# TIPS FOR BUILDING INCLUSIVE DIGITAL TEAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic can serve as a catalyst for us to understand the full power of technology to build strong teams and support diversity and inclusion. Technology has allowed us to connect teams to some extent already, but now is the time to innovate, create and strengthen. Some organizations and teams are very comfortable doing business virtually, yet for others, this is a completely new experience. Let's bring everyone along with us. Here are key tips for fostering inclusive digital teams and organizations in a crisis.

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| **Create Digital Foundations Across the Organization** | • Ensure employees have sufficient technology and access to appropriate systems to work from home effectively.<br>• Identify a digital activation team leader for each group to mobilize them to create and foster an effective virtual work environment.<br>• Host a digital orientation session to get employees up to speed, answer questions and gain additional input on how to do business virtually.<br>• Verbalize the importance of seeking technology help immediately. |
| **Set Up Processes to Build Strong Digital Teams, Foster Belonging and Drive Collaboration** | • If your group or organization does not have a web-based video meeting platform, or if yours is cumbersome, then set up a free account. We have found Zoom to be the most user-friendly.<br>• Host visual online staff meetings with your team every morning to spark connection and clarify the path forward.<br>• Encourage the use of video conferencing for all meetings, to create a more interconnected experience.<br>• Leverage polling technology in meetings to gauge the feelings of the team; word clouds are especially powerful to level-set the conversation.<br>• Create a digital "welcome apace" that is always open, where employees can just drop into the space to interact and engage.<br>• Encourage employees to establish virtual collaboration routines. |
| **For Managers:**<br><br>**Connect Digitally with Employees** | • Maintain connection often with virtual check-ins for your direct reports.<br>• Use video conferencing whenever possible rather than phone calls.<br>• Spend time understanding your team members' work-from-home challenges and collaborate to ensure any barriers are addressed. Be flexible and forgiving about distractions like pets and children.<br>• Start meetings with a friendly check-in to allow employees to express their emotions before jumping into work topics.<br>• Recognize employees for their efforts and accomplishments, both one-on-one and publicly, through online collaboration tools. |
| **For Leadership and Human Resources Teams:**<br><br>**Ensure Digital Health and Wellness Across the Organization** | • It can be difficult to focus and remain productive in a crisis. Acknowledge the challenges of this time and work with managers and employees to surface and address concerns.<br>• Encourage employees to check the CDC and the World Health Organization websites to get info and regular updates on COVID-19.<br>• Remind employees of EAP and mental health resources.<br>• Establish topic-based drop-in digital rooms to discuss key topics like managing financial and working-from-home challenges.<br>• Communicate the state of the business regularly. |