



RITUALS, ROUTINES & RHYTHMS





Having consistent operating protocols helps leaders foster a culture of engagement and high performance. These protocols are especially useful during times of uncertainty and change that may interrupt standard operations (“business as usual”). These will help everyone on your team create intentional and systematic starts and stops and ensure you regularly and efficiently connect with one another.

Here is a context-sensitive key for the definitions of each element:





Ritual: Organizational ceremonies, used as methods to deepen connection and embed company values. This could be a specific way to celebrate success, debrief a won or lost new business pursuit, or how new team members become immersed into an organization’s culture.

Routine: This could be a specific sequence in which a person prioritizes important tasks, or a structured team meeting used to advance a strategic initiative.

Rhythm: This could be the operating cadence (frequency and duration) of one-on-ones, team meetings, or performance-based discussions.

	RHYTHM		ROUTINE/RITUAL
INDIVIDUALS	Daily	 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal: open writing and daily gratitude Set intentions for the day 5-minute meditation or walk to transition from home to work (virtual commute)
		 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal: recap of the day 10-minute plan for next day 5-minute meditation or walk to transition from work to home (virtual commute)
	Weekly	 Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your plan for the week and schedule all meetings and activities Prioritize your wellness by scheduling breaks, exercise, and time to connect with others virtually
		 Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture your achievements from the week Set your priorities for the coming week



	RHYTHM		ROUTINE/RITUAL
LEADERS/ MANAGERS AND TEAM	Weekly 1:1s		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate video-based 1:1s following best practices • Have each report own her/his follow up and next steps • Record critical notes and reminders for yourself (use the Bridge) • Check in on your team's health and well-being, ensure they are practicing mindful work habits • Executives should reach out to employees each day (call list)
	Weekly Team Meetings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask that people close other apps and refrain from multi-tasking • Share screens so everyone sees the same information, use cloud-based tools for notetaking, and leverage video meeting tools to better collaborate (i.e. virtual whiteboards) • Rotate notetakers and agenda item leaders • Brainstorm ideas of how to be of service and support to your clients
ALL STAFF	Weekly Sync ups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday all-staff call to set the tone for the week (for larger populations these could be pre-recorded then distributed) • Monday executive meetings (using video) • Dedicate individual or team time to transition into the week: virtual group yoga or meditation, individual walking, exercise, or journaling
	All-Staff Meetings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share important business updates • Review the areas of focus for the upcoming quarter, month, week (connect to your purpose and strategy) • Facilitate a virtual team building experience/exercise • Acknowledge company and individual wins (recognizing effort and achievement as they reflect your values and help fulfill key goals) • Reinforce and recognize best practices for remote work • Ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak



REMOTE WORK BEST PRACTICES

Tips to help you stay healthy, connected, and engaged while working remotely.

DESIGN YOUR WORKSPACE

- **Create a dedicated workspace:** Create a space designed to meet your daily needs. Consider ideal lighting, ergonomic features (ex: comfortable chair, standing desk, padded floor mat, etc.), and how to handle potential distractions.
- **Keep your workspace and mind clutter-free:** Pack away your work items at the end of each workday, so you can effectively decompress. Regularly clean and sanitize your space.
- **Ensure you have the proper hardware and software:** This includes things like a strong internet connection, access to tools and software your team uses for document sharing and collaboration, a working webcam and microphone, and headphones or earbuds.
- **Establish quiet zones:** Be mindful of noise that may distract you or others. If possible, close the door to your office. If you are not working in an enclosed space, create a quiet place that allows you to focus.
- **Coordinate with family members or housemates:** Consider developing a shared schedule with others in your home who may also be working from home, so that you have privacy to take work calls when needed. Share the space, ensure children and pets (if applicable) are appropriately cared for, and have a clear back up plan for when things go awry.

STAY CONNECTED AND ENGAGED

- **Daily touch points:** Connect with a minimum of one teammate, by video, each day to mitigate feelings of isolation. Consider scheduling flexible hours throughout the week to have casual conversations with your teammates to ensure you each and all team members feel connected and supported.
- **Practice togetherness:** Plan and deploy group virtual gatherings (for example: wellness classes, happy hours, meals, dance parties) so the team stays in contact both at work and in play.
- **Maintain face-to-face meetings:** Use your webcam during video-meetings to foster connection and engagement. Use visual cues (body language and facial expressions) to assess how team members are feeling, and where deeper conversations may be needed. Avoid distractions and multi-tasking.
- **Develop a routine:** Adhere to a schedule and maintain regular hours. Wake up and prepare for your day in ways that create mental clarity, energy, and focus. Take frequent breaks (25 minute sprints, followed by 10 minute breaks), and when possible, have a designated end to your workday. [SHIFT's Hour of Power](#) is a weekly practice that can help you establish a good cadence. You may also explore other methods, like the [Pomodoro Technique](#).
- **Start and end your working day with rituals:** Continue to adhere to your normal morning and evening rhythms. This may include things like journaling, setting intentions, meditating, planning, sharing gratitude, or exercising. This will help you mentally transition between work and home.
- **Be prepared for meetings:** This means both physically and mentally. Ensure you are dressed and ready for on-camera presentation, at least from the chest up (no one will see your sweats and slippers) and have materials you need for the meeting laid out in front of you.



FOCUS ON YOUR HEALTH

- **Exercise regularly:** Take advantage of free exercise classes and programs like: CorePower free yoga classes via their app (download: Apple / Google Play); RevCycle free classes via IG TV; HIITBURN free workouts via YouTube; Peleton App free for 90-days for new members (includes cycling, running, yoga, meditation, strength training, cardio); Les Mills On Demand offering their online platform of 95 workouts across eight categories for free
- **Get outside:** Get your vitamin D fill and stretch your legs on a run or hike.
- **Take frequent breaks:** Step away from your workstation every hour, give your eyes a break from the screen, and give your booty a break from the chair. Try setting a timer to help you start and end breaks.
- **Wear blue light filtering and glare eliminating lenses:** Keep your eyes happy and healthy while spending hours in front of a screen.
- **Drink water:** Prevent dehydration and drink the recommended 64-ounces recommended by health authorities. Keep caffeine to a minimum.
- **Plan healthy meals and snacks:** Don't let your meal plan fall to the wayside. Prepare meals and snacks in advance when possible and be sure to eat well-rounded meals and snacks.
- **Create digital boundaries:** Establish a daily window of time to disconnect from your phone and computer.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Leverage these best practices to effectively communicate with your team no matter where they are.

BE PRESENT

- Be mindful of your energy and body language, make eye contact, and give the other person your undivided attention.
- Close your laptop (if on the phone), turn off the phone (if on a video conference), and eliminate distractions.
- Adapt to the situation based on what the person is saying/feeling and remember you are always “on.”
- Lean into the conversation and express gratitude (even excitement) for the time together. Ensure the person on the other end of the conversations feels like they are priority. Commit to making the time worth it.

BE CLEAR AND CONCISE

- Provide background and detailed information in advance, allowing ample time to review prior to a meeting.
- Speak naturally and clearly, being mindful of your tone and how it aligns with what you say.
- Avoid monologues, long explanations, technical jargon, and asking rhetorical questions.
- Follow-up with a clear recap and explicit action items with agreed upon ownership and timelines.
- In team meetings, call on people by name and ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak.
- Make the implicit explicit and clearly express expectations.



PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING

- Be genuinely interested in and curious about what is being said. Show that you are listening and that you understand by summarizing what you've heard. Avoid interrupting the person speaking.
- Ask questions to check your understanding, using phrases like: "Tell me more about ...", "Help me understand", and "Give me an example of ..."
- Show compassion and respect by responding with acknowledgment, understanding, and appreciation. Share your perspective, provide appropriate context, and invite questions or comments from others.

UNDERSTAND DIFFERENT PERSONALITY TYPES

- Ask team members they're preferred method of communication. Learn which approaches and words do or do not work effectively.
- Understand each team member's preferred working environment, what motivates them, and what may trigger an adverse reaction/response.
- Consider leveraging a tool to provide additional insights into working styles, motivations, and communication preferences (ex. DISC, TTI Individual DNA, Predictive Index).

SELECT COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND ESTABLISH CLEAR PROTOCOLS

- Leverage a video meeting platform for team meetings (ex. Microsoft Teams, Zoom, GoToMeeting, WhereBy).
- Ensure everyone is utilizing the same platform and equipment like mics and cameras are functional, software is downloaded, and settings are optimized.
- Practice the tool prior to use (especially for external and/or client-specific meetings) to work out any issues.
- Arrive for meetings early to ensure you're ready and allow for small talk prior to the scheduled start time.
- Understand when to mute lines to minimize background noise.
- When you're facilitating, call on people, by name, to maximize recognition and involvement.
- Identify yourself when speaking and make eye contact with attendees.
- Use in-app chat features to post questions and comments to minimize interruptions.

COMMUNICATE OFTEN

- Consider daily five-minute phone calls or video calls with different team members to stay connected.
- Hold virtual office hours for people to connect and ask questions (specifically managers, leaders, directors).
- Create a virtual water cooler to keep open communication.
- Ensure your team has access important information and updates



ACCELERATING PERFORMANCE

Leverage these best practices to foster higher levels of performance in your direct reports.

CREATE CLARITY AND ALIGNMENT

- Regardless of a direct report's work location, ensure the individual has clear goals that align with Sinclair's objectives (If one exists for the role, use the Role Excellence Profile as a blueprint)
- Agree on milestones and metrics by which you and your direct report will assess performance and progress
- Agree on support needed to advance performance (coaching, mentoring, learning interventions), and how progress will be measured
- Agree on the most effective ways to hold each other accountable for goal achievement
- Document all conversations, send follow up notes, and formally assess progress

COACH WITH PRECISION

- Ensure feedback follows the C.R.E.D. model:
 - **Constructive:** all feedback needs to be constructive. Framing it and delivering it any other way detracts from the point of feedback, and can create fear, uncertainty, and doubt across the employee base
 - **Reinforcing:** make sure you provide clarity on what you value and want to see the employee do again, or, what does not align with culture or performance expectations, and what/how the employee needs to produce differently (“When I heard you empathize with the customer to let him know that we understood the gravity of his issue, I knew that you had properly internalized and applied our value of Empathy. Keep it up!”)
 - **Essential:** feedback should tie directly to specific, role-based performance expectations and company values. Period. Anything more or less than this can become distracting.
 - **Developmental:** you want to deliver feedback in a way that helps your team member get better. You can do this in a number of ways, including asking questions like “What, specifically, worked in that interaction for you? What is one thing you are going to keep doing? What is one thing you will improve next time?”
- Link performance-based conversations directly to the desired performance outcomes. General coaching (“you need to be a better team player”, or “you need better executive presence), without context, will not advance performance
- Have the direct report take ownership of her/his path and progress. Ask what the person has done to advance performance, how she has overcome obstacles, and what she will do next to get even better

SELECT COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND ESTABLISH CLEAR PROTOCOLS FOR PERFORMANCE-BASED CONVERSATIONS

- Leverage a video meeting platform for 1:1s and performance reviews (ex. Microsoft Teams or Zoom).
- Ensure everyone is utilizing the same platform and equipment like mics and cameras are functional, software is downloaded, and settings are optimized.



- Practice the tool prior to use (especially for external and/or client-specific meetings) to work out any issues.
- Arrive for meetings early to ensure you are ready for a productive conversation
- Prepare notes in advance, having already followed up on action items from last conversation, and given thought to where the direct report has made progress, regressed, or stayed in neutral
- Ensure alignment with respect to who leads the conversation. Ideally, the direct report leads her/his performance-based conversations
- Formal performance-based conversations should occur no less frequently than monthly, with status and progress documented (ideally, in the Bridge)

ASSESS PERFORMANCE, NOT THE PERFORMER

- Operate as a trusting and trusted leader. Unless performance is consistently below agreed upon standards, assess outputs and outcomes, as opposed to tracking amount of time worked
- Track and measure progress against leading and lagging performance indicators as a primary focus, as opposed to activity
- Resist the urge to make judgments about intent or behavior without a performance focused conversation (As opposed to saying “you are not putting in enough time”, or before adding another metrics tracking process, have a discussion with the direct report about how his/her performance compares to agreed upon standards)