



# COLLABORATION 2021

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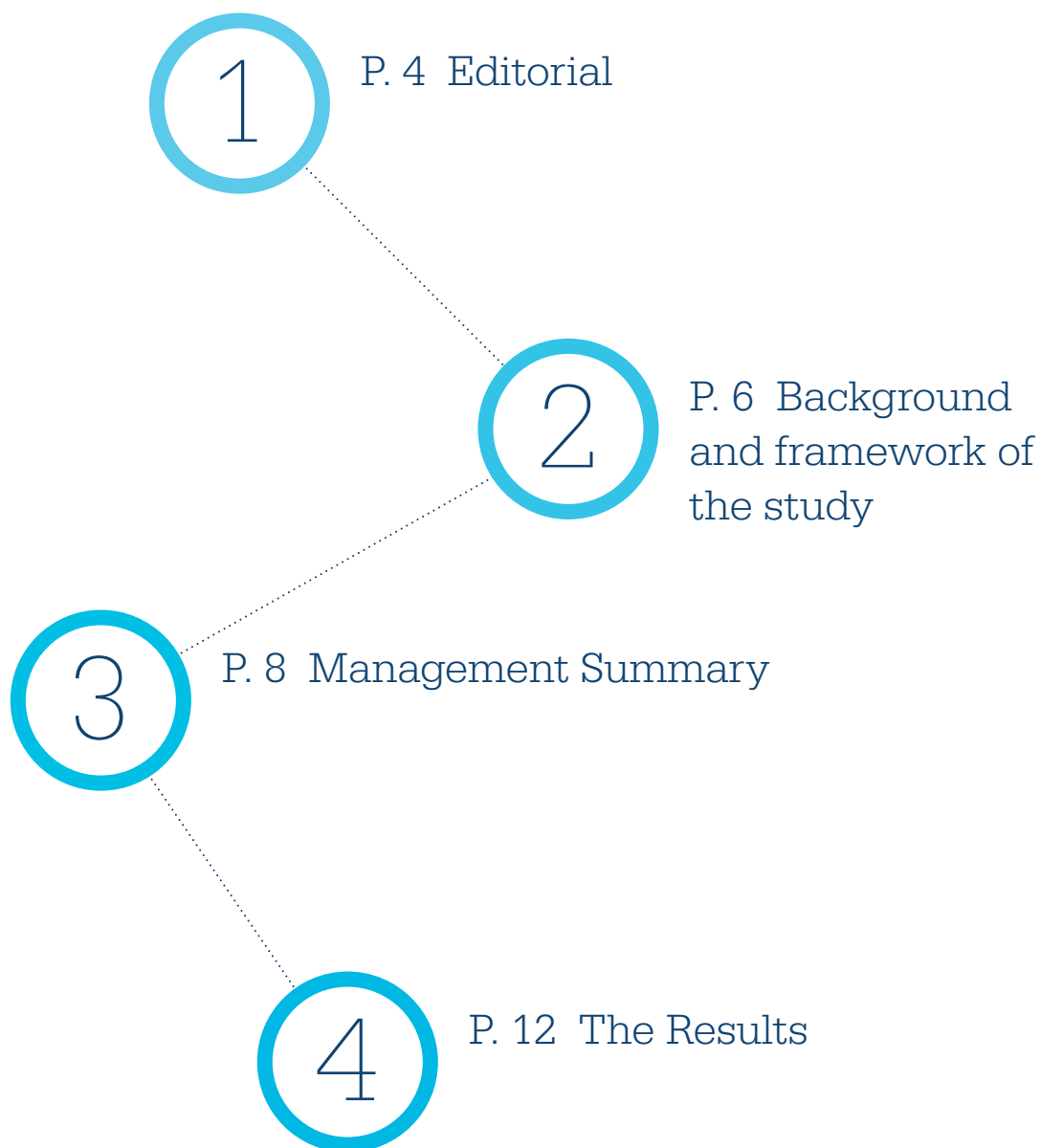
**SUCCESS FACTOR FOR WORKING TOGETHER**

A study by Staufen AG

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# CONTENT





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# 1. EDITORIAL





**Dear Readers,**

The Corona pandemic is currently not the only thing turning the economy upside down. Needs are changing, markets transforming, and technologies are becoming more accessible and usable. Working together in the form of collaboration has been a powerful response to these challenges.

A regatta is a symbol for successful cooperation. The team is aware of its responsibilities and the members are in tune with each other. The dynamic conditions of wind and waves require flexibility and quick action. The sail trim is continuously improved to achieve the best possible result.

This picture can be transferred to companies because there, too, the overall result depends on the optimal, coordinated interaction of all areas, departments, teams and employees. Collaboration is much more than just linking serial work steps.

In our recent study "Collaboration. Success factor for working together" we wanted to answer the questions: What are the success factors for successful collaboration? How digital is communication culture in companies? Which process and project management tools are target-oriented?

326 companies in Germany participated in the study. Companies from Brazil, China and CEE were additionally surveyed as valuable indicators for international cross-comparison. The study took place in collaboration with Valuestreamer, the digital solution for ensuring leadership where value is created. Valuestreamer supports global collaboration in virtual teams.



We hope the results of the study will not only provide you with sound information and inspiration but also act as a compass to keep you on course. We are always happy to assist you - not only in navigating rough waters but also in optimally trimming your sails.



Yours Wilhelm Goschy,  
CEO Staufen AG



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# 2. BACK- GROUND AND FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

An aerial photograph of a sailboat on the ocean, viewed from a high angle. The water is a deep blue, and the sailboat's sails are visible. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color, which serves as the background for the text.

For the study "Collaboration - Success factor for working together," management consultancy Staufen surveyed a total of **326 companies** in Germany in spring 2021. The aim of this study was to find out how companies organize collaboration in difficult times to stay on course.

One third of the companies are **global players** with annual sales of more than 500 million euros. Around two-thirds of the study participants come from the **mechanical and plant engineering sector**, the **automotive sector** and the **electrical industry**.

The survey was also conducted simultaneously by the respective Staufen sites in **China, Brazil, and Central and Eastern Europe**. Since culture and mentality are factors that should not be underestimated when it comes to collaboration, you will find some interesting figures from the respective countries or regions at the end of this study.

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# 3. MANAGEMENT SUMMARY



When the wind shifts, the team needs to know what to do. In the Corona lockdown, collaboration has changed dramatically in many companies. Home offices, modified shift schedules, and distance and hygiene regulations have turned once busy factory floors and office floors into non-communication zones in many places.

The truth is, however, that even before that, not everything worked well in terms of cooperation. Our "**Collaboration**" study took a deeper look at the **success factor for working together.**

# 01.

## STRESS TEST CORONA

In three out of four companies, collaboration is currently noticeably suffering from the effects of the Corona pandemic. Only one in five companies can at least come close to maintaining the pre-crisis level. In one in four companies, on the other hand, collaboration as in the past is only possible to a maximum of 50 percent at the moment. The most important reason: lack of informal exchange. Cafeterias and kitchens are no longer used as communication centers; short discussions with a colleague or a spontaneous trip to the office next door are obviously difficult to replace virtually.

# 03.

## MEGATRENDS, MEETINGS, OVERFLOWING INBOXES

The transformation of working life is certainly not a new phenomenon. Megatrends such as digitization, internationalization and individualization, as well as increased cost pressure, have been changing collaboration for years. But not always for the better: Companies complain that many meetings end without results or are simply superfluous. In addition, employees are drowning in a flood of emails.

# 02.

## THE CRISIS AS A CATALYST

The fact that official communication cannot replace or at least cushion the lack of informal exchange in many companies has a simple reason: Even before the crisis, too little was said and, above all, not to everyone (keyword silo thinking). These failures are now falling on the feet of the companies. Nevertheless, four out of ten companies self-critically admit that Corona has ruthlessly exposed their weaknesses when it comes to collaboration.

# 04.

## KEY FACTOR: LEADERS

Recognizing and remedying such deficiencies are clear management tasks. However, most companies do not give their managers a good report card when it comes to collaboration. Only in around one in two companies do the majority of managers excel in their communication skills. There is still great room for improvement when it comes to teamwork. On the positive side, supervisors in three out of four companies are open to digital tools. In order to leverage this potential, however, a cultural shift is needed in many companies. Because every second manager fears losing their sense of authority due to working from home and other similar measures.

# 05.

## EXPLOITING DIGITIZATION POTENTIAL

The still existing concerns of some executives about digitization do not remain without consequences. Although three out of four companies say they are specifically expanding the use of digital tools to improve collaboration, only in just over one in four companies do employees actually have access to all important information and tasks are prioritized clearly and transparently. This imbalance could be solved by using digital process management. But in too many companies, digital support for collaboration stops with communication tools like Teams, Zoom, etc.

# 06.

## KEEPING AN EYE ON KEY INDICATORS

Companies should not wait long to take the next step toward digitization. Efficiency is suffering from the effects of poor collaboration in 72 percent of companies. This has a direct impact on costs in every second company. Key indicators such as quality, customer satisfaction and innovative strength are also noticeably weakening. It is no surprise that employees will ultimately turn their backs on a company where cooperation is lacking.

# 07.

## COLLABORATION AS A MANAGEMENT ISSUE

There are plenty of reasons to finally tackle the topic of collaboration with a sound strategy. The majority of the study participants are convinced that collaboration must now become a top priority for them. The positive experience gained by many companies in the current crisis of breaking up old structures and rethinking collaboration is an ideal starting point for this.

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# 4. THE RESULTS

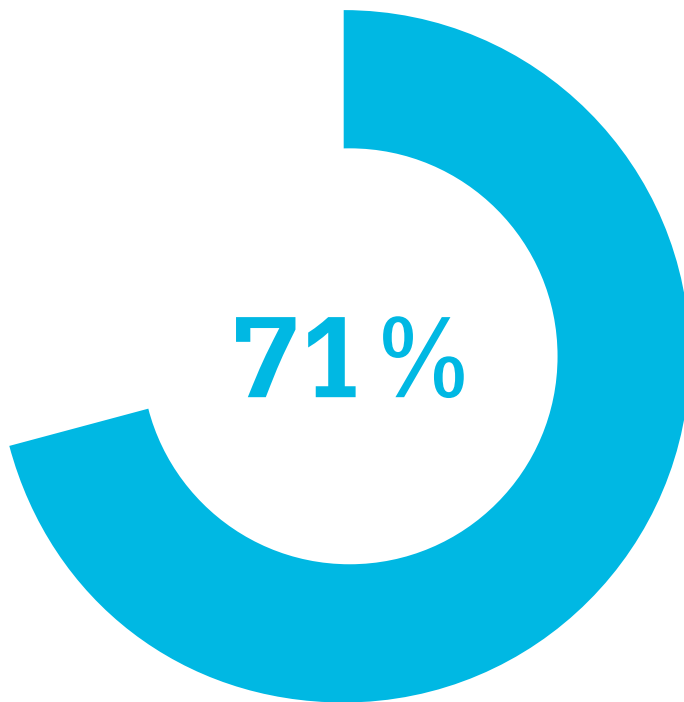


# GERMANY



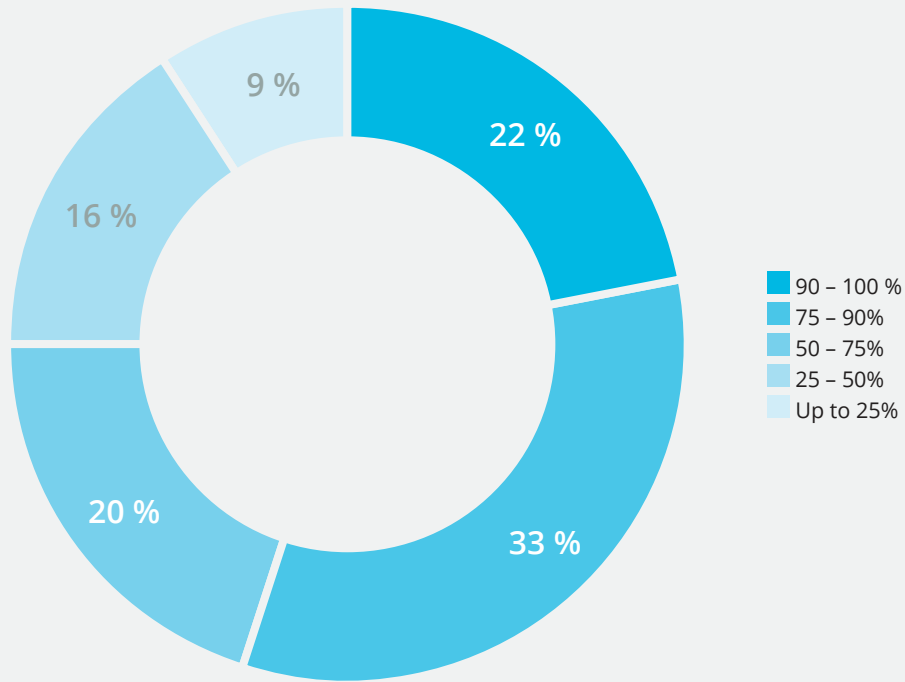
Megatrends such as digitalization, flexibilization and internationalization, as well as increased cost pressure have significantly changed the requirements for collaboration in companies. The crisis acts like a magnifying glass here.

## THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC PUTS THE COLLABORATION AMONG COMPANIES TO THE TEST



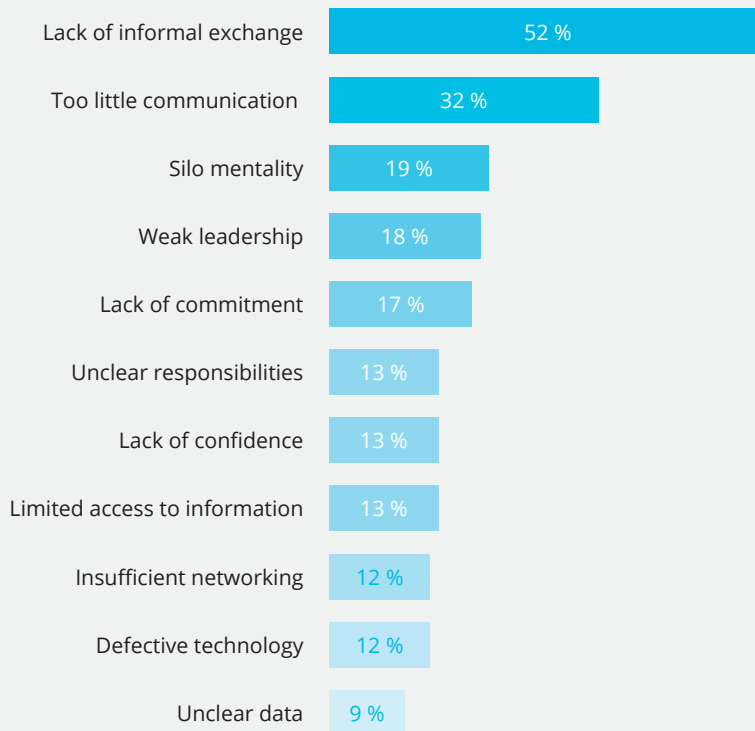
... of all companies state that their collaboration is suffering specifically as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**To what extent is collaboration currently possible in your company as it was before the COVID-19 pandemic?**



**ONLY EVERY FIFTH COMPANY IS ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE PRE-CRISIS LEVEL**

## What are the main reasons why collaboration is currently suffering in your company?



## THE CAFETERIA AND THE TEA KITCHEN ARE NO LONGER AVAILABLE AS COMMUNICATION HUBS

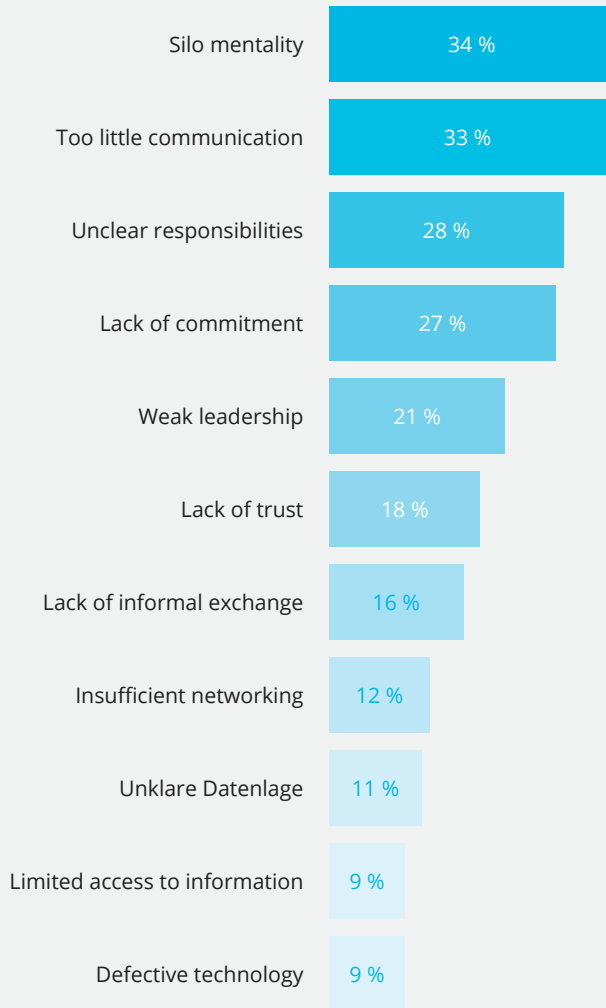


The quality of collaboration within the company has undoubtedly suffered as a result of the radical shift to the virtual world. The binding nature of personal contact and encounters cannot be completely replaced by phone and video calls. Even though many employees greatly appreciate the personal benefits of working from home, it has had a rather negative impact on the company's efficiency indicators. Future success will depend on finding the right mix of virtual and real world collaboration. In addition, further expansion of IT support is needed to enable the best possible management and integration of employees working remotely.

René Dankwerth, Managing Director, Recaro Aircraft Seating USA



**And what stood in the way of good collaboration in your company even before COVID-19?**

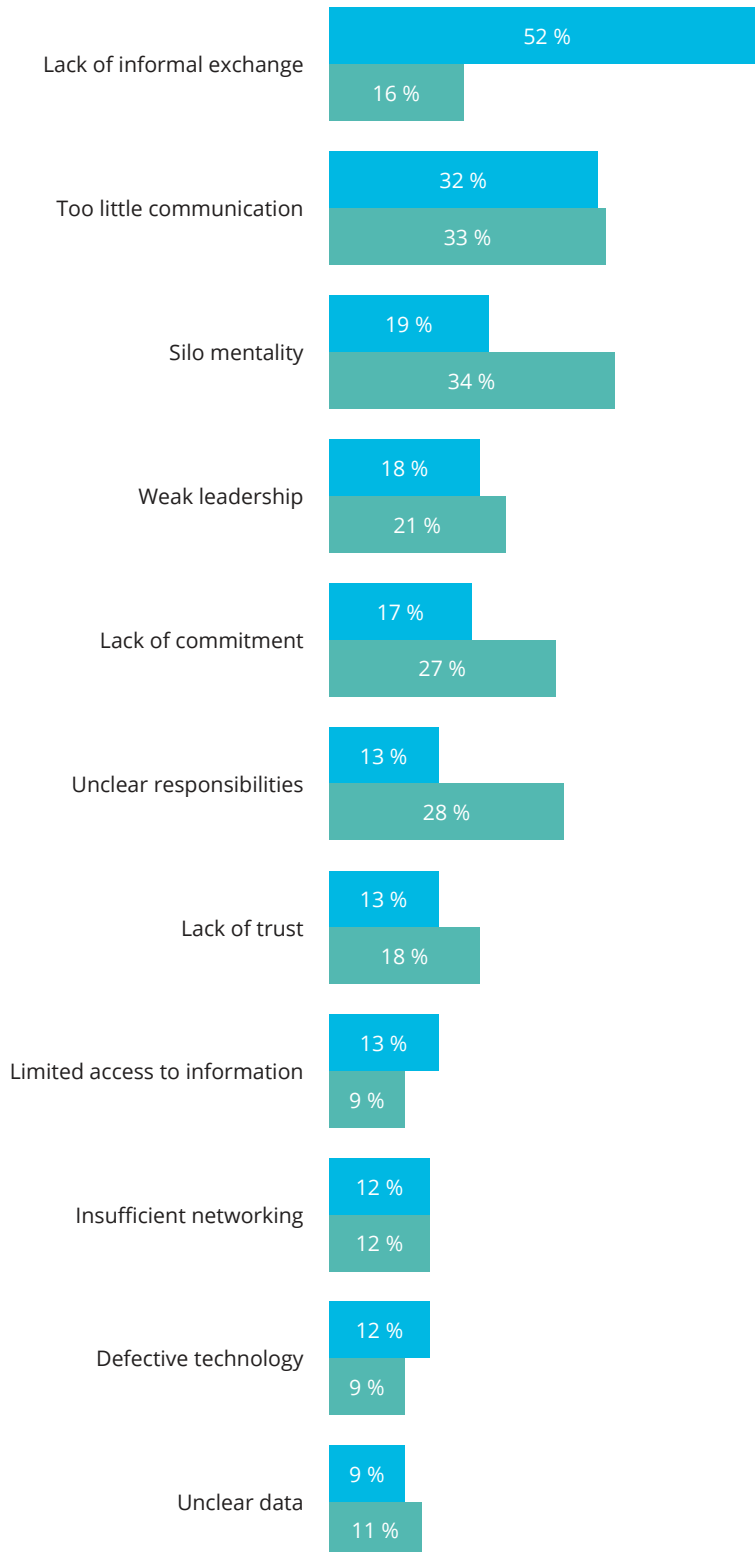


**EVEN BEFORE THE CRISIS THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH COMMUNICATION, AND NOT WITH EVERYONE**



## A comparison of what is blocking a good collaboration

■ During COVID-19 ■ Before COVID-19



**THE PRECONDITIONS FOR COLLABORATION  
HAVE CHANGED DURING THE CRISIS**

## COVID-19 CATALYST: WEAK POINTS BECAME VISIBLE DURING THE CRISIS



38%

... company owners state that COVID-19 has exposed weaknesses on the topic of collaboration.

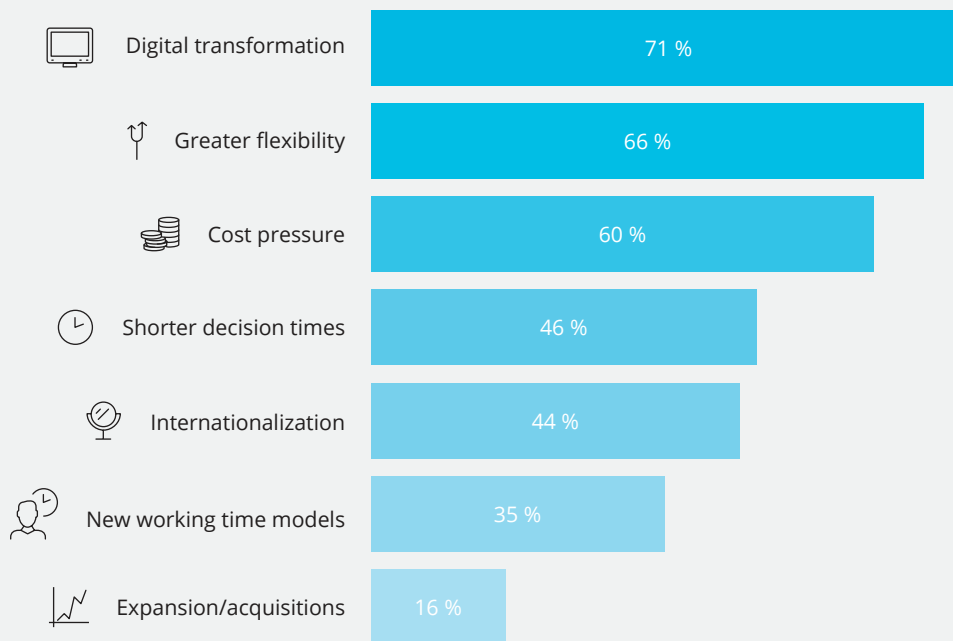


The quality of digital collaboration (which currently represents about 100% of day-to-day work) has taken a steep, positive turn over the past 60 weeks. In my view, the pivotal points are moderation, coordinated rules, precise and targeted information, and intelligently organized time-boxing. If, also, the multitude of tools currently in use are sensibly adapted - and this is precisely what we are currently creating the conditions for - we will have the best framework conditions for a hybrid "new normal."

Stefan Jörgens, Head of Development, JUNG GmbH & Co. KG



Even regardless of COVID-19, collaboration in companies has been undergoing change for years. What trends and topics drive this development for you?



**NUMEROUS MEGATRENDS LEAD TO A CHANGE IN WORKING LIFE**

## What is your company's overall communication culture like?

Responses "applies" and "applies more or less"

51%

Many meetings end without a result or specific work order

Many meetings are unnecessary

45%

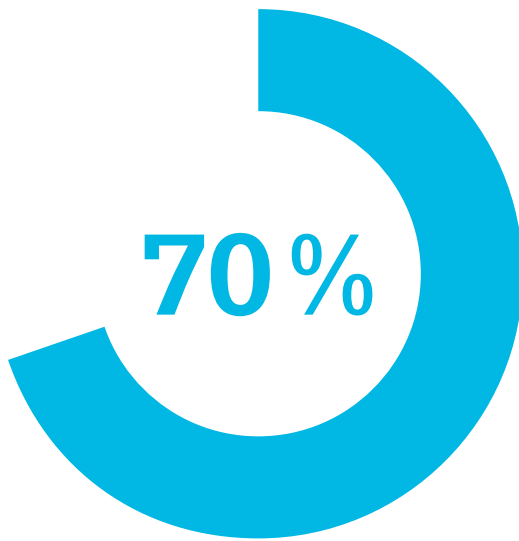
31%

The wrong people sit in many meetings

**EVERY SECOND MEETING ENDS WITHOUT RESULTS OR IS A WASTE OF TIME**

## What is your company's overall communication culture like?

Responses "applies" and "applies more or less"



Many emails are sent to large mailing lists

Communication often happens rather randomly



**A FLOOD OF EMAILS INSTEAD OF TARGETED COMMUNICATION**



**WITH RESPECT TO THE TOPIC OF COLLABORATION,  
LEADERS ARE THE KEY FACTOR**

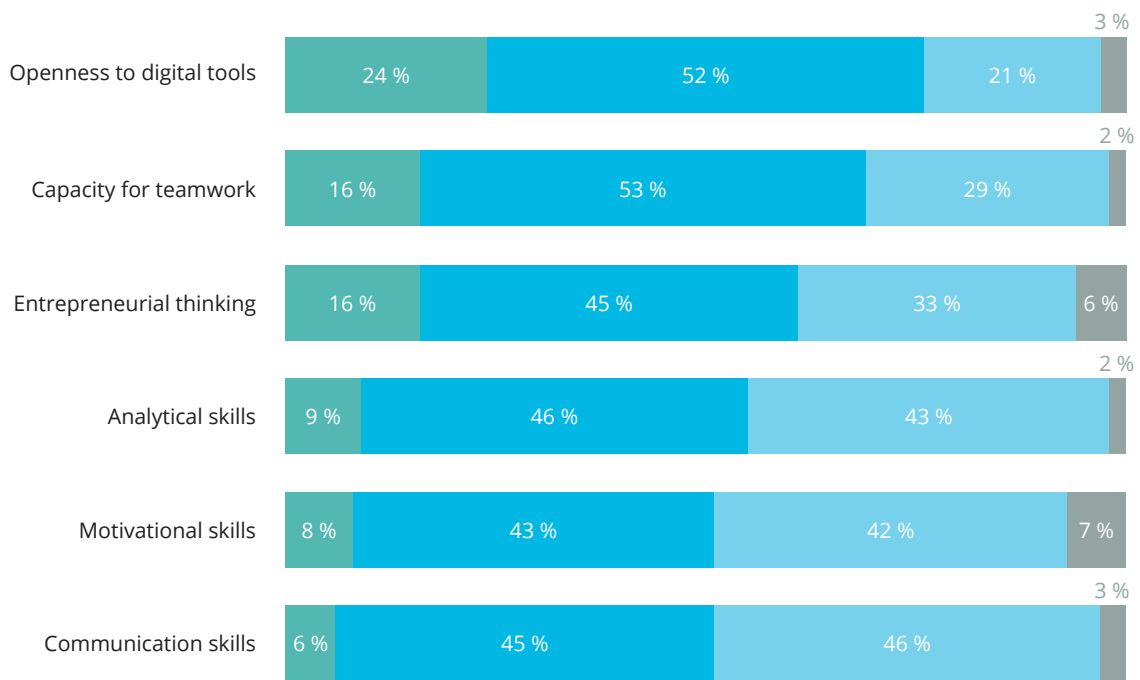


**50%**

... of the companies state that their leaders still have some catching up to do when it comes to collaboration.

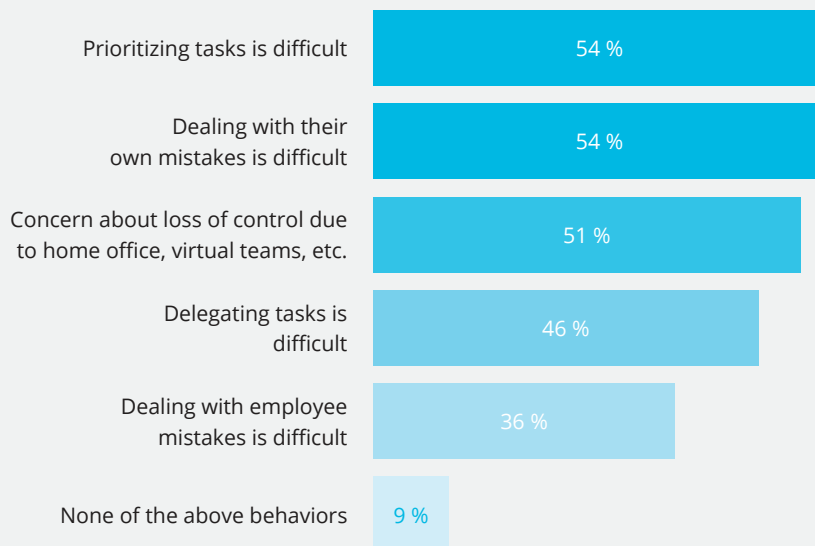
**Leaders play a central role when it comes to collaboration.  
How would you rate the following skills of your leaders?**

■ Present throughout    ■ Present in many of them  
■ Present in only a few    ■ Rarely present



**MANY LEADERS NEED TO UP THEIR GAME  
WHEN IT COMES TO SKILLS**

**Which of the following behaviors do you regularly observe among leaders in your company?**



**EVERY SECOND LEADER FEELS THEIR OWN AUTHORITY IS AT RISK DUE TO THE HOME OFFICE SITUATION**





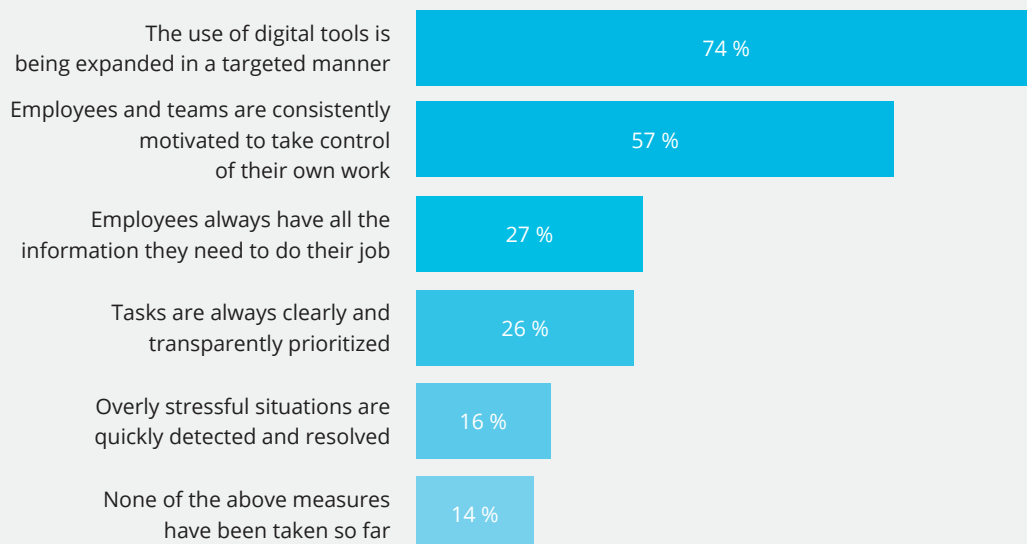
The quality of collaboration in our company certainly leaves room for improvement. In general, collaboration has three dimensions: being able to, being allowed to, and wanting to.

In my view, the key factors for success here are continuous training and improving relevant skills, granting employees the necessary freedom to interact with one another within the framework of defined guidelines, an efficient and intelligent management tool, and developing and implementing a suitable mindset.



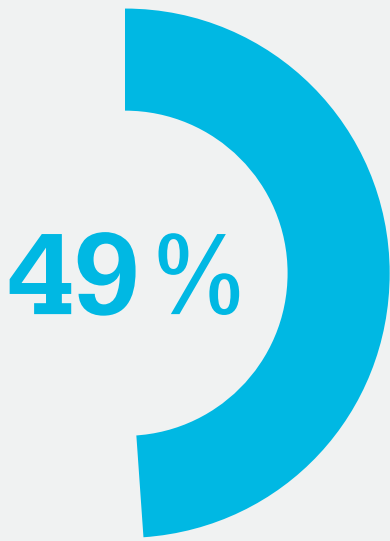
Rainer Dieck, CFO, ThyssenKrupp Automotive Body Solutions

### What is your company doing to improve collaboration?



**DESPITE DIGITAL TOOLS, CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT INFORMATION HAS MORE OFTEN THAN NOT BEEN LACKING SO FAR**

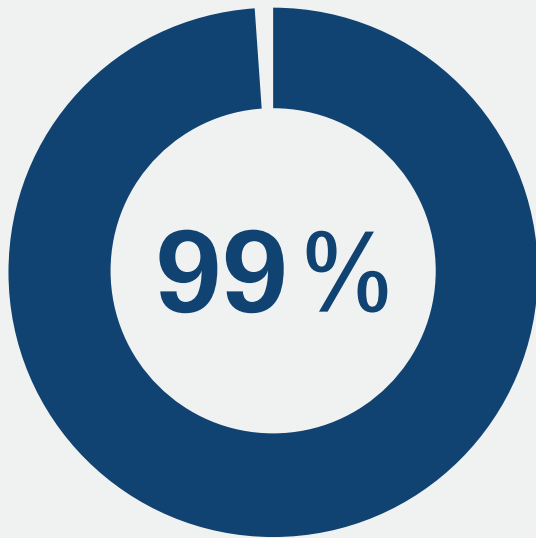
Which of the following digital tools does your company use to organize collaboration?



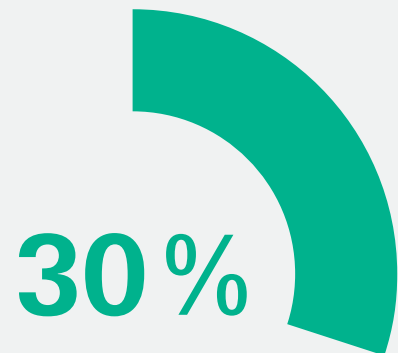
Digital process management



Standard project management software



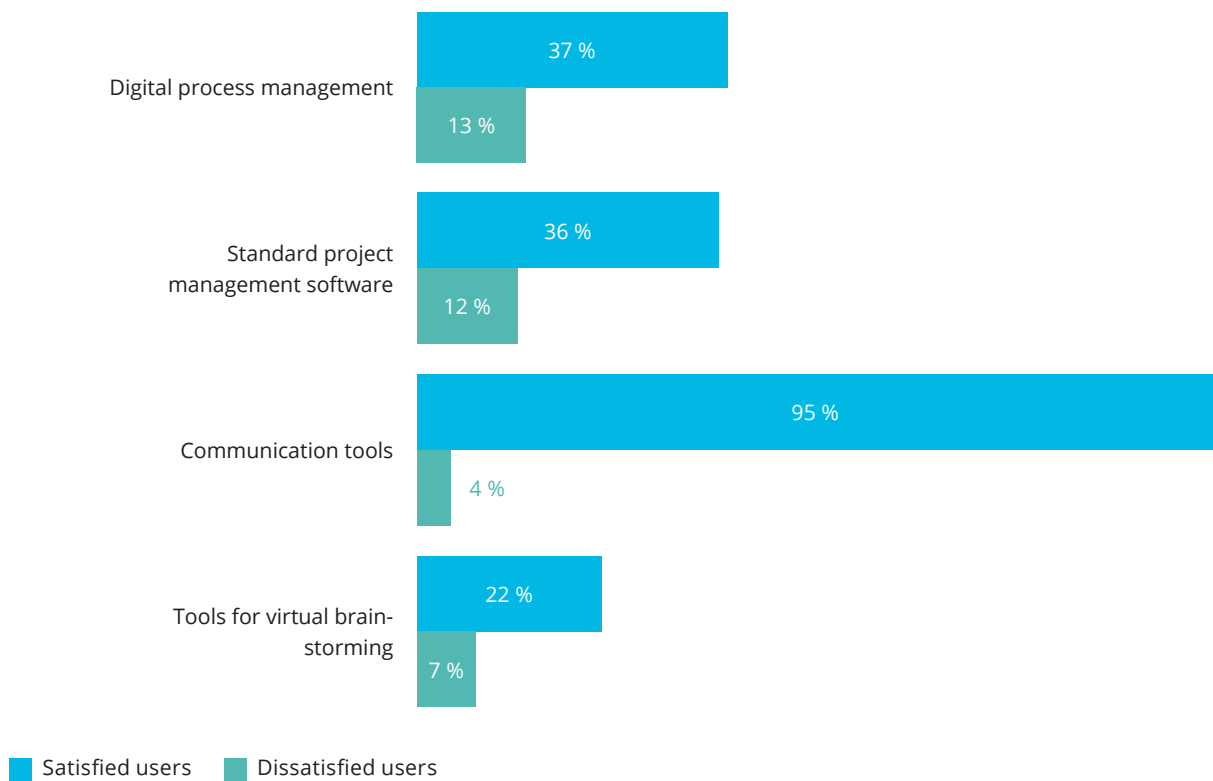
Communication tools



Tools for virtual brainstorming

**TEAMS, ZOOM AND THE LIKE HAVE BECOME STANDARD IN COMPANIES**

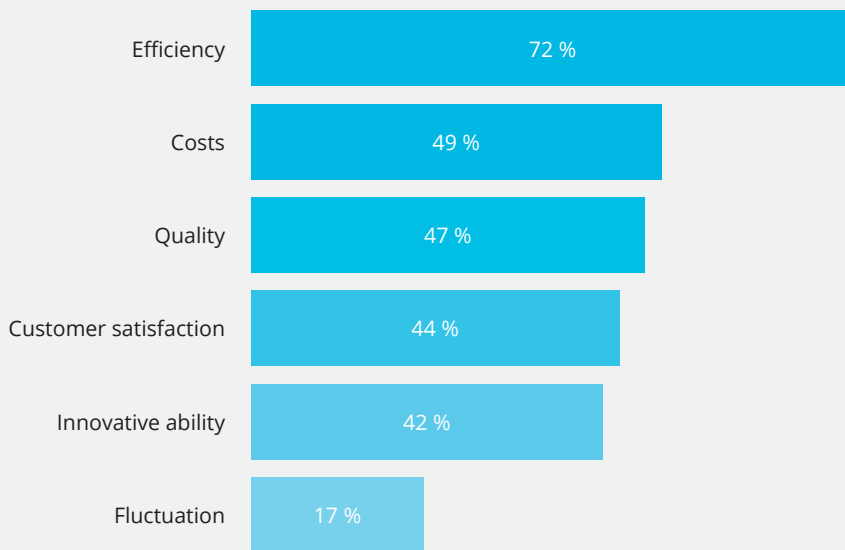
**Which of the following digital tools does your company use to organize collaboration, and how satisfied are you with them personally in your day-to-day work?**



**EVERY THIRD COMPANY SUCCESSFULLY USES DIGITAL TOOLS FOR PROCESS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT**



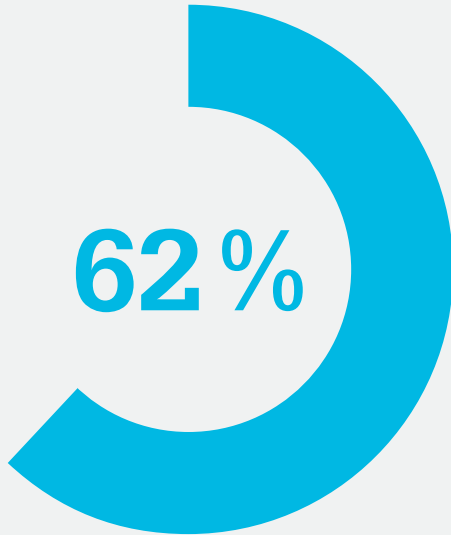
**Without considering COVID-19, which of your company's key indicators are also suffering from the effects of poor collaboration?**



**POOR COLLABORATION CAUSES PROBLEMS  
IN TERMS OF COSTS, EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY**

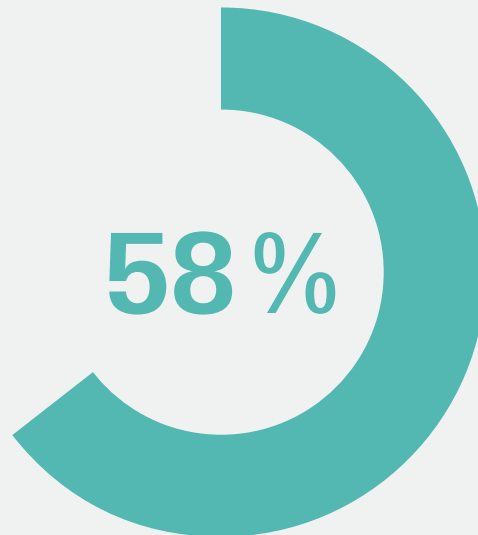
## What current insights will your company transfer into the post-COVID-19 era?

Responses "applies" and "applies more or less"

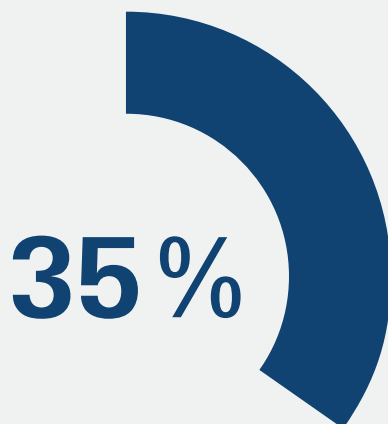


We are able to break down old structures and, as a result, improve collaboration

Our top management needs to promote the topic of collaboration and demand it from employees



58%



We currently lack clear rules for good collaboration

**CONCLUSION: COLLABORATION MUST BECOME A STRATEGIC ISSUE FOR US IN THE FUTURE!**

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# THE VIEW OF THE WORLD

China  
Central Eastern Europe  
Brazil

# CHINA

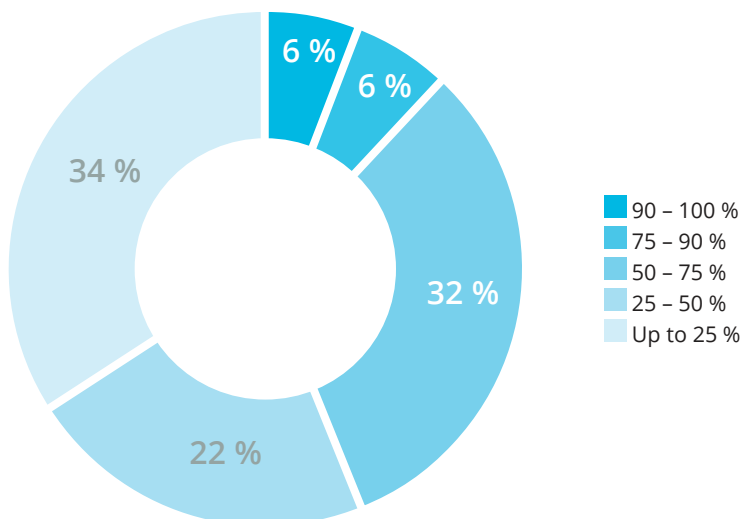
In Chinese companies, collaboration efforts are suffering significantly more due to the COVID-19 pandemic than those in Germany.



Leadership and communication must be the focus.

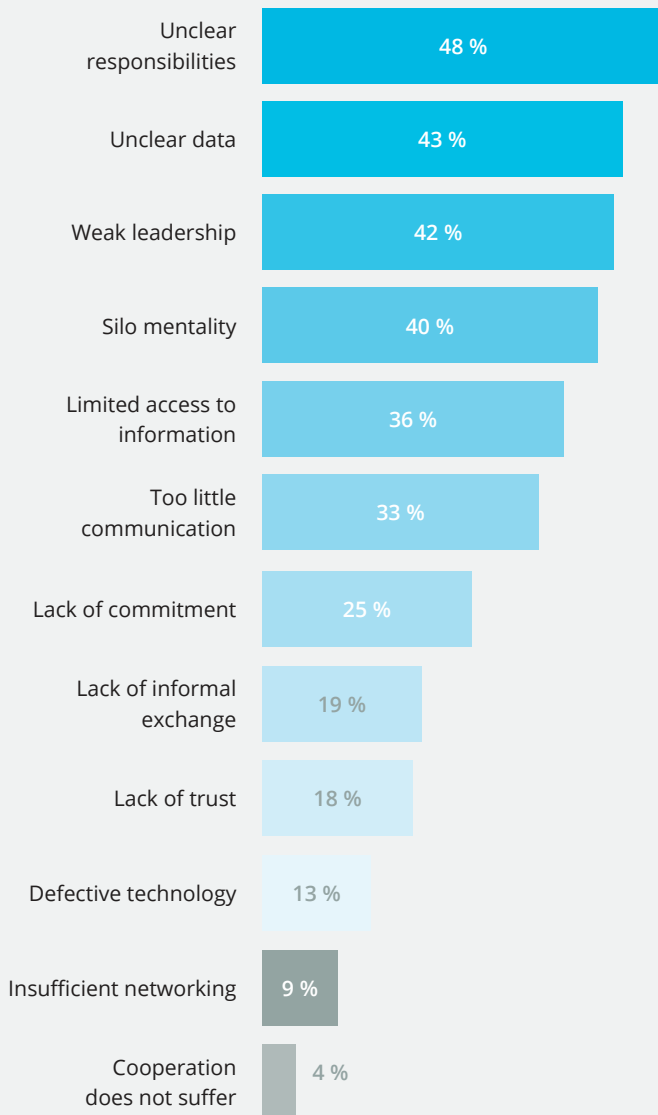


**To what extent is collaboration currently possible in your company like before the Corona pandemic?**



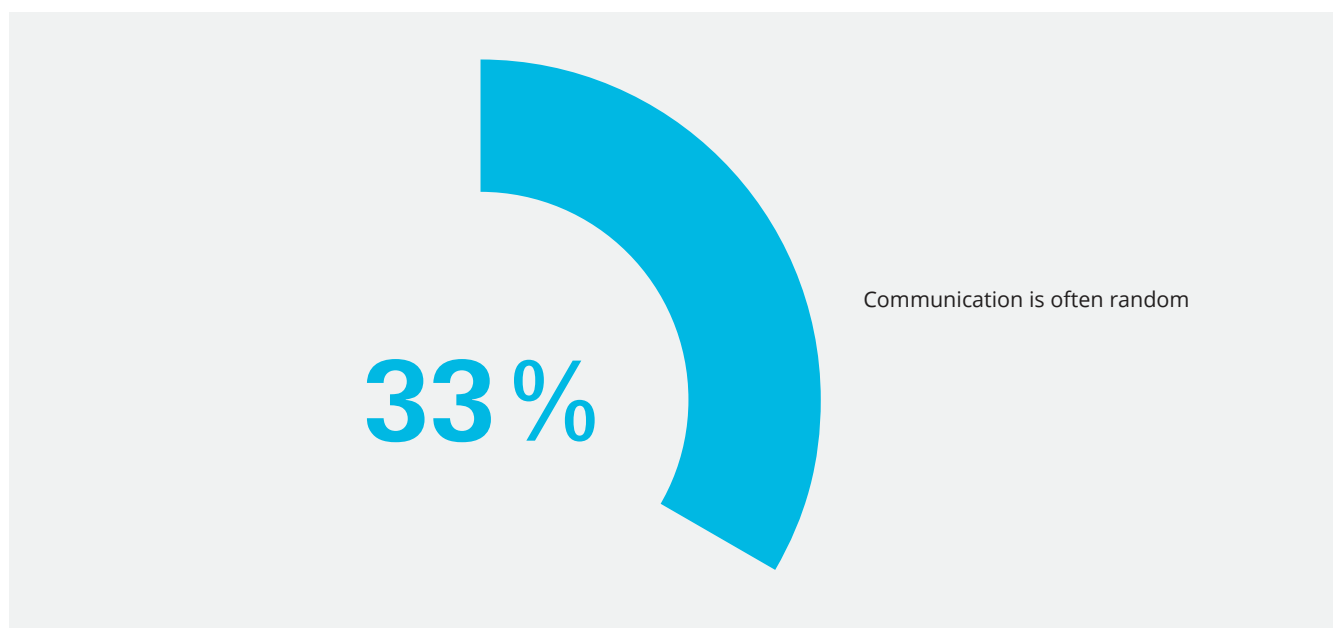
While an informal exchange in particular is lacking in German companies, in China, primarily it is the lack of clarity with respect to responsibilities that is making collaboration so difficult.

### What are the main reasons that collaboration is currently suffering in your company?





An interesting commonality: the degree of incidental communication is the same in China as in Germany.



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# CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPE



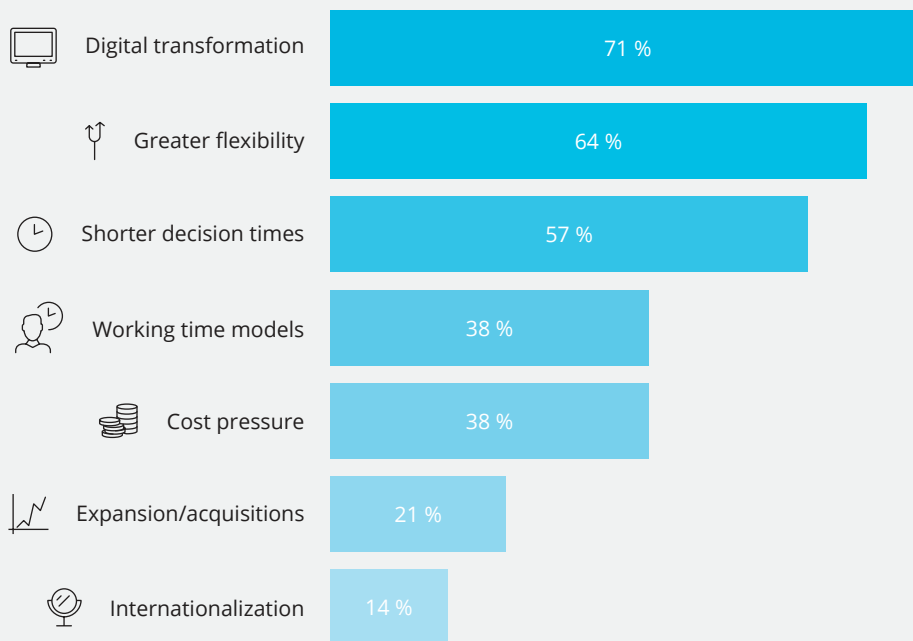
In the Central and Eastern European countries, cost pressure is not yet having as strong of an impact on the issue of collaboration as it is in Germany.



In today's world, a fast flow of information is a fundamental requirement in order to play a role and be competitive in the marketplace.



**Even regardless of COVID-19, collaboration in companies has been undergoing change for years. What trends and topics drive this development for you?**



More discipline: in the CEE region, large mailing lists are used less often.



More diversity: when it comes to collaboration, people in Central and Eastern Europe do not rely on digital tools as unilaterally as in Germany.

### What is your company doing to improve collaboration?



# BRAZIL

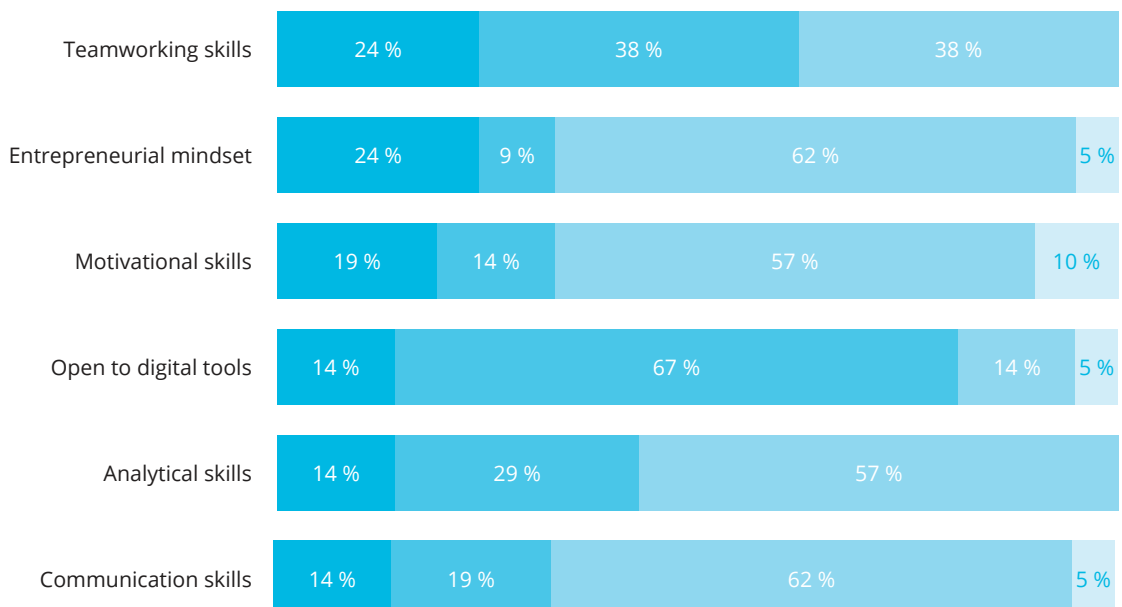
Role model Seleção: just as with the national soccer team, Brazilian managers also place a high value on the team concept.

» In many companies, what is lacking are the required tools and the leadership culture needed to establish highly efficient processes.



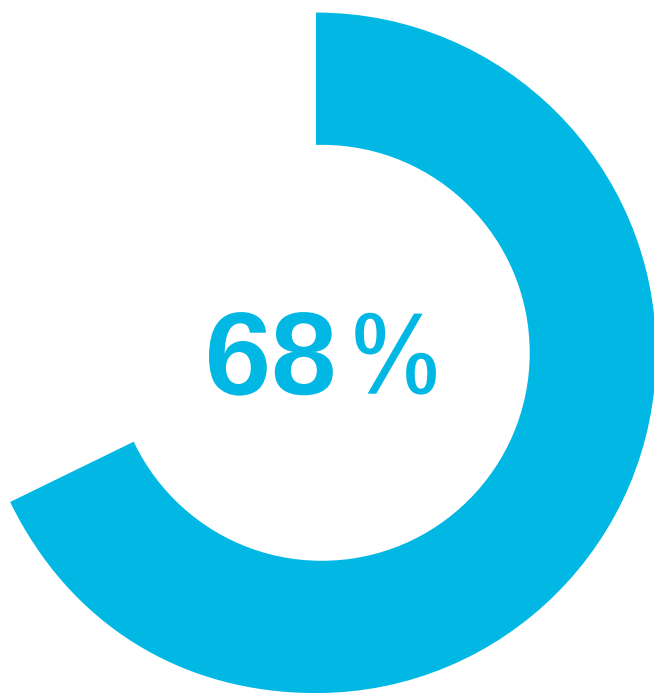
## Leaders play a central role with respect to collaboration. How would you assess the following abilities of your leaders?

- Demonstrated by all of them
- Demonstrated by many of them
- Demonstrated by some of them
- Rarely demonstrated



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But even the most harmonious team requires a clear set of rules.

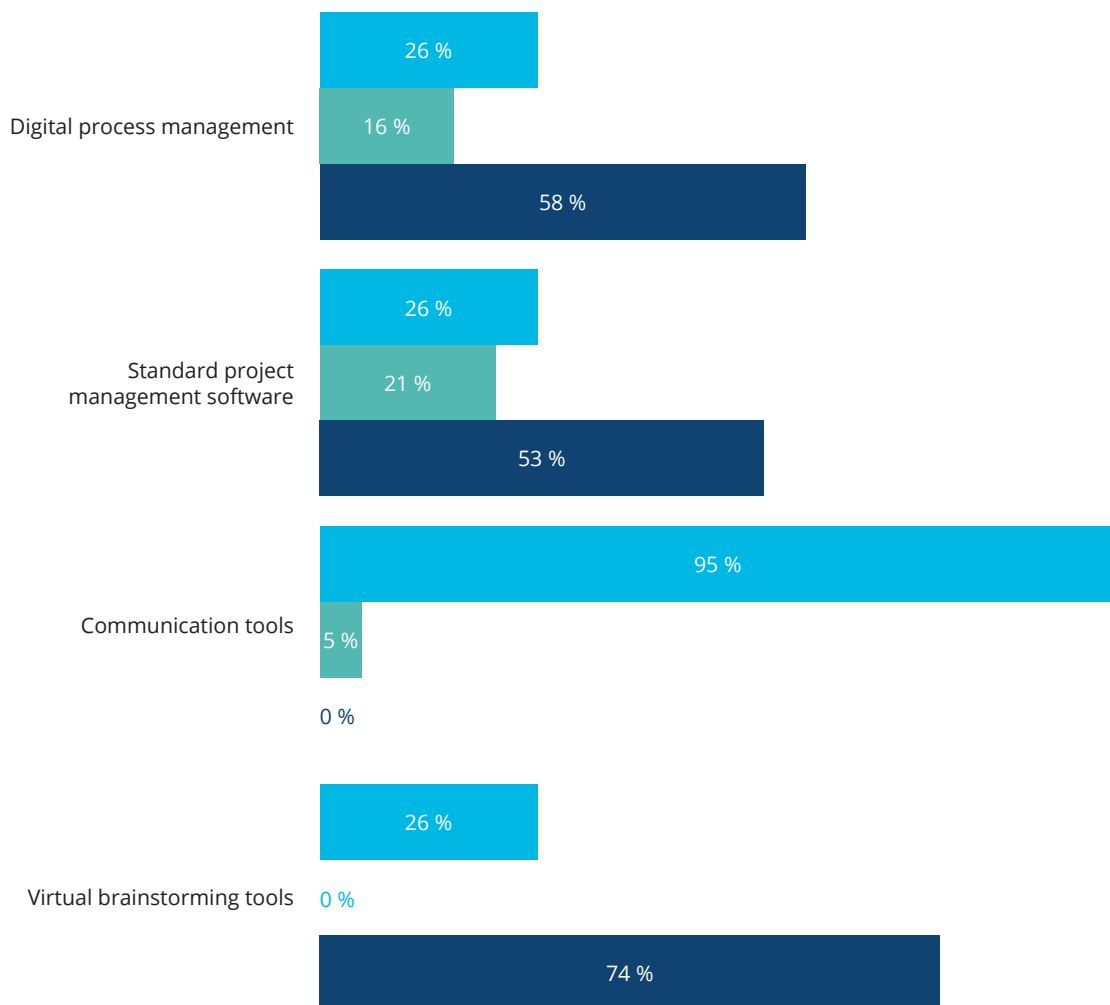


Currently, there is a lack of clear rules governing collaboration

In Brazil as well, only a minority of companies successfully uses digital tools for process and project management.

### Which of the following digital tools does your company use to organize collaboration and how satisfied are you with them in your day-to-day work?

■ Satisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Not used by the company



# TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK



VALUESTREAMER® – THE PLUG & PLAY SOLUTION  
FOR DIGITAL SHOP FLOOR MANAGEMENT

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TRUE COLLABORATION



This study was conducted in cooperation with Staufen.Valuestreamer GmbH.

# ABOUT VALUE STREAMER

Value creation is becoming more global all the time and is done increasingly on networks that span companies. This means that management becomes more difficult and important at the same time. Today, communication takes place globally in real time with complete data transparency. Effective leadership across distance has therefore become a decisive success factor for many companies.

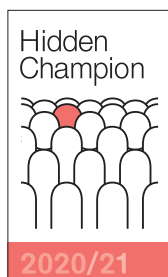
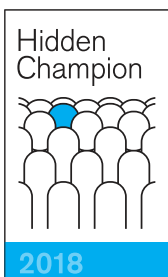
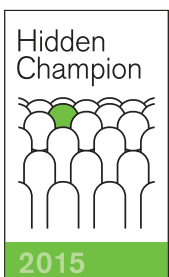
The ValueStreamer® software solution is a logical step toward meeting the digitization requirements of companies regarding management tasks, control and collaboration. As a subsidiary of Staufen AG, Valuestreamer digitally bundles all management activities where value is created (digital Shop Floor Management (dSFM)). This enables global collaboration in virtual teams. Worldwide. In real time. Agile.

# ABOUT US

We believe that inside every company, there is an even better one.

Staufen AG is a lean management consulting firm and academy. We have been advising and qualifying companies and employees for over 25 years. Worldwide.

Our goal is to make every company better and to advance our customers. Our special approach focuses on quickly setting the right changes in motion and establishing a sustainable culture of change.



# Figures. Data. Facts.

> 25

Years of experience

160

projects per year

> 60

Different  
Lean und Six Sigma  
trainings

320

Employees

> 7,000

Seminar participants p. a.

17

Languages

> 130

Active trainers and  
coaching experts

> 90

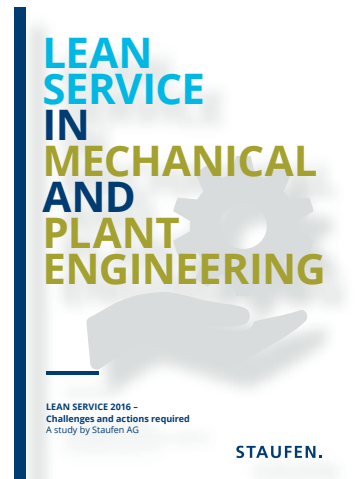
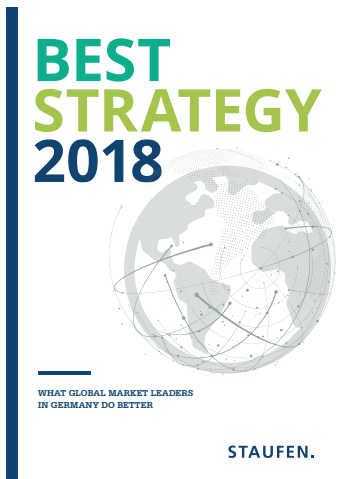
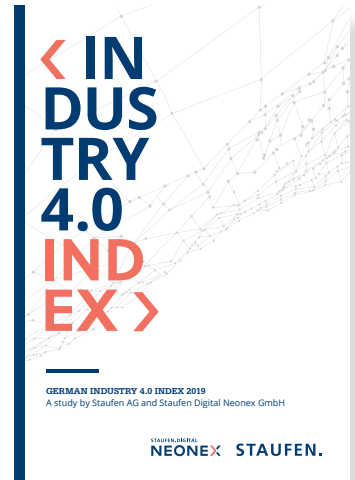
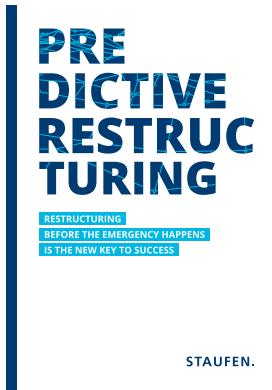
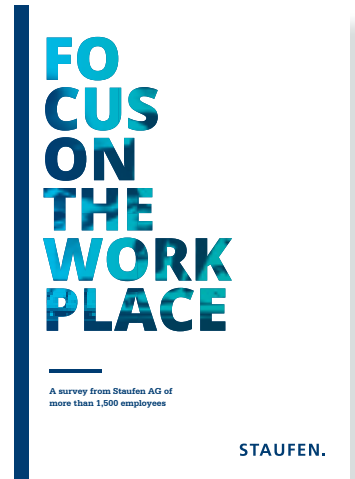
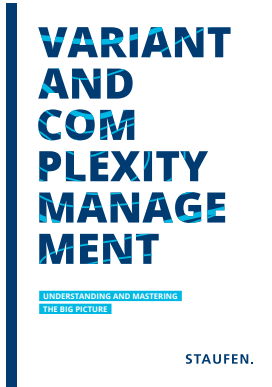
BestPractice  
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# STUDIES AND WHITEPAPER

All Staufen AG studies can be found online at  
[www.staufen.ag/studies](http://www.staufen.ag/studies)







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