

STAR UPDATE

MONTHLY INSIGHTS FROM THE **MRINETWORK** TEAM OF STAFFING PROFESSIONALS, TALENT ADVISORS & RECRUITMENT EXPERTS

Preserving Company Culture in a Remote World of Work

For many businesses, working the “9-to-5” in a centralized office is a thing of the past — at least for the time being. Even when you and your people are able to physically return to your workplaces, you’ll most likely find that practices such as working remotely continue in some form.

“Adapting your company culture to effectively support remote work is one of the most important things you can do to set your company up for work-from-home success or just for the future of work in general,” says Nancy Halverson, SVP Global Operations at **MRINetwork**. “With proper planning and execution, you can leverage remote work as an integral part of your business strategy.”

Halverson notes that one of the dangers inherent in remote work is the loss of employee connection. People can feel isolated and out of touch with the company culture and values. She advocates taking proactive steps that not only prevent that from happening, but also strengthen and enhance your employees’ alignment with your culture and values.

Establish a results-oriented environment. Creating and communicating clear objectives and key performance indicators for your team members to achieve is critical to a productive remote culture. They must clearly understand what the expectations for success include and have the tools to track and report their productivity. Even if you can’t be physically present, you can stay close through consistent communication and encouragement. Discuss work styles, resources and support needs to determine how you can empower individuals to be more autonomous.

Be inclusive. Successful cultures involve the collaboration of all stakeholders working together to determine their shared values and ideals. This can be difficult for remote teams. “Going to an office provides many opportunities for

people to come together and create the type of working environment they want,” says Halverson. “For remote teams, those opportunities are fewer because of factors like different time zones, no physical presence and interactions dictated by technology.” That means remote teams must be deliberate about inclusivity. Schedule regular time for co-workers to chat, get the team together in the same location when you can, support multiple channels of communication and encourage group work and collaboration.

Support your employees’ health and well-being.

Employees who don’t normally work from home may be thrown off their routines. When kids are home, things are even more complicated. It takes time to build healthy routines up again in a different environment. You can help employees by encouraging them to practice healthier behaviors. Encourage senior leadership to share what they’re doing to stay healthy while working from home. Check in with your employees often. Ask how they’re doing. During a time of increased stress, co-workers can provide support and make them feel less alone.

Look for signs that your culture is healthy. Even if your employees aren’t coming into the office, you can take note of the way they act in videoconferencing meetings. Do they seem happy? Are they engaged? Are you picking up signs of discontent? When your team members are truly committed to your values, they do good work that reflects their loyalty to the company. You can see it when they propose ideas or offer solutions, demonstrating their desire to give back to an organization that is supportive of them. “You’ll also get positive feedback and referrals from clients and vendors,” says Halverson, “or job candidates may refer to your culture as a reason for wanting to work for your company.”

You may ultimately find that you have happier employees due to their flexible work environment. It takes time and conscious effort to build out the processes, structure, and culture needed to accommodate remote workers. As more of the world makes this transition, it also provides opportunities for organizations to adapt and evolve as they embrace the new world of work.