

# Problem solving **framework**

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## Introduction

In remote and hybrid work settings, teams face unique challenges that require specific problem-solving strategies. Having structured frameworks and rituals in place enables remote teams to address issues collaboratively and systematically, ensuring productive outcomes. These approaches provide clarity, reduce misunderstandings, and promote inclusion, leading to stronger communication, innovation, and cohesion in distributed teams.

# Problem solving frameworks and rituals in the context of HRW

In hybrid and remote work (HRW), the absence of physical presence can lead to slower decision-making processes, miscommunication, and feelings of isolation. As a result, having clear problem-solving frameworks becomes essential for overcoming these barriers.

Structured problem-solving frameworks give teams a clear methodology to follow, which is especially important when collaboration spans across different time zones and work styles. These frameworks allow teams to break down complex problems into manageable steps, assign tasks efficiently, and track progress effectively, whether working synchronously or asynchronously.

Rituals, such as daily stand-ups, weekly retrospectives, and scheduled brainstorming sessions, provide consistent touchpoints for teams to share updates, identify challenges, and create solutions together. These rituals promote transparency, encourage participation from all team members, and create a sense of routine and predictability that helps remote teams feel more connected, with a shared understanding of goals and processes.

# Implementing problem-solving frameworks

Below are key strategies to minimise the risk of discrimination in HRW and create an equitable environment when implementing problem-solving frameworks and rituals:

## **Ensure equal participation**

In remote and hybrid settings, some team members may inadvertently dominate discussions, while others may be quieter or less inclined to speak up. Facilitators should actively encourage everyone to contribute by creating safe spaces for sharing. For instance, structured rituals like round-robin discussions or using digital tools for anonymous input that can ensure that every voice is heard.

## **Use clear and inclusive language**

When framing problems or solutions, it's important to avoid language that may unintentionally exclude or marginalise certain groups. For example, referring to "groupthink" or "tradition" may inadvertently overlook innovative ideas from more diverse perspectives. Use neutral and inclusive language that encourages creative input from all employees.

## **Provide equal access to resources**

Ensure all team members have the necessary tools and information to contribute effectively to problem-solving. This includes making sure remote employees have access to the same resources as their in-office counterparts, such as real-time collaboration platforms and relevant documents. Equitable access helps minimise feelings of exclusion and prevents some employees from being at a disadvantage.

## **Be mindful of time zone differences**

Hybrid teams with members in different time zones may face challenges in coordinating problem-solving activities. To avoid leaving anyone out, rotate meeting times or offer asynchronous ways to participate. This ensures that everyone has an opportunity to contribute, regardless of location.

## **Encourage feedback and reflection**

After problem-solving sessions or rituals, encourage team members to share feedback on the process. What worked well? What could be improved? This continuous feedback loop ensures that any inadvertent biases or exclusionary practices are identified and addressed.

The following table outlines problem-solving approaches in hybrid and remote work settings. It highlights common challenges, solutions, and tools that can be used to address them.

Challenge	Hybrid Work Solution	Remote Work Solution	Tools & Strategies
Communication Gaps	Schedule regular in-office collaboration days	Use async communication & scheduled check-ins	Slack, Microsoft Teams, Loom, Asana
Decision-Making Delays	Combine in-person and virtual decision-making meetings	Use structured decision frameworks (e.g, RACI)	Miro, Trello, Notion, Google Docs
Team Alignment	Hybrid team meetings with clear agenda & follow-ups	Virtual town halls & clear documentation	Zoom, Google Meet, Confluence
Collaboration & innovation	Encourage whiteboarding sessions during office days	Use digital brainstorming tools	MURAL, Miro, FigJam
Employee Engagement	Blend in-person bonding activities with virtual ones	Virtual team-building & recognition programs	Donut (Slack), Anecdotes (Kahoot)
Work-Life Balance	Set core in-office hours but allow flexibility	Encourage boundary-setting & async work	Clockify, RescueTime, Pomodoro apps

# Conclusion

Problem-solving frameworks and rituals play a crucial role in the success of remote and hybrid teams. By providing structured approaches and regular rituals, teams can address challenges efficiently.



## References

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