Donut: An employee experience program

By Donut Technologies Inc.

Donut is a US-based employee experience platform that automates and scales an organisation's people programmes — from new hire onboarding to cross-functional team building — right within the tools an organisation already uses.

The problem Donut addresses is a lack of meaningful connections in workplaces, especially in hybrid or remote environments where opportunities for organic interactions are limited. This lack of connection can lead to disengagement, higher turnover rates, and reduced productivity. These challenges are not confined to corporate environments—they mirror issues seen in children's social care and social work recruitment in the UK.

In social care teams, the inability to foster a sense of team belonging and support contributes to burnout and turnover among social workers. The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) has reported that social workers often feel isolated and unsupported, with many leaving the profession within the first few years.

Similar to how Donut facilitates connections to enhance engagement and retention, creating better structures for collaboration and peer support in children's social care could significantly improve workforce stability and morale. By applying principles of connection and engagement, children's services providers can begin to address these systemic challenges, ensuring better outcomes for both workers and the families they support.

Donut's platform leverages automation to seamlessly integrate into existing workflows, such as Slack and Microsoft Teams, enabling teams to connect in more impactful ways. Whether it's introducing new hires to team members, setting up virtual coffee chats, or creating opportunities for cross-department collaboration, Donut's user-friendly design ensures easy adoption and high engagement rates.

Key features include:

- **Virtual intros and coffee chats**: Automatically pair employees for informal virtual meetups, fostering stronger relationships and breaking down silos.
- **Onboarding experiences**: Help new hires integrate smoothly into teams by connecting them with peers and mentors early in their journey.
- **Cross-team collaboration**: Facilitate connections across departments to encourage knowledge sharing, innovation, and teamwork.
- **Feedback loops**: Enable teams to gather insights and feedback on engagement initiatives to continuously improve their strategies.

CASE STUDY: REMOTE EMPLOYEE RETENTION WITH CAREMESSAGE

CareMessage, a nonprofit healthcare organisation, supports over 200 healthcare companies by facilitating patient-provider communication through its text-based engagement platform. When CareMessage transitioned from a hybrid structure to a fully remote workforce, the organisation faced challenges in maintaining team cohesion, fostering connections, and ensuring a smooth workflow for its employees.

As CareMessage moved to 100% remote operations, the organisation encountered several challenges:

- **Employee adjustment**: Employees at the headquarters expressed hesitations about adapting to remote work, including concerns about isolation and workflow changes.
- **Communication barriers**: The absence of in-office interactions risked reducing informal communication and connection among team members.

CareMessage leveraged Donut to create a three-pronged strategy to overcome these challenges:

1. **Gradual transition to remote work**: CareMessage introduced a phased approach to remote work, starting with designated work-from-home days and gradually increasing them. Donut facilitated connections during this transition by enabling employees to engage in virtual coffee chats and informal introductions, helping them adapt to the new routine.

2. **Building a sense of belonging**: A remote buddy system paired transitioning HQ employees with experienced remote workers. This system, supported by Donut, provided guidance, empathy, and tips for remote work success. Employee sentiment polls, managed through Donut, provided insights into team well-being and flagged areas for improvement.

By implementing Donut, CareMessage achieved the following outcomes:

- **Improved employee satisfaction**: Regular communication and the buddy system alleviated feelings of isolation, creating a strong sense of support among employees.
- **Seamless workflow transition**: Gradual implementation and consistent feedback loops ensured a smooth adaptation to remote workflows.
- **Stronger team connections**: Donut's tools enabled employees to maintain meaningful relationships and collaborate effectively despite physical distances.

CareMessage's strategic use of Donut transformed its transition to a fully remote workforce. By fostering belonging, enabling effective communication, and embracing flexibility, CareMessage ensured its employees thrived in a remote setting while maintaining its mission to deliver impactful healthcare communication solutions.

See more: 'How CareMessage Went 100% Remote (And Embraced It)'