



Gallup Pakistan HR Newsletter

Remote Management:
Management Behaviors and Tools
Suited for Remote Teams

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Welcome

to Gallup Pakistan's 11th edition of a series of HR Newsletters. In this series we principally aim to encourage empirical understanding of HR problems faced by organizations today. **By disseminating international and local research findings, Gallup Pakistan aspires to create a knowledge hub that HR practitioners in Pakistan can benefit from. In this regard, we would be borrowing extensive research from other member countries as well.**

In this edition we endeavor to bring to our readers an understanding of **Remote Management** skills that can help managers handle their remote workforce better and engage with them effectively. The first article “**Managing A Remote Project In Five Steps**” from **Forbes**, gives five tips to efficiently manage a project remotely. The second article “**5 Tips for Training Remote Employees**” gives proven tips for training remote employees and provides data to endorse recommended management behaviors. Finally, “**Effective Communication Tips: Transforming Your Remote Workforce Into a Collaborative Unit**” highlights the importance of communication for remote teams and advises managers on handling extensive communication.

Don't forget, your valuable suggestions and ideas are much awaited and appreciated. Also, we are open for partnerships with other teams working in similar domain. We look forward to a successful journey.

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Forbes

Managing A Remote Project In **Five** Steps*

Managing business projects remotely is a tough gig. Keeping projects under budget and on time is hard enough when your team is in the room next door. Throw in language barriers, new time zones and increased difficulty in monitoring performance, and you've got a recipe for disaster.

Here is a **five-step system** that will help you ensure that your remote projects hit their deadlines — and come in at or under budget!



1

Spend Extra Time In The Planning Phase

Before anything else, have the requirements down on paper. Include desired colors, fonts, outcomes, and samples. It's also helpful to include desired outcomes, use cases, and a Q&A section. Tip: It's great to use Google Documents for specs because multiple people can get online and build it together.

2

Pay In Installments, And Build In Incentives

The best way to pay for remote work is a flat fee payable in 3 phases when certain installments have been completed, tested and approved; the largest phase coming at the end. Finally, consider building in extra incentives for hitting each of the three phases on or before the agreed-on timeframe.

3

Set Up Task-tracking Software

Nevogt recommends TeamworkPM or Pivotaltracker for this, which allow you to design each phase as a task list, and build individual tasks. On completion of a task, you'll be notified, and you can test each task and discuss with the employee. You can also set priorities and assign tasks to individual members of your team.

4

Set Expectations For Communication

Set the expectation early that your employee(s) will update you frequently on their progress — preferably on a daily basis. With good task-tracking software, this doesn't need to be time-consuming or complex. It only takes a few seconds of their time. If they won't agree to this, that's a red flag.

5

Test Early And Often

One of your jobs as a manager is to test every task that is marked as completed, and you need to do this almost immediately because it's fresh in your mind and the employee's mind. This is also an opportunity to provide feedback to your employees on an ongoing basis, which is how you hit deadlines.

5 Tips for Training Remote Employees

This article provides tips to managers about training remote employees and management behaviors that can allow for efficient outcomes and development of high engagement levels with remote employees. The primary sources used for this article include: "5 Tips for Training Remote Employees"* from Mashable and "Remote Management: Traditional Leadership Behaviors in a Contemporary Work Environment"**.

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Recruit Talent with Remote Experience

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Give Them the Tools They Need to Succeed

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Kick Things Off in Person

4

Focus on How You Use the Tools

5

Let Them Learn at Their Own Pace



*<http://mashable.com/2011/04/06/train-remote-employees/>

**<https://krex.k-state.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2097/432/KelleyWatson2007.pdf;jsessionid=F99E7D0965DC6AE9E2CC3616340DB2CA?sequence=1>

1

Recruit Talent with Remote Experience

Hire for two skill sets in any remote worker: The job skills relevant to their role plus the ability to collaborate and contribute while away from colleagues and manager.

2

Give Them the Tools They Need to Succeed

Remote workers have high standards when it comes to fast and reliable access to the information they need to do their jobs. Tools include obvious basics (i.e. email, Internet and phones), plus private networks, shared docs, wikis and logins. Data from a survey of employees at a US company revealed that the greater the spatial distance, the fewer behaviors were exhibited in the area of initiating structure, consideration, and integration.

3

Kick Things Off in Person

Plan to have new remote teammates spend their first days or weeks at HQ. For managers, it's an opportunity to convey the company culture, to set expectations and start building the trust you'll need later on to hit mutual goals.

4

Focus on How You Use the Tools

Learn to check in frequently during team conference calls to see if remote folks have questions or comments. Use the features that allow simultaneous chat during an online presentation. Tools and software like Skype, Dropbox, Rally and Agile are immensely useful. Management behaviors like 'keeping communication open through various means' and 'providing everyone with an equal opportunity to participate' are highly valued by remote employees and were endorsed by more than 90% across remote employees.

5

Let Them Learn at Their Own Pace

Devise training and learning processes and programs that play to the employee's routine and schedule (and time zone), not yours. Let them review new materials at their own pace and on their own. Give them time to go back to clarify issues they're still fuzzy on and to customize their on-boarding experience.

Effective Communication Tips: Transforming Your Remote Workforce Into a Collaborative Unit*

Most businesses realize the significance of working cohesively in teams, be it onsite or in a remote location. The same productivity and goals as achieved in an onsite office environment can be achieved even if you have a remote workforce.

Effective communication is essential to the success of dispersed teams. In this age of real-time data, we process a lot of information on a daily basis. If you are contemplating implementing a remote work force structure or contracting out projects to remote third party companies, here are some tips to help transform your workforce into a collaborative unit. The primary source of this article is Huffington Post's piece on communicating effectively with remote teams*.



Start Off By Being A Good Listener!

During meetings, try generating an environment where your remote teams feel free to express their opinions and ideas, regardless of whether they align with yours or not. Make it a forum where each person can resolve issues in a creative way. Avoid making interruptions when your team member is speaking. Instead, listen and understand. Do not be distracted by looking down at smartphones or checking emails during online meetings.

Refine Email Skills!

It is vital to train everyone to reply to emails in a clear and concise way. You can avoid unnecessary e-mail traffic by making sure that key issues are addressed in every e-mail. Quick notes are helpful in case you cannot reply to a message right away. If there are documents that need revisions and team collaboration, use tools that can be accessed by the team instead of sending it as an attachment. Two great collaboration options are Google Docs/Drive, Trello or Basecamp.

If a communication issue cannot be resolved by email, pick up the phone to make sure the message is clear and nothing is left to chance.

Stress Management is Vital!

Extensive communication over e-mail can be stressful and result in weakly constructed messages which will then be misinterpreted by your team. Postpone communication or sending emails when you are stressed. Take time to calm down before engaging with your clients and team.

Remove Barriers In Communication!

It is critical for effective communication that team members know each other better, both professionally and personally. Thanks to technological advances, there are a multitude of online tools available to make it easier for remote team members to be "present." Tools such as Skype or Google Hangouts are a must depending on needs of your team. Meetings don't have to be lengthy. Make it a priority to discuss goals achieved for the week and team objectives for next week.

Invigorate Your Remote Team With Planned Downtime!

Downtime is a must, especially for remote teams since it allows them to catch up to missed live time. Scheduling planned downtime with your entire team present in one physical location is a great way to foster fellowship and collective thinking. Incorporate fun activities and brainstorming sessions to help build trust and allow your team to get to know you each other better.



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