



What to Remember When Transitioning to Working Remotely

This is a time of new experiences, whether good or bad. The idea of working from home, let alone supervising people from a distance, is not something that many people anticipated doing, especially within such a short timeframe. In the hustle of making the change to this temporary “new normal,” it is important to remember that what was normal is no longer applicable, and we as leaders are going to have to change our approach. Below are some things to take into consideration as you assist people in transitioning to working remotely.

Give People Control

Some people cannot work from home because they play a key role in the infrastructure of the organization. Maybe some of your employees can't work from home for personal reasons. Telling your entire staff that everyone must work from home will create a heightened level of stress for employees who simply can't. Instead of issuing a work-at-home edict, encourage people to work from home if they can and are more comfortable doing so. This gives those people who may not have the ability to easily work from home control over their own decisions.

It is important to make sure people are being safe and following local, state, and federal guidelines, which may mean that people don't have this choice. In this case, work with these vital staff members to offer clarity of expectations and duties.

Set Clear and Reasonable Expectations

Just because people are working from home does not mean that the previous expectations are applicable nor should they be thrown away. You need to make sure that you establish new expectations that are detailed and fit with the ever-changing times. These expectations should continue to reflect the purpose of the company:

- We will keep our customers engaged with X
- We will maintain our standards by doing Y
- We will fulfill our mission by doing Z

One Size Does Not Fit All

People will have to change how they work and individualize their processes for effectively managing their days. As a supervisor, you will need to inform yourself of what team members need to do to successfully navigate the expectation that has been outlined. This might mean limiting the individual's projects so he or she can focus or letting them work into the evening so they can have the morning off for other obligations.

The Village EAP is taking COVID-19 very seriously and we are working to provide the best continued services to you. If you feel like you or an employee could benefit from talking to a counselor and have our EAP contract, please contact The Village EAP at 1-800-627-8220 to access your free and confidential sessions. We are here so you don't have to go it alone.

Identify Priorities

You need to offer a vision and work with the staff to identify the priorities to achieve this vision. The vision may be different than what people are used to; make sure it is clear so they can identify the needed priorities. It is important to recognize that your staff's capacity to manage projects is going to be diminished because of the new stresses they are experiencing. This means that you may need to narrow the focus of the staff to two or three things at a time.

Don't Assume

Not everyone is fluent in video conferencing tools and file-sharing apps, so it is important to make sure they are comfortable before you send them home. Have your IT department or someone knowledgeable put together a webinar, handout, or video tutorial on how to use new software efficiently. You want to make sure they are equipped before they walk out the door.

References

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