

Leaders, Managers, and HR Professionals

IMPROVE YOUR VIRTUAL TEAM MEETINGS

Use this powerful meeting format and stay connected, productive and accountable with your remote team.





A POWERFUL MEETING FORMAT FOR HIGH IMPACT VIRTUAL TEAMS

In this new normal, there's additional pressure to stay in touch with your team, track their progress, and keep everyone productive and accountable.

Maybe you've been running a virtual team for a while, or maybe this is all new to you. Either way, you know your team is experiencing stress and just having a great meeting management process is not enough.

Leaders need to use communication and observation skills in a whole new way when managing a remote team in the Covid-19 era.

Now is the time to address basic human needs and align your workforce around the purpose of your organization. Highlight how together as a community you can provide each other with what people need now more than ever.



HUMANS CRAVE CONNECTION

Human beings all crave:

- A sense of meaning and purpose for their work
- Healthy and meaningful relationships with their colleagues and leaders
- To know how they are in service to something greater than themselves
- To learn and grow

Leaders must communicate their company's strategy in a way that addresses those human needs and inspires both employees and clients.

This toolkit is for decision-makers who are at the helm of creating and driving strategy, and for managers who are responsible for getting team results.

It outlines a powerful meeting format which can help you adjust your communication style to establish focus, set goals, remove barriers, limit misunderstandings and develop a high impact team.

PREPARATION AND MINDSET

When leading virtual meetings, it's important to keep these 6 core values at the center of your process, to help your team perform at the highest level.

SELF AWARENESS AND SELF CONTROL

01

Self-awareness leads to self-control but people tend to think they are more self-aware than they actually are. If you are looking for help with your own self awareness, psychometric assessment tools can be useful to gain important insights into your own personality and communication styles and then learn to speed read others.

02

SET EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS

Your directs should have a crystal clear understanding about projects, roles, goals, deadlines and priorities. Explain what success looks like and take the time to review the instructions periodically to make sure everyone understands.

03

REBOOT YOUR GOAL SETTING SKILLS

While goal setting has always been important for leaders, when you are leading a virtual team it pays to re-examine how and why you set goals for the team. Use the SMART Goal formula when setting goals - make sure they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-framed (SMART).

04

EXEMPLIFY STELLAR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

When you work at a distance from your team, you need to pay attention to your communication skills. Discuss the workload and progress without micromanaging, and err on the side of over-communicating.

05

PRIORITIZE RELATIONSHIPS

Team building and camaraderie are always important with virtual teams, but when teams are under pressure and stress, this is even more important. Take the time to really connect with your directs and ask about their personal lives and how they are coping.

06

USE A 'LEADER-AS-COACH' LEADERSHIP STYLE

Improving your self awareness and your interpersonal dynamics by learning a coaching leadership style can catapult your ability to lead your remote team towards high performance. Coaching as a leadership style has been adopted by many Fortune 100 companies and is one of the leading factors in running a successful and ultimately profitable business and team.

POWERFUL MEETING FORMAT THE NUTS AND BOLTS

With the core values under your belt, it's time to set up your meetings! The PMF consists of a short daily check-in, with only 2 agenda items - the "water cooler" and the "progress report".

TIME AND PLATFORM

Hold your meeting on a video platform at the same place and time everyday. The beginning of the work day usually works the best. Consistency for the meeting helps your directs feel in control and reduces stress. The PMF should generally take no longer than 15 minutes total.

ATTENDANCE

Encourage everyone to attend the meeting, however the meeting should still progress even if there are some absentees. Anyone who can't attend should send an email to the group the night before and assign another team member to stand in for them.

LEADERSHIP

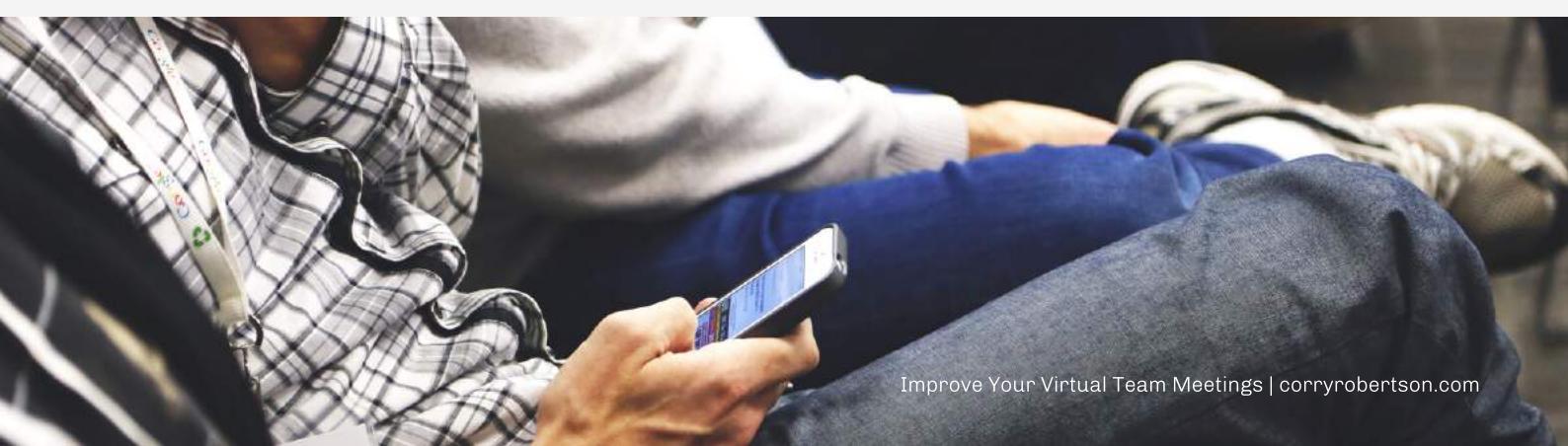
Someone should always be in charge of keeping the meeting productive, and all attendees should know who the leader is.

The leader should have the confidence and authority necessary to keep things moving along. When a discussion opens up, it is the leader's responsibility to assign a team member to schedule a conversation after the meeting.

RECORDING

It's important for someone at the meeting to take notes on any action items that come out of the discussion so that each member of the team knows what they need to do and there are tasks assigned to address any obstacles. This will also help any team members who were unable to attend to stay on the same page as the rest of the group.

- Write unrelated topics on a virtual whiteboard (Zoom has this function) to remind those involved to schedule a focused meeting for additional discussion.
- Post the topics on a shared platform so individuals can discuss them throughout the day. Slack, Asana, Trello or another communication tool can be used for this.





THE AGENDA

The PMF should only have 2 agenda items - consistency and frequency is key.

AGENDA ITEM #1 THE WATER COOLER

The water cooler is a round-table check in, 60 seconds for each team member to share funny stories, news, or personal things. Team building and cameraderie are important, and great managers make it their top priority.

Your team members are likely friends at work and probably longing for the time to catch up and connect so leaders must include ways to fill this void. When you build in “water cooler” conversation time the whole team can bond and share what's going on for them.

In times of great upheaval and stress like now, you have to maintain your relationships with your employees and make space for them to connect with each other. This is also a great chance to listen deeply and intuitively to assess the stress and over extensions of your team in order to catch it before it becomes a toxic situation.

AGENDA ITEM #2 THE PROGRESS REPORT

Team members get one minute each to address three things:

- What goal did I work on yesterday?
- What is my goal for today?
- What obstacles or barriers will stop me?

The point of this agenda item is to identify challenges before they develop into serious issues. The leader should avoid engaging in Q&A and full-fledged discussions around details.

Don't let others jump in to explain themselves or remove the obstacles. The need to discuss anything is an indicator that a follow up meeting needs to take place later that day and only those directly involved should attend.



FOLLOW UP



Schedule a “virtual coffee” follow up if necessary with each of your direct reports after the PMF, to ensure that what was discussed in the meeting moves to the next step. Deliverables and next steps should be clear and well defined.

Make sure you outline:

- Who's responsible for following up on each item or task
- When those deliverables are due
- When the next meeting or check-in will be

Effective follow-ups help leaders manage time, scope, and cost of projects, and help eliminate unproductive meetings. Follow up is not just a routine, but a key element in establishing high performance teams.

CONCLUSION



"As a leader, you are accountable for making your meetings productive and giving your team the guidance they need to be effective"

Holding productive virtual meetings is more important than ever when your team is either new to a virtual format, or stressed and trying to navigate changes within the organization and culture as a whole.

As a leader, you are accountable for making your meetings effective, and giving your team the space and guidance they need to be productive.

The most successful leaders are good listeners, communicate trust and respect, use their emotional intelligence, and ask about the wellbeing of their team members.

Great meetings and high performance virtual teams begin with astute leadership. You can do it!

If you need support or have questions about leadership development and training, organizational culture, or coaching as a leadership style, reach out and connect with me.

Schedule a call here:
www.TalkWithCorry.com

Corry
Robertson



ABOUT CORRY ROBERTSON

Corry Robertson is a leading global expert on organizational culture, engagement and retention in the tech industry, with a client list that includes Fortune 100 companies.

Corry has built a reputation for helping technical leaders understand people management in an 'engineering culture' and to leverage the skills and mindset required to build high performing teams.

Over her 20+ year career, Corry has helped hundreds of organizations develop high-calibre leaders and expand rapidly without diluting the culture.

Corry's primary areas of expertise include supporting executives and emerging leaders through human performance improvement, organizational culture management, executive team development, and leadership and high potential development programs.

As an entrepreneur, Corry is also the Founder and CEO of The Coaching Academy for Leaders, offering ICF accredited programs.

The Academy's unique proprietary method blends coaching competencies and leadership theory in a revolutionary way to help individuals and teams achieve high-level results.

You can learn more about Corry here:
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Schedule a virtual coffee call with Corry
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