

Smart guide

# Employees know what they want from internal communication. Just ask them.

5 ways to use employee feedback to enhance internal communication channels



You're seeking to improve your employee communication channels and want to get the **biggest bang for your buck.**

The best way to determine which changes will increase your employees' participation in internal communication is to ask them:

What works  
**for you?**

A person in a blue and white patterned shirt is gesturing with their right hand towards a group of smiling employees in an office setting. The background is blurred, showing several people in business attire. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

This has proved true time and again.  
During Davis & Company's more  
than three decades of experience,  
we've solicited feedback from tens of  
thousands of employees.

# Here's how you can gather insights from *your* employees:



Conduct surveys



Facilitate focus groups



Observe people as they experience communication

While you conduct your own research to build the internal communication strategy that's right for your organization, keep in mind these **5 improvements** that employees request most:

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**1**

Reduce the volume

**2**

Make communication more relevant

**3**

Simplify content

**4**

Get timing right

**5**

Set leaders and managers up for success



**1** Reduce the volume

**“Too much”** is one of the top complaints employees have about internal communication today.

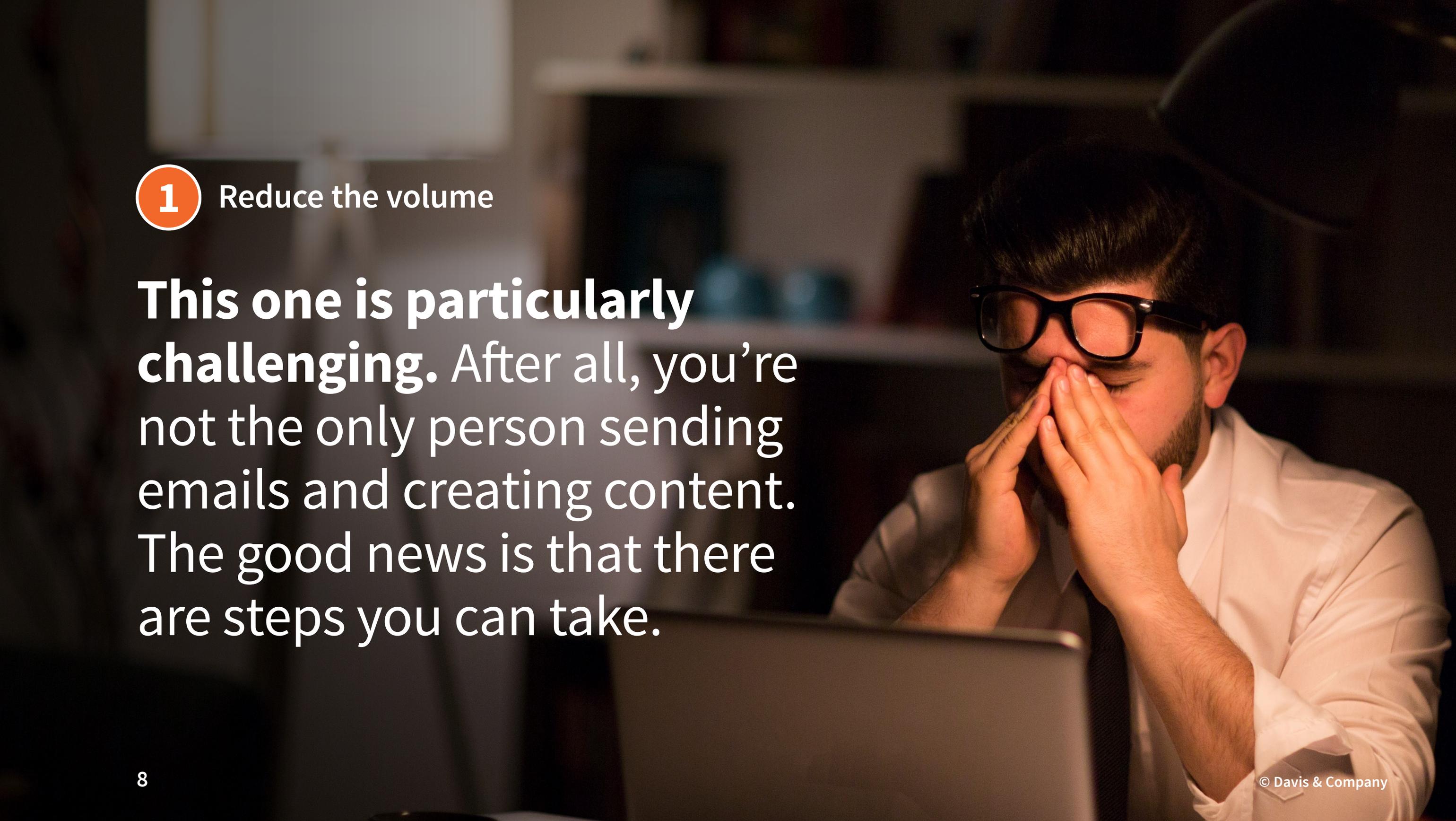
# 1 Reduce the volume

“We get so many emails every day, it seems like multiple departments are talking over each other.”  
-Tyler from purchasing

“Please do something about the number of emails in my inbox and the amount of content about the company I’m expected to read. I’m experiencing such overload that I’m sure I’m missing important information.” -Maureen from accounts payable

“If I didn’t have to manage my emails from Corporate, I’d probably have four or five hours of free time a week.” -Jamal from field sales



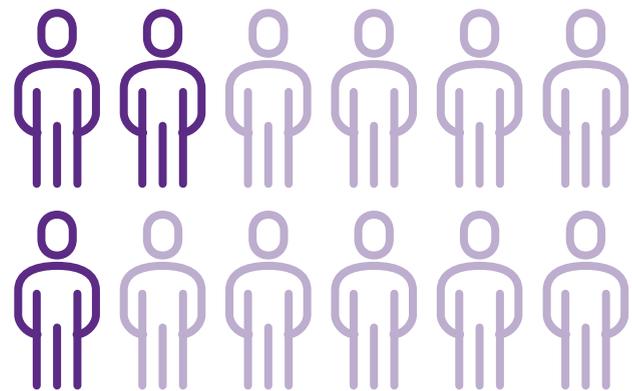


**1** Reduce the volume

**This one is particularly challenging.** After all, you're not the only person sending emails and creating content. The good news is that there are steps you can take.

**1** Reduce the volume

Employees are inundated with information, and they want **fewer channels with less repetition.**



**25%**  
of U.S. adults  
“almost constantly  
online”



**43%**  
of U.S. adults  
“online several times  
a day”

According to Pew Research Study

## 1 Reduce the volume

### How you can **reduce** the volume:



Click to  
learn more

Start by [conducting an internal communication audit](#) to determine the root cause of the overload. Analyze web and email metrics.



Then partner with the groups that produce the most content on how to streamline, consolidate and—most importantly—cut back.



**2** Make communication more relevant

Another common annoyance for employees is that they receive communication that's either **too general** or that doesn't apply to them at all.

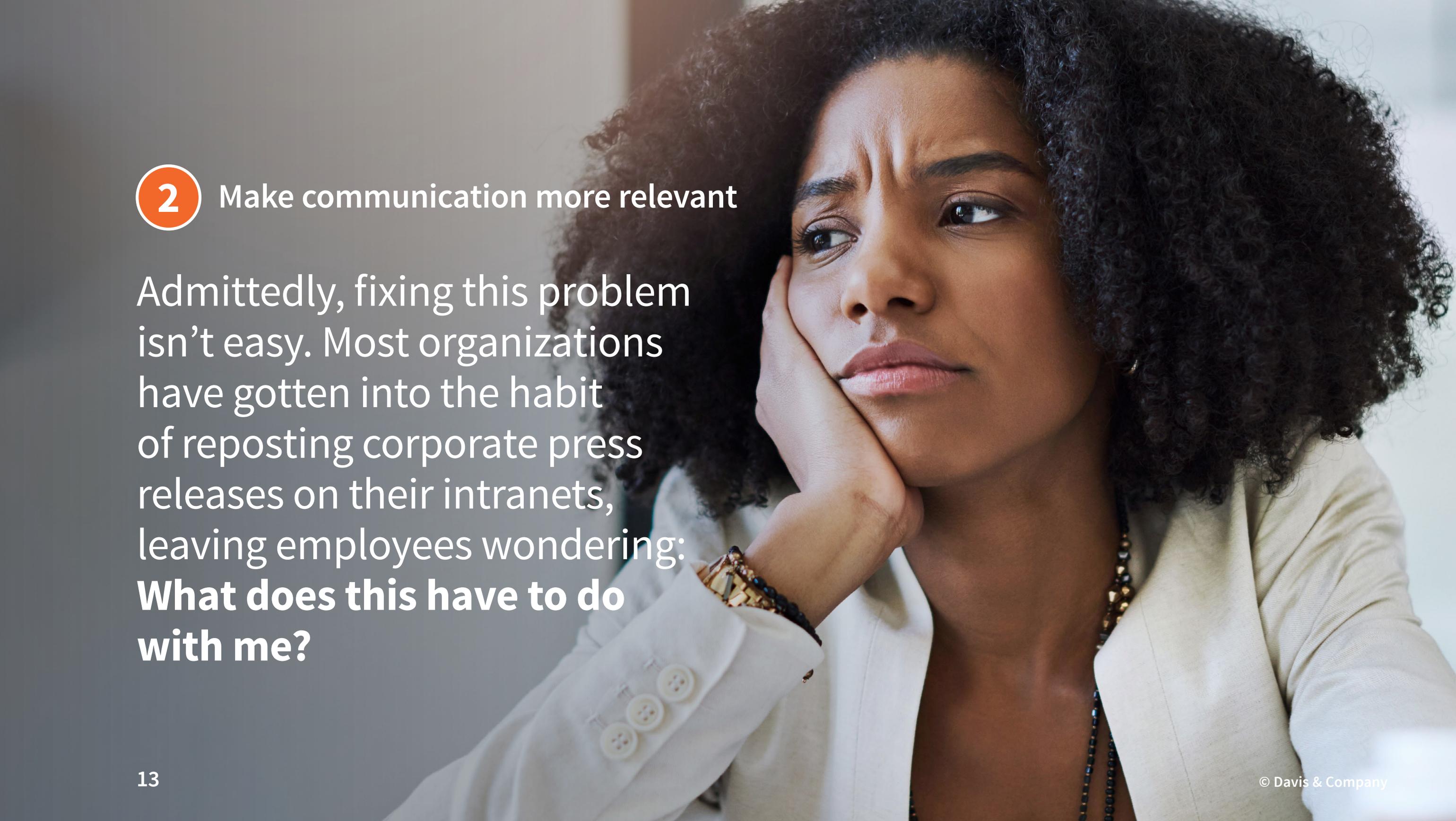


## 2 Make communication more relevant

“I get a flood of information, and it’s increasingly difficult to distinguish the important from the unimportant.”  
–**Makayla from logistics**

“I hear too much about corporate initiatives, but we don’t know what’s going on in our own building.”  
–**Riley from manufacturing**

“It would be great if I could get more details about organizational changes that impact me directly, including a comprehensive org chart.”  
–**Aria from customer support**



**2** Make communication more relevant

Admittedly, fixing this problem isn't easy. Most organizations have gotten into the habit of reposting corporate press releases on their intranets, leaving employees wondering: **What does this have to do with me?**

## 2 Make communication more relevant

# How you can make communication **more relevant**:



When creating content, make sure you answer employees' biggest questions:

- What does this mean to me?
- What do I need to do?



As often as possible, avoid sending emails to everyone in the organization. Create segmented lists by location, level and function.



Set expectations for leader and manager communication. While you can't tailor every communication to specific groups or teams, leaders and managers play a key role in interpreting information to make it relevant.



### 3 Simplify content

**Why, employees wonder, does internal communication have to be so complicated?** The content employees typically receive—loaded with acronyms and jargon words—seems to have been written in an archaic language that only Corporate understands.



### 3 Simplify content

“I’ve been to meetings and I didn’t know what was said. It seemed like a foreign language.”  
–Isabella from IT

“I just wish someone would explain it all so people who don’t deal with the topic regularly can understand it.”  
–Aiden from distribution

“I’m still learning and looking to fully grasp all that the company does.”  
–Grayson from facilities management



**3** Simplify content

**You know what to do:  
Make a pledge to  
simplify everything.**

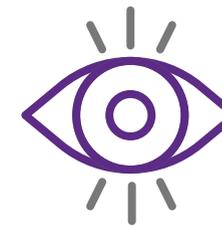
### 3 Simplify content

## How you can **simplify** content:

- Boil your communication down to one simple message, focused on what is changing for employees.
- Write the headline to convey the most important information.
- Use clear language and spell out acronyms.
- Move from describing (words) to showing (visuals). You know that images dominate external communication. So use visuals—photos, videos and infographics—to pack a punch.



People who **hear** info  
retain **10%** after 3 days

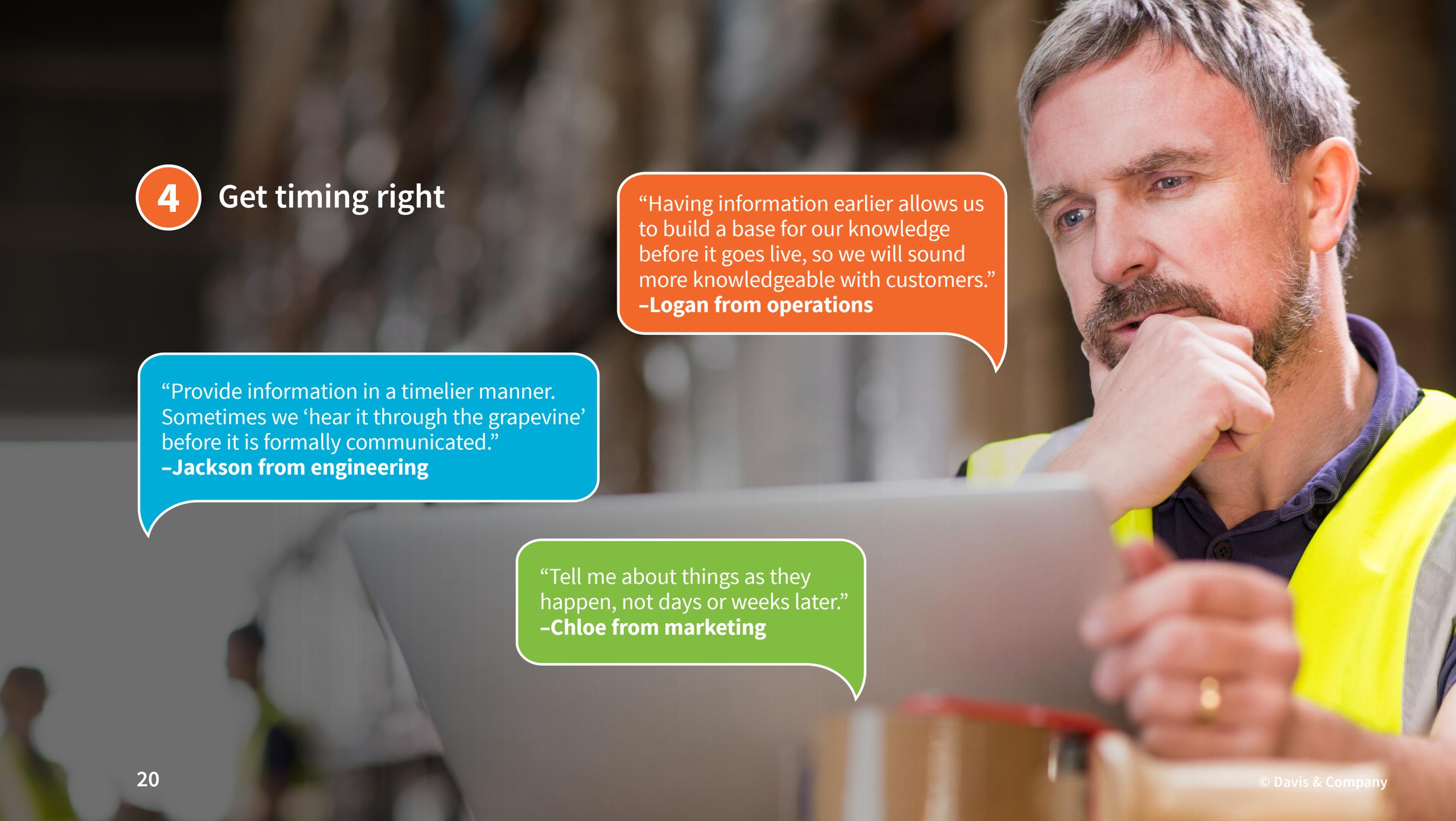


People who **see** info  
retain **65%** after 3 days

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a yellow safety vest over a dark blue polo shirt, is looking intently at a laptop screen. He has his hand resting on his chin in a thoughtful pose. The background is a blurred industrial or construction site.

**4** Get timing right

**Employees care about when they receive critical information.** Their preference? Information that’s delivered “just in time” —right when they need to act and before hearing it from external sources.

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark blue polo shirt and a bright yellow high-visibility safety vest, is looking intently at a laptop screen. He has his hand resting on his chin in a thoughtful pose. The background is a blurred industrial or office setting.

**4**

## Get timing right

“Provide information in a timelier manner. Sometimes we ‘hear it through the grapevine’ before it is formally communicated.”  
-**Jackson from engineering**

“Having information earlier allows us to build a base for our knowledge before it goes live, so we will sound more knowledgeable with customers.”  
-**Logan from operations**

“Tell me about things as they happen, not days or weeks later.”  
-**Chloe from marketing**

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a yellow safety vest over a dark blue polo shirt, is looking intently at a laptop screen. He has his hand on his chin, suggesting deep thought or concentration. The background is blurred, showing other people in a similar setting, likely a construction or industrial site.

## 4 Get timing right

**Timing is tricky to master**—because there are occasions when you have to scramble to share important, breaking news with employees. However, most messages aren't confidential and fast moving, so there are steps you can take to manage the timing of what you communicate.

## 4 Get timing right

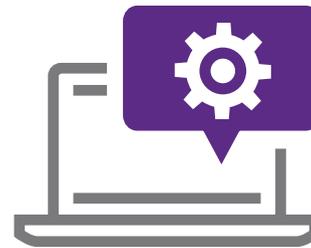
# How you can get **timing** right:

**Focus on what employees need to do—and when they need to do it.**



The biggest timing mistake organizations make is actually communicating too much too soon. Instead, focus on the employee experience. When do employees need a heads up? When do they really need to start paying attention? When are deadlines they need to meet?

**Plan ahead.**

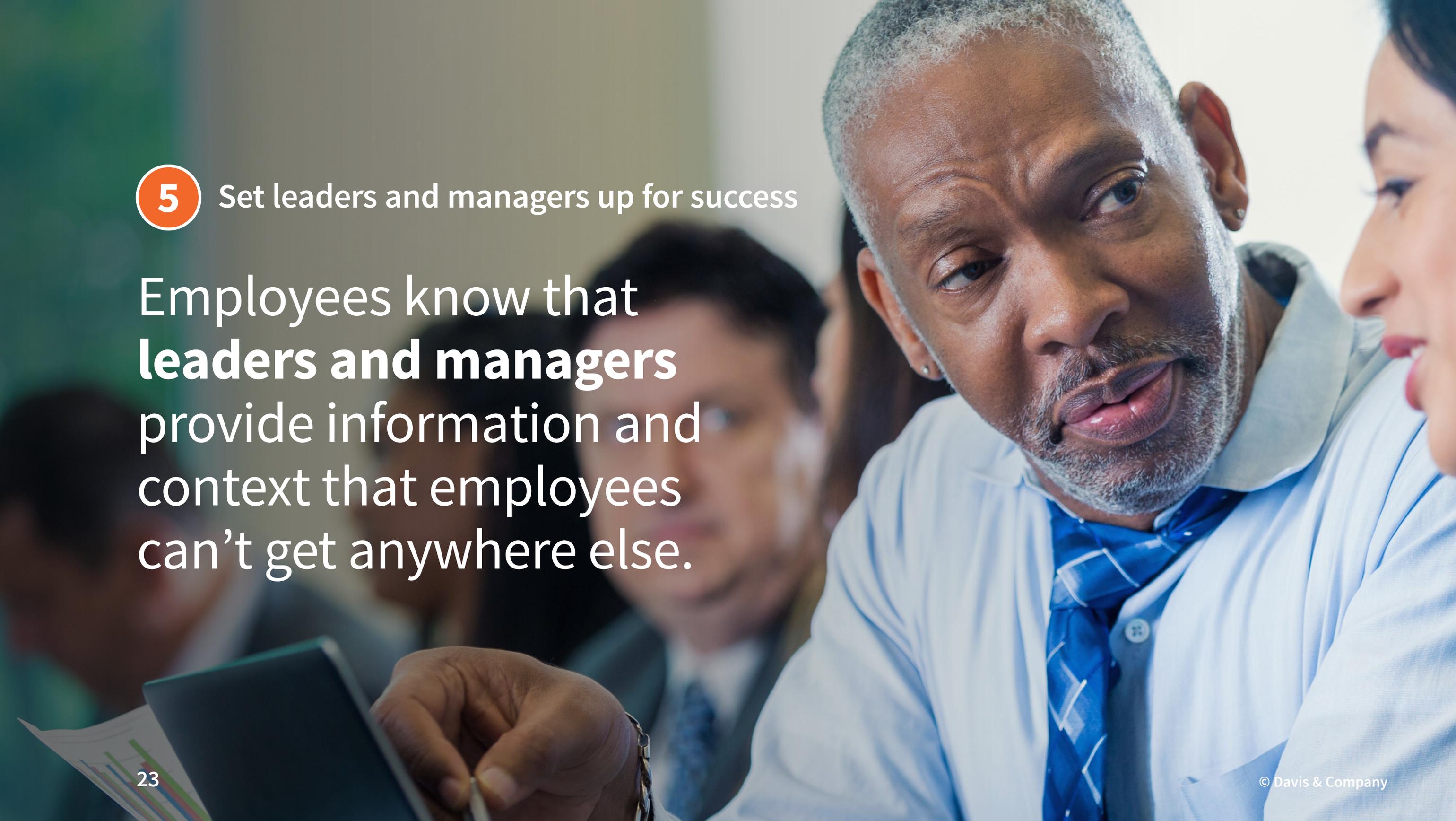


It's true that surprises come up, but 80% of what you need to communicate is expected. So there's no excuse not to communicate with enough time for people to take action—but not too early that they file it for later and forget about it. Be sure to keep holidays and weekends in mind.

**Provide updates.**



Create and follow a communication timeline to notify employees when more information will be available—even if it's an estimate (e.g., “shortly” or “within a few weeks”). Try sending a series of short, targeted e-blasts just in time.



**5** Set leaders and managers up for success

Employees know that **leaders and managers** provide information and context that employees can't get anywhere else.



**5** Set leaders and managers up for success

“I’d like more face time with our business unit president.”  
–Ava from finance

“The more face-to-face communication with senior leaders, the better.”  
–Zach from human resources

“More frequent communication from my supervisor is at the top of my wish list.”  
–Ryan from production



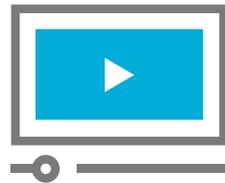
**5** Set leaders and managers up for success

However, leaders and managers **don't always have all the answers**, so they don't feel comfortable communicating.

## 5 Set leaders and managers up for success

# How you can set **leaders and managers** up for success:

### Learning sessions



When the topic is complicated and/or the change is significant, you need to provide leaders and managers with an interactive experience so they get a deep dive. Create scenarios to help them practice conversations with team members.

### One pagers



What essential information do leaders and managers need to know about a topic? Distill those points into a single page that provides a quick briefing.

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



FAQs help leaders and managers feel prepared when team members approach them with questions. To create the best FAQs, include tough questions and candid answers; and avoid corporate speak.

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a blue patterned blouse and dark pants, sits on a dark wooden bench. She is smiling and holding a white coffee cup and a notebook. She is talking to a man with red hair in a light purple shirt and a woman with blonde hair in a white top. They are in a modern office lounge with dark leather chairs, a wooden sideboard, and a large potted plant in the background.

**As you gather feedback from your employees, you'll hear many more specific suggestions on how to improve internal communication.**

While some ideas will require intensive effort, you'll find that many improvements are quick and simple to make. And even quick wins will make a big difference.

**Need more advice?**  
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