

# Why Asynchronous Work Isn't Lazy—It's Logical

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Many still believe that productivity must be visible to be valid. If they can't see you typing, talking, or attending meetings, are you really working? But in a world overwhelmed by pings, meetings, and performance theatre, the idea that synchronous work is the only kind of “real” work is outdated and damaging.

This shift signals something deeper: a re-evaluation of what productive work looks like—not louder, faster, or more performative, but calmer, clearer, and better aligned with focus and results. If they can't see you typing, talking, or attending meetings, are you really working? But in a world overwhelmed by pings, meetings, and performance theatre, the idea that synchronous work is the only kind of “real” work is outdated and damaging.

### What is Asynchronous Work

One of the most powerful advantages of asynchronous work is how well it supports global organisations operating across multiple time zones. In traditional synchronous environments, trying to coordinate meetings between teams in London, San Francisco, and Sydney can lead to awkward compromises, late nights, or early mornings for someone. Async work removes that strain by allowing teams to contribute when it suits their local time, without waiting on others to catch up or come online.

As noted by platforms like Velocity Global and , this model opens the door to truly distributed collaboration. Talent is no longer constrained by geography—the work happens around the clock, following the sun, as contributors in one region pick up where others left off. It not only reduces delays but enhances inclusivity by ensuring everyone has equal access to contribute, regardless of time zone or working hours. This is how modern, borderless teams work—not through round-the-clock meetings, but through trust, clear documentation, and asynchronous systems.

Asynchronous work is any activity that doesn't require everyone to be present at the same time. It's a way of working that allows individuals to contribute, respond, and move tasks forward on their own schedule rather than being bound to real-time interactions. This doesn't mean people are disengaged or unavailable—it means they're trusted to manage their time and focus, responding when it makes the most sense for them and their workflow.

By removing the need for everyone to be “on” simultaneously, async work encourages thoughtful communication, reduces unnecessary interruptions, and supports deeper focus. It's particularly valuable in

globally distributed teams, for those balancing flexible schedules, or for anyone who does their best thinking without the pressure of immediate response. It includes:

- Written updates instead of meetings
- Loom videos or recorded walkthroughs
- Shared task boards and collaborative docs
- Communication with delayed responses

Unlike the constant urgency of synchronous communication, async work is deliberate. It prioritizes clarity over speed, thoughtfulness over instant reactions.

Creating a culture of trust is foundational to making asynchronous work effective. When teams aren't tied to real-time oversight, leaders must be willing to let go of micromanagement and instead rely on shared expectations, clear goals, and accountability through outcomes. Trust here isn't passive—it's active, maintained through transparency, documentation, and mutual respect. This shift can be uncomfortable at first, especially in organisations used to equating presence with productivity, but it's vital for async to succeed.

In high-trust async cultures, people don't need to prove they're working every minute—their contributions speak for themselves. They're empowered to manage their own time, make thoughtful decisions, and engage with their work on their own terms. This autonomy doesn't diminish collaboration; it enhances it. When people feel trusted, they're more likely to take ownership, communicate clearly, and invest in the

success of their peers. Async work, at its core, is a vote of confidence in your team.

There's a false belief that async work is passive, because it doesn't involve constant meetings or immediate replies, some interpret it as disengaged or even lazy. However, this interpretation is rooted in a narrow view of what productivity looks like—one that prioritizes being seen over being effective.

Async work flips that script. It shifts the focus from presence to performance, from noise to nuance. Rather than demanding people be constantly available, it allows them the space to think, create, and contribute without the pressure of real-time responses. This approach doesn't just work for introverts or remote teams—it's a scalable model for any team that values outcomes over optics.

- It supports deep, focused work by reducing interruptions
- It allows for considered, better-quality responses
- It empowers diverse working styles, including neurodivergent and global teams
- It builds trust by valuing autonomy over supervision

Responding instantly is easy. Responding wisely takes time.

## **Async Builds Better Workflows**

To further illustrate the value of asynchronous workflows, here's a snapshot of recent statistics that demonstrate the rising adoption and clear business benefits of async practices:

- 94% of remote workers want flexible schedules—a core strength of async workflows. [Source: Buffer 2023 State of Remote Work](#)
- 3.75 million minutes saved by Atlassian teams in one year using async tools like Loom, avoiding over 375,000 meetings . [Source: The Australian, Oct 2023](#)
- 52% of employees say meetings are the biggest barrier to productivity. [Source: GitLab Remote Work Report](#)
- Async-enabled companies see up to 30% faster project delivery . [Source: Velocity Global](#)

Async also future-proofs collaboration. As seen in Atlassian's acquisition of Loom and its broader push toward memo-first communication, organisations are recognising that persistent, recorded updates create a more transparent and resilient knowledge base. When updates and discussions are documented, they don't disappear when someone logs off. That means decisions, context, and direction are available to everyone—not just the people who happened to be in the meeting.

And the numbers back this up. A 2023 Buffer survey found that 94% of remote workers want flexible schedules—something asynchronous workflows directly support. Atlassian, after adopting tools like Loom, reported saving over 3.75 million minutes previously spent in meetings. Meanwhile, GitLab's Remote Work Report revealed that more than half of employees cite meetings as the biggest barrier to productivity. As companies scale across borders and time zones, these stats illustrate the untapped potential of async practices to drive both efficiency and engagement.

## **Teams benefit when async becomes the default**

While asynchronous work offers compelling benefits, adopting it isn't without challenges—many of which are cultural rather than technological. One of the biggest hurdles is the ingrained belief that visibility equals value. As noted in GitLab's Remote Work Report, a significant percentage of employees feel pressure to appear busy rather than actually be productive. This 'performance theatre' undermines async practices, especially when workers feel they must respond instantly to demonstrate engagement.

Another barrier lies in leadership mindset. Many managers are still more comfortable with real-time supervision than with outcome-based trust. The async model demands a shift in how productivity is measured—moving from time spent to value delivered. According to , successfully implementing async requires organisations to embrace documentation, overcommunication, and strong onboarding processes. Without these, async communication can quickly become unclear, disconnected, or even isolating.

Despite these barriers, companies that invest in async culture consistently report higher productivity, better employee satisfaction, and improved collaboration across time zones. By addressing these biases head-on, organisations position themselves to unlock the true potential of asynchronous work.

## **If async is so effective, why isn't it the norm?**

- We confuse urgency with importance

- Leaders often equate visibility with value
- Many teams lack processes for structured async communication
- Async gets misused: it's not silence, it's structure

Even in highly asynchronous organisations, synchronous communication still plays a vital role. It's not about eliminating meetings entirely—it's about using them more intentionally. Real-time interactions are especially valuable for building team relationships, navigating ambiguity, brainstorming, and addressing emotionally nuanced topics. GitLab, a leader in remote async work, advocates for “purposeful synchronicity”—making live meetings the exception, not the default, and ensuring they serve a clearly defined function.

Companies like Atlassian and Basecamp take similar approaches, using synchronous check-ins sparingly to preserve energy for deep work. For example, a brief daily sync might be reserved for blockers and emotional support, while everything else—updates, feedback, decision-making—is handled in written or recorded formats. also recommends “asynchronous first, synchronous second,” encouraging teams to explore if a meeting is truly necessary before scheduling it.

The goal isn't to remove the human element, but to protect it from being diluted by constant interruptions. Sync still matters—but when used wisely, it becomes a tool for connection rather than a barrier to progress.

### **Async doesn't mean no interaction**

- Use real-time moments for creativity, complexity, and connection

- Blend async with sync to suit the goal
- It's not either/or it's when and why

Async Is Strategic, it is an intentional shift, not a shortcut. It represents a move away from performative productivity and toward meaningful output. Rather than relying on constant check-ins, status meetings, or a visible presence, async work trusts individuals to manage their time and deliver results on their own terms.

It respects time by minimizing distractions.

It respects diversity by supporting different work styles and life circumstances.

It respects trust—by empowering people instead of micromanaging them.

In a noisy world obsessed with urgency, the teams that learn to communicate with purpose, not pressure, will be the ones that thrive.

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*Originally published at <https://www.linkedin.com>.*

By [Nik Charlson](#) on [July 10, 2025](#).

[Canonical link](#)

Exported from [Medium](#) on November 15, 2025.