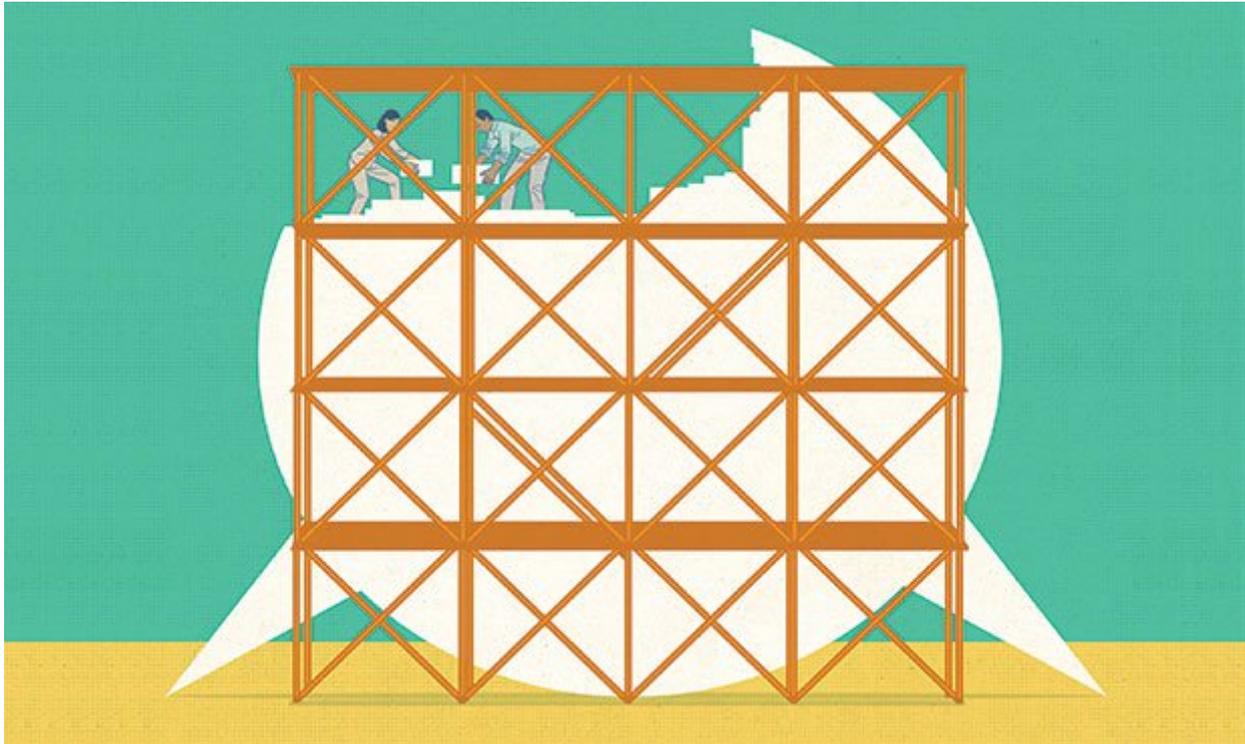


## How digital tools can improve internal communications for diverse workforces

BP [benefitspro.com/2022/01/07/how-digital-tools-can-improve-internal-communications-for-diverse-workforces](https://benefitspro.com/2022/01/07/how-digital-tools-can-improve-internal-communications-for-diverse-workforces)



As employers grapple with the realities of a post-pandemic workforce, it's worthwhile to invest time and resources into communication systems that support mobile and multilingual teams.

Today's frontline industries have some of the most diverse workforces in the United States. Statistics show that 1 in 6 employees on the frontline are immigrants. That number is likely even higher, as many are hired "off the books" and therefore don't appear in standard economic statistics. As the Great Resignation impacts jobs where a large percentage of the immigrant workforce is concentrated — like hospitality management, manufacturing, and other skilled roles — employers are faced with the need to relay information quickly to employees who speak multiple languages.

This paradigm shift has led to increased digitization, as frontline companies like Walmart launch mobile initiatives to keep employees connected. In an environment where workers speak various languages such as Spanish, Albanian, or Portuguese, employers must ensure their teams have the right resources to get the job done safely and efficiently.

Many organizations use tools like Google Translate to communicate with workers who don't speak the company's primary language. While it can be a useful hack, physically copying and pasting different messages in multiple languages is time-intensive (and we all know time is money) and negatively impacts employee engagement.

Language barriers pose long-term challenges for employers, but the need for clear communication is particularly acute now in a post-pandemic workforce. Managers must ensure their messages and policy updates are read and understood by the entire team. Here, we'll cover the communication gaps employers should consider as they adopt inline translation technology for 2022 and beyond.

## **Ensuring employees receive updates and protocols**

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Information silos pose a major internal communication challenge. Often, separate departments or distributed teams don't have adequate systems in place to share information with each other. Instead, they might rely on bulletin boards, flyers, or word-of-mouth updates from managers in standup meetings. As employers grapple with the realities of a post-pandemic workforce, it's worthwhile to invest time and resources into communication systems that support mobile and multilingual teams.

From safety protocols, to benefits enrollment, to policy changes and training and development, employees must be actively aware of updates coming from their managers and supervisors — which can be especially difficult when language barriers aren't addressed. Inefficient communication leaves employees at risk of missing out on important benefits, like health coverage. This misalignment causes a negative employee experience and opens the door to poor training and increased risk to workers' welfare. Ultimately, these challenges can go on to impact the entire organization's culture, productivity, and bottom line.

These gaps also contribute to increased turnover and safety hazards. When information is presented in an English-only format, or filtered through miscellaneous translation sites, the risk increases. OSHA estimates that language barriers contribute to 25% of all workplace injuries and loss of life. By presenting information directly to employees in one secure, multilingual platform, management can trust that all safety messages are received, accurately translated and understood by each employee.

## **Sending surveys in employees' native languages**

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Surveys offer a way for employees to express their concerns and feelings about their company. That data can help frontline organizations understand employee sentiment, make changes, and improve worker satisfaction. However, employers don't get the full, accurate picture if a portion of their workforce has difficulty reading them.

By utilizing inline translation, frontline workers can receive surveys in their preferred language, understand the questions, and answer thoroughly. Once submitted, can review the results and responses in their primary language.

When employees believe their work is meaningful, they are 49% less likely to leave. In an environment where 40% of the workforce is poised to resign, retention is especially critical. Employers who fail to reach their multilingual teams risk massive losses to company culture, employee morale, and long-term retention.

## **Quickly answering employee questions (without a translator)**

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Frontline managers struggle to answer questions from workers who don't speak the company's dominant language. Often, when upper management gets a question from an employee in another language, they have no other choice but to copy and paste the message into a search engine before providing an answer. The process is time-consuming, and as staffing shortages persist, is not sustainable.

Operational questions can arise at a moment's notice. When teams are required to rely on legacy communication methods like word-of-mouth responses or paper handbooks, productivity grinds to a halt as employees search for answers. Creating real-time, transparent communication channels reduces confusion and promotes a more inclusive culture for frontline workers.

Frontline-majority companies continue to face staffing challenges after a sharp uptick in resignations following the COVID-19 pandemic. Transitioning into 2022, technology will be key in attracting and retaining high-performing, diverse talent. As economies become more globalized, companies must follow suit. Inline translation offers that accessibility without extra administrative work.

As employee communication and inline translation platforms become commonplace in frontline industries, it's critical for organizations to take advantage of this technology to drive operational efficiency and create an inclusive workplace culture for everyone.

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