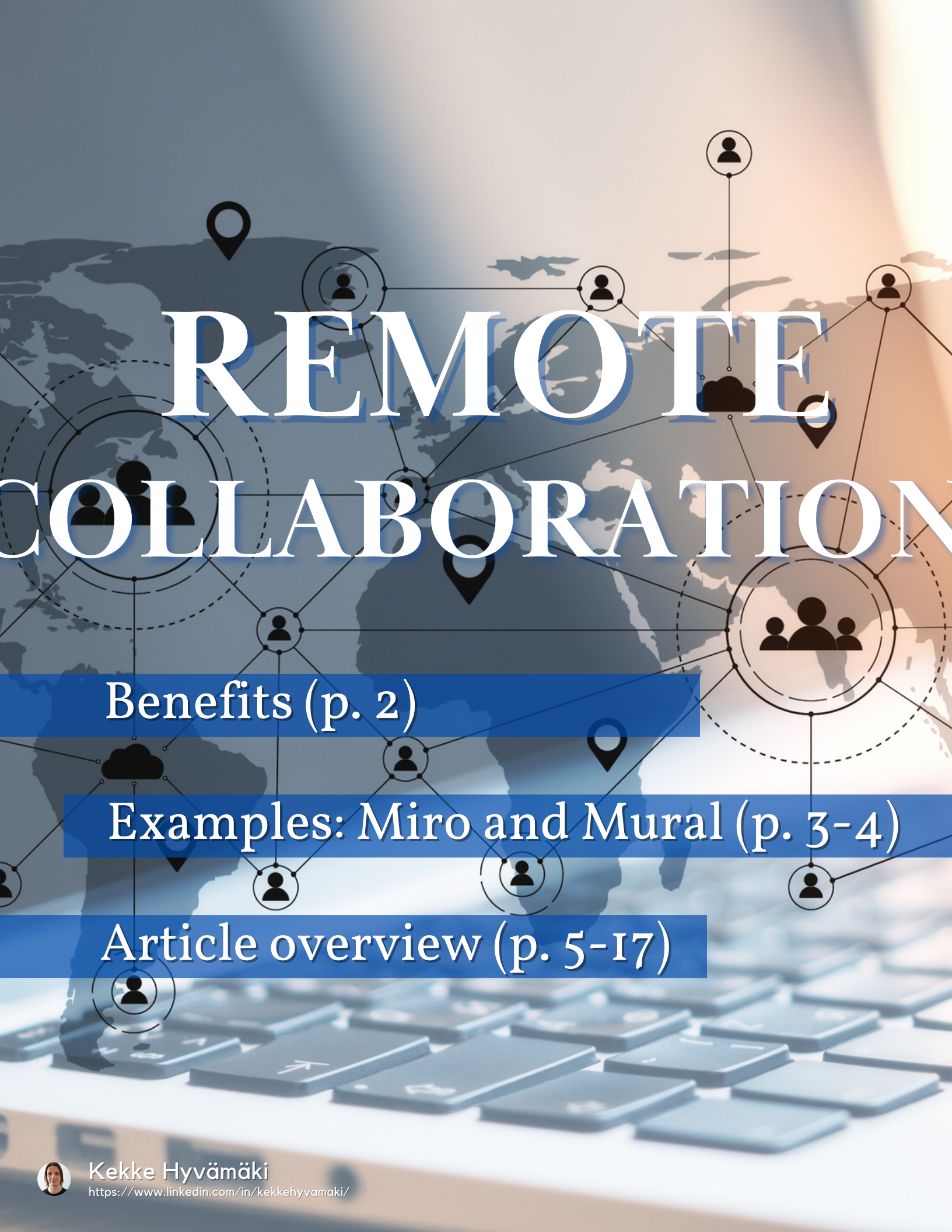


REMOTE COLLABORATION

Benefits (p. 2)

Examples: Miro and Mural (p. 3-4)

Article overview (p. 5-17)

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THERE ARE CLEAR BENEFITS OF REMOTE TEAM COLLABORATION, AND THE MOST POWERFUL ONES HAVE TO DO WITH GIVING PEOPLE TIME AND SPACE TO WORK IN THE WAY THAT'S BEST FOR THEM.

- Everyone's voice and every idea can be heard > team cohesion and alignment, productivity,
- Everything is documented, recorded
- Async collaboration is convenient and efficient for pre- and after-meetings
- Async tools streamline the collaboration (such as Slack, Miro, Mural, whiteboards, Notion, docs, etc.)
- Effective sync collaboration with different tools such as docs, presentations, whiteboards, and project management tools (Teams/Zoom, Miro, Slack, Mural, whiteboards, etc.)
- Ease of access to documents
- Reporting is easier than ever
- Track changes with ease
- Deep work and focus get better when employees can focus on the most important things – working with the case and each other
- Learning from each other because everything is visible and documented
- More efficient workflows
- Tasks can be actioned immediately
- Remove time pressure
- Brainstorm when people are the sharpest
- Develop ideas with each other
- Edit and present the work
- Reflect on others' thoughts and take inspiration
- Using different communication styles to build better results



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USING MIRO IN REMOTE COLLABORATION



“What can remote teams do to host successful virtual meetings? This is your guide to productive, collaborative conversations – when you can’t work physically side-by-side.“

https://miro.com/guides/virtual-meetings-online/

Read more about using Miro in remote collaboration

New Miro: use cases to speed up team collaboration -
https://miro.com/blog/features/use-cases-to-speed-up-collaboration-in-your-team/

How to help your team get started with Miro -
https://miro.com/blog/starting-remote-team-collaboration/

Miro for workshops & meetings -
https://help.miro.com/hc/en-us/articles/360012753200-Miro-for-workshops-meetings

How to run a collaborative virtual meeting -
https://miro.com/guides/virtual-meetings-online/

Online meeting best practices: 20 secrets to virtual meetings -
https://miro.com/blog/meeting-best-practices/

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#03 MURAL

USING MURAL IN REMOTE COLLABORATION

“Remote collaboration will only become second nature when intention and purpose become second nature. Designing better remote collaboration experiences is the only way to bring out the best version of your distributed team.”

https://www.mural.co/blog/getting-started-with-remote-collaboration

Read more about using Mural in remote collaboration

How to help new collaborators get started with MURAL -
https://support.mural.co/en/articles/2113742-how-to-help-new-collaborators-get-started-with-mural

5 everyday uses of Mural -
https://www.mural.co/blog/5-everyday-uses-of-mural

Making collaboration work: a guide for remote and hybrid teams -
https://www.mural.co/blog/getting-started-with-remote-collaboration

How to master meetings using visual collaboration -
https://www.mural.co/blog/think-out-loud-in-pictures

Mural learning - multiple examples and tutorials about the topic:
https://learning.mural.co/lessons/create-connections-in-remote-teams


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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES (TEXTS CONTAIN DIRECT QUOTATIONS FROM SOURCES)



From "How to Make Remote Collaboration Work for You" -article:
https://uk.pcmag.com/productivity/140753/how-to-make-remote-collaboration-work-for-you

Some of the **online collaboration tools** mentioned have **audio or video meeting tools** built into them, so once people have had a chance to come up with some ideas and make their notes, **everyone can look at the shared document and start a meeting to finish up any work** that would be done best synchronously on a call.

Why have we for so long expected people to come up with their best ideas in meetings? It doesn't make sense. The way to work better together is to take what remote organizations have learned about collaborating and use it everywhere.

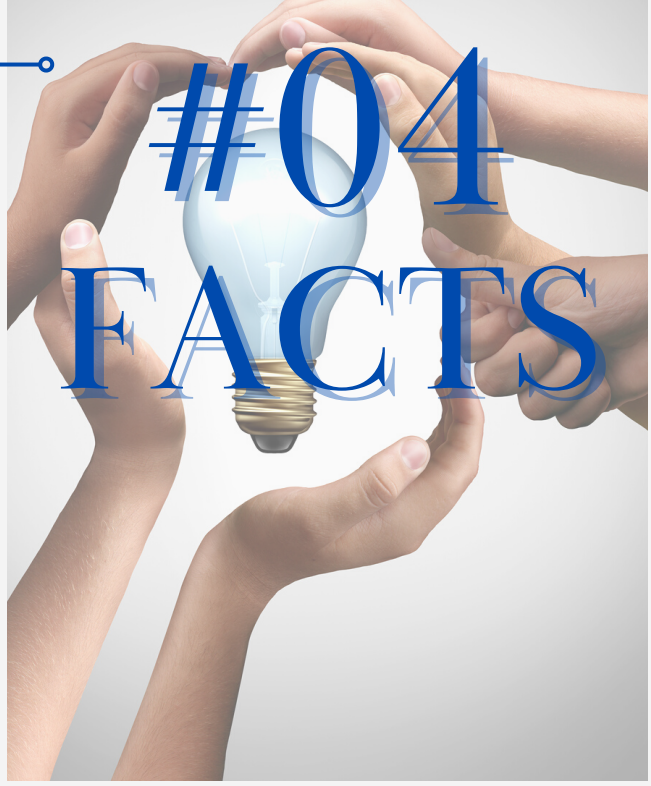
That's not to say that meetings are pointless. It's more that **too many organizations rely on the meeting to do all the work** when often the meeting is only valuable for a small portion of the collaboration work that needs to be done.

Asynchronous, remote collaboration benefits shy and introverted people who don't like speaking up in meetings but have valuable insights to share. It's the **same for anyone who doesn't have a strong verbal command of the language**, such as non-native speakers or anyone with a speaking disability. Equally, **people with disabilities** of all kinds are at an advantage when they **can take their time to read or listen** to what other people have contributed and decide how best to put together their own contributions.

For a variety of reasons, men tend to speak more than women in mixed-gender settings, and women are more likely to be interrupted by people of any gender than men. **Removing the real-time group dynamic of a meeting from a collaboration session by making it asynchronous eliminates a lot of the "who's talking more" problem.**

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES (TEXTS CONTAIN DIRECT QUOTATIONS FROM SOURCES)



From "Remote Work Can Be Better for Innovation Than In-Person Meetings" article:
https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/remote-work-can-be-better-for-innovation-than-in-person-meetings/

Fear of losing their innovative edge pushes many leaders to reject hybrid and virtual work arrangements. Yet **extensive research shows that hybrid and remote teams can gain an innovation advantage and outcompete in-person teams by adopting best practices for innovation, such as virtual brainstorming**. What explains this discrepancy between leadership beliefs and scientific evidence?

After interviewing 61 leaders on a strategic return back to the office, I discovered the root of the problem: **The vast majority of leaders tried to pursue innovation during the lockdowns by adapting their office-based approach of synchronous brainstorming to videoconference meetings**. They found that videoconferences aren't well suited for traditional brainstorming and thus feel they need to go back to the office.

Leaders often **fail to adopt innovative best practices because of dangerous judgment errors called cognitive biases**. For instance, the rejection of better practices in favor of preestablished ways is called **functional fixedness**, and it very much applies to innovation.

Another cognitive bias related to functional fixedness is called the **not-invented-here syndrome**. It refers to **leaders feeling antipathy toward practices from outside their organization, such as novel innovation methods.**

These benefits come with counterproductive effects, however. An example is **production blocking**. That's when someone has an innovative idea during a group discussion, but other people are talking about a different topic, and the innovative idea gets lost in the mix.

If you never had that happen personally, you're likely extroverted and optimistic. **Introverts** have a lot of difficulty with production blocking. It's harder for them to formulate ideas in a crowded and noisy environment of team brainstorming. They **generally think better in a quiet environment, by themselves or with one other person at most**. And they have difficulty interrupting a stream of conversation, making it more likely for their idea to remain unstated or ignored.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES -

CONTINUED



From "Remote Work Can Be Better for Innovation Than In-Person Meetings" article:
https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/remote-work-can-be-better-for-innovation-than-in-person-meetings/

Many people are also powerfully impacted by a **second major problem for traditional brainstorming**: **evaluation apprehension**. Many lower-status, junior group members feel worried about sharing their ideas openly because of previous discrimination or anxiety about what their peers will think. Moreover, despite instructions to share off-the-wall ideas, many people don't want to be perceived as weird or out of line.

As a result of these problems, **numerous studies show that traditional brainstorming is substantially worse for producing innovative ideas than alternative best practices**. It can help build team alignment and collaboration and help group members feel good about their participation. But leaders shouldn't fool themselves that using this technique will result in maximizing innovation. To leverage innovation to gain or keep a competitive edge, traditional brainstorming is not the way to go.

Trying to do traditional brainstorming via videoconference is a poor substitute for the energizing presence of colleagues in a conference room, thus weakening the benefits of social facilitation. It's also subject to the same problems of evaluation apprehension as traditional brainstorming. Instead of the losing proposition of videoconference brainstorming, **leaders need to adopt the best practice of asynchronous virtual brainstorming**.

Here's how it's done:

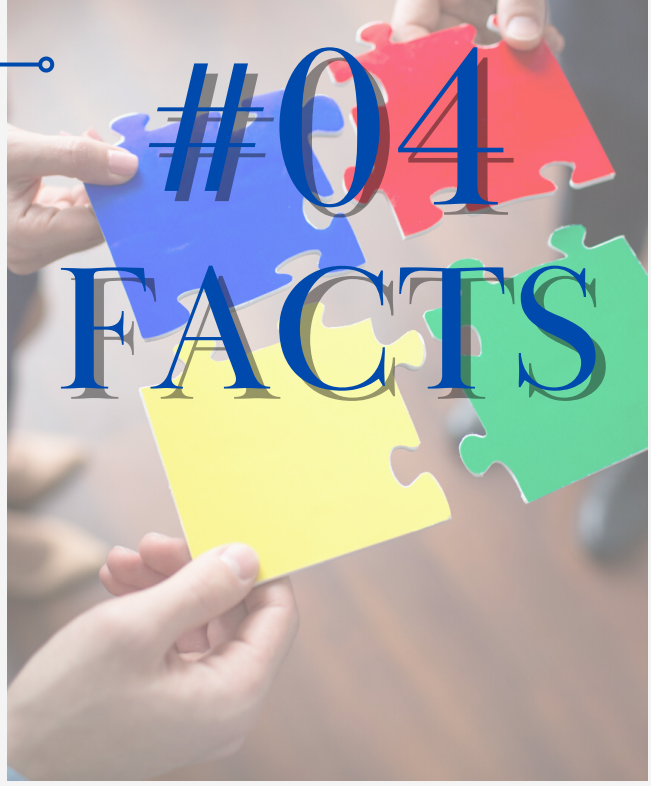
Step 1: Initial idea generation. Team members generate ideas and add them to a shared online collaboration tool. To tap social facilitation, the group can input ideas during a digital co-working meeting. Focus on quality over quantity and consider contradictions between ideas. Science has found that this focus on opposing goals facilitates innovation.

The submissions should be anonymized to avoid evaluation apprehension. But the team leader should be able to later track each person's submissions for accountability.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES -

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Step 2: Idea cleanup. The facilitator categorizes ideas and sends them out to all team members.
Step 3: Idea evaluation. All team members anonymously comment on each idea.
Step 4: Revised idea generation. Team members can do another idea-sharing session, reevaluating old ideas or generating new ones.
Step 5: Cleanup of revised ideas. Clean up and categorize the revised ideas using step two.
Step 6: Evaluation of revised ideas. Comment on revised ideas.
Step 7: Meet to discuss ideas. Finalize which ideas should be moved toward implementation. This kind of practical planning meeting is easy to have virtually for full-time virtual workers.

It also works well to have steps one through six done virtually by hybrid teams and to do step seven in-office. But it's critical to avoid doing steps one to six in the office to avoid production blocking and evaluation apprehension.

Behavioral economics and psychology research has established the superiority of digital brainstorming over in-person brainstorming. For example, a study comparing virtual and in-person groups found in-person groups felt better about their collaboration. The feeling proved deceptive, however: **virtual brainstorming resulted in more ideas generated**.

In fact, research finds that the larger the in-person group, the fewer novel ideas each person has—but the opposite is the case for electronic brainstorming. That means with more people, you get a larger number of novel ideas per person. **This effect is likely because of the removal of evaluation apprehension and production blocking**, which tend to increase with the addition of more people.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES -

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From "Remote Work Can Be Better for Innovation Than In-Person Meetings" article:
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Virtual brainstorming creates the maximum number of novel ideas, gaining an innovation advantage. It also **provides the optimal experience for the largest number of group members**, **balancing the preferences** of introverts and extroverts, optimists and pessimists, lower-status and higher-status members.

Team leaders who wisely prioritize focusing on integrating introverts, pessimists and lower-status team members into the team—which is more difficult than with extroverts, pessimists and higher-status members—find virtual brainstorming especially beneficial.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES -

CONTINUED

#04 FACTS



From "The team meeting experience – ten subtle ways that 'virtual' is better than being there in person" article:
https://unify.com/en/blog/the-team-meeting-experience-ten-subtle-ways-that-virtual-is-better-than-being-there-in-person

Here are ten less-obvious ways that 'virtual' meetings may produce better experiences and results than conventional in-person meetings:

1) In a **virtual setting**, the **focus is centered on the business content** at hand – what is being discussed and what is being shown – not on the physical presence, appearance and distracting behaviors of those sitting around us, or the environment surrounding or passing by the meeting room.

2) Your results may vary, but some **team members report feeling more apt to contribute to the virtual conversation** (via voice, text, content sharing), compared to a physical meeting where being the focus of 'all eyes' can be intimidating and yield silence among those who are less than extroverted.

3) Virtual meetings **require less planning for location and travel logistics**, can be set up **more quickly** and **can take place anywhere** with no travel costs (not to mention being a greener option).

4) People can be added and dropped as needed easily; participants can arrive late or leave early with minimal, if any, disruption to the group. In contrast, it is relatively difficult (if not impossible) to physically bring in ad-hoc participants on the fly.

5) With modern collaboration tools, you have **more ready access to collective knowledge, specialized skills and creativity** regardless of where your people are located in the world – even if they are mobile or traveling. Meanwhile, co-located team members may have a more common experience, culture, knowledge or background, which may seriously limit the diversity of input.

6) When your **team members don't have to endure daily commuting** to and from the office, their mood may be lighter, and stress levels may be lower. This may lead to happier people coming together to accomplish common goals, rather than thinking about traffic jams and crowded transit systems.


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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES -

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From "The team meeting experience – ten subtle ways that 'virtual' is better than being there in person" article:
https://unify.com/en/blog/the-team-meeting-experience-ten-subtle-ways-that-virtual-is-better-than-being-there-in-person

7) Traditionally, 'face-to-face' meetings are often limited to predefined content that is immediately at hand, whereas in a **virtual setting anyone can share any relevant content instantly**. This fluidity of dynamically sharing digital content is hard to replicate in a face-to-face team setting.

8) The **inevitable virtual side conversations via the text chat backchannel are far less disruptive** than the physical passing of notes or distracting whispered conversations in a meeting room. How many times in face-to-face meetings have we heard someone call out "People, let's have one meeting in the room, please!". With virtual meetings that problem is largely alleviated.

9) Given the cold and flu season is upon us – **no one has ever caught a bug from attending a virtual meeting**. Your workforce may remain healthier and more productive, with fewer sick days.

10) And… being virtual means you don't have to find and book that scarce meeting room and make sure there are enough chairs!


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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES -

CONTINUED



From "How to Collaborate Productively When Your Team is Remote" article:
https://weworkremotely.com/how-to-collaborate-productively-when-your-team-is-remote

If you want to better manage a high-performing remote team, consider trying a few of these remote collaboration best practices:

1. Establish a Centralized Hub with Virtual Project Management and Remote Collaboration Tools

Remote collaboration tools are a no-brainer for virtual teams. This centralized hub will **provide team members with everything they need to collaborate, accomplish their work, and stay in touch, no matter where they're clocking in for the day.**

The best remote collaboration tools and project management software includes for example:

Asana
Basecamp
Google Workspace
Trello
Teamwork
Miro
Mural
Etc.

These tools allow your team to share files, ask questions, leave comments, and track progress in this integrated workflow **as if everyone's working in the same room together**.

As a remote manager, your job is to update each project with:
-Team member assignments
-What's expected of team members
-Deadlines for deliverables
-Resources, such as documents, spreadsheets, client information, etc.

Monitoring projects and comments will help you stay in the loop without micromanaging.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES -

CONTINUED



From "How to Collaborate Productively When Your Team is Remote" article:
https://weworkremotely.com/how-to-collaborate-productively-when-your-team-is-remote

2. Create Asynchronous Communication Guidelines

Synchronous communication is the norm in the traditional business world, which forces employees to respond to messages as soon as they're received. However, a**synchronous communication allows employees to reply in a timely manner** when it's most convenient or productive for them to do so.

As we discussed in our guide on using asynchronous communication, **this model gives your team space to work.** They can **focus** during uninterrupted chunks of time **without breaking their productivity or flow** to reply to a distracting message. And you can avoid micromanaging.

Remote managers will need to let their teams know which channels to use for specific types of communication, including:
-The company's default modes of communication (email, video call, Slack, etc.)
-Which channel/tool should be used and when
-Whether teammates or supervisors need to be copied on messages
-How often you/they will be expected to check-in on a communication channel
-How to communicate/respond if something is urgent

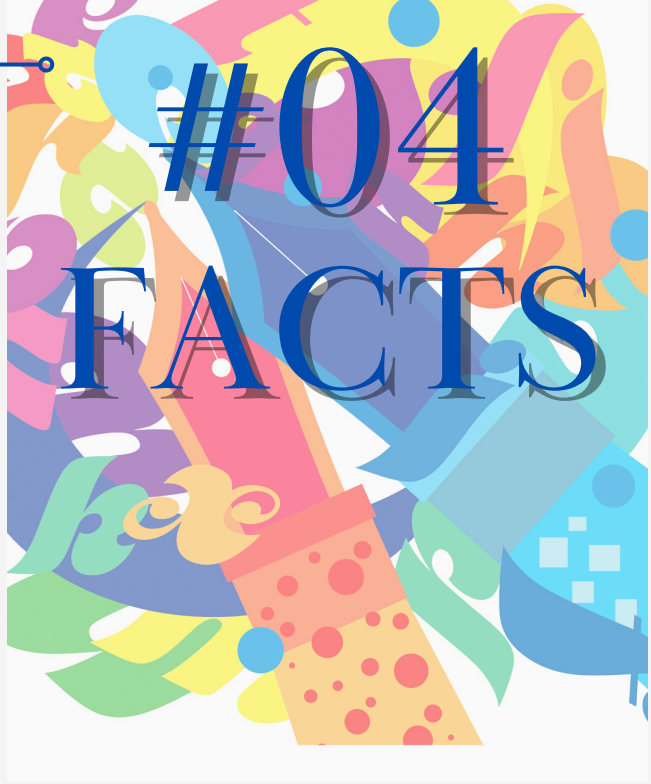
Now, virtual team collaboration can't wait days for a reply. So **you'll want to establish an expected response time for all types of communication tools you use.** You may set a five-hour response window for messages in your project management software or an EOD deadline for Slack and email messages, for example.

This **ensures your team can respond with thoughtful answers** without delaying the project or slowing down others.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES -

CONTINUED



From "How to Collaborate Productively When Your Team is Remote" article:
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3. Find an Overlapping Communication Window

Even though asynchronous communication should be your norm, **lots of collaboration magic happens when the whole team pow-wows together**.

Bad news: It's almost impossible to get everyone together in the same place at the same time, especially when your remote teams expand globally. Even if your team is working remotely due to COVID-19, you may all live in the same time zone, but that doesn't mean you're all keeping the same work hours.

So it's crucial to figure out when you can snag these precious moments.

4. Try to Minimize Video Meetings

Though virtual meetings over Zoom or Skype have their time and place, you shouldn't make them the norm. Why? Because **they're a giant productivity killer**. And Zoom fatigue is real.

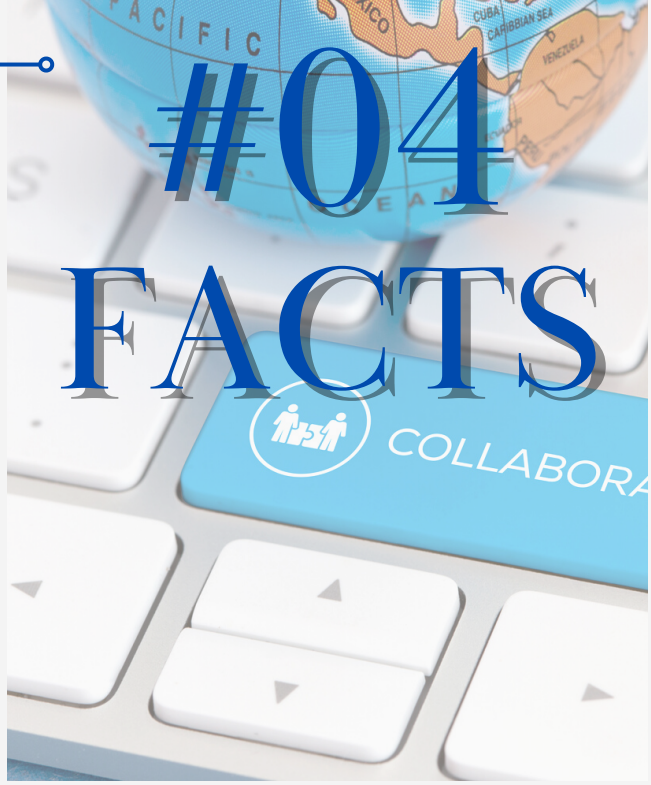
You can convey almost everything your team needs to know using project management tools and messaging apps (i.e., utilize asynchronous communication).

On the other hand, **video chats provide a connection between teams** so everyone can get to know the humans behind the screens. Visual cues like body language and facial expressions reduce the potential for miscommunication so you can have effective, focused discussions and collaboration.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES -

CONTINUED



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In our guide on the **best practices for leading effective virtual team meetings**, we discussed why you should:

-**Reserve video calls for only when they're absolutely necessary**. You may want to use video calls for project kick-offs to get everyone on the same page right from the start. You may also use them for post-mortems to give kudos or discuss what went wrong/should have gone better.

-**Send out an agenda beforehand**. This will help guide your meeting so it stays on track and productive. It also tells everyone what to expect so they can write questions or research talking points ahead of time.

When used sparingly, **remote communication tools like Zoom and Skype can be an effective outlet for everyone to share ideas, think as a collective, and make key decisions as a team.**

5. Encourage Active Brainstorming

In a traditional office setting, brainstorming may occur when everyone meets around a giant conference table with a whiteboard and a stack of donuts. **Remote teams can also brainstorm like this via virtual conference software (see tip #4).**

However, you may want to **take your brainstorming sessions up a notch by adding a bit of movement**. Skip the video call and send everyone a pair of wireless earbuds. Encourage them to take the call while they're outside on a walk, lifting light weights, climbing stairs, stretching, etc.

Now, this isn't the time for HIIT exercises or boot camp. No one should be out of breath or distracted. But science shows:

Sitting is the new smoking . Your **remote team needs to get up and move** when they're glued to their computers for several hours each day. You may even want to set a daily step goal for your team to reach as another way of encouraging team-building and a culture of self-care simultaneously.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES -

CONTINUED



From "How to Collaborate Productively When Your Team is Remote" article:
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Exercise boosts happiness, lowers stress, and lifts moods, which is especially helpful for remote workers struggling with loneliness and feelings of isolation.

Light activity increases creativity, mental performance, and both divergent and convergent thinking. These are the most essential components of a high-performing, ultra-collaborative remote team.

These active sessions will disrupt the "normal" way of doing things to reinvigorate your team with fresh ideas.

6. Rotate Team Members for Different Projects

One of the best aspects of having a virtual team is connecting employees from different backgrounds and experiences. A diverse team brings multiple perspectives to the table and helps generate true innovation.

So rather than keeping the same team members assigned to similar projects, try to **mix up teams to see what occurs as a result**. Consider who might work best together or whose skills and experiences would make for an interesting, exciting collaboration.

Send each team an icebreaker before their project begins. Teammates can introduce themselves and get more comfortable or familiar with each other's work styles, strengths, weaknesses, etc.

As more teams get paired up down the line, everyone will have a chance to learn more about each other and strengthen overall team cohesiveness.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIFFERENT ARTICLES -

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7. Create Time for Team Bonding

Your team members may not be near each other, but **their closeness can affect how well they collaborate together**. So remote managers should **use online team building activities** to help virtual employees feel more connected and less isolated. **This may then boost participation and engagement.**

At a minimum, you should **create non-work-related Slack channels** to mimic the discussions employees used to have around the ol' office watercooler.
But you may also want to try scheduling and hosting:

-Monthly virtual lunches
-Virtual home/office tours
-Furbaby Friday (all pets welcome!)
-Happy Hours or Coffee Hours
-[Trending TV show or movie] discussions
-Virtual movie nights
-Celebrations for birthdays and promotions
-Online multiplayer gaming/live competitions

Try **asking your team for their ideas and suggestions** too. These will all help your team better connect, keep communication strong, and build team bonding. As your **team gets closer** and knows each other better, collaborating will seem easier and more natural.

8. Always Track and Celebrate Project Milestones

Once you **set objectives** for your team, it's essential to **use your project management software to track all the milestones** they achieve. This reduces the need to micromanage and recognizes team members for the work they accomplished together.

This can be **as simple as praising and tagging a team member in your general Slack channel**. But if you want to take your kudos to the next level, take a cue from GitHub. They created a separate channel in Slack called the #toasts-forum.

This type of **recognition from the top goes a long way to further motivation, collaboration, and momentum**. And **praise from peers helps build strong bonds between teammates**. It's a real win/win.

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