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Technology Newsletter

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How To Manage a Remote Workforce

Over the past few weeks, we shared some helpful info on [remote work](#). These articles should help workers and IT smoothly and securely move to a remote work setting, but this creates the question, "How do I manage a remote workforce?" The principles of proper management are generally known, so a lot of this is the things we as managers and leaders should do. But the disconnected nature of remote workers creates new challenges which is the focus here: how can we apply sound management principles to a remote workforce?

In this article, we will tell you how to assess your team and technology, set expectations, communicate effectively, and manage successfully.

Assessing your Ability to Manage a Remote Workforce

The first step is to make sure you evaluate and plan the team and technology for moving to remote work. In response to Covid-19, we all had to move without a lot of choices quickly, but the exercise is essential to maximize success. There are several things to consider.

Determine which roles can / need to work from home

Not all employees will need to work from home or can. A manufacturing production or maintenance employee will still need to be onsite for operations, along with some accounting personnel to an extent (AR and AP), and some others. Review your organizational chart for those who can work remotely.

Review your Technology with your IT Team or Provider

There are a lot of moving technology parts, and you must provide three things at a minimum: Security, Reliability, and Ease of Use. You must consider what devices/clients can access your systems. Will a Virtual Private Network (VPN) be required? Is a Remote Desktop or Terminal Server needed? What is the minimum connectivity parameters for remote network connections (e.g., internet speed)? Keystone can help you evaluate all of this.

Communication capabilities are another area to assess. How will your team communicate remotely? Is there a secure video conference tool you can use? Do you have access to collaboration tools, like Microsoft Teams or Slack? Will users have access to the corporate phone system either by taking a device home or using a softphone?

What must be purchased to provide access? Typical costs include new client devices like laptops, VPN licenses, and headsets. You should create a budget for any services needed to configure this.

While you are doing this, include a security check at every step. You are not immune to a security breach; in fact you are more likely to have one: 36% of organizations have experienced a security incident because of a remote, insecure worker. We recommend that a person with security skills and mindset review each decision and that you also do a Penetration and Vulnerability test, along with regular phishing test campaigns and end-user training.

Check and update your business continuity plan. These changes may expose new holes, and any differences should always be evaluated and updated.

Other Concerns to Assess

Next, do you have a written policy for employees or users to sign that indicates the terms and use of remote access? Does it protect you from personal devices, or costs for using their internet, etc.? Keystone has a sample policy for this available upon request.

In a related note, consider a legal review of the ability and need to work remotely. Will any issues be raised because FLSA non-exempt employees may work odd or additional hours? Are there any other legal or employment issues that may arise? We suggest consulting with your legal counsel, particularly those in HR law.

Expectations When You Manage a Remote Workforce

With change comes new ways for people to think about their work. You must set expectations for productivity, availability, and communications.

EXPECTATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

Did you miss our last blog? Catch up now!

Remote Access and Microsoft Teams

In this help guide, we want to share ways your workers can work from home. While this is in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, many are finding it productive and helpful to work remotely. There are two areas we will focus on, some useful tips to connect to your corporate network, and using Microsoft Teams to stay productive and connected.



REMOTE ACCESS AND MICROSOFT TEAMS



Information

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