HOW TO: Manage Remote Employees

Whether you’re managing a remote team for the first time or the 10th, these steps can help you build connection and work with team members to reach their potential—wherever they work from.

*Create personal connections.*

- Drop an email to share positive feedback, create an office chat channel to share cat memes and other fun stuff, or arrange to have a virtual lunch with an employee to just talk.

*Invest more time in your hiring and assessment process.*

- Extra effort to make sure a new hire is the right fit for both employer and employee will lead to a smooth runway for remote employees.

*Don’t micromanage.*

- Set regular check-in meetings, and let employees know when and how to reach out to you with questions in between (and when not to).

*Adjust the length of your meetings.*

- Shorter is better virtually. Three-hour, in-person marathon meetings with a bountiful buffet of beverages and treats aren’t possible with remote teams. Shorter sessions with plenty of stretch and comfort breaks work best for remote teams.

*Listen.*

- Ask open-ended questions about workload and individual and team morale, and listen to the responses.
- Keep in mind that you will need to check in with remote colleagues more frequently than you would if everyone was in the office and you could gauge the mood in the room.

*Onboard new remote employees in person, if possible.*

- If you can’t, pay special attention to scheduling small chunks of time for a new employee to get to know colleagues and learn about your nonprofit’s culture and core values. Try not to overwhelm your newest team member with marathon Zoom orientation sessions.

*Provide tools for collaboration.*

- Create a shared document or system where employees can enter what they’re working on. Make sure employees know what tools are available to them to work together.

*Set expectations right away, and update when needed.*

- Communicate clearly what the employee’s deliverables are, deadlines, examples of how your new hire has autonomy and choice, and important guardrails.

*Celebrate victories.*

- Your team members might not see the wins their colleagues notch in their homes or apartments. Devote time at regular meetings to celebrate what’s going well.

*Reinforce the organization’s values.*

- Be aware that team members are likely to feel disconnected from the big picture when they are working remotely. Regularly reinforce in meetings and conversations where the organization is headed and how the employee’s work supports it.

Helpful Resources:

- 9 Tips to Manage Remote Employees for Better Productivity - Gartner
- 10 Tips for Successfully Managing Remote Workers - SHRM