INSIDE THIS REPORT

HELPING YOU THRIVE

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOURSELF AND YOUR TEAM DURING COVID-19?

This is a crowdsourced effort to help people and organisations with remote working at this time of acute need - the reasoning is that the better people are able to do this the more effective it will be and the better the outcome for society, with less risk of the rapid spread of disease which benefits everyone.

This advice has been produced REMOTELY by a team of >100 volunteers from around the world. It's been produced using WhatsApp, Google Doc and O365 in days though the willingness of dozens, for no reason other than to help!

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CULTURE & BEHAVIOUR

WORKING TOGETHER

Keeping your team working effectively together will be one of, if not, your key priority over the coming weeks. You will want to ensure that you are able to look after your people and you'll be trying to keep your team connected so your business can continue provide products or services to your customers. Covid-19 will obviously create enormous challenges, but as with some many crisis, we will all be surprised by the strength of human spirit, ingenuity and ability to innovate and change, especially for those within supportive cultures.

IDEA: Create a Team Charter. Here is a simple example:

"We communicate over a WhatsApp Group (given the way they've implemented Teams and my confidence is higher in a WhatsApp Group than their Microsoft Team implementation).

We use Jira to reflect the actual state of play, with a 2-hour tolerance.

We avoid 'dark work' i.e. we the work transparent to everyone

At any point in time we are able to point to an item (Jira = sub-task) that contributes towards a piece of value delivery (i.e. a Work Item / Product Backlog Item)

We have a separate WhatsApp Group that includes the client so communication I readily available across all team-members.

Despite our lower confidence, we use Microsoft Teams more for collaboration; however, our anchor, the behaviour established is we're all sensitive to our WhatsApp Group.

We share this charter, reference it often and adjust as needed"

THOUGHTS: Things to be aware of:

- Assume trust and believe that folk will be productive. It is likely most people will want to do their best.

- WFH may create new working hours and patterns - if folk don't have to commute, let them start at 7/8am and finish at 3/4pm. However, you will still need to meet departmental/company SLA's or opening hours for response to enquiries or phone calls. It's not good if all your staff choose to finish at 15:00 when your opening hours are until 17:00! Considered correctly this flexibility may even extend your service hours AND help your staff balance life & work.

- How will you manage if your flexi time is dependent on them tapping in and out on a box by the door.

- "We as a 5-person team have embraced Microsoft Teams (the client and our consultancy's mutually preferred collaboration tool) and, collectively, built emails, PowerPoint, and goodness knows other stuff through a highly interactive and collaborative setup. Key = psychological safety. As this team's servant, I contribute by guiding all of us that each of us is given a voice in discussion and establishing that we are all 5 peers. Chatham House Rules: we work as a team and we respond as a team."

"IF WORKING IN A SHARED DOCUMENT, BECOME COMFORTABLE WITH SHARING EARLY, AS A CONTRIBUTOR YOU ARE 'WORKING OUT LOUD' AND AS A READER YOU WILL SEE THE DOCUMENT EVOLVE IN REAL TIME"

12 TIPS YOU CAN USE NOW

TOP TIPS FOR CREATING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

1. **2 minutes on a video call can save many more minutes** and significantly more brain space than a long back-and-forth on Slack taking place in the background (phone calls are not as good as video, but they ARE better than endless Slack / WhatsApp or email!)

2. **Use your webcam on calls as much as possible** - helps you know when people have finished speaking/want to speak

3. **Use Trello / Jira / Teams Planner to guide stand-ups and check-ins**. Centring the updates around the cards keeps it really focussed but also means the detail is there for later when you can't just check something with somebody in 3 seconds

4. **Have a shared document (Google / Word / Dropbox Paper) for meetings** so people can follow along with the conversation and keep track of what's been agreed/asked - don't assume that somebody else is writing in their pad / on post-its if you can't see them doing it

5. It's really hard to judge what the general mood in the camp is, so **introduce a low-key way of sharing general feelings** - e.g. if people are happy to, share a number out of 10 for your general vibe in your stand-ups so people know who to give support to and who to go to for a bit of a pick-me-up

6. **Make a bit of time for inconsequential, non-work chat** - you are not machines, nobody wants you on back-to-back calls…

7. **You're allowed to make tea/coffee/stretch your legs**

8. **Don't pretend you can do life admin throughout your working day** - it disrupts concentration and just makes for a weird vibe when you jump from putting a wash on to talking to somebody about something super serious. Plan your admin time.

9. **You're allowed to close Slack for a bit if you need a bit of focus time** - just give people a heads up, but nobody will assume you're skiving off.

10. If you feel a bit lonely, a bit confused by some work, or feel like you're making no headway - **ping somebody to share a feeling or frustration**. When nobody can pick up on your furrowed brow or sighs of annoyance, it can feel like you have to fix it all yourself, but we work in teams for a reason.

11. **Slack/email isn't the best medium for sharing a difficult message –** use the phone or video chat for anything which is complex or contentious.

12. **Remember people are not all set up with home offices -** people will be working with kids, dogs, cats and partners in the background and not everyone has an office to go to. Be understanding and respectful of this situation. If using Video / Voice calls we should expect delays around mute / unmute and a loss of concentration. We recommend using messaging to write questions / ask specific people for answers and responses as well as your voice

LOOKING AFTER MENTAL HEALTH

A QUICK CAVEAT

We're not mental health experts, but our community has been looking for the best links and articles to help you understand the strains and pressures you and your people will face.

We don't profess to be the experts, but it's clear that you must consider the physical and mental health of your teams throughout this crisis.

LINKS:

Mental Health Blogs:
https://oakwoodtraining.co.uk/coronavirus-and-my-wellbeing/
https://oakwoodtraining.co.uk/agilehomeflexible-working-increase-risk/
https://hoxby.com/blog/remote-working-coronavirus-mental-health

Burn-out
People who work too hard - https://www.inc.com/jason-fried/excerpt-true-challenge-of-remote-workers.html
Avoid burnout, Four Burners theory - https://jamesclear.com/four-burners-theory

How to Succeed as a Remote Worker

1 Experiment with Your Work Setup
2 Create Work/Home Boundaries
3 Prepare for Your Meetings
4 Create Accountability for Yourself
5 Be Visible at Work
6 Communicate Clearly and Effectively
7 Work on Your Health
8 Set Clear Responsibilities
9 Talk with Your Team
10 Take Time to Socialize

CAREER KARMA.

RESILIENCE

KEEPING STRONG

/rɪˈzɪlɪəns/

noun
noun: **resilience**; noun: **resiliency**; plural noun: **resiliencies**
1. the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

2. the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.

Vision
This is all about ensuring you are clear about your purpose and goals. Then ensuring you are authentic.

Support
Having the right support in place will ensure you boost your resiliency. This comes from other leaders, peers and your network.

Persistence
Your tenacity, optimism and bouncebackability all come into play here, supported by all the other elements.

Vitality
You need to ensure you have enough energy by exercising, correct diet, enough sleep and using mindfulness.

Composure
We are always in control of how we feel! Building your self awareness and self control is a key element of resilience.

Decision Making
How you solve problems, take action and move forward is key to your success. You need to build your toolkit.

Other helpful links

https://thriveglobal.com/stories/7-effective-ways-to-build-resilient-relationships-while-working-remotely/

Understand unwritten or 'psychological' contracts - https://www.alchemyformanagers.co.uk/topics/6ixdhhPwDvZFjsZc.html

Meetings and managers - https://www.inc.com/jason-fried/excerpt-easy-on-the-mms.html

Two links from AIG over approaching the 'softer' side of remote working: Isolation and remote working
http://influence.appliedinfluencegroup.com/post/102e4jy/practicing-reciprocity

Working from home - "Reduce the guilt" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FaXvQdj74XM

MANAGING TEAMS REMOTELY

YOU CAN'T LEAD REMOTE TEAMS AS THOUGH THEY ARE SITTING NEXT TO YOU… HERE'S SOME TIPS FOR SUCCESS

For many this may be their first experience leading remote teams and this presents a whole new set of challenges which will add stress and pressure to many individuals. It's important to remember that a lot of people will be learning together, both managers and leaders and those being led. Most people will want to do their best and our advice all starts from one simple premise – Start by assuming trust!

THOUGHTS: Things to be aware of

- Trust your team – they're doing their best and want to balance their work and their obvious concerns about friends & family
- Balance Neglect vs Overbearing – you must give clear output driven guidance as you will not be able to task manage
- Diarize the formal stuff and have informal "check ins" to stay connected
- Implement regular team touch points – consider daily standups, and team huddles
- Setting expectations – make sure your teams know when they are expected to be available to each other
- Presence - now we are connected all the time, presence indicators can be less useful, but setting a precedent about how this is used can help
- Overcommunicate – invest time in telling people what's going on as you don't have the watercooler opportunities to disseminate information
- Do you expect your teams to be "dressed for business" on internal calls? What is the done thing when on video calls with customers? It might be best to relax formal dress codes during this time.

LINKS:

'Forming, norming, performing' for remote teams: https://blog.insynctraining.com/adapting-tuckmans-model-for-global-virtual-teams

Build a remote company culture: https://shift.infinite.red/six-ways-to-build-a-strong-remote-company-culture-df0a49b2f549

Remote working book: https://basecamp.com/books/remote

https://www.readyforremote.com/

Free e-book on remote team management: https://mailchi.mp/infinitered/manifesto

'Forming, norming, performing' for remote teams: https://blog.insynctraining.com/adapting-tuckmans-model-for-global-virtual-teams

Remote working teams tips: https://hoxby.com/blog/coronavirus-remote-working

IDEA: How can Agile help you at this time?

Adoption of Agile and Scrum techniques even on a small scale will help with communication, accountability, task management and focus. You don't need to go full blown agile to achieve results.

For example, a daily stand up call with a team helps focus efforts, each person speaks in turn answering these three questions:
1. What did I do yesterday?
2. What am I doing today?
3. What might stop me achieving what I want to do today?

Use a Kanban board if appropriate so there is clear sight of what's to do, what's in progress and what has been done.

FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY

THE TECHNOLOGY EXISTS TO MAKE THIS WORK!

We've never been better prepared to work remotely than now; we have a plethora for tools available across PC, Mobile and Tablet to allow many employees to work remotely almost seamlessly, and for many the use of this technology has already become part of their everyday life. Over the coming weeks and months, you'll become expert in use collaboration, messaging and video conferencing, co-editing tools, mobile apps and

You'll find ways to work you never imagined possible and will change the way you operate forever.

STARTING POINT: A Technology Check List

These are the top things we believe you'll need to immediately consider:

- Do your people have laptops, power suppliers, mice and keyboards and are they taking them home EVERY night?
- Do people know how to contact IT support? Do they know who to call, and if you have it, how to get "self-service support?"
- Do you have enough people working in IT support? You might need more than you expect and your users will be anxious and in need of more support.
- Have you got a "Bring Your Own Device" solution?
- How can you eliminate paper from all of your processes?
- Do you have a reliable VPN solution and have you scaled it correctly to meet your needs now?
- Do people know how to use any "2 factor authentication" you have in place?
- Do people know how to use the collaboration tools you've got or will get?
- Does everyone have a way of talking to their colleagues or customers?
- Do your people know where to securely store documents?
- Does your organization understand Information Security & Data Privacy rules? Now is a time where people will take short-cuts and risks which will bite you later
- Do you have plans in place for "when technology fails"?

COLLABORATION: Collaboration tools available

We believe that all of the below offer some level of free service which might help you get through the coming months

- Microsoft Teams (free tier/trial)
- Google
  - https://support.google.com/a/answer/1631886?hl=en
  - https://cloud.google.com/blog/products/g-suite/helping-businesses-and-schools-stay-connected-in-response-to-coronavirus
- Cisco Webex
- BlueJeans
- https://wurkr.io/ Digital Office Space
- LogMeIn (GoTo Meetings)
- Slack
- Zoom
- https://www.flowdock.com/ (free for teams of up to 5)
- https://discordapp.com/ - usually used by gamers but free!
- https://rocket.chat/ - free open source solution
- https://whereby.com/ - free for single users
- https://meetcafecito.com/
- www.hugo.team

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN TECH FAILS?

HAVE PLANS C & D READY TO GO!

At the point that we're working remotely because it's part of business continuity plan, then we are already on Plan B. So what comes next? How do we build contingency into remote working?

Disaster Recovery plan (might be called your BCP or Business Continuity Plan) - review your existing disaster recovery procedures. Are they up to date? When were they last tested? In the event that offices are closed and empty for long periods security may become a risk. Is your data securely off site?

What might your tech fail?
Stress test your remote connectivity. You may have several users that already have Private Network (VPN) or other methods to remotely access your internal network - but how many people will it sustain simultaneously? Cheaper SMB routers will struggle to manage more than single digit number of connections. The slightly more advanced and commonly found Draytek 2860 router for example will support 32 simultaneous VPN connections. Similarly, your remote software may have limitations on licensing for the number of simultaneous users.

Ask your IT provider/administrator to check your hardware limitations and software licenses. Whilst they're at it, check the router configuration is up to date and supported - VPN and security standards are updated regularly so ensure you're confirming to the latest specifications.

Your office connectivity will also need good, high speed connectivity to support many remote working tools such as remote desktop. Consider that a remote desktop connection requires approx 1.5Mbps to operate well. Typical modern Fibre To The Cabinet (FTTC) lines run at a maximum of 80Mbps download and 20mpbs upload (data FROM your office), many SMB connections are slower than this. If you're limited by a 20Mb upload speed you will be able to support a maximum of 13/14 full screen remote desktop connections, less if each of those users is also using the internet on their machine in the office.
Check with your IT administrator what your maximum theoretical bandwidth limit is to determine how many users can be supported.

THOUGHTS: Things to consider

- 👍 Remain agile – policies are helpful but when technology fails help people make sensible choices that allow them to continue to work.

- 👍 Offer Help – employees will be struggling with technology, ensure you've got enough resources ready to help people use and fix their technology

- 👍 Stay Patient – patiently piece together what happened and what to do next and think of the users

- 👍 Stay close to your board and executive – they may be struggling more with technology than anyone else and they may need a lot of hand holding. Consider allocating 1:1 support.

SCHOOLS: Specific advice to assist remote learning

From Patrick Shaw, EdTech Consultant, @EdTechAdviceUK:

Many (most?) schools have G-Suite or Office 365 deployed already, because it's free to schools - so access to remote tools is not a problem.

The problem is that schools generally don't have skills, expertise and pedagogies to implement/embed use of these tools.

-Rapid measures that schools should take to plan for remote working/learning: (example below is Office 365, but same applies to G-Suite, acknowledgement to @msetchell):
-Remember safeguarding is king. Use only approved systems
-Have you got integration between MIS, Active Directory and Office 365/G-Suite? Use a tool like @SalamanderSoft to automate account creation/access for all stu/staff.
-If you have an RDC service, set sensible restrictions to priority users. mass concurrent attempts to connect will bring it down
-Secure access to passwords to systems off site? Populate a secure password manager.
-Make use of distance learning Curriculum services, eg. GCSEPod. These services are embedded maturely across schools, and they offer good realtime student progress analytics - perfect for distance learning. Doesn't replace the teacher though.
-Train teachers how to Broadcast your PowerPoint presentation online to a remote audience.

OTHER LINKS

OTHER LINKS WHICH YOU MAY FIND HELPFUL OR INTERESTING

Links

Surveys:
- Buffer 2019 remote work survey: https://buffer.com/state-of-remote-work-2019

UK Media Links:
- Daily Mail Femail article: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-8095501/British-workers-share-tips-working-home.html
- Refinery29: Tips for Working from Home during Coronavirus: https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/03/9538846/work-from-home-coronavirus-tips
- New York Times: Sorry, but Working From Home Is Overrated: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/10/technology/working-from-home.html
- BBC News: Tricks and Tools for Better Working From Home: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51804354
- Guardian emotionally preparing for a locked down family: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/13/the-family-lockdown-guide-how-to-emotionally-prepare-for-coronavirus-quarantine
- Home Working News feed from aggregator: https://www.newsnow.co.uk/h/?search=Work+from+home&lang=en&searchheadlines=1
- Will the Coronavirus Response Mark a Turning Point for How Agencies View Remote Work? https://www.adweek.com/agencies/will-the-coronavirus-response-mark-a-turning-point-for-how-agencies-view-remote-work/

Podcasts

- https://eatsleepworkrepeat.com/ - a podcast focused on making work better, more productive

Finally… Sir (well he was just plain Isaac then) Newton was quite productive when 'WFH':

Newton was sent home from college because of the Plague.
This is what he did:

"The year-plus he spent away was later referred to as his annus mirabilis, the "year of wonders."

First, he continued to work on mathematical problems he had begun at Cambridge; the papers he wrote on this became early calculus.

Next, he acquired a few prisms and experimented with them in his bedroom, even going so far as to bore a hole in his shutters so only a small beam could come through. From this sprung his theories on optics.

And right outside his window at Woolsthorpe, there was an apple tree. That apple tree."

General Articles:
- Do's and do nots of remote working: People Management article with general remote working tips
- Coping with Coronavirus anxiety: http://www.alibinns.co.uk/resources/2020/3/11/how-to-cope-with-anxiety-about-coronavirus-cov-19
- How coronavirus could force the work-from-home movement: https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/2/26/21153343/coronavirus-covid-19-work-from-home-remote-pandemic?utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin
- Articulate have made this open, general e-learning guide to Coronavirus for any org to use to inform their staff: https://examples.rise.com/coronavirus/index.html#/
- Coronavirus: Four things to consider when encouraging home working: https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/coronavirus-home-working-considerations/
- Did you know Deliveroo have a 'contact free' option: Techcrunch article sharing food delivery services with no contact option
- https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/blog/2020/03/02/working-remotely-during-challenging-times/