



A purple-tinted photograph of the New Orleans skyline, featuring several tall skyscrapers and a body of water in the foreground with a barge. The image serves as a background for the event title.

# NEW ORLEANS

DRUPALCON 2016



# Live The Dream, Work Remote: Building a Successful Distributed Drupal Shop

Anne Stefanyk






Everyone Has a Why







"The virtual workplace isn't a trend - it's an inevitability."

# The Rise of a Virtual Workplace



# Going Virtual

- About 30 million Americans work from home.
- Virtual. Remote. Distributed.  
This style of organization is becoming more common among many industries including web shops

Source: U.S. Telecommuting Forecast for 2009-2016



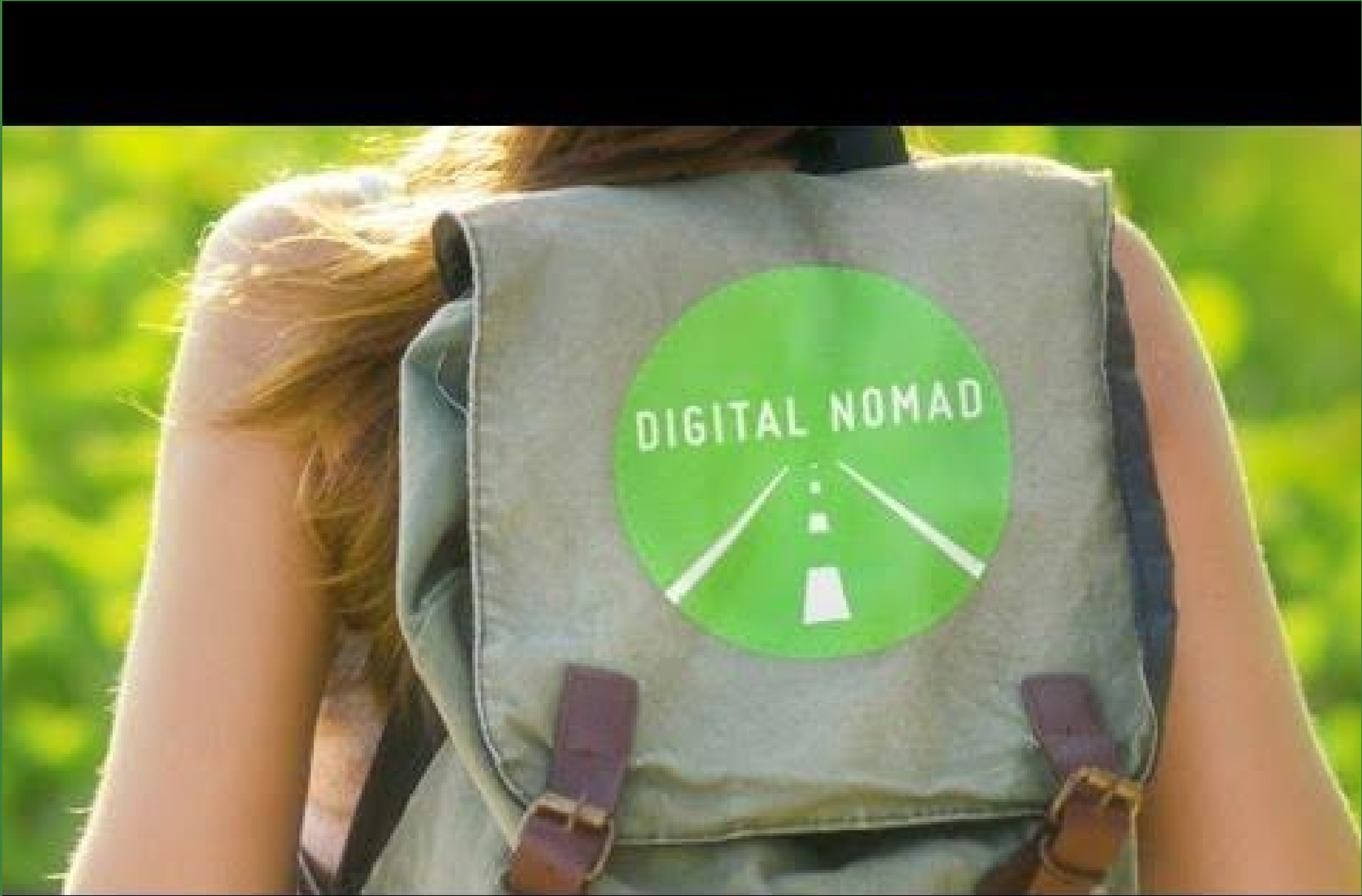
# The New Work Environment

- Less about being in the office 9-5, it's more about results.
- Bye, bye, Organizational Guy

*80% of independent workers are satisfied with their situation,  
including 58% who are highly satisfied\**



\*Harvard Business Review Article: The Rise of the Super-temp



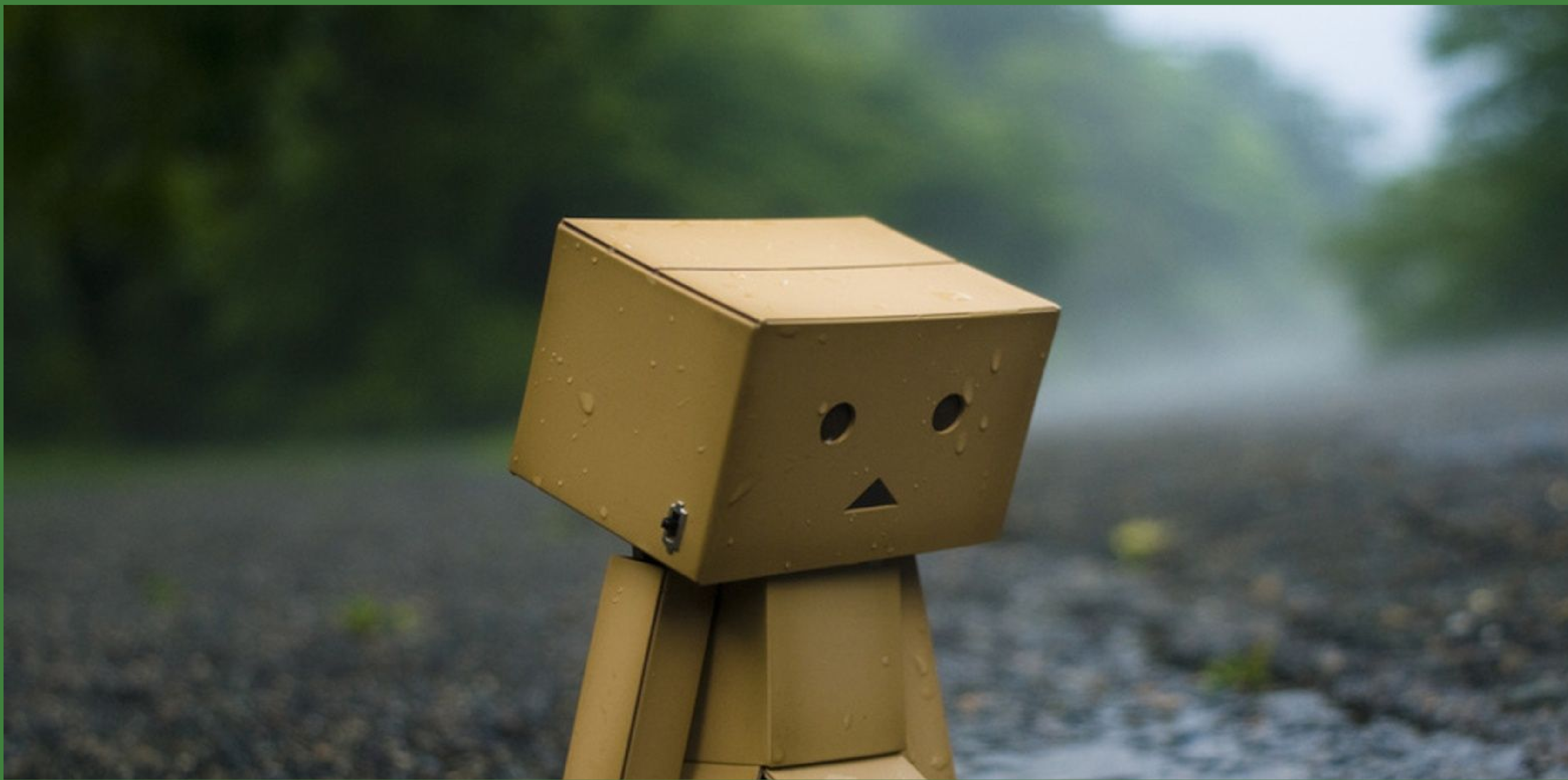


# Company Motivations

- Low Overhead
- Rich Talent Pool
- Scalability
- Happier, Productive Team
- Freedom







# Common Issues / Myths



# Common Myths

- If I don't see my employees - they are not working
- Hiring remote is the same as hiring in-office
- People will know what is going on like they do when they are in the office
- Technology will solve all problems
- It's always better to meet face-to-face





# Common Issues

- Finding the Right People
- Communications Issues
- Isolation
- Fostering “Team Bonding”
- Burnout
- Selling Clients on the Distributed Concept





# The Reality And How You Can Make it Work



# What to Expect When Going Remote

- More work than collocated employees
- Learning curve
- Shift in process and culture
- Hiring processes may need to change



# Pillars of Success

Organization

Accountability

Personal Interaction

**Trust!**





# Remote teams live and die by their trust

For remote teams, there are no walls, there are no tribes, there are no executives on the 5th floor, there's no one watching over your shoulder, and there's no one babysitting you. It's simply individuals bound by trust with one common goal."

– *Ryan Chartrand,*

*10 Secrets to Becoming a Great Remote Developer*





# Building Trust





# Behaviors **THAT BUILD** Trust, Quality and Coordination

- Keep people informed of what you are doing
- Say when you feel directly
- Assume positive intent
- Group chat
- Ask for clarification, confirm and translate back
- Know each other's back story
- Meet deadlines
- Let people make decisions independently
- Let people make mistakes
- Make decisions based on mission
- Package info for coworkers around their needs
- Use checklists
- Structure emails with main point first, action items flagged



# Behaviors that **GET IN THE WAY** of Trust, Quality and Coordination

- Assume negative intent
- Wall to wall meetings with no time to act
- Information overload
- Sugar coat feedback
- Enable instead of empower
- Send snippy emails
- Give inconsistent answers or instructions
- Cc: everyone
- Call when an email would be better
- Email when a call would be better

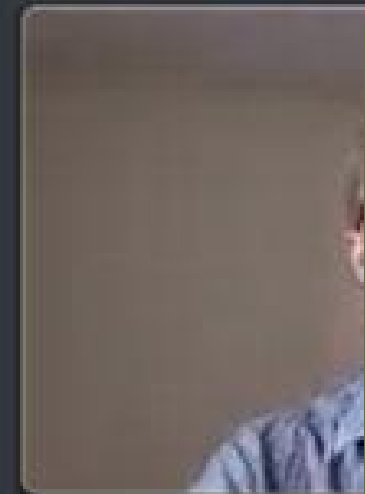






Share screen

Leave



# How to Collaborate Remotely



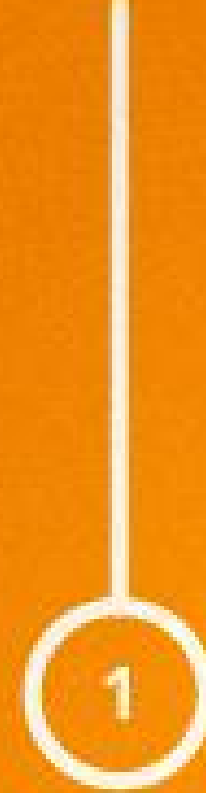
# Collaboration Tactics

- Re-think meetings
- The work is what matters
- Thou shalt overlap
- The virtual water cooler
- Governance
- Seeing is believing

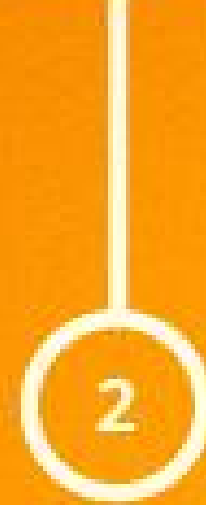




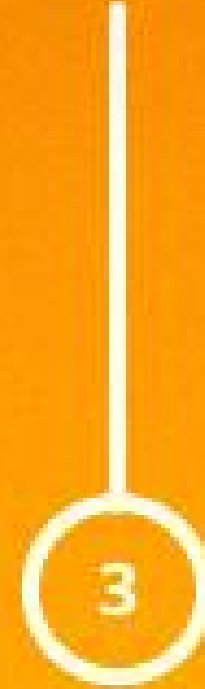
USE VIDEO CHAT



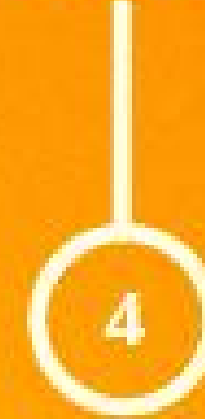
PICK UP THE  
PHONE



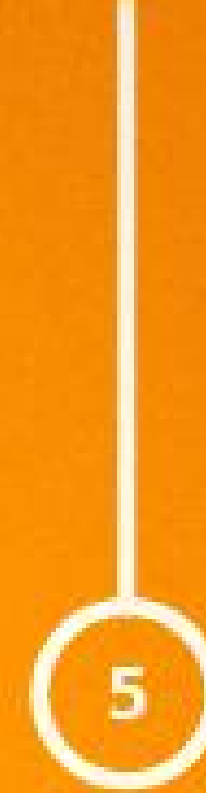
STOP INLINE  
EMAIL  
CONVERSATIONS



MAKE YOUR  
INTERNET  
"FASTER"



EXERCISE





Find the best.  
Weed out the rest.





# The Ideal Candidate

- Talented people can choose what & with whom to work.
- Remote workers are inherently self-motivated by their passion for creating outstanding work





# Remote Rock Stars

- They contribute **trust** every day
- Their word is everything
- They communicate early and often
- They find time for focus
- Do one thing, do it really well
- Are proactive



\* *10 Secrets to Becoming a Great Remote Developer, Ryan Chartrand:* <http://bit.ly/1tyqvIH>



# Remote Not for Everyone

- You miss out on being around people
- You miss out on doing fun stuff like playing ping-pong or having lunch together
- You lose a clear distinction between work and the rest of your life



# Distributed Challenges

- Timezones
- Prioritization
- Limited nonverbal communication
- Measuring engagement
- Healthcare and benefits
- Taxes
- Culture





Create a Culture of Awesomeness





# Creating Awesome

- Establish Goals and Dreams
- Pair up awesome employees
- Establish clear processes
- Expect excellence not perfection
- Encourage life-work balance
- Create your own #FreedomFridays.





Communicate. Communicate More



# Pros + Cons of Communication Tactics

	Email	Phone	Chat
<b>Pros</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Time to think about how to communicate</li><li>- Give more background info, facts</li><li>- Not limited by time zones (asynchronous)</li><li>- Solid record/paper trail</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Works well to clarify</li><li>- Works when you need discussion and decision</li><li>- Immediate</li><li>- Natural conversation and incidental sharing (e.g. how was your weekend)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Quick/short</li><li>- Works well for back chatter</li><li>- Works as doorbell to check availability</li><li>- Portable, push notification</li></ul>
<b>Cons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Lost context, one dimensional (no tone of voice or facial expression)</li><li>- Some people find long emails overwhelming</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Harder to limit time/subject</li><li>- Not as comfortable for some</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Interrupts</li></ul>







# Harness the Power Of Online Tools



# The right tools

- Meetings & Screen Sharing:
  - Zoom , Google Hangouts, Skype, Join.me
- Group Chat & Water Cooler:
  - Slack, Hipchat, IRC, Skype, Yammer
- File Sharing & Editing:
  - Google Drive, Dropbox, Github, Box
- Project Management:
  - Teamwork, Basecamp, Pivotal Tracker, Jira





Don't Forget to Facetime





# Make time to SEE People

- Video communicate as much as possible
- Encourage meetups when in the same city
- Use events/conference as team building opps
- Get out and network
- Try a co-working space





# Create Work-Life Boundaries



# Workaholics Be-Warned

- Create a specific office space where you work
- Distractions are under your control
- Time block
- Give yourself the benefit of downtime





# Beware of the Dragons!

- Cabin fever
- Check in, check out
- Ergonomic basics
- Watch the snacks



Original artwork by Mike Rohde





# Detect and Avoid Burnout





# Encourage Balance

- Make time for breaks, period. Force breaks!
- Force developers to take vacation - or simply unplug!
- Set realistic timelines.
- Don't cry wolf - not everything can be 'High Priority' but when it is, they'll believe you.







# Flexible Work Schedule



# Make time zones - and ah-ha moment - work

- Night owls, early birds
  - Let them work when inspiration is at its best
  - As long as the work is consistently delivered on time and on budget





Flexible Schedule without Sacrificing  
Client Service





# Working With Clients You've Never Met Face To Face

- Let the prospective clients know up front
- Meet up on video early on
- Provide references before the client even asks
- Be very available
- Show them work often
- Get the client involved



# Educate the Client

Education

A dark blue silhouette of a graduation cap (mortarboard) is positioned above the word "Education" on a white notepad. The notepad is resting on a wooden surface, and another notepad is visible in the background.

# Highlight the Benefits

- Better talent - we have the best of the best
- Timezone challenges be gone
- We come to you!
- Lower overhead means more focus on the client







# Q & A







We're Hiring!  
[www.kanopistudios.](http://www.kanopistudios.com/careers)  
[com/careers](http://www.kanopistudios.com/careers)

# Thank You!

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# So How Was It? - Tell Us What You Think

Evaluate this session

<https://events.drupal.org/neworleans2016/sessions/how-keep-your-drupal-developers-happy-and-inspired>

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## Thanks!