



Improving Your Internal Communications



A guide to how visual content can help create a more collaborative and productive work environment



Contents

03 / Introduction

04 / Breaking out of monotone

05 / Communicating in the era of open-office plans
& global workforces

06 / The current state of internal communications

07 / Why is this important for my business?

08 / How much could you gain from using visuals?

09 / Where do I start?

09 / Common pitfalls that prevent knowledge sharing

10 / Work better and faster

10 / 6 ways you can start using visuals right now

11 / For success, start small

12 / Get started today



Think back five years ago.

We were only seven years into the [iPhone](#) revolution. Tablets and laptops were starting to [replace](#) desktop PCs, fax machines were still in use, and we were beginning to see the shift that coincided with [millennials](#) entering the workplace. Compare that to today — where the average person spends more than [four hours](#) on their phone daily, and millennials [dominate](#) the workforce — it's hard to believe it was only a few years ago.

With technology as a catalyst, the way we consume information and communicate has fundamentally changed — and at a faster rate than ever before. Most of us have adapted to this shift in our relationships or with customer communications and opt to communicate through text and video chat instead of phone calls, for example, or using GIFs and emojis in email campaigns. But many companies are failing to make the same changes internally.

The result? Lost productivity, decreased competitiveness, reduced collaboration, and diminished employee engagement.

In this guide, we'll walk you through the current state of the workplace and common misconceptions holding your company back from effectively communicating. We'll also highlight easy changes you can make to start incorporating videos, screencasts (a video recording of a screen), screenshots, and images in your communications, as well as best practices for getting your employees on board to ensure success.



Breaking out of monotone.

For many of us, the way we work mirrors our communication preferences outside of the office: we value quick answers, flexibility, and we don't need as much in-person face time to feel connected. As a result, many companies have fallen into a habit of communicating in monotone. In other words, they're using plain-text email for almost all interactions. Compare this to how we communicate outside of the office - which is far from monotone and encompasses images, videos, visual cues, GIFs and more - and it's a stark contrast.

Email is a valuable tool, but falls short when it's used to communicate via a block of text with an unclear message. A constant stream of emails often inundates employees and can easily be overwhelming. And despite [evidence](#) that visuals, like videos and screenshots, are easier to digest and increase productivity and engagement, businesses are twice as likely to increase their use of plain-text email over any other type of communication.

A report from [The Economist Intelligence Unit](#) highlighting communication barriers in the workplace found that:

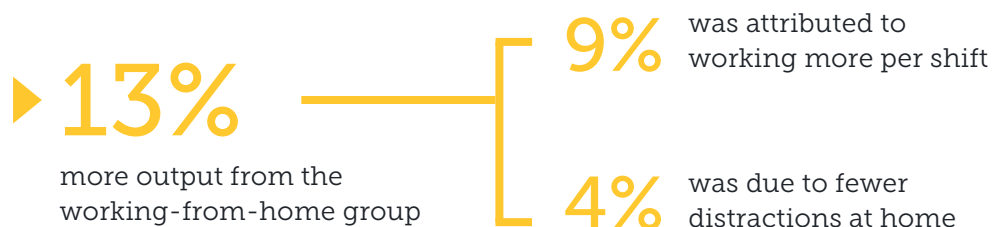
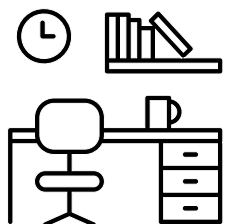
- 31% of millennials use instant messaging at work every day, compared to only 12% of baby boomers.
- 44% of survey respondents said communication barriers led to a delay or failure to complete projects, 31% cited low morale, 25% missed performance goals, and 18% lost sales.
- 60% of respondents use email every day. Yet only 40% said it is a very effective means of communication.



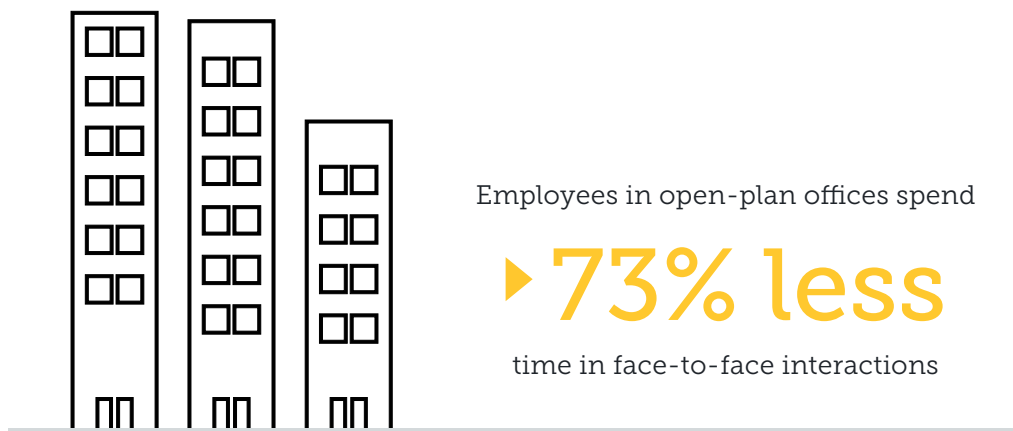
Communicating in the era of open-office plans and global workforces

Technology enables businesses of any size to operate on a global scale. And adopting regional workforces or allowing employees to work remotely has many benefits. It also adds complexity to how we communicate, especially when you take into account different time zones and language barriers.

A two-year [study](#) by Stanford found that the boost in productivity among remote workers was equivalent to an extra full day of work each week, or 13% more output from the working-from-home group. Of the 13% increased output, 9% was attributed to working more per shift, while the remaining 4% was due to fewer distractions at home. Not only did the participants take fewer breaks and sick days, but attrition halved. Yet, after the study concluded, half of the participants opted to stop working from home. The reason? They felt too isolated.



Employees working in open-office environments aren't faring much better. Originally designed to facilitate collaboration (the idea being if you can see each other, you're more likely to interact), open-plan offices are now receiving backlash. While most people know that collaboration is directly related to success, open-office environments have failed to be conducive to conversation. It's quite the opposite: a recent Harvard Business School [report](#) found that employees in open-plan offices spend 73% less time in face-to-face interactions.

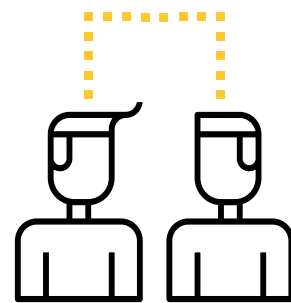


The current state of internal communications

You don't need remote employees or open-plan offices to experience breakdowns in internal communication. For many businesses, interdepartmental collaboration or interactions between managers and employees can also be challenging. Even if you're approaching each other with similar language and common goals, nuances can lead to misunderstandings and confusion.

Additionally, many organizations miss out on opportunities to glean knowledge from subject matter experts within different departments. Once an employee retires or moves on to a different company, for instance, their knowledge often goes along with them - a scenario often referred to as 'brain drain'.

- ▶ **Even if you're approaching each other with similar language and common goals, nuances can lead to misunderstandings and confusion.**





Why is this important for my business?

All businesses are unique in terms of size, goals, industries, and operations. Regardless, every organization can benefit from increasing knowledge and information sharing internally. This includes giving your employees the tools they need to succeed, as well as adequately setting the stage for a shift in the way you communicate.

Visuals: The key to effective communication. Videos, screenshots, and screencasts are powerful because not only are the messages shared visually better retained (after three days, people remember 10% of what they hear. If paired with a relevant image, the retention increases to [65%](#)), but they're also versatile.

Commonly reserved for only the most important external messages, there are multiple places and times when visual content can be used internally as well. Examples include new employee onboarding, training, providing feedback, and much more. Visual content also saves time since it's processed by our brains faster. More importantly, it ensures messages are clear and concise so that everyone has a shared and consistent experience.

Why communicating with videos, screencasts, and screenshots is critical to your business:

- Ensures what you're trying to convey is clear and concise
- Everyone has a shared and consistent experience
- It saves time by relaying messages faster
- Allows information to be delivered or captured once, and then reused and viewed multiple times

Before we get into the specifics of how you can transform your communications, let's break down why updating your business communications has become imperative. In our recent report, ['The Value of Visuals,'](#) we found businesses are missing out on opportunities to increase productivity and improve employee satisfaction.

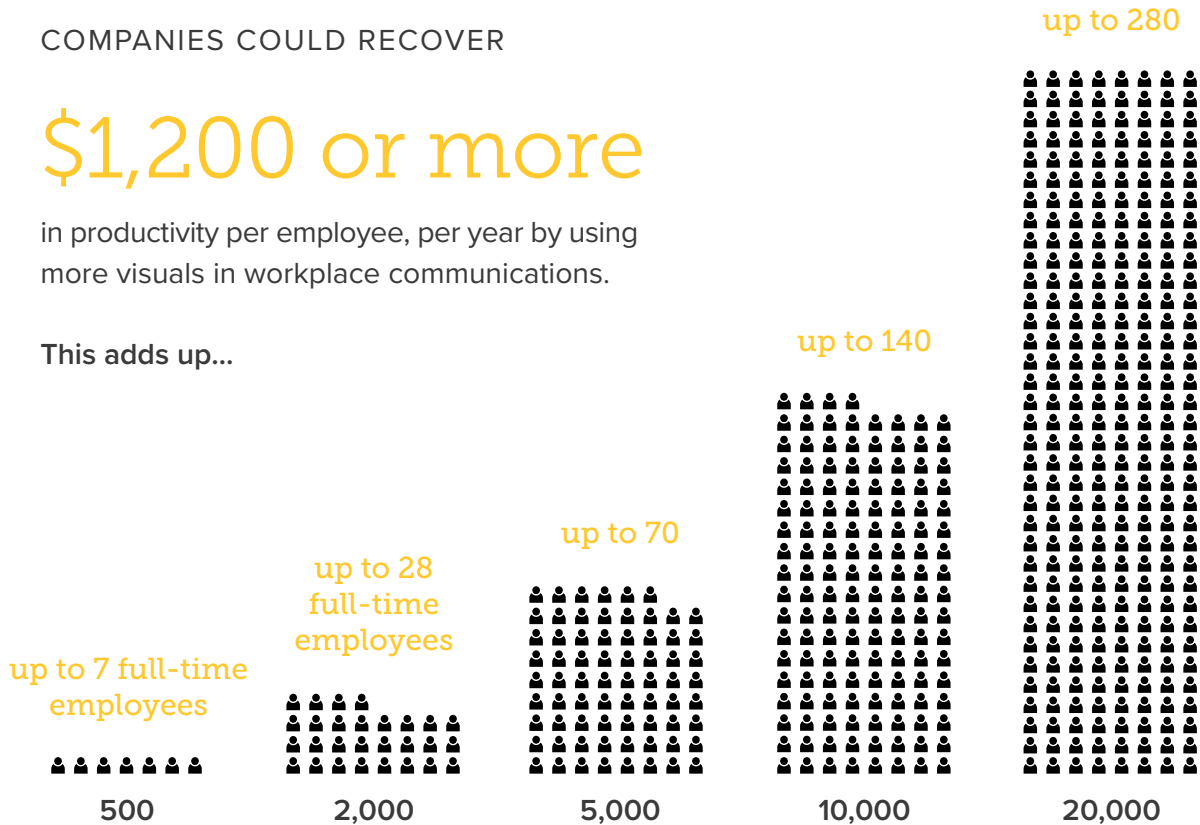
How much could you gain from using visuals?

COMPANIES COULD RECOVER

\$1,200 or more

in productivity per employee, per year by using more visuals in workplace communications.

This adds up...



Your Business	Your Employees
<p>If businesses used visual communications effectively, \$1,200 of productivity could be unlocked each year for every affected employee.</p> <p>That's like having seven extra full-time employees a year for a business of 500 workers.</p> <p>79% of employees believe that using screenshots or video would improve their business.</p>	<p>Gain an extra 33 minutes and 36 seconds per 40-hour work week.</p> <p>Absorb information 7% faster when communications are visual.</p> <p>Younger workers are 2X more likely to want more visual communications at work.</p>

Where do I start?

Common pitfalls that prevent knowledge sharing

Three common pitfalls prevent collaboration or employees sharing what they know with others. Don't let these misconceptions hold your business back from adopting more efficient communication practices. Let's dig deeper into each and how you can solve for them.

Pitfall #1: It takes too long

The perceived time it takes to create a video or screencast or to markup an image is almost always linked to quality expectations. Especially in a time where nearly [one billion hours](#) of videos are watched on YouTube each day, it's easy to believe every piece of content needs to be perfect. But every video doesn't require the same level of quality. If you find yourself in a cycle of perfection, take a step back and think about the goal and audience of the video. These two factors will help you determine how polished your video needs to be. Boost your team's confidence by explicitly outlining what content is higher-priority and needs more polish, such as external-facing or containing high-value messages, and the lower-priority content they can create.

Pitfall #2: You need special skill sets

Switching to visually capturing and representing knowledge can make some people feel uneasy. Whether it's nerves around being a first-time creator or uncertainty around the execution, many people have no idea how easy it is to create visuals. Technology has shifted how people — especially younger generations — communicate. Software like [Camtasia](#) and [Snagit](#) make it quick and easy to create and share high-quality images and video that deliver messages more quickly and better than text alone.

Pitfall #3: Unsure of where to start

Finding new ways to incorporate visual content into your organization doesn't have to be overly elaborate or complicated -- it's meant to simplify. There are lots of ways to use visuals to make communication easier and help get the point across. First, determine what you are trying to achieve and how visuals can help with that. Then empower your employees and guide them to make sure it actually gets done.

Work better and faster

6 ways you can start using visuals right now

There are several ways that visuals can enhance your communications, allowing consistent messages across your organization. While each department and team will have different needs and uses, here are some common scenarios to help get you started:

- 1. On-boarding and Training Videos:** It's time-consuming to schedule face-to-face training sessions every time a new employee joins your organization. It's also overwhelming to be a new employee with so much to learn from the start. Make on-boarding easier by creating narrated screencasts that show how to use your organization's standard programs. Your employees will be able to re-watch it when they need a refresher, and you'll save time by avoiding in-person training sessions.
- 2. Software Rollout and Training:** Use screenshots and screencasts to show your employees how to use new programs or software during an internal rollout. Teams also can provide answers to questions that are frequently asked, creating easy, repeatable responses for staff.
- 3. Recorded Webinars and Live Events:** If your marketing or product teams are hosting a webinar or live event for customers, internally sharing the recordings will help keep all employees informed on updates. Those teams are already creating the content, so try to repurpose it.
- 4. Information Delivery:** Information delivery might consist of giving an update, providing context, sharing results, or delivering additional background. If the information is coming out of a specific department, they may be able to explain the information quicker and easier, taking the burden off your team.
- 5. Building Buzz:** Use high-energy videos to get your staff excited about an event, new opportunities, or company milestones. And the best people to build a buzz around these scenarios are the teams involved. For instance, if your sales team surpassed its quota, that team would likely be excited to share the news with the rest of the organization.
- 6. Providing Feedback:** Giving and receiving feedback on content or projects can be challenging. Teams are often left waiting for input on projects. And sometimes that feedback is in paragraphs of text, leaving it open to interpretation. Using visuals to show specific feedback can reduce the time spent sending emails back and forth and helps everyone get on the same page. It also makes the approval process go much faster and smoother.



For success, start small

For our customers, we recommend starting small. Begin by finding a couple of champions who are excited or are already sharing information visually and give them the tools they need to do it successfully. When a few people start communicating with videos, screencasts, or screenshots, it usually has an influential effect on everyone else. You'll begin to see more people watching and engaging. Their colleagues will start inquiring about how they created the content, and more people will want to communicate visually too. From there, you can improve and optimize to create standardized processes.

- **Step 1:** Don't assume. Talk to your employees; ask them how they'd prefer to communicate and any challenges they've experienced. This will help you narrow down your organization's specific goals and needs.
- **Step 2:** Identify a handful of internal champions who have expressed a desire to communicate in the past or do a lot of knowledge sharing.
- **Step 3:** Set expectations. Communicate to employees the value of why they should use visuals: what's in it for them, how much time it will save, and the ways it will improve their workflow.
- **Step 4:** Create an internal communications portal. This will act as a learning page where all of the tools and resources, like instructions and templates, are housed.
- **Step 5:** Foster and nurture it. Infuse your new way of communicating throughout the company. Make it a habit by encouraging employees to create a new image, video, or screencast once a month.

Get started today

Learning a new way to communicate doesn't have to be difficult. With the right tools, knowledge, and leadership buy-in and support, incorporating visuals into everyday processes will be straightforward and painless.

Ready to get started?

Get ideas, guides and inspiration right to your inbox by subscribing to our monthly [TechSmith Newsletter](#). From blog posts to tutorials to ultimate guides, our newsletter will help you get started with visuals in your workplace today.

