



Timely Information for Personal Success

Managing Employees That You Can't See

By Jan Makela

Over 43% of the United States workforce is comprised of remote workers — and the ability to work remotely is a powerful recruiting and retention tool for many companies. In addition to those benefits, the organization also enjoys lower costs by saving on office-related expenses, and a boost in productivity as employees are no longer on long commutes.

But to get the most out of your work-from-home employees, you need to have some firm guidelines in place. Here are five keys to implementing a work-from-home system and methods to best manage remote employees.

1. Set Clear Expectations

Many managers worry that remote employees won't work hard without supervision, but studies consistently show that remote employees are more productive than their office-based counterparts. When there are productivity problems, it's most often due to unclear expectations, not slacking off.

Set firm goals and identify the required outcome, and establish a timeline for specific milestones. Regularly check-in with remote staff, monitor progress, and ensure that they are moving toward their goal in a timely fashion. If you've given clear direction on the required outcomes, you don't have to make a personal judgment about whether someone is working hard. By investing time in the planning stage, it will pay off in productivity.

2. Relationships Matter

Building a good relationship with remote employees ensures that they don't feel isolated from the team. Use instant messaging for the types of interactions you have in the hallways with office-based staff. Ask how their day is going, send a link to a helpful article, or share a joke. You're not going to just run into remote employees, so connections require deliberate effort. Set reminders in your calendar to make sure informal check-ins don't get overlooked.

3. Be Available

Remote employees can't stop by your desk when they need a quick answer, so it's important that you set aside time to be available to them. Respond to messages promptly so you don't hinder their productivity.

continued on Page 2





CLIP-N-SAVE!

Health & Nutrition Letter, Tufts University

Healthy Recipe: Soba Noodles with Vegetables

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 red onion
- 1 carrot
- ¼ zucchini
- ¼ head broccoli
- 8 ounces uncooked soba noodles
- 4 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 730
- Carbohydrates: 92 g.
- Protein: 20 g.
- Fat: 34 g.
- Saturated fat: 4.5 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Chop the onion. Remove seeds from zucchini and cut into strips. Cut broccoli into florets. Chop the carrot into large chunks.
- 2 Boil pot of water. Cook carrot for a few minutes, then add the rest of the vegetables. Cook for another 2 to 3 minutes until done al dente. Drain.
- 3 In another pot, boil soba noodles for 5 minutes. Drain.
- 4 Whisk toasted sesame oil, lemon juice, and sesame seeds together to make a sauce.
- 5 Stir vegetables into noodles.
- 6 Serve sauce on side, so it can be poured over the noodles to taste.

LifestyleTIPS®
 2018 © Write it Right LLC
 395 Grove St., Iola, WI 54945
 Phone: 715-445-4386
 Website: writeitrightllc.com
 Email: mjacquart@writeitrightllc.com

Editor/Publisher: Mike Jacquart

LifestyleTIPS® is published as a monthly insert included with an *EAR* subscription. Contents are not intended as a substitute for actual medical advice. Editorial material should be used with discretion by the reader and is not endorsed by the owner, publisher, editors, or distributors.

To order a personalized, color version of *LifestyleTIPS*® with the name of your EAP, call 715-445-4386 or email us at mjacquart@writeitrightllc.com. Pricing will vary depending on the quantity ordered.

Managing Employees That You Can't See

continued from Page 1

If you can't fully address a question right away, let them know you're working on it. Share your calendar. Sharing your calendar allows your remote staff to see when they have the best chance of catching you between meetings. Schedule regular check-in times.

Another avenue is video calls, which can build rapport by allowing colleagues to visually connect. It's more personal than a voice on the phone or text in an email. Video calls offer another advantage... callers are more engaged and less likely to be distracted by emails or social media.

4. Communicate

Communication takes extra effort when working remotely. To be effective, you must communicate clearly, often, and well. Be direct. Clearly state what you need and when you need it. This reduces the need

for follow-up messages to clarify the request. When you're not in the same office, your colleagues don't know what you're working on. Let them know how projects are progressing. Share your barriers. Likewise, let your colleagues know what barriers you're encountering and what help you need to address those barriers.

5. Connect to the Organization

You may find that remote employees lack buy-in and engagement compared to those who work in the office each day. If the employee completely works from home, consider including them in office training events. You may find that relationships improve and turnover of remote works decreases. Finding ways for your people to connect is the secret sauce to having successful employees that do not come to the office.

Summary

Both the employer and the employee—part or full time—can benefit from working remotely. For the employee the advantages may be obvious but employers also benefit from less overhead, increased cash flow, and access to a larger talent pool. When implementing a work-from-home arrangement, it's imperative to follow these five guidelines to best position your employee—and the company—for success. ■

Jan Makela is an executive coach, highly-sought after speaker, and best-selling author of "Cracking the Code to Success and Be the Manager People Won't Leave," for which he received the 2017 Quilly Award. For more information on Jan Makela, visit www.StrengthBasedLeadership.net.

