Slack Communication Guide

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to communicate shared Slack best practices so that all team members are clear on the who, what, when, where, and why of communicating with one another in Slack. Slack is an integral part of our team culture here so it's important to stay aligned & accountable to the standards outlined in this guide. And while we love using Slack, it's easy to get sucked into a vortex of constant stimulation. We'll address & offer solutions for some of those potential issues in this guide – all with the intention of creating a healthy & productive Slack workspace.

At the end of the day, we want Slack to be a place of productive, collaborative, and **fun** work & communication. 🥳

The 9 Agreements of Slack

- 📣 Agreement #1: Always default to public communication
- 🚨 Agreement #2: @here and @channel
- 🧵 Agreement #3: Thread it up
- Agreement #4: Use emojis for non-verbal engagement
- Agreement #5: Protect your focus time
- 💭 Agreement #6: Use your Slack status to communicate what you're up to
- 🔐 Agreement #7: Never share passwords in Slack
- ⏲ Agreement #8: Respond to questions/requests within 24 hours
- 🥳 Agreement #9: Slack culture

📣Agreement #1: **Always default to public communication**

Whenever possible, communicate your thoughts, ideas, updates, and questions in a public channel.

A good rule of thumb is to communicate in your team channel **first**, company channels **second**, and direct message **third**.

Defaulting to public communication allows conversations to be searchable and decreases the chance of decisions/updates happening "behind closed doors" (aka: in a DM). At the end of the day, direct messages tend to slow us down and waste time when previous conversations have to eventually be explained in a public channel.

Situations where a DM makes sense:

1. Checking in/catching up with a team member on a more personal level
2. Discussing sensitive/confidential information
3. Sharing constructive feedback

🚨 Agreement #2: **@here and @channel**

@channel – Including @channel in a message will notify everyone that's a member of that channel

- Please don't use @channel or @everyone unless it's an **emergency.** This will ping everyone, including people who may be offline or on vacation.

@here – Using @here will only notify channel members that are actively online at that moment.

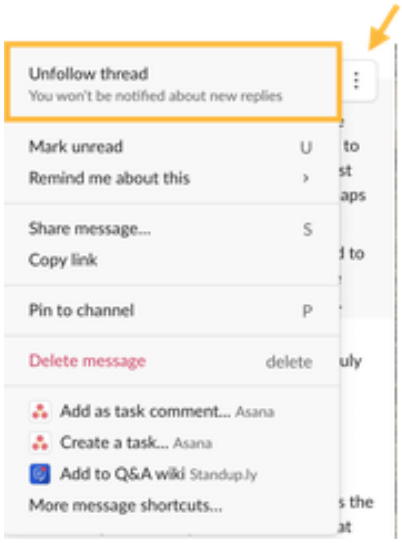
- This is best for **non-urgent** announcements and/or updates.

🧵 Agreement #3: **Thread it up**

Whenever possible, thread your replies so that the conversation stays compact and easy to follow.

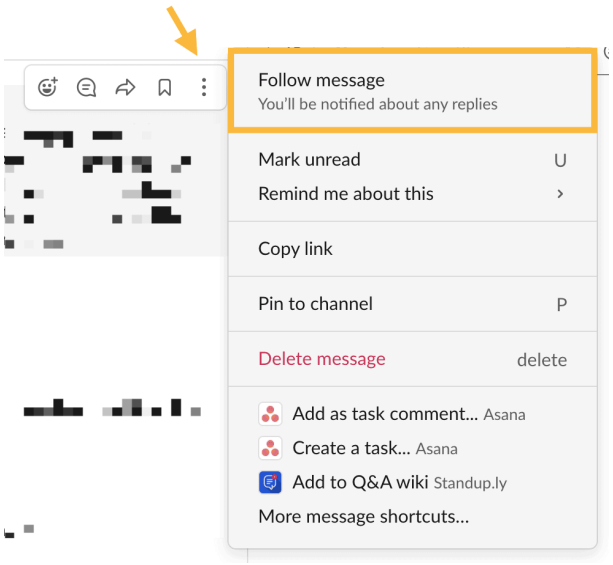
Unfollow a thread

You can engage in a message and then unfollow the thread if you don't want to continue to be notified when other team members also respond.



Follow a thread

Similarly, if there's a conversation happening that you want to stay updated on without engaging, you can always choose to follow the thread and you'll be notified whenever someone responds.

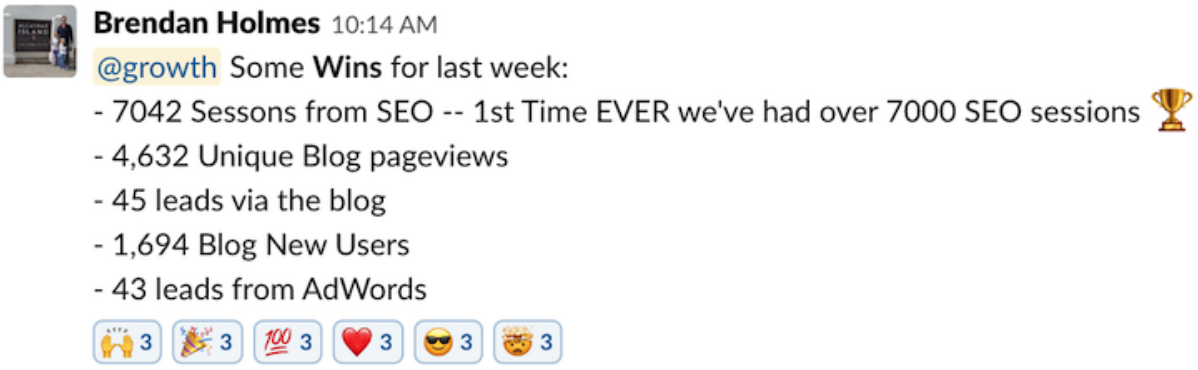


✅ Agreement #4: **Use emojis for non-verbal engagement**

Let your team members know that you've seen their message by adding an emoji to it!

Here are a few handy emoji reactions that can quickly communicate your thoughts:

Emoji	Meaning
👍	Confirmation that you've seen the post & understand/agree
👀	Confirmation that you've seen the post but need to look into it more
👆	Agreement with the post/sharing that you feel and/or think the same way
💗	Love it!



💡 Agreement #5: **Protect your focus time**

You're encouraged to protect your focus time and get out of Slack whenever needed. **You are never expected to be active in Slack all day long.** That'd be exhausting & mentally fatiguing! Slack should be something that you bounce in and out of purposefully, not something you watch all day. When you need to get things done, we encourage you to quit, close, snooze, or do whatever you need to do to avoid interruptions from Slack. Just make sure you build some time into your schedule to hop in and catch up on questions/requests at some point during the day.

The only channel that we expect everyone to stay up to speed on is #announcements, but checking that once a day is perfectly acceptable.

Don't forget to set your status to "Focus time" or something similar so that your team knows what you're up to!

💭 Agreement #6: Use your Slack status to communicate what you're up to

Slack has a nifty "status" feature that allows you to communicate what you're up to in a way that's visible to anyone that wants to check it out. This is especially handy for focus time, vacation time, or really any time that you want to clue people in on what you're working on!

Pro Tip: Consider installing the Google Calendar app in Slack to help you automate this!

🔐 Agreement #7: Never share passwords in Slack

As a general rule - it's never a good idea to send sensitive information in Slack. Our organization has tools to securely share things like passwords, customer data, and more. Ask your leader for the proper process to follow.

🕛Agreement #8: **Respond to questions/requests within 24 hours**

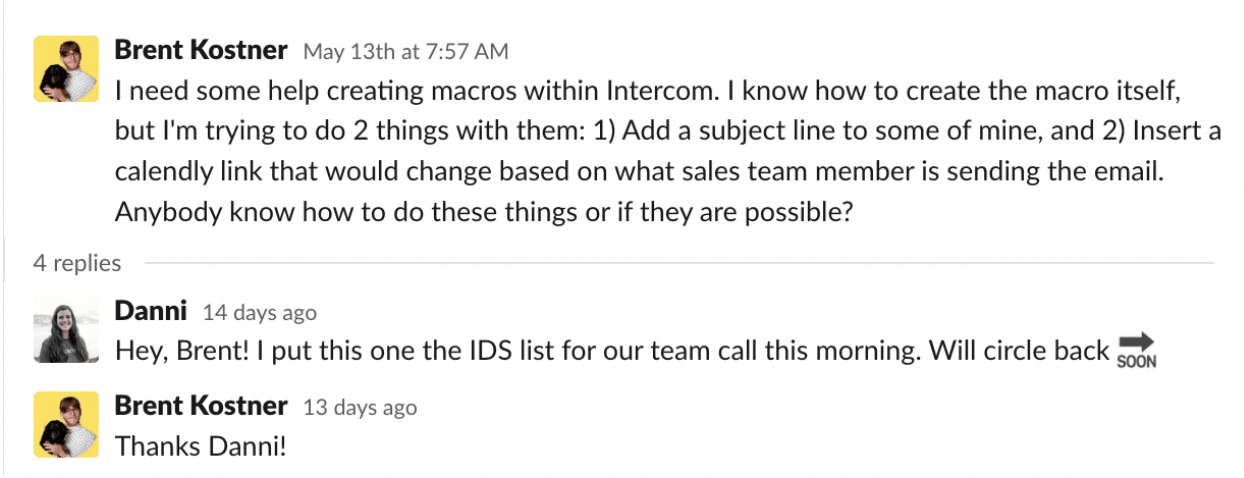
Slack can be a busy place and it's easy to lose track of things. While protecting your focus time is important, it's expected that each team member spends a bit of time each day catching up in Slack. This could look different for everyone and could take anywhere from 5-30 minutes.

Why is this a required thing? It has become more and more common to see questions/requests go unnoticed and without response in Slack and that's not fun for anyone. The intention of this agreement is to set an expectation that we can all hold each other accountable on.

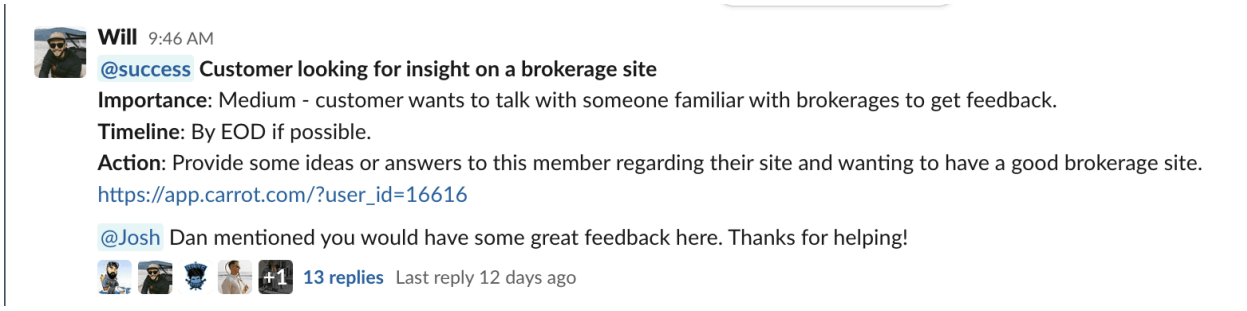
Lastly, you'll noticed that this agreement says to **"respond"** to questions/requests, not "solve" all questions/requests. We're just looking for acknowledgement and engagement because we fully recognize that not all questions/requests can be answered or solved on the spot.

Tips:

- Utilize Slack's reminder feature (if you're not using this already you're missing out!)
- Get in the habit of quickly acknowledging questions with a commitment to follow up



- Tag specific team members and specify the urgency level when making requests of other teams



🥳 Agreement #9: **Slack culture**

Slack is a huge part of how our team operates as a company, so naturally, it's a huge part of our culture as well! With that in mind, Slack should be a place where each team member can feel free to express their personality and sense of humor, and have fun with their fellow team members – all while doing great work in a productive work environment.