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WORKING IN A HYBRID TEAM

WORKSHOP GUIDE

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Hybrid working describes the combination of some people working remotely with others who are together in person at the same physical location. For individuals, hybrid working means spending some time in the office and the rest of the time working elsewhere, usually from home. Hybrid teams involve some people in the office and others who work remotely.

You can add people from different remote offices into the mix as well. Who is based where can vary from day to day, as more and more people mix days in the office with time working remotely, from home or elsewhere.

It's easy to forget about and ignore people who aren't in the office when you are, or those in different situations. Because of this, tension can build up. At the end of the session the group should understand the importance of building relationships across divides and work to resolve issues when you detect them. In addition they will learn that hybrid meetings are not symmetric and that they need to make adjustments for this.

LOOK – watch the videos and reflect on the content and message.

THINK – activities and questions linking the videos to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER – a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the videos will last around 15 minutes.

GROUP EXERCISE – At the end of the series of videos there is a practical exercise which will bring the learnings together. Delegates should be encouraged to record any personal development actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Improving hybrid meetings
- Being a hybrid team player

FILM 1 – IMPROVING HYBRID MEETINGS

LOOK (play video, 5 minutes)

Give the group some background before you show the film. Hybrid meetings are asymmetric and unequal. Remote participants like Dev are at a disadvantage compared to those together in the office, who have the benefit of being able to glance over at one another and to pick up on the full nuance of conversations.

Even the best technology won't give you the benefit of being there for real – body language and the nuances of conversation are much harder to detect on screen.

Finally, in the name of productivity, many remote workers don't leave enough time between meetings with 60% of people feeling guilty about taking any breaks, according to Forbes magazine.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to think about how to make hybrid meetings work better. How can we level the playing field? Answers you receive should include the following.

- By focusing on the remote participants: represent them physically in the room – try a life size cartoon cut-out or name tent so they can't be forgotten – and buddy up each remote team member with somebody in the room, so they can keep a personal connection throughout the meeting.
- Ask them for their input before asking the people in the room. Tech can be a challenge as it is hard to get remote people to hear when the meeting room has several people in it, especially when they are spaced out.
- To avoid the possibility of misunderstanding and confusion in the meeting, stick to a clear purpose and, if things go off on a tangent, bring it back on purpose. Be clear on objectives, timings, roles people play, ground rules the meeting runs by and what will happen as a result of the meeting.

REMEMBER

Hybrid meetings are not symmetric. Remind the group to therefore be clear and on purpose!

- Only run meetings, which have a clear and compelling purpose, and stick to this.
- Level the meeting playing field: ensure that all participants can see and hear, and are seen and heard, so remote participants are not forgotten.
- Think "remote people first". Ask them for input regularly. Support them with in-room buddies.

FILM 2 – BEING A HYBRID TEAM PLAYER

LOOK (play video, 5 minutes)

Set the scene for the team before showing the video. The group who come into the office on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday have formed a bit of a clique – the Tuesday and Thursday gang are similar. However, when a team project involves staff from across all groups, problems start to arise.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Explain that it's easy to forget about and ignore people who aren't in the office when you are, or those in different situations. Because of this, tension can build up, so build relationships across divides and work to resolve issues when you detect them. As well as in-the-office vs remote, 'in-group' and 'out-group' divisions can occur. Some may feel overlooked by management or that the other group isn't sharing that information freely with them. Everyone knows that 'out of sight' can mean 'out of mind'. We also know that people tend to form cliques and that this can get in the way of collaboration and cause tension detrimental to team performance.

Ask the group if they recognise any of these issues and how can you avoid problems and build trust? Responses should include these points.

- Make an effort gathering as a team for a weekly or in busy times, daily quick catch up for 15 minutes and hear from each person what they are pleased to have achieved and what they need from others in the team.

- When there is an opportunity to involve another team member, they think "remote first" rather than just going to the people you can see. When tension arises, they sort it out quickly rather than letting conflict build up.

- Make sure information is available to all, rather than stuck away in people's emails and messy shared drives. In order to be able to find things, agree a structure for your shared resources, meaning that it's easy for anyone to find what they need.

- Embrace asynchronous work patterns, so that people can complete tasks across different locations, working hours or patterns. Communication shouldn't always be expected to be immediate, so people can respond when convenient.

REMEMBER

Reiterate to the group that trust and communication are the foundation of effective hybrid work. Remind them of the key learning points at the end of the film.

- 'Out of sight' tends to mean 'out of mind', so keep in mind team-members who work different patterns from you, get to know them and understand their needs.
- Share information proactively across all members of hybrid teams: include remote team members and those who commute to the office on different days from you.
- If you notice tension between different groups in your team, then work to resolve it, with the support of your manager if necessary.
- Personal contact (in person meeting or video call) trumps e-mail for rich communication. Focus on building and maintaining trust, as it builds slowly but can be destroyed in an instant.

GROUP EXERCISE

The objective of this exercise is to find out whether you have understood the contents of this course.

Ask the group to identify what hybrid work environments should be included in a list?

The answers should include these locations.

The office desk
Home office
Co-working spaces
At a client or customer site

Next, ask the group how they can try to 'level the playing field' for remote meeting attendees?

Make sure their answers include these two points.

1. Giving them a 'buddy' in the room to keep them connected
2. Asking for their input first