

The coronavirus has done something in a matter of weeks that usually takes organizations years to get right, let alone embrace. Yep, as if overnight a global public health emergency has made remote working a reality for countless millions around the world and leaders are now having finally lean into this reality. No more flying around the world for team meetings and being able to see colleagues in person.

That's right, there a brave new world out there where technology is powering and facilitating how we interact and work with each other. That doesn't mean to say that it isn't daunting, as many business leaders are only now discovering the potential that these tools have in radically changing (and even enhancing) all of our working lives.

Sure, this transformation is going to be challenging for many of us. As we unpack what "working from home" really means we're all having to adapt to trusting that work will still get done, that a "hangout" can still foster collaboration and that engagement will be sustained. Of course, it's not going to be easy but this does and can work – for your business and your people to thrive during these uncertain times.

So, how can you harness the power of virtual teams in this new dawn of working from home?

Here are PDT Global's Top Tips:

Turn your camera on: *It seems obvious but make sure everyone's cameras are on. Human beings thrive from connection and being able to see other people will help create that sense of a community. Don't have the tech for a camera? Why not get everyone to send you their picture which you can post during each meeting.*

Share more: *For some people this might be the only interaction they have with other people in their day, so make it a safe sharing space. Make time to share the quirks of working from home, stories and anecdotes and of course any fears people may have about the situation. Use chat tools to encourage the reflectors to put their point across.*

Regularly Check In: *Systemise your interactions with the team so there is a routine, just like when in the office. Set up your weekly team meetings, coffee catch ups and 1-to-1s as normal and be clear about their intent. These are the times to just talk about teams, how it's working and how everyone is feeling – not just about the deliverables. People will feel heard and valued.*

Get Honest: *This is an uncertain time and many people are worrying about their jobs and what all the changes means for them and their families. Be honest about how the organization is dealing with the crisis and how it will impact them. Honesty breeds trust and avoids people feeling misinformed or out of the loop.*

Talk Mental Health: *Such a drastic shift in working life is likely to take its toll on your people. The extrovert in your team may struggle when they find themselves working alone from their kitchen every day. Take time to reach out to every team member to reassure them and ask what else they need to feel comfortable with the situation. Make the effort to ensure everyone's needs and well-being feels anticipated.*

Develop rituals: *for yourself and your teams. Share what you are doing with that – don't feel the need to "sneak off" for your mid day run - put it in your calendar and talk about it.*

Create two visions: *but don't lie. Do paint a future vision for your organization once this is over. But be honest while looking on the bright side. If your people all pull together you might just steal a lead on your competitors. Also paint a more local short term view too. Just some goals and targets to get through this with.*

Be Authentic: *that means also being vulnerable yourself. For some leaders this new world is scary. Especially if you always fought against working from home in the past! Admit that to your team and ask them to help you work out the best actions to take.*

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