

## 10 Simple Steps to Create a Quality Remote Work Policy

One of the less serious, but still far-reaching and crucial impacts of COVID-19 is the switch for many workplaces from physical to remote work. Even if your company already had a remote work policy in place, chances are you've needed to update or alter large parts of it to account for recent coronavirus related changes. In this article, I'll detail ten simple steps your organization can take to create a quality remote work policy to help you deal with the fallout from COVID-19.

### Ten Steps to Build a Remote Work Policy

#### 1. Keep Up-to-Date on the News

As news about COVID-19 continues to develop, every employer must consistently stay atop what's happening with the virus, what's expected to happen next, and how they should react from there. If your company has yet to implement a remote work policy or did so indefinitely, chances are your employees are still wondering what the plan is. Even if you've already had a remote work policy in place, it's vital you both know and are disseminating the most recent coronavirus-related news.

#### 2. Know Your Culture Needs Extra Nurturing with Remote Teams

Building a robust and connected workforce is a fundamental piece to any healthy, positive workplace culture. And this positive culture is even more essential for remote workers than it is in a traditional 9 to 5 setting. Because individuals are spread out and not sharing the same physical space, building a company culture can be a slower and more difficult process.

If your firm is making a real effort to cultivate a positive workplace culture, you're already taking a vital first step in the right direction. Make sure your leadership and HR teams understand your company's values, goals, and objectives. Plus, ensure these key employees can disseminate this valuable information to all other staff both in-person and virtually, if necessary.



### 3. Train from the Top Down

As with any extensive change to your business, it's vital to any company switching to remote work to begin the process and get buy-in from the top, down. Your leadership team must understand your remote work policy, why the company is implementing the plan, and how to explain the change to your employees.

Similarly, make sure your work leaders know how they're expected to manage employees, and how to communicate said expectations to team members. To maximize your firm's remote work policy, make sure your management team knows the policy well enough to help others both understand and appreciate it.

### 4. Be Weary of Compliance

As with any aspect of any piece of employment benefits, make sure your remote work policy is compliant with any relevant state and federal laws and regulations. While it may seem contrary, compliance will remain a relevant consideration regardless of how quickly laws are changing to adapt to the current landscape. So, as you continue to monitor the news, make sure you're paying close attention to any compliance-related changes.

If your company wants assistance with any part of employee benefits compliance, contact our in-house HR expert at [HRconsulting@theolsongroup.net](mailto:HRconsulting@theolsongroup.net).

### 5. Make Sure Your Staff Has the Right Tools

One step every organization looking to implement remote work needs to take is to determine whether your remote staff has all the proper tools need to work remotely effectively. According to [Employee Benefit Adviser](#), examples of questions employers need to ask themselves include:

- Whether they have an internal instant messaging system?
- If they rely solely on email?
- If phone numbers are published, and employees have access to them?

There are five main categories of technological tools your business can use to help remote employees work more effectively. These five categories, according to [HR Dive](#), include:

- Teleconferencing tools (Skype, Google Hangouts, Zoom, GoToMeeting)
- Collaboration tools (Microsoft Teams, Slack, Facebook Workplace)
- Data access (OneDrive, ShareFile, Dropbox, Box)
- Security tools (Microsoft Authenticator, Ping, Google Identity, VPNs)
- Virtual workplaces (Sococo, Walkabout Workplace, Wurkr)

## 6. Give Staff the Proper Support

In addition to giving your remote workers with the right tools necessary to complete their jobs, it's also essential you provide them with the proper support. This support means that employees should feel appropriately trained and capable of working remotely. Plus, your remote staff should understand what their managers expect from them, and the fact your leadership team is there to support remote staff if they have any questions or issues. Finally, make sure your remote staff has and knows how to contact IT support should any technical problems arise.



## 7. Communicate Often

One of the most vital steps any organization can take when implementing a remote work policy is to communicate with your staff as often as possible. In remote work situations, it's usually a good idea to err on the side of over-communication. Most companies, when first implementing remote work, tend to underestimate the amount of both verbal and nonverbal communication that takes place when employees are co-located, like in a physical office space. Under remote work conditions, employees must be very intentional about how and when they communicate.

## 8. Address Potential Challenges to Remote Work

Although remote work can present your firm with a copious amount of benefits, there are some potential challenges these employees face that co-located employees may not. Per a recent survey from [Remote.co](https://remote.co), there are five main challenges remote workers face. These challenges, listed from most challenging to least, are as follows:

- Unplugging after work
- Dealing with non-work distractions
- Developing strong relationships with coworkers
- Loneliness, and,
- Troubleshooting technology problems

If your company wants to maximize the effectiveness of your remote work policy, make sure it addresses the following five issues in some manner.

## 9. Set Expectations

Arguably the most critical step your firm can take when creating a remote work plan is to make sure you set expectations. Setting expectations for your employees should be a part of any business but is especially essential when managing remote workers. What are your designated work hours? What are expectations when employees are at their desks?



These are examples of questions your remote work policy should answer. Your plan should lay out what the ideal state of remote work would look like for your organization. Additionally, as part of setting expectations, make sure your company has an end goal in mind for what success with remote work would look like.

## 10. Give Recognition

The final step your business should take when implementing a remote work policy is to make sure you're giving recognition to your employees. Because remote work can be isolating, it's essential to keep your work teams connected. And one of the best ways to build a connection between team members is to shoutout quality work and give recognition for employees' successes.

Giving timely praise for work successes helps build camaraderie among your virtual team. It also works to focus team members and set expectations for future successes. You may already have an employee recognition plan in place for your physical office space. Still, it's vital you update and extend this policy for your remote workers.

## The Wrap

None of us know for sure how long the COVID-19 pandemic will last. But the importance of remote work will likely only continue to grow. Use the ten steps above to help create a quality remote work policy that will maximize the effectiveness of your virtual teams.

**And if you need more help setting up or implementing a remote work policy of your own, contact me at [mscholl@theolsongroup.net](mailto:mscholl@theolsongroup.net).**

