

Ways to Make Connections While Working Virtually

As many students begin internships and full-time jobs in a virtual world, it isn't any less important to make connections with new co-workers and supervisors. Here are ways that you can build a network and begin to develop personal relationships while working from home.

Work individually, but together

Just like snagging your favorite study table in the library with your friends to work on homework, sometimes it's nice to have company while working. There's just something special about getting work done alongside your peers and being able to bounce ideas off each other or ask for feedback. Try setting up a virtual chat room and invite several co-workers to log in to while you are working. There is no agenda, just support as you work on individual tasks. Even if you all just sit in silence while you type or listen to the same playlist together while working on spreadsheets, replicating the feeling of an open office work space can be a good way to become comfortable with your new team.

Coffee Chats

When you typically start a new job, there are often opportunities to meet new team members at the coffee machine, or on a quick lunch run. Though it might take a bit more planning, try to replicate this same experience with teammates via video conferencing! Reach out to other new employers or long time team members to chat for 15 to 20 minutes over Zoom. If a Zoom call without an agenda makes you anxious, you can prepare a few questions ahead of time to keep the conversation moving. Consider snagging a short slot on a different teammate's calendar every week to simply chat and get to know one another.

Start your individual meetings on a personal note

Whether it's an onboarding meeting or weekly meeting with your supervisor, make a point to ask a personal question before you start. It could be as simple as "How was your weekend?" or "Did you like that new taco place that mentioned last week?". On the surface, these don't seem like significant questions to ask. However, these questions can be actually quite powerful. The more you know about a coworker's dreams, hobbies, pets, children's names, etc., the greater the sense of trust is.

Look for common interests

In many office settings, meetings begin with a recap of weekend activities or the on-goings of their families. If someone mentions watching a movie you love or visiting a restaurant, you're fond of, don't miss your chance to bond over a shared interest! Once your meeting is over, shoot them a chat to spark a discussion:

"Hey, I heard you mention that you're binge-watching Game of Thrones, what season are you on?"

"Did you say at the start of the meeting that you like to bake? I'm looking for a new recipe to try this weekend! Any suggestions?"

These quick chats can be a great way to forge connections with new people over the course of your internship or new job.