



Twitter engineering uses Double to humanize remote conversations

Bridging the gap between formal and informal interaction

Twitter's Engineering team in San Francisco wasn't alone in their search for a technology solution to the disconnect created by global sprawl. Joining the ranks alongside John Deere, Steelcase, and HP, VP of Engineering at Twitter Raffi Krikorian purchased his Double in August of 2013.

Krikorian's Double lives in his office and, while he's visiting the Pittsburgh satellite office, Double can wander the aisles.

Expanding video conferencing

Before Double entered the building, Twitter's engineering team was heavily reliant on typical video conferencing applications. "We're not averse to talking to people electronically," Krikorian said. But there was something missing from the interactions that took place between the mounted screen in a conference room and the people sitting at the table. It was static, in the sense that the interaction was stuck between those walls.

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- Raffi, VP of Engineering

"For us, video conferencing works in a very regimented way - it's tied to the calendar, literally," Krikorian said. Meetings are very reactionary and directive, he added. "But most work gets done between meetings, in casual conversations."

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- Raffi, VP of Engineering

Krikorian missed out on water cooler conversations quite frequently: "One of the things that would frustrate me when I didn't have Double, is when I was traveling, I felt *really* disconnected."

So they began their quest to humanize remote engineering at Twitter.

Double: Modern, yet classic

It was important that the solution they chose resembled Twitter's company culture and the team's personality. Double easily fit the bill - elegant, sleek, simple. "At Twitter, we're pretty mindful of those types of touches," Krikorian said. "We pride ourselves in being a design-ish culture."

A few years back, a clunkier version of a telepresence robot was tested at the San Francisco office, but it only gathered dust. "It just didn't do it for us," Krikorian said. "With Double, it's just simple. It's just two wheels and a rod with an iPad attached to it. Everyone can get their heads around that."

It's not about the savings; it's about the gains

Not surprisingly, Krikorian also uses Double while in San Francisco. He's been known to connect to it in the evening after most people have left for home. "When I'm not in the office, I'll just drive it around and see what people are doing," Krikorian added. "If I bump into someone, we might chat for a bit, and then I keep on driving."

The engineering team operates under a "very lenient" work from home policy that also includes adjustable in-office hours. Although most prefer face-to-face interactions and opt for typical 9am-6pm days, some choose to work late into the night. On the nights that Krikorian connects to Double from his home in San Francisco, he is able to create face-to-face interactions that otherwise might not have been possible with team members who work more efficiently at night.

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"It allows that type of chance encounter to happen," Krikorian said. "Instead of being very transactional, it becomes much more part of the environment."

Double has established an entirely new narrative for Twitter's global engineering team. "I didn't expect to feel connected to the office when I was driving Double around," he said. "I feel better because I have a Double."

To learn more about Double Robotics, visit: doublerobotics.com

