Internal Communication at Charles University (CU)

Managerial Summary of the Survey Conducted at the Rectorate

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Introduction to the Survey

In accordance with the action plan for HR Excellence in Research (the "HR Award") for 2021-2023, a survey was designed to assess the current state of internal communication at the workplaces of the Charles University Rectorate (RUK).

The survey aimed to gain insights into experiences related to fulfilling work duties, identify strengths and weaknesses in current internal communication at the Rectorate, and gain an overview of the functionality of work procedures and collaboration within the Rectorate and across the university. The results and analysis will be further incorporated into the Charles University Internal Communication Strategy, which aims to enhance the efficiency of agenda management through not only strengthening the support for using communication channels and tools but also by sharing good practices and work procedures across the university.

The survey period lasted from October 5 to October 21, 2021, utilizing the Microsoft Forms platform. All employees of the rectorate, totaling 278 individuals, participated, yielding 138 responses (a 49.6% response rate).

Summary of Survey Results

The survey provided valuable information about the operations of the rectorate employees and opportunities for further development. Key findings include:

1. Employees reported that the coronavirus pandemic affected them and their work as follows:
   - **Neutral: 36%**
   - **Positive: 33%** [Somewhat Positive: 28%, Very Positive: 5%]
   - **Negative: 28%** [Somewhat Negative: 24%, Very Negative: 4%]
   - **Other: 3%**

Type of Response: Respondents could select only one option or skip the question. They could also add a verbal comment.

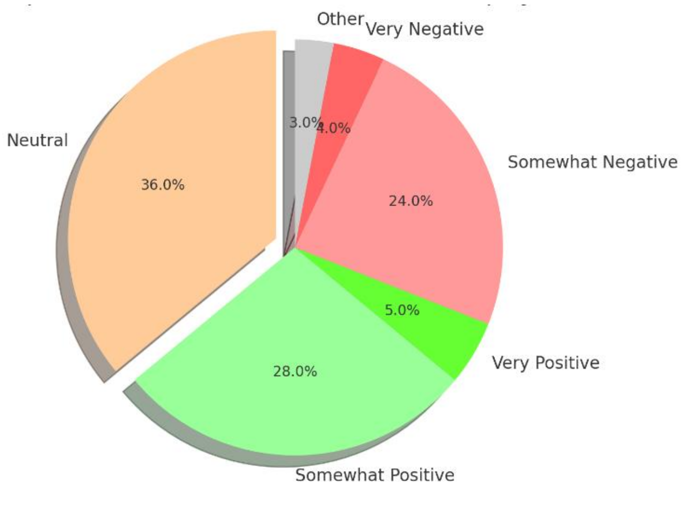

Chart 1: Employee Evaluation of the Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Themselves and Their Work.

Summary of Verbal Comments:

Comments indicated increased interest in more efficient collaboration through electronic document processing. Working from home had positives (e.g., a quieter work environment) and negatives (e.g., increased communication via emails and phone calls). Employees viewed the period of the coronavirus pandemic as a challenging time, including difficulties (e.g., reduced contact with colleagues) and new opportunities (e.g., using online tools like MS Teams).

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2. Employees adapted to the course of the coronavirus pandemic and learned to use new communication tools. The most popular newly utilized tool was **Microsoft Office 365** (121 respondents, or 44%), followed by **Zoom** (73 respondents, or 26%), **Google Suite** (18 respondents, or 6%), and others (2 respondents). Some respondents managed their work without the need to use new communication tools (9 respondents, or 3%) and others were already proficient in them (8 respondents, or 3%).

Type of Response: Respondents could select only one option or skip the question.

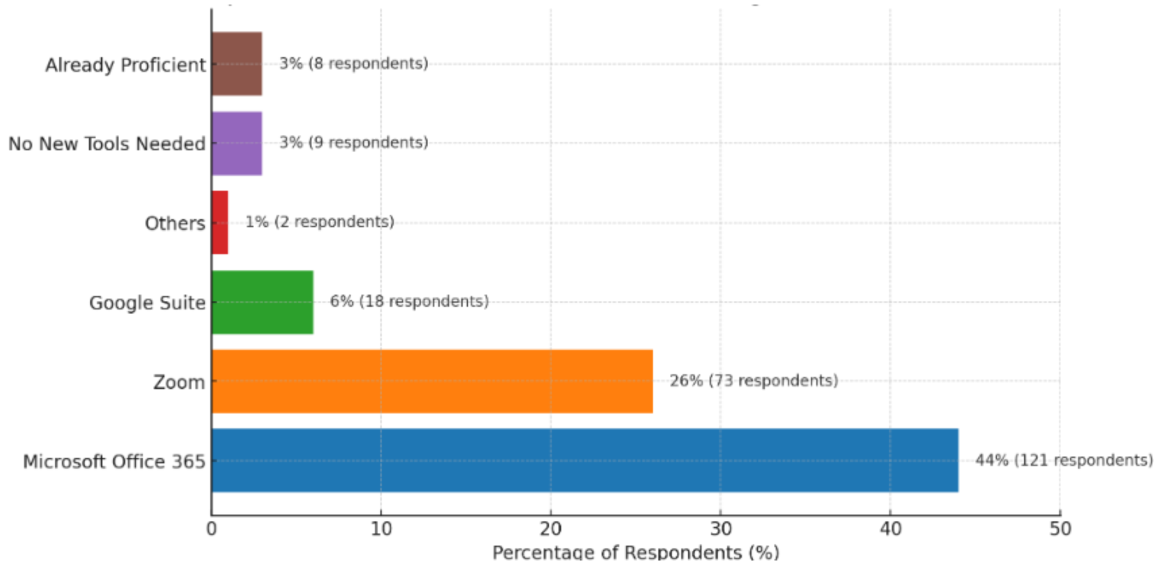

Chart 2: Overview of Newly Used Communication Tools During the Coronavirus Pandemic.

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3. Employees identified three main communication issues from management to staff:
   a. **Incomprehensibility of communications directed at employees**
   b. **Poor quality of communication coordination among leadership**
   c. **Slow response in preparing for remote and hybrid work engagement**

Type of Response: Respondents had only the option of a verbal answer to the question.

Summary of Verbal Comments:

Employees verbally commented that there were uncertainties regarding who would issue directives to employees and whether they were waiting for the university leadership or department heads. Additional comments focused on the coronavirus measures, which employees described as delayed and chaotic.

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4. Employees rated the activities of RUK very positively in most areas of its operation during 2019-2021. The highest ratings were achieved in:

- **Support for the use of new communication tools** [Excellent and Commendable 81%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 19%]
- **Approach of department and division leadership** [Excellent and Commendable 71%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 29%]
- **Approach of university leadership** [Excellent and Commendable 74%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 26%]
- **Adaptation to new situations** [Excellent and Commendable 71%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 29%]
- **Regular updates on the current situation** [Excellent and Commendable 63%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 37%]
- **Timely communication of changes** [Excellent and Commendable 56%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 44%]

Type of Response: Respondents rated each activity on a scale from excellent to insufficient.

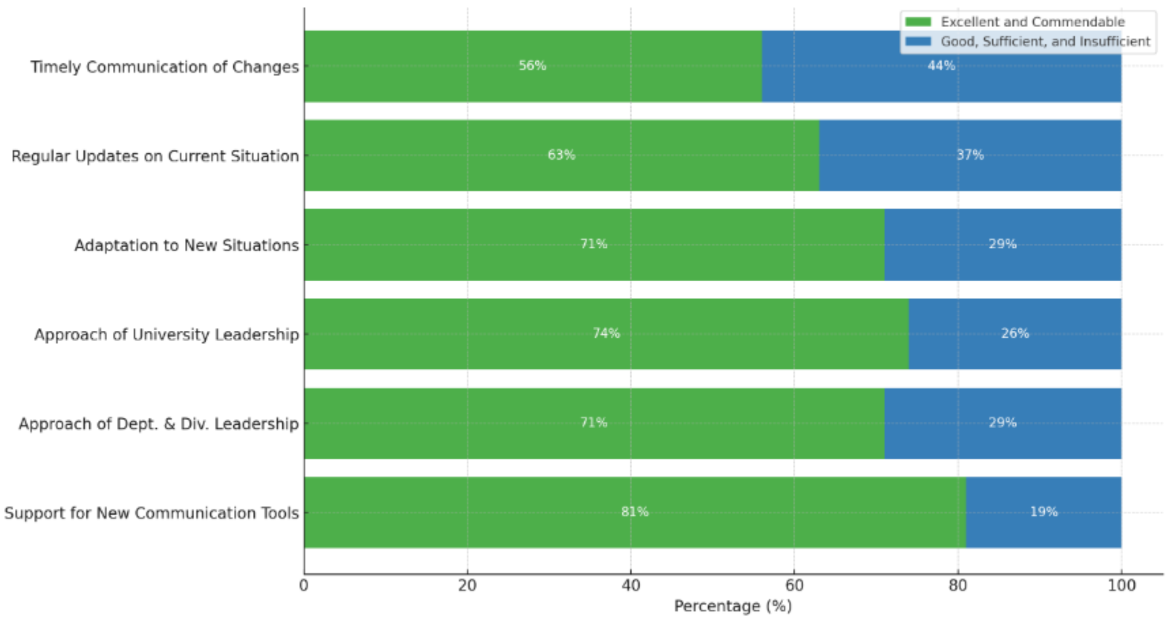

Chart 3: Overview of Employee Ratings of Selected Activities at RUK.

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5. Employees perceived the efficiency of work in their department or nearest work group as **mostly unchanged** (132 respondents, or 47%), or as **slightly increased** (86 respondents, or 31%). Further, they noted a **significant increase in efficiency** (32

respondents, or 12%), a **slight decrease in efficiency** (20 respondents, or 7%), and a **significant decrease in efficiency** (8 respondents, or 3%).

Type of Response: Respondents could select one option.

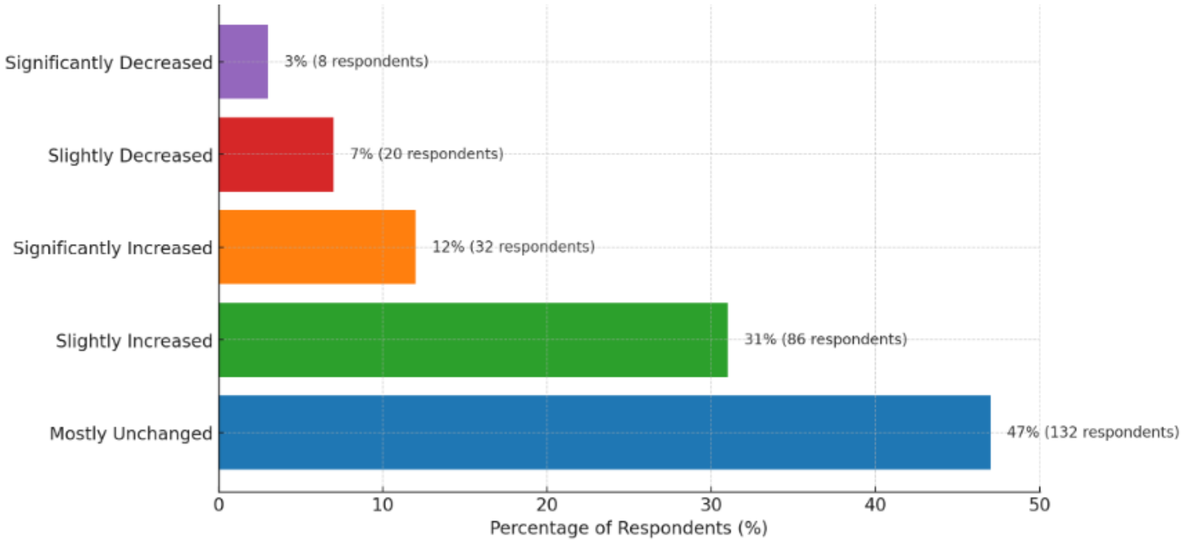

Chart 4: Employee Evaluation of Work Efficiency in the Current Unusual Situation.

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6. Perceived opportunities for working at RUK in a remote and hybrid format:
   a. **Opportunities for private life** (time savings from commuting, time savings from traveling between university buildings, better alignment of work and personal life)
   b. **Opportunities in work organization** (modernization of agendas, opportunity to learn to work with new technologies, more peace at work, collaboration has become more flexible)
   c. **Opportunities for improving the work environment** (streamlining processes and reducing bureaucratic burden, greater emphasis on digitization of agendas, replacing physical signatures with electronic ones, opportunities for changing and renewing technical equipment).

Type of Response: Respondents had only the option of a verbal answer.

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7. Employees identified the most important tools for communication at RUK as follows: **mobile phone** (109 respondents, or 39%), **landline** (65 respondents, or 23%), **SharePoint** (52 respondents, or 19%), **email** (51 respondents, or 18%), **shared calendar** (41 respondents, or 15%), **Google Drive** (28 respondents, or 10%), **social networks** (13 respondents, or 5%), and **MS Teams** (8 respondents, or 3%).

Type of Response: Respondents could choose multiple options. (Note: The percentages are calculated for each item separately.)

- ➢ The goal of internal communication: Emphasis on supporting the use of the intranet and the M365 environment, especially MS Teams.

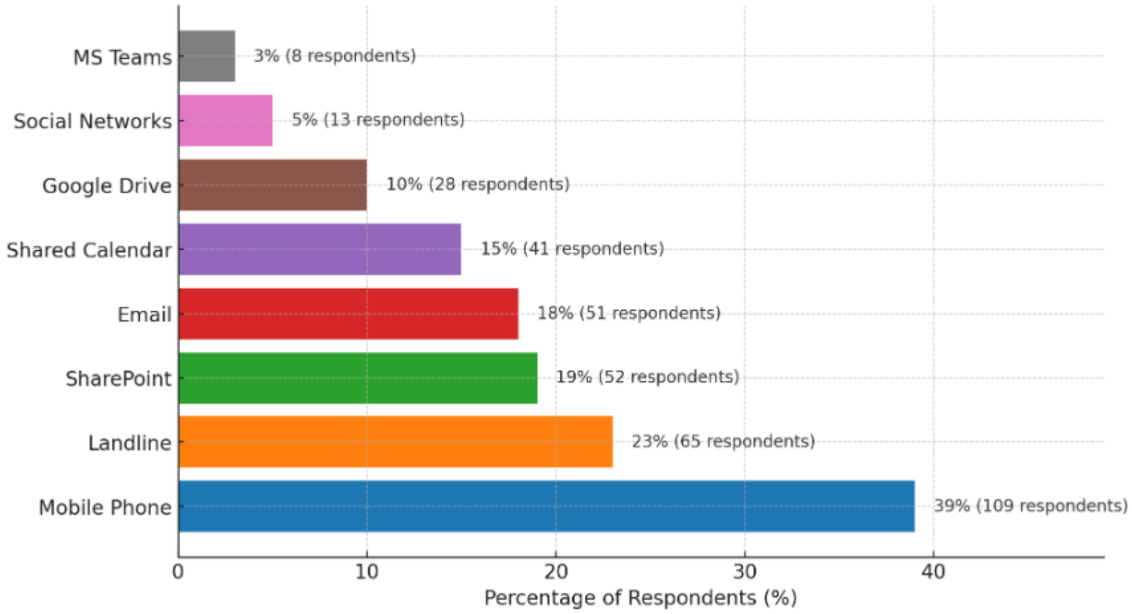

Chart 5: Most Important Communication Tools at RUK from the Employees' Perspective.

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8. Information from leadership most frequently reaches employees through **informational emails** (31%), **personal meetings** (27%), **departmental meetings** (25%), **chat groups** (9%), **meeting notes** (6%), and by **telephone** (1%). Some employees do not receive information (1%).

Type of Response: Respondents could choose one option.

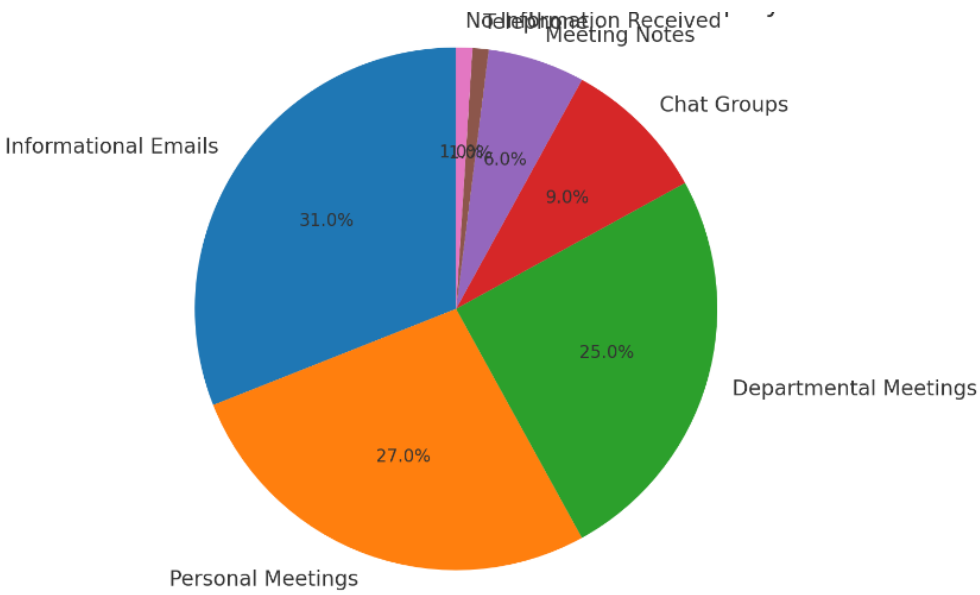

Chart 6: Most Common Communication Channels Through Which Information Flows from Leadership to Employees.

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9. Regarding the identification of issues with general communication at RUK, 14% of employees (i.e., 38 respondents) expressed that they perceive no significant

problems. The most frequently mentioned problems were: **detachment of university leadership from RUK operations** (14%, i.e., 37 respondents), **missing rules** (11%, i.e., 31 respondents), **weak support for team collaboration** (11%, i.e., 30 respondents), **lack of a platform for effective communication** (10%, i.e., 28 respondents), **misunderstandings among employees** (9%, i.e., 25 respondents), the **management style of RUK** (8%, i.e., 24 respondents), **nonexistent cooperation between departments** (1%, i.e., 4 respondents), **other** (1%, i.e., 4 respondents), and **failure to meet deadlines** (<1%, i.e., 1 respondent).

Type of Response: Respondents could select multiple options. (Note: Percentages are calculated for each item individually.)

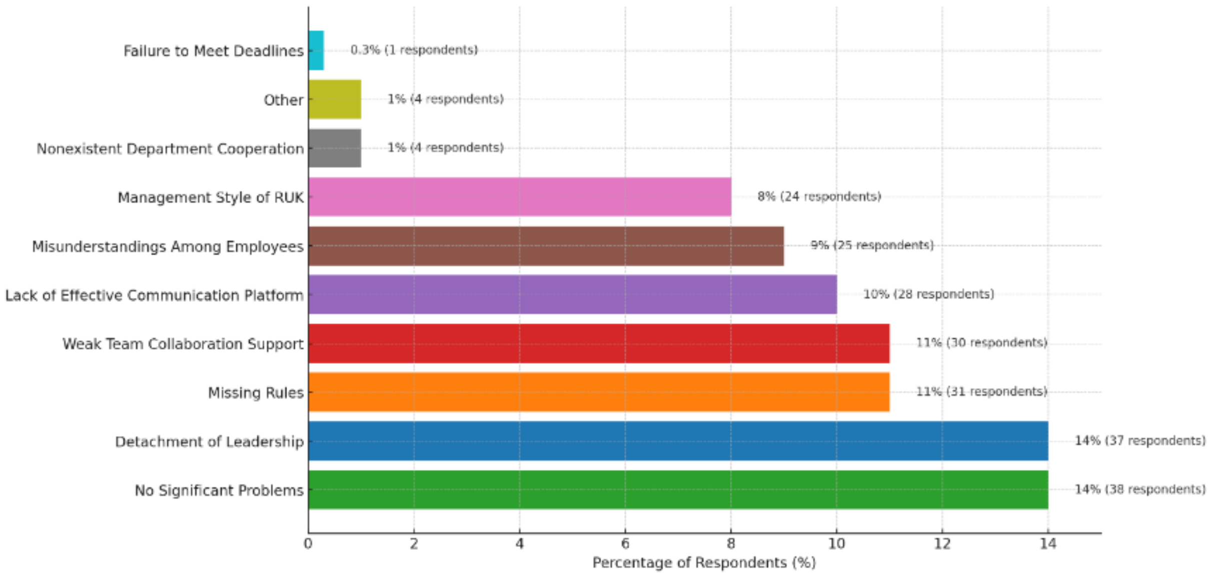

Chart 7: Identified Issues Regarding General Communication.

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10. Employees expressed a very positive evaluation regarding the work environment and receiving feedback. The highest ratings were received for:
    - **Supervisor accepts feedback** [Excellent and Commendable 92%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 8%]
    - **I know where to find the necessary information** [Excellent and Commendable 89%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 11%]
    - **I receive feedback on my work** [Excellent and Commendable 85%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 15%]
    - **I have room for professional development** [Excellent and Commendable 81%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 19%]
    - **My supervisor gives me feedback** [Excellent and Commendable 79%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 21%]
    - **I have clearly defined roles and responsibilities** [Excellent and Commendable 72%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 28%]

- **The work environment suits me** [Excellent and Commendable 70%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 30%]
- **Communication at RUK is effective** [Excellent and Commendable 48%, Good and Sufficient and Insufficient 52%]

Type of Response: Respondents rated each activity on a scale from excellent to insufficient.

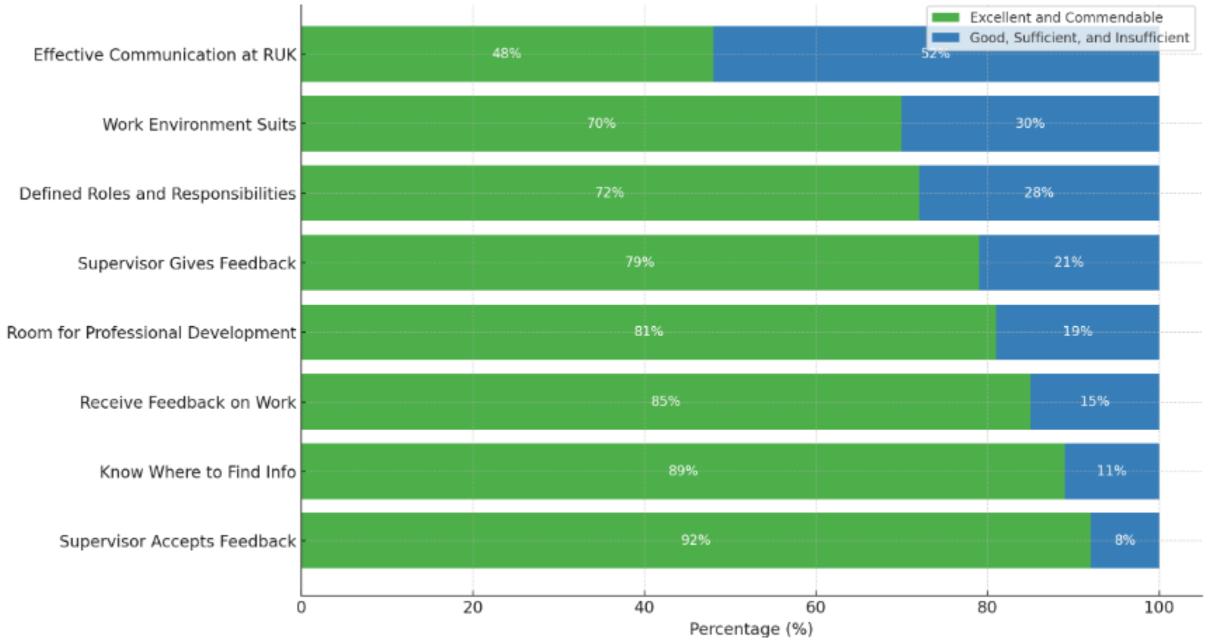

Chart 8: Employee Ratings of Individual Statements Regarding the Work Environment and Receiving Feedback.

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11. Employees submitted suggestions and comments regarding internal communication at RUK, which fall under these five main themes:
    a. The need to form interdepartmental teams.
    b. The need to establish a public database of university templates (letterheads, presentations, etc.).
    c. Interest in support and training for using M365 (especially MS Teams features).
    d. Interest in entering employees' job content into the information system.
    e. Interest in more effective employee evaluation.

Type of Response: Respondents had only the option of a verbal answer.

Conclusion

Based on this survey, specific steps to improve internal communication in the following areas have been proposed:

a) **Acquisition and dissemination of information** among all levels of RUK (leadership-employees, and among the employees of the UK Rectorate).

b) **Recommendation of suitable tools** for more effective communication across all levels of RUK (leadership-employees, and among the employees of the UK Rectorate).

The main goals identified are:

1. **To create a comprehensive interface and implement additional software tools for internal communication to be used across the entire university, ensuring relevant training for employees in the MS 365 environment:**
    a. Intranet, Microsoft Office 365
    b. Establishing rules for effective communication in the workplace and ensuring support from department heads, with consideration of target groups.
2. **To focus on the digitization of processes, enhancement of the intranet, and also support for its use among employees:**
    a. Support the transition of work processes from a paper-based environment to a digital one, support employees in adapting to a digital environment.
    b. Prepare work processes for the most frequently addressed requests.
3. **To create a newsletter for RUK employees:**
    a. To increase communication from the university leadership to employees (publish meeting notes and other important information).
    b. To generally increase awareness of current events inside RUK.
    c. To offer opportunities for departmental communication to all RUK employees.
4. **To establish a working group for internal communication, which will focus on preparing the intranet and the proper implementation of MS 365 tools.**

These four main steps have been incorporated into the proposal for an internal communication strategy, which sets the direction for improving internal communication at RUK and across the UK.