

## CASE STUDY

# HOW VERIFF IMPROVES THEIR PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH USING Kona

*"One of the great things about Kona is that it allows our team leads to have this quick and easy method to actually know how their team is feeling. We are growing fast as a team and have a lot of people managers who are new to leadership. We want to offer as many support systems for them as possible."*

**Amber de Wolde**  
Senior People Partner, Veriff



**V**eriff is an online identity verification company that has taken the industry by storm. With total funding of \$200M under its belt, the business accelerated its hiring — growing from 300 people in October 2021 to over 500 people from 60 different nationalities by the end of 2022.

Their rapid growth makes it critical to invest in their people. Amber de Wolde, Senior People Partner at Veriff, along with the 25 members of Veriff's extensive People team is tasked with building a robust learning and development framework and employee experience programs to support happy and productive employees.

"The goal is not to lose culture during hypergrowth of hybrid teams. Veriff has committed to a long term hybrid working mode going forward," de Wolde said. We spoke with her about just how they're putting that into action.

## AFTER TWO WEEKS OF USING KONA

**70%**

feel that their  
manager has a  
better sense of  
how they're  
feeling

**81%**

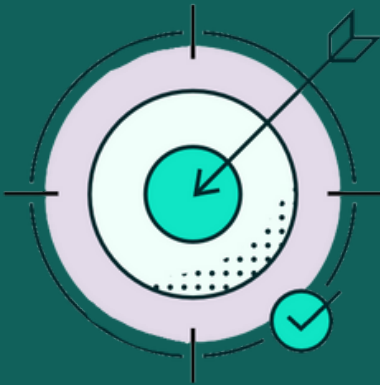
feel more  
comfortable  
sharing when  
something's  
not going well

## Challenge: Support employee mental health through change

Veriff significantly increased its workforce over the course of 2022 and that rapid growth has come with some challenges along the way.

“We grew our team of People Partners to prepare for the growth that we are going through as a company.... Because we encourage internal growth and development, that means we always have a high amount of young people managers who aren't experienced yet and need all the support and tools we can offer them. Mental health became something that we really wanted to and had to focus on, especially through all world events from recent years and people working remotely.”

### TL;DR



With total funding of \$200M under its belt, the business has accelerated its hiring — **growing from 300 people in October 2021 to over 500 people from 60 different nationalities by the end of 2022.**

The most important consideration for the People Team was preserving culture through hyper-growth and hybrid work. How do you scale a culture that serves everyone?

De Wolde shared about their strong office culture and the ways they used to keep people really happy—coming together, celebrating company milestones, team events, cross-team lunches— all things that became impossible when Veriff’s offices closed entirely to keep its people safe. She knew they had to be intentional about keeping that culture while overcoming these hurdles of rapid growth, world events having an effect on the team, but also with some divisions working unique hours, and increasing amounts of remote work.

“We have an operations team that works in shifts. That’s one of our biggest teams and so also one of our biggest challenges. We are always looking for new ways to create the best possible work life for them and for all our people. We currently have almost 100 verification specialists, who all work their own personal schedule, meaning we look for different ways to make people feel connected,” said de Wolde.

As with many businesses, rapid growth means different personalities, work styles, and communication styles. The question is: how do you scale a culture that serves everyone?

## Action: Initiate psychologically safe channels for team support

De Wolde and her team looked for a tool that could answer a few key questions:

- How do we avoid burnout in a fast-paced scale up environment?
- How can we create the best possible experience for our employees?
- How do we create a support system while working in hybrid mode?

A colleague found out about Kona and introduced it to their Slack workspace—a small group from their People team acted as ambassadors from the start.

**“We grew our team of People Partners to prepare for the growth that we are going through as a company.... [We] have a high amount of young people managers... Mental health became something that we really wanted to and had to focus on, especially through all world events from recent years and people working remotely.”**

**—Amber de Wolde, Senior People Partner at Veriff**



For the Veriff team, piloting Kona went beyond adding another tool. They wanted to invest in team wellbeing and get ahead of burnout in a fast-paced environment.

“One of the things that became a big focus for us, especially when we decided to continue working in a hybrid mode, was looking into ways in which we could ensure people's mental health. We're putting a big focus on balancing productivity, balance and wellbeing.”

De Wolde explained how Kona inspired teams to build culture and take care of one another on a daily basis. It became an avenue for listening, supporting, and understanding how everyone approaches work daily. From there, they rolled the product out to more teams across the business.



**Veriff first piloted Kona in January 2022.**

**In a year, Veriff teams submitted over 17,000 check-ins! That's a lot of well-being data.**

## Managers: Sparking valuable conversations that put employees first

Teams at Veriff use Kona to check in with each other every single day in Slack. They share updates about work and their everyday lives, sparking valuable conversations and opportunities to support one another.

"I can definitely say that people are sharing things in Kona and getting support from teammates," Mert Celik, an Engineering Team Lead, said. "There was one teammate yesterday who learned that her mother had COVID. She felt really down about it and shared it in her Kona check-in. Other teammates shared support reactions and reached out. As a result, today she's in a much better mood."

Celik also relies on Kona's smart notifications that alert him about trends in his teammates' mood. Recently, Kona alerted him that a teammate had been yellow three days in a row. Mert was able to use this data to catch an early sign of stress and address it in their next one-on-one.



**"Kona made our one-on-ones more efficient and faster. We already sort of know what's going on from Kona's check-ins and the Hub. People might be shy to talk about their feelings on Zoom. If there is a problem, they can put it in Kona and I can schedule time with them."**

**—Burak Acunaş, Verification Team Lead**

Iryna Bondar, Senior Fraud Operations Team Lead, loves Kona for the way it sparks proactive support. "Kona enables conversation. When someone is not feeling good, my teammates don't have to wait for my intervention. Other teammates check in on the person and offer help."

Casual conversations—which would otherwise happen in hallways or in the communal kitchens—often disappear in remote environments and lead to dips in engagement. By checking in frequently with one another, Kona manages to create serendipitous conversations between colleagues.

Bondar shared one interaction that actually led to a process improvement on her team. "In one instance, I saw through Kona that someone was struggling. We had a discussion in the thread and they proposed a new retro format. Now we use that format every sprint. I don't know if we'd have had that revelation without Kona. We have started different processes and improvements because of these small conversations."

## People Ops: Creating a psychologically safe, remote workplace

- Amber de Wolde and Veriff's People team have a clear vision for their company's culture. Their OKRs center around one key tenet: ensuring employees are cared for.

- "It's crucial that we create a safe space where people feel like they are able to vocalize their concerns. [Kona] allows our team leads to have this support system and actually know how their team is feeling. We have a large population of young managers and lots of growth in the company, so this support and training is crucial."

**"[Kona] allows our team leads to have this support system and actually know how their team is feeling. We have a large population of young managers and lots of growth in the company, so this support and training is crucial."**

**–Amber de Wolde, Senior People Partner at Veriff**



- "We want to create a culture where people feel like they're valued," de Wolde explains, "It's not just about you feeling that you are in a psychologically safe environment where you can be vocal, but also that the company values you as a team member. My job is to make sure people feel that on a continuous basis."

- Making employees feel cared for in a distributed setting can be a challenge. By adopting Kona across the organization, Veriff ensures that employees have a space to share how they're feeling and get support from teammates. Over time, employees build a sense of belonging with the company and with each other.

- After a year of using Kona, over 69% of participants reported higher levels of psychological safety on their teams. This factor goes a long way towards enabling honest feedback and better workplace engagement.

**69%**

**of participants  
reported higher  
levels of  
psychological  
safety on  
their teams.**

## Result: 81% of reports feel more comfortable sharing when something's not going well

- Over 50% of Veriff's employees use Kona to check in on a daily basis, touching every part of the business. From Engineering to Support, leaders use Kona to be up to date on how their team members are feeling and to maintain the culture.
- In a survey conducted among Kona users at Veriff, after only two weeks of using Kona:
  - 70% feel that their manager has a better sense of how they're feeling
  - 81% feel more comfortable sharing when something's not going well
  - 80% feel more comfortable asking questions and sharing their opinions overall
- Though nothing can replace a healthy in-office culture, Veriff is dedicated to building a global team with people working from many different locations. Kona has enabled managers to lead their teams with empathy in the virtual space and add data to their interactions without changing their workflow in Slack.



### WELL-BEING CHECKINS

Kona sends daily Red-Yellow-Green check-ins that Veriff's teams love to do.



### REAL TIME ANALYTICS

Data is anonymously aggregated into org-health dashboards for the People Team.



### TEAM HEALTH ALERTS

Managers and People Partners get relevant notifications on team needs.



## Ready to transform your culture?

Kona plays a vital role in helping teams manage stress, support well-being, and stay connected while remote.

To learn more about how Kona can transform your team, book a demo or visit [heykona.com](https://heykona.com) to add Kona to Slack. New teams can get started for free!