



Navigating the challenges of managing remotely working teams

With an increasingly dispersed workforce and flexible work arrangements, team members often find themselves collaborating remotely. Global events, such as the outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus, has resulted in many organisations having to implement working-from-home policies for large sections of their workforce, with little time to prepare for the transition. For a people leader, remote working in teams presents unique challenges around connectivity, engagement, productivity and care of members of a group.

Checklist for people leaders to manage remote teams successfully:

- Ensure that the appropriate technology is in place to support the workflow.
- Help your employees stay on track and target by running regular morning online video huddles.
- Encourage members of the team to interact with each other using existing technological capabilities for chat and video (Teams, Jabber, FaceTime, WhatsApp) and not only relying on phone and email to communicate.
- Place trust in your team members being able to achieve their work and goals from home and demonstrate your confidence through words and actions.
- Reiterate that it's "business as usual", and make sure team members are aware of the work that is ongoing by other team members.
- Have conversations with team members regularly about their experience of remote work, and recognise that some may be feeling isolated and frustrated and encourage them to seek support if they are struggling.
- Try to be extra clear on goals and responsibilities, and related timeframes and check-ins.
- Ensure you have the right support in place, from both a technical and emotional point of view - and that employees are aware that this support is available.
- Consider any additional resources, training and support that needs to take place to enable your employees to work from home successfully.
- Ensure that you have consulted and met HR policies, procedures and requirements.

What employees can do themselves:

- Proactively reach out to other members of the team to maintain an overview of the work of the team and to maintain your working relationships.
- Make use of existing technologies to catch-up with colleagues.
- Arrange regular check-ins with your manager.
- If you are finding working from home challenging, speak with your manager to address the issues you're experiencing.
- Ensure your work environment at home is both suitable and comfortable, and refer to your organisation's HR policies and procedures for home working and home risk assessments.
- If possible, choose a separate room as your dedicated workspace, which means you can close the door to keep business in and distractions out.