



Making Working From Home Work

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- We will email you the recording and slides within 24 hours.
- Please participate in our polls.
- Please use the Q&A box for questions.

Agenda

- Compliance
- Set-up
- The benefit of the doubt
- Boundaries and community

Compliance



Time tracking (for non-exempt employees)

- All time worked must be tracked and paid
- Have a detailed policy
- Make sure your system makes sense for WFH
- Be kind about confusion – we're all working through this together

Off-the-clock work (for non-exempt employees)

- This will be very easy to rack up
- Just because employees are willing to do work without recording it doesn't mean it's legal
- You cannot make their former commuting time work time (at least not without paying for it)





Meal and rest breaks

- These are still required (if they were before) and should be logged just as if employees were in the office
- Even if they aren't required (like for exempt employees), breaks should be encouraged
- Breaks restore motivation, help us retain information, improve productivity, creativity, and focus, and reduce decision fatigue (How Do Work Breaks Help Your Brain?, *Psychology Today*)

Posters and notices

- Laws about postings are evolving but not as fast as we'd like
- Post on the company intranet or virtual bulletin board
- Scan and email or print and mail
- Low risk, but not no risk



Expenses

- Can't take an employee below minimum wage
- Watch for state law in CA, DC, IL, IA, MA, MT, NY
- It makes sense to pay for employees' internet, at least in part
- Consider a stipend to help employees create a productive WFH space

Set-Up



Safety obligations

- Per OSHA, you're still responsible for ensuring a safe workplace
- Make sure that employees are not exposed to reasonably foreseeable hazards created by their at-home employment

Ergonomics

Ultra-basics

- Monitor is arm's length away and at eye level
- 90-degree angle at hips, knees, and elbows
- Wrists are straight
- Feet are flat on the floor, or a footrest

Pick a resource you like and distribute or distill it.

The living room couch
Ergonomic it is not
Find lumbar support

MONITOR

Adjust distance and height: top of the monitor at eye-level and slightly tilted.

ARMS

Relax shoulders, forearms parallel to the floor. Minimal bend at the wrist.

CHAIR

Should have a backrest and armrests, adjust height.

LEGS

Thighs parallel to the floor.

FEET

Parallel to the floor, use a footrest if necessary.



No one needs a \$1,500 chair

- Let people take office furniture home
- Offer to purchase certain items, within limits
- Reimburse employees for their own cheap(er) hacks
- Know in your heart that the \$50 ergonomic keyboard will be less costly than carpal tunnel



Screen parity

- Does the employee have the same square footage of computer screen at home?
- Consider: letting them take home their work monitors or purchasing new
- Can they set their monitor up in the most efficient way?
- Consider: monitor arms, monitor stands, stacked books



Home is distracting

- Noise canceling headphones
- White noise machines
- Door locks
- Curtains

Poll Question

What percentage of your workforce is currently working remotely?

Poll Question

**What percentage of your workforce do you anticipate
will work remotely after the pandemic?**

The Benefit of the Doubt

Command-and-control doesn't work well from a distance

Unless you've implemented some serious surveillance (not recommended, by the way), you're going to have to find a way to measure employee success and productivity that doesn't boil down to butts in seats.

This could be a good thing

First: Give the benefit of the doubt

- If you can't find it just yet, fake it.
- Better to assume good intent and behavior and be proven wrong than to treat remote employees like mischievous children who must be micro-managed from the get-go.
- Work relationships can erode very quickly, and they are even harder to patch up from a distance.



Second: Implement SMART goals

- **Specific:** detailed, narrow, jargon-free
- **Measurable:** find concrete metrics that will help you know if the goal has been achieved; avoid *more* or *better*
- **Attainable:** based in reality; be wary of “reach goals” - take current conditions into account
- **Relevant:** make sure goals align with values and long-term objectives, preferably for both the company and employee
- **Time-bound:** set reasonable deadlines and help employees work backward from them to set intermediary goals



Third: Follow up

- Check in regularly to see how things are going
- Check progress against the SMART goals
- Don't stress if this isn't seamless the first few (or ten) times – new processes and habits take practice

Fourth: Adjust as needed

Just like when we're in the workplace together, employees can be expected to show up on time, do what they're asked, and meet deadlines.

However, while the pandemic is still raging and people are WFH under often uncomfortable circumstances, concessions may need to be made.

- Can they work more flexible hours?
- Can they log out of Slack or Microsoft Teams for a few hours each day?
- Can they stay off video some of the time?
- Can we help them minimize distractions (even at a cost)?
- Should we expect a little less productivity than we did a year ago?

In the reverse: Create and maintain trust in the company

- Treat employees equally even if they are in different locations with different benefits required by law
- Mind your pay scales
- If you're going through layoffs or furloughs, make sure they are fair
- Be consistent with discipline and what you decide to care about
- Try to maintain equity between teams
- Employees may have even better forums to gossip, organize, and share information



Increase transparency

- Coffee talk with the leadership team
- “AskMeAnything” sessions
- Extended Q&A online after large meetings
- More frequent company updates
- More frequent team meetings
- More frequent one-on-ones

Boundaries and Community

Acknowledge and support boundaries

- Commute time should not become work time
- The workday is still the workday
- Weekends are still weekends
- If you have people in different time zones, establish expectations
- You should not watch people on video all day
- “Happy Hour” should not be mandatory
- Instantaneous responses on messaging systems and email are not usually reasonable or necessary (and will seriously hinder productivity)

Keep or create work rituals

- Desk plants, photos, cards – things you'd have at your workstation
- Your favorite coffee mug
- 10 a.m. coffee run
- Quitting at 5:05 and changing Slack to “away”
- “Commuting” (now known as zoning out on the sofa)



Maintain community

It's not the same when you can't hang over someone's cube wall to gossip, but try to recreate that and encourage your employees to do the same:

- Keep the coffee date
- Have the team lunches
- Reach out to talk about non-work topics
- Create drop-in group workspaces
- Have spontaneous (optional) happy hours



Embrace levity

Because we need it right now

- Let the kids say hello
- Enjoy the pet cameos
- Have communication channels for non-work banter (e.g., cycling, fitness, PokemonGo, good news, book club, cryptocurrency, dogs, cats, food)

A person is seen from behind, wearing large headphones and working on a laptop. They are positioned in front of a large window that looks out onto a sunset or sunrise. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. The person's laptop screen is visible, showing some data or a spreadsheet. The overall mood is calm and focused.

Q & A