**“Challenges By Industry: Construction”** [**Transcript**](https://www.oak.com/blog/comms-in-a-nutshell-episode-4/)

Vic ([00:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=10.39)):

Welcome to Comms in A Nutshell, a podcast by Oak Engage, Comms in A Nutshell is the go-to place to listen to discussions with the Oak Engage team, industry experts and global brands about the world of work, internal comms, intranets, and how you can get the best out of your workforce. At the end of each episode, we wrap up all the tips and findings discussed, in a nutshell so that you can start implementing them right away, enjoy this episode.

Vic ([00:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=45.27)):

Hello everyone, and welcome to Comms in a Nutshell. So for today's episode, me and Scott are excited because we have more guests than usual. Today. We are going to be having a big discussion on the challenges that different industries have pre and post COVID. So today we're going to be exploring the construction sector and we're joined by Charlotte Offord from Vistry Group, Kate Jones from Tarmac and Georgia Williams from E K F B. So before we get into the questions, it would be really great to give the listeners a little overview and introduction from our guests on who they are and basically what your jobs entail and your roles. So Kate, do you want to start?

Kate Jones ([01:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=81.85)):

Yeah, sure. So, I'm head of communications and corporate affairs for tarmac, which brings in both employee engagement, PR um, and community engagement. Um, I've also recently stepped down from the board of the Institute of internal communications. So, I've got around 25, 26 years of, of employee engagement experience, all of which went out the window over the past months when COVID hit.

Vic ([01:47](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=107.17)):

Georgia, would you like to go next

Georgia Williams ([01:48](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=108.89)):

I'm Georgia Williams and I'm the internal communications manager at E K F B, um, E K F B is one of the main works contractors for HS two. So we're building 80 kilometres,­­ um, in the middle of the track. Um, I've been with E K F B for four years. And um, my role is looking after internal campaigns, um, making sure that messages kind of get out across the project. Um, we are set up in a slightly complicated way. We've got five sections within our project, so we've got five construction projects within the construction project. Um, we've got four parent companies, so we've got people coming, um, from different kind of other projects and their parent companies, they're all used to their own culture and processes and things like that. So we've got all these different layers of complexity. So my role is to kind of try and bring all of that together.

Vic ([02:41](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=161.8)):

Amazing. Excited to explore that later. And then Charlotte, would you like to tell everyone a bit about what you do?

Charlotte Offord ([02:49](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=169.04)):

Yep. So, I'm Charlotte Offord, I'm the internal communications manager for Vistry Group, um, which incorporates the brands, Bovis homes, Lindon homes, Drew Smith, and Vistry Partnerships. Um, so that's from a recent acquisition by Bovis homes, um, in January 2020 when we, um, when Bovis homes acquired, um, the Galaford Try's partnerships and regeneration business and Lindon homes. Um, so that along with the pandemic, um, has changed things a lot, I suppose, for internal comms. Um, so I've been working with, well previously as with Bovis homes, um, for five years now, five, six years. Um, and I've been in internal in internal communications. In communications general, generally for about 10 years.

Vic ([03:40](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=220.07)):

Lovely. Perfect. Thank you. And Scott, I'll let you take it away with the questions.

Scott ([03:44](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=224.28)):

Fantastic. Obviously pre COVID in the world of construction, um, what was normal for the industry and obviously construction. We expect a lot of your teams to be on the ground, you know, onsite that type of things. But when we look at kinda the central, the main offices, where you guys, was it kind of a hybrid approach? Was everybody in office nine to five? What was really the lay of the land? No pun intended, um, before COVID for your working environments, I'll start that question to Kate?

Kate Jones ([04:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=258.71)):

I suppose, what was normal for us Pre COVID is what's for everybody else now because we very much had a hybrid workforce with a good percentage of the workforce working remotely all day, every day, um, and a proportion of the workforce based in offices in a very predictable and easy to reach ways. Um, and, and with the, the hybrid future of work that we're all leaning into now that's become a reality for more sector, but it was always par for the course with construction. So, we always had that balance between hard-to-reach audiences who were hard to reach in every way they were working. Um, in unpredictable hours, they were working on unpredictable sites, technology doesn't always reach them. So yeah, I do. I do kind of have a bit of a wry smile these days. Cause I think our normal has a lot of other people’s normal. And so perhaps we were a little bit better equipped to deal with that change when it did happen.

Scott ([05:09](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=309.7)):

Was there such a drive for, um, your like central teams who were probably office based? Where they office based all the time or was there still split for hybrid

Kate Jones ([05:19](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=319.64)):

Or I think that, I think that depended on what role you were in. So if I, I look at my team, first of all, we are a national team serving all of our 10 business areas. So it was very rare that we were all in the office together. People were out on site with their stakeholders, they were out on site with their audiences. Um, so our team was working flexibly even even before this great flexible working experiment. But then we had, um, sort of professional functions and shared service center type environments where they would've been in the office all day, every day. Um, and that did change. So we sent everybody home just before the first lockdown with laptops to follow if they didn't have them. So yes, it did change for even some of our office based people. They were now working from home. Whereas previously that wasn't something that they'd done.

Scott ([06:05](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=365.43)):

Sure. And Charlotte, was that kind of the same for you?

Charlotte Offord ([06:08](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=368.94)):

No. No. So it, it has changed quite a lot, so we've always had the challenge where we are trying to reach people out on site. So, um, uh, so like our site and sales teams there out on site and that, that has always been, yeah, always been the challenge, but yeah, when COVID hit, we previously, it was pretty much, most people were working in the office nine to five. Um, and then yeah, COVID hit and it was case of there were people were working from home, um, on occasions, but generally the, the bulk people were, were in the offices. So, um, yeah, certainly it was, it was trying to reach everybody who were, who was working from home and, and I think at that time as well, it's also reassuring people. Um, we did have some people that were furloughed and, and, uh, yeah, it was quite a, quite a quick dramatic change that happened. So, um, yeah, but we have, we have settled now into kind of the new normal, um, and yes, it's like Kate said in our introduction, it's, it's a new world now of with internal comms and, uh, yeah. Trying to engage people and reach people.

Vic ([07:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=441.93)):

Did it take a while for people to adapt or was it all quite tricky at first?

Charlotte Offord ([07:26](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=446.87)):

I think people adapted pretty quickly. Um, I think it was more, I mean, there was a lot of stuff going on in people's personal lives as well. And, but work, I suppose, was the thing that people were still doing that was kind of the one normal, even though it was different than what was normal, but that was the kind of consistent thing that was happening in people's lives. Um, so, you know, when you think back to 2020, that time was just bonkers the in, in all senses. Um, but I think people did, did adapt reasonably quickly. I mean, we were, we were lucky we were all quite kind of equipped to be working from home. Um, so yeah, it was just a case of, and, um, you know, with technologies and Microsoft teams, you could quite easily kind of slide into, into that new normal

Scott ([08:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=501.45)):

And then Georgia, I guess. Well, that's an interesting one for you because you are kind of many businesses within one as well. So I guess what, what was the, the, the normal pre COVID and pandemic for kind of, for yourself?

Georgia Williams ([08:35](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=515.61)):

So for us pre COVID, we were actually quite a small business and we had, um, we had one big office in Birmingham. There was about 160 people, 180 people. Um, and then we just opened another office in Birmingham. Um, and I think that was in January, 2020. So we were in there for about six weeks or eight weeks. Um, but I remember back then, it was actually really difficult for us. We, we tried to push people using teams more and more, um, in doing, um, video calls. Um, and the construction mentality was very much you're in the office. You have your meeting. Um, we had to people go in between the two offices to have meetings instead of doing it over teams, which is something that we were really trying to promote. Um, so when, when COVID hit, actually it was, it was really strange for us because everyone just started using teams straight away and they really adapted to it really well. Um, we set up some sessions that one of the first things that we did actually was set up at some sessions with our, IT Team explaining the basics of teams, um, and looking back now people just seem to be able to just use it just naturally. Um, so yeah, I think that was, yeah, people were very much, they had to be face to face before COVID um, for us anyway.

Vic ([09:53](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=593.48)):

Yeah. I think the main theme is COVID and pandemic. So that leads us into the next question nicely. So what do you think has been the biggest change to internal comms over the last 18 months? And what have each of you learned from this? Um, so Georgia, would you like to start with this one?

Georgia Williams ([10:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=610.83)):

Um, yeah, so I think for me it's been that shift to digital and that people like adapt into technology so quickly. Um, like I said, people were forced to rely on teams. Um, and we also found very quickly that people needed a central point of communication. So for us, we already had in the pipeline that we would have our intranet launched. Um, and I think in a way for us, it was quite a good test. We, we already knew we were gonna have a, all these different sites set up with people in different locations and we needed to have that central point for people to feel like they were part of the bigger picture. And, um, we kind of had to test that over COVID and it worked,um, for us it was kind of a lifeline because people felt like they had that central place to, to be onboarded and learn about the team and be a part of the brand, and um, so yeah, it's just about having that central point to take people back to.

Vic ([11:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=662.92)):

Yeah. So that was launched during the pandemic.

Georgia Williams ([11:05](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=665.47)):

Yeah. We launched it in August, end of July, beginning of August, 2020. Um, and at that point we had lots of new starters coming on every week. We'd have like 15, 20 new people starting every single week. So we really needed to send them somewhere to get them to feel like they were part of the, the project and the culture. So it worked really well.

Vic ([11:26](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=686.68)):

That's great. And Kate, what do you think have been the biggest challenges over the last 18 months for you at Tarmac?

Kate Jones ([11:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=693.37)):

Well, we, we also launched a new intranet in the middle of the pandemic with half the team on furlough. So we're clearly gluts for punishment here. I think there's two aspects for me. One is around channels and the other is around relationships. So the first thing we did, um, was kind of clear the airwaves for that really important COVID related information to reach people. So, um, we'd already, as Georgia said, we'd already intended to do some work on our channels mix and COVID was a perfect catalyst to, you can do anything and, and blame COVID. So we used that to full advantage. So we turned off quite a few of the ad hoc communications that were happening in favor of a dedicated and clearly signed, posted Wednesday Roundup. So people knew, um, that if they got something on a daily basis, it was the daily COVID briefing, which was coming out, um, at the end of every single day and then everything else was saved to Wednesday.

Kate Jones ([12:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=743.12)):

So we did do a little bit of channel shift or channel shove, um, under the, under the guidance of under the guise of COVID. Um, so channels a little bit, but really I think the, that changed for us most was we, we went from, as, as others have said, we went from being in the office or being on site to working at home. And that meant we'd gone from sort of four, 500 sites to about 5,000 sites. People were in their homes and we had to, um, acknowledge the fact that they were now working at home or rather living at work because boundaries just got blurred. And that did so much in terms of upping the wellbeing conversation, humanizing communications, taking into account people's individual needs, where they were juggling homeschooling and still trying to work whilst they were in smaller teams due to furlough, et cetera. So I think it really did wonders for just that humanization and understanding that people needed different things at different times and the relationships therefore needed to change between managers and their teams. So I think channels was one, but relationships was, was where we saw the biggest change. And that's continued even now as we, we formalize our plans for what hybrid working looks like longer term, the feedback continues to come through that people want to see that humanization and that treated as individuals continue.

Vic ([13:44](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=824.26)):

Definitely. And Charlotte did Vistry group launch for an intranet during the pandemic? Was that the same for you guys?

Charlotte Offord ([13:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=830.29)):

No, no. Sorry. Different there. Um, no, we had, um, in an intranet pre pre pandemic, um, which became very central to, to what we were doing. Um, I mean the biggest challenge for us and the biggest change has been, um, the acquisition of, Galaford Try and Lindon homes and um, and the partnerships side of things. So we, we've kind of, we doubled in size as a business. Um, um, so that happened, yeah, January, 2020, which was just, just before the pandemic, um, then yeah, that hits and then, so everything is just completely different. Um, so we're kind of looking at how we align our communications and how we engage with a new audience as well, I suppose, and, and things like the internet, which we already had, but that was new to half of the business. Um, and then getting those, I suppose, those key messages out around the pandemic and what was happening with the COVID at that time.

Charlotte Offord ([14:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=890.78)):

It, it, yeah, it was quite quite challenging, but we looked to, to streamline, um, streamline the comms. So people knew where to find things, whether it was on the internet or when to expect, um, communications to come through every Monday morning, we have a audio that comes from our CEO, uh, Vistry voice we call it. And that's really good cuz people know that is the key messages are always included in that, like Kate said as well and kinda pick up what I said earlier. I think a massive thing has been that the blurred lines between kind of your personal life and your work life, you know, working from home, you, you are bringing your work, home with you previously. You know, it was very separate going through, I think mental health wise and wellbeing everybody's been hit one way or another in the last couple of years.

Charlotte Offord ([15:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=939.92)):

And as a business, I think you, there's kind of a, a responsibility of, of looking after people there and with what we're trying to communicate out. I think that has to be incorporated. And it's another way of to engage people. So like we've launched things. We've had time talk sessions, which launched during lockdown, which would just be looking at certain topics. So for example, juggling childcare and work at the same time, which a lot of people were trying to do at the time, which is really, really challenging. So it just gave an opportunity for people to come together. Talk about those challenges, just over lunch time, you know, half hour chat, they went down really well. So communications has changed a lot in not just kind of obvious ways, but I think that underlying looking after people's wellbeing, mental health, it's, it's all got to be part of the messaging that goes out.

Scott ([16:34](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=994.3)):

Well, I'm glad you all talked about, uh, internets and tech. So we do know that tech technology has its limitations, uh, and it's kind of not as personable as, you know, face to face and being in the office. So I guess, how do you see technology combined with if the roles of management or kind of this, this new world of working as we get back to things, um, to kind of make the most of, of both. Um, so Charlotte, I, I guess we'll start with you if that's okay, because you talking about the wellbeing of, of staff, um, that you've been doing.

Charlotte Offord ([17:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1022.5)):

Yeah. Um, so I suppose one of the big things that we've introduced, which is use technology, um, is using the Microsoft live teams function. So where previously our executive leadership team would go around the offices and maybe annually they'd go around, do a presentation to, to all the staff, obviously during COVID, this couldn't happen. We launched a as, as an online session, so people could send in their questions that way they could do a presentation and it's gone down really, really well. And we, how many do we do? Yeah, a couple, a couple a year plus. So our head of house building and the head of partnerships business, they also do these sessions as well. And they've gone down really well because people also got the option to do ask questions anonymously. So it's a good way of just getting what people really thinking.

Charlotte Offord ([17:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1071.7)):

And I think the executive leadership team, they, they do actually quite enjoy it because you're getting, you are getting people's real feedback really. And you know, if you're in a room filled with a hundred people and you're doing a presentation and people ask to ask a question, people want to ask questions. You're not gonna necessarily get at people, always gonna be a bit wary of what they're asking, but when you can hide behind an anonymous button, then, um, people there are more willing to say what, what they, they think, which is really useful. It does really help with, with feedback and, and helping with that engagement. And they've been really popular and it is something even now as we're kind of getting out of the pandemic and when things have been quite, we we've kept them up and are kind of looking to do face to face presentations as well as these online sessions, because they've, they have been really popular.

Scott ([18:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1118.88)):

Do you think you get actually some better interaction via tech rather than face to face because the anonymity

Charlotte Offord ([18:46](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1126.46)):

Anonymity that yeah, I think so. Yeah. I think, think you do, you do get, um, you get better engagement, um, in that way. So yeah. And that's been, that has been a, a real positive, um, that's come out from, from that, which I think it might have been something we we'd looked at doing, but maybe because the company had grown so much, we might have looked at doing it, but we were definitely pushed into doing it because of the pandemic and it, and it's, it's gone down well,

Scott ([19:11](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1151.24)):

Georgia, you kind of see, has it had any limitations technology for, for you guys or have you found any kind of ways that it works to be more adaptive? Like, like Charlotte?

Georgia Williams ([19:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1161.19)):

Yeah. Similarly we used to do a, we called it a team talk in our kitchen, in our office every two weeks. And that was at the main office in Birmingham and everyone just came and got into the kitchen and we just decided that with things like that, we would just carry them on, but through teams. So we carried the team talk on, we just seamlessly went onto teams. We found that we got more engagement because people would sit at home. They could sit and listen rather than going, standing in the office when they had other stuff to do. We also have, um, what we call bite size learning, which is every week. Um, we get a different team to just talk about like updates that are going on in their function. And we just move that online. And again, we found it got more engagement because people could sit in the, their own home, um, do some other stuff.

Georgia Williams ([20:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1204.7)):

And listen in. One thing that I would say about, um, tech is in terms of management is we we've found over the last couple of years, we've had to roll out lots of new systems and processes, uh, that are technology based. And we just find that it, it, we need buy-in from people at all levels. So we always get a sponsor at a senior level to, to sponsor it. And we often take for us, it works. We take a bit of a competition approach between us at our different delivery sections and we'll get one or two of them to sponsor it. We'll try it in that section and we'll show it off. And then we get the kind of people coming in and saying, oh, I, I want, we want one of those. We want one of those. And it, that seems to work well for us.

Scott ([20:46](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1246.2)):

It's creating that kind of buy-in for the rest of that's good. That's great. Um, Kate, do you wanna jump in on this one?

Kate Jones ([20:52](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1252.16)):

Yeah, I suppose the, uh, the thing that teams particularly and other webinars has helped us do is, is reach the non connected in a new way. So previously a lot of our manager and site engagement would be boots on the ground. It has to be around 60% of our, our workforce is operational. So the, the senior leadership team had to go to them and they did. We had a really healthy program of, of safety leadership interventions, and also just the everyday getting out and about on sites. But we similarly to, to the others, we, we held monthly teams calls for each area, director supported by the comms team to start with, but they didn't manage to get that they were running their own teams calls by the end. So they did learn, um, and we would record those and they would be attended by both people still at work and people on furlough.

Kate Jones ([21:43](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1303)):

So those webinars or team sessions did a really good job of, uh, keeping people in touch with each other. And what was happening on the org around the organization, whether you were at furlough or, or whether you were still at work and because they were recorded, the operational workforce could then if they couldn't attend live, which a lot of them did, they could then listen afterwards. So we hadn't used teams and, and, and webinars in that way. Previously the, um, that the business update calls would usually be not calls they'd be face to face and they'd be site by site, by site. So the technology did help us there, but it was still in partnership with some very old school things like a telephone briefing line that we use for emergency updates and still line managers having that pivotal role of briefing their teams, because that is the main channel for our operational workforce.

Kate Jones ([22:31](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1351.09)):

It is, it is the quarry manager, the unit manager, the factory manager. So we still do and continue to do a lot of work to equip those guys. And it is mostly guys, um, to continue to engage their teams because nothing changed for a lot of those people. They were still working on the same sites, um, in the same way albeit with different COVID protocols. So a lot of the, a lot of the usual channels still continued as well as the new ones that we put on top. The other interesting use of technology for us was, um, we partnered with a gym to provide online classes, both live and on demand. And previously that gym was coming into a number of head office type locations to deliver yoga classes on an evening, um, twice a week or whatever it might be. But they, they broadened that so that all of our colleagues could sign up and attend those. So again, in the wellbeing space, the technology helped us take that off a wider as well,

Scott ([23:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1403.17)):

I think. Was it, was it yourself Kate that had kind of a bit of a limitation because did you used to kind of grab grad students or, or kind of junior members of the team and pulled 'em into meetings kind of, you know, easier.

Kate Jones ([23:35](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1415.96)):

Yes. We, we, we did see that happening and this, this wasn't, um, it, it wasn't designed by the comms team. It wasn't, you know, we didn't tell anybody to do this, but we did see some of our senior leaders proactively finding new ways to make the, to make the most of technology. So in the, in the old world, um, our younger colleagues or our new joiners would kind of rely on being in the office and seeing how other people operate in order to, to learn and to pick up tips as to how things get done around here and to learn about different stakeholders or different projects. Um, and obviously they couldn't do that anymore when they're all working from home. And so is their boss. So what we noticed was some of our senior directors saying to the client who they would normally be going down to London for a meeting, and you know, that it's now on teams.

Kate Jones ([24:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1461.49)):

So they would say, would you mind if our graduate, or if a junior member of the team joined the teams call and they would never have asked to bring that person all the way down to London for a three hour meeting, but to join a teams call and still pick up probably more than you would've done just by being in the office at the right place at the right time. That was really interesting. And we had that director speak about that experience on one of our senior leadership team call so that his peers could see that he was doing that and the benefit that it was bringing to his team.

Scott ([24:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1491.11)):

So I guess it's, it's using technology in the right way and not, not really just relying on it, but making it work for you and your business, which you guys have all kind of covered in, in the way that you've worked and found nice, you know, new nuggets that will hopefully you going forward.

Vic ([25:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1506.92)):

Perfect. Okay. So obviously connecting the disconnected, it's been a huge challenges for businesses during the pandemic, but how do you see this working in the future and in the new world of work? So Kate, would you like to kind of carry on from what you were speaking about?

Kate Jones ([25:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1523.92)):

Um, yeah, I think for us, it's, it's kind of more of the same. So I think it's connecting the disconnected for us now means how do you foster that sense of belonging when you've been working from home for the last two years now? Um, not everybody is back in our offices on a regular basis yet. So if I speak about the, the kind of people that, that, that went to work from home, whereas previously they in the office day in day out, they are telling us that because they are pretty much at home five days a week, they have lost something they've lost that sense of connection with their colleagues, with their teams and with the organization. So we are looking now at how do we, how do we blend the hybrid that they want? So you've spent part of your time at home, part of your time in a location, what's the right balance there.

Kate Jones ([26:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1570.69)):

And how do we re reignite that sense of belonging, um, connecting the traditionally disconnected that that's still a challenge. You know, we have limitations in terms of how we can use technology on personal devices and what people will consent to and what our it team allow us to do. So this has been a, a, again, in a catalyst where we have used the, the COVID situation to move that conversation on, but we're not done with it yet, so we haven't solved that problem. Um, so that was a problem pre COVID, it's a problem post COVID. We've just got now the new, the new layer as well of, of the newly disconnected. And how do we, how do we reconnect them with, with each other and with the organization,

Vic ([26:47](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1607.48)):

Georgia, would you like to go next? How are E K F B kind of adapting to the new world of work?

Georgia Williams ([26:52](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1612.34)):

So I think for us, um, we are looking at more of a hybrid approach in terms of, we, we are still keeping a lot of our team talks and things like that online, but are gonna try a hybrid style approach to them. So we're hoping to take them out on tour and stream them so that people on the ground get that physical interaction. Um, and it's still accessible online. Um, we've also got a series of events planned in, in person, um, to try and get people together. I think the problem for us in our offices is that because over the pandemic we had so many people join the business. They would join online. And the induction process itself online went really smoothly and it worked. But the problem is that you, you would only speak to people in your team. If you joined, you didn't have a reason to go out and speak to people in the other functions or the other teams, unless it was for work purposes.

Georgia Williams ([27:43](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1663.1)):

Whereas it, in the office, you, you talk to each other, you get to know people. So we are now a little bit of a, a crossroads. We've got a lot of people coming back into the office, but they don't necessarily know each other. They only know their teams that they would've spoken to when they joined online. So we are, we are trying to kind of merge the two together and get some in-person events going so that people know who each other are. And I think, again, just to reiterate my earlier point of having that central point of, of communication with people to go to, like the intranet has just been a lifeline and that's something that will continue, um, to be a lifeline, especially as we have so many people on different sites and in different sections across our project. Anyway, it's always been something that we'd we'd have, have to kind of look at.

Vic ([28:25](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1705.79)):

Perfect. And Charlotte, are Vistry group, are you guys taking a hybrid approach as well?

Charlotte Offord ([28:30](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1710.38)):

Yeah, so, um, very similar to, to what, uh, the other guys said, yeah, people are gradually coming back into the office a couple of days a week. We have changed how we communicate people and, and we kind of face those similar challenges where people, aren't necessarily feeling quite so kind of connected. And, and as Georgia said, those people who are new starters, they don't necessarily know people in, in other functions and teams. And it's just trying to bring people together and kind of create that team and, you know, bring people together without necessarily being able to bring people together. So things like the intranet, um, do really help and, and bringing in kind of suppose more personal things. So maybe people, um, get married or have a baby and, and have those kind of nice, nice things that you might necessarily know about if you're seeing people in the offices.

Charlotte Offord ([29:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1762.59)):

But if you're working from home, you don't necessarily have know that that's going on in people's lives. And, and it's creating those, I suppose, water cooler conversations, but bringing them online in a sense, so whereby you might just meet somebody from another function in the kitchen and start up a conversation and find out that way you need to try and kind of woo those people and bring those people in, but on an online format. So, yeah, I think it's, and in this case, the challenge of site people that still continues and it's yeah. Trying to connect with those, those guys that are not sat in front of a, a computer all day like office space staff gotta a new way of reaching people. So one of the things we're looking at is to try and push out the app a little bit more and the intranet app, so we can do some push notifications and engage people that way. And I think is kind of bringing in, I suppose, more, it's not just necessarily business news. You wanna get across to people because you need to kind of engage people in a different way and attract them. Um, so competitions and, and fun things on the intranet as well as in our, in the communications that are sent out to people, trying to kind of reach people in a different way. I think that's something that, that we are trying to do and we will do going forward.

Scott ([30:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1837.62)):

And there's been a lot of challenges over the last 18 months, two years that everyone's had to overcome. Um, and how has that really influenced your long term strategy moving forward,

Charlotte Offord ([30:46](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1846.66)):

Going forward, we will look at widening what we are communicating, bringing in kind of the wellbeing of people. And I think people want different things at work as well. People want more fulfilling work. Now, as I said earlier, with people, people was mental health has changed and, and people's outlook on life has changed and people have changed and people want that a little bit more. It's not just necessarily what they want from a business isn't just to get paid a nice company car and going to work in that sense. They want more. So as a business, I think it's offering people kind of that bit more and they want to work for a company they like, I suppose. Um, and, and they do have fulfilling work. Um, and we need to communicate that out. We need to offer kind of wider things for, for people, um, in that sense. And I think that is part of the longer term strategy. So it's not just, this is what's happening. These are our sites, this is what we're building. It's looking at other things that we are doing as a business on our kind of sustainability front and, um, what we're offering people through mental health and what we are offering people as kind of rewards. And, and there's more to it now, I think. And that is definitely what, what we are looking at going forward.

Scott ([32:09](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1929.17)):

Georgia. How's the, the impact been for you as you move forward?

Georgia Williams ([32:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1932.94)):

I think the, the big, the main impact has been that certain things have been slowed down, but then overall, because we've had to adapt to technology, we've been able to test the functionality of a lot of things. Um, so we've had to speed a few things up. Like our long term plan was always to have these people scattered amongst the locations, but the transition to using these new systems has been like more abrupt, I think, than we had originally anticipated. So it's been good because like I said, people have adapted to technology. Um, so we feel like we can now push more things out using different technologies. So we are also looking at pushing out our app, um, for the internet soon, um, which I'm really excited about. We are also rolling out digital notice boards, um, strategy. Um, and again, there's much more of an appetite for it now, because people kind of see that technology can be helpful to us.

Georgia Williams ([33:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1984.35)):

Um, I think in the construction industry overall, we've always been a little bit behind in terms of digital. Um, I know that when I joined there was a lot of things. I was just like, I can't believe we're still using paper for this like forms and things like that. So we've definitely see in a lot more teams like push to use, um, technology for things like that. We're looking at digital forms now. Um, so I think that's been a, a big impact, a big positive impact. Um, probably one of the negative impacts is the fact that, um, as a JV we've we worked really hard on and cultivating culture that was just as, and during the pandemic moving to online has meant that when people do join the business, they don't always get exposed to the culture in the way that we would've wanted them to.

Georgia Williams ([33:52](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2032.17)):

Um, so we are working on that at the moment, um, through some of the face to face, um, events that I mentioned, we, we also had a few things running, um, throughout the pandemic, we had an e-caf, which was run by our wellbeing champions. And it was just, I think it was every day, it was half an hour meeting every day people could drop in and out. And it was almost like the kind of chats that you'd have in the kitchen with people if you were just in the office. And so things like that have been helpful. I think, I think the biggest change has been the culture and the technology shift.

Scott ([34:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2063.51)):

Great. And yeah, Kate,

Kate Jones ([34:25](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2065.83)):

I, I think it's definitely true that at the start of the pandemic, we moved on our tech adoption 10 years in probably 10 days because everybody just had to get used to using it so quickly. Um, and I think the expectation remains that we will be able to deliver things quickly. Um, so that that's something that as comms people we'll have to kind of get used to. I think, um, one of the things that, that ha that has been really useful to us is, is not new to the pandemic, but we, we should be doing this anyway. But the, the data that we've gathered during the last two years has really shown us what's worked and what hasn't. So I'm always one for measurement and, and data use and, and never more so than the past 18 months, particularly around, um, the hybrid space. So I don't think that the construction sector would be adopting home, working to anywhere near the degree that we would be, that we are now, if, if our hand hadn't been forced and there are still a lot of managers and probably a lot of colleagues who think we should go back to full time back in the office, that's never gonna happen.

Kate Jones ([35:29](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2129.32)):

People's expectations have absolutely changed and they want that blend now. And if we don't give people that blend, they won't come and work in construction. They'll go somewhere that does give them that, that hybrid, that hybrid blend. But the data has been super useful in persuading. Maybe those more traditional managers that people have been able to deliver their work and be as productive from home, um, as, as they were, when they were in the office and without the data, there was still a perception that people, people were not as productive, but the data relies that. So I think our, the last 18 months has changed our long term strategy in terms of how and where people will work in a way that just isn't is not gonna go back to how it was previously. And so we all need to adapt to that, whether communications, whether management style, um, it, it all needs to, to take the best of both worlds as we've lived over the past 18 months and make sure that we, we continue to, to give people that blend that they've they've wanted whilst giving them more of the connection and, and the things that they've probably lost.

Kate Jones ([36:29](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2189.68)):

So our, our long term strategy has changed in the, how we work and where we work probably more than in terms of the, the true comms sense of, of what we deliver to people.

Vic ([36:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2199.65)):

Excellent. Obviously we are on Comms In A Nutshell, what are the things that have been key to connecting the disconnected within the construction industry. So if we go round and if you kind of all round up like three points or however many points, or just the important things that you think are key to connecting the disconnected. So Georgia, would you like to start?

Georgia Williams ([36:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2216.65)):

Uh, yeah, I think for us, it's been the constant engagement. Um, we shifted to online and we just, as much as we could, we carried on with our comms calendar. Um, we just moved things to online. So we had virtual awards, ceremonies. Um, we had our bite size virtual bite size lessons. Um, we had our team talks. We had our e-cafe that I mentioned, we had a few teams starting to do vlogs on the intranet. We even had our social events. We used to do in, when we had an office in Birmingham, we used to do Thirsty Thursday. Um, and every two weeks on a Thursday, we would go to a different pub somewhere in Birmingham. Um, we'd started just doing that online. Um, we would just sit - people wouldn't really drink - they'd have a cup of a tea, but after work on a Thursday, they would sit there maybe with a beer.

Georgia Williams ([37:42](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2262.72)):

And then when we relaunched our strategy to the business, we sent it out to everyone's home addresses with, um, some tea bags and a kit kat and kind of encouraged them to have a break and, and read the, through the strategy. Um, so we just, we just tried to carry on as much as we could. And I think that kept people feeling like they were involved with the business still, even though we were all in different places, we carried on updating, we obviously had some sites still open. We carried on with our constant updates from there. So people just felt like they were still involved in something and that we still kind of communicated with everyone. They still felt a part of it. So I think that was really, really key to just making sure that everyone felt connected all the time. Yeah.

Vic ([38:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2302.9)):

Did you find that people kept returning each week and stuff? Cause I know obviously you kind of get zoom fatigue sometimes don't you? I know in the pandemic it was like, oh God, like going on zoom again. And then you're doing zoom quizzes outside of work. Did you find that people did keep coming back for that?

Georgia Williams ([38:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2318.72)):

Um, yeah, we found that it was like groups of the same people. They would become friends and then it's nice to see people now in the office, they'll meet each other and they've spoken so many times at the e-caf or at Thirsty Thursday and they can actually meet up in, in real life and have a chat. Um, we also started last year, we launched the first of our affinity networks that are like networks for different things. So we started the women's affinity network, which I'm the chair of. And, um, we've recently had our first in person social and that was so nice to be able to speak to people, you know, in real life. Um, so yeah, I think it's just carrying on with all this stuff has, has been really useful for coming back now and, and just meeting people.

Vic ([39:20](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2360.42)):

Yeah. Oh, I love that. And Charlotte, in a nutshell, what are your key things that have been, um, important to connecting the disconnected?

Charlotte Offord ([39:27](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2367.8)):

So yeah, the systems, you know, the tech has been key and we, we do have them. Um, I think it's, we've just had to get that buy-in from senior leaders in the business to try and to you pick it up, use it it's now it is now ingrained, I think, in, in what, what we are doing going forward. So yeah, I mean that, that's the key, the Intranet, Microsoft teams, a lot of things we are now able, we'll record things that people can catch up later, which is really good that that's probably yeah. In the nutshell, the key thing.

Vic ([40:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2401.43)):

Yeah. How do you kind of communicate to your leadership that it is really important? How do you kind of get that key message across?

Charlotte Offord ([40:07](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2407.63)):

That is a challenge I'd say, um, I think it's finding what people are, want to communicate and what they want to say, and it's finding the right channel and the right way of doing that. And if you can explain that to people by using these, this, this channel that is the best way of communicating to people, then that's kind of how you can kind of get their buy in. I think we've, we've streamlined of what we do as well. And that's, I think really key as well. People need to be clear on where they can find things, um, where they can expect these messages to come from that again, once you've got those kind of established channels and you can be clear to these senior leaders, this is what we are doing. And this is kind of our strategy that again helps with, with the buy-in as well.

Vic ([40:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2454.06)):

Amazing. Thank you. And last but not least, Kate, what are your key points? In a nutshell.

Kate Jones ([41:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2461.06)):

I, I think it's, it's clarity, consistency, and pace. It is naturally slower to reach a disconnected workforce. And by the time your official messages got to them, they will have heard 10, 12 other versions of the truth. So we've needed to work to explain to people what that trusted source is. And that's worked in a couple of ways. Firstly, the channels piece that we talked about earlier, um, letting people know when and how they will hear information, but specifically with COVID. One of the challenges we faced was that we are a national business and yet the public health guidance is devolved. And so our colleagues working in Scotland were working often to different guidance than those in England and those in Wales. So right from the start, we had our own tarmac COVID roadmap that said, this is the national protocol that everybody will follow.

Kate Jones ([41:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2511.74)):

And we will stick to that regardless of what the, the, the, the, the rules in society might look like. So that was really helpful to us when things were changing so quickly and differently with the devolved governments taking different approaches. We had that single source of guidance that we could point to people. So that was one example of that clarity and consistency that I was talking about, but yeah, establishing those, those, those sources of truth. Um, and, and the two way, the two way communication is a real challenge as well. So we've talked a lot about reaching the, the, the non-connected with information, but finding ways to use technology or others to hear back and to get that employee voice flowing in the other direct as well, has, has been really important. And I think the technology has really helped us do that in new ways over the past couple of years.

Vic ([42:40](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2560.72)):

Perfect. Well, thank you all so much for joining and thank you for your time. It's been great listening to all your experiences and tips and insights. So thank you very much. Thank you.

Georgia Williams ([42:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2571.35)):

Thanks really interesting. Thank you.

Vic ([42:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2574.28)):

Thank you.

Vic ([42:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/o5hFMG0Lr1Ej7MtDAgIPZH4z2Jp8RTe17mgxPg5jIAArq2q_MKnekr1WSfE5_fxC2BRfrGgZ1X7ifYOacALV5YtpPxU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2576.22)):

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