VIRTUAL TEAM SUCCESS DURING COVID-19

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TOP TIPS FOR WORKING VIRTUALLY

1. Create a schedule

Build a schedule that works for you but have a schedule and stick to it

2. Craft some rituals

You have a pattern to how your workday begins and ends from the office. Create a similar pattern for home. It might be something like:

1. Get Coffee
2. Check email
3. Call clients

3. Communicate with colleagues

Even though you won't see them in the hall, create opportunities to communicate in real time. Yes, slack and instant messenger but also pick up the phone.

4. Connect in the real world

You still need human connection. Right now, that might be hard to do physically. But it is still important to connect with people beyond work. Have a virtual coffee or lunch or a break just as you would (or should) in an office environment.

5. Close your screens

Get away from the screens. Take a walk. Read a book. Cook a meal. Paint a picture. Whatever you enjoy. But turn off the screen at the end of your work day. Remember Tip 1. Just because you are working from home does not mean you are working 24/7.

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TIPS FOR LEADING VIRTUALLY

1. Communicate clear expectations

Leading virtually is just like leading on site only more so. People need to know what you expect - for their schedule, their response time, their results. It's even more important virtually because people are more reluctant to reach out or "bother" you.

2. Collaborate using technology tools

Just because you can't see each other without planning doesn't mean you can't collaborate. You just need some tools for meetings (Zoom, WebEx, Skype, etc.) and for sharing documents (Dropbox, Teams, GoogleDocs, etc.)

3. Conduct meetings on video when possible

It's hard to go a whole day and not see anyone in real time. It's hard to feel like a team when you can't see each other. So use the video capacity of those technology tools, even when people are reluctant. Several have cool settings for the background so it need not feel intrusive.

4. Contact individual team members

People need to feel connected, especially if they are new to working remotely. They also are less likely to reach out to a supervisor than in the office, where they can casually see you in the hallway. Reach out regularly.

5. Connect the team in person

Remote work saves money in terms of office space and utilities and such. During this pandemic, it's also necessary to protect everyone It's important to use some of those savings to bring people together periodically in person. It is exponentially powerful in creating a team that works well together, shares knowledge and responsibility and ultimately is as effective as possible.

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