

HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR REMOTE WORKFORCE

crf 2021
CORPORATE RESEARCH FORUM

As part of CRF's latest research report, *HR's Agenda in the Organisation of the Future*, we explored key considerations for HR in overcoming the long-term challenges of remote working:



• CULTURE

It is important to understand how cultures form and are maintained and find ways of adapting this for a remote working environment.



• COMMUNICATION

Needs to be much more frequent to support team cohesiveness and make up for the loss of random connections. Consider developing communications and meeting protocols, for example appointing a moderator to monitor how virtual meetings run and making sure team members are not being left out. Teams may need to rely more on asynchronous communications, for example sharing virtual documents or using Slack channels. Share good practices across teams.



• ENGAGEMENT

Increasing the frequency of employee pulses and surveys can provide an early warning system for emerging issues.



• INCLUSION

Remote working can exacerbate inadvertent but nonetheless exclusionary behaviours. Certain groups, such as working mothers, are at greater risk of being excluded when working remotely. Line managers are critical in building and maintaining inclusive working environments. They are likely to need extra support to communicate effectively, run inclusive meetings, and make sure opportunities to take on interesting and developmental work are shared fairly.



• LEADERSHIP

Successful remote working requires a different style of leadership, much more frequent communication and being intentional around inclusion. Some leaders will naturally adapt, and others will need support and coaching. Updating criteria for leadership appointments, gathering performance data and feedback via employee surveys, updating leading development curricula, and targeting training and support for leaders who need it are key actions.



• LEARNING-ON-THE-JOB

Much of how we learn is dependent on observing others in action and practising. Formal mentoring and buddy systems can help make up for the loss of in-person connection.



• PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Is far more than performance appraisal. Companies need to answer the questions: what does high performance look like when working remotely? How can it be measured? Performance systems may need to be redesigned to account for the difficulty of monitoring performance remotely. Increasing the frequency of check ins, focusing on setting clear objectives and monitoring processes and increasing the use of peer feedback are actions to consider.



• WELLBEING

It's harder to maintain boundaries between work and family life when working at home and people are at risk of burnout. Providing resources to help individuals manage their mental and physical health and build resilience, while equipping managers to spot and act on signs of overload through training or by providing engagement data, are ways of addressing this.