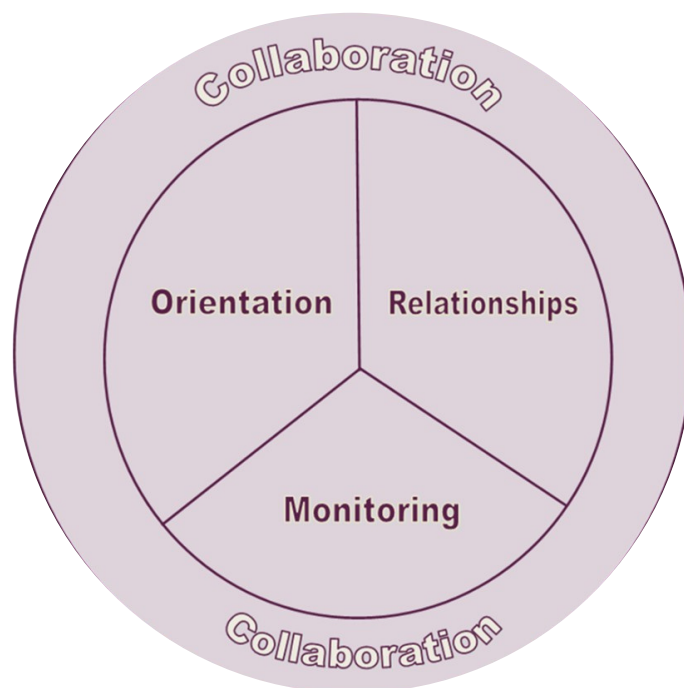


A GUIDE TO: ACHIEVING OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE

FOUR CRITICAL FACTORS

Required For Optimum Hybrid Team Performance



READ OUR TIPS ON THE PRACTICES AND PROTOCOLS THAT
ENSURE ALL HYBRID TEAM MEMBERS ARE 'IN SYNCH'
REGARDLESS OF THEIR LOCATION AND VISIBILITY

ORIENTATION

Set Vision

A manager is influential in ensuring that all team members have the right orientation.

From the start, this includes setting a clear vision for the team and gaining their commitment to the culture that is required to make the hybrid team perform effectively.

Define Priorities

Hybrid team managers will need to set clear priorities in a routine way so that everyone on the team knows what is important, and this needs to be done on a regular schedule.

Some hybrid teams start or end the week by establishing the most important things to be done. This communication should also allow time to share the deliverables that would be good to achieve, in addition to the critically important things, if the schedule allows.

Focusing on the most important things is a way of building flexibility into the system, especially if any individual requires additional support or to accommodate periods of leave.

Prepare For Fails

Manager's should also be proactive in establishing a process for when things go wrong. Setting the expectation that the 'new' way of working will need to evolve and that there will be times when it might not run as smoothly as in a workplace team is useful.

Often defined as addressing the 'pinch' points to avoid the 'crunch', managers should agree clear steps that they each need to take if they feel something is going wrong. Without this agreement, hybrid teams can derail rapidly when communication is suppressed.

Establish Norms and Protocols

Hybrid teams require clear protocols about how and when communication is going to happen for different purposes.

The team 'norms' for communicating should therefore be agreed upon. This will of course be dictated by the nature of the work and the need for decision making and collaboration, but all teams should know who has access to what information and who needs to be in attendance at which meetings or be involved in decision making.

It is useful to have guidelines on whether everyone is included, if messages need to always be acknowledged, what channels of communication should be used and how employees will structure their working hours.

Embedding the use of **BLUF** for all team communications is also recommended for hybrid teams as it keeps messages clear and focused. Some teams have created acronyms for their digital communications like 'No Response Needed' NRN.

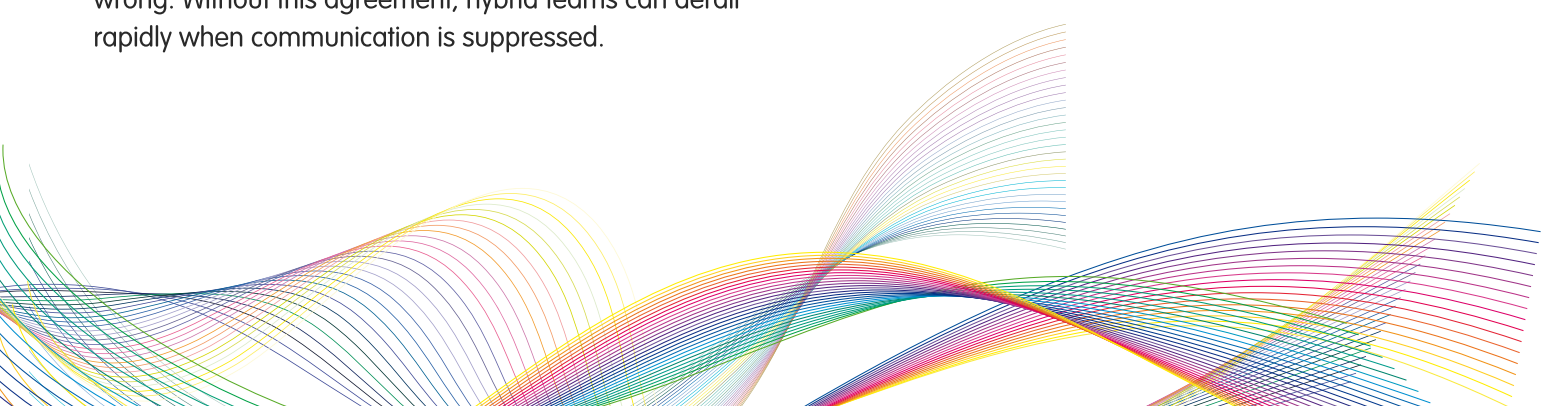


What is BLUF?

BLUF IS A MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS ACRONYM:

BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

LEAD ALL OF YOUR COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR MOST IMPORTANT DETAILS



RELATIONSHIPS

Reduce Affinity Distance

Individuals naturally create different types of relationships within a team, based on personality, interests and proximity.

A great challenge for hybrid teams is to overcome the physical distance between people, and reduce the 'affinity' distance in the team.

Affinity distance is how closely a team is linked by values, trust and interdependence. Closing the gap between people requires them all to be focused on the same goal, be committed to the team culture and feel a sense of equality and fairness.

Create Connections

It is critical to ensure people feel connected, and a manager can facilitate this by ensuring there are opportunities for the team to form strong relationships.

Hybrid teams can fall victim to the creation of an 'us versus them' mentality among colleagues located in different workspaces just as can be sometimes seen to occur between head offices and satellite offices.

Some hybrid managers stipulate that all team meetings take place online to not disadvantage those not physically in the space.

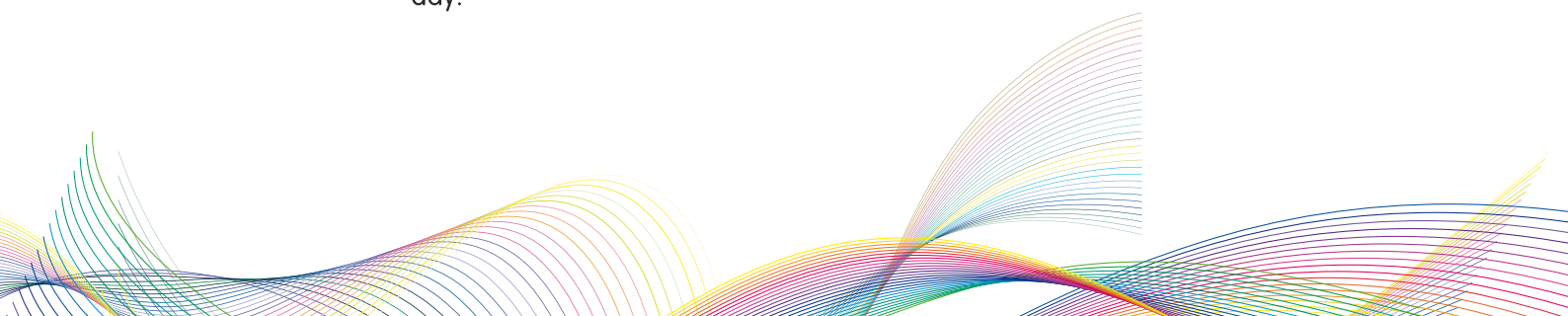


Encourage Time For No Agenda

Hybrid teams need to consciously find times when there is no agenda.

There will be value in allowing social connections to take place and individuals should be involved in deciding the best ways to achieve this for the whole team.

Some hybrid teams use an informal 'zoom room' at lunch time or by scheduling peer catch ups and events or initiatives outside of the working day.



MONITORING

Team Targets

The needs and circumstances of individuals within a hybrid team will vary greatly and will not always be as visible.

Managers will have to manage the differences while treating everyone fairly. Those working from home are likely to request flexibility around working hours, whilst individuals attending a physical workplace may require more structure.

Hybrid teams often require more compromise, and the team will need to be led by the prioritising of goals and hitting individual and team targets. Since the working day can vary greatly for hybrid team members it is important that inclusion is emphasised to them.

Focus on Inclusion

There will need to be protocols in place to ensure the team is working in synch, that they are performing consistently, and that their stress levels and wellbeing are at a positive level.

This is made more complex by the phenomenon of proximity bias. This is the creation of the incorrect assumption that the people in the physical workspace are more productive than those who are not.

Hybrid team managers will need to counter this thinking and build an open and inclusive culture that prevents those not in the workspace being excluded, even inadvertently.

Managers will need to consciously draw remote workers into to any spontaneous workspace conversations by pausing to invite them to join via call or video.

Allow Productive Time

It is also important to recognise that scheduling more work meetings as a way of making up for the reduced contact time between team members is unlikely to achieve improved relationships or productivity.

Virtual meetings should remain for absolutely necessary situations with internal messaging tools providing an alternative way to maintain dialogue within the team.

Be Accessible

Observation of a team enables a manager to provide support. In these current times of change and uncertainty there are many employees experiencing higher levels of negative stress.

It is essential that hybrid team managers consistently and habitually reach out to individuals and watch for signs of concern or burnout in the team.

Some managers achieve this with scheduled one on one video calls or conversations during the week to ask about individual circumstances and listen to any concerns or issues that arise. Many managers began this process at the start of the pandemic but with a long-term shift to hybrid team working these conversations are no less important.

Schedule One To Ones

All members of a hybrid team will need to feel the same level of security and support from management regardless of where they are based.

Whilst informal catch ups with individuals in the physical workspace are effortless, hybrid team managers need to work them into their day for those who are working remotely.

Some managers utilise digital tools for daily check-ins where team members post what they are working on for the day any challenges they foresee and these can give focus to one to one conversations.

Coach For Team Health & Wellbeing

In hybrid teams, where more flexible working hours are operated, the end of the working day is in danger of becoming less defined for those working from home. Some report working longer hours as a result, with some suggesting that their physical absence from the workspace creates in them a different performance pressure which can have negative consequences for their working hours.

Those people who work from home can also find it harder to switch off from work now that there is less distinction between going to work and being at home.

The hybrid team manager needs to not ignore any signs of negative stress in the team and be prepared to coach others in techniques to prioritise and focus both individually and collectively.

COLLABORATION

Set Goals and Objectives

Collaboration is perhaps the most difficult aspect to balance within a hybrid team. Online or digital collaboration tools are now commonplace, but the experience of collaborating when remote from others is different and can be less successful if it is not effectively led.

Managers should set the goals and objectives to ensure that the collaboration is purposeful and that teams report and update on the progress made.

Clarity Not Brevity

Communications need to be clear but not necessarily brief.

Efforts to be efficient in digital communication can result in time being spent to interpret messaging. Assuming others will understand brief cues or use of shorthand can in reality just lead to misinterpretation.

An effective team will be excellent at clarity of message regardless of the medium of communication they are using.

Promote Active Communication

In-person communication drives effective collaboration, therefore hybrid teams have to work harder to overcome this.

Remote communication naturally distorts the normal pace of dialogue within a team. The delay within most forms of virtual communication conflicts with the normal rules for interactions with others. When we don't receive an immediate response it can result in people making assumptions and feeling frustrated by the process.

It is vital that all team members actively communicate and everyone needs to be well adapted to the use of chosen digital tools and they will all need to use the selected communication channels.



CAN WE BE OF FURTHER HELP?

WE ARE ALWAYS HAPPY
TO FIND OUT MORE

Tell us what specific team and leadership challenges are you facing?



We know that many of you are in need of further support as you navigate hybrid working and team changes.

If you would benefit from a conversation with us about a specific challenge or to hear more about our latest development initiatives in this area:

'Leading Healthy Hybrid Teams'
and
'Improving Hybrid Team Skills'

Drop Indira a line: ++ 44 790 8225 014
or email: info@developmentco.com



developmentco.com