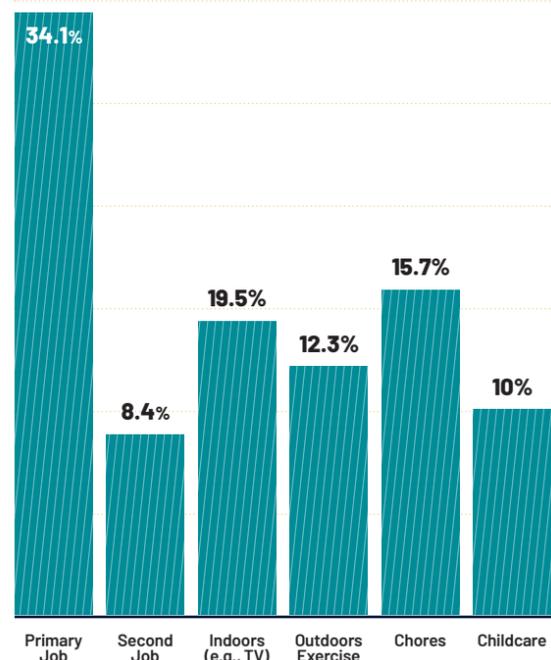


DATA

# No Commute = More Time (For Work)

When people started clocking in from home at the start of the pandemic, they no longer had to spend hours transporting to and from the office. Starting in May 2020 and for the following year, researchers surveyed US workers to find out what they have been doing with all that extra time.



Share of that extra time spent on alternate activities

TAKEAWAY

*In today's more mindful era, managers need to understand that rudeness comes in many forms.*

with 70 percent of respondents saying that remote work has bolstered rude behavior like call interruptions and ignoring emails, and 75 percent saying that they've considered quitting due to an uncivil coworker.

"Rudeness is contagious. It's like the flu," says business psychologist James Bywater, a solution architect at Korn Ferry. "Everyone catches it, and there's a lot of collateral damage." He says that employee performance, engagement, and interactions are all negatively affected, in observers, victims, and perpetrators alike. To be clear, we're not talking about bosses swearing or managers throwing printers. **We're talking about small snubs and rebuffs**, such as giving a colleague the cold shoulder or ignoring a coworker in a meeting.

The most pressing issue, says Bywater, is how incivility distracts people's attention so that their perspective narrows. "It makes people a lot less good at learning," he says. It also impairs their decision making, according to a fresh study in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. After workers experience a mild brush-off or cold shoulder, they're more likely to fixate on one piece of information and draw inaccurate conclusions than to evaluate a scenario objectively. In that study, medical students who experienced this kind of rudeness went on to incorrectly diagnose health ailments.

Remote work is causing further incivility, says Larry Martinez, an associate professor of organizational psychology at Portland State University, whose meta-analysis of 70 pre-pandemic studies of 35,344 workers found that rudeness ripples through teams and organizations, causing more destruction than previously thought. "When people think they're alone, they're more likely to feel comfortable being snarky or kind of mean," he says. "Face-to-face communication tends to diffuse situations." The subtlety is the problem: it's often hard to prove the behavior ("she replies with two words, or not at all!"), let alone intended harm, and so the vitriol grows, with no resolution.

The million-dollar question is what to do. How do you address an invisible scourge? "A lot of leaders don't do anything," says organizational psychologist Cathleen Swody, a partner at Thrive Leadership. This is a costly plan of action. "It erodes bottom-line earn-

ings, performance, productivity, engagement, and especially right now, retention." People who experience incivility put in less effort and fewer hours, and generally back off to emotionally protect themselves.

Swody suggests addressing it in real time. When you observe one staffer being rude to another, pull them aside to say some version of "Can you tell me what that was about? I want to understand. Here's how it came across, and here's how it might be affecting others."

A hard truth for bosses: your staffers probably are not the problem. If a team is rude, its leader is probably also rude. Swody says that managers commonly confuse rudeness with productivity measures, such as saving time by sending one-line emails or cutting people off in meetings ("I'm going to stop you right there") or yelling to motivate immediate action. Employees don't feel comfortable telling bosses that they're doing this. To them, experts say, that might seem rude. //

LEADERSHIP BY VINDHYA BURUGUPALLI

# The Surveillance Paradox



**EMPLOYEE MONITORING IS NOT** a foreign concept: workers are used to cameras in the office and managers wandering the halls, perhaps even peeking over shoulders. But since remote work has become

the norm over the last two years, digital employee monitoring has taken on a new importance—and it is raising concerns around keeping employee trust and protecting their privacy. That's no easy trick,

experts say. Monitoring “is part of a manager’s job when we’re in-person,” says Elizabeth Lyons, a management professor at the University of California, San Diego. “The question here is how it should be used now.”

With remote work likely here to stay in some capacity, companies are increasingly turning to AI-powered technology, often called tattleware, to monitor and measure employee productivity. Through tattleware, companies can keep tabs on remote workers by surveilling webcams, listening in through microphones, taking random screen grabs, and tracking keyboard use and keystrokes. Demand for employee-monitoring technology has shot up by 58 percent since the advent of the pandemic. Currently, 78 percent of employers use digital surveillance tools, despite 83 percent of them citing ethical concerns with it.

The latest research has found that monitoring remote workers aids in increasing productivity when it is exercised with certain considerations. It isn’t solely the technology that makes a difference, but rather how managers interact with it, says Lyons. According to her study, when managers used findings from monitoring tools to provide constructive feedback, employee performance improved. It also

raised morale, as employees felt their work was being valued. However, the cost of excessive monitoring is a loss of employee trust. “There is a risk that it can drive down employee morale, if it’s perceived as signaling to employees that their employers don’t trust them,” says Lyons.

Experts say most employees will be comfortable with monitoring if the data collected is relevant for business goals and their personal information isn’t being surveilled. The key is to increase transparency and collaboration, and ensure that employees understand the value of the data, says Lyons. Additionally, it’s crucial for companies to establish clear policies on the usage of surveillance tools, says Rick Sklarin, a senior client partner at Korn Ferry’s Silicon Valley practice. “There are gray areas between notifying employees that they will be monitored and explicitly defining how that’ll happen,” says Sklarin. “It’s really important for companies to disclose how far they’re going to go.”

In the end, managers have to decide if the cost of surveillance strategies is worth it by evaluating performance at the highest levels, says Sklarin. Since going remote, “many companies are finding that they have significant productivity increases, not decreases,” he says. ▀

## WHAT’S ON THE NEXT BOARD AGENDA

1

SUCCESSION

Identify and nurture the next, more diverse generations of company leaders, both for the boardroom and the C-suite.

2

TECHNOLOGY

Understand how the firm’s digitization efforts impact long-term strategy, staffing, and security.

3

ESG

With ESG’s prominence expected to only grow in 2022, incorporate climate change and social issues into strategies and budgets.

HISTORY LESSON

BY GLENN RIFKIN

# Will Cold Calling Ever Go Cold?

A major bank recently dropped their use, but unsolicited sales pitches have endured since at least the 18th century.



THE FORMER PRESIDENT AND CIVIL WAR hero Ulysses S. Grant had just completed his memoir, days before his death in 1885, but didn’t have a publisher. As it turned out, his friend and editor, Mark Twain, had a plan. Instead of accepting a publisher’s small royalty, the famed author and raconteur promoted the book by fanning out 10,000 former Union soldiers to go door-to-door. The upshot: *The Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* became the first

mega-selling presidential autobiography.

Call this the birth of that most pesky of business tools, the one we know today as cold calling. With the proliferation of artificial intelligence, predictive marketing, and commercial rocket launches into space, it seems society would have evolved beyond this analog practice long ago. And yet it persists, through one iteration after another.

Many credit the father of modern sales management—John Henry Patterson, the CEO of the National Cash Register Corporation—with codifying the idea of cold calling in the mid-1800s. After taking ownership of a floundering NCR, Patterson endeavored to boost sales by instituting quotas and offering commissions. He also created a sales script. His employee manual, called the Primer, instructed salesmen: “Avoid giving the impression to the merchant that you are trying to force him to buy. No man likes to feel he is being sold.”

“Patterson really codified sales management and said there is a process here and we need to identify that process,” says Frank Cespedes, a management professor at Harvard Business School who specializes in sales management. Later, in 1906, Alfred C. Fuller founded the Fuller Brush Company and began deploying what became a famed door-to-door sales icon. And then, of course, there were the infamous Hoover, Encyclopædia Britannica, and Avon sales reps. As the telephone became more ubiquitous, “lead lists” began to appear, pioneering the earliest days of telemarketing.

The term “cold calling” emerged from the use of the word “cold,” meaning “without warning.” It’s often considered outmoded in today’s highly connected sales environment, and in one head-turning move, Merrill Lynch Wealth Management recently unveiled a new advisor-training program banning the practice. Still, as anyone with a phone can attest, it lives on, proving that regardless of the medium, persistence continues to count for something. “There’s still a fairly high correlation between the number of calls a rep makes and their outcomes,” Cespedes says. ▀

## THE COLD FACTS

The average B2B decision maker receives 3,000 marketing touches a year (phone, email, TV, and radio ads).

The same decision maker receives as many as 17 phone calls a day from salespeople pitching a product, service, or idea.

It costs an average of \$5.10 every time a salesperson makes a cold call.

Studies show that 90% of cold calls go to voicemail, and most of those are deleted unheard.