

Maintain Morale with these 5 Keepers



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With breakfast dishes cleared away, the kitchen table becomes my makeshift office. I'll relocate when the kids wake up. It's not ideal, nor is it permanent. It works.

Sound familiar? We may have lost our workplace "normalcy" (whatever that was), but we can succeed at corporate isolation while still managing effectively. When your teams are scattered at home offices, remember that you can maintain morale if you know what to keep.

Keep the Community

1

Your workplace is the community you didn't realize you would miss. Community may be even more important for your employees who are accustomed to working side-by-side every day. Those brief moments of personal connection (How was your weekend? Did your daughter's team win their game? I like those shoes!) are important. And even though digital conversations are not the same, they are better than pure isolation. Give your staff the freedom to be friends, or at least friendly.

Keep Communicating

2

You should be testing the capacity of your cell phone battery right now. Communicate early and often throughout the day. It can be easy to overlook when you're at the office just how often you talk with your co-workers and employees. When everyone is working from home, alone, the quiet becomes deafening. Managers: increase your openness; transmit new levels of transparency during this challenging time.

It's also fair to ask your teams to raise their response level. You and your people need to be available by phone and email. No, not all the time. But answer the phone, return emails, respond to texts, and use your collaborative tools (Slack and others) to respond promptly.

Keep a Schedule

3

For some people, working from home saves hours of time – no sitting in commuter traffic. Some of your team may convert that "extra" time into work time. But you can't assume that. It's best to communicate workday expectations from the beginning.

You may need to schedule more frequent meetings as your team transitions to a remote-work environment, especially if you're



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maintaining a full calendar of projects and deadlines. Set your weekly work plan and meeting schedule, and make sure your teams stay aware of those deadlines and calendars. Are all your digital tools up to the task?

Keep Flexibility

4

This may challenge many managers, but if you communicate well and stay on schedule, you can give your employees flexibility to navigate this situation. Know that everyone's schedule is off – with kids, with exercise, with meals, with fun and family time – including yours.

Communicate and work from respect – both professional and personal – to help employees manage this new mode. Encourage people to talk about their challenges and share best practices for working remotely. Ask for ideas around office efficiency, workday wellness and interesting lunch options – beyond the tuna sandwich!

Keep having FUN

5

People with years of remote-work experience agree they miss the social side of office life. While you're communicating project deadlines and process updates, remember to have fun. Digital celebrations can still be impactful. Schedule time to commend your employees for achievements large and small. Communicate as a group the successful moments you've created – staying on deadline for a large project, hitting sales goals, delivering services to pleased customers.

Recognize good work even when you're not together – especially when you're not together – and you'll keep your people moving as a team.

