SWOOP Analytics

2024-25

Viva Engage
Benchmarking

How to get the most from Viva Engage

SWOOP Analytics' 2024-25 Viva Engage Benchmarking Report

SHARON DAWSON
Director, External Relations & Communications

DR. LAURENCE LOCK LEE
Co-Founder & Chief Scientist

CAI KJAER
Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer

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Executive summary

Welcome to SWOOP Analytics' 10th annual Viva Engage Benchmarking Report – How to get the most from Viva Engage! Supported by a decade of Viva Engage (formerly Yammer) data, this report boasts the world's most comprehensive, long-term analysis of Viva Engage usage and behaviour patterns, based on real-time interactions.

The benchmark goals we suggest throughout this report come from 10 years of measuring best practice behaviours from multiple millions of employees across hundreds of organisations, so you can be confident that following them will give your Viva Engage network the best opportunity to thrive. We also provide directions on how to track these benchmarked measures with SWOOP Analytics.

In this year's report, we've refreshed our traditional format to make it a **one-stop guide for Viva Engage**. Along with our regular benchmark goals, updated with this year's data, we're addressing the questions and issues faced by you - all backed by a decade of data research and the latest real-life analytics available.

This 2024/25 Viva Engage Benchmarking Report is a go-to resource for anyone using, or launching, Viva Engage.

We address:

- The **business value/business case for Viva Engage**
- The **role of Viva Engage in your internal communications strategy**
- How to **nurture Communities** on Viva Engage
- How to **get leaders on board** and flying with Viva Engage
- How to **get your people engaged** and acing Viva Engage
- **Goals to aim for** when using Viva Engage
- **Migrating from Workplace** from Meta to Viva Engage
- Enterprise Social Network **Maturity Model**

We've also identified the **world's top performing Viva Engage networks**, and the **top performing communities**, and been fortunate enough to interview many of these organisations so we can all learn from their best practices and experience.

In a first for our Viva Engage benchmarking report, we have **tapped into the wealth of experience and knowledge from people we believe to be the world's experts in managing and facilitating Viva Engage** networks. The experts contacted by SWOOP Analytics for this research are people who have been top performers in our previous benchmarking studies, and recipients of a SWOOP Analytics Award for Outstanding Collaborative Performance, or nominated by peers for the annual SWOOP Analytics Community Manager Award.

Another first is **tapping into SWOOP Analytics' AI tool Dr SWOOP to help with some of the research** in this report. Dr SWOOP is a Generative AI bot that has been trained on published and private content relating to SWOOP Analytics, such as support articles and selected content from our website including blog posts, case studies and benchmarking reports. Dr SWOOP is available on your SWOOP Analytics dashboard for Viva Engage, SharePoint intranet, Microsoft 365, Microsoft Teams or Workplace from Meta by clicking on the Dr SWOOP owl icon.

In SWOOP Analytics' 2024/25 Viva Engage benchmarking we analysed:

- More than **15 million Viva Engage interactions**
- The Viva Engage behaviours from **more than 3 million employees**
- **3,751 Viva Engage communities**
- Across **70 enterprises** in the past six months

Our key insights learned from this year's study are presented to you in a practical way to help you improve the way you use Viva Engage. We've broken these insights into three categories:

- Understanding your audience
- Writing for impact and engagement
- Where to post
- Viva Engage trends

Some of these findings you may have seen before in our research, but they have been reinforced with the latest data, and we go a step further in sharing with you how to put these findings into actions to improve Viva Engage engagement across your organisation. We also share some brand-new research, including the **best time of day, and day of the week, to post on Viva Engage**, and do a deep dive into how **different job titles are collaborating on Viva Engage, including executives and senior leaders**. The results might surprise you.

The good news is, people are using Viva Engage extensively. **Viva Engage readership levels are high, with 78% of all employees reading posts**. The top **10 posts on Viva Engage get, on average, 30% of all registered users reading them**, making it an essential part of the internal communications channels mix. And **55% of replies to Viva Engage posts come within the first 24 hours**. Remember, if you're using Microsoft 365, you're already paying for Viva Engage, so why not get the value from it?

This report provides you with the latest findings on how people are using Viva Engage, along with tips, real-life case studies and advice from Viva Engage experts to help you get maximum collaboration, connection, conversation and engagement. We hope you can use our findings and resources to get the most from your Viva Engage network. We'd love to receive your feedback on this report, and offer you a free trial of SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage so you can see how your colleagues are connecting on Viva Engage.

Key insights from SWOOP Analytics' 2024/25 Viva Engage Benchmarking Report

Understand your audience

Viva Engage readership levels are high, with 78% of all employees reading posts.

However, active participation is at 29%, meaning 49% of all employees are reading but not participating in Viva Engage conversation.

The peak time to post and reply on Viva Engage is 9am on weekdays, with Wednesday and Friday being the most popular days.

That said, any time between 8am and 2pm on a weekday receives strong engagement. Drop off in readership starts about 4pm each weekday.

People are reading and engaging on Viva Engage.

In fact, the **top 10 posts on Viva Engage get, on average, 30% of all registered users reading them**, making it an essential part of the internal communications channels mix.

55% of replies to Viva Engage posts come within the first 24 hours.

While Viva Engage responses may be slower than Microsoft Teams chat, 18% of replies still come within an hour. The remaining 45% come after 24 hours.

Almost 50% of Viva Engage users are "Responders", meaning they nurture conversations by primarily replying or reacting to posts.

However, if these people initiate more conversations by starting a new discussion in a post, they are more likely to become "Engagers".

Write for impact and engagement

The power of asking questions:

SWOOP Analytics' benchmarking data found you get almost **150% more replies when you ask a question** on Viva Engage, but **only 12% of posts or replies include a question**.

Don't forget to @mention colleagues:

SWOOP Analytics' benchmarking data found you receive **120% more replies when you @mention a person** in a Viva Engage post, but **only 14% of posts include an @mention**.

Add an attachment:

SWOOP Analytics' benchmarking data found you receive **82% more replies when you add an image** to a post and **168% more replies with a video**. **50% of posts and replies include images** but **only 4% of posts and replies have a video attached**, so if you want to stand out, think about adding a video.

The top performing Viva Engage communities in this year's analysis had one thing in common – they bring the fun to work.

"Fun" posts receive the most engagement from a broad audience. These are work-related posts, but with a fun spin. Think about putting an engaging spin on your corporate comms to make it more appealing.

Where to post

Communities is where the conversations are occurring.

Using **Viva Engage Storylines isn't where the action, or interaction, is happening**. However, it could be useful for popular leaders. 82% of our benchmarked organisations had enabled the Storyline feature, and for them, Storyline activity made up just 1%. The **average response rate to a storyline post is 35% compared with 49% for a community post**. On average, you get one reply to a post on a storyline, compared with two replies on a community post.

Most Viva Engage conversations are held in public (80% public and 20% private) and most conversations are positive.

63% of all sentences are somewhat or very positive compared with **just 14% being somewhat or very negative**. 23% is neutral. Note that "negative" sentiment does not necessarily mean people are complaining but they could be, for instance, using Viva Engage for internal support to ask about why something doesn't work.

Govern your network:

Governance of Viva Engage networks is likely an issue for many as **63% of communities benchmarked were not active** during the six-month period analysed by SWOOP Analytics.

Viva Engage trends

People in roles like HR, legal, finance, marketing, consultant, advisor, specialist and communications are the best Viva Engage performers, while executives and senior leaders fall behind.

However, executives and senior leaders are stronger performers reading news on the intranet than they are when it comes to using Viva Engage.

Viva Engage has shifted from a collaborative focus towards a more communication-centric broadcasting platform.

Perhaps the introduction of Microsoft Teams as the prime collaboration platform during the COVID-19 pandemic has been responsible for this trend, with Viva Engage taking on the role of a corporate communications channel.

SWOOP Analytics trend indicators for Viva Engage over the past five years

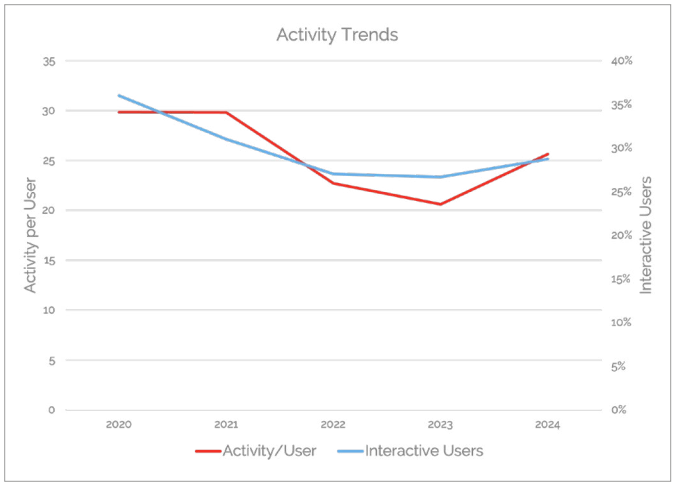
In our 2024/25 analysis of Viva Engage we have followed the major trends over the past five years and summarised them into four categories - participation, engagement, responsiveness and innovation.

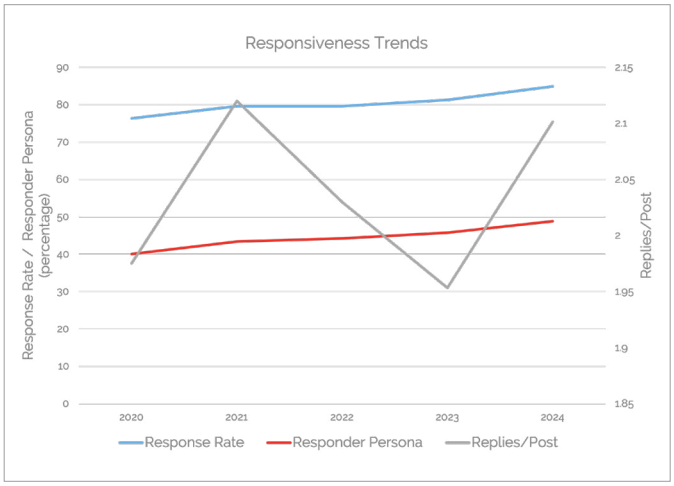
The good news is, **activity levels are bouncing back after the post-COVID-19 drop in usage.** We saw some of the highest levels of Viva Engage activity from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic when people were forced to work from home. Since the return to the office and more hybrid working practices, Viva Engage activity had been dropping. However, in this year's analysis we're seeing **a steady rise to higher activity levels**. See the Activity Trends graph below.

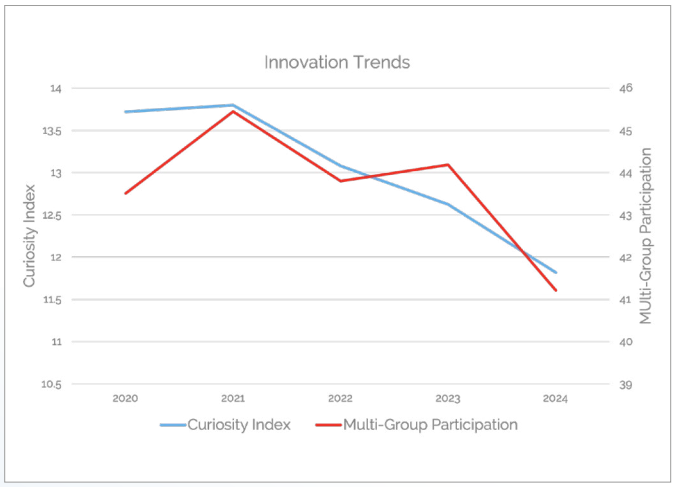
We've also seen an **upward trend in responsiveness to Viva Engage posts**. This means **more people are reacting, replying and commenting on their colleagues' posts**. It's not all good news, however, with our **people-to-people engagement measure, which measures collaboration between colleagues, trending downward**. Interestingly though, tagging others into conversations through @mentions has been on the rise, which brings colleagues into conversations. Perhaps the rise in @mentioning is more related to FYI-type alerts, rather than an invitation to join the conversation.

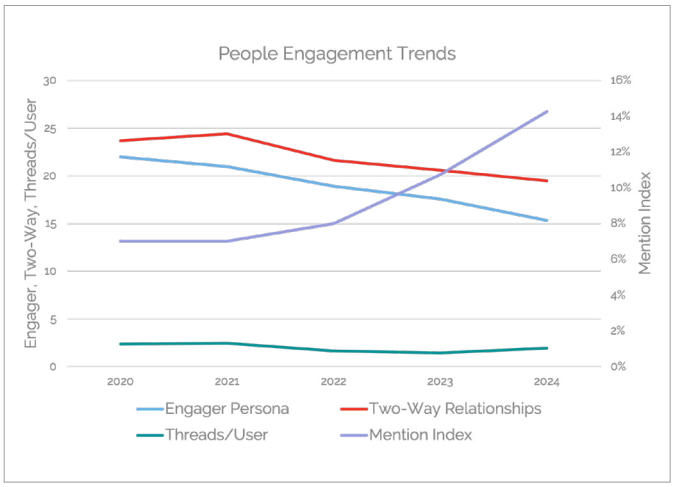
Our measures for **innovation are also trending downward.** Fewer people are asking questions in their posts and people are not joining as many Viva Engage communities, instead working within their direct communities. As a result, people have less opportunity to make connections across the enterprise outside of their regular network.

The graphs below summarise the major five-year trends movements for these four major communication and collaboration factors:









SWOOP Analytics' communication and collaboration trends from 2020-2024.

The data suggests Viva Engage is moving more towards a social media toolset, preferencing communication over collaboration. From the early days of Yammer (now Viva Engage), communities were smaller with stronger collaboration evident. Perhaps the introduction of Microsoft Teams as the prime collaboration platform during the COVID-19 pandemic has been responsible for this trend, with Viva Engage taking on the role of a corporate communications channel, and a place where leaders can connect with employees.

SECTION 1

The business value / business case for Viva Engage

There's little point trying to convince your leaders to adopt Viva Engage across your organisation if you can't produce a business case to show the value of doing so. The most recent data confirms people are using Viva Engage. Our 2024/25 Viva Engage benchmarking analysis reveals **78% of all employees are reading posts**. The **top 10 posts on Viva Engage get, on average, 30% of all registered users reading them** making it an essential part of the internal communications channels mix. **55% of replies to Viva Engage posts come within the first 24 hours**. And if you're using Microsoft 365, you're already paying for Viva Engage, so why not get a return on your investment?

We've broken down the benefits of using Viva Engage into five main points:

1.1 Building community and connection across your enterprise

Viva Engage helps create a sense of belonging and equality by allowing every person to connect and communicate across different departments, geographies and time zones. Every employee has an equal voice. This means organisational hierarchies and business silos can be broken, and every employee can connect.

medibank

In our case study on Medibank (starting on page 52), you'll learn how every employee had a say in the look of the Australian health insurer's new Melbourne office. A multi-channel approach was used throughout the entire change and communication project, with Viva Engage being a key channel. Employees were asked to vote on the types of monitors they wanted, how they wanted to access the new building, the name of the new building, the names of meeting rooms and so on. Every step of the way, employees were asked questions and encouraged to share their ideas and opinions as Medibank sought to create the healthiest workplace in Australia.

At US media conglomerate **Comcast**, Viva Engage has been used to empower employees to be the company's best and biggest influencers and ambassadors, both internally and externally. In his **Viva Engage Festival presentation**, Darnell McAlpin explains how Comcast's employee ambassadorship program has led to employees becoming the one of the strongest voices for the media conglomerate, boosting Comcast's competitive spirit internally and externally.

COMCAST

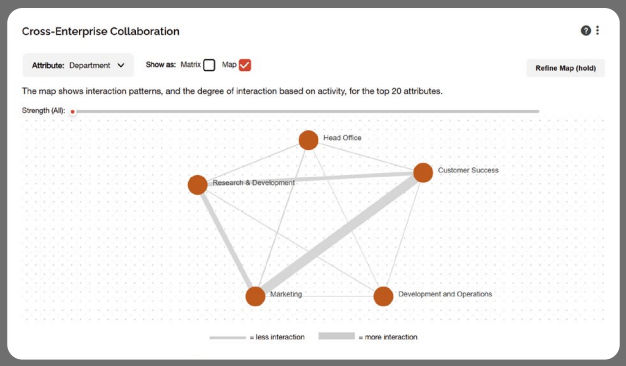
At tertiary educator **Box Hill Institute**, Viva Engage has become a space for connection and support. Employees can safely identify as members of the LGBTQIA+ community, share personal stories, and feel supported, making Viva Engage a psychologically safe space for all. This breaks down geographical and departmental barriers, fostering a sense of belonging.

With **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**, you can immediately see who is connecting with whom by using our **Cross-Enterprise Collaboration report** and **Personal Network Map**. These reports give you a visual graph or map to see which people, departments, business units etc are connecting across your organisation – and which are not connecting - as well as your own personal connections. For example, if you can see the Marketing department is not connecting with the Sales department during an important new advertising campaign, there could be a gap in communication which can be immediately identified, and action taken to resolve.

Demonstrate community and connection

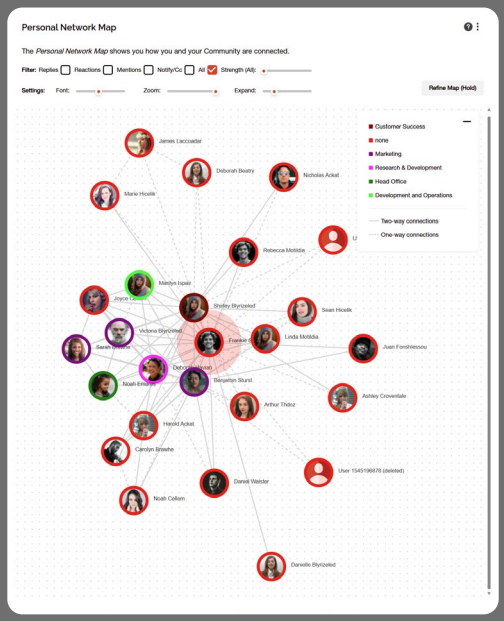
in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

Building community and connection has been the cornerstone of SWOOP Analytics for the past 10 years. In our Enterprise level dashboard in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**, under the Collaboration tab, you can find the **Cross-Enterprise Collaboration** report. Switch this to Map (as opposed to Matrix) and you'll see which departments most strongly connect with others as a network map.



SWOOP Analytics' Cross-Enterprise Collaboration report.

At the Personal dashboard level, under the Collaboration tab, you'll find your **Personal Network Map**, indicating your strongest individual connections and your **Collaboration Profile** report which highlights how you represent your department across the organisation, and how this compares with others in your department.



SWOOP Analytics' Personal Network Map.

SWOOP Analytics' Collaboration Profile report.

1.2 Facilitating open communication, knowledge sharing and innovation

One of the most powerful benefits of using Viva Engage is to provide a platform for open dialogue where employees can ask questions, share ideas, and provide feedback. Problems can be solved immediately, often cutting through bureaucracy and red tape to tap into answers. This results in measurable return on investment (ROI).

At The Home Depot there is a Measurement Services (HDMS) community where any associate working in a store can ask a question about things like the exact amount of flooring needed to cover a customer's kitchen, and receive a timely expert response, which is then immediately passed onto the customer. The result is a happier customer because they can order the correct amount of flooring, and a happier worker because they have a satisfied customer.

At global publishing company Wiley, an employee named Veronica posted on Viva Engage that she had a voicemail she needed to listen to from an editor. But the voicemail was in Korean and Veronica didn't speak Korean. She posted on Viva Engage asking if anyone could help. Another employee, in another office, saw the post and while she couldn't speak Korean either, she knew someone who could. The Korean speaker, Jerry, was tagged into the post and replied that he could help. Instead of spending time to find and pay for a translator, the entire problem was solved internally on Wiley's Viva Engage network, resulting in a quicker, free and more productive outcome.

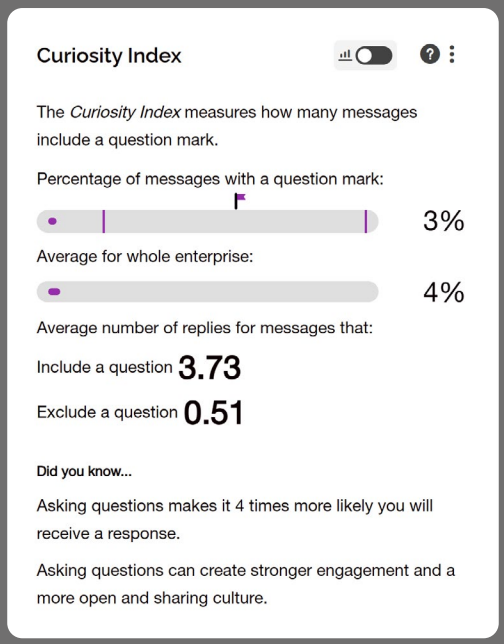
When ANZ launched an elaborate phishing simulation on unsuspecting employees, someone in the security team blew the cover by posting on Viva Engage and warning everyone of the scam. Some questioned why anyone would spoil the simulation by revealing the details on Viva Engage. On the surface, it may seem like a fair question. In fact, it is absolute best practice to share details of the scam in a way that gives thousands of employees an immediate warning. At ANZ, Viva Engage is one of the best ways to get information out to everyone, quickly, and provide a platform where every person has an equal voice to join in the conversation and share knowledge. The phishing simulation is an example of how employees use Viva Engage to help each other, to alert everyone to news quickly. Knowledge is power and sharing information about a potential cyber security threat makes for a safer workplace and a safer bank for customers.

You can measure the impact of asking questions and receiving responses by using SWOOP Analytics' Curiosity Index and Response Rate.

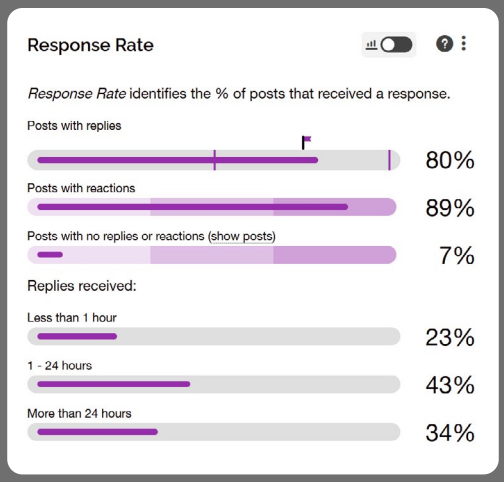
Indicators of knowledge sharing

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

Asking and answering questions is an indication of knowledge sharing. We have two reports on every level of **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** dashboards under the **Engagement** tab to help understand if people are actively engaged in asking questions, and how many posts are getting responses. These are the **Curiosity Index** report and the **Response Rate** report.

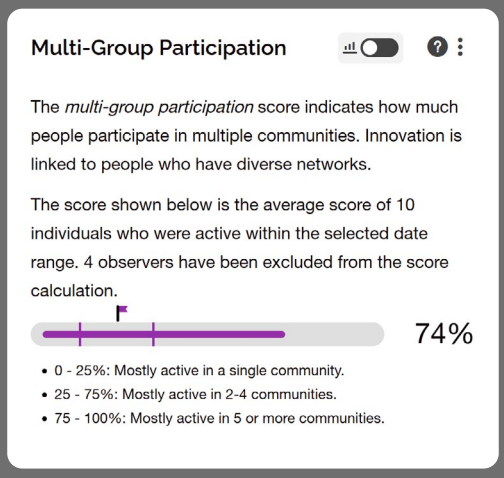


SWOOP Analytics' Curiosity Index report.



SWOOP Analytics' Response Rate report.

We can gauge how well people are contributing and getting information from different communities through our **Multi-Group Participation** report, found on all levels of **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** dashboards under the **Collaboration** tab. This report summarises how many different communities people are active in.



SWOOP Analytics' Multi-Group Participation report.

1.3 Leadership engagement

Leaders can use Viva Engage to communicate directly with employees across the entire enterprise. They can listen to their people, ask questions of their people, share vision and culture, and engage in meaningful conversations. Perhaps just as importantly, employees have a direct connection with their leaders using Viva Engage, helping them to feel seen and heard.

Take Australian health-insurer Medibank as an example. It used Viva Engage to get employees actively involved in developing Medibank's mission and vision statement when the CEO asked for ideas in a post.

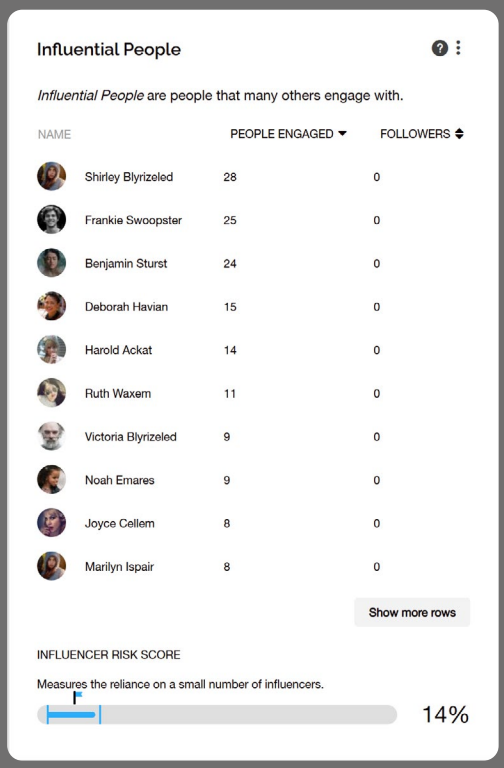
Westpac New Zealand's Chief Information Officer (CIO) Russell Jones was not featured among the top 100 influencers on the bank's Viva Engage network. A month later, he had shot to No.2 on the most Influential People list. Russell came from nowhere to take a top spot on the influencers list (of more than 6,400 employees) simply by posting on Viva Engage once a week, and taking a few minutes from his busy schedule to respond and react to other people's posts. He isn't on Viva Engage every day, but he does make an effort to post at least once a week with an update about what he's been doing, to recognise the great work of his team, to call out service anniversaries, or share some thoughts. Importantly, he also replies to comments, reacts or responds to other posts when he can – a true indication he is listening to employees - and tags colleagues into posts.

ANZ CEO Shayne Elliott, who heads up one of Australia's big four banks, actively interacts with employees and asks for input which builds trust and demonstrates transparency. Interestingly, while ANZ's then-Yammer journey started with the CEO at the helm, and was instrumental in connecting with employees during the COVID-19 pandemic, Shayne Elliott is now taking more of a backseat role because Viva Engage is part of the culture at the bank.

Key leadership engagement measures

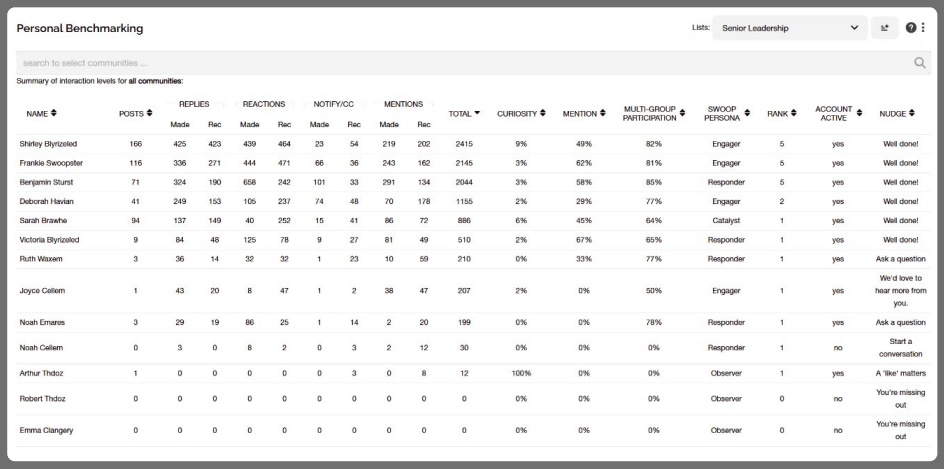
in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

If you're supporting leaders to engage and connect more with Viva Engage, there are useful reports in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** to help. The first is the **Influential People** report, found in all dashboards under the **Engagement** tab, except for the Personal dashboard. This report shows the number of people that have engaged (replied, reacted, commented or shared) with another person's post. You can see if a particular leader is in this list of influencers.



SWOOP Analytics' Influential People report.

The second report is the found in the **Personal** dashboard under the **Benchmarking** tab. The **Personal Benchmarking** report allows selected people to create a "league table" of leaders to be able to quickly compare activity and engagement levels.



Personal Benchmarking

Lists: Senior Leadership

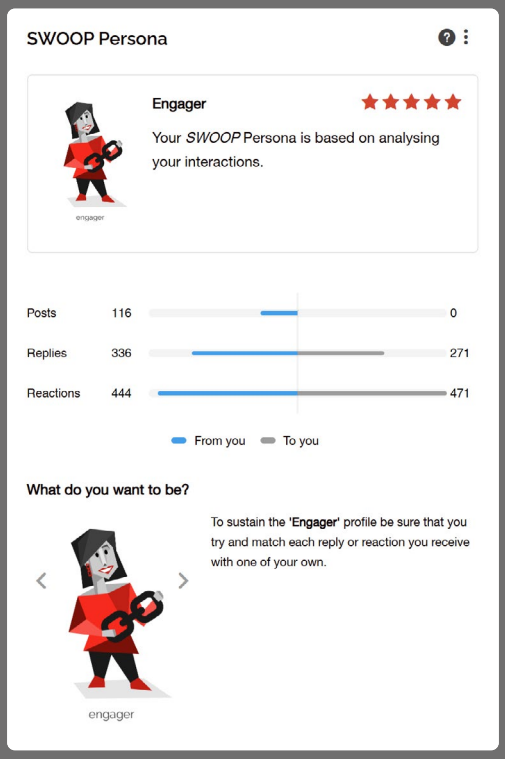
search to select communities ...

Summary of interaction levels for **all communities**:

NAME	POSTS	REPLIES		REACTIONS		NOTIFY/CC		MENTIONS		TOTAL	CURIOSITY	MENTION	MULTI-GROUP PARTICIPATION	SWOOP PERSONA	RANK	ACCOUNT ACTIVE	NUDGE
		Made	Rec	Made	Rec	Made	Rec	Made	Rec								
Shirley Blyrizeled	166	425	423	439	464	23	54	219	202	2415	9%	49%	82%	Engager	5	yes	Well done!
Frankie Swoopster	116	336	271	444	471	66	36	243	162	2145	3%	62%	81%	Engager	5	yes	Well done!
Benjamin Sturst	71	324	190	658	242	101	33	291	134	2044	3%	58%	85%	Responder	5	yes	Well done!
Deborah Havian	41	249	153	105	237	74	48	70	178	1155	2%	29%	77%	Engager	2	yes	Well done!
Sarah Brawhe	94	137	149	40	252	15	41	86	72	886	6%	45%	64%	Catalyst	1	yes	Well done!
Victoria Blyrizeled	9	84	48	125	78	9	27	81	49	510	2%	67%	65%	Responder	1	yes	Well done!
Ruth Waxem	3	36	14	32	32	1	23	10	59	210	0%	33%	77%	Responder	1	yes	Ask a question
Joyce Cellem	1	43	20	8	47	1	2	38	47	207	2%	0%	50%	Engager	1	yes	We'd love to hear more from you.
Noah Emares	3	29	19	86	25	1	14	2	20	199	0%	0%	78%	Responder	1	yes	Ask a question
Noah Cellem	0	3	0	8	2	0	3	2	12	30	0%	0%	0%	Responder	1	no	Start a conversation
Arthur Thdoz	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	8	12	100%	0%	0%	Observer	1	yes	A 'like' matters
Robert Thdoz	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	Observer	0	no	You're missing out
Emma Clangery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	Observer	0	no	You're missing out

SWOOP Analytics' Personal Benchmarking report.

Finally, leaders' activity on Viva Engage gives them a particular **SWOOP Persona** which can be found in the **Personal** dashboard under the **Engagement** tab. This persona is generated based on the level of posts, replies, comments and reactions they make and receive, with the **Engager** being the target persona.



SWOOP Analytics' Persona report.

1.4 Put an end to all staff emails and "Reply all" responses

Imagine the hours wasted, and the lost productivity, in scrolling through "Reply all" responses to all staff emails. With Viva Engage, the days of "all staff" emails are over. Instead of all staff emails, an announcement can be made in Viva Engage and an email notification will be sent to all employees. To view the announcement, people need to open Viva Engage. That means they can then see every reply and comment on the post, any updates, and they can join the conversation without sending a "Reply all" email. It allows for transparency in communication and a voice for all.

At Christian Aid, almost every employee reads Viva Engage because a decision was made to make it the primary communications tool. Leaders and staff are banned from sending all staff emails, and instead must communicate through announcements on Viva Engage.

If you want to reach every employee at global investment services provider IFM Investors, forget about sending an all staff email. Instead, post on Viva Engage. Once you've posted your message, the Internal Communications team will amplify your message by including a link to your Viva Engage post in a weekly newsletter, as part of a snapshot of conversations that are happening across the organisation. IFM Investors has a dedicated Internal Communications team that facilitates the Viva Engage network across the organisation. They "promote" posts from relevant Viva Engage communities by linking them to the All Company community, so people can quickly navigate to important conversations across the business. By limiting all-employee emails and instead encouraging people to post in Viva Engage, it reduces the "noise" across the organisation from unnecessary emails, and enables colleagues to comment, react and interact about topics.

Email is where knowledge goes to die. Take a moment to think of the knowledge, expertise, information, guidance and content that has been shared with you in emails over the years. Other than rifling through the history of those who were included in the email chain, where was this knowledge shared? How do others in the organisation access it? What about those new to the organisation? How do they get themselves up to speed on the knowledge in those emails that remains hidden in someone else's inbox? This was the concern for **RealFoundations** CEO Chris Shaida a decade ago. So began his search for a collaboration tool to share knowledge, where people could work together and accumulate knowledge that others could access. RealFoundations settled on Yammer back in 2011, now Viva Engage, and all knowledge is captured across the organisation.

SWOOP Analytics' analysis of M365 usage identified that employees spend **28% of their working week attending to emails, of which 62% were unnecessary to their work**. SWOOP Analytics for M365 measures the degree to which employees are Email Liberated by swapping email for more targeted and relevant channels like Viva Engage and Microsoft Teams. Our return on investment calculations showed an organisation of 50,000 employees could achieve time savings worth almost $200 million a year by employing email liberation practices.

Measuring the impact of posts

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

If you've used Viva Engage as an alternative to emails, **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** can help to measure the effectiveness of the communication. Firstly, you can check to see if the post is among the **Most Engaging Post** list, found in all dashboards under the Content tab. This report shows the level of activity from others on the post, including the engagement score to show how many people have replied, commented, reacted or shared the post as a percentage of those that have seen it. We also measure the **Reach** of the post as the number of people that have seen the post as a percentage of people in your organisation.

Most Engaging Posts

The *Most Engaging Posts* shows the posts that have had the most engagement in their conversations threads.
Private posts are excluded.

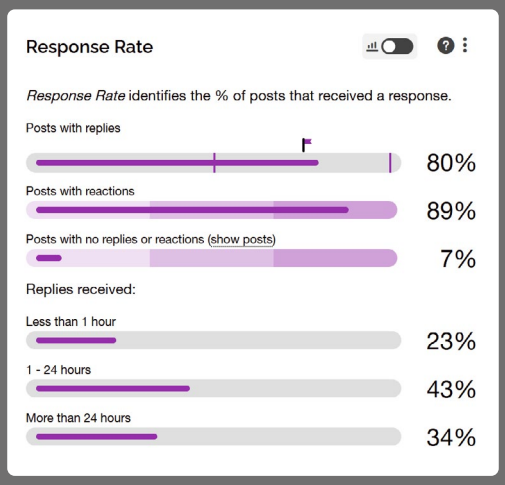
Sort: Replies + Reactions Filter By: All post types

		Replies	Reactions	Shares	People	Seen	Engagement	Reach
1	While undoubtedly some ShareSpace groups are dominated b...	39	37	0	7	20	35%	50%
2	Even if it's some heavily redacted memo, this report from the ...	26	34	0	8	17	47%	43%
3	The sharing stage leverages the methods of a visual communi...	17	39	0	13	20	65%	50%
4	The Plastic Free July Challenge The full impact of microplastic...	17	26	0	17	21	81%	53%
5	Reply' Response Rate Distribution Over Time Content Genera...	12	31	0	10	20	50%	50%
6	While a ShareSpace implementation can be developed using ...	17	24	0	10	13	77%	33%
7	The above three cultural archetypes are all very different from ...	15	24	0	10	21	48%	53%
8	The Inner Loop Outer Loop guidance system is an automated ...	11	26	0	13	20	65%	50%
9	At Australia's largest health insurer Healthinsure Private, a thir...	12	24	0	18	21	86%	53%
10	We introduce the 16 SWOOP measures aligned with the ZAD, ...	17	18	0	19	27	70%	68%

Show more rows

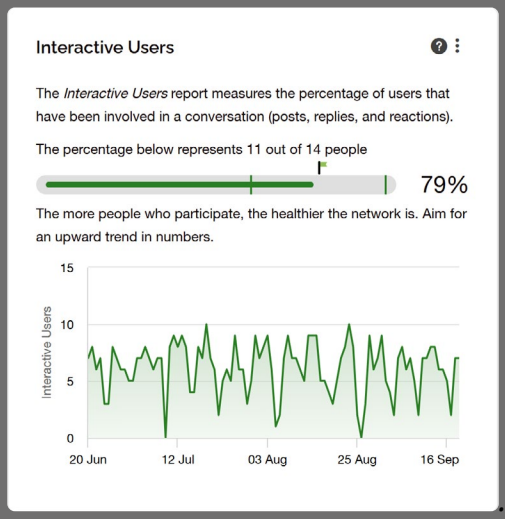
SWOOP Analytics' Most Engaging Post report.

We can also see the level of responses to activity through the **Response Rate** report in the **Enterprise** dashboard under the **Engagement** tab.



SWOOP Analytics' Response Rate report.

Finally, you can see the percentage of people in your organisation that have been involved in a conversation through posting, replying, commenting or reacting in the **Interactive Users** report on the **Activity** tab of the **Enterprise** dashboard.



SWOOP Analytics' Interactive Users report.

1.5 Leverage the investment of Microsoft 365

Viva Engage is integrated with Microsoft Teams and other Microsoft 365 applications, making it easy to access and use within existing workflows. You can access Viva Engage directly through Microsoft Teams, and notifications come via Outlook email for things like All Company announcements. These integrations help bridge the gap between enterprise-wide connections and day-to-day teamwork, making it easier for employees to participate in broader conversations without leaving their primary collaboration tool. And don't forget, if you're using M365, you're already paying for Viva Engage, so why not use it?

If you've been asked why you need Viva Engage when you're already using Microsoft Teams, RealFoundations founder **Chris Shaida has a rock-solid answer for you**. He says to think of Microsoft Teams and Viva Engage as two separate places. Not just different tools, but different places, each with its own rationale.

If you're questioning which tool to use when, we've tapped into expert knowledge to break it down for you **in this case study**. These are two great explanations.

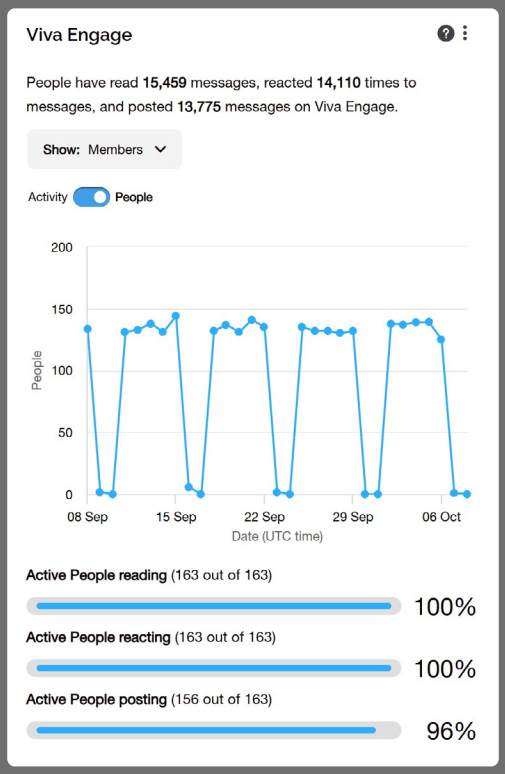
1. Microsoft Teams is for collaborating within your own team, when you know who you're working with and you're working together on live documents. Viva Engage is for open knowledge sharing. A place to ask questions and find answers, or access knowledge across the entire organisation, not just within your team.

2. Teams is where employees do their day-to-day work, with a defined group of people – their team. Viva Engage is where you ask questions to find answers and share knowledge. It's the company water cooler.

Measuring adoption and engagement

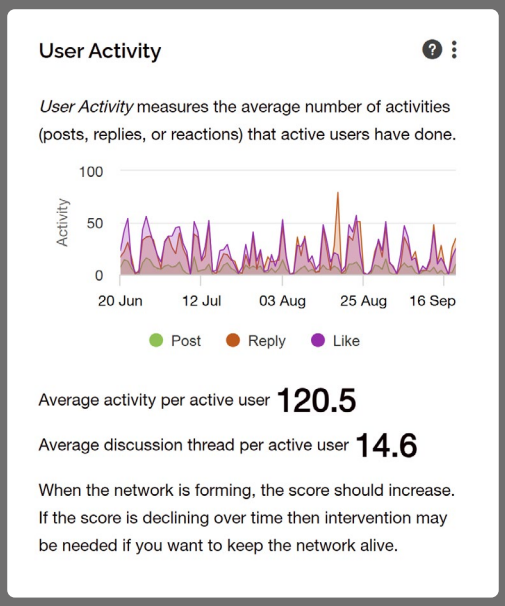
in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

To measure overall adoption, and the number of people in your organisation reading Viva Engage posts, head to **SWOOP Analytics for M365**. There, under the **Activity** tab of the **Enterprise** dashboard, you'll find the **Viva Engage activity** report which can highlight how many people are reading and contributing.



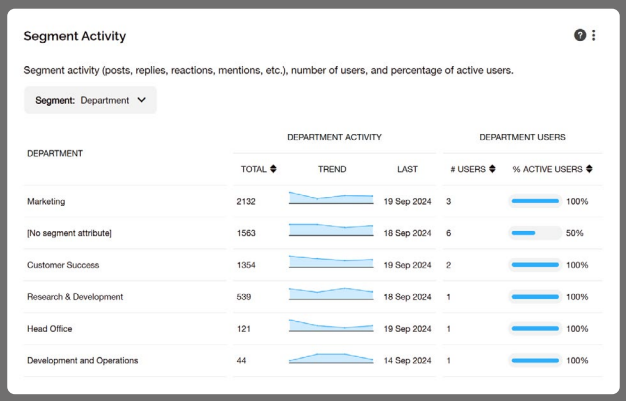
SWOOP Analytics for M365's Viva Engage activity report.

To understand more about how people are contributing, head to the **User Activity** report on the **Activity** tab of the **Enterprise** dashboard in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**. This report shows the breakdown of activity in terms of posts, replies and reactions. It also shows the average activity per user, allowing you to track adoption success of Viva Engage.



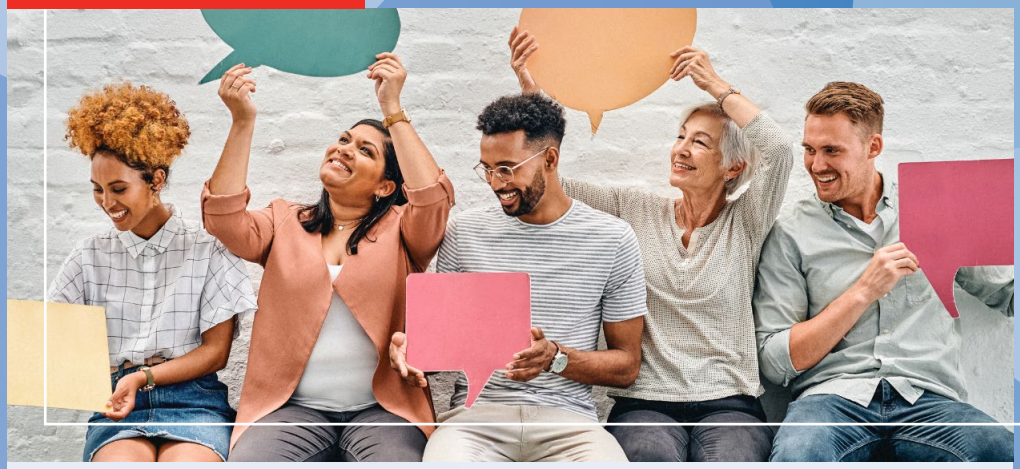
SWOOP Analytics' User Activity report.

Finally, you can see how well used Viva Engage is across the different areas of your organisation, such as departments, in the **Segment Activity** report, found under the **Activity** tab. This will help you to pinpoint if certain parts of your organisation are engaging with Viva Engage more than others.



SWOOP Analytics' Segment Activity report.

EXPERT ADVICE



The power of Viva Engage – a voice for all

The core business case for Viva Engage is that **it gives every employee a voice**.

This was the resounding consensus when we asked the best in the business to tell us what they believed to be the business value of Viva Engage.

The platform also breaks down hierarchical organisational structures, destroys business silos and gives employees direct access to connect with their leaders. SWOOP Analytics contacted about 40 people we believe to be the world's experts in managing and facilitating Viva Engage networks as part of the research into our 2024/25 Viva Engage Benchmarking Report.[1] We asked a series of questions, starting with: ***In your experience, what's the core business value Viva Engage brings to your organisation? What was the business case?***

Almost everyone replied that they launched Viva Engage (previously Yammer) because they wanted their employees to have a voice, and in doing so, feel connected with their colleagues.

Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager at Westpac NZ, sums it up nicely.

> "We were clear from the start that we wanted to build a local community where every employee at the bank had a voice, everyone could be heard, and traditional organisational and hierarchical divides no longer existed," she said.

Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager, Westpac NZ

1 *The experts contacted by SWOOP Analytics for this research are people who have been top performers in our previous benchmarking studies and recipients of a SWOOP Analytics Award for Outstanding Collaborative Performance or nominated by peers for the annual SWOOP Analytics Community Manager Award.*

One of the benefits of giving employees a platform where their voice is heard is the direct link to employee engagement, and the trust that can be built on Viva Engage between leaders and their employees.

Sally Jackson, Senior Manager, Content and Channels, National Grid

> "Viva Engage is all about giving colleagues a voice and employee engagement research tells us that employee voice is a key factor in employee engagement," said **Sally Jackson**, Senior Manager, Content and Channels, at **National Grid**.
>
> "And, as we all know, organisations with engaged employees perform better, and (there is) a strong correlation between employee experience and customer experience."

Sally says Viva Engage is also an open collaboration platform where leaders have the opportunity to communicate (both ways) with teams, and be authentic in their communication style.

Another important point Sally makes is the need to adapt workplace communications to younger generations who have grown up in the digital era, a task Viva Engage achieves.

Evita Puccio, Senior Communications Manager, Internal Engagement, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank

Evita Puccio, Senior Communications Manager, Internal Engagement, at **Bendigo and Adelaide Bank**, said Viva Engage is used across the bank to enrich the employee experience. She also talks about the importance of using authentic voices.

> "Through Viva Engage, we connect and engage our people around key strategic initiatives and conversations," she said.
>
> "Authentic voices set the tone and tell our stories with impact."

Andrew Clarke, Manager, Employee Social Media Communications at **Air Canada**, said the core business value Viva Engage brings to Air Canada is its ability to foster real-time collaboration, information, and knowledge sharing among its 40,000 employees, and connect colleagues around the globe.

Air Canada's workforce is primarily mobile, either reporting to work at their airport or in the sky.

> "The Viva Engage app enables them to interact with each other and ask questions from wherever they are in the airline's vast network, including in the air using onboard Wi-Fi," Andrew said.
>
> "For our employees, getting quick answers from tagged subject matter experts is a crucial platform attribute.
>
> "Employee engagement is also crucial for mobile workers. It allows employees to learn and engage directly with other employees and leaders around the company on essential company initiatives related to their branch."

Andrew Clarke, Manager, Employee Social Media Communications, Air Canada

Sean Zintl, Global Intranet & Channels Manager at **Sage**, said before Yammer was launched in 2020, they had consistently heard from colleagues that top-down communications were performing well, but there was no platform to connect directly with one another around business objectives and topics of common interest. You could comment on intranet news articles but the feedback from colleagues was that it felt restrictive.

> "Our stated objective at the time was to give colleagues a platform – a voice – where they could launch and shape the conversations around the topics that mattered and resonated with them," Sean said.
>
> "We wanted colleagues to feel part of a larger Sage family and to know what was going on across the business at a worldwide, regional, and local level."

Sean Zintl, Global Intranet & Channels Manager, Sage

Rajinder Pryor, Head of Business Partnering at **Network Rail** in the UK, says Viva Engage allows colleagues to connect despite their role (whether it be frontline or office-based), their shift work and their dispersed geography.

> "Viva Engage is a channel which everyone can access at their leisure. Pull rather than push," she said.
>
> "Colleagues can engage with colleagues in groups within their own business areas or engage with others they would not usually get the opportunity to engage with."

Rajinder Pryor, Head of Business Partnering, Network Rail

Cecile Kozinski, Global Brand and Communications, Channel Owner – SPICE+ and Viva Engage at Schneider Electric, said after carefully analysing all the other digital channels, the decision was made to launch Viva Engage back in 2018 with the impetus to improve employee engagement.

> "Within Schneider Electric, Viva Engage is one of the most important digital channels and the only enterprise social networking channel which focuses on connecting employees, enabling them to have dialogues, fostering a sense of community, and providing tools for collaboration and communication," she said.

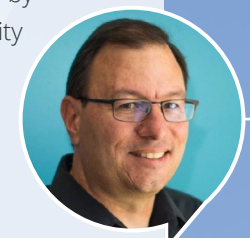
Cecile Kozinski, Global Brand and Communications, Channel Owner – SPICE+ and Viva Engage, Schneider Electric

Schneider Electric uses Viva Engage to leverage internal campaigns and to create a buzz around campaigns using strategically curated topics, hashtags and engaging leaders to maximise the reach (seen) and engagement (reactions and comments).

Kevin Crossman, IT Manager and Content Collaboration Service Owner at Juniper Networks, and Microsoft MVP, says the core value of Viva Engage is the visibility and discovery of messages and activities. He says the feed and ability for users to naturally discover activities happening around the company is valuable for inclusion and awareness.

Kevin Crossman, IT Manager and Content Collaboration Service Owner, Juniper Networks

Another benefit is reducing the number of emails across the organisation by using Viva Engage for announcements, leadership updates, and community building.



> "Deeper connections are being made using this platform," Kevin said.

For the Queensland state government Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), Yammer was launched in 2014 with the primary goal of fostering collaboration, driving innovation, and facilitating knowledge sharing across the department.

Leonie Challacombe, Principal Advisor (Digital Culture), Department of Transport and Main Roads

However, as TMR's work environment changed, so too did Yammer, now Viva Engage.

> "It is still the best way for employees to discover and share knowledge across TMR, but its core business value now lies in enhancing employee engagement and cultivating a connected and inclusive culture across our diverse organisation, in a hybrid and digitally enabled working environment," said Leonie Challacombe, Principal Advisor (Digital Culture) at TMR.

> "Viva Engage connects employees to TMR's purpose, empowering everyone to contribute and learn from each other, regardless of their role or location.
>
> "It helps break down organisational silos and brings people together across the department – from frontline workers to corporate employees – allowing us to deliver on our Digital Strategic Plan objectives by developing our digital culture and unleashing the potential of our people, enabling them to navigate and thrive in a digital and data driven world to deliver better outcomes for Queenslanders."

Microsoft Viva Engage Adoption and Training Consultant **Bernie Murtagh** also highlights the financial business case for adopting Viva Engage. As it's already included in the Microsoft 365 licence, most organisations are paying for it whether they use it or not, making it a cost-effective solution to modernise internal communication.

Bernie says there's so much more to Viva Engage than cost savings.

Bernie Murtagh, Microsoft Viva Engage Adoption and Training Consultant

> "The core business value of Viva Engage lies in its ability to create a more connected, engaged, and collaborative workforce," she said.
>
> "By offering a platform for open communication at scale, Viva Engage significantly enhances knowledge sharing, innovation, and employee engagement across the organisation.
>
> "Beyond improving communication, Viva Engage helps break down silos, allowing employees to look beyond their immediate Teams channels and engage with the broader organisation. It offers a community lens through which everyone can participate in and observe the wider business activities, fostering a sense of belonging."

Bernie points out another key business case for Viva Engage - the enhanced connection between leaders and employees.

> "In an era where visibility and accessibility are key, Viva Engage enables leaders to 'show up' and actively listen, no matter where they are working," she said.
>
> "It humanises leadership, making leaders more accessible and engaged with the wider business."

Stephen Adam, Senior Communications Advisor, Digital Experience and Solutions at NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, brings with him the experience of a successful migration to Viva Engage from Workplace from Meta. When the state government department migrated to Viva Engage from Workplace, Viva Engage was positioned as the place for staff to connect, collaborate and share, with a strong focus on two-way communication and engagement.

Stephen Adam, Senior Communications Advisor, NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

> "This position helped us build on the success we saw when using Workplace, where staff could engage directly with their leaders, connect and collaborate with colleagues around shared interests and projects, and share their stories with one another," Stephen said.

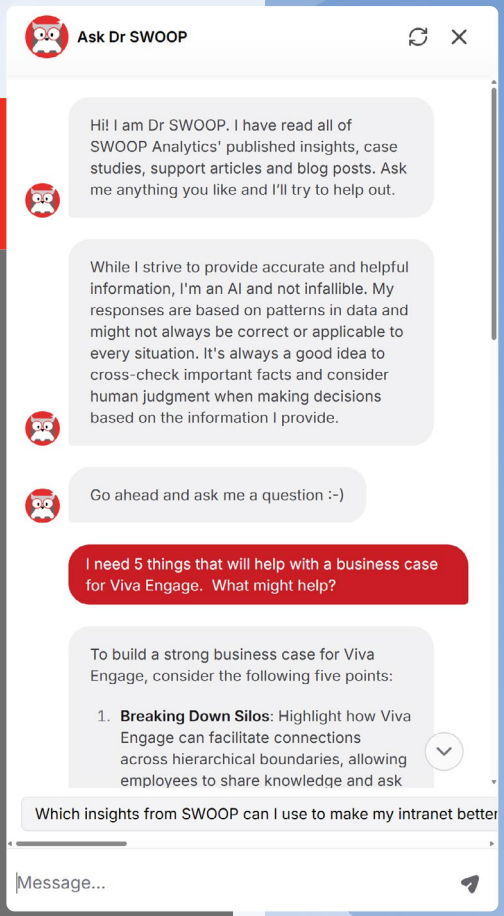
Importantly, Stephen says success has nothing to do with the actual platform – Viva Engage or Workplace – but from people building direct connections with their leaders, and each other, and sharing stories and updates with the authentic person at the heart of the conversation.

Expert advice at your finger tips with Dr SWOOP

This report can't cover every aspect of building a business case for Viva Engage, so if you want further help and you're a SWOOP customer, why not ask **Dr SWOOP**?

Dr SWOOP is our Generative AI bot that has been specifically trained on SWOOP's benchmarking research, case studies, and knowledge base. This makes Dr SWOOP a quick way to ask about any element of building a business case for Viva Engage and many other aspects of successfully using the tools in your digital workplace.

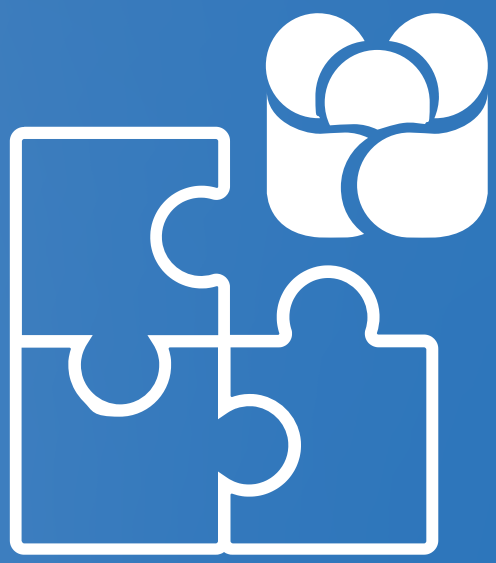
Find Dr SWOOP on your SWOOP Analytics dashboard for Viva Engage, SharePoint intranet, Microsoft 365, Microsoft Teams or Workplace from Meta by clicking on the Dr SWOOP owl icon.



Right: SWOOP Analytics' Dr SWOOP chat window.

SECTION 2

The role of Viva Engage in your internal communications strategy



Chances are, Viva Engage is one of multiple communication channels you're working with. So what makes Viva Engage unique?

The resounding consensus we received when we asked some of the world's top Viva Engage managers and facilitators is that Viva Engage provides a two-way communication channel. It can just as often be bottom-up communication, as opposed to top-down, and every employee has an equal voice to join the conversation.

In the M365 ecosystem, Viva Engage is vying with Microsoft Teams, SharePoint intranet and Outlook email as a communication tool. Most organisations will be using all these platforms in some form, so where does Viva Engage fit and how does it complement other channels?

When evaluating a communication channel, internal communications professionals will look at how to reach the right audience, whether that be all employees, or a specific identified subset. Our **recent study into the use of the overall M365 usage patterns** identified the following average use for each channel:

Table 1 - Digital communication channel usage in an internal communications context.

Digital Channel	Employee usage	Primary Communication Mode
Viva Engage	78.3%	Two-Way
Outlook (email)	85%	One-Way
SharePoint Online intranet	87%	One-Way
Microsoft Teams (townhalls/meetings)	76.9%	Mostly one-way
Microsoft Teams Channels	23.8	Two-Way

Based on this data, **Viva Engage stands out as the most viable enterprise-wide two-way digital communications channel,** and plays a critical role in an overall digital communications strategy.

Sally Jackson, Senior Manager, Content and Channels, at **National Grid** summarises where Viva Engage fits into the multinational energy company's communication channels:

> "Viva Engage creates a space for user-generated and more informal content for our colleagues, away from more formal channels like our intranet and company emails, allowing colleagues to have a voice too. Secondly, it gives leaders an opportunity to interact with colleagues and listen. It doesn't replace face-to-face interactions and townhalls, but it is part of the mix and another way to reach audiences quickly who may be geographically dispersed."

Our analysis validates that Viva Engage is being used for exactly these purposes. While more than **78% of employees are reading posts on Viva Engage, an average of 29% are also participating actively by posting, commenting, replying or reacting to messages**.

We also analysed the most popular posts on Viva Engage from **SWOOP Analytics' Most Engaging Posts report** and found an average 30% of those who can access Viva Engage read these posts. This is a remarkable achievement when you consider that for most organisations Viva Engage is still considered a voluntary communications channel.

Measuring Reach

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

The **Most Engaging Post** report, found in all **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** dashboards under the **Content** tab, shows the **Reach** of the post as the number of people that have seen the post as a percentage of people in your organisation. The report highlights the top 10 posts that have the most engagement of people who have reacted and responded to the post. The report can be set to rank the posts by the number of people that have **Seen** them, or by **Reach**.

Most Engaging Posts

The *Most Engaging Posts* shows the posts that have had the most engagement in their conversations threads.
Private posts are excluded.

Sort: Replies + Reactions Filter By: All post types

		Replies	Reactions	Shares	People	Seen	Engagement	Reach
1	While undoubtedly some ShareSpace groups are dominated b...	39	37	0	7	20	35%	50%
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10	We introduce the 16 SWOOP measures aligned with the ZAD, ...	17	18	0	19	27	70%	68%

Show more rows

SWOOP Analytics' Most Engaging Post report.

KEY FINDING

People are reading and engaging on Viva Engage. In fact, the **top 10 posts on Viva Engage get, on average, 30% of all registered users reading them**, making it an essential part of the internal communications channels mix.

Posts on Viva Engage are also overwhelmingly posted in public communities. They make up 80% of all posts. 20% of messages are posted in private communities and this demonstrates just how different it is to Microsoft Teams where most messages are posted in private teams**. Viva Engage is truly being used as an open communication channel for everyone.**

KEY FINDING

Our 2024/25 benchmarking data found **most Viva Engage conversations are held in public** (80% public and 20% private) and **most conversations are positive**.

63% of all sentences are somewhat or very positive compared with **just 14% being somewhat or very negative**. 23% is neutral. Note that "negative" sentiment does not necessarily mean people are complaining but they could be, for instance, using Viva Engage for internal support to ask about why something doesn't work.

Given the importance of the conversational aspect of Viva Engage, it is comforting to know that, on average, **49% of all messages posted receive a reply. For every one post there is an average of 2.1 replies**. Viva Engage is indeed a place for people to engage in conversation.

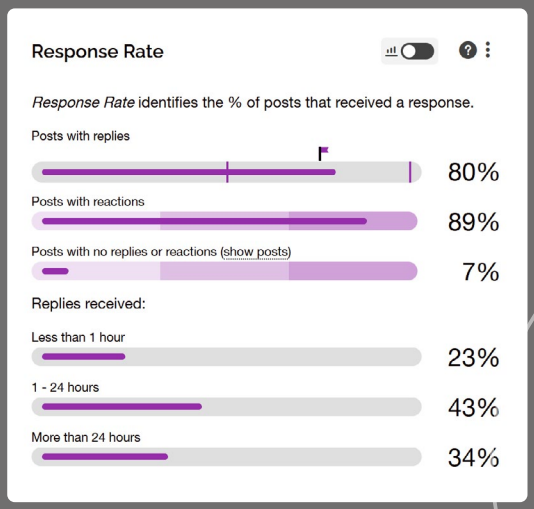
KEY FINDING

55% of replies to Viva Engage posts come within the first 24 hours. While Viva Engage responses may be slower than Microsoft Teams chat, 18% of replies still come within an hour. The remaining 45% come after 24 hours.

Finding the Response Rate

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

You can see the level of responses to activity through the **Response Rate** report in the **Enterprise** dashboard under the **Engagement** tab.



SWOOP Analytics' Response Rate report.

The data points provided above are averages, and further below we outline recommended targets you can use for your organisation's use of Viva Engage. These targets are set at the top 20% of what the best performing organisations have achieved, and will therefore be more ambitious than the average.

EXPERT ADVICE

Viva Engage - Providing a digital channel for two-way conversation

The key differentiator between Viva Engage and other internal communications channels is that **Viva Engage allows for two-way conversations**. Employees can provide feedback, ask questions, share their opinions, connect with leaders, and engage in meaningful conversations in an informal way.

It's also a platform to receive immediate information from subject matter experts in times of emergencies or crisis, a place where people can ask and immediately receive answers, and where company news can be amplified – with the ability for people to ask questions and engage in conversation.

SWOOP Analytics contacted about 40 people we believe to be among the world's experts in managing and facilitating Viva Engage networks as part of the research into our 2024/25 Viva Engage Benchmarking Report.[1] One question we asked our experts was: ***What is the role of Viva Engage in your digital channels strategy?***

The resounding answer was that **Viva Engage facilitates two-way conversation, which helps break down organisational hierarchies and silos, and builds connection across different departments**.

For Leonie Challacombe, Principal Advisor (Digital Culture) at Queensland state government Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), Viva Engage is not just a communication channel but a key part of the digital workplace. She said Viva Engage enables people to connect, collaborate and learn from colleagues while building digital skills and capabilities in a hybrid working environment.

1 *The experts contacted by SWOOP Analytics for this research are people who have been top performers in our previous benchmarking studies and recipients of a SWOOP Analytics Award for Outstanding Collaborative Performance or nominated by peers for the annual SWOOP Analytics Community Manager Award.*

> "Unlike other channels, Viva Engage allows us to have two-way conversations with our employees, where they can provide feedback, ask questions, and share their opinions," Leonie said.
>
> "This makes our communication more open, inclusive, and engaging, and helps us understand the needs and expectations of our workforce."

Leonie Challacombe, Principal Advisor (Digital Culture), Department of Transport and Main Roads

TMR uses Viva Engage to create Communities of Practice, where employees can share best practices, ask questions, and learn from each other. It is also a platform to recognise and celebrate the achievements and milestones of employees, creating a culture of recognition and appreciation.

Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager at Westpac New Zealand, said a key part of the bank's channel strategy has always been to provide places for everyone to participate, and Viva Engage fits the bill.

Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager, Westpac NZ

> "It's always been important that our employees can provide feedback, can feel connected with others, can actively share or engage with material, can ask questions, and can stop and have fun, and we know this makes for a healthier, happier and more productive workplace," Fiona said.

Westpac New Zealand always intended Viva Engage to be a place to build a local community where every employee at the bank has a voice, everyone can be heard, and traditional organisational and hierarchical divides no longer exist.

> "We've achieved that, and over time, it's become our primary channel for communication, in many instances replacing email, to enable more connection, and feedback, noting that there have been times when it's been our only channel to communicate with our employees at times of emergency, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, mass shootings and the COVID-19 pandemic," Fiona said.

She said the bank is purposeful with how it uses Viva Engage, and when.

> "Whilst we still have other communication channels including email, and intranet, there's been a deliberate move away from those, and of pushing news and information, to using Viva Engage to create and crowdsource news and information and campaigns that engage people," she said.

> "Using it at the right time and in the right way though, for campaigns and initiatives, is key to its success. For example, when we need our people to share their knowledge, we would lead with Viva Engage, versus a campaign that's more informational and requires more static channels."

Microsoft Viva Engage Adoption and Training Consultant **Bernie Murtagh** says Viva Engage is at the core of a modern digital channels strategy.

Bernie Murtagh, Microsoft Viva Engage Adoption and Training Consultant

> "It serves as the central hub where employees can engage in meaningful conversations, share insights, and collaborate on new ideas at scale," she said.
>
> "Viva Engage complements other digital tools by providing a platform specifically designed for social interaction, bridging the gap between formal communication and the need for a more personal, engaging workspace. It not only maintains but actively nurtures organisational culture through real-time interactions and visible leadership engagement."

Bernie says the "secret sauce" of Viva Engage is its commitment to two-way, transparent communication, setting it apart from more traditional broadcast channels like newsletters, live events, email, and SharePoint sites.

> "In today's ever-changing work environment, transparency and open dialogue are increasingly valued, and Viva Engage delivers both effectively," she said.

Jorn Nurkka, Senior Communication Advisor, Danfoss

For **Jorn Nurkka**, Senior Communication Advisor at **Danfoss**, Viva Engage is an integrated and important channel in the engineering giant's internal communication strategy. It is primarily used to share local news and updates.

> "This is where employees and managers can share updates, get help and find useful information that makes their work life easier," he said.
>
> "Viva Engage is also the place where we share all important information to the organisation by using the Announcement possibility, and thereby trigger a notification in Teams. This has proved to be a very effective way of reaching many employees fast."

Amplifying messaging through Viva Engage

Kevin Crossman, IT Manager and Content Collaboration Service Owner at Juniper Networks, said while urgent messages are still sent via email, Viva Engage is used as a secondary, or reminder, channel for some messages from corporate communications.

> "In IT we post messages in Viva Engage in addition to email for awareness, and also to allow for questions and follow-up," he said.
>
> "Minor announcements are posted exclusively to Viva Engage."

Kevin Crossman, IT Manager and Content Collaboration Service Owner, Juniper Networks

Evita Puccio, Senior Communications Manager, Internal Engagement, at Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, says the key principles for its channel strategy is to keep communication simple, foster conversation, be targeted and relevant, accessible and inclusive, and encourage authentic storytelling.

> "Viva Engage is a core component of our channel mix that upholds each of these principles," Evita said.
>
> "We coach and empower our leaders and teams to use Viva Engage to tell their own stories and uplift their communication capabilities."

Evita Puccio, Senior Communications Manager, Internal Engagement, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank

She said the way her colleagues consume news and information is evolving, and Viva Engage helps the internal communications team amplify key campaigns and priority messaging using social media tools and mindset, with things like short, catchy posts, gifs and infographics.

Leonie from TMR also spoke about using Viva Engage to amplify messaging from other channels. Part of TMR's digital channels strategy involves tailoring messages to different audiences by using topics, hashtags, and communities.

> "We also use Viva Engage to amplify and reinforce messages from other channels, such as email newsletters and the intranet," she said.

At Air Canada, Viva Engage is a pivotal part of its omnichannel communication strategy.

> "It ensures all employees can access company news and information anytime, anywhere, according to their preferences," says Andrew Clarke, Manager, Employee Social Media Communications at Air Canada.
>
> "While participation in Viva Engage is voluntary, the platform is available to everyone, providing opportunities for making connections, collaborating, and engaging with colleagues across the organisation."

Andrew Clarke, Manager, Employee Social Media Communications, Air Canada

As well as amplifying messages, Sean Zintl, Global Intranet & Channels Manager at Sage, says Viva Engage has become a key channel for in-the-moment updates, targeted at larger audiences. Importantly, using Viva Engage to communicate means the subject matter experts can immediately be brought into conversations, skipping the need for the internal comms team to search for answers to questions.

> "It means our wide and varied network of subject matter experts can talk directly to the teams and colleagues that support our business objectives, as post information about topics that other colleagues can more easily discover, react to and comment on," Sean said.
>
> "And giving these content creators direct access to a publishing platform means the internal communications team no longer has to support a myriad of requests from a variety of stakeholders, and can focus on priority objectives to support our strategic aims."

Sean Zintl, Global Intranet & Channels Manager, Sage

At Schneider Electric, Viva Engage is used for employees to collaborate, for cross-pollination of ideas, best practices, and skills, and for the employee communications team to amplify content, said Cecile Kozinski, Global Brand and Communications, Channel Owner – SPICE+ and Viva Engage.

Schneider Electric's employee communications team publishes news articles and videos on the intranet, and then uses a vanity account to post an Announcement on Viva Engage with a link to the intranet page.

> "This amplification has proved to increase the impact of our communications and the engagement of our employees," Cecile said.

Cecile Kozinski, Global Brand and Communications, Channel Owner – SPICE+ and Viva Engage, Schneider Electric

Sally Jackson, Senior Manager, Content and Channels, at National Grid said there were three main functions of Viva Engage at the energy group – giving colleagues a voice, allowing leaders to listen to employees and connect, and for cross-department collaboration.

> "Viva Engage creates a space for user-generated and more informal content for our colleagues, away from more formal channels like our intranet and company emails, allowing colleagues to have a voice too," Sally said.
>
> "Secondly, it gives leaders an opportunity to interact with colleagues and listen. It doesn't replace face-to-face interactions and townhalls, but it is part of the mix and another way to reach audiences quickly who may be geographically dispersed.

Sally Jackson, Senior Manager, Content and Channels, National Grid

"Thirdly, it allows for collaboration outside of departments and project teams. This and the second point have become even more important post-COVID for our desk-based workers who often work in hybrid working environments and see each other in person less."

What tool when?

Sean Zintl from Sage said there still remains some confusion amongst colleagues about when to use Viva Engage and when to use Microsoft Teams.

> "Our general rule of thumb is – if you know who you're talking to directly – use Teams," he said.
>
> "If your audience is wider or more opaque, use Viva Engage. It's still not always clear cut, but as colleagues engage with one another on various channels, they quickly get a sense of where best to go.
>
> "Overall, Viva Engage occupies a central position in our channel strategy as it enables broader and faster collaboration across teams and functions."

Benchmark goals

The goals outlined below are based on the performance of the top 20% of the organisations in this benchmarking study, combined with a decade of previous benchmarks. The goals are therefore not arbitrary numbers, but ones we feel are achievable, albeit ambitious for many.

As you incorporate Viva Engage into your overall digital communication channels strategy we recommend the following enterprise usage levels.

Reach (readership)

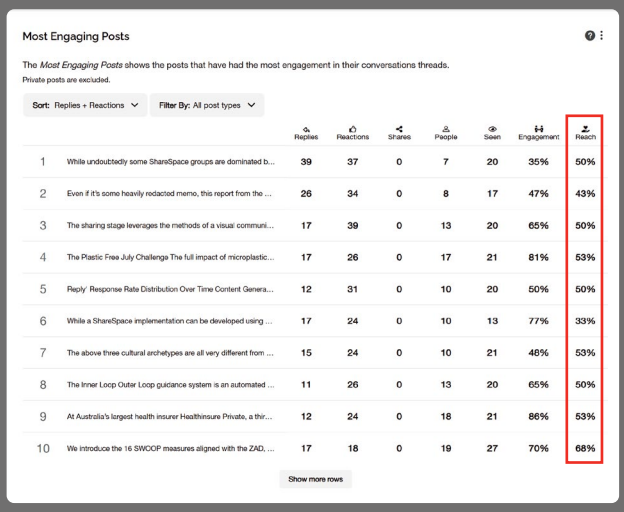
A key insight into the value of Viva Engage is the size of the audience. **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** includes a metric called **Reach**, which is the percentage of people using Viva Engage who have seen the post. We benchmarked the top 10 **Most Engaging Posts** across all organisations in this year's study and looked at the Reach achieved for these top 10 Most Engaging Posts. The best performer had a Reach of 71.7%, while the average Reach was 29.6%.

Aim for 47% Reach across your enterprise.

Average Reach: 29.6%
Best Reach: 71.7%
Goal (top 20%): 47%

Measuring Reach
in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

The **Most Engaging Post** list, found in all **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** dashboards under the **Content** tab, shows the **Reach** of the post as the number of people that have seen the post as a percentage of people in your organisation. To calculate the average Reach for your top 10 posts, use the three dots at the top right of the report to export the data to Excel, and then average the Reach column.



Most Engaging Posts

The *Most Engaging Posts* shows the posts that have had the most engagement in their conversations threads.
Private posts are excluded.

Sort: Replies + Reactions | Filter By: All post types

		Replies	Reactions	Shares	People	Seen	Engagement	Reach
1	While undoubtedly some ShareSpace groups are dominated b...	39	37	0	7	20	35%	50%
2	Even if it's some heavily redacted memo, this report from the ...	26	34	0	8	17	47%	43%
3	The sharing stage leverages the methods of a visual communi...	17	39	0	13	20	65%	50%
4	The Plastic Free July Challenge The full impact of microplastic...	17	26	0	17	21	81%	53%
5	Reply' Response Rate Distribution Over Time Content Genera...	12	31	0	10	20	50%	50%
6	While a ShareSpace implementation can be developed using ...	17	24	0	10	13	77%	33%
7	The above three cultural archetypes are all very different from ...	15	24	0	10	21	46%	53%
8	The Inner Loop Outer Loop guidance system is an automated ...	11	26	0	13	20	65%	50%
9	At Australia's largest health insurer Healthinsure Private, a thir...	12	24	0	18	21	86%	53%
10	We introduce the 16 SWOOP measures aligned with the ZAD, ...	17	18	0	19	27	70%	68%

Show more rows

SWOOP Analytics' Most Engaging Post report.

Active users

Our analysis found the overall average readership of Viva Engage at 78.3% of all employees, but how many of these people are actively participating, posting, replying or reacting? At SWOOP Analytics, we call this measure **Interactive Users**.

The best performing organisation had an Interactive User result of an impressive 87%, but the average across all 70 organisations was 28.7%.

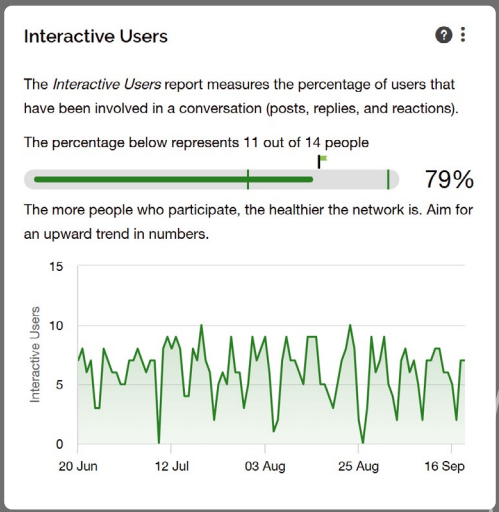
Aim for 37% Interactive Users across your enterprise.

Average Interactive: 28.7%
Best: 87%
Goal (top 20%): 37%

Measuring Interactive Users

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

You can see the percentage of people in your organisation that have been involved in a conversation through posting, replying, commenting or reacting in the **Interactive Users** report on the **Activity** tab of the **Enterprise** dashboard.



SWOOP Analytics' Interactive Users report.

This result was a 1% improvement from our 2023/24 analysis for the average, but short of 30%+ results achieved in 2020 and 2021. Perhaps this downward trend is attributable to the larger average size of our benchmarking participants, now being more than 40,000 employees.

The almost 50 percentage-point gap between passive users (78.3% reading) and active users (28.7%) is more notable. Converting a good proportion of passive users to active participants would go a long way toward lifting employee engagement.

User activity

We measure the activity levels of interactive users in a metric called User Activity, which measures the activity of each active user of Viva Engage. An "activity" is a post, reply, comment, share or reaction.

The best performing organisation had a User Activity measure of an impressive 375.9 but the average across all 70 organisations was 25.6.

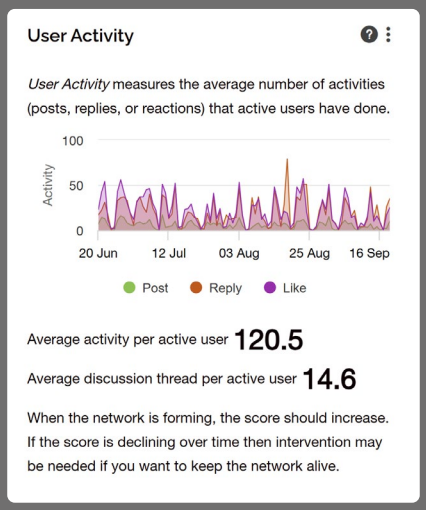
Aim for an average activity per user of 26.3 across your enterprise.

Average Activity/User: 25.6
Best: 375.9
Goal (top 20%): 26.3

Measuring User Activity

with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

To understand how people are contributing, head to the **User Activity** report on the **Activity** tab of the **Enterprise** dashboard in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**. It shows the average activity per user directly below the activity graph.



This is another measure that has increased by five points compared with last year's benchmarking analysis, but remains lower than the 2020 and 2021 levels during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the average was around 30 activities per user.

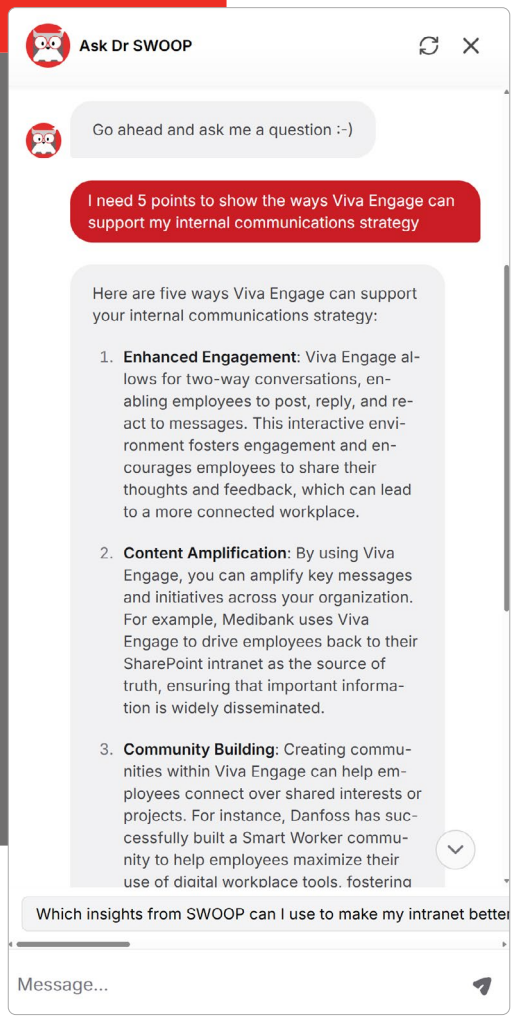
Read more about strategies for getting more people active on Viva Engage in our chapter on How to get your people engaged and acing Viva Engage.

Expert advice at your finger tips with Dr SWOOP

This report can't cover every aspect of how Viva Engage fits into your communication strategy, so if you want further help and you're a SWOOP Analytics customer, why not ask **Dr SWOOP**?

Dr SWOOP is our Generative AI bot that has been specifically trained on SWOOP's benchmarking research, case studies, and knowledge base. This makes Dr SWOOP a quick way to ask about any element of building a business case for Viva Engage and many other aspects of successfully using the tools in your digital workplace.

Find Dr SWOOP on your SWOOP Analytics dashboard for Viva Engage, SharePoint intranet, Microsoft 365, Microsoft Teams or Workplace from Meta by clicking on the Dr SWOOP owl icon.



Right: SWOOP Analytics' Dr SWOOP chat window.

The top performing enterprises in SWOOP Analytics' 2024/25 Viva Engage Benchmarking study

As part of SWOOP Analytics' annual benchmarking of Viva Engage, we rank every organisation involved in our study based on the performance of its **entire** enterprise network. This analysis takes into account every Viva Engage community across the network – the high performers and the low performing communities.

For example, an organisation with some incredibly high performing communities could be dragged down in our overall enterprise rankings if there is poor governance in place and inactive communities are being included in that organisation's analysis.

In the past, our practice has been to divide our benchmarking participants into small (100 – 1,500 interactive users), medium (1,500 – 8,000 interactive users) and large (more than 8,000 interactive users) for each region – the Americas; Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA); and Asia-Pacific (APAC), based on the number of interactive users. These divisions were made in recognition that it is often easier for smaller organisations to perform well, compared with the larger organisations. Up until 2022, this had largely been the case.

In 2022/23 a medium-size organisation, Westpac New Zealand, was ranked the best overall. In 2023/24, a large size organisation, ANZ, achieved the top ranking overall from the 97 organisations benchmarked. These results showed the evolution of the maturity of Viva Engage and the fact that the size of the network really does no longer matter. Again this year, a medium-size organisation took out top spot, prompting us to ditch the small, medium and large categories in favour of overall champions for each global region.

However, when we looked at the ranked leading organisations, one thing stood out. **Three of the top four ranked organisations in our global benchmarking were based in New Zealand**. The overall winner was Australian health insurer Medibank, closely followed by Westpac New Zealand, then two New Zealand government agencies, which have chosen not to be named given the sensitive nature of their work.

Even more interesting, when we ranked 3,751 individual communities across all the benchmarked organisations based on measures for participation, people-to-people engagement, sentiment, growth, responsiveness, and innovation, a **quarter of the top 20 ranked communities were also New Zealand based!**

We discovered this Kiwi connection when we approached each of these top performing organisations to reveal the purpose and best practices of the communities. **The secret to their success turned out to be simple – they bring the fun to work.** We are fortunate to be able to share some of these stories in the upcoming case studies.

1 *Interactive users are those that have interacted with at least a reaction to a post within the six-month benchmarked period.*

How we rank each organisation – Assessment methodology

SWOOP Analytics identifies its enterprise collaboration champions directly from the interaction patterns we assess from the SWOOP Analytics platform.

In this year's report we analysed 70 organisations. This number is down on last year's analysis of 97 organisations because we used only active data available between February 1 and August 1, 2024. In the past, we have analysed the most recent six months of data in the past two-year period. However, in this study we wanted to ensure all data was active during the same comparison period.

SWOOP Analytics metrics are calculated from raw Viva Engage activity data and grouped into four categories - Active Participation, Engagement, Innovation and Responsiveness. We have sought external expert judgments to provide the relative importance of weightings for each category to allow us to calculate an overall performance score.

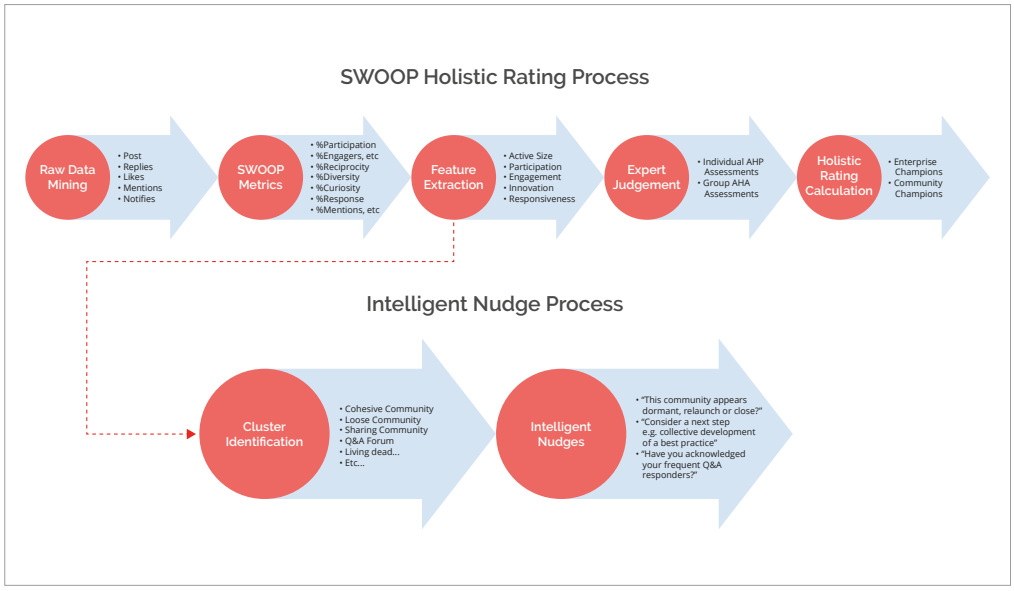


Figure 1 - Overview of SWOOP Analytics' collaboration assessment methodology.

The same criteria, plus more, is used to rank individual communities, which we explain further in our section on community champions.

Who are our enterprise colaboration champions?

Drumroll please! The 2024/25 Viva Engage collaboration champions for each global region are:

APAC:
Medibank – Australian health insurer

EMEA:
Arqiva - British technology services business

Americas:
Teradata - American software company

In our overall global rankings, **Medibank came in at No.1**, followed by fellow APAC-based organisation **Westpac New Zealand in second place** and a **New Zealand-based government agency was in third place**.

We were fortunate to have Medibank, Arqiva and Westpac New Zealand share their stories so we can all learn from their experiences.

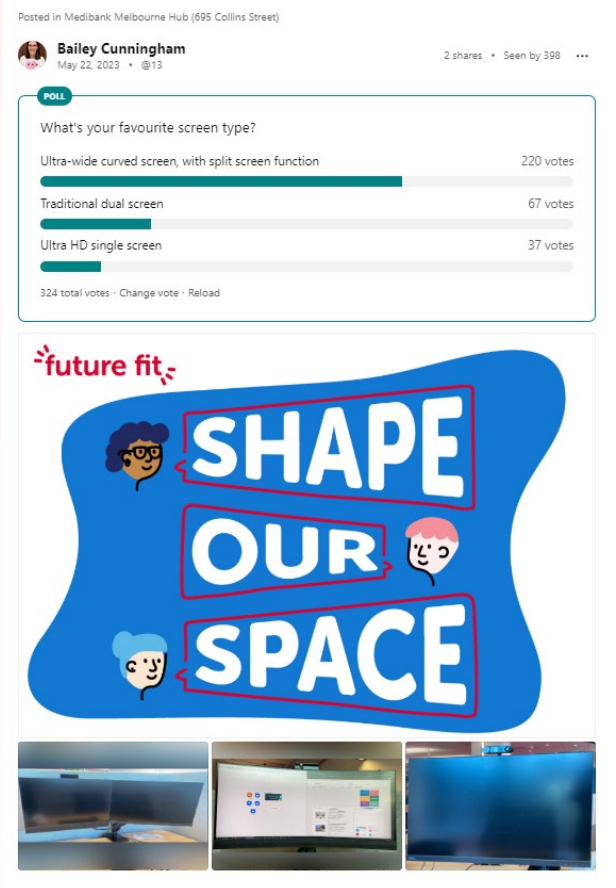
CASE STUDY

Medibank

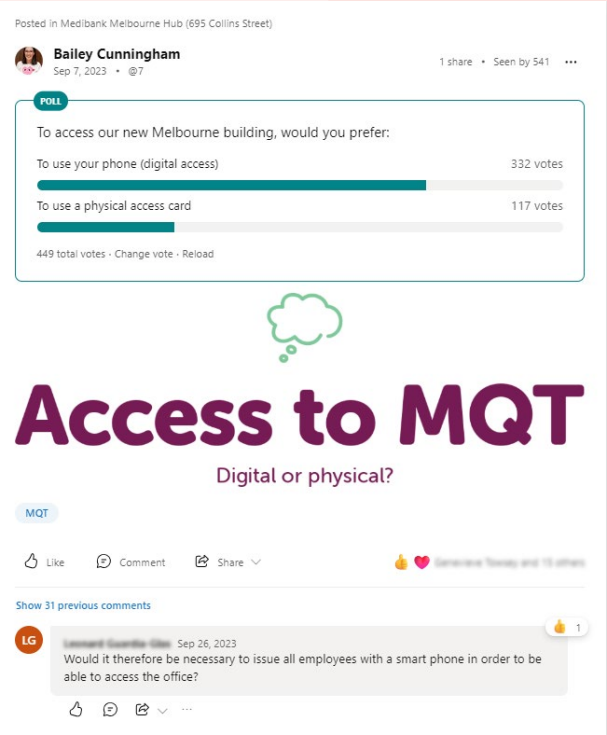
Creating the healthiest workplace in Australia by engaging employees

Imagine you're moving to a brand-new office, and right from the get-go, you get a say in what your future employee experience will be like.

You get to vote – literally – on how you'd like to access the building (swipe card or mobile app?), what sort of computer monitor you'd prefer (4K high definition screen, dual screen, curved screen?), what your office should be called, what the meeting rooms should be called, and whether you'd prefer a pool table over an air hockey table in the activity room. You get a say in just about every aspect of the new build.



An early Viva Engage post at Medibank, more than a year before the move to the new office, asking employees to vote on their preferred monitor type, after testing their preference in a Proof-of-Concept area.

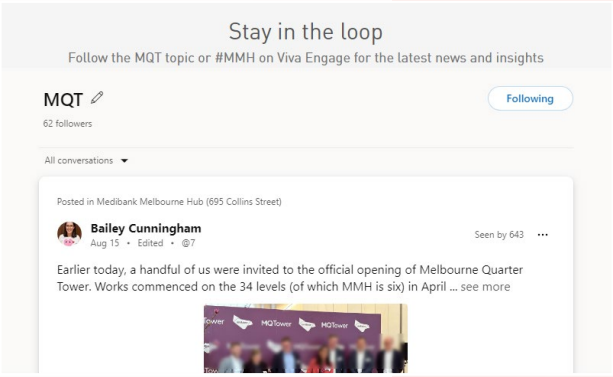


A Viva Engage poll asking colleagues their preferred method to access the new Melbourne office.

That's exactly what every employee at Australian health insurer **Medibank** has been a part of. And it's not just those who choose to use the new office to work from, but all 3600 employees across the country who also want a say.

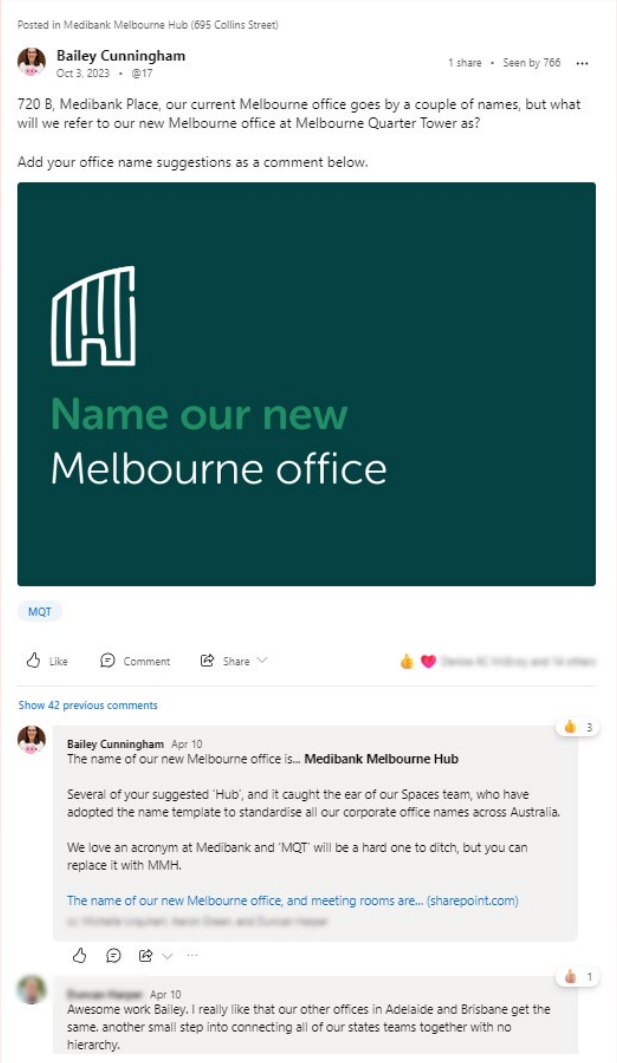
It's all part of making Medibank the healthiest workplace in Australia. A healthy workplace means Medibank can get the best outcomes for its customers, patients and the community, and create the best health and wellbeing for Australia. A key part of the new office is about employee choice, which includes whether or not employees choose to work from the six-level tenancy, or from home (there is no mandate for anyone to return to this new office to work), and this is the same company trialling a four-day working week.

This two-year communication and change project to involve employees in the move from one side of Southern Cross Station in Melbourne to the other, was primarily done via Viva Engage, using a multi-channel communications approach which also included SharePoint intranet, with a widget to link to Viva Engage conversations about the move.



Medibank used a widget to embed Viva Engage conversations into its SharePoint intranet as part of the communication and change project.

SWOOP Analytics identified this Viva Engage success story when Medibank ranked No.1 globally across every organisation analysed in SWOOP Analytics' 2024/25 benchmarking study. When you read Medibank's story about this communication and change project, you'll see how asking questions of, and listening to, employees is at the heart of everything Medibank does.



A Viva Engage post asking employees to name the new Melbourne office.

Bailey Cunningham, Employee Change and Communications Partner, Medibank

Bailey Cunningham, Employee Change and Communications Partner at Medibank, described the project as two years of listening to employees. While there was a dedicated project team and design steering committee, ideas were taken to employees via Viva Engage for confirmation before final decisions were made.

This often involved polls on Viva Engage.

> "I developed a holistic communication strategy in which Viva Engage was a key channel to excite and educate employees about our new space, and really tried to use it to listen to employee hopes for their future workspace," Bailey said.

Tapping into employees' needs

Even before architectural plans for the new office in Melbourne's Collins Street had begun, consultation was underway with employees, including Medibank's neuro-diverse network, who gave feedback that some days they need complete silence to work and other days they need lots of buzz to concentrate.

That feedback resulted in a floor plan that includes low energy, medium energy and high energy work zones.

"The space was designed by our people for our people," Bailey said.

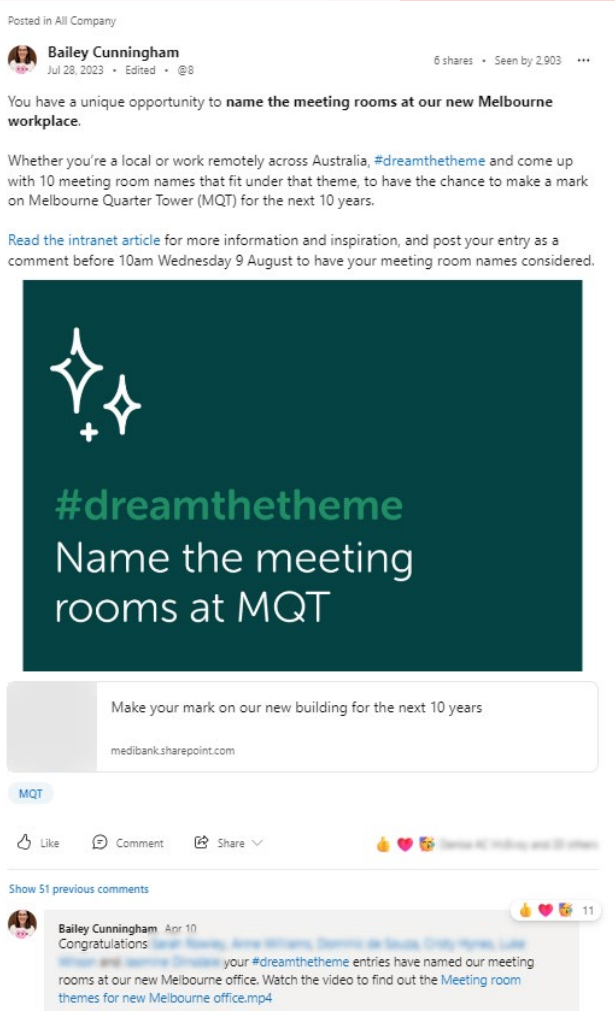
And at the heart of every design decision was the connection to traditional Wurundjeri land, where Medibank's new Melbourne office – now known as Melbourne Medibank Hub (MMH) - stands.

"The lifeforce of water is the overarching design theme at MMH. We undertook extensive consultation with Wurundjeri Elders and subject matter experts to create a living and breathing connection to the land of the Wurundjeri people on which our new office is built," Bailey said.

"So everywhere you look there has been a genuine commitment to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture; whether it be the architecture, the artwork, custom pieces of furniture or encouraging people to use the woi wurrung language for meeting rooms."

Through Viva Engage, employees were able to suggest names for the office's meeting rooms, and some suggestions were adopted. With the life force of water design theme in mind, the highest meeting rooms on level 10 are named after birds as they fly high in the clouds, level nine after Australian mountains where the rain falls, level eight after Wurundjeri landmarks like goranwarrabil (Mt Dandenong), level seven after waterways, level six after Australian beaches, and level two after ground-dwelling wildlife, who all depend on water for survival.

In the Viva Engage post on the right asking employees to share their ideas for names of the meeting rooms, you can see an example of Bailey using multiple communications channels by linking to an intranet article.



A Viva Engage post asking employees to name the meeting rooms in the new Medibank Melbourne office.

Woi wurrung language was also used to name the new board room (named "nganga warit", which means "to see a long way"), the low energy work zone ("bolin bolin", akin to a serene billabong, a quiet and reflective place), the medium energy zone (named "Coranderrk", inspired by Coranderrk Aboriginal Station in Healesville, where people come together to make decisions) and the high energy zone (named "marngrook", the traditional Indigenous Australian football game, which is often played by up to 100 people at a time). Each work zone reflects its purpose. For example, the marngrook (high energy) work zone has low partition workstations for high collaboration, with bolin bolin (low energy zone) sheltered in the corner of the floor plan.

The new Medibank Melbourne Hub also has a yarning circle, a key element of Indigenous culture**.** In yarning circles decisions are made collaboratively and through inclusive dialogue, rather than having one person in a position of power who makes autonomous decisions that may affect others.

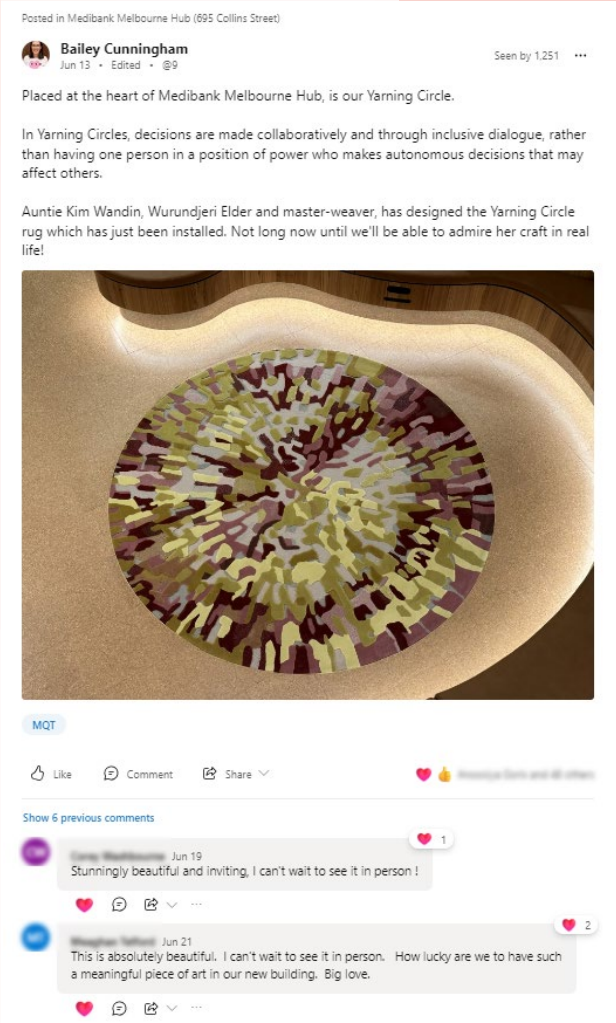
In the building's concierge area, there are two handcrafted yarning tables that symbolise the life force of water design theme and elements of the Yolngu culture from Milingimbi Island in Arnhem Land.

"They're not just tables, they're conversation starters," Bailey said.

"Their exquisite craftsmanship encourages visitors to consider and discuss their health, and how Medibank can help them.

"Space is an enabler of culture, so health and connection to each other and connection to Country, has really been embedded into every facet of our new space."

While every aspect of the new office is thoughtful, most employees probably would not be aware of the significance, except that Bailey kept everyone informed via Viva Engage, using the platform as an education tool, as well as for communication.

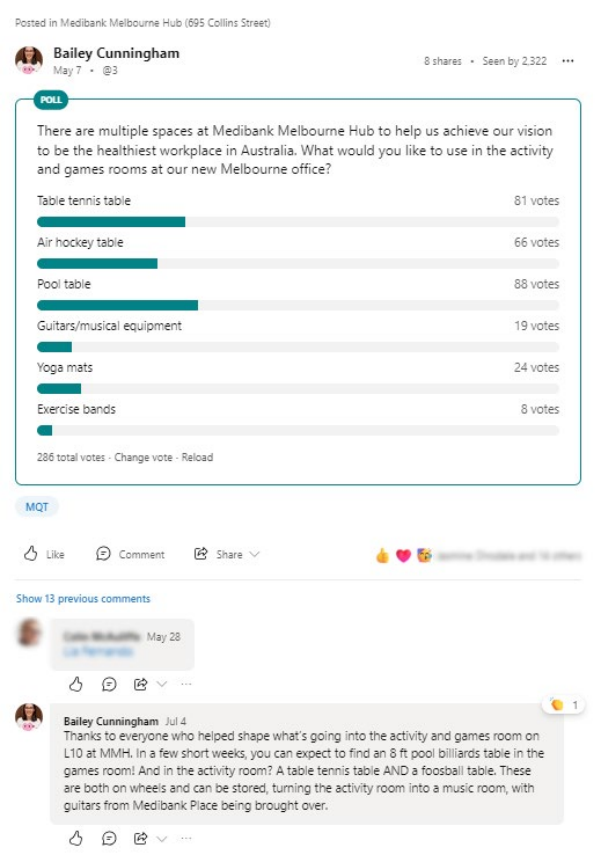


A post on Viva Engage about the yarning circle and custom rug by Wurundjeri Elder, Auntie Kim Wandin.

Measuring the impact of comms

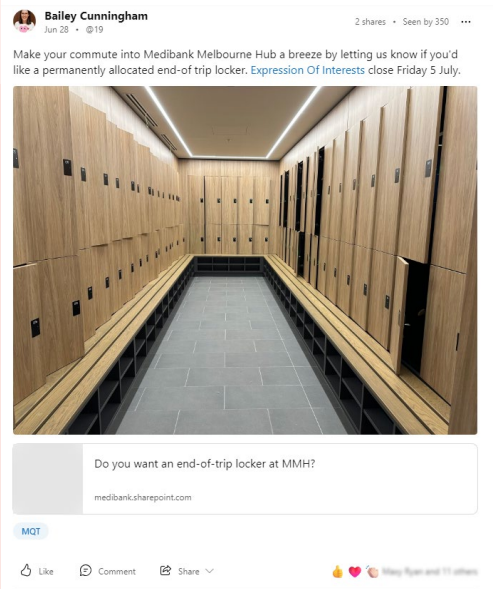
Throughout the project, Bailey used **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** to measure the reach, impact and engagement of her posts. She especially used the **Cross-Enterprise Collaboration measure** to see if any parts of the business were not engaging with the posts.

Interestingly, in this internal change and communication project, Bailey became the "face" of the project as she initiated most of the conversations. Usually, internal comms people like to be out of the spotlight but in this instance, Bailey had to take a more visible role. She said in the early days of the project, she would tap into her support network of influencers (which can be found on **SWOOP Analytics' Influential People report**) to help get early engagement on posts and Viva Engage polls.

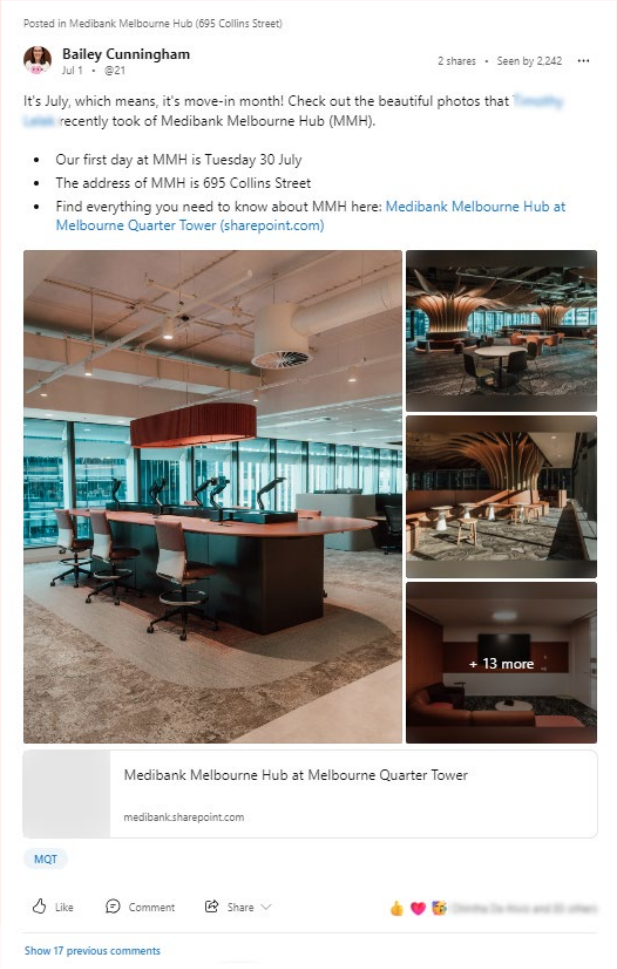


Another example of a poll on Viva Engage asking colleagues to vote on what they'd like to have access to in the new activity and games room.

While the move to the new office was a two-year communication and change project, Viva Engage posts really started to ramp up in the period from March 2024 to the actual move date in July 2024. This ties in with SWOOP Analytics' 2024/25 benchmarking period from February 1 to August 1, 2024, ranking Medibank as the overall top performing organisation from 70 organisations benchmarked in this same time frame.

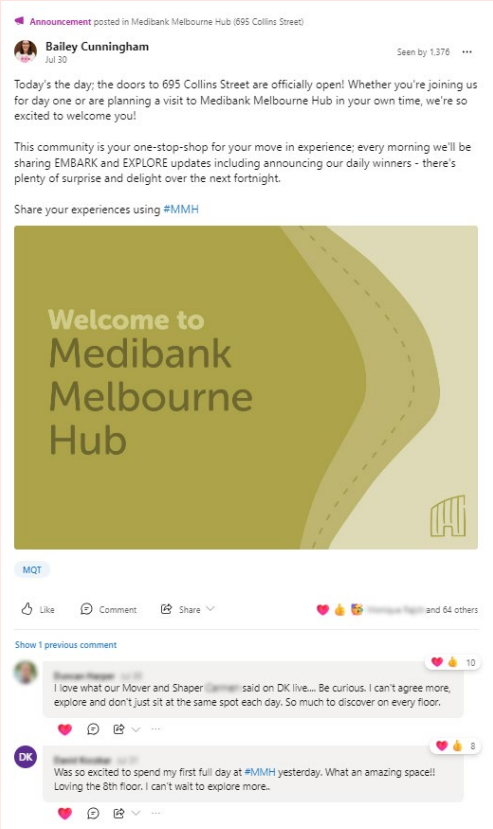


An example of cross channel communication, with a Viva Engage post linking back to the intranet and multiple Viva Engage communities.



Building momentum and communication about the move on Viva Engage.

The night before the move to the new office, Bailey rebranded the Viva Engage community for the move to Medibank Melbourne Hub and uploaded a new data set for all 1500 employees allocated to the office to add them to the community. She posted a welcome message as an announcement on day one – the only time Bailey used the announcement feature during the project.



The Medibank Melbourne Hub announcement.

Moving forward, Bailey is planning on a series of posts to encourage her colleagues to keep visiting the new office. Things like video content from the lead architect, and a tour of the artwork in the new office with the art curator.

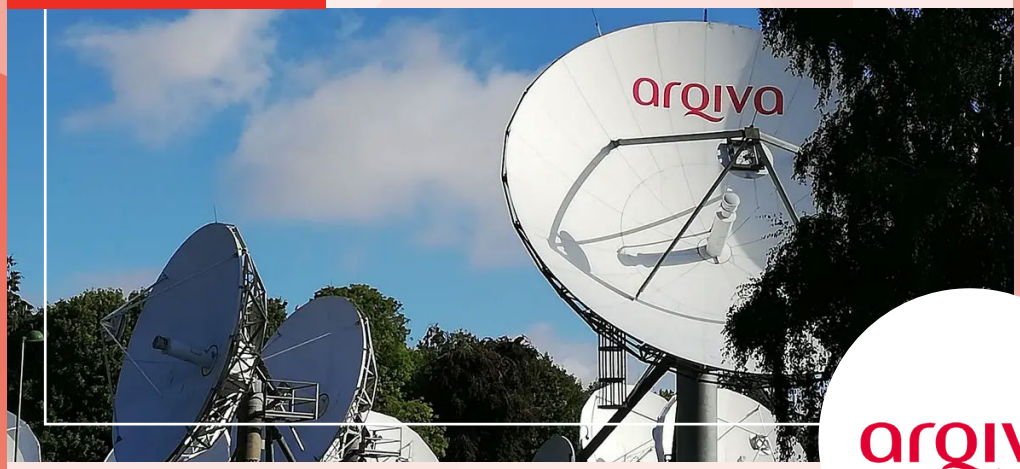
"Medibank doesn't mandate employees to come into the office," Bailey said.

"We're really anchoring back to employee choice. We're all adults, we can make our own decisions, we have a culture of trust.

"That will be a challenge for me from a change and comms point of view - what happens if the novelty of the new space wears off, how do we earn that commute back into Collins Street?

"I'm developing a content plan at the moment to start drip feeding more surprise and delight content via Viva Engage to help people really get the most out of the space and earn their commute, because we don't have to come in, but we choose to."

CASE STUDY



Arqiva

The magic in governance, combined with CEO support

When British technology services business Arqiva relaunched its Viva Engage network in March this year, it put in place two governance measures that have resulted in the network's success.

The first was to delete all communities that were no longer needed. Viva Engage, then Yammer, was used prolifically during the COVID-19 pandemic, and numerous once-thriving communities had been inactive since people could come back into the office.

The second was to establish guidelines for anyone wanting to create a new Viva Engage community. These guidelines explain the responsibilities involved in creating a new community, including plans to keep it active and ideas of how and what to post. The guidelines are effectively an agreement for the community creator to be accountable to keep it active.

When Viva Engage was relaunched across Arqiva in March 2024, some of the original communities used during the pandemic stayed, and these continue to flourish, and new communities were launched.

Fast forward six months, and Arqiva's Viva Engage network ranked No.1 for Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) in SWOOP Analytics' 2024/25 Viva Engage benchmarking analysis.

When SWOOP Analytics shared the news with Arqiva's Digital Communications and Channels Manager, Helen Nias, she was surprised. When we listened to Helen's story about the relaunch of Viva Engage at Arqiva, we were unsurprised the company ranked so highly.

Helen Nias, Digital Communications and Channels Manager, Arqiva.

As part of SWOOP Analytics' annual benchmarking of Viva Engage, we rank every organisation involved in our study based on the performance of its **entire** network. This analysis takes into account every Viva Engage community across the network – the high performers and the low performing communities. With such clear governance in place at Arqiva, it makes sense it would perform so well, as there were no low performing communities dragging down the network.

The timing of SWOOP Analytics' analysis period may have also been in Arqiva's favour. We analysed six months of data from February 1 to August 1, 2024.

The challenge now for Arqiva is to sustain the governance while also building on a successful initial period. Helen admits there is "lots more we can do".

A Viva Engage network led by the CEO

Shuja Khan, CEO, Arqiva.

As well as strong governance, Arqiva's Viva Engage network is boosted by strong executive buy-in, led by **CEO Shuja Khan**.

Prior to the relaunch of Viva Engage in March, the CEO did a weekly six-minute podcast reflecting on the past week and talking about what was ahead for the coming week. It was shared on Microsoft Teams.

While Helen describes Shuja as "super charismatic", the podcast was largely scripted, and only about 25% of employees listened to it. Importantly, the podcast was one-way communication from the CEO to employees, with no clear way for people to interact.

The relaunch of Viva Engage provided an alternative option with in-the-moment posts, and Shuja was immediately enthusiastic about the opportunities. He could properly engage with colleagues by sharing photos, asking questions and responding to comments. It is two-way interaction.

"A really huge reason Viva Engage has been successful is because it's come from the top down," Helen said.

"Shuja is very active on Viva Engage. I send examples of things he could post each week and if he thinks they are relevant, he'll take them on board.

"Sometimes I'll get a surprise notification that he's posted something else. That's always great to see because I can't know everything that's going on!"

Shared on Shuja Khan's storyline

Shuja Khan
Aug 12 • Edited

Seen by 1,178

On my way to Emley Moor to visit the teams based there.

No doubt a few of you are suffering from Olympics hangover this morning - I certainly am! My wife on the other hand is delighted...

There are too many amazing stories to recount from the last 16 days. Everyone will have their favourites. Whether it's the athlete's story of overcoming personal adversity to get to the Olympics, or their struggles to fight against the challenges of mental health, or finding the extra 15% they didn't think they had because the support they received or even the power of music to diffuse a heated situation.

I was taken by Adam Peaty's response to winning a silver medal for the 100m breaststroke. He was targeting his third Olympic gold in a row and everyone assumed anything less would be short of success. But his response was: *"I gave my absolute all there. I executed it as well as I could. It's not about the end goal. It's all about the process and it doesn't matter what the time says on the score because in my heart I've already won."*

Why do I share this here? It's because it is very relevant to what we are trying to do at Arqiva. Our Vision 2031 strategy is asking the business to break new ground. Where we need to compete hard. Against alternative technologies to DTT and radio. Against aggressive competitors who want to grab smart water metering business. Or even against nimble media services players in international markets.

We all (& should) want to win Gold every time. But as we embark on this journey - and much like the Olympic cycle it's not over one year - we should be clear on how we measure success. For me, if we focus on being more competitive everyday in everything we do then we will be successful - that's the process. We won't win every bid or opportunity but we need work hard to be in contention to win.

Over the last two years, we have put ourselves in the frame for so many more opportunities than ever before. Whether it's water bids, IP or Cloud opportunities in distributing content within the UK or internationally or retaining business with smart commercial offers. We are exceeding benchmarks operationally across the field functions alongside reducing our carbon footprint. Our selling muscles are getting stronger through the new methodology called Way2Sell which is giving us a competitive advantage.

These are not a measures against an internal view on how things were but against the competition today and in the future. This is what helped Adam Peaty to achieve so much success.

Love to hear your favourite Olympic moment. But also how you or your team is helping us become more competitive which will help us to be more successful!

Love Comment Share You and 45 others

Show 6 previous comments

Joe Bolger Aug 12
I loved Adam Peaty's response - that focus on progression, not just attainment. I'm also a little bit obsessed about how different participants relate to their competitors. Josh Kerr, the 1500m runner, told The Times a couple of weeks ago that he had NEVER spoken to his long-time rival, Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen. By comparison, Alex Yee, the triathlete, took gold and was then congratulated by his rival with an arm round the shoulder. Is there value in distance from others? Or does understanding your competitors give you the competitive edge?

1

Shuja Khan Aug 12
Joe Bolger for me the answer is clear on that. Always invest time not just understanding your main competitors but define who the emerging competition is. Josh Kerr's was so focused on the most likely competitor that he missed the one who sneaked in on the inside lane!

6

Gaurav Jandwani Aug 12
Thanks for sharing, Shuja. Inspiring on a Monday morning ! I agree, the process is well within our control. If we do the incremental one percent everyday, the outcomes will take care of themselves. On a lighter note though, my favourite Olympics moment though - belonged to a DJ ! If you haven't seen the video, it is worth seeing it. Things got heated between Brazil & Canada in women's beach volleyball, and refs intervened, and play was about to resume with tensions still high- when the DJ decided to play John Lennon's "Imagine", and both sides broke into smiles- priceless ! Someone showed calmness in moments of stress, and the Olympic spirit all in one go !

10

Kenny Skillen Aug 19
Its a cracking bunch of people in the BOC and NOC - tirelessly supporting Media & Broadcast services. Its a not a easy role at times but people do it with smiles and good humour. Always a pleasure to visit.

A screenshot of a Viva Engage post from Arqiva CEO Shuja Khan.

Data from **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** shows Shuja's posts are regularly among the **Most Engaging Posts**, and he is also among the top 10 most **Influential People** on the network. Showing Shuja the impact of his posts with data has been a game changer.

> **"That's been part of the proof point from moving from the podcast to Viva Engage for our CEO," Helen said.**
>
> **"Showing him data is a big part of it. Colleagues are commenting on his posts, he gets an idea of what's on their minds, and he can reply.**
>
> **"Whereas with his podcast, they were sent out and there was no engagement back. His posts are really helpful because they give everyone that insight into how his mind works.**
>
> **"When leaders are able to share with their people like that, it's amazing for engaging employees."**

Helen recently used **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** to analyse 26 of the CEO's Viva Engage posts. Most received strong engagement, and often more than 1000 views from the 1600-strong company. Helen had ghost written two of the posts, which both received much less engagement.

"There were a couple I'd drafted and got the okay to post, and unsurprisingly, they were right at the bottom," she said.

"The ones he writes himself are the most engaging posts."

Interestingly, Shuja posts on his Storyline rather than in a Viva Engage community. This has been a deliberate decision at Arqiva for leaders to build their profiles by posting on their personal Storyline.

"We are working on his Storyline because we want people to follow him and be notified," Helen said.

Clear governance

Arqiva launched Microsoft Teams in late 2019 and when the COVID-19 pandemic hit months later, Yammer (now Viva Engage) was launched before its scheduled kick-off to meet the needs of people working from home.

Helen said Viva Engage was "self-sufficient" during the pandemic as people created communities to discuss all kinds of topics, and the communities thrived.

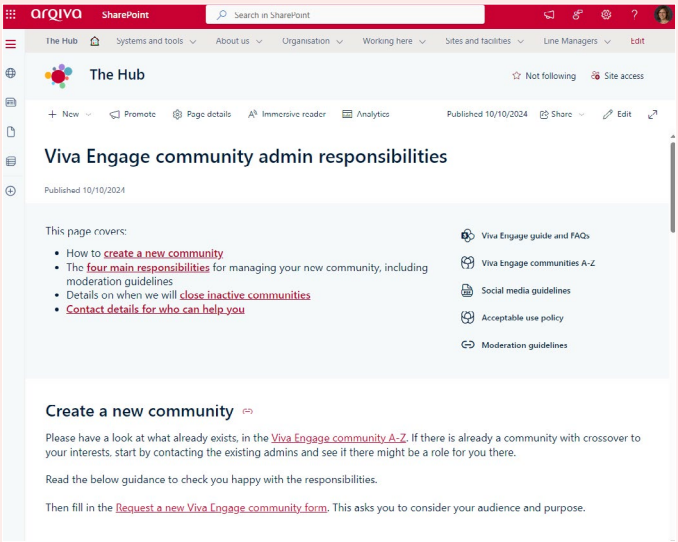
"As people started to come back to the office, they didn't just have to rely on digital interactions anymore," she said.

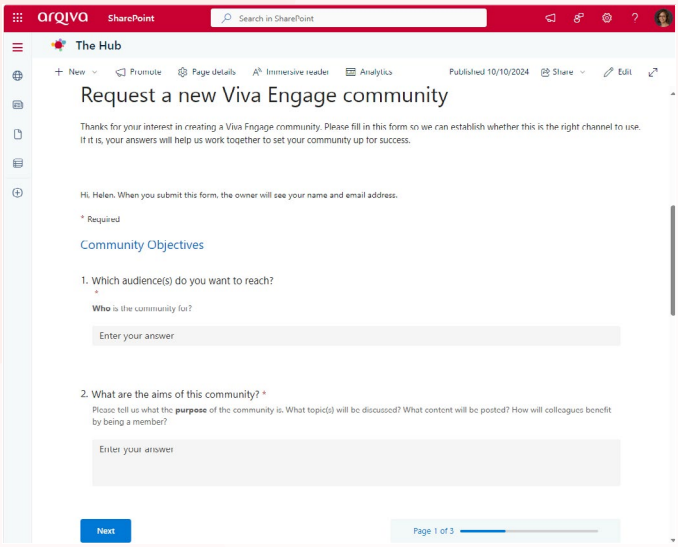
"And then there was tumbleweed. There were a few people using it and a few communities with stuff in them."

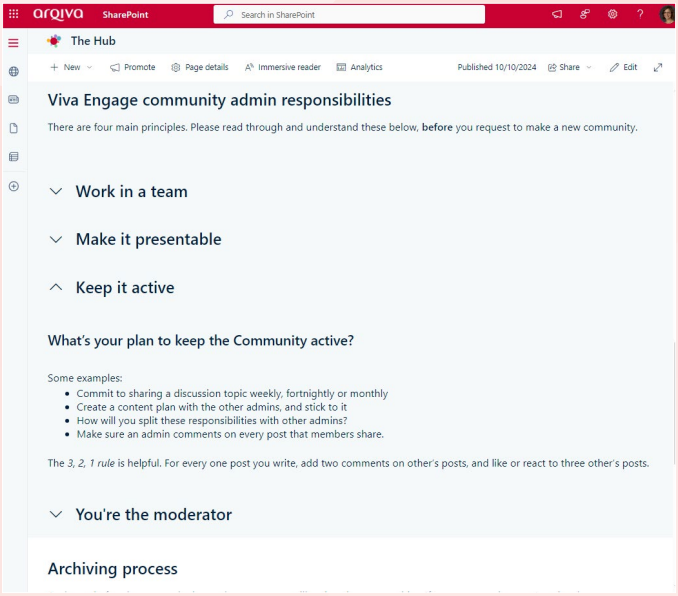
When Helen joined Arqiva she rewrote the internal channels strategy. One of the first tasks in implementing it was to delete the communities that were no longer needed. Some communities remained at the request of employees, but Helen gave them guidelines and responsibilities to keep the communities active, with the promise of holding the community admins accountable.

If someone wants to establish a new Viva Engage community, they have to fill in a form.

> "I want people to actually think about what audience do you want to reach? What are the aims of this community?," Helen said.
>
> "I didn't want people coming forward and being like; 'Can I have a community for piano playing?'."







Screenshots of Viva Engage community guidelines at Arqiva.

There are social communities at Arqiva, one of the most popular being Studded Plastic Engineering for Lego lovers, and a gardening community. Helen said many of the business communities have strong **Cross Enterprise Collaboration**, which is one of Arqiva's culture goals.

While holding people accountable to their Viva Engage communities is working, Helen said she does sometimes see a drop off.

"It's working well but it's not perfect. I set communities up for colleagues and they're active in the beginning. But work is the top priority, so in some cases the excitement wanes slightly and there's a drop in activity," she said.

"I've got a vague 'three months inactivity and we'll delete the community' rule, but it's flexible. I use discretion. Sometimes people agree their community should go."

Moving forward, Helen plans to create more self-help guidelines to keep communities thriving. She often shares tips like SWOOP Analytics' 1, 2, 3 rule – for every one post, make two replies and three reactions. And she plans to continue to work with colleagues to advise when they should be focusing on building their Storyline and following rather than creating unnecessary communities.

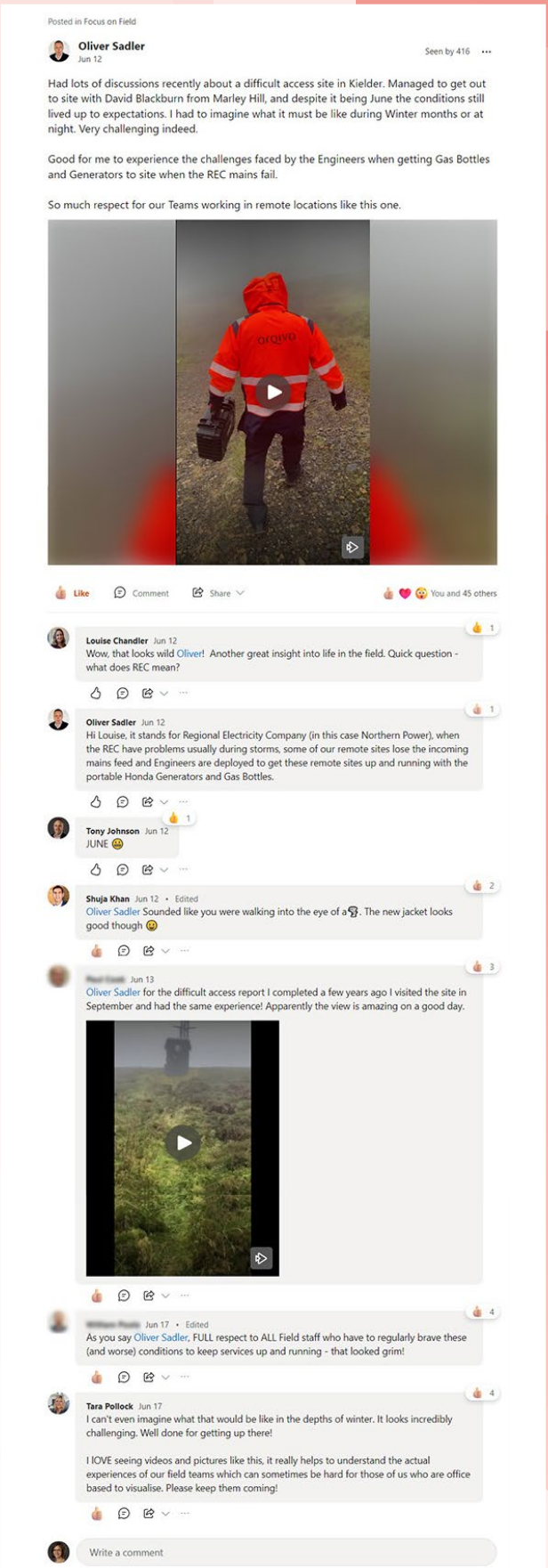
"We're a small company so I don't think we need a community for every single interest that people have, but I don't want to stop people talking about what they're interested in, so Storylines are obviously a place where they can build that up," Helen said.

Inspiration from colleagues

Everyone from frontline workers to the CEO uses Viva Engage at Arqiva. With much of the workforce on the frontline maintaining broadcast and utilities network equipment, there are some incredible stories that get shared on Viva Engage.

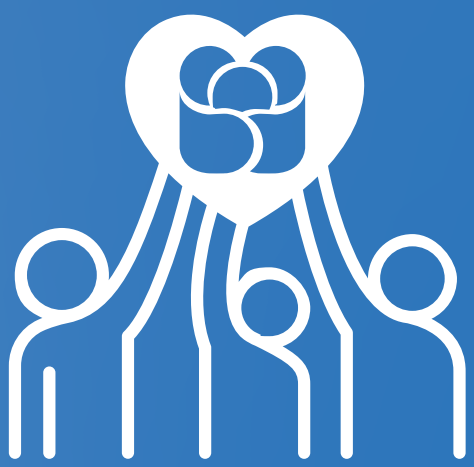
> "People get amazing photos and post them on Viva Engage and it inspires us all," Helen said.
>
> "For some of us, we're sitting in the office or at home and unless you make the effort to get out and connect with people, you're not necessarily going to really understand what goes into making sure everyone's TV or smart meter is working properly.
>
> "For me, that's a big motivation. I don't think you can do a comms role well if you don't understand the breadth of the business and you don't get to know the people who are part of it."

Right: A screenshot of a frontline worker's post on Viva Engage.



SECTION 3

How to nurture Communities on Viva Engage



Communities are the heart of Viva Engage networks. It is inside communities where most of the real work happens. Communities will experience different rhythms in their activity, depending on their context. They will self-form and sometimes disappear through natural attrition. It is important, however, that valuable communities do not disappear through lack of care and attention.

Community managers should monitor community activity. When activity levels cool, it might be time to inject some new energy, perhaps by re-visiting your purpose, holding an online event, running a member survey or simply posting some compelling content for discussion. It's also important to track the health of communities to monitor communities that could be at risk.

3.1 What makes a successful Viva Engage community?

To ensure a successful Viva Engage network, it's crucial to start with a purpose – a strong and clear strategy that engages people and helps them understand how Viva Engage can enhance connectivity and productivity.

Each organisation will have its own definition of what constitutes "success" in a Viva Engage network, however, every organisation will want to see employee engagement, knowledge sharing, innovation, and connection across the enterprise, especially between leadership and employees. It's also important to be able to measure and identify this success with data.

If you're launching a Viva Engage network, we've created a **practical guide to get you started**.

Let's dive deeper into the purpose of your Viva Engage community. One of the first questions you'll face is:

3.2 Should my community be public or private?

By default, communities formed on Viva Engage are public and therefore open to any colleague to join. There are contexts, however, where a community might be established as private, and membership is therefore by invitation only.

For example, at KFC Australia, each individual restaurant has its own private Viva Engage community, and every employee at that restaurant is a member of the community. Within each restaurant's community, every employee can talk about what's going on in their store, look at rosters, request shift swaps and more. The conversation is relevant only to each restaurant, so it is therefore unnecessary for a restaurant in another state or another city to have access to the community. Making each restaurant's Viva Engage community private limits the "noise" across the Viva Engage network, which has more than 650 restaurants and 34,000 employees, and gives employees a psychologically safe space, especially for new employees who can connect with their co-workers without feeling everyone in the organisation can see their post.

Aim for 97% of messages in Viva Engage to be posted in public rather than private communities.

Our 2024/25 data shows 78.7% of messages posted in communities are public, which is the preference for open and transparent internal communications. That is not to say private communities are bad, there is a place for them. Interestingly, we found the growth rate for private communities matched that of public communities at 6% over the six-month period analysed.

The highest percentage for public messages across all 70 organisations analysed is 100%, and based on the proportion of public/private messages in our top 20% performing organisations we have set the goal at 97% for public communities.

Average: 78.7% Public communities
Best result: 100% Public
Goal: Aim for 97% Public

KEY FINDING

Our 2024/25 benchmarking data found **most Viva Engage conversations are held in public** (80% public and 20% private) and **most conversations are positive**.

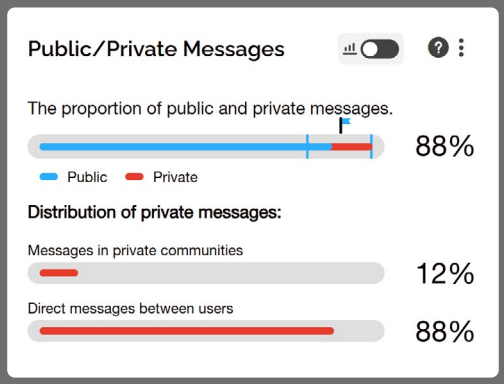
In deciding whether to make a community private rather than leaving it as public, which is the default for new communities, consider the following:

- Certain situations may necessitate private communities. For instance, when there is a need to discuss sensitive information that isn't suitable for public access, a private community might be more appropriate. However, if it is a small group, then also consider if it would be better in a Microsoft Teams team.
- Remember though, the goal of Viva Engage is to encourage open communication and knowledge sharing across the organisation. Therefore, the decision to make a community private should be carefully considered to ensure it aligns with these objectives.

Finding the split between Public and Private messages

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

The **Public/Private Messages** report in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** shows the proportion of messages that are public. You can find it on the **Enterprise** dashboard under the **Content** tab.



SWOOP Analytics' Public/Private Messages report.

3.3 Should I bulk upload members to this new community we are setting up?

The normal process for recruiting members into a community is to invite them to join - it is entirely voluntary. Bulk uploading of members takes away this choice, and in many ways creates an unwanted precedent. So, is there a context where this practice is acceptable?

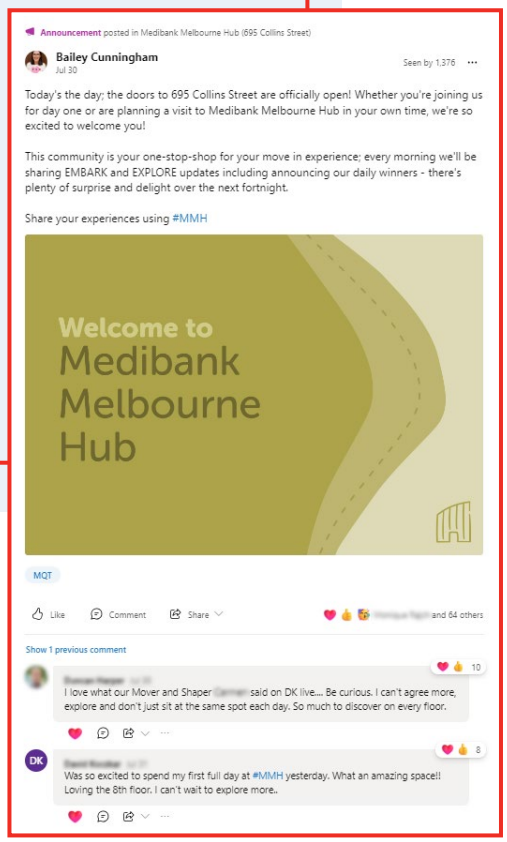
There might be instances where bulk uploading members is appropriate. For example, if the community pertains to a specific department or project team where all members need access to shared information and discussions, then bulk uploading could be the most efficient method of establishing the community.

In all cases, it's recommended to communicate clearly with the members about the purpose of the community, what they can expect, and how they can contribute. This helps in setting the right expectations and encourages active participation.

Remember, the goal is not just to increase the number of people in the community, but to foster active engagement and conversation-based communities. This can deliver greater business value.

In our case study from Medibank (page 52) , there is an example where the community manager did a bulk upload of 1500 employees to a renamed Viva Engage community for a new office. All 1500 employees were allocated to the new office and the upload was done the night before the move to the new office to ensure they all had access to the community. The community manager then posted a welcome message as an announcement.

Right: The announcement made by Medibank following a bulk upload of 1500 employees to the Viva Engage community.



3.4 When should I use the All Company community?

Questions about the use of the All Company community have been a constant throughout our decade of benchmarking. A fear of over-use of the All Company community includes an inadvertent post being sent to all employees, sometimes prompting a move to restrict access as to who can post in the community.

Over time, many organisations have refined their use of this important channel, though many still have restricted access to post in the All Company community.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we came across many instances when organisations used the All Company community to amplify important messages and announce emerging policy decisions regarding work from home procedures. This allowed for timely and consistent communication for all employees. It also segregated the All Company feed as a "source of truth", allowing informal discussions to be held in other communities.

RAA

At RAA, all CEO updates are posted in the All Company news community with an Announcement feature, which results in every employee receiving an email or Microsoft Teams notification with a link to the post in Viva Engage. The Announcement feature is used about once a week. This is done deliberately to encourage, or remind, employees to visit Viva Engage.

"The notification will bring them, and we hope they might have a little look around while they're there," said Marilyn McAuliffe, Communications Coordinator at RAA. Read the full story on page 115.

3.5 How many social communities versus business-focused communities should we have?

Structuring communities in Viva Engage depends on the specific needs and structure of your organisation. The exact number of each type of community will depend on the size of your organisation, the nature of your work, and your specific communication and collaboration needs.

Ideally, you want to have a balance of different types of communities. This could include social communities, business-focused communities, Communities of Practice, Communities of Interest (information sharing), Q&A, and

announcements. Our community benchmarking over the years has typically identified at least one social community amongst the most engaged communities. As one Director of Communications said; "They come for the cats but then they stay for the work."

It is important to constantly monitor and evaluate the performance of the communities that matter most to your organisation, and ensure they are serving their intended purpose and fostering engagement.

Types of communities

Communities look and feel differently depending on the type of interactions that happen in them. Together with The University of Sydney we embarked on a research collaboration to analyse interaction patterns that would allow for evidence-based differentiation of communities, and in our 2020 Yammer Benchmarking Report we published an updated list of community types:

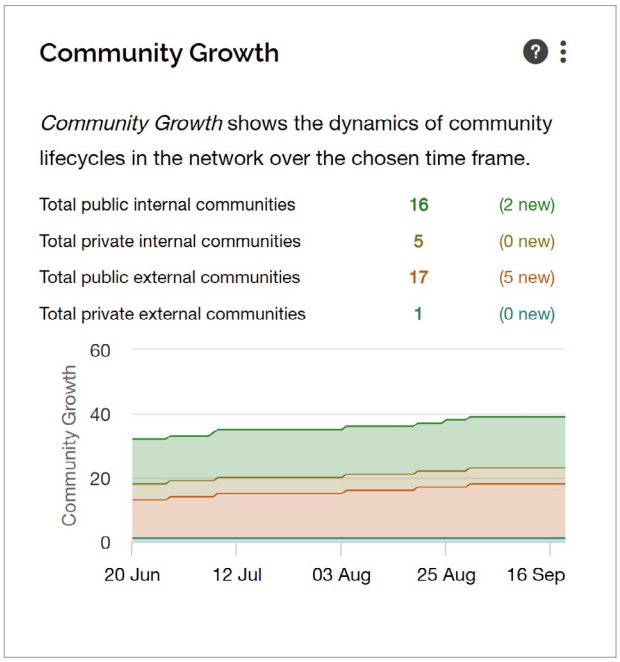
- **Community of Practice**: These are groups of people who share a common interest or passion and interact regularly. These communities are ideal for knowledge sharing and problem-solving.
- **Communities of Interest**: These communities are ideal for sharing information, ideas, and experiences about a particular topic.
- **Q&A communities**: These communities provide a platform for members to ask questions and get answers from their peers or experts.
- **Announcement communities**: These communities are usually used by organisations to make important announcements and updates. It is recommended to keep the number of these communities to a minimum.
- **Low-engagement communities**: These are communities with low levels of activity and engagement. It's important to identify these communities and implement strategies to boost engagement. If you deem the community is no longer relevant, archive or delete it.

A community should have a designated community manager who drives engagement through strategically generating content, asking questions, and posting information. This helps to facilitate two-way communication and contributes to a unique culture within each space.

3.6 Creating communities

Allowing people to create their own communities will help with the adoption of Viva Engage, but it's important you have a process in place to avoid ending up with multiple of the same communities. Before a new community is created, encourage employees to check if a similar community already exists. When someone creates a new community, make sure they understand they will be responsible for the community. Scroll back to the Arqiva case study on page 60 to see the guidelines and responsibilities asked to keep people accountable for their community.

One way to manage this is to check the **Community Growth** report in SWOOP Analytics. This report shows a list of both public and private communities created. It allows the community manager to suggest merging of communities, and to discuss if a community's privacy settings have been considered adequately.



SWOOP Analytics' Community Growth report.

Once your community/communities are established, it's time to look at **community management**.

3.7 What is the role of a community manager?

This is a question we're often asked and, although we'd love to provide you with the silver bullet, there's no one-size-fits-all answer.

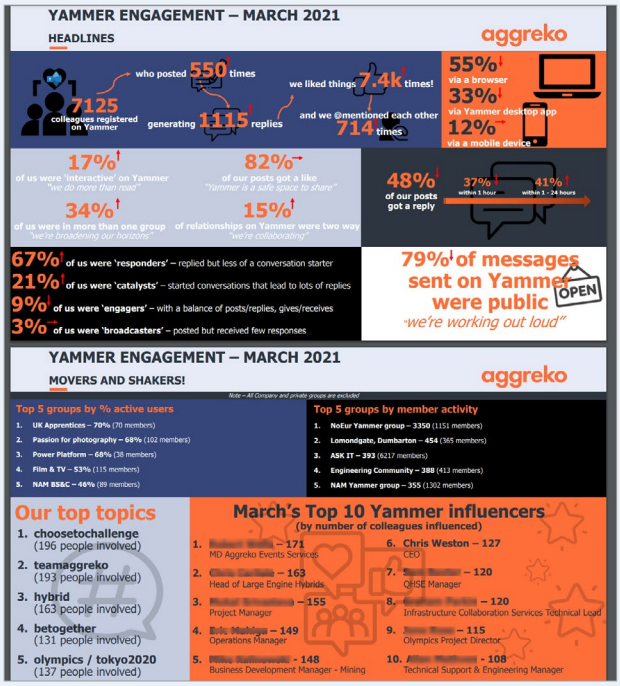
The role of a community manager is multifaceted and involves nurturing and facilitating a thriving online community. Having a dedicated person helping you to manage your Viva Engage network can be a game-changer. At the same time, they're building an online reputation as the helpful go-to person, making it a worthy channel to use, and helping with the user adoption.

At a basic level, community managers should ensure posts receive replies and reactions, especially as new communities are being established. This often means @mentioning relevant colleagues to bring them into the conversation to answer questions.

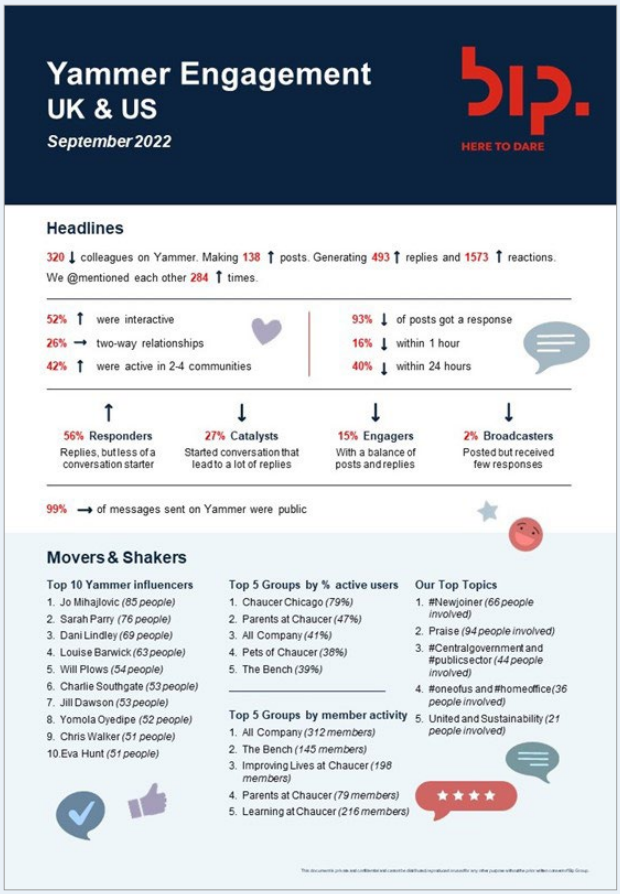
Sharing real-life data from Viva Engage to boost engagement is being used successfully at consultancy company Bip UK & Bip US, and the world's largest supplier of mobile and modular energy solutions, Aggreko.

Their Viva Engage community managers use data from SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage to produce a monthly report about Viva Engage usage, which is then shared in the All Company community for everyone to see. They @mention the most influential colleagues in the monthly report, highlight the Most Engaging Posts, the top topics people are discussing, the top groups on Viva Engage each month and so on.

The proof of the success of these simple posts also lies in the data, with these posts resulting in high engagement and conversation.



An example of Aggreko's monthly Viva Engage report, using data from SWOOP Analytics.



Yammer Engagement
UK & US
September 2022

HERE TO DARE

Headlines

320 ↓ colleagues on Yammer. Making 138 ↑ posts. Generating 493 ↑ replies and 1573 ↑ reactions.
We @mentioned each other 284 ↑ times.

52% ↑ were interactive
26% → two-way relationships
42% ↑ were active in 2-4 communities

93% ↓ of posts got a response
16% ↓ within 1 hour
40% ↓ within 24 hours

↑ 56% Responders — Replies, but less of a conversation starter
↓ 27% Catalysts — Started conversation that lead to a lot of replies
↓ 15% Engagers — With a balance of posts and replies
↓ 2% Broadcasters — Posted but received few responses

99% → of messages sent on Yammer were public

Movers & Shakers

Top 10 Yammer influencers
1. Jo Mihajlovic *(85 people)*
2. Sarah Parry *(76 people)*
3. Dani Lindley *(69 people)*
4. Louise Barwick *(63 people)*
5. Will Plows *(54 people)*
6. Charlie Southgate *(53 people)*
7. Jill Dawson *(53 people)*
8. Yomola Oyedipe *(52 people)*
9. Chris Walker *(51 people)*
10. Eva Hunt *(51 people)*

Top 5 Groups by % active users
1. Chaucer Chicago *(79%)*
2. Parents at Chaucer *(47%)*
3. All Company *(41%)*
4. Pets of Chaucer *(38%)*
5. The Bench *(39%)*

Top 5 Groups by member activity
1. All Company *(312 members)*
2. The Bench *(145 members)*
3. Improving Lives at Chaucer *(198 members)*
4. Parents at Chaucer *(79 members)*
5. Learning at Chaucer *(216 members)*

Our Top Topics
1. #Newjoiner *(66 people involved)*
2. Praise *(94 people involved)*
3. #Centralgovernment and #publicsector *(44 people involved)*
4. #oneofus and #homeoffice *(36 people involved)*
5. United and Sustainability *(21 people involved)*

An example of Bip UK & Bip US' monthly Viva Engage report, with data from SWOOP Analytics.

UNION for REFORM JUDAISM

There is no underestimating the impact of a community manager. The **Union for Reform Judaism** (URJ) was amongst SWOOP Analytics' top performing Viva Engage/Yammer networks for many years. Former URJ's Director, Network Engagement and Collaboration, Larry Glickman saw himself as a "facilitator" rather than a "manager" of the organisation's network.

Larry used SWOOP Analytics' data to identify the top five Most Engaging Posts. He then shares the post in a community and @mentions people involved, which he said never failed to result in comments and more people engaging.

Asked the secret to URJ's success, Larry pointed to three factors. The first was URJ's willingness to employ a community manager to grow the network, in this case Larry and his staff. The second was URJ's Working Out Loud policy, and the third is time. Time to grow and nurture the network.

Check out how member organisation **The NRMA** created an enterprise-wide wrap of how leaders and team members are using Viva Engage to give the big picture of how the platform is making a social impact.

Elena Sergis, The NRMA's Digital Workplace Manager, used data from her SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage dashboard to create an enterprise-wide annual wrap of how leaders and team members used Viva Engage in 2023. It immediately gave a full picture of how NRMA's people used the platform across the year, and identified it as a significant communications channel.

To help organisations determine what makes a "perfect" community manager we have put together this checklist:

Passion over experience	You must find people who genuinely, deeply care about nurturing community. It's no good having a 10-year comms veteran who deeply cares about producing shiny, polished content if they don't have a passion for helping people engage with that content. The content is the spark, not the fire, when it comes to community and conversation. Perhaps you will find the mindset you really need in more diverse backgrounds. Customer Experience, Contact Centre, front-of-house teams – people who enjoy spending their days dealing with customers can be fantastic places to seek community management talent.
Humility and empathy - essential qualities	It is vital community champions are people with the humility to understand it's not about them, it's about empowering everyone else to contribute, creating an inclusive environment where people know how to engage as much as what to engage with. And with humility must come empathy. A top community manager needs the ability to understand the varied contexts and cultures that impact on how people interact. They then need the ability to know how to adapt to accommodate these cultural and contextual factors.

Facilitator rather than manager	While there's a certain element of governance and management in nurturing your community network, it should be the lesser proportion of duties. For truly epic community development, your focus and energy should be spent on being a facilitator rather than a manager. Bringing people together around content they care about, providing value consistently – and helping others do the same. It's not the job of the community manager to provide all the answers, it's much more about asking the questions that bring others in to provide and discuss answers. Creating space for active discussion and true engagement is the priority – and with that may come a little discomfort and a need to hand over more control to the community members than perhaps you are accustomed to.
Curiosity is key	If you're going to nurture community, you need to understand what makes it tick. You need to be interested in understanding what's happening, who's leading the conversation, who's engaging others, what content is hitting the mark and what's not. You need problem-solving skills that help you see under the surface and really work the right levers to get bigger-picture results. That takes a fair bit of self-confidence and an inquisitive nature, where you may sometimes need to ask difficult questions or role-model having difficult conversations.
Firm but flexible	Like bamboo in a strong wind, a Community Manager/ Facilitator must be flexible and adaptable in the face of resistance but firm and strong enough to come back to the point time and time again. They need to have the tenacity to repeatedly make the case for community as an amazing business value driver, along with the wisdom to understand that different people are at different stages of **the enterprise collaboration maturity journey** at different times.

Is it feasible that one person can bring all of these factors to the role? It's asking a lot for one person to excel across each of the factors outlined above. So, expand your search. Seek a humble, empathetic and curious facilitator with a passion for creating inclusive communities, as well as the adaptability and tenacity to repeatedly make the business case for community as the core of communication and collaboration. We know that may not be as easy as it sounds. **We've got more insights to help**.

3.8 What does a thriving community look like?

In the past three years of our Viva Engage benchmarking, we have introduced factors to indicate whether a community is thriving. What we have found is thriving communities have healthy levels of Two-way Relationships and positive sentiment. Thriving communities are also seen to be growing. Our benchmarking identified the following growth data for communities:

If your community activity is growing at 7% every six months, or more, with healthy Two-way Relationships (25%+) and positive sentiment (50%+) then you are likely a thriving community.

3.9 Is negative sentiment bad?

★ KEY FINDING

Not necessarily. Our 2024/25 research shows **most conversations are positive - 63% of all sentences are somewhat or very positive** compared **with just 14% being somewhat or very negative**. 23% is neutral. However, "negative" sentiment does not necessarily mean people are complaining but they could be, for instance, using Viva Engage for internal support to ask about why something doesn't work.

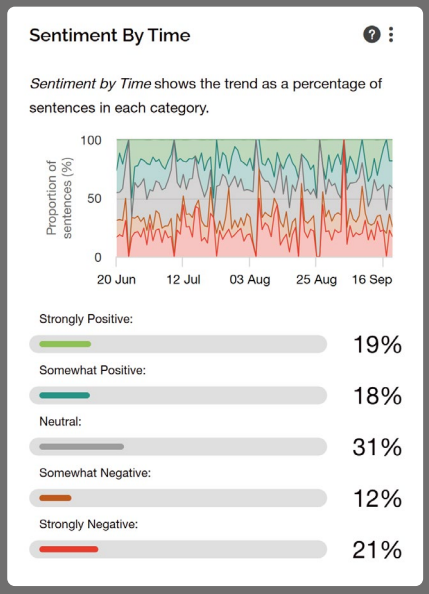
3.10 Moderating communities?

One of the more challenging jobs a community manager may be tasked with is community moderation. This will largely be required to be considered for public communities demonstrating above average levels of strongly negative sentiment (10%+). SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage highlights posts that demonstrate high sentiment scores (both positive and negative). This makes the task of moderation much more manageable.

Measuring sentiment

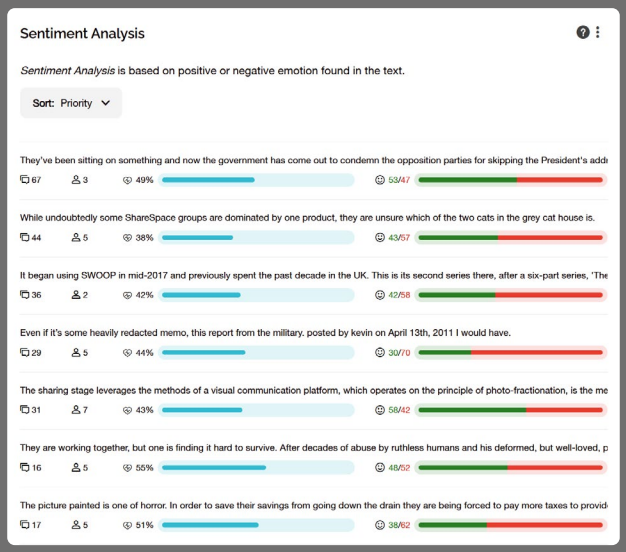
with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

To understand more about sentiment, head to the **Sentiment By Time** report on the Content tab of the Enterprise dashboard in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**. This report shows the split between how positive or negative content is, and gives an indication of which days have seen large spikes in either positive or negative sentiment.



SWOOP Analytics' Sentiment By Time report.

For a further breakdown of which posts are exhibiting the strongest sentiment, go the **Sentiment Analysis** report, found under the Content tab. This will help you to pinpoint the posts that might be worth a review to understand the subject and context of the strong sentiment.



SWOOP Analytics' Sentiment Analysis report.

However, not all strongly negative sentiment is toxic or requires moderation. The sentiment may be marked negative if the context of the discussion is negative. But if you do encounter toxic posts there are steps we suggest taking:

- First and foremost, it's essential to remind users that Viva Engage is a professional platform, and any comments will be attributed to them.
- Have a set of guidelines, or terms of use, that clearly outline what is expected from users and how they should use the platform. This can include reminders that it is a professional channel, it should be a safe space for constructive feedback, and posts should never be at the expense of others. Any posts that breach these terms of use or policies can be removed.
- If you come across an inappropriate or offensive post, you can reach out to the person privately and ask them to take down the post, referring to your organisation's policies about posting on internal social media channels. Alternatively, group admins can delete any post that violates organisational policies or procedures.
- If a user continues to post inappropriate content, you may need to work closely with HR or your employee relations team. Informing the offender's line manager can be a good first step. If the behaviour continues, sanctions can be issued on Viva Engage, including temporarily or permanently disabling the offender's account.
- It is crucial to remember that dealing with inappropriate posts should be carried out in a manner that respects the rights of all users and upholds the values of openness and communication that Viva Engage champions.

We discuss this further in our article on **How to deal with inappropriate posts on your internal communications channels**.

BlueCross BlueShield

Have you ever had to remove a post on Viva Engage because the discussion has got out of hand?

Mark Stinneford candidly shares how he had to take down a Viva Engage post from Blue Cross Blue Shield North Carolina's network at the height of the COVID-19 vaccination debate.

It opened a can of worms from an internal communications perspective, as people weren't in breach of company policy and BCBS has always encouraged employees to share their voice on Viva Engage in an open conversation.
But there was misinformation about the vaccine and scare stories posted on Viva Engage, which went against the health provider's role in providing vaccinations.

"So, for the first time I can remember, we had to end the conversation," Mark said.

It prompted Mark and his team to write new guidelines should they encounter a similar situation in the future. It also highlighted the need to have executives and experts ready to address questions and topics that come up on Viva Engage, even the tough questions – especially in a hybrid working environment.

In this fascinating Viva Engage Festival presentation, Mark openly shares some of the sticky side of encouraging employees to share their voice on Viva Engage when conversations can start to get divisive.

Katie Cutinello from Johnson Controls also shares how her team deals with difficult conversations, while fostering a culture of open communication across the global business.

Vestas

In a company with 30,000 employees spread across the globe, there are bound to be some differences of opinion, especially when it comes to topics like war, religion and LGBTQI+ issues.

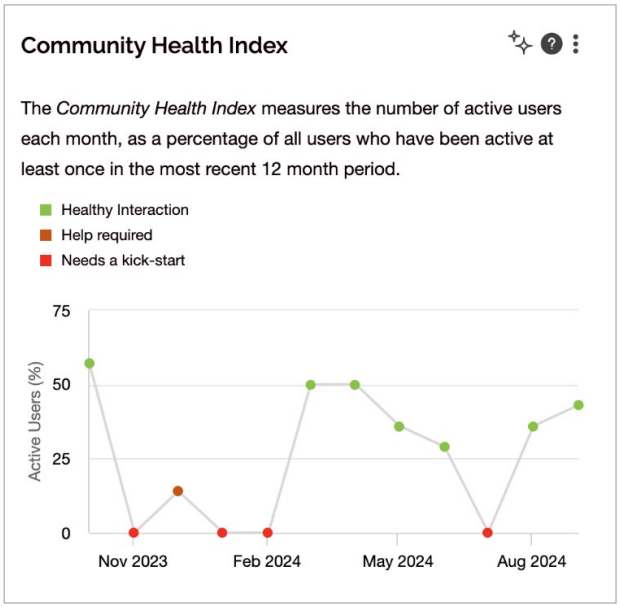
At renewable energy company **Vestas**, open conversation is encouraged on Viva Engage, but that doesn't mean it's all sunshine and roses, especially when people want to voice their opinion about all sorts of topics.

In **this enlightening Viva Engage Festival presentation**, Freja Hededal Christiansen explains how Vestas keeps conversations flowing on Viva Engage, even on the stickiest of topics.

3.11 How to identify a community "at risk"?

If your once-thriving community is showing signs of slowing, is it at risk of dying?
The most obvious indicator of a community at risk is a significant and sustained drop in activity levels. **SWOOP Analytics' Community Health Index** will show this graphically. This report tracks engagement levels over time, flagging levels that may require attention by the community leaders or community managers.

The Community Health Index data below reveals some fluctuations in active user engagement over the past year. Notably, the community experienced peaks in activity during October (57%), March (50%), and September (43%). However, there were significant drops to 0% in November, January, February, and July, indicating periods of no engagement.



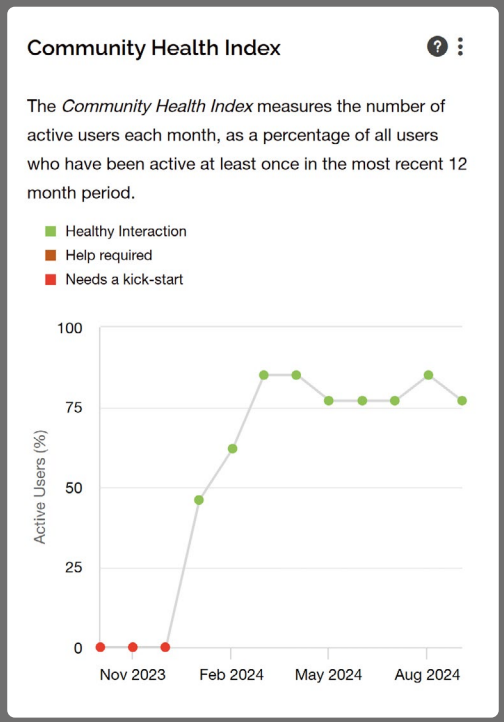
SWOOP Analytics' Community Health Index.

It is not expected that everyone in the organisation is active all the time on Viva Engage. However, for communities to be sustainable, a minimal level of core activity is required, and the **Community Health Index** alerts community leaders if the activity levels are dropping to dangerous levels, and therefore requiring their attention.

Finding the Community Health Index

with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

You can see the percentage of monthly active users over time in your organisation's communities in the **Community Health Index** report. This is found on the Activity tab of the Enterprise and Communities dashboards in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**. Higher scores show that users are returning regularly to communities, indicating they find value in the community's conversations.



SWOOP Analytics' Community Health Index report.

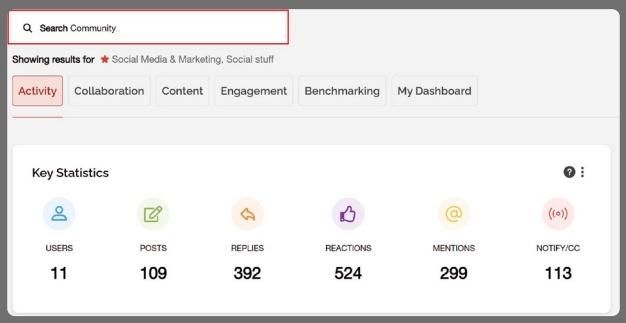
Looking at the number of posts versus the number of replies in the community is also very telling. As a general rule-of-thumb **there should be twice as many replies as there are posts**. If your community consists mostly of people posting, but few or no one is replying, then it feels more like a bulletin board than a community. In SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage you can see the number of posts and replies in the Key Statistics section. The community below has a very healthy split between posts and replies which suggests there is lots of conversation happening.

Figure 3 - Key Statistics in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage.

Key Statistics

with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

Head to the Activity tab in any of the dashboards in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** to find a summary of the **Key Statistics**. This will show the activity that's taken place over the selected date range. If you view this report in the Communities dashboard, you can select one or multiple communities by adding them in the search bar at the top of dashboard (highlighted in the image below).

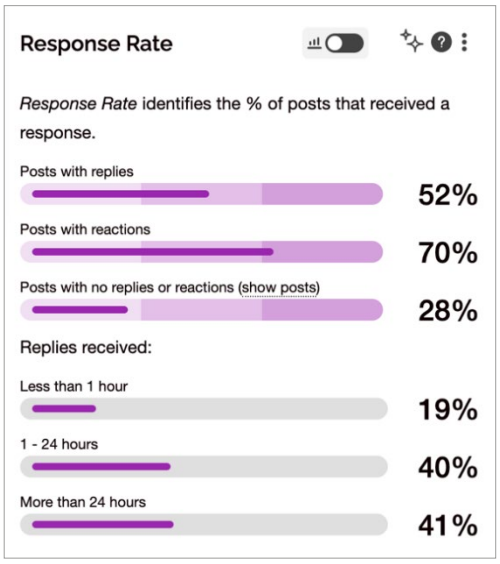


SWOOP Analytics' Key Statisics report on the Community dashboard.

Another way to quick spot if your community is at risk is to look at how many of the posts get a reply. This measure will tell you if your community is broadcasting content, or if it is resulting in conversations.

If the **Response Rate** is 50% or more, then it is a clear sign the community is focused on conversations, but as the rate drops below 50% it becomes more about broadcasting, and once you're down at the 25% level, members are seeing it as one-way communication. According to our benchmarking, the global average for Response Rate is 49.1%, and our top performers have achieved 58%, making it your aspirational goal.

In the example below, the Response Rate is just above 50% which is good, but a warning sign is that 28% of messages don't get any kind of response, neither a reply nor a reaction. This suggests the community isn't engaging much with almost a third of the posts.



Response Rate in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage.

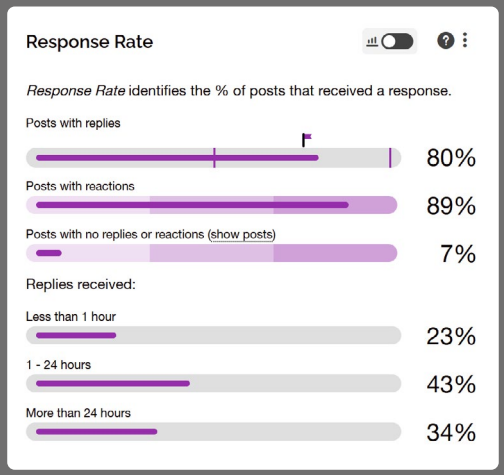
Aim for 58% Response Rate or more across your enterprise.

Average Response Rate: 49.1%
Goal: 58%

Finding Response Rates

with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

You can see the level of responses to activity in the **Response Rate** report under the Engagement tab across all but the Threads dashboard. The posts with no replies or reactions can be reviewed by clicking on the show posts link.



SWOOP Analytics' Response Rate report.

While the Community Health Index, Key Statistics and the Response Rate reports are helping you see if a community is likely to be struggling right now, it is possible to predict "at risk" communities.

With a decade of experience analysing millions of data points for Viva Engage, we know of three warning signals that are likely to ultimately lead to a lack of conversation, and therefore low engagement.

First, we know that asking questions is an important precursor for stimulating conversation. The Curiosity Index measures how many messages include a question, and the average is 11.8% in this year's benchmarking study. Our top performers had 15% of messages with questions, so this is your aspirational goal.

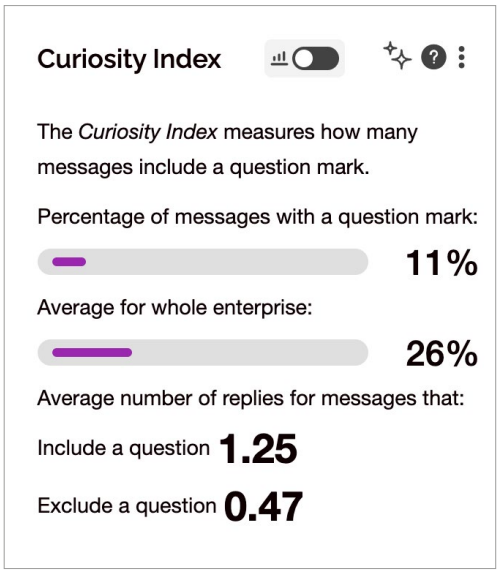
Aim for a Curiosity Index of 15% across your enterprise.

KEY FINDING

The power of asking questions: SWOOP Analytics' benchmarking data found you get almost **150% more replies when you ask a question** on Viva Engage, but only **12% of posts or replies include a question** in their posts.

If the Curiosity Index is low (0-5%) this is a warning flag that conversations could soon start to decline.

In the example below, the curiosity is good at 11% and it is clear from the difference in the average number of responses to messages with (1.25 replies) and without a question (just 0.47 replies) just how powerful it is to be asking questions.

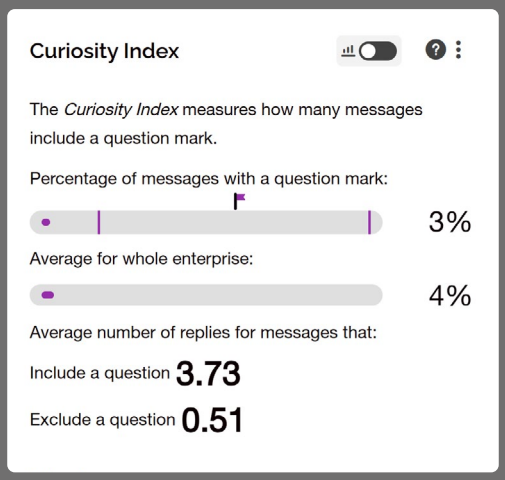


Curiosity Index in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage.

Curiosity Index

with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

Asking questions is an indication of knowledge sharing. The **Curiosity Index** report in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** is found under the **Engagement** tab of all but the Threads dashboard and can help you understand if people are actively engaged in asking questions.



SWOOP Analytics' Curiosity Index report.

Secondly, people don't typically spend their entire workday in Viva Engage, but when they are @mentioned they will receive a notification, and they know there's something they need to be involved with. We measure this in the Mention Index. When there are few, or no, @mentions in posts, members might miss relevant conversations which impacts the quality of the conversations and is a warning flag that your community could be heading for a decline.

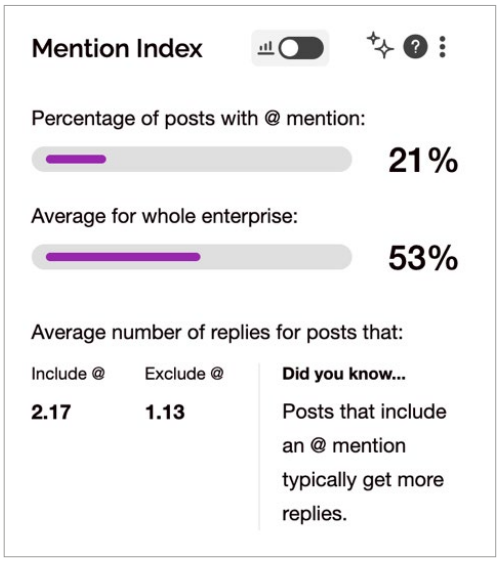
The Mention Index measures the percentage of posts that include at least one @mention, and according to our benchmarking, the average is 14.3%. If the Mention Index is low (0-5%), this is also a warning flag you need to pay attention to. Our top performers had 21% of posts with mentions. We suggest a goal of more than 18%.

Aim for a Mention Index of 18% or more across your enterprise.

KEY FINDING

Don't forget to @mention colleagues: SWOOP Analytics' benchmarking data found you receive **120% more replies when you @mention a person** in a Viva Engage post, but only **14% of posts do it**.

In the example below, the Mention Index is one of a top performers at 21%, and here you can also clearly see the substantial impact it has on the average number of replies when you @mention a colleague (2.17 replies) and when you do not (1.13 replies).

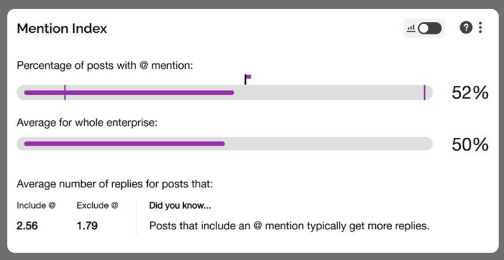


Mention Index in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage.

Mention Index

with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

Want to find out if people are getting mentioned in posts? The **Mention Index** report in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** is found under the **Engagement** tab of all but the Threads dashboard, and can help you understand if people are bringing others into the conversation by @mentioning them.



SWOOP Analytics' Mention Index report.

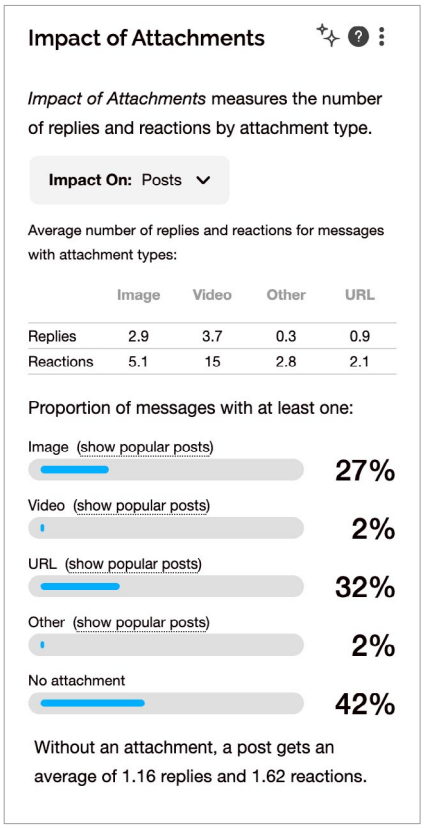
Finally, the use of pictures and video has a substantial impact on replies. According to our global benchmarking, an average 50% of posts have images attached, and 3.4% have videos attached. If you fall substantially behind this, it's another warning sign. Our top performers had 64% of posts with pictures attached and 6% with videos attached.

Aim for 64% of posts with attachments.

KEY FINDING

Add an attachment: SWOOP Analytics' benchmarking data found you receive **82% more replies when you add an image** to a post and **168% more replies with a video**. **50% of posts have images included** but only **4% have videos**. If you want to stand out, think about adding a video.

In the example below the percentage of posts that include a picture is 27%, and these have received an average of 2.9 replies. Posts without pictures received 1.16 replies, so quite a drop in the number of replies.



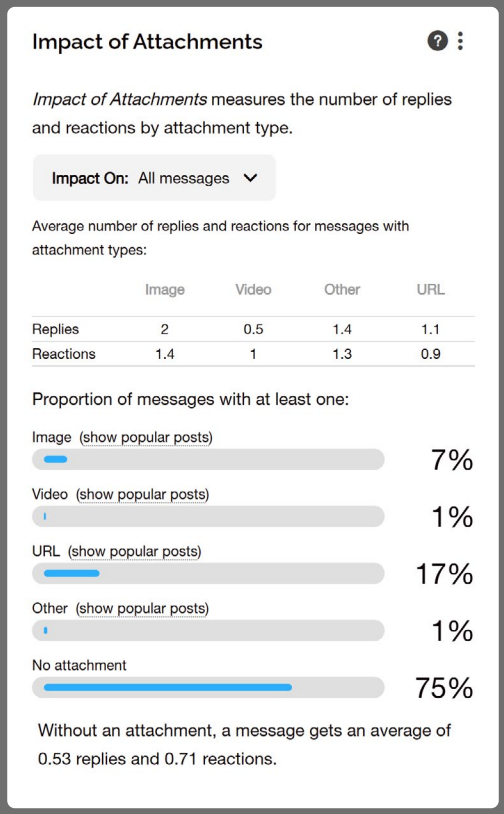
Impact of Attachments in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage.

The above metrics will be incredibly valuable for any community manager to help ensure the community is vibrant.

Impact of Attachments

with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

To check how attachments are making an impact to replies and reactions across your Viva Engage network, head to the **Impact of Attachments** report. It is found on the **Engagement** tab of all but the Threads dashboard. You can select to look at the impact on the main post, replies to posts only, or on all messages by switching the drop down at the top of the report. You can also expand each attachment type to show the most popular posts with that type of attachment; handy if you want to check, for example, the current most popular post with a video.



SWOOP Analytics' Impact of Attachments report.

3.12 When too much of a good thing becomes a risk

SWOOP Analytics' Influencer Risk Score is designed to identify those communities that might show none of the warning signs mentioned above, but instead be over-reliant on one or two key members. If we see activity polarising around a few select members, rather than being more evenly spread amongst the membership, the community would also be flagged as "at risk".

The Influencer Risk Score measures the degree of reliance on a selected few people. The Influencer Risk Score at the bottom of the Influential People report looks at the degree of drop-off from the most influential member and those lower down on the list. The lower the risk, the better. A high Influencer Risk Score is an indicator that the community is over-reliant on one or two very active members. Should they leave the community, it will likely collapse. Good communities have multiple influential people.

Aim for an Influencer Risk Score of 18% in each Viva Engage community.

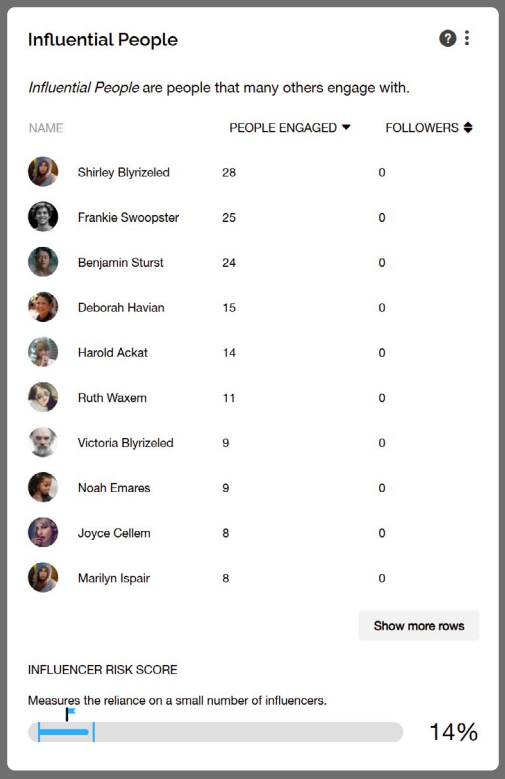
Our 2024/25 Viva Engage benchmarking data found the average Influencer Risk was 33% across the 70 organisations benchmarked, with the best at an impressive 6%. The goal to aim for is 18%.

Average Influencer Risk: 33%
Best result: 6%
Goal (top 20%): 18%

Influencer Risk

with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

Tracking influencer risk is straightforward in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**. It is shown on the **Influential People** report, found in all dashboards under the **Engagement** tab, except for the Personal dashboard. This report shows the number of people that have engaged (replied, reacted, commented or shared) with another person's post and ranks them by the number of people engaged. The **Influencer Risk Score** is shown at the bottom of the report.



Influential People

Influential People are people that many others engage with.

NAME	PEOPLE ENGAGED	FOLLOWERS
Shirley Blyrizeled	28	0
Frankie Swoopster	25	0
Benjamin Sturst	24	0
Deborah Havian	15	0
Harold Ackat	14	0
Ruth Waxem	11	0
Victoria Blyrizeled	9	0
Noah Emares	9	0
Joyce Cellem	8	0
Marilyn Ispair	8	0

Show more rows

INFLUENCER RISK SCORE

Measures the reliance on a small number of influencers.

14%

SWOOP Analytics' Influential People report.

3.13 How do you revive a community that has plateaued in engagement?

Communities go through cycles, especially as leaders come and go. For established communities, injecting new life will likely become a challenge at some point.

Reviving a community that has plateaued in engagement, or even appears to have "died", involves several key strategies:

1. **Re-establish the purpose**: Make sure the community's purpose is clear and well communicated. This can help members understand what the community is for and how they can meaningfully contribute.
2. **Optimise community settings**: Adjust the community settings to reduce barriers to participation. For instance, make sure members can easily manage their notification settings to avoid being overwhelmed by too many email notifications, or miss out on conversations because notifications were turned off.
3. **Embed the use of Viva Engage into an internal communications plan**: This can help clarify the role of the community in the larger organisation and guide members on how to use it effectively.
4. **Provide training guides**: Simplified training guides can help members understand the key functions of the platform and encourage thoughtful posting.
5. **Celebrate success**: If your community is starting from a low baseline, celebrate successes through recognition. This could involve praising members, using @mentions, imagery, and hashtags to boost engagement and set the standard for the rest of the community.
6. **Regularly measure success**: Regular reporting or checking your live SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage dashboard can help track the community's performance. Look for trends in engagement and identify key influencers who can help amplify messages.
7. **Consult SWOOP Analytics' goal-setting feature**: If you're unsure what good looks like, try consulting the SWOOP Analytics goal-setting feature to see how you compare. This can help set measurable goals for your enterprise.
8. **Ask Dr SWOOP**: The AI-enabled community coach is available in SWOOP Analytics' dashboards and you can ask Dr SWOOP for ideas about what you can do to kick-start your community. You can even ask it to review your draft post and ask Dr SWOOP to make it more engaging, and thus more likely to stimulate conversation.
9. **Patience and persistent**. Remember, the goal is to create a psychologically safe space for members to share and collaborate. Patience and persistent efforts can help revive a plateaued community.

Try these simple tips to get more people engaged in at risk communities.

» Start by asking questions in your post

Our benchmarking found you get almost **150% more replies when you ask a question** on Viva Engage, but only **12% of posts have questions**.

You can find out how many questions you're asking, and how many questions are being asked in each community, or even across the entire enterprise, by checking SWOOP Analytics' Curiosity Index.

If you're not sure what questions to ask, get inspiration from some of these:

1. What's the biggest growth opportunity that you see for our company right now? What are we not doing that we should be?
2. What's one project you'd love to focus on for an entire week but don't have time to accomplish? Why?
3. What are we spending a ton of time doing, that has the least impact?
4. What was the most positive compliment you received about our company from a customer this week?
5. What was the most common negative piece of feedback you received from a customer lately?
6. How would you describe our company to a potential customer?
7. What is something you or a customer would like to see on the product roadmap?
8. How is management doing? Any feedback for me on my leadership?
9. What's a way I can improve my communication or listening skills?
10. What's something you need from someone on a different team that you aren't getting?

If you'd like more inspiration, we've written a white paper on "Questions that create connections and impact for leaders" on Viva Engage which could be helpful to you, or watch this video "How to ask questions that create connections and impact for leaders".

» @mention your colleagues

Our benchmarking data found you receive **120% more replies when you @mention a person** in a Viva Engage post, but **only 14% of posts do it**.

You can find out how many people are @mentioning colleagues by looking at SWOOP Analytics' Mention Index across the Personal, Segments, Topics, Communities and Enterprise dashboards.

For example, in the Personal dashboard, the Mention Index will show how your score compares with the rest of the organisation. You can also see the impact of including an @mention in a post versus excluding an @mention. The Mention Index makes it easy to show individuals, communities and the broader organisation the importance of writing posts with the intention to collaborate. It is much more motivating for an employee to reply to a post when they have been directly invited into the conversation in the form of an @mention.

@mentioning colleagues can also save time, money and resources. For example, global publishing company **Wiley** solved a problem on Viva Engage, and saved time and money, by @mentioning colleagues to help. An employee named Veronica posted on Viva Engage that she had a voicemail she needed to listen to from an editor. But the voicemail was in Korean and Veronica didn't speak Korean. She posted on Viva Engage asking if anyone could help. Another employee, in another office, saw the post and while she couldn't speak Korean either, she knew someone who could. The Korean speaker, Jerry, was tagged into the post and replied that he could help. Instead of spending time to find and pay for a translator, the entire problem was solved internally on Wiley's Viva Engage network, resulting in a quicker, free and more productive outcome.

» Add an attachment to draw attention

SWOOP Analytics' benchmarking data found you receive **82% more replies when you add an image** to a post and **168% more replies with a video**. **50% of posts have images** but **only 4% have a video**, so if you want to stand out, think about adding a video.

Read more about the impact of attachments.

3.14 What are the best ways to promote a community to grow membership?

Promoting a Viva Engage community effectively can significantly enhance membership and engagement. Some of the best ways to promote a community is to tap into other communication channels.

Cross-channel communication:

Utilise email newsletters, intranet pages, and Microsoft Teams to promote your Viva Engage community. Highlight the benefits and value of joining the community to encourage participation. Interview some of your active members and ask them what motivates them to participate and what value they get. Then share these insights.

If you send weekly or monthly staff newsletters, a simple way to promote Viva Engage communities is to share a teaser of a post in the newsletter, with a direct link to the post or community to read more.

IFM Investors

If you want to reach every employee at global investment services provider IFM Investors, forget about sending an all-staff email. Instead, post on Viva Engage.

Once you've posted your message, the Internal Communications team will amplify your message by including a link to your Viva Engage post in a weekly newsletter, as part of a snapshot of conversations that are happening across the organisation.

IFM Investors has a dedicated Internal Communication team that facilitates the Viva Engage network across the organisation. They "promote" posts from relevant Viva Engage communities by linking them to the All Company community, so people can quickly navigate to important conversations across the business. Find out more.

Another well-used tactic is to embed Viva Engage as a webpart on your SharePoint intranet home page.

Victoria Police's internal comms team often scans Viva Engage communities to find stories to amplify across the police service, and then shares the story on the intranet. When the full story is published on the intranet, Victoria Police has enabled a webpart to be added at the bottom of the intranet news story, allowing access to the original Viva Engage post so anyone can comment. It's a case of coming full circle, from Viva Engage to the intranet and back to Viva Engage. Sarah Larsen, Senior Corporate Communications Channels Advisor at Victoria Police, said the intranet and Viva Engage are two channels that cannot be used in isolation, they work together. **Read more about how Victoria Police uses the two channels in unison**.

Engage leadership:

Encourage leaders to actively participate in the community. When leaders are visible and engaged, it can inspire others to join and contribute. A senior leader's involvement can significantly boost community activity and membership. Think about posting some exclusive communications on Viva Engage to encourage colleagues to visit, or use the Announcement feature to trigger an email or Microsoft Teams notification.

Add the Viva Engage app on Microsoft Teams:

Encourage colleagues to add the Viva Engage app to Microsoft Teams. For easy access, you can pin the Viva Engage app to your Teams sidebar by right-clicking on the app icon and selecting "Pin."

By integrating Viva Engage into Microsoft Teams, you can leverage Viva Engage within the Teams environment. This setup allows for a seamless experience where team collaboration and broader community engagement coexist.

Host competitions or events:

Organise competitions, campaigns or events within the community to generate interest and excitement. These activities can serve as a catalyst for new members to join and engage with the community.

RAA runs regular "adoption" campaigns on the organisation's official news Viva Engage community to get people onto Viva Engage, and once they're on the platform they're likely to look around at other communities and engage in conversations. The corporate communications team posted a competition to tag in a friend to share a coffee at the head office's café. Five double vouchers were up for offer, and the demand was high. The competition cost RAA maybe $50 in coffee vouchers, but resulted in hundreds of people engaging in the post, and more than 80% of the entire workforce, which is spread across the state of South Australia, seeing the post.

A screenshot of the Viva Engage post encouraging colleagues to tag in a friend to share a free coffee.

Another adoption competition was for a $250 RAA travel voucher up for grabs. Employees were asked to tag a colleague they thought deserved a holiday. It remains one of the top five **Most Engaging Posts** for the year, according to data from **SWOOP Analytics**.

Tap into your influencers:

Use **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** to identify your most **Influential People**. These are colleagues who have a wide reach and can effectively communicate with others. Once you've identified your influencers, encourage them to post content and participate in key conversations. You can work with them to create campaigns that highlight the value of the community – share success stories, recognise other colleagues and @mention people to bring them into the conversation. By leveraging the influence of key people, you can create a ripple effect that encourages more employees to engage in communities.

Johnson & Johnson

Johnson & Johnson successfully used internal social influencers to drive engagement on Viva Engage to deploy change management across the organisation.

In her **Viva Engage Festival presentation**, Laurence Halimi Cige from Johnson and Johnson shared details of how the pharmaceutical giant taps into its own people to help with change management and how it measures the success of campaigns.

Encourage word of mouth:

Encourage existing members to invite their colleagues to join the community. Personal recommendations can be a powerful tool for growing membership.

Provide onboarding and training:

Offer onboarding sessions or training for new members to help them understand how to use Viva Engage effectively. This can help new members feel more comfortable and confident in participating.

Create high-value content:

Share high-quality content that is relevant and valuable to your target audience. This could include thought leadership pieces, industry insights, or engaging multimedia content like videos and infographics. High-value content attracts members and encourages them to participate.
By implementing these strategies, you can effectively promote your Viva Engage community and grow its membership.

EXPERT ADVICE

Nurturing communities on Viva Engage

Successful Viva Engage communities are often created organically to address a need, they follow organisational guidelines, they have a clear purpose and quality content, and community managers are given access to data to measure performance.

Most organisations with thriving Viva Engage networks have some core official communities, and the rest are organically created as needed, to meet a specific purpose. Many successful networks provide training sessions and guidance documents setting out roles and responsibilities, and they encourage community managers to use SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage to keep track of their community activity and engagement.

And don't forget governance! An annual spring clean of no-longer-used communities can be a valuable exercise.

These are some of the top tips from the best Viva Engage managers in the world. SWOOP Analytics contacted people we believe to be the world's experts in managing and facilitating Viva Engage networks as part of the research into our 2024/25 Viva Engage Benchmarking Report.[1] We asked our experts was: ***How did you decide which communities should be created and used, or has it been an organic process? How do you best launch communities? How do you ensure they are successful? Do you manage/facilitate/govern communities?***

Here are some of their responses.

1 *The experts contacted by SWOOP Analytics for this research are people who have been top performers in our previous benchmarking studies and recipients of a SWOOP Analytics Award for Outstanding Collaborative Performance or nominated by peers for the annual SWOOP Analytics Community Manager Award.*

Sage

British-based multinational business software group

Sean Zintl, Global Intranet & Channels Manager, Sage

Sean Zintl, Global Intranet & Channels Manager at Sage, said a core group of communities broadly aligned with key focus areas were established for the launch of Sage's Viva Engage network in 2020. These focus areas were Customer Success, Colleague Success, and Innovation. Within these areas, specific interest groups were identified that would benefit from a more open and collaborative platform.

"So, for example, within the Customer bucket we identified groups of customer service advisors who were keen to share examples of great customer service and who would use the platform for recognition within the teams," Sean said.

"Inside of Colleague Success we focused on an existing network of Sage colleagues who had already formed discussion and activation groups around topics like Diversity and Inclusion, Pride, Parenting or Gender – knowing that they would benefit from more easily sharing information and support across networks that span geographies and functions.

"Initially this was a fairly organic process as we wanted colleagues to discover the benefits of belonging to communities themselves."

Apart from business updates and collaboration, Sean said Sage also wanted colleagues to have fun on Viva Engage and not view it as a serious, top-down communication channel.

"So we set up communities for things like our yearly strategy kick-off events, where we encouraged colleagues to post photographs of their various sites and activities, dressing up and generally having fun," he said.

"We also used our 40th anniversary as an opportunity to engage all colleagues on the channel, inviting them to share stories and recollections of their time at Sage during that time. We received an overwhelming response with colleagues sharing old photos, videos, product demos and stories from across the decades, many of them quite emotional and heartwarming."

Sean said four years later, with an ever-increasing number of users, business areas are now actively and extensively using Viva Engage to share information and connect with colleagues.

> **"Given the nature of our business and the geographies we operate across, we have a decentralised system of management, with key owners of each community actively involved in monitoring the health of their community," he said.**

> "Giving these community owners access to SWOOP for Viva Engage has been pivotal for them in understanding how their communities are performing.
>
> "At an organisation level we do also use the tool to monitor communities and check up with those that are obviously flatlining, to understand whether they are still needed, or need additional support to keep them going."

Air Canada

Canadian airline

AIR CANADA

Andrew Clarke, Manager, Employee Social Media Communications, Air Canada

Andrew Clarke, Manager, Employee Social Media Communications at Air Canada, shares a similar story. Air Canada launched Viva Engage (then Yammer) more than 10 years ago, and Andrew said the creation of new communities was, and still is, an organic process.

The airline's key operational branches, such as In-Flight Service, Airports, Flight Operations, Contact Centres, and Cargo, were the first to launch, allowing employees to connect and engage with others in their own branch, no matter where they were in the global Air Canada network.

Important corporate departments and focus areas of the business, such as Air Canada's health and wellness program UBY (Unlock the Best in You), Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), Environmental Affairs, Human Resources, IT, Cyber Security and Privacy, and many more, followed suit.

> "These communities help employees share knowledge, ask questions, and find answers from community admins, subject matter experts, and each other," Andrew said.
>
> "Over time, Air Canada's Viva Engage network of public and private communities expanded to include social and special interest communities such as Employee Milestones, Community Photo Gallery, Travel Photography, Employee Discounts, Lost and Found, and more."

Andrew said private communities are also leveraged for focused initiatives, such as corporate pilot projects, to engage participants in sharing their opinions and feedback, as well as training and discussion groups for newly hired flight attendants.

Department of Transport and Main Roads, Queensland Government

Australian state department

Queensland Government
Department of Transport and Main Roads

Leonie Challacombe, Principal Advisor (Digital Culture), TMR

At the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), the approach to community management has been largely organic, evolving over the years to meet the diverse needs of the workforce and changes in the working environment.

Leonie Challacombe, Principal Advisor (Digital Culture) at TMR, said a core set of Viva Engage communities based on business objectives were initially established, and from there, it has grown to encompass a wide range of interests and functions.

> "TMR employees are empowered to create new communities, with guidance provided to support their success," she said.
>
> "Our team continues to educate and upskill employees, enabling them to manage their communities effectively. This involves offering training sessions and resources on best practices for community engagement and management.
>
> "To maintain active and engaging communities, each year we conduct a 'spring clean' to declutter and remove long-term inactive communities. This helps make active communities more easily discoverable and keeps conversations thriving across TMR."

By creating an environment where employees can manage their own communities, Leonie said it ensures Viva Engage remains a dynamic and integral part of TMR's Digital Workplace Strategy.

National Grid

British energy group

nationalgrid

Sally Jackson, Senior Manager, Content and Channels, National Grid

National Grid also allows its Viva Engage network of communities to grow organically, although there is a core set of official communities that are proactively managed. These core communities include Business Unit and Function communities which are managed by the relevant colleague communication teams.

National Grid is planning to give all community managers access to SWOOP Analytics to give them a better understanding of their communities and to better run them.

> **"We are planning work to roll out SWOOP Analytics to community managers for our official communities later this year – to help them run their communities more effectively," said Sally Jackson, Senior Manager, Content and Channels, at National Grid.**

"We have also provided training sessions and guidance documents in the past for key community managers. We have a governance document which sets out roles and responsibilities, and when and how certain functionality should be used (such as All Company announcements and featured posts)."

Sally said National Grid also has a set of "have your say" guidelines for colleagues to follow when posting, along with a moderation process for reported posts.

"However, we find we very rarely need to intervene, and usually only on extremely emotive subjects," she said.

"We find that we don't need to moderate proactively."

Network Rail

Owner, repairer and developer of railway infrastructure in England, Scotland and Wales

Rajinder Pryor, Head of Business Partnering, Network Rail

Like most of the other organisations surveyed, the creation of Network Rail's Viva Engage communities has often been organic, with the exception of certain employee communities which were launched to support the growth of particular networks.

"Administrators own certain groups but Storylines have also become a medium for individuals to use to engage colleagues – as their own personal area to share thoughts, stories etc," said Rajinder Pryor, Head of Business Partnering at Network Rail.

Danfoss

Global engineering technology organisation

Jorn Nurkka, Senior Communication Advisor, Danfoss

At Danfoss, anybody and everybody can create and launch a Viva Engage community. The caveat is that the community must abide by Danfoss' internal guidelines, for example, no buying and selling, no political content, and a respectful tone.

"Many of our communities are created in connection with our sites where they share local information, but we also have a lot of communities of interest, for example, Danfoss Photographers' Group, Power BI Experts or Danfoss Assistant Network, created by colleagues with a common interest," said Jorn Nurkka, Senior Communication Advisor at Danfoss.

> **"Launching a community is not a 5km run, more like a half-marathon, and it takes a lot of nurturing to make a community a success.**
>
> **"To help our community owners to make their communities a success we have created a page on our intranet with tips and tricks on how to run a community, and we also have a community for community owners where they can share experiences with each other."**

Jorn said it's also important to ensure there is relevant and interesting information posted in the community.

"Otherwise your audience will not come back," he said.

"It's like going into a bar for a beer and then they don't have beer – well, I guess you will not come back to that bar again."

Juniper Networks

US-based networking technology company

Kevin Crossman, IT Manager and Content Collaboration Service Owner, Juniper Networks

Kevin Crossman, IT Manager and Content Collaboration Service Owner at Juniper Networks, said the creation of Viva Engage communities is organic, although some parts of the business have taken a purposeful approach to creating communities for specific audiences. For example, HR has various geographical benefits communities for people to ask questions in.

"We have branding guidelines and the Network Admin provides guidance on best practices, auto-population options, and more," Kevin said.

"The Network Admin serves as the 'enterprise community manager' for the network, providing editorial guidance and taking care to keep messages on track and to weed out dead communities or test communities."

Westpac New Zealand

Bank

Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager, Westpac NZ

Initially, Westpac New Zealand took an organic approach to creating Viva Engage (then Yammer) communities.

"In the beginning we wanted people to set up the communities that made sense or mattered to them so they could get started (with Yammer) with a sense of passion for their topic, and curiosity for what was possible," said Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager at Westpac New Zealand.

"No approvals were required, just a drive to start a conversation with a bunch of like-minded colleagues!

"However, we've always had support available for those wanting to start a new group, and keep it going, with coaching, advice, materials (like imagery) and resources such as templates."

Over time, Fiona said she has noticed many of those original communities have foundered, or been deleted, and replaced with fit-for-purpose communities around a single compelling proposition like a team, a project, or an initiative.

> **"These are far more successful because they're set up for a specific purpose, and managed by people who have a clear idea of what they want to achieve and communicate, i.e. they've started with one or more key objectives," she said.**

Westpac New Zealand now has an online request process for new communities.

"As part of this, we have an intensive approach available to admins, working with them on their objectives/outcomes before they start, and helping them set their communities up for sustainable adoption and success, including communication ideas and plans to keep things fresh," Fiona said.

> **"The combination of templates, resources, coaching and a support model has really helped some new or floundering communities move, over time, to the top of the most engaged communities, as measured by SWOOP.**
>
> **"Even though we do provide that foundational support, mostly we take a hands-off approach to administering or managing communities and this encourages individual nuanced approaches that better connect with their respective audiences."**

Schneider Electric

Global specialist in energy

At Schneider Electric, Cecile Kozinski, Global Brand and Communications, Channel Owner – SPICE+ and Viva Engage, said the creation of communities has been a mix of organic creation and systematically creating communities for communications for the functions, countries and other entities which help ensure every employee has access to effective communication and collaboration.

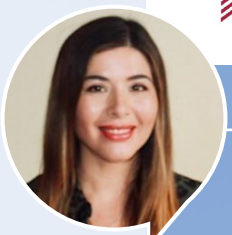
Cecile Kozinski, Global Brand and Communications, Channel Owner – SPICE+ and Viva Engage, Schneider Electric

> "Governance model is in place with the community owners and comms leaders being the catalyst in driving communications among the important and official communities," she said.
>
> "The community members are also encouraged to participate and engage on the topics of their relevance and interest to keep the engagement levels high and very often above benchmarks."

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank

Australian bank

Evita Puccio, Senior Communications Manager, Internal Engagement - Digital Channels at Bendigo and Adelaide Bank said governance is key to creating new communities, with owners of the community given clear guidelines of their responsibilities.



Evita Puccio, Senior Communications Manager, Internal Engagement, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank

> "Internal Communications have established a governance approach that outlines community management responsibilities, community lifecycle and how requests for new communities are managed," she said.

Bernie Murtagh

Microsoft Viva Engage Adoption and Training Consultant

Bernie Murtagh, Microsoft Viva Engage Adoption and Training Consultant

"Don't invite me to join your community unless you are offering canapés and fizz - aka engaging content and meaningful discussions that I can actively participate in!" – Bernie's words to remind people to make their community engaging and worth participating in.

Bernie says communities are at the heart of the Viva Engage experience, and her approach to community creation combines strategic planning with organic growth.

> **"Initially, communities are established based on key business needs, such as an increase in employee engagement, enhanced communication, knowledge sharing and innovation," she said.**
>
> **"Over time, employees naturally begin to form their own communities based on common interests and emerging topics."**

Bernie emphasises the importance of a strong launch, ensuring each community has a clear purpose and gains initial momentum through active promotion and engagement from key stakeholders.

> **"Viva Engage is only as good as the content we feed it through excellent community management," she said.**

To ensure success, Bernie advocates for ongoing facilitation, planning ahead with content, encouraging leader participation, and maintaining a balanced approach between governance and organic development. This allows communities to thrive naturally while aligning with the community goals. Bernie also recommends a mix of both business and social communities to foster a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

Bernie's top community recommendations include:

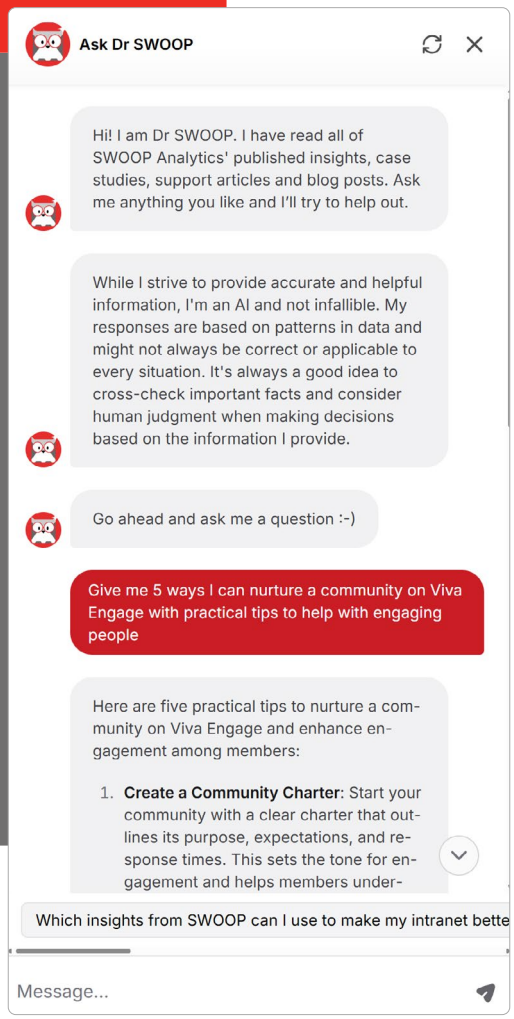
1. **All Company community:** Strategically aligned and restricted in terms of who can post, but open to participation from everyone to engage with shared content.
2. **Hobbies and Passions community:** A space to showcase talents, passions, and skills outside of the workplace.
3. **Viva Engage Training community:** Dedicated to offering and delivering training, as it's crucial to the platform's success. Bernie stresses the importance of not assuming people will naturally understand the platform —they need support and guidance to feel confident using Viva Engage in their daily work routines.

More expert advice at your finger tips with Dr SWOOP

This report can't cover every aspect of how to nurture Viva Engage communities, so if you want further help and you're a SWOOP Analytics customer, why not ask **Dr SWOOP**?

Dr SWOOP is our Generative AI bot that has been specifically trained on SWOOP's benchmarking research, case studies, and knowledge base. This makes Dr SWOOP a quick way to ask about any element of building a business case for Viva Engage and many other aspects of successfully using the tools in your digital workplace.

Find Dr SWOOP on your SWOOP Analytics dashboard for Viva Engage, SharePoint intranet, Microsoft 365, Microsoft Teams or Workplace from Meta by clicking on the Dr SWOOP owl icon.



Right: SWOOP Analytics' Dr SWOOP chat window.

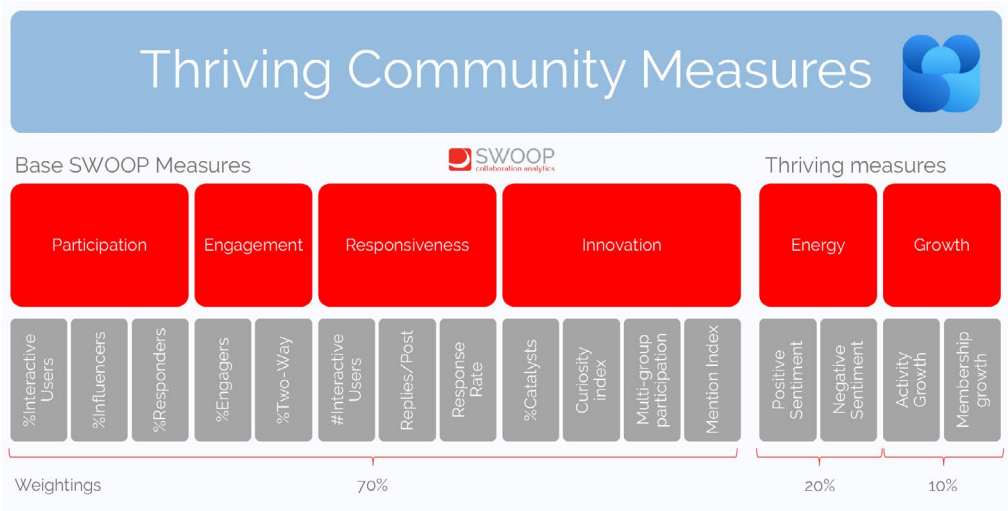
2024/25 Community champions

As well as ranking the top performing Viva Engage enterprises, which takes into account every Viva Engage community across each organisation (ie the high and low performing communities), we also did a deep-dive analysis into 3,751 "active" Viva Engage communities across the 70 organisations benchmarked. These "active" communities had regular activity throughout the six-month period assessed – posts, replies, comments and reactions.

We then looked at the "regularly active" communities – those that had, on average, **at least one interaction every workday for the six-month period analysed**. We analysed these communities on measures of two-way relationships (reciprocity), connections between members, sentiment analysis of conversations, growth in activity, consistent activity and more to identify the top "thriving" communities.

We also added a dimension to assess whether a community is thriving (or not). The key thriving measures relate to sentiment, growth and consistent activity. Surprisingly, it was this last factor of consistent activity that proved to be the hardest to meet. We set the bar of at least one activity each working day, on average. We found only 10% of the 3,751 regularly active communities we analysed could meet this threshold.

The below diagram shows the SWOOP Analytics measures used and the weightings given to each measure.



We approached organisations ranked in the top 1% of the 3,751 communities analysed, and have shared some of their stories. Below we list the names of the organisations with these top performing communities, ranked in order based on SWOOP Analytics' measures.

As noted earlier in this report, in this year's analysis of 70 organisations, **three of the top four ranked Viva Engage networks were based in New Zealand**. Surprisingly, when we ranked 3,751 individual communities across all the benchmarked organisations based on measures for participation, people-to-people engagement, sentiment, growth, responsiveness, and innovation, a **quarter of the top 20 ranked communities were also New Zealand based!**

We discovered this Kiwi connection when we approached each of these top performing organisations to ask them to reveal the purpose and best practices of the communities we ranked the highest. **The secret to their success turned out to be simple – they bring the fun to work.** Rather than stick with plain corporate comms messaging, they often present the messaging in a fun, more engaged way. We had one example of a multinational organisation that shared the same messaging about a new corporate initiative across two countries. In one country, the messaging was presented on Viva Engage as a formal text-based post. It received very little engagement. Exactly the same messaging was presented in a Viva Engage community for New Zealand-based employees, only it was written as a parody from a book series based on a popular a Netflix series, along with a witty video in the same style. It has been the Most Engaging Post in this New Zealand-based community for 2024. The same messaging, presented in two different ways, with very different employee interaction.

Another surprise was the high number of South Australian-based communities in our top performing communities. Restaurant chain KFC Australia had five of the top 10 communities based in South Australia, and South Australian member organisation RAA also had a community in the top 10 of our benchmarking of 3,751 Viva Engage communities. Therefore, **six of the top 10 ranked Viva Engage communities from the 3,751 benchmarked were based in South Australia**!

We want to recognise below these top performing Viva Engage communities (many from within the same organisation), all of whom ranked in the top 1% of the 3,751 communities benchmarked.

KFC Australia – Restaurant chain
Incredibly, KFC Australia boasted a whopping five communities in the top 10 of our global benchmarking of 3,751 communities! Even more surprisingly was that all five are store-based private communities, and all five are based in South Australia.

Medibank – Australian health insurer
Medibank had two communities in the top 10 of our benchmarking. The top performing Medibank community is called Medibank Community. It connects all 400 frontline team members at Australia's largest private health insurer, along with another 300 or so Medibank employees and executives who want to feel connected to the frontline of the business.

Primarily, the Medibank Community is used for daily updates across all stores, for recognition of employees' tenure, celebrating business successes, and for health and wellbeing initiatives like RUOK Day. It was also the No.2 performing community in SWOOP Analytics' 2023/24 Viva Engage Benchmarking Report, and has retained the position two years running. You can read more about this impressive community.

ANZ – Bank

ANZ also did exceptionally well in this year's benchmarking of communities, boasting seven communities ranked in the top 20 (with one in the top 10)! What makes it even more interesting is that five of these seven were New Zealand-based communities! That comes off the back of three of the top four ranked enterprises in SWOOP Analytics' overall benchmarking this year also being New Zealand based. Why are the Kiwis killing it when it comes to Viva Engage? They bring the fun to work. They put a fun spin on corporate comms to make them appealing and engaging.

Australia Post – Australia's national postal service

RAA – Member organisation providing insurance, road service, travel, motoring services and road safety across South Australia

RAA made the conscious decision to post official news **only** on Viva Engage – and it's clearly paid off. Viva Engage was launched across RAA in September 2023 in response to staff feedback asking for more opportunities to engage in two-way conversation. When Viva Engage was launched, the decision was made to make it RAA's official communications channel – no more news-driven intranet, no more all-staff emails and no more newsletters – everything is on Viva Engage. Fast forward a year and the RAA Official News community is ranked No.10 in the world. RAA's story below is a must read.

Comcast - multinational telecommunications and media conglomerate

Schneider Electric – multinational digital transformation of energy management and automation company

Progressive – American insurance company

Global beverage company

Each year when SWOOP Analytics contacts this global beverage company to share its top performing communities based on SWOOP's measures for participation, people-to-people engagement, sentiment, growth, responsiveness and innovation, the beverage company uses it as an opportunity to recognise these high performing communities internally, and to learn from them.

They will get together those community admins to recognise their achievements, and to uncover their best practices so others within the organisation can learn from their experience.

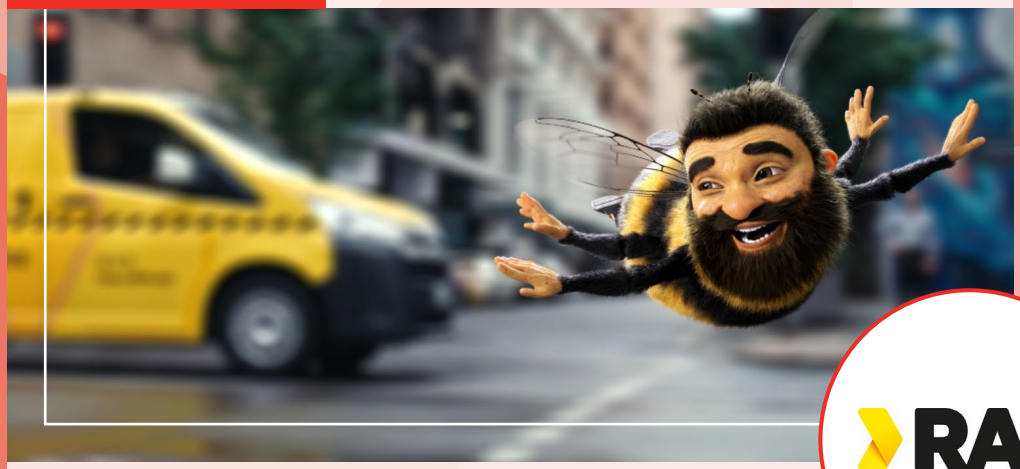
"We want to acknowledge those community leaders and take that as a moment of pride and recognition for those people who are working really hard to do something well," said the company's Director, Digital Workplace Communications.

"It doesn't happen by accident. All of this is very intentional work by these community leaders."

The Home Depot – American multinational home improvement retail corporation

Air Canada – Canadian airline

CASE STUDY



RAA

Engaging with purpose

Every few months, the internal communications team at RAA will post an "adoption" campaign on the organisation's official news Viva Engage community.

The purpose of the campaign – usually a competition – is to encourage people to engage with the platform in a fun and easy way. And, once they're on the platform they're likely to look around at other communities and engage in conversations. At RAA, it's especially important to have as many colleagues as possible using the RAA Official News community because it's the member organisation's official and only internal news channel.

Take the below post for example. The corporate communications team posted a competition to tag in a friend to share a coffee at the head office's café. Five double vouchers were up for offer, and the demand was high!

The competition cost RAA maybe $50 in coffee vouchers but resulted in hundreds of people engaging in the post, and more than 80% of the entire workforce, which is spread across the state of South Australia, seeing the post.

A screenshot of the Viva Engage post encouraging colleagues to tag in a friend to share a free coffee.

This simple campaign achieved exactly what it set out to do.

Sally Probert, Communications Manager – Internal Engagement, RAA.

> "With these adoption campaigns, we're wanting people to tag others and bring them into the conversation because we know that participation is key in getting more and more people involved," said Sally Probert, Communications Manager – Internal Engagement, at RAA.
>
> "If the person tagged is someone who hasn't really engaged with the platform before they might be more inclined to spend a bit of time looking at the channel."

Another adoption competition offered a $250 RAA travel voucher up for grabs. Employees were asked to tag a colleague they thought deserved a holiday. It remains one of the top five **Most Engaging Posts** of the year, according to data from **SWOOP Analytics**.

No more all-staff emails, no newsletters – it's all on Viva Engage

One of the main reasons the internal comms team at RAA wants to ensure everyone is using Viva Engage is because **Viva Engage is the official communications channel at the member organisation**, which provides insurance, road service, travel, energy and motoring services across South Australia.

Viva Engage was launched across RAA in September 2023 in response to staff feedback asking for more opportunities to engage in two-way conversation. Prior to Viva Engage, there was a twice-weekly newsletter sent via email that compiled company news, and email communications from the CEO and executive team.

When Viva Engage was launched, the decision was made to make it RAA's official communications channel.

> "So we weren't going to have a news-driven intranet, we weren't going to be sending out all-staff emails any more, we weren't going to be doing newsletters – everything was going to be via Viva Engage," Sally said.

Fast forward a year and the RAA Official News community is ranked No.10 in the world from more than 3,751 active Viva Engage communities benchmarked by SWOOP Analytics.

"Anything that you need to know about what's going on at RAA is published in that community," Sally said.

"We publish two to three stories a day on average, sometimes it's more, sometimes it's less, but I guess the whole point is it's meant to be a dynamic channel, you hear about news as it happens.

"When we had our newsletter, it was sent on a Tuesday and a Friday and so if you had news it had to wait until the Tuesday or the Friday. Whereas now we're able to share things as they happen."

What makes this community different to others is that while everyone at RAA is a member and can comment and engage with news, only the CEO, executive team and corporate communications team can publish news.

"We set it up so all staff can comment and engage with the news, but we wanted to protect it as a channel because, for some people, they only want to see the need-to-know news," Sally explained.

However, RAA still wants colleagues to share their news and stories, celebrate anniversaries and recognise colleagues.

That's where RAA's second top performing community comes in – Life at RAA. "We also wanted to encourage staff to share their own news and information, so we created another all-staff channel called 'Life at RAA'," Sally said.

"It's fantastic to know 'Life at RAA' is another top performing community, as it's solely driven by our people."

This community was ranked among the top 55 in SWOOP Analytics' 2024 benchmarking of 3,751 active communities in 2024.

Sally's offsider Marilyn McAuliffe, Communications Coordinator at RAA, said there were some sceptics prior to launch, suggesting it would be difficult to get colleagues posting.

"We have such a diverse workforce – including mobile roadside assistance patrols, solar and battery system installers, in-school educators and, of course, office-based staff – so there was talk of how successful this platform could really be," Marilyn said.

"But we've actually had some great success and we've seen people really champion it and own and post updates as they're out and about on the road," she said.

While staff were calling out for two-way communications, they were also not keen to add another channel to check for information. So this informed the early decision to make Viva Engage 'Official News' the primary news channel for RAA—a one-stop source of information for a busy workforce.

> "It couldn't just be a 'nice to have' space where you came and shared some news or information, we wanted it to be that dedicated place where you got your news and hopefully watch it grow from there," Sally said.
>
> "We really felt that what it needed was a core purpose to begin with and we decided that was as our official comms channel."

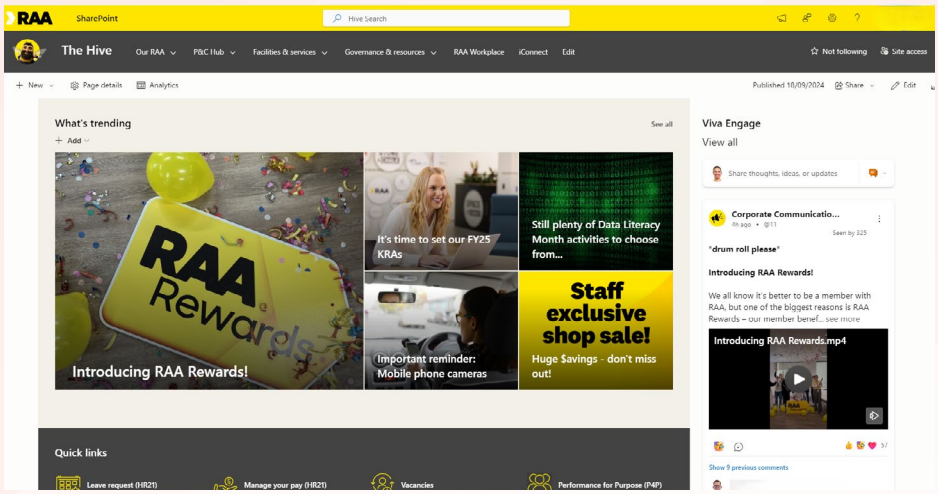
The key to success

Sally and Marilyn said there are two key drivers of Viva Engage success at RAA. Firstly, the willingness of RAA's people to embrace it and share their stories and ideas, and the support from the executive team, led by CEO Nick Reade.

"It really has become the community hub of RAA because people feel safe and comfortable to share, engage and acknowledge their colleagues on Viva Engage," Sally said.

Many of the five Most Engaging Posts across the enterprise at any one time are nostalgic posts about work anniversaries, celebrating achievements or big moments for the organisation.

Data from SWOOP Analytics shows 98% of employees access Viva Engage from their desktop. This is partly because the RAA intranet is the default browser for all employees, and because Viva Engage is embedded in Microsoft Teams. As Viva Engage is the official communications channel at RAA, it is embedded into the intranet for easy access, with feature posts amplified at the top of the intranet home page under a section called "What's trending".



A screenshot of RAA's intranet home page. The "What's trending" section at the top of the intranet features key Viva Engage posts for amplification, and the Viva Engage Corporate Communications is permanently embedded on the right-hand side with all the latest company news.

> "Our intranet is our default browser so whenever you launch a new browser, our intranet comes up and the Viva Engage feed is embedded there so people can scroll through the feed there, or they can click on it to open in a new window," Sally said.

Marilyn McAuliffe, Communications Coordinator, RAA.

All CEO updates are posted in Viva Engage with an Announcement feature, which results in every employee receiving a notification with a link to the post in Viva Engage. The Announcement feature is used about once a week.

> "There's an argument for doing that, even if it's just to bring news to those who don't regularly visit Viva Engage. The notification brings them, and we hope they might have a little look around while they're there," Marilyn said.

All executive announcements are posted in the RAA Official News community, along with all CEO updates, as he no longer sends any updates via email.

"We knew from some of the SWOOP Analytics case studies that participation by our leadership team would be key to driving success," Sally said.

"People would want to see their leaders using the channel."

Ahead of launch, the internal communications team gave the executive team tips including SWOOP Analytics' 1-2-3 rule, and finding just five minutes a day between meetings to scroll through Viva Engage to comment and react to posts.

Right: SWOOP Analytics' 1-2-3 rule.

"Our CEO in particular is very across what's going on," Sally said.

"He's such an advocate for the channel and he's especially passionate about creating opportunities to connect and engage with people across the organisation – whether that's all-staff Town Halls or simply connecting with someone on Viva Engage."

Sally and Marilyn said their CEO is also not afraid to ask hard questions and show his authentic self.

"He regularly posts to share what's on his mind—and these are posts he writes himself," Sally said.

"That authenticity comes through."

Community management

The internal comms team at RAA partners with teams across the business to understand their needs to schedule news on Viva Engage. The stakeholders are encouraged to engage with the posts made on their behalf (for example, there might be a particular policy change) and be active in the comments and available to answer questions. On the rare occasion a post is made and no comment follows, Marilyn might tag in a relevant person.

> "Generally, we try and wait for organic staff engagement to happen on the post before we get in there and do a little prodding to generate a bit of chatter," Marilyn said.

It's not just the internal comms team that's across Viva Engage, but the entire Corporate Communications team, including the social media team. RAA's social media team will often find content in the Official News and Life at RAA communities and ask to share externally.

An example of a post in Life at RAA being picked up by the social media team and used on Facebook.

"Our people are posting in Life at RAA, giving a shout out to a colleague on patrol who helped them out, or acknowledging somebody's 40 years of service to RAA, and our social media team is on there asking if they can put it on socials," Sally said.

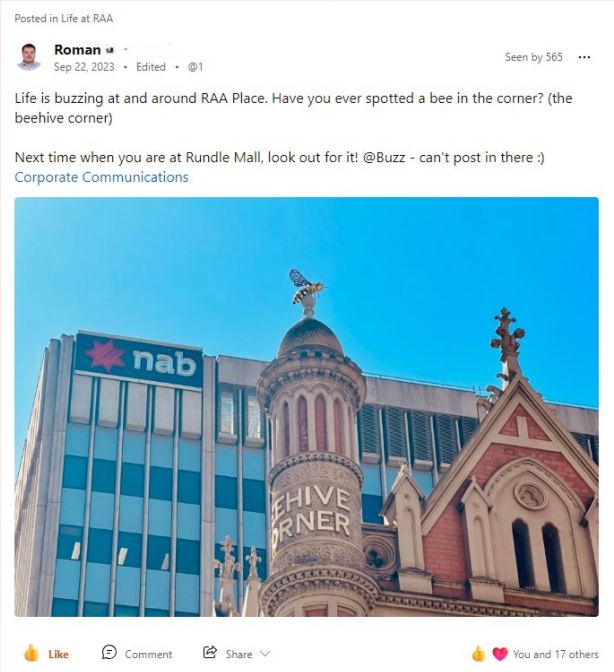
"That's been a nice crossover as well."

Sally tells the story of a new television advertising campaign. RAA's mascot is Trev the bee, and the new ad featured Trev.

Above: Trev the bee.

In Adelaide's iconic Rundle Mall, in the capital city of South Australia, there is a landmark called Beehive Corner. A staff member named Roman from Risk took a photo of it (RAA had recently moved into new offices around the corner) and posted in Life at RAA. This caught the attention of the brand team as they were preparing the campaign with the new bee mascot, and the finished ad now features Beehive Corner – something RAA's Chief Marketing Officer acknowledged on Roman's post happened because his post brought it to their attention.

"And how great for that staff member to have contributed to the campaign in that way," Sally said.



The post in Life at RAA community showcasing Beehive Corner.

RAA's people-first principle ensures staff know about any news relating to RAA before it hits external stakeholders. This is all posted in the RAA Official News community, so there are no surprises if a member of staff sees their organisation featured in the mainstream news.

"If we're making an announcement externally, staff always get that heads up first, and that's coming through our RAA Official News," Marilyn said.

The team continues to work on ways to increase engagement across the business, and are thrilled to see the impact it's had so far in two-way engagement.

SECTION 4

How to get leaders on board and flying with Viva Engage

Senior leaders play a critical role in employee engagement and promoting Viva Engage as an official internal channel. People want to be able to connect with leaders and interact with them. They want to feel they are being listened to, and for senior leaders, Viva Engage provides a unique platform to do this, at scale.

Viva Engage is fundamentally different from other communication channels because it **allows for two-way conversations**, rather than just broadcasting messages. Unlike other channels, Viva Engage means every employee has an equal voice – whether they are the CEO or a frontline worker. For this reason, Viva Engage facilitates better engagement between employees and senior leaders, which can be crucial for implementing business strategies.

Senior leaders can use Viva Engage to listen to what colleagues are talking about and ask questions. For example, if a new strategy is implemented, a leader can ask questions like; "How do you think our new strategy will impact your day-to-day work? What might get in the way?" This allows them to better understand their colleagues' thoughts and concerns, and address any potential issues.

Research conducted by SWOOP Analytics previously showed participation rates significantly increase once people have received reactions or replies from a senior leader. We found **if an employee is directly recognised by the CEO, their activity on Viva Engage increases by 28% and they develop 60% more new connections**. It's not just the CEO who makes a big impact. When we take into account the activities of the **entire executive leadership team's response to employees' posts, employees' activity on Viva Engage increased by 56% and they formed 146% more new connections**.

As part of this year's research, we analysed the communication and collaboration performances of the most influential people on Viva Engage to see which job categories dominate. Interestingly, the category for executives and senior leaders scored the lowest, while people in roles like HR, legal, finance, marketing, consultant, advisor, specialist and communications were the best performers.

That's not to say executives and senior leaders are the poorest Viva Engage users, it's more a case of them being the worst performers amongst a sample of the best users, ie the most Influential People. However, executives and senior leaders are stronger performers when it comes to reading news on the intranet than they are on using Viva Engage.

We interviewed some of the world's experts in managing and facilitating Viva Engage networks[1] and asked them how they convinced busy leaders to use Viva Engage. The overwhelming answer was showing leaders the impact of their efforts by giving them the data. With data you can demonstrate the value of their work.

1 *The experts contacted by SWOOP Analytics for this research are people who have been top performers in our previous benchmarking studies and recipients of a SWOOP Analytics Award for Outstanding Collaborative Performance or nominated by peers for the annual SWOOP Analytics Community Manager Award.*

One of the most effective ways to do this is to benchmark your leaders so they can immediately see how they are engaging on Viva Engage, and how they compare with their fellow leaders.

With **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** you are able to benchmark senior leaders and then coach them in how they can improve or hone their engagement skills. You can get a detailed picture of the behavioural profile of each person and compare their levels of collaboration with their peers. You can **build your own personal benchmarking leaderboard**.

In the example below we have a table showing the Viva Engage activity levels of three very different senior leaders. Shirley is the standout high-performer who has posted 165 times and has also replied to others (Replies – Made, 425 times), and is reacting to others (Reactions – Made, 438 times). This demonstrates that Shirley is actively engaging in conversations with others, and she is rewarded by people replying (Replies – Received, 421 times), and reacting (Reactions – Received, 463 times) to her.

Joyce is also active on Viva Engage, but her activity isn't sparking many replies and could suggest that her writing style doesn't encourage further conversation, and Emma is yet to discover the power of employee engagement on Viva Engage.

Personal Benchmarking

Lists: Leadership Team

search to select communities ...

Summary of interaction levels for **all communities**:

NAME	POSTS	REPLIES		REACTIONS		NOTIFY/CC		MENTIONS		TOTAL	CURIOSITY	MENTION
		Made	Rec	Made	Rec	Made	Rec	Made	Rec			
Shirley Blyrizeled	165	425	421	438	463	23	54	219	202	2410	9%	49%
Joyce Cellem	1	43	20	8	47	1	2	38	47	207	2%	0%
Emma Thandso	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%

A screenshot of SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage's Personal Benchmarking report.

Empowered with data you can become a trusted communication and engagement advisor to your senior leadership team, coaching them in the best way to write for better engagement.

Benchmarking leaders

with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

If you're supporting leaders to engage and connect more with Viva Engage, **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** can help.

The **Personal Benchmarking** report is the found in the Personal dashboard under the Benchmarking tab and allows selected people to create a "league table" of leaders to be able to quickly compare activity and engagement levels.

Personal Benchmarking

Lists: Senior Leadership

search to select communities ...

Summary of interaction levels for **all communities**:

NAME	POSTS	REPLIES		REACTIONS		NOTIFY/CC		MENTIONS		TOTAL	CURIOSITY	MENTION	MULTI-GROUP PARTICIPATION	SWOOP PERSONA	RANK	ACCOUNT ACTIVE	NUDGE
		Made	Rec	Made	Rec	Made	Rec	Made	Rec								
Shirley Blyrizeled	166	425	423	439	464	23	54	219	202	2415	9%	49%	82%	Engager	5	yes	Well done!
Frankie Swoopster	116	336	271	444	471	66	36	243	162	2145	3%	62%	81%	Engager	5	yes	Well done!
Benjamin Sturst	71	324	190	658	242	101	33	291	134	2044	3%	58%	85%	Responder	5	yes	Well done!
Deborah Havian	41	249	153	105	237	74	48	70	178	1155	2%	29%	77%	Engager	2	yes	Well done!
Sarah Brawhe	94	137	149	40	252	15	41	86	72	886	6%	45%	64%	Catalyst	1	yes	Well done!
Victoria Blyrizeled	9	84	48	125	78	9	27	81	49	510	2%	67%	65%	Responder	1	yes	Well done!
Ruth Waxem	3	36	14	32	32	1	23	10	59	210	0%	33%	77%	Responder	1	yes	Ask a question
Joyce Cellem	1	43	20	8	47	1	2	38	47	207	2%	0%	50%	Engager	1	yes	We'd love to hear more from you.
Noah Emares	3	29	19	86	25	1	14	2	20	199	0%	0%	78%	Responder	1	yes	Ask a question
Noah Cellem	0	3	0	8	2	0	3	2	12	30	0%	0%	0%	Responder	1	no	Start a conversation
Arthur Thdoz	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	8	12	100%	0%	0%	Observer	1	yes	A 'like' matters
Robert Thdoz	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	Observer	0	no	You're missing out
Emma Clangery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	Observer	0	no	You're missing out

SWOOP Analytics' Personal Benchmarking report.

This method of benchmarking leaders worked amazingly well for global agriculture company **Syngenta**. When it held its global leadership conference, leaders were presented with a table showing their personal level of interaction on Viva Engage (then Yammer) compared with their peers. This benchmarking table from SWOOP Analytics ranked each leader based on their engagement levels, highlighting those who were actively engaging with their teams.

Competitive streak: By showcasing the top-performing leaders, Syngenta ignited a competitive streak among leadership. Leaders were motivated to improve their engagement on Viva Engage, as they could see how their performance compared with others.

Encouraging engagement: The internal communications team at Syngenta used the benchmarking data to encourage leaders to engage more with their teams on Viva Engage. This was part of a broader strategy to enhance communication and collaboration across the organisation.

Impact on employee engagement: Once leaders became more active on Viva Engage, many more employees followed suit, leading to increased engagement across the platform. With leaders on board, it's almost an approval or invitation for colleagues to do the same. This was a key goal for Syngenta, as it aimed to foster a culture of open communication and knowledge sharing.

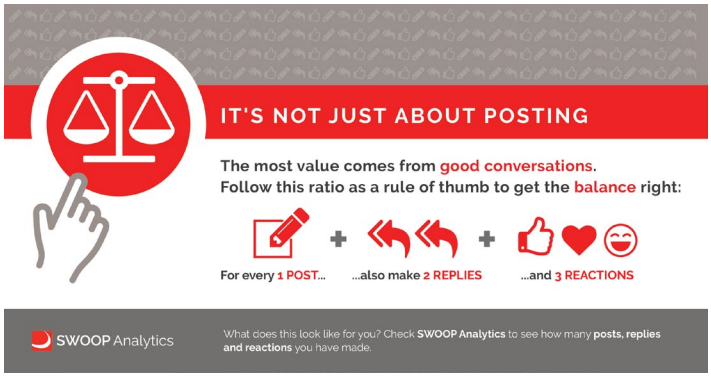
Use of SWOOP Analytics Personas: Syngenta utilised SWOOP Analytics Personas to coach leaders on improving their online engagement. By understanding their personas, leaders could identify areas for improvement and work towards becoming more effective communicators.

This approach helped Syngenta enhance leadership visibility and engagement, ultimately contributing to a more connected and collaborative organisational culture, and by doing so engagement began to snowball.

4.1 How do I get senior leaders to be more active?

Influencing senior leaders to make time in their busy schedule to become more active on Viva Engage can be challenging and while there's no one-size-fits-all approach, there are some common themes shared by our Viva Engage experts. Read their experiences below.

- **Demonstrate the value of Viva Engage with data**.
- **Highlight other success stories**: Is there a leader among your most Influential People? If so, ask this leader to encourage their peers to show them the value of using Viva Engage. It takes just minutes per day. Share with them this case study from The NRMA's CEO of Motoring & Membership Emma Harrington.
- **Provide training and support**: Ensure leaders understand how to use Viva Engage effectively. This includes teaching them to ask open-ended questions, reply to posts, and react to messages. SWOOP Analytics' 1-2-3 rule can be a helpful guide: For every 1 post, write 2 replies and contribute 3 reactions.



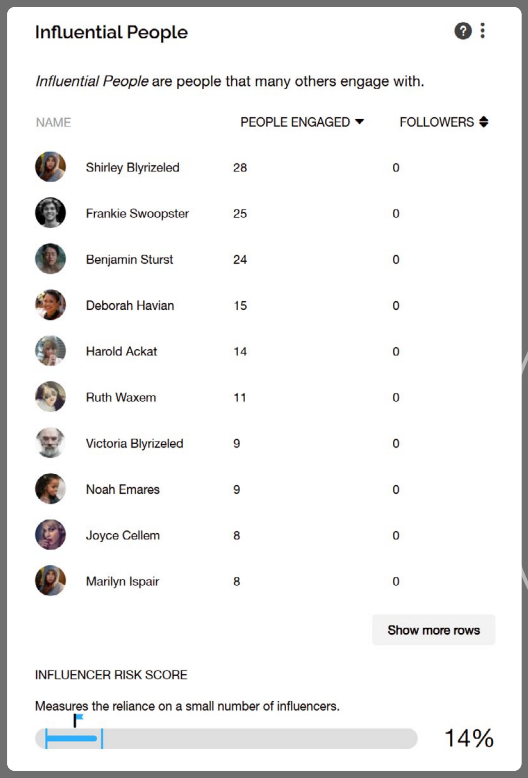
- **Set clear expectations**: Make it clear that senior leaders' contributions to conversations are expected and valued. Colleagues should feel they know executives better through their active engagement on the platform.

- **Showcase positive outcomes**: Highlight the positive outcomes resulting from senior leaders' active engagement, such as increased employee engagement, improved problem-solving, and a more connected workforce.
- **Install Viva Engage on mobile phones and devices:** Encourage leaders to use Viva Engage on their mobile devices, which allows them to engage with the platform when they are on the go.

Influential leaders

with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

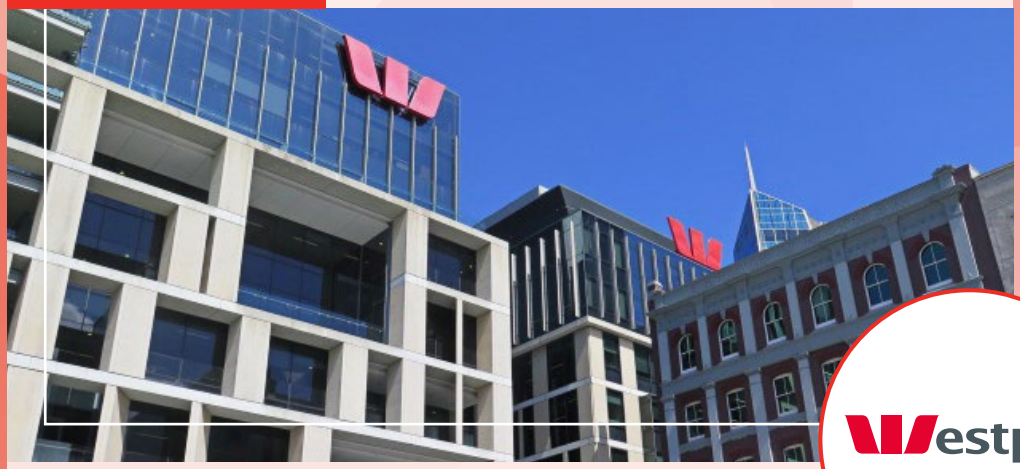
If leaders want to see how much influence they have in Viva Engage, **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** can help. The **Influential People** report, found in all dashboards under the **Engagement** tab, except for the Personal dashboard, shows the number of people that have engaged (replied, reacted, commented or shared) with another person's post. You can see if a particular leader is in this list of influencers.



SWOOP Analytics' Influential People report.

Westpac New Zealand's executive team has embraced Viva Engage and there is now healthy competition among leaders to see where they rank on the **Influential People** list. Be inspired by **Westpac New Zealand's story**.

CASE STUDY



Westpac New Zealand

Authenticity, fun and informality – a recipe for Viva Engage leadership success

Every time a new Executive Team member joins the ranks of Westpac New Zealand, they're also introduced to the organisation via Viva Engage.

This is no usual biography featuring a corporate photo and listing the manager's career history and hobbies. Instead, the camera is rolling, and the bank's new executive is asked random questions, literally pulled from a jar. Things like: "Do you prefer Vegemite or Marmite?", "Are you a dog person or cat person?" and "Would you prefer a holiday visiting museums or drinking cocktails by the pool?"

"How many times have you worked somewhere where a new starter is introduced with the standard 'Welcome to Jane. Jane is married and has three kids and outside of work she likes yoga and painting'," said Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager at Westpac New Zealand.

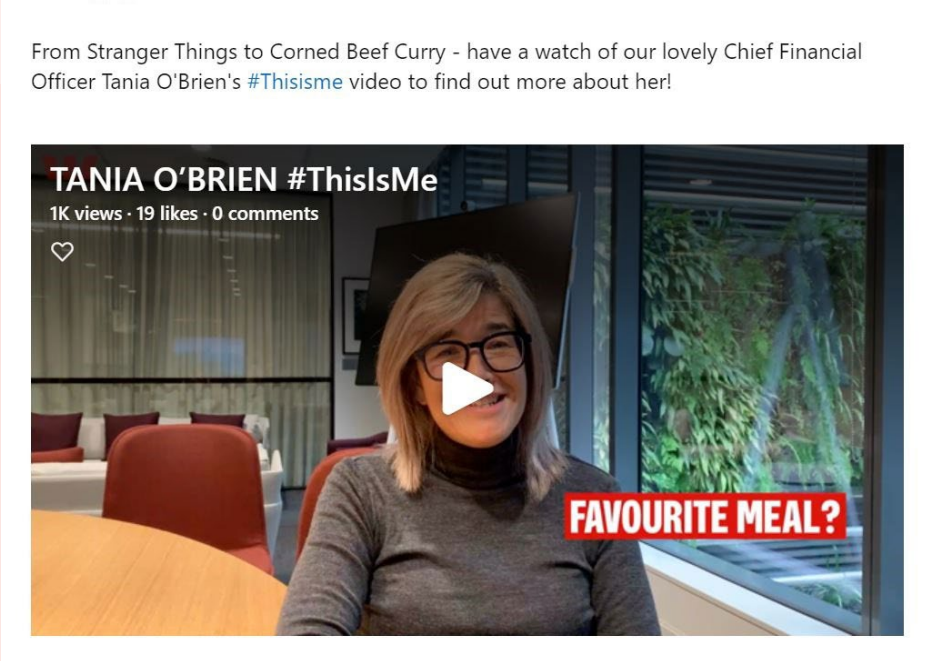
"That feels very formulaic, and it doesn't tell you anything about the person. So, we give our Executive Team some random questions, including some funny ones, to allow their personality to shine."

Fiona said this approach was influenced by short-form video content often seen on TikTok or Instagram. It's more casual, and a deliberate move away from formal corporate videos.

Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager, Westpac NZ

"These videos go straight to Viva Engage and people love them," Fiona said.

"We've had a lot of really good anecdotal and survey-related feedback that staff prefer communication that's a little bit more authentic, and not too polished. They don't want to see corporate spin."



A screenshot of a Viva Engage post with a live video introducing Westpac New Zealand's Chief Financial Officer Tania O'Brien by asking her a series of random questions.

These types of videos interacting with general managers at the bank are not a one-off at Westpac New Zealand. In fact, they're a great introduction for new leaders to the culture of interacting on Viva Engage at Westpac New Zealand.

Led by leaders

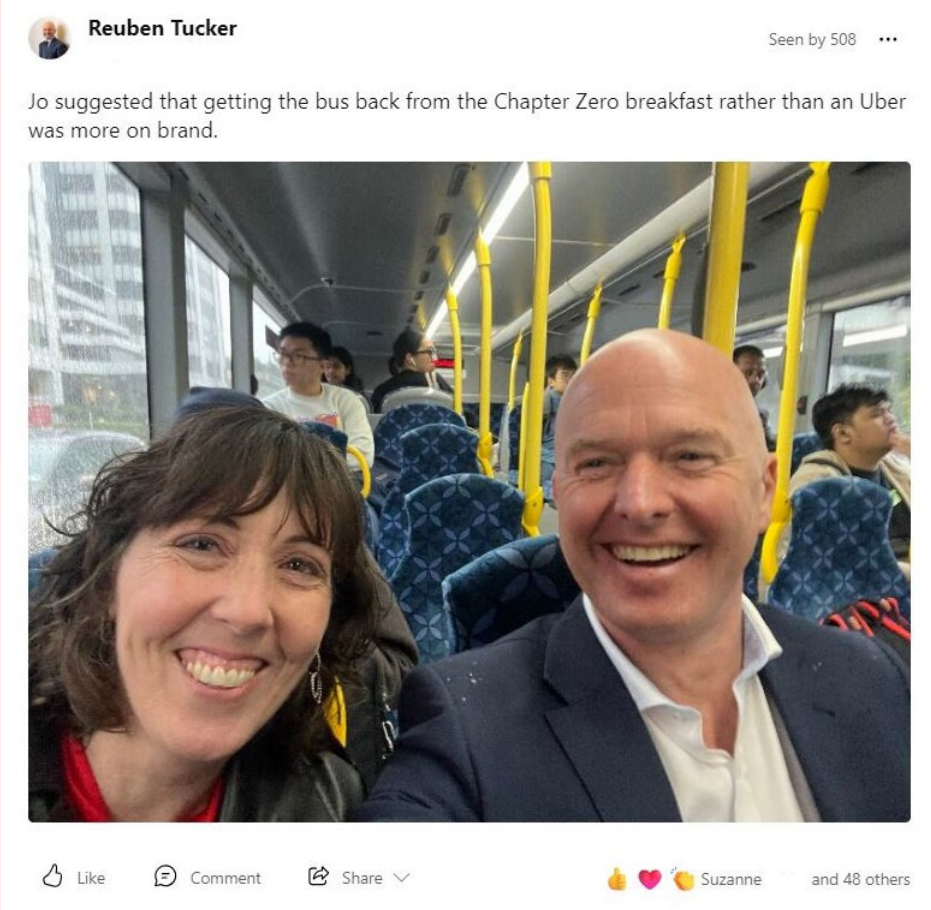
Most of the Executive Team at Westpac New Zealand now have their own Viva Engage community where they post at least once a week. Everyone in their departmental teams are members of the community, and throughout the week leaders scroll through their communities to listen to conversations, react to posts, tag in colleagues, and contribute comments.

There's some friendly (and sometimes a little fierce) competition between leaders to see where they rank on Westpac New Zealand's **Influential People** list on **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**. The competition started last year when Chief Information Officer Russell Jones was ranked outside the top 100 influencers on the bank's Viva Engage network, and a month later he had shot to No.2!

Russell came from nowhere to take a top spot on the influencers' list (of more than 6,400 employees) simply by posting on Viva Engage once a week and taking a few minutes from his busy schedule to respond and react to other people's posts. He is not on Viva Engage every day, but he does make an effort to post at least once a week with an update about what he's been doing, to recognise the great work of his team, to call out service anniversaries, or share some thoughts. Importantly, he also replies to comments, reacts or responds to other posts when he can – a true indication he is listening to employees - and tags colleagues into posts. **Read more about how Russell became an influencer in a month**.

Proud of his impact, Russell has encouraged his fellow leaders to do the same. In fact, he shared his story to the Executive Team, which Fiona said resulted in an "avalanche" of GMs coming to the Internal Communications team asking for their own Viva Engage communities.

Fiona and her team do a monthly report benchmarking leaders' activities, including top posts and influencers, on Viva Engage using data from SWOOP Analytics. This report is shared with the Executive Team. She said it works as a positive catalyst to encourage leaders to lift their game when it comes to connecting with colleagues on Viva Engage.



A Viva Engage post from Reuben Tucker, Managing Director, Institutional & Business Banking, at Westpac New Zealand, sharing an informal photo from his day.

Ask Me Anything

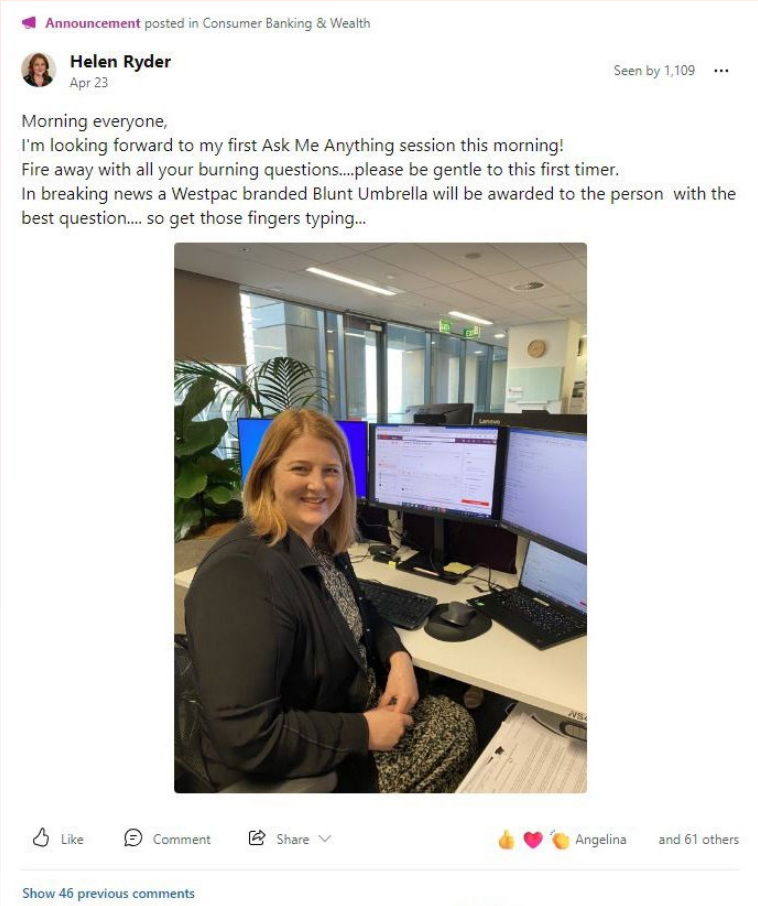
In the past financial year, three of the top 10 most **Influential People** across the entire Westpac New Zealand network have been members of the Executive Team. The **Most Engaging Post** for the year also belongs to an Executive Team member who held an Ask Me Anything session on Viva Engage.

Helen Ryder, Managing Director, Consumer Banking & Wealth at Westpac New Zealand knows the value of connecting with her people. It's especially important

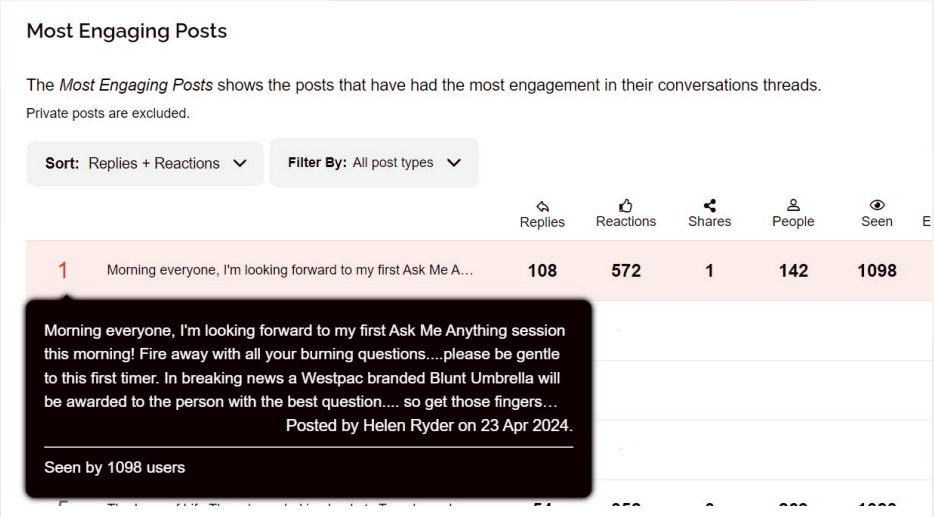
in her business, which is geographically spread. As part of her responsibilities, she looks after more than 100 branches from the top of New Zealand's North Island to the bottom of the South Island. So, the diversity of her people and their locations is one of the main reasons she is so keen on using Viva Engage.

> "If you look at Helen, she's particularly astute at understanding what good leadership looks like, and that Viva Engage is a key component of enabling that, through regularly being able to talk to, and hear from, her people and get them on board with new initiatives and ideas," Fiona said.
>
> "She does an excellent job of communicating with her people, who may not see her very often in person, but she makes them feel included and part of something bigger."

Fiona said Helen's Ask Me Anything session was completely in her own words and unscripted, albeit carefully planned. She opened the conversation with a Viva Engage post asking colleagues to hit her up with questions.



A screenshot of Helen Ryder's Ask Me Anything Viva Engage kick-off post.



A screenshot from SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage showing Helen's Ask Me Anything post as the Most Engaging Post for the 2023/24 financial year across Westpac New Zealand's Viva Engage network.

Even though the Ask Me Anything session was eventually "closed", months later questions still come trickling in. It's one of the ongoing benefits of Viva Engage – it allows everyone time to ponder their question, or dwell on a response, and follow up with more questions.

Equality for all in a safe space

Fiona said Viva Engage has become a safe space at Westpac New Zealand where everyone is encouraged to share their voice, and everyone has an equal say. There are also communities to allow people from similar cultural and language backgrounds to connect.

> "We've got people from a vast variety of cultural backgrounds and for some of them English is not their first language, or culturally the way they communicate may differ," she said.
>
> "We have Māori and Pacific Island employees, for example, who want to communicate in their own language. We've got people who are neurodiverse.
>
> "Viva Engage is that safe place where you're not on camera, you're not front and centre, but you can ask anything you want and it's a really open and accepting place, accepting of people from every possible background. Two-way communication really helps break down barriers."
>
> "It's the great leveller because ultimately Viva Engage is just the tool set which enables everyone to meet and come together."

Bringing the fun to work

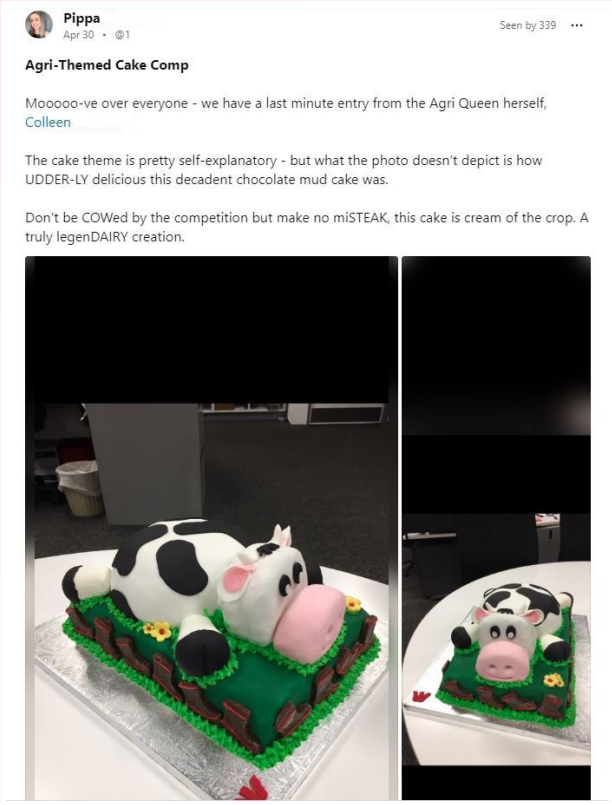
Westpac New Zealand's Viva Engage network was ranked No.2 in **SWOOP Analytics' 2024/25 global benchmarking** of 70 organisations. The bank has consistently ranked in the top three organisations in SWOOP Analytics' annual benchmarking analysis over the past five years. This ranking takes into account the performance of every community across an organisation's entire Viva Engage network – the high performing communities, as well as the lower performing communities.

What was surprising **in this year's analysis was three of the top four ranked enterprises benchmarked globally were all based in New Zealand**. We also ranked 3,751 individual communities based on measures for participation, people-to-people engagement, sentiment, growth, responsiveness, and innovation. **A quarter of the top 20 ranked communities were also New Zealand based!** These came from a range of organisations.

It was a result that didn't surprise Fiona.

> "I think when I compare our work to other organisations or countries I've worked in, the videos I've made here (in New Zealand) are more informal, chatty, and fun," Fiona said.
>
> "We really push the boundaries sometimes. Some of the highest engagement we get is with our Executive Team who open up, have some fun and just be themselves."

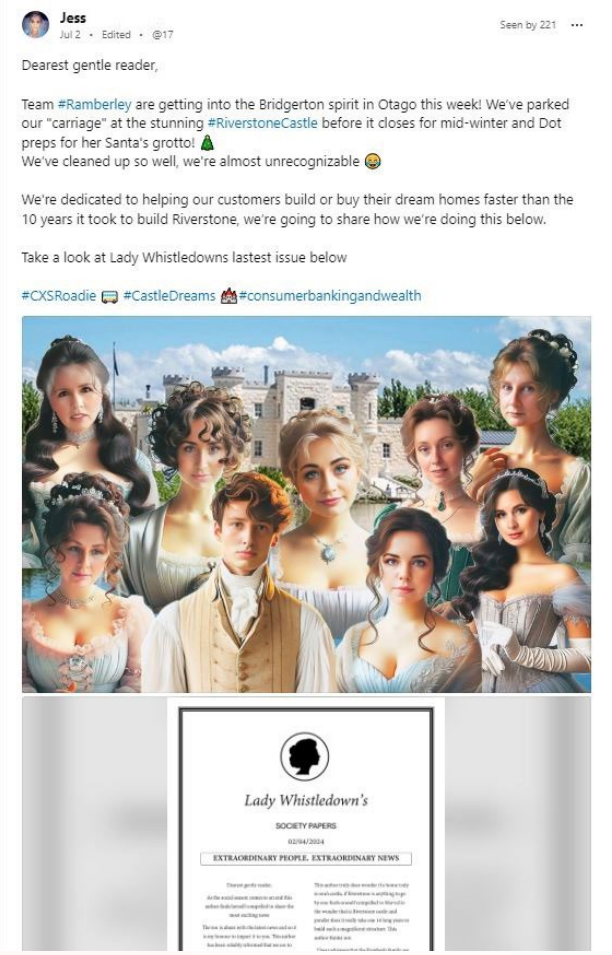
She said "not taking ourselves too seriously" is something Kiwis do particularly well.



A screenshot of a fun post on Viva Engage.

> "I think New Zealanders can be quite casual. That doesn't mean we're not professional, but we can lean to the informal where it lends itself to that," Fiona said.
>
> "We're informal in the way that we dress, meaning we (mostly) don't wear suits to work anymore, and we're informal in the way that we talk to each other.
>
> "But I don't think it's just us, I've noticed a real casualisation of communication globally, likely influenced by social media. Here at Westpac, in amongst our professional day-to-day work, we like to have a lot of fun as well."

Fiona told how the consumer banking arm of the business did a virtual tour of the country, with each physical bank branch posting on Viva Engage with a quirky meme or funny video or photo. When the latest season of the Netflix series Bridgerton was released, based on the books by Julia Quinn, one branch created a clever post, superimposing their own faces on Bridgerton characters' faces.



> "It was hilarious; the teams had so much fun doing it, and we had a lot of fun reporting on it," Fiona said of the virtual road trip.
>
> "When people come to work, my feeling is that they want to be motivated, energised and engaged but in a genuine way - they don't want what they perceive to be old-fashioned corporate spin."

Regular governance guided by analytics

It's no fluke Westpac New Zealand regularly ranks as one of the top performing Viva Engage networks in the world. Every six months, Fiona does a regular check of poorly performing communities across the network, as identified by **SWOOP Analytics**, and culls them if there is no longer a purpose for them, or she reaches out to the community admins to offer one-on-one coaching.

> "If someone's got a serious community topic they want to keep going, we'll do a one-on-one with them to review what's going wrong in that community and get it back on track. But it doesn't end there, support needs to be ongoing," Fiona said.
>
> "We encourage them to use regular analytics from SWOOP to say; 'Where are we at? What else do we need to do?'"

Fiona admits a successful Viva Engage community does not survive without work and analytics.

"It does take quite a bit of work. You can't just set up a community and let it run," she said.

4.2 Real-life analysis of executive and senior leaders' Viva Engage behaviours

As part of our benchmarking analysis, we wanted to take a deep-dive into the performance of specific job categories, with a particular focus on executives and senior leadership.

To undertake this analysis, we identified a subset of employees from our benchmarking sample of **Influential People** from each of the 30 organisations analysed in this particular study for which we could confidently identify a job category from their job title. With the help of generative AI, we were able to create a sample of 6,693 employees. **It's important to remember, these 6,693 people are among the most influential on their respective Viva Engage networks, therefore, they are active and consistent users**.

The following classification rules were applied for each of the following job categories:

Executives and Senior Leaders:
Keywords: Chief, CEO, CFO, COO, CTO, President, Vice President, Director, VP, Head of, Managing Director, Senior Leader.

Managers and Team Leads:
Keywords: Manager, Lead, Supervisor, Coordinator, Team Leader, Project Manager, Program Manager, Head of (non-executive titles), Department Head, Group Leader.

Technical:
Keywords: Engineer, Developer, Architect, Technician, Data Scientist, Analyst, IT, DevOps, Software, Systems, Technical, Network, Infrastructure, Security, Support.

Administrative:
Keywords: Admin, Secretary, Clerk, Assistant, Receptionist, Office, Executive Assistant, Administrator, Support, Coordinator.

Professionals and Specialists:
Keywords: Consultant, Advisor, Specialist, Officer, Advisor, Designer, Strategist, Analyst (non-technical), HR, Legal, Finance, Marketing, Sales, Communications.

Frontline Workers:
Keywords: Worker, Associate, Technician (hands-on roles), Operator, Field, Service, Customer Service, Support Staff, Sales, Retail, Labourer.

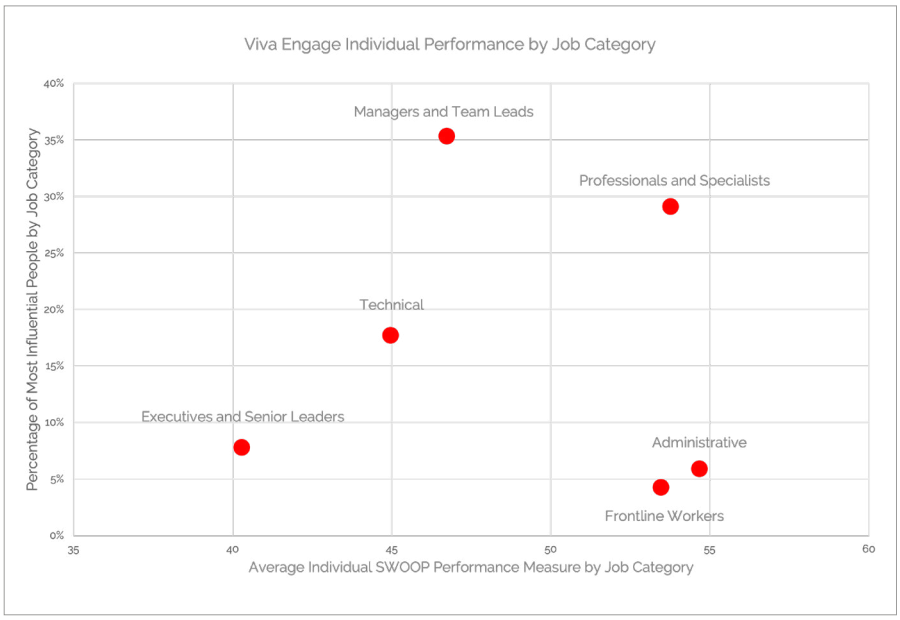
A modified performance measure was created based on those used to measure at the Enterprise and Community levels on **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**:

SWOOP Analytics Performance Factors	Weighting	Included SWOOP Analytics Measures
Engagement	29%	%Response as Replies, %Two-Way Relationships, %Mentions
Responsiveness	30%	%Response, %Reactions
Participation (activity)	20%	Post, Replies, Comments, Reactions, Mentions
Innovation	21%	Multi-Community participation (Diversity), %Curiosity, %Public

A SWOOP Analytics Performance Measure was compiled from the above measures.

Results

The following charts summarise the results achieved:



Personal benchmarking results by job category.

The individual benchmarking by Job Category shows the best performing are the Professionals and Specialists which comprise 29% of our sample of Influential People, and the second highest SWOOP Analytics Performance Measure. At the other end of the scale, we have the Executives and Senior Leaders with the lowest average SWOOP Analytics Performance Measure, and comprising just 8% of the Influential People sample.

We have previously identified that executives and senior leaders are **critical to success**, especially at the early stages of Viva Engage adoption. It is therefore

important to provide executives and senior leaders with training and support to improve their performance on Viva Engage.

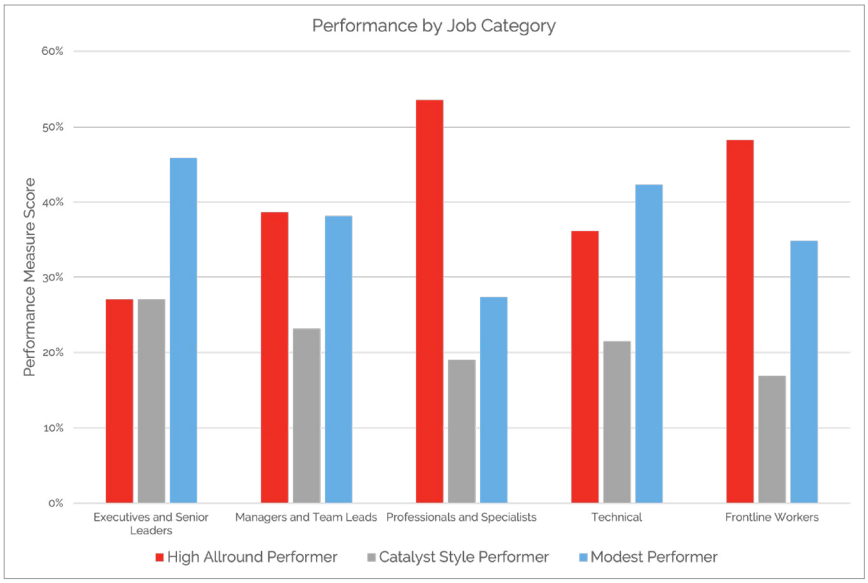
Deeper dive into Executives and Senior Leaders

Each person from the most Influential People sample was assessed across 12 different SWOOP Analytics performance measures. We used AI machine learning methods to identify personas emerging from the data; looking to see how the personas were distributed across the different job categories.

Three personas were identified:

1. High Allround Performer – above average scores across all 12 indicators; with responsiveness measures particularly strong.
2. Catalyst Style Performer – extremely strong posting performance, but poor responsiveness measures. Above average elsewhere.
3. Moderate Performer – average or below average scores across all measures.

These personas were distributed across the job categories as follows:



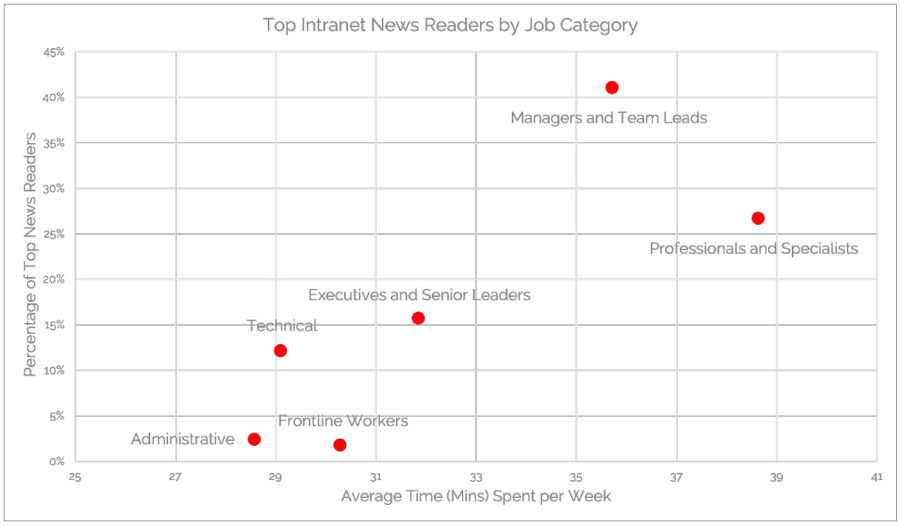
Performance personas by job category.

The above chart shows how the three identified personas are distributed within each job category. The Executives and Senior Leaders have the poorest proportion of High Allround Performer (46%), the highest Catalyst Style Performer (27%), and the highest proportion of Modest Performer (27%).

That's not to say Executives and Senior Leaders are the poorest Viva Engage users, it's more a case of them being the worst performers amongst a sample of the best users, ie the most Influential People.

Comparison with Executive and Senior Leaders' use of the intranet

SWOOP Analytics' 2024 SharePoint Intranet Benchmarking Report identified the close relationship between employees using SharePoint intranet and Viva Engage. To identify a useful comparison, we chose the top 10% of intranet news readers (~6,200) from our SharePoint intranet benchmarking study to compare with the 6,693 Influential People from our Viva Engage sample.



Personal benchmarking results by job category for SharePoint intranet news readers.

The first identifiable difference is a higher percentage of Executives and Senior Leaders (16%) reading news, compared with only 8% of Executives and Senior Leaders in the Viva Engage analysis.

Perhaps the stronger engagement of Executives and Senior Leaders with the intranet, rather than with Viva Engage, is related to the content itself. A good proportion of news content is likely initiated by the executives themselves.

We found 27% of the Executives and Senior Leaders job category posted strongly in Viva Engage but had less responses or reactions to other people's posts (Catalyst behaviour). By becoming more responsive (replying and reacting) these leaders can be converted to High Allround Performers.

For the remaining 46% of Executives and Senior Leaders operating at moderate levels i.e. have at least some existing levels of influence on Viva Engage, a coaching program targeting "how to become a more engaging leader online" will enable them to perform across all performance factors of engagement, responsiveness, participation and innovation.

Remember, the goal of measuring leaders' impact is to understand the effectiveness of their engagement efforts and identify areas for improvement. By using these metrics, you can help leaders adapt their behaviours to become more engaging in your community.

4.3 Where should leaders post? Communities, All Company or Storylines?

The decision on where leaders should post – in a community, in the All Company community or on their Storyline - depends on the context, the audience, and the content of the post. Here are some considerations:

Storylines

If leaders have a significant number of followers, posting on their Storyline can be effective. These posts have the potential to be useful, especially for executives, as their updates can reach a large audience.

Be warned though that Storylines isn't where the action, or interaction, is happening. However, it could be useful for popular leaders. **82% of our benchmarked organisations had enabled the Storyline feature, and for them Storyline activity made up just 1%**. The average response rate to a storyline post is 35% compared with 49% for a community post. On average, **you get one reply to a post on a storyline, compared with two replies on a community post**.

Communities

Communities is where conversation is happening and posting in specific communities can be highly effective. Communities bring together people interested in a particular topic. Therefore, if a leader's post aligns with the purpose of a community, it can reach the right audience and generate meaningful engagement.

Read **Westpac New Zealand's case study above** to see how each leader has their own community for their specific business area on Viva Engage.

All Company community

This community can be useful for company-wide announcements or updates that are relevant to all employees. However, it's important to limit the scope and purpose of posts to avoid the All Company community becoming a broadcasting channel with low engagement.

It's also worth noting that leaders can repost content from external platforms like LinkedIn on Viva Engage, either in a community or on a storyline, with minimal edits needed.

Regardless of where leaders are posting, ensure they find their authentic voice on Viva Engage and use it differently from traditional mediums like email. Authentic, meaningful engagement from leaders can significantly boost employee engagement and trust.

KEY FINDING

Communities is where the conversations are occurring. Using **Viva Engage Storylines isn't where the action, or interaction, is happening**. However, it could be useful for popular leaders. 82% of our benchmarked organisations had enabled the Storyline feature, and for them, Storyline activity made up just 1%. The **average response rate to a storyline post is 35% compared with 49% for a community post**. On average, you get one reply to a post on a storyline, compared with two replies on a community post.

EXPERT ADVICE

The secret to getting leaders on Viva Engage

Using data to show leaders the impact of their efforts is often the silver bullet to get them spending a few minutes each day listening to, and engaging with, their employees on Viva Engage.

It sounds simple, and it can be. When you can show your leaders how many people are reading, reacting and replying to their posts, and what a difference it makes when they react or comment on someone else's post, there is undeniable proof about the impact of their efforts.

And when leaders start to see themselves climb up the **Influential People** list on **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**, it often gives them more incentive to keep connecting, and often they will encourage their fellow leaders to do the same.

Connected leadership helps foster a culture of open communication and collaboration. Connected leaders cultivate trust, honesty and integrity within their organisation by consistently demonstrating those qualities themselves. And Viva Engage is the perfect platform to do so.

Perhaps the biggest challenge faced by internal comms teams is first convincing leaders the impact they will foster if they make just one Viva Engage post a week, and spend a few minutes each day reacting or replying to posts or comments. As part of our research into SWOOP Analytics' 2024/25 Viva Engage Benchmarking Report we contacted people we believe to be the world's experts in managing and facilitating Viva Engage networks.[2] We asked our experts: ***How did you convince busy leaders to use Viva Engage? What was your proposition to get leaders on board? Did you coach them?***

2 *The experts contacted by SWOOP Analytics for this research are people who have been top performers in our previous benchmarking studies and recipients of a SWOOP Analytics Award for Outstanding Collaborative Performance or nominated by peers for the annual SWOOP Analytics Community Manager Award.*

While we've complied above the common themes of their answers, it's interesting to hear their full stories as no one organisation, or leader, has the same story to share.

Department of Transport and Main Roads, Queensland Government

Australian state government department

Queensland Government
Department of Transport and Main Roads

Leonie Challacombe, Principal Advisor (Digital Culture), TMR

For many senior executives at the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), Viva Engage is a crucial component of their employee communication strategies in a hybrid working environment, shifting messages away from email.

Leonie Challacombe, Principal Advisor (Digital Culture) at TMR, tells the story of TMR's Director-General (DG), Ms Sally Stannard, who is a top influencer on the department's Viva Engage network.

With more than 11,000 employees spread across the state of Queensland, which is 7.5 times bigger than the entire United Kingdom, it can be challenging to communicate effectively with every employee.

"Our DG has leveraged Viva Engage to help support a connected and inclusive culture by sharing updates and photos while travelling to TMR projects and locations across the state," Leonie said.

"Sally also engages with staff posts by liking and responding, fostering genuine connections with employees, including our frontline staff and remote workers who are geographically dispersed across the state."

One of the top posts on TMR's Viva Engage network was from Ms Stannard celebrating the Paris Olympics and looking ahead to TMR's role in Brisbane's 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"Sally also acknowledged TMR's former Olympians," Leonie said.

"Sally encouraged engagement by asking staff to post about other TMR sporting champions and sharing their favourite moments from Paris."

To boost leader participation on Viva Engage within TMR's IT branch, the internal communications team organised Digital Leadership coaching for executives.

> **"A key strategy involved using SWOOP Analytics to show leaders how Viva Engage can build personal profiles," Leonie said.**

> "This data-driven approach helped leaders recognise the tangible benefits of engagement, including increased visibility. We plan to do more of these sessions across the department as part of our digital workplace change and adoption strategy.

"While we are working on enhancing engagement levels, our focus remains on equipping leaders with the skills and knowledge to effectively use Viva Engage, ultimately fostering an open, inclusive and collaborative culture."

Schneider Electric

Global specialist in energy

Cecile Kozinski, Global Brand and Communications, Channel Owner – SPICE+ and Viva Engage, Schneider Electric

Cecile Kozinski, Global Brand and Communications, Channel Owner – SPICE+ and Viva Engage, at Schneider Electric, says analytics have been key to getting leaders on board and engaging. Once they see the benefit, they have become converts.

> "We built up a comprehensive analytics report of our Executive Committee activity on Viva Engage, sharing with them tips on how to start, how to continue, and how to strengthen their presence on Viva Engage," Cecile said.
>
> "They all are eager to join the conversations (difficult or not) with our employees."

She said the communications team also organises an Ask Me Anything session on Viva Engage every year with the CEO and CFO to allow them to connect with all employees.

Air Canada

Canadian airline

Andrew Clarke, Manager, Employee Social Media Communications, Air Canada

Convincing leaders to embrace Viva Engage can be challenging, especially in the fast-paced, highly operational airline industry, says Andrew Clarke, Manager, Employee Social Media Communications at Air Canada.

He says each leader has their preferred way of communicating with their teams, but some recognise Viva Engage's immense value in connecting geographically dispersed employees worldwide.

Andrew said one such advocate is Air Canada's Vice President of Canadian Airports and Customer Experience Strategy. In late spring 2024, as Air Canada geared up for the busy peak summer travel season, this VP challenged his global airports management team to step out of their offices and meet with employees in frontline operations - customer experience specialists, station attendants, concierge, baggage agents and ground handlers. The goal was to hear first-hand about their roles, challenges, and feedback on summer travel preparations.

"The challenge quickly gained momentum," Andrew said.

"Throughout the spring and summer months, the airports management team, including the branch VP, shared their experiences (on Viva Engage) using the hashtag #SoarAndExplore in the Airports community.

"These posts captured special moments and interactions with employees, allowing everyone across the branch to see and engage with the content."

The #SoarAndExplore initiative generated more than 136 posts, engaging 906 users, and reached 8% of the airline's 40,000 employees.

> **"Leader-led initiatives like this one demonstrate how easy and accessible it is to reach and engage with employees across the branch, showcasing the true power of Viva Engage," Andrew said.**
>
> **"The goal is to inspire more leaders to recognise its value and follow suit."**

Westpac New Zealand

Bank

Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager, Westpac NZ

Getting leaders on to Viva Engage has been a work in progress for a number of years, admits Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager at Westpac New Zealand.

It took time and patience to prove Viva Engage's value, and leaders needed to be willing to be bold and take risks. That time and patience has paid off in spades. Fiona tells the story.

"Last year, we had a new GM who really wanted to create a collaborative culture, through new ways of connecting with his new team," she said.

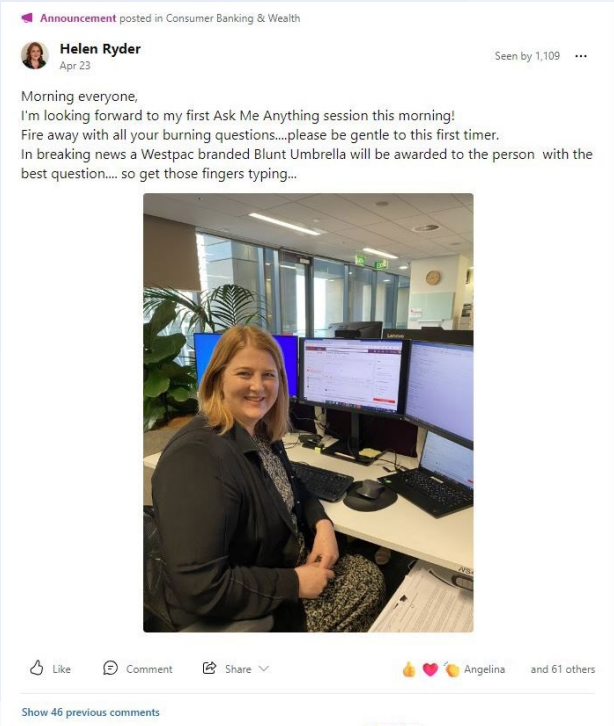
"Thanks to his internal comms business partner, it was an easy process to convince him to give up emails in favour of regular communication on Viva Engage instead."

In the beginning, Fiona said, it was very much a templated approach for the GM, assisted by the comms partner, covering key topics such as service anniversaries, and shout-outs and recognition for work delivered, but eventually became a regular feature managed from within the general manager's team.

> "The GM was eager to showcase his travel and connections with staff, such as branch visits, and regularly posted selfies and other photos," she said.
>
> "He also made sure to comment on people's posts, including from other communities and his regular five minutes a week on Viva Engage lifted his overall profile and into our most influential posters, which he has maintained over time.
>
> "His success on Viva Engage prompted a flurry of other GMs wanting to emulate his success, and created a tipping point whereby most GMs now have a community and regular communication to and with their people on Viva Engage."

Fiona said one example that has been hugely successful is Westpac's Ask Me Anything live sessions on Viva Engage. These are advertised well in advance and give people the opportunity to connect directly to, and hear from, their respective general managers.

"We've found these sessions really create buzz in the business, and employees feel more engaged," she said.



A screenshot of an executive's Ask Me Anything Viva Engage post at Westpac New Zealand.

Fiona says it does require some coaching to start the executive team on Viva Engage.

"We work closely with the executive assistants and with the GM leadership teams to help them get set up for success and maintain a community over time," she said.

"Understanding when to use Viva Engage and what to use it for (as opposed to other communications channels such as Teams and SharePoint) forms a big part of the overall plan – this helps create clarity for our employees as to what types of communication they can expect to see on which channels and reduces the possibility of duplication of effort and hence comms 'fatigue'."

Fiona said the other essential factor around helping to prove the benefits of Viva Engage for leaders has been regularly sharing analytics on the usage and engagement in their respective channels, including which topics have been most engaging, and who's been influential in having, and maintaining, conversations.

"They can then work alongside their internal comms partner to see what's working well, or needs improving, to make sure they're maximising their use of the channel," she said.

"And whilst we can benchmark individual performances against their peers, this hasn't been necessary – bragging rights to being a key influencer has definitely galvanised others into action!"

National Grid

British energy group

nationalgrid

Sally Jackson, Senior Manager, Content and Channels, at National Grid says the results are mixed when it comes to getting leaders on Viva Engage. However, showing them data from SWOOP Analytics helps prove the value.

Sally Jackson, Senior Manager, Content and Channels, National Grid

> **"I'd say we are on a journey that will take time," Sally said.**
>
> **"The communications team is increasingly using SWOOP data to help inform conversations with leaders and convince them that the platform is used by a large number of colleagues and short/frequent interactions can be extremely effective, and not as time consuming as leaders may assume."**

National Grid has prepared guidance and run sessions in the past to help leadership teams and individuals understand the value of Viva Engage, along with how to get started.

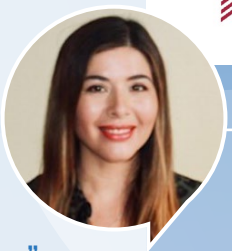
"This has to happen over time, rather than a one-and-done exercise, but we are starting to see positive changes in behaviours in some areas," Sally said.

"We'll have to wait and see if that eventually translates to improvements in engagement survey scores, but we are hopeful."

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank

Australian bank

Coaching leaders on the benefit of Viva Engage, and teaching them how to use it has been the key to success for Bendigo and Adelaide Bank.



Evita Puccio, Senior Communications Manager, Internal Engagement, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank

> "The Internal Communications Business Partners coach leaders on the value and use of Viva Engage," said Evita Puccio, Senior Communications Manager, Internal Engagement - Digital Channels at Bendigo and Adelaide Bank.
>
> "Use of Viva is built into communication plans and leaders are supported with key posts and encouraged to be visible and engage with posts from their teams."

Network Rail

Owner, repairer and developer of railway infrastructure in England, Scotland and Wales

Rajinder Pryor, Head of Business Partnering, Network Rail

Rajinder Pryor, Head of Business Partnering at Network Rail, said the unique selling point for Viva Engage has been visibility. With that visibility comes a willingness to connect with employees.

> "Leaders have been encouraged to use the channels to make themselves visible and approachable – highlighting a willingness to engage in an informal way," she said.

Sage

British-based multinational business software group

Sean Zintl, Global Intranet & Channels Manager, Sage

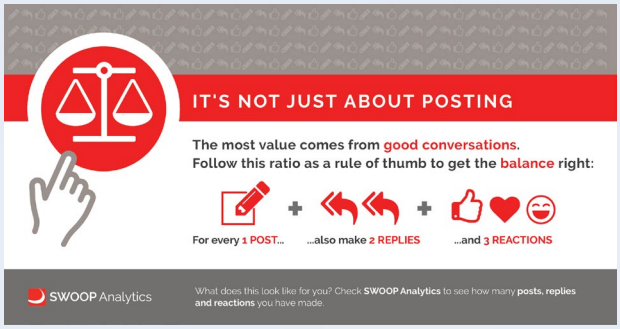
Sean Zintl, Global Intranet & Channels Manager at Sage, also speaks of leaders' visibility on Viva Engage, showing how they are listening to colleagues and responding to them.

He said Sage's CEO was already active on social media, as were many other senior leaders, so getting them onto Viva Engage wasn't an issue.

"If anything, we've had to moderate the All Company community to protect colleagues from receiving too many notifications from over enthusiastic leaders," Sean said.

"But obviously it's not been everyone's comfort zone, and we have reached out to leaders to encourage them to be more visible."

A really easy was of getting leaders on board was encouraging them to follow SWOOP Analytics' 1-2-3 rule – for every one post, make two replies and three reactions.



> "The aim here was to increase leaders' visibility on the platform – and also to be seen to be listening and responding to colleagues' feedback, rather than having to always be generating content and 'leading from the front'," Sean said.

Bernie Murtagh

Microsoft Viva Engage Adoption and Training Consultant

Bernie Murtagh, Microsoft Viva Engage Adoption and Training Consultant

Bernie's strategy for getting leaders on board with Viva Engage centres on showcasing the platform as a powerful tool for connecting with employees and promoting a culture of transparency and open communication. She says one of the biggest challenges facing leaders is connecting with employees.

> "Viva Engage addresses this challenge effectively by allowing leaders to demonstrate the act of listening through simple yet impactful digital behaviours, such as commenting on posts or acknowledging a message with a reaction or emoji," she said.
>
> "From my experience, leaders want to do right by their people and excel in communication, but they are human, just like the rest of us.

> "I keep this in mind and strive to make the features we want them to use as simple and pain-free as possible (I don't show them everything, I show them what they need to know only) for them to use (and enjoy) when engaging on Viva Engage."

To help leaders maximise their presence on Viva Engage, Bernie recommends personalised, one-on-one coaching—guiding them on everything from crafting posts to engaging with comments.

She also encourages using a leadership board to track and showcase each leader's activity on Viva Engage, fostering a bit of friendly competition and encouraging greater engagement for the following month.

Juniper Networks

US-based networking technology company

Kevin Crossman, IT Manager and Content Collaboration Service Owner, Juniper Networks

Kevin Crossman, IT Manager and Content Collaboration Service Owner at Juniper Networks, said not every leader is convinced of the value of two-way interaction with colleagues, but many do appreciate the benefit of posting on Viva Engage over email.

"Our leaders haven't been entirely sold on the idea of two-way feedback being a huge value-add, but some do appreciate the transparency of the medium compared to email," he said.

"IT works with comms professionals and executive admins to assist in leadership understanding and posting."

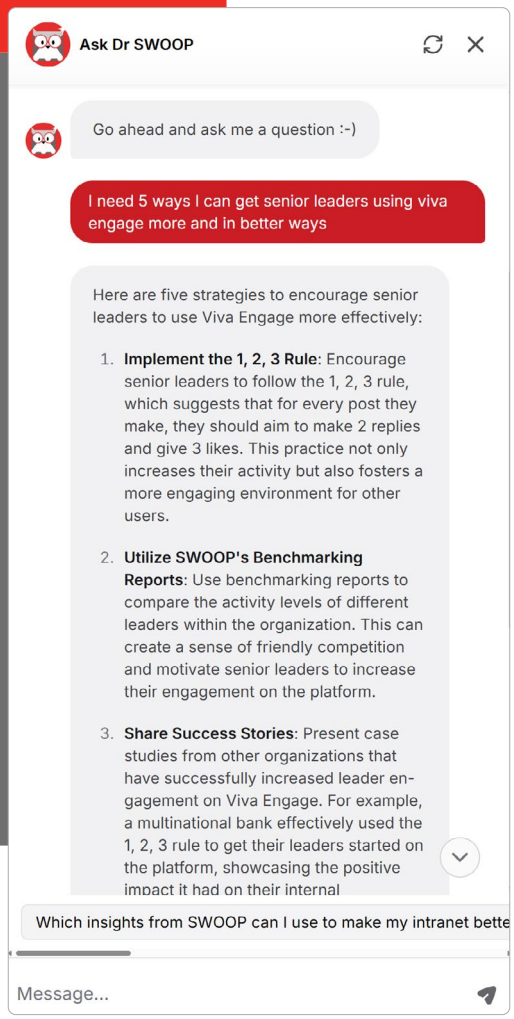
More expert advice at your finger tips with Dr SWOOP

This report can't cover every aspect of how to encourage and support leaders to thrive on Viva Engage, so if you want further help and you're a SWOOP Analytics customer, why not ask **Dr SWOOP**?

Dr SWOOP is our generative AI bot that has been specifically trained on SWOOP's benchmarking research, case studies, and knowledge base. This makes Dr SWOOP a quick way to ask about any element of building a business case for Viva Engage and many other aspects of successfully using the tools in your digital workplace.

Find Dr SWOOP on your SWOOP Analytics dashboard for Viva Engage, SharePoint intranet, Microsoft 365, Microsoft Teams or Workplace from Meta by clicking on the Dr SWOOP owl icon.

Right: SWOOP Analytics' Dr SWOOP chat window.



SECTION 5

How to get your people engaged and acing Viva Engage

We have addressed how leaders can effectively influence employees to become more active on Viva Engage but what if your leaders are reluctant to get onboard? In this section we address other actions that can encourage employees to become more engaged and connected on Viva Engage to achieve business value.

We've outlined some strategic steps to get you started in getting your colleagues consistently using Viva Engage. Some steps are replicas of those we suggest you use to convince leaders of the value of connecting and communicating on Viva Engage.

1. Establish a clear purpose: Clearly articulate the value and purpose of Viva Engage to employees. Demonstrate how it can enhance connectivity, productivity, and foster a culture of inclusivity, innovation, and problem-solving.

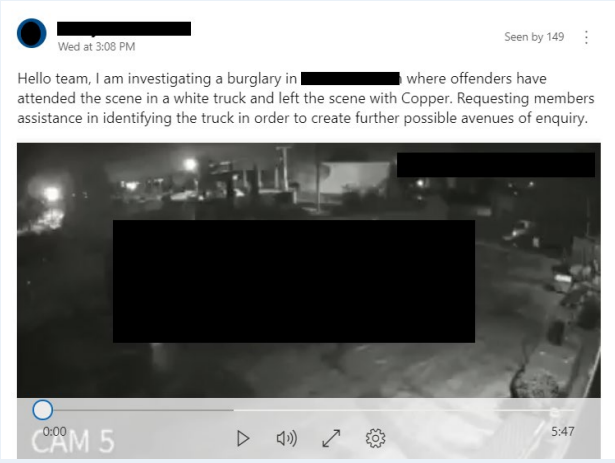
Catching crooks through Viva Engage

Take **this example from Victoria Police**. Prior to Viva Engage (then Yammer) being rolled out across the state police service in May 2021, identifying offenders from CCTV footage was a long, time-consuming operation.

CCTV files were too big to email so the process involved sending video footage to an intelligence unit, trawling through the footage to get a clear image of offenders, taking screen shots, formatting it and emailing it to those that needed it – hoping you get to the right people on the email list. This would take hours, if not days.

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

Since the implementation of Viva Engage, it's as simple as dragging the video file across and hitting post. This has led to immediate results, and arrests, as officers identified suspects from the CCTV footage. This is a great example of the operational benefits Viva Engage produces across the police force.



A CCTV video post on Victoria Police's Viva Engage network.

ANZ phishing simulation

When ANZ launched an elaborate phishing simulation on unsuspecting employees, someone in the security team blew the cover by posting on Viva Engage and warning everyone of the scam. Some questioned why anyone would spoil the simulation by revealing the details on Viva Engage.

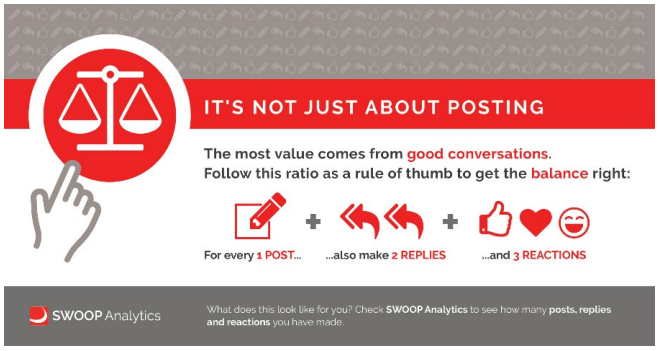
On the surface, it may seem like a fair question. In fact, it is absolute best practice to share details of the scam in a way that gives thousands of employees an immediate warning. At ANZ, Viva Engage is one of the best ways to get information out to everyone, quickly, and provide a platform where every person has an equal voice to join in the conversation and share knowledge.

This open dialogue not only helped raise awareness about cybersecurity threats but also empowered employees to learn from each other's experiences. By using Viva Engage as a platform for sharing and collaboration, ANZ was able to enhance its cybersecurity posture and create a safer workplace.

This example illustrates how Viva Engage can be used to solve problems by leveraging the collective knowledge and experiences of employees across the organisation.

2. Promote active participation: Encourage employees not only to read posts, but to initiate their own posts, replying to others, and reacting to posts. This balanced interaction is a hallmark of a successful, engaged community.

Encourage colleagues to use SWOOP Analytics' 1-2-3 rule. For every one post, make two replies and three reactions.



3. Role model activity: Senior leaders and managers should be role models in using Viva Engage. Their active contribution fosters a sense of community and encourages others to participate. Having leaders using Viva Engage is almost like an invitation for staff to follow suit.

4. Provide training and support: Not all employees may be comfortable with using a new platform. Providing training, support materials, and ongoing assistance can help them become more confident users. Perhaps some of the most influential people can take on coaching roles to support their colleagues.

5. Use on multiple devices: Encourage employees to use Viva Engage on their preferred devices, including mobile phones and tablets, to make it as accessible as possible.

6. Celebrate successes: Use Viva Engage to recognise colleagues and celebrate their achievements, work anniversaries, a job well done. Remember to @mention people to bring them into the conversation.

KEY FINDING

Don't forget to @mention colleagues. SWOOP Analytics' benchmarking data found you receive **120% more replies when you @mention a person** in a Viva Engage post, but only **14% of posts @mention colleagues**.

7. Live events: Leverage Viva Engage live events to host interactive sessions that can engage a large number of employees. These can be Q&A sessions with leaders, training sessions, or discussions on specific topics.

8. Use notifications thoughtfully: Teach colleagues how they can reduce notifications if they are becoming too "noisy", and use Announcement notifications thoughtfully. The notifications can be an effective way to bring people onto Viva Engage, but too many and people may begin ignoring them.

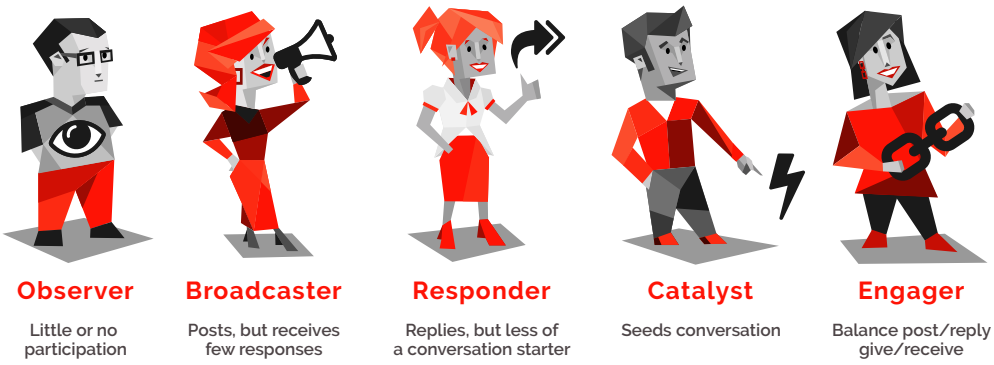
9. Tap into your Influential People: Use the most Influential People report in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage to find colleagues who are engaging others and encourage them to become ambassadors for Viva Engage. They can help to drive adoption by sharing their positive experiences and providing peer-to-peer support.

Remember, the goal is not just about getting more employees using Viva Engage, but about fostering meaningful engagement that brings business benefits.

5.1 What is my persona on Viva Engage?

You can use **SWOOP Analytics' personas** to understand and improve your online collaborative behaviour on Viva Engage, and be guided by tips provided in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** to improve your behaviours. SWOOP Analytics identifies five personas:

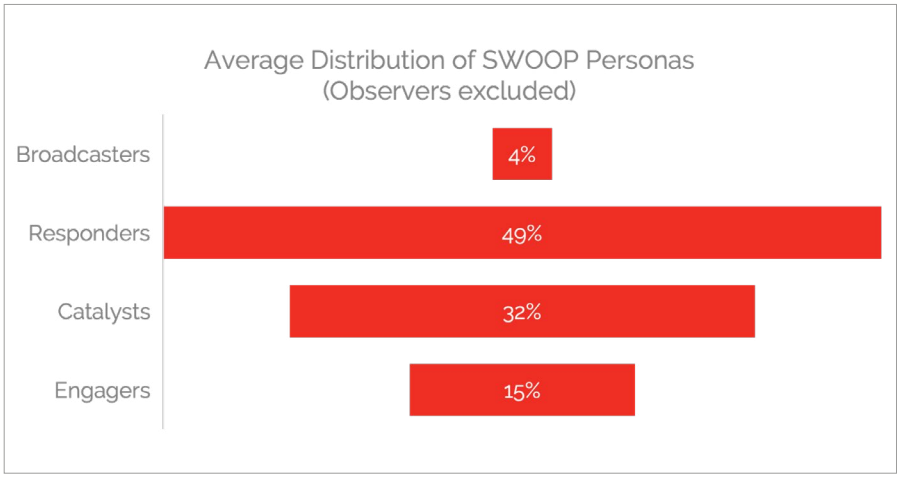
- **Engager:** Someone who regularly posts, comments, replies or reacts, and also receives replies, comments and reactions in a (roughly) equal amount.
- **Catalyst:** Someone who receives significantly more than they give – they are seeding conversations that lead to a lot of replies, reactions or comments.
- **Responder:** Someone who tends to reply or react to others, but posts significantly less.
- **Broadcaster:** Someone who tends to post messages that are not replied or reacted to, so the conversation is mostly one-way.
- **Observer:** Someone who interacts less than once every two weeks.



SWOOP Analytics' Viva Engage Personas.

In our 10 years of benchmarking, the Observer persona has always been the predominant persona. In this year's analysis, we found an average of 78.3% of people read posts on Viva Engage, but only an average of 29% have been contributing by posting, replying, commenting on or reacting to posts. Think about the most recent large in-person or online meeting you attended. The dynamics are probably not too dissimilar to the participation levels in team meetings – depending on the topic, some people may not contribute in a particular meeting - so these results are not a big surprise.

Our 2024/25 Viva Engage analysis has identified the following proportions of SWOOP Analytics personas across the 70 organisations benchmarked, eliminating the Observer persona:



Average SWOOP Analytics Persona distribution.

Observers are those that are minimally active (less than one activity every two weeks).

These are the goals to aim for across your enterprise for the persona distribution:

Persona	Average	Goal
Broadcaster	4%	< 4%
Responders	49%	35 – 50%
Catalyst	32%	35 – 50%
Engager	15%	18%

5.2 How do I encourage Observers (aka lurkers) to start participating on Viva Engage?

Do you have too many observers, or lurkers, on your Viva Engage network? Are you an observer yourself?

Observers are not contributing to conversations or discussion, nor are they sharing their knowledge and opinions with colleagues. The most productive value that can be gained from a social networking platform is when people collaborate. Consistent and frequent collaboration demonstrates continuous knowledge sharing, cooperation, coordination and, therefore, performance.

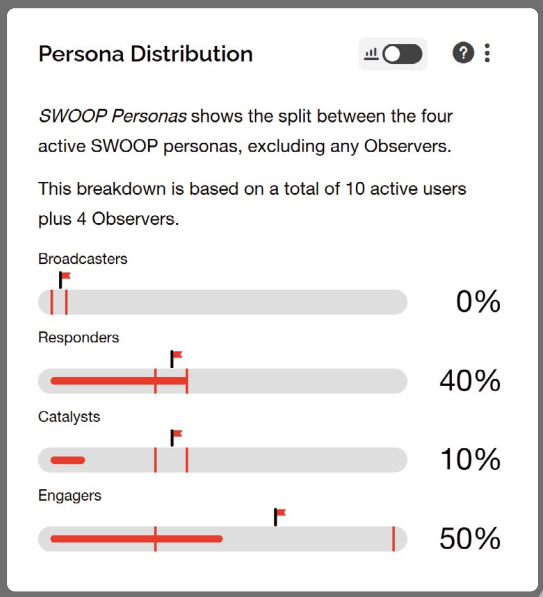
If you are an Observer, be aware there is clear evidence that the leaders of the future are those that can pro-actively build their relationship networks, and this includes online relationships.

Social communities can be a psychologically safe place for passive users to become active contributors. We have real-life examples of employees meeting and **engaging on a social community** and then going on to collaborate within business focussed communities. Read about how **Bankwest's Pets community** did just that.

Finding the number of Observers and the Persona Distribution for your network

on SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

To see how personas are distributed across your Viva Engage network, and to see how many people are lurking as Observers, head to the **Persona Distribution** report in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**. The report, found in all dashboards under the Engagement tab, except for the Personal dashboard, shows the percentage split of personas for your active users. The total number of Observers is in the text above the bars.



SWOOP Analytics' Persona Distribution report.

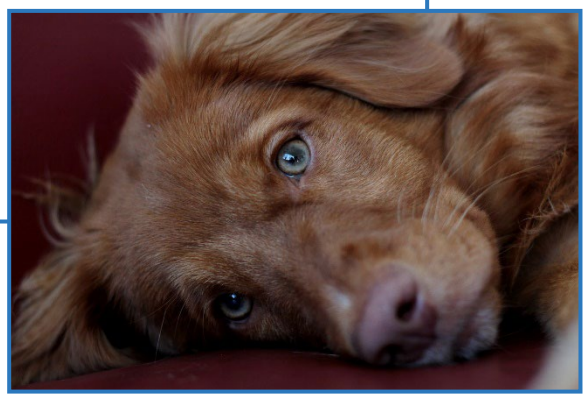
How to improve your Viva Engage persona

If you want to improve your collaboration at work, **start by reacting to your colleagues' posts, and add a comment to share your thoughts.**

Check your personal SWOOP Analytics dashboard to see your current online persona, and watch your **persona** improve once you start to engage on Viva Engage.

If you're not comfortable with posting or commenting on a business-related matter, head to a social community that interests you. Maybe there's a photography community, cooking or pet community. Start by liking some posts. If there's a photo of a cute puppy, how can you not give it a like! You're now using Viva Engage! That's all it takes.

Next, try commenting on a post. Back to the cute puppy post. Why not pop in a comment saying how cute it is? Or send a GIF or emoji as a reply. Suddenly, you're starting to make connections, and you may be surprised to see down the track you'll come across the owner of that cute puppy in a business setting and immediately you'll have something to talk about.



WILEY

At global publishing company Wiley, these social communities are highly valued. The cute cats and dogs bring people to the platform, but they stay on Viva Engage for the work.

When Wiley first launched Yammer, employees quickly began to create their own communities. Most were work-related but many were not. Soon there were communities for photography, bookworms, LGBTIQA+, Pokémon Go and, of course, the inevitable cat and dog groups.

When the Wiley Cat Lovers' community started to get popular, the Wiley Dog Lovers community was established in competition.

"These two groups very quickly became popular because of the sheer number of people that can identify as, 'a dog person' or 'a cat person'," said then Director of Communications, Ron Perazza.

"It was all in good fun but, of course, there were naysayers who dismissed Yammer as a place where people only post pictures of cats."

However, Wiley immediately saw the business benefit of these social groups.

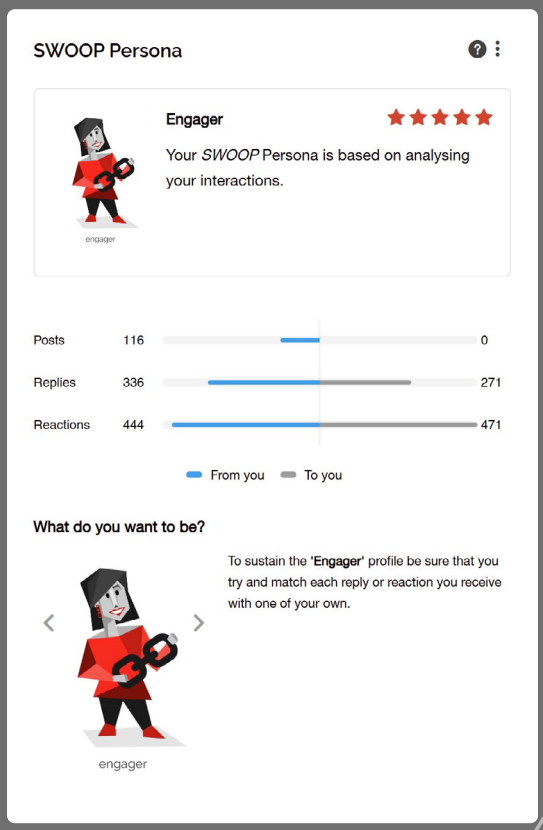
> "We quickly realised there's no reason to discourage people from interacting with each other about a common interest," Ron said.
>
> "If talking about cats gets people to connect with one another, meet new co-workers, and learn a little bit about who does what in another area of business, then that also helps the business.
>
> "It helps improve overall connectivity and gets people engaged throughout the company with the tool in ways we weren't expecting.
>
> "They come for the cats but then they stay for the work."

Remember, the goal of identifying personas is not to target poor performers, but to help each person, and the team as a whole, to develop their collaboration capabilities.

Finding your SWOOP Analytics Persona

on SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

It's important to know the distribution of personas at an enterprise or community level, but if you want to see your personal SWOOP Analytics Persona and how well you are balancing posting, replying and reacting, then you can find out on the **SWOOP Persona report**. The report is in the **Personal** dashboard under the **Engagement** tab and identifies your SWOOP persona, along with details on the balance between what you do and what you receive in terms of replies and reactions.

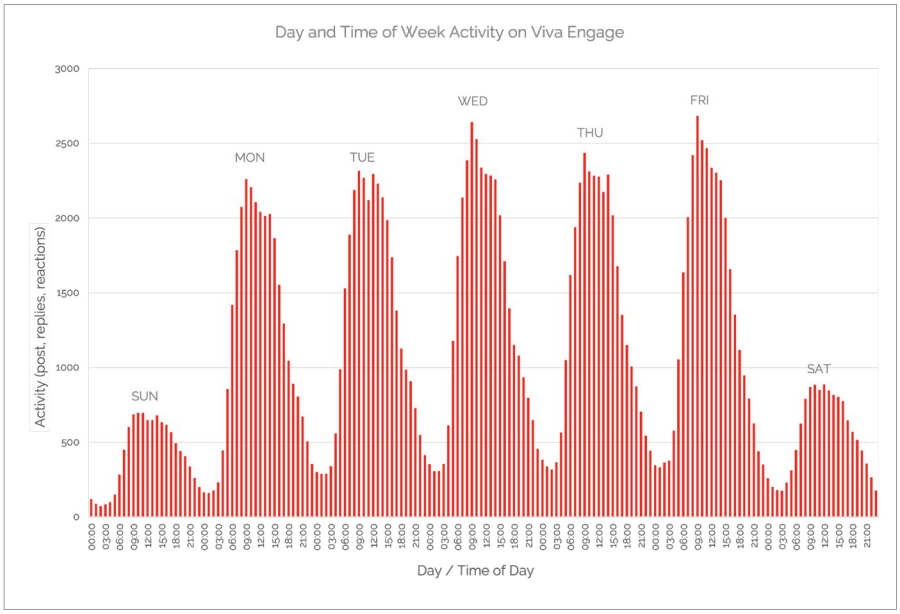


SWOOP Analytics' SWOOP Persona report.

5.3 When is the best time and day to post on Viva Engage? When are people reading and conversing on Viva Engage?

Is there a best time of day, or day of week, to post on Viva Engage to maximise the potential audience?

In this year's benchmarking we analysed the timing of Viva Engage activity by day of week and time of day:



Viva Engage activity by day of week and time of day.

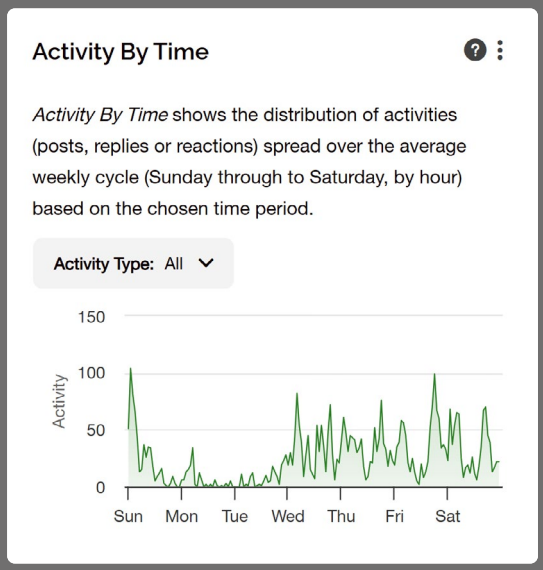
KEY FINDING

The peak time for posting and replying is 9am on weekdays, with Wednesday and Friday being the most popular days. That said, any time between 8am and 2pm on a weekday receives strong engagement. Drop off in readership starts about 4pm each weekday. This also shows most people are disconnecting from Viva Engage outside of work hours, therefore, Viva Engage is not forcing people to connect beyond their working day.

Activity By Time

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

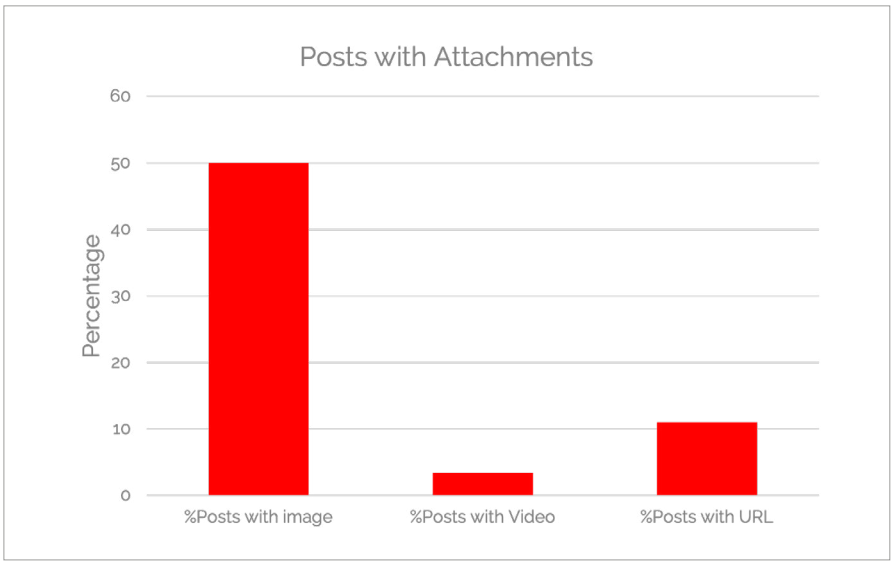
To find the most popular times people are actively participating with your Viva Engage network, head to the **Activity By Time** report. It is found on the **Activity** tab of all the dashboards and will show your most active days and times. The report can be filtered across different activity types.



SWOOP Analytics' Activity By Time report.

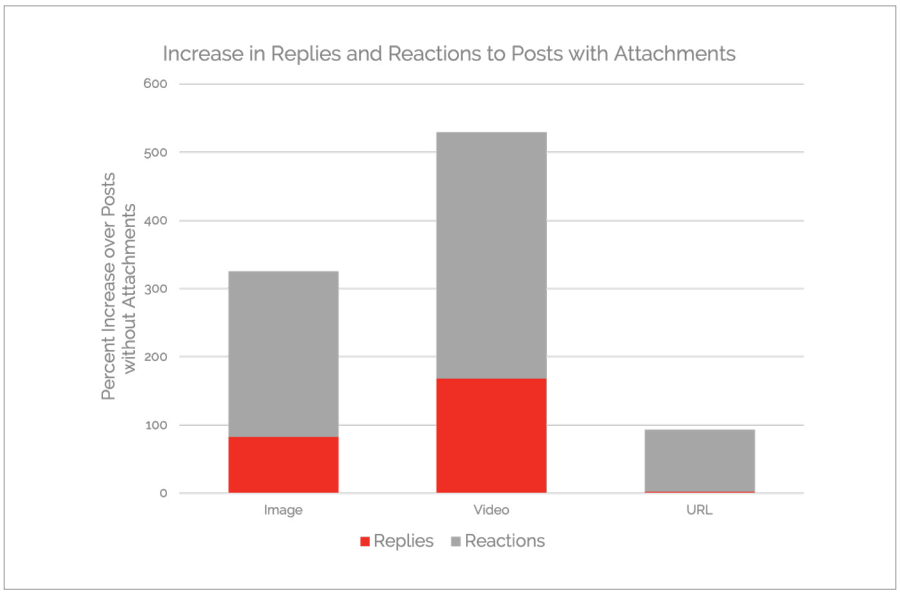
5.4 Add attachments for more impact to your posts

SWOOP Analytics' benchmarking data found you receive **82% more replies when you add an image** to a post and **168% more replies with a video**. **50% of posts and replies include images** but **only 4% of posts and replies have a video attached**, so if you want to stand out, think about adding a video.



Percentage of Viva Engage posts with attachments.

Half of all posts with attachments analysed by SWOOP Analytics had images attached. A much smaller proportion had attached a video (3.4%) and URL (11%).



Percentage increase in responses to Viva Engage posts with attachments over those without attachments.

When we look at the impact on responses that are received from posts with attachments, we can see **video attachments achieve a whopping 530% increase over posts without attachments, and a 325% increase for posts with images. URLs mainly attract an increase in reactions (91%)**.

We appear to be entering the age of video (perhaps the Tik Tok effect?). Video attachments are the most under-utilised type of attachment.

KEY FINDING

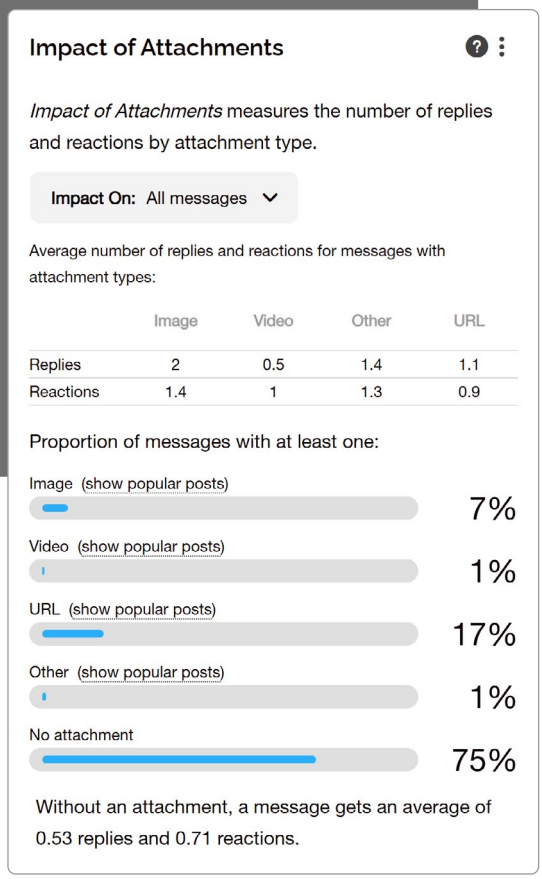
Add an attachment: SWOOP Analytics' benchmarking data found you receive **82% more replies when you add an image** to a post and **168% more replies with a video**. **50% of posts and replies include images** but **only 4% of posts and replies have a video attached**, so if you want to stand out, think about adding a video.

Impact of Attachments

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

To check how attachments are making an impact to replies and reactions across your Viva Engage network, head to the **Impact of Attachments** report. It is found on the **Engagement** tab of all but the Threads dashboard. You can select to look at the impact on the main post, replies to posts only, or on all messages by switching the drop down at the top of the report. You can also expand each attachment type to show the most popular posts with that type of attachment; handy if you want to check, for example, the current most popular post with a video.

SWOOP Analytics' Impact of Attachments report.



5.5 Tapping into the most Influential People

Identifying and tapping into the most influential people within your organisation means you can leverage their influence to bring colleagues into conversations. Tapping into these people involves a strategic approach:

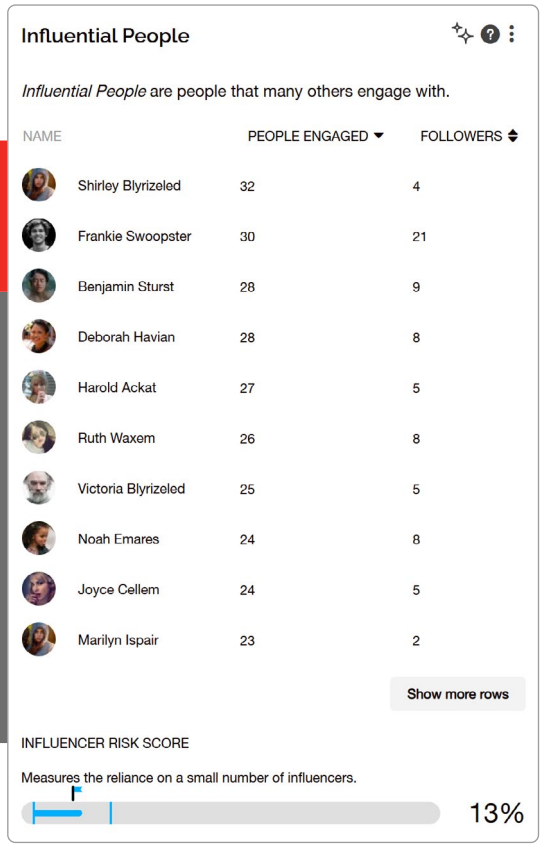
1. **Identify influential people:** Use SWOOP Analytics' Influencer Risk Score and Influential People measures to identify influential people across Viva Engage.
2. **Leverage influential people:** Once identified, work with these people to amplify the messages from senior leaders. If there are people who influence globally in different regions and countries, work with them to communicate messaging. Amplifying their voices encourages their audiences to participate, rather than relying solely on a centralised, top-down approach.
3. **Engage influencers in change management:** Influential people can play a significant role in organisational change. They are ideally placed to identify those in their network who can help solve problems. By enrolling these influencers, you can accelerate the change you are seeking.
4. **Develop a community of influencers:** Consider creating a group or team of influential people. This "sustainability collective" can help smooth the path to success by leading and energising conversations.
5. **Recognise and encourage role models:** Influencers can become important role models by being personally responsive to problems they see. Their central position in the network enables them to bring diverse points of view and accommodate a wide array of perspectives.

It's crucial to identify, engage, and leverage influential individuals within your Viva Engage network to drive engagement and foster a collaborative culture.

Influential People
in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

If you want to see which people have influence in Viva Engage, **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** will show you. The **Influential People** report, found in all dashboards under the **Engagement** tab, except for the Personal dashboard, shows the number of people that have engaged (replied, reacted, commented or shared) with another person's post. It shows your top 10 influencers.

Right: SWOOP Analytics' Influential People report.



5.6 Should I post on my Storyline or in a community?

Whether you should post on your Storyline or in a community on Viva Engage depends on several factors.

Posting on your Storyline means your posts will appear in the feeds of your followers. If you are an executive or have a large number of followers, your posts may reach a wider audience. However, for most regular employees, the data suggests that posts on Storylines may not be read by many, due to their potentially limited number of followers.

On the other hand, when you post in a community, the algorithms surface your post in the feed for the community members. This means you don't need to spend time building a following, and the size of your audience can be larger, depending on the size of the community.

Another aspect to consider is the topic of your post. Communities can be very attractive because they bring together people who are already interested in a particular topic. If you have something to say that aligns with the purpose of a community, it makes sense to post there, where it's likely to engage the members.

However, it's important to ensure your post aligns with the community's purpose. Communities with too general a purpose often end up being used for broadcasting with low engagement.

In our 2024/25 benchmarking analysis to we have found the following differences between conversations in Storyline versus Communities:

Measure	Storyline	Community
People who have posted/replied	7%	28%
Percentage overall activity (posts, replies and reactions)	1%	99%
Posts with replies	35%	49%
Average number of replies	1	2.1

Storyline versus community post engagement.

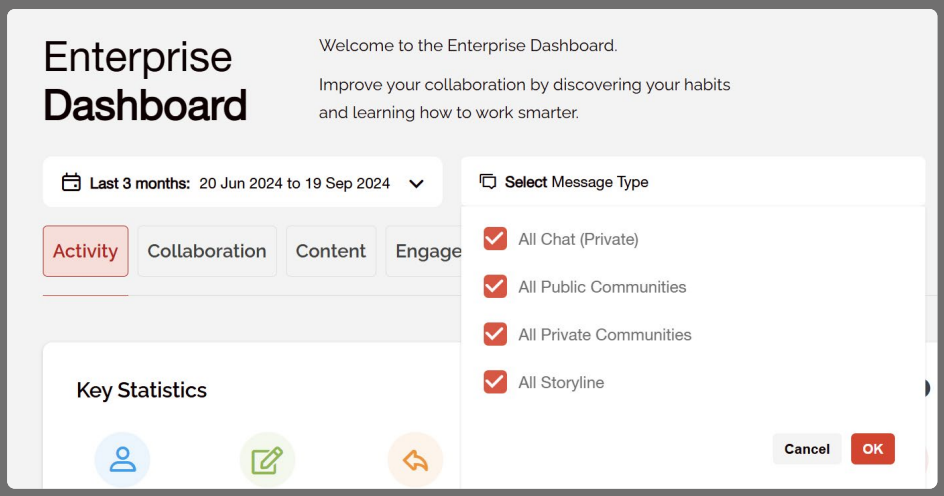
As you can see, the average response rate to posts made on a Storyline is 35% versus 49% when posted in a community. Also, where you get, on average of one reply to a Storyline post, you get 2.1, or just over double, the number of replies to a post in a community.

In conclusion, **if you have a large number of followers, or you're an executive, posting on your Storyline might be beneficial. But for most employees, posting in relevant communities could yield better engagement.** Remember, it's not just about posting; it's about engaging and adding value to your audience.

Checking Storyline Performance

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

In the **Enterprise** dashboard of **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** you can filter all the reports to all or specific message types, including Storylines. This allows you to compare how community messages compare with Storylines.

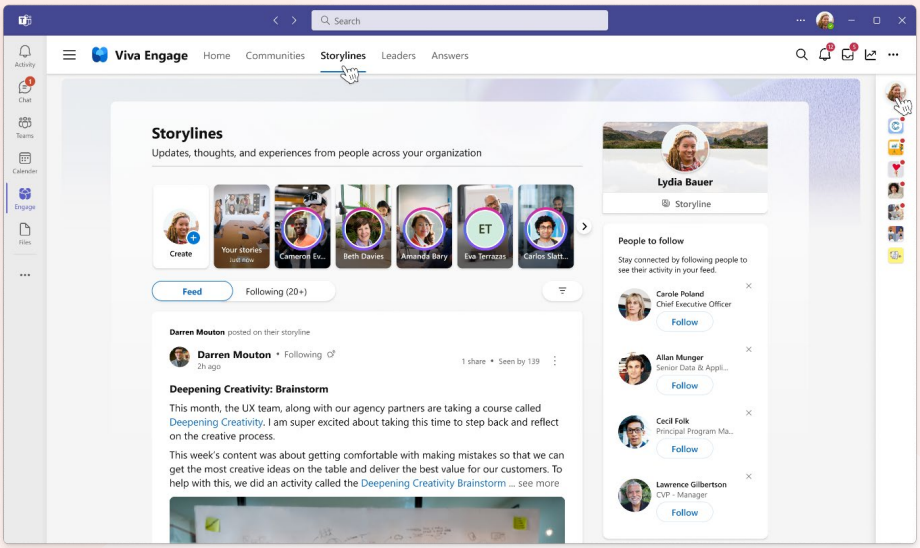


SWOOP Analytics' Enterprise level filter for Storylines.

CASE STUDY

Our top ranked Storyline user says its usually a case of mistaken use

As part of this benchmarking study, we analysed the Storyline activity of all 70 organisations. In total, 82% of the organisations had enabled the Storyline feature, and for them Storyline activity made up just 1%. We then ranked each organisation based on this data and determined the top performing organisations when it came to Storylines.



When SWOOP Analytics approached the No.1 ranked organisation for Viva Engage Storyline use, the Internal Communications team was surprised to learn of the high ranking because most people in this organisation use Storylines by mistake.

Our internal comms contact at this organisation did some analysis of their own to find out why they ranked so highly for Storylines, only to discover it was usually a case of user error.

At this organisation, people are encouraged to post in relevant communities and use hashtags for topics and campaigns.

"What I found when I did an analysis of the Storyline posts from the last month, is that all of them related to a topic that probably should have been in a specific community," our contact said.

> **"People had obviously mis-posted. You could see they had even used hashtags that were related to a specific community that was using those hashtags, or to a campaign.**
>
> **"What had obviously happened was that people had made a post, but they hadn't actually put a post in a community, just on their Storylines.**

"Because they had people following them, the person had received likes and other reactions, but I don't know whether they had realised that the post was not attached to the community where it should have been."

Having said that, when Storylines was first introduced on Viva Engage, this organisation did initially launch it to the business. And while some took advantage of the opportunity to create a blog series or to post about topics not related to a specific community, interest in its use has died off.

> **"I do think that people didn't really understand what to use it for and we found it a hard one to explain," our contact said.**
>
> **"The best analogy we had is it's kind of like your own home feed in Facebook, which seemed out of place in a corporate setting."**

The leaders at this organisation don't use Storylines because they post in their own communities, where their people are members.

EXPERT ADVICE

FOMO, @mentioning and data – tips to get people using Viva Engage

In the same way leaders may need convincing that their efforts on Viva Engage are worthwhile, so too may all employees.

Some of the best ways to get employees using Viva Engage is to create a sense of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) by sharing exclusive information, getting leaders using the platform, @mentioning colleagues to bring them into the conversation, and using the power of data to showcase Viva Engage's potential.

These were some of the top tips from the world's experts in managing and facilitating Viva Engage networks[1]. As part of our research into SWOOP Analytics' 2024/25 Viva Engage Benchmarking Report, we surveyed these experts and asked them: ***What has worked for you in convincing individuals the benefit of them using/ becoming interactive on Viva Engage?***

Sally Jackson, Senior Manager, Content and Channels, National Grid

Leverage data to drive adoption

Sally Jackson, Senior Manager, Content and Channels, at National Grid says by demonstrating the reach of messages within specific communities, colleagues quickly realise the limitations of traditional email communications, which often fail to engage.

1 *The experts contacted by SWOOP Analytics for this research are people who have been top performers in our previous benchmarking studies and recipients of a SWOOP Analytics Award for Outstanding Collaborative Performance or nominated by peers for the annual SWOOP Analytics Community Manager Award.*

She says the key is showing the value of Viva Engage with data. Highlighting the performance metrics of Viva Engage posts helps shift the mindset towards using it, as well as showing people how others are interacting with their content.

> "When a colleague sees the potential reach of messages in certain communities this instantly sells the channel, and they no longer want to send everyone an email – which we know does not always perform well," Sally said.

She says Viva Engage allows people to be more creative, have more fun and show their personality. Sally says the speed of using Viva Engage is also appealing because you can reach people quickly.

She notes the importance of getting leaders on board, and some leaders may feel understandably nervous about posting in such a public forum. Sally's team offers reassurance by helping to get leaders started, proof posts on important topics, and show them how to reach the right people and maximise visibility of their posts, and reassure them about the different nature of Viva Engage compared with external social media.

Sally said it's also important to share best practice stories from other SWOOP Analytics customers or from benchmarking internal teams.

FOMO

Sean Zintl, Global Intranet & Channels Manager, Sage

Sean Zintl, Global Intranet & Channels Manager at Sage, says while Viva Engage may not be for everyone, over the past few years at Sage, it has evolved to the point where if you're not on it, you're missing out!

> "Showcasing examples or successful communities with great engagement is usually an eye opener for some individuals or business areas," Sean said.
>
> "Once they see how easy it is to connect with colleagues, they're quickly won over."

Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager at Westpac New Zealand, takes this one step further and says having information available exclusively on Viva Engage can draw more people to the platform.

More importantly, Fiona says finding a person's "why should I use it?" is the key to getting them engaged.

> "If they feel there's no reason why they should use Viva Engage, for example they think there are no ways it could add value to their day-to-day work life, they'll continue to use other channels," she said.
>
> "So, helping them understand that it does offer a place for them to add value is important, and taking the time, through questioning, to uncover what their specific use cases may be."

Fiona Roberts, Senior Digital Engagement Manager, Westpac NZ

Westpac New Zealand helps create this value by:

- Presenting regularly to teams as to how to differentiate their communications by channel, so they have a clear proposition for their people as to what Viva Engage is used for.
- Having information that's available only on Viva Engage, versus other communication channels, to encourage slow starters, and increase FOMO.
- Having the executive team running communities for their specific business areas, so value is delivered through employees being able to hear from, and communicate directly with, their leaders on a regular basis.
- Sharing analytics with comms partners and leaders so they know how their comms have engaged their intended audience, and what has or hasn't resonated.

Empower employee ambassadors

Andrew Clarke, Manager, Employee Social Media Communications, Air Canada

Launching ambassador programs, by tapping into and utilising your Influential People, can significantly boost engagement.

At Air Canada, an employee ambassador program was launched with active users representing each operational branch. To promote these ambassadors and emphasise the importance of Viva Engage, a campaign called "Get to Know our Yambassadors" was introduced.

Each ambassador (called a Yambassador based off Viva Engage previously being called Yammer) was featured in a Q&A series in the company's monthly e-magazine, allowing their colleagues to learn how the platform benefits everyone.

> "There is genuinely something for everyone on the platform," said Andrew Clarke, Manager, Employee Social Media Communications at Air Canada.

"Additionally, the airline's digital signage network in each branch was utilised to promote the ambassadors and direct colleagues to their featured articles, which were posted in their branch's community on Viva Engage."

Since the launch of the original Yambassador program, Andrew said other departments within the airline have created their own ambassadors and champions programs, including UBY (Unlock the Best in You) ambassadors for health and wellness, DEI champions, and cyber security and privacy champions.

> "These ambassadors and champions have discovered the benefits of using Viva Engage for collaboration and knowledge sharing, especially in an organisation as geographically dispersed as Air Canada," he said.

Andrew said the Employee Communications team also actively promotes Viva Engage at onboarding events and training classes for newly hired employees, ensuring they are aware of its benefits from the start and are more likely to become active users.

Another key approach to getting employees using Viva Engage at Air Canada was the creation of business-related communities that developed organically and quickly became popular and beneficial.

These communities provided employees with quick and easy access to information and advice, Andrew said. For instance, the airline's Employee Travel community became a go-to resource where employees could ask questions and receive timely and relevant information from community members and colleagues.

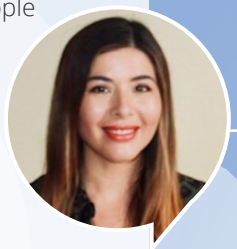
Similarly, **Kevin Crossman**, IT Manager and Content Collaboration Service Owner at **Juniper Networks**, said he employs programs such as Employee Affinity Groups, where the idea of making deeper connections with colleagues is viewed as an important company initiative.

Kevin Crossman, IT Manager and Content Collaboration Service Owner, Juniper Networks

Showcase success stories

Evita Puccio, Senior Communications Manager, Internal Engagement - Digital Channels at **Bendigo and Adelaide Bank** said sharing examples of best practice on Viva Engage, along with high performing posts, has been key to getting people using the platform.

> "Demonstrating the impact these conversations can have on the organisation has been key," she said.
>
> "We also help our stakeholders identify the types of initiatives and campaigns that would be well suited to Viva Engage."



Evita Puccio, Senior Communications Manager, Internal Engagement, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank

Microsoft Viva Engage Adoption and Training Consultant **Bernie Murtagh** also advocates for storytelling and showcasing tangible outcomes to convince people of the benefits of Viva Engage.

Bernie Murtagh, Microsoft Viva Engage Adoption and Training Consultant

By sharing success stories where employees have gained insights, solved challenges, or received recognition through their engagement on Viva Engage, Bernie creates a compelling narrative that resonates with people. She summaries these successes in a weekly Viva Engage post called "The Week That Was" with the hashtag #vivaengagewins.

Bernie also runs Viva Engage training sessions, which are conducted live on the company's Viva Engage network.

> "This real-time interaction helps users have that 'aha' moment, where they truly 'get it'," she said.
>
> "Attendees leave with practical digital behaviour techniques that they can immediately apply post-training. Often people will post on Viva Engage within seconds of the training finishing!"

Jorn Nurkka, Senior Communication Advisor at **Danfoss**, says; "Showing is believing".

Jorn Nurkka, Senior Communication Advisor, Danfoss

Danfoss launched Viva Engage by running pilots in different areas (Denmark, US, China and some communities of interest) that were a great success. These pilots were used to show the many benefits of using Viva Engage across the organisations.

> "When we rolled out to everyone, we had made short videos with the head of HR, head of communication and a segment president explaining how they thought Viva Engage would benefit the organisation," Jorn said.
>
> "Those videos helped selling the message to many of the managers who saw Viva Engage as an opportunity to connect with their employees on a more informal way."

Bringing the fun to work

Rajinder Pryor, Head of Business Partnering, Network Rail

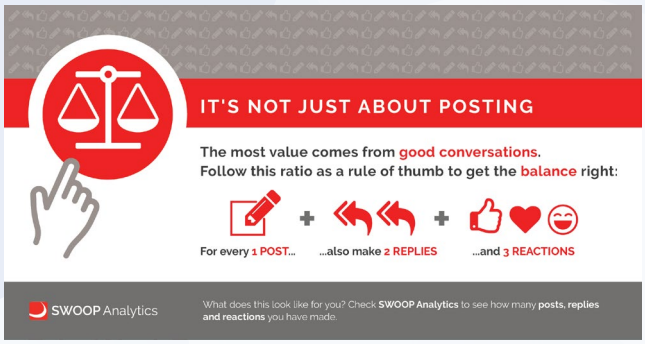
Rajinder Pryor, Head of Business Partnering at Network Rail, says the informality of Viva Engage is a huge drawcard to bring colleagues together to talk in an open and informal way, where they can share their thoughts.

> "Not everyone works in a formal office environment so this channel ensures we reach and include everyone," Rajinder said.
>
> "People engage at their own leisure based on what interests them."

Leonie Challacombe, Principal Advisor (Digital Culture), TMR

Leonie Challacombe, Principal Advisor (Digital Culture) at the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) lists a variety of strategies used to encourage people to become more active on Viva Engage.

- **Sharing success stories:** TMR presents case studies from teams that have adopted Viva Engage as their main communication tool, showcasing benefits like improved project outcomes and enhanced team cohesion.
- **Promoting Storyline for personal branding:** TMR encourages employees to use Storyline to build their personal brand, share skills and interests, and connect with like-minded colleagues, fostering a sense of belonging.
- **Emphasising relationship building:** TMR stresses that Viva Engage is a platform for building relationships in a digital workplace, enabling users to ask questions and share knowledge and insights with peers and leaders, creating a collaborative environment.
- **Creating a Viva Engage toolbox talk:** Using the familiar form of a toolbox talk, TMR provides practical tips and guidance to help employees use the platform effectively, empowering them to engage confidently.
- **Promoting the 1-2-3 rule:** TMR encourages users to tag others, use images, and engage with content, enhancing visibility and fostering community spirit.



> "We've learned that it requires an ongoing, continuous effort as what will resonate with one person or team will not work for another," Leonie said.
>
> "It's a combination of these strategies that ultimately help employees recognise the personal and professional benefits of engaging on Viva Engage."

Don't underestimate the impact of leaders

Cecile Kozinski, Global Brand and Communications, Channel Owner – SPICE+ and Viva Engage, at Schneider Electric said there was a definite correlation between leaders' engagement on Viva Engage and increased employee engagement.

Cecile Kozinski, Global Brand and Communications, Channel Owner – SPICE+ and Viva Engage, Schneider Electric

> "The more the leaders participate in the conversations, we notice a higher employee engagement," Cecile said.
>
> "The conversations flow seamlessly, making employees feel more connected to the company's vision. YamJams have been particularly helpful in bridging the virtual gap across hierarchies, leading to a sense of belongingness."

How SWOOP Analytics teaches you what your employees care about

Another Viva Engage expert we reached out to is Kimberley Tunbridge, a 2022 Viva Engage Community Champion, former Senior Manager Employee Communication at The NRMA, and the former Senior Manager Employee and Community Engagement and Communication at Sutherland Shire Council. Without prompting, Kim complied her top five tips for using SWOOP Analytics into an-easy-to-read slide, and shared how using SWOOP Analytics data can help you too. In Kim's words:

How I've used SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage over the past decade

5 in 5 - The five things your people want the most and how to give it to them in just 5 minutes a day! Lessons from The NRMA and Sutherland Shire Council (SSC) about the key things people connect with on Viva Engage:

HELP

People want to help / be a part of something bigger!
Every single time I've communicated a volunteering or giving initiative, or asked employees to help with a project, the response is overwhelming. At SSC I was inundated with people wanting to volunteer to help in the community. At The NRMA my post asking people to help input into our electric future was the most successful post of the year, because I also tied in a Bunnings BBQ mention, and who doesn't love a Bunnings BBQ?

GOSSIP

People want to hear people changes and movements firsthand!
Employees want to know about promotions, job vacancies, departures or new starters first – not before Seek or LinkedIn. In the past 10 years I've introduced Movers and Shakers everywhere I've worked and its most effective and impactful through Viva Engage because of the fast response times. They have always secured top usage on the SWOOP leaderboard and are an impactful way for leaders to connect and attract talent.

FUTURE

People want to hear from their leaders and know the future of the business / their future working here
Strategic storytelling through Viva Engage is critical. I create content strategies for internal content and work with leaders and employees to communicate through storytelling. I have a storytelling kit I developed, run workshops and drop-in sessions. Leaders who story tell achieve productivity increases, sales and more engaged teams (proven through SWOOP Analytics data)!

PRAISE

People want to be recognised and feel valued and appreciated!
People want to be seen, appreciated, recognised and feel part of it all. Viva Engage is a great way to do this, through the praise function or aligning with your current recognition program. At SSC we had a 'make your mark' program and recognised those who had made their mark on the community. At The NRMA we used Viva Engage for our 'My Thanks' awards program, even putting videos online to get people to vote!

NEWS & CHANGE

People want to know the latest / greatest, what's happening across the business and any silos!
Employees want to hear external news, project updates, acquisitions, changes, everything – internally first through Viva Engage! In all my organisations I've introduced a 'top 10' board which profiles the most engaging posts for the month / year. I use this to encourage leaders to engage with that content but also to spur people to use it more when they see the data and results it delivers.

SWOOP Analytics

At The NRMA, when a leader challenged me to say; "None of our Roadside patrols use Viva Engage", my response was; "Well, how did they all find out about the cost-of-living bonus so quickly that we put up on Viva Engage long before other channels? Or the promotion of a patrol to a Field Team Manager?". If people care for the content, they will tune in. If they don't, they won't. SWOOP Analytics is your employee sentiment measurement tool, or put it in a more simplistic manner - SWOOP teaches you what your employees care about! And that's where the gold is!

Kim Tunbridge, 2022 Viva Engage Community Champion, former Senior Manager Employee Communication at The NRMA, former Senior Manager Employee and Community Engagement and Communication at Sutherland Shire Council.

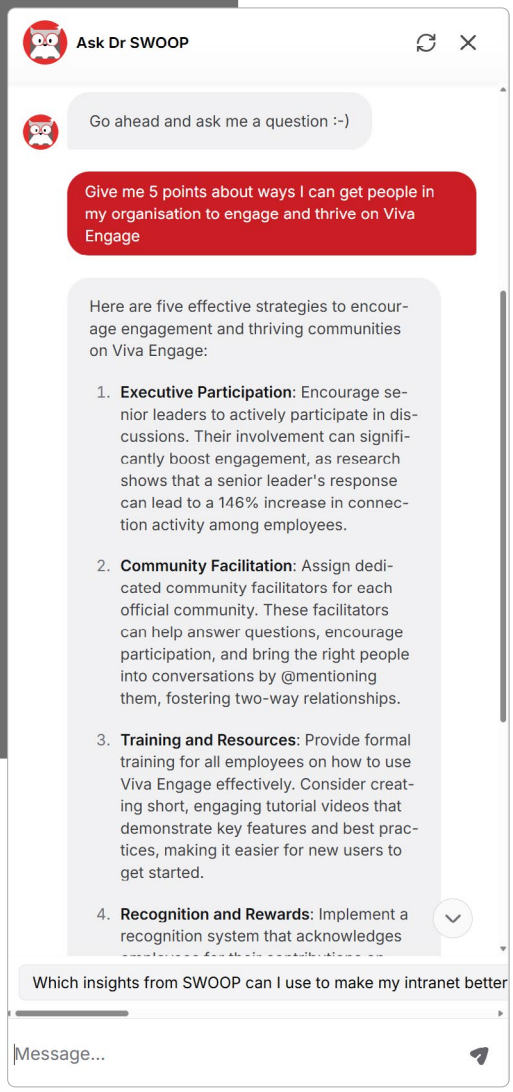
More expert advice for getting your people engaged is at your fingertips with Dr SWOOP

This report can't cover every aspect of how to encourage and support your people to thrive on Viva Engage, so if you want further help and you're a SWOOP Analytics customer, why not ask **Dr SWOOP**?

Dr SWOOP is our generative AI bot that has been specifically trained on SWOOP's benchmarking research, case studies, and knowledge base. This makes Dr SWOOP a quick way to ask about any element of building a business case for Viva Engage and many other aspects of successfully using the tools in your digital workplace.

Find Dr SWOOP on your SWOOP Analytics dashboard for Viva Engage, SharePoint intranet, Microsoft 365, Microsoft Teams or Workplace from Meta by clicking on the Dr SWOOP owl icon.

Right: SWOOP Analytics' Dr SWOOP chat window.



SECTION 6

Goals to aim for when using Viva Engage

While every organisation will have its own needs for Viva Engage, and its own measures for "success", at SWOOP Analytics we have set achievable goals to aim towards, based on the results of the top 20% achieved by our benchmarking participants. We have been benchmarking Viva Engage (previously Yammer) for 10 years, and each year we update these goals based on the latest data. Throughout this report you will have come across relevant goals to aim for, based on the topic discussed. In this section of the report, we have collated all those goals as an easy reference guide, along with some of the common questions we are asked, with the latest data to supply the answers.

6.1 What is a healthy percentage of employees using Viva Engage?

Use SWOOP Analytics' Interactive Users report

Aim for 80% of people reading Viva Engage posts and 37% Interactive Users over a six-month period.

This year's benchmarking of Viva Engage networks showed **a drop in Viva Engage readership levels from 85% in our 2023/24 Viva Engage benchmarking to 78% in this year's analysis**. Our benchmarking has regularly found about 80% of employees have accessed Viva Engage to at least read a post, and this is a very achievable goal. We measure this through SWOOP Analytics' Active People Reading report in SWOOP Analytics for M365. While our benchmark goal is short of 100% readership, to put it in perspective, our M365 benchmarking identified 85% of employees had read emails and 86% had read SharePoint intranet content. Only 77% of people had participated in a Microsoft Teams call or meeting. Based on this data, Viva Engage is a key enterprise digital platform. **If your Viva Engage readership is around the 80% mark, or more, you are achieving a healthy Viva Engage readership.**

Reading and interactive users are two different things. Think of **interactive users as those who are participating in conversations**. We measure Interactive Users as those who have performed at least one post/reaction/comment/reply/share on Viva Engage in the six months analysed. In this year's analysis, the **average Interactive Users result was 28.7%** across all 70 organisations benchmarked. However, the best performing organisations had an impressive 87% interactive users.

This result was a 1% improvement from 2023 but short of 30%+ results achieved in 2020 and 2021. Perhaps this downward trend is attributable to the larger average size of our benchmarking partners in this year's analysis being more than 40,000 employees, whereas our 2020 benchmarking study had an average organisation size of 22,000. The ~50% gap between the passive (reading) and active (interacting) users is more notable. Converting a good proportion of passive users to active participants would go a long way toward lifting employee engagement.

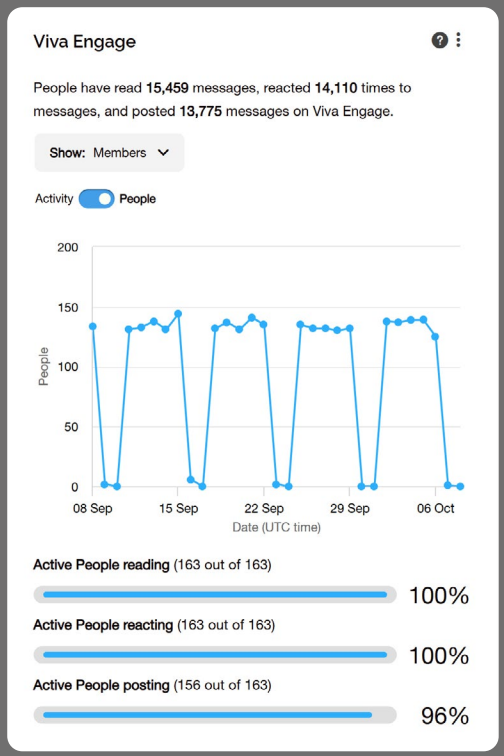
Average Interactive: 28.7%
Best result: 87%
Goal (top 20%): 37%

Some really simple ways of boosting the number of interactive users is to stop all staff emails and instead post on Viva Engage. An "announcement" on Viva Engage will create an email notification and will direct employees to the conversation on Viva Engage. Or in your company newsletter, share just a teaser of a story/competition/initiative in the newsletter, with the link to the full story on Viva Engage. It will drive employees to the conversation on Viva Engage.

Measuring adoption and engagement of Viva Engage

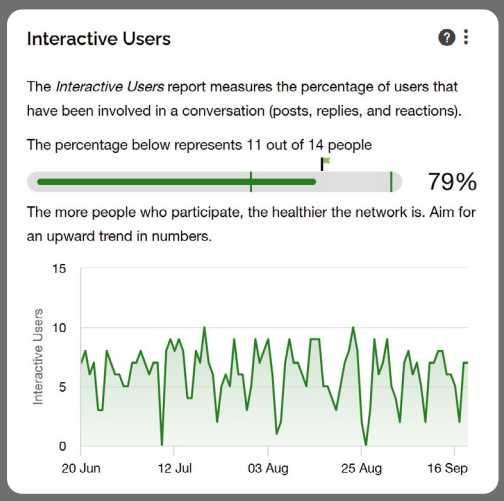
with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

To measure overall adoption, and the number of people in your organisation reading Viva Engage posts, head to **SWOOP Analytics for M365**. There, under the **Activity** tab of the **Enterprise** dashboard, you'll find the **Viva Engage activity** report which can highlight how many people are reading and contributing.



SWOOP Analytics for M365's Viva Engage activity report.

To see the percentage of people in your organisation that have been actively involved in a conversation through posting, replying, commenting or reacting you can use the **Interactive Users** report on the **Activity** tab of the **Enterprise** dashboard in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**. It shows a clear percentage figure as well as the number of users participating over time.



SWOOP Analytics' Interactive Users report.

6.2 How active should people be on Viva Engage?

Check the *average activity per active user* in SWOOP Analytics' User Activity report

Aim for 26.3 activities per user over a six-month period

Average Activity/User: 25.6
Best result: 375.9
Goal (top 20%): 26.3

SWOOP Analytics identifies an employee as "active" on Viva Engage with as little as a single reaction, in contrast to passive users who read only. Ideally, we would like those that have become active to build on their activity by replying to a post, and eventually initiating a post. The average activity per user gives us a measure of how much these active users are posting, replying and reacting on Viva Engage.

This is another measure that has improved, on average, five activities per user compared with our 2023/24 analysis. Although it trails the scores from 2020 and 2021 when the average was close to 30 activities per user.

6.3 How many conversations should be happening on Viva Engage?

Check the average discussion thread per active user

in SWOOP Analytics' User Activity report

Aim for 1 discussion thread per user every 12 weeks

Average Threads / User: **1.94**

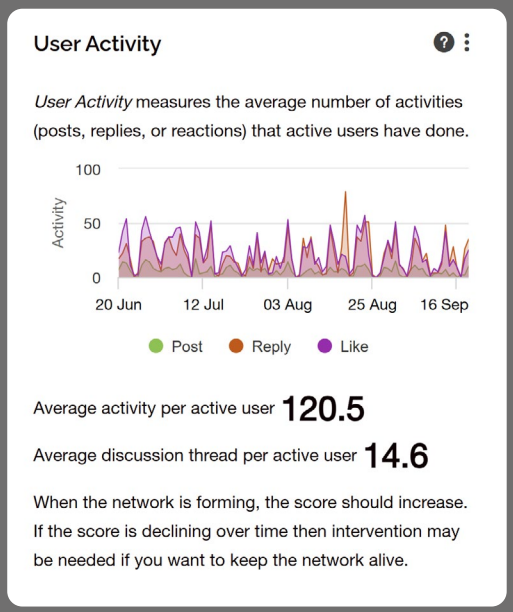
Range 0.4 – 34.4

This measure is designed to capture the breadth of engagement of employees in discussions. The more discussion threads (conversations) employees are involved in, the more likely active knowledge sharing is occurring. It is a good indicator of organisations' maturing use of Viva Engage as a platform for discussion and dialogue, and not simply content sharing. At 1.94 this measure has bounced back from lower scores in 2022/23 and 2023/24, a positive outcome for online conversations. This is another measure where there should be no upper limit. A practical initial target for Threads per User is more than one thread per user every 12 weeks.

Finding average activity per user and average discussion threads per active user

with SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

We have two goal measures displayed on our **User Activity** report on the **Activity** tab of the **Enterprise** dashboard in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**. Set the date range for the past three months and it will show you both the average activity per user (where someone has actually contributed to Viva Engage), and the average number of threads per user. Additionally, the report shows a breakdown of activity in terms of posts, replies and reactions over time.



SWOOP Analytics' User Activity report.

6.4 To have healthy conversations on Viva Engage, how many replies should we expect per post?

Use the Reply/Post Ratio
in SWOOP Analytics' Key Statistics report

Aim for 2.7 or more replies per post

Average Reply/Post: 2.1
Range 0.53 – 5.21

We often refer to the Reply/Post Ratio as "pump priming". When Viva Engage networks are starting up, it is common for leaders to post a lot of content to attract people to the network (Reply/Post < 1). During start-up, we expect the number of posts to exceed the number of replies. 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 a reply per post ratio of 2.1 we see, on average, people are replying just over twice as much as posting, a slight increase from our 2023/24 analysis. This suggests Viva Engage discussions are moving in the right direction. A practical target for a Reply/Post Ratio should be above 2.7 replies for every post.

In **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**, use the **Key Statistic** report to see how many replies and posts you have.

Calculating Key Statistics
in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

Head to the **Activity** tab on the **Enterprise** dashboard in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** to find a summary of the **Key Statistics**. If you divide the number of replies by the number of posts you will get the average replay to post ratio.

SWOOP Analytics' Key Statisics report.

6.5 How many Viva Engage posts should receive replies to foster conversation?

Use SWOOP Analytics' Response Rate report

Aim for a Response Rate of 58% or more

Average Response Rate: 49%

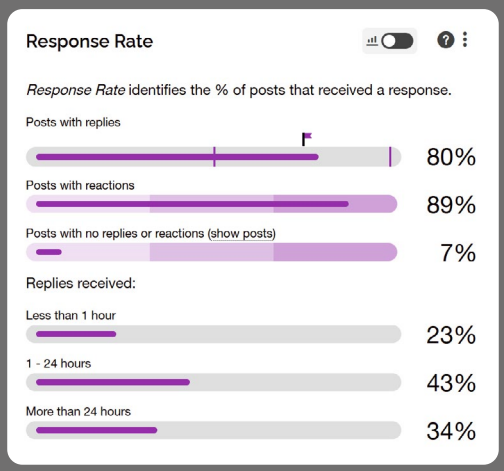
Range 13% – 77%

The Response Rate looks to directly capture replies to posts. Reactions have been excluded from this benchmark (though are available on the SWOOP Analytics dashboard), because a reaction can be a conversation killer, for example how do you extend a conversation after a "like"? The average Response Rate of 49% is two percentage points up from the 2023/24 result. Set a target of at least 58% Response Rate for this important measure.

Finding Response Rates

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

You can see the level of responses to activity in the **Response Rate** report under the **Engagement** tab across all but the Threads dashboard. Posts with no replies or reactions can be reviewed by clicking on the show posts link.



SWOOP Analytics' Response Rate report.

6.6 What are healthy Reach numbers per post?

Check Reach
in SWOOP Analytics' Most Engaging Post report

Aim for 47% Reach

Average Reach: 29.6%
Best result: 71.7%
Goal (top 20%): 47%

A key measure for internal comms is knowing the size of the audience for Viva Engage posts. SWOOP Analytics now provides the percentage of "Reach" achieved for the Most Engaging Posts (those achieving the highest levels of replies and reactions).

"Reach" is the percentage of people on your Viva Engage network who have seen the post. Engagement is the percentage of people that have interacted with a post – posted, reacted, commented, replied, shared - from those that have seen the post.

In our 2024/25 analysis we had an average Reach measure of 29.6% of people that have access to Viva Engage. However, the top 20% of organisations had an average of 47% which is the goal we suggest to aim for, or higher. If you're an organisation of more than 100,000, we would consider 30% Reach is a more realistic goal. We explain why below.

Measuring Reach
in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

The **Most Engaging Post** list, found in all **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** dashboards under the **Content** tab, shows the **Reach** of the post as the number of people that have seen the post as a percentage of people in your organisation. To calculate the average Rreach for your top 10 posts, use the three dots at the top right of the report to export the data to Excel, and then average the Reach column.

Most Engaging Posts

The *Most Engaging Posts* shows the posts that have had the most engagement in their conversations threads.
Private posts are excluded.

Sort: Replies + Reactions Filter By: All post types

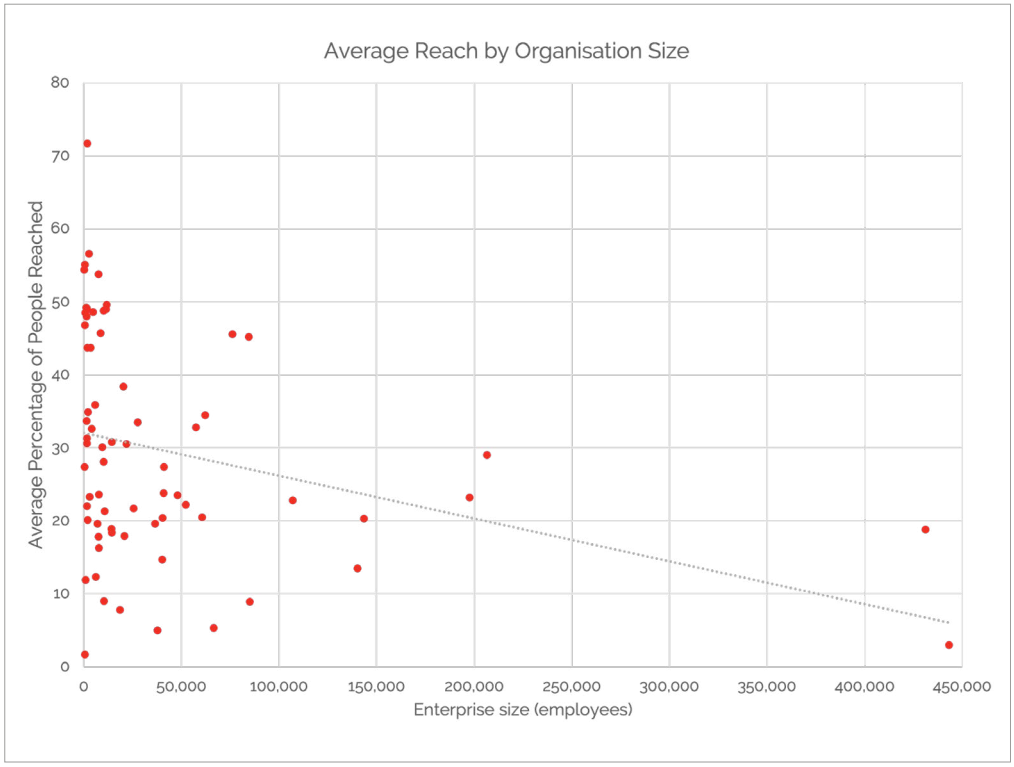
		Replies	Reactions	Shares	People	Seen	Engagement	Reach
1	While undoubtedly some ShareSpace groups are dominated b...	39	37	0	7	20	35%	50%
2	Even if it's some heavily redacted memo, this report from the ...	26	34	0	8	17	47%	43%
3	The sharing stage leverages the methods of a visual communi...	17	39	0	13	20	65%	50%
4	The Plastic Free July Challenge The full impact of microplastic...	17	26	0	17	21	81%	53%
5	Reply' Response Rate Distribution Over Time Content Genera...	12	31	0	10	20	50%	50%
6	While a ShareSpace implementation can be developed using ...	17	24	0	10	13	77%	33%
7	The above three cultural archetypes are all very different from ...	15	24	0	10	21	48%	53%
8	The Inner Loop Outer Loop guidance system is an automated ...	11	26	0	13	20	65%	50%
9	At Australia's largest health insurer Healthinsure Private, a thir...	12	24	0	18	21	86%	53%
10	We introduce the 16 SWOOP measures aligned with the ZAD, ...	17	18	0	19	27	70%	68%

Show more rows

SWOOP Analytics' Most Engaging Post report.

6.7 Is Reach harder to achieve for larger organisations?

We did find a negative relationship between average %Reach and enterprise size. This is most evident for enterprises with more than 100,000 employees, where an aspirational goal of more than 30% Reach is more realistic than the 47% goal for smaller organisations.



%Reach for Viva Engage posts across the 70 organisations benchmarked in 2024/25.

6.8 To encourage transparent collaboration and communication, how many conversations should be posted in public communities?

Use SWOOP Analytics' Public Messages report

Aim for 97% public messages

By default, communities formed on Viva Engage are public and therefore open to any colleague to join. There are contexts, however, where a community might be established as private, and membership is therefore by invitation only.

For example, at KFC Australia, each individual restaurant has its own private Viva Engage community, and every employee at that restaurant is a member of the community. Within each restaurant's community, every employee can talk about what's going on in their store, look at rosters, request shift swaps and more. The conversation is relevant only to each restaurant, so it is therefore unnecessary for a restaurant in another state or another city to have access to community. Making each restaurant's Viva Engage community private limits the "noise" across the Viva Engage network, which has more than 650 restaurants and 34,000 employees.

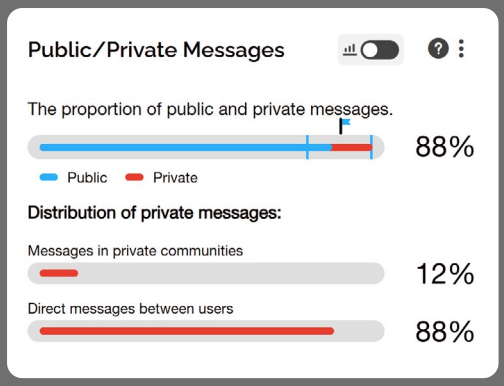
Our benchmarking has identified the **average number for public Viva Engage communities is 78.7%. The best percentage for public communities is 100%, and the goal (the top 20%) is set to 97%.**

Public communities are the preference for open and transparent internal communications. That is not to say private communities are bad, there is a place for them. Interestingly, we found the growth rate for private communities matched that of public communities at 6% over the six-month period analysed.

Finding the split between Public and Private messages

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

The **Public/Private Messages** report in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** shows the proportion of messages that are public. You can find it on the **Enterprise** dashboard under the **Content** tab.



SWOOP Analytics' Public/Private Messages report.

6.9 How often should you @mention people to draw more people into conversations?

Use SWOOP Analytic' Mention Index report

Aim for 18% or more @mentions

Average %Mention: **14.3%**

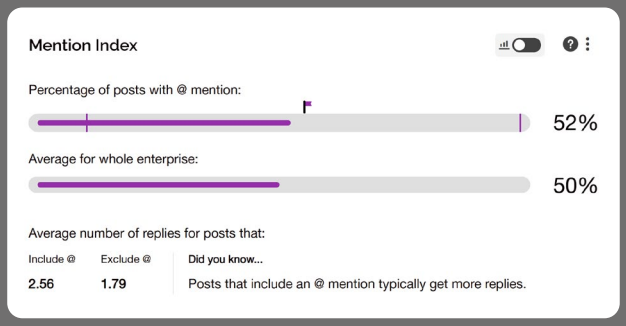
Range 3 – 46

Tagging, or @mentioning, a colleague is to encourage their participation in the discussion. Mentions help extend the conversation. The 2024/25 score is a 3% improvement on the 2023/24 score and continues an upward trend from 2020. We think selective tagging is a positive habit. The upward trend is moving against the downward trend for engagement metrics like %Two-Way Relationships and %Engager persona. This suggests that @mentioning is now more a FYI more so than asking people to join the conversation. The downward trend in the Curiosity Index (posts framed as questions) reinforces this.

Mention Index

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

Want to find out if people are getting mentioned in posts? The **Mention Index** report in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** is found under the **Engagement** tab of all but the **Threads** dashboard, and can help you understand if people are bringing others into the conversation by @mentioning them.



SWOOP Analytics' Mention Index report.

6.10 What SWOOP Analytics Persona distribution should we aim for to achieve maximum engagement?

Check SWOOP Analytics' Persona Distribution report

SWOOP Analytics' Personas are made up of five uniquely different behavioural styles – the Engager, Catalyst, Responder, Broadcaster and Observer. Below we outline the goals for the distribution of the personas, excluding the Observer. In other words, the percentages represent how the four "active" personas are split.

Broadcasters – Aim for a maximum 4%

Average %Broadcasters: **4.1%** ↓
Range 1% – 18%

Once we have managed to influence employees to become active on Viva Engage, we need to try and keep them there. The most common method is to provide content they can access only on Viva Engage. 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 characterised people who are responsible for this style of content as Broadcasters. In other contexts, broadcasting may not be a negative behaviour. But on Viva Engage it is. We believe this measure should have targets to minimise broadcaster behaviour. The average of 4.1% this year is a reduction on our 2023/24 benchmarking rate. The large range points to an opportunity for many organisations to improve. Try keeping the Broadcasters to below 4%.

Aim for 18% or more Engagers and Catalysts/Responders to be 35%-50%

Average %Engagers: **15.3%** ↓
Range 7% – 52%

Average %Catalysts: **31.7%**
Range 9% – 51%

Average %Responders: **48.9%** ↑
Range 24% – 72%

These are all constructive personas, with Catalysts important in the early adoption phases and Responders important for maintaining conversations and promoting inclusion. This year's benchmarking is showing a drop in the aspirational Engager persona to 15.3% from 17.5% in 2023/24. On the other hand, the Responder persona has risen to 48.8% from 45.7% in 2023/24.

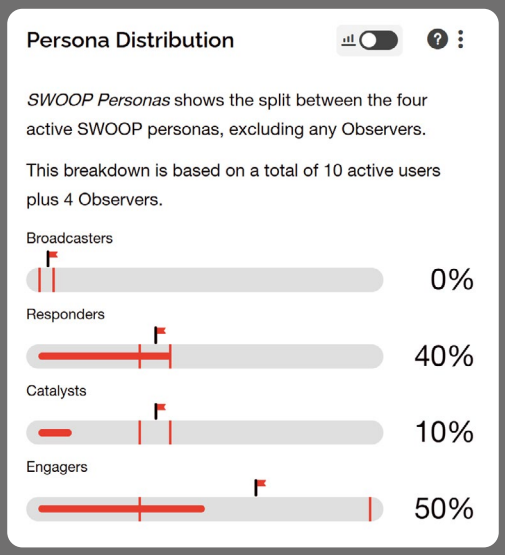
These movements are reflective of the trend toward more social media content consumption over deeper collaborative work on Viva Engage.

We suggest a target of more than 18% for Engagers, with Catalysts and Responders in the range of 35 to 50%.

Finding the number of Observers and the Persona Distribution for your network

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

To see how personas are distributed on your Viva Engage network, and to see how many people are lurking as observers, head to the **Persona Distribution** report in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**. The report, found in all dashboards under the **Engagement** tab, except for the Personal dashboard, shows the percentage split of the personas of your active users and has the total number **Observers** in the text above the bars.



SWOOP Analytics' Persona Distribution report.

6.11 How do I know if my Viva Engage community is at risk if someone leaves?

Check the Influencer Risk Score
in SWOOP Analytics' Influential People report

Aim for a maximum Influencer Risk Score of 18

Influencer Risk: Average **33** Range 6 – 78

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 Networks like Viva Engage, it is more like the beginning of the journey.

Once an organisation starts to prioritise 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 overdependent 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 Score.

This index calculates the degree to which the network is dependent on a selected few. The higher the score, the higher the risk.

The average score is 33 with a best practice i.e. lowest risk score of 6. This is about the same level as the 2023/24 results. A high Influencer Risk Score means the network is at risk if a few key people were to leave.

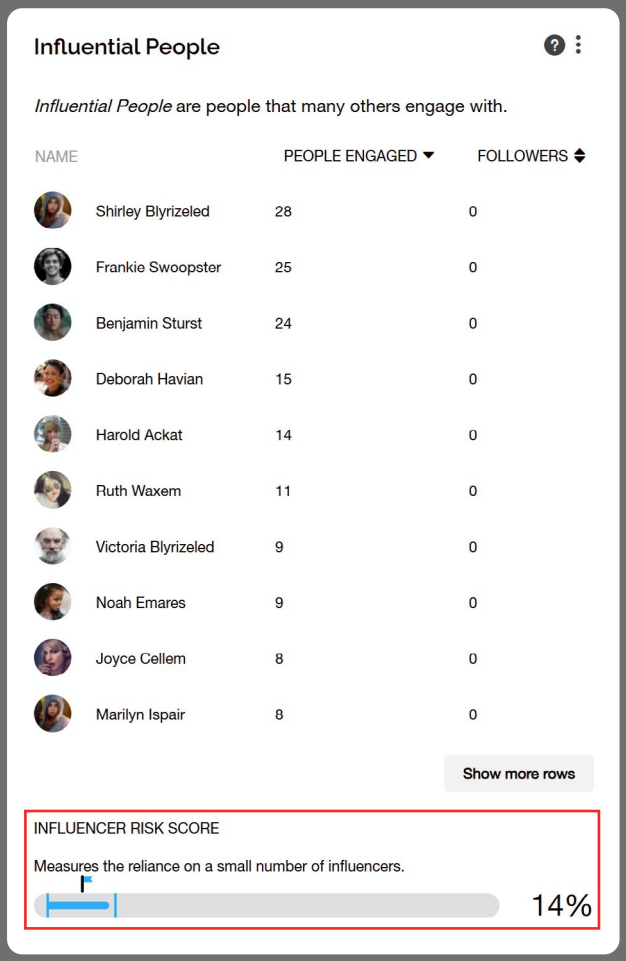
Just like hierarchical roles, it is always good to build some redundancy into the network, encouraging multiple hubs to form, and to lower the key influencer risk. On average, the Influencer Risk Score across our benchmarking participants is far too high. Set an initial target at a maximum of 18 for the Influencer Risk Score.

Influencer Risk

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

Tracking influencer risk is straightforward in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage.** It is shown on the **Influential People** report, found in all dashboards under the **Engagement** tab, except for the Personal dashboard. This report shows the number of people that have engaged (replied, reacted, commented or shared) with another person's post and ranks them by the number of people engaged.

The Influencer Risk calculation is shown at the bottom of the report.



Influential People

Influential People are people that many others engage with.

NAME	PEOPLE ENGAGED	FOLLOWERS
Shirley Blyrizeled	28	0
Frankie Swoopster	25	0
Benjamin Sturst	24	0
Deborah Havian	15	0
Harold Ackat	14	0
Ruth Waxem	11	0
Victoria Blyrizeled	9	0
Noah Emares	9	0
Joyce Cellem	8	0
Marilyn Ispair	8	0

Show more rows

INFLUENCER RISK SCORE

Measures the reliance on a small number of influencers.

14%

SWOOP Analytics' Influential People report.

6.12 How do I know if people are engaging in two-way conversations?

Check SWOOP Analytics' Two-way Relationships report

Aim for 23% Two-way Relationships or more

Average Two-way relationships: 19.5%

Range 9% – 67%

A two-way connection is formed when you initiate an interaction with someone. For example, you react to 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.

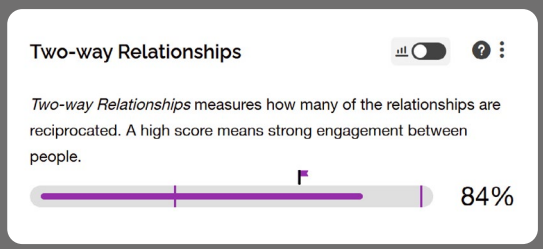
The 2024/25 result is a slight reduction from the 2023/24 result, and continues the downward trend, which is disappointing for this key measure. Organisations should be trying to maximise the Two-way Relationships measure, looking to achieve a level above 23%.

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 a Viva Engage community 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 Relationship score is the most reliable measure of relationships forming and problems being solved.

Finding the Two-way Relationship report

in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

You can see the percentage of **Two-way Relationships report** on the **Collaboration** tab of the **Enterprise** and all the other dashboards in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**.



SWOOP Analytics' Two-way Relationship report.

6.13 How many Viva Engage communities should people be active in to boost innovation and diversity?

Use SWOOP Analytics' Multi-Group Participation report

Aim for a score of 48% Multi-Group Participation or more

Average Multi-Group Participation:
(Diversity)

41.2%
Range 2 – 69

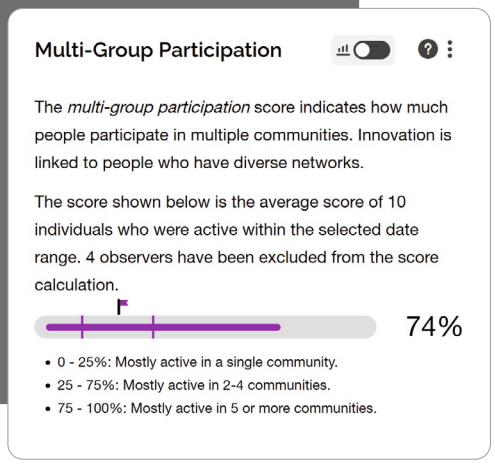
A key prerequisite for successful innovation is diversity of thought, which comes from a diversity of connections, leading to a diversity of experiences. Diversity can be measured across a multitude of dimensions. While diversity is often aligned with gender, business enterprises are also concerned about diversity of connections across the formal lines of business, or exposure to a diversity of perspectives and thinking. SWOOP Analytics' Multi-Group Participation measure used for this benchmark is diversity of participation in Viva Engage 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 an active member of, and how evenly activity is spread across those communities. Through participation in Viva Engage, people 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 employee's diversity scores. The average diversity score is marginally lower than in 2023/24. To maximise a diversity score, someone would need to spread their activities evenly across a large number of Viva Engage communities. Having public communities that span the common interests of the whole organisation is another way to encourage diversity building. There is a practical and sensible limit to how much one should aim to do this.

Finding the Multi-Group Participation report
in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

We can gauge how well people are contributing and getting information from different communities through our **Multi-Group Participation** report, found on all levels of **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** dashboards under the **Collaboration** tab. This report summarises how many different communities people are active in.

Right: SWOOP Analytics' Multi-Group Participation report.



6.14 How many questions should people be asking in Viva Engage to stimulate two-way conversations and solve business problems?

Use SWOOP Analytics' Curiosity Index

Aim for 14% or more messages with questions

Curiosity Index: Average **11.1%** ↓ Range 3% – 28%

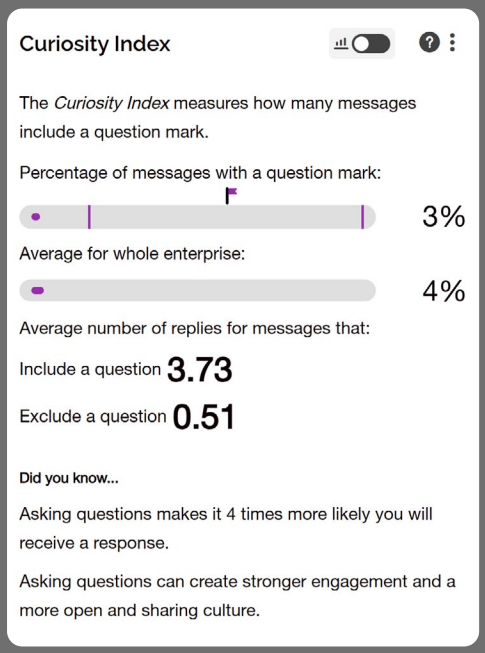
This measure simply calculates the proportion of posts and replies that include a question. On its own, a high curiosity might signal a more inquisitive organisation; and one willing to entertain change, innovate and/or challenge the status quo.

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 Viva Engage are not left there unimplemented.

The Curiosity Index is marginally lower than in 2023/24. Set a Curiosity Index goal of more than 14%.

Curiosity Index
in SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage

Asking questions is an indication of knowledge sharing. The **Curiosity Index** report in **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** is found under the **Engagement** tab in all but the Threads dashboard and can help you understand if people are actively engaged in asking questions.



SWOOP Analytics' Curiosity Index report.

6.15 Summary

Of the 15 measures directly comparable between 2024/25 and 2023/24, seven measures retreated. The drop in people-to-people engagement measures of Threads per User, Two-way Relationships, and %Engagers is a troubling trend for people-to-people engagement. The big improver was a further increase in the Mention Index. The following table collates our recommendations for enterprise goalsetting and has been largely set at the 80th percentile (top 20%) of our 70 benchmarked organisations for 2024/25.

2024/25 Viva Engage Benchmarking metrics and goals

SWOOP Analytics benchmark	Recommended enterprise targets
Platform Adoption	
Number of Active Users (%Participation)	Active participation rate of more than 37%
User Engagement (around content)	
%Broadcasters*	Less than 5% Broadcasters
%Mention	Greater than 18%
Activity/User	1 post, 2 replies, 3 likes portfolio of more than 1 interactions/week for each user
Connecting	
%Engagers %Catalysts %Responders	%Engagers above 18%. %Catalyst and %Responder should be comfortably between 35–50%
Influencer Risk*	Less than 18
Sharing	
%Public Messages	Greater than 97%
Replies/Post	Greater than 2.7 replies for every post
Threads Per User	1 thread/user every 12 weeks
Solving	
%(Reply)Response Rate	Greater than 51%
%Two-Way Connections	Greater than 23%
Innovating	
Diversity (Multi-Group Participation)	Greater than 48
Curiosity	Greater than 14%
* Lower is better	

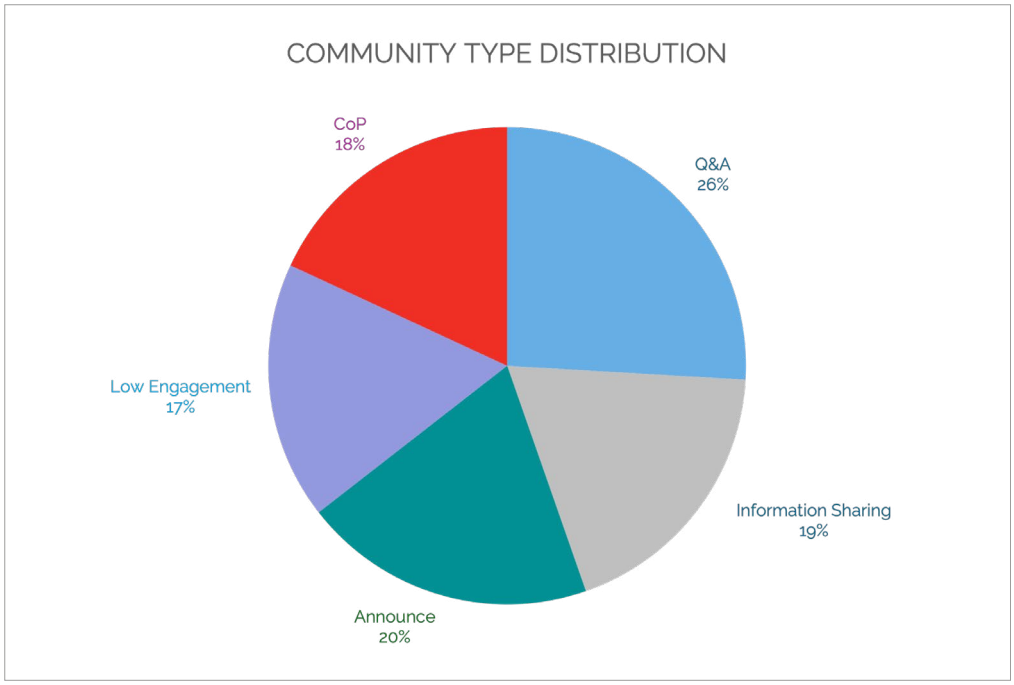
Viva Engage community benchmarking goals

Just as teams on Microsoft Teams are not all the same, communities on Viva Engage are not all the same. To better understand how you can manage your Viva Engage community, you must first appreciate the type of community you are participating in. Viva Engage communities are not all real "communities" in the true sense of the word. SWOOP Analytics uses interaction data and machine learning algorithms in our benchmarking to suggest what type of community you are a part of.

Community Type	General description	SWOOP Analytics indicator characteristics (from machine learning)
Community of Practice (CoP)	Is focused on building skills and competencies by gathering together people with acknowledged levels of practical expertise.	Modest membership size. High levels of Two-way Relationships, Interactive Users and Responders. Low Curiosity Index and Multi-Group Participation (diversity of experience).
Information Sharing (Community of Interest)	Gathers people with common interests with a view to sharing information, more so than actively collaborating. Large size.	Moderate levels of Responders, Response Rate and replies per post. High levels of @mentions.
Q&A Forums	Main purpose is to facilitate questions being posed and answers provided. Modest size. High Curiosity Index, high level of Engagers and Mention Index.	Large size. Good responsiveness (Replies/Post, Response Rate, Responder persona. Lower levels of Two-way Relationships and Curiosity Index.
Announce Groups	Generally top-down information communications.	Very strong level of Catalysts (announcers); Low levels of Engagers, Responders and Replies.
Low Engagement	Likely dormant or dead communities.	Low and modest levels across all measures.

Viva Engage community types and characteristics.

Applying our machine learning approach to 3,751 communities across our 70 organisations, the data provided the following distribution of community types:

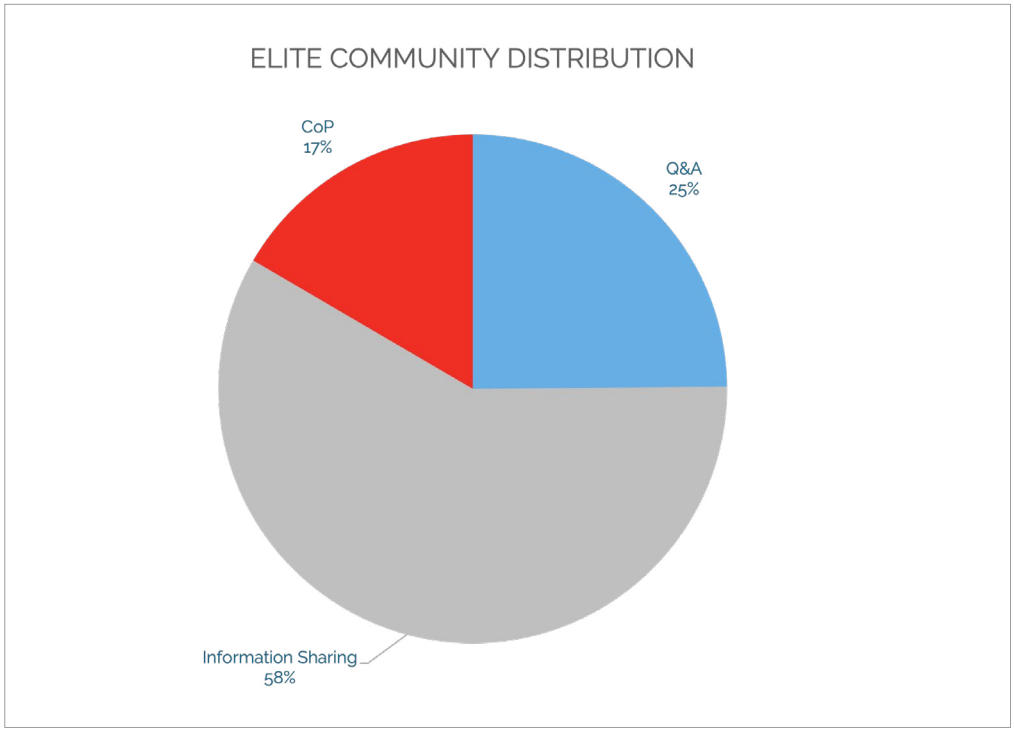


Community type distribution in SWOOP Analytics' 2024/25 Viva Engage benchmarking study.

The classification distributions were broadly similar to 2023/24. The Q&A type was 5% larger and Communities of Practice were 4% lower.

Elite Communities

We identified the top 10% (375 communities) according to SWOOP Analytics' community performance ranking algorithms. The community type distribution for these elite communities are as follows:



Distribution of elite communities types.

With our 2024/25 communities, the elite communities were made up of Information Sharing, CoP and Q&A community types. Compared with our 2023/24 data, the CoP type was down to 17% from 71%; Information Sharing up to 58% from 23%, and Q&A up to 25% from 6%.

This data reinforces the movement of Viva Engage usage towards broad information sharing within larger communities, and a retreat from more traditional Communities of Practice.

Announce Groups do not figure in our elite list due to their special purpose, which is largely to inform without an expectation for two-way interactions. While announce groups are not traditionally considered "communities", they are an important channel for internal communicators seeking some level of two-way interactions.

Community goals by type

The following tables collate our recommendations for community goal setting, and has been largely set at the 80th percentile (top 20%) for each community type from our 70 benchmarked organisations for 2024/25.

Information Sharing (Communities of Interest)

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
Interactive Users	> 55%
Response Rate (replies and reactions)	100%
Replies/Post Ratio	>3.3
Responder (SWOOP Analytics Persona)	~54%
Two-way Relationships	>28%

As the most popular community type, the responsiveness measures of Response Rate, Replies/Post and the Responder persona are key indicators of information being shared. The Two-way Relationships measure will signal how cohesive a community of interest is.

Q&A Forums

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
Interactive Users	> 56%
Response Rate (replies and reactions)	100%
Replies/Post Ratio	>3.4
Responder (SWOOP Persona)	~53%
Curiosity Index	> 20%

Q&A Forums are "quick-win" communities. Members pose questions when they are looking for some quick help. The Curiosity Index maps the percentage of questions posted. The responsiveness measures, particularly Replies/Post is an indicator of questions being answered.

Communities of Practice (CoP)

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
Interactive Users	> 56%
Response Rate (replies and reactions)	80%
Responders (SWOOP Persona)	~54%
Engagers (SWOOP Persona)	>25%
Two-way Relationships	> 28%
Influencer Risk Score	< 23

Communities of Practice are discipline-aligned groups looking to build better work practices. They typically are smaller, more focussed groups. People-to-people engagement (Two-way Relationships) is important for the transfer of tacit knowledge. It is also important to have multiple leaders (low influencer risk).

Announce Groups

Characteristic SWOOP Measure	Recommended Target (Top 20% Level)
Interactive Users	> 55%
Response Rate (replies and reactions)	100%
Replies/Post	> 3.4
Catalyst (SWOOP Persona)	> 64%
Curiosity Index	> 21%

Announce Groups on Viva Engage are designed to facilitate two-way interactions. Therefore, the response rate and replies per announcement are important goals. Announcements formed as a question are unusual, but we found high performing announce groups were posting or receiving questions for one of every four announcements. Questions, of course, encourage two-way interactions.

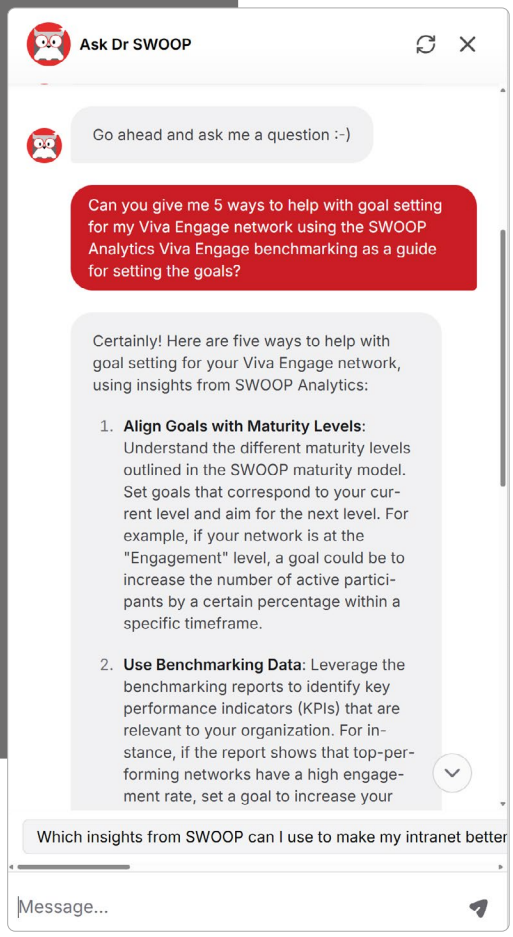
More expert advice for setting goals for Viva Engage is at your fingertips with Dr SWOOP

This report can't cover every aspect of how to set and improve your goals for Viva Engage, so if you want further help and you're a SWOOP Analytics customer, why not ask **Dr SWOOP**?

Dr SWOOP is our generative AI bot that has been specifically trained on SWOOP's benchmarking research, case studies, and knowledge base. This makes Dr SWOOP a quick way to ask about any element of building a business case for Viva Engage and many other aspects of successfully using the tools in your digital workplace.

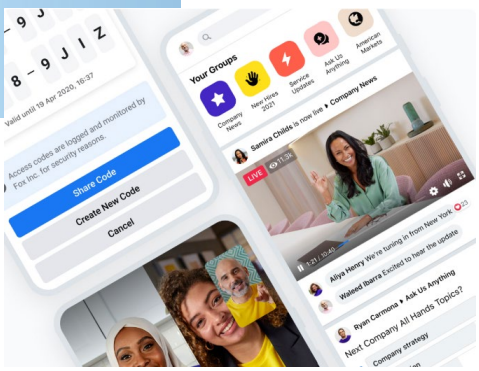
Find Dr SWOOP on your SWOOP Analytics dashboard for Viva Engage, SharePoint intranet, Microsoft 365, Microsoft Teams or Workplace from Meta by clicking on the Dr SWOOP owl icon.

Right: SWOOP Analytics' Dr SWOOP chat window.



Migrating from Workplace from Meta to Viva Engage

With the imminent closure of Workplace from Meta on September 1, 2025, this benchmarking report can be used as a helpful resource in the transition to Viva Engage. To make your migration even smoother, we are offering access to both SWOOP Analytics for Workplace **and** SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage **for up to 12 months for the same subscription fee**.



This allows you to continue to have full access to SWOOP Analytics for Workplace as you make the transition to Viva Engage, and all the while you'll also have complete access to SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage at no extra cost. You'll be able to see exactly how the migration is being embraced across your organisation, you'll see which influencers to target to help with the transition, and you'll understand the health of your communities.

Workplace Timeline:

Until August 31, 2025:
Continue using Workplace as usual.

September 1, 2025 - May 31, 2026:
Read and download existing data.

June 1, 2026:
Access terminated and your Workplace deleted.

If you're still undecided about which platform to transition to, SWOOP Analytics CEO Cai Kjaer has **outlined the options available**. We've also done the analysis, based on years of data, to find out if Viva Engage is as good as Workplace.

The data tells us that Viva Engage is just as effective as Workplace from Meta, if not better, at connecting people and allowing communication to flow.

In the table below we have outlined a set of metrics and scores that are based on analysing millions of interactions users have performed on Workplace and Viva Engage. And we have specified what business outcome they relate to.

Metric	Business Outcomes	Workplace Score	Viva Engage Score	Verdict
Replies to Posts Percentage of posts with a reply.	More replies to posts can encourage active discussions and knowledge sharing, leading to a more informed and engaged workforce. This can improve decision-making and innovation.	46.5%	47%	It's a tie. **Too close to call.**
Two-Way Relationships Percentage of relationships that are two-way.	Strong, reciprocal relationships can lead to a more cohesive and collaborative work environment. This can improve information flow, decision-making, and overall business performance.	17%	21.1%	**Viva Engage** is slightly ahead.
Influencer Risk Score Indicates the risk of over-reliance on a few key influencers.	A lower influencer risk score can reduce the risk of over-reliance on a few individuals, leading to a more resilient and distributed network. This can improve business continuity and reduce key-person risk.	34.1	33.9	It's a tie. **Too close to call.**
Public Messages The percentage of messages posted publicly.	Public messages can encourage transparency and open communication, fostering a culture of trust and accountability. This can improve employee morale and business integrity.	60.7%	79.6%	**Viva Engage** is ahead.

Metric	Business Outcomes	Workplace Score	Viva Engage Score	Verdict
Curiosity Index The percentage of posts and replies that include a question.	A higher Curiosity Index can foster a culture of curiosity and innovation, leading to more creative solutions and continuous learning. This can improve business adaptability and competitiveness.	8%	12.8%	**Viva Engage** is ahead.
Active Users Percent The percentage of users who are actively contributing.	A higher percentage of active users can indicate successful platform adoption and engagement, leading to more effective use of the platform for collaboration and communication. This can improve business efficiency and effectiveness.	35.2%	31.3%	**Workplace** is slightly ahead.
Activity Per User The average number of interactions per user.	More activity per user (posts, replies, reactions) can encourage active participation and engagement, leading to a more vibrant and collaborative work environment. This can improve employee satisfaction and productivity.	19.8	24.7	**Viva Engage** is slightly ahead.
Multi-Group Participation Measures users being active in multiple groups.	More multi-group participation can promote the diversity of ideas and cross-pollination, leading to more innovative solutions and a broader understanding of the business.	47.8	44.4	**Workplace** is slightly ahead.

The comparison table above demonstrates that the two platforms can deliver similar business outcomes. In most cases, the differences are insignificant. However, two areas stand out. The proportion of messages posted in public communities is higher on Viva Engage than Workplace, and the proportion of messages which include a question (Curiosity Index) is also higher on Viva Engage.

Public Messages = Transparency = Knowledge-sharing

Transparency and knowledge-sharing go hand in hand. On Viva Engage, employees are better at connecting with colleagues across organisational, functional and geographical boundaries in open forums. This allows for more cross-pollination of ideas, and less of "if only we knew what we know".

Also, our benchmarking on Viva Engage and Microsoft Teams has clearly shown communities on Viva Engage are mostly large and open, whereas teams on Microsoft Teams are smaller and private. If you are moving to Viva Engage, you can therefore expect that some of your colleagues will opt for Microsoft Teams, leaving Viva Engage for broader and more public conversations.

Asking questions = Trust = Speed

Another encouraging outcome for those moving to Viva Engage can expect is that more questions will be asked. When we ask questions, it is a sign of trust. In low trust cultures people don't ask questions. It is a sign of weakness, or something employees have learned is not encouraged. Trust is closely related to how fast you can move as a business. High trust = High speed.

Conclusion

Had it not been for the fact that Workplace has decided to close, it might be less straightforward to recommend a move to Viva Engage. While there might have been cost savings, technology optimisation or similar benefits associated with a move, it seems both platforms have successfully enabled strong business outcomes.

However, given that Workplace is going away, and that Viva Engage is performing better, a move to Viva Engage seems like a no-brainer.

How SWOOP Analytics can help as you migrate to Viva Engage

We're going to assume that you have decided to move to Viva Engage, and we suggest you consider using **SWOOP Analytics for Workplace** and **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage** to help.

Understanding the landscape

Before embarking on this journey, it's crucial to understand the current state of your Workplace site. Using SWOOP Analytics for Workplace, you can gain insights into how your organisation is collaborating, identify key influencers, and understand the health of your communities. This will provide a solid foundation for your migration plan.

Planning the migration

With a clear understanding of your current landscape, you can begin to plan your migration. You can identify which groups and content need to be migrated to Viva Engage. Prioritise based on activity levels, business criticality, and the readiness of the group members for the change.

Preparing for the change

Within **SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage**, you can see the most **Influential People** across each department, segment, or across the enterprise.

Change can be daunting, but with the right preparation, it can be managed effectively. Use the insights from SWOOP Analytics to identify key influencers who can act as change champions. Develop a communications plan to keep everyone informed about the migration process and the benefits of moving to Viva Engage.

Executing the migration

With a plan in place and your organisation prepared for the change, you can begin the migration process. This will involve technical tasks such as setting up your Viva Engage environment, migrating content, and configuring settings. Remember to test thoroughly before going live.

Monitoring post-migration

Once you've migrated to Viva Engage, use SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage to monitor the health of your new digital environment. Track key metrics such as engagement, responsiveness, and cross-departmental collaboration. Use these insights to identify areas for improvement and celebrate successes.

Continuous improvement

The journey doesn't end with migration. Continually monitor your Viva Engage environment with SWOOP Analytics, and use the insights to drive ongoing improvements.

CASE STUDY

A successful migration from Workplace to Viva Engage

In 2022, the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure successfully completed a migration from Workplace from Meta to Microsoft's Viva Engage. This migration occurred across the entire state government department and, two years later, Viva Engage is a place where colleagues can connect and collaborate, engage with leaders, and the number of all-staff emails has dropped.

Stephen Adam, Senior Communications Advisor, NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Prior to and during launch, Viva Engage was positioned as the place for staff to connect, collaborate and share, with a strong focus on two-way communication and engagement, said Stephen Adam, Senior Communications Advisor at NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

"This position helped us build on the success we saw when using Workplace, where staff could engage directly with their leaders, connect and collaborate with colleagues around shared interests and projects, and share their stories with one another," Stephen said.

During the move to Viva Engage, the internal communications team selectively migrated about 100 communities, including the all-staff news community – a key channel to deliver messaging to employees which has helped decrease the reliance on all-staff emails. Stephen said this community is also frequently used by leaders for updates, which helps drive engagement and connection with staff.

To help drive people to Viva Engage, the department also migrated the divisional, operational (health and safety, recruitment, technology), and high-engagement shared interest (dogs, photography, artists) communities.

"This helped provide staff with a familiar (place) and...early adoption by leveraging the previous positive experience on Workplace," Stephen said.

Governance is key

Following the launch of Viva Engage, anyone could request the creation of a new community through the Viva Engage administrator via a centralised form. An audit is conducted every six months which identifies communities that have been inactive for three months or longer.

"(It) allows us to check in with the community administrators to see if they are still needed and offer advice to help them grow and manage their communities, or archive them," Stephen said.

"By implementing these two governance measures, we've been able to manage the growth of the platform and can intervene when needed to help our community administrators."

Importantly, Stephen says success has nothing to do with the actual platform – Viva Engage or Workplace.

> **"From my experience using both platforms, success comes from users building direct connections with their leaders and each other and sharing stories and updates with the authentic person at the centre," he said.**
>
> **"These two elements are captured in how Viva Engage was positioned within our digital strategy."**

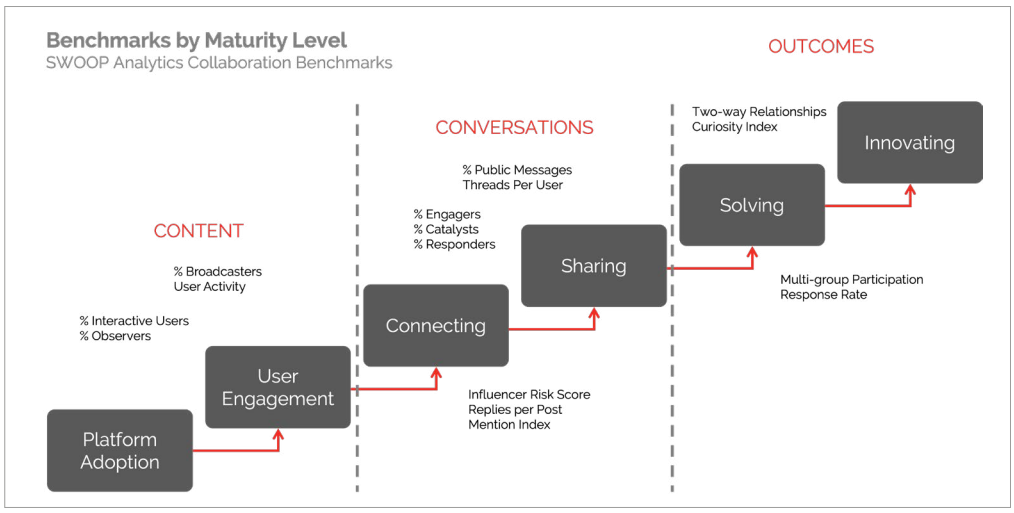
Enterprise Social Network Maturity Model

SWOOP Analytics' Enterprise Social Network maturity model was developed to help organisations track their growing enterprise communication and collaboration capabilities. It is based on prior work by Siemens and Simon Terry. Performance measures range from simple to more sophisticated. 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 organisation's collaborative performance.

SWOOP Analytics benchmarking measures

We relate the SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage dashboard measures according to the Enterprise Social Network (ESN) maturity model. SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage dashboard measures are designed for immediate real-time feedback. The benchmarking measures are designed and calculated over an extended period of six months. The benchmarking results are used to set benchmarking goals on the SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage dashboard.

The maturity framework identifies six stages of evolution of ESN exploitation, from the initial stage of encouraging people to log onto the platform, through to the use of Viva Engage to facilitate a fully innovating, adaptive and responsive organisation. Using SWOOP Analytics, we can trace the journey from a first digital experience, through to online collaboration champion, using operational data.



The above graphic positions each SWOOP Analytics report 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 organisations are thinking and acting.

The first occurs when an organisation becomes less reliant on "content" to attract employees (User Engagement Stage) and more cognisant of the need for employees to connect and build relationships. We call this the "Content" to "Conversations" transition. As you might anticipate, most new Viva Engage customers are at the Content phase and still facing the challenge of traversing the great Content/Conversations divide.

The second important transition point occurs when we move from connecting and sharing knowledge, to acting on that shared knowledge to create tangible value. We call this the "Conversations" to "Outcomes" transition.

This is where the rubber hits the road in terms of tangible business results (and return on investment). Actions speak louder than words. Conversations need to result in complex problems being solved or new products or services created for tangible outcomes.

SWOOP Analytics Benchmark	Interpretation
Stage 1: Platform Adoption Platform adoption is the initial stage when an ESN is newly launched, and the key motivation is attracting people to use it.	
Interactive Users	On launching a new ESN platform, this should be the first measure to assess. Basically, how many employees have logged into the system and made a tangible action, for example, a reaction or a post. We have not included reading as an activity because it can give you a false sense of success. This is why our Interactive Users percentages are lower than how you may be potentially measuring this now.
Observers*	Observers are classified as those that have been active less than once every two weeks. Given these people have taken a positive step to engage with the platform, it is important to convert Observers to more active participants. *For this score, the lower the score, the better.
Stage 2: User Engagement (around Content) Initial user engagement is through the content of social media e.g. moving corporate news or announcements to the ESN to facilitate active feedback.	
Broadcasters*	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. *For this score, the lower the score, the better.
Mention Index	We are reporting this subset of the %Recognition measure to enable direct comparison with the %Mention Index on the SWOOP Analytics for Viva Engage dashboard. Mentions are a way of *tagging* others into a conversation as well as a form of recognition; could also be considered a *connecting* measure.

SWOOP Analytics Benchmark	Interpretation
Activity per User	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.
Stage 3: Connecting 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.	
Percentage of: **Engagers** **Catalysts** **Responders**	These are all *positive personas* and, depending on the context, all these personas play positive roles. That said, we prefer to see a high proportion of Engagers, the people who connect others. Catalysts are also important because of the way they drive activity and connections. Responders are seen as the caregivers and are key to sustaining communities and groups.
Influencer Risk Score	This measures how reliant the organisation is on a selected few power networkers. 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. A high Influencer Risk means an over reliance on the core members.
Stage 4: Sharing At this stage, the organisation 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.	
Public Messages	This is an indicator of overall transparency. In general, we would like to see a high score, indicating a maximum opportunity for broader knowledge sharing.
Replies per Post	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.

SWOOP Analytics Benchmark	Interpretation
Threads per User	Discussion threads per user is used to assess the breadth with which online discussions are pervading the organisation. We can infer that if the majority of participants are actively involved in conversation threads, then broad-based knowledge sharing is happening.
Stage 5: Solving Problem solving marks another important transition from knowledge sharing to action. Tangible benefits only arise from positive actions i.e. job fulfilment. Organisations must reach this stage of maturity if they are to demonstrate real tangible value.	
Response Rate	The Response Rate is an indicator of both how much an organisation 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 reactions, mentions etc., to emphasise the importance of conversation.
Two-Way Relationships	This is a related reciprocity measure. It simply calculates the percentage of connections that are reciprocated. e.g. You replied to my post, and I replied to yours.
Stage 6: Innovating This stage is placed as the final maturity stage, as it is an indication that an organisation is creating new value. It is also something that most organisations struggle with.	
Curiosity Index	The degree to which an organisation looks to improve through exploring better ways, challenging and questioning the status quo is a strong indicator for innovation. We look at the proportion of postings that are framed as questions, to identify how curious an organisation is (or not).
Multi-Group Participation	Successful innovation is regularly linked to diversity in an organisation. Diversity can be measured across many dimensions e.g. cross business unit, geography, gender, experience etc. In this benchmark we use the diversity across communities. An individual with high diversity would be equally active across a large range of Viva Engage communities.

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.

SWOOP Analytics

Join SWOOP Analytics' 2025/26 Viva Engage benchmarking study

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

Join next year's Viva Engage benchmarking to see exactly how your Viva Engage network compares with the rest of the world. SWOOP Analytics benchmarking is free and your data remains anonymous.

If your Viva Engage 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 Viva Engage network with all other participating organisations. This will include a comparison of your Viva Engage network against 15 different metrics and show how you scored against the average, and the best, performing organisations. We will also compare your collaborative network performance against others, and Dr Lock Lee will provide a qualitative summary of your organisation's strengths and areas for improvement.

Your data is 100% confidential

SWOOP Analytics does not store any message content, names or email addresses. Your company name is kept confidential (unless you agree to be named as a top performer) and your participation is not disclosed. If your Viva Engage 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 organisations are.

Who can participate?

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

Want to find out more?

You'll find all the details to participate in SWOOP's 2025/26 Viva Engage 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 Analytic' next Viva Engage Benchmarking Report!

We also conduct benchmarking for Microsoft 365, Microsoft Teams and SharePoint intranet.

About the authors

Sharon Dawson

Sharon Dawson is SWOOP Analytics' 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 Analytics team in 2017 as it expanded into the United States. Sharon holds a Bachelor of Arts (Communication Studies) from The University of Newcastle.

Dr. Laurence Lock Lee

Dr. Laurence Lock Lee is the Co-founder and Chief Scientist at SWOOP Analytics. He is an experienced professional, with more than 40 years' experience as a researcher, technology leader, educator and management consultant. Dr Lock Lee is one of world's leading practitioners in Social Network Analysis for organisational change, having conducted more than 100 consulting assignments for clients around the world. He holds a PhD on corporate social capital from the University of Sydney. In the 1980s, at BHP Research, he led the largest private sector Artificial Intelligence laboratory in Australia. He also previously led the national Knowledge Management consulting practices at BHP Information Technology (BHPIT) and at Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC). Dr Lock Lee has published two books and numerous journal and industry articles. He is a regular contributor to Reworked, Forbes and blogs at SWOOP Blog.

Cai Kjaer

Cai is SWOOP Analytics' Chief Executive Officer. After an initial career as a tax-lawyer, Cai's passion for people and collaboration took him into roles in Knowledge Management and collaboration, delivering social network analysis projects around the world. Cai co-founded SWOOP Analytics in 2014 with a vision to unlock invaluable collaboration insights to a much bigger audience through a self-serve collaboration analytics platform.

Contributors

Matt Dodd

Matt is SWOOP Analytics' Product Director. He has been a long-time customer and supporter of SWOOP Analytics in his previous roles as Senior Manager Digital Channels at Bankwest and Digital Workplace Consultant with our partner Engage Squared. Matt is based in Perth, Western Australia and is always ready to lend you a hand. In this report, Matt has been responsible for explaining how SWOOP Analytics' reports can help you transform your Viva Engage network.

Gemma Saint

Gemma is SWOOP Analytic' Director for Customer Success and Growth for North America. She is passionate about enabling colleagues to collaborate, communicate and build connections. She has more than 15 years' experience in internal communication channel management, internal digital transformation and content creation. Gemma has managed global SharePoint intranet projects and seen great success with rolling out enterprise social networks including Viva Engage.

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Viva Engage live events
https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/organize-a-live-event-in-viva-engage-7338782a-4f0b-4fd0-a6c3-33625906ead1

SWOOP Analytics for M365
https://www.swoopanalytics.com/swoop-for-m365

Read more about this impressive community - Medibank
https://www.swoopanalytics.com/case-studies/medibank-connecting

SWOOP Analytics for Workplace
https://www.swoopanalytics.com/swoop-for-workplace

Workplace migration - outlined the options available
https://www.swoopanalytics.com/blog/we-really-loved-workplace-now-whatnbsp

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