

Perspectives Tip Sheet: Remote Employees

Checklist: 5 Ways to Support Remote Employees

Providing remote-work options can ensure that your organization continues to move forward, even in the extreme circumstances of the coronavirus crisis. With this checklist, you can confirm you have the right policies and practices in place. Keep in mind this list isn't comprehensive because every business is different; but it will get you started.

1. **Identify the tasks that can be performed remotely.**

These are some examples of in-office work that can be handled by remote workers without excessive disruption to usual business processes.

- Accounts receivable and payable
- Writing or updating internal standard operating procedures
- Improving website content
- Researching and connecting with more cost-effective vendors
- Upgrading software systems
- Planning the budget
- Getting started on strategic planning
- Cleaning up the customer/patient management (CRM) system
- Marketing

2. **Use business-owned devices.**

This is potentially the biggest obstacle for employers moving workers to remote status, but employees working from home should be performing tasks on company-owned computers and, potentially, company-owned phones.

The reason is that you may want to monitor activity during work hours for productivity and other reasons. In addition, if employees are using their own computers, it is more difficult to implement and enforce security precautions. This is especially crucial for employers that are subject to HIPAA or similar laws. Finally, if using personal computers and phones, non-exempt employees may be tempted to email and call outside work hours, potentially putting businesses at legal risk.

3. Develop and implement a telecommuting policy.

- Address timekeeping procedures for nonexempt employees if these will differ for teleworkers and address expectations for preapproved overtime work.
- Communicate the telecommuting policy and procedures to employees.
- Develop a telecommuting agreement to be completed by the employees and their supervisors.
- Determine the training needs of supervisors and employees.

4. Consider technology and security.

Depending on your industry, you should make sure that you are aware of any specific confidentiality laws that apply to you and exactly what they require. There are tech companies that can help your company ensure compliance, while also enabling employees to work remotely. Incorporate these points in your telecommuting policy:

- Remote employees must follow and adhere to the company's information security, confidentiality, and HIPAA (or other) policies.
- They must immediately report any policy violations and/or security incidents.
- If the company supplies equipment for home use, remote employees must provide secure locations and not use or allow others to use it for anything other than company business.
- Instruct the team on emerging threats related to COVID-19, including new phishing attacks and attempts to steal VPN credentials.
- Implement two-factor authentication using smart cards or security keys.
- Designate a point of contact within the IT department to troubleshoot and assist teleworkers.

5. Manage your staff and demonstrate leadership.

- Adopt a policy of transparency with your staff and communicate frequently.
- Make it clear to your employees what their schedule is and what modes of communication they should be available on during that time.
- Set daily or weekly goals for task and project completion; remind employees that they will be held to the same standards of schedule, productivity and quality of work.
- Check in frequently, as anxieties about health, family, friends, investments and more are likely; encourage the use of your employee assistance program in these stressful times.
- Suggest team video meetings, such as virtual coffee breaks, happy hours and lunch meetings and keep building company culture.
- Allow for the organic. Your employees may want to start a remote employee group chat or a recipe exchange. They may even want to share tips and stories about working from home.

If you are a customer of Perspectives Ltd, please make sure employees know how to reach out for support and guidance and promote the option as often as you can (call 800-866-7665—24/7/365). If your organization needs other types of support, such as training in remote leadership or teamwork assessments, contact our organizational consulting team for a custom proposal (jeisler@perspectivesltd.com).