

# How to Optimize Remote Work

based on interviews with 137 remote company leaders

## The Big Picture of Remote Work

- **Overview:** Nearly 3% of the total U.S. workforce work from home half-time or more. The average telecommuter is 46 years or older, has at least a bachelor's degree, and earns a higher median salary than an in-office worker. Remote work is available across industries (top 4: healthcare, computer/IT, education, sales).
- **Challenges:** Preventing employee isolation and overwork; creating a healthy company culture; communication; time zone coordination; worker accountability; legal/tax issues.
- **Benefits:** Increased worker productivity / efficiency; reduced employee turnover; real estate / overhead savings; access to a more diverse talent pool; happier, healthier, and more engaged employees; environmental and social benefits.

## Tips for Successful Remote Work

- **Traits of effective remote employees:** Self-starter; independent; proactive; self-aware; mature; strong written / verbal communication skills; time management; previous remote work experience; tech savvy; observant; goal-oriented.
- **Collaboration/communication tools:** Slack, Skype, Google Chat, Trello, Pivotal Tracker, Basecamp, Yammer, Hangouts, Skype, Zoom, GoToMeeting, join.me.
- **How to avoid distractions:** Secure a dedicated work space in your home; incorporate breaks and exercise into your day; shut down social media; avoid meetings during your most productive hours; use noise-canceling headphones.

## Managing Remote Workers

- **Measuring productivity:** Measure results, output, quality of work, manager feedback, and customer satisfaction.
- **Building remote relationships:** Create a culture of trust and transparency; establish communication norms; hold regularly scheduled meetings; have an instant "virtual office space;" annual face-to-face retreats; give real-time feedback; establish clear expectations and deliverables; use the right technology.
- **Creating company culture:** Throw virtual parties and events; create virtual watercooler opportunities (like lunch hangouts, coffee breaks, books clubs); assign a mentor to new hires; embrace work flexibility; celebrate anniversaries, birthdays, milestones; highlight individual volunteer and humanitarian efforts.

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