

Top tips for hybrid working employee engagement

Thursday, 28 October 2021

What you asked us

Here are the Q&A from our webinar on Thursday 28 October, 2021.

Congratulations! You deployed the tech and launched your first hybrid working model. You now have people in the office and at home. So how do you support your people to feel connected and experience those natural, 'water cooler' moments? We know that strong engagement levels lead to higher productivity, better work-life balance and more closely connected colleagues. Getting those natural water cooler moments is key. Visit [our webinars page](#) to look out for the next session led by experts in technology, change and digital transformation.

You can also [follow The Inform Team on LinkedIn](#)

About the speakers

Mark Thompson, Office 365 Consultant

Mark Thompson has over 20 years' experience in IT, training and support. Currently he's helping people work with Microsoft Teams and all things Microsoft 365. Mark's a lead trainer and produces training material for large governmental departments. Materials include train the trainer, user community engagement, support for non-technical team members and end-user training. He's passionate about sharing everything he learns and is the main source of Office 365 updates in his current organisation with over 8,000 staff.

Follow [Mark on LinkedIn](#)

Natasha Bradley, Commercial Manager at The Inform Team

Natasha has worked in the IT industry for over 12 years and has a good understanding of technology and how it can be used to overcome business challenges. Before joining Inform, Natasha ran a sales and marketing business for five years, delivering services to a range of Microsoft partners in the UK. Natasha has innovative ideas on how to use technology and is working with several large NHS trusts to introduce new ways of working with Microsoft Teams.

The questions

We've indicated the initials of the person answering the questions. The answers are either as they were given in the session or with some additional information added after more time for reflection.

Question	By	Answer
From your water cooler tips – what would you choose to first to start out?	MT	It's the drop-in meeting room. It allows us to have good relationships. Every team should have an ongoing meeting room. You'll see tangible differences and you can pop in and say hello. Just like you would in the old days.
Are people responsive immediately to group drop-in sessions or do you have to win over doubters?	MT	In the beginning I felt obliged to go to this meeting. So, you have to make sure people know that it's not obligatory. You will only see resistance if you haven't positioned it right in the first place.
How would drop-ins work within Outlook – if you send them an invite that diary could show as full – is there ways of managing that?	MT	When you go to create these meetings in Outlook you should make sure you check the <i>show as free</i> option in the meeting sessions. So they'll have appointments in there but they'll show as available.
We are now in a position where our virtual culture is great. The challenge for us is how to deal with a new hybrid culture and being encouraged to get back to meeting rooms.	MT	The most difficult meeting to get right is the one where you have people in the office and people at home. We make sure to actively welcome the hybrid people in, making sure that everyone can see everything. Someone must be in charge of that meeting. And make sure there are regular check-ins with the remote people.
How many people to you have involved in these drop-in sessions, sometimes these drop-in sessions start well but people can drop back	MT	We use this regularly in our team. Yet it would depend on your organisation and how you organise things. Our team manager, when she's not in client calls or in meetings she tends to spend a lot of time in there. Sometimes no one says anything – because you don't have to. It's a safe space where you can drop in, say hello, and go on mute. You have to make sure you communicate that.

into old habits. Have you ever had that?		So, yes, there are quiet times. Yet you have that in the office too.
--	--	--

Have a question that's not answered here or want to talk about your own project? [Contact Natasha](#) and she can help.