**Communicating with hybrid teams**

Communication in a hybrid team requires a different approach to communicating with an office based team. Effective hybrid working is facilitated by strong communication. Team members need to know how, when and where to communicate with each other.

Consider some of these tips for ensuring successful communication.

Choose an appropriate technology (and ensure everyone can use it)

Pick a platform for your regular meetings. This might be Zoom or MS Teams, but it can help to use a consistent channel. Although some people have been using these tools to meet online for a while now, not everyone is fully skilled in doing so. Always check that your team members know how to use your technology of choice.

Consider asynchronous tools

Effective communication doesn’t have to take place face to face or require a meeting. It can be helpful to agree an additional asynchronous channel (such as Yammer, Slack of Teams) for other forms of sharing and collaborating. This can reduce online meeting fatigue and allow people to reflect and contribute at a time that suits their work schedule. Organising discussions into channels can help people to manage their attention and notifications effectively. Try and pick a couple of channels and stick to them – communicating across multiple channels can be distracting and confusing. Be clear about what channel is for what sort of work (e.g. our Yammer group is for social chatting, we will use MS Teams for work discussions).

Ensure effective information sharing

Make sure that information is shared with the entire team rather than just the people who are in the office. This requirement can be supported by many of the tips in this guidance – it is important to ensure that everyone has access to the same information to avoid communication problems and feelings of unfairness.

Schedule regular team meetings

How often do you need to meet and what for? Whether it is a weekly catch up or monthly meeting, involve the team in deciding what is needed and how often. A regular meeting can help to connect people and ensure everyone receives the same information. From time to time you may want to consider scheduling in-person meetings that everyone attends. Remember – not everything needs to be a meeting!

Default to online

When some people are working in the office and some are remote the default approach for meetings should be online. Mixed meetings can lead to a poorer experience for people who are remote and it can limit their ability to properly contribute. This becomes even more pronounced when there is a large ‘in person’ group with a small number of remote attendees. You may want to consider setting your own ‘team rules’ for online meetings to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

Share working hours and days

Some teams may need to schedule their remote time in advance or on a rota system. Other roles may allow much more flexibility or autonomy. It benefits everyone in the team when people know when their colleagues are working – and where. Consider setting some team principles such as sharing locations, using presence indicators (such as the function in MS Teams) or sharing calendars. Team members should also consider including their working hours on their email signatures.

Remember to update people

When working in the office there is the potential for casual or unplanned discussions – what we often refer to as ‘watercooler conversations’. If these result in decisions or actions, make sure to update anyone who isn’t present.

Different communication approaches will work for different teams. Each time will need to find what works for them and may need to experiment with a variety of options. Everyone benefits from effective communication – and achieving it is a team responsibility. When everyone makes the effort to communicate effectively hybrid working can be a success for all.