Remote Work Checklist

Utilize this checklist to prepare your organization for adopting remote work plans that are viable and successful parts of the business strategy in times of need and otherwise. This is not an exhaustive list but will get you going in the right direction.

For Employers

Support hardware - Make sure employees have access to things like laptops, phones, chargers and the hardware they need to bring work home. Encourage them to get in the habit of commuting with these items if they don't already.

Support software - Make sure employees have access to things like email, communication tools like Slack, collaboration tools like Google Suite or Microsoft 365, project management tools like Trello, CRM systems like SalesForce and other software they might need to get their job done. Test call forwarding from landlines to cell phones. Ask employees to test the ability to access necessary programs from home so you can troubleshoot or install programs while on the network.

Support security - When employees are accessing company data in the cloud, consider ensuring employees leverage two-factor authentication. Be diligent about cyber security communication - phishing scams specific to coronavirus are on the rise. Be cautious of clickable links and attachments. Never give out your password. Be cautious about sharing personal information.

Support active communication - Encourage managers and direct reports to agree on a regular communication plan and cadence for formal meetings, informal check-ins, quick replies, 1:1 reviews, and collaborative work. This plan should include things like expected response times based on urgency, deciding which communication channels are appropriate for a given situation, and the type of work that can be done out of sync from the team versus needing to be collaborated on in real-time. Likewise, develop a communication plan for customers and other stakeholders - let them know you are open for business with modifications to normal operations.

Support a culture of productivity and accountability - Working from home does not mean getting less done. In fact, it can often mean being more productive. If all employees know what is expected of them from a performance and time management perspective, then holding them

accountable for those office hours and performance metrics should be business as usual, no matter where they are. This should take some of the stress off of managers and employees who might be new to a remote work environment.

Support wellness - One of the great things about remote work is it allows employees to take better care of themselves. There are opportunities for things like stretch breaks, quick walks around the block, eating healthy, avoiding long commutes and overall reduced stress. Take this opportunity to acknowledge and support these things which can yield a healthier, happier, more productive team.

For Managers

Set clear expectations - Make sure your direct reports know exactly what will be expected of them while they are working remotely. For instance, office hours, weekly performance goals, project updates, and task timelines.

Set clear communication guidelines - Make sure direct reports can differentiate between things that are urgent and need an immediate response versus things that can wait. Together, decide what communication channels are the right ones to use together. For example, for urgent things you will send an instant message and for things that can wait you will send an email. Whatever it is, make sure you all agree on it together and leave in some room for it to evolve and settle naturally.

Support your team - Every team is different and working at home can throw some unexpected curveballs. So ask this question often: *"Do you have what you need to be successful?"* This will flush out anything that your direct reports might be missing from their toolbox that you or the organization might not have yet considered.

Be flexible - Things come up at home that might not come up in an office. Make sure your team has some wiggle room to be flexible with their schedules. As long as everyone knows what they are accountable for, then having some flexibility will not matter. In fact, it can help re-enforce accountability and trust in the relationship, which can be a great thing.

For All Employees

Set up a solid home office - Make sure you have a dedicated space to get work done and you have access to a room with a closed-door if you need to make phone calls. You also want to consider a comfortable chair or an option for a standing desk (could be a laptop on some stacked books) to help you stay healthy while you work from your computer.

Support security - Phishing scams and cyber attacks targeting coronavirus fears are on the rise. Be cautious of clickable links and attachments. Never give out your password. Be cautious sharing personal information. Remember callers are able to spoof caller ID.

Ensure strong internet access - Check to make sure your internet speed is fast enough to have a video call. For example, Zoom, a video conferencing app, recommends you have a connection of 1.5 Mbps up and down. If you have a video streaming service like Netflix and it works ok, you should be good. If you are not sure, you can check www.speedtest.net. In areas with less internet connectivity, utilize standard conference calls. Many video conferencing tools will allow you to call in without video even if your team is using the video conferencing capability.

Avoid distractions - There are different types of distractions at home, even if you are the only one there. Make sure you have some headphones to zone into your work. Also, it might be tempting to do things like cook, clean or do laundry. Try and make sure you push chores to either end of your workday.

Be a proactive communicator - In the office, it is easy to tap someone on the shoulder if you have a quick question or be brought into an impromptu meeting. Not when you are working at home. Make sure you are proactively reaching out to people if you have questions, ideas or want further clarification on a task. It is especially important to reach out if you are facing a roadblock either because you are waiting on someone else or are feeling stuck.

Be accountable - Working from home requires trust. Being an adult who is accountable for their own responsibilities will build trust with an employer and show that you can handle working remotely. If working remotely is new, consider putting in some extra effort in the beginning to show your employer you are a pro.

Hold successful remote meetings - Remote meetings are different than in-person meetings. Make sure everyone knows what tech they should be using and have tested it before the meeting starts. It is also a good idea to have one person lead the meeting who has an agenda with a clear goal to accomplish. Begin meetings with a casual check-in with everyone much like you would in an office setting. This captures the friendliness of the workplace and makes sure everyone is represented.

Manage conflict - Conflict can come up no matter what your work situation is but when working remotely, the majority of communication is done digitally, which means you need to be extra careful when crafting the tone of your emails and messages. It is too easy to misinterpret digital communications. If you ever feel like you are heating up over digital communication, this is the time to talk to the person on the phone or by video chat to clarify. Humans are way better at communicating orally and face-to-face than digitally.