

How Companies Can Set Employees Up for Success When Working from Home

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As governments pass stringent social distancing restrictions and corporations request employees to work from home in order to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, business as usual is no longer usual.

More than half (52.2%) of US business professionals surveyed by communication platform **Fishbowl** said their workplace has restricted travel or encouraged remote work due to the coronavirus. An industry breakdown found that travel and remote work policies varied across sectors: Within advertising, 63% noted a change in procedures, 59% in accounting, 51% in consulting and 46% in law.

US Business Professionals* Who Have Experienced Workplace Restrictions due to the Coronavirus, by Industry, March 2020

% of respondents in each group



*Note: restrictions include restricted travel or remote work; *users of the Fishbowl social network app*

Source: Fishbowl as cited in company blog, March 15, 2020

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(Note that this survey was conducted via the Fishbowl app between March 11-12, 2020, nearly a week ago. Given how rapidly the situation is progressing worldwide, it's likely that this percentage has increased since then.)

We have noted several articles, including [this piece from our parent company Business Insider](#), with tips for employees who are working from home, including setting up a desk space, taking breaks for mental health and getting dressed in the morning.

But companies should consider several factors to ensure employees feel supported and enabled during this time. These corporate best practices are laid out in full detail in our report, "[Digital Transformation: How Collaboration Tools and Strategies Can Align Organizations with Business Objectives](#)," but here are some quick tips.

Give Employees the Right Tools

First, employees need access to all of the necessary tools, systems and assets while working at home. It is essential to ask employees what their setup is at home and offer to provide them with the appropriate technology when applicable.

At a broader level, collaboration tools can support remote work by virtually connecting employees. In our report, we outlined six types of collaboration tools that can help align teams across the company and foster better communication. During a period of remote work, these tools—if your company hasn't already adopted them—can help ease the burden of transition on your workforce. These include:

- **Messaging:** used for instantaneous communication
- **Project Management:** designed to support team-based initiatives and facilitate more transparent workflow tracking
- **Intranet:** centralizes all pertinent company knowledge in one accessible library
- **Internal Social Networks:** allow employees to socialize in an online forum

- **Videoconferencing:** connects employees working remotely or in different regions
- **Employee Databases:** searchable the database to find co-workers with specific skills, interests or job responsibilities

These tools must be cloud-based, with mobile accessibility and should integrate into the existing tools used for work in order to make the most of the capabilities from these platforms.

Companies also must ensure that all employees are adopting the same tool and using it in the appropriate way. For example, if the company doesn't mandate which messaging tool to use, employees could end up using several tools which can make collaboration and communication more difficult.

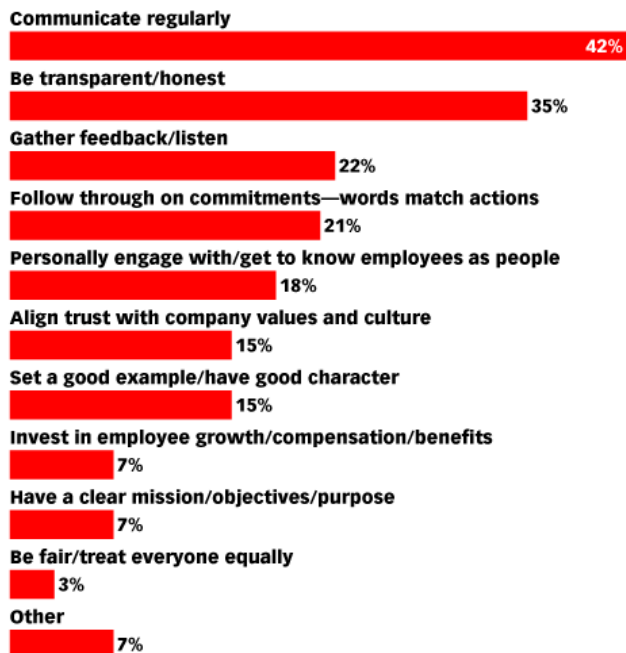
Communication

Companies must realize that their customers aren't the only people worried about the constantly changing nature of the outbreak. Employees are also critical stakeholders who have their own concerns about the impact of COVID-19 in the long term.

To eliminate anxiety about job security and working through this pandemic, constant and honest communication is key. This means taking the time to update employees—even, and especially, when working remotely—on what actions the company is taking on a regular basis. It is better to over communicate: In fact, when looking to build and maintain employee trust, 42% of CEOs worldwide said that communicating regularly is important, according to November 2019 polling from global leadership community [YPO](#). More than a third (35%) noted that being transparent and honest is also crucial.

What Are the Most Important Actions CEOs Worldwide Take to Build/Maintain Employee Trust Within Their Business?

% of respondents, Nov 2019



Note: n=2,016

Source: YPO, "2020 Global Pulse Survey on Trust," Jan 14, 2020

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How an organization responds to and addresses any crises or issues can also contribute to a company's reputation, according to 58% of executives worldwide surveyed by [Weber Shandwick](#) in August 2019. That same study also found that for 56% of respondents, how the company communicates with its employees can contribute to its reputation.

Marketing and Communications Factors that Contribute to a Company's Reputation According to Executives Worldwide, Aug 2019

% of respondents



Note: respondents selected 8-10 on a 10-point scale where 10=contributes a great deal

Source: Weber Shandwick, "The State of Corporate Reputation in 2020: Everything Matters Now" in partnership with KRC Research, Jan 14, 2020

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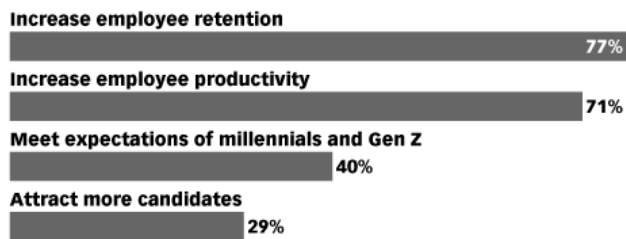
Leadership shouldn't only be transparent about how company policies are changing during this time, but should also set clear expectations for employees. Will new work from home policies impact workload? Will it change daily hours? Or will it leave certain team members vulnerable? How can parents with children at home because of school closures get the support and flexibility they might need? Giving employees answers to these hard questions as the situation progresses will alleviate potential stress and allow them to continue to produce good work, even with limitations.

Enablement and Training

As remote work becomes the new normal for many companies for the foreseeable future, it is important to consider what the employee experience will be like during this time. During regular circumstances, 71% of companies invest in the employee experience because it helps increase employee productivity, according to a September 2019 survey of talent professionals and hiring managers worldwide conducted by [LinkedIn](#).

Reasons that Companies Invest in Employee Experience According to Talent Professionals and Hiring Managers Worldwide, Sep 2019

% of respondents



Source: LinkedIn, "2020 Global Talent Trends," Jan 22, 2020

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This shouldn't change during a crisis or when all employees are working from home. In fact, a solid employee experience is needed now more than ever. Some things a company should consider are: If employees are working with new collaboration tools, will they need training in order to employ that tool? If large meetings are still taking place virtually, what are some new practices that can be used to make those meetings productive? Is it possible to have virtual employee programs to create a sense of community and still promote a tangible company culture over digital platforms?

Ultimately, despite the constantly evolving nature of the current situation, employers can take many measures to safeguard the wellness of their employees, protect the productivity of their companies and provide reassurance and stability to workers.

For more insight into how collaboration tools and strategies can align organizations with business objectives, eMarketer PRO subscribers can read our report:

Report by Jillian Ryan Mar 19, 2020

Collaboration Tools to Connect Your Teams

COLLABORATION TOOLS TO CONNECT YOUR TEAMS

How Collaboration Tools and
Strategies Can Align Organizations
with Business Objectives

March 19, 2020
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