

The All Hands Bible

By Peter Clark

Jellyfish: Host Company Q&A.

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Introduction

The writing was on the wall. Revenue had been stagnant for years. Employee satisfaction was dropping. Even the new CEO's own approval rating had plummeted below 40 percent.

To make matters worse, whispers of a new culture of secrecy permeated the disgruntled ranks—the team didn't trust its leadership anymore.

And then it happened: In September 2011, Carol Bartz was fired from Yahoo. The following year, the struggling tech company brought on Marissa Mayer as the new CEO, and despite a [controversial tenure](#), she's credited with transforming the company's culture.

While not all of us are running multi-billion-dollar tech companies, the lessons from Yahoo's failures can apply to organizations anywhere.

Organizations like yours.

The Crisis of Company Culture: Why Are Employees So Unhappy?

Let's face it: Across the board, employees are unhappy at work. In fact, a survey by The Conference Board found that [49% of employees](#) reported being dissatisfied with their job. That's *half* of our workforce.

A toxic company culture creates chaos—and we don't just mean resentful employees or your company landing on a list of Worst Places to Work. We can put an actual price tag on our companies' inefficiencies. **In the workplace, poor communication *alone* costs an average of [\\$62.4 million annually](#)** for companies with 100,000 employees.

What's more, [89% of employees](#) say workplace failures are a result of **ineffective communication** and a **lack of collaboration**.

But the good news is you *can* turn it around—and it all begins within your own team.

From these statistics, it's clear that **we need a fundamental shift in company culture.**

So where should you begin?

There is one bona fide practice that can increase productivity, boost team morale, create transparency, and overall, *improve your company culture*.

The Key to Unlocking Your Ideal Company Culture: All-Hands Meetings

Thanks to shifts in its company culture, today Yahoo is on listed on Glassdoor's [Best Places to Work](#). Right beside its name, a review from an employee reads, "Culture is amazing."

And one of the first things Mayer instituted when she stepped in as CEO? A weekly all-hands meeting.

Coincidence? We think not.

While it may seem like all-hands meetings are best kept to small startups whose employees can fit into one conference room, the truth is companies with hundreds—even thousands—of employees benefit from hosting them.

Who Are We?

We're [Jellyfish](#), a free Slack app that increases company transparency and boosts meeting engagement by letting you host moderated Q&A sessions on the fly.

Who's This Book for?

This book is for you if you're leading a team whose productivity, engagement, and collaboration are starting to feel a little "meh."

If you'd like to...

Improve your company culture...

Retain top talent...

Create new and innovative solutions...

And enjoy working with your team again...

Then you're in the right place.

In this book, we're going to show you how to do all that and more through the power of all-hands meetings. We'll give you a complete step-by-step guide to host them within your own company for maximum benefit.

Then, we'll show you one tool you can use that is *completely free* and integrates with a communications app you're likely *already* using.

Sound good?

Let's dive in.

TL;DR

- Nearly [half of employees are dissatisfied](#) with their job.
- [Eighty-nine percent](#) of employees blame lack of collaboration and ineffective communication for workplace failures.
- Poor communication in the workplace has a price tag: an average of [\\$62.4 million per year](#) per company with 100,000 employees.
- When Marissa Mayer stepped in as CEO of Yahoo, employee dissatisfaction was high. One of the first things Mayer instituted was a weekly all-hands meeting.
- Today, Yahoo is listed as one of the Best Places to Work on Glassdoor.
- To improve your company culture, start hosting all-hands meetings.

Chapter 1: What's an All-Hands Meeting and Why Should You Care?

What Is An All-Hands?

So before we dive into the nitty-gritty, let's start with an operating definition:

An “all-hands” (also known as a “town hall”) is a regularly held meeting where every member of your team can ask questions, celebrate wins, define goals, and more.

As for timing, frequency isn't as important as consistency. Even if you can only host one all-hands per quarter, for example, just make sure that you host it on a consistent cadence so it becomes a regular part of your company routine and your team can prepare for it. To give you an idea of how timing varies across companies, Square hosts their all-hands every two weeks, while Zappos does theirs once a quarter.

And yep, the term “all-hands meeting” stems from the nautical phrase “all hands on deck”—a boatswain's cry indicating that *everyone's* help is needed aboard the ship.

According to [Gokul Rajaram of Square](#), an outstanding all-hands meeting will accomplish three things:

1. **Celebrate** your team members and their accomplishments.
2. **Drive alignment** around your company's mission, strategy, and priorities.
3. Provide a forum for your everyone to **ask and answer** questions.

Unlike company-wide email blasts, one-on-ones, or a quarterly CEO report, an all-hands meeting brings even the most seemingly unrelated departments together so everyone can get on the same page and—dare we say?—*bond* as a team.

Cool. So What's In It For You?

“Couldn't that just have been an email?”

Many an exhausted employee has muttered just that after yet another useless meeting. But the enemy isn't meetings—it's *bad* meetings.

Besides free snacks and warm fuzzies, there's a lot to be gained from an all-hands meeting. We've got the research to prove it.

Boost Employee Engagement

Because of their question-and-answer format, all-hands meetings are great at engaging your team.

How? They allow your team to be heard, and that's a good thing. [One study](#) found that when managers did things like encourage employees' voices in meetings, employees became more fully engaged in their work overall.

Create Transparency

Does transparency scare you? There's nothing to fear. [Glassdoor's research](#) has found that corporate transparency can boost your team's productivity and your company's bottom line. For example, having an [open policy about salary](#) can dissolve distrust among your team *and* help close the gender pay gap. And who wouldn't want that?

Before every all-hands, AdRoll CEO Aaron Bell *encourages* his team to post their fears, uncertainties, and doubts and *guarantees* that every question will be answered or addressed by him.

Why such a radical take on transparency? Because the alternative, Bell told [The New York Times](#), "is that you have people behind closed doors chatting about the company, gossiping, saying negative things. If you address everything, people feel much more trust."

Design a Diverse and Inclusive Workplace

Women especially are less likely to be heard in the workplace. One study found that men who speak up promotively (expressing new ideas or suggesting improvements) are [more likely to gain leadership status](#) than women who do the same.

And not even the highest court in the land is immune to this bias: Researchers studied 15 years of oral arguments transcripts and found that [male justices interrupt female justices](#) *three times as often* as they interrupt each other.

In a successful all-hands, the floor is open to all members of your team, regardless of gender or status, thus promoting a more fair and diverse workplace.

Retain Talent (And Stop Bleeding Money in Recruitment)

If your company is turning into a revolving door and you're sick of wasting time and resources on recruiting new talent, take a page out of [AppsFlyer's](#) book. The SaaS company flew in more than 300 employees, including those outside of the country, for a week-long event that caused a spike in recruitment referrals after. Because of this, CEO Oren Kaniel told [Entrepreneur.com](#) that he believes the event will save them money in the long-run.

The Time to Host Your First All-Hands Is Now

Employees who are excited to come to work for an inclusive, transparent company they trust; less time wasted on recruitment; more time spent innovating. Sounds like a dream right? See, we told you all-hands meetings are magical!

And if you think your organization is just "too big" to host these, think again. You actually need it the *most* because your company's size is hindering your teams' ability to easily communicate with everyone. While an employee of a five-person startup can simply lean across the desk and have a word with the CEO, it's not so easy when that startup explodes into a 500-person established company.

As [Rajaram of Square says](#): "You should run your first formal All-Hands as soon as your company or group stops fitting into a single room." And if your company hit that point *long ago*, it's still not too late to start hosting all-hands meetings now!

Don't be intimidated. In the next chapter, we'll show you exactly how you can host your first all-hands and have your team going, "When's the next one?!"

TL;DR

- "All-hands" refers to a regularly held meeting where every member of your team can ask questions, celebrate wins, define goals, and more.
- Hosted effectively, all-hands can:
 - Boost employee engagement
 - Create transparency
 - Design a diverse and inclusive workplace
 - Help your organization retain talent
- Your organization is never too big and it is never too late to start hosting all-hands!

Chapter 3: How to Start Hosting All-Hands Meetings

All right, so you're pumped up about having an engaged, diverse, and transparent organization that works together as a team.

But...where do you start? How do you go about wrangling your busy, scattered workers into another meeting?

Below, we'll break down the exact steps for you to follow. Let's begin!

Step 1: Define your goals.

What are your reasons for wanting to host all-hands meetings? Write out clear, specific goals and the metrics you will use to measure success later on (which we'll cover in [Chapter 7](#)).

Step 2: Appoint one captain and several stewards.

While, yes, an all-hands meeting gives every member of your team a voice, it's still helpful to appoint official leaders/hosts for each meeting so it doesn't become a free-for-all. We'll define these positions as follows:

- **Captain** - Just like on a ship, the captain is in charge but doesn't necessarily interact directly with the passengers. There should be one person assigned the duty of making sure the all-hands meetings take place. However, this person shouldn't be the one presenting at the meeting every time.
- **Stewards (Hosts)** - On a yacht, the steward is the one who works directly with the guests. For each all-hands, it's a good idea to change who leads. For example, you might rotate executives, so everyone in leadership gets a chance to run an all-hands. One week it might be your engineering lead, the next, your marketing lead. They might, for example, give a special presentation on a new and exciting thing their department is working on.

As for your part, keep your company-wide update brief. If you're the CEO, it might be tempting to try to run the show, but a successful all-hands requires you to take a step back so your team can step up.

Step 3: Pick a place.

Make it somewhere that's easy for most of your team to access. For your remote teammates or those who live too far from the meeting venue, give them a way to attend via live video streaming. We recommend using [Zoom](#) (it's free up to 100 participants!). And yes, we urge you to use video versus audio alone because it will give remote attendees the fullest experience possible.

Be sure to use reliable technology and test your audio/video equipment before the actual meeting. You can host a test meeting with a few of your teammates to ensure everything is running smoothly before the real deal.

Step 4: Set the frequency and schedule.

Remember, a defining characteristic of an all-hands is that it is *regularly* held. Your team should know exactly when it's going to be, and it should become an enjoyable and anticipated part of their work life.

Friday afternoons are a popular time to host all-hands meetings. This makes sense as it's the close of the week, projects are winding down, and let's face it, everyone's looking for a break from their work. A Friday all-hands provides a nice segue into the weekend.

The frequency partly depends on your organization's size. As your team grows, it can become increasingly difficult to host weekly all-hands. Having said that, here's a chart to show some examples of companies of different sizes and their all-hands frequencies:

Company	Remote, In-Person, or Hybrid?	Employee number (approximate)	Frequency of all-hands meetings
Buffer	Remote	79	Bimonthly
Google	Hybrid	85,000	Weekly
DigitalOcean	Hybrid	400+	Biweekly
Square	In-person	2,000+	Quarterly

Step 5: Outline the format and agenda.

As we talked about earlier, the basic framework for an all-hands is

1. **Progress update** (often delivered by the CEO)
2. **Individual team updates** (usually delivered by team leads)
3. **Q&A**

You can (and should), however, add your own flavor to your all-hands; infuse it with your brand's personality and add a little excitement.

Here are some examples of companies that add a unique, fun element to their all-hands:

- **AdRoll dubs their Q&A “Rollywood Squares”** and allows teammates to submit questions (even anonymously) that their coworkers can vote on.
- **Buffer [appoints a team member as DJ](#) or musical performer for each meeting.** They even have a shared Spotify playlist to pull from.
- **Slack** has each office say hello to each other or introduce themselves to ensure that those joining in remotely feel included.
- **Etsy starts every all-hands [with an opening act](#),** such as the CEO singing a Johnny Cash cover or a coworker doing standup comedy.
- **Justworks [invites guest speakers](#)** on occasion, from new partners to board members—even customers!

Step 6: Invite everyone.

This might seem obvious, but yes, you should invite your entire team to your all-hands meetings—that includes your remote employees and contractors.

“When you have everyone remote, it changes a lot of things,” says [Joel Gascoigne, CEO of Buffer](#), a 100% remote company. “When you just have a few people remote, they can easily feel like second class citizens without full access to information.”

Yikes, we don't want that! Ensure that you include your remote team by letting them access a live stream of the all-hands, submit questions, and even present something themselves. If time zones make live attendance a challenge, record the meetings for them. And for presentations, allow them to record theirs ahead of time so you can play it during the all-hands.

Step 7: Invite questions.

For the Q&A part of your all-hands, you should open up the floor to anyone who wants to ask questions. Some companies choose to do this live, a risky move as it could put you on the spot without a proper answer. Others choose to collect questions ahead of time so they can better prepare.

(Psst...Jellyfish makes hosting Q&As super easy. [Click here to jump ahead to Chapter 5](#) and learn more about our app!)

Step 8: Pick your tools.

Putting together an effective all-hands requires the right tools, but it doesn't have to be an elaborate production. Let's dive into some tools you can use (best of all, they come with free versions).

Audio/Video

Mainly for your work-from-home and remote team members, you'll need a way to live stream and record the meeting. We recommend using [Zoom](#) (it's free up to 100 participants). This app allows your team to connect to the all-hands from their computer or their smartphone (perfect if they're traveling!). It also allows you to record the meeting so you can share it later with those who weren't able to make it to the live call.

While not required, it's probably best to provide a dedicated mic that the presenters can hold or that can be placed near the presenters, rather than relying on the onboard mic of a laptop. This ensures those watching the live stream can properly hear what's being said.

Q&A software

- [Slack](#) - This team messaging app is a great way to communicate with everyone, including your remote team. You can use it to send invites to the all-hands as well as reminders.

- [Jellyfish](#) - This is a Slack app that lets you easily host moderated Q&A sessions. We'll talk about it more in [Chapter 5](#).

Optional, but recommended: Snacks

Okay, definitely not a necessity, but snacks make meetings all that more enticing.

Step 9: Host your first all-hands!

“The best time to start doing all-hands was when you founded your company all those years ago...The second best time is this week!” - Peter Clark, Jellyfish Founder

There's Just One Problem

While these 9 steps seem simple, a problem usually arises around step 7, when you're trying to allow your team to ask questions. We'll dive into that problem in detail in the next chapter.

TL;DR

- Here's how to host your first all-hands:
 - Step 1: Define your goals.
 - Step 2: Appoint one captain and several stewards.
 - Step 3: Pick a place.
 - Step 4: Set the frequency and schedule.
 - Step 5: Outline the format and agenda.
 - Step 6: Invite everyone.
 - Step 7: Invite questions.
 - Step 8: Pick your tools.
 - Step 9: Host your first all-hands!
- But...a problem usually arises around step 7 when you're trying to field questions.

Chapter 4: The Missing Part of All-Hands: Q&A

We've discussed the generally accepted "rules" for hosting effective all-hands meetings, but now it's time to address the elephant in the room: the missing piece that can make all-hands feel boring and opaque.

That missing piece is the Q&A. Sure, many companies tack this onto the end of an all-hands with a few minutes to spare, rushing through it with unhelpful answers and calling it a day. Still other companies are so large that it's impossible to get through all the questions; Uber, for example, allocates 30 minutes of their all-hands to Q&A and still doesn't get to answer every one.

But what we're proposing here is a true embrace of the Q&A as a critical part of the ideal all-hands. Not an afterthought, but a necessary component, without which, an all-hands is a failure.

Thanks to the inherent two-way nature of the Q&A, it uplevels your all-hands meeting from presentation to conversation. (And people LOVE conversations.)

If your goal is to increase transparency, and as a result, boost your team's trust in your company, then you *must* master the art of the Q&A.

Why the Q&A Is So Important

It can improve collaboration by bringing key issues to the surface

Where else can your team feel free to voice their concerns? Most of the time, they are *not* going to bring something up, particularly if it's an uncomfortable subject, unless you explicitly invite them to.

Open up the floor to your team with a Q&A, and you'll be pleasantly surprised at the key issues that start to surface, allowing everyone to band together to be a part of the solution.

It can help everyone feel included

As your company grows, fewer and fewer of your team members will get access to you or each other. This can cause everyone to feel disconnected.

Q&As by their nature are inclusive, allowing everyone to ask a question, even anonymously.

It can amplify the voices of remote workers

While remote teams are a key part of the workforce of the future, the unfortunate downside is they completely miss out on office banter and watercooler chat. They don't get to hear about what you did this weekend over sandwiches at lunchtime or see the excitement on the engineering team's faces when they finally squash that bug.

Remote workers often feel out of the loop and may be less likely to ask questions or share news with the entire team.

A Q&A can help level the playing field, allowing remote workers to step up and voice their concerns.

What's Standing in the Way of the Q&A? 4 Obstacles

#1 It's difficult to think of what to say on the spot

Asking your team at the end of a meeting, "Any questions?" and expecting them to raise their hands and open up about their concerns [isn't realistic](#). Many people fear public speaking, for one. Another factor is that the question might touch on something emotional or controversial, and it may be difficult for that person to share in front of the entire team. And lastly, sometimes we just don't think that quickly on our feet. How many times have you left a meeting only to realize you forgot to ask that *one* question you meant to ask?

And to flip the attention around to you, it's tough to think of how to *answer* some of those questions on the spot.

#2 Allowing everyone to ask questions feels risky

The best part of an AMA (Ask Me Anything) is also the scariest: anyone can ask you *anything*. It's that brazen transparency that can make an AMA so essential to workplace trust and communication—but it can also feel like a big risk to the company.

We encourage you to think of it this way: Opening the floor to questions ahead of time from everyone on your team actually *protects* you. As [FundersClub](#) puts it:

“This practice also gives the CEO time to craft a thoughtful response. ... Now the CEO needn't say, ‘I will get back to you on that.’ She can issue an answer that's lucid and thought-through. This process will reinforce the importance of these meetings and let employees know that the CEO values their input and is willing to spend time thinking about it.”

So rather than a risk, it's an opportunity to come prepared, lessening your chances of being blindsided by a contentious question during the meeting.

#3 Q&As are hard to coordinate

A Q&A might not be such a challenge for a team of 10. But add 100 ... 1,000 ... or 10,000 to the mix, and suddenly it feels impossible. There needs to be a better way to accept question submissions ahead of time.

#4 Vetting and managing questions is a headache

On top of the sheer number of questions, how can you vet them for quality? Which questions should get priority? Doing a live Q&A during the meeting makes both of these issues difficult to solve, and it can easily get out of hand.

There's a Better Way to Q&A...

Thankfully, these four obstacles are not insurmountable. In fact, there's a simple solution to them, which we'll cover in the next chapter.

TL;DR

- The Q&A part of an all-hands is crucial because it can:
 - Improve collaboration by bringing key issues to the surface
 - Help everyone feel included
 - Amplify the voices of remote workers
- But there are four obstacles to hosting Q&As:
 - It's difficult to think of what to say on the spot
 - Allowing everyone to ask questions feels risky
 - Q&As are hard to coordinate
 - Vetting and managing questions is a headache

Chapter 5: Introducing Jellyfish, a Slack Q&A App

Okay, it's about time you officially meet Jellyfish (that's us, hi! 🐙). We're a Slack app that increases meeting engagement, company transparency, and warm, fuzzy feelings (aww).

How? **With Jellyfish, you can host moderated Q&A sessions right inside Slack where your team can submit questions anonymously.**

Here's how the free Jellyfish app solves those four problems we talked about in the last chapter:

4 Ways Jellyfish Helps Your Q&A Go Swimmingly

#1 Jellyfish allows you to host a Q&A and collect questions in advance.

Bye bye, sweaty palms and racing hearts. Jellyfish takes the sting out of being put on the spot in front of all your peers by letting you collect questions days or hours in advance. That gives your team time to thoughtfully consider what they'd like to ask, instead of scrambling for words during the meeting.

#2 It minimizes risk.

On the flipside, Jellyfish also helps reduce *your* risk of sounding unprepared or being caught off-guard if a team member asks a tough question. You'll have days or hours to craft a thoughtful response before presenting it at the all-hands.

#3 It makes it simple to coordinate a Q&A.

You can host an online Q&A session with Jellyfish in 3 easy steps.

#4 It makes it easy to manage question submissions.

There's no need to worry about oddball questions coming out of left field. With Jellyfish, you can choose to moderate your questions so you can vet them before they appear in front of your team.

Additionally, your team can vote and comment on questions beforehand, making it easy for you to prioritize questions at the all-hands meeting.

Want to See Jellyfish in its Natural Habitat? Here's How AdRoll Used It to Boost Team Engagement

AdRoll is an e-commerce growth company with a team spread across eight locations around the world. Part of the glue that holds this distributed team together is an all-hands meeting held every Friday.

For years, AdRoll used Google Moderator to host the Q&A part of their all-hands. But when Google decided to shut that product down, AdRoll scrambled to find a replacement, something that would allow them to continue to host collaborative Q&A sessions.

But...there wasn't one.

Thankfully, Peter Clark (that's our founder) teamed up with coworker Matt Farnell to build what would become the precursor to Jellyfish. It was hacked together in a week and a barebones solution, but hey, it worked.

They called it RollHands. Here's what it did:

- It integrated with Slack
- Allowed posting of questions
- Allowed voting on questions
- Allowed anonymous questions

By integrating RollHands with Slack, a messaging app AdRoll was already using, team members could ask and react to questions in real time through upvoting, downvoting, emoji reactions, and threads to discuss questions.

The results?

AdRoll's all-hands Q&As were *flooded* with engagement with many questions getting 50+ upvotes. That means **sometimes over *half* the participants in a 100-person meeting had engaged with a question**—that's no small feat!

And it didn't stop there. People at AdRoll started using RollHands in other areas too, from monthly company-wide meetings to hosting Q&As at offsites.

And get this: All of this was achieved with just an in-house, minimum viable product. Since then, Peter and Matt have spent four years refining and perfecting the product, and that's how the full-fledged Slack app Jellyfish was born.

Now, we want Jellyfish to spread its tentacles all over the workplace. With our app, you can finally know what it's like to have an open and collaborative team that's excited to work together.

TL;DR

- Jellyfish is a free Slack app that makes it easy for you to host moderated Q&A sessions on the fly.
- Jellyfish helps your Q&As because:
 - It allows you to collect questions in advance.
 - It minimizes risk because you can prepare your responses.
 - It makes it easy to coordinate the Q&A (it takes just 3 steps!)
 - You can moderate questions and your team can vote on them.
- Case Study: AdRoll used the early version of Jellyfish and saw insane engagement, sometimes with more than *half* of the participants in a 100-person meeting engaging with the question.
- Jellyfish has come a long way since the early days, and after four years of refinement, is ready to help your organization host better Q&As!

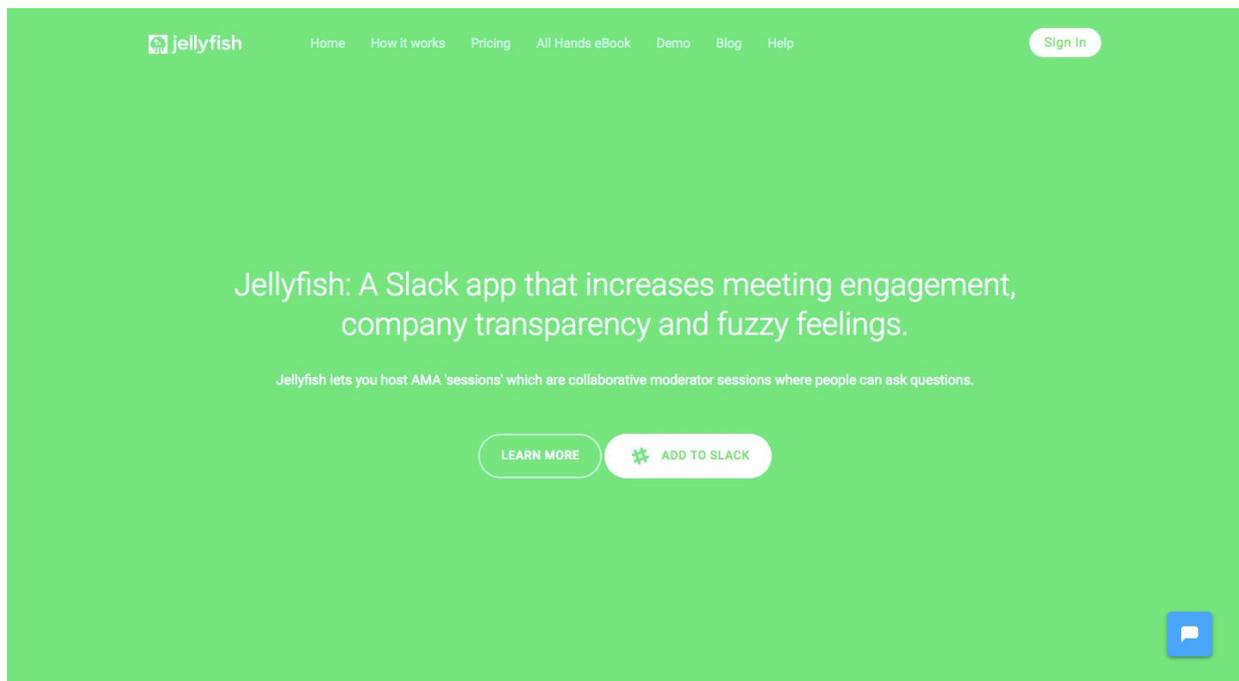
Chapter 6: Jellyfish 101: How-To Guide

Now let's dive into how to start using Jellyfish in your company today. It's so easy, you'll wish you'd done it earlier.

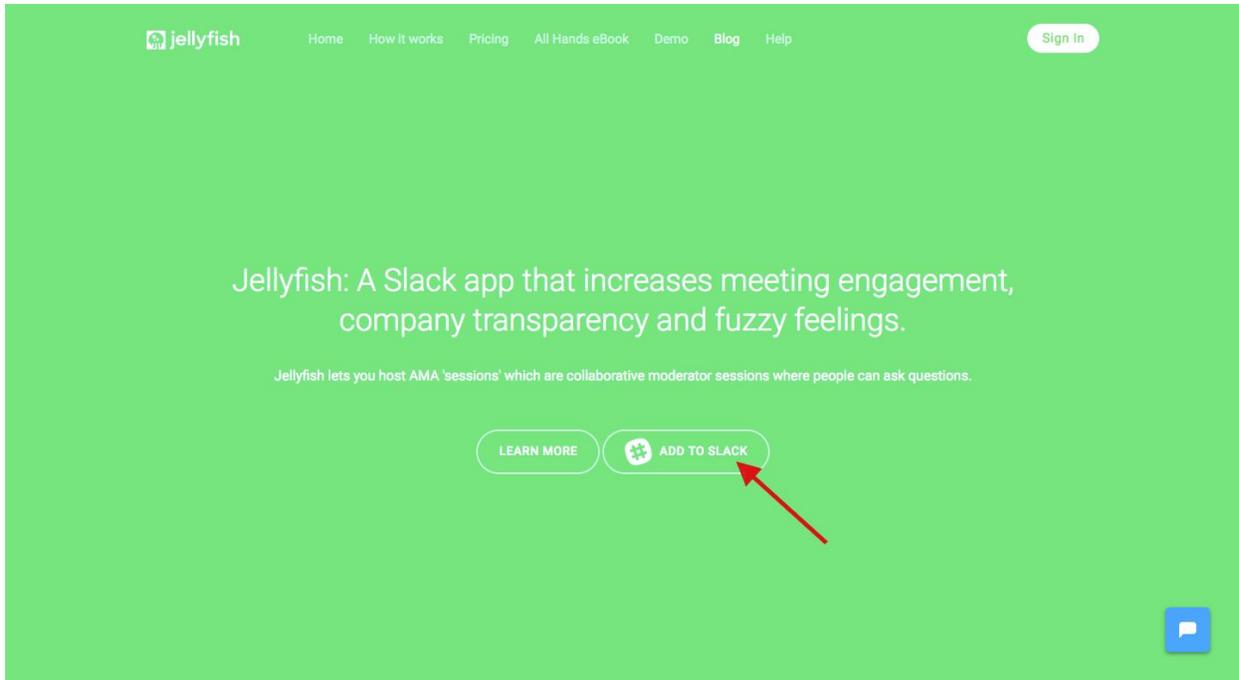
Note: The following steps assume you already use Slack. If you don't, it's a free team messaging app that streamlines your company's communications, and we highly recommend it. Install it for free [here](#).

Install Jellyfish in 3 Easy Steps

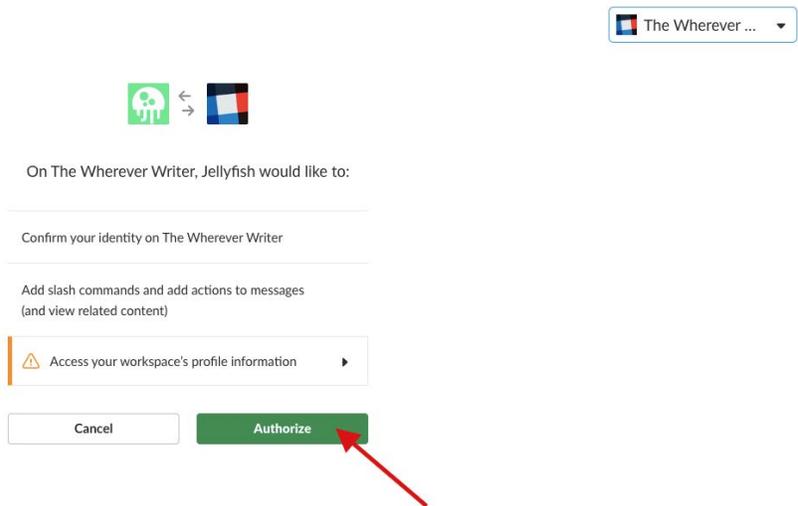
Step 1: Go to [Jellyfish.chat](https://jellyfish.chat)



Step 2: Click "Add to Slack"



Step 3: Click "Authorize."



Installed! Now just sign into your Slack account.

The screenshot shows the Slack interface with the Jellyfish bot installed. At the top left is the Jellyfish logo and name. At the top right is a "Sign In" button. The main content area features a large green Jellyfish icon, the text "Congrats Jellyfish is installed", and a message: "To continue... please [sign in](#) to your Jellyfish Dashboard." Below this is a "Sign in with Slack" button. At the bottom right is a blue chat bubble icon. At the bottom center is the text "Jellyfish © 2018".

The screenshot shows the Jellyfish dashboard in Slack. At the top left is the Jellyfish logo and name, followed by "Home". At the top right are "Admin" and "Log out" buttons. The main content area is titled "Sessions" and has two tabs: "Active" and "Archived". There are two session cards displayed:

- Friday All-Hands** (1 day ago): "Yay, it's Friday! Post your questions here and we'll answer them at the all-hands at 4". Amy in #general, 2 questions.
- Tuesday All-Hands** (4 weeks ago): "Testing this out". Amy in #general, 1 question.

At the bottom right is a blue chat bubble icon. At the bottom center is the text "Jellyfish © 2018".

Now, any time you'd like to see your previous Jellyfish-hosted All-Hands Q&As, just sign into Jellyfish.chat with your Slack account and find them all in your dashboard. You can even click individual sessions to read the questions.

Host Your First Jellyfish Q&A!

Now for the fun part! It's time to host your first Q&A with Jellyfish.

Step 1: Go to the channel your entire team has access to and type “/jellyfish host”

This cool AMA session form will pop up:



Host an AMA Session ✕

Session Name

The session will hosted in #allhands

Session Closes In

 ▼

Participant Questions

 ▼

Notify Channel

 ▼

Description (optional)

 3000

[? Learn more about Jellyfish](#)

Step 2: Add the details of your session.

- **Name:** Something like “Friday all-hands” is great!
- **Session Closes In:** This is the cut-off time for submitting questions. Pick anything from one year to one day.
- **Participant Questions:** Set the level of control you’d like to have over questions. You can require a name or allow anonymity; you can moderate questions or auto-approve all of them.

- **Notify Channel:** This sends a Q&A session notification to the channel you choose. You can send it to everyone in the channel, only those who are active in the channel, or you can choose not to send a notification.
- **Description (optional):** If you'd like, you can add a description to the Q&A session, such as "I welcome your questions. I'd especially love questions about our upcoming annual retreat."

Step 3: Watch the questions roll in!

It's fun watching your team interact with the questions. They can upvote, downvote, and even comment on them. Once you collect all the questions, you have time to review them and prepare your answers before presenting them at the all-hands.

Ask Question

Name (optional)

Concerned Employee

Use your name, a nickname, or leave blank to be anonymous

Question

Can we get more La Croix?

Description (optional)

3000

[Learn more about Jellyfish](#)

Concerned Employee asked a question on [Friday All Hands](#)

Can we get more La Croix?

👍 1

👎 0

💬 0

? Ask Question

TL;DR

- You can install Jellyfish for free in 3 steps:
 - Step 1: Go to [Jellyfish.chat](https://jellyfish.chat)
 - Step 2: Click "Add to Slack"
 - Step 3: Click "Authorize"
- Now, sign into your Slack account and host your first Q&A session!
 - Step 1: Go to the channel your entire team has access to and type "/jellyfish host"
 - Step 2: Add the details of your session
 - Step 3: Watch the questions roll in!

Chapter 7: How to Evaluate the Success of Your All-Hands

So you've seen how powerful all-hands are in improving company culture, and you've even learned how to host your own—but how do you know if your all-hands meetings are actually *working*? You want to make sure that they're not only fun, but that they're also helping to

- Drive alignment
- Answer questions in a helpful way
- Boost engagement
- Help your team feel closer
- Encourage collaboration

Remember when we had you define your all-hands goals in [Chapter 3](#)? A lot of this chapter depends on what you defined in that one. Revisit your goals and make sure that you're keeping them in mind when developing your post-all-hands survey questions.

Note: Wait until you've hosted at least 3 all-hands meetings before you even begin to assess their success. No one gets everything right the first time, so it's important to host a few and work out the rough spots before reviewing.

We have three ideas for how you can measure the success of your all-hands meetings:

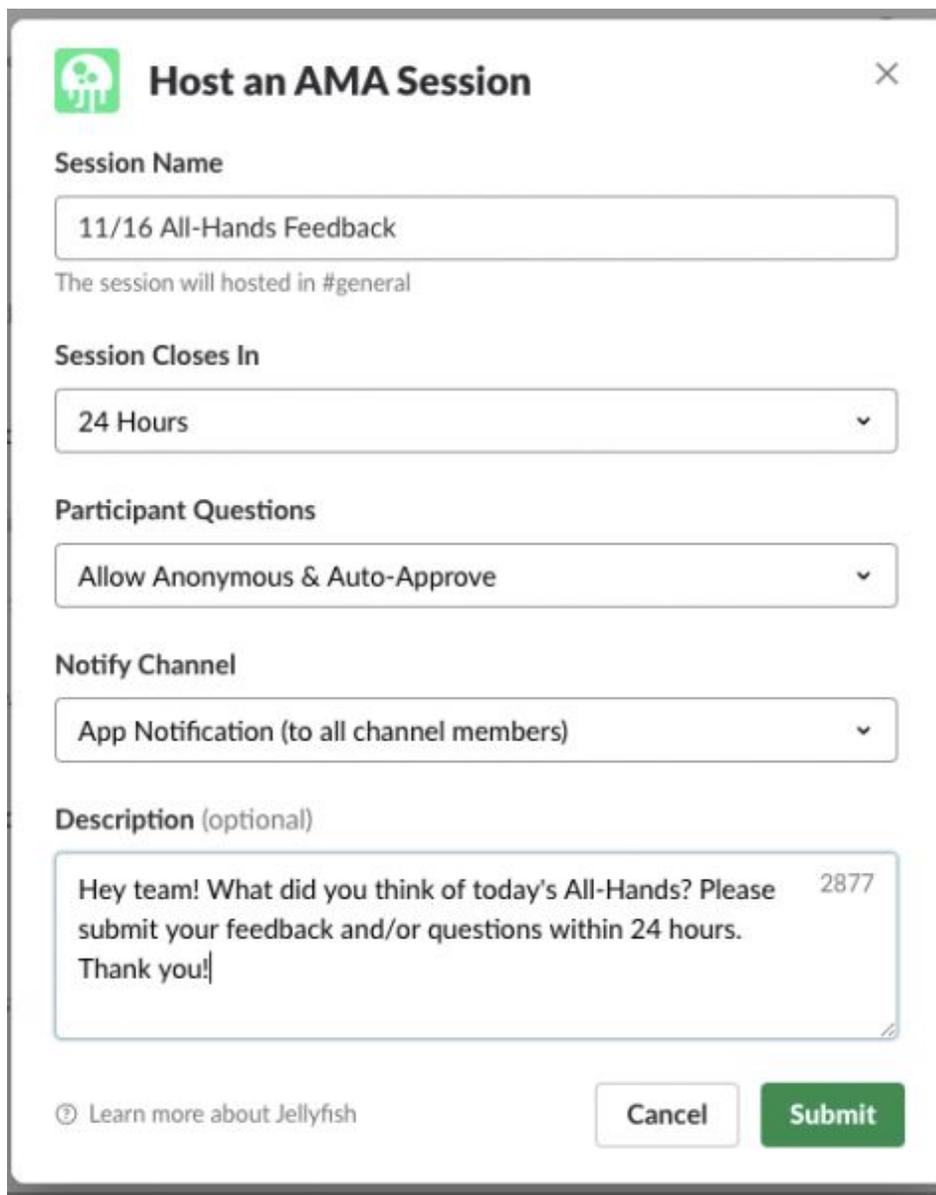
#1 Measure engagement based on the number of question submissions and reactions in Jellyfish sessions

Some of these things are easy to measure objectively. For example, engagement can be measured by how many reactions there are to questions or how many submitted questions there are.

#2 Use Jellyfish to ask questions about meeting quality after each all-hands

Since Jellyfish is a Q&A app, not only can you use it to collect questions for your all-hands meetings, but you can also use it to ask for feedback on the all-hands *after* it's completed.

Here's what that might look like:



The screenshot shows a modal window titled "Host an AMA Session" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The form contains the following fields and options:

- Session Name:** A text input field containing "11/16 All-Hands Feedback". Below it, a note states "The session will be hosted in #general".
- Session Closes In:** A dropdown menu currently set to "24 Hours".
- Participant Questions:** A dropdown menu currently set to "Allow Anonymous & Auto-Approve".
- Notify Channel:** A dropdown menu currently set to "App Notification (to all channel members)".
- Description (optional):** A text area containing the message: "Hey team! What did you think of today's All-Hands? Please submit your feedback and/or questions within 24 hours. Thank you!". A character count of "2877" is visible in the top right of the text area.

At the bottom of the form, there is a link "Learn more about Jellyfish" on the left, and two buttons: "Cancel" and "Submit" (which is highlighted in green).

#3 Send out a survey to measure meeting quality and effectiveness after each all-hands

What to Use to Send the Survey

Because you're using Slack anyway, we recommend keeping the survey within the platform too. This can be done in a couple of ways.

Option 1: For open-ended feedback questions, use Jellyfish sessions.

You can use Jellyfish to ask feedback questions after the all-hands too. This works best for open-ended questions that require simple answers. Be sure to let your team know they can erase their name to post their answer anonymously. You could ask things like

- What was your favorite part of the all-hands? What was your least favorite part?
- What did you think of today's all-hands?
- How can we improve future all-hands?

Option 2: For multiple-choice or scale-based questions, use a Slack survey/polling app.

Example questions:

1. Did last week's all-hands meeting help you work better with your team this week? (Yes/No)
2. On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being "dreading it" and 5 being "can't wait!"), how much are you looking forward to the next all-hands meeting?
3. How satisfied are you with our all-hands meetings?

What to Ask in the Survey: Using The Event Performance Indices

MeetingMetrics developed a scoring system to test the effectiveness of your meetings; it's called the [Event Performance Indices](#) or EPI. They recommend asking these six questions after your meetings and using a scale (you can come up with your own) to measure each question.

1. How satisfied are you with the meeting's overall value in helping you improve your on-the-job effectiveness?
2. How satisfied are you that the meeting was well worth the investment?
3. How satisfied are you with the overall meeting experience?
4. How satisfied are you that the meeting was motivating to you personally?
5. How satisfied are you with the quality of the education sessions at the meeting?
6. How satisfied are you with the quality of the networking opportunities at the meeting?

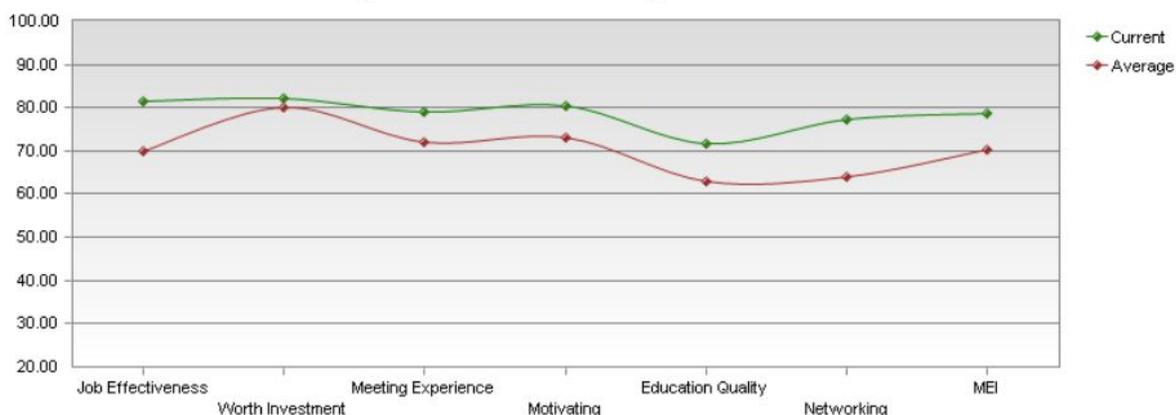
Once you get your answers, you can average the scores to arrive at your EPI for each meeting. After each all-hands, you can measure your EPI and see how it stacks up against your overall average.

Meeting Effectiveness Index (MEI)

The MEI table presents the MEI score as well as the average performance of each of the six items included in the computation of the MEI. Scores vary between 20 (lowest level of performance) and 100 (highest level of performance).

Question	Current Meeting	Average Meeting	Delta
How satisfied are you with the meeting's overall value in helping you improve your on-the-job effectiveness?	81.6	70.00	11.60
How satisfied are you that the meeting was well worth the investment?	82.23	80.00	2.23
How satisfied are you with the overall meeting experience?	79.14	72.00	7.14
How satisfied are you that the meeting was motivating to you personally?	80.56	73.00	7.56
How satisfied are you with the quality of the education sessions at the meeting?	71.65	63.00	8.65
How satisfied are you with the quality of the networking opportunities at the meeting?	77.4	64.00	13.40
Overall MEI	78.76	70.33	8.43

Meeting Effectiveness Scores Across Key Measures and MEI



MeetingMetrics put these charts together using dummy data.

Source: [MeetingMetrics](#)

Obviously, question number six should probably be modified to something like “How satisfied are you with the quality of the **team bonding opportunities** at the meeting?” since all-hands meetings aren’t about networking opportunities.

TL;DR

- After you’ve hosted at least three all-hands meetings, you can start assessing their effectiveness.
- Here are three ideas for doing that:

- Measure engagement based on the number of question submissions and reactions in Jellyfish sessions
- Use Jellyfish to ask questions about meeting quality after each all-hands
- Send out a survey to measure meeting quality and effectiveness after each all-hands

Chapter 8: Interview with Aaron Bell

Introduce yourself. What do you do at AdRoll?

Hello! I am a founder of AdRoll and ran the company as CEO for eight years. I'm currently Chief Product Officer.

AdRoll's had the good fortune of being named a best place to work a number of times. Our HQ is in San Francisco, and we have eight global offices.

We hear you host a weekly all-hands meeting. Why?

Part rally, part town hall, part celebration—all-hands have always been a centerpiece of the culture at AdRoll.

We've held weekly all-hands since we were a really small group, like five people. The early days were a rollercoaster and having a time at the end of the week to get together and debrief felt good. All-hands were predictably informal at first, and we just went around the horn with everybody giving an update on their week. As we grew in headcount, though they continued to be loose and fun in spirit, all-hands would involve more prep and had a formal arc. All-hands became a ritual everybody would look forward to.

Having frequent, consistent all-hands is important for a number of reasons.

- **All-hands give leaders a forum to beat the drum on the mission and rally the team.** The best leaders know that repetition is good, even desired, to get everybody rowing in the same direction.
- **All-hands build camaraderie.** Coworkers get exposed to what each other does and come together as a team as part of something bigger.
- **All-hands are a great forum to surface employee questions and issues early.** It's a top way to keep the pulse of the company and bring everybody closer by fielding questions.

Tell us what a typical AdRoll all-hands is like.

We have two types of all-hands.

The first is a monthly global all-hands that we use primarily for painting the bold vision, driving alignment, and getting people fired up. There we talk about goals, give progress reports, showcase teams/work, spotlight customers, and address employee questions. This meeting usually happens early-ish in the morning (goes well with a coffee), and possibly early-ish in the week.

The second is a weekly local all-hands that closes out the work week, like Friday at 4:30 p.m. The aim of this all-hands is to serve as more of a decompression and to drive camaraderie. We welcome new employees, recognize accomplishments big and (very) small, talk about upcoming social or volunteering events, and take questions. This meeting has a much higher entertainment-to-actual-business-substance ratio than the global monthly all-hands.

Can you share any all-hands best practices?

All-hands should have a narrative arc, rather than just different departments hosting disjointed sections. Sections should tie back to whatever mantras and goals are the theme of the all-hands. You should have diverse company leaders rotate and own sections. It's also important to have the C-suite, ideally the CEO, visible and involved to elevate the all-hands and give it weight.

I like recurring segments, akin to how late-night TV shows often have recurring segments. For example, interview employees, have employees act out both sides of the best customer support chat of the week, musical accompaniment by employees that can play instruments, interactive quizzes, quarterly spiff updates, pre-recorded funny videos, shark tank where employees pitch an idea to solve a company problem, always ending with a Moment of Zen, etc. I find that people look forward to their favorite segment.

If I have a big company-related announcement to make, I may hold back from announcing it over email or Slack, and tease it for the all-hands and announce there. Gives both the announcement and the all-hands more oomph.

What are your recommended tools for running an all-hands?

- Jellyfish, to take questions
- Google Slides, to collaborate and build decks
- Google Meet, to run the video conferencing for the meeting. We record the meetings and later make them accessible in the calendar item from a link.
- The quiz site/app Kahoot, which lets employees answer questions and compete in real-time

What's a common mistake companies make in hosting their all-hands meetings?

I think some companies make a mistake by being scared to give employees a forum to raise questions, or they rush through it. I use the analogy that a company is like the human body. Toxins (internal issues, problems, confusion, etc.) are always building up, and you need some sort of frequent way to flush them out (giving employees a place to express their questions, doubts, etc.) so things don't fester. If you aren't allowing questions of all kinds at an all-hands, then they are going to manifest behind closed doors in the form of gossip.

Is there such a thing as too much transparency in a company? Like, can it backfire?

One of our company values is being open, and we do everything we can to maximize transparency. We post a Jellyfish question board a few days ahead of the all-hands, so people can post questions as they occur and to give others time to vote up and down questions.

We allow or encourage anonymous questions on the board. Some people have said this creates less transparency because people aren't owning up to their questions, but I think it allows important topics to surface that normally wouldn't. As Oscar Wilde said, if you give a person a mask, they'll tell you the truth. In the early days, we did have some people posting questions that weren't appropriate or were disrespectful to others, so we now give the guidance to keep questions high-minded and not to call out specific people, which sets the right tone. And if disrespectful questions still come through, they tend to get down-voted by the community.

I've met a lot of founders who are concerned about taking anonymous questions or encouraging employees to share their fears, uncertainties, and doubts. I think these fears are overblown. And by not asking you lose the opportunity to have a big stage to address these issues. It also gives a leader an opportunity to practice answering hard questions and developing that critical skill in front of their own team, which is a relatively safe place, versus other venues where you'll need to answer hard questions: investors, boards, press, clients.

If employees feel they have a consistent forum to ask questions, raise issues, and feel heard, you build a lot of trust. And that trust is valuable to have stocked up for when rocky times hit. Your employees will be much more likely to stand by you.

How can a company tell if its culture is healthy versus toxic?

It's an art and science. For the science part, one of the things we do is quantify culture health and identify hot spots using the survey tool Culture Amp, which I can't recommend highly enough. Once a year, we send Culture Amp's survey to all of our employees and strongly encourage them all to answer (we incentivize participation with prizes). The survey asks about everything related to the employee's engagement with the company and their belief about the company's performance. You can then easily benchmark the results compared to your company's results in prior years, to other companies of your size, and internally by department or geography or demographic. We host a special all-hands to share these results and make a huge deal about it, then prescribe programs and goals to improve weak areas.

Here's to Hosting All-Hands for a Better Company Culture!

If your team feels disconnected and disengaged, it's amazing what opening the lines of communication can do to empower them to do their best work. In the office, the best way to do that in an organized way is to host regular all-hands meetings.

With Jellyfish, you can host an all-hands for free and with ease, using a team messaging app you're probably already using anyway, Slack. (And if you're not using Slack yet, we strongly recommend that you do! Did we mention that it's also free?)

Look who's already hosting awesome all-hands with Jellyfish!



[Try Jellyfish for free today at Jellyfish.chat](https://jellyfish.chat)

And drop us a line to let us know what you think! You can reach us at hello@jellyfish.chat

