

Strategies for Remote Working

Recent events have accelerated the remote work trend. Working from home presents new challenges for managers and individual contributors, but also new opportunities for building relationships, engagement and ultimately performance. These practical tips and tricks were compiled from Gallup research, Gallup experts and external sources. We hope you find it useful to have them all in one place!

Engaging Your Team — For Managers

Individualize Your Approach

- Communicate and model the expectation for connecting with your employees.
 - Consistently turn cameras on in all meetings.
 - Use audio.
 - Before you send an email, consider if you could deliver the message in another way.
- Adjust your management style to your remote workers' individual talents.
 - Know your remote workers' talents; adjust working to their strengths (if possible).
 - Lead with curiosity and questions to understand before being understood.
 - Ensure you know your employees' work-time and home-time boundaries (i.e., when can you reach them outside of work when needed).
- Establish feedback systems that capture employee and customer input.
 - Host skip-level conversations.
 - Ensure peer-to-peer connections.
 - Have virtual site visits.
 - Conduct weekly focus groups to stay connected.

Communicate to Increase Performance Outcomes

- Find new ways to create social interactions.
 - Call your colleagues instead of emailing them; chat about your weekends or evenings or favorite TV shows; always encourage video.
 - Encourage your remote employees to call their best friends at work to virtually eat lunch together.
 - Connect with them consistently, whether through phone calls, email, collaboration tools, text messages or video conferences.
 - Keep lines of communication open, honest and broad.
 - Encourage ongoing, meaningful communication to establish trust and accountability.
- Prevent social isolation.
 - Reschedule meetings for nonproductive times — typically later in the day.
 - Include social interaction time in agendas; engagement precedes performance.
 - Just as you would typically stop by their office, “stop by” virtually.
 - Don't rely on the calendar to connect authentically.

Create Accountability in New Ways

- Rank, rate and sort metrics.
 - Ensure remote workers know what metrics they can track as a part of what they are accountable for in their role.
 - Collaborate on the fairness and accuracy of the metrics remote workers are accountable for.
 - Define what success is for each metric.
- Validate their expectations.
 - Ensure extreme clarity on what's expected of them in their role.
 - Converse and clarify any thoughts about expectations.
 - Collaborate frequently and revise as expectations change.
- Have a customer mindset.
 - Discuss how their work affects internal and external customers.
 - Align goals with their expertise that yield customer impact.
 - Frequently discuss how your employees' work ties to the mission and purpose of your organization.

Manage Your Engagement — For Individuals

Keep Communication Productive and Engaging

- Find new ways to create social interactions.
 - Call your colleagues instead of emailing them, chat about your weekends or evenings or favorite TV shows and always encourage video.
 - Encourage your remote peers to call their best friends at work to virtually eat lunch together or just catch up.
- Prevent social isolation.
 - Reschedule meetings for nonproductive times — typically later in the day.
 - Include social interaction time in agendas; engagement precedes performance.
 - Just as you would typically stop by your peer's office, "stop by" virtually.
 - Don't rely on the calendar to connect authentically.

Stay Connected and Engaged Every Day

- Prioritize your own engagement.
 - Remember, engagement is a choice!
 - Think about the elements of engagement and determine which element is most personally important for you.
 - Use your strengths to form positive engagement.
 - Build an action plan for sustained personal engagement.
 - Be accountable for your success.
- Engage others.
 - Ask your peers about their personal life.
 - Actively listen.
 - Paraphrase their message.
 - Look for ways to personalize engagement.

Have Clear Expectations and Alignment

- Rate, rank and sort metrics.
 - Ensure you know what metrics you are accountable for in your role.
 - Collaborate with your manager on the fairness and accuracy of the metrics.
 - Ask what success is for each metric.
- Validate your expectations.
 - Ensure extreme clarity on what's expected of you in your role.
 - Converse and clarify any thoughts about expectations.
 - Collaborate frequently and revise expectations as the situation changes.
- Have a customer mindset.
 - Discuss how your work affects internal and external customers.
 - Align goals with your expertise to yield customer impact.
 - Have frequent discussions with your manager regarding how your work ties to the mission and purpose of your organization.

Maximize Virtual Meetings

Show Them Your Face

- Keep your video on at all times. Human connection is critical to success at work and life, so make sure your partners can see you. A quick smile, a bit of laughter or even the sight of a coworker's dog can help create the sense of connection that is needed when working remotely.
- Embrace the impact of remote working. Don't lose sight of the distance and take some time each meeting to check in on each other. Reserve five minutes in meetings for personal connection.

“Did You Say Something?”

- Audio quality is critical when joining virtual meetings. Make the effort to have good quality sound for your partners and care enough to hear what they have to say by using a headset, earbuds or microphone. Nothing is worse than listening to a peer scream into a laptop mic.
- Background noise is distracting, so block it out. If you aren't speaking, mute your line. While your colleagues understand that you may be managing many moving pieces when working remotely, your sidebar conversation disrupts the entire meeting. If you wouldn't pick up a phone and talk during a meeting, don't do it on a virtual meeting.

Focus on YOU

- Play to your strengths. If you thrive on watercooler conversation, be intentional about setting up time on your calendar to connect and just make small talk with colleagues. If you enjoy shutting your door and having time to think, be sure to disconnect from collaboration tools and email for a period to allow yourself uninterrupted time.
- Set boundaries for work. Give yourself a dedicated space to work, such as a dining room table, countertop, desk, coffee table or anything that takes your laptop out of your lap. This will help you focus. The delineation clearly defines the part of your home where work happens. Don't forget to consider what's behind you for when you are on video.
- Create a new “commute.” Avoid rolling out of bed and jumping straight to your computer. Whether it's making a cup of coffee and sitting outside for five minutes or taking a walk around the block, do what's best to keep yourself healthy. Find something that helps you wake up and get ready for the

day. Close down your laptop when you decide you are done for the day. Avoid continually having your laptop open all day and night.

Roll With It

- Things will not always go according to plan. Your computer is going to freeze. Your home internet may go out. If your kids are home with you, they may run into the room when you are on an important call or videoconference. Your dog may bark at the worst possible moment. Realize that your colleagues understand and will have patience and understanding.

Prepare

- Identify the purpose and goal of meetings.
- Be intentional about who needs to participate and what their role is in the meeting.
- Identify how decisions should be made and who the final decision-maker is for each agenda item.
- Decide what technology is required for the material being presented and confirm availability.
- Notify participants of when and where the meeting will take place.
- Develop an agenda, listing out the purpose, objectives and agenda items.
- Connect the preliminary agenda to the key participants and other stakeholders so they understand the purpose of the meeting.
- Finalize the agenda and deliver it to all participants.
- Prepare participants with the materials they need.
- Verify that all key stakeholders will attend.
- Prepare yourself — edit presentations and ensure your camera and audio are working correctly.

Additional Remote Working Strategies

Note: These best practices are curated from external sources.

- Dress as you normally would when you work from the office. Changing each morning into work attire helps change your mindset to be in work mode. Be on video when at all possible.
- Take breaks as you would in the office and find time to go outside for a walk or run around your neighborhood.
- Find the right background noise that works for you. It could be pure silence, music, opening the window or calling one of your colleagues to catch up. Limit distractions by keeping the TV, video streaming and video games off to curb potential binges.
- Don't always eat your lunch at your desk. Step away for 30 minutes to recharge.
- Drink plenty of water and get your steps in. Set a timer to step away from your laptop on a regular interval, so you don't get caught sitting at your desk for hours at a time.
- Make a list of your top three things to accomplish on your to-do list each day so you will know that you had a productive day.
- Be sure your family and friends understand that "work from home" means "work from home," not just "I am home."
- Limit other devices using your home bandwidth and internet connection to prioritize your work.
- Be patient and understanding as some of your remote working colleagues' work schedules will change. When at all possible, talk with your manager around flexibility in hours throughout the day and proactively communicate with your partners if you are not working or unavailable.