



Teamworking from home during COVID-19

A guide to enabling teams to work effectively while working remotely during COVID-19

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Introduction

When it comes to teams working together as COVID-19 forces us to change the way we work, nothing is more important than the health and safety of your people. Many organisations are making plans for their people to work from home.

A very important point to keep in mind is this - remember why this option has been chosen. *It is to protect and maintain people's health and maintain their ability to perform to the best of their ability.*

In terms of protecting and maintaining people's health, working from home is one step. Taking direction from medical professionals is another one.

In terms of maintaining the ability to keep your team working at their best, this guide can help those who are not used to working apart work better together, find new ways of working, and help inspire discussion to find even better ways of making meaningful progress through a time of uncertainty, opportunity and challenge.

Whilst for some, working from home may not seem like rocket science, for others this will be the first time they have done so, and for others, working from home regularly is not the norm either.

The content of this guide is based on tips from leaders around the world as well as my experiences of working in and out of offices for nearly 20 years, both in a corporate environment and from a sole proprietor perspective.

There are five areas teams can consider when working out how they can best work together as they prepare to work apart from each other. They include:

- Maintaining a growth mindset;
- Maintaining energy;
- Maintaining a strong connection with each other;
- Maintaining work momentum; and
- Maintaining relationships at home.

Good luck and please take care.

Adrian

Tips to help maintain your mindset

If you and the team are not used to working from home, it will be challenging and choosing a growth mindset will help you work effectively now and potentially in the future.

- ❖ [Watch Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset video as a team](#). After you watch it, ask the team:
 - How could our current working arrangements be a good thing for you?
 - How could this be a good thing for us?
 - What do you think could be the biggest risk for our team if we are working remotely for a prolonged period of time?
 - How might we reduce the impact of that risk?
 - How can we have some fun with our new ways of working?

- ❖ Take note of the learnings you make over the weeks. Note what's working and what's not. Share them with the team and when you get back to working regularly in the office. See what learnings you can apply to create new ways of working.

Tips to maintain your energy

During any time of change, ensuring you have the right routines in place is critical to ensure you are at your best to be your best. Here are some tips to help you maintain your energy whilst your regular working routine is no longer normal.

- ❖ Make time to get exercise, move or stretch. Go for a walk. Treat this as a meeting - diarise it. Or bring your phone and have a walking meeting.

- ❖ Make sure you've got some good lunch food in the fridge. Minimise the risk of overindulging in the guilty pleasure food by using small bowls.

- ❖ Give your brain downtime. Set parameters for when you'll be on your computer and phone. Tell your family when you want to be off the tech (your kids will help keep you accountable!). As a team, agree on when people need to be available and set expectations for responses to calls, emails and texts.

Tips to maintain a strong connection with your team

Maintaining strong relationships is important at the best of times, let alone when you need to work in a way that physically prevents human connection. Over communication (early on, especially during the first week of everyone at home) and using video conference are key to helping your teams perform while everyone works from home.

As time passes, teams will work out what works best for them. Until then here are some tips to help your teams stay connected and use the strength of relationships to keep projects moving forward.

- ❖ **Tips for leaders to maintain a strong connection with their team**
 - Have more team meetings than you regularly do. Especially when you first start to work remotely as a team. Midday meetings allow people to get their routines set up, especially if they have kids and have to get used to school pick ups/drop offs or simply getting them fed and ready for potential days at home.
 - Schedule weekly 1:1's with each of your direct reports. A 15-minute check-in will do you and your team wonders.
 - Send the team a short video (recorded with your phone) with business, project or stakeholder updates. Include a fun factor - introduce them to your dog, share of your learnings about working from home.
 - Call your teammates randomly. A quick "how are you going" will make them feel important and show you care.
 - Be very clear with expectations of deliverables, by when, how and protocol to keep you updated. This will be critical to keep momentum moving on projects and work tasks.

- ❖ **Fun ways to maintain a strong connection to each other from home**
 - Block out time and schedule regular catch-ups with peers. These will give you a boost of energy, allow you to learn from each other and stay efficient.
 - Have virtual lunches, coffee, tea or walks together. Take notes on your phone if need be.
 - Share more of yourself. Assuming you don't have any dirty jocks laying around, do a tour of your house when you catch up over VC.
 - Introduce your peers to your kids, your partner, dog or your lounging around the house outfit. Sharing more of each other builds stronger relationships.

❖ When conducting video calls

- Ask for everyone's commitment to focus on the meeting and avoid the temptation to multitask.
- Be ready for tech failures. They will happen, no sense in getting overly frustrated.
- Deliberately ask people for feedback on topics - avoid waiting for people to speak up.
- Be yourself. Avoid worrying about "how do I look", and "what's in the background of my video". Do what works for you.
- Use the same techniques for VC workshops. Use multiple VC links to help. Be more diligent with the roles of participants and have a list of phone numbers handy in case something goes wrong.
- Make sure you use mute when you are not talking, especially in large meetings.
- Try to speak a little slower and be ready for delays.
- If your dog or child accidentally interrupt, don't fret. It happens to the best of us.

Tips to maintain your momentum

Like any change, some things are easier to adapt to than others. Over a prolonged period of time away from colleagues, work may not progress as quickly as it normally does and some will not get the human contact they thrive off of. This may cause frustrations for individuals and teams. To help keep momentum build amongst your team, here are some tips to keep progress moving forward.

- ❖ Be really clear with what you want to achieve each day. Write it down before you open your email.
- ❖ Have a 15-minute team meeting to kick off the day, share your goals for the day. Or do it with a colleague. Or do it at the end of the day and share your accomplishments.
- ❖ Write down your accomplishments at the end of the week. You'll feel good and build confidence to take on more. If you struggle to identify any, talk to a colleague, share your feelings and they can help identify some wins you may have overlooked!
- ❖ If you are struggling, talk to your manager, a peer, a friend or your partner. They will be going through similar experiences and they may be able to help. You could also talk to a medical professional if you feel things are getting a little out of control.

Tips to maintain your relationship at home

If your partner is normally at home, there will be an adjustment for the two of you to make once you “move in” during the day.

- ❖ Ask your partner what they think would work best for how you work at home and if they have any concerns. They also have to adapt to a change, asking them for their thoughts will help find a solution that works for both of you.
- ❖ Let them know ahead of time when you need quiet time or focus time for phone calls, video conferences or “bunker down and get this done” time. .
- ❖ Keep your work area clean. Pack up at the end of the day and leave the house as it would have been had you not been home.
- ❖ If your partner asks to take out the garbage midday, or to put on a load of laundry, do it. Your partner is more important than work. For five minutes of your time, prove this.

Important note

As the COVID-19 situation progresses, there may be direction from global and local health authorities provided that contradicts what is put forward (for example, they may suggest staying indoors and not going outside for a walk). If so please keep in mind to take direction from the global and local health authorities over any of these recommendations.

If you have any questions on how you and your team can work together better at this time, please feel free to contact Adrian on the following details:

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About Adrian Baillargeon

A behavioural consultant, a team leadership coach or your biggest supporter. Whatever you want to call him, you will struggle to find someone as passionate as Adrian to help organisations make meaningful progress through the power of their people.



With over **17 years** of corporate experience in **financial services** (health insurance, travel insurance, general insurance), **pharmaceuticals, and oil & gas**, Adrian Baillargeon has worked with marketing, sales and JV management teams across Canada and Australia. He also somehow ended up in Tunisia and Cameroon coaching for Major League Baseball.

Across all of his experiences, Adrian has seen the best and the worst when it comes to teams working together to drive outstanding results. His in-depth knowledge of challenges that come within

the corporate world, family life and “chasing his dream” allows him to relate to audiences from the moment he steps into a room or onto a stage. His energetic yet calm and relatable approach (that’s the Canadian in me he says) provides audiences with some of the latest research from global organisations on team dynamics, setting oneself up to succeed within a team, thought-provoking activities and personal development insights. These not only educate leaders and their people but provide them with tools and tips to use in the ever-changing challenges of life.

[Click here to learn how Adrian can help your team make meaningful progress](#)