MAINTAINING A PRODUCTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE REMOTE WORK ENVIRONMENT

1. Stay Focused on the Big Goals

When working remotely, team members can become disconnected from the big picture. It's important to find ways to continue to remind everyone of organizational goals and to make sure the team understands how their work fits in. This can be accomplished during weekly departmental meetings, by sending a weekly email update, or by posting goals in a collaborative workspace. Team members should also be sure their goals are aligned with organizational goals.

## 2. Remain Actively Engaged in Team Projects

When teams make the shift from working in the office to working remotely, there can be a tendency to focus more on individual tasks. To help employees remain engaged in team projects, consider breaking into smaller more agile teams to improve collaboration. Team members should also find a central location to track projects, schedule times to collaborate, and find other team projects to participate in.

3. Promote Psychological Safety

Teams should try to create an environment where team members can take risks, speak openly, admit mistakes, and support diversity of thought. This is especially important during times of uncertainty and will encourage team members to be open-minded, creative, and motivated to work collaboratively towards an end goal or solution without fear of being judged. To increase psychological safety:

- See colleagues as humans
- Promote healthy conflict
- Ensure everyone has a voice
- Be curious and creative
- Focus on trust
- Create structures and norms
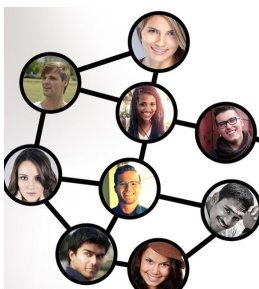
4. Stay Connected as a Team

Since there are less opportunities for informal interaction and conversations when working remotely, it's important to find ways to remain connected as a team. This can be through Skype, Microsoft Teams, or Zoom. You might consider trying shorter, scrum-style meetings with an agenda. Make sure all team members participate in team meetings. Don't forget to also schedule social time for the team.

5. Set Clear Expectations & Boundaries

- How will the team work together?
- What is everyone's working hours?
- What meetings are mandatory?
- What is the best way to reach each other?
- What are your current goals and deadlines?
- Is there an outlet if team members feel overwhelmed?
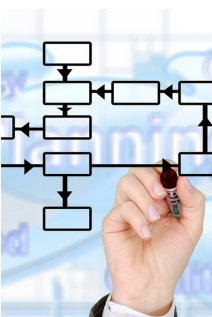
6. Document Processes & Procedures

Not having documented processes and procedures can definitely cause problems and bottlenecks whether working in the office or remotely. Be sure to:

- Review workflows for necessary updates
- Store processes and procedures in a central location
- Update processes and procedures regularly

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