10 strategies for productive remote working

Clear deadlines, objectives & scheduling

Employers should set clear objectives and KPI's, establish a period of time when they will review them, and be clear on how to measure the success of remote working at the end of that period. Employees should ask for feedback and milestone reviews.

Team design

Concerns about cross-team collaboration arise when people mistake remote and flexible working for lack of structure. As with any other new approach, it requires testing, measurement, and ongoing communication between managers and employees. Employers should encourage pro-active questions about how remote working will affect the rest of the team.

Encourage mentorship

Supporting a remote worker creates a long-term resource. Those employers who support remote working will develop a dedicated, loyal and organized core of agile workers, from whom new employees can seek help.

Technology

Remote work doesn't have to result in disconnection and miscommunication. With the continual advancements of technology, everyone should be able to work from anywhere so the 'lack of face-to-face communication' becomes irrelevant. Leverage this technology to stay connected: maintain scheduled meetings, but move them to a virtual platform, and don't forget to allow 5-10 minutes for people to check-in on one another at the start of the meeting. With technology like Facetime, Zoom and Skype and the reduced stress that effective arrangements bring, the sense of community and connection may even improve.

Security

There are no limits to what can be achieved remotely as long as organizations ensure that the processes are in place to protect data, IP, and confidential information.

Process

It's not just the arrangements that have to stay flexible. Employers and employees have to adapt over time; as circumstances change, arrangements evolve. Sustained engagement in this process will have a cumulative effect, creating a positive attitude towards remote working across the business.

Fair workload volume

Employers have to ensure that workers don't feel pressured to compensate for working from home. If workers are cramming in work in a bid to 'prove' their level of output, focus and engagement will suffer.

Set boundaries

Employees may need to pay particular attention to their own wellbeing and avoid misusing technology to over-compensate for time spent away from the office.

Communication & Connection

This is especially important to counteract the lingering stigma around remote working. Employer and employee should be in constant conversation, giving feedback and adjusting accordingly. It's also important to stay connected so employees don't feel isolated. Positive recognition from colleagues will have a ripple-effect, making workers more likely to bring their energy to the business.

Trust

Employees have to be persistent in driving their own careers and employers have to trust that in doing so they're driving the organization forward.