How To Be A Better Virtual Communicator

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CREATE PROTOCOLS AROUND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

AGREE UPON RESPONSE TIMES
Establish an expected response time for each specific channel.

MOVE SPECIFIC TYPES OF COMMUNICATION TO SPECIFIC CHANNELS
Should requests be made through email?
Quick questions in chat?
Project updates in a project management system?

USE @NAMES TO CUT THROUGH CHANNEL CLUTTER
Ensure your message gets to the right person in communication channels that have multiple people.
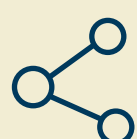
SHARE YOUR STATUS
(Available, Offline, Do Not Disturb, Busy, In a Meeting)
Sync your communication tools with your calendar for automatic status setting.

SET EXPECTATIONS FOR VIRTUAL MEETINGS
Is video required?
Should participants use headphones?
Will someone need to share their screen?

74% of professionals believe remote work will become the new normal

Women with child-care needs are **32% less likely** to leave their job if they can work remotely

61% of professionals would prefer a fully remote position

MUST-HAVE TECHNOLOGIES FOR REMOTE COLLABORATION

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS
- Zoom
- Slack
- Microsoft Teams
- Google Hangouts
- Email

PROJECT MANAGEMENT
- Asana
- Trello
- Monday.com
- Zoho Projects
- Smartsheet

VISUAL COLLABORATION
- Miro
- Mural
- Conceptboard

PASSWORD MANAGEMENT
- LastPass
- Bitwarden
- 1Password
- Keeper

CLOUD DOCUMENT STORAGE & EDITING
- Office 365
- Google Drive
- Dropbox

VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICES

BE CLEAR AND STRAIGHTFORWARD
Need something by a specific day or time?
Want an "item received" confirmation response?
Make it clear in your messaging.

KEEP EVERYONE IN THE LOOP
Keep your team aware of everyone's work and project progess. Regular communication allows you to offer assistance, provide feedback, or to correct a problem as soon as it emerges.

PROVIDE ADEQUATE FEEDBACK
Be intentional about making sure feedback gets to coworkers and messages are received in the intended manner.

75% of employees working remotely report being able to maintain or improve productivity on their individual tasks

Over 70% of managers said they are more open to flexible models for their teams than they were before the pandemic

SYNCHRONOUS VS. ASYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION

SYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION
Communication in real-time with immediate responses.
- socializing
- complex discussions
- meetings
- retreats
- emergencies

Too much synchronous communication = team burnout and less time for deep work

ASYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION
Communication happens over a period of time. Responses occur intermittently.
- announcements
- gathering feedback
- project discussions
- weekly/monthly updates
- project planning/collaboration

Too much asynchronous communication = team members become detached and feel isolated

KEY TO A HIGH-OUTPUT REMOTE TEAM:
Mostly asynchronous communication with opportunities for synchronous connection

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR SYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION

Plan in advance
Try to limit impromptu video calls and phone calls.

Use in moderation
Focus on fewer communications with only those who are essential to the conversation.

Use respectfully
Be aware of time differences when scheduling meetings with attendees in multiple time zones.

Capture synchronous meetings
Record key video calls and share them with those who cannot attend.

Maximize video and audio quality
Connect Wi-Fi and test your technology in advance of calls.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR ASYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION

Set timing expectations
When beginning the communication share a timeframe for responding and a due date.

Logical organization
To be effective, asynchronous communication should be organized and accessible by all team members. Establish and use a company-wide system for organization and naming conventions.

Overcommunication
Asynchronous communication must be detailed and clear to prevent delays introduced by back-and-forth exchanges. Overcommunicate and be very detailed in responses.

DRIs and decision makers
Keep asynchronous discussions on track by including decision makers and DRIs (Directly Responsible Individuals). They can wrap up conversations and help with decision-making once sufficient feedback has been shared.

Default to transparency
Aim for most remote team conversations to be in public where all can see. This helps the team make progress when someone is away.

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