Get Things Done:
The Ultimate Cheat Sheet for Remote Work

Recruiting

When remote, think worldwide for team recruitment, and not just local.

Use the simple OKR method of tracking results for milestones. Objectives Key Results. Write them on your main canvas and add weekly check-ins and markers to track progress.

Soft weekly meeting agendas focus on most important next steps. Stick to your meeting time. If you run out of time, roll agenda items to the next meeting or pace via collaboration on Slack or email.

Getting work done

Break projects into steps and milestones and communicate in a one-on-one or team call. Track progress on platforms like Twist or Asana. Put those on your canvas.

Create a system where people can indicate they are ‘heads down’ or ‘on call’ and can’t be interrupted unless urgent. For example, Slack has a ‘headphone’ icon. The disruption can stop for 15 minutes.

Create a team agreement. In this context, an agreement is a multi-rooted decision. ‘What check-ins are appropriate, the frequency and timing of team meetings, and 1:1 meetings.’

Have occasional all-day co-working sessions when people are audio and video-on. Have fun and ask people to share anecdotes and share personal anecdotes in a video meeting. It seems good to talk for 10 minutes with no interruptions. Slack has a feature called ‘Pomodoro’ to enforce this.

Team building - motivation

Brainstorm to create a shared, simple vision for your team. It’s a statement of the team’s overall goal and how it supports the company’s vision. For example, marketing might say ‘communio to our audience that we find data science to achieve their biggest goals’.

Reward teams at the end of successful quarters with everything from cash gifts to gift cards, to in-person retreats for meeting annual goals.

Share project files and docs as soon as they are created in the team can track progress and not just final results.

Don’t call-collaborate meetings. Start with personal ‘watercooler moments’ like ‘what did you do this weekend?’ or what you are watching on Netflix. Periodically appoint team members other than ‘managers’ to set the agenda and run virtual meetings. This can help all contributors feel heard and valuable.

Collaboration

Have a single place, infinite virtual canvases work great, where you can put your OKRs, project apps, files, and documents. Track progress, annotate, share notes.

Make sure you have one platform for communication. It can be Slack or Teams. Pick one and stick to it.

Put time and effort into creating your checklist.

- It’s a summary of the week.
- Chat - Teams, Slack, Nemer
- File Management - Dropbox, Google Drive
- Meetings - Naga
- Task management - Vibe
- Notes - Evernote

Don’t let the silence statement go forlorn. Refer back to it frequently and amend it as needed to match reality.

Invite members of other departments to do weekly AMAs (ask me anything).

When project planning, make sure all the team members are on board and accepting the project management plan, and that all the critical steps are in place.

Agree on steps. Who approves what phases? Do cross-functional teams need to be looped in? A shared canvas is a great place to ideate through this process.

Meetings

- Get weekly (or more) and team meetings. It’s obvious, but it’s critical to ensure successful meetings.
- Have an agenda at least one day prior to the weekly meeting to ensure everyone can comment and be prepared.
- Don’t do status meetings. Status should be covered by working towards a sprint goal and completing it or not. Only schedule meetings that focus on problem-solving or decision-making and require a conclusion when meeting goals are at risk.
- If one team member says he is skipping or is not going, try 9:15 to 9:30 to ‘stand up’ and brief the team in a quick call. Finish what is completed, what they plan to do next, and any obstacles that stand in their way.
- Consider scheduling an important meeting as a lunch meeting and have lunch sent to each employee or order custom food for delivery via DoorDash or UberEats, etc.

Getting work done

- Break projects into steps and milestones and communicate in a one-on-one call or a cardboard box. Track progress on platforms like Twist or Asana. Put those on your canvas.
- Create a system where people can indicate they are ‘heads down’ or ‘on call’ and can’t be interrupted unless urgent. For example, Slack has a ‘headphone’ icon. The disruption can stop for 15 minutes.
- Create a team covenant. In this context, a covenant is a multi-rooted decision. ‘What check-ins are appropriate, the frequency and timing of team meetings, and 1:1 meetings.’
- Have occasional all-day co-working sessions when people are audio and video-on. Have fun and ask people to share anecdotes and share personal anecdotes in a video meeting. It seems good to talk for 10 minutes with no interruptions. Slack has a feature called ‘Pomodoro’ to enforce this.

Team building - motivation

- Brainstorm to create a shared, simple vision for your team. It’s a statement of the team’s overall goal and how it supports the company’s vision. For example, marketing might say ‘communio to our audience that we find data science to achieve their biggest goals’.
- Reward teams at the end of successful quarters with everything from cash gifts to gift cards, to in-person retreats for meeting annual goals.
- Share project files and docs as soon as they are created in the team can track progress and not just final results.
- Don’t call-collaborate meetings. Start with personal ‘watercooler moments’ like ‘what did you do this weekend?’ or what you are watching on Netflix. Periodically appoint team members other than ‘managers’ to set the agenda and run virtual meetings. This can help all contributors feel heard and valuable.
- Share customer feedback, good or bad in weekly meetings so team members can gain perspective on their role in the ecosystem of the company.
- At the end of the week, have each team member write out their good and bad thing. ‘What I’m looking forward to’ or summarize the week and look ahead to next week. Smartboards are a great place to post these.
- Pair your remote workers with a more seasoned remote buddy. Have the buddies meet regularly to train up and help the new person.
- Don’t call-collaborate meetings. Don’t feel the pressure to be productive at all times. You need to take a break every day and do something for yourself. When that’s meditation, making a healthy lunch, or watching YouTube videos, make sure you can reflect on your mind.

by Vibe Team