

Re:Me

The importance of individualism
in a changing world

Chapter 3:

Reassure... employees they are doing
a good job in difficult times

Recognise Realign **Reassure** Redefine



The growing importance of demonstrating care

Employees have had two major sets of challenges to deal with during the pandemic: adapting to new ways of working – and coping with new time and emotional pressures such as increased isolation, caring for family members and home-schooling. As a result, **41%** of employees in our research report their mental health has impacted their productivity at work.

59% of employees will look for a new job if their work values aren't accommodated

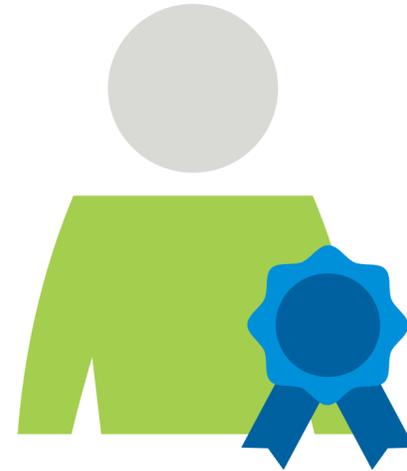
In the first two chapters of Re:Me we've seen the detail of how the pandemic has reset the relationship between employees and employers, with **32%** of employees now feeling the relationship has weakened.

We've also seen how those employers who understand employees' new priorities (and have realigned their behaviours) have improved productivity. Plus the risks of not realigning with employees expressing that if their new values are not accommodated, they will look for new employment.



Many employees have had a difficult time. In this chapter we explore the importance of reassurance: the need for employers to increase focus on care, recognition, communication and reward, and show their commitment to employees and their families by ensuring their basic needs are met.

Drawing on our study, we show how employers can better communicate with staff to recognise success, support wellbeing and rebuild a lost sense of belonging.



In chapter three, we demonstrate how reassurance can best be achieved through three key findings from the research:

73% of employees say they will work harder for an employer who cares about them

Key finding 1:

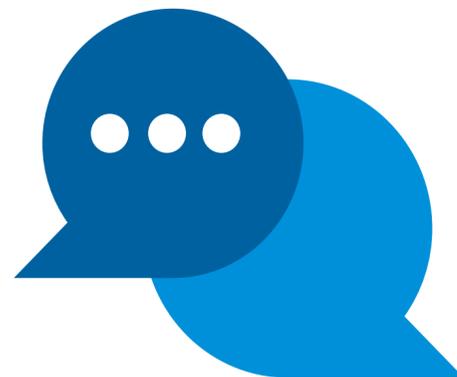
Employers need to reprioritise communication

In the same way that the pandemic has changed how we work together, it has also changed how we communicate. Findings from the **Re:Me** research can now inform the re-prioritisation of messages employers now most need to focus on, to reassure and motivate employees around the following themes:

- ✓ Job security
- ✓ Career development
- ✓ Fair distribution of workload
- ✓ The right level of communication.

Job security

Understandably high on employees' list of priorities is job security. Seven out of ten now say they will 'work harder for an employer who makes me feel my job is secure'. And while employers will often be unable to make this commitment, recognising the importance of the role the individual holds and how well they are delivering is of increasing importance.



Career development

Our study shows that employees want the reassurance that their career progression is continuing, undiminished by the pandemic. **65%** of employees say they want the opportunity to enhance their skill set to prepare for changes in their job role in the next six to twelve months, while this was only a reality for **49%**.

52% of employees say their productivity has been impacted by the way resource allocation of colleagues has been handled

Fair distribution of workload

With many employees working excess hours since the outbreak of the pandemic, our research shows employees need to be better informed of the fairness of work distribution among their peers. **52%** of employees admit 'their productivity has been impacted by the way resource allocation of colleagues has been handled'.

Recognising individuals' workloads, providing clarity to overcome misperceptions and rectifying any imbalances have become critical factors in maintaining motivation.

The right level of communication

While frequency of employer communication needs to be reviewed, achieving the right balance is proving a fine line to tread. Many employees are unhappy with contact levels, leading to dis-engagement.

47% of employees said they felt isolated from the company during Covid-19. Yet for three in ten employees, over-communication is the issue. **29%** feel their productivity has been impacted by too much communication from managers and colleagues.

Employee agreement with statements about behaviour and values

70% of employees

I will work harder for an employer who makes me feel my job is secure.

65% of employees

I would like the opportunity to enhance my skill set to prepare for changes in my job role in the next 6-12 months.

52% of employees

My productivity has been impacted by the way resource allocation of colleagues has been handled.

49% of employees

I have been given the opportunity to enhance my skill set to prepare for any changes in my job role in the next 6-12 months.

47% of employees

I felt isolated from the company during Covid-19.

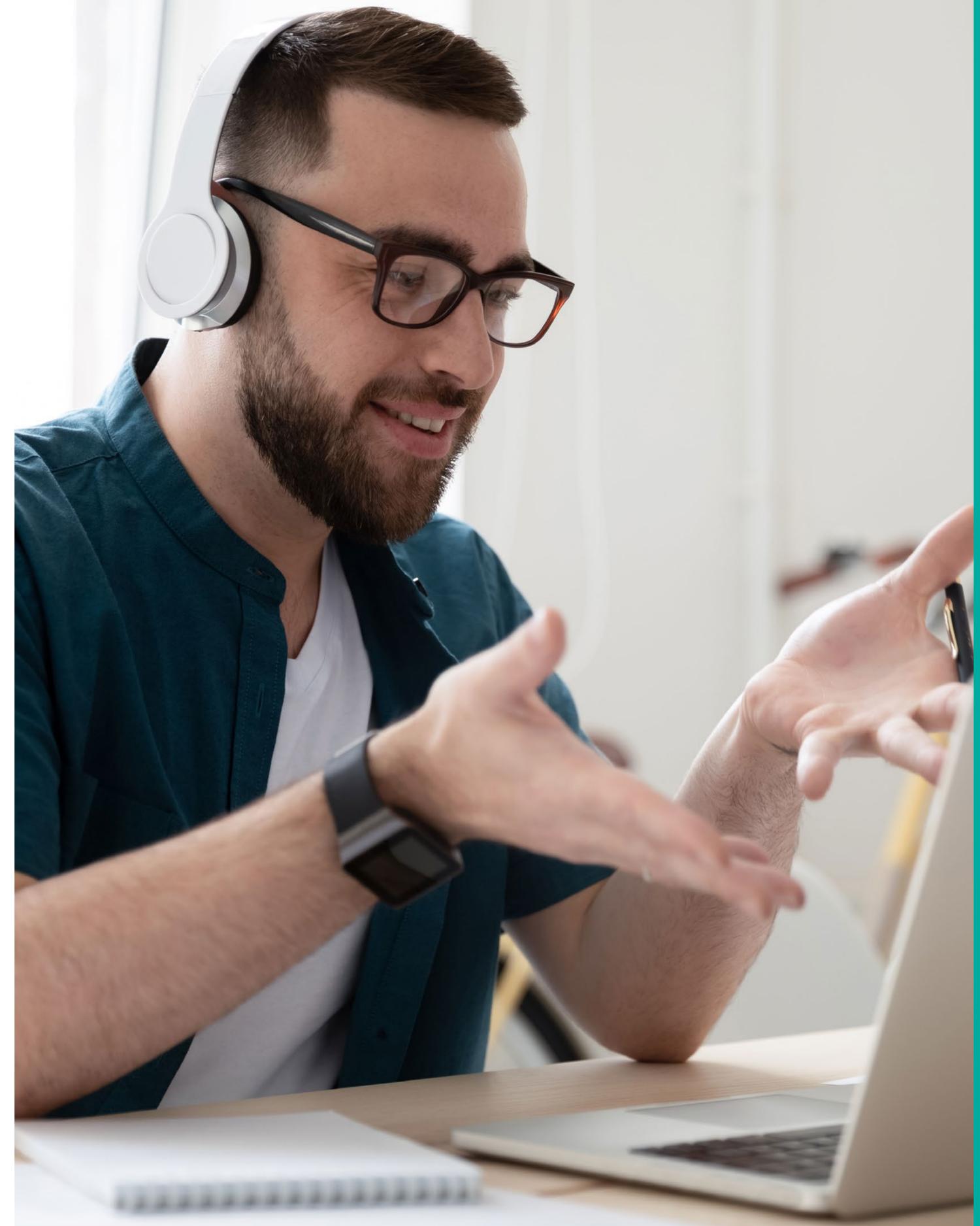
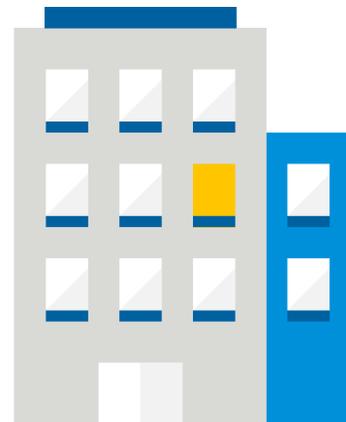


Key finding 2:

Employees' basic needs are the bedrock of the new relationship

62% of employees and 72% of employers feel that their relationship with each other changed, with one in three employers feeling it has weakened. In the same way that Re:Me shows how employee values and priorities have changed, it is essential we also understand how their basic needs have evolved.

With over half of employees (54%) considering leaving their job in the next 18 months, our research set out to define those factors that would most influence their decision to change their minds and stay.



Higher pay ranked most highly (65%), a factor that likely pre-dates Covid-19. Yet the pandemic has surfaced new priorities. 62% of employees now cite job security as their second most important basic need. The need for employers to ‘demonstrate more care for my physical wellbeing’ (40%) and ‘mental wellbeing’ (39%) in third and fourth places now clearly needs to be responded to by more organisations. Interestingly, ‘more suitable benefits’ ranked fifth (38%) indicating that employees are looking for benefits that better meet their individual needs.

And while factors such as pay and job security may be out of employers’ control, there are clearly areas employers can increase focus on to support employee needs and reduce flight risk.

39% of employees would remain if their employer demonstrated more care for their mental wellbeing



Key finding 3:

A caring approach will have a direct effect on productivity

In chapter 2 we saw how the crisis has led to fundamental changes in expectations of employers' behaviours. The shift is such that almost three in four now feel employers have a social responsibility to them (71%). The research reveals the value demonstrations of care can have on employees today.

73% of employees will work harder for an employer who cares about them

Care will, in turn, be 'repaid' by employees in increased productivity. **73%** say they will work harder for an employer who cares about them. Yet many employers appear to underestimate the value employees place on care, with just **65%** believing in the correlation.

The importance of care to companies as a strategic offering is not to be underestimated, as the economy picks up. **68%** of employees feel that employers who care for their staff will attract the best talent.



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of employees feel that employers who care for their staff will attract the best talent

Recognition, reassurance and reward have complementary roles to play in demonstrating employer care in response to solid performance, identifying new ways of working – and appreciation for excess hours worked. While all are important, our research gives clear direction on the most valued ways of demonstrating care.



 **Recognition**

With job and financial security figuring high in employees' concerns, 'reassurances' confirming they are doing their job well – and providing training that prepares them for future changes in their job role – are not to be underestimated.

 **Care that recognises individuals' situations**

Given employers now have a greater understanding of individuals' family and caring responsibilities, providing flexibility in hours worked – or reward days off – will demonstrate both care and appreciation.

 **Rewards realigned with today**

While pay rises and bonuses are crucial in recognising performance, they can also be absorbed into day-to-day outgoings. Rewards can help to demonstrate care through a diversity of employee benefits aligned to individuals' – and their families' – pandemic needs. An area we explore in depth in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Redefine

In chapter 4 of **Re:Me** you'll see how employers could benefit from redefining their employee benefits offering. And how, with **74%** of employees now wanting a benefits package tailored to their needs, this can help deliver packages for like-minded groups.

Visit metlife.co.uk/ReMe to download chapters one and two, and find further content including:



An infographic that highlights our findings



A short film explaining the importance of the four Rs

Methodology

The **Re:Me** research was conducted in August 2020 to examine the changing relationship between employers and employees, to reveal the values, expectations and priorities that are important to both sides and where the gaps lie in a Covid-19 world and beyond. It was a nationally representative, online, quantitative study among 900 employees (450 of both SME and Corporate organisations) and 300 employers (150 of both SME and Corporate organisations). Corporates have been defined as those with 500+ employees and SME defined as those with 50-500 employees.



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