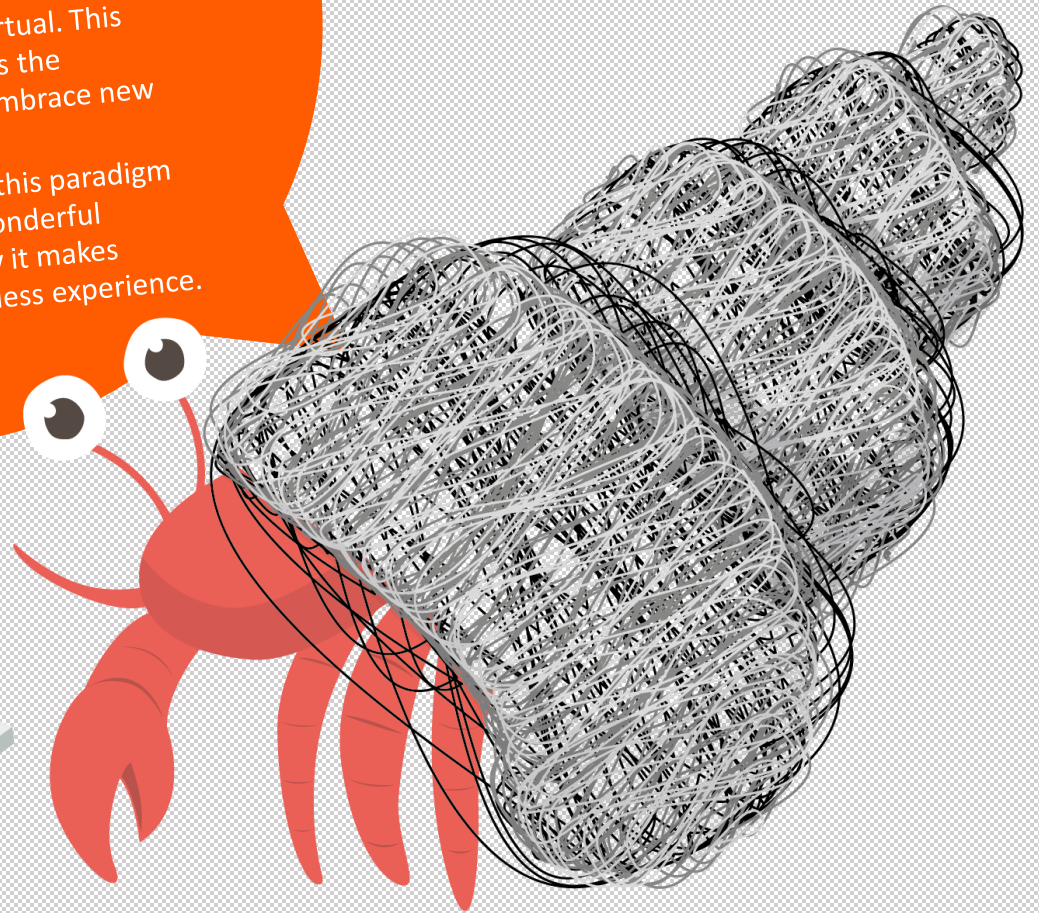# WORKING REMOTELY – COMMUNICATING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Workplaces are no longer central locations with set hours. Increasingly they are decentralised, sometimes international and often virtual. This means employees can kiss the commute goodbye and embrace new ways of working.

Technology has allowed this paradigm shift. Generally, it is a wonderful enabler. Used effectively it makes remote working a seamless experience.

COMMUNICATING WITH TECHNOLOGY

BECOME YOUR OWN TECH GURU

Technology bridges the gap between you, your colleagues, your manager and your employer. It is the channel through which communication is funnelled. One size does not fit all, so familiarise yourself with the systems, platforms and software your people use. Make sure you have the basics: a phone or tablet, a laptop, the right software and Broadband.

LET THE MEDIUM MATCH THE MESSAGE

Everyone has their own preference, be it phone, video, WhatsApp or text. The choice should depend on what you're doing. If it's a quick catch up with a small team, a group WhatsApp can work. If it's a larger team, you could set up a Facebook group. If the task is more involved, for example delivering learning, then platforms like Zoom or Skype are more functional. They are also easy to set up and use. Zoom is reasonably priced and has a range of features for larger groups. Here's some ideas

- Catch ups with team members = Skype
- Sending gossip and gifs = WhatsApp
- Official team talk and engaging teams for comms = Facebook group
- L&D = Zoom
- Collaborating on a project = Microsoft Teams
- After-work social = House Party

Try keeping online meetings and chats to around 40 minutes or less and practice responsible WhatsApping or IMing in team groups. Remember that some platforms are public. Twitter, for example, might not be the best place to give open feedback or raise grievances. Constant monitoring of Twitter can also eat into your time and hoover your mood (especially if you follow Piers Morgan).

HAVE A GO

If you work in an organisation where colleagues also work remotely, it is likely that people will work at different times, particularly if the organisation is international. Develop a weekly schedule and share it with others. Encourage them to do the same, so you all know when everyone else is available.

Set up a team WhatsApp group or workplace (facebook for work) page dedicated to helping each other with technical problems. Peer to peer support is a great way to problem solve and you can share tips and advice.

Many organisations advise their people to use a VPN (virtual private network) when working remotely, especially if you are working over public wifi networks. Ask your organisation for advice, do some research and find out the best VPN software for your purposes.