



## **Remote Control** *(adapted from “The Corporate Creative” second edition)*

There are a number of circumstances, which vary greatly from organization to organization, that determine whether fully remote, fully on site, or a hybrid model best serves an in-house agency’s (IHA) working model. Below is guidance if your group is either hybrid or fully remote.

### **On Site and Remote Criteria**

There are specific roles and phases of the creative process that are best served by either working remotely or on site. To keep it simple here are some instances where each approach is most appropriate.

#### **On site roles include:**

- Live event production roles such as webcast producers and associated functions like audio and camera operators (this is pretty much a no-brainer)
- Videographers, DPs, and photographers engaging in on site shoots
- Account managers - at least partially, as in-person client contact is critical to establishing strong working relationships
- Leadership roles - at least partially for the same reason as account managers inclusive not just of establishing relationships with clients but other IHA stakeholders and team members as well

#### **On site activities**

- Brainstorming
- Agency work creative audits/critiques
- Team building events
- Creative reviews with clients (obviously if the clients are available on site)
- New business pitches

#### **Remote roles**

There are circumstances and business objectives that support incorporating fully remote workers into an IHA. They include:

- Cost efficiencies achieved through outsourcing to geographic areas where labor costs are low
- Meeting the mandate for 24/7 coverage by establishing remote teams in multiple time zones
- Upskilling the IHA by increasing the talent pool beyond corporate office locations
- Securing talent with cultural knowledge of geographic areas the IHA services

#### **Remote activities**

Basically, any task that involves the individual act of creation and creative refinement. In other words - concepting, design, production, copywriting, editing, video editing, animation, illustration, you get the idea. Also, on the operations, project and account management side we’re talking about process-mapping, project scoping, documentation of client communications, etc.

### **Guidance for Remote Working**

There are a slew of best practices and guidance that should be employed when working with remote agency team members that will set everyone up for success. Here’s a list developed by Cella Inc.

## Overview

Agency leadership should ideally plan weekly schedules and determine where team members will be working based on what will best meet immediate and long-term business needs.

The overall guiding priorities are safety and productivity. If being on site positively impacts productivity then team members should be on site. If being off site affords a team member to be more productive and/or guarantees safety and the team member's well-being, then the team member should work off site.

## Remote work project guidance

To ensure maximum productivity, managers should consistently establish and communicate on a project-by-project basis the following information with individual contributors:

- Job objectives
- Specific assigned tasks and expected deliverables
- Task deadlines
- Allotted hours for assigned tasks (level of effort)
- Project-specific points of contact
- Handoff protocols

## Remote worker communication and operational guidance

Proper communication protocols and etiquette are critical practices that in-house agency team members are expected to follow. This is especially true for staff when working remotely. Accessibility, proper file sharing and security should be your priorities when engaging in remote work. Working off site will only work if team members diligently follow the communication guidance listed below.

- Update your IM tool status daily
- Communicate contact information
  - Let team members know where you will be working and a phone number where you can be reached. To personalize your IM tool status, just type in your customized message in the bar below your name. Be sure that your manager approves your schedule and knows if you will be away during core hours.
- Check in often
  - Establish a check-in schedule and communication tool (IM, email, etc.) with your supervisor on a daily or semi-weekly basis. Touch base with Project Managers or other team members with whom you are working on an assignment at least once a week to hold your own "job status meeting."
- Log in your time
  - Fill out your PM tool timesheet by the end of each day. You are responsible for capturing your own hours so the agency can track jobs and make sure they stay within estimated hours. If you think you may exceed your allotted hours for a specific task or incur overtime, immediately contact the appropriate PM and your manager.
- File and save correctly
  - When working remotely and accessing the agency server to retrieve a job on which you intend to work, you must pull down the entire job folder to your desktop. You should not work directly off the server. Make sure you save your files correctly and in the Active Folder so team members have access to the most recent file. This will help ensure version control.

- Use online meeting tools  
Maintain consistent and regular communication by taking advantage of your IM tool, teleconferencing, and online conferencing as designated by your manager.
- Think before emailing  
Before you write an email, consider if a phone call would be a better option. Agency inboxes are inundated daily with emails and sometimes a real-time phone conversation is more productive and appropriate. This is especially true if the communication involves a lot of information or is an emotionally charged matter. For an instant response, use your IM tool.

### **Remote Worker Accessibility Guidance**

Because of constantly changing project demands and workload and the need to exchange project-specific content and feedback, when working remotely, it is critical that all team members engage in practices that will allow for them to be quickly and easily contacted and communicated with.

### **Accessibility Best Practices**

Team members working remotely must be sure to do the following:

- Keep your shared schedules current on a daily basis
- Immediately notify either your manager or an appropriate Project Manager, if you will be unexpectedly inaccessible during an agreed-upon work schedule
- Include current contact information in all emails and on voicemail greetings
- Inform your manager of any anticipated extended absences as soon as possible
- Include in your IM status your current location and contact information

### **Accessibility Tools**

Team members working remotely should use the following tools and technologies to allow for accessibility and communication:

- Your IM and email tools provided by your company are the corporate mandated applications to be used for instant messaging and email
  - All company emails should include your company signature
  - When emailing about specific projects, the project number and name should always be included in the subject line
  - The out-of-office tool must be used for extended absences with reference to how long you will be OoO and contact information for an alternate team member
- Your company provided Calendar tool should be used for all scheduling
  - Calendar should be updated on a daily basis
  - Meetings with other staff or clients should be scheduled through Calendar
- When working remotely it is permissible to use your personal phone
- When using your personal phone be sure to include that number in your contact information on all emails, your IM status and in your VM greetings