

PERFORMANCE CONVERSATIONS FOR LEADING REMOTE TEAMS



#TALENTCONVOS

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Hello!

We're excited to share this resource with you. We've worked with hundreds of leaders and teams. Throughout our work coaching and consulting, we've seen a trend when it comes to leader effectiveness and team health - the power of communication. This guide highlights one of our favorite leader practices - holding 1-on-1s with team members - as a way to share an easy to use strategy that we've seen work time and time again. As a complement to our original 1-on-1 Guide, we've made a few adjustments to focus specifically on leading remote teams for high performance.

We hope you find this resource as powerful as others have. Remember, it's not about being perfect; the most important thing is that you start and keep growing!



**This guide was created by
Human Resource Services Learning & Organizational Development
"Helping people be their best so they give their best!"**

WHAT'S INSIDE

THE BASICS

- ✓ Differences in leading remote vs colocated teams

CHECKLISTS

- ✓ Leading Remote Teams Checklists (Daily/Weekly/Occasionally)
- ✓ Customizable Weekly Checklist
- ✓ GOOD Meeting Templates

TIPS

- ✓ Avoid micromanaging & build high trust teams
- ✓ Communication without collaboration overload
- ✓ Technology that gets the job done
- ✓ Setting expectations that drive outcomes



ARE REMOTE TEAMS A NEW DAY OR JUST SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT?

Welcome, leader! How are you?

Like many, you may find yourself leading remote teams for the first time in your career. **Although it may feel wildly different than your normal day-to-day, you have a lot of experience that will help you lead high performing remote teams.**

If you've ever supervised someone who worked in a different building - or even a different floor - you've led remote teams.

Even if you haven't supervised individuals or groups in different physical locations, you have likely been part of a team where you have collaborated with someone in a different location. Both experiences are useful in your new normal.

Despite this, we acknowledge **there are some unique aspects of leading remote teams.** Unlike the office, you aren't able to drop in for a quick question while passing by or say hello in the break room. While you are missing the conveniences of physically seeing each other in the office, many things are still the same. Your role as a leader is still the same - helping your team to be successful.

This guide includes checklists, templates, and tips to effectively manage remote teams.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

- Communication won't happen on its own - connect intentionally
- You'll need a little help from technology to bridge the gap

What other items do you feel have been different for you since you started leading remote teams?

WHAT'S THE SAME?

- You still have the same great team!
- Your core leadership practices are still critically important

What other items do you believe are the same whether you are leading remote or colocated teams?

LEADING REMOTE TEAMS CHECKLIST

DAILY



Hold brief team check-ins or standups.

Start the day off together on a 15 - 20 minute video chat or call. Ask team members to share what's on their radar for the day – not a play-by-play list – just what's most important and the focus of their efforts. This will pay dividends because your team will be connected, know where they're headed, and have the resources they need.



Take notes for the next 1-on-1.

This daily action item is for both you and your direct report. Informally take notes to prepare for your next meeting so you can have a productive, outcome-focused conversation.

WEEKLY



Hold GOOD 1-on-1s with each team member.

While working remotely, the GOOD framework (page 8) is an easy way to manage work and help your employee be successful. GOOD will get you started with meaningful conversations to make sure the work is getting done and your employees have what they need to be successful. Each week you'll recap accomplishments/challenges from the previous week and talk about the week ahead. Screenshare or send work ahead of time. GOOD helps teams drive accountability.



Manage more than one level of direct reports? Make sure you're visible! Focus on your communication to the broader team. Check out page 14 for tips.



Bookend your week with a team checkout. Take 15 - 20 minutes to connect via video chat or phone with your whole team. Have each person share a high level accomplishment, celebrate a highlight of the week, and what's on deck for next week.

FROM TIME TO TIME



Host a virtual social event.

Groups become a team when they have a shared purpose and interconnected work. People become a team when they feel connected to one another. Host a virtual game night or social hour after work. Eat lunch together with the cameras on. Find fun ways to join together as a group.



Don't forget about recognition!

No, your remote team may not join together in a conference room to hand out awards, but they still deserve recognition. Whether it is cheers for peers or more formal recognition from leadership and the organization, you need to recognize good work. Highlight behavior you want to see more of and accomplishments your team worked hard for. Check on page 19 for virtual recognition ideas.



Celebrate good times!

You won't be decorating cubicles or passing around cards for birthdays and other milestones, but it doesn't mean you should celebrate your people. Get creative and involve your team.



GOOD 1-ON-1 MEETINGS



GOALS

Discuss priorities and goals, progress, and adjustments needed. This is a continuation from the last meeting.



OBSTACLES

Discuss roadblocks impeding progress toward goals. Where are they stuck? What's getting in the way of success?



OPPORTUNITIES

Discuss learning and development needs, collaboration opportunities, and where support is needed.



DECISIONS

Agree on action items, measures of success, and due dates. Ensure you both have a shared understanding.

**IN TEAMWORK,
SILENCE ISN'T GOLDEN,
IT'S DEADLY.**

— MARK SANBORN, AUTHOR

GOOD 1-ON-1 MEETING FOR MANAGERS

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

GOALS

- Update on goal progress
- What's changed or been redirected?
- Motivating/draining goals
- New goals

OBSTACLES

- Roadblocks to success
- Potential solutions
- Highest/lowest priorities

OPPORTUNITIES

- Future ambitions
- Development opportunities
- New skills/roles
- Support needed
- Collaboration needs

DECISIONS

- Employee and manager next steps
- Due dates
- Confirm shared expectations and understanding of success

GOOD 1-ON-1 MEETING FOR EMPLOYEES

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

GOALS

- What did you accomplish?
- What's changed or been redirected?
- What are your priorities?

OBSTACLES

- What's working? What's not?
- Do you need help removing any obstacles?

OPPORTUNITIES

- In what areas do you want/need to develop?
- What support do you need?
- What are your collaboration needs?

DECISIONS

- What are your action items?
- Are you and your manager on the same page?
- Are you clear on due dates?

WEEKLY CHECKLIST

WEEKLY STEPS

Remember, your focus as a leader of remote teams is to ensure your team feels connected, is clear on what success looks like, and has the resources to succeed. Use these steps as a guide to drive performance.

MONDAY

- Hold a team standup in the morning with all team members. Focus on reconnecting, goals for the week, and any collaboration needs.

TUESDAY - THURSDAY

- Host a daily stand-up (15 mins) with the whole team. What's on their radar? What do they need?
- Hold your weekly GOOD 1-on-1s with team members. These should be prescheduled and on a regular cadence.
- Follow up on action items and obstacles you need to address based on GOOD meetings.

FRIDAY

- Hold your end-of-week checkout with the whole team. Focus on key accomplishments, highlights, and what's on deck for next week.

ANY DAY, JUST BE SURE TO FIT IT IN!

- Team communication. What do they need to know? What do they want to know?
- What kudos should be given? What recognition should be shared?
- What should be celebrated?

IT'S G.O. TIME!

Use this space to capture Goals and Obstacles from your GOOD 1-on-1 sessions this week. This gives you line of sight to the team's priorities and obstacles you can address.

TEAM GOALS

OBSTACLES

REMOTE TEAM TIPS & RESOURCES



REMEMBER:




Leading colocated teams is not too different than leading remote teams. They have the same needs and the core principles of leadership still apply. There are a few nuanced differences though. Check out the tips on the following pages for resources, best practices, and ideas to help you lead high performing remote teams!

COMMUNICATION
EXPECTATIONS & OUTCOMES
TECHNOLOGY
TRUST
OTHER RESOURCES



COMMUNICATION IS CRITICAL WHEN LEADING REMOTE TEAMS.

Communication is more important than ever when leading remote teams. Unlike the office, you don't have the ability to stroll by someone's cubicle or see each other in the break room. Now, more than ever, you'll need to focus on one of your key responsibilities as a leader – communicating. This ensures your team knows the direction you're headed, what's needed, and has the feedback needed to be successful.

-  **Revisit your meetings schedule.** Don't assume what worked in the office will work for your remote team. Talk with your team about how often you'll meet and what you hope to accomplish at each meeting. You may find you start meeting more frequently for a shorter period of time.
-  **Revisit team norms related to communication.** Talk about expectations related to response times, availability, and how to get a hold of each other.
-  **Make no assumptions about what your team knows.** Absent of information people are likely to fill in the blanks themselves. Continuously communicate with the team in multiple forms about information related to the team, department, and organization. Check in with your team to ask them what they want to know more about. What you communicate (or don't) will significantly impact success.

SET EXPECTATIONS THAT DRIVE OUTCOMES TO GET THE RESULTS YOU WANT

LOOKING FOR SPECIFIC OUTCOMES? GET BACK TO BASICS BY CREATING SHARED EXPECTATIONS. PAINT A CRYSTAL CLEAR PICTURE OF WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE.



Include your team's perspective, expertise, and input when setting expectations. Yes, the final direction is at your discretion, but spending time together crafting these visions of success will drive engagement and ensure a high quality outcome.



Get back to basics to create clear goals. Use a goal-setting formula to ensure you create clear goals. It doesn't matter if you use SMART, FAST, x by y, or another formula - just make sure you get specific so you both understand. One litmus test to evaluate goal statements is to determine if someone who is unfamiliar with the purpose could understand expectations just by reading the goal.



Create learning opportunities when employees miss the mark. Most employees know when they miss expectations. Instead of pointing out the obvious, coach the employee to facilitate insight. What does good look like? How did it measure up to the expectations? How might they rate themselves? What needs to be different next time? What did they learn?



Redirect as needed. Things are always changing at the County. Goals and priorities rapidly shift. If you or your employee find that a goal or expectations no longer make sense - change them. Ensure that goals and expectations continue to yield meaningful and relevant outcomes.



You get more of what you focus on. Provide reinforcing feedback and highlights when someone does great work. Be specific so employees know what to do more of. This reinforces expectations and drives positive behaviors.



TECHNOLOGY HELPS YOU BRIDGE THE PHYSICAL DISTANCE

Technology helps you to create connection and facilitate communication - foundational components of successful teams and relationships. No, you don't have the ability to physically see each other, but technology can help bridge the distance.

- ✓ **Technology is a tool, not the process.** Use video and voice conferencing tools, online collaboration spaces, and project management resources as a way to create a shared space. You still need to plan and facilitate work processes.
- ✓ **Make using video the new norm.** This helps the team pick up on non-verbal cues, increases engagement, and bridges the physical distance.
- ✓ **Try new collaboration tools.** Our favorite is Microsoft Teams. Don't have access? No problem. Try Skype, Google Hangouts, or even a phone. Whatever the modality, it's critical that you connect.
- ✓ **Adopt an experimenter's mindset.** Not all tools fit all teams. Try something out, get feedback, and change it if it doesn't work. Keep experimenting until you find what works best for your team.



TRUST HAS A DIRECT IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE AND ENGAGEMENT.

You have a direct impact on building and maintaining trust through your everyday actions. As with all employees, start from a place of trust with your employees who work remotely. Assume positive intent and that they are going to do their best. Resist the urge to micromanage your team's performance. Ultimately, managers who engage in micromanaging behaviors lower team performance and damage relationships for the long-term. In reality, high performance relies more on if your team trusts you - not the other way around.

Follow these three tips to ensure trust is maintained as you manage the virtual transition.

01

Clarify expectations and connect them to meaningful work. If your employees understand what success looks like, they will be able to focus energy on delivering outcomes. Follow through on your promises. Focus on outcomes.

02

Show you care by ensuring they have the tools, equipment, resources, and knowledge to be successful in their roles. Dedicate open 'office hours' to connect and dedicate some time in your 1-on-1 to catching up before you focus on goals.

03

Recognize their talents and reward their progress and performance. Celebrate their successes.

**THE ABILITY TO LEARN IS THE
MOST IMPORTANT QUALITY A
LEADER CAN HAVE.**

— SHERYL SANDBERG

OTHER RESOURCES

TRAINING RESOURCES

Additional resources related to learning to work and lead from home are available through Eureka. Log in and search on Learner Home for the following COVID-19 playlist series to learn additional strategies to effectively work from home.

- Working from Home
- Cornerstone Cares
- Wellness at Home



Not on Eureka yet? Visit the websites below for access to more than 600 training courses:

- [Cornerstone Cares](#)
- [Disaster Ready](#)

VIRTUAL RECOGNITION

Recognition is recognition regardless of the format. What differs with virtual recognition is the need to get creative with the tools you use. Email and cards still work, but here are a few extra resources to make recognitions a celebration!

Group e-cards

[Openme.com](#), [Groupgreeting.com](#)

Online recognition

[workhuman.com](#), [tinypulse.com](#)

Kudo Boards

[kudoboard.com](#) or your team's virtual project board

DON'T FORGET!

Visit the [Team Development Resource](#) on the L&OD website for tips, tools, and best practices for leading teams - including remote teams!



1-ON-1 GUIDE

Looking for more information about holding or amping up your 1-on-1s? Start with GOOD 1-on-1s to focus on performance during your transition to remote working, and then dive a little deeper with the 1-on-1 Guide!

[Click here to access the guide.](#)



LEADING REMOTE TEAMS IS MORE ABOUT YOUR LEADERSHIP AND LESS ABOUT TECHNOLOGY.



This guide was created by

Human Resource Services Learning & Organizational Development

The Learning & Organizational Development team serves as a strategic partner to help the organization and its people grow and thrive to better serve the citizens of Orange County. We offer a variety of consulting services, resources, and development opportunities, ranging from professional development experiences to coaching and consulting services.

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