

E-book

Unleash manager superpowers with Microsoft Viva

A guide for HR and managers to improve the employee experience and business outcomes



Microsoft Viva helps managers navigate the new world of work

Insights from Microsoft's Work Trend Index indicate that the rise of hybrid work and flexibility has come with new challenges. In order to succeed, leaders need to balance employee interests with the success of the organization.¹ Managers play a critical role in making that happen—and their organizations know it.

Employees who recommend their manager are over two times more likely to be engaged, to stay with the organization, and to have clarity about their company's strategy.² Innovative technology can help managers—and their teams and the organization—succeed in this new hybrid era, helping align everyone around the most impactful work and create a culture where people thrive.

Microsoft Viva is that technology. The integrated employee experience platform brings together solutions managers need to address the unique challenges of both their teams and individuals during this shift in work.

Microsoft Viva supports managers across four distinct employee experience areas: insight, growth, connection, and purpose. In this guide, HR and managers will learn how they can inspire their teams in each area.

- **Insight:** Balance team productivity and wellbeing with insights
- **Growth:** Support employee learning to boost team performance
- **Connection:** Inspire teams through community and 1:1 connections
- **Purpose:** Align team work to top org priorities



Insight

Balance team productivity and wellbeing with insights

From flagging burnout to surfacing opportunities for greater wellbeing, evidence-based insights enable managers to assess their team's needs for more balanced, focused, and productive work. But managers need to augment these insights about how people work with an understanding of how they feel, and research shows that many employees are not asked about their work experiences.

Less than half (43%) of employees say their company solicits feedback at least once a year. And even among those who are asked, 75% still feel like it's not enough—and 80% of managers agree.¹ Without consistent feedback, managers are left to operate on assumptions and best guesses.

Hybrid work has made it harder than ever for managers to keep a pulse on their team. It's also made collecting critical feedback more difficult. But both are possible with the right tools.

48%

of employees and 53% of managers report that they're burned out at work¹



Actions for managers

- Check the pulse during moments that matter
- Reduce meetings for less stress, more focus
- Drive team performance with regular 1:1s
- Boost productivity with sustainable, flexible work
- Calibrate after-hours communication to set the tone

Insight

Check the pulse during moments that matter

Employees are more satisfied when they feel heard (90% vs. 69%) and are engaged (89% vs. 73%). On the other hand, employees who don't think their companies use their feedback are more than twice as likely to consider leaving in the next year.¹

Viva Pulse empowers managers to seek regular and confidential feedback on their team's experiences, helping spot potential issues before they derail team morale. A built-in, research-backed question library prompts managers to ask the right survey questions, while sentiment analysis surfaces trends on employee engagement. Along with results, Viva Pulse provides next steps, suggested actions, and recommended learning based on the feedback received. Managers can share de-identified and aggregated results with their teams to spark conversations on important topics to help drive team success.

Reduce meetings for less stress, more focus

Meeting-free days—days that people can dedicate uninterrupted time to their projects, check tasks off their lists, and spend focused time on strategic work—help improve both collaboration and productivity. In a survey of 76 companies employing more than 1,000 people, participants reported that meeting-free days were associated with better autonomy, lower stress, and better communication.³

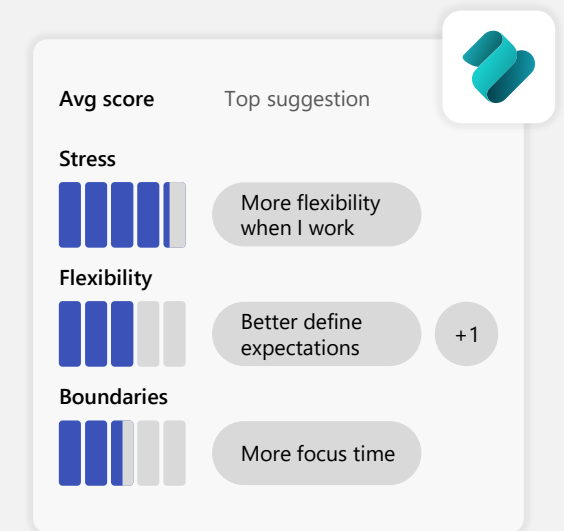
Viva Insights gives managers visibility into the overall team experience, including time spent in meetings and how much time is available for focused work. This data, which protects individual privacy, helps managers decide if (and when) no-meeting days should be scheduled. A shared focus plan from managers and the ability to silence Microsoft Teams notifications can also help employees zero-in on what's important without distractions.

Drive team performance with regular 1:1s

Compared to in-person managers, hybrid managers struggle to trust that employees are doing their best work (36% vs. 49%).¹ One-on-one meetings and active, authentic listening are key to rebuilding that trust and helping direct reports navigate change, align around shared goals, and maintain connectedness—all while working remotely.

Viva Insights alerts managers when it's been too long since their last 1:1 with an employee and makes it easy to schedule a much-needed check-in on the spot.

Viva Pulse enables managers to send teams ultra-quick, research-backed surveys to understand unique, team-wide work patterns and needs. Managers can then use those insights to jumpstart deeper 1:1 conversations and actionable suggestions for improving team outcomes.



Viva Pulse helps managers gauge things like employee stress and flexibility.

Employees who feel their companies use employee feedback to drive change are 21% more satisfied and 16% more engaged than those who don't.¹

Insight

Boost productivity with sustainable, flexible work

In survey after survey, most respondents report wanting a flexible, hybrid work schedule. Workers today are more than three times as likely to be working remotely and more than twice as likely to be participating in hybrid work than before the pandemic.⁴ For many employees, this is great news: this kind of schedule means more space for taking care of kids, supporting elderly family, and building new skills. But the line between work and life can quickly blur, and it's up to managers to help their people maintain boundaries.

Viva Insights helps managers understand how hybrid work impacts flexible schedules and the ability to unplug. Several reports, like after-hours work and quiet time, give managers actionable, aggregate data to encourage their team to use their time more effectively—professionally or personally.

Calibrate after-hours communication to set the tone

Flexible work is one of the hallmarks of the hybrid era, but managers shouldn't take it for granted. Instead, they need to model healthy collaboration habits and minimize work-related notifications during their team's personal time. Those habits will rub off on employees: one study found that when managers start their work week on Sunday night, their direct reports do too.⁵

Viva Insights simplifies scheduled emails and chats so that communications are delivered during recipients' working hours. It also gives managers much needed visibility into work patterns that might lead to burnout and stress. At the same time, managers can reflect on their own work patterns, seeing how much their after-hours meetings, emails, chats, and calls affect their teams' overall quiet hours.

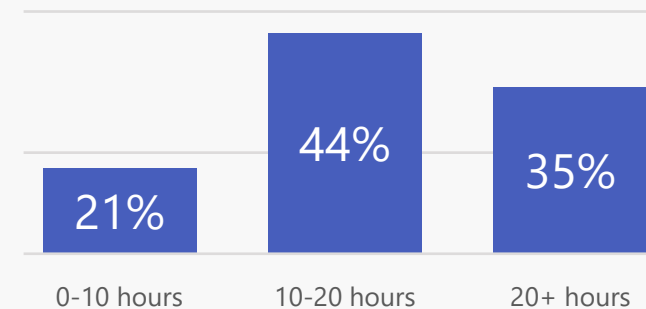


Balance: Protect time outside of working hours

35%

of employees are collaborating after hours for more than 3 hours each week

Average weekly time spent collaborating after hours



Take action

Setup quiet time to mute notifications from Outlook and Teams outside of your set working hours

[Get started](#)

[View more actions](#)

Viva Insights offers managers reports and actionable suggestions about after-hours work.

After acting on data from Viva Insights, PayPal saw a 10% reduction in off-hours meetings and 10% increase in employee focus hours.⁶

Growth

Support employee learning to boost team performance

The importance of learning and growth cannot be overstated. Personalized, self-serve training, especially in the flow of work, empowers employees to build their skills and solidify their perspectives whenever the time is right for them.

Employees today consider opportunities to learn and grow as the top driver of a great work culture—a huge jump from 2019 when those attributes were ranked ninth.¹ Just like health and wellbeing, the pandemic shifted what employees consider important at work.

Managers can make or break learning experiences for their teams. Those that bake employee growth and skilling opportunities into team culture through technology can expect better results, retention, and, ultimately, job satisfaction.

91%

of employees say it's very or extremely important for managers to encourage experimentation and learning²



Actions for managers

- Centralize learning content for self-serve options
- Create learning collections curated for specific team needs
- Empower teams to quickly find answers on their own

Growth

Centralize learning content for self-serve options

It's a big responsibility for managers to ensure all their team members take the right training courses for onboarding, ongoing development, and compliance. Bringing all those requirements into one place, and empowering individuals to learn at their own pace, can streamline a manager's experience and improve team culture through skilling and growth.

Viva Learning enables managers to pin a learning tab in a Teams channel and then curate the courses, resources, and custom content employees see there. In turn, employees can complete those courses on their own time and ask questions in the centralized Teams discussion thread. Additionally, enhanced integration between Viva Learning and the LinkedIn Learning Hub creates a seamless navigation experience across both systems.

Create learning collections curated for specific team needs

Managers of hybrid teams need to make sure remote employees aren't overlooked for learning opportunities. Addressing this directly impacts employee retention: 76% of employees say they'd stay at their company longer if they could benefit from more learning and development support.¹ Ultimately, managers need to create equal learning opportunities for everyone through personalized experiences.

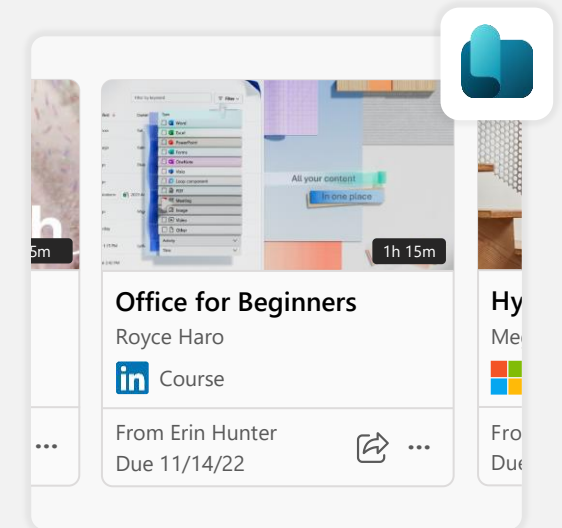
Viva Learning helps managers share courses and build learning collections for each team member. Employees see recommended courses from their managers in the My Learning tab, as well as a personalized snapshot of bookmarked, recently viewed, and completed courses. Managers can track the progress of recommended courses and send praise to those who are prioritizing growth.

Empower teams to quickly find answers on their own

Managers juggle a lot, leaving little time to answer basic (but important) new-hire questions or chase down experts for more complex asks. Self-serve tools for employees to answer their own questions lets managers refocus on higher-value activities without ignoring questions that help employees succeed.

Viva Topics is an AI-powered solution that discovers, organizes, and surfaces content in the apps people use every day. Curated pages offer intrinsic knowledge about topics specific to the organization.

Answers in Viva connects employees to answers by crowdsourcing knowledge from across the organization. It's a conversational experience that uses natural language to quickly match employee questions to expert answers.



Managers can share courses in Viva Learning to improve specific team skills.

Since deploying Viva Learning, **Music Tribe** has experienced an 80% increase in learning content engagement from employees.⁸

Connection

Inspire teams through community and 1:1 connections

One of the challenges of hybrid work is maintaining team cohesion and connection remotely. Without the traditional social benefits of an office—watercooler chats, in-person meetings, group lunches—people are struggling to find community at work.

Employees feel this struggle acutely, with 51% saying their relationships outside immediate work groups have weakened.¹ But the answer isn't forcing a return to the office since 94% of people still want to work remotely some of the time.²

To rebuild community, managers need to keep their team connected through virtual but authentic communications, collaboration, coaching, and praise.

43%

of leaders say relationship-building is the greatest challenge in remote and hybrid work⁹



Actions for managers

- Create a community presence
- Model authentic collaboration

Connection

Create a community presence

Social capital took a major hit with the shift to hybrid work. Employees miss their work friends but are loathe to give up the flexibility of working remotely. So, while 68% of leaders say ensuring team cohesion and connection has been a moderate to major challenge, a forced return to the office isn't the answer.¹ Instead, managers need to rebuild work communities virtually.

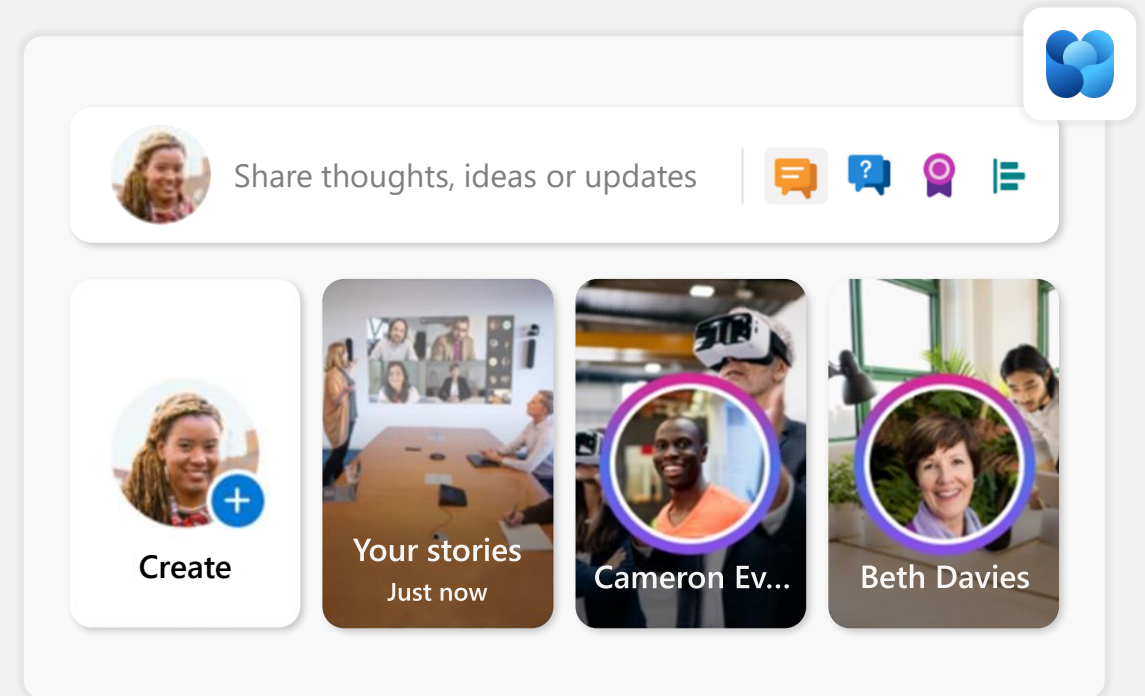
Viva Connections delivers a personalized experience for people to discover news, tasks, and resources that keep everyone engaged. These meaningful connections foster a culture of inclusion that can help managers bridge the social gap created by hybrid work.

Viva Engage brings people together through digital communities, virtual events, rich conversation tools, and more. It's a social space for employees and managers to connect informally, just like in the office.

Model authentic collaboration

Collaboration is the hallmark of team cohesion. Just like after-hours work, managers who model authentic collaboration set the tone for people to connect across their team. Of all manager traits, employees list authenticity as the No. 1 manager trait for supporting their best work.¹ But healthy, authentic collaboration can be hard to measure—and, as the saying goes, if you can't measure it, you can't manage it.

Viva Insights helps managers reflect on how well they are modeling healthy collaboration habits for their team. The app gives managers a glimpse into how often they're multi-tasking, double-booked, joining meetings on time, and impacting the team outside of their working hours. Metrics like these can tell managers if they're inadvertently hurting collaboration because they're too busy to fully engage with their team.



Viva Engage lets managers and team members connect on a more personal level.

"We're connecting people not just with the organization, but with each other. Through Viva, [we're] bringing together employees who might not encounter each other at work otherwise."¹⁰

Sarah Blum

Employer Branding and Recruiting Specialist | Blum

Purpose

Align team work to top org priorities

Employees want to know their work matters. It's up to leadership to create clarity around what's most important, but those shared goals and guidance are often lost in translation.

Among people managers, 80% say they'd benefit from more senior leadership clarity about impactful priorities. At the employee level, 81% say it's important that their managers help them prioritize their workload.¹ When everyone understands how individual goals connect to overall objectives, people are more engaged because work is more fulfilling.

Managers must act as a bridge between leadership and employees to ensure everyone is pulling in the right direction. This starts with clearly defining team goals and individual roles.

4.5x

Employees who report having clarity about their work priorities are **4.5x** as likely to say they're happy at their current company¹



Actions for managers

- Set goals to drive business outcomes in the flow of work
- Provide role clarity from Day 1 to align individual work to team progress

Purpose

Set goals to drive business outcomes in the flow of work

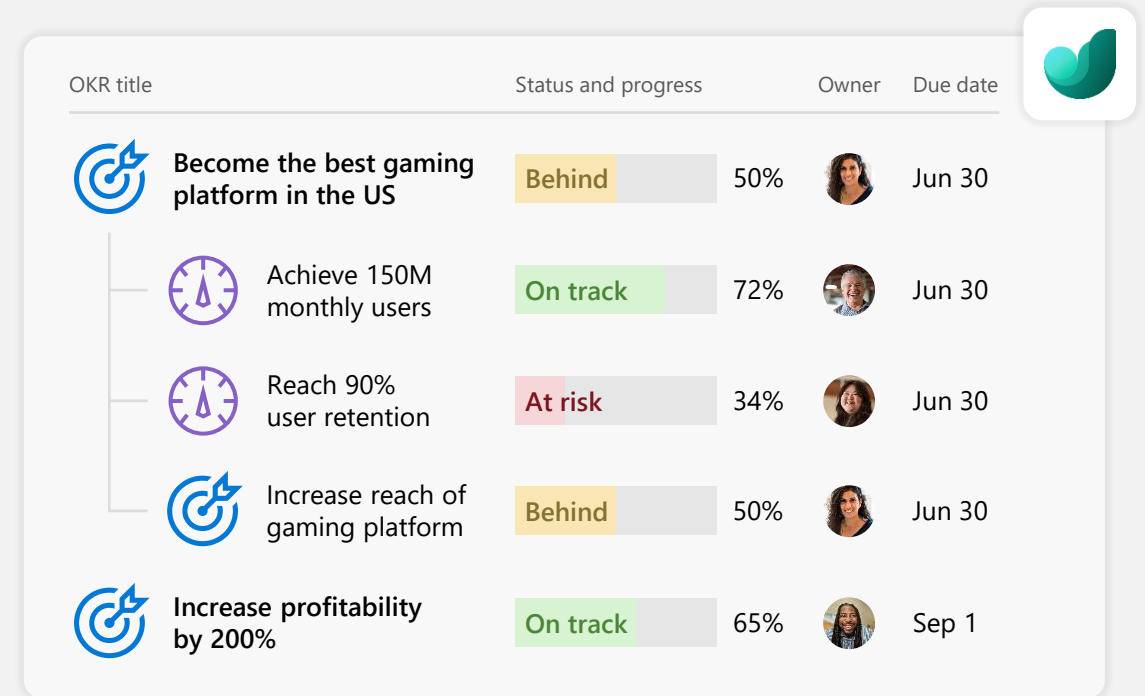
Shared team goals drive business results and give employees a greater sense of purpose. People who are clear about their work priorities are 4.5x as likely to say they're happy at their current company,¹ which makes goal-setting critical to the bottom line *and* employee experience.

Viva Goals is a goal-setting and management solution that connects teams to their organization's strategic priorities. Based on the objectives and key results (OKRs) framework, the app helps managers define team goals that individuals then manage through familiar tools like Teams and Azure DevOps. Team members can update goals progress on the fly and see how their results impact other efforts. Those updates are reflected in highly visual dashboards that automatically update to always show the latest information.

Provide role clarity from Day 1 to align individual work to team progress

Onboarding gives managers a unique opportunity to impress team ethos and expectations upon new hires. It's the perfect time to define a team member's role too, which, like shared goals, have a trickle-up effect. In an internal Microsoft study, new hires were 1.2x more likely to feel that they were contributing to their team's success when managers played an active role in onboarding.¹¹ Active managers impact both individual and team success, and with the right tools, they can ensure they're continuously engaged from Day 1.

Viva Insights helps leaders understand how much average weekly time managers are spending with new hires. They can also compare that number across work modes to make sure remote and hybrid individuals are receiving the same amount of facetime as in-person workers.



Viva Goals shows employees how their OKRs and projects impact org- and team-wide goals.

“Every employee at Microsoft should feel they can ask their manager how the projects they work on accrue to their team's key results. Now, since we've started tracking OKRs in Viva Goals, it's easy to have that discussion.”¹²

Maryleen Emeric
Chief of Staff, Modern Work | Microsoft

Best practices for managers from Microsoft

The ultimate way managers benefit from Microsoft Viva is when all the apps come together to enrich employee engagement from every angle. Microsoft discovered this firsthand and continues to see positive impacts from Viva.

Here are some of the ways Microsoft Viva has helped managers at Microsoft support their teams and uphold the company's Model, Coach, Care framework.¹³

- Live the culture by demonstrating a growth mindset and sharing skills acquired from Viva Learning
- Lead by example, using Viva Insights to adopt healthy work habits such as setting aside time for focused work
- Communicate with purpose and evangelize culture through Viva Engage
- Define goals and connect team output to overall business outcomes using Viva Goals
- Reach out beyond immediate teams with Viva Engage and publicly praise team members to make cross-team connections
- Help teams adapt and learn by leveraging Viva Learning to curate courses and training
- Use regular 1:1s to give employees the support they need and identify actionable ways to foster positive wellbeing at work with Viva Insights

When employees thrive, companies flourish. Microsoft Viva enhances the employee experience through solutions that support managers in all their roles. Learn more about Viva and how it can help your managers succeed in today's new world of hybrid work. Select the links to access that resource.

- [Microsoft Viva website](#)
- [Getting started guides and demos](#)
- [Case studies about organizations using Microsoft Viva](#)
- [Featured content from HR at Microsoft](#)



Endnotes

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