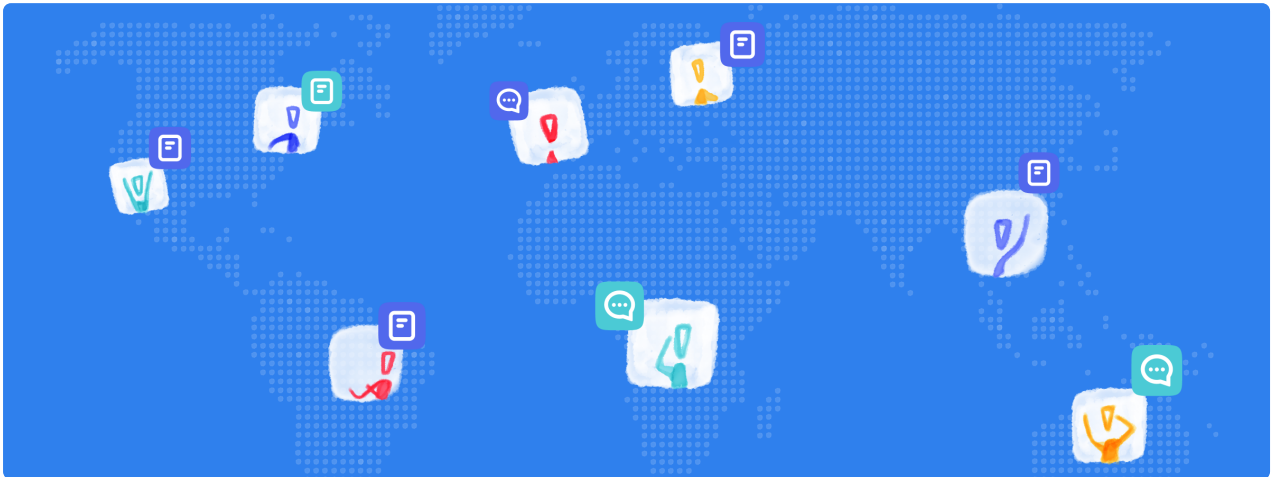


Start working like a remote company

[Edit here](#) on Medium.



Starting Slite 3 years ago, I had no clue it would become so connected to the remote topic.

In hindsight it's obvious: I admired the Zapier, Basecamp and Buffer who challenged the status quo of office life, and experienced firsthand this special rhythm when working as a freelance.

Ask any remote worker, the benefits are simpler: being close to family and working on an awesome challenge, no matter your location. But on the company side, I didn't expect so many upsides, and was surprised when expected issues turned into benefits.

The informal water-cooler chitchat, the conflict resolution over a coffee all seem in favor of a physical office, right? Truth is, they don't scale. Ambiguous conflict resolutions, patting your colleague on the back, or joking around the coffee machine won't work in the long run. They hide issues and lead to rotten situations.

Remote teams can't take these shortcuts, and instead, they benefit from working on constructive feedback and efficient conflict resolution from day 1.

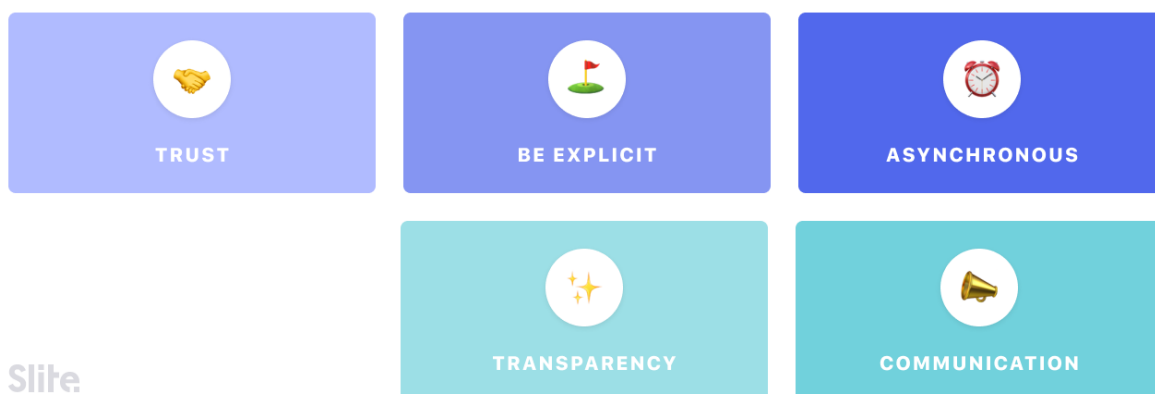
Any company out there should work like a remote one, because it would be solving its scaling challenges way in advance.

The keys to remote

As Slite went from being collocated to a half-remote-half-office setup, to eventually full-remote, I spoke with mentors at companies like Invision, Buffer and Zapier and started detecting some patterns.

First, I saw how much harder they are to make work, but how much more resilient they are once working. **Second**, they were very conscious of *how* they worked, constantly challenging their organizational model. **And third**, their core work principles gravitate around:

- Granting trust by default
- Being explicit
- Collaborating asynchronously
- Making information transparent
- Communicating intensively



These are inherent to remote companies, but are in no way exclusive to them. You can work in an office with all your teammates and abide by these principles. Here's how we apply them at Slite and why they're so beneficial.

Grant trust by default

"If you have hired people you trust, trust they are working".

This quote [from Buffer](#) says it all. It is non-negotiable in remote teams: try micromanaging and nudging your employees 7000 km away and with a six hour time difference, it simply doesn't work.

Since you can't afford to not trust folks, you need to put in the extra effort during hiring and onboarding.

Be explicit

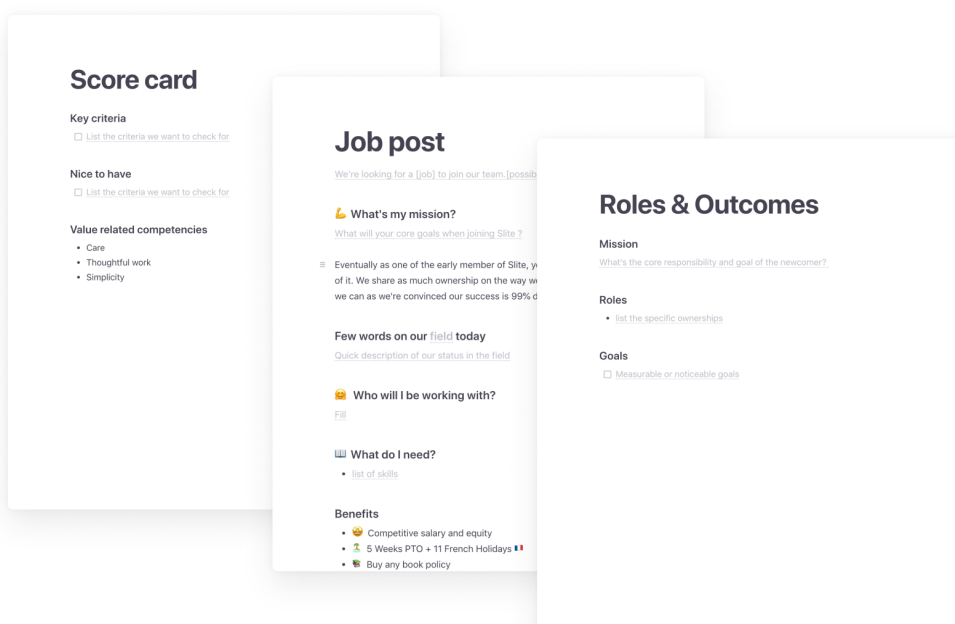
The untold creates conflicts.

In a remote team, you can't rely on implicit ideas or body language to convey your ideas or start a discussion. And that's for the best. It forces you to be extremely explicit on every level, at all times, reducing misunderstandings drastically.

For example, my co-founder Pierre and I were recently talking of hiring an Israeli person and discussing the legal set up. We discussed working with him as a freelancer, but something didn't quite feel right. We could have ended the conversation and moved on but we wanted an explicit reason on why it didn't feel "right". Pierre came up with it:

You "employ" people to grant them security so that whatever happens, health issues, personal problems, sector crisis, you know the state will hop in & take care of the person. Having freelancers really creates two classes of citizens in the team.

While the problem remains unsolved, we're clear and aligned on the downside of this solution.



Hiring and onboarding is the area in which we learned first hand the importance of being explicit. It starts with a scorecard stating exactly what you expect from the candidate, which is then reflected in the job post, assessed during the interview, and eventually in the new comer's roles and outcomes. At every step, the candidate, your team and yourself know why it's a go or not.

Collaborate asynchronously

With folks in different time zones, your communication shifts. You can't tap on shoulder or ping folks at all times. The alternative is to work in a more thoughtful, lasting, asynchronous fashion.

Consider **the half-life of information**. Half-life in nuclear physics describes the time taken by the radioactivity of an element to reduce by half. We can apply it to information: what the time for your document to lose half its interest?

Well, async communication forces you to raise the half-life of your information. You can't have messages with 10 minutes half-lives, they need to have half-lives of a few hours or more to be efficient. So they need to be much more thoughtful, usually longer, and maybe less frequent.

It creates longer-form conversations, and reduces back and forth. It also gives everyone the opportunity to chime in and contribute thoughtfully — not just the most reactive or loudest.

From documenting thought processes in tools like Slite or using asynchronous videos to make a point with tools like Loom, longer form information comes in various shapes and forms.

Make information transparent

In remote teams, your colleagues might be sleeping when you need them.

It isn't a problem if everyone always has access to the right information. Make information transparent by documenting everything: meeting outcomes, project status, handbooks, onboarding status, tasks, etc...

It's exactly what Slite is made for: give your team one space, where all important information is accessible by default.

Communicate intensively

When speaking with friends I realize this was **the biggest misconception about remote**: we often think of remote folks as isolated people on every corner of the globe, with almost no social interaction. In terms of valuable, qualitative interactions, most remote teams communicate far more.

And this, simply because you can't (and shouldn't anyway) rely on informal interactions. Remote teams instead work with many (heavily used) **formal** communication channels, making information sharing way more inclusive and efficient.

Going remote

Remote is an incredible way to grow a company. You can hire the best, and give them an exceptional work and life setup. In our current team, we were able to hire Mike living in the Alps with his baby and wife, Julien raising his kite-surfing skills in Lisbon, Charley married to his Brazilian wife, allow Pierre to leave Paris for a calmer city or even Rob to move from Seoul to Dublin, without ever questioning if those choices would be compatible with Slite's journey.

So if you consider it, go for it, and go all-in.

And if you're already well setup in a collocated space, do work like a remote company: write things down, make decisions and interactions explicit, centralize information, enforce heavy communication, put trust at the center of your values. All these combined will let you scale and work in peace.

You... want to work remotely but your company isn't ready?

As a matter of fact, we're currently hiring for very key positions

→ [Take a look at our jobs page](#) 😊