Managing Remote Workers

Remote working comes with a unique set of challenges. This is especially true for those who are new to remote work and may need time and support to adjust. Below are a set of tips to help you best manage your remote workers.

Communication is key

As a manager, be accessible to all of your team members. Video conferences using tools like Zoom and WebEx can keep remote employees from feeling isolated. Making an effort to have some face-to-face conversations in place of emails ensures a more communicative remote team. This connectivity bolsters trust and leads to better collaboration.

Focus on results

When evaluating productivity and performance, managers need to create a system that is focused on objective results to help ensure realistic and effective assessment. Understand that employees working from home may be juggling multiple responsibilities, including caregiving, and they may need flexibility around the hours that they work.

Set clear expectations

Don't leave remote workers trying to read your mind. Distance amplifies uncertainty, and it is the role of the remote manager to provide a sense of structure through clear roles and responsibilities, precise objectives, and performance measures. Create ways remote workers can monitor their own performance and not always have to wait for your feedback.

Provide regular feedback and inspiration

Remote workers should be recognized and rewarded for their successes, individually and publicly. Let remote workers know how their work is important to the bigger picture - how it contributes to the success of the unit, the division, the organization, to the wider community. Make an effort to normalize and celebrate virtual teams.

Encourage work-life integration strategies

Remote workers can have very fluid boundaries between their personal and professional lives because their office is in the home. Encouraging employees to try to keep to a routine and establish a space that is work-specific can help with this. Employees should also feel like they are able to "shut work off" to rest and recharge at the end of the day.

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