

# Overcoming Business Challenges



## The Challenge: Dispersed Workforce

Managing employees who are scattered from sea to shining sea and beyond can pose several challenges. However, it can also yield extremely beneficial results in all facets of your business, which is why many companies are taking on this challenge.

Global Workplace Analytics has identified numerous reasons to allow remote work options in your organization, whether employees are teleworking full-time or part-time. Here's a snapshot of those benefits:



Higher Employee Satisfaction



Reduced turnover



Reduced absenteeism



More productive meetings



Saves employers money



Easier to scale up



Environmentally friendly



Larger talent pool available

Many of the most talented employees are looking for flexible work options, including the ability to work from anywhere in the world. The key to attracting and retaining those talented employees is having a handle on how to manage a remote workforce well.



Remote employees need to know they're not on an island – managers must strike a balance of engaging them emotionally and intellectually in the company's mission, while offering the trust and independence that allows them to be high performers.



*MORE THAN*  
**TWO-THIRDS**

OF EMPLOYERS REPORT  
**INCREASED**  
**PRODUCTIVITY**  
AMONG THEIR  
**TELECOMMUTERS**

From 2005 to 2016, telecommuting grew by **103%**



- Global Workplace Analytics

This guide outlines some of the top challenges of managing a dispersed workforce, and how leaders can turn remote work into a highly beneficial way of doing business.

## Clear Communication

Not meeting face to face leaves a lot of room for miscommunication – you'll want to err on the side of overcommunicating so nothing falls through the cyberspace cracks.

With so many tools available for online communication, make sure to get everyone on the same page for the best way to use each one:



Email should stay reserved for short, objective exchanges of information



Get on Skype for longer, detailed conversations and regular check-ins



Phone calls also work for longer conversations if Skype isn't an option



Chat platforms are best for general, more informal group discussions or messages

Managers should be sure to have Skype meetings with remote employees at least once a week, to ensure expectations are clear for tasks, objectives, goals, processes and reporting. If there are any issues with performance, it's important to first ensure expectations were crystal clear.

Recording meetings is highly recommended, so anyone can listen back to the conversation and clarify what they think they heard.

Giving each team member a bird's eye view of how their everyday tasks fit into the company's mission will help them become invested and engaged in what you're out to accomplish together. Try using a visual platform that allows you to easily update goals and progress for the entire team to see.

***Despite being physically dispersed,  
your remote team can be completely  
unified on the path to seeing its  
vision through to success.***

## Collaborative Relationships

Another tough aspect of engaging a dispersed workforce is building strong relationships with the team. If a remote employee feels they are only there to report to "the man" and check tasks off a list, they won't develop trust with managers or loyalty to the company.

Don't leave your remote employees on an island. Even if they are literally on an island, they shouldn't be metaphorically!



Since you'll be meeting on a regular basis, make sure to factor in some time at the beginning for informal conversation, rather than diving straight into the agenda. This gives employees the chance to learn a little about each other and be more comfortable in work discussions.

Remember that chat platform we mentioned using for informal conversations? Consider that your team's online watercooler by adding some channels where the team can have fun discussions.

You can also try hosting knowledge-sharing sessions. Let your remote employees show off their favorite skills or hobbies with the whole team in an online demonstration or discussion.

***To build open communication among your team, you need to have trust.***

Building trust with remote employees means asking them for feedback on your management style and methods. It means empowering employees to be self-motivated and not micromanaging them along the way.

Give remote employees the tools and space to build rapport with each other and you'll start to see the trust factor underpinning each discussion, allowing innovative collaboration to flow freely.

# Mobile Cybersecurity

No matter how much you trust your remote employees, you should have a plan for the security of all those mobile devices connected to your company's network.

Cybersecurity training should be part of your onboarding process to ensure remote employees know how to securely access company data and keep it protected. IT departments can't be left up to the challenge alone – cybersecurity is a necessary training topic for every employee.

**RECOMMENDED RESOURCE:** Learn how your company can protect itself against cyber breaches in this article:



Any and all communication between a remote device and a company or cloud-based system should be encrypted – some organizations like HIPAA and FINRA require encryption for compliance.

Your remote employees can have Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) set up on their devices for encrypted access to shared networks. VPNs are simple to set up and provide that needed layer of security.

## Deliver Training

Whether your employees are onsite or working remotely, they need training – but does it need to look different for each of those groups? Nope! Today's solutions for employee training are more effective than ever, and they don't require physical presence to learn.

**Increase your remote employees' engagement, knowledge and leadership potential by providing online, video-based training.**



Video has been proven as the most effective way to engage employees in training, especially when it's bite-sized. On-demand microvideos allow employees to fit training in throughout their workday, and find exactly what they're looking for when they need it. It's also a great way to ensure that training is delivered timely and consistently across the company.

When it comes to compliance, utilizing a learning management system will allow you to keep track of your remote workers' training progress, and administer quizzes and other forms of learning-reinforcement that ensure knowledge transfer.

Social learning is also a huge part of the overall learning experience. Facilitating learning among peers deepens the knowledge transfer, and providing an online space to collaborate in this way can prove invaluable to a business.

Finding top talent is hard enough! Don't give them a reason to seek employment elsewhere.



Today's employees **value** development opportunities **more than** traditional perks.

By making high-quality video training available to all of your employees, you can foster the skills that you both need to see success in the marketplace.

## Recommended Resources



Why Invest In  
Online Employee Training



Episode 37: Training a Dispersed  
and Virtual Workforce



Engaging and Managing  
Remote Employees



The Long-Distance Leader -  
Strategies for Successfully  
Leading Remote Teams

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