



Outback

Team Building & Training

10 Ideas to Bring Remote Employees Together

Table of Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	3
<u>1. Communicate Every Day</u>	4
<u>2. Encourage Off-Topic Chats</u>	5
<u>3. Schedule Town Hall Meetings</u>	6
<u>4. Plan Virtual “Lunch and Learns”</u>	7
<u>5. Try “Shared” Experiences</u>	8
<u>6. Enforce Work Breaks</u>	9
<u>7. Promote Team Recognition</u>	10
<u>8. Get Everyone Together</u>	11
<u>9. Set Up a Training Seminar</u>	12
<u>10. Bond With Team Building</u>	13
<u>Get In Touch</u>	15

Introduction



According to a [recent Gallup survey](#), 43% of employees spend at least some of their time working remotely.

That number has been steadily increasing over the last decade, and more company leaders are starting to question how they treat their remote employees:

- **“Do they feel included?”**
- **“Do they feel involved?”**
- **“Do they feel like part of the company culture?”**

This free guide is designed to give you some ideas for how you can bring remote employees together, so they feel more included, involved, and part of your company culture.

If you'd like to learn more about how our team can help, you can reach out to one of our Employee Engagement Consultants for a [free consultation](#).

Idea #1. Communicate With Remote Workers Every Day

Skype, phone calls, Slack, e-mail – it's important that you keep in touch with remote employees.



Over the last decade, technology has improved to the point where it is now easy and seamless to communicate from anywhere. Keep your lines of communication open to help remote employees feel more connected to your workplace culture.

Some quick tips:

- Consider scheduling quick 10-minute daily phone calls with your team. This can be a great way to touch base on your priorities and challenges.
- Use video conferencing to get some face-to-face time with remote employees. Psychologically, this can have a big impact on how connected they feel to the office.
- Set up a [Slack](#) channel for quick questions and conversations between remote employees.

Idea #2. Encourage Off-Topic & Random Conversations

Give remote employees plenty of opportunities to express themselves and their personalities.



One of the best ways to cultivate long-term relationships with remote employees is to get to know them better. Encourage off-topic conversations to help build a more casual “virtual” work environment.

Some quick tips:

- Set up [#General](#) and [#Random Slack channels](#) for employees to “goof off” in. Encourage them to participate by posting regularly.
- Learn what types of interests your remote employees have, and share your interests with them. If you all like cooking for example, you could try setting up a recipe exchange.
- Try not to stress too much about them “goofing off.” Remember, in an office there are plenty of random conversations happening anyways!

Idea #3. Schedule Inclusive Town Hall Meetings

Get everyone together, including all remote employees, for regular town hall meetings.



Having regular “town hall meetings” is a great way to get everyone on the same page. Include remote employees via conference call or web conferencing to help them feel more connected to the office.

Some quick tips:

- Try using web conferencing software, like [GoToMeeting](#), to help remote employees have more of a presence at your company meetings.
- Check in periodically during the meeting with remote employees to ensure they are still engaged, and encourage them to speak up when there is a topic that you know is important to them.
- Make sure to send out any meeting materials to remote employees beforehand!

Idea #4. Plan Virtual “Lunch and Learns”

An online webinar or guest speaker can provide an excellent bonding opportunity for your team.



Even though you aren’t all physically located in the same place, you can still plan a “lunch and learn” session together with the help of the Internet.

Some quick tips:

- If you bring in a guest speaker to the office, you can live stream their seminar for remote employees.
- You can use Google to find live webinars on topics your team is interested in, such as time management or customer support. Alternatively, there are lots of pre-recorded learning courses available on websites like Lynda.com.
- You can make it a true “lunch and learn” for remote employees by giving them a small allowance to order some take-out food!

Idea #5. Try “Shared” Team Experiences

You might not be able to go out and see a movie together – but you can do the next best thing!



Shared experiences are a big part of team building, and the same is true for remote employees! Try planning an activity or event that you can all do at the same time from your different locations.

Some quick tips:

- For example, buy a movie ticket for your remote employees so you can all see the same movie over one weekend. Afterwards, you can all share your thoughts and opinions with each other.
- Other ideas include: everyone going out to similar-themed restaurants, reading the same book, or trying a physical experience that is nearby each remote employee, like indoor rock climbing.
- The important thing is to encourage everyone to share their experiences with each other!

Idea #6. Enforce Regular Work Breaks

It can be easy for remote employees to burn out, so make sure they take consistent breaks.



One of the reasons remote employees can feel disconnected from their work is because they don't have an official schedule in place. Help engage them to feel better about their team and their work with consistently enforced work breaks.

Some quick tips:

- Set a few 15-minute work breaks throughout the day, where remote employees are explicitly told not to send any work-related emails or messages.
- Encourage them instead to get away from their screens, do something active, or spend time in one of the social Slack channels you set up.
- If remote employees are emailing during breaks or after work hours, remind them of their schedule to keep them from burning out.

Idea #7. Promote Team Recognition & Rewards

Find creative ways to reward and recognize the remote members of your team.



Rewards and recognition are a great way to motivate and engage employees both in the office, and working remotely. Here are some ways you can share your appreciation with remote employees.

Some quick tips:

- Encourage employees to share positive feedback about their remote colleagues during weekly and monthly meetings.
- It goes both ways – make sure you encourage remote employees to share feedback about team members in the office too!
- Send small tokens of appreciation, such as Starbucks gift cards, when remote employees go above and beyond in their role.

Idea #8. Get Everyone Together When You Can

Whether it's once a quarter or once a year – bringing your team together can be powerful.



There are lots of ways to make remote employees **feel** like they're closer to your team – but nothing can replace them **actually** being there. Bringing everyone together can be hugely beneficial for improving your team dynamics.

Some quick tips:

- Plan a “remote visit” week, where you bring remote employees in to work at the office. This can be a great opportunity for them to get to know your workplace dynamics.
- Alternatively, you could also plan a company retreat where you take everyone off-site for some strategic planning, learning and development, and team building. Retreats are an incredible opportunity to forge new bonds and connections.

Idea #9. Set Up a Training Seminar or Workshop

Get everyone together, either in-person or over webcam, for an interactive training program.



One of the best ways to show remote employees that you care about them is to invest in their long-term learning and development. Try bringing in a professional facilitator for a half-day training session that is inclusive for remote employees.

Some quick tips:

- Training sessions can be a great way to build a stronger company culture, even if your employees are working hundreds of miles apart. Check out [our case study](#) for more information.
- You can book a half-day training program anywhere in North America. Popular topics include: [emotional intelligence](#), [conflict resolution](#), [time management](#), [employee engagement](#), and [performance management fundamentals](#).

Idea #10. Bond With A Team Building Activity

You can all participate in a team building experience, no matter how far away you are!



The best way to build connections and bonds between your team at the office and remote employees is through team building activities. A fun afternoon of teamwork challenges can really help bring all different types of employees together!

Some quick tips:

- If remote employees are already coming into the office, take advantage of the time by planning an [indoor](#) or [outdoor](#) team building activity.
- Even if you can't get everyone together, you can still participate in a simultaneous team building activity. Use the "Outback Team Building & Training" smartphone app to try a [budget activity](#), and remote employees can complete challenges from anywhere.



It's difficult to get to know each other better as individuals since we're not physically all located in one place...[But] this worked. We found that we are more aligned than we thought. Thank you!



The team from [Principia](#) participated in an [Active Employee Engagement](#) skill development session.



Get In Touch

To learn more about our 2018 team building activities and receive your free quote, get in touch with us:



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