WEBER THOMPSON

Hybrid Work Series

In 2022, the WT EDI Group facilitated a series of discussions to address the new post-Covid work environment and gain feedback from WT staff. We examined barriers, goals and ideals, and a vision for new strategies. The outcome was a collaboratively designed agreement for best practices and a hybrid work strategy for WT.

This poster summarizes the series outcomes and is a resource tool. It is a living document that will be updated, as needed, to reflect our learnings.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at Weber Thompson

We acknowledge that systemic inequities exist, in our society and profession, that must be challenged.

WT's EDI Group acts collectively and individually as agents of change to create respect, understanding, and meaningful inclusion with our peers, communities, and our work.

Key Concepts in EDI

Key Concepts in EDI that Impact Our Communications and Professional Relationships in a Hybrid Work Environment.

IDENTITY
Our inherent or chosen characteristics, including our roles and experience levels at work, are often related to power or agency in any given interaction.

MICROAGGRESSIONS
A comment, action, or form of discrimination that negatively targets a marginalized person or group – may appear as commonplace or daily, verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities. Whether intentional or unintentional, they communicate hostile or derogatory slights to marginalized groups. Examples include: comments ignored, talked over, not being acknowledged, tone policing, and addressing only the dominant person.

CULTURE
Culture is a system of values, habits, skills, ideologies, and beliefs. Both implicit and explicit, we use these shared patterns to make meaning out of our environment and determine appropriate behavior.

INCLUSION
A culture and environment where all individuals and groups can fully participate while being and feeling welcomed, respected, supported, and valued. Everyone can contribute to their highest potential and are valued and recognized for those contributions.

Inclusion In The Hybrid Environment

Individual Hybrid Work

Team members can work fluidly, utilizing the positives of the hybrid environment in a holistic way.
See the Four Modes of Work graphic on the right.

Location does not necessarily determine work mode; individuals can adjust their environment to meet their needs.

The inherent flexibility of hybrid work helps us to manage unexpected challenges.

Everyone can balance having a rich life outside of the office while getting the work done.

We recognize the benefits and limitations of different work modes and understand which are most beneficial for our productivity, individually and as a team.

Individuals should clearly communicate their work schedules and coordinate expectations and availability with their teams.

- VISION
- CALL TO ACTION
- BEST PRACTICES

Teamwork

Teamwork needs and productivity are balanced / coordinated with individual needs so team members can contribute and connect effectively within all four modes of work.

Teams are flexible, reasonably accommodating, and understanding of other's identities and needs. Individuals can effectively balance their external responsibilities and workload.

Think beyond individual tasks and analyze team effectiveness at inclusion in a hybrid environment as it applies to communication, coordination, group learning, efficiency, and quality control.

Establish ways to lessen the frenetic pace of teamwork through predictability and stress reduction.

Teams should have a clear understanding of when and how team members can be contacted within the work day/work week.

Teams should make conscious choices about which communication tools to utilize and in what ways.

Teams should have a clear understanding of expected speed of response through various communications tools.

Social Connection / Office Culture

Connections are forged between everyone in the firm through various touch points and multi-modal options. The community is proactive to ensure everyone is included and feels supported.

Everyone is encouraged to create and contribute to the office culture.

Consider firm priorities relating to mentorship, culture, connection, quality of work, and business needs, through an inclusive lens within the hybrid work environment.

Provide opportunities for professional growth and mentorship, with an emphasis on supporting underrepresented groups.

Strive to understand each other's context, including their identity (comfort and belonging) and circumstance (tech, location, resources).

Take time to make introductions and help build connections, especially for people who are newer to the firm and haven't had as many opportunities to meet colleagues in person.

Attribute good ideas to the person that originates it, ex. "Can we revisit what X said?"

Support and model balanced breaks and boundaries at individual, team and office-wide scales, such as lunch breaks away from work, using the Aloha room, exercising, etc.

Clearly communicate needs to one another using respectful and inclusive language. Disrupt microaggressions.

Model the behavior you would like to see in others.

Reach out and actively engage with each other, but be respectful of work needs and look for signals like headphones.

Inclusive Meetings in the Hybrid Work Environment

Meetings in the hybrid environment utilize tailored technology and conscientious moderation to include all participants regardless of their location. All participants feel they are heard and can fully participate in the conversation.

All participants feel they are heard and can fully participate in the conversation in hybrid work meetings.

Upgrade conference and focus room technology, lighting, and environment, and provide training to use efficiently.

Consider having one person moderate the meeting and another person manage tech and screen shares to keep the meeting as fluid as seamless as possible.

Popcorn/raise hand/pass the mic are good ways to include people who don't feel like they can interrupt others.

If multiple people are in the same meeting at their desks in the office, meet together in a conference room instead.

As a moderator, set up the format in advance and communicate to group, assign someone to monitor chat.

Consider calling on remote participants first when doing introductions or asking for input so that inclusion is established early on.

If attending a meeting remotely from your desk, be aware of your volume and impact on those working around you. Consider moving to a focus room.

During Zoom/remote meetings, utilize hand raising tool and chat instead of interrupting.

Perspectives

Early Career Professional (ECP)

CHALLENGES
Folks early in their career need high levels of supervision. They can have a lot of questions, which can be inefficient or disruptive for supervising staff when working apart or asynchronously.

BEST PRACTICES
Teams should create a safe space for asking questions and make new members feel included and valued. ECPs and their teammates should prioritize in-office time to provide direct supervision and build connections, professionally and personally. ECP's also benefit from opportunities to broaden their professional network and connections.

Broad Contributor (BC)

CHALLENGES
As a broad contributor, it's challenging to track multiple project needs, different schedules, and communication preferences. They are often working on many tasks and may not be able to respond immediately to one team.

BEST PRACTICES
Have a central place for everyone to find where another team member is (daily) and their preferred method of communication. During onboarding, share the project team style, schedule, and expectations. Respect BCs time and provide well-organized updates and key information.

Mid-Career Professional (MCP)

CHALLENGES
Mid-career professionals have a lot to contribute but still have questions. Frequent in-person conversations may not get distributed and cause gaps in communication. MCPs often function as a conduit for information between senior and junior staff when not everyone is present, creating an unacknowledged workload across the office.

BEST PRACTICES
Sometimes collaboration is best done in person. MCPs must be organized and use tools like issue logs or Slack to create an accessible record and make a concerted effort to seek answers. Be proactive and ask questions on Slack channels.

Manager

CHALLENGES
A manager needs to balance everyone's schedule and communication preferences with the needs of the overall team, treat everyone with equal attention, convey personal availability, and balance individual work demands.

BEST PRACTICES
Managers should give time for everyone to respond, schedule focus/open hours, use Slack status, be transparent about their current working mode, and clearly communicate expectations and team needs to individuals. They also work to maintain strong communication channels to stakeholders outside the core team.

Senior Leadership (SL)

CHALLENGES
Senior leaders can easily get over scheduled with many different projects and responsibilities. There is a heavy emphasis on meetings, and communication is very challenging in a remote environment. They need multifaceted communication much more in a hybrid work environment. Their ability to transfer information to junior staff is reduced, and the mental load of tracking multiple project teams can be challenging.

BEST PRACTICES
SLs should express communication preference and narrow the toolset to avoid overload. They should make space for unscheduled time, casual interactions, and be clear when they need to be included in communications.
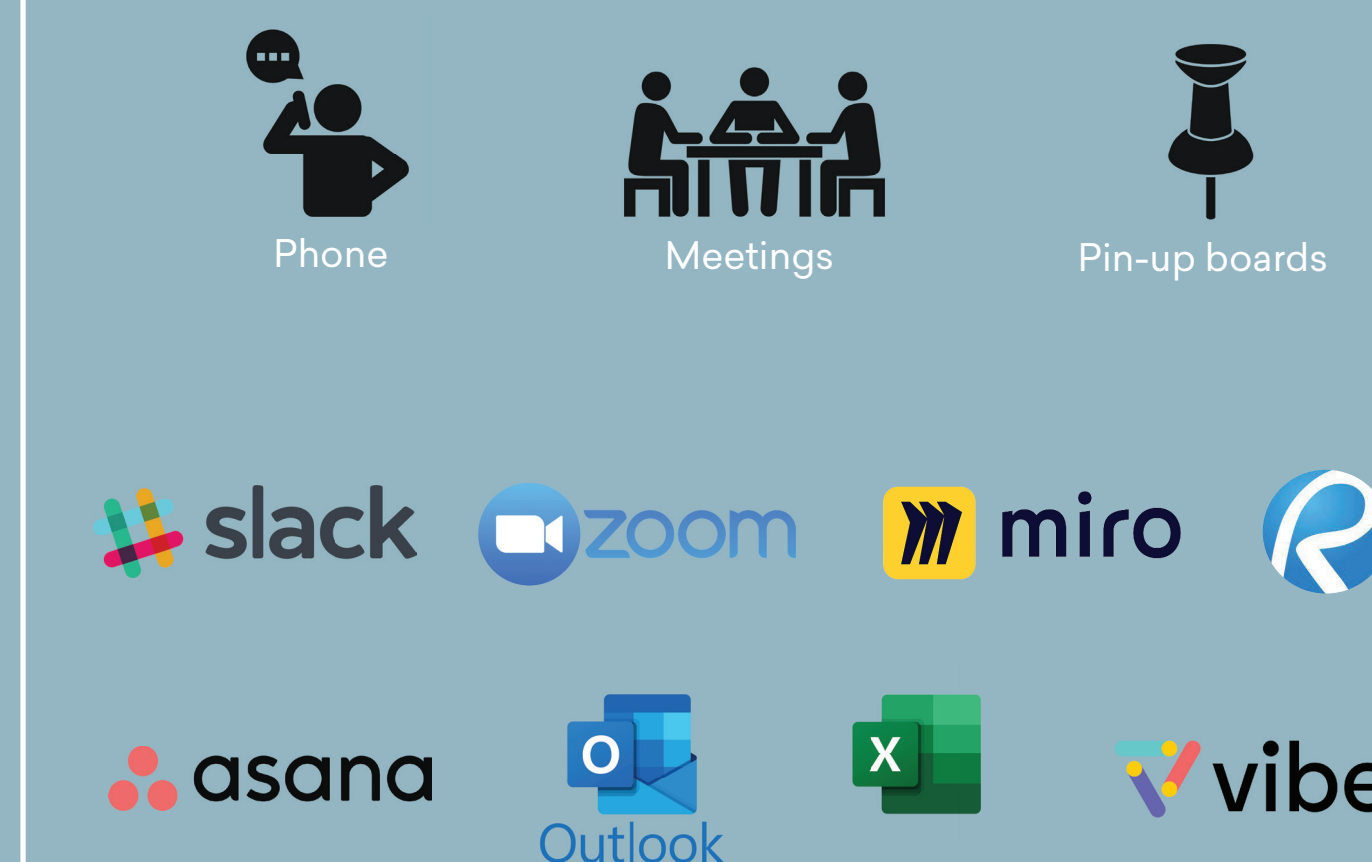
Four Modes of Work

The move to hybrid workplaces can be thought of as adding flexibility to the "where" and "how" of work. We can be co-located or distributed. We can work synchronously, or asynchronously. Together these options give us four modes of work.

All of these modes can contribute to innovation, creativity, and productivity in their own way.

	WORKING TOGETHER, TOGETHER	WORKING ALONE, TOGETHER
Co-Located		
Distributed	WORKING TOGETHER, APART	WORKING ALONE, APART
	Synchronous Work	*Asynchronous Work*

Communication Tools

Make conscious choices as a project team on necessary communication tools.

Phone   Meetings   Pin-up boards

slack   zoom   miro

asana   Outlook   Excel   vibe