



# PayPal unlocks workplace data, improves employee wellbeing with Microsoft Viva Insights

Customer  
PayPal

Products and Services  
Microsoft 365  
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Industry  
Banking and Capital Markets

Organization Size  
Corporate (10,000+ employees)

Country  
United States

January 31, 2022



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When customers choose to make an online purchase with PayPal, like 400 million people do around the world, they often make this choice for a payment experience that is not just convenient but also safe and reliable. They might even wonder at the technological innovation that makes it all possible.

It's easy to forget that behind every seamless transaction is a large, globally dispersed workforce of people who help make it happen. At PayPal, its global payment services are provided by tens of thousands of employees across the globe. The welfare of its worldwide workforce is top of mind for PayPal executive leaders, and they are turning that deep concern for employee wellbeing into

action with the help of [Microsoft Viva Insights](https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-viva/insights) (<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-viva/insights>).

“At PayPal, we want our employees to be artists and not mechanics,” says Dan Torunian, PayPal Vice President for Employee Technology and Experiences. “We want them to focus on crafting experiences and driving outcomes on behalf of our customers—not on the mechanics of how to do their job.”


PayPal distributes regular qualitative surveys to track engagement, satisfaction, intent to stay, and other employee experience indicators. As the company has continued to innovate its services and expand its business, it has modernized and consolidated its IT environments with advanced technologies such as [Microsoft 365](https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365) (<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365>) to make it easier for all employees to get work done. It also reduced after-hours meetings and adopted focus days without meetings to help employees safeguard their productive hours, preserve their free time, and strike a rewarding work-life balance.

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## Workplace disruption

As COVID-19 drove PayPal to move to remote operations to protect employee health, it created a strain on many aspects of day-to-day business, including how managers and employees connect to align

 **Microsoft** priorities and objectives. This dynamic was exacerbated by the nature of PayPal's global workforce, which spans multiple time zones

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and is comprised of employees in different regions who had to navigate the challenges of remote working. PayPal leaders saw this strain reflected in internal feedback, which showed varying effectiveness of meetings and shifting employee sentiment as many reported missing the comfort of working in person.

The company responded to this dynamic by employing a wide range of tactics to ensure an inclusive environment and meeting behaviors, including company-wide wellness days; the opportunity for employees to take time to care for family and loved ones; tools to help managers and employees interact more effectively; and a pilot test of focus days that allow uninterrupted time for employees to learn, innovate, and work. None of these tactics would have succeeded without the aid of technology to inform behaviors and help guide manager effectiveness.

According to the [Microsoft Work Trend Index](https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work) (<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work>), time spent in [Microsoft Teams](https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software) (<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software>), meetings has more than doubled for workers in companies around the world since February 2020, a potential indicator of digital overload, increased worker stress, and burnout. When its own regular pulse polls in Glint revealed similar employee challenges, PayPal determined that it would not let workplace disruption erode the norms that have preserved boundaries and protected people's time. The company wanted a way to monitor and measure the effectiveness of employee wellness initiatives and empower everyone in the organization with the tools and experiences to help those initiatives succeed.

"We need to deliver an exceptional employee experience—under all workplace conditions," says Torunian. "We use Viva Insights to empower our existing workforce while also competing for new talent."

# Leadership insights

Using one of the Viva Insights templates, PayPal combines sentiment data from Glint polling results with behavioral data from Viva Insights and Microsoft Power BI to better understand the factors that affect the employee experience and proactively adjust work norms to avoid burnout and stress. Using safeguards such as aggregation, deidentification, and differential privacy to protect individual privacy, PayPal built a customized dashboard for company leadership to use to monitor multiple indicators, such as tracking at a glance how well company initiatives protect employee time, limit large meetings, and give employees the networking opportunities they need to be successful in their roles and advance their careers.

PayPal quickly used its new capabilities to see, on average, if employees were suffering from meeting overload and identify which groups were most affected.

“With Viva Insights, we have the capability to understand our employees’ work-life balance while respecting individual privacy,” says Saumil Gandhi, Senior IT Director at PayPal. “On days we set aside for focused work activity, we can see how successfully people stay focused or not on that day.”

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PayPal

## From insights to actions

Based on this, PayPal leaders used Viva Insights data to develop hypotheses to inform actions and strategies aimed at improving employee wellbeing.

The tools and data also provided an opportunity for managers and senior leaders to help employees across time zones protect their personal time by being more mindful of meeting times and respecting focus days.

“With the insights we deliver to leadership in Viva Insights,” says Gandhi, “we get a sense of when to send gentle reminders to managers and leaders about not scheduling meetings on focus days and additional ways to align for better work-life balance.”

Once PayPal began to look deeply at the data with Viva Insights, the company had the information needed to take meaningful action to drive positive change. “With Viva Insights, we’ve found that more employees take focus time seriously,” reports Gandhi. “We started with 30 percent of employees practicing focus hours—and we’ve already seen that grow to 40 percent. Ten percent is a significant bump.”

Other improvements were even more dramatic. PayPal saw a 25 percent improvement in cross-region collaboration between US and Asia-Pacific workers, reductions in off-hours meetings greater than 10 percent over three quarters, and charts showing that employee-manager meetings continue to rise.

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# Beyond insights

PayPal also uses Viva Insights to encourage and empower employees to protect time for uninterrupted work, avoid back-to-back meetings, build in breaks to reduce stress, and reset before diving into another call. Employees are encouraged to structure time to prepare for meetings, avoid sending emails to colleagues outside of their scheduled work hours, and track commitments. Individuals can opt in to see a personalized dashboard that displays work metrics and suggests ways to reduce stress and avoid burnout.

To cope with the complexities of managing a globally diverse workforce, PayPal leaders are constantly assessing how to preserve the company's core values and sustain a culture of innovation while boosting employee wellbeing. "I think approaching the deep questions that shape how we run our business opened the door for us to adopt Viva Insights to get a better understanding of employee behavior," says Torunian. "Being able to get that quantifiable pulse on the workforce allows us to pivot quickly and make appropriate accommodations."

With the right data and the commitment of its leadership, PayPal is forging new practices, processes, and rituals to enhance employee experiences and empower employees to balance their work and home lives. With Viva Insights, PayPal has the capacity to identify urgent workplace problems, quickly generate business insights, and determine when, where, and how to take effective action to protect the welfare of its most important asset—its employees.

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 **Microsoft**  Gandhi: Senior IT Director

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