2021 and for extended periods through 2022, whilst the rest of the country also faced restrictions. With the exception of employees required to provide services in its branch network, most employees were forced to work from home. Once lockdowns were finally lifted, Westpac NZ wanted to rebuild the sense of community that had always existed and get people back into offices, if they wanted to.

Fiona and her team launched a campaign called "Together Again in the Office" on Yammer. The focus was on FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out).

"We wanted people to get a sense that coming back into offices was something that you wanted to do – there was still a vibrant community of people here and you could come in and meet your colleagues. That meant you could brainstorm, have coffee, go to cafes, or get together with your colleagues for drinks," Fiona said.

Photos were posted in Yammer of teams meeting up in person in the office, of what was on offer for the day at the office café, what art exhibits were on display around the offices or special deals available at local shops.

"Even though the campaign is officially over, we're still doing this to encourage people back in. So we're really subtly, and not so subtly, showing people what they are missing out on," Fiona said.

## **Knowledge sharing on Yammer resulting in ROI**

Westpac NZ recently ran an external home loan campaign for first home buyers, encouraging first home owners to get into the property market. As part of the campaign, Westpac NZ's Consumer Banking & Wealth team ran an internal Yammer campaign to engage employees with the external marketing effort.

In a nutshell, the Yammer campaign was a place to share ideas and knowledge. For example, branch teams shared photos of their in-branch displays, while others shared examples of how they had supported customers through their home-buying journeys.

Left: The initial Yammer post about the external First Home Buyers campaign.

Posted in Consumer Banking & Wealth  
Jun 7 • Edited • @41  
1 share • Seen by 523

Thank you all for your support with our housing campaigns in market the past few months. We've heard lots of awesome customers stories and it's been a great success #togethergreater.  
Now we have an amazing offer for our **First Home Buyers** customers that launched Monday 6 June.  
We will be continuing our Yammer competition for best customer stories! Post your story about helping a customer with their first home, or any part of their home loan journey, add the #onthehouse #magicmoment, and be in to win a morning tea!



Westpac Home Loans  
TOGETHER GREATER

Posted in All Company  
Mar 28 • Edited • @13  
Seen by 634

Here at Pukekohe branch we have housing on the mind !

This morning we had a great meeting collaborating on how we will highlight to existing and future Westpac home loan customers that we are the best partners for their home lending journey.

We are excited to share below some of what we have come up with Together :

- More talking about our winter warm up loan !
- Making sure existing customers know how easy it is to refix through Westpac one!
- Identifying customers that may be closer than they think to their first home and help them come up with a plan to get them over the line faster !
- Promoting our unique products such as offset !
- Making sure existing customers are aware of our promotion . We're offering all those that fix their loans and stay with Westpac the chance to win a \$5000.00 smart home vent system, keeping them and their family more healthy.

We cant wait to share how we used some of these to create amazing customer experience's !! #onthehouse



SO Apr 1  
Seen by 699

Ready to go come Monday!!!!  
Lets go team

#onthehouses #local #Togethergreater #onthemarket #firsthome #goldclass



ES Jun 14 • @24  
Seen by 242

Customer came in to see [redacted] to get a home loan top up to do a gifting for his daughter to help her with a first home deposit. [redacted] became courageous and asked the customer if his daughter's loan was approved, to which he stated that it was not as yet. [redacted] obtained permission to contact the daughter to see what Westpac could offer her. The daughter was happy for [redacted] to assess her application which she did and provided a conditional approval within 30 minutes. The daughter was so impressed with the quick turn around and placed an offer on the property that evening which was accepted. Well done [redacted] for being curious and going the extra mile. #winninginwellington #GCS #onthehouse

Like Comment Share

and 19 others

Some of the responses posted on Yammer to the First Home Buyers campaign, sharing ideas and photos.

Each post carried a hashtag so weekly reports could be compiled, via SWOOP Analytics, to see how the campaign was tracking.

"I can see with SWOOP if we are getting a good cross section of people across the bank engaging," Fiona said.

"I can see what's happening branch by branch, if there's a particular branch manager that's doing a good job engaging the team, or where it's not going well. You can watch and see who the (SWOOP) Engagers are and it does give those teams a really good idea of where they need to do more work to support that campaign."

The huge success of this campaign though, according to organiser Robert Fernandes, Regional Manager Auckland Central East, came down to Yammer being a fantastic visual platform where people could share information and stories.

"It's one of the first times that an internal Yammer campaign has created such a vibe that its positively impacted on the success of an external campaign. We were really lucky to have senior leaders involved as well and that role-modelling helped people get engaged and made them feel like they were all part of a team," he said.

"It's really spurred us to look at what we do for future campaigns as we can now see the return on investment through using Yammer."

#### » EMEA - KLM Royal Dutch Airlines

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines is the flag carrier airline of the Netherlands and has regularly been among the top performers in SWOOP's global Yammer benchmarking. We have case studies to share about KLM's success with Yammer and SWOOP:

- [ROI and Sustainability - Saving money and the planet at KLM Royal Dutch Airlines](#)
- [Tapping into unrealized resources](#)



### 2.2.3 Small organizations (between 200 and 1,500 active staff)

A couple of SWOOP's regular collaboration champions took out top honors again in this year's benchmarking. At the top of the list is Bip UK & Bip US (formerly global consultancy company Chaucer) coming in at No.2 in the worldwide rankings of 97 organizations and No.1 overall for small-size organizations. Close behind is real estate management consulting and managed services firm RealFoundations, which again took out first-place for small-size organizations in the Americas. New to the winners circle this year is New Zealand renewable electricity generator Meridian Energy, the No.1 collaboration champion for the APAC region. The collaboration champions for small-size organizations are:

- » **APAC - Meridian Energy**
- » **Americas – RealFoundations**
- » **EMEA – Bip UK & BIP US** (No.1 overall collaboration champion for small-size organizations)

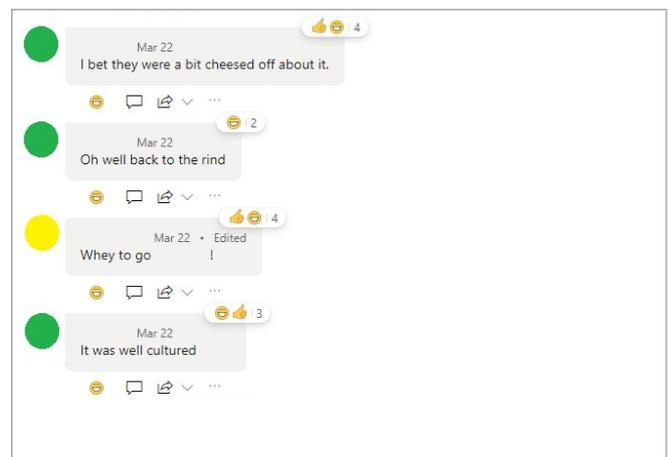
Read [Meridian Energy's](#) story:

#### The power of Bad Dad Jokes

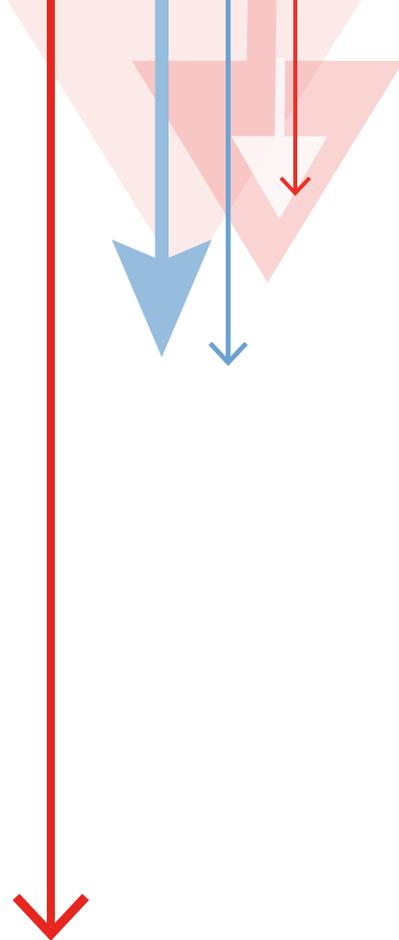
A few months back in a meeting at [Meridian Energy](#), someone made a comment about the Dad Jokes that get bantered around the staff café and wouldn't it be great to have a place to share them. Internal communications manager Kat Jensen, thick in the midst of rolling out Yammer across the organization, knew she had the perfect place for them to be posted.

The jokes are awful, as you'd expect, but the Bad Jokes Yammer community is now the most engaged Yammer community at New Zealand renewable electricity generator Meridian Energy, according to data from [SWOOP Analytics](#).

What makes the community so important is that it's been an easy and entertaining way to introduce Yammer to hundreds of employees who had otherwise never engaged on an Enterprise Social Network (ESN). These employees may be connecting over terrible jokes, but more importantly, they are connecting with colleagues they otherwise may never encounter, they're learning how to use Yammer and they're starting to explore other Yammer communities while they're there.



An example of a post in Meridian Energy's Bad Jokes Yammer community.



It was a conscious effort by Meridian Energy’s internal communications team of Jack Zorab, Internal Communications Advisor, and Kat to focus on social groups when they softly launched Yammer in September 2021.

“The Bad Jokes community seems really trivial but there was a marked increase in usage of Yammer after we launched it,” Jack said.

“Suddenly we had this whole group of users who had never really engaged with enterprise-wide channels before. Especially for shift workers, it gave them a way to connect socially by sharing these terrible jokes.

“It is the most active community in terms of users who engage and are active because everyone has some bad jokes to share, or if they don’t have one themselves, they give it a laugh or a love. The jokes are just terrible, they really make you roll your eyes or groan out loud, but people keep coming back for more.”

COMMUNITY	ACTIVITY			ENTERPRISE USERS	
	TOTAL ↕	TREND	LAST ↕	# USERS ↕	% ACTIVE USERS ▼
Bad Jokes	1283		30 Aug 2022	125	 72%
Generation Community	358		29 Aug 2022	140	 71%
Customer Care & Delivery	1206		30 Aug 2022	231	 70%

A screenshot of Meridian Energy’s Community Activity in SWOOP Analytics, showing Bad Jokes as the most active community.

The Bad Jokes Yammer community has already begun to show business value across Meridian Energy.

“Suddenly you then see these people popping up in other places around the network,” Jack said.

“We’ve given them something that draws them in socially and suddenly they realize this isn’t so bad – people are engaged with me, so I’ll engage with them.”

You could imagine sometimes the jokes are not in good taste but Kat says there’s been no need to moderate the community so far, nor any other community on Meridian Energy’s Yammer network.

“It’s a really well-behaved, self-moderated network of people,” Kat said.

“Our grass-roots approach to Yammer has meant our people know it’s their network, not something that’s ‘controlled’ by the company, and everyone seems to get how to behave – have fun but be kind and be respectful. We’ve never once had to step in and delete a comment. That democratization of it, everyone who uses it feels it’s our network.”

## From missing forks in the kitchen to collaboration champion

Kat and Jack said their 870 or so colleagues on Yammer have really taken ownership of the network. These employees are scattered right across the country and for many, Yammer is their way of connecting with colleagues outside of their usual team. It's perhaps for this reason Meridian Energy was ranked the No.1 Collaboration Champion in the APAC region for small-sized organizations (between 200 and 1,500 active staff) in [SWOOP Analytics' 2022/23 Yammer Benchmarking analysis](#). This takes into account all of Meridian Energy's Yammer communities and compares them with other organizational networks of a similar size.



It's an impressive accolade for a Yammer network that was just a year old when the analysis was carried out by SWOOP.

Meridian Energy knew it was time for an ESN when inboxes were being overrun by email blasts, often for things like; "There are no forks left in the kitchen, please return your forks".

"It was just driving people mad," Jack said.

"Then the 'reply all' emails would start. Someone would 'reply all' on their phone, someone would joke about the email. You'd end up with 6,000 emails going out for one issue. It became a real problem and so we looked for something better.

"We came across Yammer and explored it more. It ticked a lot of the boxes around that informal communication and allowing people to connect with each other, allowing that open and honest two-way communication which was something that had popped up a few times during our employee engagement surveys.

"We wanted a solution that wasn't just about solving a comms problem, but would enable staff to build connections and increase engagement across the company."

## Power to the people

Jack and Kat had done their research, which included reading previous SWOOP Analytics benchmarking reports and [case studies](#) to learn what has worked for other successful Yammer networks. They knew the value in social groups and encouraging employees to take ownership of Yammer communities. They also knew the power of having a leader engaged on Yammer and so recruited the General Manager of Retail to “sponsor” Yammer for her business unit.

In the first few months of Yammer, it was the Rainbow community and the Pets of Meridian community that really flourished. At the same time, the number of emails began to slow for things like missing forks.

“We wanted to give that power to the people,” Jack said.

“We told them; ‘These are your communities, not our communities.’”

Kat and Jack both believe the success of Yammer at Meridian Energy was making it completely optional initially for anyone to use. There has never been a directive to start using Yammer. However, now adoption levels are high, some All Company announcements are made on Yammer, with notifications to the announcement sent via Microsoft Teams and email.

“Yammer has been a ‘nice to have’ tool, not a ‘must have’ tool,” Kat said.

“That made it more appealing for people to get onboard. It made it very clear that it was different to other corporate comms.”

## Isn't it just social media?

Like most internal comms professionals, Kat and Jack faced some criticism from colleagues that Yammer was just another distraction from work. That became another reason to never force Yammer on anyone, but instead pique their interest about what might be happening on Yammer.

Leaders have also questioned whether Yammer is just social media. That's where data from SWOOP Analytics has made a huge impact. Kat and Jack are able to immediately show leaders the impact of their posts on Yammer.

“Having SWOOP Analytics, when I've been asked; ‘Why are we doing it like that?’ I grab some figures and stats and show them,” Jack said.

“I can show them that when it was on the intranet it had 100 views. After 15 minutes on Yammer and it's already had 800 views, 78 people have engaged with it, and so it's been a lot easier to prove the value.”

Kat said it's been validation for executives that messages have not only been read by employees, but that they're also reacting and engaging with their messages.

"It really provides much richer engagement for our executive team," she said.

Kat said one of the biggest complaints about the intranet is low readership, or it might take a week for someone to go and read a story on the intranet.

"Yammer is really appealing because it gives you an opportunity to get that push notification out, whether it was via Teams or a super important announcement, ticking that email box as well," she said, referring to the email notification if an All Company announcement is made on Yammer.

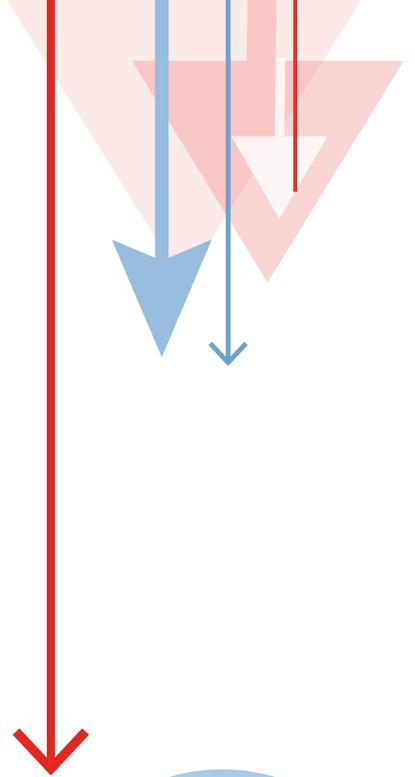
Another upshot of All Company announcements on Yammer is a reduction in email. Kat said it had been months since an all company email had been sent.

"We don't use email anymore," Kat said.

As Meridian Energy's Yammer network continues to mature, Kat and Jack plan to encourage senior leaders to engage even more and continue to present them with data to show their impact.

"We can show them that what they are doing is working," Jack said.

"It's not an instant thing, you've got to keep working at it, but we can show them with SWOOP the impact they're having."



*From top:  
Kat Jensen, Internal  
Communications Manager,  
Meridian Energy*

*Jack Zorab, Internal  
Communications Advisor,  
Meridian Energy*

## » Americas – RealFoundations

RealFoundations, the world's foremost provider of management consulting and managed services to the Real Estate industry, has taken out top honors again in 2022/23 as the No.1 Yammer network for small-size organizations in the Americas.



real foundations

Year after year, RealFoundations has proved to be one of the most mature Yammer networks analyzed by SWOOP in our benchmarking.

The company has also generously shared its best practices with SWOOP 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](#)
- [The secret to writing a great Yammer post](#)
- [Breaking the silos between service providers and clients](#)
- [Collaborating in the Modern Digital Workplace webinar with RealFoundations and Microsoft](#)
- [Real Foundations CEO Chris Shaida reveals his 7 behaviors for success on Microsoft Teams](#)
- [How a global organization 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?](#)

## » EMEA - Bip UK & Bip US

### Making a difference with data

When consultancy company [Bip UK & Bip US](#) ranked No.2 in [SWOOP Analytics' 2022/23 worldwide Yammer Benchmarking](#) of 97 organizations, we asked; "What did you do differently this year?"

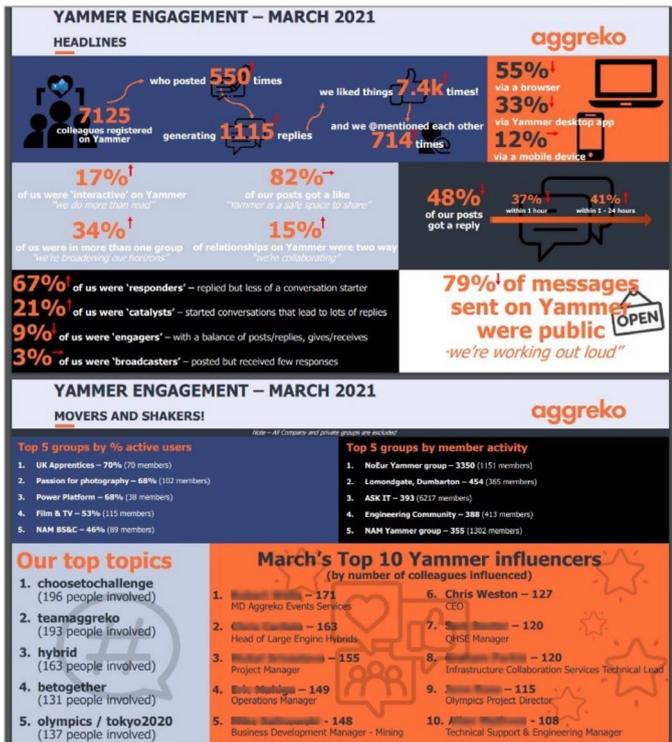
Sarah Parry, Head of Knowledge Management, had an immediate answer.

During the [2021 Yammer Festival](#) hosted by [SWOOP Analytics](#), Sarah watched a session with Paul Brereton, Head of Digital Communications at Aggreko, the world's largest supplier of mobile and modular energy solutions.

In [the session](#), Paul explained how he uses data from SWOOP Analytics 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, highlights the Most Engaging Posts, the top topics people are discussing, the top groups on Yammer each month and so on.



*Sarah Parry, Head of Knowledge Management, Bip UK & Bip US.*



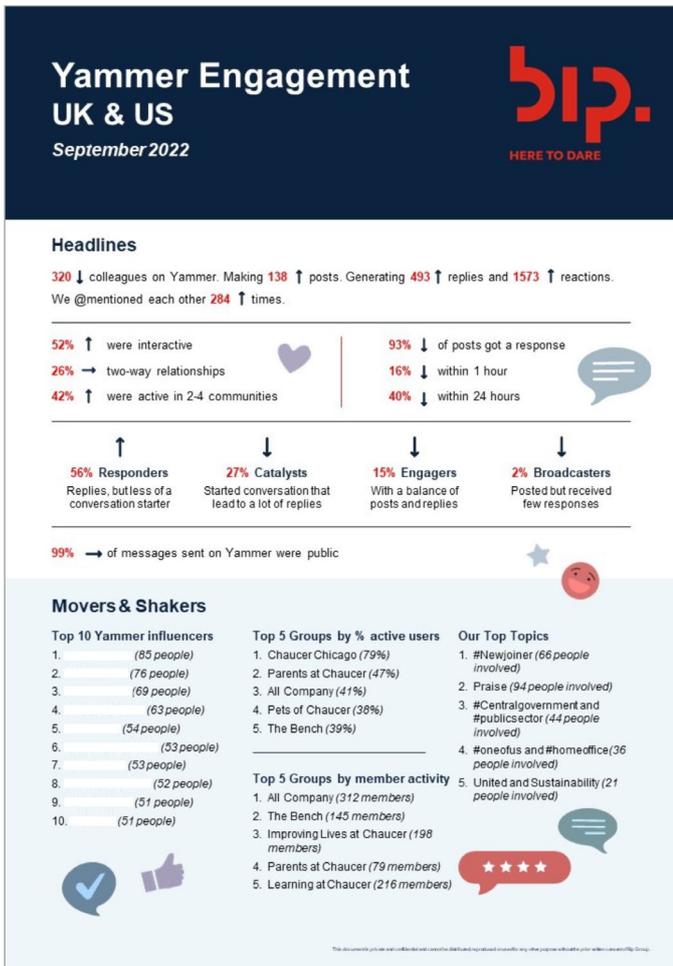
An example of Paul's monthly Yammer report, with data from SWOOP Analytics.

"I looked at that dashboard and thought; 'We're all about data, why aren't we doing this?'" Sarah said.

"So, at the end of December, I ran our first dashboard."

To Sarah's surprise, the Yammer engagement metrics from December were high despite many employees taking time off for the Christmas and New Year celebrations. A closer look at the data showed the higher levels of engagement for December could be linked to the online work Christmas party where a competition was held to share a photo of your team on Yammer, which received loads of responses and reactions.

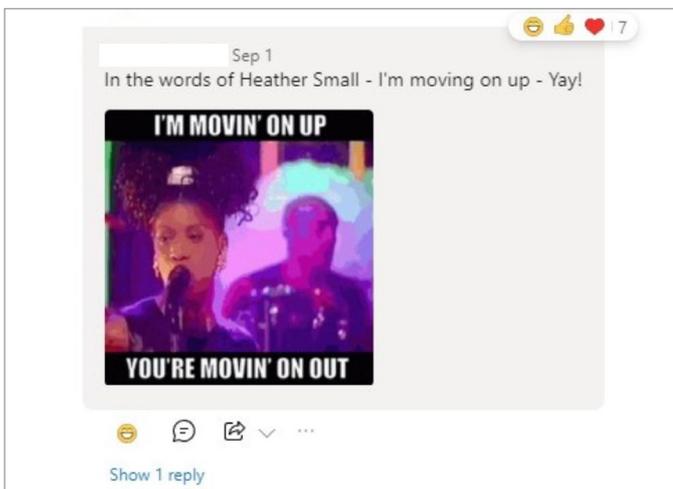
In her first monthly Yammer report post, Sarah @mentioned the top influencers, reported on how many people had been using Yammer, the number of posts made, replies, reactions and how often people @mention each other. She also highlighted the two-way relationships occurring across the organization and if people are active in more than one community, along with the response rate and the distribution of [SWOOP Personas](#).



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

"I always start each post with a summary and that the data is from SWOOP," Sarah said.

"I committed after that first month to do a report on the first day of each month, looking back on the previous month. I praise the individuals and I say, 'thank you', to top 10 influencers and tag them. We're starting to get some real competition going to get on the report."



Leaders are also taking notice of Sarah's monthly Yammer updates, with Sarah and Dani Lindley, Head of Corporate Communications & Engagement, working with the leadership team to show them the importance of engaging on Yammer.

"We've got the stats, we can prove this, our people really are on Yammer and we want to see you too, Yammer is an important channel for engagement," Sarah said.

These monthly Yammer reports are amplified in Bip's weekly internal email, as well as posted on the SharePoint intranet, with direct links to the Yammer post with the monthly update.

"We're sharing it across all of the channels," Sarah said.

"We're posting it in Yammer itself for those people who are in Yammer. We also publish a news article in SharePoint and we mention it in our weekly email newsletter, for those who prefer to keep in touch through email."

Back to the question; "What did you do differently this year?", Sarah summed up; "What's different? This is the difference."

Simply using the data from [SWOOP Analytics](#) to create monthly reports, posting those reports and @mentioning people identified each month has in itself created a new lifeblood in Yammer. Employees see at a glance the hottest topics, most engaging posts and most influential people across the Yammer network, drawing many into the platform.

### **Welcoming new employees via Yammer**

One of the regular hot topics on Bip's Yammer network is #newjoiners, where new employees are asked to post on Yammer and introduce themselves to their new colleagues.

"All of these get loads of interactions," Sarah said.

"When we do the monthly dashboard with SWOOP data, we see that #newjoiner is consistently one of the top five topics. There tends to be a lot of engagement on these posts."

During new employees' induction week, Sarah introduces them to Bip's knowledge management ecosystem, including SharePoint and Yammer, and she emphasizes that while she personally is not a fan of social media, Yammer is different because it's a safe, warm and welcoming space where ideas and opinions can be shared with respect, people are celebrated and connections are created.

At the end of the induction week, the new employees are asked to post on Yammer to introduce themselves and the team of new inductees make a short, usually funny, video to share on Yammer.

"The #newjoiners is to help people to get over any concerns about posting for the first time," Sarah said.

"I encourage people and say; 'With our hybrid ways of working, our digital channels are so important for connecting with others across the company. Yammer gives you that sense of community, it's a very visible demonstration of our shared purpose."

"There's a lot of praise, there is a lot of saying thank you."

### Bring your whole self to work

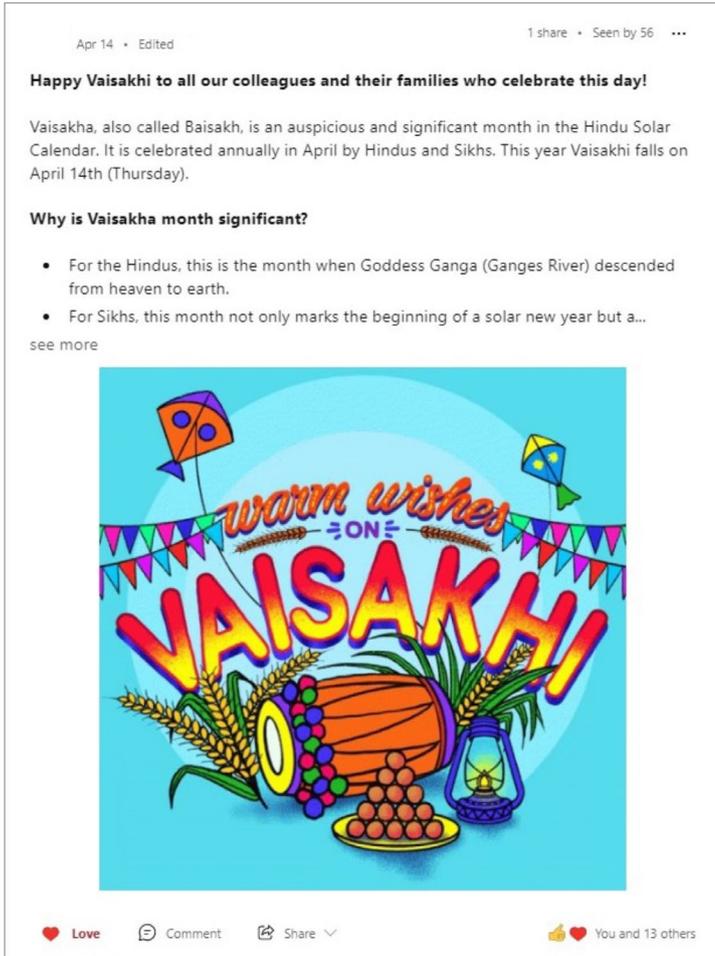
Bip UK & Bip US, formerly Chaucer, has always encouraged its people to bring their whole selves to work – and share what matters to them with their colleagues. Chaucer has regularly been among the top performers in SWOOP Analytics' annual Yammer benchmarking analysis and this year ranked No.2 overall, and No.1 for small-sized organizations (between 200 and 1,500 active staff) from the 97 organizations included in the benchmarking.

Some of the new, and most popular, Yammer communities formed over the past year include a Keep Calm & Craft community, which started with people sharing their knitting and crochet projects and has since broadened to people sharing photos of their sculptures and artwork.



*Some posts from Bip UK & Bip US's Keep Calm & Craft Yammer community.*

Neurodiversity is another big topic on the Yammer network, with people sharing their personal experiences and resources. A "United" community celebrating all employees' different cultures is one of the most engaging on Yammer. Different cultural festivals and holidays are shared, and again, many posts are linked to the weekly newsletter and on SharePoint.



A screenshot from the United Yammer community.

"We encourage people to bring their whole selves to work and Yammer is where they do that very openly and it then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy," Dani said.

"We've discovered some amazing hidden talent of artists and sculptors, alongside the crafters. There is a big wellbeing aspect to this as well."

Dani also noted the increase in the number of photos and GIFs used in Yammer posts, something that is not coincidental.

"When we onboard new joiners, we do mention the power of images in making engaging posts. We do appear to appreciate a well-chosen GIF," she said.

Perhaps the best endorsement for Yammer at Bip comes from a comment Sarah received recently.

"I had someone say recently that they've only been here a few weeks, but they already feel they've made friends through Yammer," she said.

*Bip, Italy's third-biggest management consultancy, acquired London-based consultancy Chaucer in July 2020, creating a global advisory company that employs more than 4,500 people.*



Dani Lindley, Head of Corporate Communications & Engagement, Bip UK & Bip US.

## 2.3 Who are our most thriving communities?

This year we have extended the assessment process used for the enterprise collaboration champions to incorporate additional measures tailored to identify the Most Thriving Communities. The rationale and measurement framework are provided in Section 4.1. The No.1 Most Thriving Community was identified at US insurance company [Progressive](#) and we are thankful to many of the other top 10 performers for sharing their stories with us.

The standout performer for the Most Thriving Communities measure was US retailer [The Home Depot](#), with three communities ranked within the top 10.



### » The Home Depot

#### How a thriving community measures up at The Home Depot

If you're an associate at The Home Depot and your flooring customer needs help preparing for installation, the Home Depot Measurement Services (HDMS) Yammer community is ready to help, seven days a week.

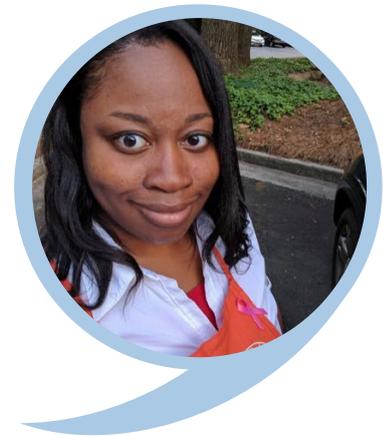
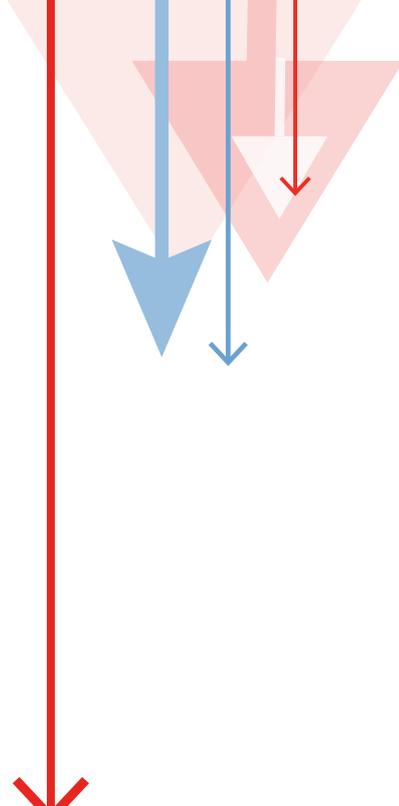
Chances are, you'll receive a warm greeting and quick assistance from the HDMS team. The team has two service-oriented associates, Susan Brinkman and Rubi Padierna, whose roles are dedicated to ensuring the community's success. As a part of managing the community, they regularly gather data from [SWOOP Analytics](#) as they work to support The Home Depot's associates and customers.

The community was established shortly after The Home Depot launched Yammer in January 2021, with a vision to provide an interactive avenue of support to associates in the store aisles.

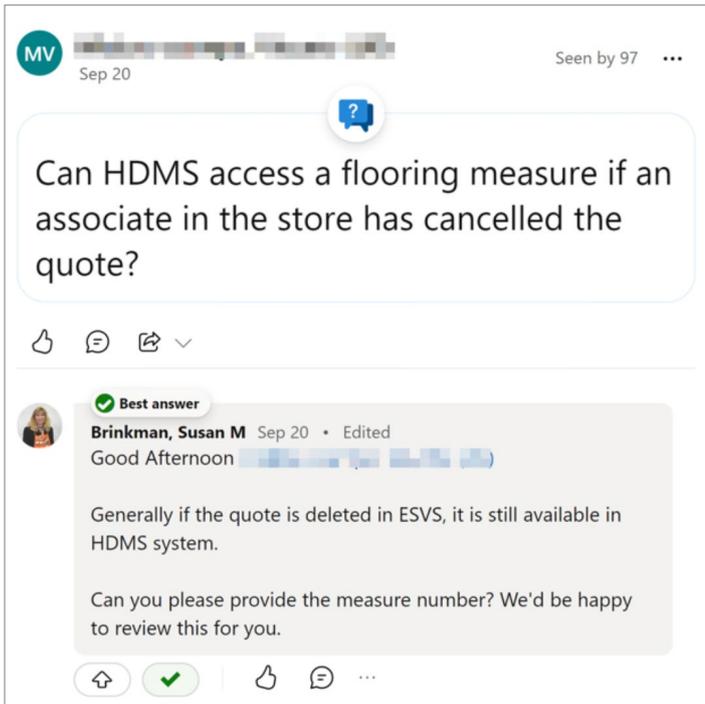
"This is an integral way for the business to connect with associates who are trying to successfully take care of the customer," said Tai Collins, Senior Manager, Web Communications – Social & Sentiment at The Home Depot.

"The leaders had a vision for this to be a destination for feedback, best practice sharing and business updates. There are plenty of questions asked, and Susan and Rubi are on top of connecting associates with answers every single day."

The analytics from SWOOP have been a key driver in the community's success at The Home Depot. Activity by Time, for example, ensures updates are posted at optimal times. Another measure the HDMS team prides itself on is its Response Rate, which identifies the percentage of posts that receive a response. They aim to respond to Yammer posts within the first hour.

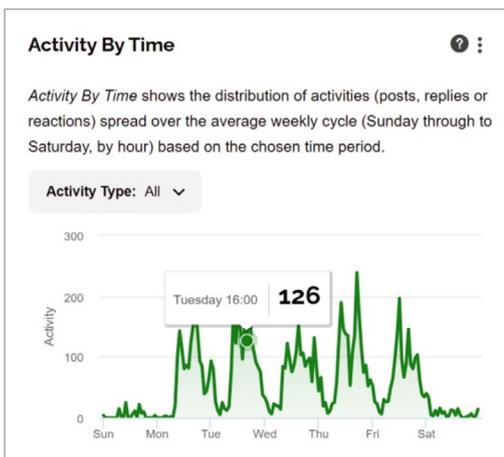


*Tai Collins,  
Senior Manager,  
Web Communications –  
Social & Sentiment,  
The Home Depot*



An example of a question answered within minutes of posting.

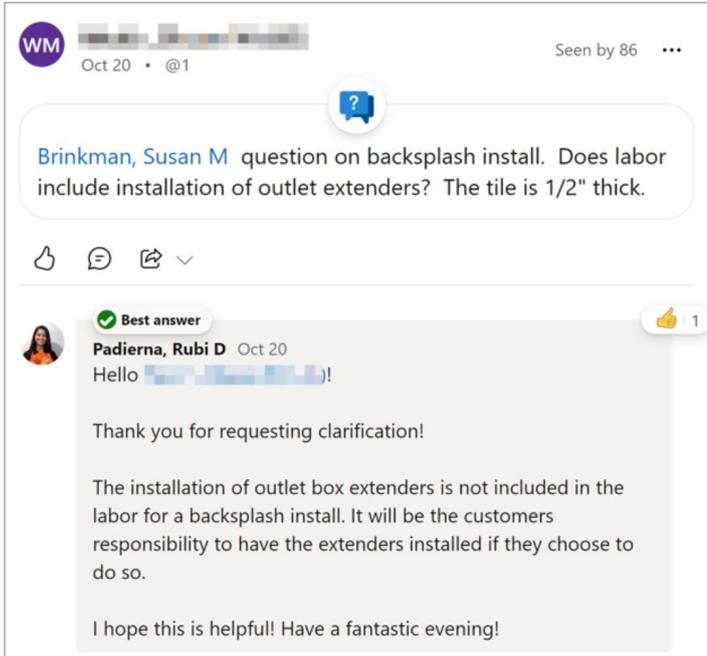
The team has used the available data to its advantage to create a strong performing Yammer community. The result is a timely response to almost every question, leading to empowered associates providing better outcomes for customers.



An example of SWOOP's Activity By Time measure (please note, this is not from The Home Depot's data).

"The data supports scheduling the two community managers in this setup works well," Tai said.

"You can get an answer seven days a week. Susan and/or Rubi are always around at the right times for our associates to help resolve issues and connect them with additional resources."

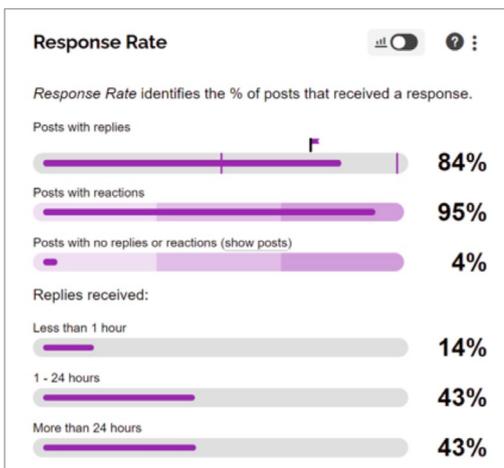


An example of teamwork to tackle questions in the community.

The HDMS team was among the first business partners onboarded to SWOOP at The Home Depot.

"The data was very important for figuring out how to optimize the Yammer community. And very influential in the way they measure success," Tai said.

"Susan and Rubi are very driven community managers and that is reflected in their excellent metrics."



An example of SWOOP's Response Rate measure (please note, this is not from The Home Depot's data).

It's not all roses on this Yammer community; sometimes associates pass on their frustrations and customer complaints. Susan and Rubi keep things balanced by ensuring that The Home Depot's culture of celebration is well represented.

The HDMS team's need to recognize excellent work and success eventually spurred a separate community dedicated to posting celebrations of these achievements.

"Having the two communities helps with the sentiment and provides a nice boost," Tai said.

### **A thriving community**

The impact of the Measurement Services team cannot be underestimated. It has earned them top honors at The Home Depot as the Most Thriving Community, according to an analysis of 3,200 Yammer communities conducted as part of SWOOP Analytics' 2022/23 Yammer and Viva Engage Benchmarking Report.

In fact, this community ranked No.4 from the 3,200 Yammer communities analyzed from around the world, with two social-based Yammer communities also making the top 10.

"I think it's one of several community success stories so far on Yammer," Tai said.

"They've taken so many of the right steps to make sure they were going to be successful. This team has put in a lot of very dedicated work into having a community that would be a center of knowledge.

"And more importantly, they focus on how they can be of service to help associates be successful."

Measurement Services is one of hundreds of business and interest-based communities within The Home Depot's Yammer network, which is available to 500,000 associates. It ranked highly based on the measures of community performance, energy (sentiment) and growth (activity and members).

Tai admitted she was surprised to learn the Measurement Service community was ranked by SWOOP as the Most Thriving at The Home Depot because they are quiet achievers. But when she looked more deeply at the way they work, it made sense.

Tai and her team recognize the business value that having a balance of community types brings to associates. They find that building community in areas including, and beyond, business objectives enables connections around common interests in associates' lives and builds long-lasting friendships.

"It was really interesting for me to see that the commonality between our top-ranked communities was that true connections made among our people start there," Tai said.

"And then they talk and support each other across the platform in other communities based on those formed bonds."

## » The NRMA

### Motoring along with Yammer

CEO of Motoring & Membership Emma Harrington admits she was nervous, and maybe even a little anxious, when she first started to share her thoughts, ask questions and open herself up on [The NRMA's](#) Yammer network.

In the back of her mind though was the reassurance from her internal communications team. If you stuff something up - edit it, or worst case, delete it. Still, it wasn't something that came naturally to Emma all those years ago, to share personal stories on a social platform and make herself vulnerable in front of her more than 1000 employees.

Emma also knew if she wanted her employees to trust her, she needed to first trust them. So, Emma took the plunge and posted in The NRMA Group Yammer community.

Fast forward four years and The NRMA's Motoring and Membership Forum is ranked No.8 in the world from more than 3,200 Yammer communities analyzed as Thriving Communities in [SWOOP Analytics' 2022/23 Yammer Benchmarking study](#). The Yammer community has become a place of connection, community knowledge sharing, people recognition and innovation - where every employee has a voice, customer problems are being solved within hours and innovations and solutions to new technologies are being brainstormed.

Emma continues to be the Most Influential Person in the Yammer community, according to data from SWOOP Analytics - not because she's broadcasting but because she's listening and responding to conversations. Yammer provides her an "open door" visible leadership approach in the hybrid world.

Answering questions, solving problems and getting to know her employees via Yammer has now become one of the best and easiest parts of Emma's role at The NRMA, Australia's largest member organization.

"I get so much joy spending time in there and you get a real sense of the community that is the wider organization," Emma said of Yammer.

"Of all the things in my job, this is the least pressured, most fun part of it to be honest.

"I quickly realized this is way less work than sitting, crafting an email or a video. It suddenly revolutionized it for me because I could stay connected without having to schedule meetings but I could be present and ask questions and invite feedback really informally.

"It didn't take much effort, you immediately get feedback, which then builds your confidence."

As CEO, if it wasn't for Yammer, Emma wouldn't have the opportunity to welcome the new contact center team to the organization, follow step-by-step the roll out of new tablets to the roadside assistance patrols or comment on someone's new pet.



*Emma Harrington,  
CEO of Motoring &  
Membership, NRMA.*

The trust now established via Yammer has resulted in quantifiable business returns. People post their problems in the Motoring and Membership Forum and receive answers. If Emma comes across a problem herself, she @ mentions the relevant leader to alert them to the issue and problems are usually solved within hours. In the days of email, Emma said it could take a month or more to do the same. People have the confidence to discuss the good and the bad on Yammer.

“There’s the positive comments, but also constructive comments - feedback when we’re not doing our best,” Emma said.

“That’s taken a bit of time to build trust that you can appropriately share customer feedback or employee feedback and it will be listened to and actioned upon.

“It needs that to really be a robust tool that is a symbol of our trust. We’ve built so much trust we can even have great conversations about things like LGBTQI+ and people can learn about inclusion in all its forms, ensuring everyone feels like they belong in our organization.

“For me it’s become the heartbeat of our organization. You can see what’s going on, how people are feeling. I otherwise don’t get to necessarily celebrate the everyday successes, so I love it.”

Posted in NRMA Roadside Community

 Sep 29 • @13 1 share • Seen by 143 • ...

**Wanted: Tips and Tricks for keys locked in cars**

As part of our annual campaign to raise awareness of kids and pets locked in cars, we are keen to gather tips and tricks on how to prevent accidentally locking keys in the car.

We are hoping to film some of the tips and tricks and share them across our Member communication channels.

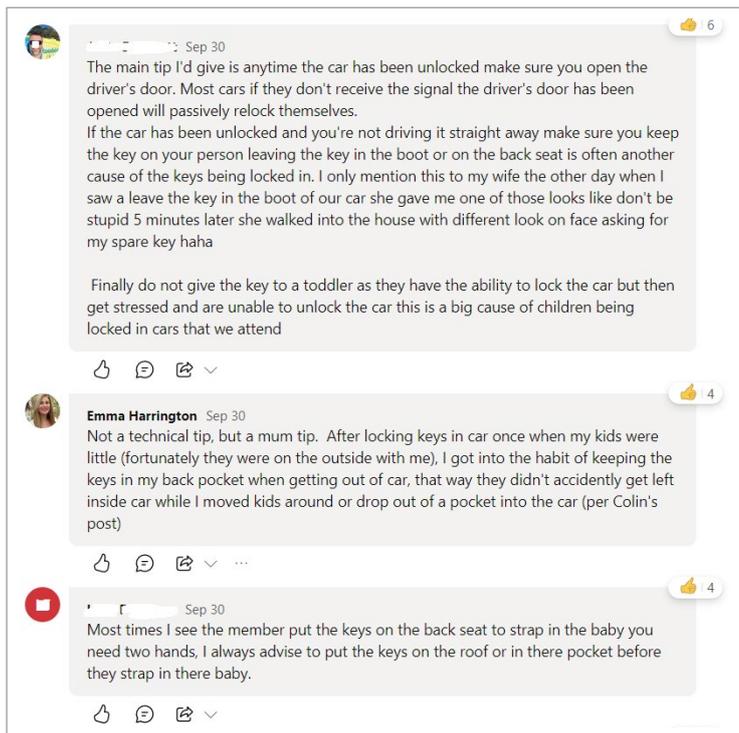
Here is a tip that a Patrol shared with me that I now use all the time:

[How to remote open windows on VW](#)

I had no idea I could do this with my Golf! It's great to let all the hot air out, load the kids in the car and if my car was to accidentally lock I can still get in.

**Please share your tips below.**

\*At this stage, this is all the involvement that is required. We'll be in touch if we need more info.



An example of Emma joining in a conversation on Yammer.

### How does a CEO find the time to be so engaged on Yammer?

It's a question asked by most internal communicators and business leaders. Emma says it's easy! Most days, Emma will find 10-15 minutes to jump onto Yammer on her phone and have a quick look through communities, not just the Motoring and Membership Forum but other communities across The NRMA. If someone is asking a question, she'll @ mention the people who can help.

Then, about once a week, often while she's waiting in the car to pick up her kids from sport or after-school activities, Emma will spend 30-60 minutes scrolling through Yammer communities on her phone and joining conversations.

"Last week someone was saying; 'The T&Cs on this don't reflect this' and I was like; 'Okay, @Ken, can you do this?' so I can steer traffic at something that's a really customer-detailed level that otherwise would never make its way to me because people say, 'You don't need to know it,'" Emma said.

"And I don't need to know it but it's nice to be able to feel valuable. The 10 seconds that it took me to tag Ken and ask him to help, I can contribute value to anyone in the organization and they can see that we're listening, learning and acting."

Doing something as simple as the CEO tagging in the right people to a conversation can make things happen quickly, ultimately delivering a better service to NRMA Members.

"Literally the collaboration and the customer problem solving can happen within 24 hours or faster (via Yammer)," Emma said.

"That's the role I sometimes play. It's a nice channel to show that I do care about the work that our frontline are doing every day. That then builds trust and breeds trust and it's self-fulfilling. We get better results.

"People feel more connected with each other. Instead of sitting there wondering; 'Who do I ask to fix this?' they just ask, literally; 'Can anyone help me with this?'. And they get to know each other as people, not just professionals."

NRMA's Internal Communication Manager Kimberley Tunbridge made the point that Emma, and other leaders, can't always be across Yammer and that's okay. When a leader feels like they've dropped off Yammer for some time, it's never too late to jump back in and just pick it up.

### Analyzing the impact with SWOOP

Every month Kim and Emma go through the past month's data on SWOOP Analytics to see who engaged with Emma's posts, what they liked, responded to and where she could improve.

"Once a month we go through the SWOOP analytics to see what's working and what's not working and really make sure we get the right mix of the formal and informal communications to align our people to our strategy," Emma said.

"So really understanding what kind of content people are engaging with so we can learn from that and build on it. That happens once a month and we have a meeting where we go through the analytics and the dashboard both at an NRMA M&M (Motoring and Membership) Forum level and my role in the group."

Right across The NRMA Kim encourages people to follow the SWOOP guidelines of a successful Yammer post – include a photo or video, or ask a question. The internal comms team run workshops to show employees the impact of doing so, how they can connect, collaborate and profile the critical work they are doing for our business.

Emma said posting on Yammer, including a photo or video and asking a question, is now just second nature.

"Hats off to Kim and the Internal comms team for helping to be the light that keeps us innovating, keeping it fresh, trying new things and using SWOOP Analytics to use the data to improve on that," Emma said.

"Sometimes we do it great and sometimes not so much but that's okay. It feels such a safe environment now for us to try things out."

In her Yammer workshops, Kim makes the point that posting on Yammer is not about self-promotion but about contributing to the business.

"I tell people; 'This is not about you, it's not about making yourself look good. It's about connecting to our business and delivering for our business,'" Kim said.



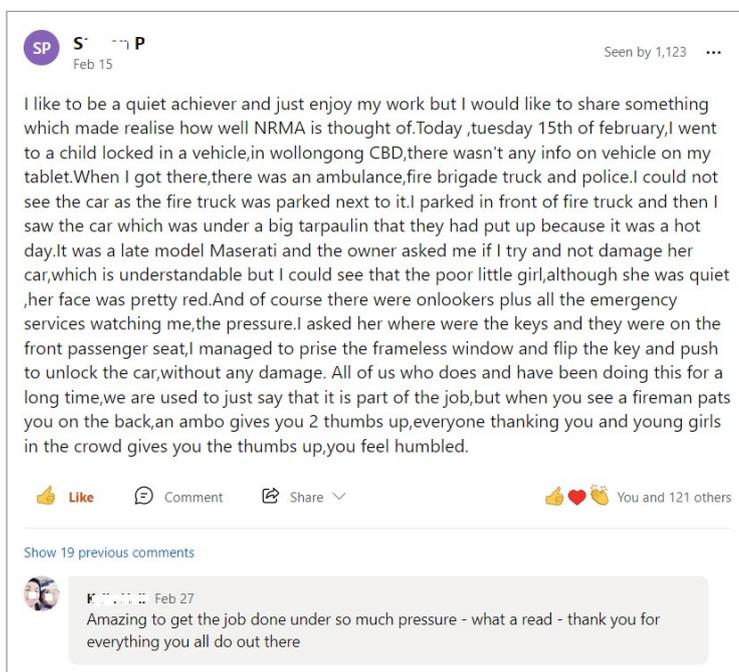
*Kimberley Tunbridge,  
Internal Communication  
Manager, The NRMA.*

"We created the Motoring and Membership Forum Yammer group to bring two businesses together. The way we connected people, combined cultures and aligned people to our future strategy has been incredible. Our Yammer group was the cornerstone of this – especially through COVID lockdown times."

### Saving lives by knowledge sharing on Yammer

Kim said Yammer is so ingrained in the culture of NRMA now that people automatically go to it for help and support, which is encouraging collaboration.

She shared the example of a recent Most Engaging Post where a patrol member shared his story of how he managed to unlock a Maserati with a child locked inside, with emergency service personnel and large crowd of onlookers.



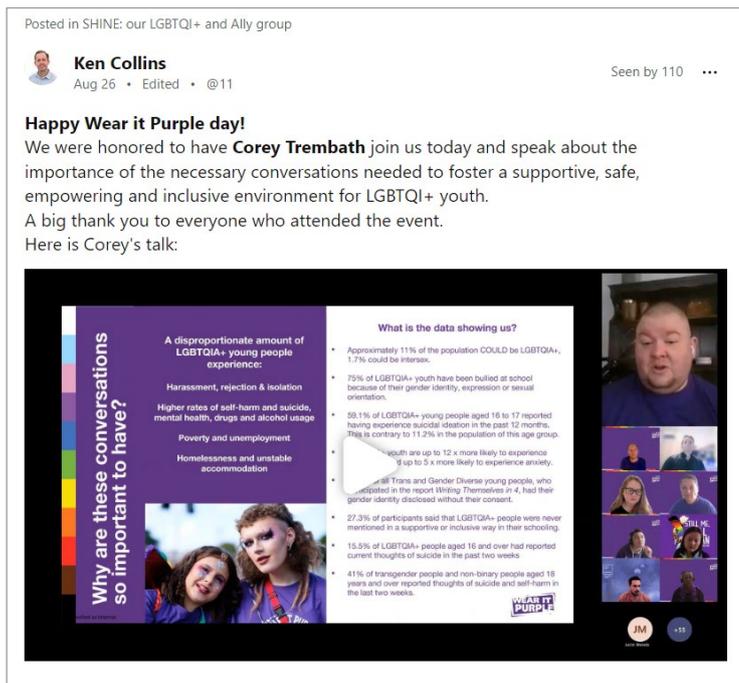
*The Yammer post about the keys locked in the car with a child, and how the patrol shared his new-found knowledge.*

"We often see children or animals locked in a car in serious situations and our patrols are the heroes who come to help," Kim said.

"Recently, police, the fire brigade and ambulance service couldn't unlock the car and The NRMA was called on for help. As previously our patrols had shared their top solutions for unlocking cars, our patrols had the knowledge to help. The response, it exploded!"

Kim attributes the shift to people coming to Yammer for help directly with Emma's leadership on Yammer.

"Since Emma has been so visible on Yammer, everything changed and shifted and everything transformed. We are also seeing other leaders follow her example," Kim said.



A post from leader Ken Collins about Wear It Purple Day.

## Innovating on Yammer

The NRMA has recently rolled out a project where all roadside patrols, towing team and country service centers received a new Samsung tablet, with Yammer and the Microsoft 365 suite installed.

Elena Sergis, Change Communication Advisor, led the project comms and has observed patrols are now more frequently sharing their stories, insights and experiences.

“We continually encourage our patrols to share and collaborate on Yammer as we are finding stories from the roadside are not only popular internally, but they also form some of our most engaging content on external channels like LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook too,” Elena said.

Emma said patrols are also sharing their experiences of electric vehicles (EVs), which is becoming a knowledge depository for the new technology.

“Today they were talking about a couple of EVs that were breaking down and how they were solving it,” Emma said.

“I think we might see over the next period how they start to use it to knowledge share, particularly around what electric vehicles are doing and how they behave differently, which will be phenomenal because that knowledge doesn’t exist anywhere in the market.

“We’re experiencing it in real time and can then build education and learning off the back of that.”

## Trusting employees by showing you can be vulnerable

Kim said Emma's willingness to share her vulnerabilities and opening up about wellbeing and even mental health challenges have become some of the most engaging posts on Yammer. For example, Emma recently posted about how she can feel uncomfortable when she has to learn something new. Her post was met with loads of responses from employees who feel the same way.

"That's fostering this culture of growth and leading by example," Kim said.

"People have been able to get to know Emma on a personal level much more digitally than what existed when it was face-to-face because Emma would just be in the office and she'd be moving from pillar to post in lots of different meetings."

Posted in Motoring & Membership Forum

 **Kim Tunbridge**  
Aug 17, 2021 • @8 Seen by 342 ...

Life is absolutely AWESOME in lockdown!

Said no-one.

Ever.

People across M&M are finding these times incredibly challenging. But nobody seems to be talking about it, really talking about it. Why is that? We know that some people like to keep their personal and professional lives separate, and that's a-ok. But many of us want to share, to talk about the challenges we are facing to understand if we are alone or not and to get support, ideas and help.

Well, we are here to tell you you're not alone. With Lifeline experiencing the highest calls in the 58 years it's existed, you really aren't. Who are we? We are a bunch of people who live our playbook and want to carry you when you need help by starting some courageous conversations. Over the coming weeks you'll see this hashtag (#courageousconversations) on posts from courageous people who have agreed to start some powerful conversations that will help people.

What do we want to achieve with this? We want to help people, reach out, start a conversation, connect as people and make sure that people know all the help they have available. From their colleagues, counselling, [Our employee assistance program](#), [our peer support champions](#), [this list of people](#) are here to have a chat, [Beyond blue](#), [our wellbeing page on blue](#) and a raft of support and services on our [Yammer wellbeing group](#). We want to point people to help and smash the stigmas that exist with mental health and we ask you to comment if you feel comfortable doing so, share your story, help someone or

This National Pie day, the Social Media team asked our NRMA Facebook followers which Aussie town hosts the best flaky pastries. The response was overwhelming, with over 500 comments in 48 hours!

We saw many votes for Robertson, Berry and Pie in the Sky in Cowan; and some more unusual recommendations that have us ready to plan trips just to give them a try, like the Curry Scallop Pies coming out of Tassie!

Be sure to check out some of the comments from our followers and get some inspiration for your next pie road trip.

We also want to know which town's pies and bakeries are winning the heart's of NRMA Staff. Let us know in the comments!

<https://www.facebook.com/myNRMA/photos/a.165057866862560/559...>



In a complete backflip from her initial nervousness and anxiety about posting in Yammer, Emma said she now enjoys posting on Yammer much more than writing a formal email or report.

"You stop overthinking what you're writing and what you're saying and people can see different dimensions of you because you let them into your lives because you comment on their dogs, or you comment on different pieces of content they've put up," Emma said.

"I've enjoyed the fact that I can, in a non-forced way, reveal parts of my personal being as a leader without a big show and tell. You can do it in real time, in the moment, and that is really rewarding for me.

"It's become a wonderful community of practice for our people but as a leader it allows me to stay connected and, when we're not in the office all the time, to have those informal, 'how are you?' chats, or celebrate someone or welcome someone new - that gives me energy."

## » Transport for NSW

### How social media success can transfer to internal comms

Can you wear heels while driving in the Australian state of New South Wales? Is it legal to eat while driving?

These were some of the questions asked in [Transport for NSW's](#) "All Transport" Yammer community as part of a campaign to drive employees to the new platform. The Ask Me Anything campaign was held during Road Rules Awareness Week and featured road safety experts answering all the random questions we've never been too sure about.

The campaign worked. Six months later it's still the top performing post on Transport for NSW's Yammer network, according to data from [SWOOP Analytics](#). The Ask Me Anything campaign was hosted on Transport for NSW's All Company Yammer community, which has been renamed the "All Transport" community to personalize it for employees. The Ask Me Anything campaign wasn't a new concept, it had already proved to be a highly engaging campaign on external social media, but this was the first time it had been used internally.

"We've done this concept externally and it's been exceedingly popular externally because everyone has a road rule they want to know about," said Jeremy Bowell, Manager, Digital Engagement at Transport for NSW.

"We noticed off the back of that huge levels of engagement and also an uptick of people actually joining that All Transport community."

The All Transport community was ranked among the top 10 Most Thriving Communities in SWOOP Analytics' 2022/23 Yammer benchmarking analysis of more than 3,200 communities.

Do you know the road rules in the Australian state of NSW? Can you wear heels while driving? Is it legal to eat and drink while driving?

While there are no specific road rules that prohibit eating behind the wheel, drivers can still be slapped with hefty fines if doing so affects their concentration or control. As for shoes, there is currently no legislation requiring a driver to wear or not to wear footwear whilst driving a motor vehicle in NSW.



*Jeremy Bowell,  
Manager, Digital Engagement,  
Transport for NSW.*

» Box Hill Institute

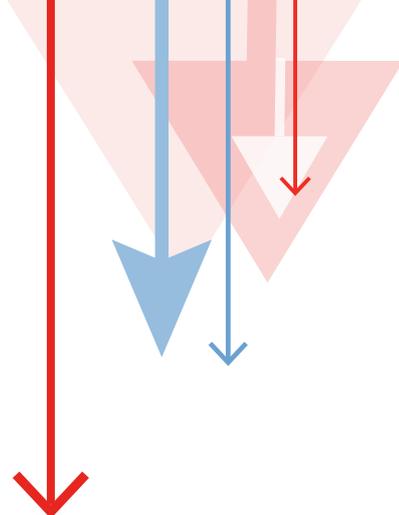
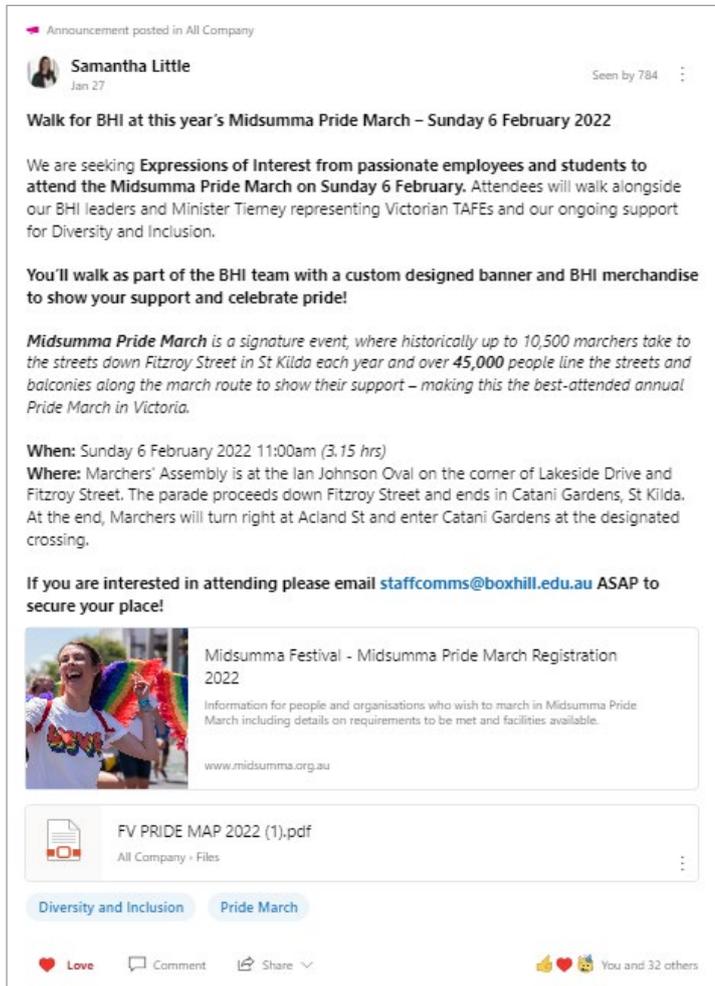
## Elevating employees' voices

When tertiary educator [Box Hill Institute](#) put out an expression of interest in its All Company Yammer community to join a Pride March through the streets of Melbourne, the internal communications team was blown away by the response.

It wasn't the huge engagement the post received that made the biggest impact, but the way employees openly shared their personal stories. Employees at Box Hill Institute were able to safely identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community to all their colleagues, share their personal stories and feel supported.

It reinforced that Yammer had become a psychologically safe space at the Box Hill Institute. The expression of interest post about the Pride March received the highest engagement numbers on the Yammer network for a six-month period, according to data from [SWOOP Analytics](#), followed closely by a follow-up post from the event.

Samantha Little, Associate Director Internal Communications at Box Hill Institute, said the initial Yammer post resulted in loads of sign-ups for the Pride March but more importantly it confirmed Yammer had evolved into an organization-wide networking platform where every employee has a voice.



*From top:  
Samantha Little,  
Associate Director Internal  
Communications,  
Box Hill Institute.*

*Rhi Bell,  
Internal Communications  
Coordinator,  
Box Hill Institute.*

*The initial expression of interest Yammer post about the Midsumma Pride March.*

"It actually created a safe space for people to publicly say in our workplace; 'Yes, I'm part of that community and I'd love to be there,'" she said.

"It created this really nice thread of rainbow GIFs and high fives and people sharing their story. That to us was a real game changer because it made people feel like they were part of that platform and ever since then we've known that people want to come in and share and Yammer has been that safe space."



One of the follow-up Yammer posts about the Pride March.

Part of Box Hill Institute's employee engagement strategy and employee experience, especially as a part of the internal communications strategy, is to elevate the voice of the employee. Samantha and her colleague Rhi Bell, Internal Communications Coordinator at Box Hill Institute, believe these pride posts achieved exactly that.

"It's just all user generated," Samantha said.

"It's really part of our internal comms strategy to create those spaces and elevate the voice."

Most Engaging Posts					
The Most Engaging Posts shows the posts that have had the most engagement in their conversations threads.					
Sort: Replies + Reactions		Filter By: All post types			
	REPLIES	REACTIONS	SHARES	PEOPLE	
1	Walk for BHI at this year's Midsummer Pride March – Sunday 6 Febru...	17	81	0	23
2	S...	12	71	1	34
3	Welcome!	23	51	1	17
4	We...	8	65	0	67
5	I...	3	64	0	64
6	All...	12	50	0	20

A screenshot from Box Hill Institute's SWOOP dashboard for Most Engaging Posts.

## A thriving community

The All Company Yammer community at Box Hill Institute was ranked in the top 10 of the Most Thriving Communities in SWOOP Analytics' 2022/23 Yammer benchmarking based on the measures of community performance, energy (sentiment) and growth (activity and members).

When Box Hill Institute employees join Yammer, everyone is given access to the All Company community. All communities are public and staff are encouraged to explore other communities. There are between 1600-1700 employees at Box Hill Institute, with about 1500 using Yammer.

Engaging posts from other communities are shared into the All Company community, and posts to the All Company community are also shared on the intranet and staff newsletter to encourage staff into Yammer.

Rhi said teams are actively encouraged to post in the All Company feed as opposed to creating their own communities.

"We try to keep the conversation as open as possible but we also want to reduce department silos and we want people to feel empowered to be able to discuss things that are happening in all areas of the business," she said.

Rhi said there had been an exponential growth in Yammer since it was softly launched at Box Hill Institute in May 2020. Yammer communities were created based on common interests with things like mental health, work from home, health and fitness – the sorts of interests that gave employees some reprieve during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Staff benefits and non-essential communications were posted on Yammer. Things like offers from health insurance providers for Box Hill Institute employees or offers from Box Hill Institute's own student businesses like florists, veterinary services and grooming were shared exclusively on Yammer.

"We encouraged those teams to use Yammer to advertise their services so they could take ownership of that story and encourage the two-way conversation," Rhi said.

The first big spike in Yammer engagement came when then CEO Vivienne King began posting video updates on Yammer. Yammer was also used for staff awards and to highlight recognition and staff achievements.

The next spike in engagement coincided with the Communities app (Yammer) being linked to Microsoft Teams.

“The good thing we’ve noticed with this is it’s that exponential growth,” Samantha said.

“It’s not just us in internal comms coming up with an idea. It’s not just one or two posts that’s causing that spike, it’s really sustainable. I think that was the most exciting thing for us to see over the last couple of months, that growth that’s organically happening, it’s very exciting.”

### **Cross-enterprise collaboration**

Recently Samantha and Rhi were swamped with work and hadn’t had a chance to check what was happening across Yammer. They were pleasantly surprised to go into Yammer to find it thriving with new posts from across the organization.

One post that stood out was from the indigenous student support officer explaining an initiative with an organization called The Torch, which works with indigenous people in the corrections system to support them with art. The student support officer shared examples of indigenous art work to use as digital backgrounds and asked for feedback on favorite options.

“That post has just gone crazy this week,” Samantha said.

“There are so many different departments picking different options.”

For Samantha and Rhi, one of the stand outs about this post was the fact so many different departments within Box Hill Institute had become involved in the conversation, showing a break in department silos to collaborate together. It was also an example of working productively during a project, rather than receiving feedback once a project was completed.

“We are starting to see more of that natural collaboration and getting people to post while they’re working on something to get feedback, rather than afterwards,” Samantha said.

“It’s exciting to see that happening and where it’s going in the future.”



*An example of The Torch artwork, featuring artist Wade Traplin.*

» NZ Post

## Delivering community and connection

It must be every executive's dream! The Most Thriving Yammer community at [NZ Post](#) is one that connects the leaders of those that deliver mail and parcels across the entire country of New Zealand.

NZ Post's Customer Service Delivery (CSD) Yammer community was ranked in the top 10 of the Most Thriving Communities in SWOOP Analytics' 2022/23 Yammer benchmarking of more than 3,200 communities, based on the measures of community performance, energy (sentiment) and growth (activity and members).

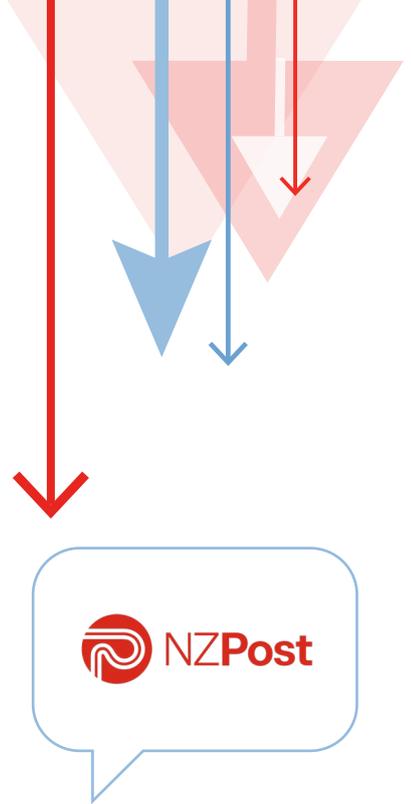
Members of the Yammer community are the service delivery managers and team leads who oversee mail contractors, courier drivers, operations staff, mail sorters, posties – everyone involved in the physical process of getting mail and packages delivered across New Zealand.

Perhaps what makes this community of customer service delivery managers even more important is the difficulty in reaching frontline staff with official communications. The managers and team leads involved in the Yammer community have a face-to-face connection with NZ Post's operations staff, meeting often on a daily basis for team briefings to relay information, much of which has been shared from head office in the Yammer community.

"The people in CSD represent those in frontline positions. Most don't sit at a laptop on a day-to-day basis, if at all," said Tara Hayes, Corporate Communications Lead at NZ Post.

"Their main link to communication with NZ Post as an organization would be through face-to-face team briefs that might be held at the start of a shift on any given day. The people who are active on Yammer represent a small percentage of those broader teams.

"For us, getting (communications) to those frontline people is our biggest challenge so to know that there is a portion of those teams really active and engaged on Yammer gives us some clarity into how they use that platform, and how they disseminate information that way."



## Celebrating colleagues and creating an online community

While sharing information about new safety measures or guidelines feature in the weekly official updates in the CSD Yammer community, the posts with the most engagement are those that involve celebrating people, whether it be a work anniversary, a birthday, a great photo someone has shared of a NZ Post van delivering a package.

NZ Post Channels Specialist, Shaina Eng, said many of these types of posts in the CSD Yammer community feature on the Most Engaging Posts list across all of NZ Post's Yammer network, according to data from SWOOP Analytics.

"Most discussions in the group are updates from those leaders that generate a lot of conversation, or it's content posted from the community itself," Shaina said.

"They'll share things like a pretty picture of one of our vans and there's a bird on top of it, or they'll talk about service anniversaries. If someone is celebrating their 20, 30, 50-year anniversary there will be a lot of kudos posted for that person and then a lot of discussion after the fact."



One of the Most Influential People across NZ Post, according to SWOOP Analytics' data, is Jenn Nikora, Regional Service Delivery Manager. Jenn is almost always in the top five Most Influential People list at the enterprise level. When it was her birthday in April, her colleagues across the country used Yammer to celebrate.

Posted in CSD - Customer Service Delivery



**Corinne Peters**

Apr 22 • Edited • @18

Seen by 643 ...

No chance of forgetting the birthday of this great leader.  
Many Happy Returns **Jenny Nikora** 🍰🎈🎁



Like Comment Share

68 others



Apr 22  
Happy birthday! Hope your day is awesome!

Like Comment Share



Apr 27  
❤️thank you tell Lady I am accepting late cake deliveries..hehe.

Like Comment Share



Apr 22  
Hey **Jenny Nikora** my Taurus sister wishing you a truly fabulous birthday today!

Like Comment Share



Apr 27  
xo

Like Comment Share



Apr 22  
Happy birthday Jenn

Like Comment Share



Apr 22  
Happy Birthday **Jenny Nikora** ! Have the best day and enjoy a long birthday weekend on us :)



Like Comment Share



Apr 27  
nga mihi E Hoa xo

Like Comment Share



Apr 22  
Enjoy your special day **Jenny Nikora**!



Like Comment Share



Apr 27  
the fur kids were on point with lashings of loving ❤️

Like Comment Share

A Yammer post in the CSD community to celebrate Jenn's birthday.

The simple birthday post had loads of comments and reactions from people dispersed right across the country. Data from SWOOP Analytics shows Jenn's birthday post as one of the Most Engaging Posts of 2022 so far in the CSD Yammer community.

"It's these types of posts that tend to do really well in our communities, the ones that are very personal and really not work related, that celebrate the people that they work with," Shaina said.

While these posts are not specifically related to work, they are about recognizing and celebrating colleagues, creating a sense of belonging and community across the workplace. This can become especially important as many of the workers spend much of their day alone, delivering mail to the households and businesses of New Zealand.

### Learning from those who have always worked in a hybrid environment

As more of NZ Post embraces hybrid work as the new norm, Tara believes the rest of the business can learn from the CSD community and how they've learned to overcome geographical boundaries to build an online community.

"It's interesting that these people who have always had to find some way of connecting outside of these platforms which we're now relying on a lot more because of hybrid working, are the ones who are actually thriving in it because they've always had to find a way to do it," Tara said.

"Whereas those of us who have relied on being face-to-face with people, we're having to learn it in a different way. They're a bit ahead of us in that respect because they've always had to do it, whereas those of us who are used to working in an office-type environment are coming to Yammer with a different perspective."

### Why curated comms don't cut it

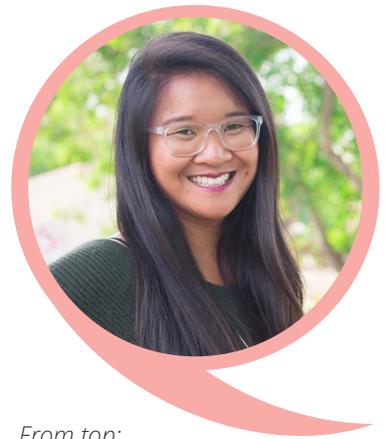
The post shared above about Jenn's birthday is clearly an authentic, spontaneous, heartfelt Yammer post, and as such it received huge engagement. NZ Post's Chief Operations Officer Brendon Main, and manager of the CSD team, is a strong proponent of Yammer and leads by example, encouraging his managers and team leads to also post on Yammer.

"Brendon is very keen on using Yammer to engage with his people, so I think that's also a big element, that he's a big champion and proponent for using Yammer and empowers his leaders to use that platform to communicate with their people," Shaina said.

Conversely, the weekly updates about safety procedures or corporate communications that need to be relayed to teams gets little to no engagement on Yammer, despite having a high number of views.

"In my experience in having seen how people engage with Yammer at NZ Post, people are very supportive of anyone who shares something personal," Tara said.

"By comparison, we will push the team brief out every week. We do not get engagement with it because people know it's curated and edited content."



From top:  
Tara Hayes,  
Corporate Communications  
Lead, NZ Post

Shaina Eng,  
Channels Specialist, NZ Post

“Since the team brief is pretty straightforward, people will read it and share it with their teams, but very rarely do they ‘like’ it or comment on the posts,” Shaina added.

### **Quieting the noise on Yammer**

While the value of personal connections on Yammer can't be underestimated, it can also create unnecessary noise for some people. In a physical workplace, if personal conversations are happening and you don't want to be involved, you can walk away and go directly to the person you want to have a conversation with. In Yammer, it can be harder to scroll through the personal conversations to the work-related one, Tara said.

NZ Post recently conducted a staff survey which found an element of frustration with Yammer.

“People can't always easily find the information they're looking for, and how information is fed to them in the algorithm means the information they want to see at the top isn't always there,” Tara said.

“So while we know people are using it, and they do use it for gathering information, there are inefficiencies to it.”

Tara said that's the challenge faced by the internal communications team to adjust the channels to make it easier for employees to find the conversations they want to join, while also competing with a plethora of other communications and notifications on numerous devices.

“For us, the challenge is how to we make sure the stuff we put out on Yammer is not just seen as noise,” Tara said.



*Parcel sorting at NZ Post's Auckland Operations Center.*

## » Anonymous US Health Insurer

### Thriving with pride

"Inclusion and diversity of everyone, that's something we speak to, day in and day out," says the Corporate Communications Lead at a leading US health insurer.

Data confirms this US health insurer is achieving its goal of inclusion and diversity for all, with the company's "Pride NRG" Yammer community ranked in the top three of the Most Thriving Communities in SWOOP Analytics' 2022/23 Yammer benchmarking analysis. SWOOP looked at more than 3,200 Yammer communities for the in-depth analysis, with the US health insurer's LGBTQIA+ and Allies resource group – named Pride NRG - coming in at No.3, based on the measures of community performance, energy (sentiment) and growth (activity and members).



The Corporate Communications Lead says the Pride NRG (energy) Yammer community has become a place of connection and support, breaking down geographical, departmental and even team barriers across the company's almost 100,000 employees spread across the US. She said few people who are now connected via this Yammer community have ever met face to face, yet many communicate and support each other on a daily basis.

"I know these people don't work together but I see them popping up, talking, having in-depth conversations about real life things that are occurring," she said.

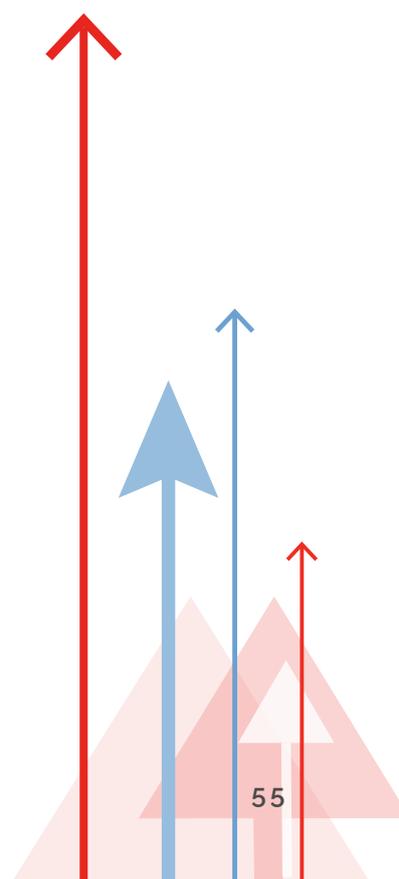
"They're not in the same team, they're not in the same department, they don't live in the same state, yet they are friends just by how often and how open they're willing to communicate and discuss these very sensitive and important topics.

"Honestly, they became friends over these Yammer communities."

While the topics discussed in the Pride NRG Yammer community may not always be specifically work-related, the Corporate Communications Lead spoke of the importance of giving every employee a voice, and a platform to use that voice.

"Diversity and inclusion is definitely a highlight of what (we) do," she said.

"We want people to bring your whole self to work. If people are happy in their work, that gives them the motivation and drive to want to keep going to work, to have that friendship and camaraderie amongst each other."



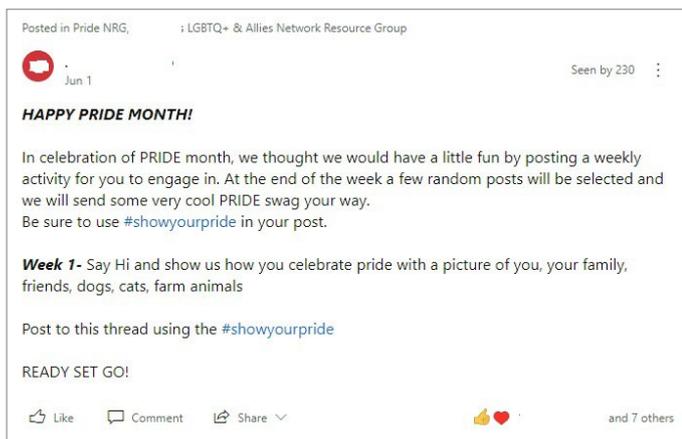
## Far from just a social group

That's not say the Pride NRG community is just a social network. Far from it. The community is one of 10 NRG (energy) resource groups on the company's Yammer network. The goal of the community is to create unity across the LGBTQIA+ and Allies groups by sharing information and knowledge, especially on how to be a better LGBTQIA+ ally.

In June 2022, the health insurer celebrated Pride Month and tapped into the Yammer community with guest speakers, events and competitions. Pride Month activities were linked from the intranet back to the Yammer community.

"Posts were shared on our Yammer network and linked to all of our different networks and resources to get the word and the message out to more associates on how to be a better ally," the Corporate Communications Lead said.

"They also recently provided talking guides, things to avoid, things to do, how to be a better ally to each of the different groups."



*An example of a post during Pride Month in the company's Pride NRG Yammer community.*

## A thriving community

The period for SWOOP Analytics' analysis for Thriving Communities was between February to July 2022, which took into account the whole month of June and Pride Month. In measuring energy as part of the analysis, SWOOP looks at both positive and negative sentiment, as our research shows negative sentiment does not always equate to negativity but more so to discuss negative topics.

The Corporate Communications Lead said the members of the Pride NRG community are super supportive of each other, and while most posts are positive, people can also discuss negative topics and receive support from their colleagues.

"All of those members are going to be engaging and uplifting and positive and I think that's where our sentiment would definitely be higher because they're all going to be supportive of what is posted on the community," she said.

The company's No.2 Most Thriving community identified by SWOOP is a religious group. It's a great example of the diversity and inclusion across the health insurer's Yammer network.

## Acceptable use policy

The Corporate Communications Lead said most people using Yammer at the health insurer are associates who are interacting with customers.

“They’re not leaders, they’re not the ones that are making the executive decisions. It’s the people that are interacting and doing the day-to-day work who are using Yammer,” she said.

That’s exactly how the company wants Yammer to be used. However, with a network of close to 100,000 people, the company is currently updating an acceptable use policy for clear guidelines about how associates use Yammer. With such wide and varied topics up for discussion, the guidelines have become necessary.

“We don’t say; ‘Watch how you state your personal opinions’. We more just say; “This is a professional work environment so just be cautious of what you state online,” the Corporate Communications Lead said.

“We want people to be themselves, we want people to feel free to interact with who they want to, as long as it’s in a professional manner because this is still a professional setting but we want you to talk about a mix of topics.”

As well as having one of the Most Thriving Yammer communities, this US health insurer also took out honors as the No.1 Yammer network for large-size organizations (with more than 5,000 active staff) in the Americas in SWOOP’s 2022/23 benchmarking of 97 organizations.

## 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 Why the numbers are important

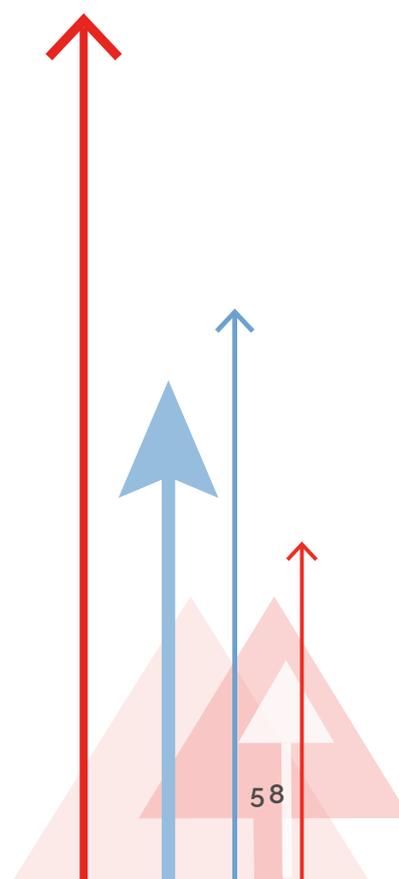
#### 3.1.1 What surveys can't do

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have been bombarded with engagement surveys, looking substantially to assess the health and wellbeing of staff, regularly working remotely. Surveys are an efficient and direct way of getting a pulse on how people are feeling, which is great. However, the shortcomings of surveys are well known. Firstly, not everyone answers, [typically less than 50%](#). Secondly, those who respond may not be a representative sample of the organization as a whole. For example, in our recent [Microsoft 365 benchmarking study](#) we found up to 50% of staff were hardly digitally active at all. Workplace survey results are biasing toward those that are digitally overloaded, leaving a large proportion of staff unrepresented. We see a hint of this effect in what is now being called [“quiet quitting”](#). We are also [hearing that because of the periodic nature of workplace engagement surveys, effective interventions are likewise periodic](#), sometimes as little as once a year.

So, what is the alternative? Surveys are referred to as “active” assessment i.e. uses an intentionally designed and administered survey instrument, that requires active participation of the respondent. The alternative is “passive” assessments, which is continuous and is undertaken in the background, with no explicit requirement for staff to directly interact. The advantage of passive assessments is that it is continuous i.e. on all the time. It assesses what people actually do, rather than what they might think they are doing. It is often referred to as [“reality mining”](#), a technique designed to study human interaction patterns through analysing the digital trails left by employees as they work. This is the technique SWOOP Analytics provides. Because SWOOP mines the digital interactions of all staff, no statistical extrapolations based on subsets of employees are needed.

Sounds too good to be true? Well, there are challenges. Firstly, for subjective factors like wellbeing, the question can be asked directly in a survey. Passive techniques need to identify measures that can indirectly infer something like “wellbeing” or “engagement”. In a perfect world we would like to apply both active and passive techniques to test their alignment. This is something we have periodically been able to [do with one of our customers, comparing survey and SWOOP engagement scores](#). Thankfully in this instance they did align!

At a broader level we are able to validate our SWOOP performance measures in our larger benchmarking studies, where we identify leading collaborative enterprises, teams and communities. We reach out to the identified leaders to solicit their stories as case studies of best practices. Again, we have yet to find a SWOOP benchmarked leader that has proved to be otherwise. In fact, their stories are typically insightful and inspiring. And that's why we publish them in this report.



### 3.1.2 What SWOOP counts

Yammer use has now been the subject of eight SWOOP benchmarking studies. In the early studies we developed a suite of basic measures along with an Enterprise Social Network (ESN) maturity framework (see 3.2.3) we have consistently re-applied in each subsequent study. Like with surveys, when looking for longitudinal change, it is important to have a core of indicators that are measured the same way each year. From time-to-time we will experiment with new measures, some of which will find their way into our core measures. In this year's study we are experimenting with some new or additional measures, looking to assess "thriving" Yammer communities. Our success, or otherwise, will be reflected in the feedback we get from those identified as our most thriving communities.

For the most part, SWOOP measures "active participation". 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. We have been able to report on enterprise Yammer "reads" statistics in our [SWOOP for M365](#) product. Since the inclusion of access to Yammer through Teams and Outlook, Yammer participation, including reads, is around 85% of staff. Active participation has dropped to 27% of staff in 2022; meaning nearly 60% of staff are Yammer readers only.

The following sections report on our core Yammer performance metrics, to provide year to year comparisons, trends and updated performance targets.



### Finding Yammer readers in SWOOP

Within [SWOOP for M365](#), you can find the % of Yammer readers on the Enterprise dashboard under the Activity tab.



### 3.1.3 SWOOP indicators year-on-year comparisons

The overall activity level is just one factor SWOOP uses to judge performance. Many of our measures are relationship-centered, and therefore can be strong even with lower levels of activity. The chart below summarizes the movements for 18 SWOOP indicators.

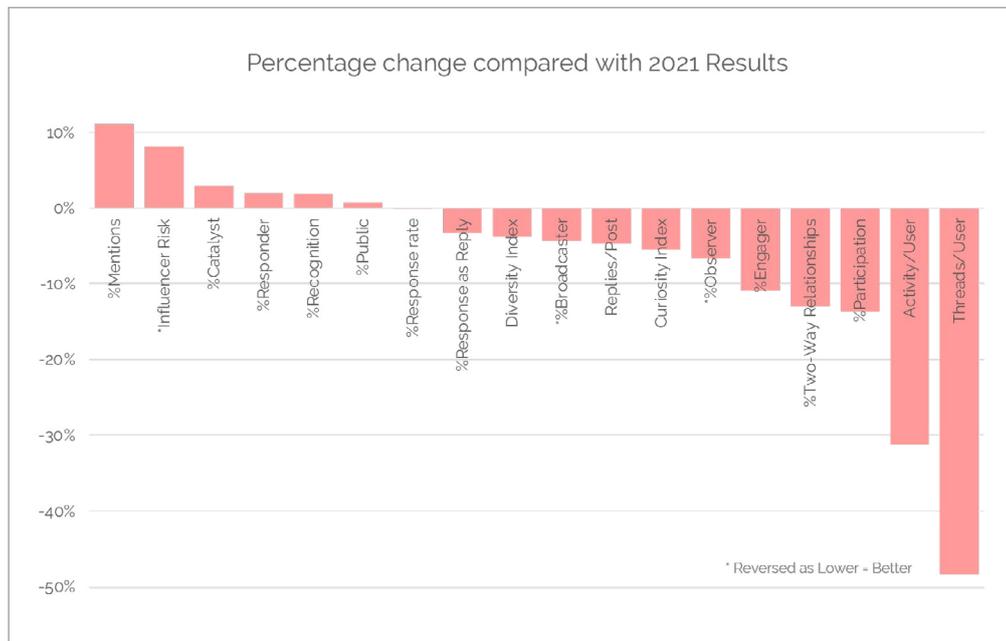


Figure 2 - SWOOP indicators change from 2021

Unlike the previous years, 2022 has seen a majority of indicators in negative territory (11 of 18). Not shown in this chart is the 20%+ increase in the average size of organizations assessed this year (average of 48,736 staff compared with 37,9012 in 2021 and 22,254 in 2020). Perhaps the larger average organization size may be having some impact. However, its unlikely to be the full story. The significant drop in the active participation rate at 27% continues a downward trend from 31% in 2021 and 36% in 2020. The nearly 50% drop in “Threads/User” suggests a broad-based drop in discussion intensity. The other relationship-centered measures of %Engagers, %Two-way Relationships, Replies/Post and Replies Responses drops reinforces this trend.

On the positive front is the use of tagging with @mentions and a lower influencer risk (over-reliance on single leaders). The increase in %Catalysts, %Recognition (mostly likes) adds weight to a view that Yammer is moving toward being centrally a social media experience of the Facebook and Instagram kind. Social media influencers are our “Catalysts”. The high passive (reading) over-active participation is also reflective of a retreat into social media-style sharing than previous years. The introduction of Viva Engage and its personal stories and storylines will likely only strengthen this movement.

We might feel this is a retrograde trend; from people engaging with each other in deep community-based conversations, to simply consuming social media shared content. There is, however, a potential positive interpretation. More staff are using Yammer, if only passively, since Yammer was exposed through Microsoft Teams and Outlook in 2021.

The significant drop in the active participation rate at 27% continues a downward trend from 31% in 2021 and 36% in 2020.

Our benchmarking partners are also 20%+ bigger now than previously. As Yammer scales across larger organizations, it is inevitable the large number of Yammer “newbies” will start at the lowest “platform adoption” phase as passive participants; bringing down the overall averages.

The new Viva Engage stories and storylines, targeting leaders, exposes these leaders to more staff. Our prior research suggests the active participation in Yammer (be it through Viva Engage) of organizational leaders can lead to a substantial increase in the active participation of staff on Yammer. Optimistically, what we might be seeing is a “helix effect”, where we might be going backwards to collect more Yammer participants as passive users, before moving them forward as a larger group through the maturity journey.

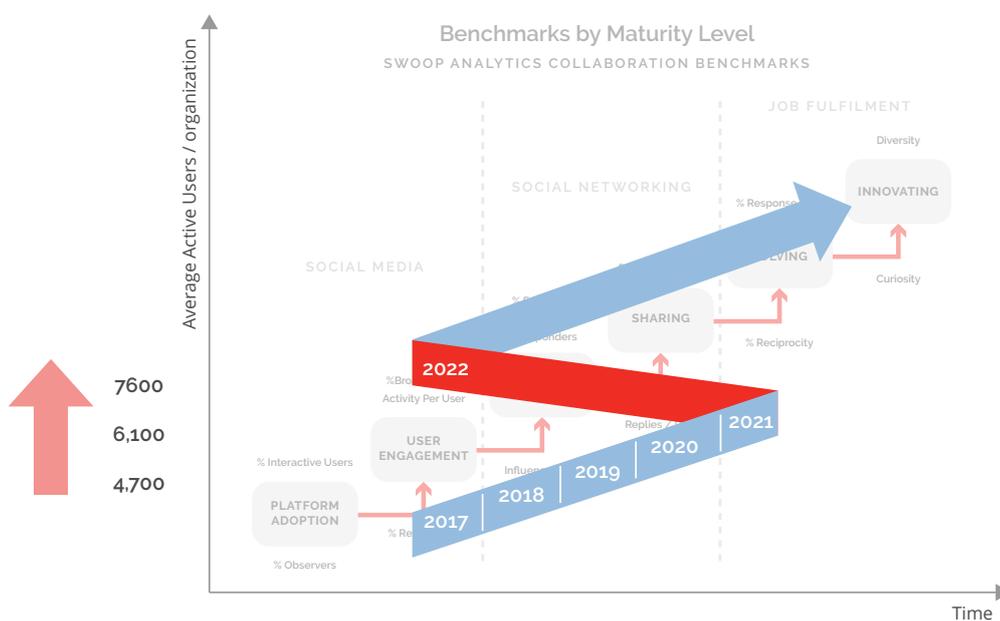
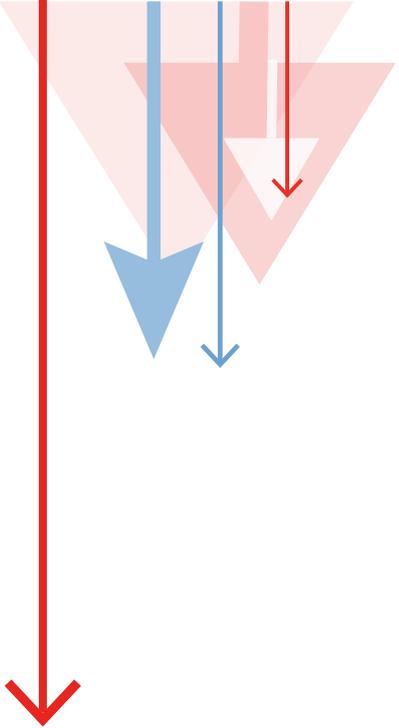


Figure 3 - Going backwards to go forward

The critical point, however, is for internal communications staff not to become satisfied with just an effective internal social media platform. What we have learned from prior niche users of Yammer, is that Yammer can provide much more tangible business value in the form of enterprise-wide innovation and critical problem solving. We address these opportunities later in the report.



### 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 97 organizations, 3,200+ communities with almost five million individuals and more than 21 million interactions, across the breadth of industry sectors. For 2022 we have purposefully selected our sample of organizations to include only organizations for which we have data during the COVID-19 period from March 2020. The majority were benchmarked from February 2022 to July 2022; a period where organizations were still in a state of flux and uncertainty around their future of work configuration.

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.

**Our benchmarking report covers 97 organizations, 3,200+ communities with almost 5 million individuals and 21 million+ interactions.**

#### 3.2.1 Demographics

*Our sample is formed from 97 organizations, with a minimum of 200 active participants.*

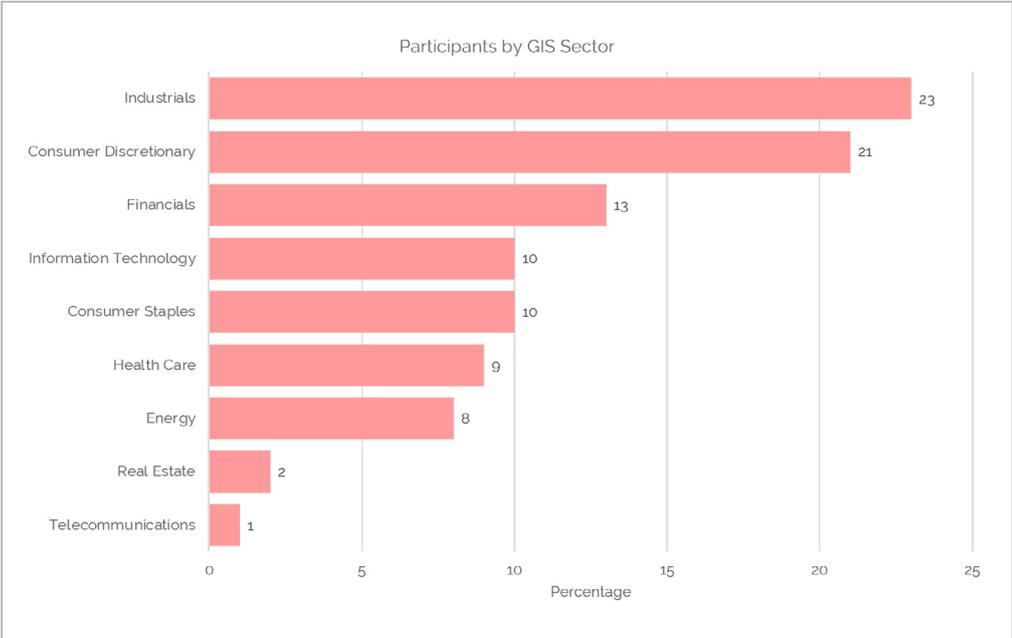


Figure 4 - GICS industry segmentation

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](#). The big mover for 2022 is the energy sector with eight participants, compared with just a single company in 2021.

### 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:

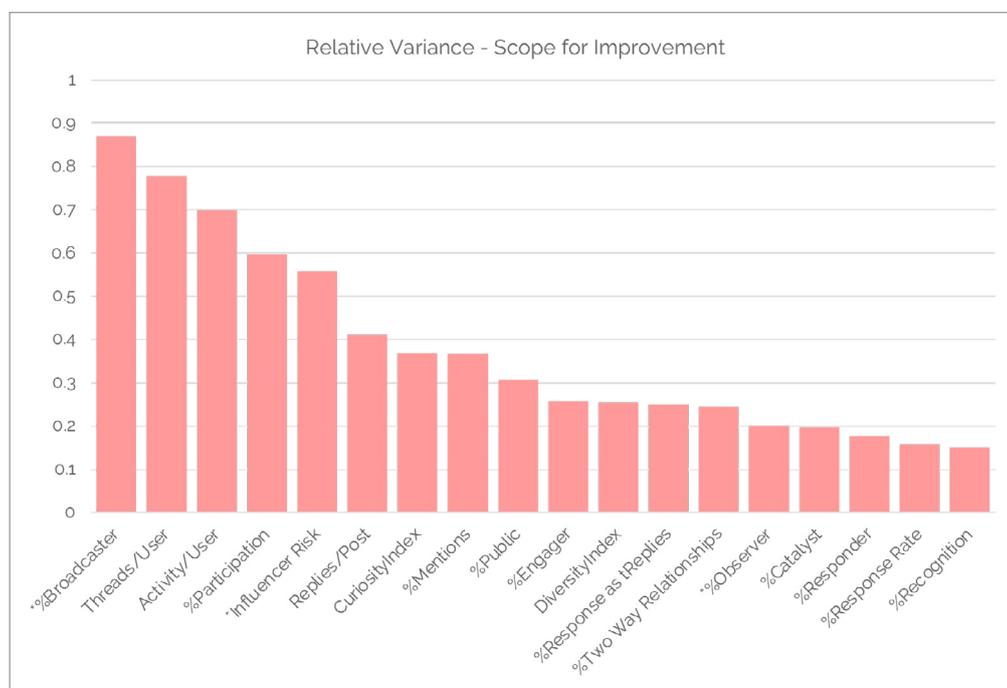


Figure 5 - Improvement potential from benchmarking

Our 2022 results reveal the %Broadcasters, Threads/User, Activity/User and %Participation having the greatest levels of variance, and therefore opportunity for improvement. The top five improvement areas were the same as in 2021. The continued high variance in %Participation rates can be attributed to the even larger average size of organizations being benchmarked this year. The average organization size is almost 49,000 employees with 7,600 active on Yammer in the past six months. This is an increase of 22% from 2021 after an even larger 70% increase 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. As Yammer adds even more opportunities for leaders to engage with staff, the Broadcaster persona should alert posting leaders when their posts are not engaging staff.

### 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 6 - 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](#). If you are not a SWOOP customer you can try out the [SWOOP Persona Quiz](#) and find out which persona you are.

## 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 results are used to set benchmarking goals 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](#).

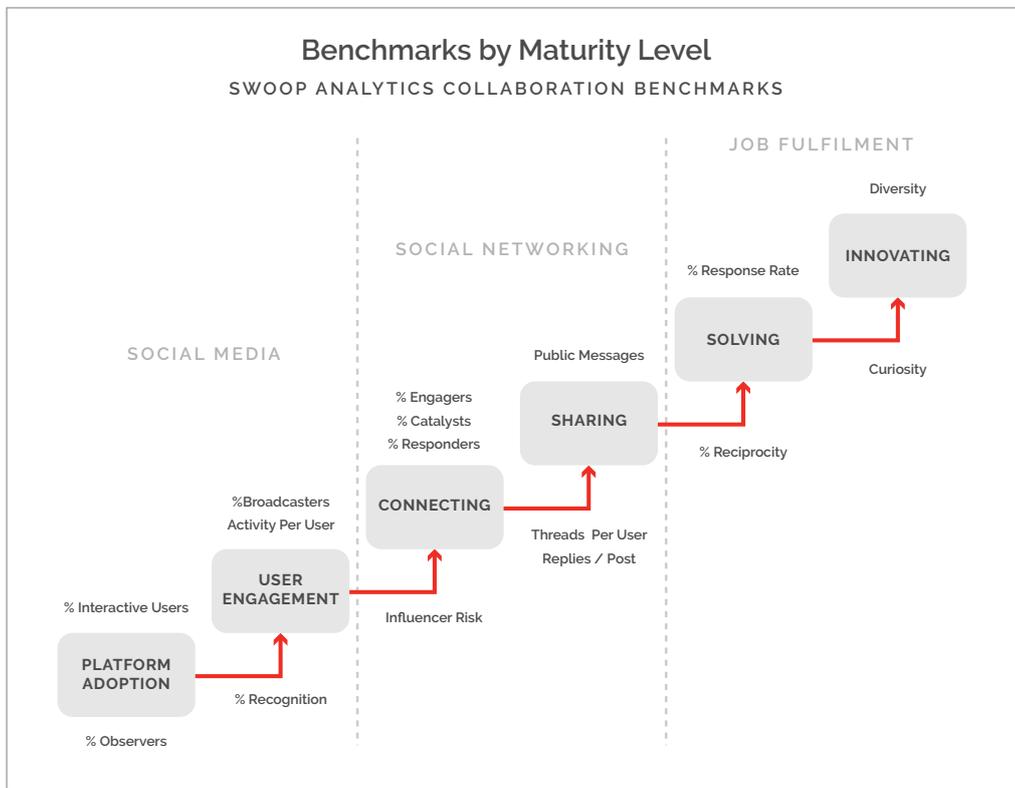


Figure 7 - ESN maturity model

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. From a tool usage perspective we might now see much of the “job fulfilment” activities being conducted in small focused teams, rather than Yammer, but it is important to sustain the connections between Yammer communities and the active teams on Microsoft Teams they may have spawned (see Section 4.2.1.2).

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

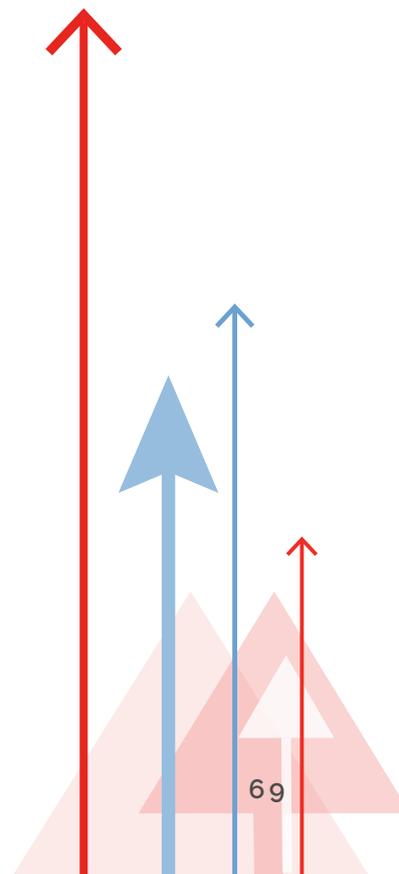
SWOOP Benchmark	Interpretation
<b>Stage 1: Platform Adoption</b> Platform adoption is the initial stage when a ESN is newly launched, and the key motivation is attracting staff to its use.	
<b>% Active Users (Participation)</b>	<p>On launching a new ESN platform, this should be the first measure to assess. 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 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>
<b>%Observers*</b>	<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 score, the lower the score, the better.</p>

SWOOP Benchmark	Interpretation
<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 score, 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>
<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>

SWOOP Benchmark	Interpretation
<b>Influencer Risk</b>	<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>	
<b>% Public Messages</b>	<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>
<b>Replies/Post</b>	<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>
<b>Threads Per User</b>	<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>
<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>	
<b>Response Rate</b>	<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>
<b>Percentage Two-Way Connections</b>	<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>

SWOOP Benchmark	Interpretation
<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.	
<b>Curiosity</b>	<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>
<b>Diversity (Multi-community participation)</b>	<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 Yammer 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. The easiest introduction to Yammer is through reading posts and replies. This is the case for the majority of Yammer users at the moment, with likely more than 50% of staff being passive users of Yammer.

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.

#### Average % 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 27% with a best performance of 80%, a 14% reduction from the 2021 results, continuing a downward trend from 2020.

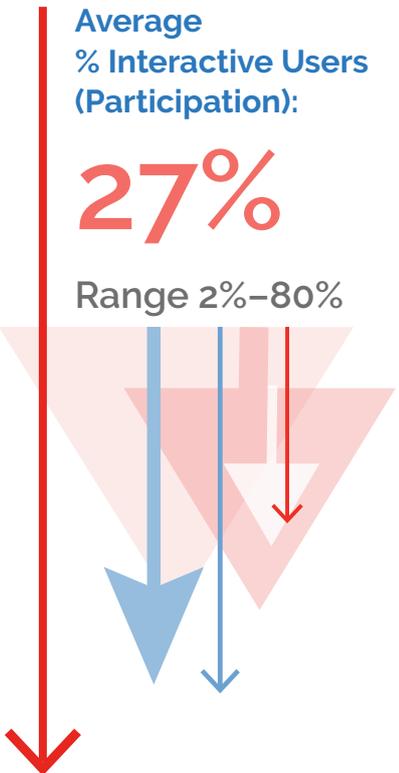
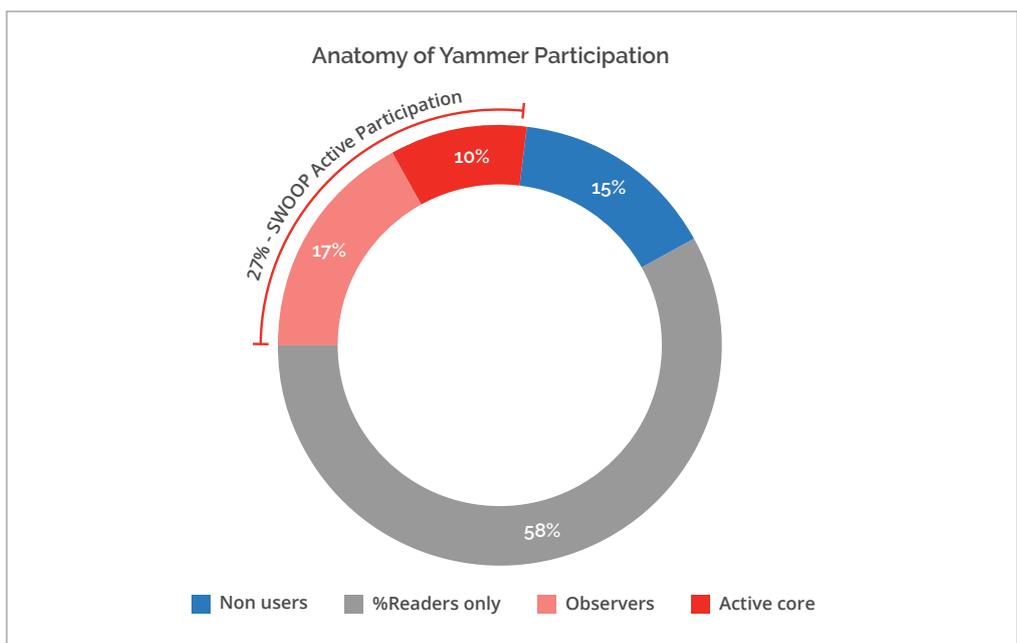


Figure 8 - Anatomy of Yammer participation



## Finding Interactive Users in SWOOP

Within **SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage**, you can find the % Interactive User on the Enterprise dashboard under the Activity tab.



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.

Of the 27% deemed as active, 64% were classified as “Observers” (active less than once every two weeks), leaving only 10% as truly active participants. As these scores have been trending downward over recent years, there is some cause for concern. This is balanced by the increasing size of organizations participating in our benchmarking, to an average of just under 50,000 staff. Participation rates tend to be lower for larger organizations.

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

**Aim for a participation rate goal of more than 38%.**

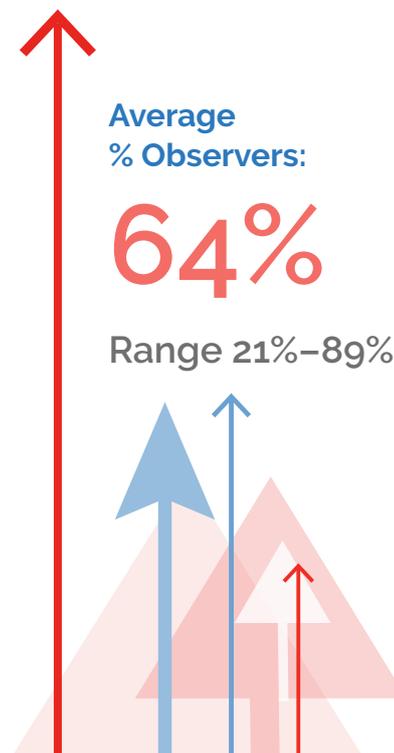
### Observers

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 64%, which is a 7% increase from the 2021 result, continuing an upward trend from 2020.

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 53%.**





Twice a year, real estate management consulting and managed services firm **RealFoundations** uses **SWOOP** to benchmark its employees. It's an opportunity to see how each staff member is contributing, collaborating and sharing their knowledge with the rest of the organization on Yammer, and Microsoft Teams.

If, for example, a senior leader is identified as an "Observer" by SWOOP, based on their online behavior on Yammer, they can be helped to improve their collaboration.

"We bake that into the performance review process," said CEO Chris Shaida.

"People see where they stand, they see their persona. It is not a negative thing. The measurement is important and we've been tracking the expansion of that measurement beyond Yammer into Teams and through the other parts of Microsoft 365."

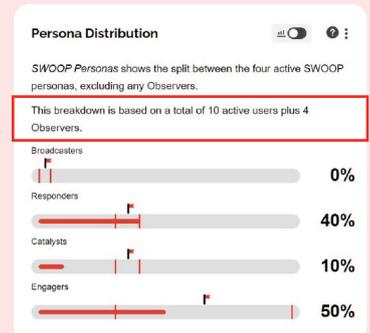


Chris Shaida,  
CEO, RealFoundations.



## Finding Observers in SWOOP

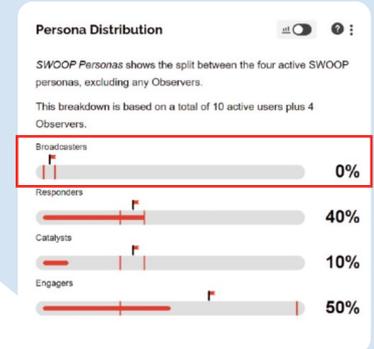
Within **SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage**, you can find the number of Observers in the Persona Distribution report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Engagement tab. This can be used to get an overall % of Observers.





## Finding Broadcasters in SWOOP

Within [SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage](#), you can find % split of all the Personas in the Persona Distribution report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Engagement tab.



### 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.

#### 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 6% this year is a slight increase on our 2021 benchmarking rate. The large range points to a room for improvement opportunity for many organizations.

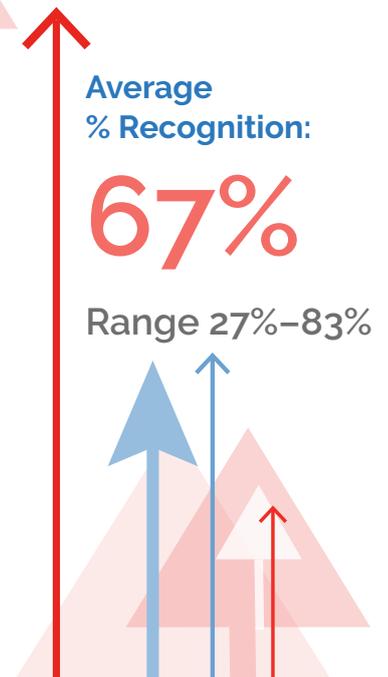
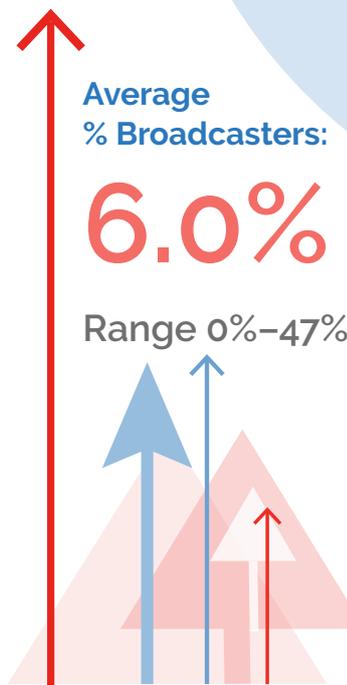
**Try keeping the %Broadcaster to below 3%.**

#### Recognition

A core characteristic of any social system is social recognition. The ubiquitous like, reaction, 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 reactions (mostly 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 2021, continuing the upward trend from 2020.

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



# Recognition in SWOOP

Within [SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage](#), the breakdown of interactions is on the Key Statistic report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Activity tab. You will need to total all the posts, replies, reactions, mentions and notifies and then calculate the % of that total that are reactions and mentions.



## Mentions

Tagging a colleague is to encourage their participation in the discussion. Mentions nearly always extend the conversation. The 2022 score is an 11% improvement on the 2021 score and continues an upward trend from 2020.

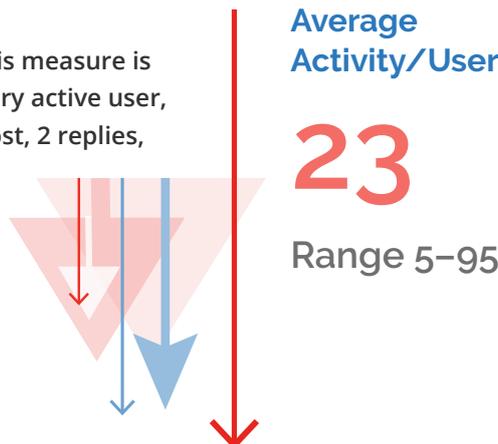
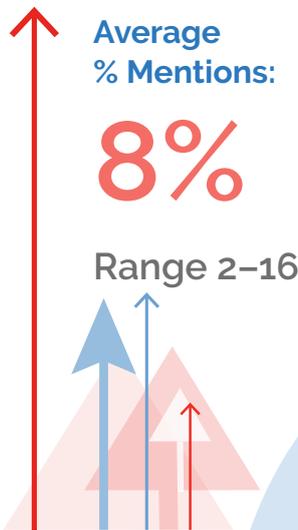
We suggest a target of 11% mentions.

## 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 under one activity/week/user. The 2022 best practice (95 activities / active user) performance works out to 3.6 activities/week/user. The performance is a 31% drop from 2021 and 2020. This is a measure we would like to maximize without limit.

We suggest a practical target for this measure is one or more activities/week for every active user, ideally in the proportion of the 1 post, 2 replies, 3 likes rule.



### Finding %Mentions in SWOOP

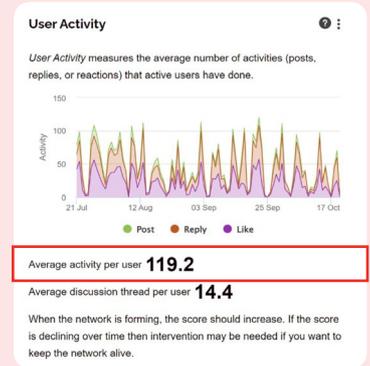
Within [SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage](#), you can find %Mentions in the Mention Index report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Engagement tab.

Include @	Exclude @	Did you know...
2.13	1.55	Posts that include an @ mention typically get more replies.



## Finding Activity / User in SWOOP

Within **SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage**, you can find the Activity / User in the User Activity report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Activity tab.



### 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 SWOOP 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>3</sup>.

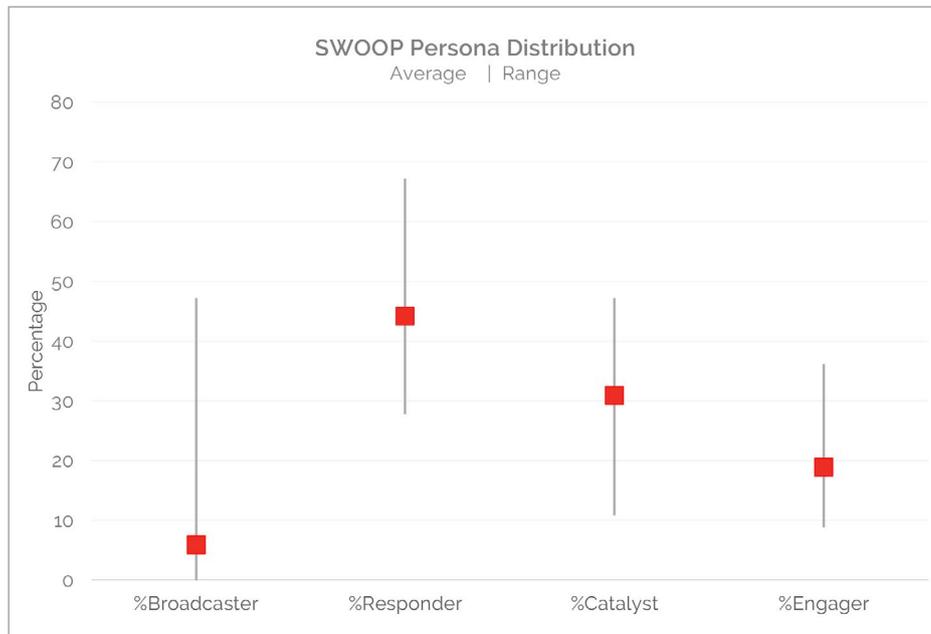


Figure 9 - Behavioral persona distributions

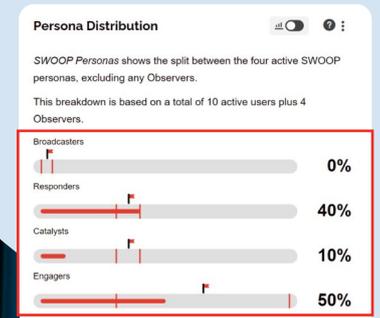
The Responder has the highest average score. A Responder is someone who reacts to others with replies and likes. We often refer to them as the caregivers who help sustain communities. The pattern has changed little from 2018, with a significant range of scores for each persona. The Engager is our aspirational 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. The proportion of Engagers has dropped by 11% from 2021, continuing a downward trend from 2020.

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



## Persona Distribution in SWOOP

Within [SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage](#), you can find the proportion of the Broadcaster, Responder, Catalyst and Engager Personas in the Persona Distribution report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Engagement tab.



In terms of targets for the positive Personas, the proportion of Engagers should be more than 23%, and Catalysts and Responders should be comfortably between 30–40%. Broadcasters should be avoided completely.

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.



**ANZ** encourages employees to use **SWOOP's Personas** to help guide them to improve their presence and boost their influence on Yammer.

If someone is, for example, a Broadcaster and wants to become an Engager to help influence content on Yammer, ANZ's Channels and Insights team would provide coaching on how to improve their social collaboration style. Following the nudges on SWOOP will continually provide people with tips to improve their collaboration behaviors on Yammer.



"Where SWOOP would come in is we provide advice on best practice and then the Personas dashboard is where people can coach themselves to improve their activity and build a stronger influence on the network," said Ryan Crocker, Adoption and Communications Lead, ANZ.

*Ryan Crocker, Adoption and Communications Lead, ANZ.*

## 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.

### Influencer Risk:

# 32

Range 3.6–75.4

The average score is 32 with a best practice i.e. lowest risk score of 3.2 – an 8% decrease on 2021 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 14% for the Influencer Risk Index.**

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 in SWOOP

Within **SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage**, you can find the Influencer Risk Score at the bottom of the Influential People report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Engagement tab.

NAME	PEOPLE ENGAGED
Shirley Blyrizeled	28
Frankie Swoopster	25
Benjamin Sturst	24
Deborah Havian	15
Harold Ackat	14
Ruth Waxem	11
Victoria Blyrizeled	9
Noah Emares	9
Marilyn Ispair	8
Joyce Cellem	8

**INFLUENCER RISK SCORE**  
Measures the reliance on a small number of influencers.  
14%



When tertiary educator **Box Hill Institute** was about to softly launch Yammer, Internal Communications Officer Rhi Bell used it as an opportunity to go around the campus talking to people to find the most connected people who might be able to help her amplify messages on Yammer.

Then the state of Victoria was hit with the world's longest COVID-19-enforced lockdown. There was no more going around campuses to find Yammer ambassadors.

Enter SWOOP Analytics. SWOOP's Influential People measure immediately reveals the most influential people across the organization, within each department, and even on every topic. The Influencer Risk Score at the bottom of the report measures the reliance on a small number of influencers and alerts you to the risk of relying on too few people. Imagine, for example, you have a high reliance on five people in your department on Yammer and within a few months of each other, they all leave. How will this affect your Yammer community?

"I'm one of those people that just randomly goes out and starts talking to people," Rhi said.

"That's how we found the people that are most connected - by literally having conversations with people and now we have SWOOP and use the Influential People (measure) we can be like; 'Oh, I didn't actually think of that person'. 'It's great to be able to leverage that.'"

### 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, Threads/User and these are outlined below.

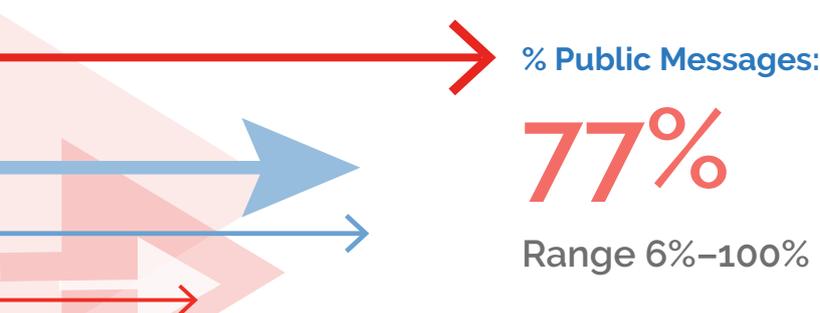
#### Public Messages

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

At 77%, the percentage of public groups is at the same level as in 2021.

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



#### % Public Messages in SWOOP

Within **SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage**, you can find the proportion of public messages in the Public/Private Messages report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Content tab.





**Of all the Yammer communities at tertiary educator [Box Hill Institute](#), only three are private. Every other community is public for anyone to post, comment and react – and it will always stay that way.**

Samantha Little, Associate Director Internal Communications at Box Hill Institute, says Yammer will always remain a public, open place, primarily to give all employees an organization-wide platform to talk and connect, especially as staff are spread across three campuses.

Another reason to keep Yammer communities open is to differentiate Yammer from Microsoft Teams. Teams is for project-based work at Box Hill Institute while Yammer is a public platform to connect every employee, no matter what the topic is, where they are based or where they sit in the organization.

“To differentiate Yammer, it’s really important for us that it is a public platform and all of the groups are public because otherwise you’re just kind of mirroring a platform that’s quite similar (Teams) when communities are private,” Samantha said.

At Box Hill Institute, every employee is invited into the All Company group and announcements are often posted in this community. Once in Yammer, many employees then explore other communities. This is tracked with SWOOP Analytics’ Cross-Enterprise Collaboration measure.

“We want cross pollination of the All Company group with the other groups,” Samantha said.

“So if we have too many private groups that we don’t know about, we don’t get that cross pollination and when we do a big announcement in All Company, we see more people going into the All Company but also going into the other groups and exploring a little bit of what’s going on.

“For our strategy, Yammer will always remain an open place.”

## 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 2.03 we see that on average, **people are replying about twice as much as posting.** This suggests ESN discussions are moving in the right direction. This year's performance is marginally lower than 2021.

A practical target for a Reply/Post ratio should be above 2.7 replies for every post.

Average  
Reply/Post:

# 2.03

Range 0.29–5.64

**Western Sydney University tracks its Yammer campaigns by using the Hot Topics measure in SWOOP. During an extended COVID-19-enforced lockdown across Sydney, the university launched a Gratitude Week campaign on Yammer to help employees focus on small, positive moments.**



Using data from SWOOP Analytics, they found #gratitude was the most engaged topic during Gratitude Week.

Looking at the data shared below, the most talked about topic – gratitude – had 34 posts with 143 replies, well exceeding the recommended reply/post benchmarking target.

Name	Total participants	Total reactions	Total posts	Total replies
gratitude (hashtag)	349	942	34	143
grateful (hashtag)	95	93	4	10
mentalhealthmatters (hashtag)	43	29	1	8
mhwbt (hashtag)	43	29	1	8
friendsforlife (hashtag)	28	29	1	2
#Gratitude	10	21	1	8
gratitudeweek (hashtag)	17	12	1	1

It's no coincidence then that “gratitude” remained the hottest topic on Western Sydney University's Yammer network for the entire year.

## Reply/Post ratio in SWOOP

Within [SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage](#), you can calculate the Reply/Post ratio by dividing the number of replies by the number of posts from the Key Statistics report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Activity tab.



## 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 1.64 this measure is a large 48% reduction on 2021 and therefore something to watch going forward. 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 11 weeks.

Average  
Threads / User:

47%

Range 0.33–7.32



## Finding Activity / User in SWOOP

To find your Threads/User result, you'll need a custom benchmark from SWOOP. This is available for all SWOOP customers on request, or you can [trial SWOOP for free](#) and receive a **free custom benchmark report**.

FREE 2-WEEK TRIAL

Try SWOOP for free on your own data.

Try SWOOP for free

### 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” 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.**

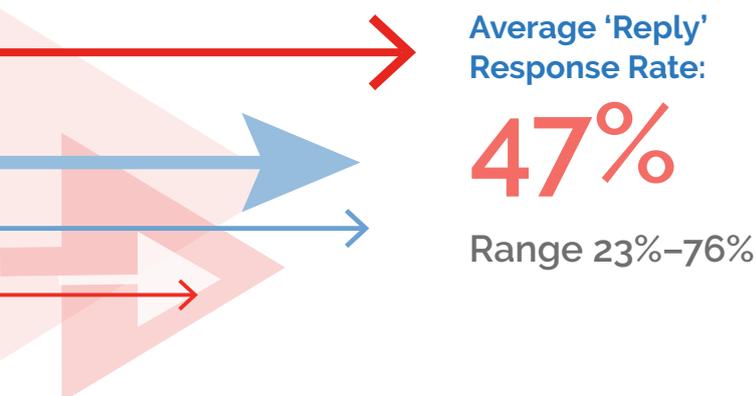
For this stage we’re applying the Response Rate and Reciprocity measures.

#### 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”?

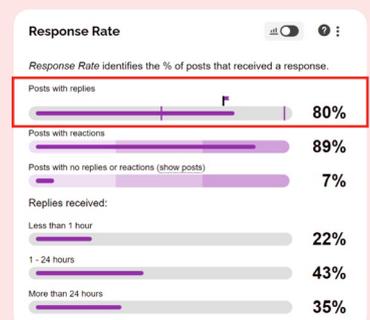
The average of 47% is similar to the 2021 result.

Set a target of at least 58% Reply Response Rate for this important measure.



### Finding Response Rate in SWOOP

Within [SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage](#), you can find the % of posts with replies in the Response Rate report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Engagement tab.



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

## Two-way Relationships (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 of a relationship being formed. 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 Two-way Relationship measure is simply the percentage of all relationships that are two-way connections. The 2022 result is a 13% drop from the 2021 result, which is disappointing for this key measure.

**Organizations should be trying to maximize Two-way Relationships, looking to achieve a level above 26%.**

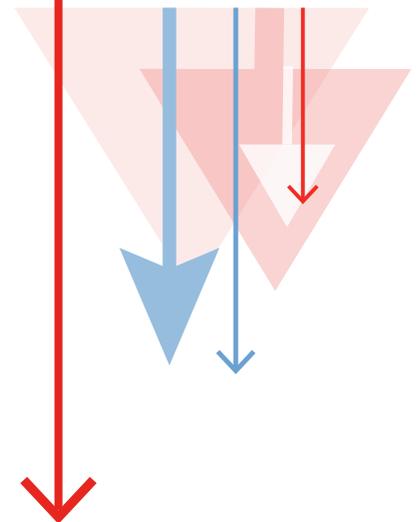
If you have a group with a high number of two-way connections, it is more than likely the group is densely connected, and therefore more cohesive in its operations. It is common to judge an ESN group by how active it is. But if the activity is simply statements or opinions passing in the night, performance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

**The Two-way Relationships score is the most reliable measure of relationships forming and problems being solved.**

**Average  
%Reciprocation  
(Two-way  
relationships):**

**21.6%**

**Range 12%–37%**

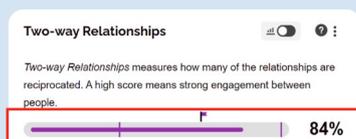


**If the activity is simply statements or opinions passing in the night, performance is an illusion.**



## Two-way Relationships in SWOOP

Within [SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage](#), you can find the % of two-way relationships in the Two-way Relationships report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Collaboration tab.



### 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>5</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 Multi-Group Participation and Curiosity measures.

#### Multi-Group Participation

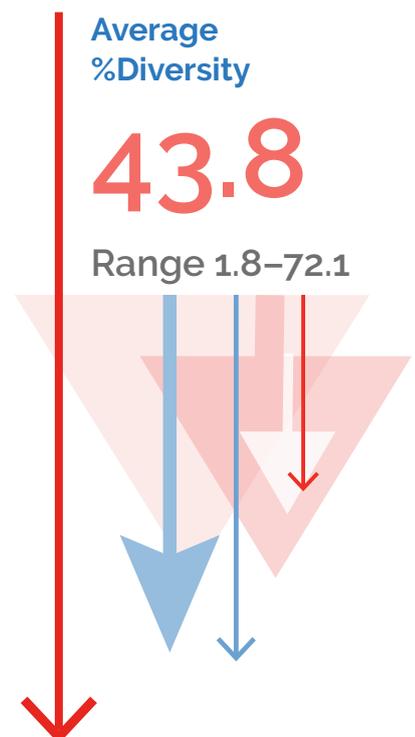
A key prerequisite for successful innovation is diversity of thought, which comes from a diversity of connections, leading to a diversity of experiences. Diversity can be measured across a multitude of dimensions. While diversity is often aligned with gender, business enterprises are more regularly concerned 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 lower than 2021.**

To maximize a diversity score, an individual would need to spread their activities evenly across a large number of Yammer communities. Having public communities 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.

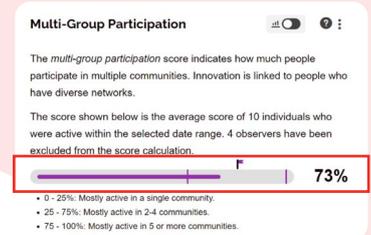


5 <https://www.amazon.com/Innovators-Dilemma-Revolutionary-Change-Business/dp/0062060244>



## Multi-Group Participation in SWOOP

Within [SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage](#), you can find the % of multi-group participation in the Multi-Group Participation report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Collaboration tab.



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 (Two-way Relationships), Multi-Group Participation and Curiosity that collectively reflect how innovative an organization is likely to be.**

### Curiosity

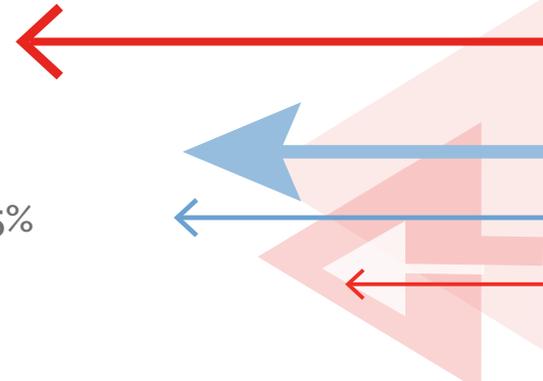
This measure simply calculates the proportion of posts and replies that include a question. On its own, a high Curiosity might signal a more inquisitive organization; and one willing to entertain change, innovate and/or challenge the status quo. Despite COVID-19, the curiosity levels were largely unchanged from 2021. Curiosity and Multi-Group Participation 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 17%.

Curiosity Index:

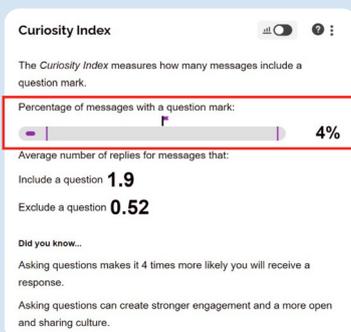
# 13.1%

Range 2.1%–27.5%



## Curiosity in SWOOP

Within [SWOOP for Yammer and Viva Engage](#), you can find the % messages with questions in the Curiosity Index report on the Enterprise dashboard, under the Engagement tab.



### 3.3.7 Summary

Of the 18 measures directly comparable with 2021, 11 measures retreated, with active participation being of most concern. This was also the measure of most concern in 2021 and 2020. The big improver was the increase in %Mentions and a drop in Influencer Risk.

The following table collates our recommendations for enterprise goal setting, and has been largely set at the 80th percentile (top 20%) of our 97 benchmarked organizations for 2022.

Table 2 - SWOOP recommended enterprise targets

SWOOP Benchmark	Recommended Enterprise Targets
<b>Platform Adoption</b>	
Number of Active Users (Participation)	Active participation rate of more than 38%
%Observers*	Less than 53% observers
<b>User Engagement (around content)</b>	
%Broadcasters*	Less than 3% Broadcasters
%Recognition	Between 50% – 70%
% Mention	Greater than 11%
Activity/User	1 post, 2 replies, 3 likes portfolio of more than 1 interactions/week for each user
<b>Connecting</b>	
%Engagers %Catalysts %Responders	%Engagers above 23%. %Catalyst and %Responder should be comfortably between 30–40%
Influencer Risk	Less than 14
<b>Sharing</b>	
% Public Messages	Greater than 96%
Replies/Post	Greater than 2.7 replies for every post
Threads Per User	1 thread/user every 11 weeks
<b>Solving</b>	
%(Reply)Response Rate	Greater than 58%
%Two-Way Connections	Greater than 26%
<b>Innovating</b>	
Diversity (Multi-Group Participation)	Greater than 51
Curiosity	Greater than 17%
* Lower is better	

## 4 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.

Yammer communities are not all real “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’s intent and the SWOOP classification. This should signal a need for reflection on whether the community’s purpose is actually being achieved. Where the purpose and SWOOP classification match, then the community leaders can look to the benchmark goals to guide their development.

Applying our machine learning approach to 2022 Yammer community data provided the following community types:

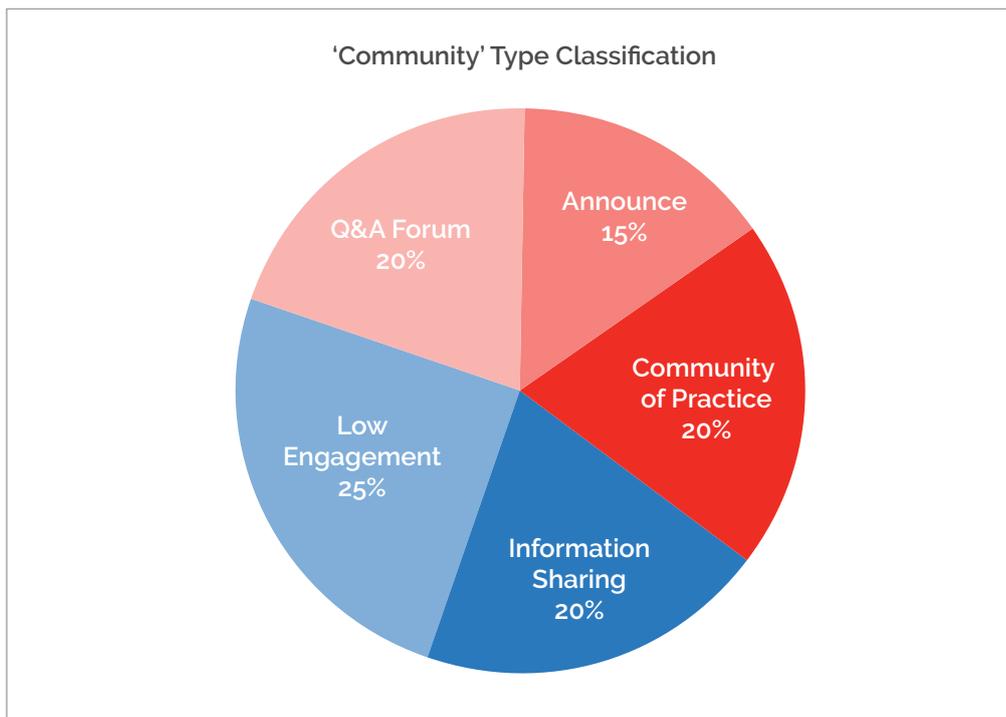


Figure 10 - Machine learning classification of Yammer community types

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.

Comparing the percentage classifications to 2021, the “Low Engagement” has grown from 15% to 25%, while “Announce” groups have dropped from 23% to 15%.

Table 3 - Community types and characteristics

Community Type	General Description	SWOOP Indicator Characteristics (from machine learning)
<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 and %Responders. Low %Curiosity
<b>Information Sharing (Community of Interest)</b>	Gathers people with common interests with a view to sharing information, more so than actively collaborating.	Large size, moderate levels of responders, response rates and replies / post. Low reciprocity, diversity and %Engagers.
<b>Q&amp;A Forums</b>	Main purpose is to facilitate questions being posed and answers provided.	Modest size, high Curiosity, %Engagers and Mentions. Modest diversity; low levels of %Participation and %Catalysts.
<b>Announce Groups</b>	Generally top-down information communications.	Very strong %Catalysts (announcers) and response rate; Low %Engagers, %Responders and Reciprocity.
<b>Low Engagement</b>	Likely dormant or dead communities.	Modest %Catalysts, 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's classification; and set the target at the 80th percentile (top 20%) for the given measure. However, for this year we are extending our measures for Yammer community performance, to include elements associated with a thriving community.

## 4.1 Thriving communities?

Referring back to [Microsoft's Klinghoffer and McCune's article](#) where they close with; "As we enter the hybrid work era, we're excited to keep studying the numbers even more deeply to understand how thriving can be unlocked across different work locations, professions, and ways of working". We think we can help with that. Our initial exposure to thriving employees were as members of the high performing "self-directed teams" we identified and celebrated in our [2021 Microsoft Teams Benchmarking Report](#). Our partners, the [Hargraves Institute](#), have since developed a whole education and coaching program called "[Resilience for Thriving Teams](#)".

In unpacking the term “*thriving employee*”, we can take from Klinghoffer and McCune their definition: “*to be energized and empowered to do meaningful work.*” We can also take from their research that employees do not thrive outside of their collaborative environments; being their work teams, communities, networks and formal department structures.

To date the main instrument for collecting data on both employee engagement and now employee thriving has been periodic surveying. Klinghoffer and McCune have pointed out some of the shortcomings on relying solely on surveys. While follow-up interviews can fill some of the gaps, it is not scalable across whole organizations.

Klinghoffer and McCune made use of the technology of sentiment analysis along with calendar and email data to assess the impact of work/life balance; and a hint to perhaps how a more continuous measurement approach could be established. Sentiment alone, however, is only a rough proxy for a thriving employee. For example, a new recruit might be very upbeat about the new perks the company is offering and speak very positively about this, while at the same time feel disengaged from meaningful work in a collaborating team.

For our 2020 Yammer benchmarking of communities, we undertook a major overhaul of our methods for assessing successful Yammer communities. We used AI techniques to identify the most distinguishing features for our SWOOP community measures. We combined this with judgments sought from industry experts to create a weighted formula to be used in our assessments. The following table identifies the major factors and underlying measures used in the assessment:

Table 4 - SWOOP feature identification

Feature	SWOOP Measures <sup>6</sup>
<b>Participation</b>	<i>%Participation</i> <i>Influencers</i> <i>Responders</i>
<b>Engagement</b>	<i>Engagers</i> <i>Reciprocity</i>
<b>Responsiveness</b>	<i>Active Size</i> <i>Replies/Post</i> <i>Response Rate</i>
<b>Innovation</b>	<i>Catalysts</i> <i>Curiosity</i> <i>Diversity</i> <i>%Mentions</i>

The question we are asking now is; “*are these factors consistent with a thriving community?*”. We would suggest it goes a fair way; and we suspect community managers would be comfortable having their leading communities described as “thriving”. Certainly, the members feel empowered to support a meaningful purpose, as they have volunteered their participation. We explore this question further in section 4.2.

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6 See Table 4 - SWOOP Metrics

In our 2021 Yammer benchmarking study we included a section on “Happiest Communities”, where we used sentiment analysis as the indicator. What we found was that relying on positive sentiment is limiting. For example, we found some perfectly happy communities working in areas where the context was negative e.g. cyber security. We therefore chose to identify the “energy” (both positive and negative sentiment) in communities. This measure also deserves a place in the employee thriving measure.

Finally, another dimension we would associate with “thriving” is “growth”. We say that our vegetable garden is thriving when the produce is overflowing. Measuring growth in activity and membership of Yammer communities is therefore a measure that has a place. We need to be mindful though that for communities there can be a point where too much growth can create a loss of focus, leading to lower engagement, energy etc..

Our framework for measuring thriving communities looks like:

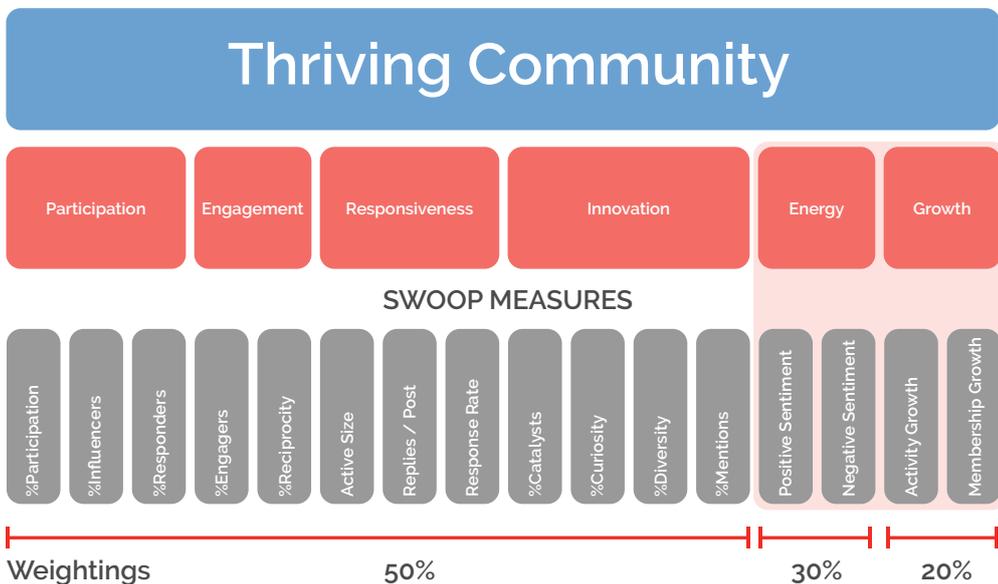


Figure 11 - Measurement framework for Yammer community thriving

The Participation, Engagement, Responsiveness and Innovation factors are weighted according to our expert community managers’ group judgments. We have added the “Energy” and “Growth” factors (shaded area) and gave them a collective 50% weighting to emphasize the extension of thinking beyond a “high-performing community” to “thriving”.

The 50/50 weighting of the current community performance measure and the “Energy” and “Growth” factors added to accommodate the “thriving” descriptor is somewhat arbitrary, but given the unknown effects, is as good a place as any to start experimenting.

## 4.2 Impact on prior Yammer community measure

For 2022 we considered using this new measurement framework to assess our Yammer Community Champions. Before doing this, we investigated what additional value the “Energy” and “Growth” factors might add to an overall Yammer community performance measure i.e. were the thriving measure additions already implicit in the existing performance measure? In conducting a statistical analysis of our existing performance measure and the new “Energy” and “Growth” factors, we actually found a *negative correlation* between our existing score and the “Energy” factor. This indicates that indeed the addition of sentiment in the form of an energy measure would add new value to an overall performance score.

We were comfortable therefore to apply our new measurement framework to rank Yammer community performances, but with one additional filter. We anticipated that if a Yammer community was seen to be “thriving”, we would anticipate there would be activity in the group at least five in every seven days i.e. a working week over the six-month period analyzed. Surprisingly, this reduced the “most thriving community” candidate list to an elite 459 communities.

Below we present some characteristics taken from our new ranking scheme:

### 1. Which individual SWOOP measures contribute most strongly to the new Thriving Community measure?

Statistical analysis identified the following measures (other than energy and growth) that predict a strong community performance:

- Reciprocity
- Replies/Post
- %Response Rate
- %Mentions

These are all strong engagement measures, which is a positive finding.

### 2. What other measures distinguish the elite Thriving Communities from the others?

Table 5 – Non-elite vs elite Thriving Yammer communities

Average	Non-Elite	Elite Thriving
<b>Total Users</b>	1,393.05	5,313.85
<b>Total Active Users</b>	185.13	1,024.99
<b>%Participation</b>	34%	48%
<b>Growth</b>	-23.21	-10.68
<b>Energy</b>	1.46	1.23
<b>2021 Group Performance</b>	48.47	57.71

What is firstly evident is that, on average, the thriving communities are larger, yet with higher active (not just reading) participation rates. Perhaps the filter for having to have activity on each working day may explain this i.e. the more members, the more likelihood of daily activity.

Interestingly, even for the elite communities, the average %growth is still negative, though not as negative as the non-elites. Of the whole sample, 42% of communities showed positive growth. The average growth for the whole sample was -21%. So growing as a community is indeed a challenge, and perhaps not essential to being seen as thriving?

### 3. What types of communities are classified as “thriving”?

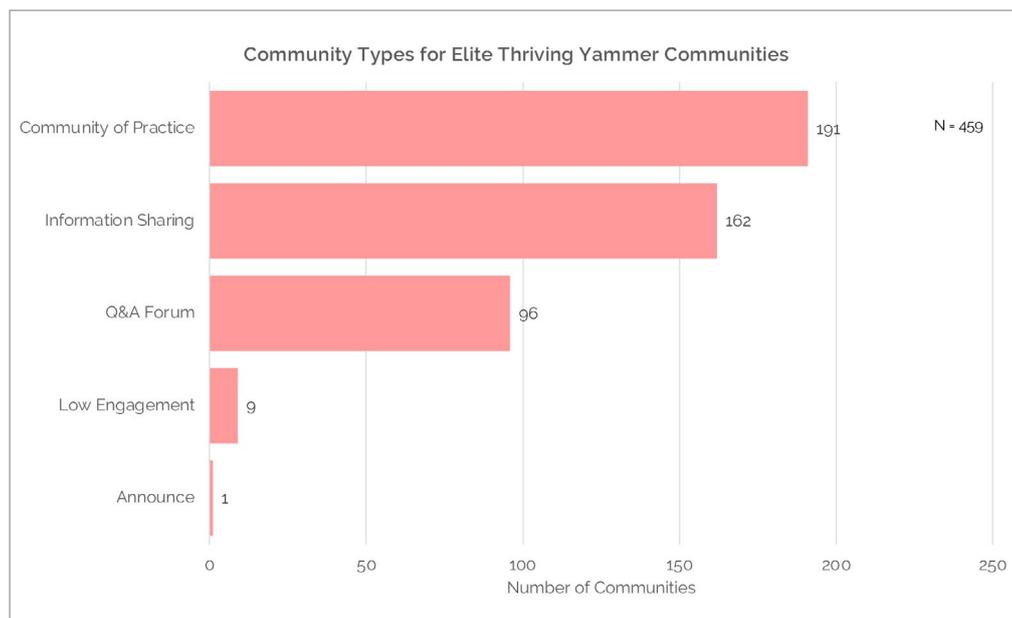


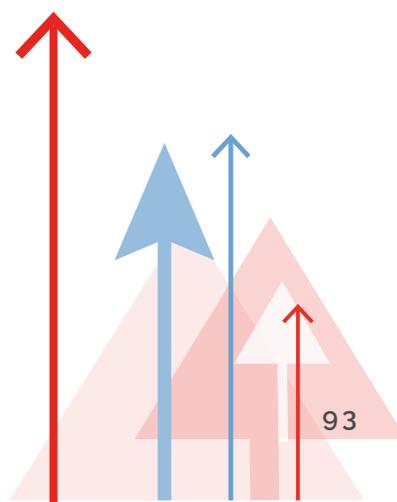
Figure 12 - Community types for elite thriving communities.

It's comforting to see the thriving communities are the higher connections communities of Communities of Practice and Information Sharing communities. Thriving Q&A Forums are also well represented. It may seem incongruous to see “Low Engagement” communities making this list. They appear to be small communities that have shown high levels of growth, be it on the back of low activity levels. It's probably not surprising to see just a single Announce community on the list.

To identify more qualitative insights from this list, we have reached out to a selection of the top thriving communities to share their stories (Section 2.3). We hope you can see from these stories that these Yammer communities are indeed “thriving” and therefore adding a degree of validation to our measurement scheme.

In the following sections we identify suggested targets for the different types of communities. In the absence of accepted industry best practices, we again use the top 20% threshold to identify a target that is both aspirational and demonstrably achievable.

The thriving communities are the higher connections communities of Communities of Practice and Information Sharing communities.



## 4.2.1 Community of Practice

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. Our machine learning classification algorithms classify a community as a CoP when the community possesses a core of well-connected members with a larger “gallery” of less connected members. For a CoP, the connected core represents your discipline experts; the gallery is made up of those looking to learn from and eventually join this expert core.

As an example, if your organization is a project-based consulting firm, then Project Management is going to be one of your “core competencies” you would want to strengthen and grow. By bringing together your most experienced project managers into a “Project Manager’s CoP”, you are not only providing a place to strengthen even further a critical core competency, but providing a “social learning” platform for developing project managers to learn from both the experts and each other. If you are a retail bank or a food retail chain, no doubt a core competency required would be around just how to set up and run a store.

There is 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. A short [introduction to Communities of Practice](#) can also be found on the SWOOP blog.

### 4.2.1.1 Communities of Practice and core competencies

A key [HBR article written by C.K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel](#) on core competencies define them as being:

Rare:

- Challenging for competitors to imitate.
- Offer superior value to customers.

More simply, what core capabilities do you think your organization brings to customers?

[This article](#) from HR firm Indeed provides some hints and examples with a simple six-step process for identifying what core competencies you should define.

1. Revisit your company’s mission statement.
2. Brainstorm why your company is important to customers.
3. Consider your current competencies.
4. Compare each competency against the three criteria for core competencies.
5. Write down the core competencies you come up with for your company.
6. Identify areas that may need to be outsourced to allow you to better focus on your core competencies.

We recommend trying this process yourself with some of your colleagues.

Core competencies cannot be built through doing online courses. They evolve through the constant interactions of specialist or expert staff. Through coaching and consulting with a broader suite of developing staff, they will look to the point that a critical mass of expertise has been assembled, and warrant being identified as a core competency. A Yammer CoP is an ideal platform for facilitating the growth of a core competency, with its focus on social learning.

A Yammer CoP is an ideal platform for facilitating the growth of a core competency, with its focus on social learning.

Do you have Yammer CoPs aligned to what you have identified as an emerging or even aspirational core competency? We suggest organizations identify say four to five core competency aligned Yammer communities to mark as “official”. Look to have them sponsored and formally led by discipline leaders. This type of activity will therefore embed Yammer and these communities at the core of the organization’s strategy and mission.

Something that distinguishes a CoP from an information sharing, or Community of Interest, is that CoPs develop actions or projects that produce a tangible product i.e. a documented best practice, training course design, supplier vetting process etc.. Often the requirement for the deliverable is extensive enough to justify a formal project and resources to complete. For example, selected members of the official CoP may be conscripted into a working team hosted by Microsoft Teams, but linked to the CoP.

#### 4.2.1.2 Yammer CoP/Microsoft Teams integration example

The structure illustrated below provides an example of how a Yammer CoP with an innovation and new product development mission can be digitally integrated with associated project teams:

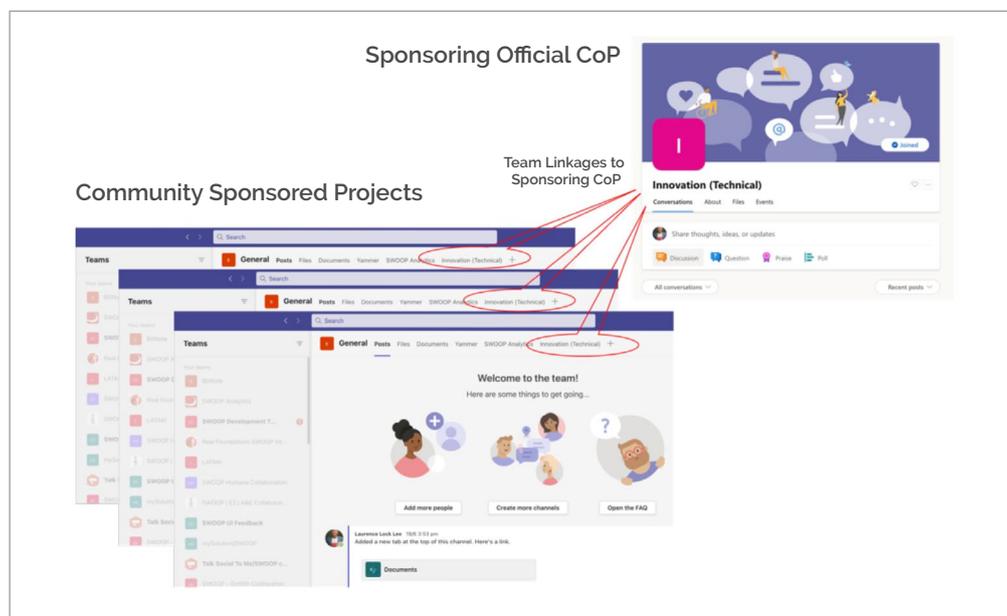
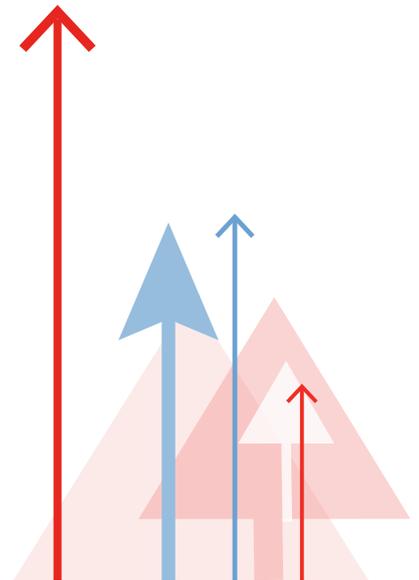


Figure 13 - Official Community / Teams integration

The example shows an “official” CoP established to host innovation discussions. As an official community, it is resourced by a fulltime Chief Innovation Officer (CIO) and a small number of support staff. The CIO has established a Yammer community to host

engagement activities across the organization. With a charter to create new revenue-generating products, the CIO sponsors a number of ideas campaigns aligned with the organization's strategic themes. The campaigns surface a number of crowd-sourced ideas the organization is willing to invest in.

Formal Microsoft Teams projects are established with some of the staffing drawn from those championing the selected ideas. Each of the sponsored teams progress the development of the product idea as private Teams. However, the teams make regular updates and seek regular feedback through a connection to the Yammer community directly accessible from their Teams space.

This structure offers some [distinct advantages over traditional approaches to new product development](#):

- Contributions can span the breadth of the organization; far more than any single department. Additionally, raw ideas and/or suggestions will be naturally matured through online discussion between peers.
- The breadth and diversity of contributions are almost guaranteed to be greater, exposing the full creative potential of the organization.
- It's relatively inexpensive when compared with more formal methods of information and idea collection.
- A relatively small team can facilitate quite large-scale exercises.
- It can provide opportunities for staff to be seen and heard from any location or seniority level, and who could potentially be invited to follow through with their ideas or contributions on a sanctioned project.

#### 4.2.1.3 Community of Practice performance targets

Below we have selected some specific SWOOP measures aligned with CoP performance from our benchmarking data. Typically the target is set at the top 20% level, making it aspirational, but demonstrably achievable:

Table 6 - Suggested SWOOP targets for CoPs

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
%Reciprocity	33%
%Participation	78%
%Influencer Risk	< 16%
%Responder	60%
%Response Reply Rate	78%
Replies/Post	3.5
%Engager	21%
Active Size	<= 365
*Energy	1.64
*Growth	44%

\*not currently included in SWOOP's dashboard

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.

Many of the targets have been lowered for 2022, reflecting the lower weightings given to 2021 SWOOP measures in favor of “Energy” and “Growth” factors. Not all SWOOP users have sentiment available on their dashboards. For those that do, the provided energy target is roughly equivalent to a combined “positive” and “negative” score of around 60% on the Sentiment by Time report.

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 higher this year at just under 365. 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.

While much of the current buzz is around employee engagement and connections of a social media/networking style, we cannot emphasize enough the stronger and deeper connections provided by high functioning CoPs are the core business value generators for Yammer.

#### 4.2.2 Q&A Forums targets

Unlike CoPs, Q&A Forums are more open for membership and focused on problem solving and innovation. The defining characteristic of Q&A Forums is curiosity i.e. a large number of posts framed as questions. This is followed by higher levels of %Engagers, Response Rates and Mentioning. 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 7 - Q&A Forum recommended targets

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
<b>%Curiosity</b>	27%
<b>%Engager</b>	39%
<b>%Replies/Post</b>	5.7
<b>%Mentions</b>	18%
<b>%Diversity (multi-group participation)</b>	60%
<b>Active Size</b>	1,000 (but really as large as you can get)

The above suggests about 27% of all postings on a Q&A Forum should be questions that should receive, on average, more than five to six replies. A diverse membership - 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. The targets for 2022 are significantly higher than 2021, though with a smaller average active size. We suggest a higher quality of Q&A Forum exists with this year's cohort.

Q&A Forums provide quick business value. Have a common technical problem to solve, but with little time to research the problem yourself? Look to post it on a Q&A Forum. You may find someone has already posted your question and an answer already exists. Otherwise, you may get an answer from a colleague in a fraction of the time it might take to pursue it through formal channels.

Public Q&A forums have been around for longer than the internet has existed. Who hasn't searched online for a problem you are having to find a quick answer? Be aware though that Q&A Forums work better when the membership is large. For Yammer Q&A Forums, we recommend leaders monitor unanswered questions using the SWOOP dashboard. Even if you don't know the answer, respond by @ mentioning others that might.

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

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, Replies/Post and %Responder personas, along with good level of %Catalysts. The strongest "anti-characteristics" are the engagement measures of %Reciprocity, %Engagers, %Mentions and %Diversity.

Table 8 - Recommended targets for information sharing communities

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
Active Size	2,600 (more the merrier though)
%Response Rate (replies and likes)	99.8
%Replies/Post	5
%Responder	54%
%Catalysts	45%

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/likes).

High performing information sharing communities should have relatively large audiences who react/respond to information shared. Catalysts are required to drive participation. Responders are required to keep people participating. Information Sharing communities

play an important “inclusiveness” role. You may find some of your most thriving information sharing communities are on non-work topics.

The role of thriving non-work related communities; many mission driven e.g. Same-sex marriage, Black Lives Matter, Climate Change, were well documented with case studies in our previous two Yammer benchmarking reports. It is important, though, to be mindful of sustaining an appropriate balance of work related and non-work related information sharing communities.

#### 4.2.4 Announce communities targets

Announce communities are 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 Work From Home 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.

Announce groups did not rate in our 2022 most thriving communities analysis. We are therefore leaving the targets at those created in 2021.

Table 9 - Recommended targets for announce communities

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
<b>%Catalysts</b>	76%
<b>Active Size</b>	805
<b>%Participation</b>	49%

We typically think of Announce communities as large forums for executives to make announcements. We anticipate that as Viva Engage evolves, there will be significant support for announcements by senior executives.

#### 4.2.5 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, low levels of innovation, low reciprocity – all suggest these communities have been launched but not really moved to a productive level.

## 4.3 What are some examples of Yammer communities found to be “thriving”?

We have been able to provide a selection of detailed case studies on selected benchmarked thriving Yammer communities in Section 2.3. However, we were exposed to many more than those we were able to highlight in the case studies. The following list provides a description of the communication themes associated with the elite thriving communications we were able to identify:

- Organizations new to Yammer who have used their “All Company” community to successfully launch.
- Larger groups where “Ask Me Anything” offers were being made, with the idea of soliciting work process issues or roadblocks. We saw examples of these groups with dedicated knowledge brokers to facilitate strong response rates.
- “Mission-driven” communities e.g. LGBTQIA+, environmental issues, Black Lives Matter etc. continue to build and thrive. While in the past we may have referred to these communities as “non-work”, this is no longer the case. They are central to establishing the behavioral expectations for a diverse and inclusive organization.
- Technology adoption groups, whose membership and active participants were expanding beyond technical IT staff to end users, posting questions on functions and usage.
- Photography groups. Our benchmarking has shown that sharing images is one of the best forms of creating engagement; and now thriving growth and activity.
- Thriving non-work communities extending beyond the “mission-driven” communities to topics like gaming (remember Dungeons and Dragons?), Dad Jokes etc.

# 5 Futures

In our 2021 Yammer report, we spoke about how Yammer was being used to drive a culture of positive engagement across organizations during an extended pandemic disruption. The announcement of Viva Engage, along with stories and storylines, is strengthening the social media related functions. We have noted this year that some of the most engaged communities are on topics not directly related to work. We recognized the value of “non-work” communities way back in our [2018 Yammer Report](#). [Josh Bersin has more recently been associating with this style of engagement as contributing to a sense of “belonging”](#).

We think if this is what Yammer and Viva Engage is set to become, it will be a gross under-utilization of its capabilities. We do not want to minimize the importance of socialization around non-work activity. But there has to be a balance. Across the Microsoft 365 suite we see no other place where large-scale social learning, wicked problem solving and innovation can happen. As much as we need the informal catchups around the “virtual watercooler” to de-stress and balance our work day, non-work socialization needs to be balanced with work-related socialization. The risk is that Yammer and Viva Engage might be seen as being a place where people go to take a break from their real work.

The Yammer Maturity Model Figure 8 - ESN maturity model, identifies social media usage as the earliest maturity stage. Our 2021 Yammer Benchmarking Report focused on the opportunity for radical innovation moving out of the pandemic. This time we are focusing on wicked problem-solving through social learning in Communities of Practice on Yammer. Both are associated with the most mature stages of ESN usage.

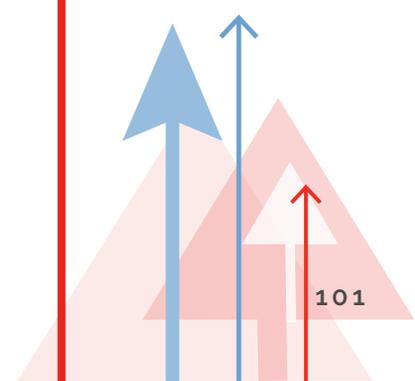
## 5.1 Wicked problem-solving through social learning

“Wicked Problems” are defined as; [“a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize”](#). We are currently living with one such wicked problem; hybrid working. There is no shortage of wicked problems for organizations to address. Think of big oil companies like Exxon, BP, Shell, and Chevron navigating a low-carbon future. Established banking organizations looking for a way to encompass cryptocurrencies. Health services dealing not only with a global pandemic but also facing an ageing population with increased medical needs. The list goes on.

Wicked problems aren't solved by using Yammer as a simple Q&A Forum alone. They require deep expertise, developed, shared and nurtured through deep conversations, debates, and resolutions, amongst a diversity of expert staff, traditionally conducted face-to-face, but now increasingly online. It is within the Yammer communities of practice, led by true subject matter experts, the more challenging problems can be effectively addressed.

*Critical problem-solving and social learning through communities of practice were two of the great legacies left from knowledge management two decades ago.*

Across the M365 suite we see no other place where large scale social learning, wicked problem solving and innovation can happen.



## 5.2 Social learning communities (Communities of Practice)

One Knowledge Management framework still very relevant today is Harold Jarche's connected enterprise framework:

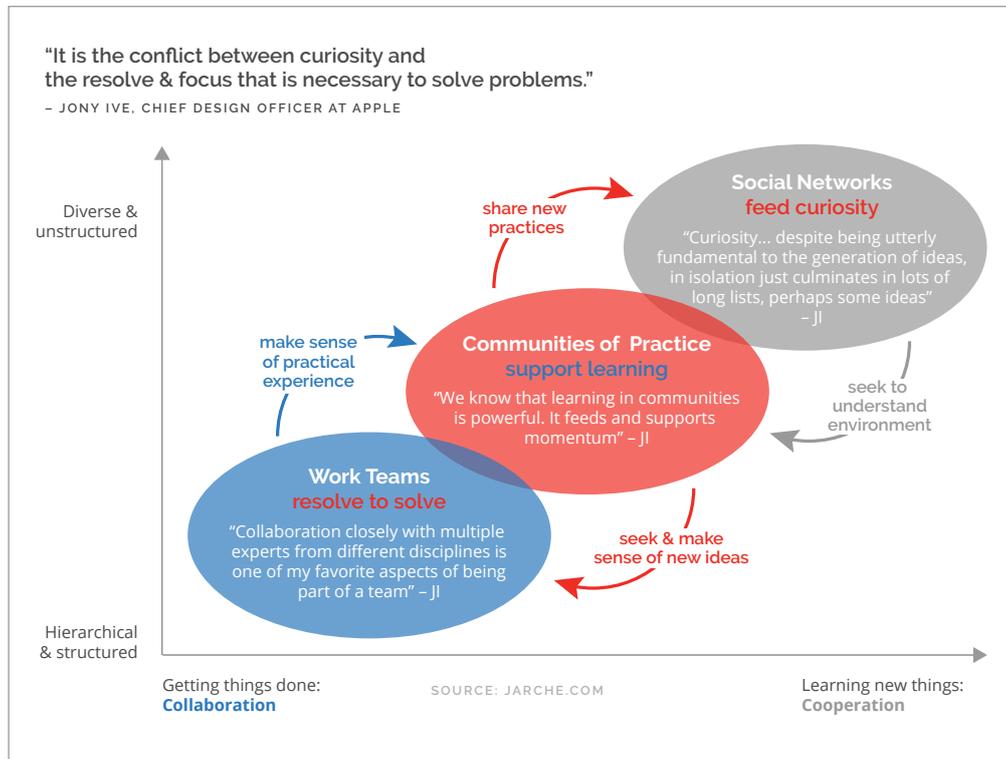


Figure 15 - The connected enterprise

In his [article on curiosity and resolve](#), Jarche addresses the; "constant dance between bigger groups of ideas and smaller groups of people working together requires both cooperation and collaboration", by proposing that the willingness to learn within [Communities of Practice](#) (CoP) is the bridge between the two.

With this framework it becomes easy to visualize digital teams as the work teams, Yammer for the Communities of Practice and Yammer for the internal social networks, along with LinkedIn for the external social networks. Knowledge sharing leaders therefore would need to be active in all three digital domains.

Within the Microsoft Viva Suite we have [Viva Learning](#), which is substantially a courseware facility. Hosted on the Microsoft Teams platform, it does support social learning, but only to the extent of sharing interesting learning content with Teams colleagues.

When we think of social learning, it is more directly aligned with the [theory of social learning](#); "a perspective that states that people learn within a social context. It is facilitated through concepts such as modelling and observational learning". In our [2022 M365 Benchmarking Report](#), we recommended [adopting a social learning approach within working teams, as a way of building digital working skills](#) i.e. learning "in action" from your more competent team colleagues.

Social learning within CoPs, however, has a very long heritage, with the term being coined by cognitive anthropologist [Jean Lave](#) and educational theorist [Etienne Wenger](#) in their 1991 book *Situated Learning* ([Lave & Wenger 1991](#)). In reality though, they had existed within industrial settings for decades, growing out of the regular apprenticeship programs of the time.

Looking back at the firms that had been acknowledged for their CoP programs in the 1990s like Ford, Chrysler, Shell, Dupont, IBM, Siemens, Johnson & Johnson, General Electrics, Toyota, Hewlett Packard, BHP, Chevron, the World Bank; they were the Who's Who of global stock markets of the day. For many of these companies, CoPs still exist and are operating successfully. We are aware of several who have successfully moved their online CoP programs from custom-built applications onto Yammer. While CoPs may have been a natural extension of heritage apprenticeship schemes for industrial firms, what about today, where there is a new layer of services and technical firms dominating our marketplaces?

Danish carbon reduction technologies company [Haldor Topsoe had developed a Yammer community for new team managers to facilitate social learning amongst their peers](#). In our analysis of communities in section 4.2.1 we identified that 42% of Yammer communities had behavioral characteristics of CoPs. More importantly, we found “thriving communities”, and therefore their thriving membership, are more associated with CoP and Information Sharing communities than Announce and Q&A Forum style communities. While these latter types of communities have their place, if we really want to leverage Yammer and Viva Engage to help build a thriving workforce, we need to embrace social learning within CoPs.

**If we really want to leverage Yammer to help build a thriving workforce, we need to embrace social learning within CoPs.**

### 5.3 Knowledge Management 2022 style

In the 1990s, organizations were rushing to appoint C-Suite “Chief Knowledge Officers” and fully embrace the “Knowledge Era”. Empowered by the rapid increase in the service economy and the knowledge-based jobs it created, KM was a big thing. Many believed that the technology industry compromised the industry by pushing information management and search technologies as KM, completely ignoring the important people aspects of KM. This left many potential adopters disillusioned and confused.

Reflecting back on just what happened to KM, the emergence of social media and enterprise social networking had certainly contributed to its demise. More accessible to the average end-user, tools like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Yammer started to fill a need to share knowledge more organically, with less of the formality that had come to be associated with information management and formal KM models.

What we are now seeing is another evolutionary change, where the enterprise social networks and digital teams are re-discovering “content”. This time, however, thanks to products like the AI-powered Microsoft [Viva Topics](#), technology can open up the vast informal information sources for discovery of both content and the associated human connections. To be fair, Viva Topics is not a magic bullet that will perfectly curate your informal information for you. The promise is to give you a good first cut. [The progress towards bringing together “collections and connections” is a significant achievement in our view.](#)

What has been missing from current KM programs is the ability to engage with the masses. Just like social media and social networking achieved in the early 2000s, this new wave of technology-enabled KM, could finally overcome the KM engagement problem.

## 5.4 What does it now take to be a successful “future of work” leader?

The recent documentary on the [“Science of Success”](#), uncovered the somewhat surprising discovery that success is largely a social construct i.e. how your performance is perceived by others, more so than the performance itself. The documentary featured many of SWOOP’s academic heroes; computational social scientists, who were able to use their science to predict the success in fields as abstract as modern art and music.

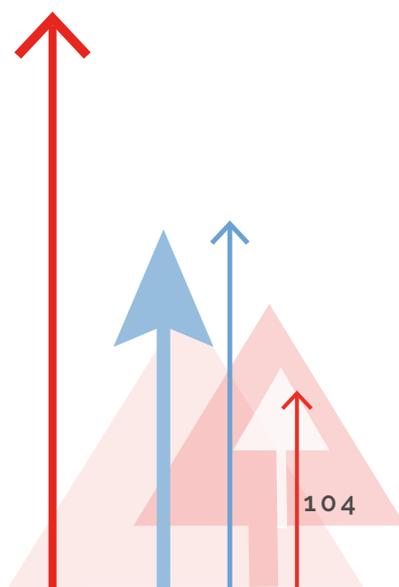
The social network science that underpins SWOOP’s products has also been acknowledged by the people analytics field. The recent [Insight222 People Analytics trends report](#) indicated that 48% of the 184 organizations included in their study had now adopted [Organizational Network Analysis \(ONA\)](#) to better understand the internal workings of their respective organizations. Josh Bersin in his just released book on [Irresistible Organizations](#), quotes research that *“The most predictable driver of success was the level of collaboration and the connections between the team and the rest of the company”*. The message is clear, to be a successful future leader, the breadth and depth of your trusted network really matters. Today, the face-to-face opportunity is being diminished and the virtual connection requirement amplified, adding a new digital dimension to leadership success.

To explore what this might look like in practical terms, we analyzed more than 1,100 staff across several organizations during the first half of 2022, where these organizations were in hybrid working mode. Many of these organizations make their living from sharing knowledge (both tacit and explicit) so we were interested in the dynamics of knowledge sharing across their work teams (inner circle), communities and social networks (outer circle) by looking at their digital engagement with their colleagues within both Microsoft Teams channels and Yammer.

We only looked at reciprocated connections e.g. *“I respond to your posts and you respond to mine”*. Reciprocated connections are seen as the trust pathway through which tacit knowledge can be effectively shared. Knowledge-sharing leaders would also be seen to be sharing explicit knowledge (content), to assess this, we totaled the number of files an individual viewed or edited on SharePoint.

To identify the knowledge-sharing leaders we assessed an individual’s reciprocated connections on Yammer and Team channel interactions, as well the number of files they viewed/edited, and plotted them on the chart shown below.

Success is largely a social construct i.e. how your performance is perceived by others, more so than the performance itself.



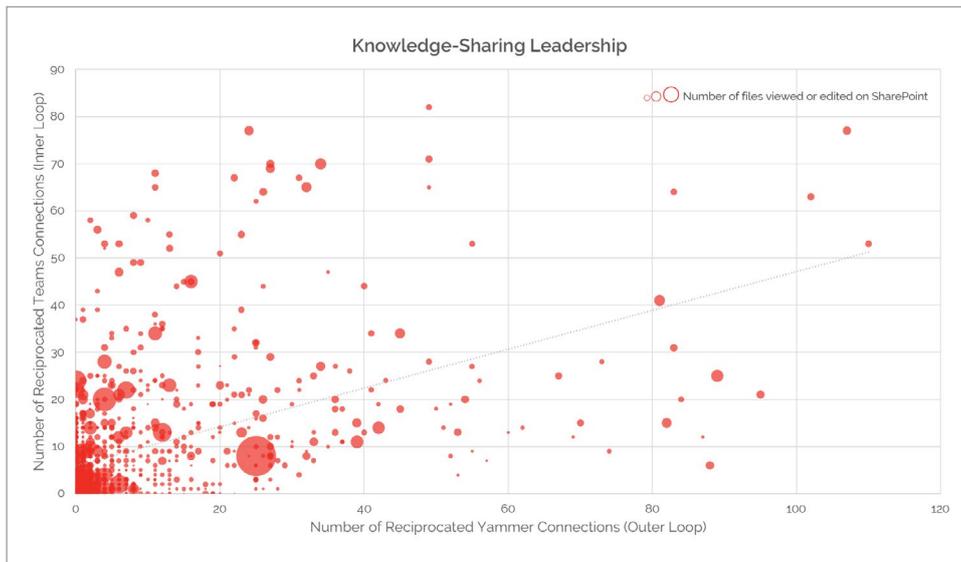


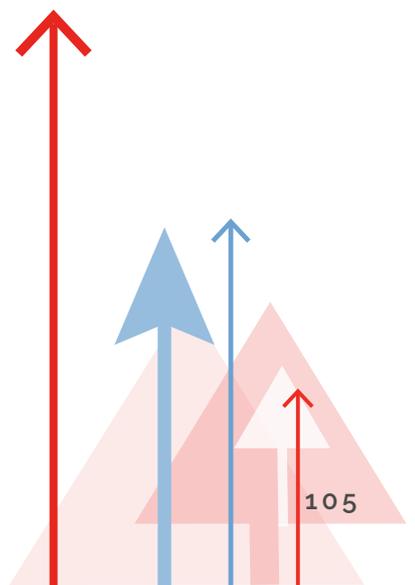
Figure 16 - Knowledge sharing leadership

The key findings from this analysis were:

1. People who have a high number of Yammer relationships also have a high number of Teams channels relationships (statistically significant at 95% confidence level). We call these 'Knowledge-sharing leaders' (top right of chart).
2. People who have a high number of relationships on Teams channels also view/edit files, whereas people who have a high number of relationships on Yammer work comparatively less with files (statistically significant at 95% confidence level)
3. Workers who view/edit many files are challenged with also building connections in Teams channel, but particularly challenged doing this on Yammer.
4. The overall knowledge-sharing leader had 107 reciprocated Yammer connections, 77 reciprocated Teams connections, while viewing/editing 1,360 files on SharePoint over a six-month period.
5. The average knowledge-worker had just two reciprocated Yammer connections, four reciprocated Microsoft Teams connections, viewed or edited 221 SharePoint files.
6. We reached out to our participating organizations looking for commentary on the anonymized knowledge sharing leaders we had identified. We were pleased to hear our identified leaders were indeed recognized as such within their respective organizations.

If you want to be a leader in your organization, start building reciprocal relationships on both Teams and Yammer, while actively engaging and sharing content from SharePoint.

One senior consultant had recently been voted by peers as this year's MVP for the organization. Another was a very active and respected competency leader. Another two were company co-founders. These identified leaders are practicing "collaborative management". They are closely connected to their teams and continuously guiding and appraising progress and productivity. Think about the huge gulf between leaders and their staff that [Microsoft researcher's labelled the 'productivity paranoia'](#). This would not exist if these leaders were practicing the collaborative management behaviors identified in these knowledge sharing leaders.



David Stanford is an Enterprise Managing Consultant and Co-Founder at real estate professional services firm **RealFoundations**. RealFoundations has been a regular SWOOP benchmarked leader for Yammer, Microsoft Teams and M365. The organization is committed to using a modern digital workplace, based on the M365 ecosystem, to best deliver its projects around the globe. It was perhaps not surprising a RealFoundations co-founder would be benchmarked as one of our standout knowledge sharing leaders.



David had recently provided an article to an industry publication Realcomm on ["Enterprise Management with a Modern Digital Workplace"](#) to share his leading practices. Here are some highlights:

1. **Stay fully informed in less time:** Each day David can stay fully informed on projects across four continents by simply perusing selected Yammer and Microsoft Teams sites.
2. **Understand project status for active management:** For projects he is more actively involved in, David efficiently monitors progress, asks questions, follows up directly in the digital team.
3. **Stir the pot:** As the digital teams are working transparently, David can rapidly detect when things aren't quite right and challenge co-workers to think again.
4. **Provide just-in-time guidance:** By being across many projects in close to real time, he is able to efficiently "course correct" as required.
5. **Better manage internal operations:** As a member of the senior leadership team, David works routinely with his co-leaders on strategy, cultivating talent, market research, contractual agreements, investments etc on a daily basis, and without being co-located. As an example of the agility of the leadership team, they were able to mobilize employees in their Chennai support center to work from home at the onset of the pandemic, in less than 30 hours.
6. **Execute work collaboratively:** David is an archetype remote and mobile worker, providing input or formal approvals wherever he is.
7. **Quickly locate information and experts:** David leverages the full scope of Microsoft's content management toolsets to quickly identify documents, subject matter experts, and past project reports.
8. **Connect the dots:** By being well connected on both Yammer and Teams, David can keep his finger on the pulse on what is going on across the firm. He regularly connects the dots for staff, responding to their online questions, connecting colleagues and pointing to relevant online content.
9. **Mine new revenue opportunities:** Through Yammer and Teams, David is well informed on industry trends and evolving marketplace needs identified by colleagues.
10. **Build a connected organization:** David and the RealFoundations leadership team are role models for their globally located staff. Everyone is empowered to work collaboratively and transparently.

You can also hear David talking to these points as a typical "day in my life" [here](#).

We think David Stanford and RealFoundations are a model for the future of work for organizations post COVID-19. And of course RealFoundations uses SWOOP Analytics to measure employee engagement across its digital workplace.

In summary, the leaders inside those organizations are connecting and sharing knowledge at an astonishing rate. In a small way, we have demonstrated here how SWOOP's analytics can identify "future of work" leaders. And with the encouragement provided by academia, in the future, even predict who will be your future leaders.

All organizations can benefit from closing the gap between the best and worst performers. The message is clear though. If you want to be an effective leader in your hybrid working organization, start building reciprocal relationships on Microsoft Teams and Yammer, while actively engaging and sharing content from SharePoint

## 5.5 What does it take to have thriving employees?

When Gallup looked to measure how "thriving" an employee was, it used a qualitative scale and a question; *"Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you."* Gallup found this index retreated significantly at the start of the pandemic in 2020 and is only now recovering slowly. The Gallup data revealed those employees shown to be struggling, as opposed to thriving, take 53% more sick days and their productivity is seriously impacted by depression and anxiety.

What can the workplace do about this, especially if the workplace is not the prime source of concern? Gallup suggests; "Work should be a stabilizing force in people's lives." We would take this one step further and suggest that employees' workplace teams and communities will become the key factor in their feelings on thriving at work and life in general.

One clear action is to identify, acknowledge and amplify your thriving communities. Our analytics have identified that thriving communities are playing a crucial role in developing inclusive cultures, whether they are work related, purpose focused or simply recreational.

When senior management facilitate, encourage and promote thriving communities (and therefore staff), by actively participating themselves, they are setting a positive platform for new hybrid ways of working. While staff may initially engage with each other around non-work related topics, the comfort and safety experienced can then be translated to important work related ones.

## 5.6 Some speculations on Viva Engage Stories and Storylines

At the time of writing the [Viva Engage Stories and Storylines](#) is now in general release. We anticipate the freely available Story and Storyline features introduced into Yammer will create the most excitement, and concern, amongst regular Yammer custodians. While we look forward to reporting on their actual use in future Yammer Benchmarking reports, we indulge ourselves here on some speculations as to how the story of storylines and stories might play out.

Firstly, the early customer feedback pre-launch is that not all Yammer custodians are particularly keen on opening yet another channel for staff to create even more noise on the Yammer network. Microsoft's initial intent for stories and storylines is to be open to everyone. It now looks likely Administrators will be given the capability to limit the voices; and of course, the consequent "who gets the privilege" arguments. So, we are dividing our speculations by the governance option available.

### ***All-in option***

This is the Facebook/Instagram look-a-like option. This combination has proven itself in the consumer world, and of course Facebook has an enterprise version called [Workplace by Meta](#), a platform [SWOOP also supports with its analytics](#). In fact, we are already [making predictions on the potential success and usage patterns of storylines and stories based on our Workplace by Meta customers' experiences](#). Workplace's mature social media features were definitely a point of differentiation with Yammer on its launch in 2016. Stories and storylines will likely now close that gap. While stories are hosted by Yammer, they will also surface in Teams and Outlook.

Storytelling in a business context has come a long way since it was initially frowned upon [by its early proponents](#), back in the 1990s. Authentic stories are seen to be the most humanistic of corporate communications types, exposing a little of the personality of the speaker, compared with the traditional impersonal messages we had become used to. For leaders in particular, it is seen as a way of more strongly engaging the audience with the intended message.

Microsoft is looking to storylines as another way to grow engagement across the enterprise. The expectation is that staff will be more comfortable sharing with others in a familiar social media environment; and therefore broadening the level of people-to-people engagement, and [even a sense of belonging within the organization](#).

The stories feature allows images and video only. This is not a bad thing, as our SWOOP benchmarking identifies posts that include images and videos as being by far the most engaging. In our [2021 Yammer benchmarking report](#), we identified a number of compelling case studies where posts that would now fit into the stories feature had a significant effect on employee engagement. UK headquartered global power generation company [Aggreko has a "Picturesque Aggreko" community](#), where staff can share photos of where they are working anywhere in the world. The community has enabled staff to gain a sense of pride in their organization, as staff share their pictures at work; now a clear use case for Viva Engage stories.

The default “all-in” use of stories and storylines has some drawbacks. Corporate communications staff are rightfully concerned that a free-for-all approach opens the doors to potentially more toxic posts that they have been guarding against, well since Yammer arrived! Many organizations are using [SWOOP's sentiment analysis reporting to help flag toxic discussions early](#), so any potentially toxic posts can be nipped in the bud.

Another valid concern is the risk that personal storylines will take the focus away from Yammer communities, where much of the tangible value creation happens in Yammer. If staff can simply post into what is a personal channel, will they bother to seek out communities to participate in?

A final concern is whether stories and storylines will actually be able to build engagement more than what is currently being achieved? We are already reporting on a drop in %active participation in Yammer (be it due to the larger audience). Will storylines be able to rebuild the %active participation to the 30-40% level that our research indicates is the level required to sustain a productive network? If you were not prepared to post or reply in a Yammer community, would you be more active because you can write or record a video in your own channel? [Some think not](#). But in truth we don't know until we can measure it; something we hope to be able to help with soon.

### ***Privileged few option***

This appears to be an option that many corporate communications staff are looking for. And in reality, it is probably Microsoft's intended audience as well. For many organizations the All Company feed has now been restricted to approved posters. In this year's benchmarking study, we have identified several organizations that have successfully used the All Company feed to launch and manage employee engagement campaigns that have been ranked amongst our leading “thriving communities”.

Storylines are likely to provide a voice to leaders who might not necessarily post to a Yammer community or be part of a managed campaign. Having all organizational leaders active in Yammer storylines will likely grow active participation, based on research we have conducted on the [effect of organizational leaders posting and replying on Yammer](#). The early indication from Microsoft's own use of storylines supports this expectation. Therefore, there appears little downside in opening up storylines to a select suite of organizational leaders.

Perhaps the only cautionary note would be where organizational leaders become comfortable in solely using their personal storyline channels and ignore some of the important Yammer community sponsoring roles they can play, especially for the acknowledged “official” Yammer communities.

On balance, we expect the addition of stories and storylines will have a positive effect on participation and engagement, but not a transformational one. Improving the visibility and authenticity of organizational leaders, when engaging with staff at all levels, is always a positive. The default “all in” option may need careful consideration though. Perhaps the risks could be moderated if Microsoft were to adopt the LinkedIn model internally. LinkedIn has invested heavily in encouraging participants to develop rich personal profiles, that in themselves, provides their workplace “story”. How much more engaging could Viva Engage be if all staff members had LinkedIn quality profiles?

## 6 Final thoughts

It has now been 14 years since Yammer was first launched to enterprise users as an internal social networking platform. Our early benchmarking studies from 2015 showed active participation between 30% to 40% of staff on average. The average active participation across all Yammer-using organizations was likely much lower than this, given that organizations looking for Yammer analytics were likely already relatively mature. In essence, a relatively niche user base.

The first real competition for Yammer came from Workplace by Meta from 2016; for which SWOOP also provides analytics. While there are more similarities than differences between Yammer and Workplace; the Facebook/social media heritage did lead to higher participation rates closer to 100% on Workplace. Yammer's communities, however, tended to have more intense interaction. With the introduction of Viva Engage, the products are getting even closer. Yammer has already benefited from the introduction of the Communities app (now re-labelled Viva Engage) in Microsoft Teams and access to Yammer through Outlook, with increased participation rates above 80% on average, albeit, mostly passive users.

Our greatest fear is Viva Engage will become just an internal social media platform for staff to connect; but that it will not progress much further than that. Perhaps this style of use might substitute to some extent for the lost social interactions in the physical workplace, and provide a stronger sense of belonging for staff, outside of the office.

As much as this might engender a warm and fuzzy feeling amongst the executive, the wicked problems and lost innovation opportunities remain unattended. While we should prioritize our diminishing face-to-face time for creative pursuits like innovation and solving the big problems, Yammer is there, uniquely provisioned, to sustain a common purpose in our hybrid working environments.

We believe "*thriving with work, more so than thriving at work*" is the preferred position to be in.

We believe that "*thriving with work, more so than thriving at work*" is the preferred position to be in.

## 7 Join SWOOP's 2023/24 Yammer Benchmarking Study

After reading this report, we're sure you'd love to know how your Yammer network compares with other organizations. Are you among the best in the world? Or are you struggling to get leaders and employees collaborating?

Join [next year's Yammer benchmarking](#) to see exactly how your Yammer network compares with the rest of the world. SWOOP benchmarking is free and your data remains anonymous. We'll give you free access to SWOOP for a limited time so you can see collaboration habits in your organization and find your Most Engaging Post and Influential People.

If your Yammer network is among the best, you will receive a SWOOP Award for Outstanding Collaborative Performance and be offered the opportunity to be mentioned in the report and share your learnings. You can also opt-in to receive a custom report authored by SWOOP's Chief Scientist Dr Laurence Lock Lee. This custom report compares the results of your Yammer network with all other participating organizations. This will include a comparison of your Yammer network against 16 different metrics and show how you scored against the average, and the best, performing organizations. We will also compare your collaborative network performance against others, and Dr Lock Lee will provide a qualitative summary of your organization's strengths and areas for improvement.

### **Your data is 100% confidential.**

SWOOP does not store any message content, names or email addresses. Your company name is kept confidential and your participation is not disclosed. If your Yammer network is among the best in the world we will ask your permission to mention you and offer you the opportunity to have a case study written, which will then be included in the benchmarking report. In your custom report (provided only to you) we will show how you compare with others but you will not be able to see who these other organizations are.

### **Who can participate?**

You must have minimum 200 employees on Yammer and your Yammer network must have been active for more than six months. There is no limit to the upper number of colleagues on your Yammer network.

### **Want to find out more?**

You'll find all the details to participate in [SWOOP's 2023/24 Yammer Benchmarking Report on this page](#). Our Customer Success Team will be in touch to walk you through all the details. We're looking forward to you being a part of SWOOP's next Yammer Benchmarking Report!

We also conduct benchmarking for [Microsoft 365](#), [Microsoft Teams](#) and it won't be long before we benchmark [SharePoint](#).

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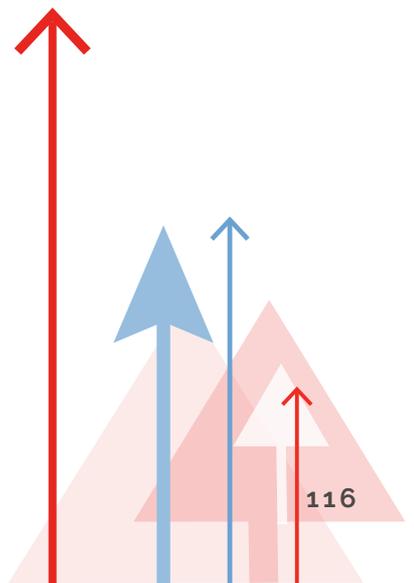
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**Sharon Dawson** is SWOOP's Director, External Relationships & External Communication. She is experienced in media and communications, having spent more than a decade working for Australian Associated Press (AAP) in the Sydney, Canberra and London bureaux. Sharon has covered Olympic and Commonwealth Games, worked in the Australian federal press gallery, reported on federal elections and been a sports correspondent for many years. Sharon 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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