

Tips for Managing Remote TMs

Equipment

Make sure your teammates have what they need to be productive.

Help them Prepare

Review the Tips for Working Remote guide.

Establish structured daily check-ins

Be present with your people. Nearly half (**46%**) of remote workers say that the best supervisors are those who get in touch regularly. You will probably need to have longer and/or more frequent 1-1's to make time to connect.

Meet on video

Face-to-face communication is **34 times** more effective than email. For team meetings, ask everyone to stay off mute. Research shows that asking people to avoid using the mute button results in more engaging, thought-provoking discussions. Consider Web Ex, Facetime technologies.

When you have an important message, pick up the phone

Teammates can easily misread or misinterpret emails from “the boss.” When delivering an important message, call. This eliminates ambiguity and prevents unhelpful interpretations

Bring clarity to every conversation

Studies show that virtual conversations are hard to follow given the lack of non-verbal cues and the unnatural flow of conversation. Avoid tangents, be succinct and send recap notes after meetings.

Maintain a positive outlook

Working remotely doesn't cause companies to falter. In fact, studies show that **77%** of people who work from home are equally if not more productive. With negative stories currently flooding the news and social media, teammates are more likely to feel discouraged. Remind your team where they are headed. Ask what excellent work would look like. Celebrate successes often, and share highlights widely across the team.

Make sure everyone feels included

Leaders are more likely to reach out frequently to those in their inner circle. This can lead to some feeling left out or undervalued. Keep a list of all of your direct reports posted in your workspace to remind yourself to include everyone each week.

Provide praise and appreciation

The most successful leaders maintain a **ratio of 5:1** positive to negative interactions with their teams. Be on the lookout for any opportunities to highlight good behavior, ensuring your direct reports feel valued and secure so they can focus on their work. This is a time to at least continue, and actually ramp up, your recognition practices.

Provide clarity on roles, expectations and goals

An abrupt change like working remotely can bring about confusion and uncertainty amongst your team. Regularly clarify or re-clarify your current team goals and name how each teammate contributes to the outcome. Clear processes and expectations provide structure and stability

Prioritize personal connection

Under current circumstances, it can be easy to dive into task-oriented work. Google's People Innovation Lab (PiLab) found that just a few minutes of **open-ended questions at the beginning of meetings** strengthens connections and improves workflow. Use check-in questions at the start of your meetings to build connection.

Keep coaching conversations going

Remote workers report fewer growth-related conversations with their managers

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Remote-specific 1:1 questions

- 1) What's your favorite part about working remote?
(understand what drives them)
- 2) What's your daily routine like for working?
- 3) What's the highlight of your day?
(look for signs of loneliness, encourage socializing)
- 4) What's most challenging for you in your work routine?
(help troubleshoot)
- 5) What do you do to recharge each day?
- 6) What's your setup like for working?
- 7) What's one thing we could get for you that would make your work easier or better?
- 8) What's the most important thing we do to help you be successful working remotely?
- 9) How do you manage distractions during the day? Is it a challenge for you?
- 10) What helps you feel connected to others and counteract the potential loneliness of working remotely?
- 11) Can you fully disconnect at the end of the day?



Communication questions

- 1) Have you been surprised by any news announced at homeroom meetings? What was it?
- 2) Do you feel included in our team decisions? Why?
- 3) How are the tools we use as a team working out for you remotely?
- 4) Are there any tools that we could try out that could help us improve our remote culture?
- 5) Are our meetings friendly? What could we improve?
- 6) Do you think our decision-making process works effectively while also supporting our remote culture? Have you seen a decision drag out for too long lately? *(decision making is hard and usually longer in remote teams and is worth constantly monitoring the pulse on)*



Connection questions

Use these questions to ensure your remote TMs are building bonds and connecting with the entire team

- 1) How could I better support you?
- 2) Do you feel like you have opportunities for “water-cooler” type discussions with the team to help you spur on ideas?
- 3) Do you feel supported by the team so that you could go to anyone asking them for help? (In remote teams, this can be a problem. Ideally, you want everyone to feel like they can go to anyone and ask them about something)