

 Threads

CASE STUDY

 **Buffer**



# How Buffer Achieved Transparent, Collaborative Communication Across Its Remote Workforce



Buffer is a completely distributed, remote company of about 85 people that offers a suite of tools that help online-first consumer brands effectively reach their customers via social media. As such, decision-making is one of the most fundamental ways employees at Buffer can stay both functional and happy.

Buffer was in need of a platform that would allow them to be inclusive across time zones, become more asynchronous as a distributed team, and help them to save time on tasks that required full transparency, a key component to the company's culture.

There was a growing feeling of frustration for the entire team as they continued to use multiple tools and drown in email. "I've been with the team for so long, and as we grew, we would add more email filters and figure out processes to accommodate everyone," explained Carolyn Kopprasch, Chief of

Special Projects at Buffer. "One moment that really put it into perspective was when I had to tell a potential hire, 'you'll be completely stressed out and overwhelmed by email at first.'"

This was when both Carolyn and Courtney Seiter, Director of People at Buffer, knew they needed to make a change. "We felt this pain prior to 2019 but it was only this year when we began searching in earnest for something that could solve our key problems," said Courtney. "Since I oversee the team's happiness and how we get work done, I felt especially responsible for finding a solution that would last."

# Challenges

With the problem laid out in front of them, Carolyn and Courtney weighed their options. “We had tried several other tools like Discourse and Twist,” said Carolyn. “We had a clear vision of what we were hoping for, and we even fantasized about building it ourselves.”

Like many companies, Buffer uses multiple tools and platforms to get work done. Between Slack, Email, Discourse, and trials on asynchronous tools, they found themselves losing track of conversations. For an entirely distributed company, this was particularly painful. “In PST, the day would start 8 hours before I would wake up and I’d find myself struggling to catch up and stay on top of it all,” explained Carolyn.

While Slack was useful for remote messaging, it became too cumbersome

and time-zone incongruent for thoughtful decision-making. Other platforms, like Discourse, turned into a place for company-wide announcements and while trialing other asynchronous tools like Twist, the team still felt the pain of email and siloed conversations.

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Buffer needed a way to have more in-depth conversations, easily make decisions, and have a place where longer-form communication could live. “The high-level goal was to change the way we communicate and fix the problem that email was creating,” said Courtney. “It was a productivity issue.”

Buffer is known for spearheading a completely transparent culture. The company shares all internal emails amongst every individual, allowing them to have context and insights into what each team is working on.

“Transparent email was the best thing ever when we were 12 people. We then sort of made it work when we were 40, and it was painful at 50. Then, at 80 people, we still hadn’t solved it and we were drowning,” said Carolyn.



# Solution

Both Carolyn and Courtney sat down and put together a list of “dealbreakers” for what they wanted in their next tool. “We had a shortlist of things we were looking for,” said Courtney.

A few of these dealbreakers included:

- Searchable, archivable discussions
- Customizable notifications
- Do not disturb functionality
- The ability to create a “to-do” list of sorts

With a clear idea of what they needed, Courtney sought out alternative solutions that met their requirements. While researching, she read about Threads on social media and decided to take a leap of faith, tweeting at the Threads account.



@threads Hi Threads team! We're on the waitlist at @buffer and very excited to give your tool a try! Any idea how long the wait might be? 😊

Threads saw the tweet and sent Courtney a DM, and the rest is history. “We chatted with Rousseau [CEO and Co-Founder] on Friday and then got everyone on the product the following Monday,” explained Courtney.

Little did Courtney know that someone who worked at Perfect Keto, a Threads customer, also mentioned the platform to Buffer CEO, Joel Gascoigne. “When I mentioned Threads to Joel, I was surprised to hear that he had already heard of it and was tracking it,” said Courtney.

Buffer was able to get their 85-person company on Threads in less than 5 days. The Threads customer success team was able to educate their team on naming conventions, use cases, and settings, allowing them to take the reins quickly and painlessly.

“We let the team know that we were exploring a new tool, and we set up rules for the first two weeks of usage,” said Carolyn. “We were pretty confident that if we used it correctly, it would be an amazing solution for us.”

Buffer was able to cut the number of emails sent (during an average work-week) by 50 percent since using Threads, a pleasant outcome to their transparent email problem. “We’re no longer drowning in email, and it doesn’t

feel like a never-ending black hole,” said Courtney. “Everything is now neatly organized on Threads.”

Threads has also allowed Buffer to scale their transparency and make discussions functional and useful. “Transparency and communication were becoming overwhelming; we needed to find a way to do both, and we found that with Threads,” said Carolyn.

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## Looking Ahead

“If we have successfully done what we hoped to do with Threads, and we are on track for that, the long-term impact will be a history of organized communication that we can always refer to,” explained Carolyn. “We’ll continue to be a company that approaches communication thoughtfully and intentionally.”

As any company knows, there are growing pains. “It’s important to keep looking and reevaluate processes and tools, being ruthless about editing out what doesn’t work for your team,” said Courtney. “Threads is scalable and allows us to avoid these growing pains.”

And the new hire that was mentioned earlier? Fortunately for her, she joined right after Buffer got on Threads. “I had such a sense of relief,” explained Carolyn. “I was able to tell her, ‘this is no longer an issue, you don’t need to worry anymore.’”

Drop us a line at [hello@threads.com](mailto:hello@threads.com) to learn how you can achieve transparent, collaborative communication for your company.

#### **About Buffer**

Buffer is a suite of social media products made for modern, online brands, providing them with the tools they need for visual marketing, audience engagement, and analytics. We want to help these brands stand out online and to drive meaningful engagement and measurable results for their brand and their bottom line. Our suite of publishing, engagement, and analytics tools helps more than 75,000 brands build remarkable online profiles. Buffer is a team of real people, aligned in common values. Being a Buffer customer should feel like you have a whole team of people cheering for you. We want to see you thrive on social media.

#### **About Threads**

Founded in 2017, Threads is a San Francisco-based company designed to help teams inform, discuss, and make decisions at scale. For leaders at every level of a company, Threads is the platform for work that best delivers on decision making by tapping into the collective wisdom of an entire team, providing everyone with a voice to assure better business outcomes. Join the future of work and learn more at [threads.com](https://threads.com) or follow us on Twitter @threads.