



Home is where the heart is: 5 top tips for success with a remote workforce

1. Lead by example

In a time of extreme turbulence in the business world, virtually everybody will know at least one person who has lost their job or is in danger of redundancy. Those in work will be looking to their managers for reassurance that they're still a valued member of the organisation. This is where strong leadership can play such an important part of empowering every person in every team to make a positive, meaningful contribution to the business post-pandemic. But remember to hold yourself to the same standards as your employees. For example, if you put new measures or processes in place, like banning work emails outside of office hours to ensure a better work/life balance, then make sure you do so yourself, too. This should encourage employees to do the same.

RSA tip: Hold 'walking meetings' that enable everyone within your team to get away from their home offices, meet up for a social chat and get some invigorating exercise.

2. Communicate with transparency

A vacuum of information often leads to speculation that can be potentially harmful. If employees are working remotely and are therefore likely to be more isolated from talking to colleagues, it could be easy for them to become fearful of what the future holds if they aren't regularly kept informed. Keeping virtual lines of communication open with, for example, monthly team meetings or vlog updates can be key to removing stress from the workforce and maintaining cohesion within and between teams.

RSA tip: When writing a business update email, leave it for an hour after drafting and re-read it before you hit send. This second perspective can make sure your message is clear, concise and absent of ambiguity.

3. Don't overlook mental well-being

The proportion of UK adults experiencing loneliness spiked from 10% to 24% in the first two weeks of the lockdown. As mentioned in the previous point, remote working can make it harder for people to connect with those they work with, and this could pose risks to their mental health long-term. Social contact is essential to every human being, after all, and simply checking in on someone to see how they're feeling can have a big impact. It's absolutely vital that an employer provides easy access to a full range of mental and emotional support services. And if you're unsure what services your company provides, take the time to educate yourself about them, so that you can best help a colleague who might need pointing towards the right support in the future.

RSA tip: Try not to look at the news more than once a day, so that you don't get worked up around things beyond your control.

4. Connect the dots with technology

The tools needed for effective implementation of a business-wide remote work set-up are substantially different for those needed for an office-based operation. Workflow tools that measure productivity, collaboration platforms across audio, video and messaging, and robust security that protects sensitive business data on remote devices are all vital considerations. A cloud-based infrastructure could be the best and most efficient way to coordinate all these elements.

RSA tip: Don't be afraid to try new things, whether that's an overhaul of your online footprint or a different social media platform. Every experience is different.

5. Consider long-term flexibility

Remote work removes much of the reasons to keep a business shackled to the rigidity of the nine-to-five. With the tools in place to ensure employees are doing the jobs expected of them, it's then possible to give them more freedom to work where and when they want. But this flexibility is a plus point from the perspective of the employer, too. Not only will it allow them to hire workers from a much wider geographical area, but it will also help them stand out in a job market where talented employees' demands for flexible working will make employers offering it more desirable. However, it's important to make sure the boundaries between work life and home life don't become too blurred for employees, in terms of both their working arrangements and their physical working space.

RSA tip: Ensure employees can completely switch off work devices or close their home offices outside of working hours, so they feel able to relax and unwind in their free time.