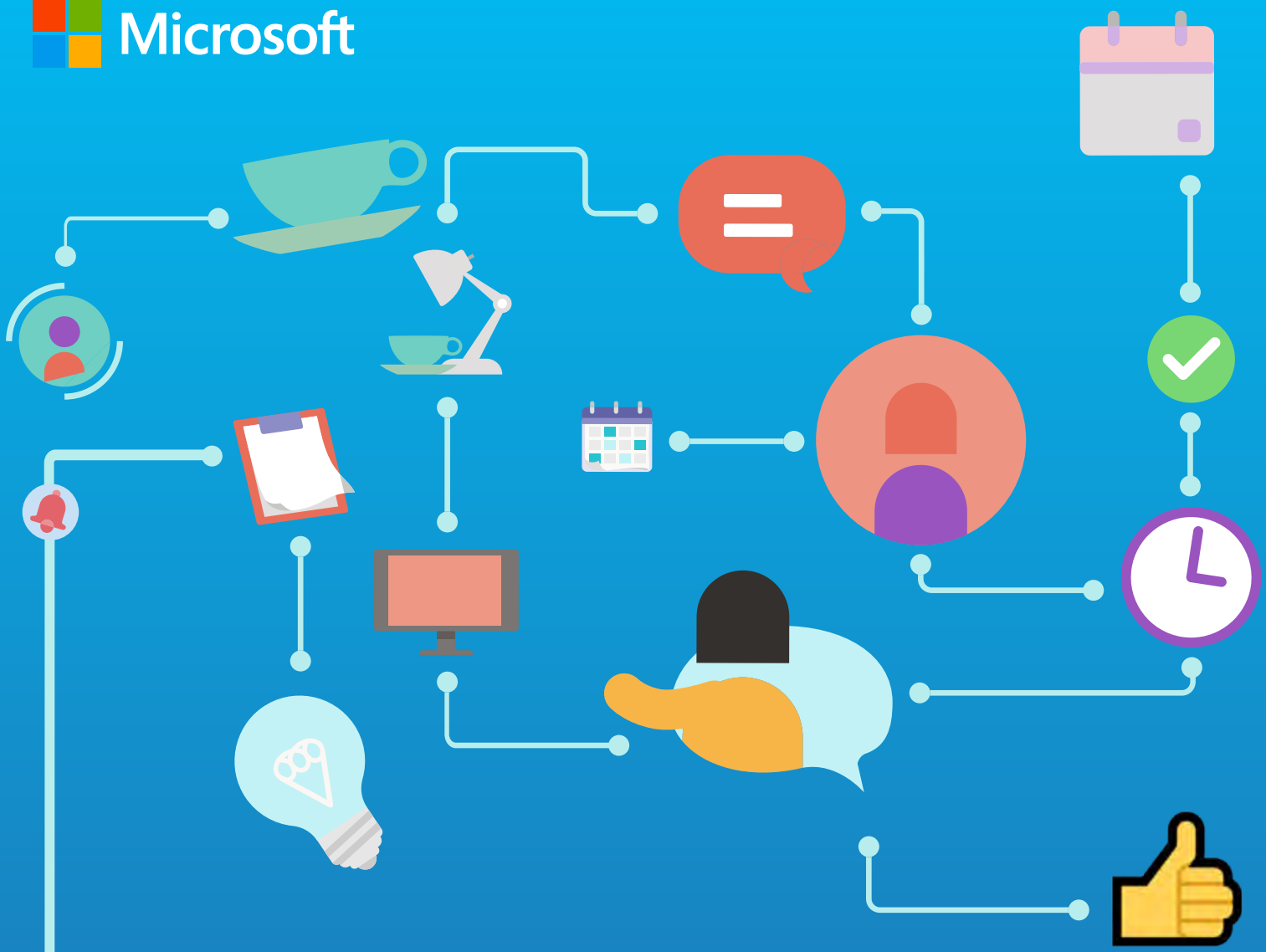
Microsoft



Hybrid work: A practical guide

A flexible hybrid organisational framework embraces people, places, and processes, both digitally and physically. This allows us not only to work better together, but also individually. Building a hybrid workplace means creating an inclusive culture, led by empathetic leaders that empower staff to connect, collaborate, and innovate securely from anywhere. It means thinking of new ways to engage customers across every point of your relationship.

This series of practical guides is designed to help you understand and implement hybrid working successfully in your organisation.

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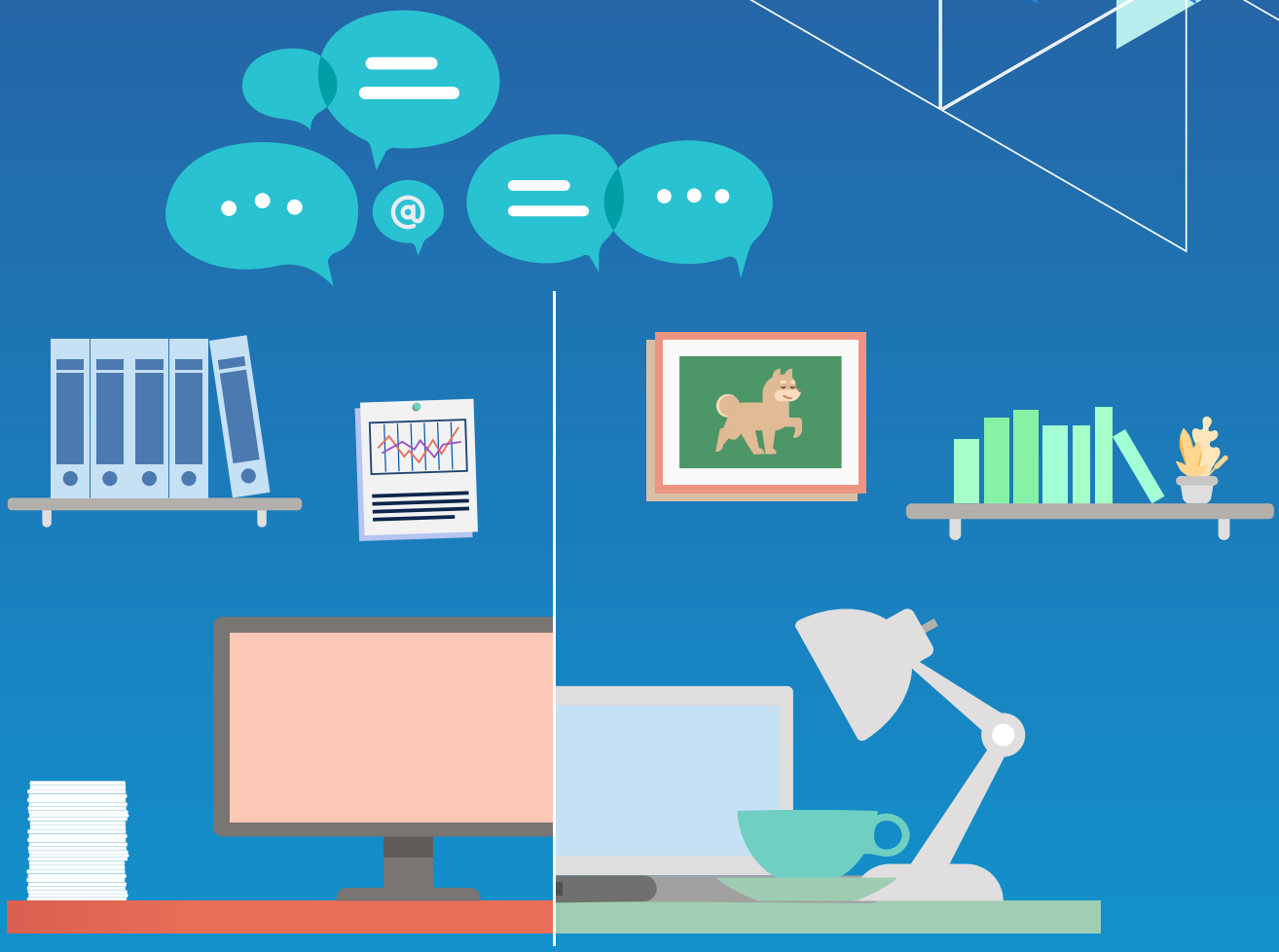
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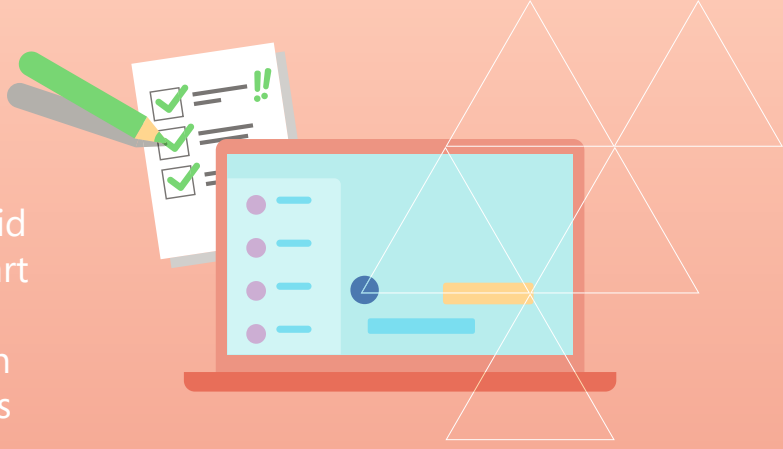
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RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL HYBRID MEETING

When hosting a hybrid meeting with a mix of in-office and remote attendees, how do you make sure it's inclusive, engaging, and effective for all?

BEFORE



Like most things in life, preparation for hybrid meetings is key. What you do before you start a hybrid meeting can determine whether it ends successfully or not. You'll find that, with time, the following tips and tech suggestions will become second nature.

Share the agenda with everyone so they can all start on the same page.

Test the tech beforehand to reduce the chance of in-meeting hiccups.

Encourage attendance and focus by using video.

Starting the meeting early helps in-person and remote attendees not only connect, but also settle in.

Top tip: Use the Accessibility Checker to make sure everyone can access your docs and presentation.

GOOD

BETTER

BEST

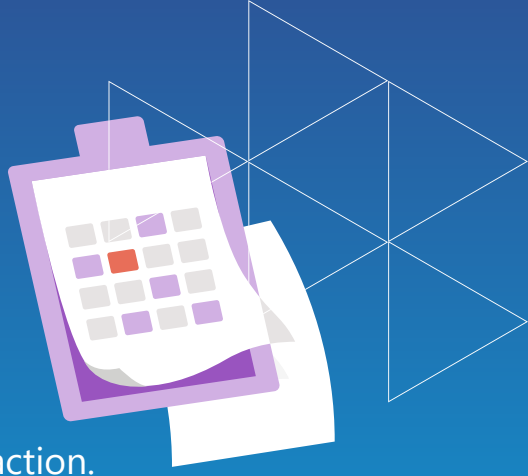
For hybrid meetings to be successful, the tech needs to work at both ends, so encourage attendees to set up effective remote spaces.

- Good internet connection
- Laptop
- Quiet, front-lit space
- External webcam
- External microphone
- Lighting
- Multiple screens

Make sure office meeting spaces are set up for success.

- Everyone connects with own device
- Use the Surface Hub or Teams Room

DURING



To be successful, you want your hybrid meeting to follow the agenda, allow everyone to have their say and make any notes accessible to all. So, here's some ways to keep your meeting on track, keep attendees engaged and allow them to interact. Using tools like polls, digital whiteboards and breakout rooms fosters engagement, connection, and interaction.

With Raise Hands, you can make sure both in-person and remote attendees can get involved.

Add 5-10 minute breaks in longer meetings to help refocus everyone.

Record the meeting and let everyone know it's being recorded.

Top tip: Remind people they can use live captions in Teams.

AFTER



While you may have planned and executed your hybrid meeting well, effective follow-up is essential to achieve meaningful action and a positive outcome. So, here's some tips and tech you can leverage to share recordings and meeting notes and, most importantly, implement what was agreed.

Use the 5-minute end of meeting alert to wrap up and discuss next steps.

The meeting chat or channel enables continued discussion.

Tagging people in meeting actions lets everyone knows their next steps.

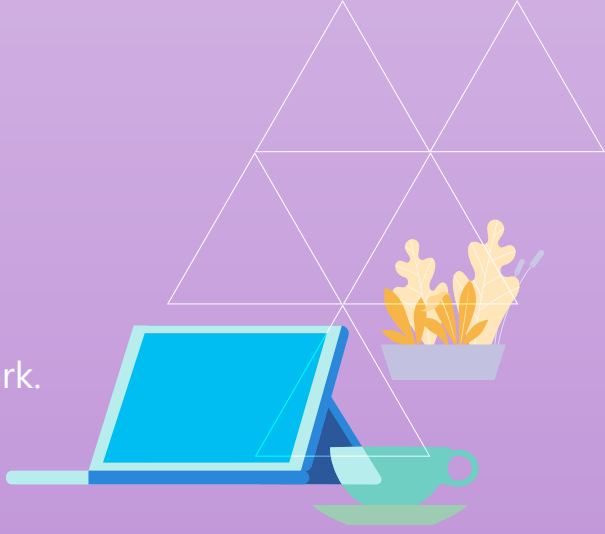


WORKING ASYNCHRONOUSLY IN A HYBRID WORKPLACE

How do you create the space and the right environment for people to work independently, but still engage with others and collaborate together?

MORE SPACE TO DO OUR BEST WORK

A little freedom from schedules and interruptions can allow us to do our best thinking and produce better work. It's why many businesses and teams are embracing asynchronous working, a system that allows you to focus independently, while still enabling you to collaborate freely with teammates and colleagues.



Creating a successful asynchronous hybrid working environment
Tips and tech for building a harmonious and effective asynchronous workplace:

- Allow for people's different rhythms and habits – what suits you may not suit everyone
- Communicating via different platforms – chat/email/voice message – allows colleagues to respond more easily
- Optimise how time and spaces work for everyone
  - Home: for independent working
  - Office: for teamwork and collaboration
- Don't expect to give or receive instant responses – let people reply when they can
- Use Planner to keep track of work and ensure schedules are maintained
- Use Viva Insights to manage focus time
- Have people share and give space to their hours/ways of working
- Minimise interruptions by using @mentions in docs/channels/chat/email to call someone's attention specifically

MANAGING A PROJECT WITH AN ASYNCHRONOUS HYBRID TEAM



Most of our learnings for creating an asynchronous work environment apply here, but here's some more tips and tech for managing asynchronous project teams.
The goal for managers is to support and balance focused, individual working as well as effective team collaboration.

Manage workload
- From the outset use Planner / To Do to organise tasks and manage due dates

Team comms
- Use @mentions in docs/channels/chat/email to request specific feedback
- Reduce isolation by encouraging but not demanding participation and feedback in docs

Morale
- Build camaraderie and boost asynchronous behaviour by celebrating achievements or having get-togethers via Teams



ONBOARDING IN A HYBRID WORKPLACE

How do you bring new hires into a workplace that now operates increasingly remotely, so that people feel supported and integrated when physical interaction is limited?

PRE-ONBOARDING



By letting you connect, collaborate, and innovate from anywhere, hybrid working raises productivity and improves employee work/life balance. But with the lack of a physical work-life transition, isolation from teammates, and fear of being invisible to stakeholders, it's obvious hybrid working poses challenges. If you want to create a feel-good factor with new hires, it's helpful to do some groundwork before they arrive.

So, here are some tips and tech you can use:

- Reach out to new connections via LinkedIn and encourage colleagues to do the same
- Develop a simple 'Hybrid Work Home Setup Plan' all new hires can follow
- Send out devices and anything else needed to help set up a new hire's home office
- Use Autopilot for the fastest, easy and secure set up
- Assign a mentor and buddy to guide them through their initial weeks on the job
- Use Sway or OneNote to send a first-week agenda and essential onboarding material

ONBOARDING

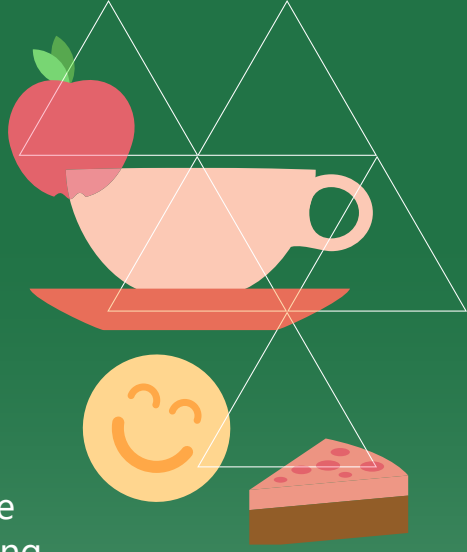
From getting to know their colleagues and learning the culture, to familiarising themselves with internal systems, new hires have a lot to take in. So try to avoid overwhelming them by delivering any training and introducing new tech in short, easy-to-consume chunks.



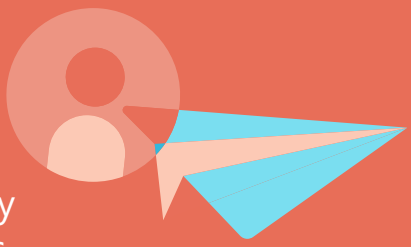
Fika

'Fika' is an important part of getting to know colleagues in a relaxed way. In Swedish, it means 'a coffee and cake break'. But there is a bit more to it. It is more a state of mind that supports taking time in your day to reconnect with people and share something together.

With the demands of the workplace, the Swedes feel that to take 'fika' is to take a pause. It helps people relax and refocus. Involving new hires in this ritual can help build positivity and productivity, making them feel part of a team.



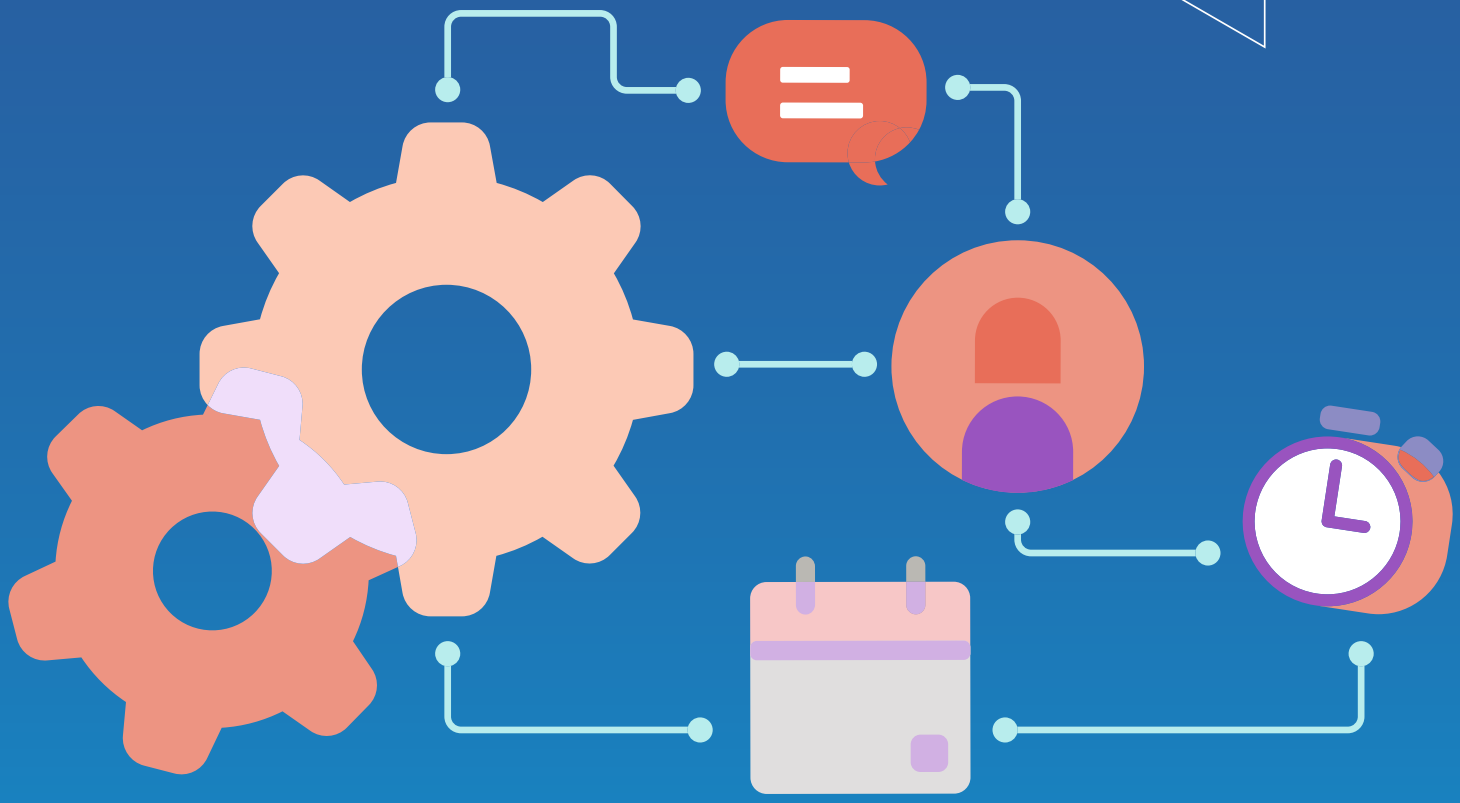
ONGOING ONBOARDING



Onboarding doesn't end until a new hire is up to speed and a fully integrated member of the team, so you should set out milestones and use any tech available to ensure they're achieving any goals and targets they should be reaching.

Create a 30-, 60- or 90-day learning plan using Viva Learning / Microsoft Learn, setting KPIs based on tech skills, professional competency, understanding of company systems and tools, customers and partners.

- Use one-to-ones on Teams to broaden cultural and organisational understanding
- Leverage Viva Insights to optimise ways of hybrid working



MANAGING A HYBRID WORKPLACE

What are the challenges and the effective solutions in bringing people together, even when they are working apart?

LEADING BY EXAMPLE, SO EVERYONE BENEFITS



Effective managers know how to set an example, communicating effectively, being thoughtful and proactive, and pre-empting issues before they happen. Staff also feel more comfortable with clarity - knowing what they're expected to do, why and when. So arrange team meetings at times that will work for everyone.

Some ideas:



Have a survey, or run a workshop.



Brainstorm, debate and discuss.



Have a 100-day trial and then tweak accordingly.

It's useful to remember that you are working as part of a team.



- Collaboration
- Results
- Remote-first mentality for Team meetings



- Delegation
- Counting hours

CARING IN A HYBRID WORLD

People like to be valued. They like to have their voice heard, because this helps mitigate concerns and show that you care. They want to get feedback and recognition if it is deserved. This can be achieved remotely by various means, so you get to see the different perspectives and outlooks your team have.

Top tips to build rapport:



- Hall of fame, star of the week, work heroes
- Celebrate milestones of work anniversaries or if people are leaving
- Create meaningful virtual send-offs or create Kudos Cards
- Regular recaps and highlighting what's going on

MAKE REMOTE WORK FEEL LESS REMOTE

We all know work isn't always fun and remote work can feel harder and alienating, so try and build a virtual work culture and in-person fun in the office. Involve new starters and make them excited to be joining the wider team.

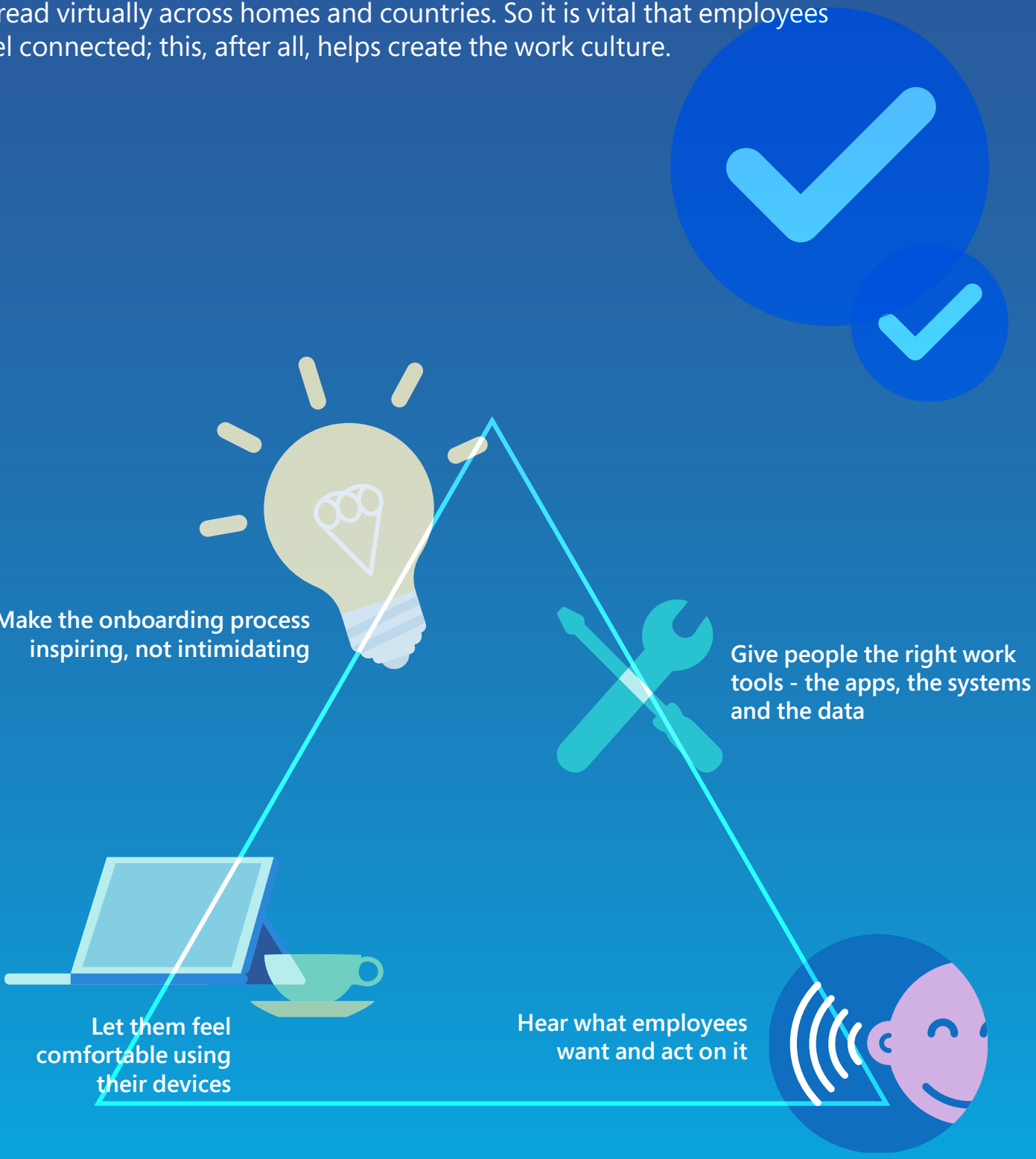


DIGITAL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE IN THE HYBRID WORKPLACE

When trying to improve the experience for home and office, how do you ensure all employees feel connected and valued?

CONNECTING PEOPLE REMOTELY TO IMPROVE WORK

The workplace used to just mean the building, but now it is spread virtually across homes and countries. So it is vital that employees feel connected; this, after all, helps create the work culture.



WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

Employees want to feel connected, understood, heard and supported. They want to receive feedback and be told if they are doing a good job. This will help to retain people and to attract other talent attracted to flexible working. Whether staff work in the physical office or off-site, it's important everyone shares the same experience.

- It is an empowering feeling for employees
- Giving people a choice of how, when and where they work is liberating

Overcoming challenges in 3 steps

Step 1: Onboarding process

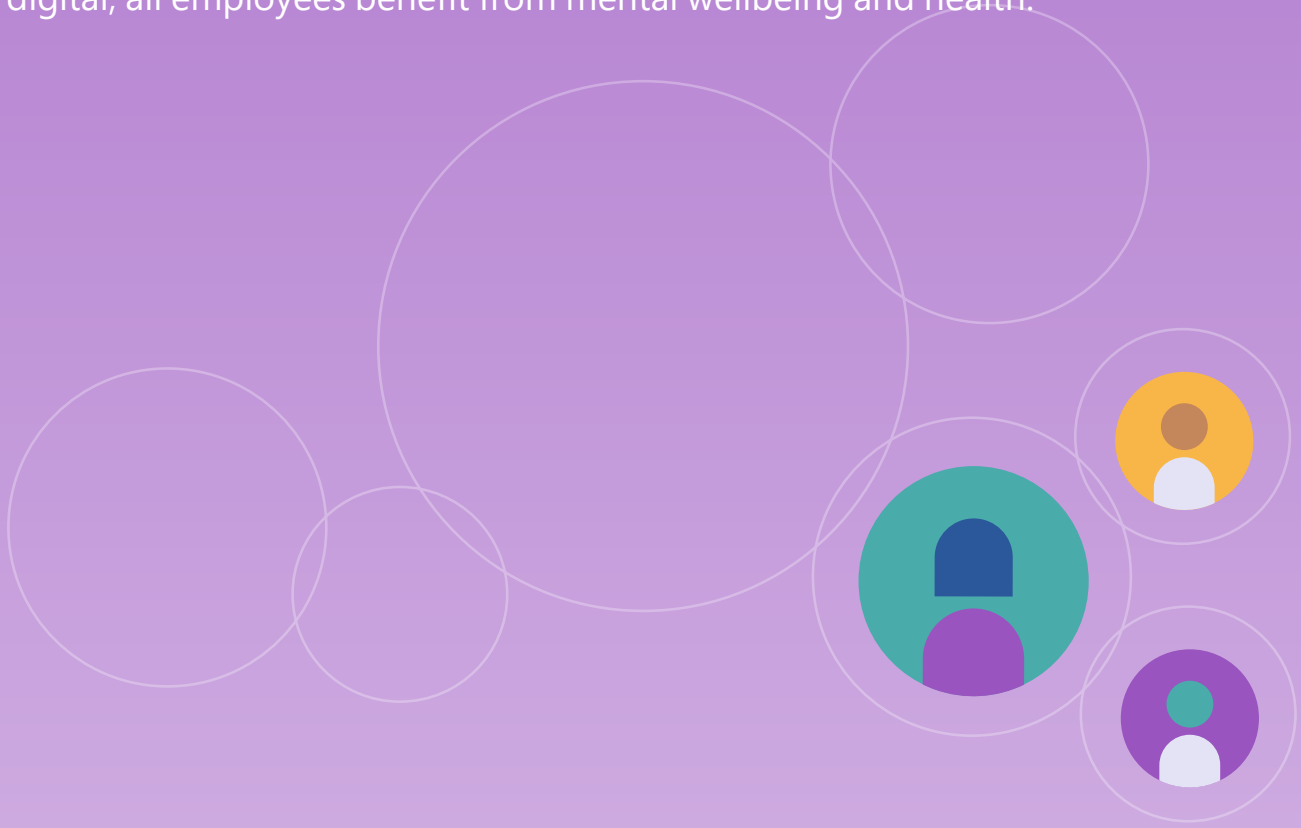
- Enable individuals to feel part of something bigger that supports them
- Think about delivering skills and training - how you engage to develop careers and retain staff

Step 2: Communication

Digital working has only exacerbated the silo mentality. Managers need to break that down, work together and hear what people say. The nature of digital favours issuing instructions and announcements, but it's important to nurture two-way communication that builds employee engagement.

Step 3: Productivity and health

Engender trust so people can give their best. If managers are empathetic in the way they use digital, all employees benefit from mental wellbeing and health.



HEAR WHAT COLLEGUES ARE SAYING



People like to feel their voice can be heard. They want to be part of the work dialogue. Remember, it is a conversation where everyone should feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and opinions on ways of working. Conducting interviews across staff can really help improve the digital experience for employees.



Think about what kind of questions you could ask:

- 'What challenges did you face moving to a fully remote workplace?'
- 'How did you respond to them?'
- 'What are you planning to do for hybrid?'





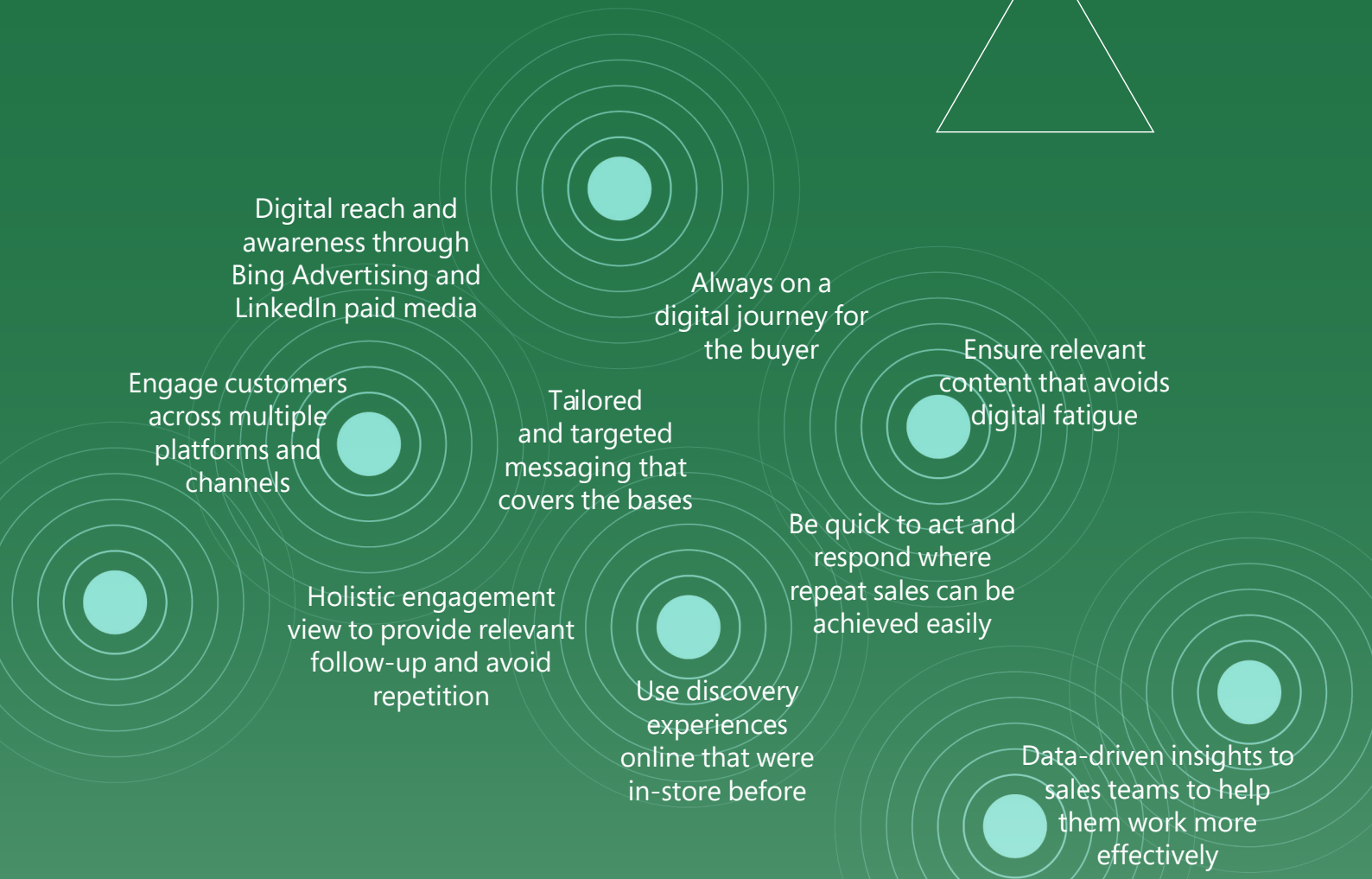


HOW TO DIGITALLY ENGAGE CUSTOMERS

Finding ways to keep your customers interested poses challenges. How can we avoid the risks of digital fatigue and lack of engagement?

CONNECTED AT EVERY STAGE

It's critical to involve customers at every stage of the sales cycle and afterwards. Issues can be mitigated through specific messaging and a targeted approach.



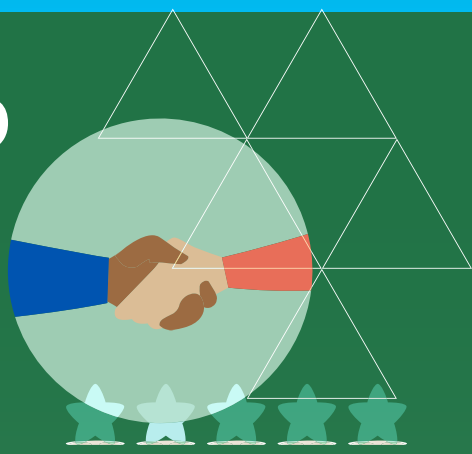
OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT

Ensure that sales teams are primed for success by giving them the right tools and approaches:



- Opportunity management
- Content activity view and outreach
- Build virtual relationships, like LinkedIn for example
- Look at how you host customer calls and events in the digital landscape
- Utilise advocates and customer references - target the Most Valuable Professionals (MVPs)
- AI/Machine Learning-based risk assessment and next-step recommendations to support seller learning and enablement
- Use customer footprint and behaviour to find chances to up-sell or cross-sell

POST-SALES SUPPORT AND ONGOING RELATIONSHIP



After the sale, there still needs to be an ongoing engagement with the customer to build brand loyalty and relationships in a virtual environment. Some ways of achieving this:

- Enable customer service teams
- Use tools for project management to help build the relationship
- Use CPE to monitor the customer journey and ensure the right people are targeted
- Ongoing relevant content to create fans
- Sales outreach based on 'next best workload' recommendations
- Ease on entry into new digital discovery journeys and restart the whole sales cycle
- Use customer footprint and behaviour to find chances to up-sell or cross-sell



HOW TO LEAD IN THE EVOLUTION OF HYBRID

As a leader, how do you empower others in your organisation to act on processes, manage change, retain staff and motivate new starters and established employees?

GETTING REAL

Employers and management are ready for people to be back in the office, but employees aren't. We need to manage this disconnect.



People are re-evaluating their relationship with work

Unprecedented shift where norms and leaders will be put to the test

The drive towards flexibility

No short-term fix

No one really knows what's coming next

THIS IS JUST THE START

It is important to realise that we are at the start of a revolution in working. One size doesn't fit all. Leading your team has to be a process of discovery to enact and develop ways of working and managing.

- Set goals
- Manage expectations
- Embrace a 'digital first' mentality
- Safeguard people's wellbeing and mental health
- Experiment, learn and adapt
- Be agile
- Empathise with the workforce
- Set guidelines and decide how you will measure succes

CHANGE COMES FROM THE TOP

Lead by example. Make sure you evaluate, not dictate. Set clear goals and communicate with the team who will manage the process, from the MD and COO, to HR. There needs to be a proper reconsideration of people, place, and process so you can deliver meaningful change.

Above all, be positive. Leaders need to embrace the opportunity and work with their employees. They need to show respect and a willingness to learn together to grow together. A new way to work requires a new type of leadership.





PRACTICAL SECURITY TIPS FOR HYBRID WORKING

Working whenever and wherever carries security risks. What can you do to mitigate them and keep yourself secure at all times and in all places?

THE BASICS

Here are a few simple steps you can do that can make all the difference.



Know where your software came from? Malware is common in spoofed downloads. Be sure to check.

Use multi-factor authentication for everything – not just work access points but personal ones, too. Microsoft Authenticator works not just on Outlook.com, but Gmail also.

Change default passwords on any network equipment, e.g. routers.

Use a password manager when MFA isn't supported. Save passwords in Edge and access them on iOS and Android devices, or other PCs, wherever you're logged in.

Protect against ransomware by working natively in the cloud, i.e. don't save local copies on your PC. If the worst happens, you can then access previous versions.

Keep your devices up to date.

CONSIDER YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Risks are all around us. It's easy for a simple mistake to be a costly one. So be prepared with these useful bits of advice.





Smart devices can listen in. So if work is confidential, take them out of the room and disable the 'Always on' of your mobile assistant.

A compromised device can exploit other devices on your home network. What devices share it? Regularly change the internet router password. Keep a spare router channel just for trusted devices.



Check the network you connect to. Don't connect to unknown networks - data can still be sent over unencrypted.



Think before you throw away. Was the device securely wiped? Could any printed or handwritten paper contain anything you could be phished with?



Be careful what you plug your phone into. Is the charge point a data point on your phone? Should you risk it?



Never allow access via USB, unless in a known secure environment.

THINK ABOUT EVERY INTERACTION



People want what you've got and will go to great lengths to get it. Stay one step ahead with these handy tips:

- Ask yourself if something was suspicious. Report it to your security team. Better safe than sorry.
- If you wouldn't do it in the office, then don't get into bad habits elsewhere. For example, don't look for dubious software downloads or keygens (key generators), or browse to risky sites.
- Never leave devices unlocked. It only takes a second.

HYBRID WORK AND COMPLIANCE

Now more than ever, it's important to keep tabs on all your data - where it is, who can access it, who controls it. Ask questions, find answers, and protect yourself and everyone in the organisation.

Data basics

- What is it?
- Where is it stored?
- Who has access?
- PII Data Exposure Risk
- Classify your content
- Apply sensitivity labels
- Review retention policies
- Use Privacy Management to identify data transfers and data overexposure risks
- Run Microsoft 365 Insider Risk Manager to spot trends of internal adversaries

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT HYBRID WORKING

Get more resources and tips on how you can build a resilient hybrid culture in your organisation.

Build resilience with hybrid work

Hybrid Work: A Guide for Business Leaders



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