

ChatGPT at Three: New research uncovers its seismic impact on workplace communication, from politeness to small talk

Research from The Adaptavist Group finds that over a third (35%) of US workers speak to colleagues less since using GenAI.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, December 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Three years after the launch of ChatGPT, new research from [The Adaptavist Group](#) reveals how GenAI has fundamentally altered workplace communication across the US, impacting everything from small talk and politeness to writing skills and speech.

The research was conducted as part of the company's latest [Digital Etiquette: Unlocking the AI Gates](#) report. Based on a survey of 1,000 knowledge workers in the US and over 200 business leaders responsible for implementing AI, the findings show that while many workers credit AI with improving clarity, confidence, and productivity, significant proportions raised concerns about 'addiction', declining politeness, and the erosion of core skills.

The jack of all workplace roles

AI has rapidly become not just a go-to 'colleague' for millions of professionals, but a must-have element in many tasks once handled exclusively by humans. Nearly half of US AI implementers (46%) now prefer to consult AI on legal or policy issues, and 34% use it for HR-related matters. Meanwhile, nearly a third of US knowledge workers (34%) said they'd rather engage in small talk with an AI bot than with a human. As a result, 35% of US workers are speaking to colleagues less since using GenAI, showing how the technology is having a seismic impact on workplace relationships.

Notably, the study revealed that men in the US reported a steeper decline in interpersonal communication than women, with 47% saying they now speak to colleagues less, versus 24% of women. With men around the world facing a loneliness epidemic, the findings are particularly noteworthy.

The preference of an AI chatbot over a human for 'small talk' is particularly strong among younger US professionals aged 25-44 (42%), compared with just 16% of those over 55. Across markets, the US leads the shift toward AI-led interaction (34%), compared to 25% in the UK, 23% in Canada, and 21% in Germany.

Reliance on GenAI has become so ingrained in workplaces that over one third of US workers (41%) believe they're 'addicted' to using it.

Rudeness IRL

The research also points to evolving workplace dynamics. Nearly a third in the US (31%) admit to being less polite since using GenAI.

However, the advent of AI has also improved communication on multiple fronts, changing how people speak to one another:

- 55% say they now speak more succinctly
- 64% believe colleagues communicate more clearly
- 72% report clearer writing since adopting AI tools

More broadly, 42% of US respondents believe AI is creating divides between leaders and their teams. [Previous data from The Adaptavist Group](#) showed that high earners have significantly greater access to AI tools and training, suggesting that AI adoption may be widening the gap between leaders who benefit more from extra training and access and employees who are being overlooked.

AI Advantage or Atrophy?

When it comes to AI's impact on skills, the picture is divided. While 32% of US workers worry their abilities are declining due to reliance on AI, a larger number (72%) believe the technology is helping them develop new capabilities.

- 64% say AI has improved their writing
- 51% credit it with enhancing critical thinking
- 42% report stronger design skills
- 39% note improvements in coding

Culture drives ROI

The research underscores that organizational culture, not technology, is the true differentiator in AI success. Globally, companies that actively encourage responsible experimentation and learning with AI see markedly stronger outcomes:

- Skill development: 89% report growing skills in AI-friendly organisations, versus 59% where AI use is merely tolerated
- Job satisfaction: 54% in AI-encouraging cultures report significantly improved satisfaction, compared to just 8% where it's discouraged

- Team collaboration: companies that encourage AI use report significantly better team collaboration (68%) than those that discourage it (23%)
- Return on investment: 73% of organisations that promote use successfully prove AI ROI, versus just 36% of those that discourage it

Neal Riley, AI Innovation Lead at The Adaptavist Group, commented:

"As GenAI continues to embed itself in society, we're seeing a shift in how work gets done and how people connect and communicate. Evidently, AI can make us more efficient and articulate, but it also risks eroding some soft skills and driving a wedge between human interaction.

Finding the right balance with AI so that you see all the benefits and reduce the drawbacks is all about cultivating the right environment. Evidently, when organizations have the right culture in place, they see stronger performance, clearer communication, and measurable business returns.

"The key to achieving a culture where AI use remains healthy and work-conducive is one which encourages responsible AI experimentation, and has a framework for measuring success."

Carolyn Freeman, CyberPsychology specialist, commented:

"Engaging in, and relying on, higher levels of synthetic AI relationships that meet specific psychological or emotional needs can displace efforts to satisfy those needs through connections with real people. Employees need regular opportunities, whether in person or virtually, to discover shared interests, exchange ideas, build trust and form the foundations of effective collaborative teams.

"Chatbots offer an always-on presence that feels available, non-judgemental and emotionally safe, meeting users in their moment-to-moment need states, enabling low-stakes 'small talk' without social risk. Interactions with AI can feel more private, contained and forgiving, giving employees space to vent frustrations, explore ideas or rehearse difficult conversations without fear of damaging performance reviews or workplace reputations.

"As social beings, people seek out belonging and acceptance from others. Chatbots can become an attractive, non-judgemental stand-in for those who feel socially anxious, lack close confidants, or find it difficult to trust people. Because the interaction is consistently positive, affirming and supportive, use can edge towards the 'addictive', paradoxically deepening loneliness and weakening the drive to connect with other humans."

Methodology:

A survey of 4,000 knowledge workers evenly split across the US, UK, Canada and Germany via Attest.

Also, a survey of 900 respondents evenly split across the US, UK, Canada and Germany.

Respondents were identified as 'business leaders' who are responsible for implementing AI into the organization. 'Business leaders' were defined as those in the following positions:

C-Level (e.g. CEO, CFO), Owner, Partner, President

Vice President (EVP, SVP, AVP, VP)

Director (Group Director, Sr. Director, Director)

Manager

About The Adaptavist Group

The Adaptavist Group is a collection of diverse companies with one common goal: to make business work better. We combine the best talent, technology, and processes to make it easier for our customers to excel—today and tomorrow.

We are experts at delivering innovative software, tailored solutions, and quality services across some of the world's most trusted technology ecosystems, including Atlassian, AWS, monday.com, GitLab, and many more.

The Adaptavist Group exists to support clients' day-to-day workflows, business transformation, and high-growth strategies. We offer a comprehensive but always evolving range of services across key practices: DevOps, work management, ITSM, AI, agile, and cloud. Our depth of knowledge across these practices unites us in our mission to help businesses embrace continuous transformation and make it their competitive advantage.

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