6 Strategies to Keep Your Remote Team Members Feeling Connected

A remote team can be a great thing, as long as everyone is on the same page.

By Young Entrepreneur Council [@yec](#)

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More and more businesses are adding remote members to their teams -- and for good reason. Opening positions to remote applicants produces a broader pool of talent, and it allows workers to do what they do best from wherever they feel most [comfortable and productive](#). But it can be a challenge to [stay connected with a team](#) that's spread across various locations and even time zones.

Below, six entrepreneurs discuss their top strategies for [touching base with remote team members](#) -- and making sure those workers feel equally connected to the team.

Use Slack for updates and communication.
"Slack is the best communication medium for remote teams," says Liam Martin, co-founder of productivity tools [Staff.com](#) and [TimeDoctor.com](#). It's crucial to have tools for your team members to communicate when they're not seeing each other regularly in the office.

"Apart from channels for various teams, we have a channel 'chillzone' where employees can relax and discuss not-so-serious things," Martin adds. "Slack's integration with Coworker Coffee also pairs each employee with a different colleague every two weeks for a virtual coffee. This helps them find common interests and connect in a better way."

Institute a presence policy.
Even those who work in a conventional office setting know how difficult it can be to really connect with a team when everyone is constantly distracted by incoming calls, emails and more. That's why it's important to make time to focus on one another, even if you're doing so across a long distance.

Corey Blake, founder and CEO of creative media firm [Round Table Companies](#), says: "We are a remote team with employees all over the country. We spend a good amount of time on the phone and emphasize presence -- meaning that, while people are

together, we limit distractions. When we meet in person, no computers are open and people don't check their phones. And, as the founder, presence starts with me leading by example."

Add a personal touch to meetings.
It's difficult to get to know coworkers on a personal level when you're hundreds of miles apart. So, it can be useful to make time in meetings for more than just the basic orders of business.

"We start all meetings with a check-in that builds our team's connection," notes Benjamin Berman, EOS implementer and partner at business scaling service Optimize For Growth. "People report their best personal and professional news and their expectations for the meeting. It's a hyper-efficient and remote-friendly version of water cooler conversation that takes people out of the daily minutiae of the business."

Play team-building games.
"Team-building games are a great way for remote teams to connect and get to know one another on a more personal level; they also have tangible impacts on productivity, morale and team performance," says Dave Nevogt, co-founder and CMO of HR software firm Hubstaff.com. It's important to make time for fun so that team members can get to know one another as people and not just coworkers.

"All you need to get started is a video-enabled conference tool like Skype or Google Hangouts. Some activities our team has tried are gaming nights, a virtual scavenger hunt and fitness challenges," notes Nevogt.

Plan a quarterly retreat.
While remote work can be great, it's hard to make deep connections with coworkers if you never spend real quality time together. That's why Michael Hsu, founder and CEO of autonomous accounting firm DeepSky, recommends making room in the schedule (and budget) for periodic get togethers for your remote teams.

"The DeepSky team spreads across 15 time zones and leverages daily check-ins to stay on point," Hsu says. "Our quarterly retreat, however, is where the team really gets connected. Four times a year we get together somewhere in the world and spend three days reviewing, evaluating, planning and bonding over various activities."

Bring everyone together for fun and work.
Spending time together having fun is great. But don't underestimate the importance of letting your team work together in one place, if only for a few days.
Diego Orjuela, CEO of medical device supplier Cables & Sensors, says: "Each year, we organize a special retreat for our entire staff to spend time together and work shoulder to shoulder. This year we took everyone on a four-day cruise creating cohesion within the team as people got to spend all day together. After we returned, we worked together for an entire week. This time together proved invaluable."

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