Peer-to-peer practices:
Survey results show the power

By Liz Guthridge, Managing Director

September 2013

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Topics

- **What?**
  - Survey purpose
  - Highlights of results
- **So what?**
  - Implications and insights
- **Now what?**
  - Actions and offer for you

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Peer-to-Peer

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About your survey sponsor

Connect specializes in strategy implementation to move from **blue-sky thinking** to **greener-pasture actions**.

Uses brain-friendly techniques to help leaders improve:

- **Clarity**
- **Involvement**
- **Habit design**

Liz Guthridge
Managing Director

Author of *"Change Through Smart-Mob Organizing: Using Peer-by-Peer Practices to Transform Organizations"* in **The Change Champion's Field Guide** (Wiley 2013)

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Survey purpose—hypothesis

Employees value working with their peers

- Easy, fast way to get things done
  - Tap into the wisdom of people doing the work
  - Jump over the hierarchy
  - Get practical ideas
- Trust "people like me"
- Can collaborate with others who have different skills to solve big problems and new challenges.

My peers

People like me

Regular people

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Survey purpose

For peer-to-peer practices (P2P):

1. **Assess prevalence of these 6 practices:**

    – **Recognition:** thanking peers for being supportive

    – **Feedback:** giving peers feedback on job performance

    – **Training:** helping peers learn new skills

    – **Coaching:** helping peers deal with workplace challenges

    – **Idea-sharing:** tapping into the wisdom of peers

    – **Serving as an ambassador:** informing and influencing peers

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Survey purpose

2. Understand the work environment that supports peer-to-peer practices

- Support from employer

- Opportunities to share ideas

- Trust in peers, manager and senior leaders

- Willingness to recommend employer as good place to work

What? About the survey

Peer-to-peer practices-- **formal and informal--** within the context of trust and leadership support

Questions:
- 19 quantitative
- 3 qualitative
- 5 demographic

422 write-in comments

Definitions of peer-to-peer

- **Formal practices**: "Employer sponsors a program with a system and policy in place"

- **Informal:** "Just the way you do things; you and your co-workers are acting on your own"

Connect Consulting conducted this online survey in August with 332 respondents

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High-level survey results

- **Most peer practices are informal**
  - Highest formal program was peer recognition: **32%**

- **78% say peer practices help them do their job better**
  - Get quality ideas, information and support quickly in a low-risk setting

- **Many respondents say they'd like more structure**
  - More encouragement and support
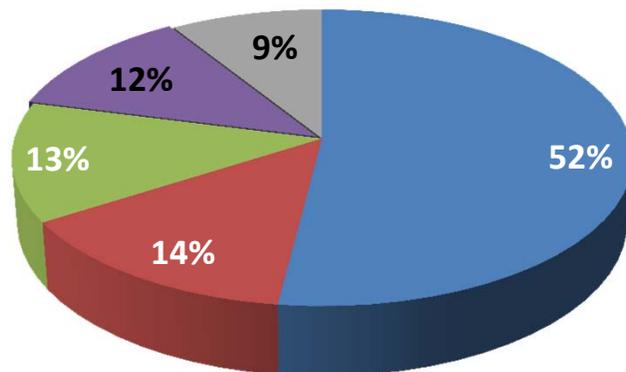 - More processes and training on how to use
  - Better technology

All write-in comments

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About the respondents

Very experienced

Years in workforce

- 20+ years
- 15 to less than 20 years
- 10 to less than 15 years
- 5 to less than 10
- < 5 years

9% 12% 13% 14% 52%

Work at these organizations

- 21% publicly-held companies

- 34% privately-held

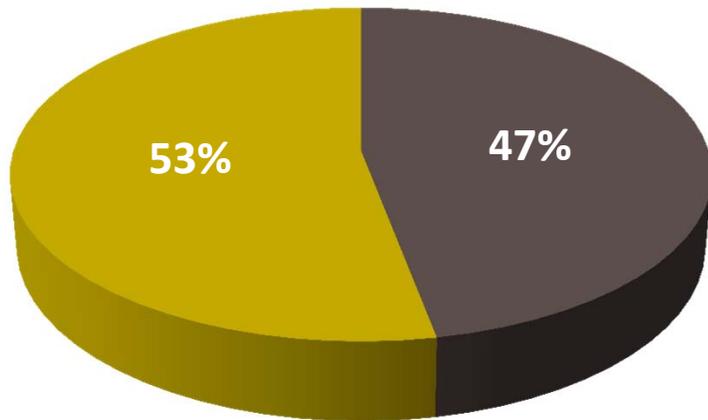- 17% non-profit

- 17% education

- 10% government or military

In a variety of functions

About the respondents
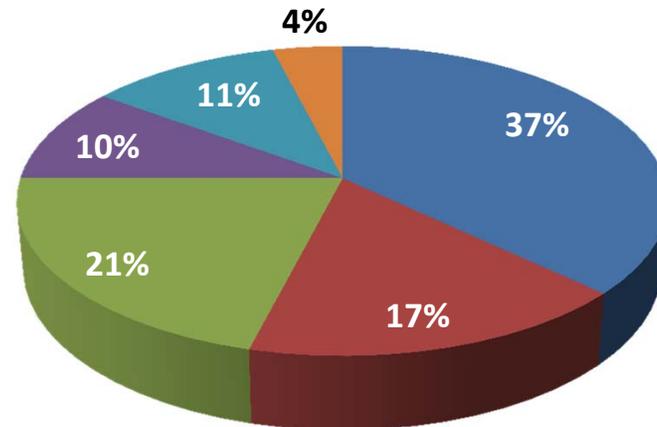
47% are managers; 54% have 10+ years in the role

Whether managing employees

■ Yes ■ No
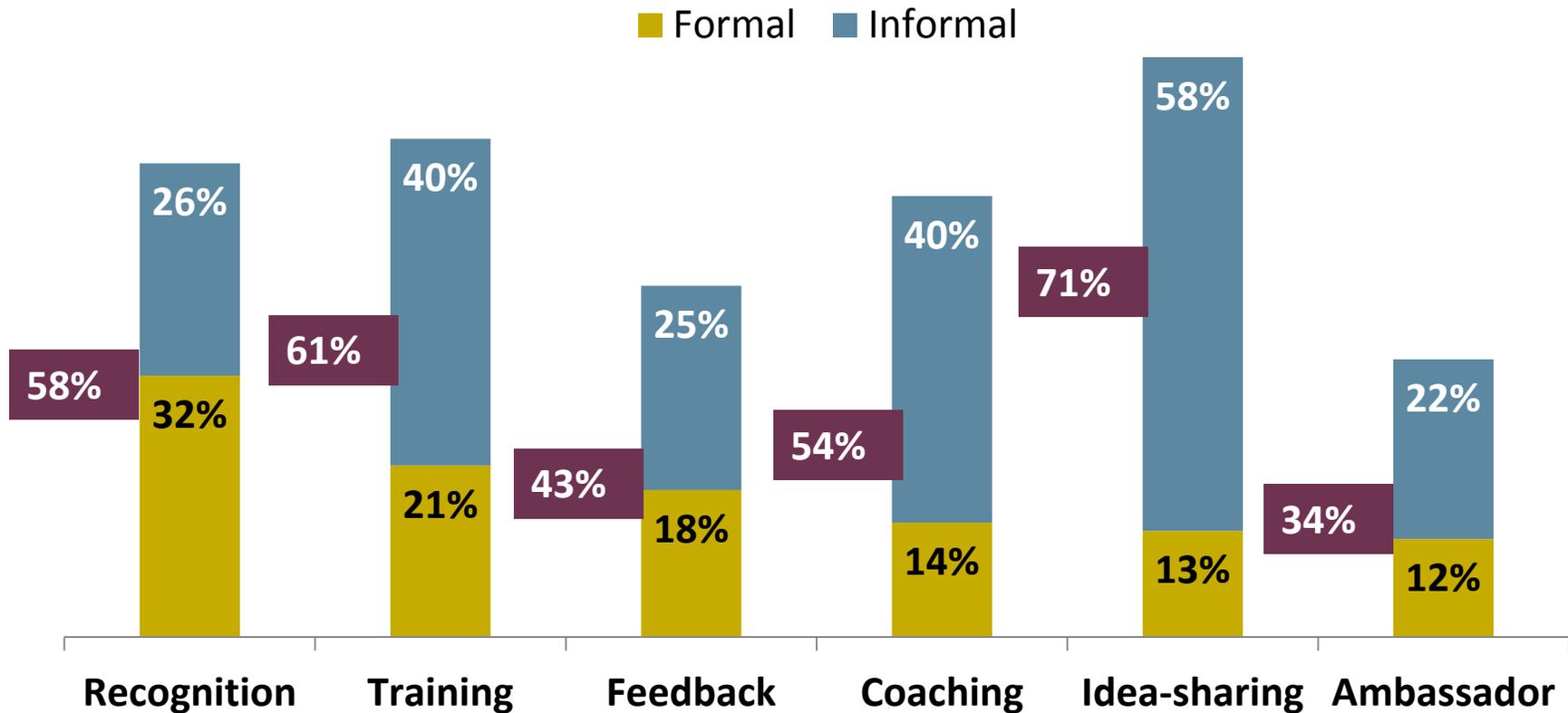
- 53%
- 47%

Years managing employees

■ 15+ years
■ 10 to less than 15 years
■ 5 to less than 10 years
■ 3 to less than 5 years
■ 1 to less than 3 years
■ < 1 year

- 4%
- 11%
- 10%
- 21%
- 37%
- 17%

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Prevalence of P2P practices

Informal more common than formal

Legend: Formal | Informal

Recognition: Formal 32%, Informal 26%, 58%
Training: Formal 21%, Informal 40%, 61%
Feedback: Formal 18%, Informal 25%, 43%
Coaching: Formal 14%, Informal 40%, 54%
Idea-sharing: Formal 13%, Informal 58%, 71%
Ambassador: Formal 12%, Informal 22%, 34%

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Prevalence of P2P practices

Overall observations

- Publicly-traded companies more likely to have formal peer-to-peer programs
  - Comparison between public and private on next slide
- Not many demographic differences

P2P by company type

Respondents of public companies reported higher degree of formal and informal P2P practices

| Practice	Publicly-traded Companies			Private Companies		
	Formal	Informal	Overall	Formal	Informal	Overall
Idea-sharing	13%	64%	77%	10%	50%	60%
Training	27%	44%	71%	19%	29%	48%
Coaching	13%	36%	49%	13%	29%	42%
Recognition	40%	22%	62%	24%	29%	53%
Feedback	24%	27%	51%	13%	19%	32%
Ambassador	22%	16%	38%	9%	21%	30%

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Results: Recognition

Recognition most common formal program. Of the 32% with a formal program:

- 40% also have a **peer-to-peer rewards program**

- Co-workers can give a cash award, gift card or other reward*

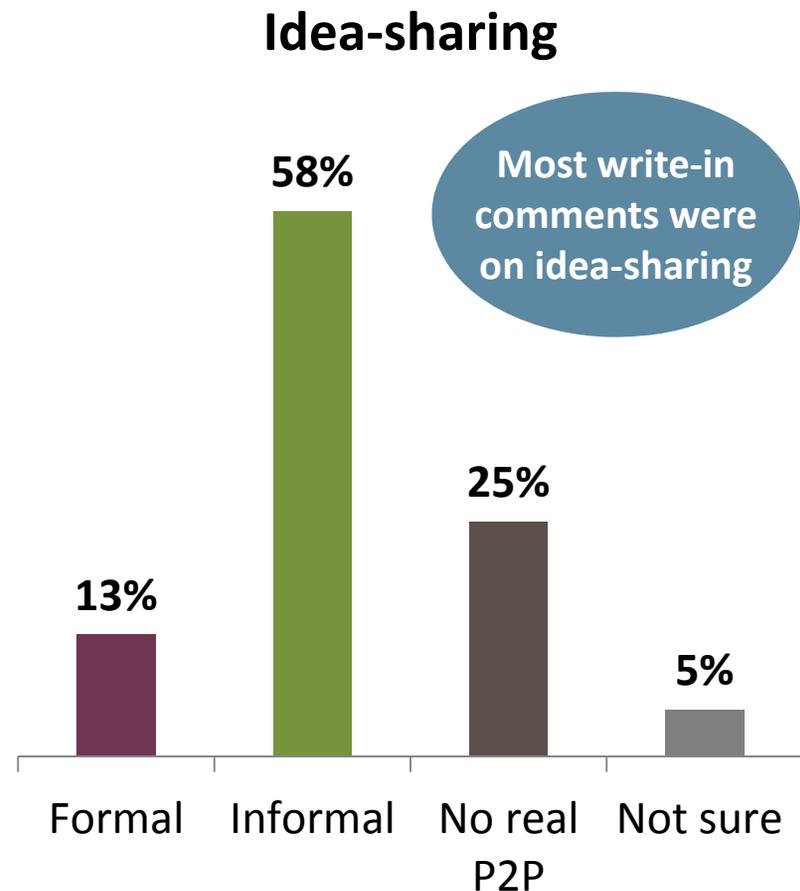*Other reward includes $50 once you get 5 awards, points for gifts and plaques.

P2P formal rewards

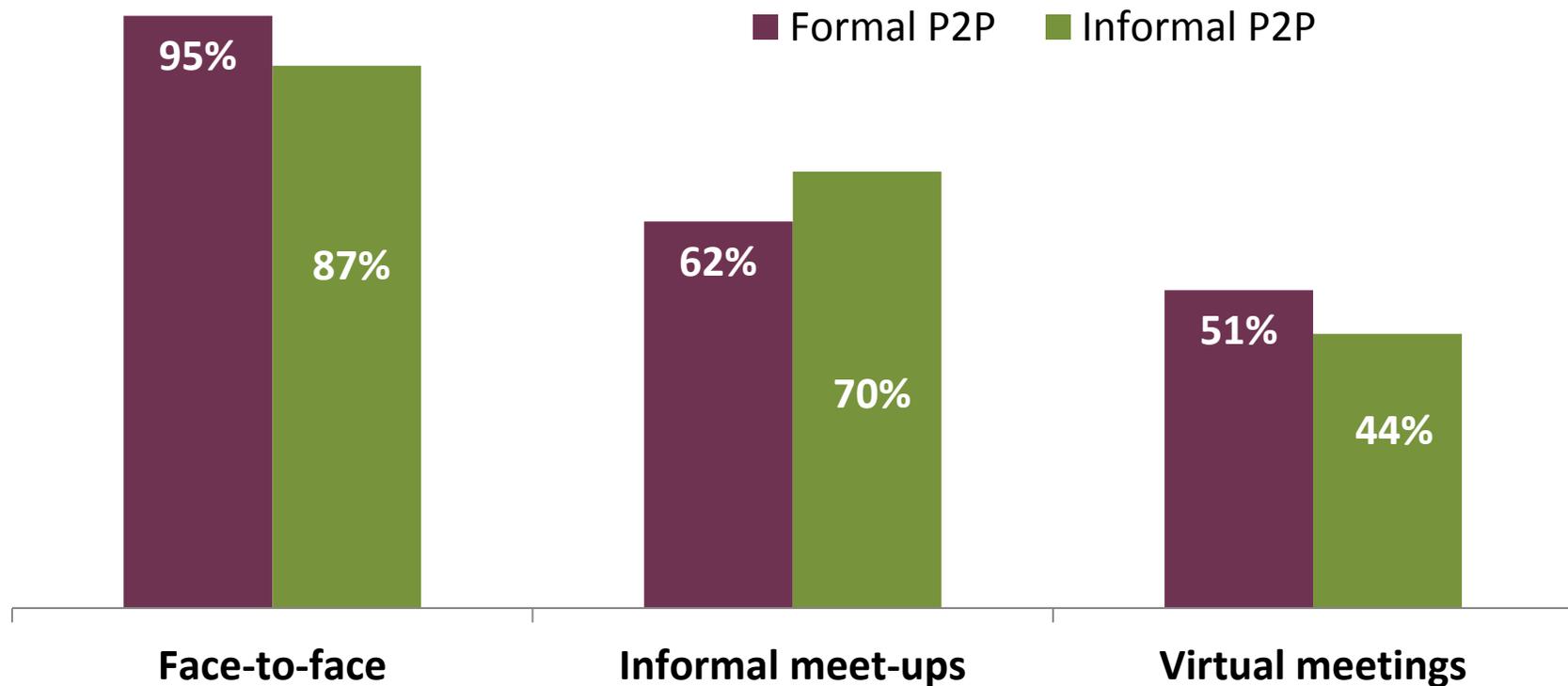| Up to $25	$25 or more	Other*
22%	15%	3%

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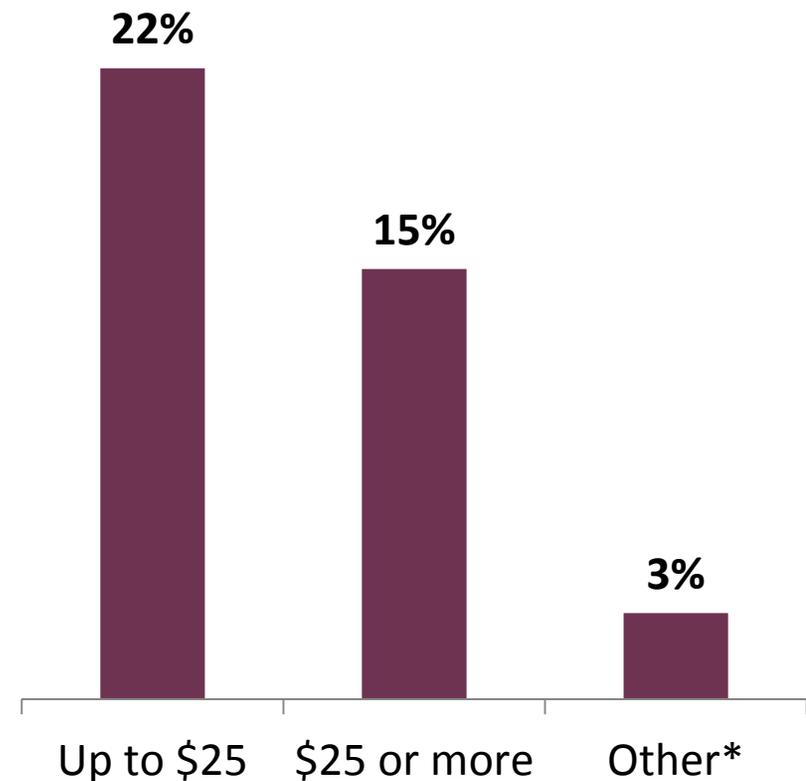
Results: Idea-sharing

Idea-sharing the most popular informal practice.

The 71% who said their employer encourages them and their co-workers to share ideas and practices with employees in other departments and locations (formal and informal) use a variety of methods, as shown next.

Idea-sharing

Most write-in comments were on idea-sharing

58%

25%

13%

5%

Formal   Informal   No real P2P   Not sure

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Results: Idea-sharing

Methods respondents use—meetings

Legend: **Formal P2P** (purple), **Informal P2P** (green)

- Face-to-face: 95% (Formal P2P), 87% (Informal P2P)
- Informal meet-ups: 62% (Formal P2P), 70% (Informal P2P)
- Virtual meetings: 51% (Formal P2P), 44% (Informal P2P)

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Results: Idea-sharing

Methods respondents use—electronically

Legend: ■ Formal P2P ■ Informal P2P

Other informal P2P methods include: Google groups, LinkedIn, Powernoodle, in-house online forums /groups and the telephone.

Other formal P2P methods include: salesforce.com, FactorLab's Grow and Intranet information boards.

- Email requests: Formal P2P 72%, Informal P2P 79%
- Social networks: Formal P2P 10%, Informal P2P 16%
- Collaboration technology: Formal P2P 33%, Informal P2P 23%
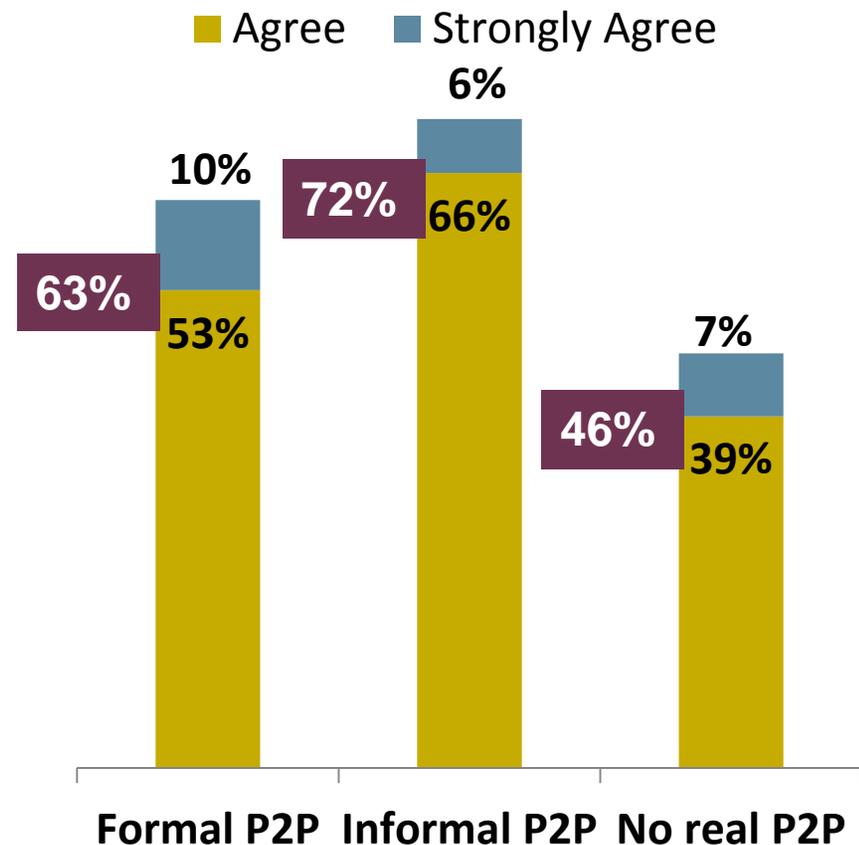
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Results: Use of practices

Q. I regularly use peer-to-peer practices.

Observations

More frequent P2P users are:

- Those who believe peer practices help them do their job better: **73%.**

- Public company respondents: **60% vs. 53%** for private company. *(Public companies also have more P2P practices.)*

- Those who've worked 5-10 years: **67% vs.**
  - **52%** for those with less than 5 years
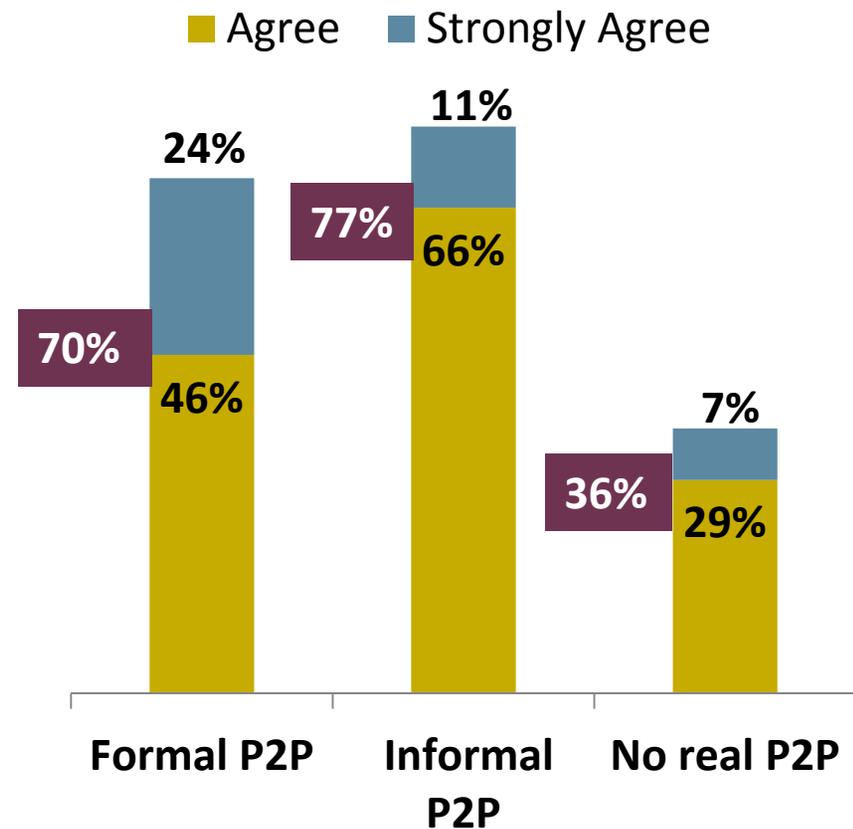 - **58%** for those with 20 years or more

■ Agree   ■ Strongly Agree

63%   10%   72%   6%   46%   7%
53%   66%   39%

Formal P2P   Informal P2P   No real P2P

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Results: Support

Q. My employer supports me in using peer-to-peer practices.

Observations

Of those who believe peer practices help them do their job better, **70%** agreed/strongly agreed with this statement.

For these individuals as well as others, they said in the write-in comments that their employers should take more supportive actions about peer-to-peer practices as explained later.
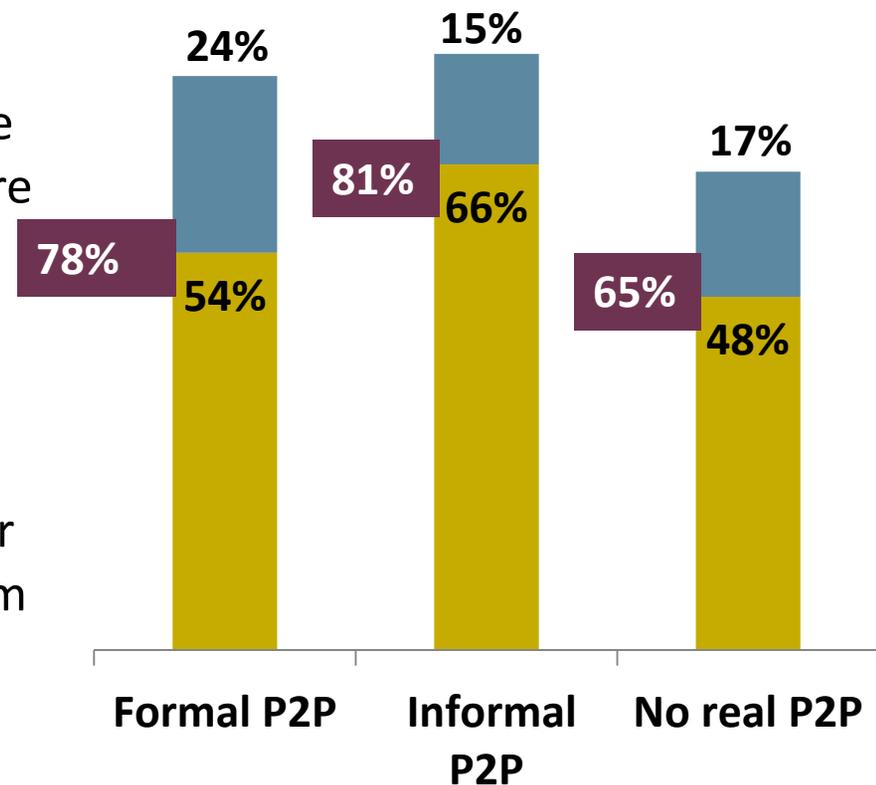

Legend: ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Formal P2P: 70% | 24% (Strongly Agree) | 46% (Agree)
Informal P2P: 77% | 11% (Strongly Agree) | 66% (Agree)
No real P2P: 36% | 7% (Strongly Agree) | 29% (Agree)

Results: job performance

Q. I believe peer-to-peer practices help me do my job better.

Legend: ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Observations

- Employees who have been in the workforce more than 20 years are most positive.

- No difference: managers and non-managers rate the same.

- Even those who say their employer doesn't have real peer practices use them and find them of value.

Formal P2P: 78%, 24% Strongly Agree, 54% Agree
Informal P2P: 81%, 15% Strongly Agree, 66% Agree
No real P2P: 65%, 17% Strongly Agree, 48% Agree

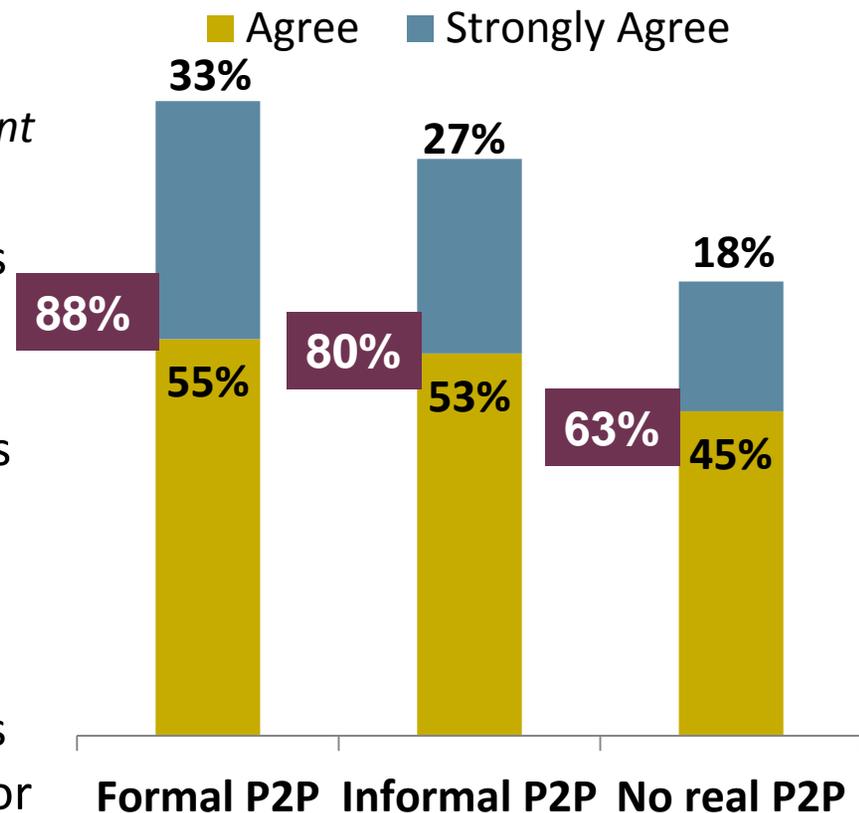**connect CONSULTING GROUP**

Results: work environment

Q. I have opportunities to share my ideas and concerns with my employer's leaders, including my manager.

Observations

The survey results on the work environment questions start here.

Respondents who work for employers with P2P practices (formal/informal) were more positive on these issues. People who believe that P2P practices help them do their job better also were more positive.

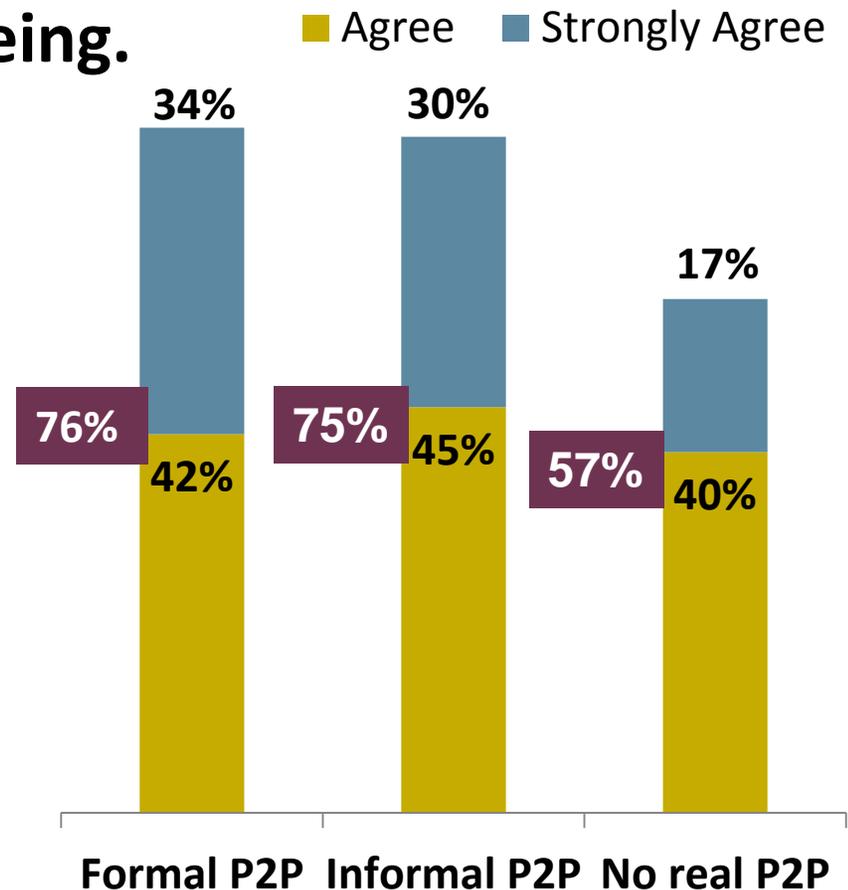It's unclear whether the P2P practices contribute to people feeling positive or are a beneficiary.

Legend: ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

- Formal P2P: 88%, Strongly Agree 33%, Agree 55%
- Informal P2P: 80%, Strongly Agree 27%, Agree 53%
- No real P2P: 63%, Strongly Agree 18%, Agree 45%

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Results: Manager's interest

Q. My manager demonstrates a sincere interest in my satisfaction and well-being.
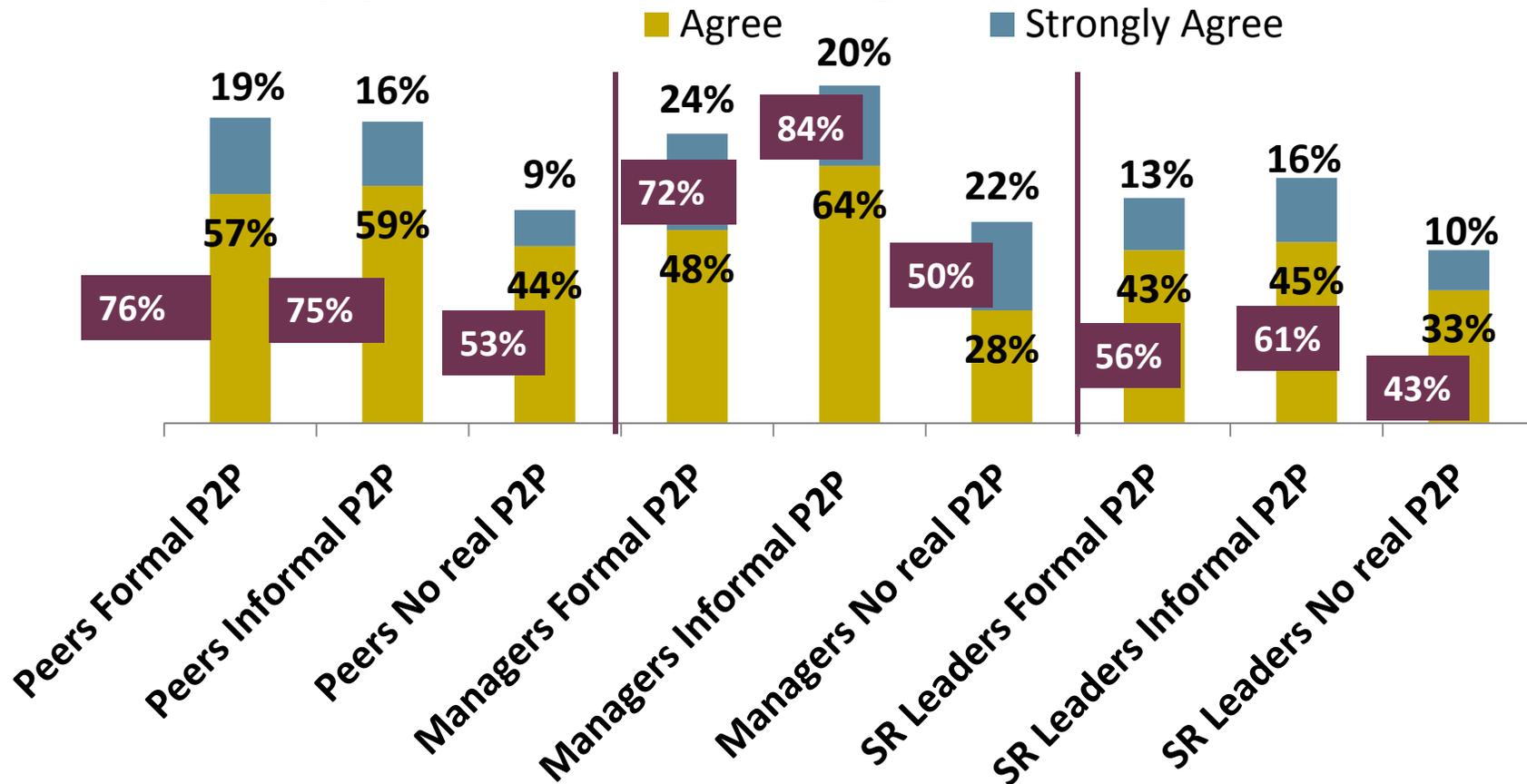
Legend: ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Observation

Of those who believe peer practices help them do their job better, **72%** agreed/strongly agreed with this statement.

Chart data:

	Formal P2P	Informal P2P	No real P2P
Strongly Agree	34%	30%	17%
Agree	42%	45%	40%
Total	76%	75%	57%

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Results: Trust

Q. I trust my peers……my manager………senior leaders.

■ Agree   ■ Strongly Agree

|	Peers Formal P2P	Peers Informal P2P	Peers No real P2P	Managers Formal P2P	Managers Informal P2P	Managers No real P2P	SR Leaders Formal P2P	SR Leaders Informal P2P	SR Leaders No real P2P
Strongly Agree	19%	16%	9%	24%	20%	22%	13%	16%	10%
Agree	57%	59%	44%	48%	64%	50%	43%	45%	33%
Total	76%	75%	53%	72%	84%	28%	56%	61%	43%

Results: More on trust

Observations

**Managers and peers are trusted about the same in organizations with P2P practices (formal and informal).**

Respondents who strongly agreed/agreed to "I believe that peer practices help me do my job" also trust peers, their manager and senior leaders about the same as those with formal P2P practices.

■ Senior Leaders ■ Managers ■ Peers

56%   71%   73%

Agree/Strongly Agree

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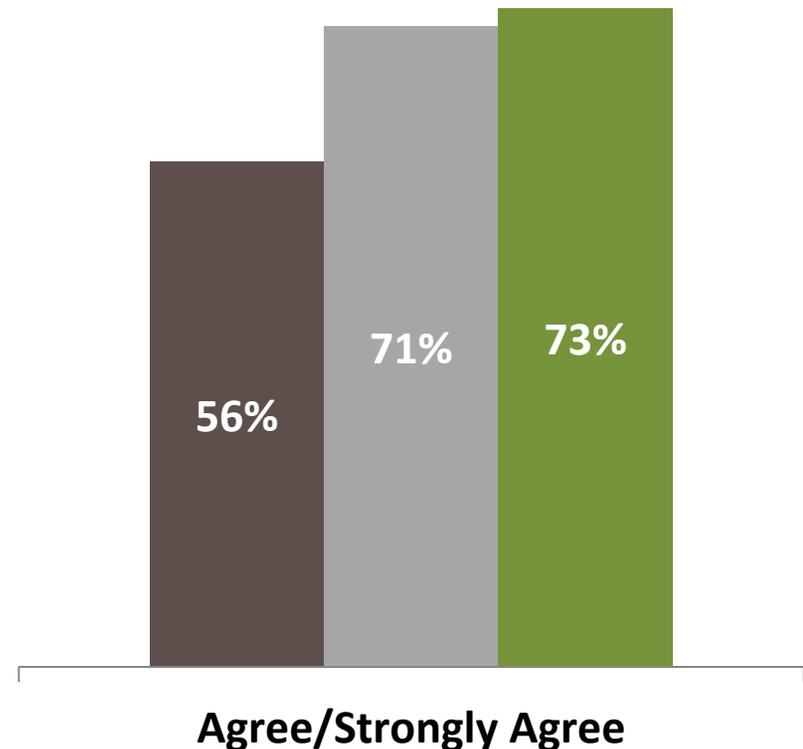
Results: Likely to recommend

Q. I am likely to recommend my employer to a friend or colleague.
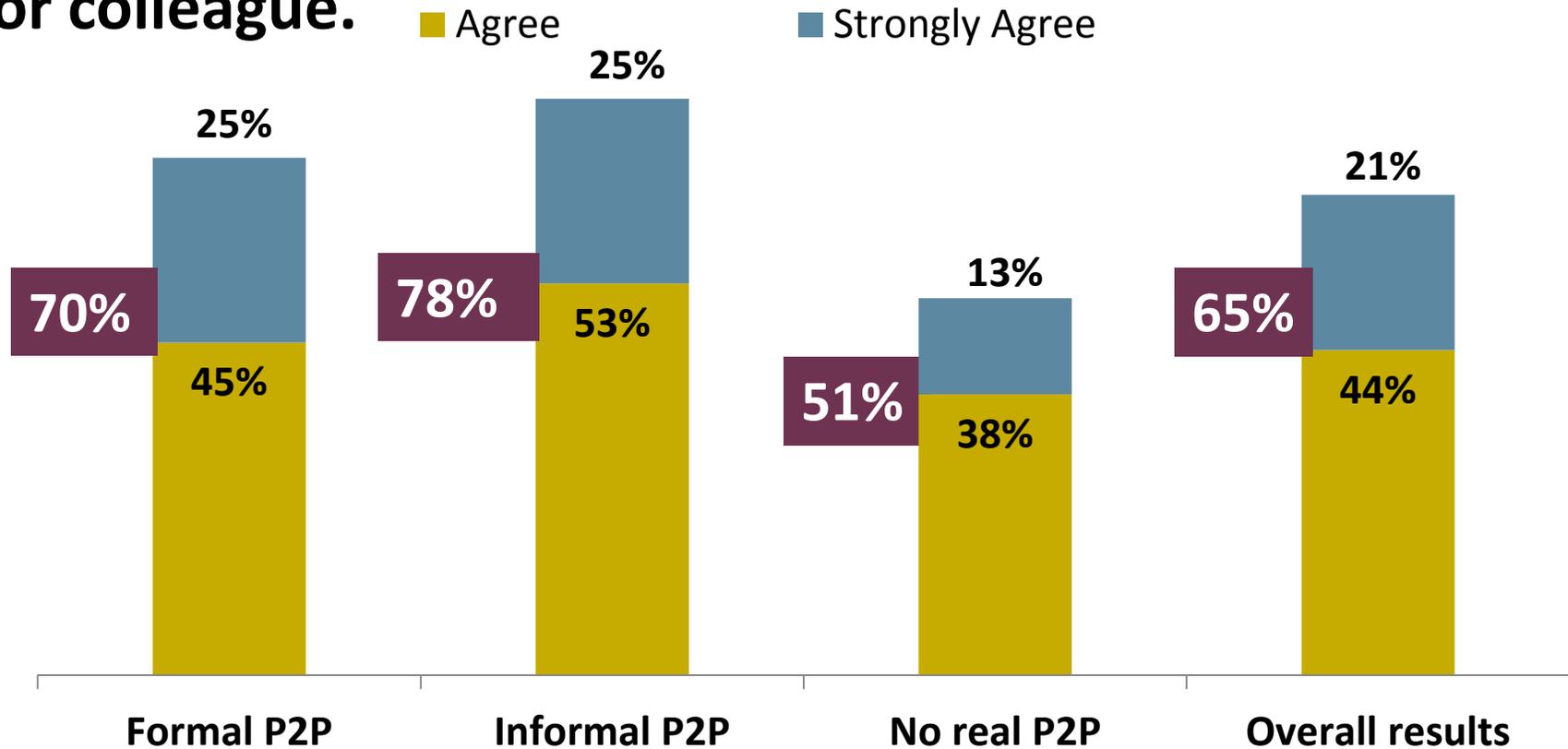
Results: Write-in questions

What do you like best about peer-to-peer?

What could be better about the peer-to-peer practices you use now?

Anything else to add?

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What do you like best about peer-to-peer?

Themes
- High-quality assistance, especially ideas
- Speed
- Support, especially non-judgmental
- Opportunity for professional development
- Social connections with colleagues

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Selected quotes: What do you like?

- "Quick input and feedback."

- "Builds friendship and relationships."

- " My peers best understand my day-to-day struggles and appreciate my successes."

- "The lack of hierarchy, more candid interaction."

- "It is the most natural and least threatening way of gaining information, insight and support."

- "The collaboration, sharing of ideas, being able to 'test' things out in a safe environment."

- "Helps you get to know peers in other departments and builds stronger morale and thought leadership."

- "Everyone helps each other grow stronger."

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What could be better about the peer-to-peer practices you use now?

Themes

- More formal structure and resources, including better technology
- Training
- More support from manager and employer
  - Permission
  - Encouragement
  - Time allocated

Selected quotes: What could be better?

- "Employer needs to reinforce program."
- "Need training skills of peer-to-peer feedback."
- "To be more in the open, approved practices for all."
- "More formalized practice is needed. Many are reluctant to seek feedback from peers."
- "We could be more explicit about when and how we are supporting one another—'naming' it when we're doing it."
- "We need peer-to-peer with other departments. We have a good system for our team, but not with other groups."
- "Spending time helping peers counts against you because your manager only counts things you do directly."

Anything else to add?

Themes

- Peer-to-peer is special
- Leaders at all levels aren't clued in
- Need to balance flexibility with structure

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Selected quotes: Anything else to add?

- "Collaboration & cooperation make a better workplace!"

- "Our supervisor has no idea what we do and never seems to care."

- "Most of the questions in this survey do not make any sense in a true peer-to-peer environment like we have. There is no such thing as my 'senior leaders'; there's just other colleagues who have different jobs...The concept of a manager is an out-of-date idea for us. There's no Parent/Child dependency which is pretty alien to a true peer-to-peer environment."

- "Peer-to-peer practices are growing in influence in large part because they fit so well with the social media-driven environment."

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So what? Implications/insights

🐾 Peer-to-peer practices—formal and informal—are an effective way for employees to collaborate

- Easy-to-use, fast and practical
- Provide a range of benefits
  - Improve results
  - Expose to new ideas
  - Build trust through connections and relationships

🐾 Peer-to-peer also natural and flexible

- More "community" orientation than programmatic, considering all the informal practices

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So what? Implications/insights

- Employers can maximize value of P2P by:
  - Embracing P2P practices that already exist
    - Idea-sharing, coaching, training, recognizing, giving feedback and influencing others
  - Emphasizing advantages that employees experience
    - High acceptance and use because of the advantages P2P offers
    - Low-learning curve
    - Meaningful professional development
  - Providing more structure, including support and more technology options
    - Build on what exists, especially making it easier for employees in other locations and departments to help one another
    - Not necessarily convert into formal programs

So what? Implications/insights

For those with P2P practices: formal and informal	For those without any real P2P practices now
Appreciate your bountiful orchard	Plant seeds to grow practices that are:

For those with P2P practices: formal and informal

Appreciate your bountiful orchard

- Lots of low-hanging fruit
  - Help employees improve how they use current P2P practices
- More fruit on higher limbs
  - Add more technology and look for other ways to improve performance

For those without any real P2P practices now

Plant seeds to grow practices that are:

- Fast and easy to use and reap benefits
- Low risk
- Practical

"Why not go out on a limb? That's where the fruit is." -- Mark Twain

For all: Be FEARLESS with P2P

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Now what?

## Be FEARLESS: 8 ways to Unleash Peer Power and Energize Performance

1. **F**rame peer practices as a foundational way to do work

2. **E**ndorse the value:
   - **Fast way to get practical ideas in a low-risk setting**

3. **A**cknowledge employees who use peer practices

4. **R**emove barriers to make it easy for peers to help one another

5. **L**earn what works best in your organization and share the findings

6. **E**ducate employees on how to use peer-to-peer practices well

7. **S**potlight results, including featuring success stories

8. **S**upport managers to embrace peer practices

Join the webinar, Thursday, Oct. 24, to learn more.
Sign up at http://bit.ly/1asPDbZ

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Now what?

Being **FEARLESS** with peer-to-peer means

- **Tweaking**, not reinventing practices or creating new programs
- **Adding** boundaries, guard-rails and road signs, not building a new super highway
- **Scoring** a double-win with improved performance and increased engagement, not chasing shiny new objects that *might* revolutionize work

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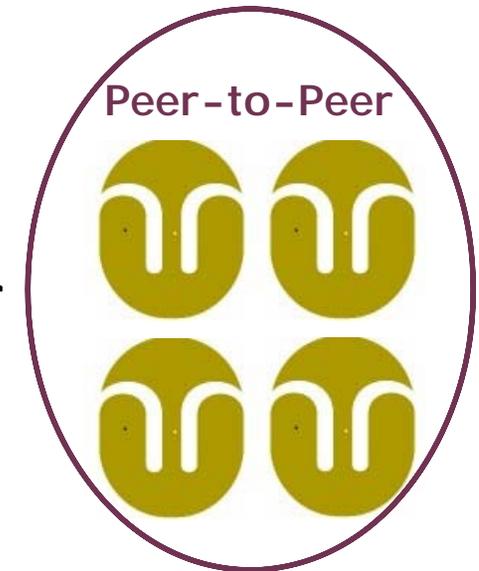
Now what: Offer for you

Free 60-minute coaching/consulting session on P2P

1. Email me by 11/15/13 at:
   liz.guthridge@connectconsultinggroup.com

2. Explain in 200 words or less your situation:

   – Your current situation with peer-to-peer

   – What you're interested in achieving with peer-to-peer

Peer-to-Peer

Also, remember the Oct. 24 webinar: http://bit.ly/1asPDbZ

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