Further Reading: Managing Teams in a Remote Environment

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

Gallup Workplace Engagement Survey.
The engagement of managers is critical because they set the tone for the engagement of the people who report to them -- managers affect 70% of the variance in team engagement. They are responsible for keeping employees informed about what is going on in the organization, setting priorities, and providing ongoing feedback and accountability.

> Harter, Jim. "U.S. Employee Engagement Reverts Back to Pre-COVID-19 Levels." *Gallup.Com*. Last modified October 16, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.gallup.com/workplace/321965/employee-engagement-reverts-back-pre-covid-levels.aspx

For Owl Labs' 4th annual State of Remote Work report, we partnered with the leading remote analytics firm, Global Workplace Analytics, to learn more about the current state of remote work in 2020 and what lies ahead. We wanted to uncover remote work statistics and gather the current work from home trends to provide you with a comprehensive remote work benchmark report during COVID-19.

> OWL Labs. "State of Remote Work 2020." Last modified October 8, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.owllabs.com/state-of-remote-work/2020

COMMON CHALLENGES OF REMOTE WORK

What are the challenges of remote working and how should companies address them during COVID-19? And what after the crisis? Is remote working here to stay?

> EY Belgium. "Why Remote Working Will Be the New Normal, Even after COVID-19." Last modified September 7, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.ey.com/en_be/covid-19/why-remote-working-will-be-the-new-normal-even-after-covid-19

Being proficient at managing remote employees requires a mental leap, especially for traditionally minded managers.

> Insperity Staff. "Managing Remote Employees: 7 Tips and Best Practices." *Insperity*. Last modified March 24, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.insperity.com/blog/managing-remote-employees/

In response to the uncertainties presented by Covid-19, many companies and universities have asked their employees to work remotely. …There are specific, research-based steps that managers can take without great effort to improve the engagement and productivity of remote employees, even when there is little time to prepare.

> Larson, Barbara Z., Susan R. Vroman, and Erin E. Makarius. "A Guide to Managing Your (Newly) Remote Workers." *Harvard Business Review*, March 18, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://hbr.org/2020/03/a-guide-to-managing-your-newly-remote-workers

From our Chat:

Re: a dedicated space.
"A friend uses a tray with all ofc items and moves from room to room in his home based on family needs. One day, he's in the laundry room, and the next, he's in the kitchen. The tray idea works well for him as a mobile desk."

BEST PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING YOUR REMOTE TEAM TO ENABLE THEIR BEST PERFORMANCE

A study on the effects of a "Work from Anywhere" program on productivity at the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) This transition resulted in a 4.4 percent increase in output without affecting the incidence of rework.

> Choudhury, Prithwiraj, Cirrus Foroughi, and Barbara Zepp Larson. "Work-from-Anywhere: The Productivity Effects of Geographic Flexibility." *Academy of Management Proceedings* 2020, no. 1 (July 29, 2020): 21199. Accessed October 27, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://journals.aom.org/doi/abs/10.5465/AMBPP.2020.225

A study examining the role relationships play in mediating the link between the extent of telecommuting and job satisfaction. Explores three fundamental types of relationships maintained by employees are investigated—those with managers, coworkers, and family.

> Golden, Timothy D. "The Role of Relationships in Understanding Telecommuter Satisfaction." *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 27, no. 3 (2006): 319–340. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/job.369

A PDF of the original 2004 *Harvard Business Review* article explaining Emotional Intelligence. Specific to our purposes, those with high Self-Regulation have an edge in managing and working remotely.

> Goleman, Daniel. "What Makes a Leader?" *Harvard Business Review* (January 2004): 82–91. http://athena.ecs.csus.edu/~buckley/CSc233/What-makes-a-Leader-HBR.pdf

After embracing remote work, this CEO speaks about how his team over contextualizes communication, encourages flexible schedules, and facilitates cross-generational mentorships to make the most of the rise of working from home.

> Khusid, Andrey. "How to Build a Remote Team While Bridging Generational and Geographical Gaps." *Fast Company*. Last modified July 15, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.fastcompany.com/90527712/how-to-build-a-remote-team-while-bridging-generational-and-geographical-gaps

When your company runs on digital communication, the tools you use to connect your team become your office. Their design determines who will be involved in which discussions and who will be able to access what information. They impact your employees' ability to focus and do their jobs. They shape your team's culture in big ways and small. As a remote team, you must be as intentional in choosing your digital workspaces as traditional companies are in designing their physical ones. This article will walk you through how we at Doist have designed our virtual "office spaces" to keep over 65 team members connected across 26 countries and 15 time zones. You'll learn how we've chosen the tools that make up our remote communication ecosystem and exactly how we use each to build a productive and transparent team culture.

> The Doist Team. "The Pyramid of Remote Team Communication Tools." *Ambition & Balance*. Last modified April 23, 2019. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://blog.doist.com/remote-team-communication-tools/

While we can't predict what will happen with the world in a few months, weeks, or days, remote workers aren't going anywhere, and companies need to adapt to remain competitive.

> Trodella, Christine. "4 Ways to Manage Remote Workers When You Don't Know How Long They'll Be Working from Home." *Fast Company*. Last modified March 16, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.fastcompany.com/90477145/4-ways-to-manage-remote-workers-when-you-dont-know-how-long-theyll-be-working-from-home

From our sessions Chat:

Re: Rules of Engagement

"I recently adjusted team meetings based on my team's energy, not my own. They agreed to a mid-morning meeting than a late afternoon or early morning meeting. It works! They are quite responsive, engaging, and energetic."

"How many devices does everyone use throughout the day in order to keep up with both async and synced comms? (Just curious since it seems I need more devices now than pre-COVID.)"

> "At least two devices and sometimes three for asyn and sync communication."

Re: Virtual Icebreakers or other Social interactions

"my team begins each business meeting with a personal sharing of a joyous moment of the day or the week."

"Zoom bingo"

"Walking to the Regions – virtually"

"Zoom family time on Fridays"

"Zoom lunches, happy hours"

"We're going to do some Halloween trivia or Scattergories during our Wednesday water cooler tomorrow"

"Trivia Contests"

"We share pics once a month on a specific theme."

"We also do riddles."

"My favorite: Share your percent if you where your own phone battery?"

"Share a favorite breakfast food."

"Puns and brain teasers"

"Personal check ins"

"I allow each team member the opportunity to lead the opening of the meeting. They log on to MS-Teams at least 15 minutes before the meeting and chat about anything."

"Among Us team virtual game - current fad (even political candidates showed a video of them playing...chuckle)"

"Yes, what was your highlight for the day?"

"Dad jokes every Friday" [I'm Chris and I approve this Icebreaker!]

"One team member opened the meeting with by showing us his musical skills. He played his bass guitar and took requests for songs. It was quite nice."

TIPS FOR MANAGING EXPECTATIONS FOR BOTH YOUR TEAM (AND YOUR BOSS)

A 2015 metanalysis review of existing research on telecommuting to better understand what the scientific community knows about telecommuting and its implications. The goal is to bring to the surface some of the intricacies associated with telecommuting research to get insights into the debate regarding telecommuting's benefits and drawbacks.

> Allen, Tammy D., Timothy D. Golden, and Kristen M. Shockley. "How Effective Is Telecommuting? Assessing the Status of Our Scientific Findings." *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 16, no. 2 (October 1, 2015): 40–68. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100615593273

Make remote work more productive and engaging for employees with these empathetic but practical actions.

> Baker, Mary. "9 Tips for Managing Remote Employees." Last modified April 2, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/9-tips-for-managing-remote-employees/

From our Chat:

The leadership book about putting on your Oxygen Mask first: Lawrence, Kevin N. *Your Oxygen Mask First: 17 Habits to Help High Achievers Survive & Thrive in Leadership & Life*. Lioncrest Publishing, 2017.

Re: questions to ask your team.

"Also ask, 'What can I do better? How can I, as your leader, be of better support to you?'"

"And having an anonymous route for that feedback works well too"

Re: encouraging and maintaining boundaries.

Outlook's *Delayed Delivery* is Options Ribbon (on an email window) > Delay Delivery

"Is it important to hide my odd working times, or does that make be human and show my vulnerability too..?.which can be a connection."

"The best way I ever got through to my boss on respecting boundaries is when I showed him exactly how much time it was taking me on each project he assigned. Then I asked him if he wanted me to do all these projects or not?" [From Chris: "Okay boss, so which of these other projects can I stop working on to do this new thing?" Make them prioritize for you as a reminder.]

"Be sure to set expectations when unusual times require work. I require comp time requests first."

"All of this said, some people work well at night/early morning. be careful not to discourage their working hours."

BUILD CONNECTIONS AND COLLABORATION INTO THE WORK

In this podcast episode, we dissect how to use humor to build bonds in business and in life.

> Aaker, Jennifer, and Naomi Bagdonas. "Make 'Em Laugh: How Humor Can Be the Secret Weapon in Your Communication." *Stanford Graduate School of Business*. Last modified June 22, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/make-em-laugh-how-humor-can-be-secret-weapon-your-communication

When you think of your workplace meetings, is laughter a regular attendee? Akin and Dan squeeze a research paper from an exciting branch of social science in which the merit of emotions at work is being brought into question. In every *Squeezing the Orange* episode, Akin and Dan unearth social science's hidden gems by squeezing peer-reviewed articles and sharing their choice findings!

> Cable, Dan, and Akin Omobitan. "Laugh It Up: The Way Humour Transforms Workplace Meetings." *Squeezing the Orange*. Last modified September 9, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://squeezingtheorange.podbean.com/e/laugh-it-up-the-way-humour-transforms-workplace-meetings/

Enjoying work — or taking it a step further, *laughing* at work — has a positive impact on you and the people around you.

> Fazio, Dr Rob. "Council Post: Lead with Laughter: How Humor Can Positively Transform A Work Environment." *Forbes*. Last modified August 10, 2018. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2018/08/10/lead-with-laughter-how-humor-can-positively-transform-a-work-enviroment/

SHRM Online has collected the following 10 tips from experts to help managers who work with remote employees.

> Gurchiek, Kathy, and Kathy Gurchiek. "10 Tips for Successfully Managing Remote Workers." *SHRM*. Last modified April 30, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-news/pages/covid19-10-tips-for-successfully-managing-remote-workers-.aspx

The two kinds of Trust the most effective virtual workers build and maintain.

> Larson, Barbara Z., and Erin E. Makarius. "The Virtual Work Skills You Need — Even If You Never Work Remotely." *Harvard Business Review*, October 5, 2018. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://hbr.org/2018/10/the-virtual-work-skills-you-need-even-if-you-never-work-remotely

Many business leaders are asking how they can communicate uncertainty both internally to their teams and externally to their clients — whether it's about participating in an upcoming conference or delivering on a signed proposal. Communicating in the face of uncertainty is a constant leadership challenge. Here are five steps found to be incredibly effective.

> Shapira, Allison. "How to Reassure Your Team When the News Is Scary." *Harvard Business Review*, March 5, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://hbr.org/2020/03/how-to-reassure-your-team-when-the-news-is-scary

From our Chat:

"We allow employees to begin work at 6:00 am and as late as 10:00 pm. They work their 8,9, 0r 10 hours around their home schedule. It's been a game changer for productivity and morale."

"Virtual Office Olympics can be fun."

"Please don't forget self-trust... You must trust self to get things done & meet self-expectations."

"Powerful nuggets on trust! We must also be transparent and humble with our team!"

ESTABLISHING BEHAVIORS AND RITUALS THAT BUILD A POSITIVE TEAM CULTURE

CEEK defines "Organizational Wellness" as an engaged and inspired workforce serving a growing or otherwise successful organization. We believe an intentional, values-based culture is the glue between the two. We specialize in helping organizations intentionally create and implement a values-based cultures.

> CEEK LLC. "CEEK LLC Blog Posts on Culture." Accessed October 27, 2020.
> https://www.ceekllc.com/blog/categories/culture/

Research shows that organizations that focus on performance and health are more successful and deliver better financial results. There are proven tools and techniques that can help. The first step is to understand exactly where your culture excels and where it lags.

> Fuchs, Steffen Fuchs, and Rafat Shehadeh. "Creating a High-Performance Culture | McKinsey." Last modified October 3, 2017. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/creating-a-high-performance-culture

Time management expert Laura Vanderkam studies how busy people spend their lives, and she's discovered that many of us drastically overestimate our commitments each week, while underestimating the time we have to ourselves. She offers a few practical strategies to help find more time for what matters to us, so we can "build the lives we want in the time we've got."

> Vanderkam, Laura. "TED Talk: 'How to Gain Control of Your Free Time.'" October 2016. Accessed October 27, 2020.
> https://www.ted.com/talks/laura_vanderkam_how_to_gain_control_of_your_free_time/

From our Chat:

"Mission/Vision/Values help me decide where I'll work. Have left an org when behaviors weren't aligned with values and there was lack of accountability" [Chris: At CEEK we call that Organizational Hypocrisy.]

"We actually have the Rules of Behavior on laminated cards that attach to the employees ID. They are also posted throughout the building." [Chris: THAT is awesome!]

Re: What is one thing that you do every day or every week? What does this say about that which you value?

"meet with management"

"check in with everyone on team"

"Weekly progress report "

"Coffee with others"

"Put out the Trivia questions"

"Read a Proverb for Wisdom"

"I have a weekly meeting."

"water cooler (non-work discussion) weekly - we invite kids to share jokes to kick off meeting"

"meet with management progress report take a break"

"Morning text messages with the team"

"Weekly team meeting for pulse check"

"Weekly Activity Reports, Weekly Staff Meetings"

"expanding skills online with others everyday... showing doing & modeling"

"Attend team meeting and provide status updates on projects"

"Bullets for my Boss to discuss with her Boss"

October 27, 2020

OTHER IDEAS

Run a search in your favorite search engine for the following phrases:
Team-Building Activities for Remote, Hybrid, and In-Office Teams
Virtual Meeting Icebreaker Activities
Best Microsoft Teams for Remote Worker
Best Slack Bots for Remote Worker

Slack. "Energize Your Remote Work Culture with These 6 Apps for Slack." *Slack*. Last modified June 9, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://slack.com/blog/productivity/remote-work-culture-with-6-apps-for-slack.

Regniers, Nathalie. "Are You Making the Most of Microsoft Teams While Working Remotely?" *Microsoft Pulse*, March 6, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020.

Bullock, Spenser. "Microsoft Teams Tips: 3 Ways to Improve Remote Work." *AvePoint Blog*, May 27, 2020. Accessed October 27, 2020. https://www.avepoint.com/blog/microsoft-teams/microsoft-teams-remote-work-tips/

Training Officers Consortium
https://trainingofficers.org/

Based in Washington, DC, TOC is built upon a foundation of service and excellence, relying on the volunteerism of its registrants to carry out activities that offer Federal workers unparalleled value. Through its premier professional development programs, trainers, educators, learning executives, and human resource development specialists serve as resources to other trainers in departments, bureaus, agencies, and offices of the Federal Government. Training by TOC is an authorized training activity under the Government Employees Training Act.

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https://www.ceekllc.com/

At CEEK, our vision is to rid the world of zombies in the workforce. Uncover employee's inner passions, promote a shared integrity, and unleash their collective creativity to attain organizational wellness. CEEK can help transform your organization and culture, leveraging an engaged workforce to meet and exceed business objectives