



Remote Work for Employers

The Playbook

Intro

For businesses used to working in a traditional setting, remote work can be daunting and is often uncharted territory. We at MVPF strongly believe in the **'future of work'** concept and have been remote friendly since founding the company in 2016. We've tried many different approaches, made many mistakes and have found an equilibrium that works for us. The reality is, we are consistently

iterating our processes and will continue to do so, in order to provide the best environment for our people to be most effective & happy. Due to the recent rise in the relevance of remote work, we wanted to share some learning around key topics to consider across the board, in the hope that it helps you to get up and running, as quickly & smoothly as possible.

Table of contents

The Basics

[Clarity is key](#)

[Keep it personal](#)

[Remember why you're here](#)

[Trust your people](#)

[Test, test, test](#)

The Core

[Guidelines](#)

[Tooling](#)

[Document everything!](#)

[Communication Structure](#)

[Time Management & Meetings](#)

[Performance & delivery measurements](#)

[Time is of the essence!](#)

Communication

[This really is KEY](#)

[Keep the vibe alive](#)

Learnings

Guide for Individuals

[Workplace and setup](#)

[Here's a couple of our stations for reference](#)

[Time Management](#)

[Communicate!](#)

The Basics

Clarity is everything

Confusion and messy communication are your enemies when working remotely. Assume every person in the organisation is new to remote-work and base all your company-wide communication with this in mind. You'll only succeed fast when your employees don't need to think about, or question how they should be working. Make everything crystal clear and make sure everyone knows what your plan is. The more prep, the better.

Keep it personal

It's purported that 93% of communication is non-verbal, meaning that words alone don't convey the full truth and when teams are distributed, this has a bigger effect than usual. Meaning and emotion can be lost and often messages are misinterpreted, resulting in breakdowns in team relations. Video/call should be the default when possible (we come back to this later).

Remember why you're here

As leaders, your job is to remind your employees of the overarching mission & vision of the company. It's somewhat

easier to connect to this when you're gathered together in the office, with the values hanging on the wall, but how can you help your teams connect to this remotely?

It's your goal to find ways that fit your team, keep them going and stay motivated.

Trust your people

Trust is paramount in distributed teams and it's your job as employers to create psychological safety for your staff. Push a results-oriented approach to your leadership team, where people value outcomes over 'time spent' - your teams will focus on the right things, spend less time worrying about how people are working and work together to get things done. Approach with kindness - remember there may be a reason for why that person is suddenly unavailable.

Test, test, test

There's no 'one size fits all' solution - it just doesn't exist. Prepare to test, iterate and work towards making it better without the pressure of having to do everything perfectly immediately. Take ownership of mistakes and include your teams in the process.

The Core

Guidelines

Establish your ground rules. Make them as comprehensive and humanly possible and share them officially, whilst keeping them easily accessible. Invite comments and amendments (you'll generally overlook something). Include working hours, make note of time zones, response-times and a guide for communication (email/slack/call appropriateness), video policy, who to ask for what and create an FAQ.

Tooling

Ensure everyone has what they need to be successful. Think about expenses for fast solutions, preparing hardware & consider security as a priority. VPNs are a good solution as home setups are generally not secure, be careful with passwords and reassess what communications should be distributed in shared documentation (gDrive etc). Ensure this is communicated super clearly and offer training on anything new. Think about how you'll communicate and over what channels (we use [slack](#)).

If your employees don't currently use a workflow management tool (e.g. Asana, Trello, Miro or Jira), don't be tempted to rush a new tool roll-out you're not ready for. **Work pragmatically and be realistic.** Think about makeshift high-level workflow solutions using basic tools that everyone's comfortable with, over complicated new software that disrupts current working methods.

Do your research and make a call quickly based on the information.

Document everything!

Ensure all information is as accessible as possible. Put together a simple Playbook with all the knowledge one might need for day-to-day operations and proper access to shared resources across the company. Consider if you have any new-starters joining, what can be automated in terms of knowledge transfer and be centralised so it can always be referred back to by all employees.

There are some great recording tools like [Loom](#), which make things 100x easier to understand and help add a little more sense of interaction.

Communication Structure

While your basics should be clear i.e. working hours etc, think about how you replace daily conversations. What channels will you use and for what topics? Try to mimic your office life as closely as possible and structure in a work-positive manner.

Ensure there's a channel for each topic & that it's clearly explained what each is for, with gentle reminders if someone goes a little off-piste.

Time Management & Meetings

Team collaboration should be individual to that division - what works for engineering might be very different for sales, and so team leads should develop their own daily/weekly/monthly schedule and ensure all team members are clear and included i.e. daily stand-ups to discuss and reprioritise tasks using your normal workflow tool. Encourage individuals to collaboratively time-block in calendars to allow for concentrated, uninterrupted intervals of work and make this a standard across the board.

Performance & delivery measurements

The team leads should be working to their regular schedules here in terms of tracking (OKRs/Targets/Roadmaps etc), but this also needs to be aligned across departments.

All-hands meetings are paramount and should be more regular than usual, with a clear agenda and proper facilitation with a consistent thread to the overall mission/vision & company-wide objectives.

Time is of the essence

Given that there might be some dips in activity dependent on the nature of your business, really think creatively about how your teams can use that time.

Many teams would relish a little reflection time to do some recalibration - tidying up CRMs, reassessing processes etc that they just don't get the time to do normally. Make this time as productive as possible and utilise the opportunity for a little thinking-time.

Also consider training & learning opportunities across the board.

Communication

This really is KEY

Establish your practices and **don't compromise** here. Official announcements should be done through email, chat tools (i.e. slack) for fast comms and for anything longer than a couple of questions, schedule a short video call. This avoids any misinterpretation, things don't get lost in translation and it's a great excuse to create more connection. Encourage your teams to do this with common sense - knowing you'll have a couple of topics to cover throughout the day, means it's easier to book a 15 min slot with a colleague and bulk your questions than calling randomly.

Push for video ([zoom](#), [hangouts](#), [join](#)) as a rule. Establish your [etiquette](#) & enforce it.

Record everything you can ([Panopto](#), [Loom](#)) and share all outcomes - some people may have to miss certain meetings and there won't be a chance to catch up as usual.

Ensure all meetings are structured with a clear agenda, a facilitator to control communication and someone to take notes for ALL larger gatherings.

We also recommend an interactive system during any meetings/presentation (try [Mentimeter](#)) to make it collaborative, visual and allow comments & polls for fast & efficient decision making.

Keep the vibe alive

As leaders, you need to set the tone. Work with your leadership to create fun trends (sharing jokes, memes, tips, news) & create outlets for collaboration across a range of topics.

Reach out to your teams on a 121 basis, check in to see how they're doing and offer encouragement. **You have no idea how much this will mean to a lot of people.**

Emulate your office habits - live stream lunches, organise remote beers on a friday afternoon and ban work-chat - think mukbangs, OOO topics, online gaming events and send merchandise (t-shirts/jumpers) to keep the connection.

Key Learnings



Reiterate long term goals & values



Own your mistakes & make it ok for others to do so



Proactively offer support more often than usual



Celebrate the short term, collectively



Personal & emotive approach



Push & encourage company-wide projects where possible