

Remote and Hybrid Teams: Methods Adoption Workshop

Introduction

- Personal introductions/ice breaker if required.
- Purpose of the day: *agree how we want to work as a team*
 - Set the expectation that this is the start of a process. Not every topic will be covered today. We will have the chance to cover new topics, and to revisit existing ones, in later mini-workshops.
- Set the context
 - Make the day aspirational, not remedial. We are at the forefront of a working revolution, and this is our chance to show what good (great) looks like.
 - Show the challenge of the context and why all teams find hybrid working much harder: collaboration and management is harder when you can not see the people you work with.
 - Teams usually learn through an informal process of discovery, which is easy when you see each other all day. Remote working means we need to make the informal process of discovery explicit. We need some structure on the journey, otherwise it will be a random walk.

Team status and/or purpose

This section achieves two goals.

- Role model the working style of the day: positive, solution focused.
- Identify the key topics which the team wants to work on.

The approach is simple: ask WWW and EBI

- WWW: *What Worked Well* so far in how we managed remote/hybrid working? Capture your team succeeding, and learn from that.
- EBI: *Even Better If...* Instead of stating problems alone, EBI encourages the solution mindset. These are the topics your team will want to focus on.

An optional extra for this section:

You may also explicitly address: are we a team? This can be useful or dangerous in equal proportions. The way to resolve this is to ask each team member where they can not achieve their work without support of another team member: mutual dependency is the hallmark of any team. Dependency means vulnerability, which means you need high trust across the team. If you are very brave you can then explore how to build trust across the team:

- Common values (best developed through social interaction: dinner etc)
- Common goals: what are the goals we collectively want to achieve?
- Credibility: do as we say. This means paying attention to “saying”: always manage expectations well
- Risk: where are other teams/team members vulnerable/dependent on us and how can we mitigate that risk? Risk here is personal and emotional, not just logical.

Methods Adoption Workshop Modules

This is where you address the issues identified by the Team Purpose section. You should also have your own list of topics which you want addressed. Below is a prompt. Do not expect to cover every topic: focus on what matters most. You can come back to the same and/or new topics in later sessions. This is a journey of discovery, not a one off event.

Communications

- When will we be available for emails, meetings, calls: identify core working hours and time when team members can work without interruptions
- How will we keep each up to date (daily YTH meeting?)
- What technology platforms will we use
- Where will we work and when?
- Meeting protocols: 60 minutes or 50? How to ensure all contribute, can we have 50/50 in/out of office meetings? You can use WWW and EBI here as well.

Acid test some of the outcomes. Is it OK to email someone at 3am in an emergency, or should we call them if it really is an emergency?

Decision making

This section alone can be an entire workshop. Focus on a few key decisions to start with. This section is often best done in person with a flip chart where the team can collectively map out the desired RACI by decision. Where you are running the session remotely, focus down to the bare essentials of decision making for your team.

- What are the essential/regular decisions we have to make, and which do we want to focus on
- Who has decision making rights (RACI?) for each decision
- Acid test the outcome: how will we deal with disagreements, etc?

Professional Development

- How can we support new team members? (mentoring, training, networks, values etc)
- How can we manage performance remotely?
- How can we manage workloads remotely?
- How can we support work-life balance and avoid excessive stress?

Values in action

This section is vital, but can lead to waffle. A good way in is to do a WWW/EBI on values displayed while WFH: What Went Well in terms of values that enabled the team to perform remotely and what is Even Better If.... This will identify the essential values your team need to maintain going forwards. Process for this section:

- WWW and EBI on values in action currently regarding WFH/hybrid working
- Identify the top three values the team want to focus on in future: stay focused here
- Acid test the core values: how will each value play out in a critical incident?

Note that on remote/global teams some values and mindsets seem to stand out:

- Professional regard, which minimises unnecessary conflict

- Kindness, because people need more support when they are remote
- Growth: you need people who are willing to learn and adapt

Plumbing

No one cares about plumbing, until it goes wrong. Then there is a crisis. Pre-empt the crisis:

- What are the minimum acceptable conditions for home working (technology, broadband, computers, tech support, workspace, desk, chair, health and safety etc)?
- How do we support team members who do not have minimum acceptable conditions?