

# How to work effectively with distributed creative teams

Working effectively with a distributed team can be challenging. The way we work has changed significantly with many teams previously office based, now working remotely and some businesses have closed their offices completely, opting instead for a fully remote way of working.

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While there are many benefits to remote working, the lack of face-to-face interaction, in-person creative sessions, and impromptu chats over coffee are missed by many. If you are working with a distributed team and you're struggling to stay creative and connected, this article is for you.

## What is a distributed team?

If you don't know what a distributed team is, it's a team of people who are not physically working together. In other words, they're not all based in the same office space. You might have people split across multiple sites or working from home.

When your team is distributed, you don't just face the challenge of staying connected, you can also face the challenge of teams with different working

schedules or people spread across different countries and time zones.

Thankfully, technology is here to help and there are many innovative ways to connect with your creative teams even when you can't meet face-to-face. In this article, we will be sharing how to work effectively with distributed creative teams.

## Prioritise a great onboarding process

Onboarding new employees into distributed teams can be a difficult process, especially as new hires won't meet their colleagues in-person. So, it's important the onboarding process is as inclusive and engaging as possible.

Include new team members in group meetings, activities, and phone calls from day one – even if it's just to listen and observe. This is a great way to help new employees get to know the company, how things work, and familiarise themselves with their colleagues.

You might also choose to assign an *onboarding buddy* to support new starters. This person will serve as the new hire's support system throughout their onboarding experience. Organising an onboarding buddy for each new hire is a great way to help new hire's acclimatise to their roles and settle in faster.

## Invest in the right technology

Technology can make all the difference when it comes to working effectively with distributed creative teams. Remote work requires the right technology in order for people to do their jobs effectively and communicate with their team members.

According to the UK's leading Apple Mac IT support solutions provider *Counterpoint*, "Technology should be empowering your teams to work and learn more effectively [...] If teams can't effectively access software, shared files or are using slow hardware, productivity drops and you can be left with unhappy teams who can't effectively do their jobs."

Whether you choose to invest in a cloud-based platform or a centralised working dashboard, investing in the right technology will make all the difference to your distributed creative teams.

# Set healthy boundaries

Setting healthy boundaries for your distributed teams is one of the best things you can do to support job satisfaction and creativity. Remote workers often struggle to maintain a healthy work/life balance, with many overworking to impress their bosses.

In fact, according to *Inspire You*, “Many professionals are staying late, arriving early, skipping lunch to ensure that they can complete projects and tasks with the immense pressure they are under, whilst forgetting to take the time they also need for themselves.” Therefore, setting boundaries is vital.

If your employees work across different time zones, create a clear schedule that outlines everyone’s working hours. This way, everyone knows when they’re working and when their colleagues are available to interact and collaborate. This is a great way to remove employee guilt about finishing work at the end of the day and helps encourage a better work/life balance.

# Use team building exercises

It can be difficult to connect distributed creative teams, particularly if they haven’t met in-person before and won’t have a chance to do so. This is why it’s so important to make use of team building exercises. Team building exercises are a great way to establish connections amongst your team, cultivate a sense of belonging, and boost company morale.

Team building exercises look a little different for distributed teams as they tend to be carried out online. However, don’t see this as a limitation. There are many ways you can build up your remote team! We recommend scheduling online happy hours, book clubs, chat apps such as Slack, virtual quizzes, and awards ceremonies.

All these options allow your remote teams to interact with one another outside of a work context, so they can unwind at the end of a busy day and get to know their colleagues better.

# Celebrate employee successes

Remote working can be challenging for many people as it can be an isolated way of working. As such, many people do not receive the recognition they deserve. This can lead to low morale, poor job satisfaction, and suffering retention rates.

If you want to work effectively with your distributed teams, it's vital you celebrate employee successes. We all want to feel appreciated and valued by others. That's why celebrating employees' successes, both big and small, within your company is often the best way to boost morale and team productivity.

As companies around the world have been adjusting to new ways of working, one thing remains clear; distributed teams are here to stay. Learning how to work effectively with distributed teams will support the continued success of your company and ensure the continued creativity of your employees.

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