How to turn ideas into action as a remote worker

As we move on from last year things are looking so much brighter but many are still getting used to working remotely. Our ideas are as exciting, and our ambitions as big as they ever have been, so how do you channel that excitement and make an impact when face-to-face time with colleagues is limited?

Read on for our best advice for getting your voice heard and pushing through brilliant, productive projects while working from home.

48%
will likely work remotely at least part of the time after COVID

50%
of us agree that decision making has been negatively impacted

72%
say that planning has been more difficult with the impact of COVID

70%
say it is difficult to give and receive feedback working remotely

66%
say their team's productivity has dropped off

Let your idea shine

There are so many fantastic ideas waiting to be heard. Yet many of us lack the confidence to share our voice, especially in large, busy or important remote meetings. If you often find yourself holding back at the perfect moment, make simple tweaks to your approach.

Be the first to speak or respond. Whether you have an exciting starter thought or a crystal-clear vision, let it be known and don't assume that everyone shares your thinking! It's harder to "read the room" remotely but pick your timing courteously and ensure your idea is shared before the conversation has time to head in a different direction.

Consider asking more constructive questions too. This way you can frame your idea to decision-maker priorities – amplifying it without steamrolling a meeting.

Be a productive leader

How many times has a remote meeting generated a mountain of great content that never saw the light of day? Be assertive and follow up with a rough outline of your thoughts in writing and schedule a meeting to focus on the idea in earnest. Microsoft 365 with Teams allows you to check out colleague schedules, so you can pick a time that's convenient and involves everyone who can add value.

Make positive momentum

Whether you plan a Teams meeting or use the webinar function (it has brilliant functionality when managing larger online meetups), give your participants reason to get excited about attending. Share a simple agenda beforehand, create a SharePoint folder containing sources of inspiration and make it known that open discussion is welcome, mid-and post-meeting.

Nail your presentation craft

Prepare well and tailor your presentation to remote meetings. This doesn't mean packing as much information as possible on-screen. Support your ideas with a brief, visual presentation that engages and adds colour to your discussion, making sure to hook people in with main points before diving into detail.

With few breaks from video calls and virtual pitches, brevity is appreciated. So, be concise and straight-talking, but resist the temptation to rush. When meeting remotely it can be difficult to gauge when someone wants to speak, so take plenty of pauses and check in with your audience. The most important stakeholder could be drifting off.

Create constructive conversation

Who wants a monologue? Approach your meeting as a vehicle for collaboration that facilitates conversation between screens. Work extra hard to frame your presentation in a way that makes attendees want to weigh in with their opinions. Let questions develop the discussion, not shut it down. When people invest their own time and thoughts, they're far more likely to stick with you when putting plans into action.

Enlist the help of tech

You've put effort into being listened to – keep that momentum! IT is your best friend here – particularly the Microsoft 365 productivity suite. Record your session and set up a workflow that automatically copies it, along with your slide deck, into the project SharePoint folder we recommended earlier.

Microsoft 365 allows real-time collaboration, so ask participants to feedback on your ideas, directly on the document. You could even set up an email workflow to invite participants to share their thoughts, alert them when a certain individual has commented (i.e., the department head) and schedule in a next meeting to finetune and assign tasks and timelines.

Make it easy to collaborate and create

SharePoint helps you to be productive and push projects through to completion and is accessible for everyone using Microsoft 365. With sites for every project team, you can share and manage files and collaborate in real-time. Tasks and permissions can be assigned and handed over by using no-code workflows, while notifications to all project members can be automated – i.e., a new file upload, document sign off or the beginning of a new project sprint.

OneDrive integration ensures that important files are backed up and there is constant cohesion across file storage and project management platforms. Files and data can even be integrated to Teams project areas – great for having to hand during catch ups. Is it any surprise SharePoint is favoured as an integrated project management tool?

Build engagement and enthusiasm

Teams chat channels are great for communicating causal updates and supportive feedback to your project team. But what about the other people that will make your idea a success? Use the SharePoint intranet to post exciting news and practical information about your project to whole departments and divisions.

Whether you're implementing a new system, launching a marketing campaign or redefining the sales process, get colleagues engaged as early as is appropriate to expect a stellar performance when you launch.

Have a roll out to smile about

In many cases your project will result in new assets for colleagues, partners or clients. Use a workflow to automatically upload important documents to specific cloud locations and use Stream (within Microsoft 365) to host live or on-demand training sessions.
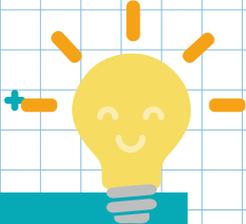
Well done! With a positive mindset and help from productivity technology, you've transformed that golden idea into a project to be proud of. Are you a remote worker or do you manage a team that work from home? Speak to Starcom about maximising IT and integration to boost productivity and keep teams smiling.
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