

A guide for

# BRIDGING THE GLOBAL GAP



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# Introduction

What ties us to our coworkers isn't shared desk space: it's a shared mission. [Remote work](#) existed conceptually long before 2020, but COVID-19 made it our reality. Fully remote teams and organizations are now the norm, and remote work isn't just a perk—it's an expectation.

With teammates spread across a city, country, and even the globe, we're faced with new communication challenges. How do we adapt cultures based on co-located interactions to our remote reality?

During pre-COVID days, global companies sometimes ensured every new starter was flown to the HQ office to spend a week or two with the local team. This helped with practical training and company knowledge, but it was considered essential for building a global culture. Today, adjustments need to be made.

HR leaders should constantly look for solutions to ensure that both sides of the distant relationship between managers and employees are very clear from the start as to what's expected and that you can never over-communicate with other offices.

The more information you can share about what you're working on, what's happening in any local office, even where the team ate dinner together, the smaller those global gaps become.

There is no doubt that the best way to stay connected to people and build a robust [company culture](#) is through personal, face-to-face meetings. However, we all know we have other (sometimes unpredictable) circumstances, so physical meetings between all staff may not always be possible, and technology should be embraced.

# Setting up your tech stack

The right tech can really make or break a global culture from both a business and a people perspective. It is your key to seamless communication, clarity, and an engaged culture. Here are some tech tools you should consider:

## **Telecoms/video conferencing**

Having the right software and hardware to allow for clear, uninterrupted conversations that don't drop off halfway through or lose sound is essential for your people. Keep in mind that your people may also need a stable solution to communicate with your clients and other partners. [Zoom fatigue](#) is real. One solution that many HR pros agree on is encouraging employees to step away from their laptops and take meetings on the go. Any video conferencing software you invest in should also include an app or way to connect via phone, so your people can take meetings away from their desks here and there.

## **HR/internal comms system**

Select a system that allows your team to access all of the important company messages and information at a time that's right for them. Use dynamic org charts to show global structures and how everyone links together. Share business, department, and individual goals to provide an overarching view of the bigger picture. Celebrate birthdays and work anniversaries globally. Introduce new starters, shout about successes, communicate common interests and bring all of your teams together. On top of that, the platform you choose should allow automating HR admin tasks, enable seamless [onboarding](#) no matter where your new joiner is located, and provide easy access to company documents. It should be a one-stop-shop for creating an engaging company culture no matter where your people work.

### **Email and messaging tools**

Email goes without saying, but educating your people on how to use the scheduling function to ensure emails arrive at an appropriate hour for all time zones is inclusive and courteous. Championing the use of an instant messaging tool such as Slack or Microsoft Teams, which people can snooze when they are out of the office, is another simple, cost-effective way to bridge global gaps and create a true sense of 'one team'. This is especially true when these tools integrate with your [HRIS](#) and provide daily updates on what's happening and where it's happening.

### **Virtual watercooler**

Before the pandemic, the office was a great place to bring people together, socialize, and build culture. With employees spread across the globe and working in a remote or [hybrid work](#) structure, we need to adjust. Apps like [Donut](#) can be integrated into Slack and function as a way to randomly pair employees for a virtual coffee or lunch meeting. This way new joiners (and employees who have been

around for a while) can meet someone outside of their team and form connections. In a hybrid work model, HR can use Donut (or similar apps) to get people from different backgrounds and departments talking, solving problems, and creating friendships.

### **Work globally, play globally**

This isn't tech-related, but multi-office competitions and challenges are the perfect way to enhance [employee engagement](#) and bring your teams closer together. They can also be used as wellbeing initiatives. Something as simple as seeing which office can do the most steps in one month, which office can build the biggest house of cards, or even which office can drive the most successful charity initiative. Then encouraging the winning office to set and communicate the next challenge keeps a constant flow of global communication, which is too often reserved for managers and above.

# Global culture goes beyond tech

While ensuring your people have the right tech for seamless, global communication is key, there are other considerations HR teams should take into account. I'm sure we can all identify with the list of pain points here:

- Conference/video calls that frequently cut out, and people can't be heard.
- Forgetting remote workers when it comes to team lunches/birthday treats
- Forgetting remote workers in general
- In-office jokes that other teams/locations just don't understand
- Language barriers
- Sarcasm that doesn't translate
- Timezone issues that have people calling in at 2 am or on national holidays



Below are some top tips for creating an inclusive culture across your global teams:

**1. Be aware of time zones.** Either use a system that allows your team to access important messages and information at a time that suits them, or schedule emails to send time appropriately. Make sure important emails land in inboxes during working hours when they can be discussed.

**2. Celebrate global festivals across the organization.** Widen cultural knowledge, bond, and have fun.

**3. Clearly communicate international holidays.** Prevent international workers from being disturbed on their day off, or meeting times being delayed while you wait for teams that aren't there to dial in. If you don't have a system that does this for you, create a team calendar to share which offices are closed.

**4. Educate everyone on cultural faux pas.** Use your HR system to share a PDF guide on the everyday norms of your different global offices. What are the standard greetings? What time do people have lunch? How tactile are they? What is the standard business dress in each of your offices?

**5. Actions speak louder than words.** However, a few hand phrases in different languages of your team are always a great asset for every employee to have. Being able to at least offer a 'hello' or a 'thank you' to your colleague in their local language is welcoming, respectful, and inclusive.

# Conclusion

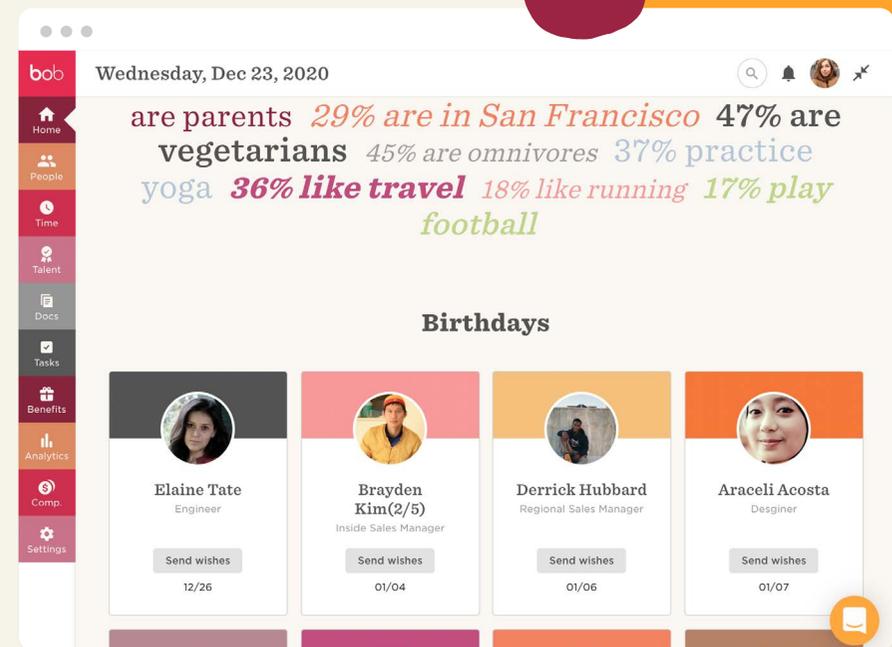
Global, remote, and hybrid work cultures present a whole new set of challenges that HR teams must solve to ensure their people are happy and able to do their jobs well. If you invest in good technology that allows for seamless global communication, find company culture advocates across your sites, and take the time to set clear expectations for employees and managers, you'll be headed in the right direction.



# Meet bob

bob is designed and developed for the new world of work. Onsite, hybrid, and remote HR leaders can drive culture, two-way communication, engagement, performance, and compensation. All leaders and individual contributors in the organization can benefit from bob by using it as a data source and report generation tool for planning and tracking.

bob's innovative UI, automated processes, and integrations with leading third-party tools ease administrative tasks for everyone across the organization and make even the most mundane work tasks pleasant, intuitive and engaging—and not just for HR admins. bob puts people first with culture tools that connect co-located and remote employees to their fast-growing, global companies.



Now is the time to make smarter decisions when it comes to your people and organization.

To learn more about Hibob and our data-driven tools, get in touch with us at

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