

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN MANAGING YOUR WORK FROM HOME Team

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People are asking for advice and ideas around the new work from home scenarios that employers and employees are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic. I have rounded up the following things you can expect to come across, if you haven't already experienced it, with your virtual workforce. The most important takeaway: make time in your regular one-on-one meetings with remote staff to find out what's going on behind the scenes of their new "home" office, find out their personal needs, and monitor their overall health and wellbeing.

THE NEED FOR SPEED. With many families having children attending online classes and parents now at home, the need to all connect at the same time can put pressure on a home internet. While many of the nations' leading internet providers are providing cost-saving options to help, learn if any employees are experiencing internet challenges and work out a way to complete some work tasks at off times of the day.



CHILDCARE DILEMMA. Find out how your workers are doing with juggling working from home around their, now 24/7, childcare responsibilities. Provide some productivity courses to show people how to batch and plan their work around childcare needs. Seek out childcare experts to educate on dealing with child stresses and new parenting ideas. Most of all, be flexible with workers if they need to rearrange hours to help with the balance of childcare and work duties.

ADORABLE PETS. Not only do employees have to pay attention to a partner, spouse, or child, they may have a family pet - the barking dog or meowing cat! While everyone is making a diligent effort to keep the background noise to a minimum, cut some slack if there is an appearance from any household member on a phone or video conference call. In fact, embrace it - a little break can put smiles on everyone's faces!



A TIME TO INSPIRE & UPLIFT. This is a time for senior leaders and managers to plan and deliver messages of hope, transparency, and the latest company news and updates. Get your communications team to plan out a communications calendar and ask different leaders to own a message and create video and email versions to share with your people.

SOME DAYS ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS. This new normal will be hard for many. Let employees know you understand, and together you will get through this. Remind them to learn from those unproductive days and to make the next day a better one. Give them eBooks like "Remote: Office Not Required" by Jason Fried & David Heinemeier Hansson to read and learn from.



BE ON THE LOOKOUT. If you learn of employee anxiety or depression, hear how they're sleeping longer, or mention they're eating more, draw upon employee assistance program providers. Have HR provide this information to keep employees aware of the resources available to help them through these times.

ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL HEALTH. Ask your employees how they manage physical activity during their workday. Encourage them to get up from their desk after every hour and stretch along with suggesting online programs to make "home" their online gym. If your organization has the ability to do a steps challenge, this is a fun and interactive way to keep employees connected while encouraging and rewarding healthy behaviors.



WORKING WISELY. Make sure new work from home employees are not working more hours than necessary after gaining time from not commuting. Recommend they use this time for themselves to recharge and get ready for their new way of doing things. Suggest that they exercise, read a book, learn something completely new and breathe. Some sites like duolingo, TedEd - TedEd@Home, and Scholastic are offering access for free.

STAYING CONNECTED. Sanity is being pushed to the max. Recommend work from home employees build in time to connect with peers, especially if this was the case where they worked before. Contact one peer a day if you don't have regular meetings that provide the opportunity to connect. Use apps like Skype, WhatsApp, or FaceTime, to talk with people around the virtual "water cooler."



HAVE A RECOGNITION CONVERSATION. None of us knows how long work from home orders will prevail. Schedule 15-minutes during a virtual videoconference meeting to find out if their recognition preferences have changed in this new work environment. You might not be able to give them their favorite chocolate bar right now, but listen carefully for the employee's suggestions and then go give better recognition more frequently.