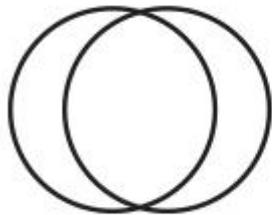


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# A1.1 Review on Good Practices

## Remote Management for SMEs

<b>Activity coordinator</b>	Metalaxis
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Re.Ma

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Remote Management  
for SMEs



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Revision History

Author	Date	Version	Description
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## Literature Review on Existing practices Remote Management

### Executive summary

This report reviews good remote work practices in use today and provides recommendations for the management of the performance of remote workers, training of managers of remote workers, and building a culture compatible with remote work.

The introductory study had a limited sample size, and further research is needed to explore the range of options available to onsite workers in hybrid remote/onsite work settings. Additionally, while preparing this report, Trello released a remote work manifesto that serves as a noteworthy example of a thriving remote work culture.: (<https://info.trello.com/hubfs/Trello-Embrace-Remote-Work-Ultimate-Guide.pdf>).

### Findings

- Organizations develop remote work models to attract and retain the best employees worldwide. They're also competing locally for talent normally bound by geography.
- Time and focus are perceived to be more valuable in remote work cultures. As such, managing remote work teams requires effective and focused meetings and projects.
- Performance reviews of remote workers are performed much more frequently. Managers interact with remote workers more often but in shorter bursts.
- Remote workers are not compared to their onsite peers; rather, they are assessed specifically on how well they executed tasks and met objectives.
- Managers resist relying on informal, in-person meetings. Information is spread quickly through multiple technologies to ensure awareness and promote focus.
- Onsite workers sometimes view remote work as a benefit not available to them. Companies work hard to develop cultural norms and managers collaborate to correct these potentially toxic attitudes.

### Recommendations

- Determine what remote work model best achieves the goals of the project or team.
- Make performance review part of weekly discussions with remote workers.
- Set and reinforce technology, meeting, and collaboration norms that ensure success.
- Train managers and team leads to keep meetings and projects clear and organized.
- Steward a culture centered on how remote and onsite workers both increase the value of the organization, not a culture of the haves and have-nots.

## Introduction

The outbreak of coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has severely affected the global economy. Major victims of the COVID-19 outbreak, as studies show, were small, and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). One of the main response strategies for most of enterprises was introducing Remote Work to their employees/businesses. While there are still no precise figures on the scale of teleworking during the COVID



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crisis, some early estimations suggest a much larger prevalence than before the crisis. An ad hoc online survey from Eurofound (2020) estimated that close to 40% of those currently working in the EU began to telework full-time as a result of the pandemic. More specifically, according to the EU Joint Research Center analysis (jrc120945), the prevalence of remote work varied strongly across sectors and occupations and was already particularly high in knowledge- and ICT-intensive services.

Business managers and leaders, especially SMEs, have to deal with new challenges related to coordinating a team across multiple office locations and managing full-time remote workers. However, the training system is not prepared for the challenges and considerations of managing remote teams. The training market, however, has not yet caught up with these challenges as only 15% of remote employee managers have received specialized training (the “2020 State of Remote Work Report”).

The objective of the project “Remote Management” is to promote the acquisition of competences of SMEs managers, in the adoption of remote management strategies and the use of related tools. For addressing this objective, the following specific objectives (aims) have been set:

- SO1. A systematic review of the practices on remote management tools and strategies
- SO2. MOOC (Massive Online and Open Course) on remote management.

## Methodology

Metalaxis, the activity leader, created a "READING LIST" which was shared with project partners via the communication platform, Basecamp. The list includes all the references used, including articles, books, video links, and definitions of terms. The list of references can be found at the end of this document.

Four thematic topics were chosen for development, and each topic was further divided into three units, resulting in a total of nine units. After conducting desktop research, each partner presented four topics that formed the basis of the Literature Review on good existing practices in remote management. The topics selected are:

### **Topic 1: About remote Work Practices.**

Factors supporting the remote work movement. Building a Team Workspace for remote work. Differences in hiring and onboarding staff for a remote working environment.

### **Topic 2: Managing a Remote Team**

Leading in a remote environment. Preparations needed for remote work. Asynchronous communication needed in a remote team. Leadership in a remote environment. Metrics and outcomes for success in a remote working environment

### **Topic 3: Remote transition Processes**

Work Readiness and preparation for remote work. Strategies for executing a remote transformation. Planning a remote transition. Type of remote teams. Phases of remote transition process

### **Topic 4: Culture for remote working Teams**



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Building a remote organizational culture. The role of culture in a remote working team. Adjust values to empower remote a working team

The working team of the activity have distilled all the topics presented into this document containing selected practices. These topics will be directly related to the competences a trainee should have for implementing tasks needed during the Remote management process. Additionally, the topics will be linked to the learning outcomes of the Re.Ma curriculum that will be developed in a later phase and will serve as a main guide for developing the training material in Remote management in Activity 2.

Finally, the literature collected as a reference “translated” into a simple and understandable language having as a challenge to:

- ✓ Keep the Literature review simple in terms of the language used.
- ✓ Make the description of the unit as practical as it can be.
- ✓ Limit the number of pages to no more than 35.



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## Topic 1: Remote Work Practices

### 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the conventional notion of where and how we work. Starting from mid-March, 95% of the global workforce has been working remotely in 175 countries. The pandemic has affected various organizations worldwide in different ways, with some, like IBM, able to transition to working from home without major difficulties, while others have had to suspend their operations entirely or partially. As many countries shift from crisis management mode, organizations are now beginning to plan for a new and altered normal, which involves reopening under different circumstances.

As the labor market has shifted from manufacturing and construction to service-based industries (according to Statistics 2016), and with the rise of high-bandwidth communication tools, advancements in management techniques, a shortage of trained knowledge workers in certain geographic regions, and an increasing need for flexible scheduling options, organizations are now more accepting and supportive of a distributed workforce. These workers are considered actual employees, rather than contractors, and they may work independently or as part of a team. They receive direct supervision from the organization and work in various virtual arrangements.

Companies are adopting new working models to reduce labor costs. Large organizations, in particular, have global offices to mitigate risks, take advantage of tax laws, lower capital costs, and attract talented employees in specific locations worldwide. With a workforce whose outputs rely mainly on thinking and writing, different management and organization methods can be employed.

### 2. Factors supporting the remote work movement.

The growth of knowledge worker jobs has been triggered by two significant changes in the workplace. The first is the computerization of business processes such as accounting, human resources (HR), logistics, and point of sale, while the second is the requirement for teams to develop software to replace and improve these processes. Previously, labor was typically situated in one location, such as on an assembly line or in tall office buildings, to reduce transportation costs and minimize the distance between work centers. Management was trained to efficiently oversee labor organized in this manner

McKinsey's research on "What's next for remote work" in 2022 suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has removed previous cultural and technological obstacles to remote work, initiating a fundamental change in where work is performed, at least for certain individuals. However, the development of the remote work movement has been influenced by several factors, such as technological advancements, cost savings, improved work-life balance, higher productivity, and access to a larger pool of talent. The following factors are supporting and contributing to the continuous expansion of remote work.

1. The advancement of technology has accelerated the feasibility of remote work more than ever before. With high-speed internet, video conferencing software, project management tools, and other digital tools, workers can effortlessly collaborate with colleagues and accomplish tasks from anywhere in the world.



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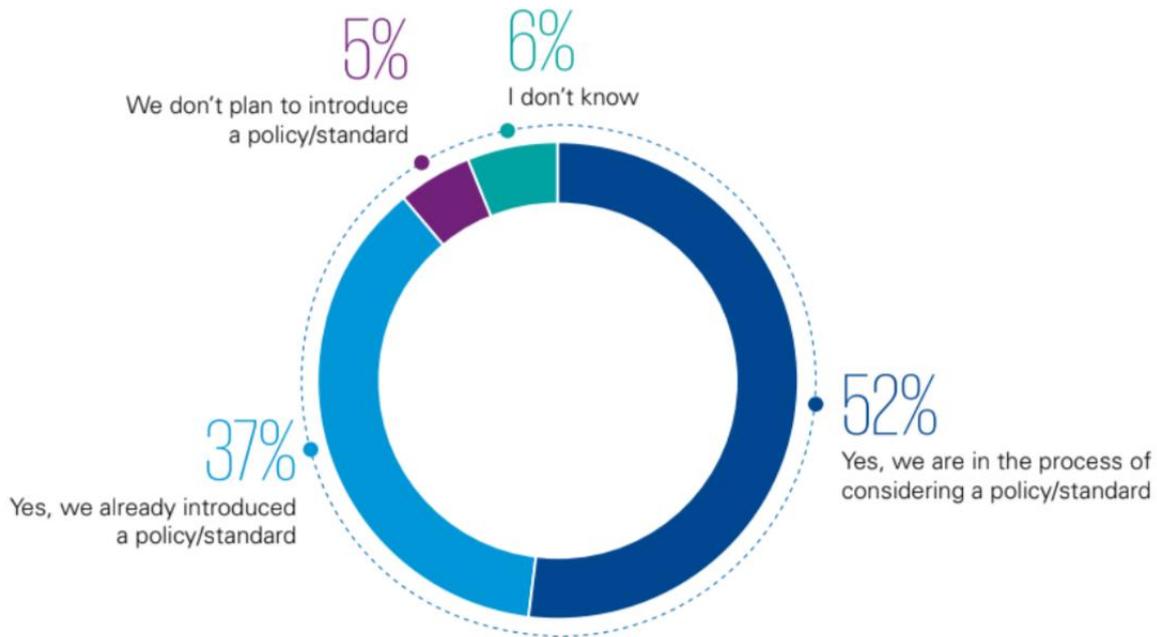
2. Cost savings are one of the advantages of remote work, benefiting both employers and employees. Companies can reduce their expenses on office space, equipment, and utilities, while employees can save money on commuting costs, work attire, and other expenses that come with working in a traditional office setting
3. Remote work can improve work-life balance by providing employees with greater flexibility in their work schedule. Remote workers can often choose their own hours, work from home or other preferred locations, and take breaks as needed to attend to personal responsibilities, such as caring for children or pets.
4. Increased Productivity: Studies indicate that remote workers are often more productive compared to their office-based colleagues, possibly because they face fewer distractions and interruptions, have greater control over their work environment, and enjoy greater autonomy in their work.
5. Access to a Larger Talent Pool: Companies can benefit from remote work by accessing a wider pool of talent irrespective of the location. This can be particularly advantageous for companies that are located in areas with a shortage of skilled workers or those who wish to broaden their talent pool beyond their immediate geographic location.\

### 3. Remote Work Policies

Eighty-nine percent (89%) of companies have already introduced a remote working policy or are currently considering one.

More than half of the organizations surveyed (52 percent) are currently considering implementing a remote working policy, while 37 percent have already introduced one. The numbers reveal that the vast majority are pursuing a long-term strategy for remote working. However, strategies vary depending on each organization — their business model, their long-term strategic goals and their corporate culture. There is currently no one-size-fits-all approach.





Source: "Work from Anywhere: Insights from the research and government perspective," Global Webcast Participant Survey, KPMG International, 28 September 2021. [www.kpmg.com/taxwebcasts](http://www.kpmg.com/taxwebcasts)

Many businesses have already moved to modify and sometimes redesign human resources policies to address COVID-19 realities, including support for remote working. In the near term, remote work will be an important complement to reopening strategies. Then, as the transition to this "different normal" continues, businesses will need to define – for various type of work and job roles – how best to integrate between remote versus traditional work locations in terms of flexibility, focus, collaboration, innovation, affiliation, and well-being.

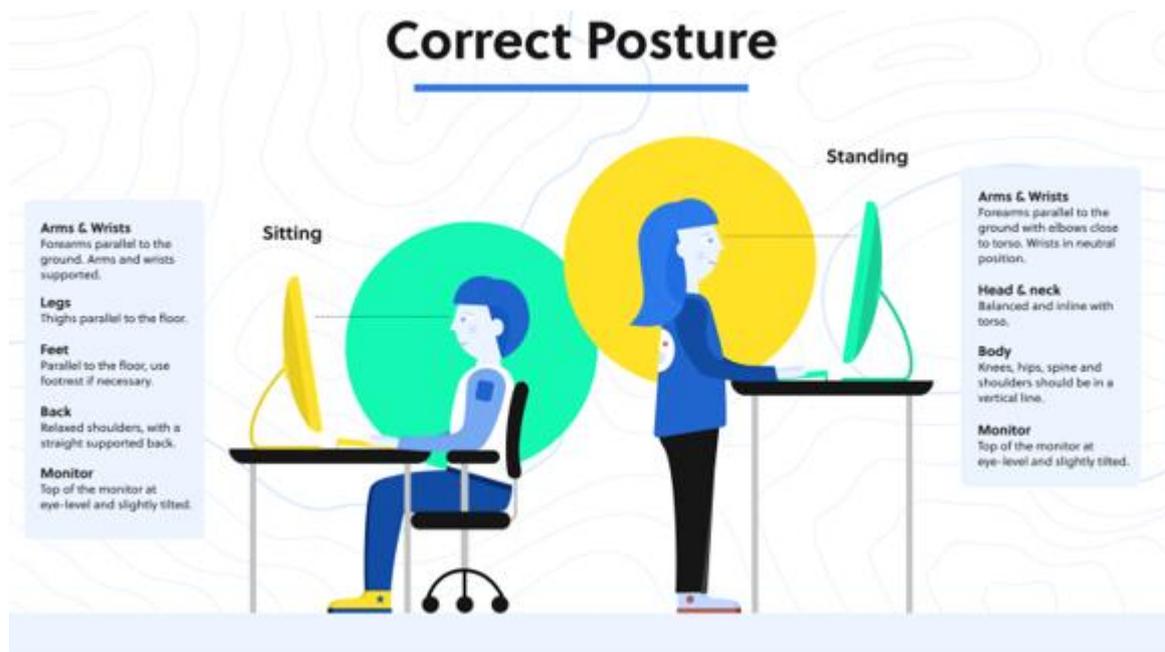
In today's work environments, it is fair to expect that public guidance is sought on ICT-enabled work performed more or less regularly away from the employer's premises – not on traditional "home work" such as clothing "piece work". The type of mobile work environments that new technology has enabled allows employees to spend time away from employer premises. However, there is no single policy model for ICT-enabled work performed remotely.

#### 4. Workspace for remote work.

Although not a law specifically for those working from home, employers should take all reasonable steps to ensure the employee's workstation is correctly set up, safe, comfortable and easy to use to reduce potential injuries as indicated in the health and safety measures. In turn, employees must care for their health and safety and follow any reasonable policies or directions their employer gives them.

An appropriate workstation will include the following:

- Right level of illumination, both natural and artificial light sources should not create glare on the computer.
- Sufficient lighting level for visual tasks to be completed without eye strain.
- The right level of ventilation and thermal comfort.
- Unobstructed exit path in case of emergencies, including electrical cords, uneven carpet, clutter
- Suitable storage for documents



## 5. Challenges for Remote Workers

As referred in a study of KPMG, affiliation, visibility, and marginalization as the primary challenges faced by remote workers. Affiliation pertains to the sense of belongingness and camaraderie among a group of people working together. Visibility, on the other hand, pertains to how the remote worker sees themselves in the organization's future plans and how they are perceived by their leaders and project managers. Finally, marginalization refers to the worker's potential isolation and discontent with their role, which can result from a lack of connection with their team or organization.

### *Affiliation*

As social beings, humans have an innate need for social interaction. This idea was famously articulated by Aristotle who stated that “Man is by nature a social animal.” Numerous studies have demonstrated that the absence of social interaction can have negative effects on our health and well-being (Berkman and Syme 1979). In a traditional office environment where colleagues are physically located together, social needs can be met through face-to-face management discussions, team meetings, and casual interactions.

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However, in remote work environments, interactions between team members are mainly facilitated by technology. The main challenge of a remote work model is how to provide unstructured time and opportunities for remote workers to connect with their colleagues in person. Unfortunately, these types of interactions are often undervalued and eclipsed by the perceived importance of completing work tasks.

The term "real work" refers to tasks that are based on a person's individual skills, such as data analysis, software development, or painting a fence. On the other hand, activities such as attending meetings, sending emails, and having informal conversations with colleagues are considered ad-hoc work that can distract workers from their real work. Although on-site workers tend to have more of this ad-hoc work, they benefit from the fact that it is encouraged and expected. For example, they can take a coffee break together and use that time to recover from intense work, resolve conflicts, and generate new ideas while having face-to-face interactions. Remote workers, however, miss out on these opportunities for in-person, unstructured time with their colleagues.

When working in a hybrid environment, remote workers can experience a sense of disconnection from their colleagues since they spend all their working hours in their home office. Despite remote work being a cost-saving measure for companies, remote workers might not have access to co-working spaces within the organization, which could help them feel more connected. This could happen either unintentionally or explicitly. For instance, a computer security professional who was interviewed for a study was not allowed to work in co-working spaces because they were perceived as being insecure workspaces.

### *Visibility*

The opportunities for career advancement and high-profile projects may not be equally available to remote workers as compared to their onsite colleagues. The physical presence of onsite staff near project managers tends to create a preference for them. Additionally, it was highlighted that if a manager or team lead was not located at the same site as senior leadership, it could negatively impact their chances for career growth within the organization.

Morgan and Symon (2002) explain that the extent and quality of communication between remote workers and their managers affects the degree to which the remote workers feel connected to the organization. Despite the potential for increased communication and transparency through computer-mediated channels, remote workers still perceive a sense of visibility when they have a strong connection with their managers. This suggests that physical presence and direct access to managers are highly valued by remote workers.

The lack of visibility can also result in team members being unclear about each other's responsibilities. This can lead to onsite workers being unaware of the expertise of their remote colleagues, or whether they are currently working on a particular task. If not managed properly, this miscommunication can increase the workload of the manager and decrease the overall performance of the team.



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### *Marginalization*

Excluding remote workers from impromptu conversations that occur outside of scheduled meetings can pose a significant challenge due to their physical isolation. Such marginalization of team members can have a gradual, subtle impact on the overall performance of the team from an organizational perspective.

A number of individuals mentioned that remote workers are not kept informed; their involvement in meetings is hindered by their absence from the physical space; and they miss out on informal and unplanned discussions. If certain team members are frequently excluded from spontaneous conversations, the team as a whole may begin to accept the remote workers' absence.

The possibility of creating a division between those who have access to remote work benefits and those who don't is another consequence of marginalization within an organization. One interviewee mentioned a scenario where remote workers were perceived to have more flexibility in task completion, causing occasional tension between groups. In the absence of a strong culture of inclusive hiring, inter-team trust, and prioritization of electronic communication, this tension can erode trust and commitment among employees over time.

## 6. Management Challenges

Managing remote and onsite employees with the same job classifications presents complex challenges that require line managers to supplement communication and connection between team members intentionally. Traditional managers can easily connect people in an ad-hoc fashion in a co-located workspace to react tactically to issues. However, in a hybrid environment, a manager may need to connect onsite staff physically and ensure they take time to connect with remote staff through chat, phone, or video. Managers with remotely located staff dialing in need to eliminate side chatter to enable the remote participant to hear during meetings, which can cause friction between the team and the manager. All these challenges increase the time required to manage the team.

Equity is also a significant challenge, as onsite staff who do more ad-hoc work than remote members (who do more real work) can create a perception of inequity. Remote workers experience miscommunications and interpersonal challenges as much as their onsite peers, which combined with jealousy, can negatively affect an organization's performance.

Research supports the notion that remote work management is challenging, as direct control over work is difficult, and managers must adopt delegative management principles, as stated by Hertel et al. This requires remote team members to fulfill delegated management functions aligned with the team's goals, and managers must provide timely and regular feedback to individuals and teams. A survey by Horwitz et al. found that the highest cited factor for success in a virtual project is having a clear definition of objectives, roles, and responsibilities.

Moving from in-person to technology-mediated communication introduces further potential for miscommunication. To ensure successful remote work, managers and workers must build trust and have



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norms about asynchronous communication (email/IM). Misinterpreting constructive criticism as disparaging may occur among members of virtual teams in the early stages of development, as found by Maruping and Agarwal. Therefore, norms should be set on how to confirm communications between peers and managers.

Several examples by Morgan and Symon show that managers and leaders who failed to listen to their employees and cultivate direct communication with remote workers experienced negative impacts. Trust, cohesion, and an increase in alienation may negatively impact remote workers' performance, as tied by Staples to job stress in remote workers. The role of a manager overseeing remote workers is to coach them on how to take on delegated tasks because control is not direct. Finally, not all staff members are suited for remote work, and HR issues must be handled swiftly in cases of low-performing remote team members, as the overhead for a manager to correct behavior over a long period is too high.

## 7. Conclusion

Investing in virtual teams of remote workers has the potential to extend high-performance organizations. With the wide variety of social and data-sharing technologies available today, sharing data is made easier. However, management is even more critical in these virtual environments. Key to success is crafting concise, clear goals and expectations and effectively transmitting them using multiple technologies. Providing more frequent coaching in shorter intervals can help remote workers receive the feedback they need to stay on track. Management also needs to ensure that remote workers feel heard, can resolve interpersonal issues, and feel connected to the larger organization.

The trend of remote work is on the rise and is expected to continue even after the pandemic subsides. As a result, organizations and employees are adjusting to the prospect of increased remote work as a permanent feature. This trend is welcomed by many organizations, as remote workers often report increased productivity and trust in their employers compared to their office counterparts. To determine the best approach to incorporating remote work into post-pandemic recovery plans, organizations should consider all remote work options available and adjust their plans accordingly.

To begin, organizations should evaluate whether remote work is feasible for their operations and at what potential costs. They should then determine which aspects of their workforce can effectively carry out their tasks remotely by examining the portability of work. After these assessments, organizations can then consider the most effective strategies for promoting collaboration and building relationships in their new hybrid workforce..

Flexible work arrangements, including "work from anywhere," are becoming a permanent feature of the modern workplace. However, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to implementing such arrangements, as each organization's strategy, objectives, culture, and operating environment are unique.

To develop a successful and compliant policy, collaboration across different functions and regions is essential, leveraging technology to ensure efficiency and compliance. Communication is also critical to support a smooth rollout and transformation process. As we navigate this new terrain, companies will need to be flexible and adaptable, continuously learning and adjusting their programs to anticipate changes and



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meet evolving compliance regulations and employee expectations. Close alignment with stakeholders will be crucial in this ongoing process.



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## Topic 2: Managing Remote Teams

Managing remote teams can be a challenge, especially if you're used to managing employees in a traditional office setting. However, with the right approach, tools, and communication channels, you can successfully manage a remote team and ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals. Here are some tips for managing remote teams:

### *Establish clear communication channels*

Clear communication is crucial when managing remote teams. You need to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that you're able to communicate effectively with your team. Establish clear communication channels such as instant messaging, email, and video conferencing tools to ensure that you can stay in touch with your team and provide feedback and support.

### *Set clear expectations*

When managing remote teams, it's essential to set clear expectations for your team members. This includes work hours, project deadlines, communication protocols, and goals. Make sure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities and that they know what's expected of them. This will help ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals and that you can achieve your objectives.

### *Use project management tools*

Project management tools can help you keep track of your team's progress and ensure that everyone is on track. There are many project management tools available, such as Trello, Asana, and Basecamp, which can help you track tasks, assign work, and monitor progress. Using project management tools can help ensure that your team stays organized and focused.

### *Encourage collaboration*

Collaboration is essential when managing remote teams. Encourage your team members to work together and share ideas. This can be done through video conferencing, instant messaging, or other collaboration tools. Collaboration can help ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals and that you're able to achieve your objectives.

### *Provide regular feedback*

Regular feedback is crucial when managing remote teams. You need to ensure that your team members are aware of how they're performing and that you're able to provide constructive feedback. Schedule regular check-ins with your team members to discuss their progress and provide feedback. This will help ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals and that you can achieve your objectives.

### *Prioritize employee wellbeing*

Managing remote teams can be stressful, and it's essential to prioritize your team's wellbeing. Ensure that your team members have the necessary tools and resources to work effectively and that they're not overworked. Encourage your team members to take breaks, set boundaries, and prioritize their mental health. This will help ensure that your team is productive and that you can achieve your objectives.



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## 8. Preparations needed for remote work

Transitioning to remote work requires preparation and planning to ensure that everyone is equipped with the necessary tools and resources to work effectively. Companies and individuals should establish clear communication channels, set clear expectations, provide the necessary tools and resources, prioritize cybersecurity, and promote work-life balance. By doing so, they can make remote work a success for everyone involved.

As remote work continues to gain popularity, more and more companies are embracing the idea of letting their employees work from home. However, transitioning to remote work requires preparation and planning to ensure that everyone is equipped with the necessary tools and resources to work effectively. Here are some preparations that companies need to make to successfully transition to remote work:

### *Establish clear communication channels*

Clear and effective communication is crucial when working remotely. Companies should establish communication channels such as instant messaging, email, and video conferencing to ensure that employees can stay in touch with each other and with their managers. Individuals should also make sure they have a reliable internet connection and a quiet workspace to minimize distractions.

### *Set clear expectations*

Remote work can be challenging, especially for those who are new to it. Companies should set clear expectations for their employees, including work hours, project deadlines, and communication protocols. This will help employees stay focused and ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals. Individuals should also set goals for themselves and create a schedule to help them stay on track.

### *Provide the necessary tools and resources*

Companies should provide their remote workers with the necessary tools and resources to work effectively. This includes access to project management software, virtual private networks (VPNs), and cloud-based storage solutions. Individuals should also invest in the necessary equipment, such as a reliable computer, a headset with a microphone, and a webcam.

### *Prioritize cybersecurity*

Remote work can pose cybersecurity risks, especially if employees are working on personal devices or using public Wi-Fi networks. Companies should prioritize cybersecurity by providing employees with secure access to company resources and training them on how to identify and prevent cyber threats. Individuals should also take steps to protect their personal devices and avoid using public Wi-Fi networks.

### *Promote work-life balance*

One of the benefits of remote work is the flexibility it provides. However, this can also lead to work-life imbalance if individuals are not careful. Companies should encourage their employees to take breaks, set



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boundaries, and prioritize their mental health. Individuals should also create a routine that balances work and personal time, and avoid working outside of their scheduled hours.

## 9. Asynchronous communication in a remote team

To effectively manage remote work, it is important to recognize that it is an essential aspect of the organization's operations rather than a privilege that is selectively granted. Decisions about remote work should be made on a case-by-case basis by the employee's manager or team lead, with a focus on establishing clear communication and resolving any interpersonal conflicts that may arise. Establishing norms and routines that help employees understand their colleagues' context and work through any issues is crucial regardless of their location.

### Asynchronous communication tools

- Email.
- Recorded video.
- Screenshots with markups.
- Collaboration tools such as Slack.
- Instant messaging or texting.

#### *Stewarding a Remote Work*

Regular one-on-one meetings with managers are crucial for remote workers to feel connected and supported. These meetings should be structured and focused on an agenda to be effective. Performance discussions should also be included in these meetings, providing an opportunity to address any potential problems before they escalate. Effective meetings should adhere to a well-planned agenda, ensuring that all participants are prepared and focused. High-performance organizations tend to have more frequent and shorter meetings that are more productive and less prone to off-topic discussions.

#### *Hold Weekly One-on-Ones and Include Performance Discussions*

Every person interviewed emphasized the need and importance of holding weekly one-on-one meetings with their manager. Without these frequent check-ins, remote workers quickly feel disconnected. Management researchers Cascio and Shurygailo found that one-on-ones should be structured according to an agenda to be effective (Cascio and Shurygailo 2003). Such meetings may be the only chance all week to raise and discuss issues, and head off potential problems. These one-on-ones also provide a richer environment for weekly or bi-monthly performance reviews.

#### *Conduct Prepared and Focused Meetings*

Meetings that adhere to well-thought out agendas can be short and effective. When there is a strong culture of effective meetings, all members in the meetings are more prepared and leaders of the meetings provide structured, thoughtful agendas. Team members tend to spend far less time on tangential topics and discussions. The interviewees said that high-performance organizations have meetings that are more



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frequent and much shorter.

*General Recommendations*

It is important for all meeting participants to use the same mode of communication, be it telephone, video conferencing, or screen sharing, to enhance team cohesion. The use of video teleconferencing has been found to be more effective in promoting team cohesion than other modes of communication such as voice, chat, or email. Various technologies such as phone bridges, BlueJeans videoconferencing, ScreenHero, Slack, Zoom, Hip Chat, and Skype can be used to facilitate communication and collaboration.

Hambley et al. found that team cohesion is greater when using video teleconferencing versus voice, chat, or e-mail (Hambley, O'Neill and Kline 2006). Technologies used included phone bridges, BlueJeans videoconferencing, ScreenHero (<https://screenhero.com>), Slack, Zoom (<https://zoom.us>), Hip Chat (<https://hipchat.com>) and Skype.

## 10. Leadership in a remote environment

To develop leadership skills in a remote work setting, new and efficient methods must be adopted. The effectiveness of your leadership depends on the amount and quality of work you accomplish, while your efficiency as a leader is based on your ability to complete the appropriate tasks in a given timeframe. The combination of effective and efficient leadership can be achieved through the implementation of new leadership strategies. According to Harvard Business Review, delegation is "the shift from doing to leading." Successful leaders have honed their strategic delegation skills over many years.

The following steps are effective only if they are built upon a foundation of strong communication between the employer and employees. You can foster this communication by regularly scheduling face-to-face meetings, whether they are conducted in-person or virtually. If in-person meetings are not possible, you can still effectively lead your team by utilizing videoconferencing technology.

*Step-1:* To start improving your leadership skills, you can follow these simple yet effective practices. First, when delegating a task, make it clear to the employee that they are fully responsible for completing it. By instilling accountability in your employees, you ensure that they take ownership of their actions and avoid shifting blame. This helps to maintain the quality and timeliness of the delegated task.

*Step-2:* Once the task is assigned, it is essential to reach an agreement with the employee regarding the desired outcomes of the work. It is advisable for both parties to document the expected results of the delegated task to have a clear and specific reference point.

Strategic delegation is enhanced by an important factor - the deadline. Instead of imposing a deadline on the employee, allowing them to choose their own deadline can redefine the relationship between the employer and employee. This gives the employee the freedom to evaluate the time taken to complete the delegated task, making them responsible for achieving the desired outcome within the agreed-upon time frame.

In a remote work setup, the absence of physical proximity can lead to a higher inclination to micromanage employees, which can hamper their freedom to work. As a good leader, it is important to find a way to



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balance micromanagement with the independence of staff by leveraging tools that enable a seamless remote work environment. One such tool is remote employee monitoring software, which helps analyze the amount of time employees spend working during their designated hours. By using this tool, you can monitor the productivity of your staff from anywhere and ensure that the work is being done efficiently.

To lead employees in a remote work environment, it is crucial to identify resources that can assist in analyzing their engagement with work. This saves time and enhances the quality of expected outcomes. As a leader, utilizing online tools and applications that aid in achieving collective goals efficiently is essential. It enables maximum engagement from remote workers without resorting to micromanagement or restricting their freedom.

Flawless communication is the most important skill that a leader should possess. In a work-from-home setting, effective communication takes on a new meaning. In a physical workspace, communication is multifaceted and efficient, while in a virtual workspace, it requires a series of rituals to ensure a minimum standard of efficiency is achieved.

As a leader in the twenty-first century, it is important to provide your employees with the right technology for communication, which has a direct impact on their productivity. To achieve this, you must think and act creatively to find the most effective and efficient form of communication. This step is vital for leadership and reinforces the importance of evolving into a responsible leader who can adapt to new challenges.

In order to become an organic leader who inspires others to follow instinctively, it is important to follow the steps discussed above carefully. These steps can lead to a cumulative effect that creates an environment of trust and motivation within the team.

With the large-scale shift from proximal to remote workspaces, it is crucial to develop leadership skills that are conducive to this new environment. As a leader, you must consistently sharpen your skills and adopt new strategies that work well in the changing times.

## 11. Measuring Success

### *Conducting Performance Reviews*

Regarding conducting performance reviews, all subjects reported that both remote and on-site workers underwent similar quarterly or annual performance reviews. However, according to all remote workers interviewed, the most valuable feedback they received came not from these reviews but from their regular meetings with their group lead or manager. This could be a formal, weekly review agenda item or an informal touch on performance. The literature suggests that coaching on performance more often is necessary. McKinsey & Company's Boris Ewenstein states that frequent performance coaching will motivate and inspire individuals. It is key to train managers to provide short, data-driven discussions that shape future performance instead of dwelling on past performance.

### *Key Points*

Some key points to consider include



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- separating duties that cannot be done remotely, such as those that must be performed on-site, and thus remote workers cannot be directly compared to on-site workers who have such duties.
- Managers of remote workers may require a more rigorous approach to communication and organization.
- Trust and accountability throughout the organization are essential for hybrid or pure remote work environments to be successful. Remote workers must interact with their colleagues beyond their usual work-related conversations to help establish and reinforce employee relationships.

## 12. Invest in Training and Coaching Managers

It is recommended to invest in additional training and coaching for team leads on managing remote workers. Specifically, they should learn how to establish and maintain communication norms, conduct more effective meetings, carry out performance appraisals, and foster a culture of transparency and trust. The role of the manager overseeing remote workers is to coach them on how to take on delegated tasks because direct control is not feasible (Hertel, Konradt, and Orlikowski, 2007). Managers must also identify potential team morale issues, such as employees feeling undervalued or neglected by the organization, and manage such perceptions by building a workplace culture and employment agreements. Even if the option to work remotely is part of the larger culture, the decision ultimately rests with the employee's manager or team lead.



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## Topic 3: Remote Transition Processes for Organizations

Companies are adopting new working models to reduce labor costs. Large organizations, in particular, have global offices to mitigate risks, take advantage of tax laws, lower capital costs, and attract talented employees in specific locations worldwide. With a workforce whose outputs rely mainly on thinking and writing, different management and organization methods can be employed.

However, certain companies may resist or limit virtual work arrangements, as they believe that the best solutions to complex problems stem from the interpersonal dynamics of co-located teams. Some companies have adopted remote work arrangements, but have later changed or amended their policies in an attempt to enhance performance and communication among team members. Examples of such companies include Yahoo, Reddit, and IBM. (Simons 2017) (Swisher 2013) (Quora 2014) (Valdellon 2015)

### 13.Types of remote teams

For the purpose of this report, we are considering four remote working models:

- 1.) a purely remote working team;
- 2.) a few individuals working remotely;
- 3.) separate remote functional teams in different locations; and
- 4.) multiple individual contributors working remotely for a central manager or team.

#### *A purely remotely working team*

This describes a team that operates without a physical central office and instead, all members work remotely from home or a shared working space. The team conducts regular meetings through video or phone chat sessions, including daily, weekly, and as-needed meetings. To communicate, the team relies heavily on tools such as instant messaging, texting, and group chat applications. To ensure the success of the team, it is crucial that information is transparent and accessible to all members. Successful teams also occasionally meet in person, typically on a quarterly or annual basis. Additionally, the team may hold informal video conferences on a weekly basis for socializing purposes.

#### *A few individuals working remotely*

This model describes a team where the majority of the members work on-site and only a small number of individuals work remotely. Meetings are usually held with the local participants present in a room and remote members joining via phone or video conferencing. The remote workers typically work from home or a shared workspace and use instant messaging, texting, and group chat for communication. However, email is often the preferred mode of communication. These remote workers are occasionally flown in for face-to-face interaction with the team.

#### *Distributed working teams:*

Virtual teams are commonly used in large organizations where project developers, sales and marketing, and customer support are located in different regions. Liaisons or local managers are responsible for managing the team members in different locations. Meetings are conducted primarily via conference calls



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and cross-functional communication occurs only when designated. There is usually no face-to-face interaction among team members.

*Multiple individual contributors:*

In this model, a small management team oversees a group of remote workers who work from various locations. All meetings are conducted through video conferencing, and the entire team rarely meets in person.

### 14. Advantages of Virtual Teams

- Save money
- Improve work-Life balance
- Fewer Distractions
- Increase productivity
- Avoid unnecessary meetings

### 15. Disadvantages of Virtual Teams

- Maintaining team alignment can be challenging
- Tracking progress can pose difficulties
- Communication can be more challenging
- Building team cohesion can be challenging

### 16. Work Readiness and preparation for remote work.

*Areas of Evaluation*

Start-up companies have numerous chances to adopt novel technologies, tools, and procedures that can enhance the efficiency and teamwork of their staff, manage, and reduce risks and security concerns, and considerably augment the company's capacity to operate proficiently in a remote environment. There are many models for assessing remote working readiness. An indicative one is that of "Toptal", that focuses in six areas essential to running a successful remote organization.

 <p><b>Hiring, Management, &amp; Engagement</b></p> <p>Hiring and retaining talent looks very different for a distributed workforce. Company leaders must be prepared to change the way they manage teams and track progress. A culture that values trust, autonomy, and diverse skillsets is critical.</p>	 <p><b>Remote Strategy &amp; Leadership</b></p> <p>For a remote company to succeed, leaders must be prepared to invest in a values-based culture that champions trust and transparency. To accomplish company objectives, alignment among leaders and teams is paramount.</p>	 <p><b>Communication &amp; Collaboration Tools</b></p> <p>Traditional technologies are designed for locally-based teams, but there are a variety of new tools and programs that enable seamless communication and collaboration among globally-distributed teams.</p>
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#### Technical Infrastructure

Leveraging the proper software is the foundation for successful technical teams. Whether it's using 3rd party software or custom in-house systems, implementing remote best practices for development, design, and management allows organizations to excel remotely.



#### Policies & Compliance

Having the right policies and procedures to operate remotely builds the foundation needed to accomplish business goals. With the right approach to mitigate risk, operating safely and securely outside location constraints is achievable.



#### Security & Privacy

Longterm success requires remote-specific considerations for security standards and privacy regulations. Customer and brand trust is established through risk avoidance designed for the remote workplace.

#### Remote Work Readiness Stages

The process for remote work readiness assessment, as described in the “Toptal” tool, includes four stages: *Beginning*: At the initial stage, companies have a plethora of chances to integrate novel technologies, tools, and procedures to enhance team productivity and collaboration, mitigate risk and security issues, and significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of remote work.

*Transitioning*: In the transitioning phase, companies may lack confidence in their ability to succeed in a remote work environment. While they have made some progress in adapting systems and processes for remote work, many aspects of their business still depend on physical proximity.

*Developing*: Companies in the developing stage demonstrate a degree of confidence and progress in their ability to excel in remote work. They may identify specific areas of opportunity to strengthen their remote work efforts, such as technology, tools, people, and operations.

*Thriving*: Companies in the thriving stage have a high level of confidence in their ability to work remotely and attribute their success to the adoption of suitable technologies, people and operations management, and a trust-based organizational culture. They recognize the potential for improvement in key areas such as remote leadership, communication, productivity, and risk management.

## 17. Remote Work Security

As remote work becomes more prevalent, companies need to take steps to protect their sensitive information and assets by implementing remote work security measures. Remote workers often use personal devices, public Wi-Fi networks, and cloud-based applications that may not have the same level of security as the company's internal network. This can increase the risk of cyber attacks, data breaches, and other security incidents. To address these risks, companies may adopt remote work security strategies such as:

- Using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to secure remote connections to company resources.
- Enforcing strong passwords and two-factor authentication for remote access to company resources.
- Providing company-owned devices or enforcing security standards on personal devices used for work.
- Implementing data encryption and access controls to prevent unauthorized access to sensitive data.
- Providing regular training to employees on remote work security best practices to help them avoid common cyber threats.

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### *Remote Work Security best practices*

In addition to these measures, remote work security best practices may also include:

- Using firewalls, antivirus, and intrusion detection/prevention systems to secure the company's network and devices used for remote work.
- Conducting regular security assessments and vulnerability testing to identify potential weaknesses and address them proactively.
- Enforcing strict access controls and limiting access to sensitive information based on the principle of least privilege.
- Encouraging employees to use secure communication tools, such as encrypted email, chat, and video conferencing platforms.
- Establishing a clear security policy that outlines remote work security guidelines, reporting procedures, and consequences for policy violations.
- Monitoring employee activity for signs of suspicious behavior, such as unusual login attempts or data transfers.
- Regularly backing up important data to a secure location to prevent loss in case of a security incident.

## Topic 4: Culture and Values for remote teams

### 18. Building a remote organizational culture.

#### *Manage for Equity, not Equality*

To ensure the success of an organization, it is essential to build teams with the best possible candidates that managers can hire. Since remote and onsite workers may have different roles to play in achieving success, it is important to create distinct job descriptions for remote workers that outline how and why the job can be performed remotely, and how their performance will be evaluated. Additionally, to prevent toxic behaviors like entitlement and jealousy from affecting team performance, managers should focus on the value of individual performance and team cohesion during performance discussions.

### 19. Recommendations for promoting a Remote Work Culture

The ALCF and CELS directorate have partially adopted remote work practices, as they have technical leads who manage developers remotely and individual contributors working from different parts of the world. To foster a successful work culture that includes remote workers and teams, the following three recommendations can be considered.

### 20. The role of culture in a remote working team.

A strong company culture is particularly important for remote teams because it serves several key functions, including:

- Articulating the mission and vision of the company, providing a clear sense of purpose and direction for employees.



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- Communicating the unique values and qualities that differentiate the company from its competitors, helping to build a sense of identity and pride among team members.
- Establishing standard procedures and guidelines for work, which can be especially important in remote environments where there may be less face-to-face interaction and more reliance on asynchronous communication.
- Fostering a sense of enthusiasm and commitment among employees, who are more likely to feel invested in the future success of the company if they feel a strong connection to its culture and values.

## 21. Adjust values to empower a remote working team

- Ensure that your culture initiatives are aligned with your company's values and goals.
- Allow for informal conversations during meetings to build relationships and strengthen team cohesion.
- Cultivate trust among team members through transparent communication, consistency, and reliability.
- Seek and incorporate feedback from employees to improve the team's performance and well-being.
- Schedule regular one-on-one meetings to provide individual attention and support to each team member.
- Establish clear and realistic goals and expectations for the team's work and progress.
- Acknowledge and reward employees for their achievements and contributions to the team's success.



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