

# There's an "i" in Collaboration

## How to **office alone** and **work with a team**



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You're sitting alone but not working alone. That dual reality is clear today. What's also clear? You have work to do, coworkers to do it with and an unknown duration for this new office-in-isolation work style. Every employee today needs to make the most of collaboration skills to succeed in the workplace and thrive remotely.

## 7 steps to Collaborative Success

Define roles

1

The entire point of collaboration is to create with co-workers who have unique strengths. Set clear roles at a project's onset and continue to clarify those roles as you make progress. Assign a lead technologist too, especially in this remote-work environment. At a minimum, someone needs to know more than **"unplug it for 30 seconds and try again."**

Communicate  
clearly

2

Project communication needs to be specific, frequent and positive. A manager or project leader needs to elevate the transparency. Meetings must have clear goals with assigned responsibilities. Project calendars need to be visible and complete. And team members must be able to ask questions and get clarification. To accomplish any of this, people need to be responsive. Answer the phone, return emails, respond to text messages and use the collaborative tools available (Basecamp, Slack, others).

Recognize  
good  
work

3

Marathon race courses place cheering fans along the entire course (not just at the end) for a reason. When you acknowledge good work when it happens, you increase the potential for more good work. People are moved to maintain strong performance when co-workers and managers recognize those efforts.

Be ready

4

Most collaborative teams today are lean; that means team members need to remain flexible, adapting as a project evolves. It also means each team member must be accountable for the work they do and be ready to have the hard discussions, facing and giving constructive criticism to meet the larger goals.

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### Be organized 5

Collaborative environments are filled with responsibility—stacks of duties where people depend on one another's orderly progress. And that demands organization. That doesn't mean you have to work with the same methods as your teammates. It does mean you need to find your own organizational system and use it.

### Respect schedules 6

This is where your new remote office mimics your old team space. Sure, you now have the convenience of home – walk your dog and get a load of laundry done. But collaboration works only if you are available in the morning; if you know the schedules of your teammates and if you respect each other's time.

### Have FUN 7

You're going to work hard and you're going to demand extra efforts from people around you (digitally around you). It's important to keep it human through the process. Is it someone's birthday? Have a virtual birthday celebration or a video happy hour. Keep connected beyond just work and you'll enjoy collaboration even when isolated.

