

Five tips for remote team harmony

Global teams and virtual meetings are par for the 21st-century corporate course, but smooth operations still require thoughtfulness and an old-fashioned human touch.

1 Make time for face time

You're in Little Rock; she's in Sydney. No sweat. Pull up a screen and catch up. Who cares if the Aussie is pouring Shiraz while you're sipping coffee? Connect for the sake of connecting. And no need to get personal. Regular "dates" build rapport.

2 Check in before meetings

First order of business in any meeting: Ask how your colleague is doing. "Let them know you care about them as a person," says Gayle Van Gils, author of *Happier at Work: The Power of Love to Transform the Workplace*. It's a simple morale booster.

3 Soothe their jitters

Working apart from the team can get weird. Really weird. She didn't Slack me back. OMG I'm getting fired!! Combat feelings of disconnection with extra efforts to ensure clarity. Record meetings and take notes on off-the-cuff changes.

4 Take one (crack of dawn meeting) for the team

Not every time! When the crappy end of the time-zone stick is rotated, it feels fair. Early birds and night owls might even find an easy rhythm. Bottom line: "You have to be flexible," says Van Gils.

5 Build empathy with stories

Slack CEO Stewart Butterfield has gone on the record about empathy as a company value. "Tell me your story," he asks candidates. Open-ended questions ("What's been going on?") can create a bridge between you and remote staffers.