

Connected Teams in a Distributed World: Insights from the IIBA UK x ILTA Roundtable 2026

An anonymised summary of themes and patterns discussed under Chatham House Rules.

Introduction

The International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA UK) and the International Legal Technology Association (ILTA) recently convened a closed roundtable bringing together senior practitioners and leaders across legal, financial, public sector and consultancy environments. The goal: to explore what it truly takes to build connected, high-performing teams when working across regions, cultures, and organisational structures.

Held under Chatham House Rules, the session surfaced candid insights into team behaviour, leadership expectations, professional standards, and the realities of distributed delivery. The insights below are fully anonymised and distilled into practical themes.

1. The Anatomy of a High-Performing Team Member

Across industries, participants aligned on the behavioural hallmarks of individuals who elevate team performance:

- Energy: active engagement rather than passive attendance
- Pace: moving with urgency and helping others maintain momentum
- Continuous improvement: challenging not just what the team delivers, but how it operates
- Collaboration: proactively seeking input and working beyond silos

2. How Business Analysts Can Meet and Shape Client Expectations

Participants emphasised the need for clarity and structure in how BA services are delivered:

- A clear framework within the BA team, with client sign-off, embedded into the Statement of Work
- A well-defined BA approach that is understood by both the team and the client
- Strategic involvement - BAs adding value at the problem-framing stage

- A BA service framework supported by governance, enabling consistency across regions

3. Why the BA Practice Must Have a Seat at the Table

A recurring challenge in distributed environments is the risk of BAs being perceived as administrative or junior project support.

The group stressed that:

- The BA practice must be viewed as an investment, not a delivery convenience
- A formal framework is needed to articulate the practice's value
- Clear outputs and boundaries protect both the BA and the organisation
- Without strategic positioning, teams may default to seeing BAs as execution-focused rather than decision-enabling

4. Team Composition Depends on Practice Maturity

Distributed models work very differently depending on the maturity of the BA practice:

- Immature practices require strong, credentialed BAs to set and maintain standards
- Mature practices benefit from intentionally blended teams - senior practitioners for shaping direction, junior practitioners for operational delivery
- Spreading an immature team too thinly across regions introduces quality and consistency risks

5. Collocation, Culture & Community: The Human Glue

Despite the rise of hybrid work, participants unanimously agreed that in-person connection still matters:

- Regular collocation builds relational capital, which sustains trust and collaboration at a distance
- Cultural differences must be named and navigated explicitly
- A Community of Practice is essential for aligning standards across regions
- Leveraging industry frameworks (IIBA, BCS) reduces reinvention and enforces a shared toolkit

6. What Effective Leadership Looks Like in Distributed Teams

Leaders of high-performing teams exhibited a set of consistent behaviours:

- Intentional connection that goes beyond task check-ins
- Setting and continually reinforcing a clear North Star
- Maintaining a big-picture perspective, resisting the pull into tactical detail
- Recognition, formal and informal, especially important without physical proximity
- Active coaching embedded in day-to-day leadership

Looking Ahead

The roundtable highlighted that building high-performing distributed teams is as much about people as it is about process. Clarity of expectations, strong professional frameworks, intentional leadership, and investment in relationships all emerged as critical success factors.

These insights will inform future sessions, articles, and collaborative initiatives aimed at advancing the craft of business analysis and strengthening cross-regional teamwork across the IIBA and ILTA communities.