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From **Collocated to Fully Virtual** in Five Minutes

Whether it's an international pandemic, a loss of office space, or simply a distributed team that is unable to get together in the same office, coordinating and working virtually while still being effective is a must. **Get your fully virtual team up and running in just 5 minutes with these quick tips:**

Choose a Battle Rhythm:
■ Select a regular cadence of ceremonies that your team will adhere to.

Scrum sets teams up well with Sprint Planning, Daily Scrums, Sprint Review, and Retrospectives, but it is by no means the only option out there. Look up any of the Agile frameworks or invent your own! Don't be afraid to modify your framework per your team's needs, but in the spirit of Shu Ha Ri, give the framework an honest chance as-is before messing with it.

Increase Communication:
■ Setup a group messaging forum.

The reason collocation is so important is that anyone can look up from their desk at any time and say they're struggling with something or they need someone to sign off on a pull request. Being able to get the whole team's attention fast saves a good deal of waste and this often gets lost in a virtual setup with poor communication. Collocation can be simulated with an open group messaging system that serves the same purpose, like slack or Google Hangouts/Chat.

Visualize Work:
■ Track your team's work in a visible manner.

With collocated teams, a physical board with work status columns helps anyone who wanders into the team space know what the team is doing at any given time. A physical board also gives the team an artifact around which to focus a daily discussion (for instance, Daily Scrum). The same can be achieved with a virtual board, using LeanKit, Trello, or Jira, among other options.

Keep Interaction Human:
■ Find a method for virtual collaboration that ideally includes video chatting and screen sharing.

Another benefit of collocation is being able to quickly slide into a pairing effort by wheeling your chair right up to someone else's desk. This can be simulated by jumping on a video conference together, so team members can talk through complex problems face-to-face and switch off typing on the same screen. Doing this virtually is made easy by tools like Zoom, BlueJeans, or Skype.

Inspect & Adapt:
■ Make quick decisions on numbers 1-4, evaluate progress regularly, and be willing to change up your approach.

Teams waste a lot of time letting perfect be the enemy of good enough. Your first system for virtual work won't be flawless, so you should reevaluate early and often. It's critical to set up regular check-ins to inspect and adapt based on what's working for your team and what isn't.

All of the above suggestions address the issue of virtual team collaboration, but what if your team's product isn't available to be worked on virtually? Hurdles such as proprietary codebases and government-classified work may make virtual work impossible for some, but in other situations, you may just need to create a development strategy complete with agreed upon source code repositories, branching and merging strategies, and deployment protocols. As with all of the other suggestions, put some system in place, then evaluate and iterate upon it as you go.

Find Other Resources to Help You Go Fully Virtual

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