

# Starter worksheet - Chapter 15



1. How do managers in the article use communication to help their teams work well together? Give **two or three examples**.

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2. What are **three examples of technology** mentioned in the article that help people communicate or work together?

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3. Why do you think **trust** is important in communication between managers and staff who work remotely?

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4. What **two communication problems or challenges** are mentioned in the article, and how do the managers try to solve them?

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5. If you were part of a remote team, what **one idea from the article** would you try first to make teamwork easier or more enjoyable?

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6. If you were going to **quote or refer to this article** in your research project, how would you reference it correctly?

Choose an interesting quote in the article and show how you would write it in your project.

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**1. How do managers in the article use communication to help their teams work well together? Give two or three examples.**

**Prompts:**

- What do the managers do to make sure everyone feels connected?
- How do they explain purpose or keep people motivated?
- What helps teams understand each other's roles?

**Sample Answers:**

- They make sure every team member understands the **shared purpose** of their work (Vicky O'Neill, Ibec).
- They use **team charters** to clarify goals, norms, and values.
- They hold **positive-news meetings** to celebrate success and recognise people regularly (Elysia Hegarty, Cpl).

**2. What are three examples of technology mentioned in the article that help people communicate or work together?**

**Prompts:**

- Which tools or apps are named?
- How do they make teamwork easier?
- What kinds of communication do they support?

**Sample Answers:**

- **Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack** are used for daily communication and meetings.
- **Trello or Monday.com** help manage projects and track progress.
- **Virtual whiteboards, cloud-sharing, and project-management software** streamline teamwork across locations.

**3. Why do you think trust is important in communication between managers and staff who work remotely?**

**Prompts:**

- What problems happen if there isn't trust?
- How does trust affect motivation and independence?
- What does the article say about micromanagement?

**Sample Answers:**

- Trust lets employees work independently without feeling watched.
  - Too much monitoring or tracking can cause stress, dissatisfaction, and lower wellbeing.
  - Empowering leadership styles that give **autonomy and support** build stronger trust and communication.
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**4. What two communication problems or challenges are mentioned in the article, and how do the managers try to solve them?**

**Prompts:**

- What makes communication harder for remote teams?
- How do they overcome distance or lack of clarity?
- What do they do to keep communication positive?

**Sample Answers:**

- **Challenge:** Lack of clarity about roles or expectations.  
**Solution:** Create shared purpose and clear team charters.
- **Challenge:** Reduced team connection or recognition.  
**Solution:** Regular meetings focused on positive news and recognition to keep morale high.
- **Challenge:** Over-monitoring staff with technology.  
**Solution:** Build trust and focus on communication instead of control.

**5. If you were part of a remote team, what one idea from the article would you try first to make teamwork easier or more enjoyable?**

**Prompts:**

- Which idea sounds realistic or helpful?
- How would it make work better for the team?
- Would it help communication, trust, or motivation?

**Sample Answers (student-choice examples):**

- Having short positive-news meetings to celebrate team wins.
- Setting clear team goals or using a shared online workspace.
- Using messaging tools like Slack for quick updates instead of long emails.

**6. If you were going to quote or refer to this article in your research project, how would you reference it correctly?**

**Prompts:**

- What information do you need to include in a reference?
- How would you show a short quote inside your writing?
- Can you think of one useful quote to include?

**Sample Answers:**

- **In-text example:**  
“Effective management of dispersed teams requires excellent communication and trust” (Barron, 2024).
- **Full reference example for bibliography:**  
Barron, D. (2024) *Managing a Remote Workforce Calls for Specific Skills and Interventions*. *The Irish Times*, 24 May 2024.
- **Possible quote:** “Purpose provides an emotional hook that can drive performance and connection.”

# Managing a remote workforce calls for specific skills and interventions

With dispersed teams clarity, good communication and a sense of joint purpose are essential requirements



Danielle Barron

Fri May 24 2024 - 05:00 • 4 MIN READ

Successfully managing a hybrid or fully remote team requires excellent communication, an abundance of trust and an enhanced focus on team building. That's according to experts who say that while many managers found themselves in this novel situation during the pandemic, it is time to take a considered approach to the unique challenges involved in managing dispersed teams of workers in order to ensure optimised performance and maximise the gains this set-up can offer.

One of the key challenges faced by managers in this new world of work is the effective management of dispersed teams, agrees Vicky O'Neill, HR strategy specialist with Ibec.

“Optimising team performance amongst dispersed teams requires a different set of skills and interventions,” she says. “It is no surprise that leadership development, learning and development, and performance management, were the top three HR priorities in our HR update survey last year.”

Managers now need to put in place conscious interventions and mechanisms in order to “curate connection, learning experiences and the culture they need to succeed”, says O'Neill. A simple one is ensuring every member of the team understands their shared purpose.

“Having a shared purpose and helping the team understand how their work contributes to this purpose is a key motivational lever,” says O’Neill “Purpose provides an emotional hook that can drive performance and connection.”

From a pragmatic point of view, clarity regarding roles, responsibilities and performance expectations is necessary for team success, O’Neill notes. “This can also be connected back to the team’s purpose, continuously reinforcing the ‘why’, alongside the ‘how’ and the ‘what’.”

Such clarity is essential when it comes to managing remote teams, says Elysia Hegarty, associate director of the Future of Work institute, a consultancy service offered by recruitment agency Cpl. She says organisations that prioritise team building often establish team charters, which clearly articulate the team’s purpose, norms and values. Within these charters, recognition plays a key role as a fundamental value and is an incredibly effective component in team building.

“Employees who receive regular recognition and praise increase their individual productivity and engagement and are more likely to stay with their organisation,” she says.

Hegarty cites the example of a recent client who introduced a 30-minute biweekly team meeting dedicated to positive news, such as celebrating successes and recognising team members collectively: “This simple practice took very little time out of the workday but had a profound impact on team morale and performance.”

O’Neill agrees that empowering team members to take ownership of their work fosters autonomy and accountability.

“Research emphasises the importance of empowering leadership styles in remote settings,” she says. “Providing autonomy while offering support and guidance, when needed, cultivates a culture of trust and enhances individual and collective performance.”

Ultimately, communication is critical, says O'Neill. "Establishing clear communication channels, whether through instant-messaging platforms, information portals, video conferencing or email fosters transparency and collaboration, which will build trust and psychological safety in teams and across the business." This positively correlates with improved performance, she notes.

And, according to O'Neill, the role of technology in facilitating virtual teamwork is sometimes a "missed opportunity". "Platforms such as project management software, cloud-based document sharing and virtual whiteboards streamline workflow and promote seamless collaboration across geographies," she adds.

Hegarty suggests using these platforms to establish "regular rituals" involving both synchronous and asynchronous communication.

"These could entail video calls such as time-boxed daily stand-ups or weekly meetings to ensure everyone is aligned and aware of project updates," she says. Useful tools include Slack, Microsoft Teams and other project management tools such as Trello or Monday.

Leading teams requires trust to empower employees and input via ongoing coaching conversations, O'Neill says. "Organisations are moving toward performance and development experience to drive employee engagement versus traditional hierarchical performance processes," she adds. We are also seeing a rise in organisational mentoring programmes to foster learning and connection across organisations."

Hegarty also emphasises the need for trust and cautions against using tech to micromanage in a remote team situation: "Lack of trust for some managers can be an issue and this results in over monitoring employee work. We have seen the embedding of technologies to track employee time, which can lead to dissatisfaction, decreased wellbeing and increased attrition."

The successful management of remote teams does not lie squarely at the manager's feet, however, says Kevin Empey, author of *Thrive in the Future of Work* and managing director of WorkMatters, a consulting and training firm. Empey, who carries out training at IMI for its Senior Executive Experience programme, says that while the manager is the creator of a solid trust base and consistent team environment, the individuals within a team have a shared accountability for the its ultimate success and performance.

“The manager cannot be in a traditional command and control mode in a remote team setting so joint ownership and responsibility is necessary for the team to perform,” he explains.

He agrees that managers should not fall into the trap of feeling they need to micromanage and “be on top of every detail and decision the team makes” to get their work done.

“Creating this sense of shared accountability is critical, as is ensuring that colleagues know that with flexibility to work from everywhere also brings responsibility to support the overall team in achieving its objectives for their internal and/or external customers.”

[Danielle Barron](#)

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