

Fostering Team Connectivity in the Era of Hybrid Work



The unforeseen events of March 2020 reshaped the way we work globally, with social distancing, lockdowns, and remote arrangements becoming integral to the 'new normal.' Businesses worldwide adapted by encouraging remote work, a transition that posed challenges for many. Even as we surpass a year in this remote working landscape, certain industries are contemplating the continuation of digital work practices, albeit in a hybrid fashion.

Navigating the shift from in-person to digital and hybrid work has been a learning experience for everyone. Maintaining team connectivity and engagement, despite limited face-to-face interactions, has become a crucial consideration in this new working environment. Establishing a robust support network for teams is now more vital than ever.

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted individuals globally, prompting adjustments in both personal and professional spheres. Video conferencing tools such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Hangouts became integral to work and social interactions. Remote work has become ingrained in public consciousness, with technology enabling the concept of carrying an office in our pockets. However, the challenges presented by hybrid work arrangements are substantial, requiring adaptation from both employers and employees.

The shift to remote work compelled individuals to take on a more autonomous role, defining their work routines during lockdowns. Addressing the psychological effects of remote work and enhancing productivity in the digital realm became focal points, especially for those balancing work with responsibilities like homeschooling. While the adjustment process has been challenging, many find remote work beneficial, with many believing it reduces stress, and some noting increased productivity in a hybrid work environment when approached constructively and with focus.

Considerations for Hybrid Working

Maintaining connectivity and engagement in the evolving landscape of virtual work is crucial, presenting challenges in ensuring alignment among team members. Delving into aspects beyond mere connection, such as team satisfaction and comfort, let's explore key considerations for hybrid working.

Communication

Effective communication stands as a cornerstone in a hybrid work model, especially when team members are geographically dispersed across various time zones. Prioritize inclusive communication methods, such as video and voice calls, to foster a sense of inclusion, visibility, and audibility among your team.

Employee Wellbeing

The significance of employee wellbeing cannot be overstated in the hybrid work model. Monitor stress levels closely and encourage open communication regarding burnout. Employees who enjoy both physical and emotional health are more likely to exhibit engagement, connection, productivity, and commitment.

Inclusivity Overcoming challenges associated with remote team members feeling disconnected from those in the office is paramount. Proactively address proximity bias by conducting all meetings via video, even if some team members are physically present in the office. This approach levels the playing field and fosters an inclusive environment.

Flexibility

Given the uncertainties of the past year, embracing flexibility as a key leadership skill is imperative. Flexibility extends to adapting to various changes, whether positive or negative, significant or minor. Clearly defining crucial tasks and priorities can instill flexibility in managing a remote team, recognizing that adjustment may be required during this transition.

Working Hours

Remote work often blurs the boundaries of traditional working hours, leading to discussions around out-of-office expectations. Establishing clear and reasonable working hours is vital, dispelling the notion of perpetual connectivity. This practice not only contributes to lower stress levels but also enhances overall workplace productivity.