Managing Remote Workers

Establish structured daily/weekly check-ins (Phone/Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.):

- Try to establish a daily/weekly check-in session as you would if you were in the office together, day one or as close to the start of the telework arrangement as possible.
- It is important that the check-in is regular and predictable. The meetings should be a time to consult and collaborate one-on-one or as a team.
- Regular shorter meetings are more effective than less frequent longer ones.

Provide several different communication technology options:

- Some employees may not have VPN access, so ensure those employees can complete their assigned duties. If not, a hybrid schedule would be more realistic to allow them some time in the office with access to the network.
- Be mindful of communication among team members. Ensure everyone is sharing information as needed.

Establish rules of engagement

- Remote work becomes more efficient and satisfying when managers set expectations.
- HR recommends that managers establish some "rules of engagement" with employees as soon as possible in a telework arraignment.
- The most important factor is that all employees share the same set of expectations for communication and poor performance should be addressed swiftly.
- The human element can sometimes get lost in emails, team chats and text messages. 55% of our communication comes from body language, be aware of this when communicating with your team and discuss openly with them for awareness.

Performance Management Process

- Supervisors need to be sure that each remote employee is self-disciplined – in control of their own productivity and comfortable working without a supervisor present. This trust should go both ways, and remote workers should also feel trusted to work from home.
- Structured and scheduled performance reviews (PMPs) are a time-tested way to evaluate employees should they be working in the office or at home.
- Providing regularly scheduled feedback can make working from home as productive as working in the office.
- Provide appreciative feedback on what they have done well and corrective feedback when they've gone off track.
- Use behavior statements versus personality statements. (He is lazy, but what does lazy look like?)
- Praise in public and correct in private.

Resources

Harvard Business Review – A Guide to Managing Your (Newly) Remote Workers
https://hbr.org/2020/03/a-guide-to-managing-your-newly-remote-workers

The Enterprisers Project: A community helping CIOs and IT leaders solve problems
https://enterprisersproject.com/article/2020/4/remote-teams-accountability

How to Manage Remote Teams – Challenges and Tips for Managing Remote Employees
https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Managing+Remote+Teams&&view=detail&mid=058B
E5F5A17B6911D44D058BE5F5A17B6911D44D&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3
Fq%3DManaging%2BRemote%2BTeams%26FORM%3DVDMHRS

The 6 Essential Skills for Effectively Managing Remote Teams
https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Managing+Remote+Teams&ru=%2fvideos%2fsearch%
3fq%3dManaging%2bRemote%2bTeams%26FORM%3dVDMHRS&view=detail&mid=2FC9F7ECB
C226803A5542FC9F7ECBC226803A554&&FORM=VDRVRV

Five Steps to Manage Performance Issues

1. Identify performance issues

As a manager, one of your responsibilities is to ensure that employees perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner according to their job specifications. To resolve many performance issues, additional training and coaching is usually sufficient. For employees experiencing stress, medical issues or other personal problems, additional assistance may be needed.

2. Observe behavior

If an employee's performance continues to decline, it may be indicative of personal difficulties. Initial signs that an employee is experiencing such issues may include: outbursts toward customers or co-workers, unexplained or unexcused absences, or poor attention to work details. Upon observing such behavior, meet with the employee. By addressing the situation immediately, there is a better chance of an effective resolution. If the employee shares any personal issues that may be affecting work performance, use the opportunity to suggest a referral to the EAP for assistance. This is an example of an informal referral.

3. Document facts

Good documentation will assist you in providing objective, factual information and will help identify patterns of deteriorating performance. Document only work-related issues, including attendance, conduct and work quality. Avoid personal opinions or third-party information.

4. Prepare to meet with the employee

The focus of the meeting should be on work performance. Work with your Human Resources department to develop an action plan to resolve the performance issues, including the consequences if performance does not improve. Examine all past documentation on the employee and try to evaluate how he or she will react based on past history. Remember that some people will react more forcefully than others. You can contact the EAP for a consultation prior to the meeting. GuidanceResources professional staff can serve as a sounding board, help you evaluate the action plan, offer new ideas and provide support.

5. Take action

During the meeting, be prepared to address your concerns and solutions. Using the six steps listed below, you can develop an outline to aid you during this discussion:

- Clearly describe the work performance issues you have identified.
- Outline behavioral changes, if any, that you have observed.
- Explain why this problem concerns you.
- Inform the employee of the consequences if work performance or conduct does not improve.
- Discuss all available supportive services, including the EAP, and suggest the employee make use of them.
- Express confidence in the employee's improvement and set a date for a follow-up discussion.

Eight Characteristics of Effective Managers and Supervisors

1. They take full responsibility for the productivity of the department and expect their employees to be fully accountable for their part in this productivity.
2. They like people and can communicate well.
3. They don't mind giving criticism of a constructive nature.
4. They give praise freely and when it's earned.
5. They are not intimidated by workers who tell them what they really think.
6. They seek new ideas and use them whenever possible.
7. They respect the knowledge and skill of the people who work for them.
8. They follow up to ensure goals, commitments and standards are being met.