



QUANTUM
WORKPLACE

LEARNING TO WORK REMOTELY

What You Can Do to Keep Your
(Unexpectedly) Dispersed Workforce Engaged

Remote work is becoming a new normal for organizations across the globe due to the coronavirus pandemic. In order to maintain workplace culture while making this shift, organizations must find new ways of engaging their employees.

This quick guide will help you set the stage for remote work and give you best practice tips to help:

- Executive leaders inspire an inclusive remote culture that engages all employees
- Managers recognize the challenges that come with managing remote employees
- Employees shift to more consistent working environments and stay motivated during this transition

FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations are charged with creating a safe environment for their employees every day. And when a crisis occurs, it can be even more challenging to keep employees at every level in a safe place, physically and mentally. Here are a few tips to help you create clarity for people leaders and support your employees well-being.

Clarify expectations.

Paired with the amount of uncertainty looming in the world, unclear expectations are only going to lead to further confusion. It's more important now than ever to create an environment where employees can thrive personally and professionally. Here are a few ways to create clear boundaries for your remote employees:

- **What restrictions do your employees have when working remotely?**
Consider access to technology and equipment or security issues.
- **How are you keeping employees motivated toward achieving their goals?**
Clarify individual and/or team performance goals and make adjustments accordingly.
- **How are you connecting with employees?**
Set a schedule for regular performance conversations and check-ins.
- **How are you staying on top of daily progress?**
Create a timeline and format for regular updates.
- **What do employees need to know?**
Establish expectations for regular communication and goal progress.
- **Do you have a remote policy that needs review?**
Update and communicate organizational policies to your team.

FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Ensure resources, tools, and technology are available to connect employees.

Access to face-to-face communication is a big part of helping employees be successful while working remotely. In addition, providing equipment and internet access for key employee groups may be necessary. Ensure leaders and managers are working in conjunction with office managers and/or technology teams in order to provide the needed hardware/software and develop a plan for any physical space needed by employees. Consider these platforms for connecting seamlessly and regularly:

- Slack
- Google Chat
- Zoom
- GoToMeeting
- Skype
- Microsoft Teams

Measure and track employee engagement.

When your employees are all in different places, it can be easy for them to get lost in the shuffle. You might think you've got all hands on deck when in reality your employees are stressed, confused, and disengaged.

Find out how your employees are feeling and where they need more support. This may need to be more frequent as employees adapt to their new situation. Stay connected and understand employees' specific needs through:

- Pulse surveys
- One-on-ones
- Feedback

FOR TEAMS

Working with a team can be difficult when employees are physically apart from each other. And staying collaborative and focused on team and organizational goals can seem impossible. Here are a few tips that will help you practice empathy, stay flexible, and keep a pulse on your team's productivity.

Increase frequency and timeliness of communication from leadership.

Communication and trust are key to engaging your dispersed workforce. Clear guidelines will help managers remain confident, and employees will understand what's expected of them. If you can't stroll down the hallway to catch up with an employee, then communication becomes the glue that holds everything together. But you can't expect employees to be successful or supported by email and cell phone alone.

- **Good:** Email all major announcements from senior leaders.
- **Better:** Record an interview with senior leaders to share via email or intranet.
- **Awesome:** Hold a video conference, or have leaders join department or team-level meetings.

Be considerate of employee schedules.

It's important to keep remote employees updated regarding major projects, goals, and more for the company. With more information circulating in the news every day, managers and leaders must formally bring their teams up to speed.

This means empathizing and supporting employees who are juggling parenting or taking care of family members while also trying to get their work done from home.

- **Good:** Employees communicate schedules and availability, and managers respect them.
- **Better:** Managers set regular meeting hours to fit varied schedules and time zones.
- **Awesome:** Teams hold virtual lunches or coffee breaks to connect on personal and professional matters. Record meetings when possible, and drop them in channels/emails for all employees to view.

FOR TEAMS

Increase feedback loop frequency.

Ensuring that your teams are constantly moving in the right direction is difficult even when in the office. Managers should increase the cadence in which they're collecting and responding to employee feedback, especially as further news develops. Asking for regular feedback can help the team keep on top of their priorities.

- **Good:** Ask for employee feedback on how the organization has handled recent events.
- **Better:** Regularly share feedback as environments change and new events take place.
- **Awesome:** Get and share feedback at all levels to stay productive and engaged.

Adjust and adapt to changing environments.

Expect team dynamics to shift as employees transition to working remotely. Some individuals will figure out how to do this early on. Others will take time to find their groove.

Either way, team members should expect a steady evolution as they're adjusting to new communication styles, schedules, expectations, and other variables that might come with transitioning to remote work.

- **Good:** Regularly check-in with employees for personal and professional goal progress.
- **Better:** Hop on a web conference with a teammate who is doing similar tasks to avoid procrastination.
- **Awesome:** Schedule team working sessions to stay connected, check on mental health, and achieve goals.

FOR EMPLOYEES

In such an overwhelming time, employees likely aren't thinking of how they can be the most successful in their work. Share these tips with your employees to help them stay calm, focus on their work, and remain productive.

Dedicate a space for work.

Successful employees have a dedicated physical space set aside to focus on work. The kitchen table will do in a pinch, but employees might think more strategically when preparing for longer stretches of time. But not all employees will have ideal circumstances. Here are some things to consider when setting up a workspace:

- Privacy
- Noise
- Wifi connection
- Natural light
- Temperature-controlled area

Set boundaries for others in your space.

Most employees will have kids, roommates, or significant others vying for attention and space in the same area. It's important that they have conversations about where work boundaries exist. This might include a designated, physical space that, if possible, is not intruded upon. Keep in mind though, those same people have needs too. Any ask on the employee's part should consider expecting reciprocation.

FOR EMPLOYEES

Create and stick to a regular routine.

Remote worker stress, anxiety, and burnout are serious concerns, especially in times like these. To find a sense of normalcy, it can help to develop a consistent daily schedule.

This could include getting ready for the day such as exercising before diving into the day's work or getting creative by using a "closed/open" sign on the door to a makeshift office. Consider making a plan that includes:

- **Start of the day:** Get prepared for the day as normal; take a shower, get dressed, eat breakfast.
- **Middle of the day:** Set aside for daily tasks, team meetings, and even breaks throughout the day.
- **End of the day:** Find time to wind down, connect with team members, and actually log off.

Find time for self-care.

Extra flights of stairs and long walks to work are a built-in way to get your employees moving when heading into the office. Of course, it'd be optimal to get at least 30 minutes of gym time each day. But if you can't, consider getting creative in replacing those missed exercise opportunities. Consider walking and talking on the phone to a manager for 15 minutes each day or replace "commute" time with a walk around the block.



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CONCLUSION

As an organization, it's imperative to put on a united front for your employees. And while you might not have all the answers, you do have the power to communicate often, listen to your employees, and stay the course. We have a variety of resources available to help you navigate these uncertain times. We invite you to read, download, and share them with your team.

[VIEW MORE RESOURCES](#)

We're all in this together. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at hello@quantumworkplace.com.