BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Effective Communication and Collaboration

Communication

Clear, transparent, and regular communication is essential for any team to be successful, but it is critical to the success of a remote/hybrid team. For ensuring successful communication, consider the following:

- **Select the Methods and Tools for Communication.** Identify when you will use email, chat, and virtual meeting tools like Zoom, Teams) and how you will share updates (Teams, Trello, Slack).

- **Plan and Schedule Time**. In the absence of regular informal opportunities, set aside time for 1:1 meetings, group meetings, check-in/drop-in times, etc.

- **Set Expectations.** It will be vital to establish the frequency and expectation of communications. For example, it will be essential to clarify the following:

  - response time for emails
  - ways team members will keep each other abreast of their availability and progress
  - cadence for staying engaged and connected
  - process for sharing concerns and feedback
  - ways to communicate when in-person to ensure remote employees are pulled into critical conversations as needed

Doing this work on the front end will help ensure fairness and equity between team members and reduce conflict due to poor communication or misunderstandings.

Manager Responsibilities	Employee Responsibilities
- Be intentional in ensuring everyone has a voice. - Model active listening. - Be available. - Give explanations, not orders. - Communicate often and with transparency. - Do regular, informal, and formal pulse checks to assess climate. - Invite feedback. - Avoid gossip.	- Listen to understand. - Ask questions for clarity. - Communicate regularly and clearly. Share information and progress. - Be open to feedback. - Constructively provide feedback. - Share your perspectives. - Follow up and follow through. - Follow determined processes for sharing concerns. - Avoid gossip.

Collaboration

How hybrid teams collaborate will need to shift. The chart below shows the variety of collaboration modes that occur naturally in a hybrid team. It will be important to intentionally facilitate collaboration for each of these, not just for teams that are co-located.

"Our insistence on making synchronous work the default is inherited from a prior era where asynchronous tools were not built for speed and efficiency. We must reset how we leverage all the work modes available to us." – Alexia Cambon, research director at **Gartner**

Tips for rethinking how you collaborate:

- Use synchronous times with care to do the work that requires face-to-face interaction.
- Build in time for asynchronous, focused work.
- Be flexible.
- Learn about and adopt digital collaboration tools.