

Adapting to a remote way of working: Our top tips

As businesses nationally are adapting to the Government's guidance to work at home where possible, leaders are also having to adapt to support and manage their colleagues during this 'new norm.'

The ONS reported that in 2019, 5.7 million workers surveyed stated that they mainly or recently worked at home. Sectors such as information and communication, professional, scientific and technical activities, financial and insurance activities, and real estate activities, provide far more homeworking opportunities. During the Coronavirus lockdown, [Finder.com](#) reported that 60% of the UK's adult population were working from home, and we'd expect to see this number continue to rise through 2020.

With this shift in working, comes a shift in operational running for leaders, and steps should be taken to ensure that businesses can thrive (and even survive). Below are some of our top tips for how leaders can look to adapt during this time.

1. Embracing technology

From laptops to desktops, Zoom to Skype, Slack to Basecamp – businesses need to ensure that their staff have the tools needed to be able to do their job effectively. This may mean investing in up-to-date laptops, embedding Microsoft Office 365 into your organisation and collaborating via the likes of Slack. In a world of technology, it has never been easier for everyone to come together remotely to allow for efficient and effective working. Software such as Microsoft Office 365 which has cloud-based storage included is a must for any team who are sharing and storing information. Microsoft Office 365 also has TEAMS, which can facilitate group conference calling (with some nice functionality to share screens and record meetings allowing for it to also be used for training purposes).

The use of a project planning tool such as Slack or Monday.com should also be considered, especially if your teams work across multiple clients for example. A lot of these platforms can also integrate into your Outlook calendar.

Leaders need to ensure that their team have the tools to do the job, and now is most certainly the time to invest in this.

2. Increased productivity, but what about well-being?

Finder.com also reported that both colleagues and employees felt working remotely could boost productivity levels. But with fewer distractions, only one brew to make

and fewer opportunities to nip out on your lunch break, could it be that employees are sacrificing their physical or mental well-being in favour of deadlines and to do lists? This is why employers should also consider and where necessary, invest, in the well-being of their staff teams. It could be via virtual coffee mornings or team quizzes, helping to pay for the likes of gym memberships (when they re-open) or fitness classes, supporting colleagues to undertake professional or personal development, setting up new rewards schemes that still reach those colleagues working remotely or encouraging outdoor group Yoga classes on a lunch break. By investing in the well-being of your staff, they will like feel more valued, loyal and in turn, will work even harder for you.

3. There's no I in team

Working from home can be lonely, in fact, [smallbiztrends](#) report that 20% of remote workers struggle with loneliness. But if you have already considered and invested in some of the ideas in points 1 and 2, you will be well on your way to helping your colleagues feel more connected and less isolated. But don't forget, a quick phone call which isn't about work, or an unexpected delivery of flowers can be a great way to remind a colleague that you are thinking of them and that they are valued. Also, don't forget to make the time for collaboration and discussion, after all, two heads are better than one as they say.

4. Delegate and discuss

It is very easy as a leader to try and do everything. And with more teams working remotely, it is also very easy to think it is quicker to just do it yourself. But delegating to others, discussing and evaluating, strategizing and planning are also incredibly important for any business to succeed. So, the next time a possible new client asks for a proposal, what about involving your wider team who perhaps wouldn't normally get the chance to contribute? Give them a voice, get them involved as once you have won the new business, you'll certainly need to delegate the implementation to them.

5. Outsource and save

Finally, the make-up of businesses will likely change significantly in the coming months. We are under no illusion that we are heading for a significant dip in the size of our economy as we try to recover from this pandemic. So, it's understandable that businesses will also need to protect their bottom line, without compromising on delivery. That's where outsourcing can really help. Websites such as People Per Hour or Freelancer.co.uk are great ways to find specialists who can help you and your business for a short time-frame, or specific area. Things like call handling (yes shameful plug), could be handled by a Virtual Assistance company instead of a permanent member of staff for example, and by opting for this route, you can refocus your other team members to ensure that they are cracking on with their job, without the worry of manning the phones.



You may also be moving to a more permanent way of working. If this is the case, as a leader, you don't want your mobile constantly ringing. Outsourcing certain roles and responsibilities can help to improve efficiencies and your bottom line, without compromising on customer service.

One thing is for certain, business leaders need to adapt and adapt quickly to a more agile and innovative way of working. New challenges will likely present around staff well-being, but a leader who is already looking for ways to invest in their colleagues will likely buck this trend. So, the question is, what will your approach be?