

Sparkling a revolution in how we work

Global biopharma company embraces innovation to improve work-life balance



Striking balance between personal and professional

What if success at work revolved around results? What if collaborating and connecting with colleagues didn't depend on location? What if your priorities dictated your calendar instead of the other way around? What if you could be truly empowered at work?

Leaders at a global biopharma company no longer wanted to ask these questions. They wanted to answer them...once and for all.

Like most of its peers, this company faced steep challenges as a result of the global pandemic, particularly when it came to helping employees strike that elusive balance between professional and personal lives.

The sudden and dramatic shift to remote work, intensified by limitations in the way people were operating, was amplified by the blurring boundaries between work obligations and home schedules.

After listening to employees from across the organization, several themes emerged. The company recognized the need to:

- Improve engagement outside of meetings through digital methods to build relationships and encourage stronger connections between employees and across teams.
- Allow for flexibility in daily schedules, supported at all levels of the organization with shared goals across functions and levels to drive greater efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity.
- Improve innovation, productivity, and

creativity by prioritizing focus time (or intentional time to reflect and make strategic connections)

This kind of transformation journey is easier said than done, but the company was determined to prove they could drive desired outcomes and improve patient results with a flexible mindset on how, where and when work happens.

A global biopharma company wanted an innovative approach to work that was optimized for both the present post Covid-19 climate and the future, regardless of where you work. Accenture was engaged to design a custom solution for this new way of working.

When tech meets human ingenuity

Unlocking flexibility, collaboration and results

Accenture, in partnership with the biopharma company, developed a unique human-centered approach that has not only changed the way work happens at the company but has changed the way employees approach their lives. The solution democratizes how people achieve results, improving the way leaders work with their teams and increasing trust.

This project tapped into Accenture's multifaceted expertise and included conducting in-depth research, creating over 150 content assets, and embedding a "Net Better Off practice."

The success of the program depends on trust and the universal adoption of simple yet significant changes. Initially, the team created engaging and immersive campaigns anchored around individual well-being, team effectiveness, and agility.

For team effectiveness, we designed a change management approach to drive a more outcome-focused organization. For better engagement, we created a digital worker toolkit centered around Microsoft Teams. For flexibility, we designed strategies centered around verbal cues, behavioral

nudges, manager training, and meeting etiquette to empower employees to better manage their time.

The journey began with campaigns that were anchored around our desired outcomes. The team developed more than 50 supporting products—including collaboration technology to reduce email traffic and opt-in experiential learning using NextGen learning methods and tools—that were rolled out in a phased approach.

So how did this look in practice?

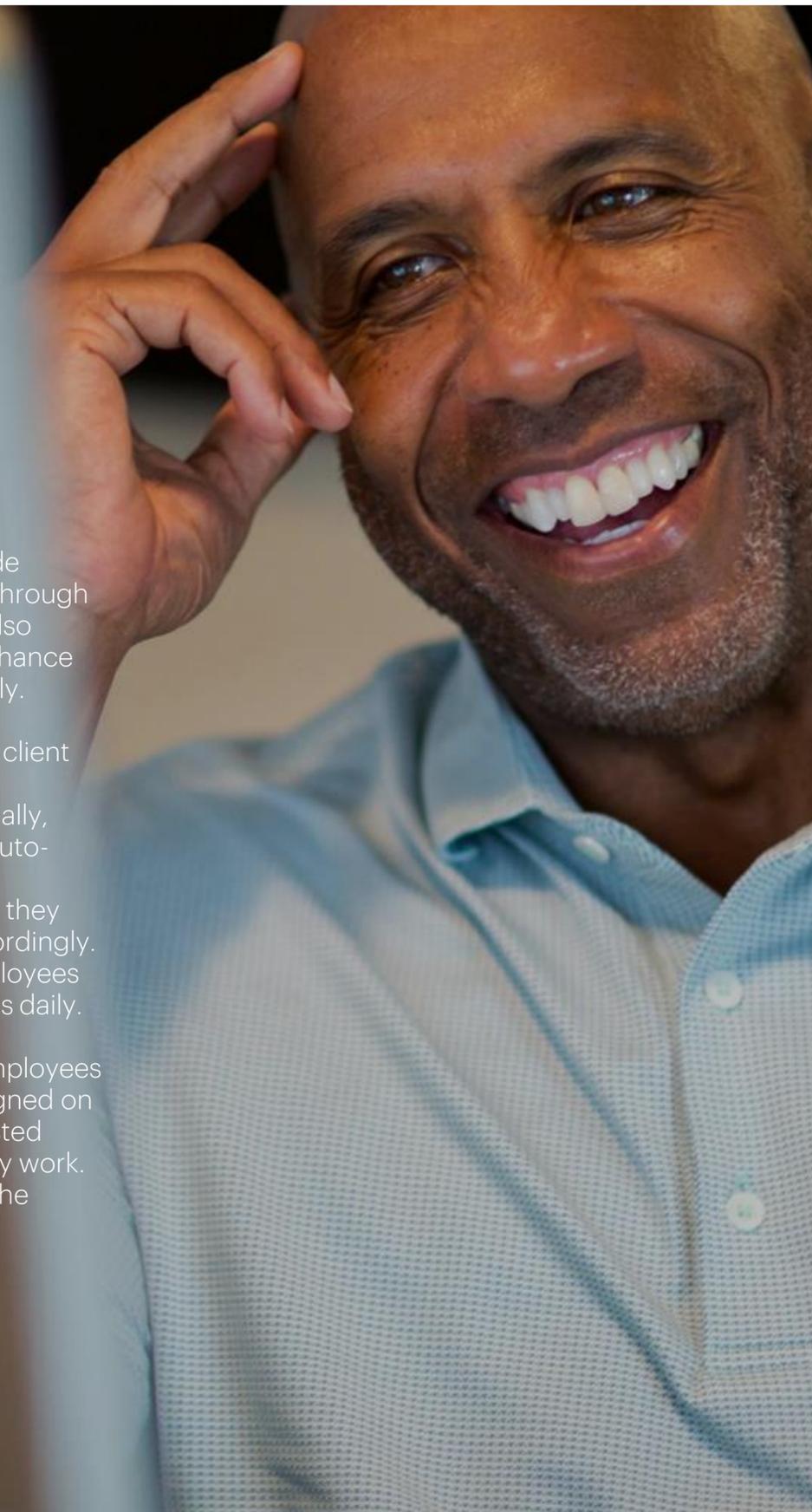
One of the teams was tapped to nurture and measure the empowerment of a people mindset before scaling and rolling out to the rest of the company. The pilot launch included half-day experiences, coaching, and operating models to transform the team's ways of working.

For example, some employees in this group were in 40-50 hours of meetings, with approximately ten hours of meetings a week outside of "working hours" and back-to-back meetings, without a break. The team launched two experiments to address this issue. First, they instituted virtual commutes with a five-minute gap between meetings. Second, the

team moved meetings from outside to inside working hours as set in Microsoft Outlook, through a people-focused campaign. Teams were also given the tools to collaborate digitally to enhance the effectiveness of work happening globally.

Microsoft's centralized platform helped the client transition to a unified digital space for communication and collaboration. Additionally, Microsoft Viva Insights, which helps users auto-schedule their work time, helps company employees analyze recent work patterns so they can adjust their schedules and actions accordingly. Microsoft Planner is also used to assist employees in aligning with individual and team priorities daily.

Throughout the transformation process, employees and managers were encouraged to stay aligned on priorities and progress while all involved tested flexible approaches to when and where they work. The focus was on the result and providing the employee with the flexibility to achieve it.





A valuable difference

Putting people first and reaping remarkable results

Sometimes the simplest solutions are the best.

The company has successfully shifted away from a “presenteeism” culture, where meetings are the primary way for employees to demonstrate their value. Teams now use digital collaboration to fuel progress. The pressure to “always be on” has lessened, thanks to the increased trust and flexibility on how, when, and where they work. And employees now have clear, regularly updated shortlists of priorities that reflect the latest needs of the business and expectations of managers and teams.

Since the start of the project, there has been a 30% increase in one-on-one meetings with managers at least once a month, an indication that employees are more connected. Meanwhile, almost half of employees reported that they are now more empowered to get work done more flexibly.

These statistics matter, but so do the individual stories that collectively demonstrate the power of this dramatic shift. Employees have expressed that the new approach gives them hope that they can now do what they love without sacrificing their personal lives. Before the implementation

of this solution, some had said they were considering leaving their jobs. However, they now believe they can stay and continue to serve patients. Others shared anecdotes of how their daily lives have improved.

Going forward, the desire is to continue the shift away from heavy email traffic and more toward collaboration platforms like Microsoft Teams, to have days with shorter, less frequent, and more effective meetings to enable employees to have a greater sense of ownership and trust.

The company’s bold experiment has demonstrated that an organization can achieve outstanding results by putting its people first, and the company is committed to deliberately driving and evolving this change going forward.

Can you be truly empowered at work? At this global biopharma company, the answer is yes.