# How to Successfully Manage Remote Workers

Managing telecommuting employees boils down to two essential ingredients: **connection and collaboration**. Managers must put in extra effort to cultivate a positive team dynamic and ensure remote workers feel connected to other colleagues. Here are some tips to approach this new structure proactively:

## START FROM THE TOP

The management team must be present in online tools and channels, communicating proactively and engaging in timely conversations where they are happening and knowing when to bring things to video chats. The key here is to **be available and personable**, just as you would be in real life. When the organization sees that the management team has gone comfortably digital, they will be ready to follow.

*A risk with remote work is that people start spending too much time online without natural transitions throughout the day, working unhealthily long hours. **Set a good example of going offline during non-work hours!***

## SET EXPECTATIONS

Just as you would in a traditional work setting, **establish clear expectations from the outset** of remote work, along with **offering supports and extra communication** as you both navigate the new structure. If applicable in your industry, ask your employee to set monthly and quarterly performance goals as well as targets for what 'hitting it out of the park' would mean. Then, just as you would with employees working down the hall, you should check in regularly on progress through an agreed-upon schedule.

**Your telecommuting policy expectations should include:**

- ✓ Time employees are required to be available - Usually during normal working hours.
- ✓ Email, phone call and follow-up response time - 30 mins to an hour is typical.
- ✓ Work deliverables and deadlines
- ✓ Dedicated space for work with little distractions (**test the videoconferencing before they try it with a client**; you don't want a pile of dirty laundry or barking dog to distract from their professionalism!)
- ✓ How often the employee will be allowed to telecommute

## USE THE RIGHT TOOLS, AND USE THEM ALL THE TIME

**Use every digital tool** you have available to facilitate communication. Connect over text messaging, Slack, email, video conferences. Use group chats as the backchannel during online meetings.

## ALLOW FOR INDIVIDUALITY

Some of your employees will love this; others won't. Some will adapt immediately to new technologies and ways of communication, and others will feel more isolated or left behind. **Allow space for employees to adapt and voice their preferences**, and try to meet them where they're at.

## Principles to Remember

- Get to know your remote reports on a personal level by reserving a few minutes during meetings and calls for casual workplace conversations
- Establish a schedule of communication both between you and your remote employee and between the remote employee and the rest of the team
- Use video technology to spark spontaneous interactions among your team members

**Want to talk this over with an EAP consultant?** Call our supervisor hotline at 888-392-0050.