

Member's Quarterly

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President's Message

Remote Work: How's It Working for You?

Getting results in this new environment

There are numerous advantages for both employees and the employer when it comes to remote work. Do you really know if your employees are actually working? Are they all working to their full potential? I am not saying they're not. I am merely asking the question.

One quick check is output. Are they completing their assigned work correctly and on time? That's a pretty good gauge. Are they really working all of the hours that you are paying them to be on duty for you? If they were in the office and completed their regular work, wouldn't you assign them more? Again, just asking.

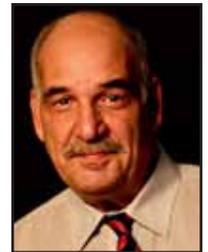
I'm not the only one asking these questions. Some studies suggest that employees are generally more productive working remotely. Mostly, this is because they control their environment. However, this is only true if they have a dedicated workspace and minimal outside distractions. What happens if they have two young children and a dog running around them? In that scenario, they are likely not as productive as being in the office.

How can you determine how productive your employees are while they work remotely? Forbes magazine did an article on this issue. Joseph Folman and Jack Zenger examined a dataset of 9,755 individual contributors to look at identifying behaviours that indicate employees are being productive. The behaviours include: takes initiative, delivers consistent results, displays good judgement, walks the talk and willing to take on more.

That is not a bad set of indicators. But unless you monitor and follow up, they are only signals and not results. It looks like remote and hybrid working arrangements are here to stay for many traditional office workers. Our challenge as managers is to make sure they are happy and supported to do that. We also must make sure that the organization gets its money's worth.

To accomplish this, you need a plan. This may include sharing your expectations as candidly as possible, offering regular opportunities for two-way feedback and monitoring your employees' work the same as if they were sitting down the hall from you. You can build in some reporting pieces like end of day or weekly reports on their activities and some spot checks if you feel it might be necessary for some employees.

It's a new world out there in the virtual workplace of the future. In any case, you still have to work if you want to get paid. There's an old proverb that comes to mind. "No bees, no honey. No work, no money." True in whatever space you work in.



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