

BEST PRACTICES



MANAGING A WORK FROM HOME TEAM

Workforce Insights by the Columbus Chamber of Commerce

FOUR-PART WORK FROM HOME SERIES...

COLUMBUS
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

The Columbus Chamber of Commerce is researching best practices to assist our members and the Central Ohio business community during these challenging times. Many organizations that have been deemed non-essential are still operating with teammates in remote locations and finding success by incorporating work from home (WFH) guidelines for their workers.

PULSE YOUR EMPLOYEES' PRODUCTIVITY



The lack of face-to-face in-person interaction can be concerning for both supervisor and individual contributors. At the onset of working from home, even the productivity of high performing employees may take a dip. This is normal as everyone adjusts to their new circumstances.

Often, supervisors worry that employees will not work as hard or as efficiently (though research indicates otherwise). Clear guidelines and consistent communication are always key to productivity, especially when a team is operating remotely.

WHAT OUR BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE SAYING...

"I recommend using **scorecards to ensure everyone stays on pace**. The scorecards are then discussed in weekly virtual team meetings to promote healthy accountability. These meetings are held at the same time via video conferencing."

Catherine Lang-Cline, Portfolio Creative

"We ask employees to **add everything they are working on to their calendars** and follow up on completed projects. For many projects, they can monitor and report KPIs like orders entered and calls taken, which we are asking them to do."

Shawn Richard, Palmer-Donavin

"As an entrepreneur, **I've always focused on what you need to do today**. We continue with that as we WFH."

Rachel Friedman, TENFOLD

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The Chamber has collected an extensive list of reliable and relevant resources regarding COVID-19. Visit [Columbus.org](https://www.columbus.org) for more information.

IMPLEMENT CONSISTENT AND PREDICTABLE REPORTING

According to research, the most important factor in ensuring success within a virtual workplace is consistency of messaging. Check-ins should be regular, predictable and presented in a forum in which the employee knows that their concerns and questions will be heard.

Many platforms are available to keep teams connected and engaged with work and each other. We recommend the creation of a group communications platform that will give all team members a line of sight on group projects and key information.

At the Chamber, we're using Microsoft Teams. We have created department and inter-department teams to ensure we're all aligned on priority projects. We have increased the frequency of managers meetings to semi-weekly to boost cross-functional communication.

Regardless of frequency, many companies find that allowing time at the beginning or end of the group meet up to allow some basic social interaction, such as spending the first few minutes just catching up with each other, is beneficial.

WHAT OUR BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE SAYING...

"I lead a daily meeting, as well as a daily COVID-19 crisis meeting, with time ranges from 30 - 60 min to **address the issues that are changing fast** with our team, members and the business community." - *Lori Kaiser, Kaiser Consulting*

"**Do a culture check in with your team.** Ask them to give a 1 to 10 score on how they are doing both professionally and personally." - *Rachel Friedman, TENFOLD*

"We have Slack channels called #ologiepets #wfhconfessions #ologieparents and #thewire. Those bring regular laughter and engagement. **We have fun with non-work related video meet ups too**, like virtual happy hours, sometimes with a theme (Tiger King), and even an engagement celebration." - *Dawn Marinacci, Ologie*

"We had our first fully-remote quarterly team meeting last week, and we planned a fun building activity with cross-functional teams using the "Breakout Rooms" functionality in Zoom. We've also **scheduled additional causal 1:1 time** for all team members as well as virtual team lunches for social time during the day." - *Brad Griffith, Buckeye Interactive*

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MAINTAIN CLIENT AND VENDOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH INFORMATION SHARING

Communication remains important with our external partners, just as with our internal team members.

"The vendors we have relationships with have been going smooth with a lot of communication. Anyone trying to be a new vendor at this point is put on hold unless they have an immediate solution to what we need, as we are still working on keeping things going **rather than trying to make additional big changes.**"

Catherine Lang-Cline, Portfolio Creative

"We are sharing information with clients on a regular basis. We have received great information from our vendors as the various Stay at Home orders have been issued as well as anticipated economic impact, etc. What hasn't been very helpful is every vendor sending form letters on how they are responding. It becomes information overload."

Shawn Richard, Palmer-Donavin

"We still expect exceptional client service. In these rapidly changing times, we are encouraging more communication via e-mail, video meetings and calls. More **frequent communication** is the key to making sure we meet expectations."

Lori Kaiser, Kaiser Consulting

"Brand identity is still critical, if not more so now. Having a customized background that shows your brand on virtual platforms does matter."

Rachel Friedman, TENFOLD

To continue to build your relationships during this crisis, consider re-tweeting and sharing posts from your vendors' social media platforms and find new ways to connect and interact in the virtual world.



"Leveraging social media can mean giving your audiences a behind the scenes look at the people behind your brand and our audiences seem to have fun with that. We've featured Ologie pets, home office configurations, and even curated a Spotify playlist of the music we are listening to (called "Ologie Quarantunes") that we are sharing on social."

Dawn Marinacci, Ologie

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ADAPT TO CHANGING EXPECTATIONS WITH STRONG LEADERSHIP

Research from University of California Irvine professor Judith Olson found those businesses in which workers understand expectations, have similar work styles, know and like each other, have technology that allows them to collaborate, and know how to use that technology are best poised for success. The supervisor or manager is the key conduit - responsible for translating the organization's response to COVID-19 for each employee.

With news and circumstances changing daily, if not hourly, during this time, employees look to their leadership for guidance and reassurance.

"This is the time for leaders to deliver **transparency, competency and empathy.**

To have a change of mindset from fragile or robust to anti fragile."

Brandon Dupler, Dupler Office

Brandon recommends this video: [Things That Gain From Disorder Video](#)

"As always, leadership is key...It's easy to read any of the thousands of articles on the internet about leadership during COVID-19, it's a lot harder to do it, especially in unprecedented situations. **But the leaders who were proactive, creative, and energetic** in February 2020 are the ones who are doing the best in March and April, and who will adapt the best as we grow into the so-called new normal together." - *Bill Nolan, Barnes & Thornburg*

In turn, it is important for managers and those in leadership positions to alter their expectations. Making expectations realistic, achievable and focused on outcomes is critical, as leaders guide their organizations through a remote work environment. [Inc. magazine offers excellent tips.](#)

"While our goals are the same- helping businesses and business owners - we have put a strong emphasis on self-care. Getting out for walk breaks midday, making sure we are eating healthy and getting enough rest are all ways that we can make sure we are in the **best mindset to help our clients and our community.**"

Brittany Douglass, ActionCOACH

"We understand the burden WFH can put on people by completely blurring their work and home responsibilities, especially parents. It comes down to putting trust in them. Everyone is a capable adult who is in charge of managing how they get their work done each day. We are allowing for a lot of flexibility for when people work, as long as the work gets done. **Remember that everyone is doing their best** to juggle work and home, so be patient and flexible."

Dawn Marinacci, Ologie