

9 don'ts for remote working in 2021



2020 was a crash course in remote working, everybody was sure that it was a flash in the pan and would rapidly dissipate. 2021 seems set to hold the same challenges with an additional twist, we now see that large amounts of our workforce want to have the flexibility of remote working. Key issues remain, especially that quantity and quality of meetings/calls is too high and is disruptive rather than constructive to productivity.

Nevo Hadas, Partner at DYDX, unpacks some of the lesson's companies have learned as well as what to avoid heading into 2021:

Do not pretend you are in the office. What worked face to face, does not work in remote settings. Your communication style must be clearer, especially with expectations and deliverables.

Do not make video compulsory. There is enough research explaining Zoom fatigue and video calls is a contributor to this. It would be considered acceptable to have a video call for an initial meeting or a check-in, but otherwise keeping video off is better than video on to manage exhaustion.

Do not schedule back-to-back meetings. Effective context switching (I.e., changing topics) is hard. Rather only plan 30 minute or 45-minute calls and give yourself time to prepare for the next meeting or grab a coffee.

Do not sit at your desk non-stop. If you can, do a conference call on your phone, with the camera off and walk around or sit somewhere else if possible.

Do not have so many calls. Not every problem requires a meeting, use asynchronous communication (messaging) or other tools to keep teams in sync.

Do not use e-mail so much. E-mail is killing productivity and reducing your effectiveness as inboxes get even more crowded than they did before. Start using messaging tools to increase communication.

Do not assume everyone gets the tech. In many companies, there are more and less technology-literate employees. Invest in training your staff on Teams or Slack to increase their ability to work effectively and have greater confidence in their tools.

Do not under-resource onboarding new team members. Your induction process needs to be updated to bring on new team members quickly and effectively in a remote environment. Develop a remote induction program that gives them a “mentor” to show them how things work and check in regularly with them. Do not ignore culture. Yes, you can still and should still build team culture even when remote. Activities like chocolate tasting allow teams to have a physical experience while distributed and help build connection.

There have been many lessons learnt over the past year and many more to learn as we embrace this new way of working. DYDX has created a **book** on how to set up and manage remote teams.