

Managing a Remote Team




1. Adjust Your Mindset



The first thing to consider when planning to manage a remote team is your mindset and feelings towards remote work. It is important to think of remote work as real, valid work—not anything less than being in the office. Next, know that while remote work is just as important as your normal work environment, it requires a different style of management. You must manage your team proactively and consciously.

Being proactive and conscious is key in emergency situations like the COVID-19 outbreak. By being proactive, you can set your remote team up for success by providing the right resources, staying on top of goals, and setting up a seamless virtual workspace. Being conscious ensures that you stay aware of your workers' well being and mental state during the time period that they will be working remotely, helping to lead them better and encouraging their productivity.

2. Communicate Often

A black silhouette of a human head in profile, facing left. Three white curved lines emanate from the mouth area, representing sound waves or communication.

As a manager of a remote team, you must communicate often with those you manage. Set up regular meetings (phone or video call) to touch base with them. Here are __ things you must accomplish through communication with your workers:

Help your people understand their work style

Take the time to ask questions and help your employees determine the work style that fits them best and allows them to be most productive. Consider their social preferences and collaboration preferences. Do they thrive off of constant communication with others? Do they prefer video calls over phone calls? Once their work style is determined, make recommendations based on this knowledge.

Clearly define goals and objectives

Make sure your employees understand what they need to be working on and accomplishing each day or week. Give them a really clear sense of what tasks need to be done. It is a good idea to give them 3 top priorities at a time—this way, the workload will not be overwhelming and your employees will be focused on specific goals. This will make them feel more tied in and working towards successful completion of a deliverable. It is also important to provide metrics to your employees to help them see the value of their work.

3. Provide The Right Tools & Technologies

It is key that you provide technology and tech support for your people that are going to work remote. Provide tools that facilitate remote work, such as:

Web and Video Conferencing Platform

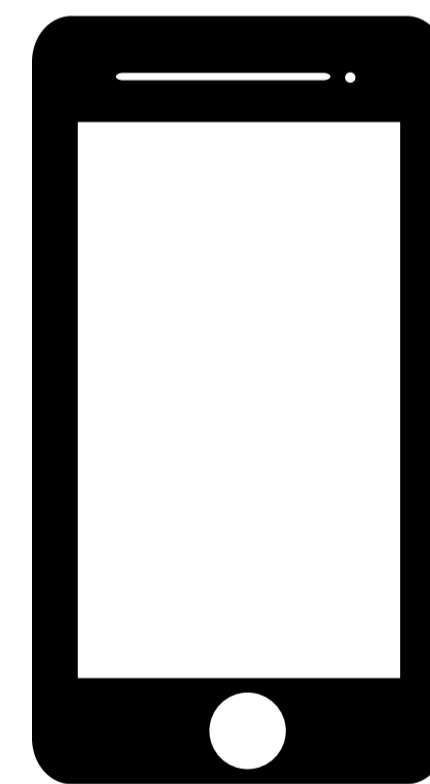
Web and video conferencing encompasses company and external capabilities (such as live webcasts and webinars) and team and department capabilities (such as web and video conferencing and room-based video conferencing). Video-based meetings will be key for remote workers to stay in close contact and have effective meetings.

Team Collaboration

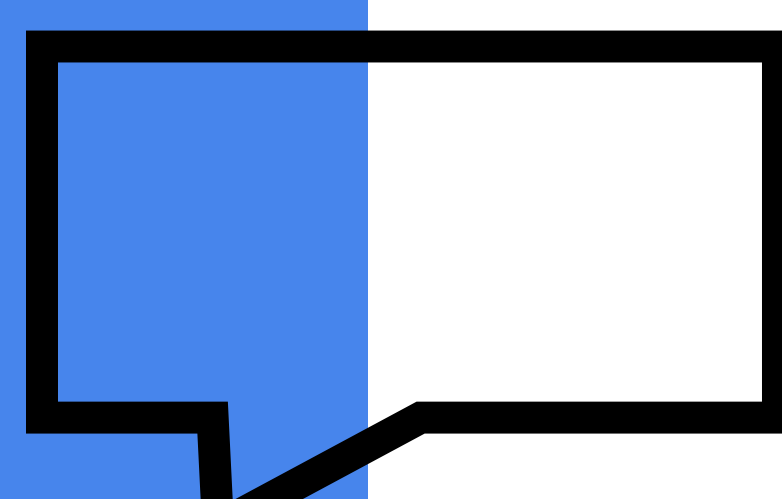
Team collaboration combines cross-platform synchronous and asynchronous interaction modes with elements of collaboration infrastructure that are mobile-friendly. It includes point-to-point and group chat/instant messaging, audio and video, and screen/file sharing. A primary focus of team collaboration is facilitating teamwork and team-building for mobile users, which is why it is key for remote work managers to provide team collaboration technologies.

Digital Work Hub

A digital work hub creates a digital work environment for your workers. It provides functionality normally associated with multiple applications with a single interface designed to simplify work. Provide these to allow team members to share content, progress on projects, etc. This will help keep team members in the loop and see the status of projects and progress towards goals. Think of it like a virtual team workspace. This is still an emerging area but proves to be beneficial to teams.



4. Implement a Work Buddy System

A black outline of a speech bubble, pointing towards the bottom left.

Introduce a work buddy system to your remote workers! This will allow each employee to have a work buddy to talk to every day to keep connected to work. Team managers need to be tied in and have check-ins, but it's also important for colleagues to touch base with each other to keep engagement and morale up. Introduce the concept on a team call and then encourage everyone to have a buddy that they chat with 1-2 times a day at a minimum. Phone calls are fine but the tool that works the best is team collaboration and/or text messages.

These tips apply for all managers, but are especially key when managing a remote team. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these tips can be used to keep your remote team feeling connected and productive.