

Managing Virtual Teams

Tips for proactively managing remote teams during COVID 19

The situation with Coronavirus is rapidly evolving. Understandably, many staff are anxious about developments, we are having to adjust flexibly and quickly. The health and wellbeing of ourselves our teams and our loved ones is paramount. Looking after each other and having regular well-being check-in's will be necessary.

1. Adopt a virtual mindset

Measure performance by output, trust is essential during this period of uncertainty

2. Agree ground rules with your team

For example agree maintaining normal office hours so colleagues should be prepared to be available during those periods as usual, with adjustments for established flexible working arrangements.

3. Setting Expectations

Your team needs to understand what they are responsible for (goals) and when it needs to be done (deadlines), and they can work accordingly. As you aren't in a position to ask for status updates on work over a desk, or at the water cooler – consider what check-in's you need to ensure the team are on top of their work (or whether this can be managed in other ways, like shared project documents).

4. Supporting anxious staff

Stay calm and listen. Create an online environment where individuals can share openly everything from their mental health to family issues, it gives you a chance as a manager to get to know your team on a more personal level than you might have done so before. Ensure there are regular well-being check-ins, if needed dedicated support can be offered via the Employee Assistance Programme 0800 243 458.

5. Stay in touch

Suggest a daily Microsoft Teams stand up to stay in contact. Consider setting up a Teams site which may become more significant and be used for more important comms during periods of home-working. Use video communication wherever possible.

6. Be explicit about everything you say

In a written environment, your tone of voice and body language are no longer available to you to communicate key messages, so you need to choose your words and punctuation carefully. Every adjective, full stop and exclamation mark matters. Keep all written correspondence short and concise – no space for mis-interpretation.

7. Encourage personal communication

Loneliness is one of the most common reported challenges of remote working, therefore include as much face-to-face interaction online as possible through video calls, regular manager check-ins as possible.

8. Ensure Virtual Meeting Etiquette

Who leads the meeting? Assign a team member who is technically interested/intuitive that can support teams virtual meeting. In group meetings there may be extraverts and introverts, allow everyone time, go round the group and allowing all to answer.

9. Be realistic

Be realistic about what someone can achieve if they have children or are caring for others at home. You may need to reallocate work and give them easier things to deliver and understand they may have to work more flexibly.

10. Transparent anagement/leadership

Remote working necessitates a new level of transparency and trust in teams. Our virtual management revolves around the ability to trust your teams and share information openly with them.

More info

www.linkedin.com/learning/paths/remote-working-setting-yourself-and-your-teams-up-for-success