

Managing remote teams

Many of us have found ourselves in the position of working from home during the recent lockdowns. For some of us, working remotely continues to be the new normal as businesses start to open back up. While we've become accustomed to this new way of working, many of us are also leading teams who have now been out of the office for some time.

It's always a good idea to have clear remote working policies established, and to make sure you and your team are familiar with your company's expectations.

Here we've put together a few ideas that might help your team to keep thriving while working from home.



Tips for cultivating a team culture that works

Establish a structured check-in

Daily check-ins provide teams with reassurance that there is an established place to receive updates, ask questions or raise concerns.

It's important they are at a regular time, so your team knows they are firmly established and consistent check-ins.

Team calls work particularly well for groups that collaborate closely. While one-on-one calls might be better for team members that are working on individual projects.

- Consider video conferencing solutions, like Zoom or Skype, so you can see each other and pick up on visual cues to enhance conversations.

Utilise communication tools

Communicate frequently and ask for feedback to be sure your team is hearing and understanding.

Take good meeting notes and share summaries and action points with your team.

Creating a work-in-progress document, that all team members can access and update, might help to capture updates that you might normally hear in passing conversations.

- Consider utilising collaboration tools like SharePoint, Microsoft Teams or Slack for less formal communications.
- Consult with your organisation's IT department to see what tools are available and always be sure they meet data security requirements before implementing with your team.

Set clear expectations

It might be helpful to agree on team-wide expectations around hours of availability, but some level of flexibility is also important. Be open with your team and let them know when you'll be away from work and encourage team members to let you and their colleagues know if they will be unavailable. Be clear about holiday and leave policies.

Understand the workloads and pending deadlines of your team members and adopt an 'early and often' communication approach to ensure efficient workflow.

- Consider sharing your online calendars so availability and workloads are clear across the team.

Celebrate wins!

Be sure to mark achievements, call out wins and celebrate success of individuals and the team. You can help ensure the visibility of the work and achievements of your team.

- Consider encouraging your team to recognise each other's achievements. Use a peer recognition programme if your organisation has one or set up a team page to celebrate success.

Listen to feedback

While some team members may enjoy the solitude of working from home, remote working may be more challenging for others.

Proactively ask your team members how they are finding the experience of working from home, listen to their concerns and show empathy towards their situation.

Listen to feedback to help pinpoint what is working for your team and what isn't.

- Consider resource guides, so your team knows how to access resources (technology or other) to help them with their home working set up.

Encourage social interaction

Relaxed conversations about non-work topics can boost team spirit and may help team members feel less isolated. Introduce your family, friends or pets on casual video calls.

- Consider using group messaging tools for casual chat or create virtual catch ups through Microsoft Teams, start a channel where you can share personal updates and stories.

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