

STAR UPDATE

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

Manage the Work, Not the People

As millions of Americans now work remotely, managers unaccustomed to supervising employees from afar face new challenges in leading and evaluating their team's performance. Traditional management styles prior to this new World of Work emphasized the need to manage employees effectively to get the best results. Today, however, the emphasis has shifted to managing the work rather than the people in order to get the best results from a remote workforce.

"The key to this approach is to leave people alone and let them work," says Nancy Halverson, Senior VP of Global Operations at **MRINetwork**. "Tell your team about the big vision and ask how it might be accomplished. This brings your remote team closer together and encourages additional interaction. Then let them go do it. The most important metric to consider is results."

Halverson offers the following advice on successfully managing for productivity:

Focus on the endpoint. "It's critical that you set clear expectations and focus on the results you want as opposed to managing the process that gets you there," she says. "Get rid of time-suckers and distractions like long meetings and unnecessary updates. Make sure that everyone knows exactly what's expected of them. Trying to manage remote workers as if they were still together in the office is counterproductive."

Provide employees with the best equipment and tools. This allows them to do their best work from anywhere. "That includes providing high-quality monitors and headphones and ensuring meetings are set up for participation regardless of location," says Halverson. "If you have people who continue to come into the office,

they need places to conduct video-conferencing that ensure the best experience for virtual attendees."

Schedule regular check-ins. Once you've set clear expectations for work assignments, it's important to regularly touch base with remote workers to make sure they have the resources they need and are on target to hit their goals. "Don't micromanage them or give the impression that you are constantly monitoring them to see if they're working," says Halverson. "You'll know from the results they produce how they're doing. And always encourage them to bring up challenges or problems they're having before they become insurmountable."

Introduce redundancy. Halverson believes that the current situation is an opportunity for employers to upskill their workforces. "You may have had to furlough people, and now you need to figure out who's going to pick up the slack," she says. "You may be surprised at how willing your team is to take on new roles or to train for new skills. Problem solving on this level changes the relationship you have with your employees. You become partners committed to the same goals."

"What's basic here is trust between employer and employee," says Halverson. "Even in a traditional workplace there's no way to completely prevent the misuse of time. But, as shown by productivity gains, most people do what's expected of them – and more. Believe in your people and let them share in the responsibility for moving your company forward, whether they're at the office or at home."