



Tips for Managing in a Virtual World



TIP #1-SET EXPECTATIONS

One of the most important steps in establishing and leading a remote team is setting clear expectations for how the team will work together.

Having guidelines in place will ensure the team is on the same page when it comes to how the team collaborates and for accountability. For example, this could include creating a remote handbook or “best practices” document, updated regularly to include expectations such as how and when the team will meet, an outline of team member availability, and expectations for communication.



TIP#2-BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Let’s face it, sometimes working remotely can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness and it can be challenging to stay connected to others in an increasingly technology-driven world. It’s important to take steps to keep your team genuinely connected, provide opportunities to engage, and have some fun too! Gone are the days of “water cooler chats” so consider options for bringing this back remotely. For example, schedule a short “coffee break” once a week and encourage team members to join. Or, if your group is more inclined, an after-hours “virtual happy hour” can be a fun way to stay connected.

TIP #3-LEAD PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Contrary to popular belief, virtual meetings can be just as effective (if not more effective!) as connecting in-person. Some suggestions for ensuring productive remote meetings include: schedule meetings on a recurring basis for consistency, provide an agenda and pose questions for discussion ahead of time, set expectations for use of video and participation, use virtual tools available for engagement including virtual whiteboard, polling and chat.

Another idea-start each team meeting with individual updates-give each team member several minutes to share what they’ve been prioritizing and are focused on.



TIP #4-COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE!

Effective communication is a critical leadership skill and it’s even more important in a virtual world. It’s crucial that leaders communicate regularly with their remote teams and encourage team members to do the same. Effective communication builds trust, strengthens relationships, and increases engagement. Provide regular updates on goals, initiatives, and organizational changes and check in on your team members frequently.

Ask engaging questions and listen. Ask for feedback and encourage new ideas.

TIP #5-LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY



The use of technology is a game changer when it comes to managing a virtual team. Consider using consistent technologies and tools across the team and organization to streamline. Programs such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, Adobe Connect, or Webex are popular options for video conferencing. In addition, instant messaging programs such as Slack, Google Chat, or Webex Teams can increase collaboration and efficiency. Determine which technologies work best for your team and use them consistently.

TIP #6-ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION

It's important that teams stay connected on projects and remain organized and aligned on goals, timelines, and deliverables. There are many programs available that will ensure that your team and projects remain collaborative and on task in a remote environment. Consider programs like Basecamp, JIRA, Trello, or OneNote to keep teams and projects organized and aligned.



TIP #7-CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Creating a culture of accountability is important when leading a remote team. It's much easier to provide accountability when your team members are clear on what is expected of them. Accountability helps you measure success and progress as well as keeps employees engaged and responsible. Ensure you have a clear strategy in place for communicating expectations and a plan for regular follow-up.

TIP #8-CREATE ROUTINE AND CONSISTENCY

There are certainly pros and cons to working and living in the same place. It's important to create consistency and routine in your day and to encourage your team members to do the same. One suggestion is to create simple, yet consistent morning and evening routines-this helps tell your brain and body that it's time to work and when it's time to disconnect from work.

TIP #9-CELEBRATE AND RECOGNIZE



Taking time to regularly celebrate and recognize your team will go a long way in keeping your virtual team members motivated and connected to your organization's culture, mission, and values. Employee recognition has been shown to increase engagement and improve productivity. Some suggestions for celebrating remotely include: a phone call, email, a handwritten card, a gift card, or a surprise lunch delivery. Be specific, timely, and most importantly, sincere with your recognition!

TIP #10-PRIORITIZE 1-1'S

There are many benefits to conducting regular and consistent 1-1 meetings with your team members. In a virtual world, 1-1s are a valuable opportunity to connect and engage with your team members while strengthening your relationships. A 1-1 meeting is an opportunity to check-in, ensure alignment, discuss priorities, celebrate areas of success, and discuss areas of opportunity. Plan for 1-1s by preparing questions to engage in discussion and ensure you and your team member wrap up with an action plan.





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WANT TO LEARN MORE?

For additional information and sources check out:

Forbes

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/brentgleeson/2020/08/26/13-tips-for-leading-and-managing-remote-teams/?sh=384d3bd6577b>

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2020/08/12/14-leaders-share-their-tips-for-holding-remote-teams-accountable/amp/>

Harvard Business Review

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/hbr.org/amp/2020/03/a-guide-to-managing-your-newly-remote-workers>

SHRM

<https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-news/pages/covid19-10-tips-for-successfully-managing-remote-workers.aspx>

Entrepreneur

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.entrepreneur.com/amhtml/350200>

Forbes

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2020/08/12/14-leaders-share-their-tips-for-holding-remote-teams-accountable/amp/>