

THE DATA BEHIND VIDEO MEETING FATIGUE AND HOW TO COMBAT IT

A Global Survey of Executives and Knowledge Professionals

May
2022



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Introduction

This paper reviews key findings from a global research survey across 1403 participants to understand employee and employer key objectives and challenges for 2022. The research focuses on hybrid worker video meeting patterns and associated ramifications. This report documents increasing stress and physical ailments that result from increased time spend in video meetings and investigates possible remedies and solutions. Specifically, the research investigates the use of devices used to facilitate video meetings as well as the positive and negative ramifications, leading to findings on how to reduce employee frustration, improve planned tenure, increase productivity and relieve video meeting fatigue.

Executive Summary

This research finds that hybrid workers spend 2 or more hours in video meetings each workday, with half of those surveyed saying they work from home 8 or more days each month. Executives state their top focus for remote workers in 2022 is team performance, employee engagement, individual performance, and data protection with all four only separated by five percentage points. Thus, at a strategic level, team and employee performance is a higher priority than headline-grabbing security issues. Hybrid knowledge workers indicate their top challenges for 2022 were work-life balance, preventing burnout, and career advancements.

Top issues negatively impacting video meetings are background noise, poor sound, and video quality, a trend that has continued for the last three years. These and other issues create video meeting fatigue and correlate with the 81% of knowledge professionals and executives who experience physical ailments at the end of each day with video meetings. The most common device used for video meetings are laptops (69%) which, while broadly available, is not the best solution, as less than half of the survey participants indicate they have the technology they need for working remotely.

4 out of 10 surveyed plan to leave their employer within two years but this trend is reduced by having the right technology and improved ability to collaborate. When asked what would reduce video meeting fatigue, two key areas were dominant: culture changes around meetings and better meeting technology. Survey participants were then divided into two groups: those that use Webex collaboration devices and those that use other devices (laptops, mobile devices, etc.), revealing two strong trends when compared. Those with Webex devices report higher levels of productivity, collaboration, improved culture, and having the right technology to do their work. Those using Webex devices report nearly 30% fewer frustrations than workers using a laptop. Webex device users were nearly 40% more productive when working remotely.

Hybrid work and video meetings are the new normal, and companies need to provide employees the best technology to reduce meeting fatigue and minimize negative physical ramifications, while taking steps to improve collaboration practices and reduce meeting overload. The laptop isn't the best answer.



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Key Findings

- **Hybrid Work and Video Meetings Pose Significant Impact on Top Work Concerns**
 - 93% spend 2 or more hours in video meetings each day
 - 50% work from home 8 or more days every month
 - Executives state team performance, employee performance, and engagement over data protection and security as key concerns for 2022
 - Employees cite work-life balance, burnout, and career advancement are their top work-related concerns for 2022
- **Video Meeting Fatigue and Physical Ailments Exacerbated by Technology Shortcomings**
 - Background noise, poor sound, and video quality are top video meeting frustrations
 - 95% experience video meeting fatigue and need changes to company culture and key technologies to reduce fatigue
 - 81% indicate some physical ailment at the end of each day filled with video meetings
 - Laptops are used 69% of the time for video meetings
 - Less than half reported having the technology they need when working remotely
- **Retaining Employees Requires Better Technology and a More Collaborative Culture**
 - 42% plan on leaving their current employer in the next 2 years
 - Employees with proper technology plan to stay longer with current employers
 - Webex device users indicated being better enabled, more productive, with improved collaboration
 - Webex device users were 65% more likely to say they never get frustrated during video meetings

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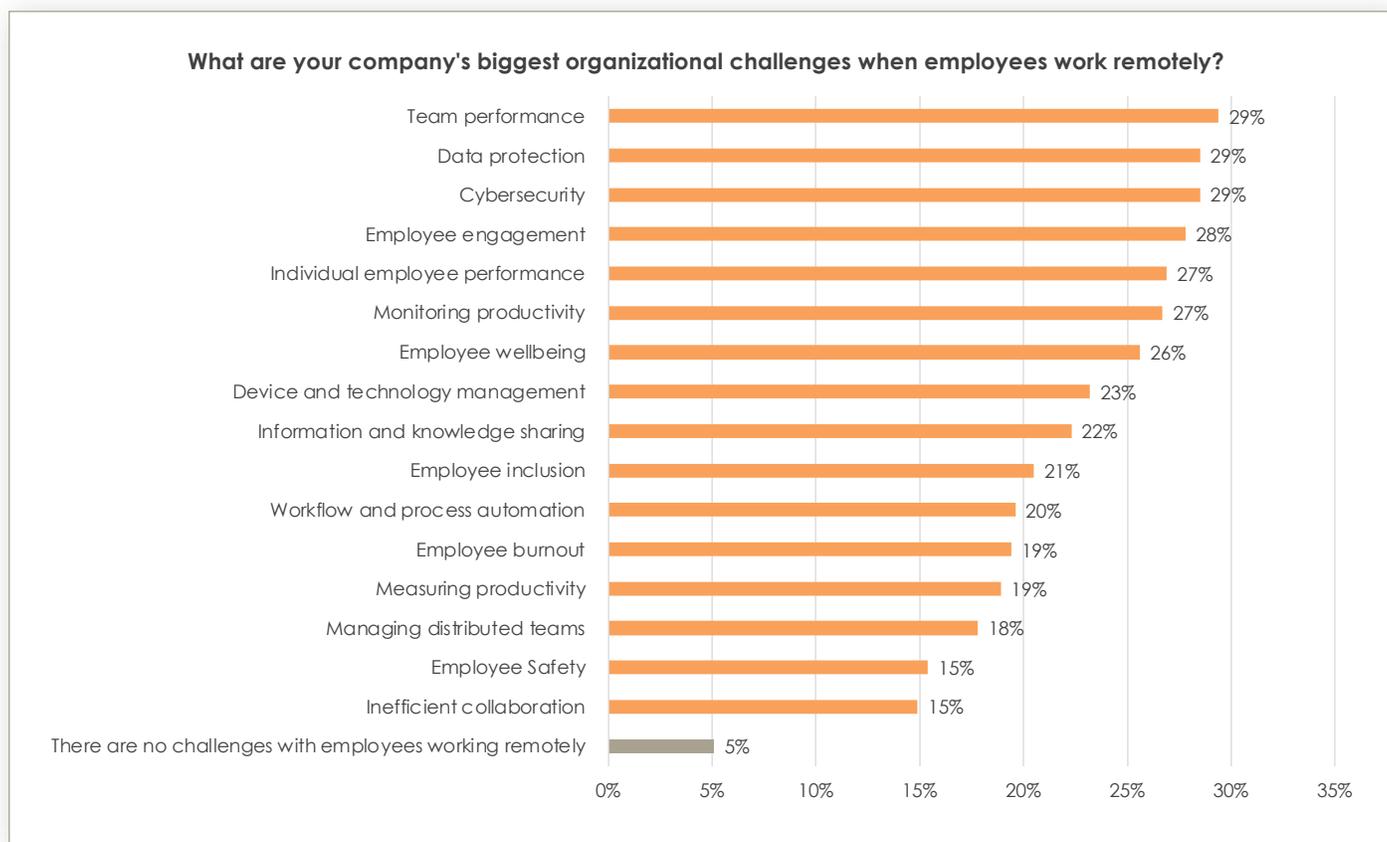


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Detailed Findings

Executives Focusing on Employee Performance and Engagement

Since hybrid work has become part of the normal operating paradigm, the research sought to learn from executives what challenges it creates and where companies need to focus. The top three executive answers center on the employee, specifically team performance (34%), employee engagement (31%), and employee performance (30%). To put this in perspective, these concerns are higher than headline grabbing issues like data protection (29%), and cyber security (24%), which are down in the 4th and 8th spots respectively. Employee well-being (24%) and employee inclusion (26%) round out the top 8, firmly cementing the executive focus on employees above all else.



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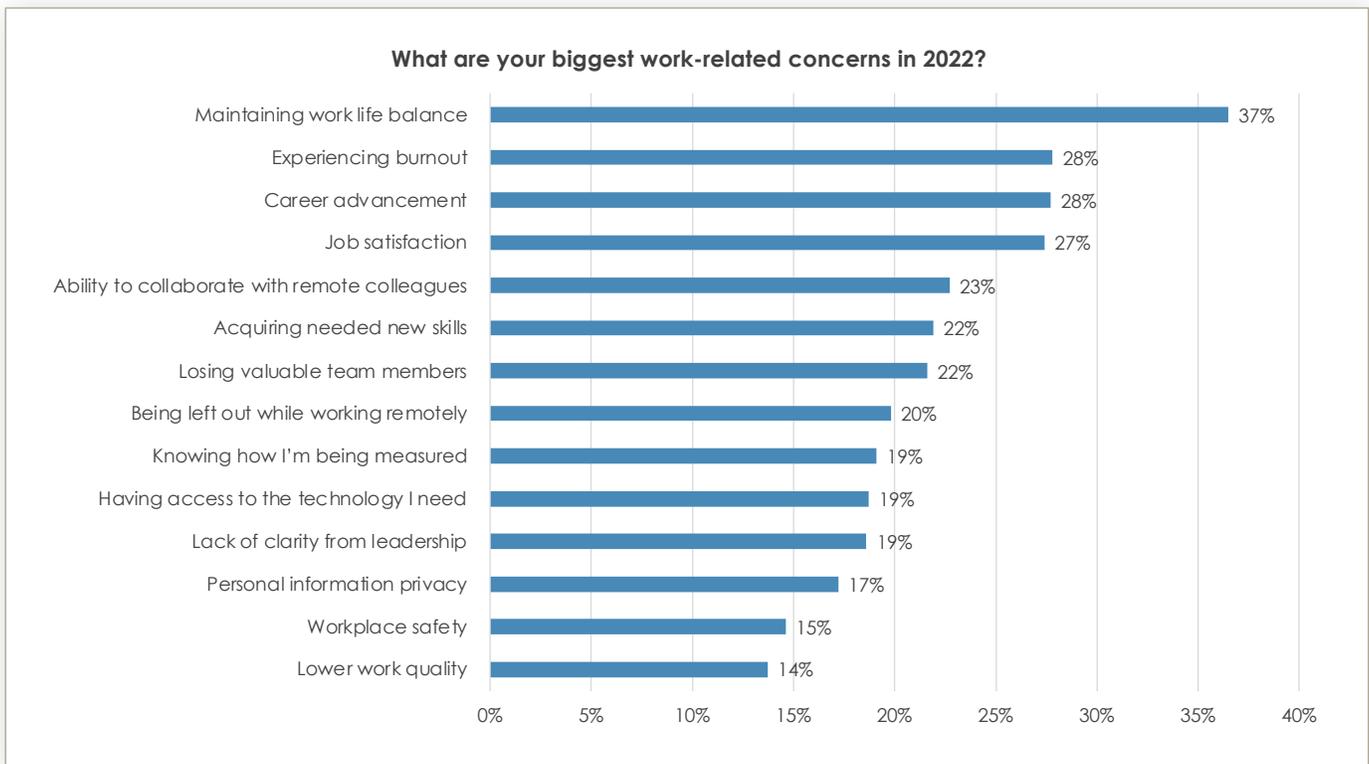
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Work-life Balance, Job Satisfaction, and Collaboration Top Concerns

To gain a 360-degree view of the hybrid work model, the research asked knowledge workers their top work-related concerns for 2022. The first two focus on well-being, maintaining work-life balance (37%) and preventing burnout (28%). Employees, perhaps as expected, are also concerned about career advancement (28%). Job satisfaction (27%) is in the 4th spot and is often a two-way street with enjoying the work being performed and having the right tools to do the job well. Rounding out the top 5 employee concerns is the ability to collaborate with others (23%), which takes a decidedly important role in the new hybrid work era and directly affects the four concerns above it. The ability to collaborate effectively with team members, in the office or working remotely, is directly aligned to their ability to get their work done and ultimately influencing job satisfaction, engagement, promotions, and maintaining a work-life balance.



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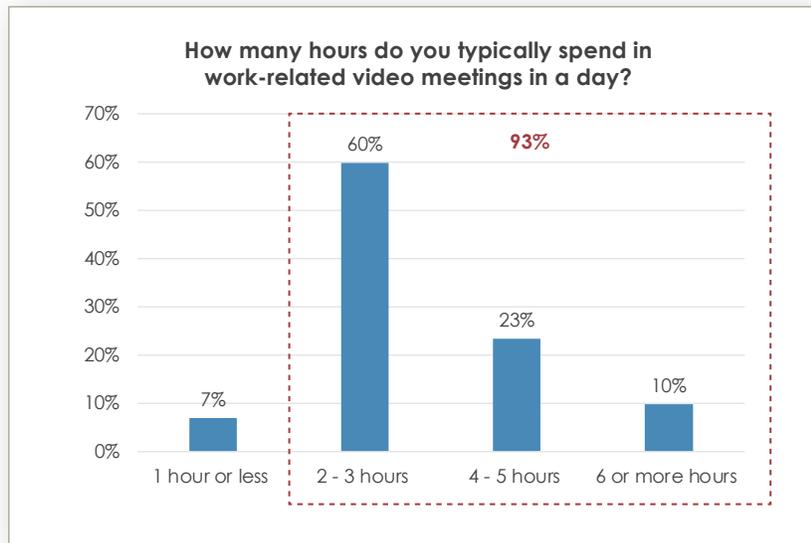
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Most Employees Spend 2 or More hours in Video Meetings Each Day

The importance of effective collaboration cannot be overstated for companies with hybrid workers, and the research specifically measured the magnitude by understanding how frequently workers are collaborating in video meetings. 93% of knowledge workers and executives spend at least 2 hours in video meetings each day, and 1/3 spend at least half of every day in video meetings. This reinforces why workers and executives are focused on and concerned about their ability to collaborate, leading to the top concerns and focuses discussed above.



Webex by Cisco

Webex devices are designed to power inclusive and secure collaboration from anywhere. With a range of room systems, desk devices, phones, and headsets, you can turn any space in the home, the office or on-the-go into a productive hybrid workspace.

[Learn more](#)

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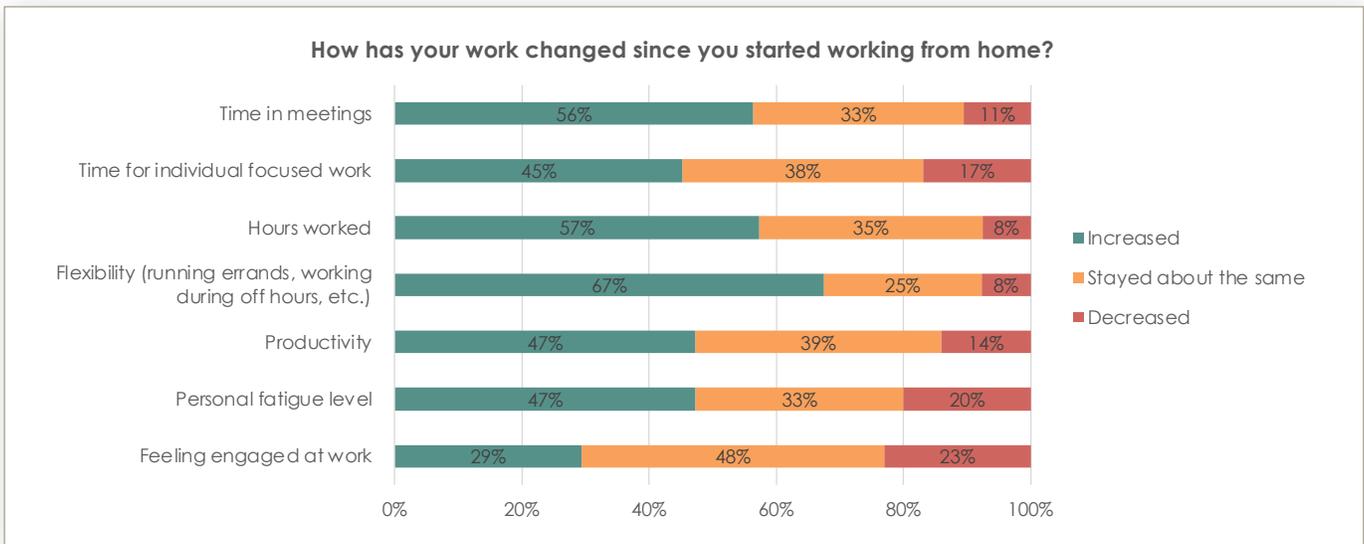
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More Time in Meetings and Increasing Productivity, but at what Cost?

To provide context, [research from 2021](#) showed that all but one key metric was increasing for hybrid workers. Time in meetings grew (56%), as well as the total number of hours worked (57%). This extra time generated increased productivity (47%) and the feeling of having more work schedule flexibility (67%). However, there are some serious negative trends as well, such as increasing personal fatigue (47%) which was a top concern cited earlier by workers. Additionally, stagnating engagement levels were reported by 23% as getting worse, which is becoming a key concern for executives.



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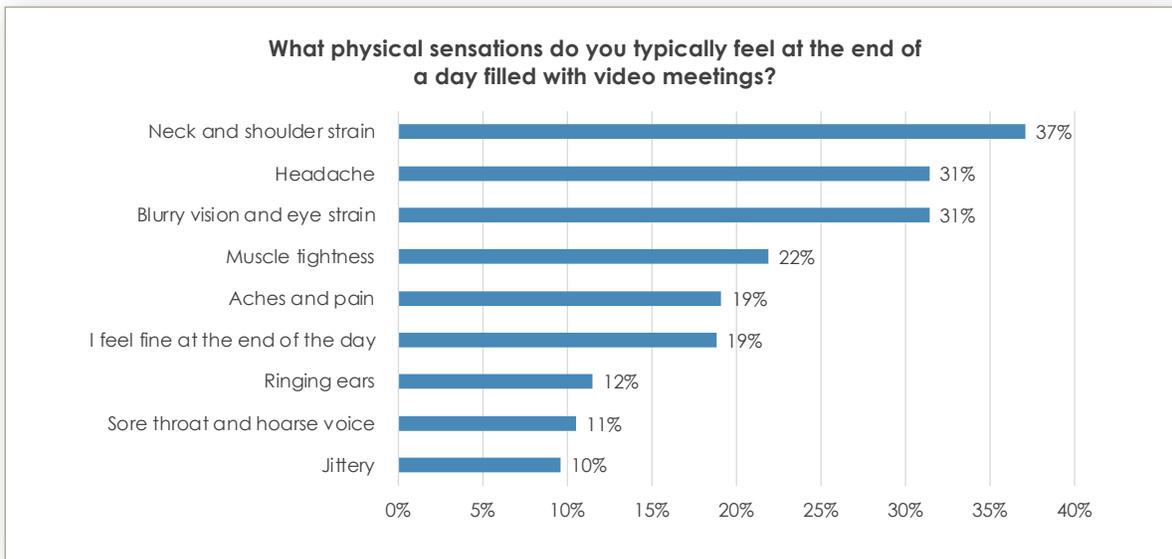
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8 out of 10 Attending Video Meetings End their Day with Physical Ailments

The research sought to understand just how fatigue is manifested, if at all, from the growing amount of time in video meetings. Only 19% say they feel fine at the end of the day, meaning that 81% physically do not. More than 1 in 3 knowledge workers state their days with video meetings end with neck and shoulder pain (37%). Tied for second are headaches and eye strain or blurry vision, both at (31%). Other symptoms were muscle tightness (22%), general aches and pains (19%), ringing ears (12%), sore throat or voice hoarseness (11%), and feeling jittery (10%). This provides the evidence that video meeting fatigue carries actual physical issues in addition to just feeling like there are too many meetings each day.



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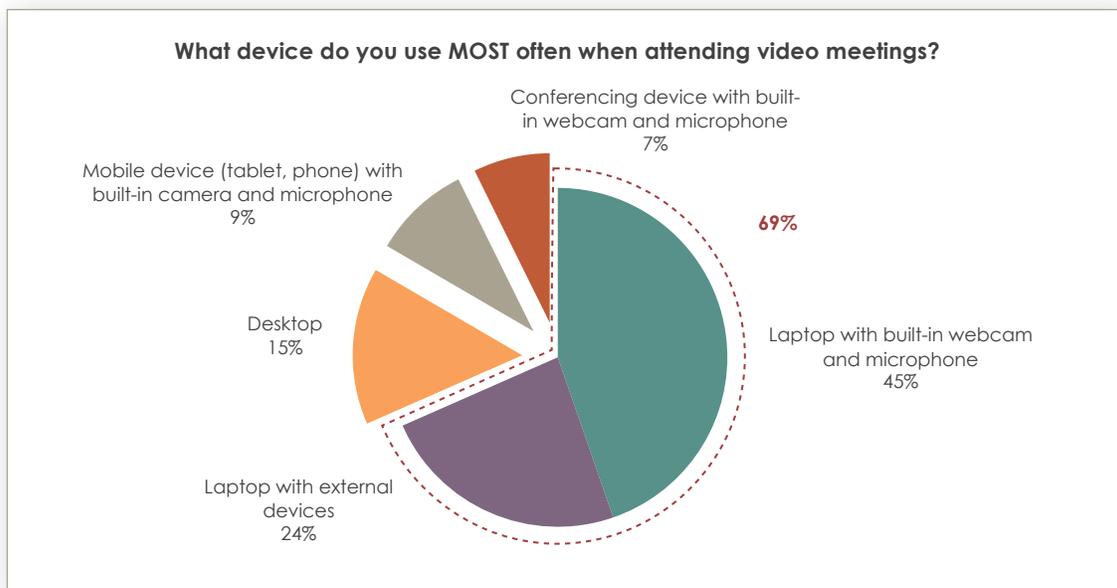
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More than Two Thirds Rely on Laptops for Video Meetings

In order to address some of the negative trends, it is key to understand what technology is being used to facilitate video meetings. 69% percent of all video meetings are attended using laptops, and 2 out of 3 video meeting attendees use just the laptop alone, with no peripherals (webcam, headset, ear buds, etc.). 15% of participants indicate they use a desktop to attend meetings, and 9% primarily use a mobile device. Just 7% of participants use a dedicated web conferencing device.



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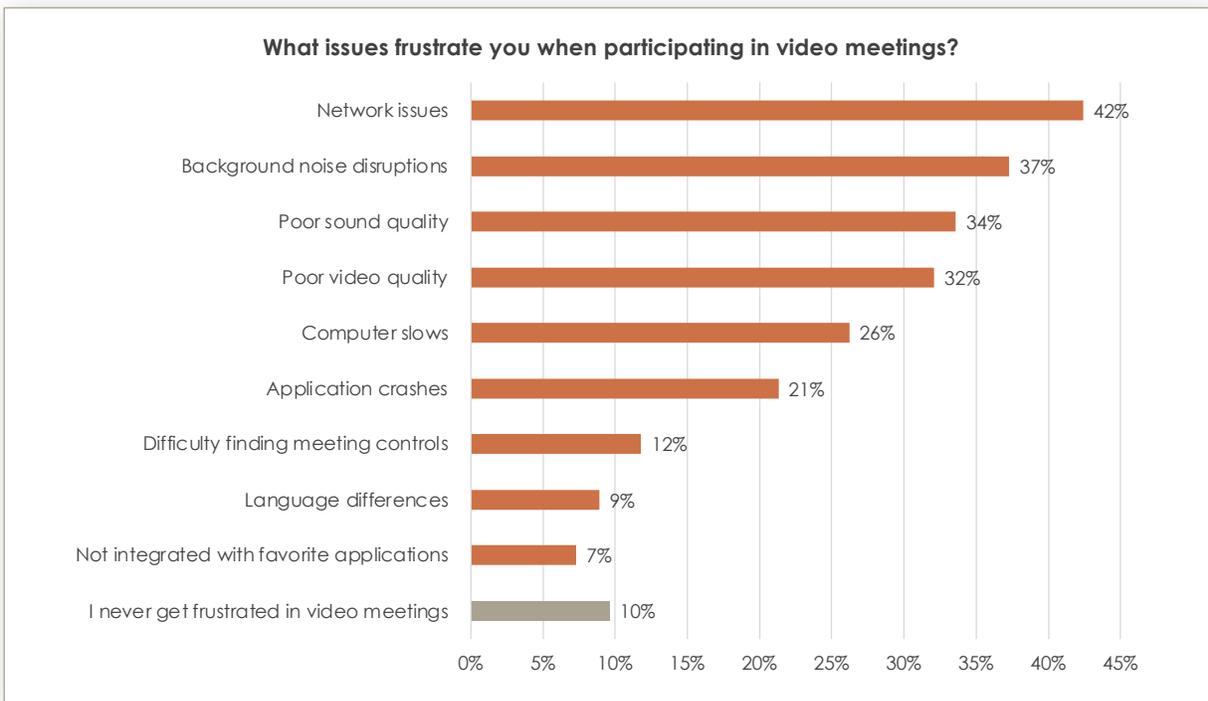
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Background Noise, Poor Sound, and Video Quality Top Meeting Issues

Knowledge workers and executives were asked what frustrates them during video meetings. Network issues take the top spot with 42%, something most users can't control. However, the next three issues - background noise (37%), poor sound (34%) and video quality (32%) - are perennial issues and have placed in the top 4 spots for the third year in a row of Dimensional Research's video meeting related research. These three frustrations are affected by the technology used for video meetings. In-depth analysis compared different solutions survey participants used for video meetings to determine if specific technologies can mitigate some of these frustrations. One significant finding is that Webex device users are 65% more likely to say they never get frustrated during video meetings and report 27% fewer frustrations than those using a laptop.



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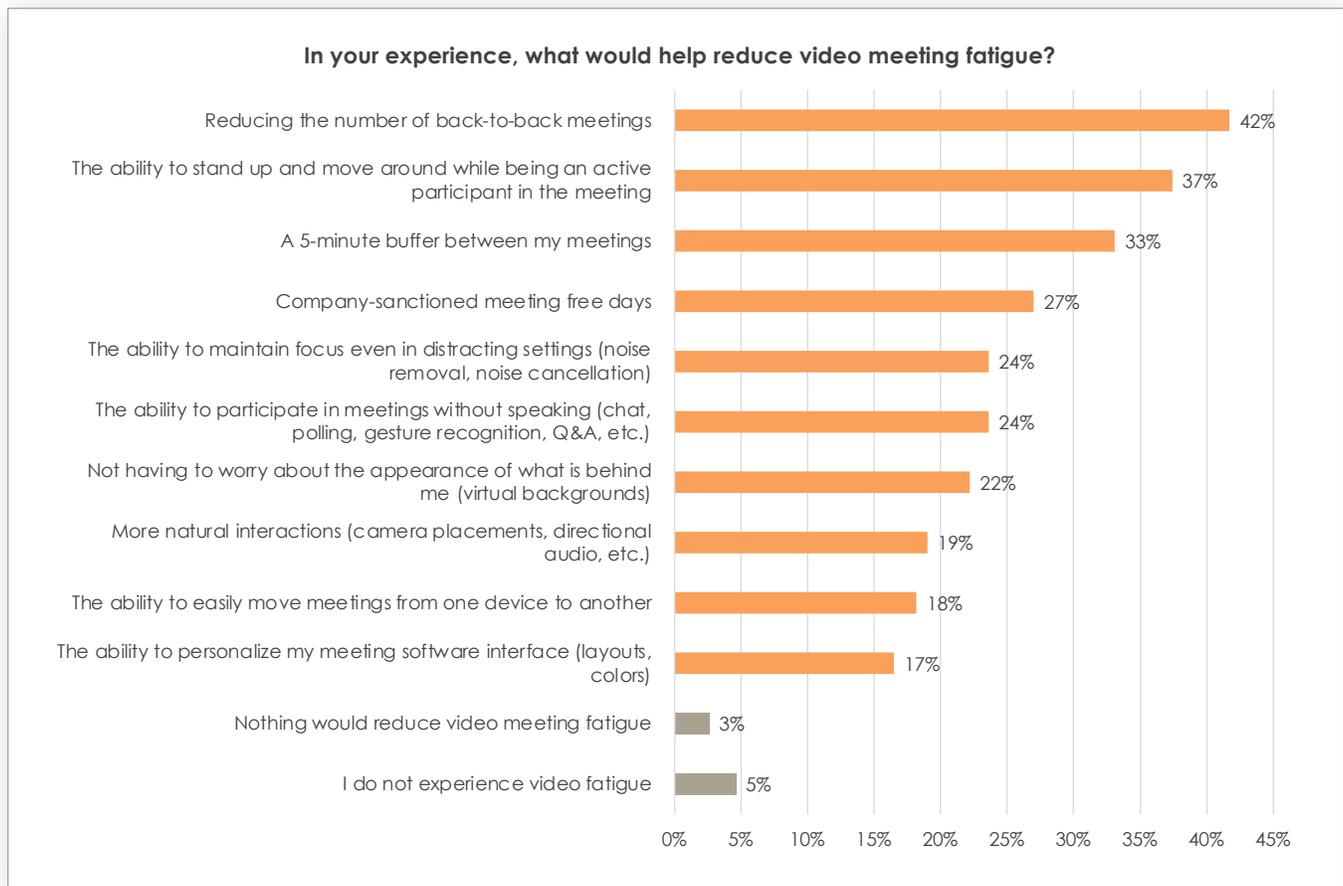


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95% Experience Video Meeting Fatigue; Culture and Technology Must Change

While the intent of the next research question was to focus directly on opportunities for video meeting fatigue resolution, it uncovered that only 5% experience no video meeting fatigue. Consequently 95% of executives and knowledge workers are affected, higher than the 81% who reported physical ailments discussed earlier. However, 97% of participants offer suggestions on how to minimize video meeting fatigue.

At a strategic level, the recommendations fall into two categories: changes to company culture and improved meeting technology. The top 3 suggestions include adjustments to meeting culture including reducing back-to-back meetings (42%), five-minute buffer between meetings (33%), and meeting-free days (27%). All of the other recommendations fall into better meeting technology: the ability to stand up and move around (37%), removing unwanted background noise (24%), non-verbal participation such as chat, gestures, or polls (24%), virtual backgrounds (22%), better camera locations and improved microphones (19%), hand-off meetings between devices (18%), and, lastly, the ability to personalize their video meeting solution.



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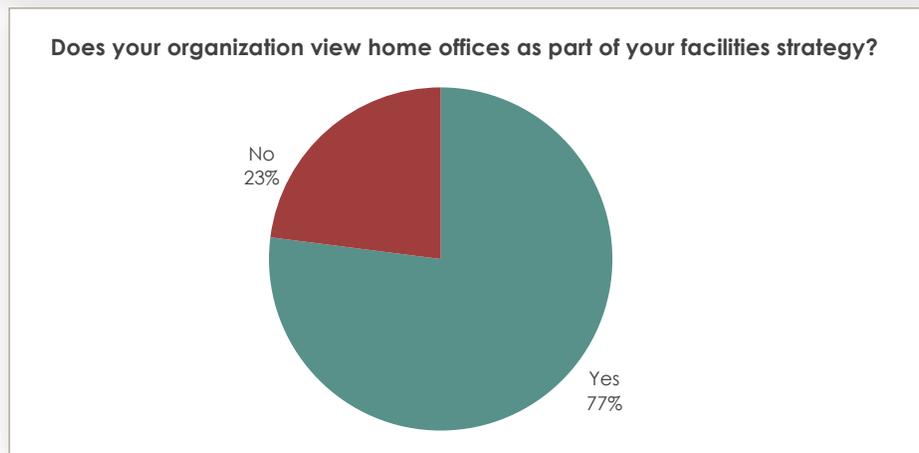
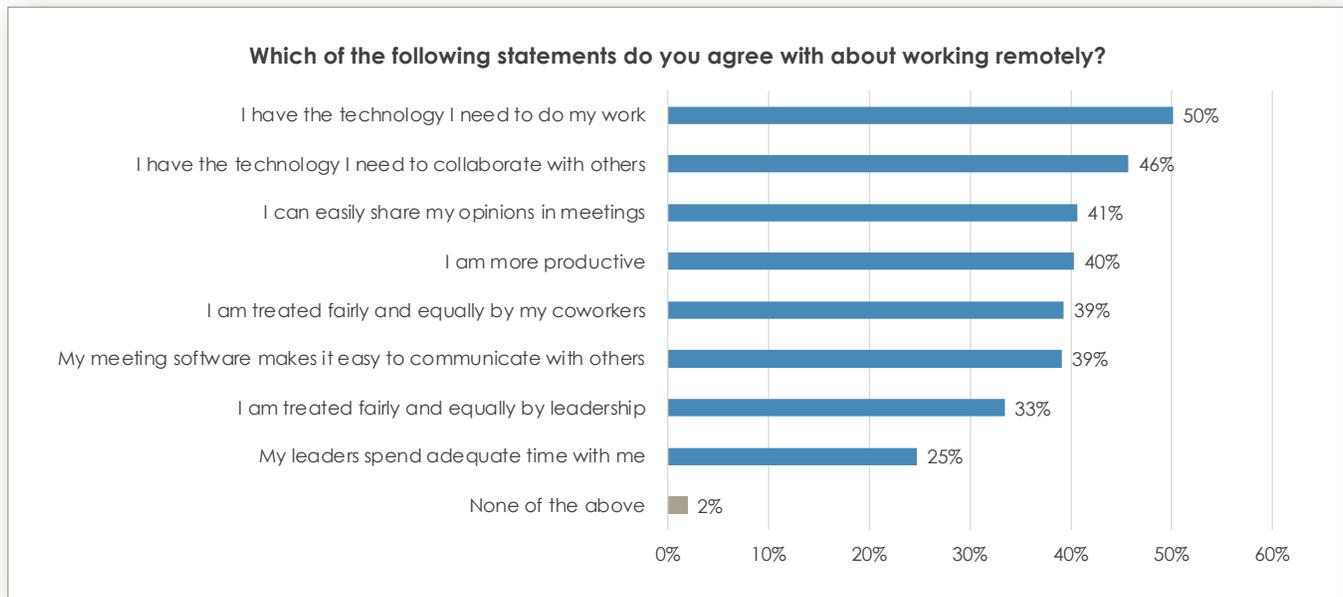


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Less than Half Have the Technology They Need when Working Remotely

Given the long list of technology and cultural improvements needed to reduce video meeting fatigue, the research then investigated how enabled workers and executives feel today about working remotely. The first takeaway from the findings is that just half, 50%, of workers feel they have the right technology to do their job. Less than that, at 46%, were those that have the proper technology to collaborate.

Missing technology again is the culprit with just 39% indicating their meeting software enables them to easily communicate with others. 77% of those responsible for employees and their productivity (executives, facilities team, HR, and IT) stated that home offices are now, in fact, part of their larger facilities plan. Thus, the problem of not having the right technology is either that they have not started resolving the issue or are making poor technology choices. In direct support of the impact technology makes, Webex device users report they were 38% more productive when working remotely.



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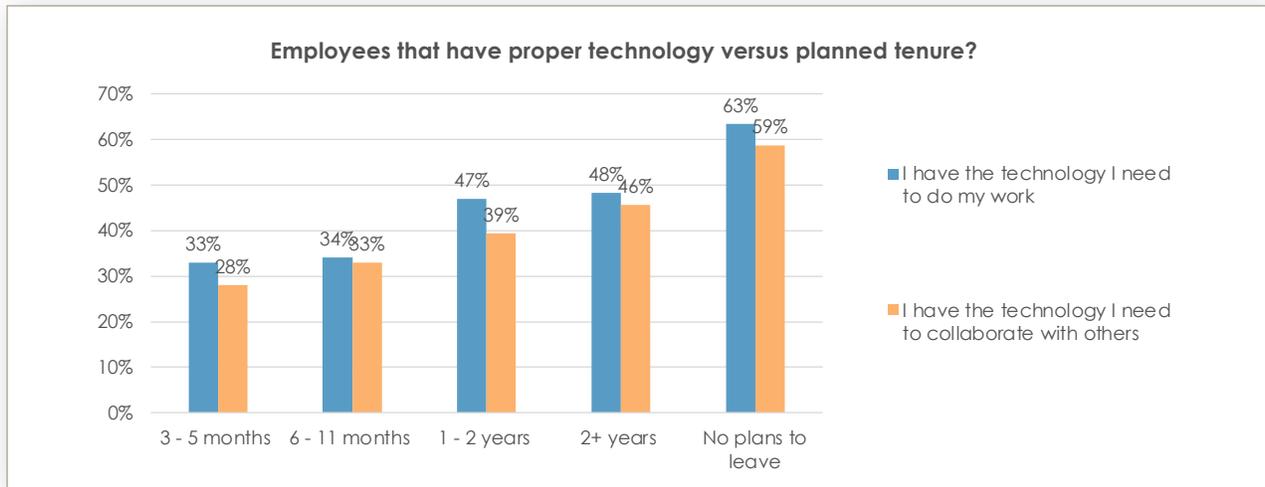
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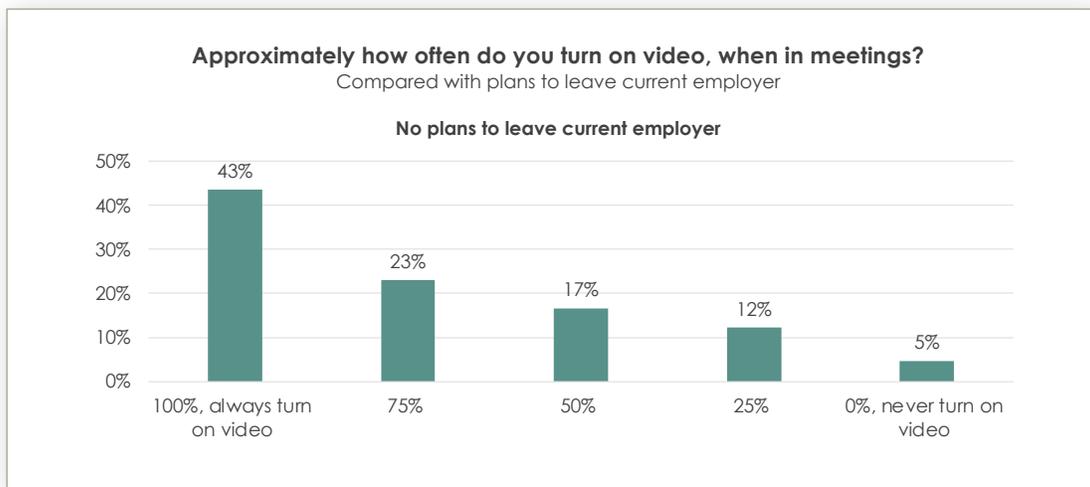
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Employees with Proper Technology Plan to Stay Longer with Current Employers

In addition to the importance of technology for mitigating video meeting fatigue and enabling employees to collaborate, the research discovered other correlations proper technology provides. In the chart below, we see a direct correlation between planned tenure related to having the right technology. Simply put, those with the right technology intend on staying longer with their current employer. Further analysis finds that employees that are better able to collaborate have no plans to leave their current employer. This new information corroborates [research conducted last year](#), where 77% of those with proper technology were happy with their employer.



We also revealed in last year's study a direct correlation between those that turn on video in meetings all the time and those who were also happier with their employer. This year the findings again show those that use video in meetings all the time (43%) or most of the time (23%) have no plans to leave their current employer. The combined research establishes that the two key factors to video usage in meetings are technology and company culture.



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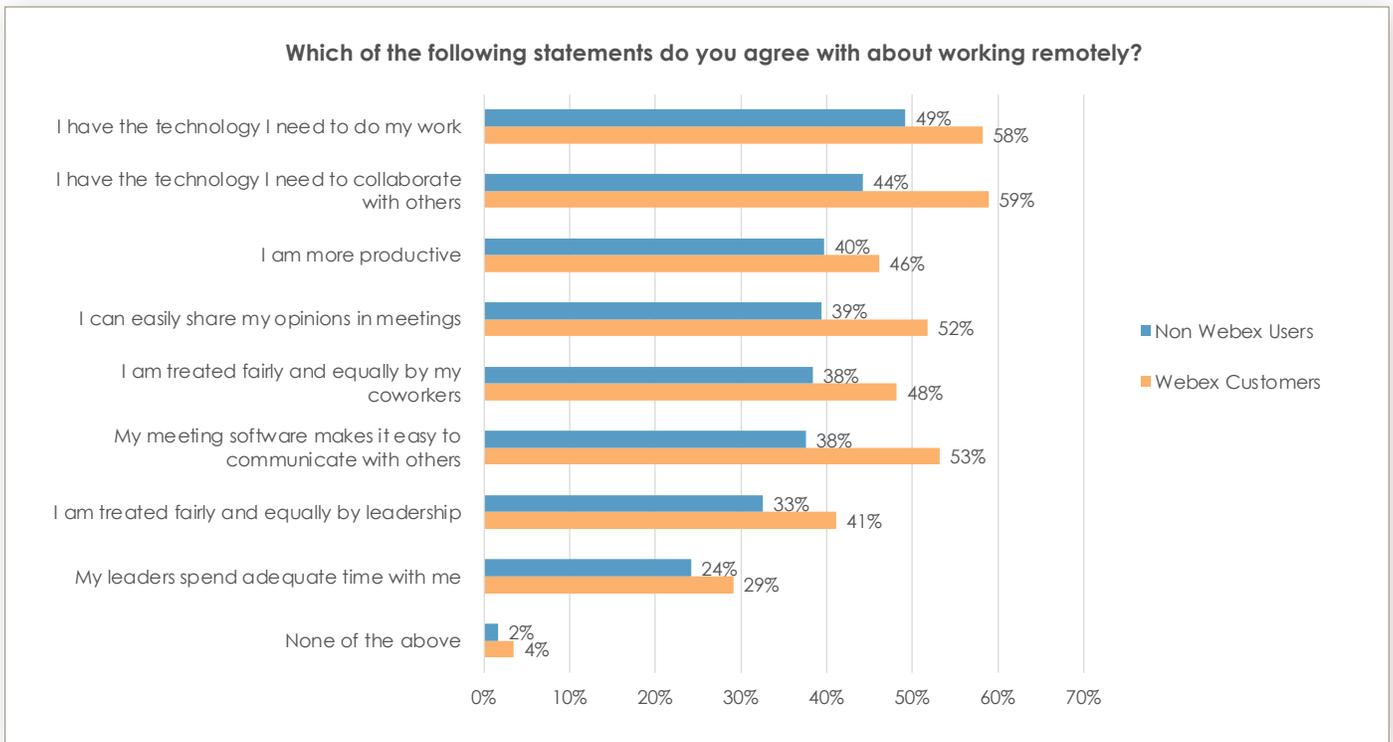
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Webex Device Users Indicated being Better Enabled and More Productive with Improved Collaboration

Given the preceding findings about technology challenges, the research directly inquired about collaboration and technology vendors which revealed additional insights. The data show that Webex users reported higher marks across the board when it comes to remote work experiences. This data shows that better technological enablement for collaboration does in fact lead to greater productivity and a better culture and work environment.



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Conclusion

In 2022 executives are firmly committed to employees and their productivity. In fact, those are their top priorities for enabling the hybrid worker model. But the reality is employees and executives are in more meetings than before and many of them include video meetings with remote employees. While both the hours spent working and productivity are up, so is meeting fatigue with physical symptoms. This is certainly behind employee's top priorities for work-life balance and avoiding burnout.

Remedies for these issues fall largely into two areas, changing company culture and improving the technology employees have access to. Today most video meetings are attended on laptops and from these results the laptop alone is not the best approach. Providing the right collaboration and meeting technology not only reduces meeting fatigue factors, but directly results in happier employees who stay longer.

Given that home offices are now an extension of the work office, leaders need to consider their technology decisions more carefully. Having the right technology impacts people's ability to work effectively and boosts loyalty with healthier and happier employees. The alternatives are physical and other fatigue issues caused by frustrating work conditions which drive employee turnover, all of which are costly to the business. Webex devices have shown to reduce video meeting fatigue and enable employees to collaborate with more ease than other solutions. The survey reminds us that employees are the most important part of a company, which is why they are the top concerns on leadership's minds.

Survey Methodology

Individuals representing all seniority levels that attend video meetings weekly working at companies of all sizes and industries were invited to participate in a survey on their experiences with video meetings, technology used, and physical and mental states.

A total of **1,403 qualified participants** completed the global survey. All participants attend video meetings each week. Participants represented numerous countries from 5 continents to provide a global perspective. The survey was administered electronically, and participants were offered a token compensation for their participation.

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About Dimensional Research

Dimensional Research provides practical marketing research to help technology companies make their customers more successful. Our researchers are experts in the people, processes, and technology of corporate IT and understand how IT organizations operate. We partner with our clients to deliver actionable information that reduces risks, increases customer satisfaction, and grows the business.

For more information, visit www.dimensionalresearch.com.

About Webex by Cisco

Webex by Cisco creates collaboration software and tools for calling, meeting, messaging, audience engagement, events, contact centers, and devices, with an emphasis on ease-of-use for the user, and flexibility in allowing teams to collaborate remotely from anywhere with web access. Webex places emphasis on inclusivity; more specifically the idea that every user can be seen, heard and be able to fully participate in remote collaboration. In June 2021, they launched the Webex Suite, which offers purpose-built solutions for hybrid work. The Webex suite features enterprise grade security, AI-powered, integrated management tools.

For more information, visit www.webex.com.