THE GUIDE TO

MANAGING A REMOTE TEAM

GMS
Simpler. Safer. Stronger.

TABLE OF
CONTENTS

> " In 2019, fewer than six percent of Americans worked primarily from home.
>
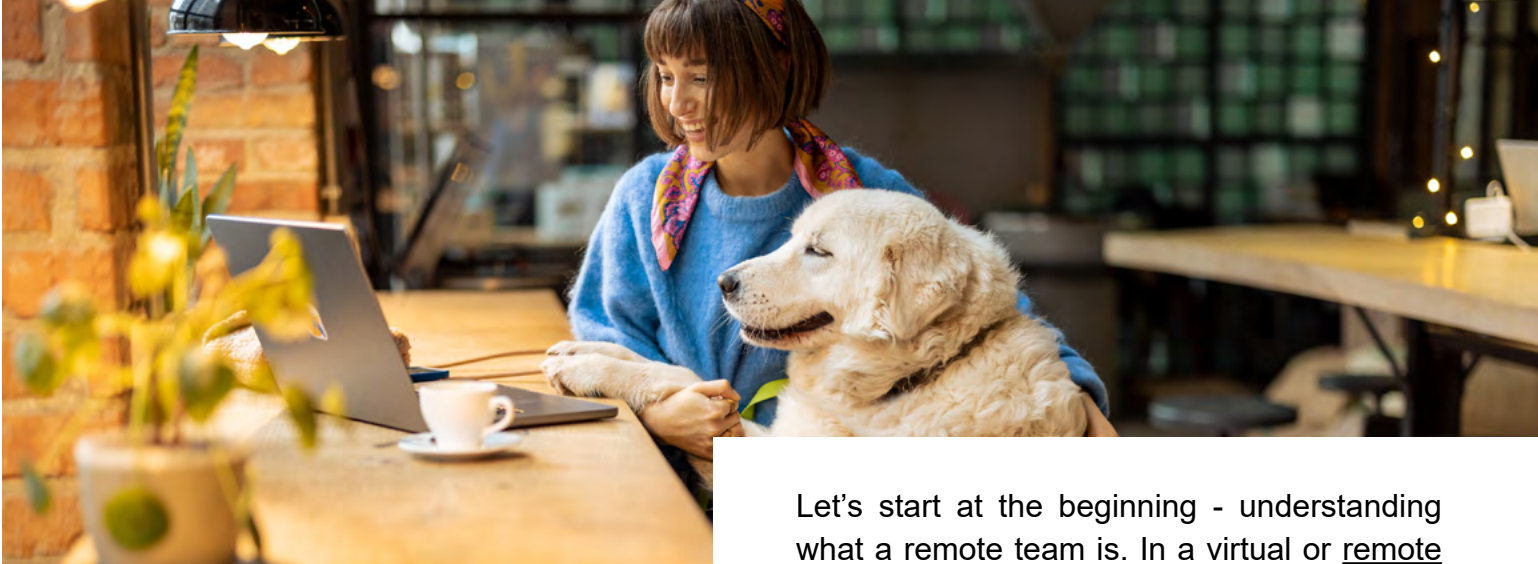> Now, 71% are working from home full-time or part of the time. "
>
> *NCCI*

WHAT IS A
REMOTE TEAM?

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced businesses to shut down, affecting individuals worldwide. The abrupt closure of businesses ushered in a new way of doing work, working from home. In no time, employees across the country quickly decided their opinions on remote work – some realized they wanted the socialization and routine of being in the office. Others flourished with the new-found flexibility and lack of commute. And, somewhere in the middle lie those who prefer a hybrid model, or the mix of both at-home and in-office. Research shows that in 2019, fewer than six percent of Americans worked primarily from home. Now, 71% are working from home full-time or part of the time.
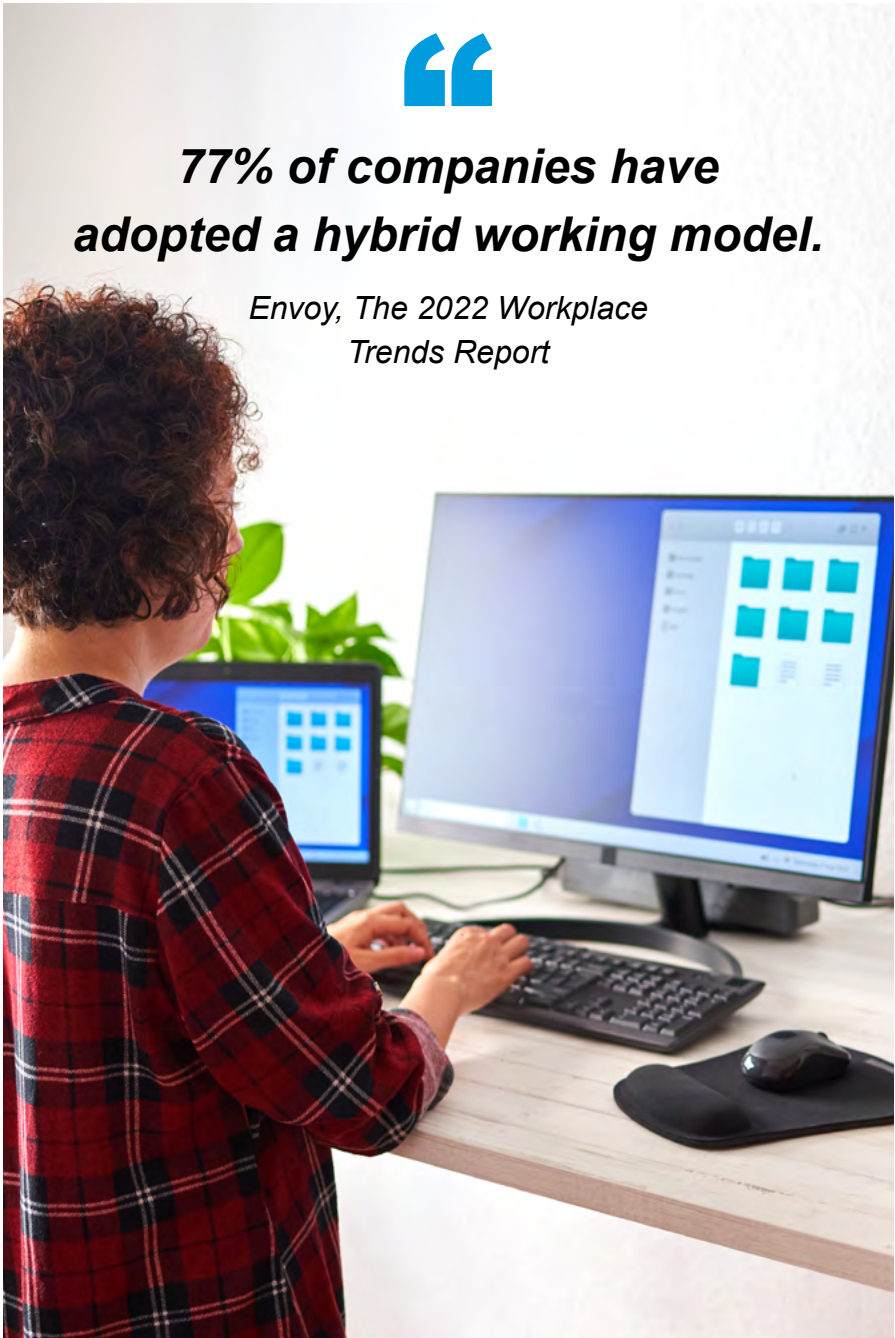
On the tail end of the pandemic, most businesses have now implemented a return-to-work plan or other post-pandemic model. After all, now that the workforce has become acquainted with the work from home life, many are fighting to give up that right. They know it's now possible to work remotely, and are certainly enjoying it, so why would they come back to the office? Throughout this guide, we make it easy for you to manage your remote team more effectively.

> **77% of companies have adopted a hybrid working model.**
>
> *Envoy, The 2022 Workplace Trends Report*

Let's start at the beginning - understanding what a remote team is. In a virtual or remote team, members share responsibilities for the accomplishment of defined objectives and work from a variety of stationary, mobile, and/or remote workspaces. It's typically a group of professionals working together from various time zones with diverse skills and different cultures. While the concept of remote work has been around for many years, it became the new way of work when businesses were forced to shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic. Simply put, it's the exact same work and make up of what many do in the office, but now they are spread out in many different locations, even across different countries!

Currently, the most common form of remote work is a hybrid work schedule. Hybrid work is a flexible approach that combines working in an office environment and working from home. It ultimately allows your employees to choose how and where they work – providing independence to employees by establishing their work week in a way that best suits them and your company policies.

Hybrid work is an excellent way to drive productivity and employee engagement at work. Seventy-seven percent of businesses already have a hybrid work model in place. Whether you've been implementing this type of work or are just starting, you should know the benefits and challenges you will face and how you will overcome these challenges.

HIRING REMOTE
WORKERS

A <u>survey</u> showed that 65% of respondents want to work remotely full-time, while 32% want a hybrid work environment. In addition, younger generations, having been forced into a remote work lifestyle, now look for that benefit during their job search. Hiring, onboarding, training, and managing your remote workers is different than managing a team on-site. Having a plan in place is essential to the success of you and your team. Luckily, we've made it simple and have provided a step-by-step process that makes your job easier.

Consider implementing the following steps in your hiring process for remote workers:

Step 01

Figure out what you're looking for in a remote employee

Whether you're looking to hire one employee or a handful, this will always be the most important step. Determine what qualities or skills you want your ideal candidate to possess.

Utilize the following considerations for evaluating remote employees in relation to:

- Culture fit
- Collaboration skills
- Self-motivation
- Communication skills
- Time management
- Adaptability

Different positions may require different skills, therefore, this list could change.

Step 02

Write an enticing job description

When writing a job description for a remote position, you want to include as much information as possible. Ensure you clearly express that this is a fully-remote position (or a hybrid position). Whatever the working situation is for that role, include key terms to identify the position as remote such as remote job, virtual job, work remotely, and work from anywhere. This will help attract self-motivated, organized, and adaptable remote workers.

Include the following in your job postings:

- Define remote or flexible work
- Clarify the location
- Position details and required skills
- Salary range
- Stipend to cover the cost of a remote workstation (if applicable)
- Travel requirements (if applicable)
- Company summary

Step 03

Promote the job

As you already know, virtual jobs are a hot topic in today's society. So, you won't have many problems attracting candidates. However, how can you set yourself apart from your competitors and attract top talent? Consider partnering with platforms such as Glassdoor, LinkedIn, and Indeed.

You can also promote job positions specifically for remote workers with the following resources:

- FlexJobs
- Working Nomads
- Remote.co
- WeWorkRemotely
- Remotive

Step 04 ——

Be transparent

From the very beginning, ensure you're transparent with your candidates. Being transparent about your company's mission and expectations from your employees is an excellent start to the employer-employee relationship. This is when you'll state what their hours are, the expectations, paid time off policies, and anything else they must know.

Step 05 ——

Prioritize collaborative hiring

What better way to show your company culture than having a current team member set up a call with the candidate? The candidate can ask your team members questions they may feel hesitant to ask you. This technique allows you to get a deeper understanding of the candidates. In addition, this approach allows your employees to get involved in the core operations and makes them feel valued.

At the end of the day, hiring remote workers takes more planning than the typical hiring process. Every step must be well thought out. The last thing you want is to hire someone that wasn't fit for the job because you rushed through the hiring process. It takes time to figure out what works best for you, but you'll get there.

EXTENDING THE
JOB OFFER

Once you've discovered the best candidate for your position, you'll want to extend an offer by calling them. If they don't answer and you receive their voicemail, leave a detailed message stating that you need to speak with them and let them call you back. Do not extend the job offer by leaving a message.

Once you've reached your candidate on the phone, you'll want to acknowledge the following:

- Official job title
- Working hours with time zones (be specific since they're remote)
- Compensation
- Start date
- PTO policy

After a verbal acceptance, be sure to send the candidate a written offer within 48 hours. The written offer should include the details listed above, along with their benefits, travel requirements (if applicable), instructions for performing a background check, and a date the candidate is expected to sign by. This ensures the candidate is serious and wants the job just as much as you want to hire them.
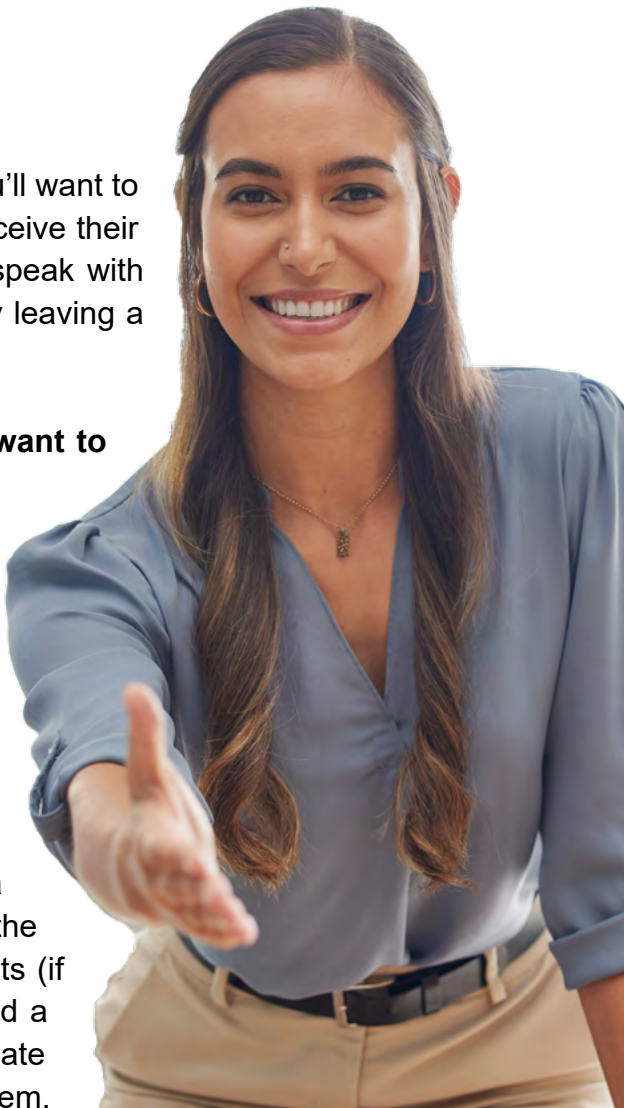
> **"**
> *Job seekers who apply for 21 to 80 jobs have the highest probability of receiving a job offer.*
>
> *Zippia*

ONBOARDING YOUR
REMOTE TEAM

Now the challenging part – the onboarding process. Onboarding plays an essential role in your new hire's success. In addition, it's important to have an onboarding process that's effective since remote workers don't have as many opportunities to integrate your company's processes and culture compared to on-site employees. As their manager, ensure they have all the resources in order to succeed in their new role.

To create an effective onboarding process, consider the following practices:

- Start early
- Get employees online and set up as soon as you can
- Provide a digital employee handbook
- Create a sense of belonging
- Provide an individualized remote onboarding plan with video check-ins and goals
- Initiate professional development and personal growth from the start
- Encourage collaborative learning
- Check in regularly

> **"**
> *More than 93% of employers believe that onboarding plays a critical role in an employee's decision to stay or leave the company.*
>
> *CareerBuilder*

Experts show that more than half of employees have reported experiencing mishaps such as not having the right technology, missing instructions, and more throughout their onboarding experience. While no business is perfect, and we're all going to make mistakes from time to time, your job is to make the onboarding process as seamless as possible. Start planning early and ensure your team members know you're there to help if they have any questions. The onboarding process is just the beginning of an ongoing developmental foundation that should continue to strengthen your employees' cultural alignment, relationships within your team, and performance in their new roles.

HOW TO MANAGE REMOTE
TEAMS EFFECTIVELY

If you're a manager and are new to managing a remote team, you can attest that it can be challenging. Fear no more. We've made it easy for you to virtually manage your team more effectively.

To be successful, guarantee you have systems in place to do the following:

Facilitate better communication:

- Consider holding virtual meetings
- Share your calendar so your teammates can see your availability for discussions
- Utilize communication applications such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom
- Provide agendas prior to meetings

Streamline work processes:

- Set daily goals
- Create constant communication between colleagues
- Utilize resources such as Microsoft Teams, Zoho, Calendly, and so much more

Enhance engagement among your team members:

- Prioritize communication
- Recognize good work
- Demonstrate a collaborative culture
- Encourage work/life balance
- Host virtual meetings and casual hangouts
- Ensure your employees feel heard
- Strengthen personal connections
- Foster company culture

Maintain accountability:

- Set clear expectations around communication
- Maintain clear goals that foster accountability
- Monitor employee engagement, not productivity
- Set aside time for regular check-ins
- Lead with transparency
- Empower employees to manage their lives, work, and wellbeing

When all is said and done, there are additional steps you can take to ensure a productive remote team. It's essential to remember that managing your remote team requires a different skill set than managing one in an office setting. Don't be too hard on yourself, as you aren't alone, and this is an adjustment for many managers. Ultimately, ensure you establish a sense of trust when managing your team remotely that balances holding them accountable and being understanding. From a survey, 94% of employers stated that work productivity was the same or even higher since employees started working from home. Use that as an encouragement to trust your team.

" *30% of individuals are more productive and engaged while working from home.*
Becker Friedman Institute for Economics

COMMON CHALLENGES WITH
A REMOTE TEAM

While all of this sounds straightforward and relatively simple to implement, simple doesn't equate to easy. Seventy percent of employers found it challenging to adapt to remote work as a way of doing business. Since most employees were forced to work from home at some point during the pandemic, you understand what it's like firsthand to work from home and the distractions you're faced with. Whether you have a dog, children, or perhaps a significant other working from home, these distractions can add up throughout the day.

The following are common challenges that are presented when managing a remote team:

- Collaborating on projects
- Supporting each other
- Maintaining transparency
- Virtual team-building activities
- Setting individual and group goals

- Optimizing meetings
- Lowering productivity in some cases
- Establishing daily or weekly check-ins
- Helping create a great work environment
- Giving your team greater autonomy

Other common challenges when managing a remote team include:

- Creating opportunities for social connection
- Lacking face-to-face supervision
  - Make it a rule that all employees must have cameras and microphones on during meetings to emulate an in-person experience
- Investing in remote communication tools and teaching best practices
- Different time zones
  - Understanding the impact of being in multiple time zones
  - Scheduling meetings during times everyone can attend
  - Knowing your remote team's working hours
- Social isolation
  - Hosting 'virtual hangouts'
  - If you are close in location, consider meeting with team members once a month to make them feel like they aren't alone
- Project management
  - Perhaps you have your employees send weekly reports at the end of the week to check in on what they were doing throughout the week. This holds them accountable to get their work completed. Using a project management software, like Monday.com, enables efficiency between you and your team.

While all these challenges should be thought about, the most important one to consider is communication. Good communication has always been the main driver of effective management. Managing a remote team, however, calls for enhanced communication skills to ensure all team members feel connected and motivated. Always follow up with team members to understand any challenges they may face, which ultimately helps you lead and set an example for your team.

> "
> **70% of employers initially found it difficult to adapt to remote work as a way of doing business.**
>
> *SHRM*

CHECKLIST FOR MANAGING
A REMOTE TEAM

We've made it easy for you to begin a more seamless process of managing your remote team with a checklist to ensure you hit all points.

Have you provided your team with their working hours?

It's essential to clearly establish the time your employees are expected to work. Include the time slot for lunch and breaks (if applicable). Will you have strict 9-5 hours, or are you a global organization that has to work around time zone differences, allowing employees to work when best fit their needs.

Have you set up clear responsibilities and expectations?

Every team member must understand their responsibilities. The more your employees understand their duties and expectations, the more productive your team will be. As the manager, you'll be able to hold your team more accountable for their actions.

Have you determined time off policies?

You must set up a clear remote work policy that addresses holidays, breaks, vacations, and sick days.

Are meetings arranged in advance?

From the start, determine how often, when, and where meetings should be held. If you are all local to each other, have in-person meetings at a coffee shop for your team to discuss what's happening once a month. Or plan your bi-weekly meetings for each employee on a specific day and time each week.

Do you have a plan in place for effective communication?

Do you have software in place where your team members can communicate? Email is a great way to communicate, and we all have cell phones that can be used as well, but have you thought about using more secure and faster software? There are a variety of options available to you. Microsoft Teams is a great starting point and is used in many businesses.

Do you have shared values and goals clearly stated?

In order for your team to be on the same page and move in the same direction, you must have a set of shared values and goals. Company culture effectively motivates employees; however, having a remote team makes it challenging to experience that company culture. Employees who feel like they're a part of a team and have values that align with the organization are more likely to stay with the company. Knowing that, be sure you schedule outings with your team. If you can't come together in person, find ways to get together virtually. Host a virtual happy hour over Zoom or host virtual celebrations for team wins.

Do your employees have the support they need?

While letting your employees know that you're there for them is essential for your team's success, ensuring they have the proper technology and set up in their homes is also important. Is their working environment productive? Do they have two monitors to be more efficient? Do they have a desk? Do they have a headset if that's a necessity for their job?

CONSIDER PARTNERING
WITH GMS

We understand how challenging it can be to manage a team, let alone a remote team. Fortunately, when you partner with GMS, we provide you with the resources essential for your team's success. From helping you create or update an employee handbook that clearly states expectations and policies to providing you with a learning management system, we've got you covered.

In addition, if you have remote workers in states other than where your business is located, tax and payroll can be challenging. It's essential you understand the varying state laws on taxes and the obligations you have. GMS helps ease that process to ensure you remain compliant.

Alongside this, your remote employees still want access to a competitive benefits package. Even though they work from home, they still earn and deserve paid time off, medical and wellness benefits, and more. GMS provides business owners with a customized benefits package to provide to their employees.

The last thing you want is for your team to fall apart because you weren't provided with resources to help during these unprecedented times. If you don't already provide your employees with the ability to work from home but plan on it, we will work with you to set up a system to ensure everyone makes the most out of their day.

GMS
Simpler. Safer. Stronger.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

LET'S GET STARTED »