

10 Tips for Hybrid Design Teams

How to Keep Creative Energy Up

Distance has become the ultimate design team challenge.

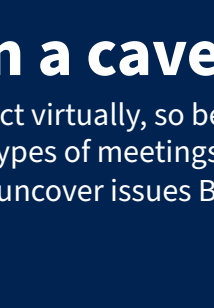
Now more than ever, teams are stretched across cities and time zones, rarely in the same room together. Without prototypes and Post-Its, art boards and a shared pot of coffee, where does creative magic happen? How do teams stay connected, inspired, and manage the design process virtually?



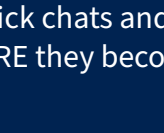
We asked two creative leaders for tips.



Margaret Bossen
Sr. UX Product Designer | Boston Scientific



Michael Ruby
Chief Creative Officer | Retina



1 Don't work in a cave alone.

It takes extra effort to connect virtually, so be intentional about gathering as a group. Make sure to mix different types of meetings. Quick chats and team building not only keep you connected but help uncover issues BEFORE they become problems.



Stand-ups and team meetings

Meet regularly to share progress. Also give "shout outs" to team members.



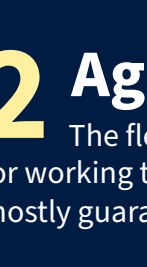
Collab sessions

These sessions help keep teams together and working toward a shared goal.



Catch-up meetings

Just chat! Can be 15-minutes. The point is to connect and air out any issues.



Team building

Plan group activities and use digital tools to connect on special interests.

2 Agree on working hours.

The flexibility of working from anywhere is great, but you still need blocks of time for working together as a team. Set times and days of the week when the whole team is mostly guaranteed to be available for meetings, calls, chats, etc.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Big meetings and corporate events		Team hours: 9am-3pm		No meeting day!

3 Make meetings count.

While it's important to gather as a group, meeting fatigue is real. Try to be as effective and efficient as possible during meeting time.

PRO TIPS



Set a realistic meeting agenda and stick to it.



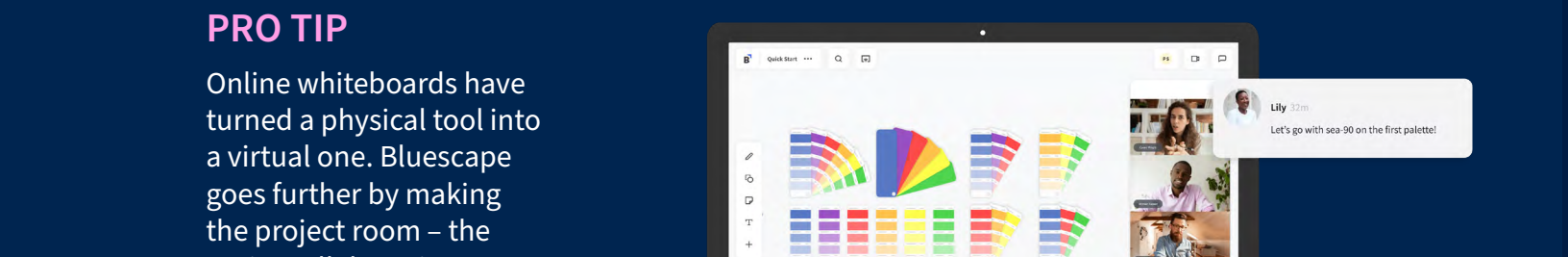
If a topic needs a deeper dive, plan a separate meeting.



Decide which meetings are "Cameras on" and which are optional.

4 Treat freelancers like part of the family.

Too often, freelancers and contractors are left out of important conversations, which limits their knowledge and causes re-work. Treating them as valuable contributors will improve work output – and your team's culture!

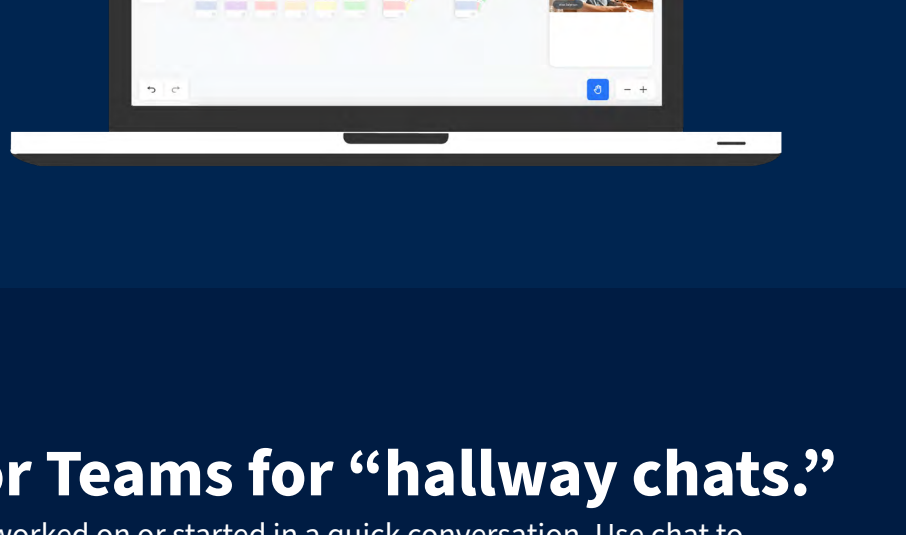


5 Decide on useful collaboration tools.

Who doesn't love the smell of a fresh Sharpie? Unfortunately for hybrid teams, physical whiteboards and sticky notes don't "travel" well. But there are a lot of online tools that do. Some teams even operate in virtual reality.

PRO TIP

Online whiteboards have turned a physical tool into a virtual one. Bluescape goes further by making the project room – the entire collaborative space – virtual.

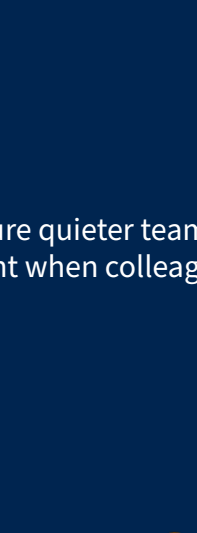


6 Use Slack or Teams for "hallway chats."

Often, decisions can be worked on or started in a quick conversation. Use chat to scope out some initial thinking for large topics, then meet to dig deeper and arrive at a meaningful decision.

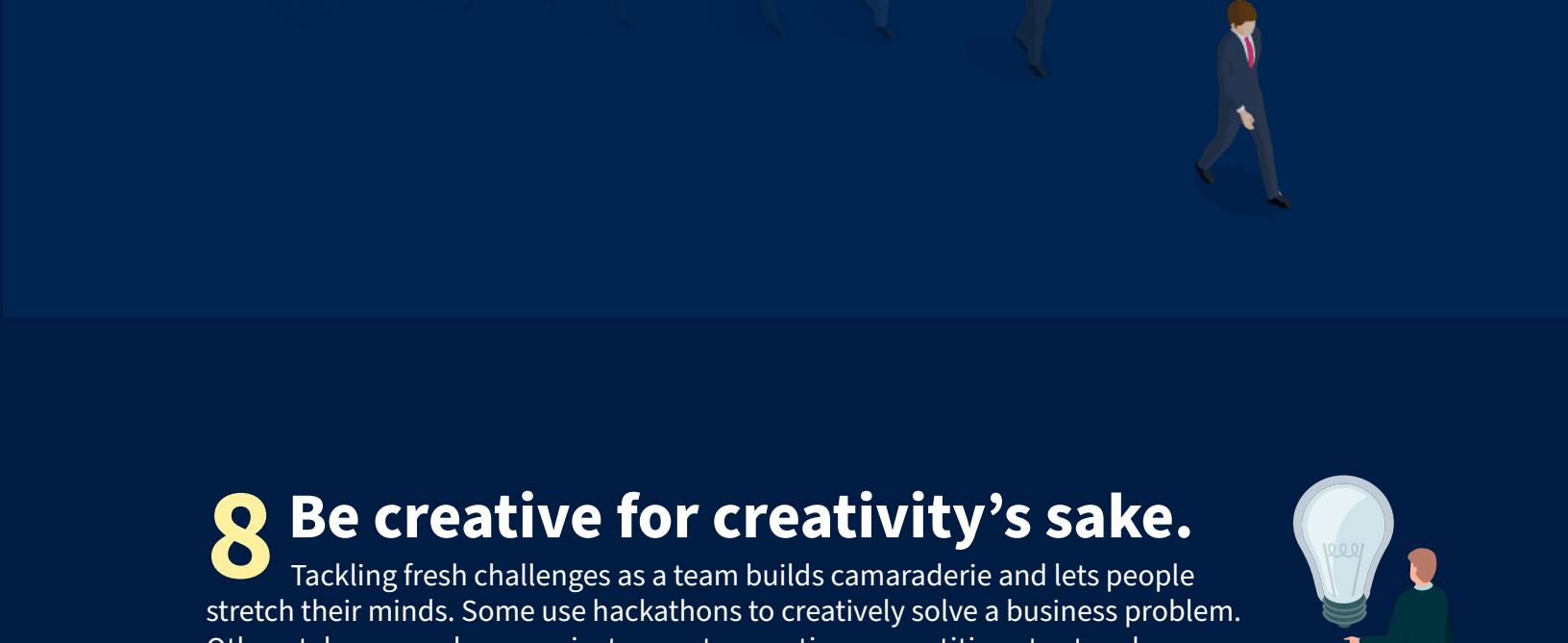
PRO TIP

Have some fun. Not every hallway conversation is work-related. Chats don't have to be either. Set up channels for animal lovers, foodies, or whatever your team is into!



7 Give introverts the floor.

Outspoken team members usually get the most airtime. Be sure quieter team members have a chance to contribute, too. Listen closely for moment when colleagues want to chime in and try to clear a little space for them.



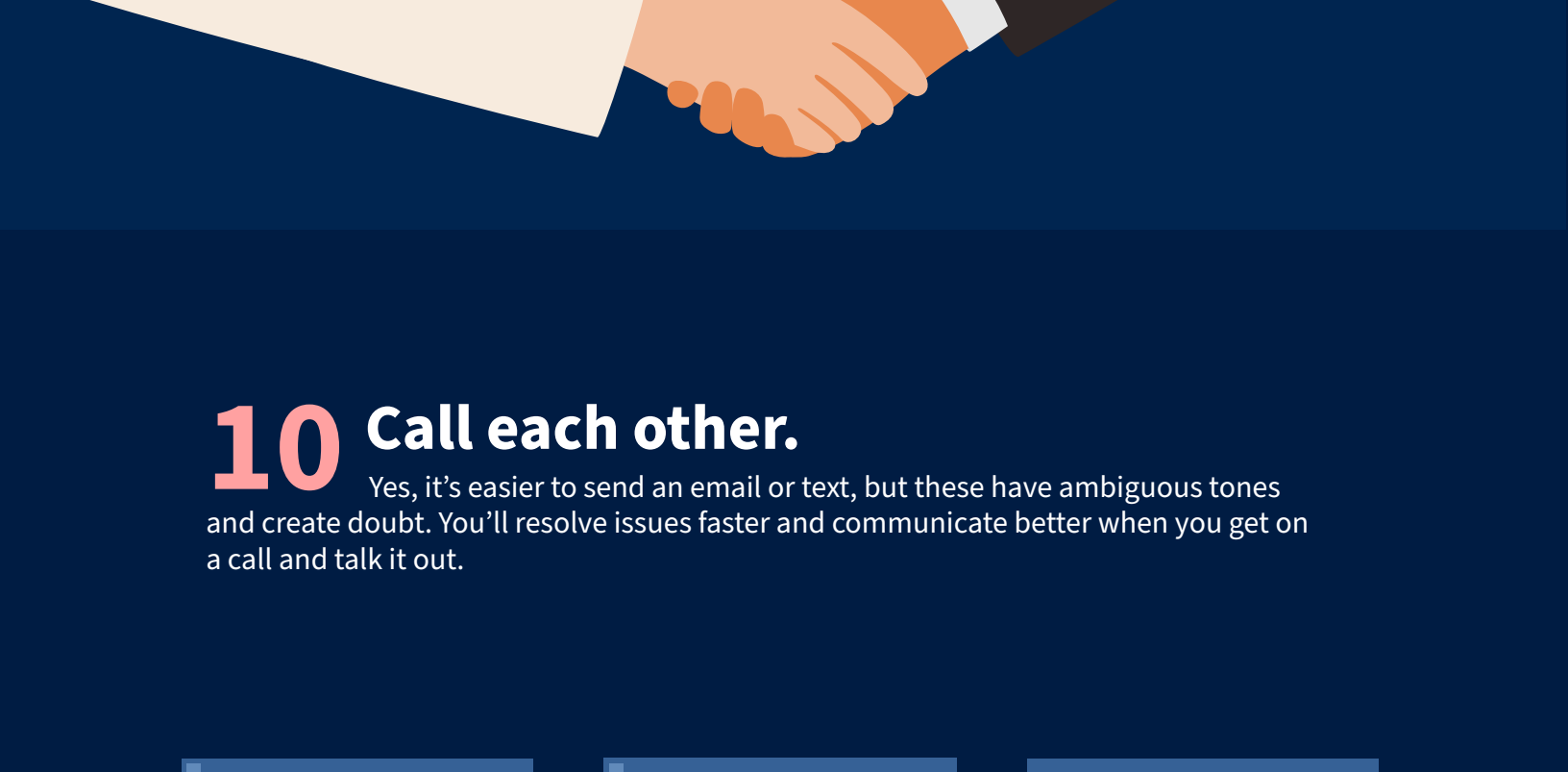
8 Be creative for creativity's sake.

Tackling fresh challenges as a team builds camaraderie and lets people stretch their minds. Some use hackathons to creatively solve a business problem. Others take on pro-bono projects or enter creative competitions to stay sharp.



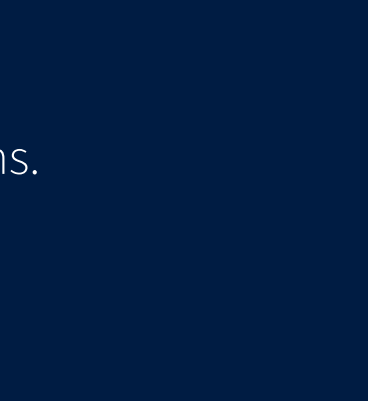
9 Create a buddy system.

Pair people of the same discipline – or better yet, different disciplines – as buddies to work together, learn from each other, and have each other's backs.



10 Call each other.

Yes, it's easier to send an email or text, but these have ambiguous tones and create doubt. You'll resolve issues faster and communicate better when you get on a call and talk it out.



Collaborate, Create, And Innovate From **Anywhere.**

Bluescape for design teams.

EXPLORE BLUESCAPE