

Navigating the new world of virtual work

Essentials of remote working

PwC in the Caribbean | April 2020



Welcome to our new normal

We're living through disruption unlike anything we've ever seen or experienced before.

It's now more important than ever to align our teams, solve important problems, gain deep insights and accelerate decision making to help shape the future of our business landscape.

Virtual working is a significant adjustment for some organizations, but it's vital to ensuring business continuity.

Adapting to our new normal of remote working requires extra structure, intention and care. It's more than simply setting up remote meetings. Working remotely also means ensuring those meetings go beyond being a video conference with a shared presentation to create a truly collaborative, human-centred and results-driven experience.



Working together virtually

Adjusting to remote working

We're social and collaborative beings by nature. But collaborating through a screen isn't exactly natural. The good news is that we can adapt and evolve. Through clear communication and collaboration, working in virtual teams can quickly become second nature.

Building and maintaining trust is more important than ever

One of the challenges of working in virtual teams is that it's easy to zone out, become disengaged, stop sharing ideas or feel reluctant to speak, all of which will reduce impact. Trust and collaboration are key in helping to avoid this. Establishing an atmosphere of trust between all members of a virtual team can help stimulate creativity, collaboration, productivity and innovation.

The words we use matter

Without social cues like body language and facial expressions to provide valuable emotional context, the words we choose become even more important. People can't feel the warmth of your presence through a screen, so make an extra effort to consider the language you use. Being compassionate and conversational helps build trust. Avoid words that could be misinterpreted, and refrain from aggressive attempts to persuade or influence others.

Don't confuse brief communications with clear communications

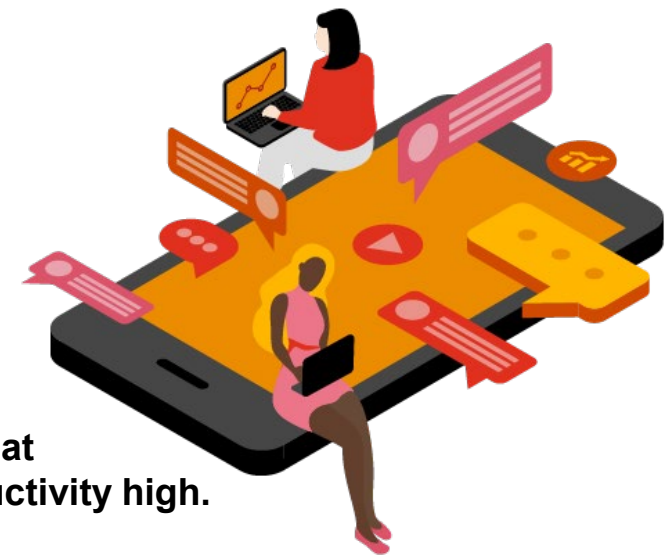
In our efforts to be efficient, we sometimes use fewer words to communicate. Don't assume that others understand your cues and shorthand. Take time to communicate with the intention of being very clear, no matter the medium. You can never be too clear, but it's too easy to be less clear than you should.



Working together virtually

Keeping engagement and collaboration high

Virtual working presents opportunities for teams to use new and different ways of working that encourage people to work together, even at a distance, while keeping engagement and productivity high.



Set up group chats for working teams

Stay connected throughout the day using Google Hangouts or other online chat tools to create group threads and team chat rooms. It's a great way to ask questions that come up, share resources and discuss life.

Keep track of what needs to be done

Project tracking tools are helpful to keep everyone accountable and on target. Use note-taking apps to keep on top of tasks, timelines and status. Use other tools to track project progress and store documentation.

Work together, sometimes in silence

Set up audio/video working sessions so you're not working alone. Questions are answered in real time, ideas flow freely and it's fun. Being silent is okay, as it's sometimes nice knowing someone else is there.

Organize daily stand-ups with your team and individuals

Daily stand-ups are helpful to assess what's working and ask people how they're feeling. Try holding one at the start and end of the day. Discuss work underway, successes, challenges and potential solutions.

Agree on ways of working

Understand everyone's working times, availability at home and agreed response times to emails and chats. Set clear team norms around methods of communication. Respect others' boundaries and capacity to respond. Showing empathy for everyone's working conditions goes a long way.

Turn your camera on

We can all be accessible using video conferencing with Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Skype. Make sure to use your camera. Seeing each other during meetings helps with social bonds and conveys sub-verbal cues.

Conduct periodic team retrospectives

Strengthen team chemistry and performance by reflecting the good and the bad within a specific time frame. Build a collaborative action plan, assign owners and commit to implementing tactics to improve over time.

Treat time zones fairly

Teams and customers are spread across the country and around the globe. Don't forget that when setting meeting times.

Working together virtually

Leading and managing a virtual team

Leaders have an opportunity to role model a culture and create a positive working environment that empowers everyone to contribute to conversations, team up, develop and freely share new ideas.

Model the way with a human touch

Set up a designated work area that's comfortable and ergonomic. A separate room is ideal, but not necessary, as it's more important to have a spot that can become your "home office."

Create a shared goal, agree on new expectations

Encourage personal accountability by co-creating goals and expectations in the team on a weekly and monthly basis.

Enable others to act virtually

Delegate appropriately within teams, provide visibility into the work and empower team members to take accountability.

Focus on solutions to problems

Focus on structured problem solving to resolve issues and set standards.

Show appreciation and celebrate success

Reinforce good behaviours on the virtual team. Recognize performance in new ways.



Model the way

- Show compassion and be transparent and authentic in every interaction; role model and reinforce organizational values.
- Set personal standards for working remotely. Talk about commitments and eliminate bad habits from the office (e.g. too many people at meetings, overuse of email, etc.)
- Meet with your leadership or team to talk about expectations for working in the new way. Project confidence in taking on new or enhanced responsibilities.
- Empower and motivate the team and individuals to transition to new ways of working.
- Focus on individual and team well-being. Establish daily well-being routines that are built into calendars.

Delivering virtual workshops

Evolving from physical to digital meetings

Ensure meetings go beyond being a video conference to create a truly collaborative, human-centred and results-driven experience.

Engage early and prepare like never before

Pre-engagement and preparation are important. If you can, send participants a pre-session kit—including information on how to test their technology, how to participate fully and other elements for use in the session.

Design for people

Try multiple methods of facilitation, such as small group activities, whole-group facilitated conversations and interactive whiteboards and gamification. It's okay to iterate. If some techniques don't work as well as you want, modify them to suit your needs. Or better yet, try something else.

Be inclusive

Actively guide discussions to make sure everyone has equal access and opportunity to be heard. This creates confidence in the value of the session and promotes active participation by all individuals, accelerating progress and alignment to outcomes.

Inhabit the same space

While we all know the value of having everyone in the same room, it's just as important with virtual sessions. Use only virtual workspaces so everything people need is on the screen. This gives everyone equal access to the same virtual world.



Deliver an experience

Design for engagement. Every detail counts, including the meeting invite, workshop length and the range of experiences. Distractions are inevitable. If you're caught out, own it! Consider a fun code phrase for being distracted when setting ground rules. Saying, "I was in Hawaii" is more fun than admitting your mind was out to lunch.

Have some fun

Hold up written cue cards on camera to signal people to applaud or let them know what's coming up next. Use music or audio clues to signify changes in your agenda. Be creative!

Working virtually with customers

Running effective virtual meetings

Be prepared. Prepare all instructions, overall ways of working for the session and meeting debriefs to be sharper and quicker when working virtually.

Communicate as early as possible. Share the agenda—in advance if possible—and include it in the meeting invite if the technology allows.

Think about your surroundings. What's the backdrop when your camera is on?

Dedicate someone to take notes. Graphic recorders (scribes) are able to work virtually. Have them share their notes and screen if appropriate.

Get to the point. Deliver value for the customer within 30 to 60 seconds of your introductory statements.

Meeting size matters. Establish standards around how long to wait for latecomers, how to bring people up to speed and how to manage large groups in a virtual meeting.

Call people by name. Do this more often than you would in person as it invites them to listen.

Consider the MVS rule. Mix facts and stories. Determine the minimum viable slide (MVS) deck needed. Select the least amount of data you need to inform and engage. Don't add a single slide more.



Working virtually with customers

Technology considerations

Don't assume the technology works. Practise with the technology and have backup plans ready.

Understand your customer's technology. Find out if the customer needs you to use their technology. Does their technology require plugins? Will they work on your computers? Test it out in advance.

Use the technology to its fullest to grab the asset for later use. Screen grabs and stored assets are great ways to create follow-up opportunities and conversations.

Forget the smoke and mirrors. If your content isn't compelling, no amount of virtual technology or stunts will win the day.



Be well, work well

Healthy habits working from home

Our behaviours and habits fuel the four dimensions of energy. Maintaining them helps us become and sustain our best selves, both personally and professionally.

Physical

The physical dimension is your fundamental source of energy. Your energy expenditure should be balanced with intermittent renewal, so you perform at your best in a sustainable way.

Stand up for short meetings. Keep your body energized. Don't skip meals, stay hydrated and remember to move by scheduling stretching, walks and regular exercise. Snacking on healthy foods like fruits and nuts will help keep resilience up.

Mental

The mental dimension is your ability to drive focus and direct your attention at will. Your attention is like any other muscle: the more you train it, the stronger it gets.

Schedule breaks, walks, time for movement and fresh air. Make time to listen to music, meditate or relax. Stay digitally connected, but remember to step away from the screen. If you're feeling overwhelmed, ask for help. Find out if your organization has an employee assistance program.

Emotional

The emotional dimension is your internal climate from which you act and react. Your emotions impact your performance. The higher your reservoir of positive emotions, the more resilient you are.

Show appreciation, and spend time outside and in natural light. A gratitude journal can keep you focused on the positive. Check in periodically with yourself. Take the time to listen and celebrate the learnings and wins along the way, no matter how big or small. Stay curious!

Spiritual

The spiritual dimension taps into your individual core values and purpose. You serve yourself and others best when you act in alignment with your values.

Block time in your calendar for spiritual well-being. Make a fresh start each day: decide what not to do, what to focus on and find more of the positives in the near and long term. Reward yourself for your growth opportunities in your week. If you do good, you'll feel good.



Helpful resources

The Habit Bank

Visit our [Habit Bank](#) for more ideas to support your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being.

New world. New skills

Increase your digital acumen by exploring our **Digital Fitness App**. It also includes COVID-19-related resources, such as health and business insights, educational materials and tips for managing self care. Visit: <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/products/digital-fitness>

Download it from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) and use the invite code "LRNALL" to access it for free until July 31, 2020.

Reimagining your remote working experience

We're here to help guide your organization through transformation in the workplace: from envisioning your workplace of tomorrow to enhancing your employee experience as you adopt new technology and embrace cultural shifts in navigating a new world of virtual work.



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