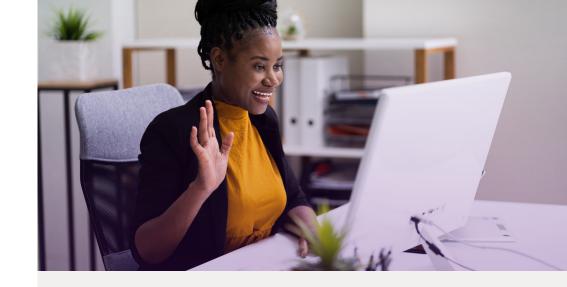# Remote employee

MANAGEMENT LESSONS

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And What Is Coming Next for Virtual Workers!

IT'S A BRAVE NEW WORLD

In 2020, nearly every manager of an in-office team became a remote manager. We all had to learn a lot on the fly, and we all made some mistakes along the way. But now that the initial shock is over, and it is clear remote work will continue to be the norm for the foreseeable future, it's a great time to focus on the ways you can successfully manage your team.

This eBook will share tips for keeping your remote workforce engaged, productive and content in their jobs and will provide a peek into the future.

IN THIS GUIDE, WE WILL DISCUSS:

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HOW TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE A REMOTE TEAM

Managing a remote team isn't much different than managing an in-person team. The biggest difference is lack of proximity. When everyone is working from home, you're no longer privy to conversations between co-workers, team members can't pop into your office when they need to, and it can be a challenge to keep the team feeling like a cohesive group.

Be Flexible

People are at home with pets, children, spouses, roommates or elderly parents which can make a strict nine-to-five schedule impossible to keep. As long as work is getting completed on time and quality remains high, don't get hung up on which hours your employees work.

Be Clear About Processes

While you want to remain flexible, you also cannot afford to lose control of workflow processes. Be clear about the non-negotiable aspects of specific processes so you can keep productivity high.

Invest in Great Communication Tools

Have a variety of tools in place including chat platforms, video conferencing, screen sharing, project management tools and cloud-based document collaboration tools. The easier you make it for remote employees to communicate, the more connected they will feel.

Have Fun

Remote teams can feel isolated. Don't be afraid to have fun and to make time for virtual team building.

Prioritize One-On-Ones

It's important for you to stay connected to remote teammates, as well, so schedule weekly 10-minute one-on-ones with employees. Check in on their workload, ask for feedback and go over their goals and performance.

DON'T LET EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION FALL BY THE WAYSIDE

Employee recognition is always important, and it should not fall through the cracks in a remote work environment. Recognizing employees boosts morale, improves engagement and helps remote employees remember they are valued.

Send Old-Fashioned Handwritten Notes

In a remote-first world where we spend hours on video chat and smartphones, a handwritten note stands out because it shows you went out of your way to send a personal message. Consider sending handwritten birthday greetings and writing a handwritten note when someone goes above and beyond.

Implement Peer Recognition

Peer recognition programs are an effective way to increase teamwork and build trust. There are a myriad of ways you can facilitate peer recognition systems:

- Set up a special email address for employees to send stories about teammates.
- If you use collaboration platforms like Slack or Teams, set up a channel for people to give shout-outs to teammates.
- Reserve time in every team meeting for peers to recognize each other.
- Offer ways to send each other notes and cards, etc.

Give Practical Gifts and Rewards

With ever-changing rules and regulations regarding social distancing and the unfortunate occurrence of restaurants and local attractions shuttering, it's a good idea to choose practical gifts when giving prizes and rewards. Consider things like grocery cards, gas cards or even plain Visa gift cards that people can spend how they wish.
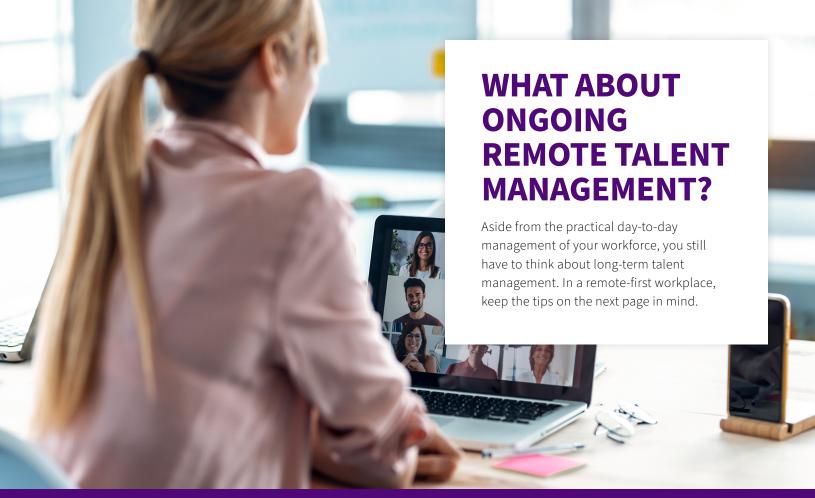
MANY EMPLOYEES ARE FEELING THE EMOTIONAL STRAIN OF WORKING FROM HOME.

Some are dealing with anxiety, isolation and even depression in their new working world. Consider these tips for focusing on your remote employees' mental health:

- Encourage social connection through video calls, remote team-building activities, and frequent informal check-ins.

- Plan time for breaks, and let employees know it is alright (and expected!) to walk away from their computers for short periods during the day.

- Make access to mental health services, including teletherapy, clear and encourage employees to take advantage of them.

- Be flexible with working time and daily schedules whenever possible. This is an adjustment for everyone, and good employees shouldn't let the stress of their schedule keep them from performing their best.

It is up to employers to support their employees' mental health at work – even when working from home. A staff who feels cared for will not only perform better, they will also attract other great workers when it comes time to staff up.

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WHAT ABOUT ONGOING REMOTE TALENT MANAGEMENT?

Aside from the practical day-to-day management of your workforce, you still have to think about long-term talent management. In a remote-first workplace, keep the tips on the next page in mind.

- **Design flexible systems.** Flexibility is a hallmark of any adaptable organization.

- **Identify leaders.** You may be surprised at which of your team members step up to lead in these crazy times. Identify employees who have natural leadership abilities and ask them to help with important tasks and projects.

- **Expand learning opportunities.** Employees may be asked to take on new responsibilities as priorities change, they may be required to cover for someone who is sick, they may be needed to spearhead new projects and may need to develop new skills. Promote cross-training and other learning opportunities to improve skills and boost employee engagement.

- **Identify future needs.** The pandemic will change your company and your industry in the long run. Stay plugged in to what those changes might be and start looking ahead to the types of skills you will need to fill potential gaps.

- **Focus on incremental improvements.** Don't look for the greatest quantitative adjustment first. Instead, find ways to intervene and make incremental but meaningful improvements.

- **Have a plan for absences.** Experts predict we will see "rolling" COVID-19 hot spots emerge until there is a treatment, vaccine or cure. It's important to have a plan for covering gaps if people fall ill or must quarantine with an ill family member. This may include hiring temporary workers or contractors on short notice.

SHOULD WE REMAIN A REMOTE COMPANY?

Now that we are all accustomed to working remotely, many leaders are considering staying remote well into the future. Is this the right choice for your business?

Always Look To Local Guidelines

Local and state restrictions can vary significantly from federal guidelines. Make sure you have a good grasp on what you are and are not allowed to do in terms of reopening your office.

Talk To Your Insurance Expert

Your insurance policy may be restrictive when it comes to filing any sort of claim related to the pandemic. Talk to your insurers to understand exactly what your policy covers and what types of claims they actually pay out before deciding to fill your office with people.

Talk To Your Employees

Don't just arbitrarily decide to keep everyone at home or bring them all back. Survey your team to get a feel for how they are doing.

Some employees have found that they thrive while working from home and would leap at the chance to continue to do so. Other employees are itching to get back into the office where they feel they are more able to focus. You may find that a hybrid model works well for you in the future.

Consider Long-Term Cost Savings

Many employers are considering cutting back on physical space and making their offices more like co-work spaces where desk space is shared and people can float in and out. By limiting the number of people in the office at one time, you can control costs significantly.

REMOTE ENGAGEMENT STARTS WITH REMOTE RECRUITING

The way someone feels about their job can be shaped before you even hire them. It is necessary to set the right tone throughout the hiring process to provide candidates with the reassurance they want and need that your company is adept at remote work.

- **Don't cut costs on your video conference software.** You want crisp, clear sound and picture and it should be simple to use for both you and your candidates.

- **Communicate well prior to interviews.** Send candidates a meeting link for their interview several days prior so that they have time to test that link. In that email, confirm the time and let them know if you expect them to share their screen, or prepare anything to present.

- **Be on time.** Don't make the candidate wait in an empty virtual meeting room. They may sign off if you make them wait. If you get tied up doing something else, email them to let them know or ask an admin to log in and update the candidate.

- **Set the right tone when you sign in.** When you log in to the meeting, take a few minutes to break the ice and ease into the conversation to help everyone relax. This also allows you to test audio and video before anything important happens.

- **Be flexible.** You probably know how difficult it is to find a quiet place to conduct meetings when you have a house full of activity, so cut candidates a bit of slack. As long as you can see and hear the candidate clearly, be flexible and focus on the substance of their answers, not whether a rogue toddler runs across the back of the screen.

- **Expect technical problems.** Technical issues can happen to anyone at any time, so don't hold a frozen screen against someone. It helps to set a plan in case of massive technical issues, like a backup conference call dial-in line.

REMOTE ONBOARDING ALSO SETS A TONE

Onboarding also shapes the way a new hire feels about your company and can be the determining factor in whether they make it a full year with your organization.

Be sure your remote onboarding process is engaging and sets new hires up for success.

- **Be proactive.** Send new hire paperwork as soon as you receive their signed offer letter. Then, have your tech team set up all logins and credentials well in advance.

- **Start day one with a video meeting.** Since you can't meet new remote employees at the door, set up a video call first thing on their first day to welcome them and go over the onboarding process.

- **Keep them busy.** Provide a structured schedule for the first week so new employees don't have to wonder what to do next. Don't forget to add the new employee to all meeting invitations, as well.

- **Incorporate the team.** To help build relationships across remote teams, schedule a video lunch or happy hour where the team can get together.

- **Set clear expectations.** Provide clear deadlines for training, milestones and skill-building. New employees need to know exactly what you want from them.

- **Meet regularly.** Unfortunately, it's easy to forget about new employees when everyone is remote. Set a regular schedule for check-in meetings to see how things are going, monitor progress and provide feedback.

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COULD YOU USE SOME SUPPORT?

Hiring, recruiting, engaging and retaining a remote workforce requires time and resources –
two commodities that are in short supply for many internal HR and talent management teams.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE.

PrideStaff is an expert staffing and recruiting firm that can help you navigate the remote landscape.
Our solutions will help you control costs while generating real ROI for your company. Leverage our expertise to:

- Improve the flexibility of your workforce.
- Save HR's time by conducting remote screening and initial interviewing.
- Quickly scale operations up or down as circumstances dictate.

- Reduce overhead.
- Provide coverage for ill or caregiving employees.
- Help you develop long-term staffing and talent acquisition plans.

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When PrideStaff has your back, you can move forward
with confidence – even from a distance.

PRIDESTAFF HAS FREE ARTICLES THAT CAN HELP YOU DURING THESE UNPRECEDENTED TIMES.

Check out these blogs from The Watercooler, and visit our page today for up-to-date news and resources: **www.pridestaff.com/blog**

Reopening After COVID-19:

Finding Motivated Workers
https://www.pridestaff.com/blog/your-guide-to-reopening-after-covid-19-finding-motivated-workers/

Prioritizing Worker Health, Safety and Flexible Work Arrangements
https://www.pridestaff.com/blog/reopening-after-covid-19-prioritizing-worker-health-safety-and-flexible-work-arrangements/

Expect the Unexpected When Planning Workforce Needs
https://www.pridestaff.com/blog/reopening-after-covid-19-expect-the-unexpected-when-planning-workforce-needs/

Leading In a New Time:

Trustworthiness: The Key to Leading in Today's World of Work
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