Productivity Tools

Celpax – quick, anonymous thumbs up, thumbs down check in with your team. You can have one wall mounted device, and the accompanying dashboard to review the data, for free.

Tandem – feedback app, allowing real time, crowd sourced feedback for any member of the team. Includes 360 feedback, analytics, and tracking of one to one meetings.

Asana – task and project management tool. Recommended by several Productivity Club members.

FreeAgent – accounting software for small businesses, covering all the essentials including invoicing, expenses, and HMRC self assessment.

Jira – task and project management software, free for up to ten users.

Microsoft Teams – collaboration software, allowing file sharing, video conferencing, task management and more. Used by many Productivity Club members.

Workflowy – online tool for creating detailed bullet point lists, including lists within list. Recommended particularly with use alongside the Pomodoro Technique.

The Pomodoro Technique – somewhere between a tip and a tool, the Pomodoro Technique means that you split your work up into focused blocks, with breaks to refresh your mind in between.

Zoom – web conferencing software

Productivity Pitfalls

Unlimited holiday policy – one member implemented this and experienced problems with staff perception of who was taking 'too much' or unfair amounts of leave. Change and expectation management required to avoid conflict.

Encouraging feedback is a good company culture, but be aware that there is a hierarchy in place in every company's structure, and that giving feedback therefore takes confidence that it will be heard.

Employees will have different needs when it comes to communicating – make sure that your policies and visions around how you communicate are inclusive and open to challenge.

Productivity Tips

Love/Like/Hate Matrix – each regular work task is listed, and each employee rates out of ten their ability to do the task, and their enjoyment of the task. This allows the company to reassign tasks with reference to team strengths and preferences, lets the team feel that they have choices, and highlights areas where team members would enjoy and benefit from specific training.

Task swapping – each member of the team takes in a task that they no longer wish to perform, this is laid on a table and is available for someone else to take on as a replacement for the tasks that they will no longer be doing.

Appraisals to Performance Reviews – and let them be an opportunity for the team to discuss their career path, not only to look at the last six or twelve months.

Changing Appraisers - The appraiser doesn't have to be a line manager.

Reverse Mentoring – pair up a senior team member with a new start, and encourage informal meetings and feedback in both directions. Helps to break down hierarchy and foster good culture around feedback.

External Expertise – sometimes it's more productive to invest in bringing a consultant in to help with specific problems.

Define Your Outcomes – make sure that your team know what your overall goals are – whether for your business overall or specific projects - and how they will be measured for success. Also include key milestones for projects so that progress can be accurately measured and celebrated. Make sure that every project ties in to your company's bigger picture, and be clear about how.

Be Ready to Stop – if something isn't working, make sure that you and your team are ready and able to say so.

Define Your Methods – make sure that your team understands and is confident with any tools or ways of working you're using. Time spent on supporting them in the first instance will lead to greater productivity overall.

Remember the Customer – the way you want to work, or the projects you want to run, should always refer back to what the customer actually wants.

Celebrate Success – one club member has a 'good news' inbox, where all team members are encouraged to send any item of good news. Every week, one item is chosen as a highlight and shared with the team, and a monthly newsletter shares every success with the wider team.