

Remote Work Leadership

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COVID-19 **swiftly accelerated** what was once a gradual transition to an **increasingly remote workforce**, molding a former trend of cutting-edge companies into **an enduring reality for all**. Organization leaders must modify their strategies for the long-term to ensure an **engaged, productive, and inspired** remote workforce.

Three themes shape the work ahead:



Prioritize People and their Development

An important part of collegial relationships and team management are frequent, informal check-ins (coffees, drive-bys), but leaders must now find a way to provide timely feedback without coming across as micro-managers. A Harvard Business Review remote work survey revealed that **managers who were given relevant trainings on remote management did not micro-manage their employees**, leading to improved employee mental health and stronger work performance. The opposite was also true.^{1,2} Remaining engaged on a day-to-day basis helps bolster more formal career development conversations.

Companies that dedicate resources to training on team management best practices in a remote environment are taking a great first step. Other ways to strengthen people development practices include virtual check-ins to stay connected and creating a formal system that engages employees in the development of people policies. Honest conversations around employee morale, career development, mentorship, and feedback enable organization leadership to make meaningful moves on the path to improvement.



Promote Work-Life Balance

Employees are struggling with work life balance in new ways; they are working and living in the same space. This lack of delineation can expedite burnout. In a remote work survey, **22% of employees find the biggest struggle is unplugging after work**.³ Consider strategies to combat drawbacks of remote work and engage your workforce through connectivity initiatives, which are proven to reduce staff turnover, improve productivity and efficiency, and realize greater returns.⁴ Companies that prioritize employee's mental health come out ahead – engaged, happy, and balanced employees produce higher quality work and positively influence or contribute to the company culture.

Simple strategies include communicating clear boundaries to remote employees, like a “no-message” rule outside of set work hours, encouraging employees to disconnect. Re-evaluate your internal communication strategy to ensure your employees are regularly engaged and have a say in upcoming changes and identify the tools and processes to bolster your strategy. Provide employees with the opportunity to recharge and be rejuvenated through work culture.



Invest in Remote Tools

Remote work shifts have forced executives to re-evaluate their technological infrastructure to support the workforce. According to a Riverbed report, nearly all business leaders reported remote technology performance issues that have impacted employees, leading to lack of productivity and lack of employee motivation.⁵ Additionally, **remote work has increased the average cost of a data breach by \$137,000 and scams increased by 400% in March 2020 alone**.⁶ It is imperative for organizations to strengthen their remote cybersecurity and IT support to sustain productivity.

The keys to this strategy are improving resources and increasing education. Implement phishing campaigns to educate employees and raise awareness across the enterprise. Continually monitor and update anti-virus software on employee hardware and networks. Monitor technology advancements and best practices to maintain productivity. Evaluate your IT support operating model to identify opportunities to optimize remote IT support. This will have a positive impact on employee morale and engagement – and could also be the difference-maker in your organization's cybersecurity posture.

Companies can invest in their people in a unique way by examining strategies for improving accessibility and productivity in a long-term remote environment. Consider prioritizing the skills and infrastructure that are especially valuable to support this new context as the world rapidly becomes increasingly digital.

At DayBlink, we assist organizations with a people-first approach to improving digital business operations. To learn more about our Organization & People services, please contact Kenneth Merritt at Kenneth.Merritt@dayblink.com.

¹<https://hbr.org/2020/07/remote-managers-are-having-trust-issues>
²<https://www.raconteur.net/hr/corporate-culture/trust-remote-working/>
³<https://buffer.com/state-of-remote-work-2019>

⁴<https://www.engagemultiplier.com/blog/why-is-employee-engagement-so-important>
⁵ <https://www.riverbed.com/press-releases/>
⁶<https://www.pandasecurity.com/en/mediacenter/news/covid-cybersecurity-statistics/>