

Communication Charter Template for Remote Teams

Instructions: Discuss each item as a team to agree on and commit to communication norms. Fill in the blanks and check the boxes as each item is addressed.

This charter sets expectations for how our team will communicate, collaborate, and work together effectively across time zones and distance.

As a team, we commit to the following communication norms:



Core Hours

- Given our dispersed locations, our team will work the following core business hours when all of us will be working and available:

- We will accommodate global time zones by:

- We will respect our core hours for all synchronous communication including meetings, calls, and chats.



Communication Etiquette

- We will build trust by responding promptly to our teammates.
- We will take time to provide feedback and help solve problems.
- We will assume positive intent and use a supportive tone in our communications.
- We will communicate with the team if we cannot meet a deadline.
- We will be inclusive of other people's work-life schedules, as well as their cultures, backgrounds, and experiences.

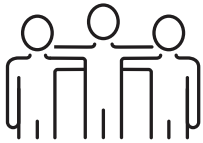


This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.



Inclusive Meetings

- We will meet regularly and utilize video conferencing.
 - Our team meetings will occur with the following frequency:
-
- We will make our meetings more inclusive by using instant messaging during meetings so that remote employees and introverts can more easily signal when they have a comment. One person will be assigned to monitor the chat during meetings to alert speakers when there are comments from others.
 - We will be on time for meetings.
 - We agree to limit side conversations, multi-tasking, and background noise during meetings.
 - We agree to pause briefly in between speakers on calls to accommodate any lag time and give others a chance to break into the conversation.
 - Managers will have regular one-on-one check-ins with both co-located and remote reports. At these meetings, managers should review tasks, projects, and work goals; provide clear, specific feedback; discuss career advancement opportunities; and reinforce the employee's connection to the team's goals.
 - We will share a meeting agenda and any materials to review in advance of meeting.
 - Manager-direct report one-on-one meetings will occur with the following frequency:



Community Building

- We will build a virtual water cooler where the team can "hang out." It can be a separate team chat room or other technology that lets us communicate casually and easily. Our hangout will be:
-
- We agree to use icebreakers or spend 10 minutes at the beginning of meetings to allow some time for socializing.
 - We will schedule quarterly virtual coffee breaks, game breaks with prizes, or virtual lunches to build and maintain team member relationships and reduce feelings of isolation.
 - We commit to using a positive tone in our communication with each other.
 - If possible, we agree to budget for and set up an annual in-person meeting.



Communication Technology

- We will invest in communication platforms such as a virtual chat room, video conferencing, and online collaboration tools that will allow members to share progress and work together seamlessly regardless of location.
- We commit to using the right technology for the right type of communication.
- Email:** We will avoid using email for sensitive feedback or conversations. We will always check our tone and err on the side of positivity.
- Chat:** We will use chat frequently for real-time communication during core business hours. We will set up norms for using chat to communicate about schedules, projects, collaboration, and unexpected emergencies or time demands.
- We will start our day with a “hello” in the chat room and a quick update on work priorities for the day.
- Video Conferencing:** When conversations or tasks are more complex, we will use video conferencing so we have more visual cues from all participants. This includes team meetings and calls to resolve conflicts or solve problems. We will always include the video link in the meeting invitation.
- Project Management:** We will select and utilize an online project management platform such as Asana, Jira, Wrike, or Zoho.
- Brainstorm:** We will create and share virtual whiteboards such as Microsoft Whiteboard to help with brainstorming, collaboration, and teaching.
- Training:** We will provide sufficient training to everyone on the team so we can follow best practices and keep up-to-date on the technology we are using to communicate with each other.

Sources

- N. Sharon Hill and Kathryn M. Bartol, “Five Ways to Improve Communication in Virtual Teams,” *MIT Sloan Management Review* (Fall 2018); Jay Mulki, Fleura Bardhi, Felicia Lassk, and Jayne Nanavaty-Dahl, “Set Up Remote Workers to Thrive,” *MIT Sloan Management Review* (October 1, 2009).
- Laura Vanderkam, “The Scheduling Secret That Will Make Your Team More Productive,” *Fast Company* (August 8, 2015).
- N. Sharon Hill and Kathryn M. Bartol, “Five Ways to Improve Communication in Virtual Teams,” *MIT Sloan Management Review* (Fall 2018).
- Michael D. Watkins, “Making Virtual Teams Work: Ten Basic Principles,” *Harvard Business Review* (June 27, 2013).
- N. Sharon Hill and Kathryn M. Bartol, “Five Ways to Improve Communication in Virtual Teams,” *MIT Sloan Management Review* (Fall 2018).



CATALYST
WORKPLACES THAT WORK FOR WOMEN