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# REMOTE TEAMS TOOLKIT: HOW TO STAY CONNECTED AND COLLABORATIVE DURING COVID-19

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## How to stay connected and collaborative during COVID-19

It seems like many of us have joined the remote workforce overnight. Amidst much uncertainty, we're making home offices out of kitchen islands, navigating conference calls with family members or pets in the background, and attempting to stay engaged and focused during an unsettling time. As COVID-19 rapidly reshapes our workplace experience, with both positive and negative side effects (see below), the demand to adapt new ways of doing things in very little time has left many of us in need of some extra support.

### Integral believes technology amplifies the human factor of personal relationships within organizations.

With more than 75% of our own team working remotely across North America even before COVID-19, team Integral has been growing its beliefs and behaviors around virtual collaboration for some time now. As our own ways of working continue to evolve in the coming weeks, Integral will share a toolkit each week for how we can all establish and run healthy, connected, and productive remote teams.

The exercises included in this first kit are a great way to kickoff (or deepen) the connection of your remote team and strategically shift from in-person to virtual productivity.

#### ✓ Positive:



*"My God... those meetings really could all have been e-mails."*

Cartoon source: The New Yorker

#### ✗ Negative:



*Bob works from home to escape the distraction of office chit chat.*

Cartoon source: The New Yorker



# Exercise 1:

## Build Your Remote Worker Profile

### Q. Who are you now that you're not in an office?

Re-introduce yourself to your team and gain clarity on your new remote capabilities and needs by completing a personal profile. By painting the picture of your new remote location and creating transparency around your workday boundaries, you can help your colleagues more easily connect with you in your space. Be honest and specific, and ideally update regularly as your personal needs change.

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**Step 01** Take and share a photo of yourself in your new working space. Capture details important to you and that might interest your team - like your desk space, pets, location in your house, etc.

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**Step 02** Plot out the times you plan to be online. Working from home doesn't mean you'll be productive for eight hours straight. Be realistic about times during the day when you'll want to take breaks: for meals, for fresh air or even mindful breathing.

Next identify where/how your team can find you. Consider adding additional communications platforms to the ways you already connect, i.e home phone number, cell phone number, skype, Zoom, Slack, Yammer, ect.

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**Step 03** What's your remote working superpower? Briefly explain one thing about remote working at which you know you excel.

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**Step 04** What's a remote working obstacle or challenge that you're committing to getting better at? How can your team hold you accountable for it?

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**Step 05** How do you need support? What resources or tools do you need? Maintaining and cultivating team spirit with your work colleagues is more important than ever. Gaining clarity on the ways you individually need support and how you can support others will strengthen your ability to deliver strong work, virtually

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## Exercise 2: Keep. Lose. Add: The COVID-19 Edition

### Q. How will you re-prioritize your in-person work habits while identifying new opportunities for remote ways of working?

“Keep, Lose, Add” is a great practice to run with your team to understand which behaviors drive value, and which aren’t as valuable as you think they are. In this scenario, we’re recommending it as both a data-gathering and prioritization exercise, focused on retooling the habits of your in-person workday for a virtual world.

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**Step 01** As a team, start by mapping out the typical elements of your daily experience (morning standup, checking email, team coffee, independent working time, client or project status meetings, internal events, etc.).

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**Step 02** While evaluating each touchpoint you captured, bring a critical eye to which activities you complete independently and which bring together a greater collective.

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**Step 03** It’s time to re-evaluate through the lens of a virtual workday. Each person in your team will vote for what they’ll:

**KEEP** - Practices that make it easier to get work accomplished.

**Question:** Could I get work done that I’m proud of without it?

**LOSE** - Practices that slow down virtual work or drive greater siloes.

**Question:** Will this slow efficiency or impede my ability to seek input from others?

**ADD** - (New) practices that fill a gap.

**Question:** What new habits or rituals am I craving now that our team is remote?

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**Step 04** Make a document capturing the team’s recommendations. Create a plan for implementing the highest priority tactics from the ADD category.

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## Exercise 3: Establishing Your Remote Team Charter

### Q. What are the commitments you and your teammates will make to ensure the success of your new remote community?

Best developed as a collective, team charters clarify a group's shared beliefs and boundaries that its members pledge to adhere to. This exercise is an opportunity to decide as a team what's most important about how you'll work together remotely.

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**Step 01** Each participant will take time either before or during this exercise to capture up to three (3) commitments they think essential for a connected and productive remote team. Consider things like:

1. No multitasking during Zoom calls. Stay present and fight the urge to have multiple screens up at once. This one is by honor code.
  2. Establish a daily ritual for non-working interpersonal time, like a Google Hangout lunch hour, or a Close of Business huddle.
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**Step 02** Everyone shares their commitment ideas with the larger group, and one, master list gets created. **Tip: we use Google Sheets to allow for easy collaboration.**

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**Step 03** Each team member votes for the five charter principles they feel the strongest about.

**Get curious and facilitate these questions as a group discussion:**

- Which commitments are the most important to your team?
  - Why did those rise to the top, and why were others less critical than you imagined?
  - Who is in favor of which commitments and how do their personal priorities play a role in prioritization?
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**Step 04** Finalize your charter. Have everyone virtually sign it. Post it to your Slack or Yammer thread, send it out to your team in an email, and find ways to reward and recognize your teammates when you see it in action during the workday.

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