



Top

Do's and don'ts for
managing and leading a
hybrid team



Top do's and don'ts for managing and leading a hybrid team

We've done in the office and we've done remote but increasingly our teams are a mixture of both now, and it looks like this new way of working is here to stay.

Here's a list of practical do's and don'ts for you to implement in order to get the best out of your people, no matter how they work or where they are located.

Do's

Encourage some time together

And it doesn't have to be a set day (unless this makes it easier ongoing for your team members with children!) but a set meeting / activity that requires your people to be face to face. Even when I managed a team that spanned the whole of Europe and the Middle East, we made time to meet a couple of times a year in person. This time together cemented relationships and took them to another level.

Enable routines

Routines will enable your team to know when, where and what they are doing, regardless of where they are physically. It gives people a sense of security. Make sure that the team are involved in setting the routine too. This could involve some meetings, breaks, catch ups, etc.



Ensure everyone has the equipment and tech they need

Audit everyone's equipment for work - this means everything from laptops to desks, chairs, filing, phones, lighting as well as the right technology to be able to work and communicate effectively. Engage your team in the audit and in trying different solutions out so that the best solutions can be found for your team regardless of where they are. Two things to make sure you put on your list are calendar sharing facilities and cloud storage. Making sure that information is stored in one place that everyone can access is key.

Rules for meetings and calendars

The Work Trend Index report from Microsoft (2021) reports a 148% increase in meetings on Teams so it's no wonder that the people I work with are struggling with the volume of meetings. Make sure meetings are shorter and crucially that there is a time buffer that is "sacred" before and after each meeting (nature does call eventually!). Set rules for this and for booking into other people's calendars. Pick up the phone to someone if you're struggling to find time.

Review working hours and other contractual obligations

How long has it been since you looked at your contract? You will probably find that it is somewhat out of date anyway.... One of the key things to review is the 9 to 5 work hours. Is this sensible now? Review how you move to a "work done / goals achieved" mentality rather than hours completed. What flexibility and trust will this show? What other contractual obligations should be looked at and changed?



Create enticing spaces in the office

When your team are at the office make sure that it's a great space to be. You want people to want to come in and see other people. You want them to feel like it's their space - almost a treat to be in the office rather than a chore. So engage the team in creating that space for themselves. Also ensure that the work they do in the office is different where possible to the work they do at home. This means that there's a real reason to be in the office.

Prioritise networking

One of the things that can happen when you have a dispersed team working in different environments, is that the relationships become transactional. It become more about he doing than the being and being with each other. Make sure that you prioritise and build time for networking and collaboration and make it a part of your everyday - both for you and the team. Look at how to incorporate this in people's objectives.

Communicate, communicate, communicate

And essentially, make sure that the same information is available to all. Vary the way that you communicate with the team - chat and email have their place and you will probably be communicating via a videoconferencing tool or face to face, but how about producing a video and sending everyone a link to it?



Don'ts

Assume everyone wants the same thing

Oh how much easier it would be if we all wanted the same thing!! But alas! We don't... So consult, consult, consult and prepare to flex and learn and flex and learn some more. Be prepared to try things out, evaluate and then come back to more or different solutions if necessary. This isn't about giving everyone what they want. It's about finding out what works best so that the organisation gets what it needs and its people do too.

Assume they all want what you do

When the Covid pandemic started and we were all told to work from home, I must admit, I found it easy and enjoyable. I was set up physically and emotionally to do it. It took me a while to really understand what made it so difficult for some people and downright scary for others. Don't assume that everyone will be happy with the solution that's the right one for you. Really get into their "shoes", walk a mile or two in them, understand the situation from their perspective first.

Treat people differently depending on their choice

Now I'm sure that this isn't something you would do intentionally, but be aware of that conversation you have with someone who is having a coffee with you at the office - is the conversation one that should be shared? Are you delegating responsibility to those who are sat with you just because they are in view? What unconscious bias could you be prey to?



Don'ts

Have some people online and some face to face in meetings

One of the things that everyone being online whilst working from home has achieved is a sense of inclusion - we're all in the same boat mentality. Well as things change and you no longer have everyone in the same place, make sure that you are not creating a "them and us" by having some people in the room with you and some people online when it comes to meetings. Make sure that in whole team meetings everyone is using the same way to access the meeting - i.e either face to face or online.

Book back to back meetings

PLEASE!!!! This has been one of the biggest issues over the last couple of years. Think about it logically - if we are face to face we need to walk from one meeting to the next, possibly stopping off at the coffee machine along the way or even the rest room. The same is needed whether you are in the office or not. Booking back to back meetings is not only impractical. It also gives you the sense of always being late or behind, gives no time for preparation and prevents the best work and thinking being done.

Turn a blind eye to burnout

Even if you are fit, well and healthy, is everyone? According to Microsoft, high productivity is making an exhausted workforce. In their study leaders are generally doing ok whereas their people are struggling more. A lack of control, feeling that they have to be on 24/7 and in some instances a lack of appropriate tools, are all to blame. How are your people doing? Could they be better?



Now it's time to take action

Take one of the suggestions and make time to put it in place. If it involves the team, share it with them and use it as an opportunity to connect and collaborate.

Which one will you pick? Drop me a line at sonia@soniagavira.com and let me know.