



Manager's Guide to Leading Remotely Through COVID-19

Keep your team engaged and productive from home

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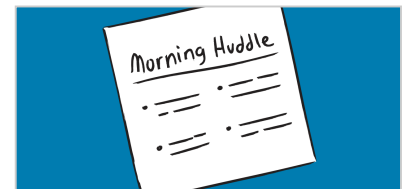
Consider evaluating tools from **The Manager Toolbox**

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Bolster Your Team's Morale During a Crisis

Tool Builder
7 minutes



Run a Daily "Crisis Huddle"

Tool Builder
7 minutes

Lead an engaged and productive virtual team

COVID-19 has introduced unprecedented challenges for managers who may now be managing a remote team or a team adapting to ever-changing circumstances amidst the pandemic. Leaders need new tools to keep their team productive, engaged, and aligned.

Focus on what you can control as a leader. Here's what your team needs from you right now:

01

Clarity

Clearly communicate the most important priorities. In check-ins and conversations with staff, state what needs to get done, why, and by what date. Help your team prioritize, especially as you pivot to accommodate changing circumstances —and manage urgent requests more closely.

Tools: One-on-one check-ins, Team weekly check-ins

02

Autonomy

Be flexible about when and how the work gets done as long as deadlines are met. Staff need your encouragement to exercise autonomy when making decisions about work-life balance and their working preferences.

Tools: Individual working preferences assessment, Establish team norms for the new normal

03

Connection to mission

Remind team members of the “why” behind their work and recognize team members when they exemplify the organization’s mission and values.

Tools: Tips for recognizing staff, Connect the team to the mission through storytelling

04

Sense of belonging

Create space for team collaboration and feedback with effective and engaging virtual meetings and social events.

Tools: Weekly team huddle guide, Tips for recognizing staff, Virtual team-building activities picklist

Special Report: Virtual Onboarding Tool

Tool 3: Establish team norms for the new normal

Overview

As your team is working amidst a pandemic, you may need to revisit your team norms and make sure that everyone is operating from the same list of assumptions and rules to protect the team's time and maximize individual productivity.

In a team meeting, have each team member share their answers to the following questions to help all team members get on the same page about flexibility and preferences. Consider sending staff these questions in advance so they can prepare their answers, or, depending on the size of your team, conduct the individual working preferences assessment with each team member before hosting this team meeting. During the meeting, go category by category, ask the associated questions, give staff a minute to contemplate their answers, and then ask each team member to share with the group. Record answers on a shared document throughout.

TIME

30 minutes

depending on the size of your team

1. Protected work time

- When do you want to have a 'no meetings' zone on your calendar to protect your most productive work time?
- Would it be helpful to coordinate consistent 'no meetings' days or times of the day for the team?

2. Communication preferences

- How do you prefer to be contacted for urgent needs?
- What's the best way for us to maintain contact throughout the day for social or non-urgent communication (e.g., text group, chat group, email, standing 15-minute huddles)?
- Are there subject line abbreviations or other email practices we can all agree on to streamline inbox management?

3. Preferred working hours

- What hours of the day do you prefer to be offline to attend to your personal needs?
- How are you creating separation between the work day and your personal time?
- How are you building in time for breaks?

Follow-up:

Create a shared team calendar that outlines times that are set aside for meetings and times that are protected teamwork time. Encourage team members to block their individual protected time or OOO hours on their calendar and turn on their away messages during that time.

Ensure all team members have access to the shared document with team agreed-upon communication practices and each team member's preferences. Ask for commitment from all team members that these preferences will be respected.

Tool 4: Team weekly huddle guide

Overview

As staff are remote, it's harder to have visibility into what people are doing and feel a sense of connection to the team. To avoid micromanaging, clarify ownership of projects and deadlines during team meetings and document this in a shared location.

TIME

30 minutes at least once per week.

You can host a truncated version of this to check in on progress mid-week for 15 minutes or less.

In each team huddle, touch on the following points:

1. Kick off with an icebreaker

- A simple discussion question will suffice, such as “what restaurant will you visit first out of quarantine?” Or, “what are you grateful for today?”
- Ask attendees to raise their hands if on video or chat in their answers. Call on a few people to share. Make sure to call on different people each week.

2. Recognition of how the team is living the organization's values

- Take one of your organization's values each week and ask the team to share a story of how a fellow team member lived up to that value. Encourage them to be specific.

3. Share a story. Reminder of the team's key priorities

- Share the top 3 goals for the team.
- Explain any organizational priority shifts since your last huddle. (Note: Don't shy away from the difficult messages. Share the reality, why it's important, and necessary context. Gather input to share with senior leadership.)
- Keep staff updated on relevant news.

4. Share individual priorities

- Create a shared document (e.g., Google document) and have each team member fill in their top 3 goals for the week.
- Consult the team's list to align on priorities and ensure individual priorities tie back to overarching goals.
- Provide information that will make projects easier and identify roadblocks the team may encounter.

5. Save time for questions and input

(Note: Always build in time for questions, reserve at least ten minutes so staff don't feel rushed.)

- Invite the team to give input on an ongoing project that relates to your team's goals.
- Open the floor for questions related to organizational changes or strategy and elevate as needed.

Sample Tools from The Manager Toolbox

Advisory Board's research has been the health care industry's guiding light, helping executives work smarter and faster. In addition to our traditional workforce and management research, we've developed **The Manager Toolbox**, an easy-to-use portal where leaders can build personalized job aids (cheat sheets, talking points, scorecards, decision aids, etc.) in 10 minutes or less for your toughest day-to-day challenges.

A TOOL FOR EVERY TASK

Management 101



- Give difficult performance feedback
- Plan a meeting worth every minute
- Make next week's workload more manageable

Retention and engagement



- Conduct a high-impact stay interview
- Assess someone's departure risk
- Discover if a resignation is reversible

Lead through a crisis



- Bolster morale during crisis
- Deliver a difficult message compassionately
- Bring redeployed staff up to speed quickly

Business and finance



- Build a winning business case
- Find a cost savings opportunity



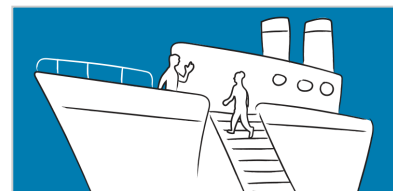
Conduct a High-Impact Stay Interview

Tool Builder
10 minutes



Lead Virtual Meetings That Get People More Engaged

Tool Builder
9 minutes



Use Onboarding Check-Ins to Stop Early Turnover

Tool Builder
7 minutes



Watch a demo and learn more about membership on advisory.com/managertoolbox

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