

MANAGING TELEWORK

Once teams begin teleworking, it becomes imperative that supervisors keep employees engaged. Proper engagement fosters productivity and accountability for teams who are working remotely. The following are general guidelines to help supervisors support their employees.

Communicate clear expectations

Working remotely means teams are scattered and there is a need to provide even more structured expectations to ensure work occurs seamlessly. When moving to telework, you need to cover everything: key projects and deadlines, important daily or weekly tasks, and scheduled meetings. Discuss schedules and availability. Are employees working regular work hours, do they need to track hours, are they expected to check in daily? Be extremely clear because employees may have a different idea of what working remotely looks like.

Create appropriate performance metrics and establish regular times for discussion and collaboration. This will help foster some consistency and direct work efforts. Set expectations of staff schedules and availability. Make sure staff understands the importance of availability to the team and others. Also, discuss guidelines for requesting time off while teleworking.

Activate the “digital workplace” and meet frequently

Help employees communicate and collaborate from anywhere using online meeting software or other pre-determined productivity products you established when planning for telework. If you are using more than one digital product, outline what each type of communication should be used for and when.

Communicate on a regular basis using predetermined technology methods: including but not limited to email, phone, instant messaging, and online meetings. This includes daily check-ins, regular meetings, and one-on-ones. It is a good practice to set up at least two team meetings each day: a morning meeting, for staff to discuss work plans for the day and what/who they need to accomplish those plans, and an afternoon meeting for them to report progress and reflect on what worked and what did not.

Encourage informal communication within your team to try and replicate as much of the work culture as possible. Share success and celebrate wins.

Promote accountability

Meeting frequently while teleworking is good for the cohesiveness of the team, but it also promotes group accountability for daily work goals. The daily group meetings create a natural place to discuss and problem solve. It also shows who is and who is not adjusting well and allows you to use the time to problem solve and help.

Focus your efforts on work products and not just hours logged. While a work product may not be feasible every day, updates are strongly encouraged to ensure productivity and to create a remote performance environment. Approved project management apps like Trello can help staff stay connected and updated between group meetings.