

Managing a Hybrid Team of Employees

Upcoming Online Seminars

9/1/21 – Effective Communication: Attitude is Everything

10/1/21 – Understanding SAD: It's More Than Just the Blues

11/1/21 – Coping with the Holiday: Tips for a Successful Season

To watch these online seminars, log in to www.supportlinc.com and click on the 'Monthly Feature' tile or use the 'What's on Your Mind?' search tool.

Employers across the country are inviting the return of their workforce sent home during the pandemic. But not all employees may be coming back on site and those who do may not be in the office full time.

Leading a blended team can create challenges for supervisors. Here are some techniques you can use to empower your team to do their best work in these circumstances.

Humanize the Remote Experience

One of the key elements remote workers miss is the camaraderie of others. If you already connect regularly through team and project meetings, incorporate a few minutes at the start for members to socialize.

Based on your team's size, another option is creating subgroups of three or four individuals. Studies show that smaller work groups lead to higher engagement, accountability and productivity. Encourage the groups to connect often to share progress, talk about obstacles and offer support.

Define New Processes

Remote workers can unintentionally be left out when it comes to problem solving or sharing ideas, due to the ease of face-to-face conversation in the office. Have an explicit discussion about how and when you're going to communicate, who has access to what information, needs to be in which meetings and should have input on which decisions. Agree on the norms, such as how and when messages will be acknowledged and if the entire team must be included.

Continue Making Meetings Virtual

Ask that all participants join meetings via their computer, regardless of being on location or not. This way, you can ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate and be heard.

Communicate Across Channels

Set up group chats through products like Slack, Microsoft Teams or Google Chat, to reduce the number of email chains and increase collaboration. These platforms ease the ability to

provide updates, gather input and build consensus. In addition, have a "fun" channel where daily inspiration, entertaining memes and personal or family achievements can be shared.

You should continue to check in regularly with remote employees by scheduling "coffee chats" or individual calls.

Efforts to intentionally be inclusive with all members of your hybrid team will reduce miscommunications and lead to greater success.

A SupportLinc management consultation can provide you with personalized resources and additional support.

To access SupportLinc services today, call 1-800-475-3EAP (3327) or visit www.supportlinc.com

The Resiliency Toolkit

Coping with stress in a positive way is known as resilience — and it has many health benefits. Resilience is associated with longevity, lower rates of depression and greater satisfaction with life.

For resources, tools and tips to help you bounce back from life's challenges, visit www.resiliency.tools today.

Creating a Culture of Motivation

A key realization for most supervisors is that you can't create motivation for others. No matter how much you may need and want motivated employees, people choose on their own whether to experience motivation at work. You can, however, use these suggestions to help create a workplace that maximizes support and fosters engagement, productivity and satisfaction.

Welcome Collaboration

Employees need to feel safe before they will speak up and share ideas. Show your team that you value their opinions by being engaged in meetings and doing your best to minimize email and phone distractions. Suspend judgment during brainstorming sessions. Invite every participant to voice recommendations, actively listen and ask thoughtful, clarifying questions. While you don't need to act on every suggestion, sincerely thank colleagues for their input and insights.

Treat People Fairly

Processes that are transparent and fair help everyone feel valued. Overcommunicate about changes in policy or staff as soon as possible. This gives your team time to process and be in a better position to adapt when the change occurs. Demonstrate fairness by modeling rules and behaviors. Be thoughtful of how you assign work, evenly distributing and rotating new projects and challenging tasks.

Normalize Support

The pandemic has underscored the necessity of regular mental health check-ins. Intentionally ask each of your direct reports how they are *really* doing on a regular basis. Show respect, compassion and empathy for their feelings with responses like "That sounds hard to manage" or "I'm sorry things are difficult right now." Be assured, your role in the conversation is not to fix the situation — simply talking about stressors can help reduce the emotional distress that an individual is feeling. Arm yourself with knowledge about SupportLinc and share the program's resources and services that can help boost emotional wellbeing and address work-life balance concerns.