

# Productivity @ Work

 The Fuze Communications Index



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report shows that technology improves collaboration and communication processes, enabling:

- Companies to more easily identify and enact solutions for long-standing productivity and engagement hurdles
- An expansion of the remote and distributed workforce, in line with future of work trends
- A strengthened company culture that takes into account the various differences in cultural communication preferences across age demographics, the United States, and worldwide

**Good technology isn't enough - the best work is done by employees who feel like their workstyle preferences and ideas are heard and supported.**

# Introduction



Advances in technology, from device capabilities to internet speed, are dramatically improving workforce communications and collaboration. These innovations enable the workforce to thrive across geographic boundaries.

Employees collaborate on an international scale like never seen before, with numerous office locations, distributed colleagues, and business partners in different countries. This global view of communications and collaboration is transforming the way people work.

In addition to the global scale of the workforce, remote work is becoming a standard practice across many industries. Last year, 43 percent of employed Americans said they spent at least some time working remotely, according to a Gallup survey of more than 15,000 adults.<sup>1</sup>

**This report uncovers patterns and unique elements in the ways different groups communicate and collaborate. We review geography, demographics, engagement levels, and technical considerations to uncover preferences within various subgroups.**

As companies look to connect with a global and distributed workforce, it's important to understand the diverse communities that make up these groups. Communication and collaboration preferences are often as diverse as the communities they support.

Demographics impact how workers prefer to communicate and interact. By understanding those differences, companies can empower their employees with a collaborative environment and implement solutions to assist in those collaboration efforts.

The goal of this report is to help businesses understand the needs of a distributed workforce and the challenges those workers face. Business leaders will also gain insight into how to not only overcome those challenges, but how to use technology to generate maximum productivity and employee engagement.

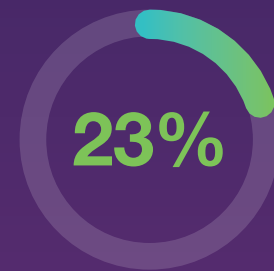
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<sup>1</sup>State of the American Workplace. Washington, D.C.: The Gallup Organization.

# Global

Work on an international scale is impacted by more than distance. Even with a global communications platform that can support various modes of collaboration, it's important to understand the unique preferences and communication patterns of your colleagues in different countries.

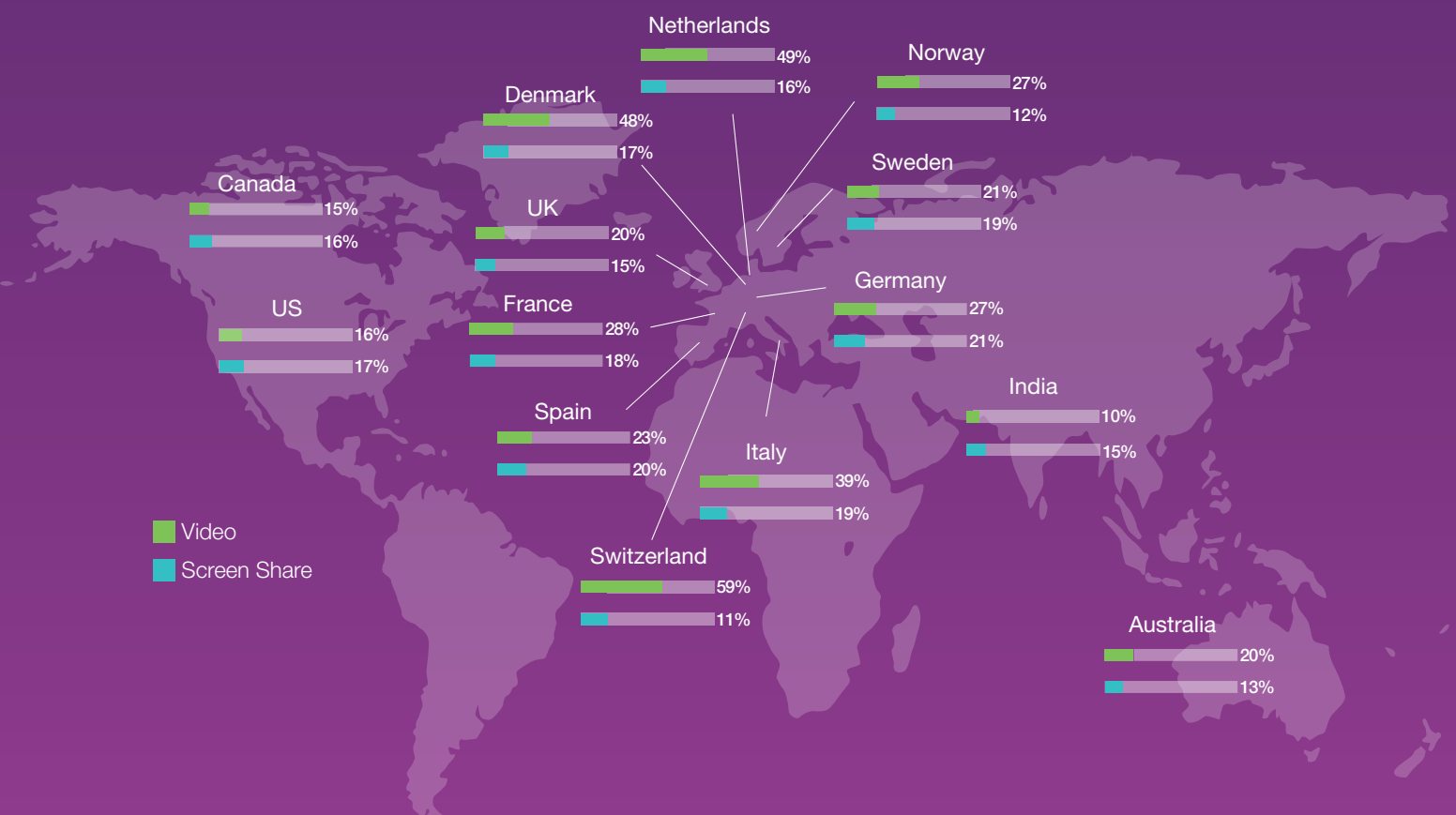
There are numerous factors that may result in this diversity in preferences, including differences in culture, time zone, proximity to economic hubs, and infrastructure investments.



**Global Average**  
The average usage of other countries combined

## Video and Screen Share Percentage by Country

(Includes meetings that use video or screen share at least once)







## PERSPECTIVE



Video on  
vs.  
Video off

Video and screen share create the opportunity for teams to stay connected, but as you meet with your teams, keep in mind the regional differences. If your regional office culture supports it, ensure a 'video on' policy for all meetings to drive engagement. For example, start the meeting with your video on if you are meeting with people in Switzerland or Denmark, however if you are catching up with your team in India, stick to an audio only default.

One significant difference between countries is the preference to use video and screen share during meetings and calls.

### Highest usage of video



Switzerland



Netherlands



Denmark



Italy

### Highest usage of screen sharing



Germany



Spain



Italy



Sweden

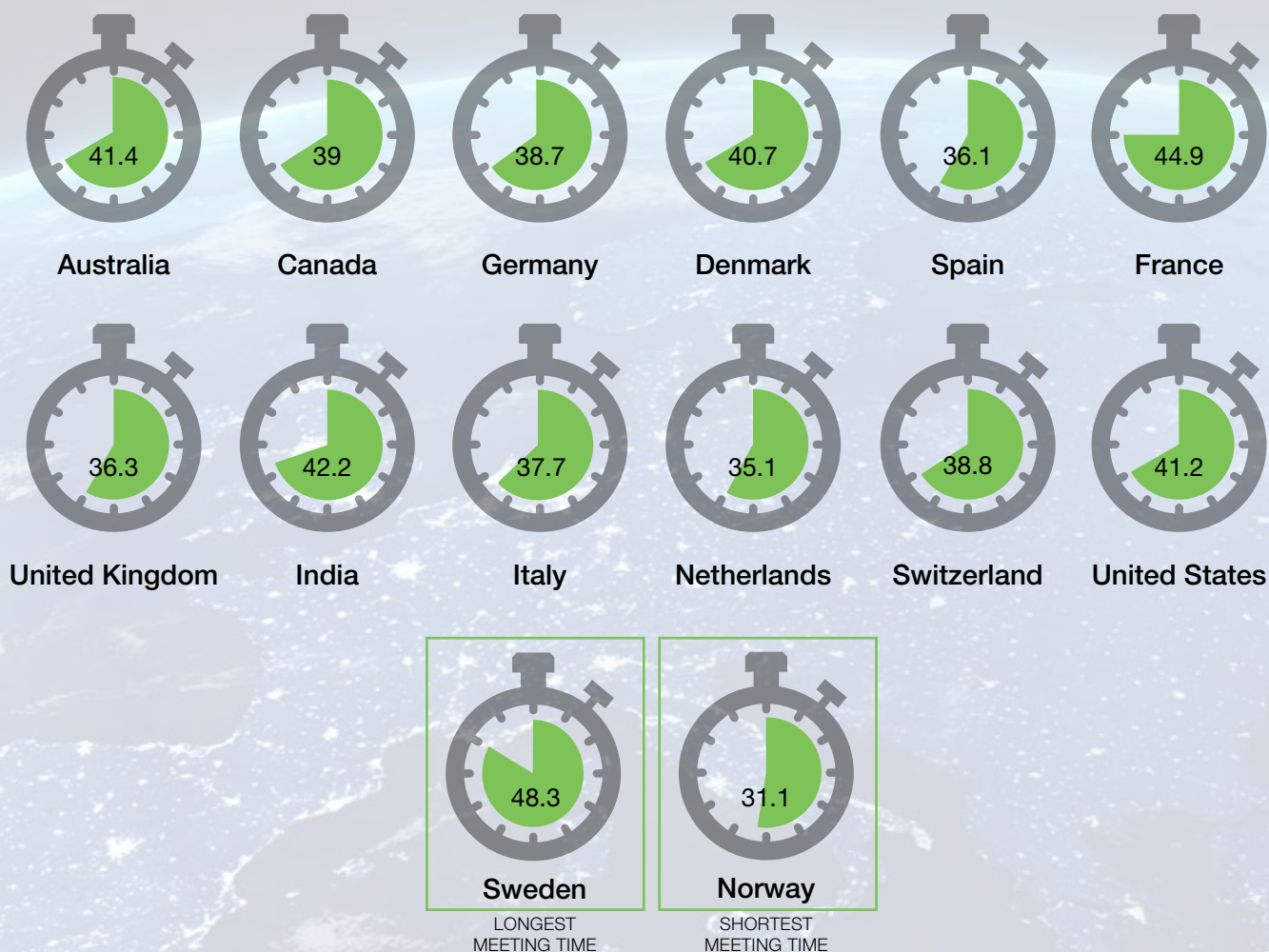


France

## Average Meeting Times by Country

Average meeting lengths by country vary by approximately 17 minutes, ranging from 31.1 minutes in Norway at the low end to 48.3 minutes in Sweden at the high end.

Minutes



Across all countries, the **average meeting time** is **39.4 minutes**.

## PERSPECTIVE



### Meeting Lengths

Notice that none of the average meeting lengths are 60 minutes, yet your calendar is likely littered with hour-long meetings throughout the week.

Instead of defaulting to 30- and 60-minute meetings, consider switching your calendar settings to 25 and 50 minutes to improve meeting efficiency if all attendees are based in the same country. Not only will this increase the likelihood of meetings starting on time, it will also give employees an opportunity to check emails, refill their coffee cups, and have a moment to re-energize on days booked full of meetings.

## PERSPECTIVE

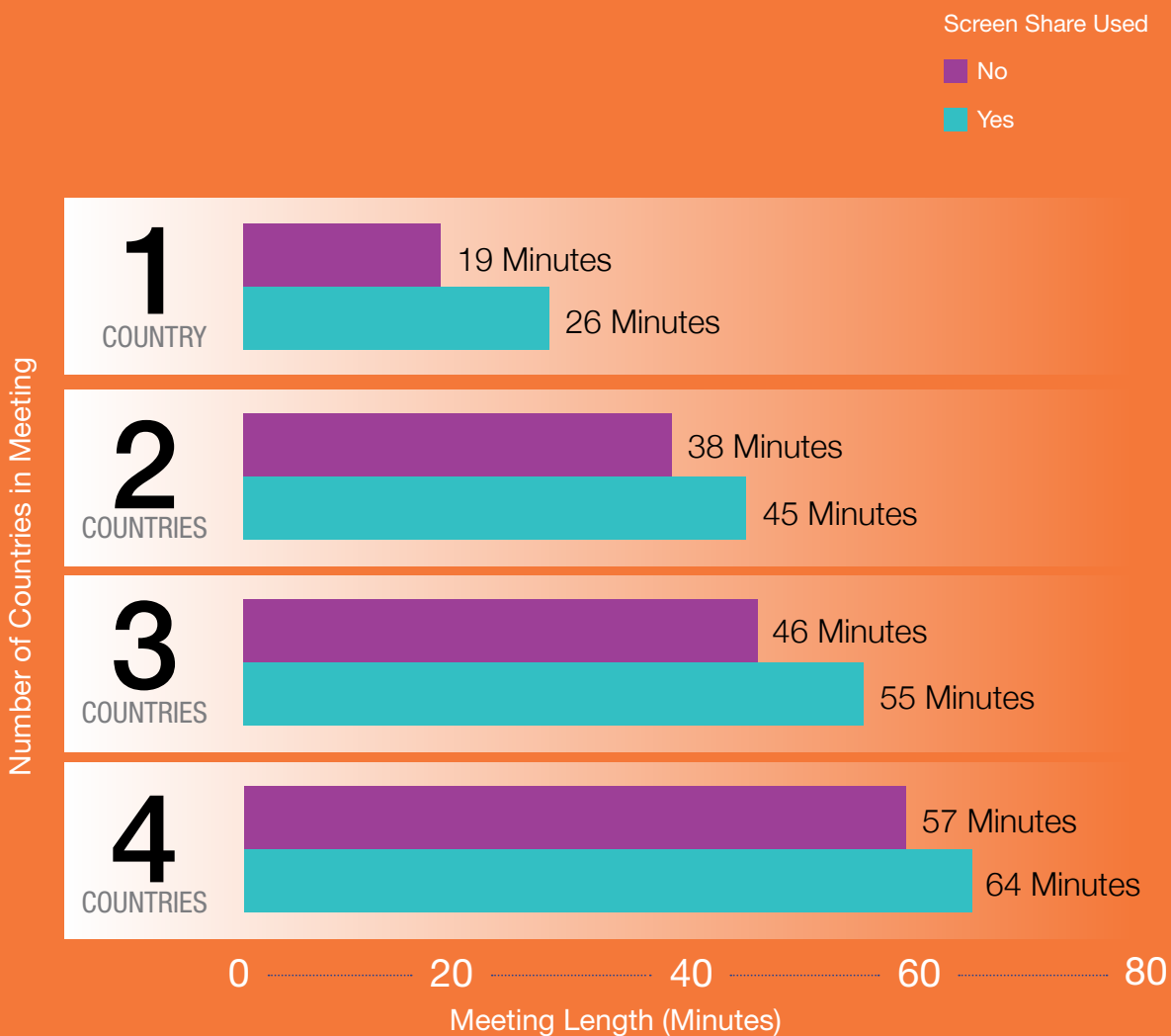


### Meeting Times

While keeping meeting lengths shorter makes sense when you're talking to participants from one country, on the flip side, you should intentionally schedule longer meetings when you know you'll have participants from two or more countries joining you. We recommend 60-minute meetings with participants from three countries, and at least 75 minutes for four countries or more. We promise, your team will prefer to get time back than run over.

### Impact of the Number of Countries on Meeting Length

Since we're looking at collaboration across countries, it's important to understand the impact of including people from numerous countries in a meeting. The duration of a meeting increases dramatically for each new country added to the meeting. Moving from one country to two countries doubles the average meeting length. Including four or more countries triples the length of the meeting. This holds true whether a screen was shared—which typically represents a more interactive meeting—or not.



## Device Types by Country

While a desktop application or internet browser is the overwhelming choice to access meetings across all countries, there are noticeable differences in the usage of mobile phones, landlines, and tablets. Australia leads the group in mobile access to meetings, with 15 percent, and is the only country to demonstrate noticeable tablet usage, at 8 percent compared to an average of 0.18 percent for the remaining countries. Landline access is highest in the United Kingdom (13 percent), the United States (8 percent), and Canada (5 percent). Mobile phone access is highest in Australia (15 percent), Denmark (10 percent), and Italy (8 percent).

### Countries with Top Usage





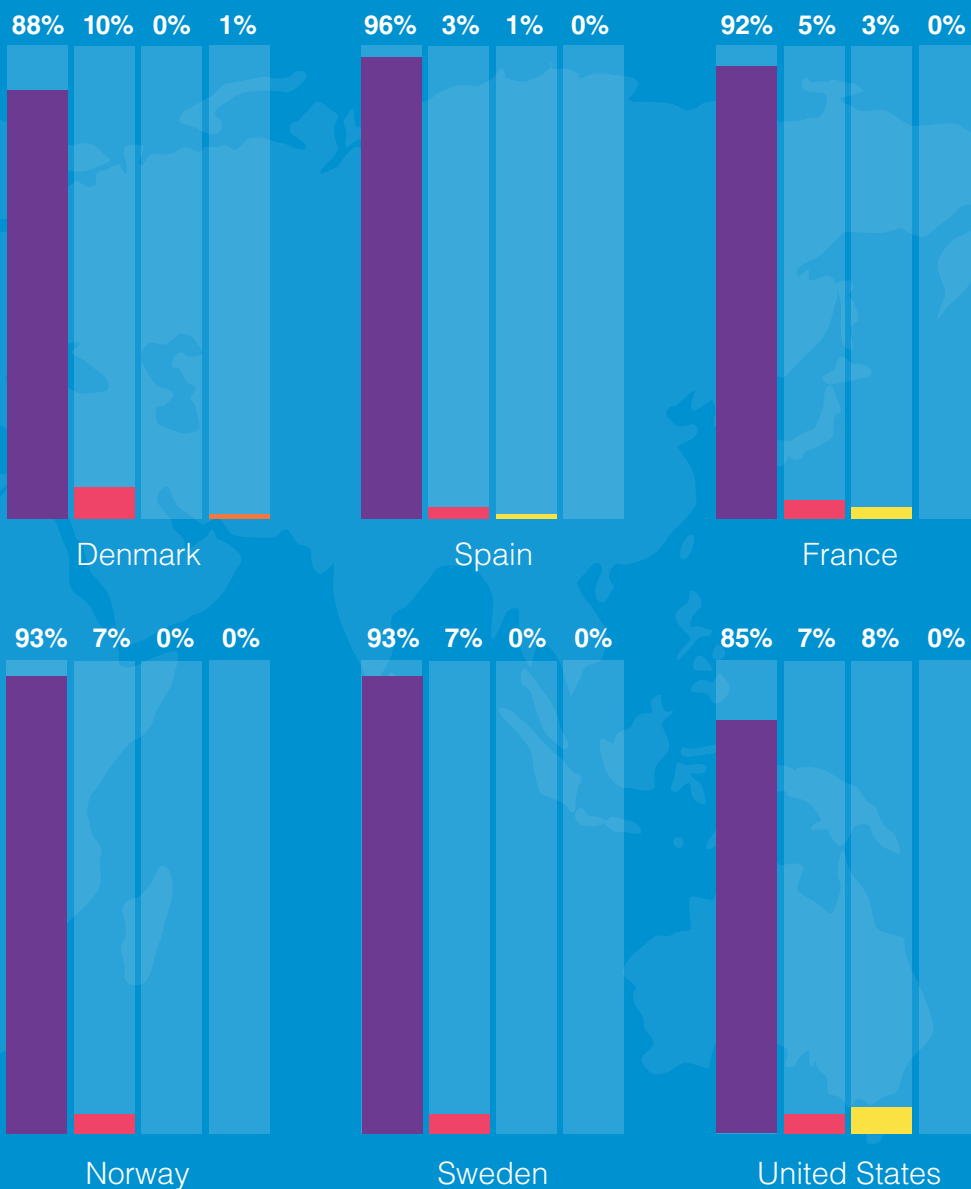
## PERSPECTIVE



### Business Communications

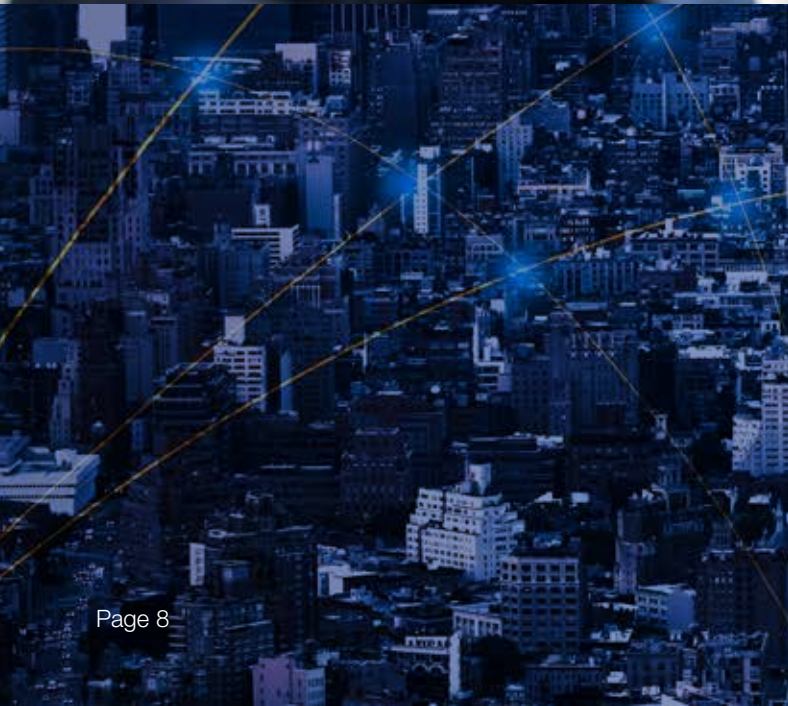
The quality, flexibility, and cost-savings of internet-based calling have made the laptop our device of choice for business communications. Future workers (age 15–18) rate their mobile phones as their preferred work tool, over the laptop, signaling to leaders that you need to make sure your communications tools are mobile ready for the shift on the horizon to mobile as the preferred meeting device in your organization.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Breaking Barriers 2020: How CIOs are Shaping the Future of Work, Fuze.





Communication styles and preferences vary by state across the country.





# U.S. Statewide

It's understandable that preferences change across global markets. However, there are also differences in how people in the United States communicate and collaborate across state lines.

Patterns emerge when we look at the average meeting length by state. The southeastern and midwestern United States appear to hold longer meetings on average, when compared to the West Coast and Northeast.

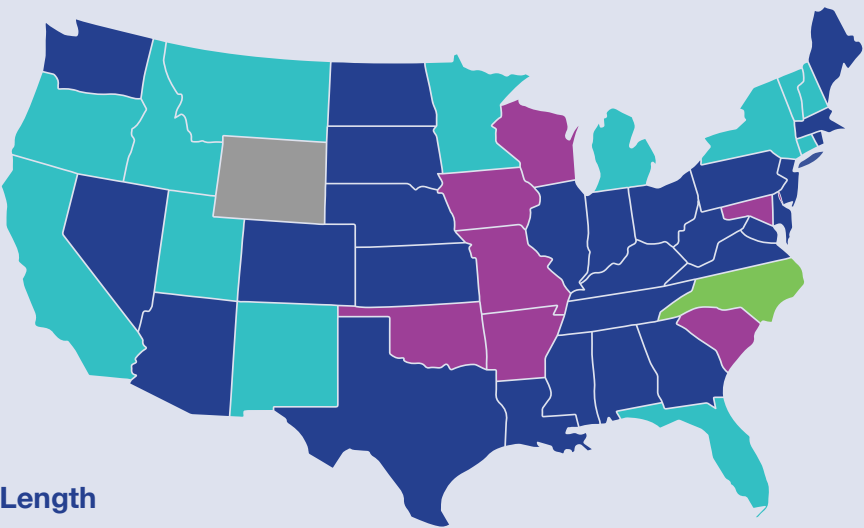
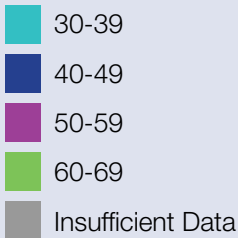
Average call length and message length vary on a state-by-state basis, rather than forming clear regional patterns.



# Average Meeting Length by State (Minutes)



Average Meeting Length (Minutes)



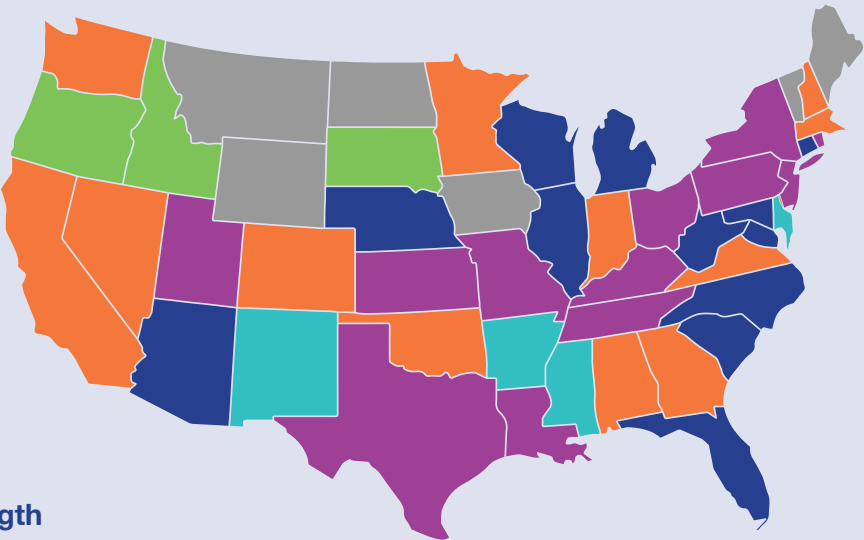
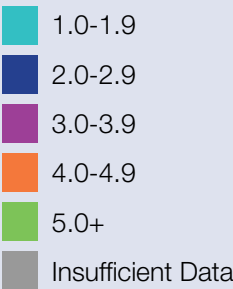
Top Three	
66 Min.	North Carolina
59 Min.	South Carolina
59 Min.	Iowa

Bottom Three	
32 Min.	New Mexico
34 Min.	Vermont
34 Min.	Montana

# Average Call Length by State (Minutes)



Average Call Length (Minutes)



Top Three	
8.2 Min.	South Dakota
6.0 Min.	Idaho
5.4 Min.	District of Columbia

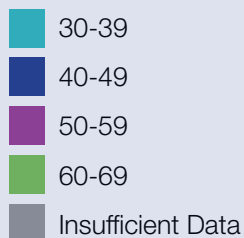
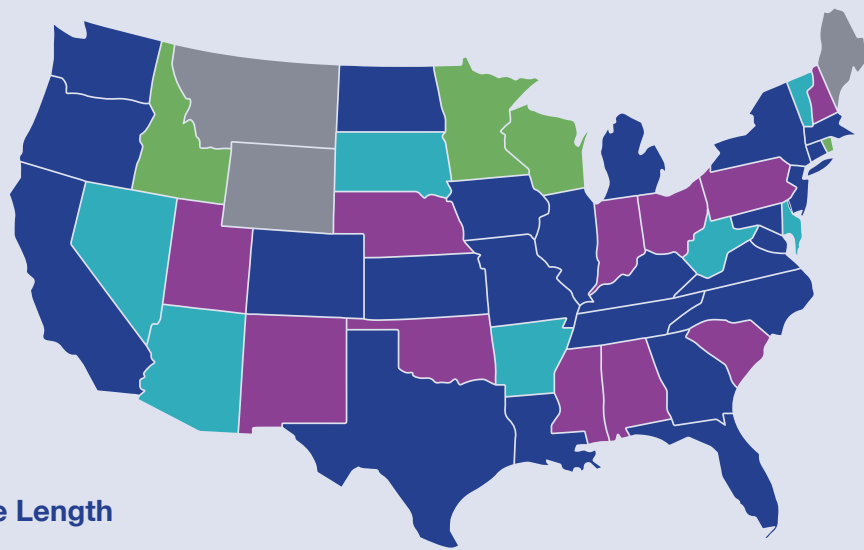
Bottom Three	
1.4 Min.	Delaware
1.4 Min.	New Mexico
1.7 Min.	Arkansas



## Average Message Length by State (Characters)



Average Message Length  
(Characters)



### Top Three

66.5 Characters	Idaho
65.3 Characters	Wisconsin
62.5 Characters	Rhode Island

### Bottom Three

31.4 Characters	West Virginia
32.6 Characters	South Dakota
34.5 Characters	Vermont

## PERSPECTIVE



Meeting  
Lengths

Geographic stereotypes hold true in terms of meeting length, as southern and midwestern teams are likely more formal and polite, asking personal questions before getting to the meat of the conversation. Thus their meetings frequently run longer.

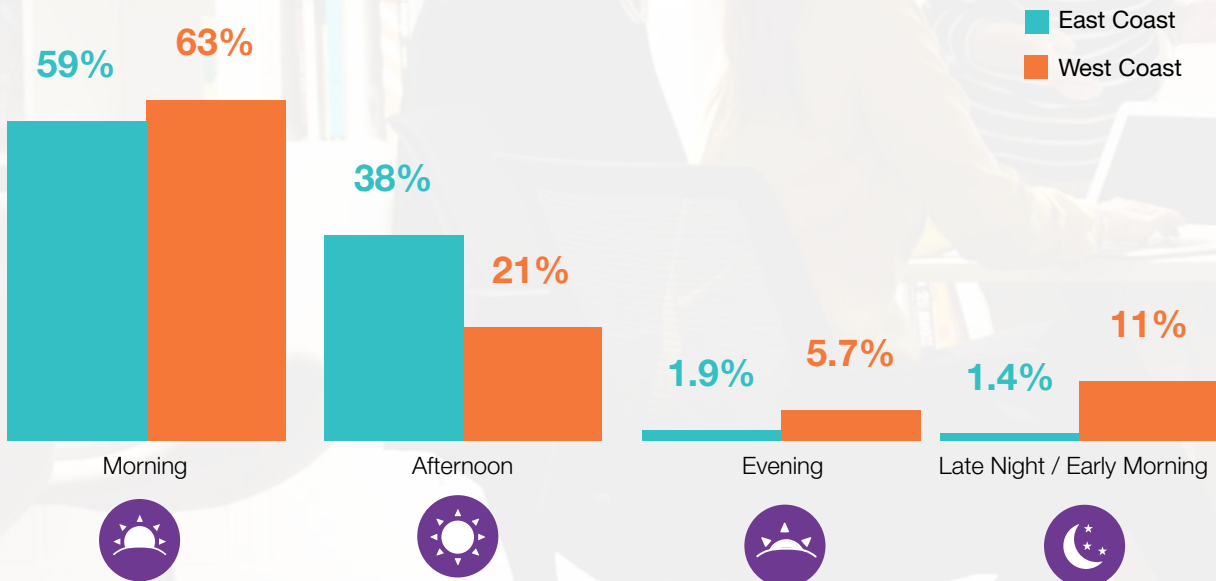
For example:

- South Dakota tops the list with the longest average call length of 8 minutes and 15 seconds and Delaware has the shortest average call length at 1 minute and 24 seconds.
- New Mexico has the shortest meetings on average, 31 minutes 26 seconds.
- North Carolina has the longest meetings on average, 65 minutes 57 seconds.

# U.S. East Coast vs. West Coast

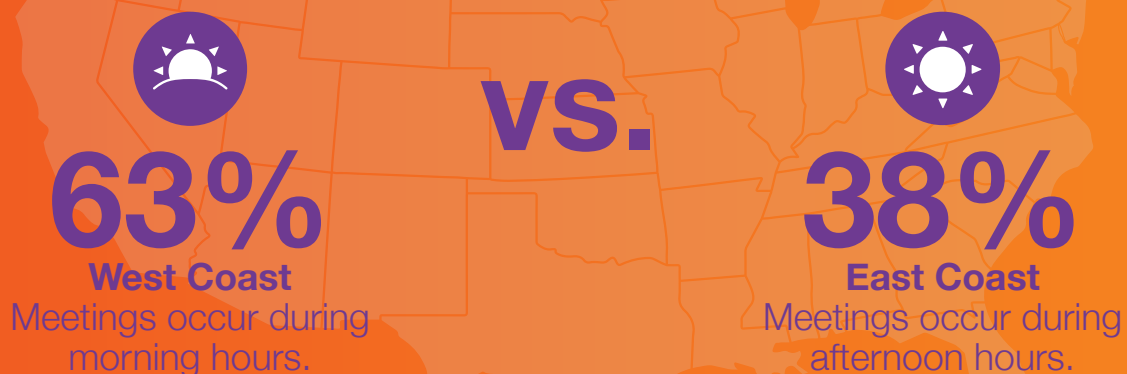
When examining the differences between communication patterns on the East Coast versus the West Coast of the United States, we can quickly see that both coasts adjust their meeting schedules to accommodate the other coast's working hours.

## Percentage of Meetings by Time of Day



## Ideal Meeting Times by Coast

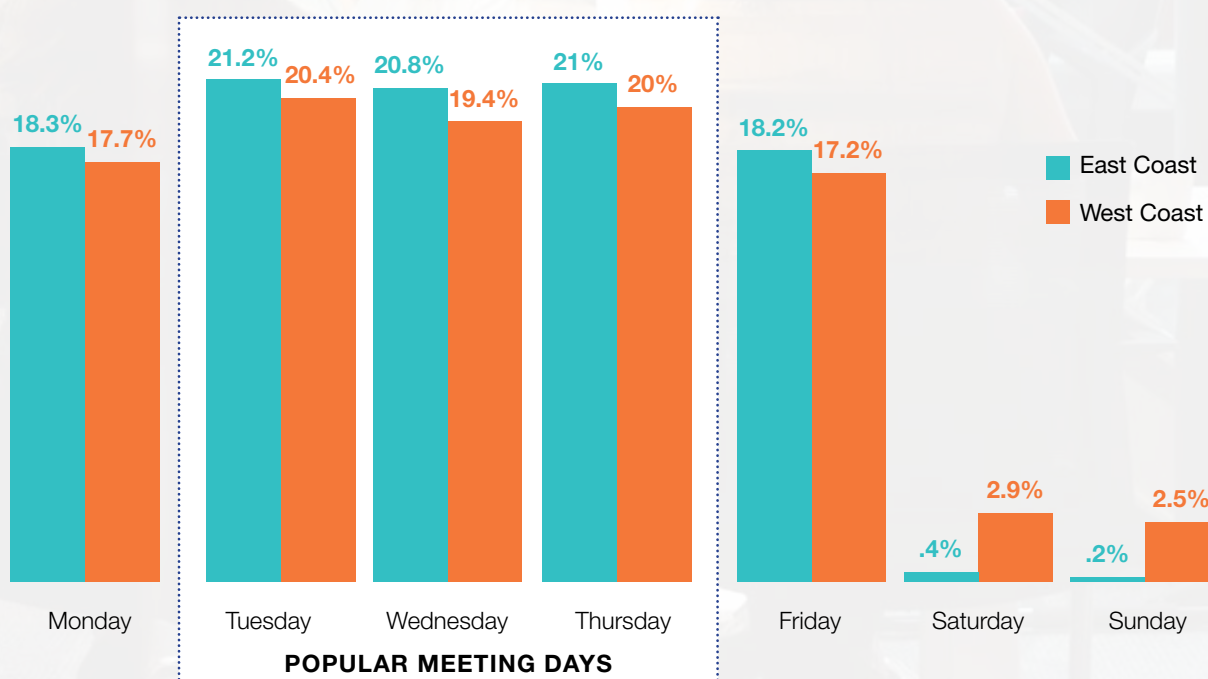
Meetings on both coasts are most likely to take place Tuesday through Thursday, with the least popular workday for meetings being Friday. East Coast workers predominantly hold all meetings Monday through Friday. West Coast workers hold 5.4 percent of their meetings on the weekends, compared to 0.6 percent of East Coast workers.



West Coast meetings peak during the morning hours, with 63 percent of all meetings taking place between 7:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. East Coast workers are more likely to hold meetings in the afternoon compared to their West Coast counterparts. However, workers on the West Coast are more likely to hold meetings over a larger part of the day, well into the evening and late night/early morning hours.

Eleven percent of meetings on the West Coast take place during the early morning hours, from midnight to 6:00 a.m. This likely reflects participation in morning meetings on the East Coast.

### Percentage of Meetings by Day of Week



### The rise of the weekend meeting?

5.4% vs. .6%

Percentage of meetings held over weekends on the West Coast.

Percentage of meetings held over weekends on the East Coast.

## Best Meeting Times by Coast

The following charts show the most efficient times to host meetings on each coast. Efficient meetings are defined as meetings with high attendance, both the percent of attendees and the percent of time they stayed on the line.

### West Coast

Most and least efficient West Coast meeting times by day.

Day	Best 	Worst 
Mondays	9:00 a.m.	5:00 p.m.
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
Wednesdays	9:00 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
Thursdays	9:00 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
Fridays	9:00 a.m.	6:00 p.m.

### West Coast

Most and least efficient West Coast meeting times overall for the week.



**2:00 p.m.**

**Thursday**

is the best time to hold meetings on the West Coast.



**7:00 a.m.**

**Friday**

is the worst time to hold meetings on the West Coast.

## PERSPECTIVE





Meeting  
Lengths

Taking advantage of the week ahead, East Coast workers tend to kick things off on Monday afternoons, with mid-week check-ins on Wednesdays. The late afternoon meeting times may account for the addition of West Coast team members or those based in other time zones, supporting the growing trend of distributed teams. On the other hand, West Coast workers tend to hold the most meetings when their East Coast counterparts have already signed off for the day, perhaps as a result of meetings and correspondence with these teammates earlier in the day.



## East Coast

Most and least efficient East Coast meeting times by day.

Day	Best 	Worst 
Mondays	10:00 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
Tuesday	10:00 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
Wednesdays	10:00 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
Thursdays	10:00 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
Fridays	10:00 a.m.	6:00 p.m.

## East Coast

Most and least efficient East Coast meeting times overall for the week.



**4:00 p.m.**  
**Wednesday**  
is the best time to  
hold meetings on the  
East Coast.



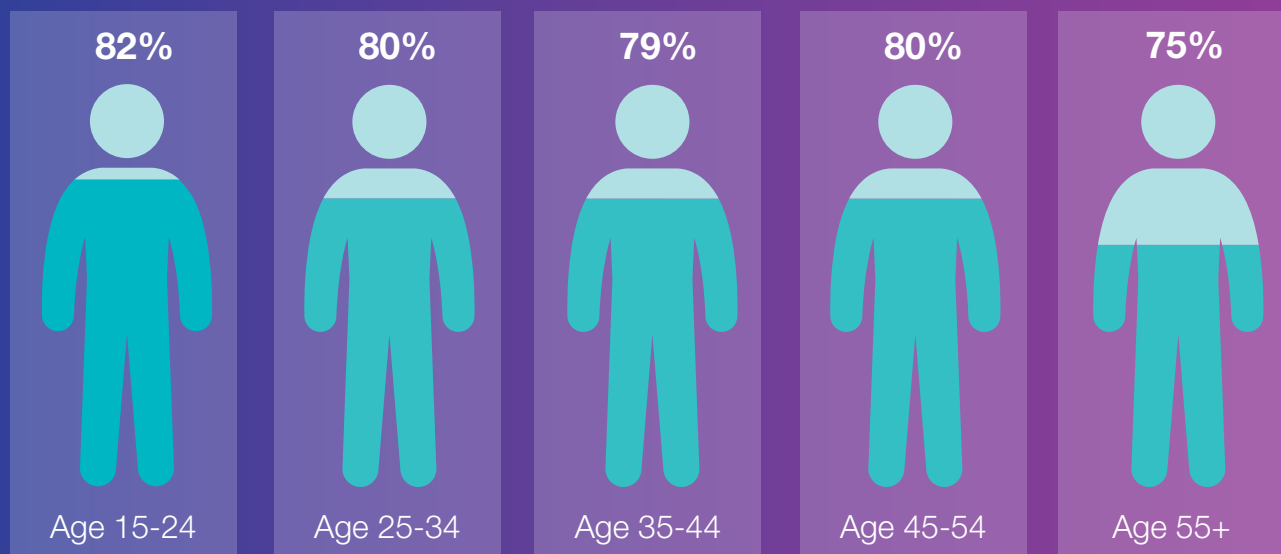
**7:00 a.m.**  
**Monday**  
is the worst to  
hold meetings on the  
East Coast.



# Age

Differences in the technical aptitude across generations are well-documented, along with their varied expectations for freedom in work and collaboration. Despite these characteristics, there are no statistically significant differences in the likelihood to use video or share a screen during a call or meeting, or any major difference in message or call length by age. However, there are differences in meeting attendance.

## Percentage of Meetings Attended by Age



As workers age, the percentage of meetings that they attend decreases, from 82 percent at age 15–24 to 75 percent at age 55+. This is likely due to an increased number of overall meetings as seniority level typically increases with age and experience.

## Average Call Length by Age

Average call length is consistent across age groups, varying between 3.6 and 4.0 minutes. The 55+ age group is the exception to this rule, with an average call length at 2.7 minutes.





## PERSPECTIVE



Differences in  
demographics

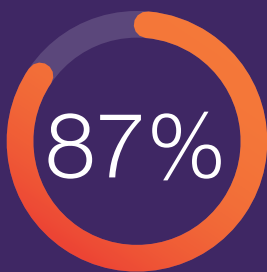
It's not surprising that the youngest workers attend the most meetings, as they are focused on career growth, expanding their internal networks, and learning about every part of the business. On the other hand, older workers can be more selective about the meetings they attend and often are more direct and efficient with their communications, which is likely the reasoning behind the shortest average call length time.

# Engagement

When looking to improve meeting engagement by attendees, screen sharing and video capabilities provide a measurable benefit. Meeting length and time also impact the likelihood of early disconnects from meetings.

## Impact of Screen Share on Average Attendance Length

On average, when a screen share occurred at some point during the meeting, attendees stayed connected for 87 percent of the meeting. Without a screen share, they only stayed connected for 75 percent of the meeting. With an average meeting time in the United States of 41.2 minutes, this increase in attendance translates to an extra 4.9 minutes.



With Screen Share



Average meeting time

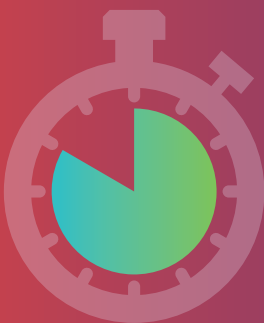
41.2  
minutes



Without Screen Share

## Impact of Video on Meeting Length

If video is used at any point during a meeting, the length of the meeting increases on average by seven minutes or by 14 percent.



**Video**  
49.1 minutes



**No Video**  
42.9 minutes



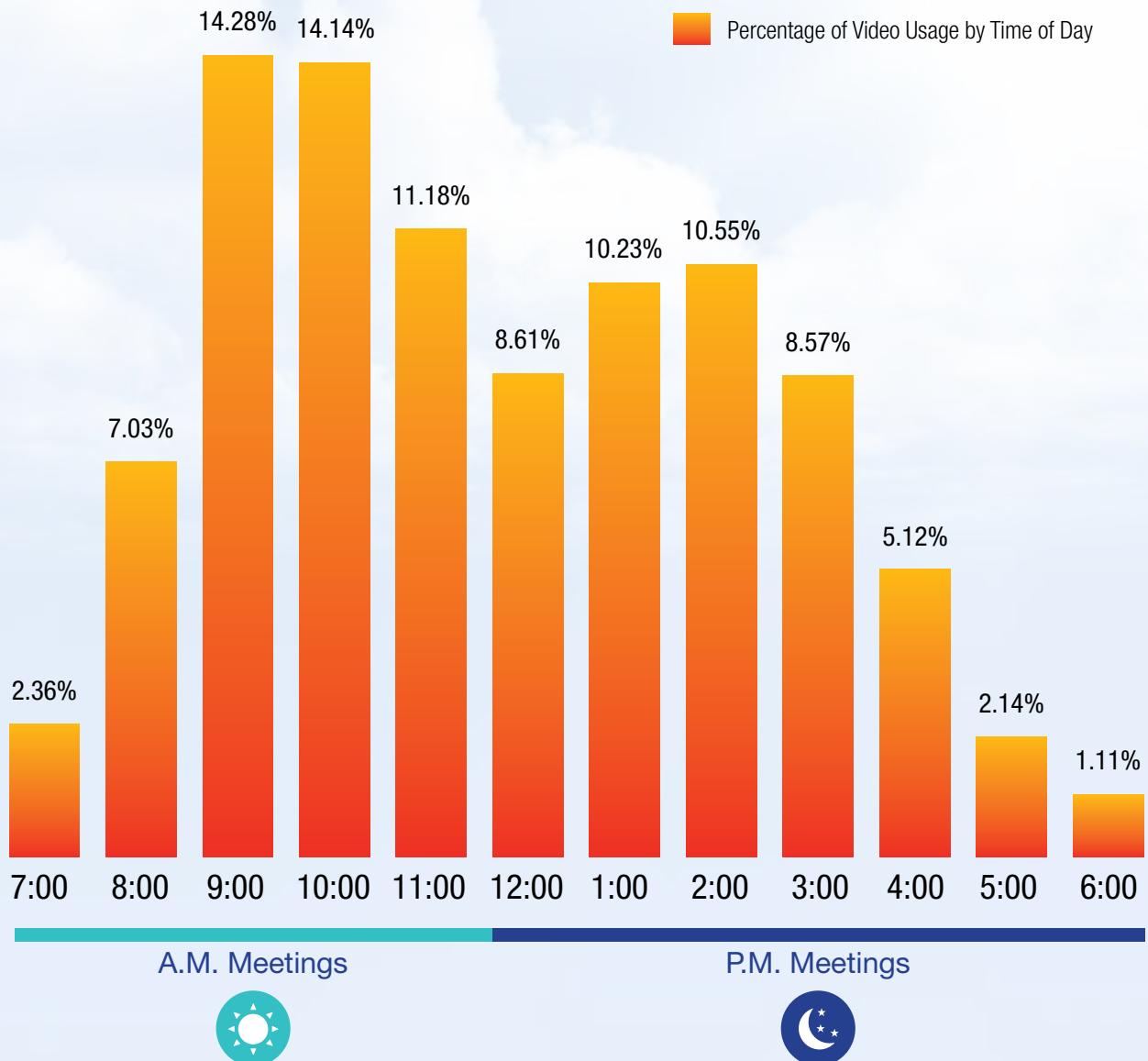
14%

Increase in meeting  
time with video



## Video Usage by Time of Day

The likelihood of workers using video changes throughout the day. At 8:00 a.m., workers are seven percent likely to use video, but that rate doubles to 14 percent from 9:00–10:00 a.m., which is the most popular window for video chat. From 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m., the average rate is 11 percent, except for a dip to eight percent around lunchtime. Video usage begins to drop off around 3:00 p.m.



## PERSPECTIVE

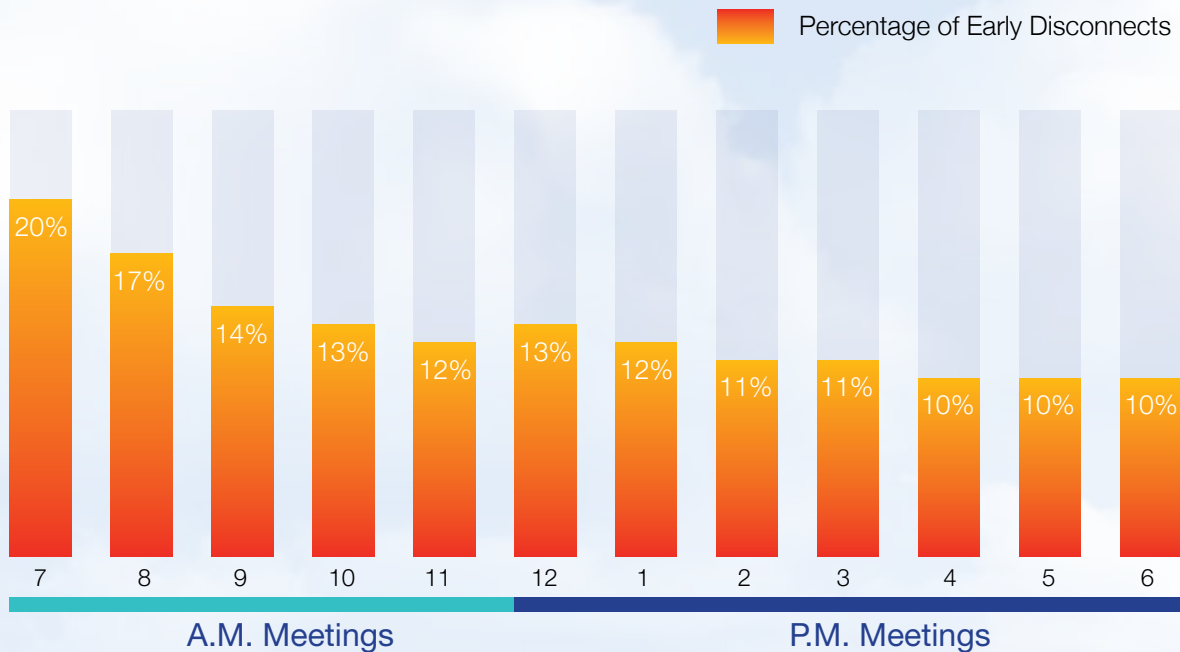


Video Meetings

Adding a visual element to a meeting or call helps to keep all meeting participants more engaged, while also reducing the opportunity for multitasking, a proven productivity killer.

## Early Disconnects by Time of Day

The percent of attendees who leave a meeting with at least 10 minutes remaining in a session appears to decline throughout the day. Meetings starting at 7:00 a.m. have a 20 percent chance of an early disconnect by an attendee. There is a very slight increase in disconnects around lunch time (12:00 p.m.), but overall the improved attendance rates continue through to 6:00 p.m., where the portion of early disconnects is 10 percent. Morning meetings likely have a higher drop-off rate due to commuters joining meetings and disconnecting when they reach the office.



## PERSPECTIVE

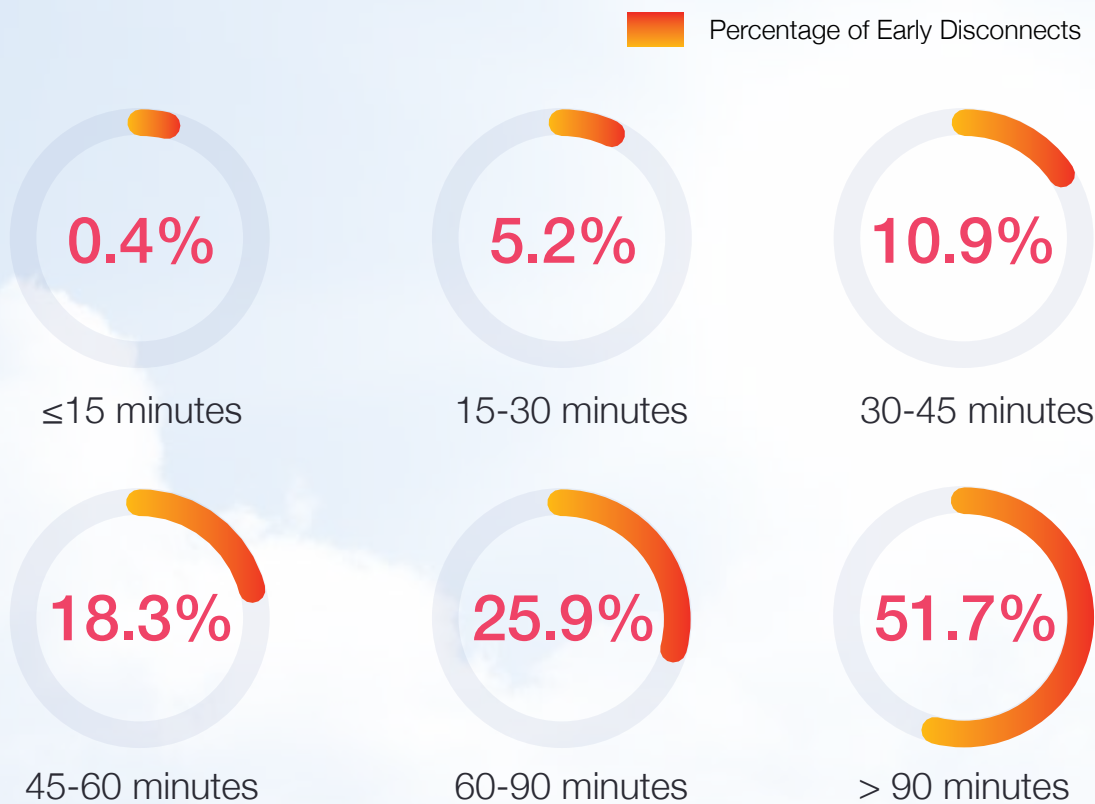


Video Meetings

But, first coffee. Think twice about requesting a video meeting before 9 a.m., since there is a low likelihood that participants will turn on their video. Similarly, video usage drops again at the end of the day, which could be due to meetings taken in transit or from home if workers leave the office early.

## Early Disconnects by Meeting Length

The percent of attendees who leave a meeting with at least 10 minutes remaining in a session increases exponentially as the length of the meeting increases. Meetings at or under 15 minutes have an early disconnect percent of only 0.4.



## PERSPECTIVE



Meeting Lengths

Efficiency reigns supreme when it comes to meeting length, which is likely why shorter meetings have the lowest early disconnect rate. As a meeting drags on, more participants are likely to bail early.



# Collaboration Across Demographics

Communication preferences vary across geography, demographics, engagement techniques, and technologies. There are similarities and differences in mode of communication, device type, meeting format, call length, and many other attributes.

While it's important to understand the unique patterns across these teams, it's equally important to provide an effective means for employees and partners to seamlessly collaborate.

To achieve the benefits of a global workforce, communication and collaboration across teams should be viewed as an asset, not a hindrance.

Business and IT leaders should look to provide their workforce with a comprehensive, extensible communications platform that supports various methods of interactions, allowing for flexibility based on culture differences and individual preferences.









# Analysis Methodology

For this report, one year (2018) of global Fuze meeting data was analyzed, consisting of scheduled meetings, both ad-hoc and regularly occurring. These usage data points, reflecting engagement with the Fuze platform, include information on 5,059,638 (non-unique) attendees spanning 1,513,935 meetings instances.

A second source of usage data also analyzed the characteristics of Fuze user calls, messages, and meetings from three months (December 2018–February 2019) where a user participated in at least one call, message, and meeting. These usage data points consist of 20,305,787 calls; 33,117,894 messages; and 1,016,915 meetings.

In order to enrich the usage data with demographic information, the 2017 American Community Census (ACS) was queried at the ZIP Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) level. As a result, all demographic findings are based only on attendees located in the United States.

Since attendee information is at the ZIP code level, we mapped ZIP codes to ZCTAs and weighted the measurements according to the census data. For example, if the census tells us 30 percent of 02101 consists of people aged 25–34, and we have data on 1,000 attendees from 02101, we estimate 300 persons are aged 25–34. The demographic findings are therefore an estimate based on population patterns within a ZCTA.





## About Fuze

Fuze is a global cloud communications and collaboration software platform for the enterprise. Through an innovative and consumer-inspired unified experience, Fuze enables seamless transition between calling, meeting, chatting, and sharing. Fuze empowers the digital workforce anytime, anywhere, and across any device. Headquartered in Boston, MA, Fuze has additional locations including New York, San Francisco, Seattle, Ottawa, London, Amsterdam, Aveiro (Portugal), Paris, Munich, Zurich, Copenhagen, and Sydney.

Learn more about Fuze: [www.fuze.com](https://www.fuze.com)