**DRAFT FINAL– FOR POSTING ON USC RESOURCES**

**7-19-24**

**USC/IABC Study Finds Hybrid Work is Boosting Morale While Threatening Corporate Culture**

**Communications Professionals Are Taking Center Stage to Preserve Corporate Culture During the Hybrid Work Revolution**

**LOS ANGELES (July 2024) —** Although work-from-home (WFH) policies have improved morale, particularly among remote workers, internal communications professionals say these new work policies and practices are weakening corporate culture.

In a joint study with the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), the USC Center for Public Relations found that internal communications professionals play a pivotal role in maintaining corporate culture as their organizations navigate the hybrid work revolution. The study's results were previewed at IABC’s World Conference last month and released today.

Among the key findings:

* **Hybrid is here to stay.** Ninety-four percent of professionals surveyed report their companies have hybrid policies in place, and a similar percentage has included some version of WFH in their long-term planning. Despite this seemingly permanent change, less than half of employers conduct regular check-ins with their remote staff, and only 20% track employee attendance in the office.
* **Happiest at home.** The study also shows that morale is viewed as good or very good among hybrid employees (37%) and by fully remote (41%) workers. By comparison, only 18% of on-site employees appear to be happy about their situation. The data suggests that flexible work arrangements contribute to higher employee satisfaction.
* **Challenging culture.** However, in this post-COVID work environment, 2/3 of communications specialists report that maintaining corporate culture is their most significant challenge. Notably, 37% feel their company’s culture has weakened under the new work arrangements. Forty-five percent believe the conflict between management and staff has increased over disagreements about promotions and workload.
* **Happy Hour isn’t. Roughly one-third of respondents said their company’s return-to-office (RTO) policies were effective, while 70% said WFH and remote worker policies were working. Relationships with coworkers were the most frequently cited tactic to lure people back to the office; only 18% mentioned Happy Hours.**

“This ‘remote revolution’ represents a significant long-term risk for firms that are unable to adapt and a competitive advantage for those who do’” **said Fred Cook, director, USC Center for Public Relations. “**Fairfax Cone, the founder of renowned ad agency FCB, famously said, ‘Our inventory goes down the elevator every night.’ Today, it’s more like, ‘Our inventory goes down the elevator twice a week…if we are lucky.’”

The complete workplace study and nine core recommendations from the USC Center for PR on how internal communicators can redefine the future of their workplaces are posted at xxx.

**About the USC Center for Public Relations**    
Based at the [USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism](http://annenberg.usc.edu/), the [USC Center for Public Relations (CPR)](https://annenberg.usc.edu/research/center-public-relations) connects corporations, agencies, academics and students to define the future of our industry and to develop those who will shape it. Under the direction of longtime Golin agency leader and current USC Annenberg professor [Fred Cook](https://annenberg.usc.edu/faculty/fred-cook), CPR conducts and publishes research reports forecasting the future of communication and forward-looking, thought-provoking content authored by our [board of advisers](https://annenberg.usc.edu/research/center-public-relations/center-public-relations-board-advisers), [staff](https://annenberg.usc.edu/research/center-public-relations/center-public-relations-staff) and USC colleagues. Signature initiatives include the [Global Communication Report](file:///C:\Users\ron\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\VJO4UPMC\annenberg.usc.edu\gcr), USC Annenberg’s Kenneth Owler Smith Symposium, the [USC Relevance Report](file:///C:\Users\ron\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\VJO4UPMC\annenberg.usc.edu\relevance), and the Lead On! leadership forum for women in communication. Follow the Center for PR on social media (@USCCenterforPR, #PRFUTURE).