

Navigating Remote Work & Leadership

Tips, Tricks & Advice



Some Do's as a Remote Leader

- **Be a role model** – Keep your promises and be accountable
- **Create a culture of follow-up and follow-through** – Set goals and expectations
- **Listen better** – Ask more questions
- **Organize scheduled one-on-ones**
- **Be boringly predictable** – We love consistency and predictability!
- **Recognize your team members** – by sending a short email; texting them a note + emoji; be creative!
- **Explore technology options... experiment and learn** – What's the worst that can happen?
- **Be encouraging**
- **Be patient...** with them and yourself!
- **Build connections – we need them!**
 - ✓ Quick check-ins – Daily? Weekly? Remember: We love boringly predictable!
- **Boundaries = Good** – Available 24/7? No. This is for them and for you.
- **“Open Door” Hours** – Set aside daily hour(s) where you are available to talk
- **Find the good** – You may find some hidden strengths/talents on your team while they work remotely

Some Don'ts as a Remote Leader

- **Forget your manners**
- **Assume they know** (what you're thinking...what you want...how you're feeling...how your day has been)
- **Be disrespectful of their time**
- **Focus more on their schedule versus their results**
- **Micromanage... Overlead...**
 - ✓ Lead based on what your direct reports need (Daily check ins? Every other day?)
- **Let standards/expectations slide**
- **Lose sight of business goals**

Communication While Leading Remotely

Overall

- Be consistent, clear and courteous
- Quality vs. quantity
- Understand the context
- Promote teamwork – no “us” versus “them”
- Stay calm under pressure

Communication While Leading Remotely (continued)

Some Tips

- Set team/individual communication norms (i.e. NNTR = No Need to Respond)
- Make time for “small” talk (Be a human!)
- Move from certainty to curiosity: Fight the assumption of negative intentions
- Ask good questions... (“What’s getting in your way?” / “What has been a ‘win’ for you today?”)
- Technology: Use it differently...i.e. Emoji’s/gifs to convey emotions

Regarding your organization’s messages:

- Own them & show respect for the organization, other teams, and other functions

Team Communication

- Monitor team communication (What seems effective/ ineffective?)
- Impromptu check-ins
- Send team updates (Weekly? Check your tone... Are you encouraging? Informative?)

Don’t:

- Make assumptions
- Communicate as you would in person
- Be a communication bully (Do you really need to text/email/ voicemail the same message?)
 - ✓ Choose your digital volume wisely
- Think brief communication = clear communication (Sometimes brief is not enough!)
- Forget a team member

One-on-One and Team Meetings While Leading Remotely

One-on-One Meetings: Schedule one-on-one calls with each direct report (Weekly? Biweekly?)

- Check-in: How are you doing? Are there any challenges you are experiencing working remotely?
- Scheduling organized calls: How often? When? What will we discuss?
- How should we communicate between calls?: Email/Skype/ Text/Call?

Team Meetings: Hold a weekly team meeting

- Technology is your friend
- Forgive each other – this is new for many (and maybe you!)
- Include everyone (as appropriate!)
- Ask an opening question to build connection
- Seek feedback (What’s working? What isn’t? What do we need to adjust? How are we communicating?)

Team Meetings: Common remote meeting norms

- Ensure typical meeting behaviors are followed...
 - ✓ Mute? Unmute?
 - ✓ No multi-tasking – Be respectful
 - ✓ Important question/idea that isn’t directly relevant to discussion? Contact you separately
 - ✓ Only one person at a time speaking (if possible)
 - ✓ When commenting, speaker gives their name (“This is...” – based on number of attendees
 - ✓ Stay on time

What Behaviors are Required of a Remote Leader?

Clear Communication

- ✓ Focused and Specific
- ✓ When in Doubt? Ask.

Focused Listening

- ✓ Remove Distractions
- ✓ Stop. Pay Attention

Focused Listening

- ✓ Aware of Self
- ✓ Aware of Others

Organized

- ✓ Focusing on Priorities
- ✓ What is Urgent? Important?

Common Challenges of Remote Employees

1. Working Differently
2. Isolation/Loneliness (loss of connection)
3. Communication Confusion
4. Conflict
5. Burnout

What Can You Do To (Specifically) Help Your Team Through These Challenges?

Work Differently

- Coaching them (Focus on their challenges and responses, as well as their results)
- Discussing their professional goals for the week (suggest setting daily goals)
- Discuss/share best practices with the team
- Encourage them to use organization tools (calendar, project management tools, etc)

Isolation/Loneliness (Loss of Connection)

- Encouraging them to reach out to others (colleagues, family, friends)
- Help them see the challenge as a time of great opportunity
- Organizing “check-ins” at appropriate intervals
- Establishing new team rituals – think outside the box! (eat lunch “together” once a week)
- Seek feedback on what you can do to help them

What Can You Do To (Specifically) Help Your Team Through These Challenges? (continued)

Communication Confusion

- Setting communication norms (what do you/they prefer when communicating?)
- Setting a “communication cadence”
- Making time for “small talk”
- Asking good questions
- Using technology well
- Organizing scheduled one-on-one meetings / Holding weekly team meetings
- Ensuring your tone is appropriate (Encouraging? Informative?)
- Monitoring team communication
- Getting feedback on how to improve!
- **When communicating with different styles...**
 - ✓ Recognize your personality preferences... and theirs!
 - ✓ Realize when something isn’t “clicking.” (i.e. they aren’t listening, questions seem “off,” their tone of voice, they’re being overt, etc)
 - ✓ Get feedback from them and adjust, adjust, adjust

Conflict

- Accepting the conflict: Working remotely increases possibility for misunderstanding/misinterpretations
- Focus on proactive conflict management (Address that you are working differently, there’s a loss of connection, and there is communication confusion)
- Moving from certainty to curiosity: Fight the assumption of negative intentions... Ask good questions when (even a little bit) in doubt
- Discuss: How did we get here? What do we need to do differently so this doesn’t happen again?

Burnout

- Connecting with them. Checking in with them. This is important!
- Being cautious when defining “going above and beyond”
- Be careful sending late night emails, etc. Lead by example
- Asking questions: What is their work routine? How is it working out?
- Setting boundaries: Discuss taking breaks and establishing work hours

Overall: How to Continue Moving Through the "Now Whats?"

- Ensure quick successes, and celebrate them!
- Postpone extra changes, if possible.
- Begin to accept that change is the norm.
- Communicate. Adjust. Communicate.
- **Bottom line: Be the leader you are.**

Advice for Leaders

Be a Trustworthy Leader

- Do what you say you will do. Be a role model. Listen to your team well.
- Understand what matters to your team... and work hard to protect what is related to that.
- Be authentic: Share yourself honestly
- Ask for feedback
- Trust must be mutual

Take Care of You

- Coaching: What’s working for you? What isn’t?
- Are you setting professional goals for yourself each week?
- What best practices are you using? Are you prioritizing what is urgent vs. important?
- Reach out to others... maybe schedule time?
- See the challenge as a time of great opportunity
- Monitor your work schedule – Are you taking breaks?
- Be compassionate and kind to others, and yourself
- Take the time to connect with people who make you laugh/happy!