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Ensuring Success for Virtual Teams

Top five tips to set virtual teams on the right path from day one.

Greetings!

Miscommunications happen all the time. It's not uncommon nowadays to hear about missed connections at work on a regular basis.

An appointment request pops up in your inbox and the subject line states that the call is on Monday, the body of the email requests time for Thursday, and the reminder is set to pop up at 3:00 a.m. on Tuesday. You're at a loss but everybody gets it wrong sometimes.

It got me thinking that perhaps it's time for a few helpful tips on how to participate effectively on a virtual team:

Communicate clearly and frequently: By phone, email, fax, or smoke signal, the principle is to always be clear, avoid unnecessary detail, and be direct. Have [difficult conversations](#) when needed and don't be afraid to ask questions to ensure clarity.

Respect time/time zones: Communicating across time zones is a commonality in today's workplace. No matter how much time you may have or what time it is where you are, it may not be the same for the person on the other end. Be sure to ask if it's a good time for the other person to talk and [be mindful](#) of time differences when scheduling conversations.

Meet regularly: Whether it's by video/phone conference, or face-to-face, ensuring regular check-ins with the team is essential to maintaining good relationships among members. It should be quick, useful, and only cancelled under extenuating circumstances.

Structure your meetings: Having a clear agenda and structure helps meetings move along smoothly and produces results. All team members need time to have their say while keeping things moving efficiently. Producing a concrete action plan at the end will ensure accountability and allow appropriate follow up.

Define the team: By creating a team charter everyone can speak the [same language](#) from the outset and conflict is less likely to occur. Everyone will know to take personal responsibility and will have grounds to approach team members who aren't pulling their weight.

We're still looking for our readers' best work lessons. [Reply](#) and let us know your top workplace words of wisdom and whether they're from your dog Sparky or your Favorite Aunt Millie. We'll feature the best

lessons in the July edition of Active Voice!

Sincerely,



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