

Remote Work Team Norms

Working together when we're not together:

We seek to overcome three types of high-quality connections:

GETTING CONNECTED	BEING CONNECTED	FEELING CONNECTED
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When in the same location, it is easy to stop by someone's desk, catch them in the hall to ask a question, or share an important update on a project. The effort for these interactions is low, often spontaneous, and there is little activity that has to be put in to make sure they happen. Interactions with remote team members have an inherently higher level of discretionary effort. You have to pick up a phone, send a slack, or schedule a meeting. As a result, many of these interactions don't happen or occur at inconvenient times. As a high performing team, we find ways to overcome this disconnect when members of the team are remote. Working remote is a privilege and subject to the discretion of team supervisor.

GETTING CONNECTED

Be present. Some engagement signals are lost when working together virtually (EX: Zoom Meeting), particularly when we mute the phone, take notes, or focus intently on our laptops.

Scheduling a meeting that works for everyone is a challenge. It's easy to forget what matters to your teammates, especially when it comes to time zones and respecting individual working hours.

Keep in mind that time zone differences mean some team members may be eating lunch while others are eating breakfast.

Some best practices to consider when working with remote teammates:

- Add different time zones to your calendar and be mindful of these before trying to connect.
- Make sure remote employees have current Zoom Meeting information for all office locations & rooms.
- When appropriate utilize Slack for "pop up" meetings, daily huddles, or answering work-related questions.
- Take advantage of work hours that overlap, as much as possible, by protecting that time for collaboration, alignment, and other projects that need team input and feedback.
- Be flexible when hosting a recurring meeting, perhaps one that is during someone's off-hours, and consider rotating the schedule to ease time zone burden.

One more thing, be clear with each other on hard boundaries (such as office hours) that we are unwilling to change based on established expectations.

BEING CONNECTED

Meetings with remote employees are challenging, especially when the majority of attendees are together physically. In a meeting, it is imperative to include remote employees in discussion and create an environment for remote members to participate.

Below are tips to help make these meetings more engaging and inclusive:

- Share materials and agenda prior to the start of the meeting.
- Use video (when possible) during meetings so body language and facial expressions aren't lost. Remote employees ensure the camera setup is at an angle that allows for attendees to see you clearly as well.
- Rotate hosting responsibilities amongst all participants (remote and HQ). Everyone plays a part!
- When possible post notes electronically (Google Doc) or on a Jamboard so that remote attendees can view and participate..
- Remote employees are encouraged to make the effort to remain engaged and active during meetings. Speak up when there is a technical challenge or other distractions (noises) which are impacting the ability to participate or listen.
- HQ employees seek to include remote employees actively in the meeting. This includes being thoughtful about breakout sessions and how meetings are constructed to keep them involved. When a question is asked, make an effort to specifically ask if there are any comments/input from those that are remote.

FEELING CONNECTED

Written communication in email and Slack loses emotional context and can be construed in a negative way by the receiver. It is important not to inadvertently associate negative feelings / emotion with written communication. Asking for clarification or having rapport with your team can develop a stronger understanding of what the message conveys before jumping to conclusions.

Similarly, at times remote employees can feel isolated. Create opportunities to get to know your distributed teammates just like you would if they sat in the next desk over or same office. Add their milestones (anniversaries, birthdays, special events) into your calendar and recognize those dates. We also make efforts to overcome these feelings by finding ways to positively engage them in company activities.

ROLE	BEST PRACTICE
Remote Employee	Look for ways to improve your own distributed work experience, from building strong social connections to working around common logistical (time and technical) challenges. Find a remote partner that can share best practices with how they stay connected and interact with colleagues.
Leader of Remote Employee	It's important for leaders to remember they set the tone and best practices when it comes to how employees approach working remotely. Be mindful to not only communicate the investment in distributed work, but also follow through and demonstrate support for those impacted. Small things matter and may include defining expectations of work hours, being respectful of time zones, sending encouraging notes of recognition, adjusting meeting schedules, and when possible fostering on-site visits and collaborations.

Remote Work Plan Checklist:

Remote Team Norms Established in Writing

- Expectations shared with team and reviewed

Equipment

- Confirmed with IT all team members have computers (personal or work)
- Entire team able to login to VPN successfully

Huddles and 1:1s

- Communicated plan to team?

- Scheduled via:

- Zoom

- Slack

- Phone

- Other _____

Weekly Meetings

- Communicated plan to team?

- Scheduled via:

- Zoom

- Slack

- Phone

- Other _____

In-Person Client Meetings

- Meetings already scheduled:

- Discussion with team on how to handle and communicate with clients regarding remote-work plan being initiated.

- Client communication - notification that the in-person meeting will be amended and provide options based on client needs

- Phone

- Zoom

- Other _____

- Meetings scheduled after remote work plan initiated:

- Discussion with team on how to handle and communicate with clients regarding remote-work plan being initiated.

- Client communication - how to talk to clients and provide options based on client needs

Phone

Zoom

Do you have any meetings that must be in-person? If so, what and how will you adapt?

Does your team provide training to clients? If so, what and how will you adapt?

Internal Meetings

Zoom, if available.

Slack

Phone

Check-ins

How will you ensure your team is working and being held accountable?

End-of-day reports

Slack

Honor System

Checking who is online

Other _____

How will you ensure team health and connectivity?

Increase huddles

Zoom check-ins

Slack

Phone Calls

Other _____

Mail

Does your team require distribution assistance and if so, what must go out?

How are you going to have your team mail it out?

Printing

Does your team require printing assistance and if so, what is necessary and what is plan? _____