

Building strong workplace connections :

The Playbook

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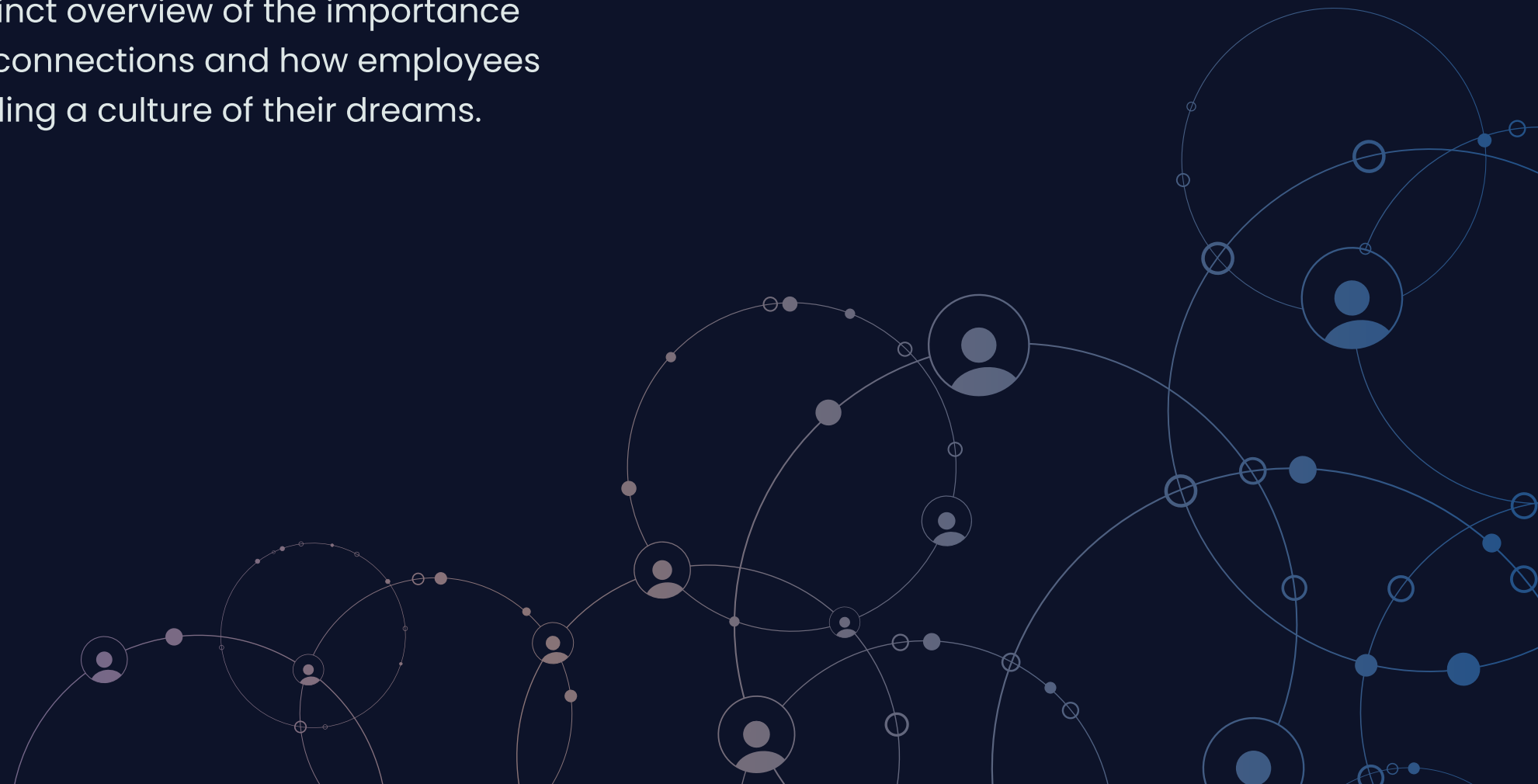
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Who this guide is for

All HRs, People Ops, CXOs who want to focus on creating an employee-centric culture at their organisations.

This playbook gives a succinct overview of the importance of having genuine human connections and how employees can also contribute in building a culture of their dreams.

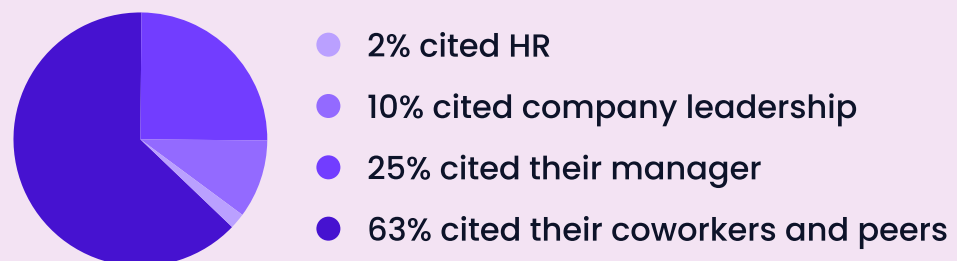


ROI of building human connections

Human connection is no longer nice to have, it's a must have for businesses.

Coworker connections matter

In a recent research, Enboarder asked people who made the biggest impact on helping them feel connected.



Till a few years back, team-bonding or connections were something that organisations thought of as something that requires no effort. In the recent times, research has shown that organisations who invest in team building and engagement are more likely to thrive 10X more than organisations who don't.

Did you know ?

People with strong work friendships are *7x more likely* to be engaged in their jobs.
-Gallup

Fifty-eight percent of employees would consider leaving their current job if they didn't feel connected at work.
-Blueboard

Connected employees are *5.5x more likely to report that their workplace motivates* them to go above and beyond their job responsibilities.
-Enboarder

Connection drives performance

Just as you would feel more motivated to hit the gym and stay focused on your fitness journey if you have a gym/fitness buddy, employees feel more productive when they are **connected to their co-workers**.

Do you have a best friend at work?

Unsurprisingly, **Gallup** has been including this question in their employee engagement survey for the past 20 years. In the current scenario, this question resonates more than ever.

People with work besties or strong work friendships are **7X more likely** to be engaged in their jobs and the organisation they work for.



Connection drives retention

Building strong human connections also has a huge impact on employee retention.

Enboarder research showed that connected employees were **4X more likely to stay** with the company for a longer duration than employees who feel disengaged.

McKinsey found that **51% of employees quit because they lacked a sense of belonging** at work, and **46% cited the desire to work with people who trust and care** for each other as a reason to quit.

In addition, Blueboard reported that **58% of employees would consider leaving their current job if they didn't feel connected at work** (the statistic jumps to 65% for employees 25-30 years old).

And these statistics get scarier when we consider that only **38%** of employees currently agree that their organisation is **effective at helping them build authentic relationships** with co-workers and managers.

The cost of turnover is **extremely high**;

\$\$

losing an
employee

>

\$

employee's
salary.

After an employee leaves, your business simultaneously takes a hit internally while the role remains unfilled. These expenses are known as the cost per hire and the cost of vacancy- not to mention opportunity costs.

It's estimated that **2/3 of all sunk costs due to turnover are intangible**, including lost productivity and knowledge, which are part of the cost-of-vacancy and opportunity costs.

However, the most substantial impact of turnover may not be money at all, but the damage done to the rest of your workforce.

Connection drives perception

Employees are your best advocates

Good talent is hard to find – it's even harder when your company reviews don't show a good picture of your organisation on Glassdoor, Indeed, Vault, and all of the other company rating sites.

Research indicates that candidates are **7X more likely to apply** to a job opening shared by their friends/peers.

Employees that feel connected are more likely to stay at their company, **feel optimistic about their company's future** and believe their company is more competitive.

In other words, when employees feel more connected to their co-workers and their company, their overall perception of the company improves.

Why does this matter?

The level of connectedness your employees feel doesn't stay within your walls. It's shared on social media/review sites and showcases employees' perceptions of your company. Helping your employees feel connected ensures that your organisation will maintain a good image in the industry and a solid talent pipeline to choose from.

Employees are your best tool to showcase your brand forward and centre and **connected employees are the ones who will drive this.**

How to build connection rituals & habits into every stage of employee experience

When you watch a high-performing team in action, you realise that they have some habits, rituals, and ceremonies that support the team's work.

A ritual is a custom or tradition that defines who they are as a team, reinforces positive team behaviors, and contributes to the team's culture and philosophy.

So how do you build rituals and habits?

1. Identify Your Process

What does your onboarding look like?

How do you engage employees?

What are the means of team connection right now.

Do the teams in your organisation take efforts to build connections? If yes, what's working?

If no, what can be improved?

This will help you in identifying any gaps and improve processes.

Every company has a small list of **golden rituals**.
A few criteria:

1. They are named
2. Every employee knows them by the first friday
3. They are templated



Bing Gordon

Partner at Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers



2. Use the “how might we” framework to turn your problem into an opportunity

Identify a problem or a scenario that exists within a team and is something that comes up frequently.

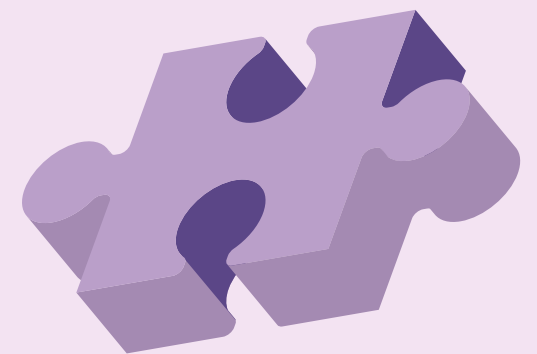
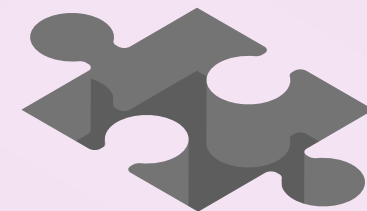
E.g. A particular deadline every month that collectively shoots up the stress levels of the team. Or a situation where the code breaks or a bug that was not caught in time by the QA team. Situations like these have the potential to bring down the mood of the team, decrease efficiency, and lead to an overall drop in productivity.



How can a ritual be built in this?

Scenarios like this can be an opportunity to build rituals. This is an easy way to spin the situation and create a new ritual in the team that can reshape the way you work, the team dynamic, and the emotional connection with your goals.

Picture this, instead of singling out an individual for a broken code, the team leader can decide that the developer responsible can wear a special hat for the day or buy chocolates for the entire team. This is not to pin-point any individual but to lighten the load for the individual and create a positive environment for the wider team.



3. Get buy-in from teammates

No matter what rituals or habits you propose, it won't work if your team does not resonate with the idea. Pitch in your ideas, get ideas from the team and decide on the ones that everyone thinks are easily doable.

While everyone from the organisation can come up with ideas that might work, do remember that it will only work with a top-down approach.

Research has shown that the more the leaders believe in the idea the more the chances of success.

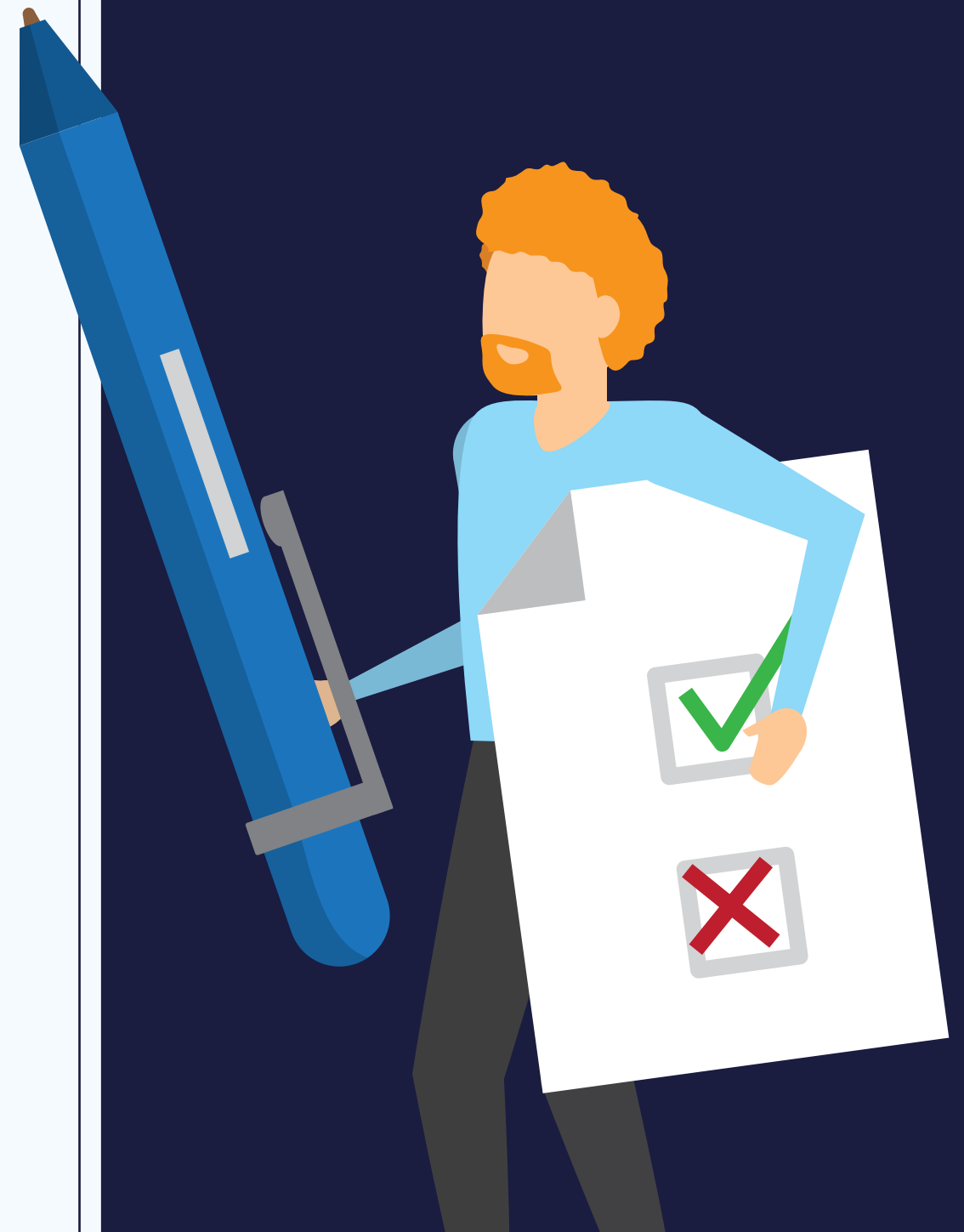


4. Try it out and iterate

Don't be afraid to jump in and try it out, taking the time to observe the results. As you go, get feedback from the team to ensure they're bought into the idea and enjoying it. Make updates and changes as you go.

Track, measure, and keep improving the template. Many ideas might sound interesting on paper but execution might not prove to be that successful.

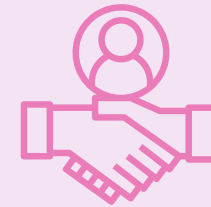
On the other hand, many ideas might sound mundane but actually be a lot of fun and get quickly adapted into a ritual.



Few ideas that can be tried out

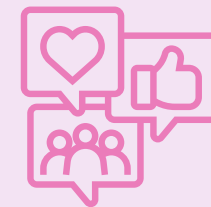
Onboarding

- Introduction over team- lunch
- Virtual Coffee with CEO/Senior Management
- Custom Quiz on new employee
- Icebreaker games



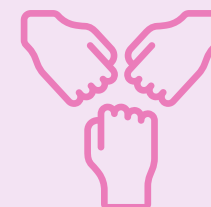
Engagement

- Non-work catch-ups
- Go for walking meetings vs. standing meetings
- Potluck for virtual employees – everyone orders food for their assigned team-mate
- Virtual or in-person Coffee Dates – Random coffee dates where everyone in the company gets assigned a random person to go have coffee with on Wednesday to chat and get to know each other
- Special rituals for milestones – new feature release, caught a critical bug, closed a sale, etc



Farewell

- Dressing up as the movie characters of the employee's fav movie
- Team Dinner
- Short movie clips showcasing all the milestones and memories



Making the shift from “Talk to HR” to belonging is everyone’s job

In today’s world, belonging is everyone’s job, regardless of their job title.

For too long, the onus of team-building and creating a sense of belonging has been shouldered by HR. When employees express feelings of being overwhelmed, stressed, or under appreciated, an unfortunate number of managers dismissively respond with, “That’s not my issue, consult with HR.” In today’s scenario, that does not work. Everyone is part of shaping and evolving an organisations culture, regardless of their title, and regardless of whether they’ve worked with the organisation for twenty years, two years, or two weeks.

Leaders should foster a safe, nurturing, and open environment to solidify connections. This doesn’t necessitate deep personal sharing or friendship with all, but a culture of connection, care, and inclusion. Creating such a culture, where employees can be authentic and receive support, requires intention and effort from everyone, not just HR.



Creating time and space to build genuine workplace connections

Fostering connections among employees is easier said than done. Most team-building programs die quickly as teammates do not get enough time to build a genuine workplace connection.

Organisations should realise that people are more than the work they do and building connections does not happen overnight. Some employees may hit it off pretty quickly while some may take a lot of time to get connected. Your employee engagement program should be designed in such a way that it allows everyone the time and space to get to know each other better, and discover shared interests.

Offer flexibility to employees on how they want to build a connection. Some may prefer meeting in-person, some virtually, while some may connect over games or their love for food. Ensure as a workplace, there are ample opportunities for your employees to connect outside of work.





Leveraging technology to boost and build human connections

Technology is today at the forefront of everything we do and it can definitely boost your efforts to build connections within your team.

1. Invest in good team-building apps that encourage your employees to engage beyond screens. These apps easily integrate with Slack or MS Teams or via a web version and can help automate employee engagement.
2. Virtual meet apps like Zoom/Google can be used for team meet ups, game nights, and other exciting activities.
3. Employee recognition apps for appreciation/ celebrating employee milestones like birthdays and work anniversaries.



Key Takeaways



Human connection is a need, not just a want

Genuine human connections at work are critical for the success of every organisation.



ROI of human connections

Research throws light on the various aspects human connections can have on organizations. Connection drives performance, retention, and perception.



Building habits and rituals can boost team connectivity

High-performing teams have some habits, rituals, and ceremonies that support the team's work. It is something that defines who they are as a team, reinforces positive team behaviours, and contributes to the team's culture and philosophy.



Creating a feeling of belonging is everyone's job not just HR's

Everyone is part of shaping and evolving an organization's culture, regardless of their title, and years of experience.



Building human connections need space and time

Team-bonding does not happen overnight. It is a continuous effort from everyone in the organisation to build the culture that they desire.

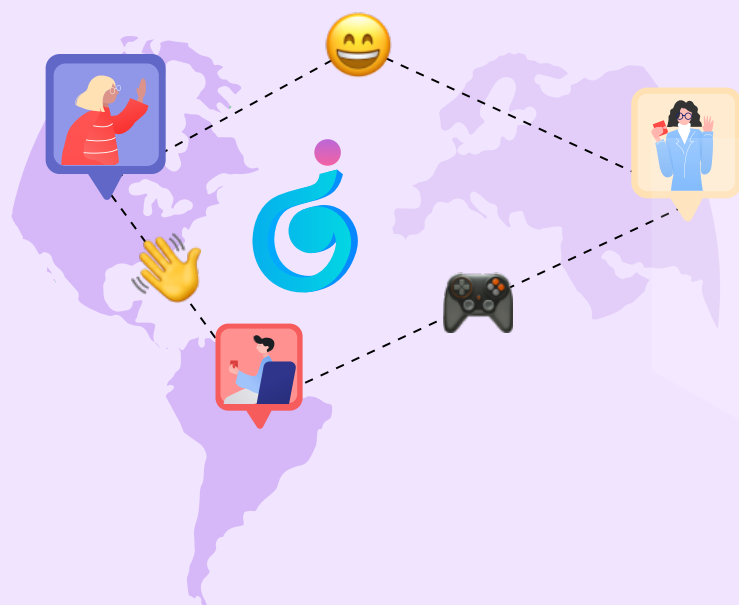


Leverage technology to build connections

Team-building and recognition apps, Zoom, Google Meet – all contribute towards building team connections.



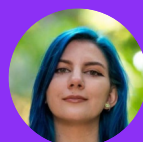
About



Trivia is a fun social and team-building designed to build strong teams through Games, Quizzes, VirtualCoffee and Water Cooler. Built for Slack and MS Teams, Trivia is more about post-game banter, inside jokes, and laugh riots. It lightens the mood, creates a lively atmosphere, and helps you bond with your peers, instantly.

- 30K Instant Quizzes
- Highly engaging games like Hangman, Pictionary, Emoji Rebus
- Recreate the in-office magic with VirtualCoffee (powered by ChatGPT) & Virtual Water Cooler
- Engage geographically distributed teams with Self-paced quizzes
- Celebrate birthday and work anniversaries right within your workspace
- ISO 27001, GDPR & Microsoft 365 certified

"Honestly, Trivia is a blessing. We are able to humanise in a way that was not happening earlier. Like I love the VirtualCoffee feature, it's a great way to break the ice. I have seen so many instances where the VirtualCoffee pairings have fostered strong bonds. We've seen people discussing topics outside of work."



Sonia Stefan
Recruiter, BetterQA

<https://www.springworks.in/trivia/>

Interested in seeing Trivia in action?

Book a Demo



About springworks

Springworks is the organisation that powers The Shape of Work community. We're on a mission to help companies create category-leading workplace cultures.

We make recruitment, onboarding, employee engagement, and employee productivity tools for organisations that prioritise stellar employee experiences.

How Springworks can help your organisation

RECRUITMENT

Bring intelligence and efficiency to recruiting.



An Applicant Tracking System that's FREE FOREVER

ONBOARDING

Find the right talent faster with background verifications
(only for INDIA and US geos)



Seamless, flexible and incredibly reliable,
all powered by the blockchain.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Build a culture everyone wants to be a part of. Inspire your team to reach new heights, have a laugh at work and engage deeper.



Appreciate, celebrate, listen to and reward your employees. All in one R&R, Pulse Survey, eNPS tool for Slack and Microsoft Teams



Your AI-powered knowledge bot for Slack. Albus uses GPT-4 to build a comprehensive knowledge base from Google Drive™, Notion and more, making information easily accessible with natural language queries



Interactive games for team-building right inside Slack and Microsoft Teams

We know a thing or two about building exceptional company culture.

At Springworks, employee well-being is the top priority.

This has led to a remarkable 4.5 rating on Glassdoor for our 170+ employee strength company.

If you're interested in knowing the kind of initiatives Springworks is up to in terms of Employee Experience, do follow Kartik Mandaville (CEO, Springworks) on LinkedIn.