

On May 1, 2020 during the MTA Fridays: *Virtual Discussion Group* on managing remote workers and teams, colleagues discussed challenges they and their teams face since transitioning to remote work and becoming distributed teams. Leaders have met these challenges with courage and creativity. Please see solutions listed below for some ideas you may wish to implement to help your distributed team thrive as you work remotely.

Challenges

- Internet bandwidth; VPN
- Increased workload, increased email
- Staff feeling they are being micromanaged
- How to keep your team engaged and productive when their scope/project is not designed for remote work.
- Takes longer to do basic things; communication takes longer and slows job productivity
- Having new staff start during the shut down
- Receiving info, getting a steady stream of information to reassure staff; communication
- Feeling emotional, lonely, anxiety
- Disruption of life
- Establishing team remotely
- Meaningful work
- Lack of face-to-face interaction, social interaction, lack of hard copy documents, office/work space, resources
- Balancing children and school work and work
- Participant technology

Solutions

- Offer encouragement and support
- Use all technology to facilitate communication
 - Review guidelines about when it is most effective to use email, text, or Google Hangouts.
 - Use phone calls instead of emails, WebEx/Zoom
- Be flexible with deadlines and share the load as a leader
- Be vigilant about checking in with people you need information from and hold them accountable
- Conduct quick and regular check in's with teams, 1:1s, personal check ins
- Recap meetings and conduct "look aheads" for future meetings
- Meet 2X/week with your team and include an agenda and minutes from meetings
- Conduct meetings with ice breakers to connect, and not just discuss work. Play virtual games
- Laughter
- Pizzas sent to team for lunch, enjoy virtual lunches together
- Send journals to your staff so they can document this historical time and how they are doing
- Answer questions as clearly as possible
- Send out a get-to-know-you questionnaire to your team
- Communicate with compassion

- Express appreciation for the work still happening
- Celebrate successes!!!

For more information about MTA Fridays, please contact MTA at mta@unlv.edu.