



The Optimal Balance: **Effective Communication in** **Hybrid and Remote Teams**

Programme Overview

- *The Optimal Balance* is a virtual session centred around tools for effective communication within teams that are having to adjust to a hybrid or semi-remote work routine.
- The programme's focus is on: (i) enabling managers to make blended work models succeed for them as well as their teams; and (ii) strategies to promote team cohesion and enhance internal communications despite not all team members working in the same place at the same time.
- As many firms seek to harmonise between home-working and office-based attendance, the increasing flexibility may bring uncertainty and a lack of clarity for all involved. This programme addresses this head-on and offers ways to find the right balance so as to make that blend work.
- Our award-winning programmes are dynamic, interactive and informative and the training is designed to enhance participants' engagement and attention levels.
- Typical session duration: 120-180 minutes.



Virtual Session on Proposed Content and Outline

Suggested outline

Welcome and introduction

Participants' Views

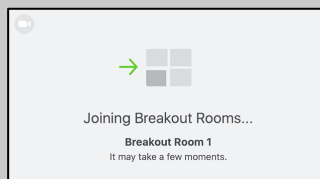
- Using an interactive online word-cloud poll, participants share their concerns about the impact which hybrid working is already having or may have on their respective teams and communications.



Participants
contribute
anonymously
via their phones

Conversation Demonstration

- The co-facilitators enact a conversation demonstration, playing the parts of members of a fictional hybrid legal team. In breakout rooms, participants discuss what was working well for the protagonist in the conversation and what might make that conversation even more effective.



Each breakout room
appoints a spokesperson to
share their group's
impressions

Conversation Demonstration Re-Run

- Taking on participants' feedback, the facilitators re-run a segment of the conversation, inviting participants to shout "PAUSE!" whenever they observe the protagonist doing anything that could be improved.



Participants re-direct
the conversation in a way
that steers it towards a more
effective outcome.



Suggested outline (continued) //

The remainder of the session is structured along two primary strands:
values and process and **effective communication in the hybrid setting**

VALUES AND PROCESS

Values

- We look at what principles and values underpin participants' examination of hybrid working and how to make it function for them and their teams
- What are participants' aims in this regard?

Building Trust

- How do you build and maintain trust within teams operating in a hybrid setting? We consider this through the lens of Harvard Academics, Maister, Green & Galford's *Trust Equation*.

Process and Structure

- Organisations are already devising firm-wide policies around process and structure for team work in the hybrid world. Here we assess the parameters participants are already aware of within their own teams.
- The participants then explore what else may need to be implemented in order to advance the efficacy of the 'new normal' for their organisation in a way which is congruent with the values identified earlier.

Do, Review, Renew – Feedback in the Hybrid World

- The provision of feedback, its frequency and equitability across the team are vital elements in the hybrid environment. An effective feedback culture promotes better communication, growth and an enhanced performance (as well as better results). We look at what this looks like in practice.
- On the point of equitability, we invite participants to explore practical ways to ensure they are communicating with and providing feedback to different team members in as uniform a manner as possible, regardless of how much time they spend in the office.

The Hybrid Process as Applied to Remote Onboarding

- How can the values of the organisation and the principles on which the team's hybrid working are structured be shared and disseminated most effectively when it comes to new joiners who have to be onboarded remotely?
- What processes and parameters should be put in place to support new starters, provide them with a meaningful and practical induction and connect them to the team's (and organisation's) goals and objectives?



Suggested outline (continued):

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE HYBRID SETTING

Reframing Mehrabian's Communication Theory for the Hybrid Age

- We deconstruct and reframe Mehrabian's traditional communication theory pie chart by inviting participants to consider what other important elements need to be borne in mind when we think about communication in the hybrid age.

Challenging Conversations in the Hybrid Setting

- With a nod to the conversation demonstration earlier in the session, we offer participants tools to support them in handling challenging conversations – whether expected or unexpected – when the team is part office based, part remote working, including: The FOTO model (focus on your outcome); tips for effective preparation; ways to handle emotions; the LIFT model for managing the conversation; collaboration in practice.

The Importance of Facts

- When we work in hybrid teams, we may not have a full picture of what's going on for other people and, whilst assumptions are part and parcel of our perception of the world and our evaluation of our communication, we may need to keep challenging ourselves to stick to facts and what we know to be true.
- Here we also examine the value in being curious and asking open questions.

The Opportunity in Syncopation

- We introduce the notion that work in a hybrid team can be likened to syncopation ("a disturbance or interruption of the regular flow of rhythm").
- In pairs in breakout rooms, participants discuss what their usual modes of communication with different members of their team(s) are (e.g. email, text, Slack, F2F etc) and which they find more or less effective.
- Back in plenary, we look at which of these different modes can make that syncopation work most effectively in the best interests of the team and in what circumstances.

Takeaway Task

- Referencing our earlier discussion around participants' aims in the *Values* segment of the programme, we invite them to set themselves a target, with regular check ins, to assess their progress in achieving those aims.

Key Learning Points and Close.

ABOUT STREVAS

Strevas designed and delivered a "Lockdown Learning Programme" which received the **2020 Law Society Excellence Award** in *Learning and Development*.

In addition, the programme was recently short-listed for the **2021 Legal Week Award** for *Outstanding Training Innovation*.



Strevas provides bespoke training globally to help practitioners develop their talents to their full potential. We have a particular expertise in **experiential learning** to help identify strengths, build better communication skills and encourage a healthy feedback culture. We have all worked as **lawyers**, each with a minimum of ten years of experience in private practice or in-house (often in multiple jurisdictions), and we are all trained, **professional actors**, harnessing our diverse backgrounds in the delivery of communication and wider skills training.

Our training sessions are highly practical and designed to have immediate and meaningful impact. We are passionate about the learning experience and, having spent so many years 'at the coal face', we know what a difference our type of experiential training can bring.

Between us, we have delivered training to over 50 different law firms as well as other professional service firms, banks, corporates and public agencies. This give us a breadth of experience that we continue to build on and pull into our work.



Vanessa Coffey



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