

A guide to managing remote teams*



*This is a living document and will be updated as we refine our approach and learn about what works

Introduction

Managing teams who are working remotely requires us to think differently about how we can work well when we're not in an office together.

As a manager, you play a key role in helping your team to do their best when they are working remotely.

Managing remotely requires extra emphasis on aspects such as communicating and getting your team aligned and clear on their work.

Being aware of your team members' individual needs, providing clarity, and setting clear expectations will help you all thrive in the remote environment.

Included in this guide are some tips for you to consider how you can best manage and lead your team when working remotely.

- 1. Communications**
- 2. Sharing information with your team**
- 3. Empathy and trust**
- 4. Clear expectation setting**
- 5. Learning from what works**

1. Communications

When people are in different locations, make communication a key priority. It's better to over-communicate than leave people with questions or uncertainty.

Useful strategies include:

Being available

Let your team members know how they can communicate with you (Skype instant messaging, phone, text, email) and keep your communication channels open. Use your Skype status to indicate your location and if you can't be disturbed or are away.

Keeping up with 1-to-1 conversations

Where possible, make sure you continue to have regular conversations with staff. Convert your 1-to-1 conversations to Skype and try to use video to improve the quality of the engagement.

Informal communication

Make sure you are also catching up with staff in the informal way you would normally have with your team. Use technology to support you to do this.

1. Communications (continued)

Team meetings

Decide on the frequency that people would like to connect – you may need to meet more frequently, for shorter times, to provide updated context to them.

Hold your meeting via Skype and encourage people if they can to use their webcams to increase the sense of connection.

You might choose to have these first thing in the morning to get everyone aligned for the day ahead. Use this time to discuss how people can support each other with their work.

People may miss the informal connection opportunities that happen naturally in the office, so encourage a period at the beginning of the call where people can share how they're feeling.

Encourage everyone to participate in the calls by being sure to hear from everyone, if it's reasonable based on the number of attendees.

Leave plenty of time for questions and continue to check in on what questions people have.

2. Sharing informing with your team

Please cascade information and messaging to your staff about updates and the ongoing context of our work.

We are using various channels for communication organisationally, but you as a manager play a crucial role in sharing information directly to your teams.

Help your team members by providing as much information and clarity as you can.

Remember that some people will be ok with little information and others will need more.

3. Empathy and trust

Remember to think of your team members as individuals and ask them what they need to be their best during this time.

Be aware of their contexts in terms of their health and family members, any specific concerns or worries they have, and be sensitive to their needs.

4. Clear expectation setting

In terms of helping your team to manage their work, be clear when setting expectations. Some aspects you might clarify with your team members include:

- How urgent is the request?
- What might have to be deprioritised to allow for more urgent work to be completed?
- Who might be available to help or support?
- What can you do if you get stuck or need help?

If any of your team members are struggling to achieve any agreed-upon commitments, have a conversation with them to see what they need to help them stay on track.

5. Learning from what works

As an organisation we will be learning what works (and what doesn't) as we go. It is important to connect with other managers to share your learning at regular intervals.

Check in with your team on what's working and any changes they think will be helpful to help improve how the team performs remotely.

Please follow the conversation and share your experiences on Yammer

#remoteworkingtips