

Why we need to rethink digital collaboration

With the rise in digital collaboration due to recent events, employees are feeling new pressures and stressors both in work settings and at home. One added pressure point is the increase in video calls and chat messaging absorbing the day-to-day.

Studies show that 'Zoom fatigue' is real - and it has to do with the way our brains process information and handle this stress.

Meetings are on the rise

 200% increase in video conferencing minutes per day due to pandemic closures^①

 Zoom usage went up 20x as teams moved to remote environments^②



"Zoom fatigue"

It may seem like a buzzy phrase, but the science behind the term is very real.

Organizations are trying to replicate the in-person atmosphere in an online environment. This causes fatigue, burnout and generally doesn't support the worker as they transition into a fully digital role.

A glitch in the system...



Technical difficulties

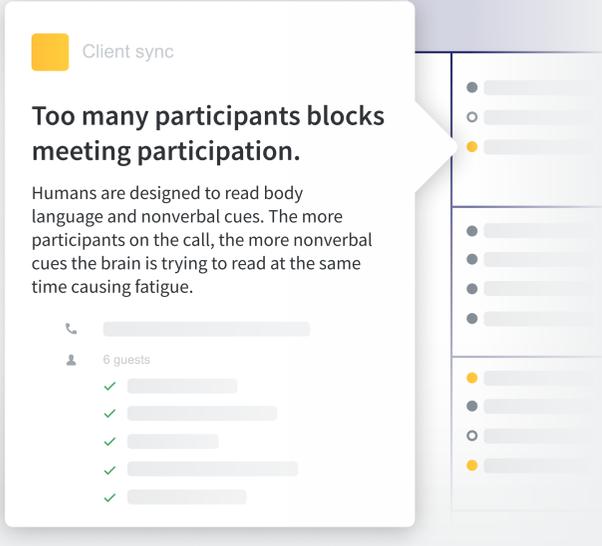
Two-thirds said their video calls had cut out, frozen or disconnected^③



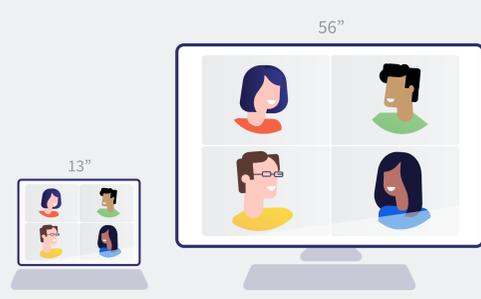
Expectations from coworkers to always be "on"

For every distraction, the worker loses 23 minutes of time. These distractions add up quickly if workers are expected to react to Slack notifications in real time.^④

We're not wired to take in so much information



Screen sizes are triggering your fight-or-flight response.



Researchers at Stanford found that larger screens — 56 inches compared to 13 inches — activate the sympathetic nervous system associated with the fight-or-flight response — likely in part because they made images look closer and more threatening.^⑤

Multi-person screens magnify this exhausting problem.^⑥



How to fix this^⑦

Asynchronous and fatigue-free work

-  Cancel unnecessary meetings
-  Turn your camera off
-  Require an agenda to be as efficient with meeting time as possible
-  Have Slack hours and widely communicate when you'll be available
-  Join audio-only to remove visual distractions
-  Stand or walk during a call

Copy and paste the following into your next meeting invite

This is a fatigue-free meeting

1. Turn off your camera
2. Snooze Slack
3. Minimize/hide all unnecessary tabs or windows
4. Plan to stand up, walk around, or do some stretches

① Microsoft, "Remote work trend report: meetings", April 2020
 ② Inside HigherEd, "Zoom Boom", April 2020
 ③ Inside HigherEd, "Zoom Boom", April 2020
 ④ Slack, "Work is fueled by true engagement", October 2019
 ⑤ Media Psychology, "The Effects of Screen Size and Message Content on Attention and Arousal", November 2009
 ⑥ National Geographic, "'Zoom fatigue' is taxing the brain. Here's why that happens", April 2020
 ⑦ Sitepoint, "The Real Future of Remote Work is Asynchronous", December 2019

① HRB, "Help Your Employees Manage Their Reentry Anxiety", June 2020
 ② Doist, "The Complete Guide to Deep Work"
 ③ Doist, "Asynchronous Communication: The Real Reason Remote Workers Are More Productive"