FabricEditions

How to run remote delivery teams

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Remote delivery playbook

This playbook was created to support anyone who is part of <mark>a delivery team and need to work remotely</mark>.

Effective remote working requires more than once a day stand-ups or Jira ticket movements. It is being and feeling part of a team while physically away from them and forming bonds beyond project work.

As Fabric, we have experienced a rich remote working culture and success in distributed delivery. In this playbook, we have documented our tips and techniques of running remote delivery teams from setup to being a hive mind.
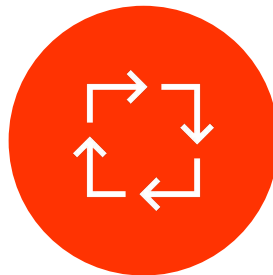
The playbook structure

In this playbook, we will touch upon the six key elements to
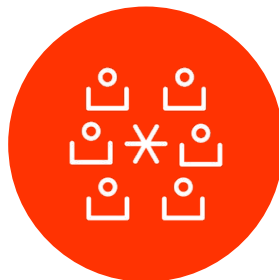a remote delivery team, from setup all the way to camaraderie.

Remote Setup

Communication

Team Charter

**Uncompromised
Engineering Practices**

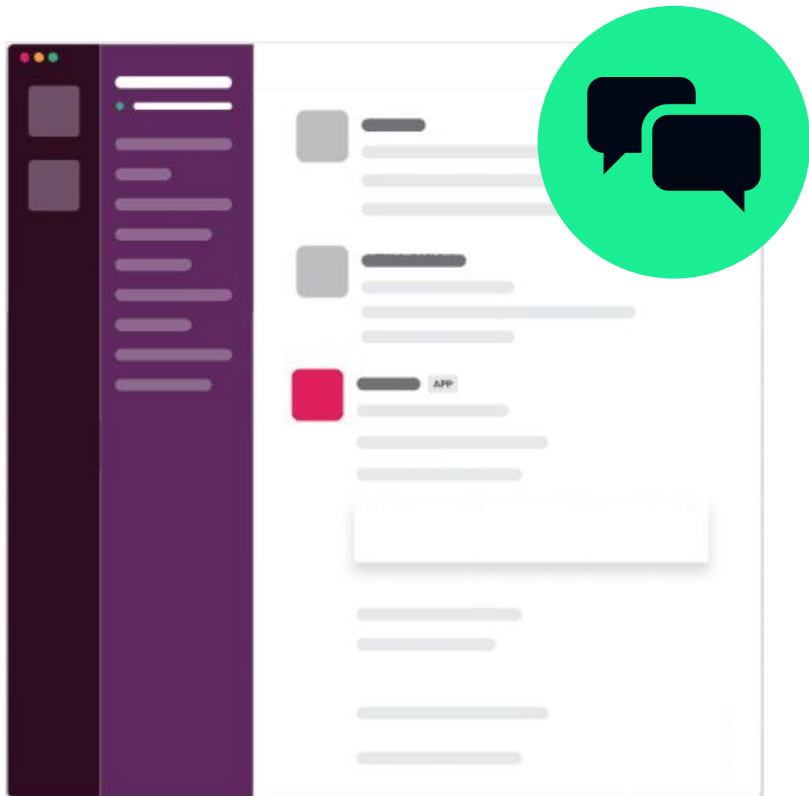**Managing Stakeholders
and Clients**

Camaraderie

Remote setup

For smooth running of operations, it is very important to have a reliable setup for every team member, necessary technology and hardware in place.

Remote Setup
Collaboration tools

Define and make sure all team members have access to **VPN** and company-wide **collaboration tools**.

RECOMMENDED TOOLS
→ **Slack**
→ **Google Meet**
→ **Microsoft Teams**

FABRIC TIP
When choosing communication tools, make sure it aligns with your team's expectations. Ensure they're comfortable with them and their features. You don't want to end up with people using different tools, breaking up the team's cohesion.

Remote Setup
Internet connection

It is important to stay connected with your team members at all times and hence a good **high-speed internet** is a must. If you often struggle with your connection speed, **keep a backup like mobile data** for important meetings.
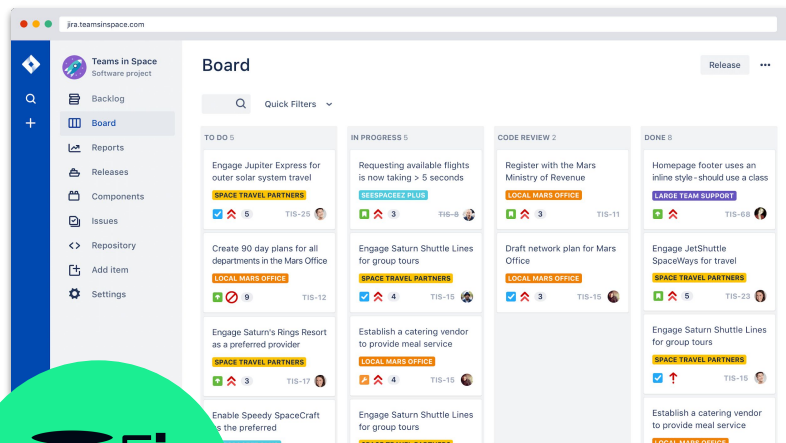
> **FABRIC TIP**
> *Check if you have NBN access to your home, upgrading to a 50mb/s plan will help with stable good quality video calls.*

> *People can't hear you properly? Your camera freezes often to others? This is usually related to your upload speed. Check if you can pause any cloud synching apps whilst on calls.*

Remote Setup
Environments, databases and build

For uninterrupted operation all team members should be able to **access to all environments and databases** needed for delivery.

Access to **automated build pipelines**, all **dashboards** and **project management tools** is fundamental.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS
→ **Trello**
→ **JIRA**

Communication

Team communication helps build trust and it gives birth to innovative solutions.
Collocated teams have plenty of impromptu encounters and interactions.
It's important to emulate these in a remote setting for everyone to still feel part of a team. From practices to tools this chapter covers most aspects of enabling the best out of remote communication.
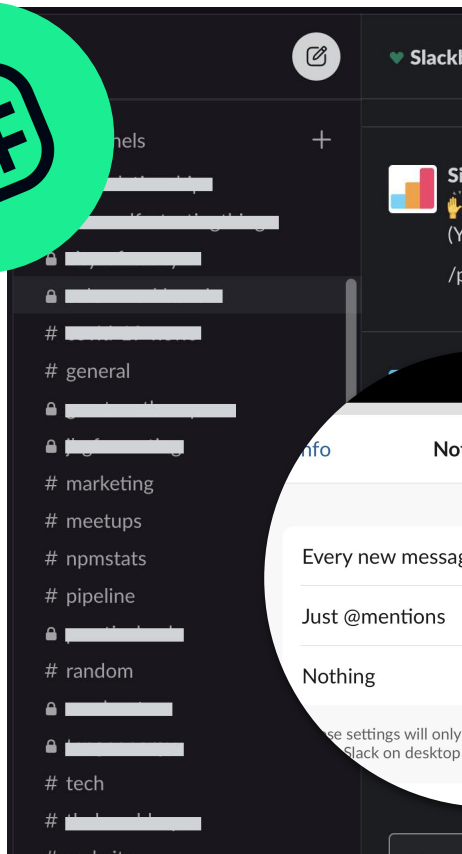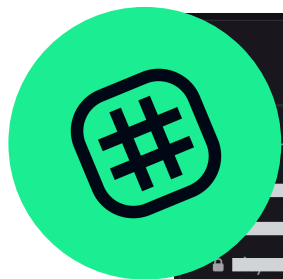
Communication
Define working hours

Create a team charter with **core working hours** when everyone is available, such as 11 am - 4 pm. This is particularly important for teams with members in different timezones.

FABRIC TIP
Set a secondary timezone to be visible in your calendar so you're aware of working and lunch hours in other locations.

Communication
Create space and reduce friction (1/2)

On your team communication tool (e.g. Slack, Hangouts) create a team general channel and multiple other focused channels. This will help reduce friction and enable conversations.

OUR CHANNELS LIST
→ **General**
→ **Tech**
→ **Random**
→ **Meetups**
→ **Marketing**
→ **Individual project channels**

FABRIC TIP
Change your notification settings on each channel and get appropriate timely alerts.

general
marketing
meetups
npmstats
pipeline
random
tech

Notifications

Every new message

Just @mentions ✓

Nothing

...se settings will only apply to your mobile devices
...Slack on desktop to adjust your desktop

Create space and reduce friction (2/2)

Workspaces   Create

CATO

User Experience Design

View workspace

View workspace

A shared workspace such as Google Drive or Confluence for every team to access and share artefacts is critical to fast and successful team alignment

FABRIC TIP
Folder structures and naming conventions are important for colocated teams, but particularly for distributed teams. Define them and communicate them so your team follows it when organising their workspaces.

Communication
Digital boards (1/2)
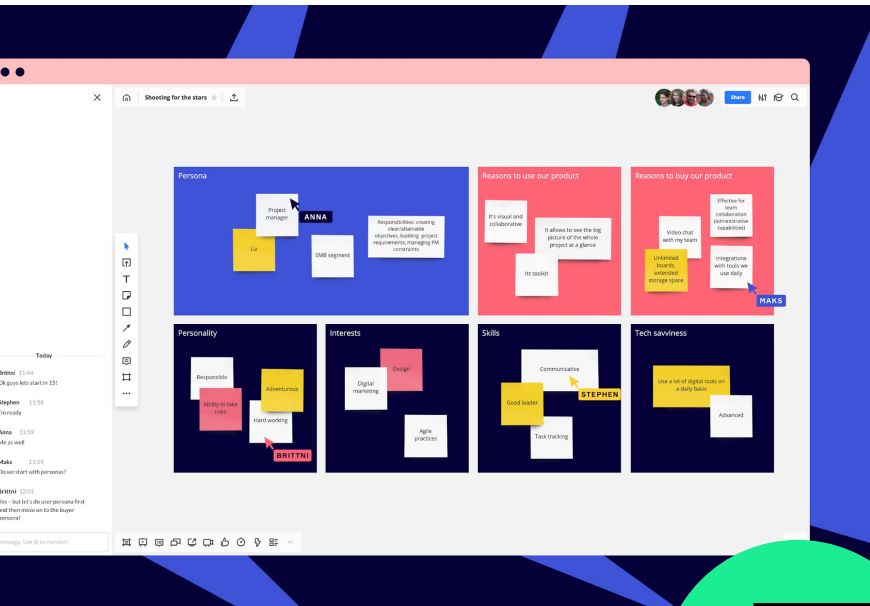
Invest in an **online whiteboarding** tool such as Miro or Mural. This will help your teams collaborate in a similar way to how they use physical boards.

FABRIC TIP
Try using Miro on every video conference discussion and share it for everyone to see. Get someone to capture outputs of each session as they're discussed. Like in a physical workshop, the digital whiteboard will help create share understanding and more effective conversations.

Communication
Digital boards (2/2)
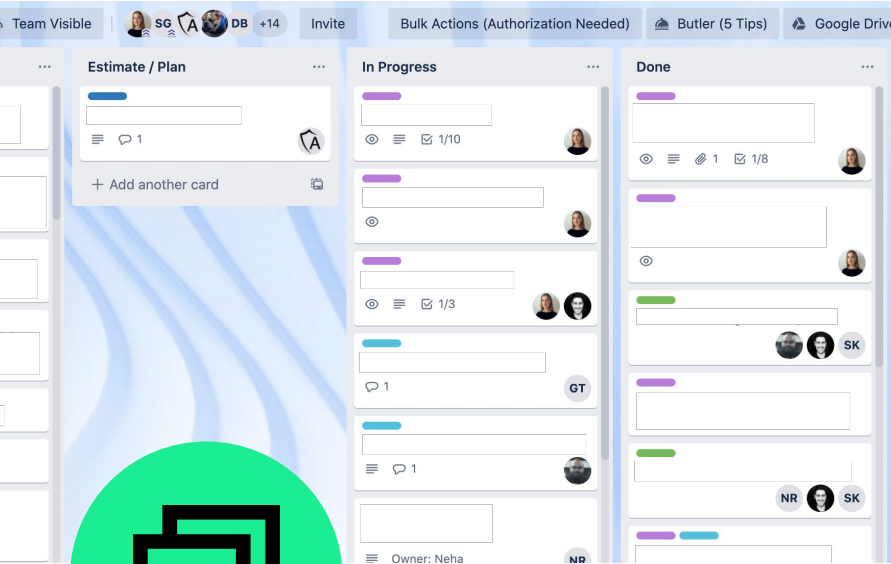
Transfer your physical kanban and whiteboards to a digital one in tools like - Trello, Jira or Miro. With every team member keeping it updated will help project progress effectively.

FABRIC TIP
Tools like Miro allow you to convert post-it walls into digital boards by simply taking a picture. It even recognizes handwriting and converts it to editable text.

Communication
Remote pairing

Pairing does not have to difficult to do in a remote setup, there are multiple plugins like Teamviewer, Visual Studio which makes it feel like you are in the same room.

RECOMMENDED TOOLS
→ **Teamviewer**
→ **Visual Studio**

Team charter

When working remotely it is important to define standards and the ground rules of working remotely as a group. A team charter helps with that. It can be a baseline and retrospectively amended as the team establishes routines.

Team charter
Plan routine and weekly rituals

Establish some basic routine around the various team activities like core working hours, stand up, retrospective, etc.
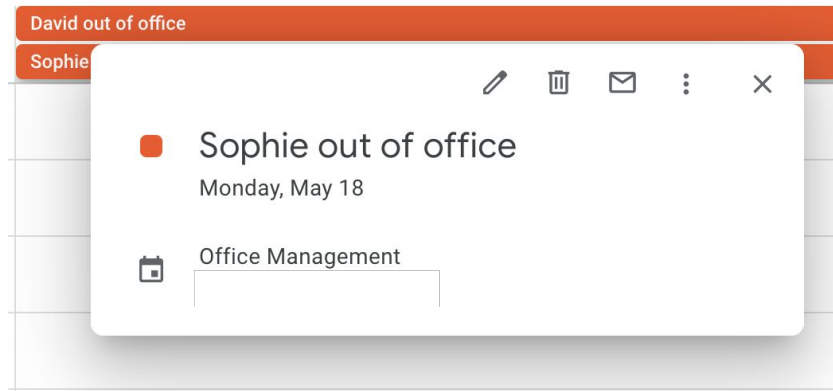Plan weekly 'all hands', 'showcase' and retrospective with your team

FABRIC TIP
If you use Slack you can sync it with your usual calendar and get timely notifications before your scheduled meetings. With a quick link to join the meeting. No more missed or showing up late to meetings.
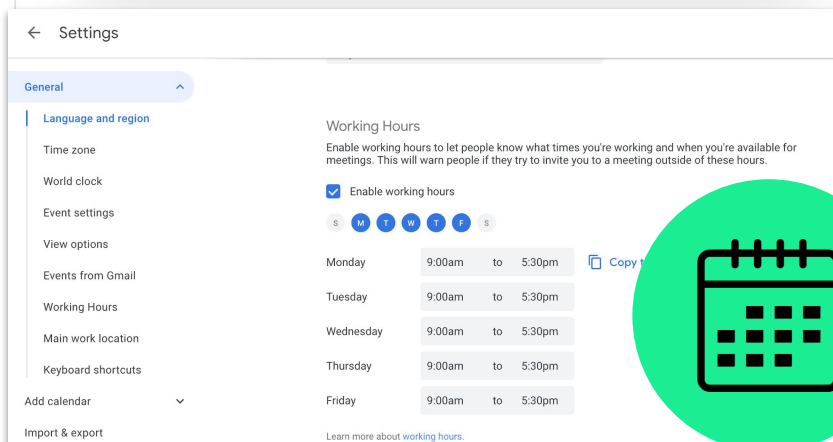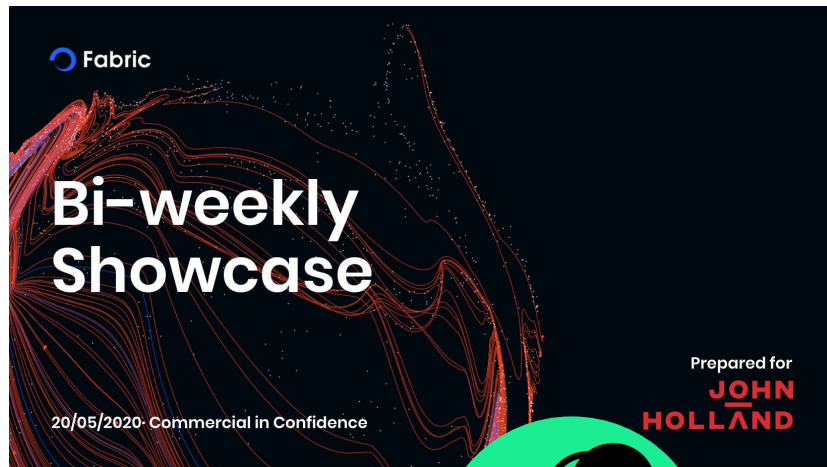
Team charter
Team members availability

Every team member can set their 'out of office' time indicating who is available. Teams can create their leave calendar as well showing non-availability of team members.

Team charter
Over communicate

Bi-weekly Showcase

20/05/2020· Commercial in Confidence

Prepared for
JOHN HOLLAND

Over communicate with your team about the scope, status, velocity, client/stakeholder feedback so that everyone is aligned and feel like a part of a team.

FABRIC TIP
Create a project tracking dashboard that provides stakeholders with live updates on a sprints status, dependencies and blockers.

Team charter
Tools charter

Some tool suggestions for various delivery team practices.

Practices	Tools
Sprint management	Jira, Trello
Video conferencing for stand-ups, retros, showcases, etc.	Google Meet, Zoom
Whiteboard	Miro
Team communication channel	Slack, Hangouts
Documentation	Google drive

Uncompromised Engineering Practices

We take pride in our modern engineering capabilities and even in a distributed or remote setup we do not compromise on these modern practices.
Our uncompromised engineering practices help us deliver high quality product with more confidence for our client even in a remote setup

Engineering Practices

Automated build pipelines help detect integration errors quickly helping teams to develop and deploy software more cohesively and confidently.

Monitoring and Logging are a valuable component to gauge the impact of performance

Test coverage If your code is covered by tests, maintenance and deployment of new features become very smooth and easy.

Coding hygiene Best practices include self-documenting code that is easy to read and collaborate in, refactoring and feature rotation to make team code knowledge broader

Managing stakeholders and clients

Managing stakeholders when teams work remotely is crucial for the success of projects. It's human nature to worry when its not in front of your eyes, hence its very important to share more often and convey more information to build the necessary trust.

Managing stakeholders and clients

Share project status more frequently. Include on scope, velocity, overall progress with all the stakeholders. At least weekly

Organise frequent and regular **showcases** with all team members and stakeholders.

Share **progress report in mails** to all internal and external stakeholders

Over communicate to maintain transparency with your stakeholders and build trust
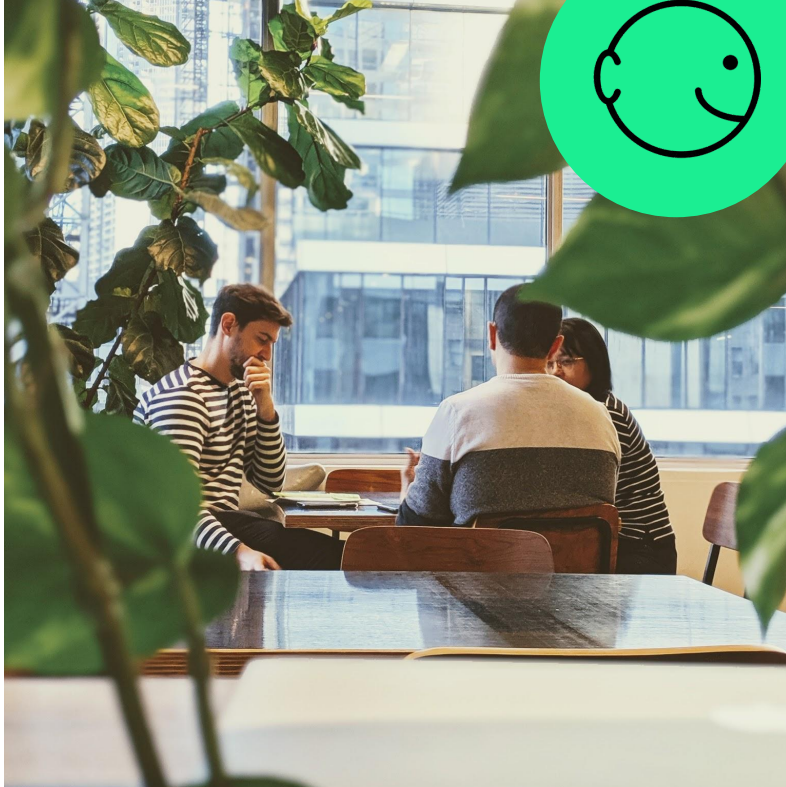
Camaraderie

People who spend a lot of time together, form a mutual trust and friendship. It's important to build similar social norms and trust among team members for them to be highly productive in a remote setup.

Camaraderie
Empathise

Connect with your team members informally on 1-1 calls. **Be empathetic** to your team members, many team members might have more responsibilities at home to take care of. **Catch up with your team members personally** and inquire about their well-being.
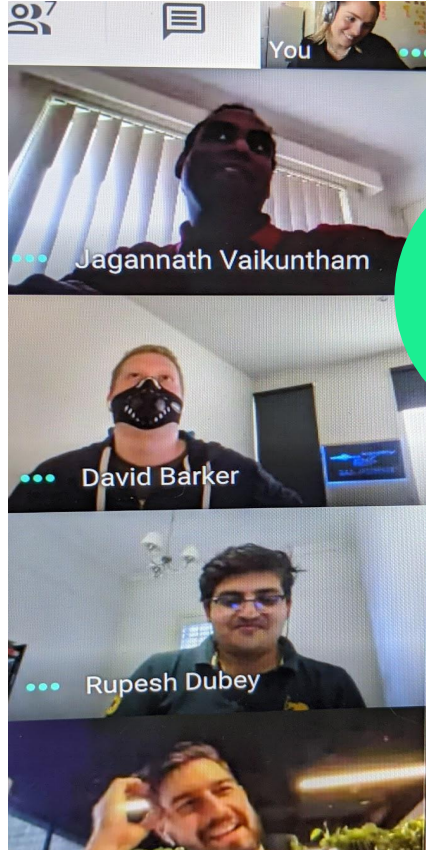
FABRIC TIP
We don't often talk about our feelings at work, when working from home it's important to check-in more often than usual. Ask your colleagues 'How are you feeling today?' over the typical 'How are you?'
It skips the chit-chat and helps to connect with your peers.

Camaraderie
Socialise, online

Have **remote social events** where the team talks about everything apart from work.

EVENT IDEAS
→ **Weekly remote lunch**
→ **Friday beers**
→ **Dress-up Thursday**
→ **Video games night**
→ **Remote coffee run**
→ **Skill sharing / Remote brown bag**

Camaraderie
And...

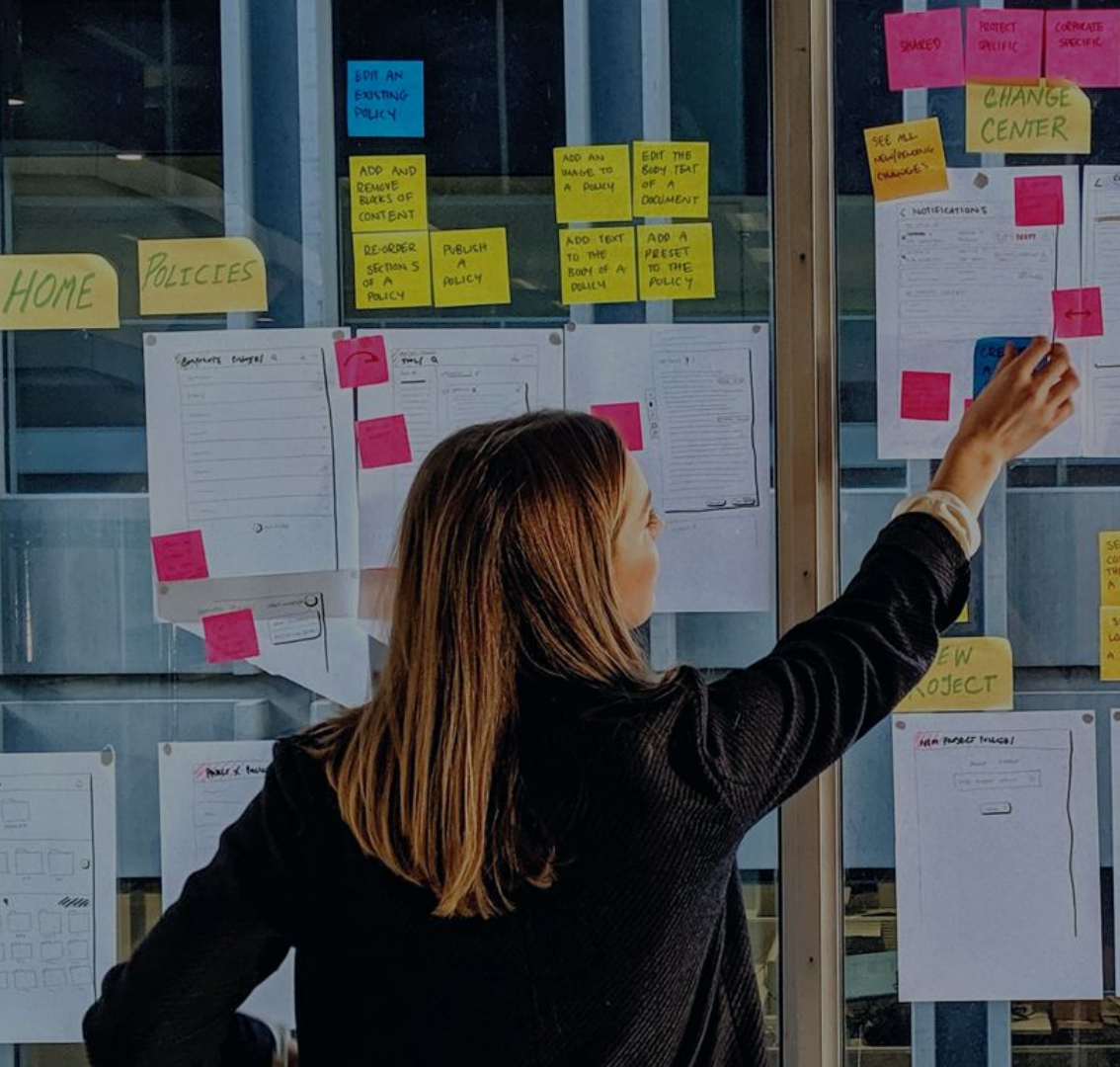Create a **team random chat** group to carry on the team banter

Encourage '**video always on**' meetings wherever possible, facial expressions and body language are key

Be more flexible about core work hours and meeting times

ENCOURAGE TO
→ **Share links**
→ **Giphys**
→ **Day-to-day pictures**
→ **Create polls**

Find out more on
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