

## 9 Best Practices for Managing Teams Virtually

Containing Coronavirus means we are entering a new world of working from home as well as managing teams remotely. This flyer offers best practices and resources to use as you work with your staff online.



Use your EQ: Emotional Intelligence



Strategically communicate with your team



Agree on guidelines for remote work



Create a virtual work plan that works for your team structure



Assess your team's strengths & weaknesses and redeploy as needed



Make work visible and create clear measures of productivity



Address technology issues for your team



Have everyone brush up on their technology skills



Maintain a sense of culture and camaraderie

### Challenges with Our New Normal

- Lack of face-to-face supervision
- Lack of access to information
- Lack of adequate tech equipment
- Lack of - or spotty - WIFI (or competing with partner/children for bandwidth)
- Work plans aren't as relevant without face-to-face interaction
- Social isolation and anxiety
- Distractions at home
- Young children at home needing supervision

### Secret to Leading a Virtual Team? Being a Great Manager

*Good management can happen anywhere.* The essence of good management doesn't change when working remotely.

#### Management Essentials:

- Set the tone
- Give clear expectations
- Communicate effectively and often
- Equip your staff to succeed;
- Coach staff through challenges; and ask for feedback

#### Digital Leadership Add-ons:

- Transformative vision
- Forward-looking perspective
- Digital literacy
- Adaptability

### [How Digital Leadership Is\(n't\) Different, MIT Sloan Management Review](#)



#### Emotional Intelligence 101

Daniel Goleman, author of *Leadership: The Power of Emotional Intelligence*, articulates the four EQ superpowers that every leader needs:

- self-awareness
- self-management

- empathy and social awareness
- relationship management

[Boost Your Emotional Intelligence with These 3 Questions](#), Harvard Business Review  
[Five Rules for Leading in a Digital World](#), MIT Sloan Management Review

### **Strategically Communicate with Your Team**

- Set the tone: what’s your call to action message to your team?
- Create remote work communication protocols: use resources below for examples on how to create a team charter or rules of engagement for communication.
- Be proactive; don’t wait for disaster.
- Don’t conflate brief communications and clear communications.
- Don’t bombard your team with messages; learn what the right remote work communication tools are, and when and how to use them.

[How to Collaborate Effectively If Your Team Is Remote](#), Harvard Business Review  
[Get Your Virtual Team Off to a Fast Start](#), Harvard Business Review  
[Five Ways to Improve Communication in Virtual Teams](#), MIT Sloan Management Review  
[A Blueprint for Remote Working: Lessons from China](#), McKinsey Digital

### **Agree on Guidelines for Remote Work**

- Make sure you are communicating the guidelines for remote work to your team.
- Rally your team with a remote ‘mission statement’, which can reiterate common vision, goals, transparency, and trust. Use keywords that motivate your team: coherent, productive, and motivated.
- Your organization likely already has an HR policy handbook. Consider creating a remote version or a remote code of conduct so everyone is on the same page.

Possible categories:

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| • Values/Mission   | • Unacceptable behaviors    |
| • Touchpoint meetings: establish structured check-ins and decide frequency | • Reporting a problem       |
| • Expected behaviors   | • Taking care of each other |
|  | • Committing to improvement |

### **Create a Virtual Work Plan that Works with Your Team Structure**

- Whole world is in triage mode and is working to figure this out.
- What kind of team(s) you lead?
- Different types of teams (multi-site team, team with satellite workers, distributed team, small team, large team) will require different management strategies.

- Focus on what you and your team *can* do. Reprioritize during this time.
- Create scenarios and contingencies for immediate term and longer-term goals, activities, and outcomes.

### **Assess Staff Strengths and Weaknesses**

- Depending on team members' capacities and/or technology limitations, get creative with work that can be done without much technology or work that can be done - but wasn't as high a priority before COVID-19.
- Talk with your staff; find out what's working and what's not: Ask: "What can I do to make sure that this sudden and quick transition is working for you?"
- Work with your team to solve challenges.
- Ask people how they think they could do the work differently.

[15 Questions About Remote Work, Answered](#), Harvard Business Review

### **Make Work Visible and Create Clear Measures of Productivity**

- Establish clear expectations and a regular cadence for team touchpoints.
- Make sure your team knows how their performance will be measured and your expectations for working and communicating virtually.
- Use key indicators of success in the job to think about clear and simple metrics for work done. This might be shared work plans, mini weekly reports, group reports, or touchpoint meetings.
- Consider asking your staff to use their calendars to time block as a metric for work done.
- Time worked is not necessarily a useful measure of work accomplished.

[I asked experts to analyze my to-do lists. This is what they found](#), Fast Company

[Could Time-Blocking Replace your To-Do List?](#), Fast Company

[This is the Time Management Hack that Helped Me Double My Income](#), Fast Company

### **Address Technology Issues**

- Be mindful of first-time remote workers. This is a challenging time for many employees, especially those who are working from home for the first time. Stay in close communication with your remote workers and make sure they have the tools they need to be effective while working from home.
- Make sure that staff have access to the resources they need to do work. Direct managers to very quickly ensure that every employee has full access, so no one feels left behind.
- Be aware of security protocols from your organization could hamper virtual work.
- People migrating to laptops might have new challenges with different hardware.
- Downloading software can be difficult if your organization has restrictions in place.
- Determine what you need to order for your staff, so they have what they need.
- Managing technology with kids and spouses/partners who are also online for school or work can be challenging.



## Have Everyone Brush Up on Their Technology Skills

- This is a good time for technology professional development for anyone who is not well-versed in online platforms. There are countless online and video resources to help your staff get up to speed.
- Be resourceful.
- Be a proactive solution finder not just problem identifier. Encourage your staff to adopt the same attitude.
- Each one, teach one. Delegate learning a new skill to a team member and ask them to be the new resident expert and help teach others.

**Technologies to Facilitate Remote Work:** [Click here.](#)

## Best Practices for Virtual Meetings

- Provide attendees with the tools they'll need:
  - Purpose Statement, Participant List, Agenda
- Ensure everyone knows how to use the technology.
- Carefully design the offsite's flow and conduct a dry run.
- Assign clear roles.
- Set ground rules.
- Try for interactivity:
  - Learn and use technology tools such as polling or chat. You can even do breakouts on virtual calls.
- Embrace the bumps and weirdness.
- Don't go too long; you may find that virtual meetings can be shorter than in-person ones.

[Virtual Offsites That Work](#), Harvard Business Review

[What It Takes to Run a Great Virtual Meeting](#), Harvard Business Review



## Maintain a Sense of Culture and Camaraderie

- You may need to over-communicate during this time.
- Offer encouragement and emotional support.
- Provide opportunities for remote social interaction.
- [Research](#) on emotional intelligence and [emotional contagion](#) tells us that [employees look to their managers for cues](#) about how to react to sudden changes or crisis situations.
- Don't neglect other ways people may need to connect; create a "virtual water cooler" or "virtual Happy Hour."
- Be kind to yourself...and to your staff.

[Virtual Happy Hours Are The New Way To Go Out: Here's How To Plan A Great One](#), Forbes

[Making Virtual Teams Work: Ten Basic Principles](#), Harvard Business Review

[A Guide to Managing Your \(Newly\) Remote Workers](#), Harvard Business Review

## **More Resources on Leading Virtual Teams**

[The Dos and Don'ts of Online Video Meetings, New York Times](#)

[The Tech Headaches of Working From Home and How to Remedy Them, New York Times](#)

[Adapting Workplace Learning in the Time of Coronavirus](#)

[Understanding the Videoconferencing Tools Available to Your Nonprofit](#)

[Nonprofit Resources for Remote Work During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

[Tips For Transitioning An Office-Based Company To Remote Work](#)

[Mastering Virtual Meetings](#)

[COVID-19 Has My Teams Working Remotely: A Guide for Leaders](#)

[Leading Remote Workers: The Coronavirus' Impact On Effective Management, Forbes](#)

[5 Remote Work Myths to Leave Behind in 2020](#)

[New to Working Virtually? 9 Tips for Surviving the First 90 Days](#)

[25 Tips to Help You Manage a High-Performing Virtual Team](#)

[7 Tips for Successfully Managing Remote Teams, Inc.](#)

[Harvard Business Review \(COVID-19 related resources are free\)](#)

[A Guide to Managing Your \(Newly\) Remote Workers](#)

[8 Ways to Manage Your Team While Social Distancing](#)

[Virtual Offsites That Work](#)

[Your Employee Tested Positive for Covid-19. What Do You Do?](#)

[Best Practices for Instant Messaging at Work](#)

[The Virtual Work Skills You Need — Even If You Never Work Remotely](#)

[Virtual Meetings Don't Have to Be a Bore](#)

[A Guide for Working \(From Home\) Parents](#)