



## Best Practices for Communication

### 1. Establish Clear Communication Norms

- Define Channels and Tools: Specify which tools should be used for different types of communication (e.g., Slack for quick questions, email for formal communications).
- Set Response Expectations: Clarify expected response times for different channels to manage urgency and ensure timely communication.

### 2. Regular Check-Ins

- Weekly Team Meetings: Schedule regular video conferences that accommodate different time zones, ensuring everyone stays aligned and connected.
- One-on-One Meetings: Conduct regular one-on-ones with team members to provide personalized support and feedback.

### 3. Utilize Overlapping Work Hours

- Flexible Schedules: Create flexible working hours to maximize overlap between different time zones for synchronous collaboration.
- Rotating Meeting Times: Rotate meeting times to ensure all team members occasionally participate during their optimal working hours.

### 4. Foster a Culture of Documentation

- Meeting Notes: Share detailed meeting notes and action items in a central location accessible to all team members.
- Knowledge Base: Develop a shared knowledge base (e.g., Confluence, Notion) where important information, processes, and updates are documented.

## Effective Communication with External Providers

### 1. Clear and Consistent Communication

- Regular Updates: Provide external providers with regular updates on project status, changes, and expectations through emails or scheduled calls.
- Single Point of Contact: Designate a primary contact person to streamline communication and reduce confusion.

### 2. Formal Communication Channels

- Contracts and Agreements: Use formal documents to outline roles, responsibilities, deadlines, and deliverables. Ensure these are reviewed and agreed upon by all parties.
- Project Management Tools: Share access to project management tools like Asana or Trello with external providers to keep track of tasks and deadlines.

### 3. Feedback Mechanisms

- Regular Feedback Sessions: Schedule periodic feedback sessions to discuss progress, address issues, and ensure alignment.
- Surveys and Forms: Use surveys to gather structured feedback from external providers about the collaboration process.

## Examples and Research

### 1. Automattic (WordPress.com)

- Example: Automattic, the company behind WordPress.com, operates with a fully distributed team. They use Slack for daily communication, P2 (an internal blog system) for asynchronous updates, and Zoom for video conferencing.
- Outcome: This combination of tools allows them to maintain strong communication and collaboration despite being geographically dispersed.

## 2. GitLab

- Example: GitLab, a fully remote company, uses Slack for real-time communication, Zoom for video meetings, and GitLab itself for project management and documentation.
- Outcome: GitLab emphasizes transparency and documentation, ensuring all team members have access to necessary information at any time.

## 3. Research Findings

- Study on Virtual Teams: Research published in the Journal of Business Research highlights that clear communication protocols, effective use of technology, and regular social interactions are key to the success of virtual teams.
- Asynchronous Communication: A study by Buffer found that asynchronous communication allows remote teams to work more flexibly and reduces the pressure of being constantly online.

By implementing these strategies and leveraging the right tools, leaders can effectively maintain communication, connection, and collaboration across geographically dispersed teams and different time zones. This ensures that the organisational culture remains strong and that all team members feel included and empowered.