

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Remote Work Engagement Solutions for Employers

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COVID-19 Pandemic's Impact on Engagement

- ❖ The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has upended the entire work situation, disrupting established processes and disorienting employees.
- ❖ Since engaged employees, who are key to propelling an organization's success, are focusing on adapting to and getting through the crisis, engagement levels may drop significantly – at least for the immediate future.
- ❖ Organizations can help their employees – and themselves – to survive by providing solutions that help them see a path forward and foster engagement.





Challenges of Working Remotely During the Coronavirus Crisis

ISOLATION / LONELINESS

- ❖ It is easier to feel connected and part of a team when employees are in the office and can share ideas quickly and easily every day.
- ❖ When employees suddenly switch to working from home or other locations, they may feel disconnected from their coworkers and the organization.





Challenges of Working Remotely During the Coronavirus Crisis

COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

- ❖ More effort is required to maintain the flow of information.
- ❖ It is more difficult to reach coworkers to confer and collaborate.
- ❖ Employees may perceive a lack of support from their organization or their supervisor.
- ❖ The lack of in-person contact with coworkers can contribute to misunderstandings and possible conflicts.



Challenges of Working Remotely During the Coronavirus Crisis

WORK / LIFE BALANCE

- ❖ Employees report that they find it difficult to unplug from work.
- ❖ It is very easy for individuals working from home to tie themselves to their desks and work at all hours of the day, blurring the lines between work and home life.



Challenges of Working Remotely During the Coronavirus Crisis

DISTRACTIONS

Distractions due to the coronavirus crisis may include:

- ❖ Child care and home-schooling children
- ❖ Aiding an elderly or at-risk family member
- ❖ Trying to get needed groceries and supplies
- ❖ Mental health challenges (stress, anxiety, depression)
- ❖ Caring for a family member diagnosed with COVID-19
- ❖ Death of a family member or friend





Challenges of Working Remotely During the Coronavirus Crisis

MANAGEMENT AND HR CHALLENGES

In *addition*, management and HR professionals also face these hurdles:

- ❖ Staying up-to-date and complying with rapidly changing legal requirements
- ❖ Responsibility for transitioning other employees to remote work
- ❖ Processing layoffs and furloughs
- ❖ Communicating bad news
- ❖ Responsibility for maintaining morale
- ❖ Key players in planning for business continuity
- ❖ Lack of a support network



Maintain Engagement During the Crisis

- ❖ Effective methods to help remote workers feel connected and engaged generally involve making adjustments to regular office practices, not large investments.
- ❖ Have an effective telecommuting policy and telecommuting agreement.
- ❖ Train and coach managers and supervisors how to communicate with and lead employees through the changes to remote work.



Maintain Engagement During the Crisis

Steps to offset the challenges of remote work and boost engagement include:

- ❖ Increase your communication generally.
- ❖ Hold regularly scheduled calls and meetings more often.
- ❖ Provide time for socialization before starting meetings.
- ❖ Allow flexibility.
- ❖ Use appropriate collaborative technology to facilitate group work.
- ❖ Assign projects that require collaboration and teamwork.



How to Support Remote Workers

- ❖ Provide logistical support for employees setting up their home office.
- ❖ Provide training and guidance on how to telework effectively:
 - Model best practices.
 - Institute policies restricting emails after work hours.
 - Have remote workers establish schedules and core hours that meet work and home needs
- ❖ Focus on building a trusting relationship with employees so:
 - Each remote worker feel supported as a valued member of the team.
 - Productivity goals are achieved.
- ❖ Think creatively about how to achieve business goals with remote workers.
- ❖ Remind remote employees of health and benefit programs that can provide assistance.



How to Support Remote Workers

Tips that managers and supervisors can share with employees working from home may include:

- ❖ Have a dedicated space for work.
- ❖ Maintain a regular schedule.
- ❖ Assume the best intentions in emails.
- ❖ Step away from work for breaks and meals.
- ❖ End the work day.

Just because you are working at home, does not mean that you must always be working.

– Stephanie Ranno, VP Bus. Dev., Torchlight Hire

The most important tip that managers and supervisors can share is:

Ask for help.

Working from home does not mean working alone.



How to Support Remote Workers

MANAGEMENT AND HR

Managers and HR are also working remotely, but with a heavier burden. In addition to the above tips, they should:

- ❖ Working even more closely with their senior management teams.
 - Share the burden
 - Keep strategies tightly aligned
 - Collaborate on bringing teams together
- ❖ Make time for themselves.
 - Set times for focusing on others' needs, unless an emergency
 - Practice self care
- ❖ Connect with a network of peers for support.
 - Maintain confidentiality if outside the organization

The most important tip for everyone is:

Ask for help.

Working from home does not mean working alone.



What 4 Things Do I Do Next

- ❖ Review and, if needed, update your telecommuting policy and telecommuting agreement. Make sure it has been provided to all employees working remotely.
- ❖ Select a collaborating platform and tool. Provide it and training to all employees.
- ❖ Establish and initiate a communication plan, including:
 - Increased organization-wide communications (emails, town hall meetings, etc.)
 - More frequent team meetings, including shorter meetings just for updates and to check in.
 - Plans by front-line managers for 1-to-1 communication with every team member. Provide coaching on leading and adapting through the change to remote work.
- ❖ Create opportunities for teams to engage in virtual socialization. Practice social distancing – together.



How XpertHR Can Help

- ✓ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): FAQs](#)
- ✓ [Managing a Remote Team - Supervisor Briefing](#)
- ✓ [How to Coach Managers Through Leading Remote Teams for the First Time](#)
- ✓ [How to Manage Telecommuters](#)
- ✓ [Flexible Working](#)
- ✓ [Improve Employee Engagement Checklist](#)
- ✓ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Workplace Resource Center](#)



Upcoming Webinars

❖ **Thursday, April 9:**

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Benefit Considerations for Employers

❖ **Tuesday, April 14:**

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Payroll Considerations for Employers

❖ **Thursday, April 16:**

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Leave Considerations for Employers on the State and Local Level

The logo for XpertHR, with 'Xpert' in a white sans-serif font and 'HR' in a white sans-serif font inside a white square. The background of the top half of the slide is a blurred image of a woman's profile with long brown hair, looking out over a city at night with bokeh lights.

XpertHR

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