

# How to stay connected when working remotely

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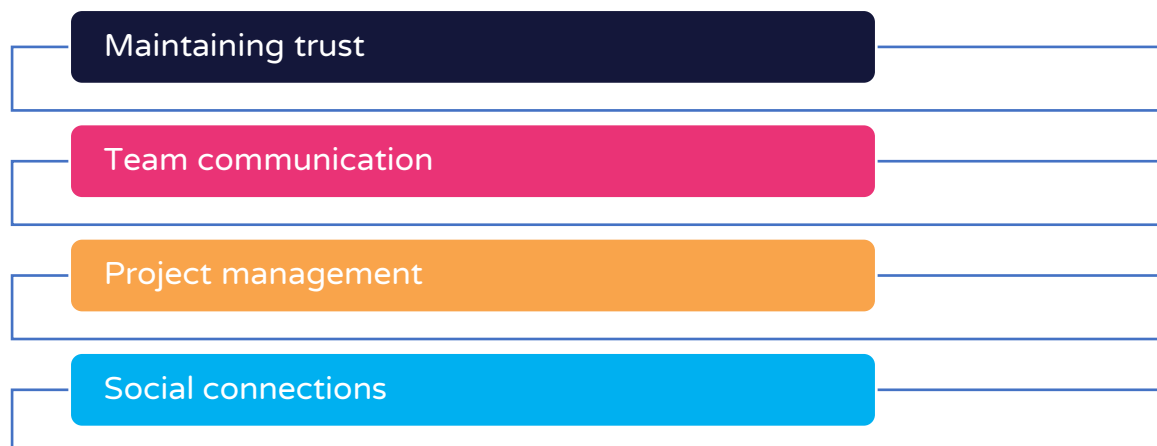
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## Challenges in managing remote teams

Managing remote teams is very different to in an office. You face a unique set of challenges that wouldn't exist in the same way in person.

As a manager, you need to change your approach – what works in person won't necessarily also work online.

There are 4 main challenges that you may face when managing remote teams:



### **Challenge 1: Maintaining trust**

When your team are working remotely, you don't have visibility over what they are doing like you would in an office.

However, it is very important to cultivate an environment in which employees feel trusted to do their work, and ultimately feel respected by their managers.

How can you put trust at the heart of managing your remote team?

- Hire self-motivated people, who you know are more likely to thrive in a remote environment.
- Trust by default, only question their work if you have reason to do so.
- Measure success based on performance metrics rather than hours spent online.
- Promote autonomy and give your team freedom in how they work. As long as they're getting the work done, let them figure out their best way of working.

### **Challenge 2: Team communication**

Communication can sometimes become stunted when working in remote teams. You can't just go up to someone's desk like you would in the office.

Instead, you will have to use means such as instant messaging, emails, or video calling.

What can you do to promote communication?

- Provide detail – anything you think another team member might benefit from.
- Invite everyone to meetings so that they are kept in the loop.
- Don't overcomplicate communication – make sure you know what you are using different communication channels for.
  - Use instant messaging for quick questions or updates.
  - Use email for longer or more formal communication.
  - Schedule calls for important updates.

### **Challenge 3: Project management**

Project management can sometimes get confusing in remote teams, as you are relying on regular updates from other people.

What can you do to overcome this?

- Use online software to track the status of different tasks/actions within the project.
- Schedule regular update meetings where team members can share what they've been working on.
- Use shared drives to store all project related resources so all team members can access them.

### **Challenge 4: Social connection**

Employees working remotely are more likely to experience feelings of isolation.

Take action quickly to make sure they don't feel disconnected from the rest of the team/company.

Some things you can do are:

- Pairing employees together to have virtual 'coffees' and giving them time out from their day to do this.
- Provide opportunities for different team members to work together on projects, where appropriate.

## How to keep remote workers connected



### **Create opportunities for informal interaction**

Make sure that there is opportunity for team members to engage in small talk.

Perhaps use the first 5-10 minutes of weekly meetings to have a catch up and for more informal conversation before diving into work.

### **Provide opportunities for team working and collaboration**

Are there upcoming projects that will require input from more than one person?

Where appropriate, assign different team members to work together, to give them an opportunity to get to know each other.

### **Have regular meetings**

Having regular team meetings will make sure there is a good level of contact between team members, making them feel connected to the company and to each other.

### **Video calls**

Make sure you set a ground rule of having videos on during meetings.

### **Have in person gatherings**

Try to have an in person gathering at least once a year, so that team members can get together, work and socialise in person.

Use this opportunity for team building and social activities.

### **Check in on team welfare**

Make sure you're checking in on your team members and see how they're doing.

Are they feeling disconnected or isolated? Talk to them about it.