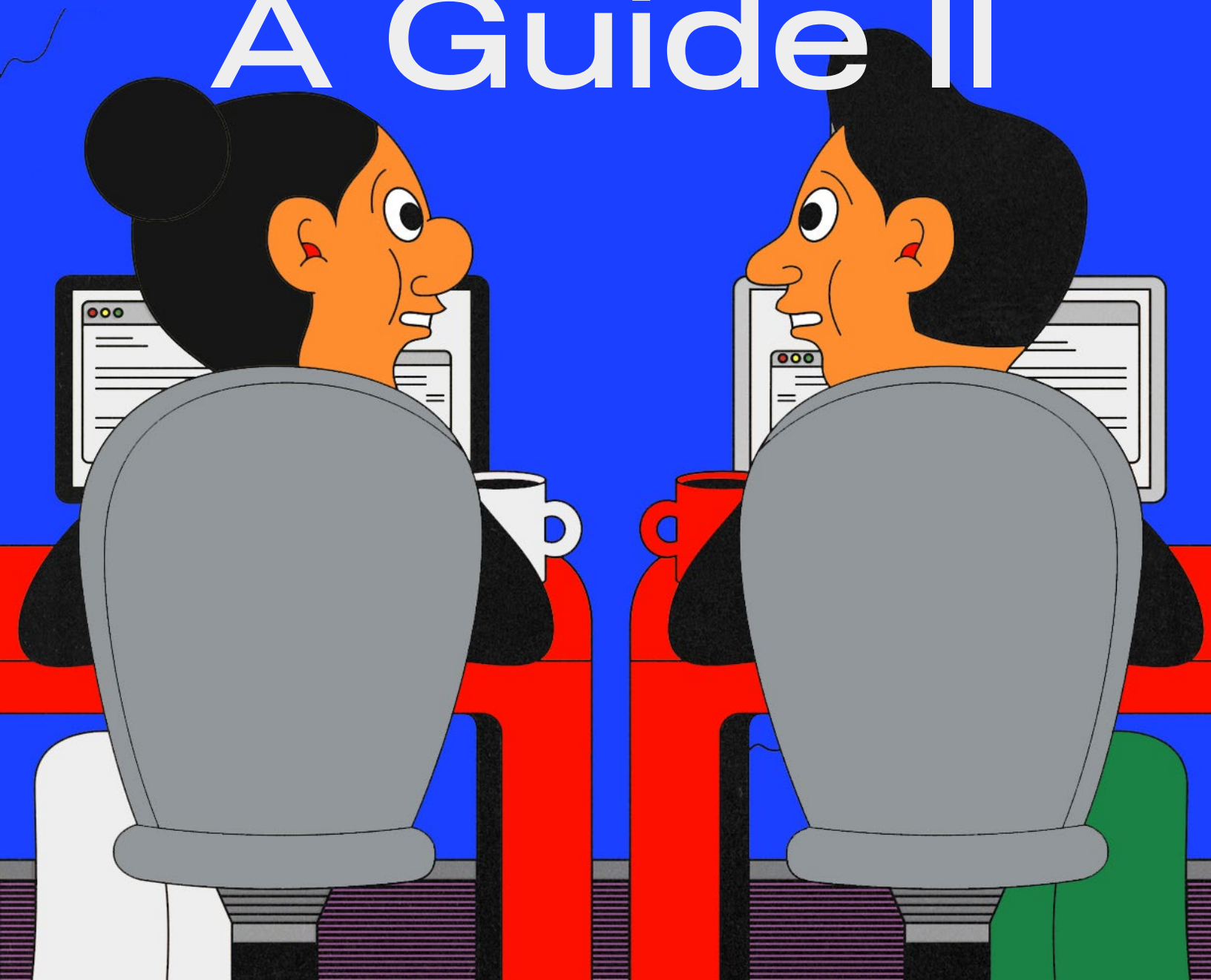


# Hybrid Work: A Guide II



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# I. VICE Media Group's Approach



# RETURN TO THE OFFICE GUIDE

May 2022



It's been over two years since the COVID cases first started cropping up around the world.

At this point, (just to scratch the surface of what we've all gone through) employees around the world have worked remotely, worked in-office, are back to working remotely (again!), and we are all figuring out how to truly work in hybrid mode. One thing for sure is that the new way of working is here to stay, and our focus is on being flexible and intentional about the way we work and how we work.

The bottom line is that we're still in an awkward transition phase. Turning workplaces into collaboration hubs remains a work in progress. Being in the office should not be an obligation but a destination. As we continue to build and adjust our workplace

practices, we will continue to push the boundaries of how we get things done. Creating an exciting workplace right from the start remains our top goal - from your first experience with a recruiter and hiring manager to your first day of onboarding, to your performance reviews and company gatherings. Everything at VMG should allow people to experience the spirit, purpose and promise of our company.

Now that many of us have experienced the hybrid and remote experience, we asked some of our internal VMG members what they're doing and plan to do to manage a hybrid workforce. This guide includes some of their responses in addition to some additional tips that offer guidance on running inclusive hybrid meetings, improving communication, establishing alignment on dispersed teams, and more. Let's build this together.

# WHAT IS IT?

At VMG, we're reinventing the future of work every day. We believe that hybrid work is the new remote work, offering employees greater flexibility that generates more productivity, connection and creativity. This requires a culture of trust, empathy and empowerment. It also means managers must focus on outcomes, not just activity metrics.

A hybrid work model is a plan that incorporates a mixture of in-office and remote work in an employee's schedule. This model allows us to have more control over our work and work environment. It's important to note that there isn't a "one size fits all" solution to a hybrid work model and that managers and employees should work together to plan and agree on a schedule and build team norms that create a shared purpose and deeper connections with and among team members.

# HYBRID WORK @VICE MEDIA GROUP

We believe that easing back into offices at a pace that feels right for your teams will help us rebuild connections, revitalize teams, and continue to build a workplace culture where everyone can feel and perform at their best. We are now requiring that our teams maintain a hybrid schedule (a minimum of two fixed days a week in the workplace) to increase cross-collaboration while still being empathetic to preferences.

# EMBRACE A GROWTH MINDSET

Leverage each other to increase innovation, creativity and productivity by engaging each other.

When in physical workplaces, it is much easier to “run” an idea past someone. With a dispersed workforce, being intentional about implementing a continuous listening strategy to learn what employees need to innovate and create is key. This can be done by hosting brainstorming sessions or by asking a group of individuals to answer a set of questions using a word document. Either approach is effective with small, big or cross-functional teams as long as it is followed by action items that individuals can execute in their day-to-day.

## ACTION:

- Hold regular check-ins at all levels to discuss what's working and what's not.
- Put informal listening strategies in place to learn what employees need to do their best work.
- Host collaborative brainstorming meetings in the workplace and save the busy work for remote work.
- Lead by example - demonstrate openness to ideas and feedback.
- Ensure a diverse group of people is invited to brainstorm (e.g., freelancers, employees from other Lines of Businesses).
- Be mindful of having too many calls. There's a balance between connection and independent productivity.

# DESIGN YOUR TIME

Use your time effectively and learn how you think about your work schedules. Measure performance by providing employees with clear tasks and outcomes.

Depending on the type of work that needs to be done, think about how you productively get through your day. When do you feel energized when working? Are you in the workplace or remote? Who are you with? When do you feel depleted when working? What type of work were you doing at that time and in what setting? Also, align on in-office schedules with peers and managers to increase cross-collaboration amongst team members.

## ACTION:

- > Imagine what your ideal workday and week looks like.
- > Reflect on the days you feel energized and write down what you were doing and who you were with. Do the same for the days you felt depleted.
- > Establish a team norm of having focus hours or focus days when no meetings are allowed to be scheduled.
- > Establish a team norm of “video call days” for when you’re not in the workplace. This will increase cross-collaboration when you’re in the workplace.

# FOSTER INNOVATION & CREATIVITY

Leveraging individuals on your team and other teams for idea sharing and feedback is a sure way to increase innovation and creativity.

Cultivating a workplace culture of innovation and creativity requires all individuals to feel authentically themselves, trust in what we are trying to achieve and how, and be comfortable being vulnerable. Trust is earned by the clarity of intent, transparency and consistency over time. Vulnerability leads to idea sharing, out-of-the-box thinking and connection amongst teammates, in turn resulting in meaningful and impactful relationships and productivity.

## ACTION:

- Schedule informal listening sessions to encourage idea sharing and to get a sense of what a team needs to innovate.
- Create a culture of open communication by scheduling regular check-ins at all levels to discuss what's working, and what's not. From one-on-ones with managers to office hours with executives, create lines of communication at all levels where people feel comfortable giving honest feedback.
- Create a SLACK channel or Google Suites Chat specifically to share ideas, industry trends and feedback on work.
- Schedule in-person temperature checks where people can question and interrogate goals and progress, and understand barriers to collaboration and innovation.
- Reward success!
- Encourage risk-taking.



# LEAD WITH INCLUSION & FAIRNESS

It is the whole team's responsibility to ensure that there is a sense of belonging and equity within a dispersed workforce.

Proximity Bias is falsely assuming that employees are more productive in the workplace where they are close to some peers and their managers. As a people manager, your imperative should be to facilitate flexibility while ensuring that all employees have an equal opportunity to participate in meetings and other interactions when some employees are home and others are in the office. Everyone wants a sense of connection, to feel seen, heard and valued. Feelings of exclusion or alienation can make it hard for remote employees to speak up and can lead to decreased motivation and engagement within a team.

## ACTION:

- Take into consideration the different communication preferences of team members.
- Ask for feedback on managing style during 1:1 convos.
- Ensure in-person and remote employees are getting equal attention.
- Develop performance metrics rooted in outcomes, not based on visibility.
- Abandon the mindset of monitoring team members and instead focus on whether they achieve their agreed-upon business goals.
- Facilitate and host bonding experiences everyone can participate in. Talk to your team members and ask them how they want to do this.
- Leverage team members for idea sharing and feedback.
- Use a buddy system. Research has shown that younger and more junior workers feel less supported by their coworkers, leaving them lonelier and more disconnected in hybrid setups. Pair these employees with a peer or mentor to facilitate the workplace relationships they might otherwise be missing.

# PROVIDE CONNECTION OPPORTUNITIES

Believe it or not, many individuals are craving social interaction in physical workplaces.

While some individuals prefer the comfortability and convenience of working from home, others miss the social (people) aspect of working in the workplaces. Additionally, many new team members started their Vice experience working remotely, and have never met any of their colleagues in real life. Being especially intentional about providing connection opportunities for those who are remote and in-person will increase a sense of belonging and collaboration.

## ACTION:

- Facilitate inter-departmental interactions, idea sharing and convos - add it to the team calendar.
- Host lunch gatherings and social outings.
- Schedule informal meetings to promote fun convos, like industry trends, and brainstorming.
- Host cross-departmental meet & greets, especially for those who started their roles remotely.
- Dedicate an area in the workplace specific to socializing.
- Institute a Focus Fridays, dedicated to focusing on work, well-being and no meetings so that your team members can integrate team activities the other days of the week.

# ESTABLISH TEAM ACCOUNTABILITY

To avoid confusion amongst team members, establish an accountability framework that is understood by all.

Establishing team accountability increases team productivity because it establishes clarity of purpose - why they work and for what - helps avoid confusion on goals and expected deliverables.

## ACTION:

- Develop team-level agreements, or operating manuals, to make explicit norms and expectations for flexible working. For example, establish “core collaboration hours” by fixing a three- or four- hour timespan each day when they can expect colleagues to be available for meetings or quick communications.
- Use the RASCI Format - Responsible, Accountable, SUPPORTED, Consulted, Informed. Model for projects, strategies and initiatives to assign roles and responsibilities.
- Use the SMART (Specific Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) Goal Framework to ensure you and your team’s goals are attainable.
- Empower ownership. Facilitate mutual agreement on priorities and what team members must deliver on.
- Establish team agreements.
- Ensure individuals on your team are getting credit for their work. Share an email to the broader team congratulating them on a successful project completion!

# LEAD WITH COMPASSION

But seriously, we've all gone through ALOT over the past couple years.

Compassion isn't something you're born with. It's the act of being mindful and considerate of how you treat others. This can be done on an individual and group level by listening and caring about what your team has to offer.

## ACTION:

- Ask your team what they need. "What is the one thing holding you up right? What is one thing I could be doing to make your life better this week?"
- Communicate to your team the importance of setting boundaries.
- Encourage coffee chats and socialization amongst team members.
- Start the week off with a team "Monday Refresh" for a wellness check and pep rally. This time can also be used to discuss industry trends, culture, food and entertainment.
- Give individual team members time to adjust to the hybrid model.
- Integrate social check-ins virtually and in person.
- Do not make assumptions and ask questions when things are unclear
- Communicate frequently and clearly, e.g., meeting follow-ups, and provide frequent updates on projects.
- Schedule check-ins on how the hybrid schedule is helping productivity and motivation.

# II. It's in Our Work



## A COLLECTION OF VMG ARTICLES WE'VE PRODUCED ON HYBRID WORK

TOPIC	LINK
MENTAL HEALTH	<a href="#"><u>DO I HAVE TO TALK ABOUT MY MENTAL HEALTH WITH MY BOSS?</u></a>
WORKPLACE CONFLICT	<a href="#"><u>EVERYTHING YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE TALKING TO HR ABOUT A PROBLEM AT WORK</u></a>
WORKPLACE TIPS	<a href="#"><u>HOW TO USE EVERY LAST PERK FROM YOUR JOB</u></a>
WORKPLACE CULTURE	<a href="#"><u>HOW TO SMOKE WEED AT WORK</u></a>

## RESOURCES

FUTURE OF WORK CULTURE INSIGHTS - Culture insights built by your colleagues around hybrid and remote work.

COVID MICROSITE - Helpful information around our COVID-19 policies and more. Please refer to the “Your Office” section for FAQs.

SKILLSHARE HYBRID WORKING CLASSES - Valuable training to support you in easing back into a hybrid workplace.

TEQUITABLE - An independent and confidential sounding board that provides employees impartial and confidential guidance for any workplace issues or concerns.

VMG MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES - A summary of the various resources available to you at VMG in support of your mental health and wellbeing.

## IN OFFICE RESOURCES

### IN-OFFICE RESOURCES

Office Risk Management Plans - protocols & office info (also via Covid Microsite)

NY - 49 SOUTH 2ND STREET (S2)

LA - 589 VENICE BOULEVARD (Venice)

WASHINGTON, D.C. (DC)

ENVOY: Office entry / desk booking, visitor management, deliveries, rooms (app only)

ENVOY & VMG | RESERVING A HOT DESK: INFO SHEET

VICE Support

SERVICE REQUEST CATEGORIES

OPEN A TICKET

# Thank You

