



## **4 Ways to Support Virtual Counsel**

**Skills and Professional Development**



As remote working continues and online video meetings become more common, it is more important than ever that in-house counsel remain engaged with, and crucially, support one another. In Melbourne, Australia, numerous lockdown restrictions have forced in-house counsel to work from home. Legal teams have shifted to using online video platforms to hold their team meetings.

Mindful of losing the physical interaction between colleagues, it is increasingly likely in-house counsel may attend a virtual coffee catch-up or social event. To achieve the most engaged and supported virtual team members, here are a few tips legal teams can consider.

## **1. Book social meeting time during working hours**

While this may seem like a no-brainer, its impact is often lost. Confirming that setting aside time for social interaction is more important than work (for the next 15 to 30 to 60 minutes) will put team members at ease and make them feel valued.

This method to value your team members allows for more flexible work and creates sustainable work habits — two of the little things that the [Harvard Business Review](#) found made employees feel appreciated.

## **2. Shine a spotlight on as many people as possible**

If your larger meetings tend to be dominated by one or two people, make sure you proactively engage other team members by asking them questions and giving them the platform (and time) to speak.

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This encouragement not only promotes public speaking, but may also inspire team members to speak up at other times when input is required. It empowers them to seek further growth and opportunity within the team to assist with projects or contribute to team decisions.

### **3. Content is key**

If you are putting together a fun social catch-up, avoid talking about work. If people keep circling back to work or negative events (e.g., the pandemic), consider introducing it as a Work-free Zone at the beginning of the meeting or even set fun topics to discuss.

If team members feel they can't relax or always need to be "on," chances are they will soon burnout, [particularly in the age of back-to-back-to-back video meetings](#).

### **4. Celebrate your team's wins outside of work**

Proactively engaging with the lives of your colleagues outside of work is important in a few different respects. First, people may understand a bit more about each other and what makes them tick. But also, team members can receive positive affirmation that their life outside of work *is* in fact important and can be celebrated to achieve greater well-being.

Team leaders can help their teams improve work-life balance by asking their team members for guidance. This may involve discussing what changes they think will improve their situation so you can [collaboratively work on strategies](#) to achieve this.

### **Parting thoughts**

The tips above are intended as some quick, easy morale-boosters for an increasingly online in-house team. However, they are starting points only and require [ongoing commitment, feedback, and improvement](#) so that in-house counsel continue to feel supported.

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