

YOUR GUIDE TO MAINTAINING YOUR TEAM'S WELLBEING REMOTELY

With many professionals remote working, maintaining the mental wellbeing of ourselves and our teams has never been more of a priority. If not managed well, working from home can become a lonely and isolating experience, and the lack of contact with other people can be difficult to deal with. So what strategies can employers use to help maintain their team's wellbeing on a remote basis?

1

Make the most of your internal communication channels:

Although they might not all be in the office together, it's crucial that your team still feels connected to the organisation and their purpose in working for you. Regular communication keeps employees engaged and helps celebrate achievements and successes. Regular newsletters, FAQs, tips for managers and 'myth busters' to prevent rumours from getting out of control all contribute to a feeling of community and will help to reduce any anxiety your employees may be feeling around being 'out of the loop'.

2

Use face-to-face where you can: One of the great things about living and working in today's modern age is that not being together in person needn't mean that you can't actually see each other. Encourage your teams to use video calls where possible when conversing with each other, as seeing someone's face makes it much easier to pick up on social cues and also makes it feel like much more of an in-person meeting than a phone call, thereby facilitating better and more productive communication.

3

Encourage a work-life balance: When you can check your emails 24/7 and there isn't a mass exodus from the office at the end of the day, it can become tempting to let working hours edge into our home lives. If sustained, poor work-life balance can lead to burnout and stress and impact productivity, performance and morale. You can help avoid this by encouraging your workforce to take full lunch breaks, log off at a sensible hour and avoid working at weekends. This should also be emphasised during team calls and catch-ups.

3 TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOUR TEMPORARY STAFF – REMOTELY

Make sure you are looking out for the wellbeing of your temporary and contract workers. Here are three tips:

1. Make them feel part of your team

Although this is much easier in a common workspace, ensuring temps are included in emails, calls and team catch-ups will ensure they are aware of how what they are doing fits into the bigger picture and help them maintain their focus.

2. Be transparent about their workload

In the current climate, the likelihood is that you might need more flex than usual with regards to the tasks and projects they are assigned to. Make sure you're communicating about any changes to their workload, which of course may be dependent on how your business is being affected.

3. Keep your recruiter in the loop

Remember, they may be working remotely, but your recruiter is still on hand to advise you. Keep in touch with them about your temporary worker, let them know how they are performing and about any changes to their assignment.

4

Establish an open culture: More difficult as it may seem when you are not all in the same workspace, make sure that you are checking in with your team members regularly, particularly if they appear to be struggling. This can be done on an individual basis, but it's also important to have conversations at a team level around the importance of being mindful of each other's feelings and recognising if colleagues are finding the remote set up difficult. This will also help promote an open dialogue, help to normalise conversations about mental wellbeing and encourage self-reflection in your staff.

5

If you can, be flexible: In these times of uncertainty, it's understandable that you need to keep business activity focused and on track. However, the unpredictable nature of the current situation means that a degree of flexibility may be needed around normal working practices. Many people will have children or other caring responsibilities that will need to fit in around work, which may mean employees join conference calls with children in the room, or switch their working hours. If you can, be accommodating of these requests, your employees will thank you for it and be more inclined to give the very best they can professionally during this challenging time.

6

Encourage feedback: Your employees want to feel like they have a voice. Any anxieties felt by your employees will be partly alleviated by the knowledge that you value their thoughts on how you are handling the current situation. Deploy staff surveys, host virtual focus groups and use the feedback you get to help improve the way you are remotely managing your workforce.

7

Schedule in a weekly team catch-up: For many of us, work represents a big part of our social life as well as our professional one, and the temporary absence of catch-ups in the kitchen and after-work drinks can be sorely felt. Teams having lunch together and virtual tea breaks are a great way of keeping things social. Try to schedule a virtual team catch up – perhaps at 4.30pm on a Friday when things are starting to wind down – that is less about work and more perhaps about recapping on the week's successes, having a general catch up or even a quiz. Enjoying a drink together at the end of the week may not go amiss either!

HOW TO SPOT WHEN SOMEONE MAY BE FEELING ISOLATED

Feelings of isolation can be amplified when working remotely. Here are some things to look out for in your team which may be a sign they are struggling and could do with some extra support:

1. **Late starting work, joining meetings or hitting deadlines**
2. **Little communication with you or their colleagues**
3. **Changes in behaviour, such as being distracted or short in meetings**
4. **Only talk about business when speaking one-to-one**
5. **Lack of interest in work or new projects**