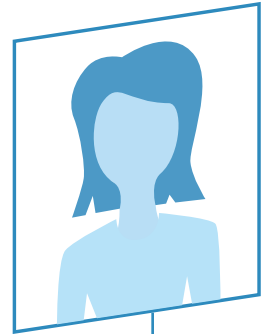
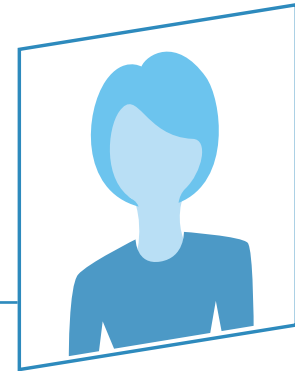
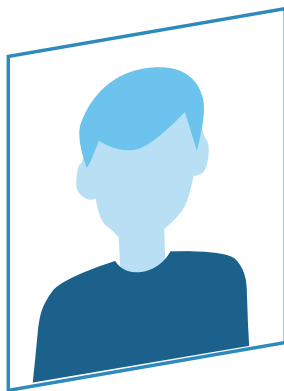


The Essential Guide to Leading and Working, Remotely



The game has changed, causing companies to rapidly shift their strategy. To guide the transition, we've developed an essential best practices guide for leading remotely and preparing your employees to work remotely.

Leading Remotely

1. Communicate more frequently than you do in the office.

Keep all regularly scheduled meetings. Change is always best accomplished when consistency can be maintained wherever possible. Anything that can stay the same, should. With remote work, you don't have the benefit of hallway conversations or the general visibility to the people that you don't necessarily meet with regularly. Increase your communication to offset this. Think daily updates or daily check-ins with the executive leadership team. Schedule more frequent (than usual) virtual townhalls, all-hands, Q&A sessions, etc.

Consider a 15-minute “Good Morning” call—on video—at the same time every day, with your remote team. It's a great way to officially start the day (like the opening bell on Wall Street) and provides a symbolic mindset shift from home life to work life. It's a time for connection and, since it's so short, can be much more about small talk and how everyone's feeling than it is about pressure to get things done.

2. Lead—and strongly encourage participation — via video

Everyone will follow the leader. If the leader won't get on video, then no one else will. Video is more personal and engaging. Hiding over the phone is easy – and will happen. Be intentional about how you come across when you're speaking and listening. You are as much on stage now as you are when you're on a physical stage in front of your employees.

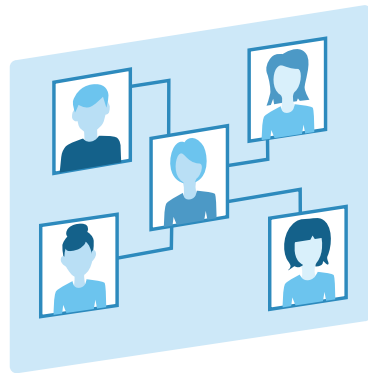
- ▶ Clear your background. Busy backgrounds are distracting for you audience. **Put the focus on you by keeping your background simple.**
- ▶ Look into the camera when you're speaking. Place a stickie next to your webcam as a reminder. Or drag your video windows as close to the webcam as possible. You'll come across as if you're looking directly at your audience.



- ▶ Lighten up! Smile and nod. It's the simplest way to add warmth which impacts how much people trust you, like you and will follow you.

3. Virtual all-hands can be extremely effective

When you're sharing updates or driving alignment around a new strategy, it's just as important for you to be able to see faces and read how your employees are feeling, as it is for them to see and experience you. Also, use this opportunity to celebrate milestones or recognize individuals or teams for their work. Communicating wins is critical for keeping remote workers motivated and engaged.



When it comes to Q&A, manage virtual participation carefully: Whether you're using Zoom, WebEx, Google Hangouts or another software, be familiar with the tools available to you. Designate one individual to handle incoming questions from the audience, sort through them and feed them to the leader/speaker. Another best practice is to record all incoming questions, write proper responses to them, and send out the entire document of FAQs afterward.

4. Set clear meeting expectations.

Distractions increase with virtual communication. To compensate, clarify meeting guidelines and expectations and **shorten meeting length whenever possible**. It is more challenging to keep people's attention virtually. Shorter, tighter meetings will be helpful and appreciated.

5. Let your team know how they can reach you

"Text is better than a call." Or, "Slack me instead of email for quick questions." When team members know your preferred mode of communication, they'll feel confident that they can reach you when they need to.



6. Communicate your availability and set the expectation for your team

What hours will you be available each day? What hours is your team expected to be available? Communicate this up-front so there's no confusion or assumptions about availability.

7. Your team(s) need to know you are listening.

When you're remote, silence can be interpreted as not paying attention.

- ▶ **On video: Look into the camera at least 80% of the time—** this will engage others by making them feel like you are looking directly at them. Use essential listening behaviors that show you are with them: nodding, verbal minimums and using facial expressions to mirror the communicator's message are important.
- ▶ **Without video: Verbal responsiveness matters most.** Repeat back what you hear with authentic paraphrasing but do not interrupt! Ask open ended questions. Be inclusive and call out remote employees by name to ensure they are able to participate. Create a clear list of action items with assignments and summarize it at the end of the call.
- ▶ When possible, record meetings and send the recording out afterward for anyone who was unable to attend.



8. Consider your employees personality.

While some individuals may struggle to focus, others will struggle to “turn off” at the end of the day. Extroverts that get a lot of energy from their colleagues may not like the isolation while others will be more productive, work longer hours and potentially burn out. **If remote work becomes long-term, it's essential that, as a leader, you are in tune with different reactions and advise appropriately.**

According to a New York Times article, “Research shows that what remote workers gain in productivity, they often miss in harder-to-measure benefits like creativity and innovative thinking. Studies have found that people working together in the same room tend to solve problems more quickly than remote collaborators, and that team cohesion suffers in remote work arrangements.”

9. In times of uncertainty, be present, be focused and be clear, more than ever.

Your team may be worried, concerned, confused and tackling the dynamic of having to work from home when they (potentially) never have before. Your communication needs to be real, relevant, timely and most importantly, calm. There is no substitute for calm leadership during a crisis or time period that causes people to panic or feel insecure.

- ▶ With unpredictability, it's important that you communicate clear goals and timelines for the upcoming weeks. For example: "In the next two weeks, while we are all remote, here are our top priorities and deadlines..."



**The following
best practices
are intended
to be distributed
to your team(s) >>**

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Working Remotely

1. Communicate, communicate, communicate!

Communicate with your colleagues throughout the workday to stay connected – but also, with your supervisor to help them understand what you are accomplishing – or where you need help. It's easy to slip into a pattern of communicating less, the fewer people you see. Set up regular touchpoints and come prepared to these meetings with updates.

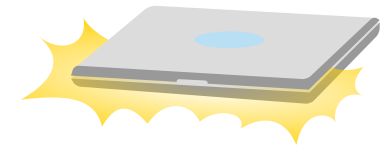
2. Designate a work-from-home space

As tempting as it is to setup shop on your couch, think about ergonomics and how you sit and work at the office. Then, set up a comfortable workplace, as far from distractions as you can.

It's even better if you can close a door at the end of your workday to provide some additional separation between home life and work life.

3. Keep regular office hours—and boundaries—to separate work from home

Majority of remote workers put in more hours, not less, than their in-office working counterparts. If you worked 8 to 5 in the office, continue working those hours at home. Or, establish a new schedule that will help you create a set at-home routine. Then, communicate your available hours to your supervisor and colleagues.



Consider time zones. If your team is spread across the country, there are a minimum number of hours each day that are optimal for both parties. If your team is international, you're probably used to being flexible to occasionally meet outside of normal working hours.

4. Get dressed to work

Yes, you *could* work all day in your yoga pants or sweats. But you'll feel more productive if you treat your working hours at home just like your working hours in the office. This doesn't mean you have to wear a suit– but “getting dressed” for the workday helps you shift your mindset about how you spend your time.

5. Embrace the video—and be mindful of it

Video is the key to feeling connected when you're working remotely. Whether you're talking to your colleague, client or boss, it's like being in the same room. The entire feel for a meeting changes when people join on video versus on the phone. But you could do more harm than good if you're not mindful of how you're coming across.

- ▶ **Ensure your camera is at eye-level.** If you're tall, try propping it up on a couple of books. This will put you at the best angle for the camera.
- ▶ Don't stare at yourself or others on video. **Look into the camera when you're speaking.**
- ▶ Run a test to make sure your audio and video work before any call—especially calls with clients.
- ▶ Looking professional matters here too (even if you're wearing sweats with your button-down shirt). **Consider your background.** For example: working from your bed will look much less professional than your kitchen island.

6. Isolation is real.

If you are used to the dynamics of an office, working from home can be isolating. Schedule breaks for yourself to get outside, take a walk and meet colleagues for lunch or coffee. Most of us feel that working from home is a huge luxury but it can quickly turn lonely if you are not careful to find outlets.



7. Lastly: you are at work, even though you are at home.

Be mindful that during office hours, you aren't there to clean the house. Keep work separate from home by closing the door (literally or figuratively) on it at night to help establish healthy boundaries. If you have a child that needs care, you'll still have to manage childcare outside the home, or with a nanny, so that you can focus on work.

Consider making an indicator for your family that lets them know when it's OK or not OK to interrupt. For example, a red stop light sign for do not disturb; a green light to indicate interruptions are OK; and a yellow light could mean, please check first via a quick text message.

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