



The Hidden Cost of Fragmented Workplace Communication

corro

**What a five country
workforce survey
reveals about**

**productivity,
attention and
duplication**

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	7	04 Implications for Organisations	39
What Leaders Need to Know		The Hidden Work Is Productive Capacity Spent	
01 Introduction	15	Standard Communication Metrics Measure The Wrong Things	
Communication Has Changed. The Way We Account For It Has Not		The Cost Compounds Through Knowledge Erosion	
The Cost Is Real, Recurring, And Largely Invisible		AI Raises The Stakes	
Demographics Explain Little. Structure Explains More		From Output Metrics To System Metrics	
Diagnosis First. Problem Solving Follows		Communication Has Changed. The Way We Account For It Has Not	
02 Fragmented by Design	21	05 Conclusion	47
The Designed Environment Is Already Fragmented		Communication Systems Shape Effort, Not Just Outcomes	
The Platform Mix Varies, But Multi-Platform Working Is Universal		Why Recognising Hidden Work Matters	
Platform Fragmentation Is An Organisational Characteristic		What This Paper Leaves Open	
Personal Messaging Has Already Crossed Into Work		The Moment To Act	
Fragmentation As A Structural Feature, Not A Behavioural Failure		06 The Work That Follows	53
Implications For Communication Effort		Annex A About This Research	57
03 What Fragmented Communication Costs	31	What Was Measured	
Cost One: The Overhead Of Finding Information And Following Up		Why Five Countries	
Cost Two: Work That Gets Done At Least Twice		How The Data Is Analysed And Reported	
Cost Three: Attention Under Continuous Pressure		What This Data Can And Cannot Show	
The Environment, Not The Worker, Is The Source		About Corro®	65



Foreword

From the Founder & Chief Executive Officer

Communication is the invisible architecture of every organisation. It shapes how people coordinate, make decisions, and build shared understanding. It's also what connects us as humans, how we build relationships and navigate the world together. When communication functions well, people act with shared purpose. When it falters, even sound strategies can fail to deliver and great talent underperform.

Over the past several decades, workplaces have become more connected than ever before. Tools designed to improve clarity and speed have multiplied, spreading across email, chat platforms, project boards, dashboards, and a growing use of personal messaging apps. Each tool promises better collaboration, but when used together without curation, they can produce the opposite effect: more confusion, more duplication, and less shared understanding.

Our communication systems have become fragmented and complex, creating friction rather than flow, isolation rather than connection. Organisations struggle daily with disconnected systems that force people to work around their limitations, wasting time switching between apps, losing valuable information between systems, and surrendering control of their critical communication infrastructure.

At Corro® we have set ourselves the task of fundamentally rethinking how organisations communicate. To do so, we are undertaking an ambitious global research program to gain deep insights into the challenges and opportunities around digital communication in the workplace. As the fabric of our society increasingly depends on digital communication, we recognise our profound responsibility in shaping how humans will connect and collaborate into the future.

Our research agenda is driven by the quest for unparalleled qualitative and quantitative insights into the complex nature of communication in a hyper-connected world; a world in which our current systems are failing the modern workplace. We are seeking to understand how a human-centred, systems-based approach and resulting redesign can restore clarity, build efficiency, and restore "organisational wisdom."

Sara Goldsworthy

Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Corro



Introduction

From the Head of Research & Capability

The pace and scale of change in communications technology makes it tempting to produce research that settles quickly on proposing solutions to problems. That is not the research program Corro® is pursuing. Before we propose any answer with confidence, we want to make sure we are asking the right questions; framing them carefully enough so that the evidence can reveal how a communication ecosystem actually works and is experienced by the people using it. These questions then need to be held open long enough for a pattern to become visible across different kinds of work, and in different organisational contexts.

Of course, the most useful research still helps us find answers, but treats the framing of the question as part of the answer. Much of what workers describe about the experience of communication at work is in practice friction with the tools themselves, rather than with the work those tools are meant to support. On closer inspection, as we show in this research, the pattern is less a failure of any single platform than a set of adaptations they have quietly built to keep communication moving through the fragmented environments they have inherited. The questions we think are worth asking are about those adaptations, and about the conditions that require them.

The same orientation shapes what we look at. The communication ecosystem of an organisation is not captured by any single variable. It is made up of interacting elements: the size of the organisation, its industry, the work people actually do within it, the channels available to them, and the habits their colleagues have settled into. When those elements are examined together, rather than in isolation, a more complicated picture emerges.

That is why this first paper focuses on description rather than prescription. Better questions require a shared empirical picture to work from, which this paper sets out to establish. It draws on a survey of 2,553 workers across five countries: when people describe what communication at work is like now, what pattern do they describe?

What the series will do from here is take the questions this first paper opens and pursue them further, examining sector and organisational contexts in more depth. That work is already underway. For now, what we are publishing is a picture of communication at work in 2025 as the people doing that work describe it.

Dr Alan Davison

Head of Research & Capability, Corro



Executive Summary

What leaders need to know

Key takeaways

We're wasting time and effort working around fragmented communication systems.

Hidden Productivity Loss Is Significant

The time and attention workers spend searching, following up, switching platforms, and reconstructing lost context is a hidden productivity cost, not an occasional friction, that most organisations do not measure within their own performance systems.

The Problem Is Structural, Not Behavioural

This cost is generated by how communication environments have accumulated, and is not explained by demographics, generation, or individual communication skill. It persists even in organisations where leadership is strong and guidance on tool use is clear.

Searching, Duplication & Disruption Is Routine

One in three people search across platforms for a message they know they received daily, more than two in three follow up on messages at least weekly, one in five encounters duplicated work weekly, and roughly half report moderate-or-greater focus disruption from message volume.

Organisations Are Losing Visibility, Not Just Time

Between about 40% – 70% of workers use personal apps for communication at work daily. As communication migrates into personal messaging apps and personal AI accounts, the reasoning, decisions, and outputs behind that work are being generated in places organisations can't see.

Fragmentation Is An Organisational Cost

Recognising communication as a critical organisational system, rather than an administrative overhead, is the first move towards understanding the cost of fragmented environments.



Most organisations do not measure what their communication environments actually cost in their performance systems. We mean cost in a specific sense: not the price of software, licences, or tools, but the time and attention workers spend working around them. Our survey of 2,553 workers across Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Singapore finds that the searching, following up, channel switching, and duplicated work generated by fragmented communication environments are not occasional friction. They are the normal operating conditions of modern working life.

The cost is a structural productivity loss, built into how communication environments have accumulated over time, and it is almost entirely absent from how organisations understand their own performance.

2553

workers surveyed

5

countries: AU · NZ · SG · UK · US

The Scale Of Hidden Communication Cost.

Nearly one in three workers search for information across multiple platforms every single day. Two in three do so at least weekly. More than half struggle to find specific items within their email at least weekly. More than two in three follow up on messages at least weekly to clarify intent or confirm receipt, and more than half switch platforms when doing so. One in five encounters duplicated work every week, and that is just what they are aware of. Roughly half report that message volume reduces their ability to focus by a moderate amount or more; a similar proportion say the same of notifications.

None of this is produced by poor individual habits or inadequate technology skills. It arises from the structure of communication environments: the way modern workplaces distribute and fragment information across multiple tools, threads, and channels without reliable means of locating, retrieving, and building on it. When information is scattered, workers compensate, and the cost of that compensation is largely invisible even as the compensatory work itself is not.

1 in 3

search across platforms for a message they know they have received every day

> 2 in 3

follow up on messages to clarify or check intent at least weekly

1 in 5

find colleagues duplicating their work every week

~ 2 in 5

at a minimum use personal apps daily for communication at work

A conservative estimate of five minutes per search episode to the search frequency patterns reported by the workers in this survey, the average time lost to message search friction is approximately 13 hours per worker per year, equivalent to around one and a half working days. One in eight workers surveyed reported both searching across platforms and struggling with email search every single day; a group for whom message search friction alone consumes an estimated 40 hours, or five working days, of productive time per year.

The Stakes Are Rising.

The structural reality behind today's communication problems was already accumulating before any organisation had to think about generative AI tools. The problem described here predates artificial intelligence.

Communication environments were already fragmenting, already costly, and already unmeasured before any organisation had to think about generative tools. AI is now compounding that problem on two fronts. Inside organisations, AI tools work best when context is preserved, and fragmented environments are structurally poor at preserving the reasoning, prior decisions, and relevant history that AI depends on. The problem was already costly. It becomes more so as organisations attempt to deploy AI inside systems that do not maintain the contextual record AI needs to work well.

The second front is workers going outside the system. **A substantial share of the workforce already uses personal messaging apps for work: daily use sits between 39 and 46 percent in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and close to 70 percent in Singapore.** Our survey did not directly measure personal AI account use, but recent studies (referenced later) consistently find that the majority of workers using AI at work are doing so through tools their employer has not approved and cannot see.

The reasoning, context, and outputs generated in that activity live in accounts the organisation neither owns, nor can access, nor can retrieve when the person leaves. What organisations lose in fragmented environments is not only time but visibility: over what was decided, why, and on what basis. That loss of control is harder to name, and harder to recover, than hours.

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From Diagnosis To Decision.

The hidden cost of fragmented workplace communication is not a future risk. It is a current condition, absorbed right now by workers in every country we surveyed, quietly, routinely, and at a scale most of their employers do not measure. Treating this as a matter of individual behaviour, or as the price of tools organisations have already bought, has produced incremental response and no meaningful change in what workers experience. Recognising communication as a critical organisational system, not an administrative overhead, is the first move that any other move depends on.

01

Introduction

Digital communication is not fit for purpose, and carries costs that most organisations do not track in their own performance accounting

Every organisation using digital communication tools will recognise some version of this: a search across three tools for something that should have been easy to find, a message sent, a reply awaited, a follow-up on the follow-up, a phone call to confirm what the email said, work completed that someone else had already done last week. These moments are familiar. Experienced constantly, they are also easy to normalise and eventually to accept as just part of the work. A quick search, a brief check-in, repeating messages across platforms, or some duplication of a colleague's work. Recoverable each time, but the cost of it disappears into the noise and busyness of daily work.

Our five-country survey of 2,553 workers shows that these patterns represent a significant and largely unrecoverable productivity loss. They accumulate and spread across every role and level, while remaining largely unaccounted for in how organisations measure the effort their people expend. That effort is the cost of the time and attention workers spend working around their communication environments.

Communication Has Changed. The Way We Account For It Has Not.

Over the past two decades, the tools we use to communicate at work have multiplied. Email remains ubiquitous and dominant, but alongside it sit multiple instant messaging platforms, collaborative workspaces, video calling platforms, and for many workers, personal messaging apps that blur the boundary between professional and private communication. Reaching anyone, instantly, across almost any device, has become the baseline expectation of working life. **What has not kept pace is coherence of communication, such as the ability to find what was said, see the context for what was decided, and build reliably on what came before.** That gap has a cost, and that cost does not stop at individual inconvenience nor even the time wasted. It surfaces in the quality of decisions, the speed of coordination, and the reliability of shared understanding across teams.

What has not changed, or has changed far more slowly, is how organisations understand the effort this environment generates. Even when organisations do see communication friction more clearly, the temptation will be to address these at a surface level, such as with “smarter” tools or more training. These interventions assume the system is broadly sound and that frictions are primarily matters of individual habit or skill.

The Cost Is Real, Recurring, And Largely Invisible.

Digital communication is not broken, work obviously still gets done, but it is carrying a load that most organisations have not made visible in their own performance accounting. Workers are communicating via a substantial and largely invisible volume of compensatory activity. This is effort spent not in communicating, but in managing the consequences of communication environments that were never designed as coherent systems. When organisations set out to measure the effectiveness of their communications systems, they need to ensure they are actually measuring the right thing: not just the adaption rate of new tools or the volume of messages, but also the compensatory work that can remain hidden below the surface.

Every hour workers spend searching for context, following up to confirm what should already be clear, or recreating work that has already been done elsewhere is an hour unavailable for the

work they were hired to do. That is a structural productivity loss rather than a minor inefficiency, and something that most organisations have not identified as a distinct cost, let alone measured accurately within their own systems.

Roughly two in three workers search across platforms for a message they know they received every week. Following up to clarify intent or confirm receipt is nearly universal: more than two in three workers do it at least weekly, and in most countries the figure is closer to three in four. More than half regularly move from one platform to another to resolve a single communication. One in five encounters duplicated work every week. And for roughly half of the workforce, message volume or notifications reduce the ability to focus on important work by a moderate amount or more.

None of these patterns of activities are surprising, and at the individual level the people doing this work will recognise them. What is less visible to those responsible for the environments that produce them, and what our evidence establishes, is how consistent, widespread, and structurally generated these moments are.

~2 in 3

search across platforms for a message they know they have received weekly

>2 in 3

follow up on messages to clarify or check intent at least weekly

1 in 5

find colleagues duplicating their work every week

~2 in 5

at a minimum use personal apps daily for communication at work

Demographics Explain Little. Structure Explains More.

Demographic factors, including age, gender, and seniority, account for relatively little of the variation in how workers experience communication friction. Our data does not support the familiar picture of younger workers as more burdened, or of older workers as less able to navigate digital communication.

Where meaningful variation does exist, it is largely organisational in character. Workers who believe their leadership communicates effectively, and who work in organisations that give clear guidance on when to use different tools, report substantially more positive overall workplace experiences than those who do not. **The gaps associated with leadership quality and organisational clarity are far larger and more consistent than anything attributable to demographics.**

There is, however, a limit to what organisational conditions can change. **Even in organisations where leadership quality is high and guidance is clear, the routine frictions of fragmented communication (searching, follow-up, duplication, attentional pressure) persist.**

Workers in organisations with effective leadership report a better experience of the same environment; they do not report a fundamentally different one. The environment continues to demand effort regardless of how well individuals and leaders navigate it.

Diagnosis First. Problem Solving Follows.

The diagnosis offered here describes what workplace communication in modern organisations actually involves: what effort it generates, where that effort falls, and how the environments that produce it have come to feel normal rather than costly.

We do not evaluate specific technologies or recommend particular platforms. The more common failure in this space is not a shortage of proposed solutions; it is a shortage of accurate problem definition. Organisations reach for tools, training, and guidelines while the structural conditions generating friction remain unnamed and untracked within their own performance systems. **Prescription without diagnosis does not resolve the problem, it may in fact lead to the problem persisting.**

Accurate problem definition of this kind offered here is largely absent from how organisations currently think and talk about communication. That absence is part of why the problem persists.

How to design, govern, and evolve environments to reduce the hidden effort they generate are harder questions not directly answered here, but the evidence establishes the ground on which they can be asked seriously, and against which any answer should be tested.

02

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The contemporary communication environment

Read on their own, platform usage figures suggest most workers cluster around a small number of primary tools, typically email, a messaging platform, and perhaps a collaboration workspace. However, the environment workers actually navigate in practice is more fragmented than that. Our survey finds, consistently across all five countries, a gap between the communication environment organisations design and the one workers inhabit.

The Designed Environment Is Already Fragmented.

The fragmentation is visible before any individual behaviour enters the picture: most workers say their organisation expects them to use more than one platform. Between 71% and 91% of workers across the five countries report that their organisation expects them to use two or more communication platforms. The United Kingdom has the most fragmented designed environment of the five countries, averaging 2.6 expected platforms per worker, with 49% of workers expected to use three or more. In Australia and New Zealand the figures sit at 89% and 87%; in the United States, 82%; in Singapore, 71%, though Singapore presents its own distinctive pattern, discussed below.

These figures reflect an environment designed on the assumption that communication practice will follow the platform set. **A platform stack is a design consequence based on best intentions, not a reliable predictor of what actually happens.** Communication practice adapts to the demands of real work in ways no platform stack fully anticipates; reaching someone quickly outside formal channels is a routine example, not an edge case. The assumptions built into most platform stacks, namely that behaviour follows design and that a sophisticated tool set constitutes a working communication environment, rarely survive contact with actual practice. Wherever those assumptions go unchecked, the gap between designed and actual widens.

Workers expected to use two or more communication platforms

Country	Avg platforms	Expected to use 2+	Expected to use 3+
AU	2.4	89%	40%
NZ	2.4	87%	40%
UK	2.6	91%	49%
US	2.3	82%	36%
SG	2.1	71%	34%

Source: Corro Workplace Communication Survey, Oct 2025

The Platform Mix Varies, But Multi-Platform Working Is Universal.

Unsurprisingly, email is the most widely expected platform in four of the five countries, cited by between 90% and 95% of workers in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States as a tool their organisation expects them to use. Microsoft Teams is the most commonly expected instant messaging platform in these same four countries, cited by between 55% and 78% of the workforce. Slack and Google Chat trail behind, expected by between 8% and 18% of workers depending on the country.

Singapore presents a markedly different picture. WhatsApp is the leading platform there, cited as expected by 72% of the workforce, slightly ahead of email at 71%. Microsoft Teams is expected by 45%, reflecting a communication environment shaped more heavily by mobile messaging than in the other four countries. This is not a minor variation; it represents a structurally different set of norms around which tools are central and which are supplementary.

Platform mix by country (expected platforms)

Platform	AU	NZ	UK	US	SG
Email	95%	92%	92%	90%	71%
Microsoft Teams	78%	73%	78%	55%	45%
WhatsApp	33%	32%	51%	21%	72%
Slack	8%	10%	17%	19%	4%
Google Chat	9%	8%	12%	20%	11%
Other	13%	18%	7%	21%	4%

Source: Corro Workplace Communication Survey, Oct 2025

Platform Fragmentation Is An Organisational Characteristic.

Some workers face more fragmentation than others, and the difference is not random. Organisation size and industry sector shape both how complex a worker's expected communication platform stack is, and what that stack contains.

38%→80%

Workers expected to use Teams:
smallest to largest organisations (all five countries)

Organisation size is the clearest driver, and the sharpest illustration of that is found with Microsoft Teams: 38% of workers in organisations of ten or fewer employees are expected to use it, rising to around 80% in organisations of more than 500. Large organisations have largely standardised on Teams as their primary messaging tool.

61%→26%

Workers expected to use WhatsApp:
smallest to largest organisations (all five countries)

Smaller organisations work with a more varied mix, and lean more heavily on WhatsApp. Our survey finds 61% of workers in the smallest organisations are expected to use WhatsApp for work, against 26% in the largest. The overall platform count reflects both patterns: around 79% of workers in

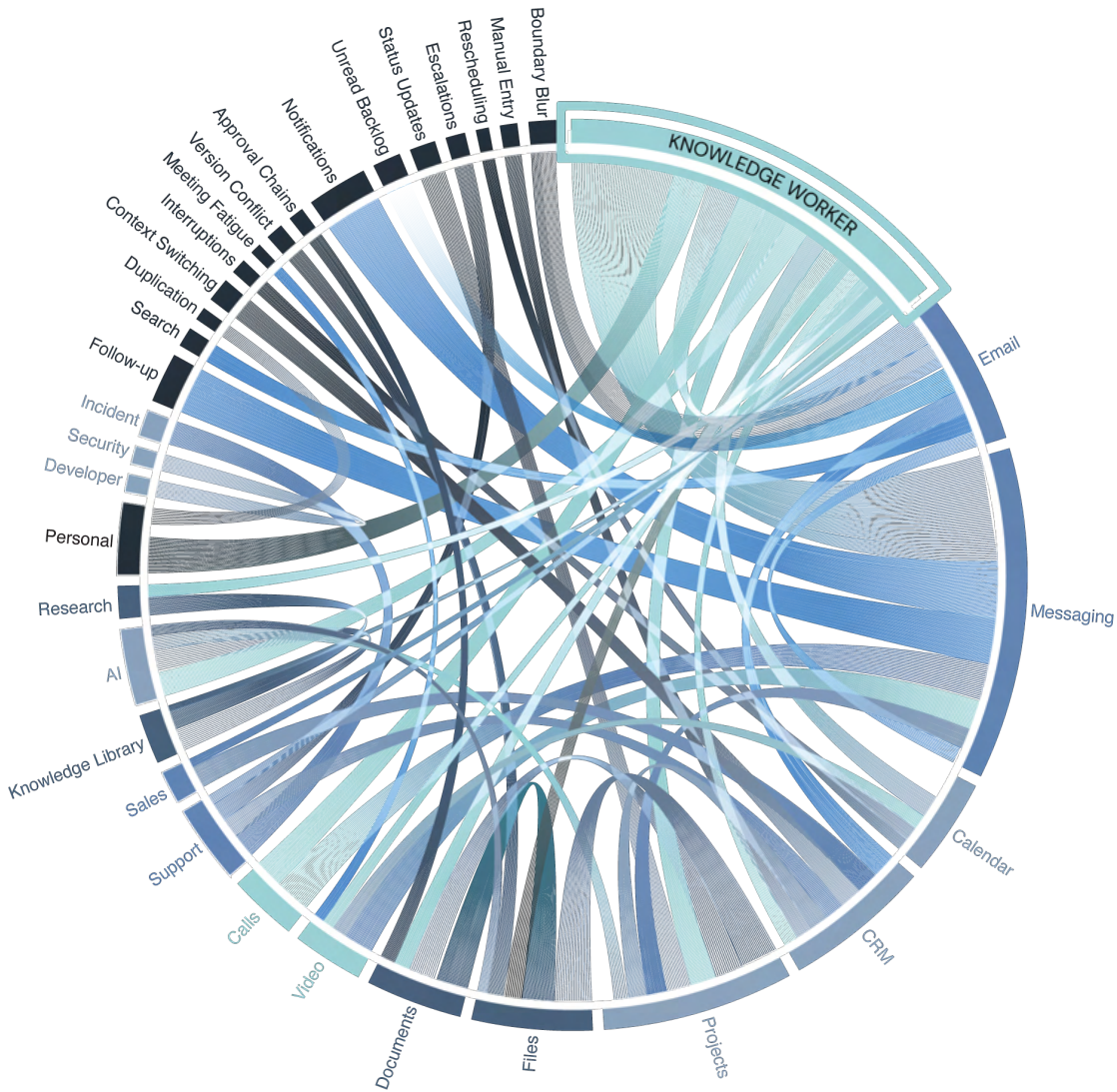
organisations under 50 employees are expected to use two or more platforms, rising to between 86% and 92% in larger organisations.

Organisational size correlates to how many platforms workers face whereas the specific sector tends to shape which ones and why. Public administration and safety presents a distinct profile. Teams is formally expected by 93% of workers, and WhatsApp by only 14%. The designed stack is the most standardised of any citable sector, with most workers on the same two platforms.

The character of the expected stack is different in information media and telecommunications, and in professional, scientific and technical services. WhatsApp rates are lower (37–42%), but these are the sectors with the highest co-occurrence of competing enterprise messaging tools: around 18% of workers in each are expected to use Teams alongside Slack or Google Chat, platforms that serve overlapping functions within the same formal environment.

In construction, accommodation and food services, retail trade, and transport and logistics, WhatsApp appears in the formally expected platform stack at rates of between 46% and 55%. Organisations in these sectors have already crossed the boundary between enterprise tools and consumer applications at the design level. In every sector, workers grapple with multiple platforms and complex webs of communication that are already established before they arrive.

In every sector, workers struggle with multiple platforms and complex webs of communication.



Illustrative representation of the connectivity and friction for the knowledge worker.

Personal Messaging Increases Fragmentation.

Alongside formally sanctioned platforms, personal messaging applications are in widespread use for work-related communication. We asked workers how often they use personal apps (such as WhatsApp, Signal, or Facebook Messenger) for work purposes. Around 39–46% of workers in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States do so daily. In Singapore, that figure rises to 70%. Singapore’s WhatsApp-first communication environment reflects a level of single platform dominance without equivalent in the other four countries surveyed. Across the four non-Singapore countries, only around one in five workers report never or rarely using personal apps for work (25% in Australia, 23% in New Zealand, 22% in the United States, and 20% in the United Kingdom). In Singapore, that proportion falls to just 7%.

This pattern is consistent with what a fragmented communication environment would predict: one in which information is distributed across multiple tools and organisational boundaries are often permeable. Personal messaging applications serve practical purposes: reaching a colleague quickly outside of formal systems, coordinating with external stakeholders, or following up across contexts where organisational platforms are not easily accessible. Their use is widespread not because employees are ignoring official guidance, but because these tools solve real problems in the

course of everyday work. AI tools are increasingly part of this picture: used for drafting, research, and problem-solving through accounts that may sit outside the organisation’s systems entirely.

Age adds a further dimension. Daily personal app use for work is not concentrated among the youngest workers; it rises steadily with career stage. Workers aged 18–24 and 25–34 report daily use at around 40%, a figure that climbs to 47% among 35–44 year-olds, 54% among 45–54, and 61% among 55–64. Among workers aged 65 and over the figure reaches 78%, though that cohort is heavily weighted toward Singapore, where personal app use is structurally higher across all age groups. **The pattern among the working-age bands is consistent on its own terms: personal app use at work is not a behaviour concentrated in younger or digitally-native workers. If anything, the gradient runs in the opposite direction.**

~39–46%

use personal messaging apps for work daily (AU/NZ/UK/US)

We can expect age and seniority to be at least loosely correlated, and move in the same direction. Across Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, 48% of senior workers report daily personal app use for work, against 38% of mid-level workers and 36% of junior workers. One pattern in the data pushes back against a tempting reading of personal app use: that it is primarily a symptom of difficulty with

formal communication channels. If that were the case, workers less satisfied with their own communication skills should rely on personal apps more heavily than their more capable peers.

Our data shows the opposite. Across Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, workers who describe themselves as very satisfied with their communication skills are more likely to use personal apps for work daily than those who describe themselves as satisfied: 53% against 38%, a gap of 15 points. The most confident self-assessed communicators are also the least likely to report never using them (17%, against 25% of the satisfied group). **Personal app use is not concentrated in workers struggling with their communication environment; it is most visible in those engaging most actively within it.** Role complexity is likely a contributing factor: it tends to correlate with both communication confidence

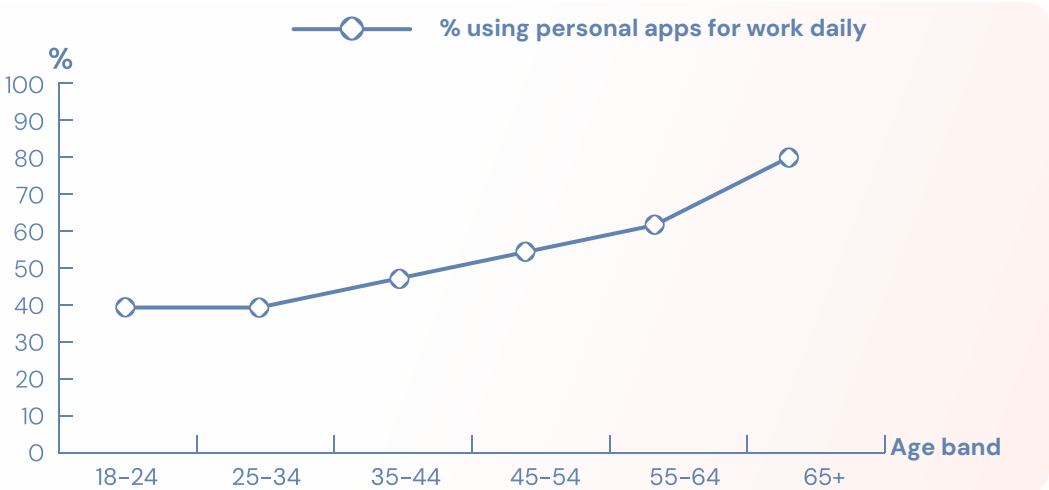
and the breadth of relationships that draw workers toward personal channels. Other drivers operate in specific settings, including, in some public-sector contexts, the deliberate use of personal channels to avoid creating a formal record.

70%

use personal messaging apps for work daily (SG)

Singapore is the exception, and a coherent one. Daily personal app use among very satisfied and satisfied workers there is virtually identical at around 70–73%, reflecting a communication environment in which personal app use is already so deeply embedded across the workforce that individual confidence level ceases to function as a differentiating factor.

Visual with daily personal app use for work, by age group



Source: Corro Workplace Communication Survey, Oct 2025

Fragmentation As A Structural Feature, Not A Behavioural Failure.

Workers face a designed environment that arrives already fragmented, built up by successive decisions rather than any coherent plan. Within this context they naturally layer adaptive behaviour, such as using personal apps or other workarounds that no platform set anticipated.

The evidence from our survey suggests that employees navigate the designed environment by adapting to its limits rather than ignoring its structure. The tools they reach for beyond the official stack reflect a genuine diversity of tasks, relationships, and urgency levels. Additionally, not all of it is intended for the formal record, a distinction whose significance varies considerably by sector and role.

Communication stacks accumulate over time in a way that makes sense addition by addition but was never planned as a system. The typical designed platform stack reflects the cumulative logic of how these environments have evolved, with email coming first as ‘electronic mail’, messaging tools added for speed, and collaboration platforms following for increased project coordination. The resulting layered infrastructure has been shaped by the history of decisions that preceded it rather than any coherent architecture. Organisations rarely introduce new platforms with complexity in mind, the intent would be to

take advantage of a tool’s particular affordances, such as streamlining a workflow or opening new collaboration pathways. How the platform will actually be used cannot be known in advance.

Workers continuously absorb the friction of their communication environments in order to make them function. Consequently, fragmented communication environments continue to function at some level, but this is not because they are well designed. **The searching, the following up and channel switching documented in the sections that follow are also part of this pattern, forming a feedback loop in which worker adaptation reduces the visible signal that anything is wrong, which in turn reduces the pressure to address it at a structural level.**

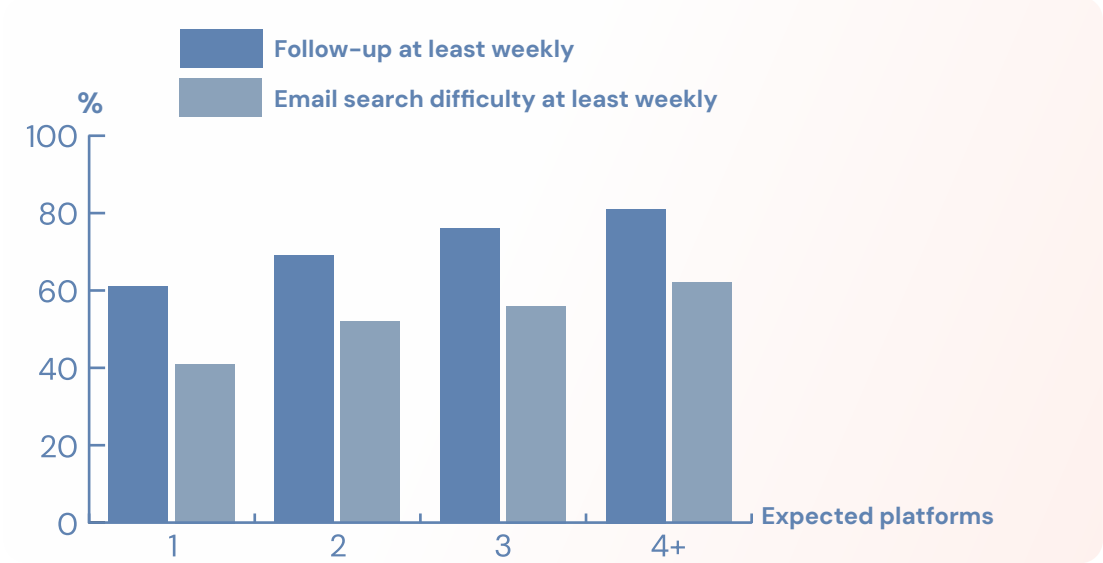
Workers continuously absorb the friction of their communication environments in order to make them function.

Implications For Communication Effort.

The productivity cost of this pattern lies not just in the fragmentation itself, but in the compounding consequences it generates downstream, and our survey indicates the scale of this cost more clearly. Workers expected to use four or more platforms follow up on messages at least weekly at a rate of 81%, against 61% of those on a single platform. A similar gradient appears in email: 41% of single-platform workers struggle to find something specific in their email at least weekly, rising to 62% among those on four or more platforms. Follow-up is particularly telling, because it is not mechanically tied to having more channels available: workers can follow up within

the same channel. That it rises consistently with platform count is consistent with a communication environment that generates additional interaction work, not merely redistributes it. When information is distributed across email, messaging platforms, collaboration tools, and personal applications, it becomes harder to locate, reconstruct, and act on over time. A conversation that begins in email may be followed up in Teams, clarified via WhatsApp or Signal, and resolved in a face-to-face meeting, leaving a trail of context distributed across systems that no individual or tool fully captures. What that distribution costs organisations, in lost time, lost clarity, and lost opportunity to act on their own accumulated knowledge, what the following sections document.

Communication friction rises consistently with each platform added to the stack



Source: Corro Workplace Communication Survey, Oct 2025



03

What Fragmented Communications Costs

Search overhead, duplicated work, and sustained attention pressure

Around 43% of workers globally face two overlapping retrieval burdens every week: they search across platforms for messages they know they received, and they struggle to find something specific in email. This is a signal of something structural. Fragmented communication environments generate costs in three forms: overhead from searching and following up on information that should be findable; duplication, because work gets repeated when prior effort is invisible to those who would otherwise build on it; and accumulated attention pressure, which compounds across the working day in ways that rarely register until they are measured.

Cost One: The Overhead Of Finding Information And Following Up.

One in three workers (33%) search across communication platforms every single day to find a message they know they have received. Two in three (66%) do so at least weekly. The pattern is consistent across countries: in the United Kingdom, 71% search across platforms at least weekly; in Australia and New Zealand, around 60%. Singapore stands apart: nearly half of all workers there (48%) are searching across platforms on a daily basis, and 73% do so at least weekly. The burden is compounded having to look across multiple systems simultaneously, checking email, then Teams, then WhatsApp, then a collaboration tool, to find a message that the worker knows they received somewhere.

33%

search across platforms for a message they know they received every day

Cross-platform search is not the only form of retrieval burden. More than half of workers globally (52%) report struggling to locate something specific in their email at least weekly, and around one in six (17%) face this difficulty every day. Email is the most widely used communication platform in four of the five countries, despite being a legacy system that wasn't built for today's use cases, and it remains a persistent source of search friction despite built-in retrieval tools. The volume of messages, the way conversations fragment across threads, and the accumulation of attachments all

contribute to a system that is easy to send into but difficult to navigate when something specific must be found. Forty-three percent of workers face both challenges regularly, searching across platforms and struggling to find things in email at least weekly.

66%

search across platforms for a message they know they received at least weekly (global avg)

Applying a conservative estimate of five minutes per search episode to the frequency distributions reported by workers in this survey produces an average time loss of approximately 13 hours per worker per year, the equivalent of around one and a half working days. That figure understates the burden at the acute end of the distribution. One in eight respondents reported both forms of search friction every single day, and for that group the implied annual time cost rises to approximately 40 hours, or five full working days, spent on message search friction alone.

43%

face both search burdens regularly

Both estimates rest on a single external assumption: five minutes per episode, a figure consistent with controlled studies of email retrieval behaviour. The frequency data is the survey's own. These figures represent message search friction as a defined and measurable component of the broader information retrieval burden that

knowledge workers carry, not a measure of that burden in full. These figures are reinforced by the Asana's Work Innovation Lab (Hinds et al., 2024) which found that Australian and American workers spend over an hour and a half per day searching for information they need to do their work. Further research and modelling is required to accurately quantify the cost to organisations and economies.

26%

follow up on messages every day

The same conditions drive follow-up behaviour. Around one in four workers (26%) follow up on messages every single day. Across the workforce, 71% do so at least weekly. The proportion who say they never or rarely follow up is strikingly small: around 7–8% globally, and as low as 5% in the United Kingdom. When workers do follow up, they frequently move to a different platform from the one in which the original message was sent. Around one in five (22%) switch channels when following up every single day. Across the workforce, 59% do so at least weekly. **More than half of all workers (53%) both follow up and switch channels regularly, meaning that for a majority of the workforce the act of communication routinely involves navigating across tools, not just within them.**

71%

follow up at least weekly (global avg)

In Australia, 62% of senior workers switch channels at least weekly compared with 48% of junior workers; in New Zealand, 60% versus 33%; in the United Kingdom, 65% versus 47%; in the United States, 72% versus 49%. Follow-up and channel switching are not in themselves signs that communication has broken down, they reflect the work required to achieve shared understanding in the course of complex, interdependent tasks. Initial messages convey information; conveying information and establishing shared understanding are not the same thing.

59%

switch channels when following up, at least weekly

Channel switching is consistent with workers seeking conditions better suited to convergence, moving toward real-time exchange and richer communicative cues when the original channel has not resolved the matter. What increases with seniority is not the volume of follow-up but the pull toward higher-bandwidth channels when a single-channel exchange falls short, consistent with roles that carry more stakeholders and more situations where workers must secure shared understanding before work proceeds.

Coherent communication environments generate convergence work proportionate to what the task requires whereas fragmented ones generate more, and the excess concentrates among workers on more platforms: those expected to use four or more follow up at least weekly at 81%, compared with 61% among those on a single platform.

Cost Two: Work That Gets Done At Least Twice.

Roughly one in five workers globally (around 20%) report that colleagues have recreated or duplicated work they had already done at least every week. In Singapore that figure rises to one in four (25%); in the United Kingdom and Australia, around 21% in each. This is a predictable consequence of information being distributed across platforms where it cannot be reliably located or cross referenced. Colleagues proceed without visibility of what has already been completed, and so decisions get revisited and documents get recreated. Fewer than half of workers across the five countries report that duplication rarely or never happens to them. These figures are also likely to represent a lower bound: the survey question captures only duplication the worker is aware of. Duplication that goes unnoticed, a plausible scenario in fragmented environments where prior work is hard to locate, would not register.

~1 in 5

encounter duplicated work at least weekly (global avg)

1 in 4

encounter duplicated work weekly in Singapore

The survey indicates that duplication arises not because workers are unskilled or negligent, but because the communication systems they operate in make prior work difficult to see and build on. When decisions are spread across email threads, chat conversations, and collaboration tools, none of which maintains a coherent shared record, employees cannot always know what has already been done. They proceed on the information available.



Work done twice is also a symptom of information that did not persist in findable form: a decision not recorded where it could be retrieved, a piece of work not visible enough to prevent repetition. Over time, in environments where information is fragmented rather than consolidated, the default trajectory for institutional knowledge is erosion.

Duplication hits junior and senior workers at roughly the same rate. Seventeen percent of junior workers encounter duplicated work at least weekly, against 22% of senior workers, a gap that varies inconsistently across countries. The flatness of this distribution indicates that it is spread across the workforce because the conditions producing it are spread across the environment.

One of the more unexpected findings concerns the work environment. Workers who report that they work all days remote experience duplication at least weekly at roughly half the rate of those in office or mixed arrangements: 11% compared with around 21–22% for in-office and hybrid workers. This runs against the intuitive expectation that remote working would produce more duplication. One reading is that fully remote workers tend to operate through more structured digital workflows, where prior work is more consistently recorded in retrievable form. Workers in office-based or mixed environments may rely more heavily on in-person verbal exchange, which rarely creates a recoverable record of what has already been done.

Monthly duplication is more widespread (around 44% of workers encounter it at that frequency), but the weekly pattern carries the real organisational weight. Work that is redone every week is not an occasional misfire; it is a structural drain on capacity, compounding quietly across teams and roles.

Cost Three: Attention Under Continuous Pressure.

The survey asked workers how much the overall volume of messages, and the number and timing of notifications, reduced their ability to focus on important work. Around half of workers in every country report that message volume reduces their ability to focus by a moderate amount or more: figures range from 39% in the United States to 53% in Singapore, with Australia at 52% and the United Kingdom at 52%. Notifications follow a similar pattern: between 38% and 50% of workers report moderate or greater focus disruption from notification volume and timing. For roughly one in five, the impact goes further: around 15% to 23% report that message volume affects their focus a lot or a great deal, with the United Kingdom at the higher end. These are not marginal or occasional experiences. **For the majority of workers across all five countries, reduced focus from communication load is a routine condition of working life.**

What the distribution shows is a persistent, moderate level of interference that most workers experience as the normal condition of their working day. In most countries, the largest single response category for message volume is “a little” or “a moderate amount”. Seniority shapes exposure rather than capability. Junior workers report moderate or greater focus disruption from message volume at 42%; senior workers at 53%. In the United Kingdom the gap widens to 36% against 59%.

Around 70% of workers across all five countries keep notifications on at work, usually or always, with consistent figures across AU (74%), NZ (68%), UK (73%), US (74%), and SG (70%). The majority of workers are maintaining continuous exposure to incoming communication signals throughout their working day. The cumulative character of this exposure cannot be directly measured, but what the data establishes is that the conditions known to impair sustained concentration are present at volume, and for most workers they are present every day.

Workers on more platforms show consistently higher disruption: those on five or more platforms report moderate or greater focus impact from message volume at 65%, compared with 45% among those on a single platform. More platforms distribute the communication load across more monitoring demands, each with its own notification stream, or even duplicated notifications, and its own attention cost.

The Environment, Not The Worker, Is The Source.

The three costs documented in this section are not separate dysfunctions. **The costs compound in the sense that a communication environment that generates retrieval overhead also generates follow-up, channel switching or duplication, which creates the attentional pressure that makes all three harder to register as connected.**

At least four in ten workers in every country face regular focus disruption from message volume

Country	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal	Moderate +
AU	14%	34%	30%	18%	4%	52%
NZ	16%	40%	28%	12%	3%	43%
UK	14%	34%	29%	17%	5%	52%
US	23%	38%	24%	10%	6%	39%
SG	17%	29%	37%	11%	5%	53%

Source: Corro Workplace Communication Survey, Oct 2025



04

Implications for Organisations

Recognising the hidden cost of workplace communication

What the preceding sections document is not only a communication problem, it is a cost problem, and a larger one than most organisations have begun to reckon with. The searching, following up, channel switching, duplicated work, and sustained attention pressure described in this paper are not just communication activities. They are productive capacity being spent compensating for the limitations of environments that were never designed as coherent systems. This section traces the implications of that distinction: what the cost actually is; why standard approaches cannot see it; how it compounds over time; and why the stakes are rising.

Two factors in our data consistently reduce the friction workers experience within fragmented environments: individual communication confidence, and clear organisational guidance on tool use backed by effective leadership. The guidance and leadership effects are the more substantial. Workers whose organisations provide clear guidance on tool use are significantly less likely to encounter duplicated work: the gap between those who agree and those who disagree their organisation provides such guidance ranges from 12 to 22 percentage points across the five countries. Leadership quality runs parallel, with a 13 to 27 point duplication gap between workers who rate their leadership highly and those who do not. Individual confidence provides a narrower buffer: workers who are very satisfied with their own communication skills are roughly twice as likely to escape focus disruption entirely, but among those who do not escape it, their experience is nearly identical to their merely satisfied peers. Both factors operate within the structure, not on it. Neither shows any consistent relationship with how often workers search across platforms, because that friction is a property of the communication architecture itself. Better governance reduces duplication and attentional disruption; it cannot reach the structural source of retrieval friction. That is where the limit lies, and where the implications of this paper begin.

When a cost is not measured, it cannot be reduced by design.

The Hidden Work Is Productive Capacity Spent On Unproductive Tasks, Not Recovered.

The effort organisations fail to measure is, in aggregate, time their people spend working around systems rather than within them. Searching for something that should be findable, duplicating messages to be heard, or recreating work that already exists somewhere in the system: these are not communication activities. They are, at best, remedial. They are productivity losses that wear the clothes of communication activities, which is why they go unrecorded. These activities are distributed across individual workers, absorbed into the routine business of the working day, and nowhere recorded as work. They do not generate tickets, approvals, or time entries. They do not appear in engagement surveys as a category of effort. **They are present in the experience of almost every worker and absent from almost every organisational dashboard.**

This invisibility is not incidental. It is the mechanism by which the cost persists. When leaders cannot see a cost, they cannot manage it. When a cost is not measured, it cannot be reduced by design, only by accident, or by asking workers to absorb more of it individually.

As long as organisations treat communication performance as a property of the people within a system rather than a property of the system itself, the interventions they make will redistribute the burden rather than reduce it.

Standard Communication Metrics Measure The Wrong Things.

Organisations typically gauge their communication health through a small set of proxies: tool adoption rates, message volumes, response times, and in some cases, satisfaction survey scores. These metrics capture certain aspects of communication activity, but they do not capture the effort embedded within it. High tool adoption can coexist with high retrieval friction. Fast response times can indicate a workforce running under stress from platform norms. Low message volume in one channel may simply mean that activity has migrated to one that is harder to track. What none of these metrics captures is the ongoing compensatory work that workers perform to make fragmented systems function.

The natural organisational response to communication friction, when it is recognised at all, will tend towards incremental changes such as a new tool, a guidance document or training program. These responses are not without value, of course, as clear guidance on tool use, is associated with meaningfully more positive workplace experience. But neither guidance nor capability removes the fundamental sources of friction. There is a structural reason why incremental responses tend to reproduce rather than resolve communication dysfunction. Each is an intervention aimed at people rather than at the system, and each rests on the assumption that the problem is located in what individuals do, and can therefore be addressed by changing what they do. When the problem is the system rather than of the individuals within it, the assumption does not hold.

As long as organisations treat communication performance as a property of the people within a system rather than a property of the system itself, the interventions they make will redistribute the burden rather than reduce it. The failure here is not only strategic but diagnostic. **Communication systems carry the same category of operational significance as financial systems or IT infrastructure**, namely that when they underperform, the effects propagate across every function and every level. Organisations that do not understand this treat communication problems as management problems or training problems, which is why the interventions they reach for will likely produce the same result. The burden may shift, but the system itself remains unchanged. An organisational strategy that relies primarily on developing individual capability to absorb a systemic burden is a cost-transfer mechanism rather than a communication strategy.

The Cost Compounds Through Knowledge Erosion.

Fragmented conversations rarely leave a coherent record; what persists is the outcome, stripped of the reasoning and processes that led to it. What was tried, what was considered and rejected, what context shaped the choice: none of this tends to accumulate in systems that scatter conversation across platforms and time. Documentation typically captures outputs and does not reliably capture the judgement exercised, the alternatives considered, or the contextual understanding that made those outputs possible. **Organisations that rely on documentation as their institutional memory retain what was decided; they lose how and why.** Organisations that have allowed significant portions of their communication to migrate to personal messaging platforms have slipped into a more severe version of this condition whereby the reasoning, decisions, and context that would otherwise constitute an institutional record exist in accounts and on platforms the organisation neither owns nor can access. Consequently, organisational knowledge is not merely thin but structurally irretrievable.

As that understanding dissipates and erodes, so does the organisation's capacity to build on its own experience rather than repeat it. Because the record of what was tried and why is unavailable, the same approaches are revisited, the same mistakes are made, and the same effort is spent arriving at conclusions the organisation has already reached. The relationship between fragmented systems and staff turnover runs in both directions. Environments where context cannot be found and the reasoning behind decisions leaves no legible

trail are more likely to frustrate capable people: those who most need reliable access to prior work and shared understanding to do their jobs well. **When capable people leave, more context leaves with them, because in fragmented environments much of what they knew was never recorded in a place others could find it. The result is a feedback loop where fragmented systems make work harder, which increases the likelihood that capable people disengage or leave, which accelerates the erosion of the institutional knowledge.** This loop does not appear in any communication metric currently in common use, but customers or stakeholders likely encounter the effects in the consistency and reliability of what is delivered to them. Shareholders carry exposure to an operational risk that resists being named or measured. In organisations accountable to the public, communication fragmentation eventually surfaces in the quality of the services provided.

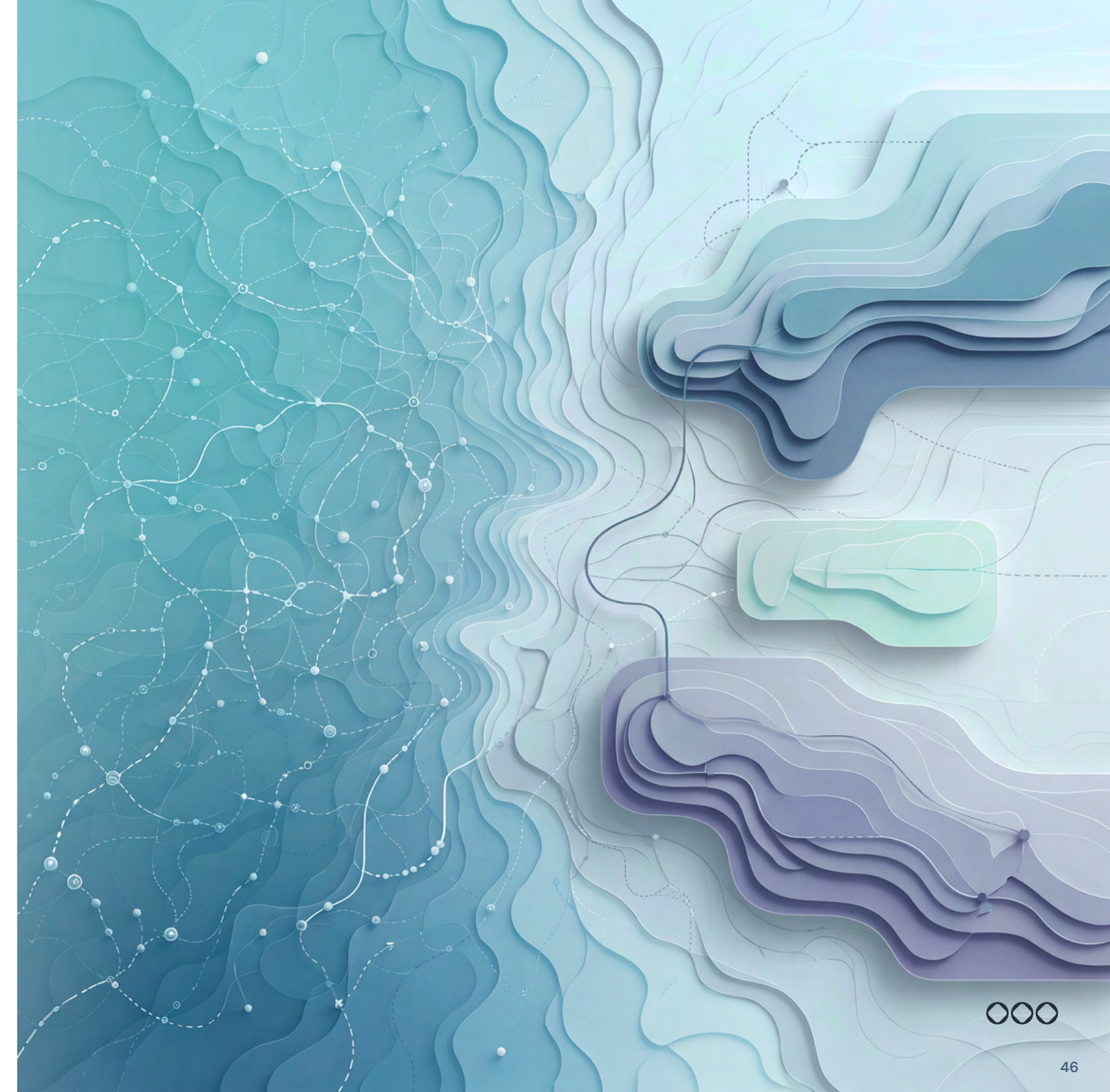
AI Raises The Stakes.

These dynamics are becoming more consequential as artificial intelligence becomes embedded in organisational work. In order to work at their best, AI tools depend on context. They produce better outputs when the reasoning, prior decisions, and relevant history of a problem are available. Fragmented communication environments are structurally poor at preserving exactly that kind of context. The problem was already costly before AI; it becomes more so as organisations attempt to deploy AI effectively inside systems that do not maintain the contextual record AI needs to work well.

The second dimension is off-system use. Workers now routinely use AI tools through personal accounts outside their organisation's systems: drafting, research, problem-solving, analysis. A WalkMe survey of 1,000 workers in the United States conducted in August 2025 found that 78% of employees use AI tools not approved by their employer, while separate research from UpGuard found that only 30% of organisations have full visibility into what AI tools their people are using. The reasoning, context, and outputs generated in those interactions are invisible to the organisation, and are not retrievable by colleagues who need them. This is the hidden communication cost problem in a new form: not just information scattered across messaging platforms, but organisational intelligence being actively generated in places the organisation neither controls nor can retrieve. For organisations that have not addressed communication fragmentation, AI adoption is more likely to extend that fragmentation than resolve it.

From Output Metrics To System Metrics.

Communication in modern organisations is a complex system where its constituent elements are distributed, layered, historically accumulated, and only partially under any individual's or leader's direct control. Organisations that want to understand their true communication performance cannot do so by measuring what their systems produce. They need to measure the work that those systems require: the effort embedded in navigating, retrieving, clarifying, and compensating for the limitations of environments that were never designed as coherent wholes. That shift in frame is what this paper has sought to establish.



05

Conclusion

From invisible work to deliberate design

Digital communication systems are functioning, work gets done and organisations continue to operate. But they do so in large part because workers are continuously absorbing the effort required to navigate environments that were never designed as coherent wholes. Roughly two in three search across platforms for a message they know they received every week, one in five encounters duplicated work every week, and roughly half report regular focus disruption from message volume or notifications. That effort is real, it is widespread, and it is almost entirely invisible to the organisations that depend on it.

Communication Systems Shape Effort, Not Just Outcomes.

Communication is not just what gets sent and received. Communication is about building shared understanding to sustain the working relationships through which complex tasks get done, and to create the conditions under which coordinated effort is possible. Making this wider purpose achievable requires everything from retrieving prior context and confirming shared understanding, to locating information dispersed across tools and compensating for the limitations of environments that distribute knowledge without providing reliable access to it. These activities constitute a substantial, largely invisible category of everyday work.

That distinction matters. When friction in workplace communication is framed as a behavioural problem (workers who don't know which tool to use, or managers who communicate poorly, or employees who haven't adapted to new technology), the response is individual. Training, guidelines, encouragement. These interventions have value but will always be limited. The data shows that effective leadership communication is strongly associated with positive workplace experience, and that clear guidance on tools has a measurable relationship with how workers feel about their organisations. **But the survey also shows, with equal clarity, that searching, follow-up, duplication, and attentional pressure persist even in organisations where leadership and guidance are highly rated.**

Why Recognising Hidden Work Matters.

The costs documented in this paper are real: in time, in cognitive load, in duplicated effort, in attention fragmented across a working day. The frequency patterns documented in this survey point toward a time burden that standard productivity measures rarely capture. Asana's Work Innovation Lab (Hinds et al., 2024), drawing on a survey of 2,015 Australian knowledge workers conducted in February 2024, found that Australian workers spend an average of 108 minutes per day searching for information they need to do their work, significantly more than their US counterparts at 96 minutes. The present survey did not measure time expenditure, and the Asana figure encompasses information retrieval broadly rather than cross-platform communication search specifically. The structural diagnosis the two studies share, however, is consistent: fragmentation of information across multiple platforms is not a minor inconvenience but absorbs time at a scale that organisations have not yet learned to account for. Whether those 108 minutes are a ceiling or a floor may depend on how many platforms a worker is required to navigate. They are also almost entirely absent from how organisations measure and manage their own performance. Communication is assessed by what systems produce, not by what they require. Organisations invest in tools, processes, and talent without accounting for the effort those tools, processes, and environments generate at the same time.

Recognising hidden communication work does not immediately resolve it, but it is a necessary precondition for doing so. **Organisations cannot design better communication environments while operating under the assumption that their current ones are basically working.** The survey evidence suggests a more accurate starting point: they are working, but only through continuous, distributed, and largely unaccounted-for effort from the people inside them.

The Moment to Act.

Organisations that want to address hidden communication cost need to start by understanding what their environments require, not only what they produce. **The reframe begins with recognising communication as a critical organisational system rather than an administrative overhead.** In other words, communication is infrastructure. Organisations that understand this can begin to see those costs, measure them, and make more deliberate decisions about the environments they build, the tools they deploy, and the governance they put in place to ensure those tools serve the work rather than complicate it.

These conditions are becoming more consequential as AI tools develop and become more widely adopted. AI tools depend on context. They produce better outputs when the reasoning, prior decisions, and relevant history of a problem are accessible. Fragmented communication environments are structurally poor at preserving exactly that kind of context: conversation disperses across platforms, decisions accumulate without legible reasoning trails, and

the institutional knowledge that would make AI more effective erodes before it can be retrieved. Workers now also routinely use AI through personal accounts outside their organisation's systems. The outputs, reasoning, and context generated in those interactions are invisible to the organisation and irretrievable by colleagues who need them. For organisations that have not addressed communication fragmentation, AI adoption is more likely to extend the problem than to resolve it.

The hidden cost of fragmented workplace communication is not a future risk, it is a current condition. It is being absorbed, right now, by workers in every country in this survey, quietly, routinely, and at a scale that most of the organisations they work for do not measure and few have named.

For organisations that have not addressed communication fragmentation, AI adoption is more likely to extend the problem than to resolve it.

// The hidden cost of fragmented workplace communication is not a future risk, it is a current condition. //



06

The Work That Follows

An invitation to engage

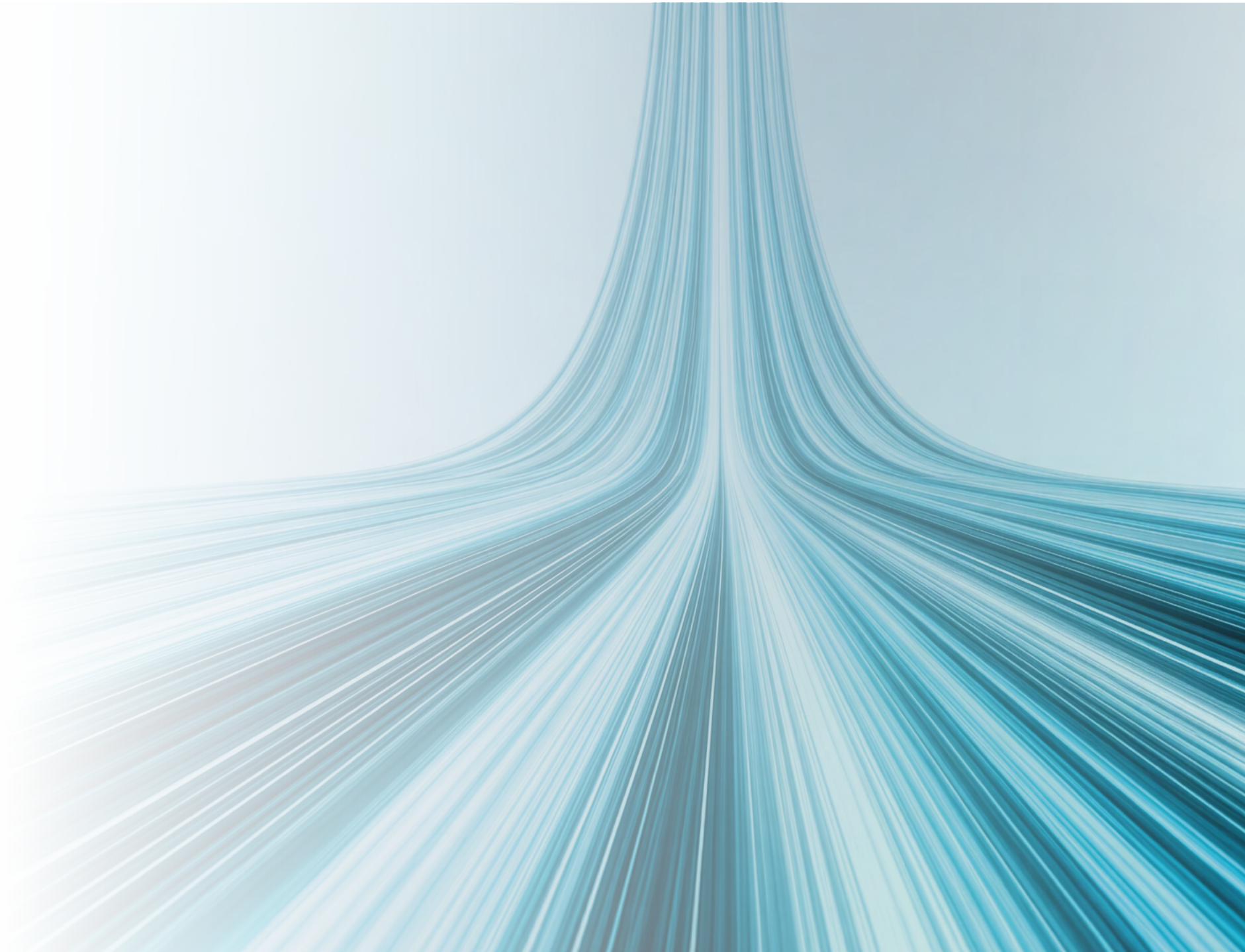
Where To Next.

The findings of our research are structural in character and consistent across five countries. They highlight a problem that individual organisations can partially mitigate but cannot solve in isolation. Communication environments have accumulated over time, without enough intentional design, into systems that cost far more than anyone has measured. Understanding what better design looks like and what governance structures would sustain it requires collaborative, sector-informed work that is connected to policy.

Corro is committed to leading that work in collaboration with organisations that want to test these findings against their own experience. We are seeking sector and industry bodies interested in sector-specific research programs, and government agencies engaged with workforce productivity and digital economy strategy. The next stage of this program depends on collaboration across organisations, sectors, and policy.

Organisations, industry bodies, and policy agencies with a stake in this question are invited to reach out.

hello@corro.co



Annex

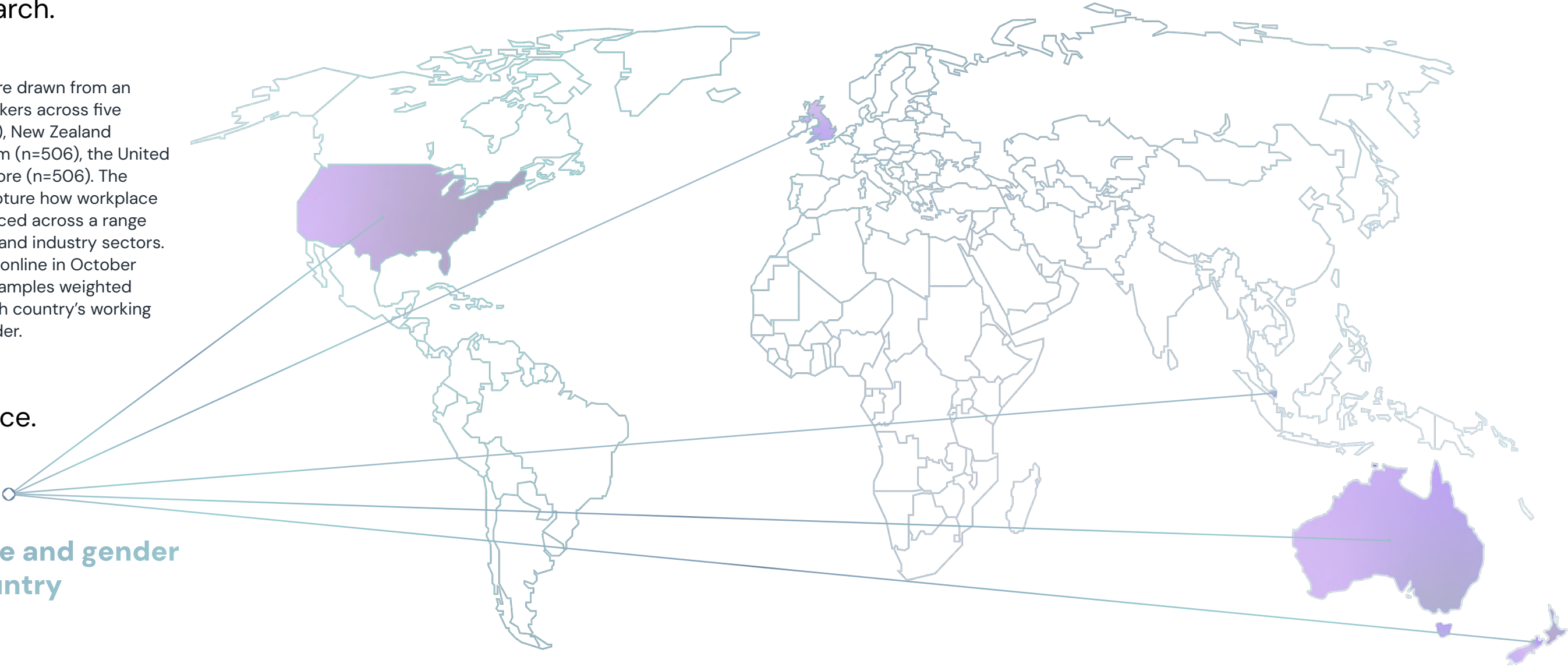
About This Research.

The Global Survey

The findings in this paper are drawn from an original survey of 2,553 workers across five countries: Australia (n=502), New Zealand (n=507), the United Kingdom (n=506), the United States (n=532), and Singapore (n=506). The survey was designed to capture how workplace communication is experienced across a range of roles, organisation sizes, and industry sectors. The survey was conducted online in October 2025, with analysis of the samples weighted to be representative of each country's working population by age and gender.

Survey At A Glance.

- 2,553 workers
- 5 countries
- Online survey
- Weighted by age and gender within each country



What Was Measured.

The survey covered multiple dimensions of everyday workplace communication experience. These included: the mix of communication platforms workers use and are expected to use; how often workers search for information across tools or struggle to locate items within email; the frequency of following up on messages and switching channels when doing so; how often colleagues duplicate or recreate work that has already been done; the extent to which message volume and notifications affect the ability to focus; how workers manage notification settings; satisfaction with their own communication skills; perceptions of leadership communication effectiveness; whether organisations provide clear guidance on tool use; and overall workplace sentiment, measured using an adapted Net Promoter Score (eNPS) approach.

The survey was not designed to evaluate specific communication tools or platforms, or to assess the performance of particular vendors or technologies. Its purpose was to capture the everyday experience of communication as workers encounter it: the effort it involves, the friction it generates, and the conditions that make that experience better or worse.

Why Five Countries.

Conducting the survey across five countries was a deliberate methodological choice. Workplace communication practices, like anything else, are shaped partly by local culture, industry mix, technology adoption patterns, and organisational norms. By surveying workers across geographically and culturally distinct markets, it becomes possible to distinguish between findings that are local and those that are globally structural. Where a pattern appears consistently across Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Singapore (countries that might be expected to differ in their communication cultures and workplace norms), confidence in that pattern as a feature of modern digital work rather than a product of any single context is substantially higher.

Singapore warrants particular mention. Its communication environment shows a distinctive profile in the data: higher frequency of daily interaction, a different platform mix, and some differences in how structural factors moderate experience. These differences are acknowledged throughout the paper rather than smoothed over. They are themselves informative, and they do not undermine the cross-country consistency of the paper's core findings.

WhatsApp's prominence in Singapore is not simply a matter of consumer preference. According to We Are Social's Digital 2025 Singapore report (February 2025), 80.1% of Singaporeans use WhatsApp monthly, making it the country's most used and most preferred social platform by a substantial margin, a level of single-platform dominance without equivalent in the other four countries surveyed. Research by HubSpot APAC found that 68% of Singaporean WhatsApp users report using the platform for work-related communications, even where their employer provides an alternative enterprise messaging tool. In Singapore, WhatsApp functions as de facto organisational infrastructure: embedded in team coordination, client communication, and internal decision-making in ways that actively blur the line between sanctioned and informal channels. This is relevant when interpreting Singapore's higher rates of personal app use, daily follow-up frequency, and channel switching across the paper's findings.

How The Data Is Analysed And Reported.

All single-variable frequency distributions reported in this paper use weighted data. Weights were applied to correct for sampling imbalances by age and gender within each country, ensuring that the reported figures reflect the broader working population rather than the specific composition of the survey sample.

Cross-tabulations are used throughout the paper to look beneath the overall figures: to ask whether a pattern holds across different groups of workers, and whether the experience of communication differs by, for example, work environment, seniority, or communication confidence. They work by breaking the sample into subgroups and comparing responses across those groups. Because the purpose is to examine relationships within the data rather than estimate population-level prevalence, cross-tabulations use unweighted respondent counts.

Where subgroup sizes are small, cross-tabulation findings are treated as directional rather than definitive and are not used as the basis for substantive claims. Sample sizes for the key subgroups used in each section are noted in the accompanying data footnotes.

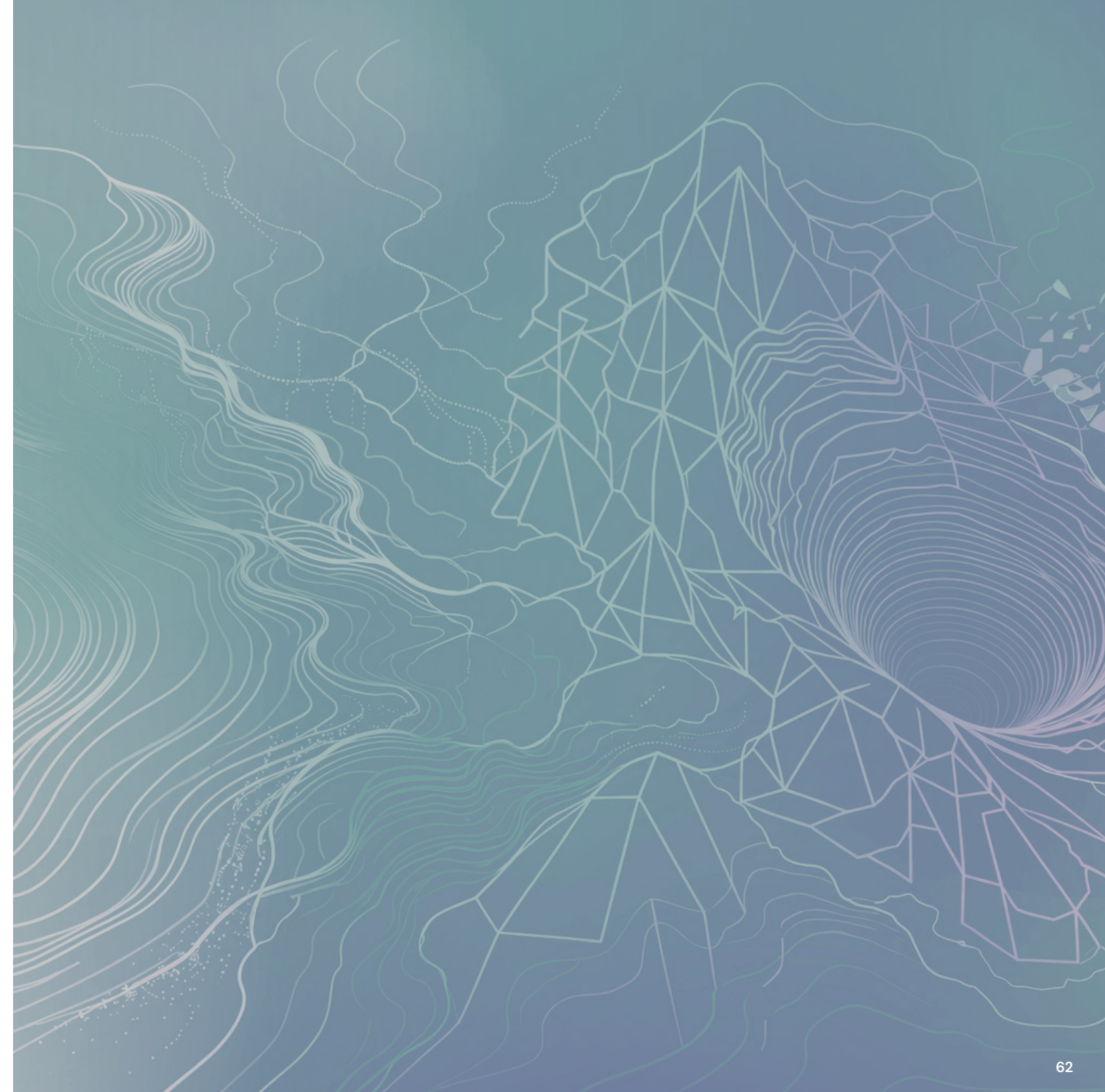
Methodology note: Weighted data is used for all single-variable frequency distributions. Unweighted data is used for all cross-tabulations. Where subgroup sizes are small, findings are treated as indicative only.

What This Data Can And Cannot Show.

The survey captures self-reported experience. It reflects how workers perceive and describe their communication environment: the frequency with which they encounter particular situations, the extent to which certain conditions affect their work, and their assessments of their own capability and their organisations' practices. This is well suited to the paper's purposes: understanding how communication is experienced is central to understanding its costs. The survey is not designed to support strong causal claims about productivity outcomes, organisational performance, or the effectiveness of specific interventions. Associations between variables are treated as indicative of patterns and relationships rather than as evidence of causation.

The survey also captures a point in time. Communication environments, tool mixes, and organisational practices evolve. The findings presented here describe the conditions workers reported experiencing at the time of the survey. They should be read as a current account rather than a fixed one, and as a foundation for the kind of ongoing measurement that, this paper argues, organisations should be doing rather than not.

One further interpretive boundary is worth noting. The survey captured each respondent's individual work environment rather than their team's composition. A respondent who reports working all days remotely may be on a fully distributed team, a mixed team, or a predominantly co-located team from which they alone work remotely. This limits the inference that can be drawn about whether work-environment patterns in the data reflect a worker's own arrangement, or the structural character of their team. Where this distinction is relevant to a particular finding, it is noted in the text.





About Corro®

Corro is an Australian and New Zealand technology start up co-founded by Sara Goldsworthy (Chief Executive Officer, formerly Head of National Security and Defence Policy for AWS in Australia and New Zealand, and previously a senior executive across the Australian Government including the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet) and Sir Rod Drury KNZM (founder of Xero).

From different starting points, both founders encountered the same problem: organisations that had built up layers of communication tools and lost control of their own communications in the process. The trade-off most organisations had accepted, between the flexibility workers need and the sovereignty organisations require, was not, in Corro's view, a necessary one.

Corro's platform is built to close that gap, giving organisations integrated, secure communication with the capacity to search, retrieve, govern, and preserve the conversations, decisions, and knowledge their daily work generates. The company's founding premise is that communication is not merely infrastructure. It is a strategic capability, and one that most organisations are currently unable to see, measure, or act on in full.

This research program is designed as a longitudinal series. This survey establishes the baseline. Follow-on studies will examine fragmentation by sector and organisational size, the moderation effects of leadership and capability at scale, the risk profile of AI adoption in fragmented environments, and the governance structures that have successfully reduced communication friction. Organisations, sector bodies, and policy agencies with an interest in this work are welcome to contact the Corro research team at hello@corro.co.

