

To: Dr. Erika Patterson

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Subject: Proposal for Addressing Communication Inefficiency and Communication Error in Remote Work Setting

Introduction:

Since the Covid pandemic started, remote work has become one of the major working styles in many industries in Japan. The Japanese government's recommendation for immigration to the countryside is another reason that remote work has become a trend. While many conservative companies hesitate to adopt a remote workstyle, some companies adopt a hybrid working style of remote work and non-remote work, and some others adopt fully remote work.

Working fully remotely has many benefits for workers. For example, since workers do not need to go to the office, they can choose wherever they want to work, they can save time and money on transportation, or they can feel safer during the pandemic. However, at the same time, remote work has some problems. It reduces the chance to make a good relationship in an office, it often contains a communication error due to the lack of face-to-face communication, and it has communication inefficiency due to the time lag of the question and response. These problems would create stress for workers and lead to communication errors. To take advantage of remote work, companies need to deal with this problem.

Intended Audience:

Japanese companies and workers who adopt remote work

Statement of Problem:

There are deficiencies in smooth communication in remote work compared to non-remote work. The time lag for responding to co-workers creates inefficiency in working. They constantly need to check the notification and wait for the response. Also, remote work settings require workers to communicate only through texting or setting up online meetings. The lack of flexibility in communication results in a stressful work environment.

Proposed Solution:

One possible solution to this problem is the use of virtual talking room services such as SpacialChat or Discord. Setting the schedule for staying in the voice chat room allows workers to communicate smoothly as if they are working in the same office. For a more comfortable setting, companies should not force workers to turn on their cameras or even mic. Allowing mute and speaker mute can take advantage of flexibility in remote work.

Scope:

To assess the feasibility of introducing a virtual talking room service into the company, I plan to pursue these areas of inquiry:

- How stressful is communicating only through email or other texting services and phone calls?
- Do people experience a time lag for response in remote work?
- Do people experience the situation that they cannot proceed with their project due to the time lag?
- How often do people need the chance to quickly ask a question to their co-workers?
- How many hours can people comfortably stay in the virtual talking room?

Methods:

The primary method will be to create and distribute a survey to examine and evaluate the experiences of people who are working either fully or half remotely. The survey will be distributed on my Twitter account, whose followers are almost all Japanese.

The secondary methods for this proposal will be my own research. I will set up a time to stay in the virtual voice chat room in discord for my working team in my company. Then, I will interview each person for the details.

Qualifications:

Last year, I started a new business and it has been conducted fully online. As the business gets bigger, I found difficulty in communicating everything online, and I have been thinking of making an actual office. However, since I understand the advantage of a full remote work environment, I found that introducing a smooth communication tool would be another choice.

Conclusion:

The main reason why many Japanese companies hesitate to shift from non-remote work to remote work is the impression that remote work would be inefficient. This proposal not only solves a problem for existing remote work teams or companies but also recommends a transition to remote work.