

To: Dr. Erika Patterson

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Subject: Proposal for Increasing Opportunities for Casual and Unplanned Interactions Between Team Members of The Digital Services Team of Public Services and Procurement Canada

**Introduction:**

The Digital Services Team is part of The Public Services and Procurement Canada department within the federal government of Canada. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the majority of work has been conducted virtually, from each team member's home. Many of the tasks, such as application development and website maintenance can be completed in isolation and do not require consistent interaction with other team members.

These factors have decreased the presence of casual or unplanned interactions between team members. These types of interactions contribute to team morale and spontaneous creativity.

**Intended Audience:**

The manager of The Digital Services team who is responsible for decision-making on team activities and organization.

**Statement of Problem:**

There are currently limited opportunities to facilitate casual or impromptu interactions between team members. These types of relations between team members are beneficial for maintaining positive relationships and job sentiment. Additionally, this type of communication can lead to creative and low-pressure collaborative problem solving that can improve work performance. Absence of these interactions can lead to work-place isolation and poor performance which can prevent personal development and disruption to the team's productivity.

**Proposed Solution:**

- One possible solution is to encourage in-person work
- The other is to use digital tools and intentional planning to facilitate these types of interactions digitally

Online and remote work offers many potential benefits to team members. Complete removal of that option would have negative consequences that could counteract the benefits of facilitating impromptu interactions. For this reason, I will not consider complete removal of remote work.

**Scope:**

To assess the methods for increasing causal and unplanned professional interactions between team members, I plan to pursue these six areas of inquiry.

- What proportion of workdays would team members prefer to be in-person versus remote?
- What incentives would increase team member's desire to work in-person?
- How much unplanned interaction and how often would it need to occur to benefit personal and team performance?
- Which digital tools are available and how could they be applied to increase instances of unplanned or casual interaction?
- Is there a difference in value between digital casual interactions and in-person casual interactions?
- How do we measure the impact of these interactions?

**Methods:**

The primary method will be to create and distribute a survey to examine and evaluate online or hybrid workers's experience. The survey will be distributed directly to The Digital Services team members and posted to a community of co-op student's in the same field who work online. Collecting data beyond the immediate team of study will address the areas of inquiry and is relevant to The Digital Services team to gain perspectives from outside this specific team dynamic.

**Qualifications:**

I have been working with The Digital Services team since August 2022. I have previously worked in office, online, and in hybrid roles and personally witnessed the impact on team dynamics. As a member of the team of study, I am informally familiar with sentiment around the topic and have unique insight on important factors and team member's priorities. Thus, I am well prepared to create the survey and report on the data.

**Conclusion:**

Personal and professional fulfillment from one's work permeates every aspect of someone's life. Many people spend a majority of their time at work and the personal interactions that occur impact their wellbeing and performance. It is evident that improving team member's wellbeing and performance is beneficial to work quality and production, but the impact on team member's personal lives is equally important. With your approval, I will begin research at once.