



Future of Work: 5 Top Tips to Leading Teams Remotely

As a leader, it can be a challenge to manage team members who are working remotely. It takes a strong bond of trust to overcome the desire for 'presenteeism'; the traditional approach of correlating physical presence with productivity.

Here are 5 top tips to ensure your remote team is working productively, collaboratively and with fulfillment. The Future of Work is here!

(1) Communicate frequently and with clarity



Create the optimum environment for your employees to perform as valued team members.

- Have a weekly team collaboration meeting, by video conference, to discuss 'the 3 P's': Priorities, Problems, Plans. Have everyone contribute as an open forum for ideas and actions.
- Create clear guidelines on what channels are to be used for communication, by whom and for what purposes and expected levels of frequency to enhance team collaboration, cooperation and engagement.
- Check in with your individual team members, once or twice a week at agreed times, but be careful not to micro-manage.
- Don't let distance lead you to react rather than respond. For instance, if you receive feedback on a team member from a third party, first communicate with the individual directly by video call to hear their side of events before you respond.



(2) Prioritise reporting, updates and recognition

A consistent flow of information regarding priorities, achievements and accomplishments keeps employees engaged, empowered and motivated.

- Regular dashboard updates are critical for nurturing team members' understanding of team direction and goals. They are also a great way of giving public recognition for individual or team accomplishments.
- Tailor your approach to each team member. If you have a team member who is less prone to self-motivation, find ways to increase transparency through daily reporting of actions and accomplishments.
- If you detect that a team member has 'gone quiet' or progress is slow, check in with them and explore the root cause of the issue.



(3) The age of video call is here

The most effective and human way to collaborate is through video calls. They are critical to productive remote working because:

- They allow you to observe and use non-verbal communication and body language.
- They encourage active participation (contrast with a passive telephone call whilst you attend to other matters).
- It's good for the human psychology to feel connected by seeing and hearing other people.

Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype etc make it much easier to communicate across teams.



(4) Tailor your approach to each team member

Diversity is the key to strong, successful and high performing teams.



- Prioritise time spent on each team member; the more senior you are the greater time you should be dedicating to people development.
- One size does not fit all:
 - Each team member is an individual, with different needs, wants and desires.
 - Some team members may require greater levels of supervision and support from you; don't judge and be flexible.
 - Some team members may have external, environmental factors affecting their productivity or ability to deliver; be curious about their remote circumstances and speak openly about particular challenges.
- Be mindful that different people have different tension responses; some freeze, some fight and others flight. Be versatile with those you lead.



(5) Care for each team member as an individual

As a leader, you have a duty of care to your team members for their health and wellbeing, whether or not they are physically located close to you.

- Ensure your team members are working from a safe work station and environment and have the required tools to perform e.g. good back support and a raised screen.
- Create guidelines for healthy and productive work practices such as regular screen breaks, exercise and mindfulness practices.
- Monitor working hours to ensure they are maintaining healthy and sustainable practices whether working from home or remote offices.

Golden summary:

- Treat remote workers as if they are next door, but be more flexible on how you communicate and care for them.
- Ensure you focus on people development more than their deliverables. Do that, and the deliverables look after themselves.

- Use the technology that is available to you to collaborate, communicate and thrive!



About changeosity

We are a Dubai-based boutique consultancy firm. Our three founders have over 70 years of leadership experience in government and multi-national corporates in 50 countries, including 30 years in the Middle East.

Together, we have delivered highly profitable and award-winning transformation in a wide range of sectors in the Middle East.

Our diagnostic, development and implementation programs, together with our coaching, facilitation and leadership services, enable businesses to regenerate, grow and inspire.

