

Managers can work remotely, too. You might not even be working from home; you might just be the only person on your team working on-site. Most of the same tips apply, especially when it comes to communicating and building personal rapport. In addition:

- Set clear expectations, not just for work product, but also for how you will communicate with one another.
- Meet in-person, as well as virtually, on a regular basis.
- Foster a team environment: Make sure your remote employees feel like part of the team.
- Focus on goals, rather than how the goals are met. You will not have insight into your team's every working moment, so focus on their output.

A Time for Experiments

Approach the summer as an experiment. Conduct a pilot to test out options for remote or hybrid arrangements to help your department determine the best way to get work done. No one knows the answers yet - prepare them for this. U turns are embarrassing. Experiments are fun.

Just because you or your staff have been working remotely since the beginning of the pandemic does not mean you are set up for long-term success. After all, you were likely forced into this without much forethought or planning at the beginning of the pandemic.

It is worth taking a step back now to make sure you are considering the best ways to make a remote working arrangement work for you and your team. Consider conducting a 90-day pilot program using a Remote Work Agreement to define expectations and responsibilities more formally. Such an approach may help you adjust and refine how best to structure working arrangements within your respective areas.

Avoid Common Pitfalls

- Not trusting your people: For remote workers, it can feel difficult to trust well and get to know someone who you might never have met in person. Remote managers do not have the luxury of physically checking in on their team members, so trust really must be learned.
- Skipping your 1-1s: Finding the time to do 1-1s can feel like an impossibility, but the pay-off can be huge if they are implemented well. It is also one of the best ways to really get to know your team professionally, so we really recommend scheduling them when you can.
- Focusing on working hours: One of the reasons why people choose to work remotely is in the flexibility it offers for the working day. But a lot of managers still focus on the hours that someone works and not actually the output. It is a real throwback to normal office working conditions, and it is best not to carry the practice on into the remote world.
- Not finding time to connect with the team: Connecting with the team requires more effort and time as a remote manager. Without doing it, a lot of the interactions that happen in an office just will not take place with a remote team. Again, it is another example of something that really must be scheduled into your calendar.
- Thinking that meetings will solve your problems: What works in the office does not always work in the remote world. Meetings are a key example of something that just does not translate so well with a remote team. It is a difficult habit to kick, but it will ultimately save you time and get the message across quicker if you avoid remote meetings.

- Overlooking the personal & professional development of your remote team: In your role as a remote manager, you need to invest time and dedication into the development of your team. Your team members will appreciate it, become more engaged, and are much more likely to stay with you if you show some care.
- Failing to communicate: Communication really is one of the cornerstones of remote work. For a remote manager, it is even more important to practice the skill as your team members rely on you for guidance and task setting. It can be easier to get away with communicating badly when you are a normal employee, but it just cannot happen when leading a virtual team.
- Not setting the standard for your team: There's nothing worse than being a bad example to your remote team. It is a sure-fire way to make your team members disengaged and feel like they can do the same too. You must be a good example to have everyone be on their best game.
- Not setting clear expectations: Improving your overall transparency has a lot of benefits for a remote team, including the setting of clear expectations. We are not all together in the same office space, so everything should be laid out explicitly to avoid any confusion over your team's goals.

* Adapted from Duke University and remote-how.com "10 Mistakes to Avoid When Managing a Virtual Team."