Jumpstart Your Team with Clear Operating Norms

Creating and Adopting Norms for Your Virtual Team – Quick List

Explicit norms are especially important for a virtual team. **Choose one or two as a start**, and allocate team time to create a few team norms for each. **Make sure to talk through with your team how to sustain each norm, and what the implications are if the norm is violated**. Caucus your team to find out where they feel norms are still needed, and set aside discussion time to create them as a team. **Periodically check in** as to whether norms are still valid or need tweaking.

- *Team communications:*
    - *Team meetings*
    - *Use of asynchronous conference areas*
    - *Use of email, instant messaging, phone and texting*
    - *How and where documents will be created, distributed, accessed and shared*
- *Work-life balance, scheduling time, being accessible, do not disturb time*
- *Decision-making*
- *Priority-setting*
- *Surfacing issues, navigating through conflict*

Virtual Meetings as a Starting Point

Since virtual meetings are the communications cornerstone of most virtual teams, start there. Here are a few best practices related to virtual meetings. **As a team, decide on 3-4 best practices that your team can adopt as shared norms**. Revisit these after your next few team meetings and adjust as needed. **Keep adding more norms to your list, branching out to all aspects of teamwork** where people feel norms are most needed.

Use the template on the other side to begin, and keep building!

Virtual meeting best practices

- *Insist on prework by all, as long as it's reasonable*
- *Everyone off mute to encourage discussion*
- *Set aside time for check-in or check-out (create social capital at every interaction)*
- *Design for conversations (80%+ interactivity)*
- *Be on time –late comers catch up on own time*
- *Share responsibility for keeping to the agenda*
- *Take temperature checks when in doubt*
- *100% participation – no multitasking (Keep track of who is/is not participating)*
- *Share the air, balance participation*
- *Keep remote participants visible in our minds' eye*
- *Rotate responsibilities: facilitator, timekeeper, scribe, host*
- *At close of meetings, ask participants for feedback on what went well/not well*

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Example for Virtual Meetings

Norm	How We'll Sustain	Consequences if Broken
Team Meetings		
Keep remote participants visible in our minds' eye	• Go around the room with remote members first • Print out a head shot of all team members and have by phone • Ask remote participants to take turns leading certain meetings • Ask remote team members for candid feedback	• Everyone participates remotely for next few meetings • Remote members set agenda for next few meetings
Design for conversations (80%+ interactivity)	• Send out content that can be read and reflected on at least 3 days ahead of meeting • Minimize presentations or review of documents in all team meetings • Give everyone a few questions they'll come ready to answer	• Participants will opt out, silently • Few people are likely to contribute

What Virtual Meeting Best Practices Can Your Team Adopt as Norms?

Norm	How We'll Sustain	Consequences if Broken
Team Meetings		