

Top Tips for Managing Remote Workers

Activ Absence is often used to increase visibility for home workers, so everyone knows who is working, where and when.



Adrian explains:

"Our software, Activ Absence, can be used to give businesses the staff visibility they need to make remote working successful."

"Our software has helped people manage remote workers effectively across a wide range of industries, including transport, IT and software development, sales and support."

"However, software is only part of the solution. The number of employees who could benefit from remote working is much higher than those actually given the option by their employer. Even when employers say they offer flexible working, they often fail to communicate this to their staff."

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Flexible working is good for the bottom line.

A recent survey by [Vodafone](#) highlighted that 83 per cent of global companies offering flexible working improved their productivity and 58 per cent said it had boosted their reputation. Three out of five (61 per cent) said that flexible working had a direct effect on their profit and loss statement by increasing their company's earnings.

Some companies are still fearful of fully embracing remote working in case their productivity levels will plummet. Yet the Vodafone research highlights the opposite – that flexible working can have a positive impact on the bottom line and it keeps people happier and more engaged.

Practical Tips for Implementing Remote Working

Here are our practical tips for to help employers implement remote working successfully:

- Ensure employees know what's expected of them in terms of activity or performance, especially if they are working at home. Agree how they can be contacted and set expectations around communication – i.e. a daily phone call at the start of the day if working at home.
- Flexible working can mean people coming into the office and leaving at different times. Employees should be made aware that this needs to be done quietly and with minimal disruption as people around them may be working different hours.
- A weekly or monthly work schedule with deadlines should be agreed and it made clear that work must be complete the same as it would under normal working circumstances. Employees must understand they are still part of the team/department and therefore can't let people down.
- It's important to not lose sight that people still work as part of team no matter how small the organisation. Regular team meetings or events should involve everyone, even if this means a degree of flexibility and people coming into the office when they don't usually. Flexible working works both ways.
- All team members need to know where everyone is at any one time. This should be visible and recorded in a centrally accessible electronic diary that should break down any barriers that prevent the employee being contacted.

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- Good communication is essential for flexible working to work successfully and this must be maintained between employee and line manager/teams members – even when working away from the office. Others need to know the employee away from the office is actively busy working.
- Technology is essential – make use of the latest electronic instant messaging tools, including webcams to keep in touch whilst working at home. Working at home can be isolating so this can help maintain an ‘office’ environment – albeit virtual – as well as ensure people are working.
- Working remotely shouldn’t make a difference in how people are rewarded or praised for tasks done well or completed on time or ahead of schedule. Equally if people are not completing things on time or tasks not done as agreed take time to understand the reason and assess if further support or assistance is required so they do not feel completely isolated
- Don’t forget to include all employees on any electronic communication that includes work news, success/wins, activities, company news to ensure that they still feel part of the organisation and are not forgotten.
- Whilst we can help with visibility of work patterns, consider whether you need to offer personal safety advice and/or solutions for remote workers. For example, carers, nurses, estate agents and salespeople may visit people in their own homes, or in empty buildings. Risk assessments are essential for all staff, as even lorry drivers are now being advised to take additional security precautions. We are not experts in this area and recommend Managers seek advice and guidance from the [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#) and Police/[NTSO](#) as appropriate. It may be wise to invest in appropriate personal safety tools, but it’s also important to let staff know you trust their personal safety decisions and if they feel unsafe, you will back them if they cancel/leave a situation. Out of sight is definitely not out of mind, and you are legally responsible for their safety. The [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#) also offer personal safety recommendations for employees who work from home.
- Finally, make a note of any improvements in productivity and wellbeing of employees, as well as any areas that could be causing concern every three months. It’s important to nip any issues in the bud as soon as you can, but also to demonstrate to the business that embracing flexible working has been successful.