



MOTIVATION AND COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR REMOTE TEAMS

1. COMMUNICATE!

- Master the technic of active listening. *It means listening to understand first! This requires to stop thinking about your own answer while the other is talking and focus on understanding their point of view. It will take some effort but will make communication more effective.* This will allow to spend less time on discussions.
- Pay attention to the tone of your voice. “7-38-55 communication rule” says, that success of the message is only 7% the information itself. 38% the intonation and 55% is body language and facial expressions. With remote work we do not see each other that much, so 93% comes down to the tone of our voice.
- Share information. According to Gallup research done before our “new normal” remote work reality “74% of employees have a feeling they are missing out on important information at work”. Sharing information today is important communication skill, which will make people still feel the part of the organization even working away from office.
- Create a virtual coffee-machine or watercooler space where your team members can have 24/7 access . *Social loneliness is number one problem for people who all of a sudden have to work from home. Even if their partner and kids are around, people start missing their colleagues, the small talk, inside jokes and a possibility to quickly talk over a work issue.* Virtual coffee-machine room is a place for “bumping” into each other for a little chat, support and sharing of idea’s. (There is a great number of social platforms that can be used to create this space)
- Introduce a possibility for a quality one-on-one meeting time for the team members. *Let people know that they can use this virtual space to have a weekly cup of coffee together for 15-20 minutes.* Knowing there is such a possibility helps a lot to prevent social loneliness .
- Use video calls for meetings instead of phone calls. *If Zoom is a too expensive option, use Skype. Money should never be an excuse for not using video communication.* When you see people you are talking

with, you see their facial expressions and body language, so if someone is down or not motivated you notice and thus can address it right away.

- Introduce Communication Importance Grade (CIG) to your team and make sure everyone is using it. CIG is an agreement you make within your team about how the information is communicated based on its urgency and importance. *Video communication is the most informative means of communication (the picture is worth a thousand words) and e-mail is the slowest way of communication nowadays.* So CIG determines that video is used for the most important and urgent messages (Zoom call, Face-time), then audio (phone), then text – (WhatsApp, Telegram) and then the email. *Team members who missed a couple of hours due to some unpredictable stuff which can happen when you work from home do not have to stress and try to answer everything at once: they know what is more urgent and important.*

2. DO NOT MICROMANAGE!

- Schedule a fixed meeting rhythm. *When everyone knows the time and day on which meetings are held, team members do not feel that they are being checked upon all the time and stay concentrated and focused.* How often you decide to plan the meetings depends upon the type of work, but the 3 things need to be covered: 1. What the people have done since the last meeting; 2. What they plan to do the coming period; 3. What issues they face and how you can help them.
- Manage performance and not activity. *Clear idea of tasks and assignments is the key here. As well as knowing what is expected in the content of performance.* Make sure you communicated it properly and everyone has a crystal clear picture.
- Measure the productivity. *If you trust your team members to do their own time management, perfect. If not, make sure you download a program to take care of it.* If one employee has less done within a day than his colleagues, you need to understand why in order to address it. *What doesn't get measured, does not get managed.*
- Give a reason. This might sound like an example of micromanagement, but it is quite an opposite. *Due to new work situation the tasks might be new or different from what the employees use to do.* Giving a reason behind your request is a very important leadership tool. *Research shows that when we really understand the reasoning behind a request, we are 30% more likely to fulfil them.* So make sure your people understand your

reasons for avoiding complaints and frustrations, the very things that kill morale.

- Learn to think big. *Now is the time when you can and ought to learn how to let things out of your hands and start thinking strategy. This is a perfect opportunity to take a leap of faith in your people and start doing what a real leader should do: developing and articulating a compelling and strategically relevant vision for your team.*

3. MOTIVATE!

- Create an employee motivation program. *Praise, a positive feedback are an important skill in good leadership. They become something vital for people who work remotely because they are not sure that their hard work and efforts are being seen.* It can be a full motivation program with defined values that you want to reward in a team member and a meaningful gift at the end of each period, or it can be a regular recognition of hard work. But even just letting your employees know that you are aware and appreciate what they do in the form of a short mail, a public shout-out, a card or a small bonus, will motivate to go an extra mile.
- Handel rumours and problematic employees. *We simply can not afford negative gossip and unmotivated people in our team. Address rumours straight away openly and honestly to kill them on the spot. Invest one-on-one time and effort to raise the moral of unmotivated team members, but if it does not work consider letting them go.* Research shows that employee motivation even of your best team is quickly drained even by one unmotivated person.
- Prepare for the future. *This too will pass. No matter how difficult the problems we are facing now are, sooner or later we have to start planning for the future.* By involving your team in setting goals for the future we help people to put their fears aside and feel more confident about the future in general and their place in it in particular. That alone will help them to put their present fears aside.
- Equip for success. *After Corona, our team, our organisation, our country, our world will face enormous economical challenges.* Make sure your team will be the best, the strongest, the most motivated version of itself. Use this time to make a team profile, recognize the weaknesses, use professionals to address those weaknesses and to help those employees, who will be your driving power, to develop and grow.

4. FINALLY

- Consider gamification. Gamification is the use of game techniques and elements in an environment where there really is no room for a game. It's based on an idea that people like to do things where they can compete with others. So the creators adopted techniques of computer games to make monotonous, uninteresting tasks more attractive. *According to eLearning Industry, gamification is the primary mechanism used by 40% of the Global 1000 organization to improve their business.* There are special trainers who can help your organisation to apply really serious gamification , but there are also methods which are super easy to use without an expert. *You can introduce points systems when employee can collect points as an almost immediate positive feedback. You can gamify communication goals so that the people get in contact with each other more often and for example choose “the best communicator” once a month. Gamification can be used to reward posting, liking , sharing etc . There is a huge part gamification plays in sustaining corporate culture providing ways to participate in company projects or get trained on new products.*

"We do not stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing." – George Bernard Shaw.