



Working from home

Toolkit for managing remote working teams

Communicating Strategically

Be strategic about how and when you communicate

Employees who usually work in-house may feel cut off from the resources, information or relationships they need to do their jobs well, so plan to communicate frequently.

It is also important to make time to socialise, as it may be vital for people who need lots of interaction to keep their energy up.

Managers will have to be diligent about communicating productively - coaching high performance requires frequent conversations, and these will require planning as there won't be opportunities to have chance conversations as we do in onsite workplaces.

Your team needs to hear from you, especially as economic fears worsen, to maintain their trust in leadership. Keep the lines of communication open, honest and broad. Make it easy for your team members to know your thoughts and contribute their own.

Rules of thumb for communicating effectively with remote working teams

Below are some guidelines for communication based on a particular need:

Need	Recommendation
For addressing urgent and immediate needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phone calls to be used for items that require urgent and immediate attention.• Urgent information can be sent through email, but use phone calls or at least a text message to draw attention to the email.• If email or text message is being used to convey urgent information, include an explicit request for a response, so you know that your message has been received and the relevant team member is taking appropriate action.
Sensitive situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If a sensitive situation emerges – where you or someone else may have a strong reaction to something that took place- avoid email discussion.• Request a phone or video call to add greater depth to dialogue.• This should apply for both positive and negative news.• In the case of positive performance related feedback, once delivered over the phone, make sure you follow-up with an email to further cement their contribution onto the official record and will make it easier to do performance evaluations later.
Social connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use richer communication media for your work interactions, like video chats and phone calls.• Create a 'cameras on' culture during virtual team/individual meetings.• Interacting with you in real time where they can see your facial expressions or hear you laugh at a joke will be more rewarding than the same exchange on email and help keep them connected to you and the organisation.• Have regular contact via email or phone calls even if there is no pressing business to discuss.• A regular five minute check-in can provide a strong foundation for the relationships you will need to manage.

Provide managerial accessibility

A best practice for managing remote teams is to designate times when you are regularly available to virtual team members through virtual office hours or by connecting with each employee daily.

You could also share your calendar to inform employees when you are available to talk.