

Managing mixed team dynamics in Hybrid & Remote Work

“Regularly checking in, offering flexibility, and using technology to bridge gaps are key to building a cohesive and high-performing team, no matter the location.”



Introduction

Managing mixed team dynamics in hybrid and remote teams presents unique challenges, but it also offers great opportunities for growth, collaboration, and innovation. This factsheet is designed to help leaders and team members navigate the complexities of balancing in-office and remote workers by offering practical strategies to foster clear communication, inclusivity, and effective collaboration. By implementing these best practices, teams can bridge the gap between different work environments, ensuring that all members feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute to the team's success, regardless of their location.

Understanding the issue

Understanding how to manage mixed team dynamics in hybrid and remote work (HRW) is crucial because the success of these teams depends on how well leaders navigate the complexities of balancing in-office and remote workers. Without effective management, hybrid teams can experience communication breakdowns, feelings of isolation, and inequitable access to opportunities, which can negatively impact productivity and morale. When these dynamics are not properly addressed, remote employees may feel disconnected, and in-office workers may lack an understanding of the challenges their remote counterparts face. By understanding and actively managing these dynamics, organisations can create a more cohesive, inclusive, and efficient team environment, leading to higher engagement, better collaboration, and improved overall performance.

Best practices for managing mixed team dynamics in HRW

Promote clear and consistent communication

Set expectations by defining communication protocols and the best tools for different situations, such as Slack for quick chats, Zoom for meetings, and email for formal updates. Over-communicate important information to ensure remote employees stay informed about key project details and updates. Since hybrid teams work across different time zones, using **asynchronous communication** tools like project management software helps ensure that no one is left out due to scheduling conflicts.

Foster inclusivity and equity

To promote inclusivity and equity, avoid favouritism toward in-office employees by ensuring remote workers have **equal opportunities** to contribute to meetings and decision-making. Rotate meeting roles so both remote and in-office team members have the chance to lead discussions or share updates. Use collaborative tools like shared documents or interactive whiteboards to ensure all voices are heard, and consider video conferencing for meetings to guarantee equal participation regardless of where team members are located. Fair treatment and visibility for both groups help foster a more cohesive and inclusive team culture.

Create opportunities for social interactions

Organise virtual social events and encourage informal chats by setting up virtual "watercooler" spaces where team members can discuss topics unrelated to work. Establishing buddy systems or pairing remote and in-office employees helps foster peer support and build stronger relationships across the team, mitigating feelings of isolation for remote workers.

Foster a culture of **trust and transparency**

Set clear, measurable goals that align all team members—both remote and in-office—toward the same objectives. Regular one-on-one check-ins between managers and employees help provide personalised support, feedback, and coaching.

Encourage **open feedback from all team members** to address any challenges or concerns regarding team dynamics, communication, or workloads. By building a foundation of trust and openness, teams will feel more comfortable sharing ideas and addressing issues as they arise.

Monitor and address **potential conflict**

Pay attention to any signs of frustration, misunderstandings, or miscommunication between remote and in-office workers. If tensions arise, address them quickly and openly to prevent escalation. Establish clear conflict resolution mechanisms and encourage team members to address issues directly and constructively. **Providing training on empathy and conflict resolution** can also help prevent conflicts from disrupting team dynamics and foster a supportive atmosphere for all employees.

Conclusion

Managing mixed team dynamics in hybrid and remote environments requires intentional strategies to ensure effective communication, collaboration, inclusivity, and support. By implementing the practices outlined in this factsheet, teams can break down barriers between in-office and remote employees, foster trust, and create an environment where all members feel equally valued. Regularly checking in, offering flexibility, and using technology to bridge gaps are key to building a cohesive and high-performing team, no matter the location.



Further reading

- De Souza Santos, R., Grillo, W., Cabral, D., de Castro, C., Albuquerque, N., & França, C. (2024). Post-Pandemic Hybrid Work in Software Companies: Findings from an Industrial Case Study. arXiv preprint arXiv:2401.08922.
- Hu, X. E., Hinds, R., Valentine, M. A., & Bernstein, M. S. (2022). A "Distance Matters" Paradox: Facilitating Intra-Team Collaboration Can Harm Inter-Team Collaboration. arXiv preprint arXiv:2202.02484.
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- Sporse, T., & Moe, N. B. (2022). Coordination Strategies When Working from Anywhere: A Case Study of Two Agile Teams. arXiv preprint arXiv:2204.03978.