How to Keep Employees Engaged When Working Remotely

The world of work has been turned upside down and changed - for good.

Work from home and remote work opportunities were often seen as a benefit or luxury before the global pandemic. Now, a lot of people are working from home or are on remote-work rotation schedules.

How do you keep employees engaged and productive while working remotely? Your team might find itself divided between work offices that look a lot different and home offices that feel increasingly confining. How do you keep your team connected? Follow along for our tips for **managing your team from home** and **keeping employees engaged** through these challenging times.

Communication is Key

When working from home, it can be easy for employees to feel like they're out of the loop.

In an office, there are lots of small interactions that occur on a daily basis and keep workers feeling connected with their teams, projects, and even the organization at large.

Working from home, on the other hand, can leave employees feeling disconnected. To counter this, make sure you're communicating regularly through daily check-ins, team meetings, and department or company-wide communications.

A few ideas:

- Schedule a quick daily check-in with each team member

- Weekly video calls for the whole group to connect face-to-face

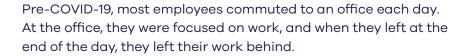- Set aside a day to have coffee with an employee or two

These interactions go a long way toward keeping employees **engaged** and **working productively.**

Equally important is **what's being communicated.** Transparent communications are crucial so everyone knows what's happening and what is expected of them. This is true in teams, departments, and across the organization. For example, if your business is dealing with challenges, trying to hide this fact from employees isn't going to put them at ease. More likely, it will damage their trust in leadership and exacerbate any existing job anxieties they have.

Ultimately, **your message matters more than your platform.** Whether it's email, Slack, Zoom video calls, or internal social channels, keep up the open and honest communication to keep your employees connected.

Encourage Work-Life Balance

Pre-COVID-19, most employees commuted to an office each day. At the office, they were focused on work, and when they left at the end of the day, they left their work behind.

Now that homes have become offices, the line separating work life from home life has blurred. It is easy for employees new to working remotely to feel like they need to be "on" 24/7. The problem is that this stress **can quickly lead to burnout,** exhaustion, and performance issues.

> **"**
> Burnout is hitting an all-time high. More than **two-thirds, or 69%,** of employees, are experiencing burnout symptoms while working from home, and this influx is impacting both business productivity as well as the overall health of the workforce."
>
> **- FORBES**

How can you encourage work-life balance among your employees when work is always present?

One simple step is to help employees create boundaries. What hours is your team expected to be available each day? Taking into consideration different time zones, employees with kids or family members to care for, and job responsibilities, establish "office hours."

Like time spent in an actual office, these hours should be focused on important projects and tasks. Beyond these hours, however, employees should be encouraged to close their email, turn off the computer, and step away from the "office."

Don't forget this includes you, too!

If you are at the computer late every night or respond to emails at all hours, you'll signal to your team that, despite your support for work-life balance, being "at work" all the time is actually more important.

Host Virtual Events

For years, companies have touted in-person office events and social gatherings as a job benefit.

That doesn't have to stop when you're remote!

Virtual events like lunch and learns, coffee breaks, and happy hours can help foster togetherness among employees when in-person gatherings aren't an option.

Now is a great time to create opportunities for employees to connect both socially and professionally.

Have you been thinking about starting a mentorship program within your organization? Great! Start the program virtually.

Are you trying to encourage connections among employees who might not normally interact in the office? Set up virtual coffee breaks or small group time for employees to pause their work and get to know their colleagues.

Taking these programs online is the perfect way to get them started. Not only do they encourage social connection at a time when it is especially important, but they also allow for experimentation and testing to see what formats work best.

If you're in a position to meet in person for these things, **make it happen!** Just because work is remote, doesn't mean your team never sees each other in person. Encourage them to work together at a coffee shop for a day or schedule a team happy hour get-together.

Keep Up the Company Culture

Company culture defines the environment in which your employees work and includes elements like the mission, company values, organizational ethics, expectations, and goals.

Many people consider a company's culture to be its personality, and personality isn't really susceptible to change. Similarly, just because your work environment might look different these days doesn't mean your culture should!

It's more important than ever to continue doing the things that distinguish your company and its culture.

Do you have a special onboarding process to welcome new hires? Do you celebrate work anniversaries and employee achievements?

Maintaining these traditions is crucial to helping employees stay engaged and excited about the organization and their work. Keeping up the company culture also reminds your team that, while work might look different these days and into the near future, some things never change.