Considerations for Managers of Hybrid Teams

To help you consider the challenges and implications of hybrid teams, here are some ideas and questions to support your conversations and to build shared understanding and expectations with your team.

Further information to support you can be found in the Working From Home Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.

Understanding the challenges of hybrid teams from the following perspectives:

What does Hybrid mean?	What will it mean for both the individuals and the team? What are the boundaries (flexible hours vs office hours etc)? Do you need to build in anchor points where the whole team is together in the same physical space? Some hybrid teams build regular Anchor Days into their schedules.
Team Purpose	Consider taking this opportunity to refresh and talk about purpose, roles and communication structures. Build shared understanding and ask the team for ideas to include in the planning.
Inclusion and Fairness	Consider both inclusion and fairness from the perspective of the whole team and the individuals within the team. How do you manage the different circumstances while treating everyone fairly? If you have a hybrid team, consider taking all meetings online to ensure that all the team feels that they are connected to the same information flows. Engage and communicate to build understanding.
Jobs and Tasks	Consider the drivers for each task: 1. Energy 2. Focus 3. Co-ordination 4. Co-operation Then consider how these drivers will be affected by changes in working relationships. What are the team norms and shared expectations about working in a hybrid team?

	What are the clear expectations around responsibilities and time frames?
	What tools can you use to support workflow and team building both synchronous and asynchronous working?
	Tools such as Trello, Teams, and Slack can be useful but what do your team prefer to use and for what purpose?
Employee Preferences	Consider the personal preferences of the employee and enable others to understand and accommodate these preferences.
	How do you remain flexible and adaptable?
	How do you, as the leader, maintain effective relationships with each of your team?
Projects and Workflows	Consider both the process (how does work get done) and the method of co-ordination and communication that supports the process.
	Will there need to be elements built into the design of the hybrid team to ensure both the process and structure work well?
	Consider how the following might be affected: 1. Communication including problem solving and brainstorming 2. Knowledge sharing 3. Project update and progress update sharing 4. Socialisation 5. Performance evaluation 6. Data and information security
	What protocols can you put in place to ensure that the members of the team in the office are in sync with those working from home?
	How can you build in opportunities for remote staff to connect with office-based workers regularly and that simulate the type of natural conversations that take place between people who work together.
Information Storage	Information storage by a hybrid team, where some staff are working from home, requires intentional planning. When developing a plan for information storage consider: • What information needs to be accessible and in what form(s) for staff? • What information needs to be stored to meet legislative requirements? • What practices need to be in place with regard to privacy and use of personal information? The information storage goal is to ensure version control and make information accessible to staff who need it for their roles – and not to have information stored on personal desktops.

	The manager could undertake an initial audit and then discuss it with the team to gather feedback and form a final plan that is documented and available to the team. This could be done at the same time as the communication audit. An example is found below.

Example Audit tool

Channel/Information Storage currently used	Purpose/activity/function required in the team	Comments about effectiveness/risks/ "fit for purpose"

Example draft plan

Information storage	Purpose
Team HRD-Storage area	Emails with decisions made with students accessible to all staff
Draft documents the team is working on	Teams – files in designated folders identifying topic

References and further information

Lynda Gratton - How to do Hybrid Right, *Harvard Business Review (Vol 99/3)*

Working From Home Policy

Working From Home Procedures

Working From Home Guidelines