

MANAGING REMOTELY – ONE-TO-ONES

Decentralisation is a growing trend. Hot desking, flexitime, remote teams and WFH are becoming normal working practices. While Zooming in the kitchen in pjs is a life goal for some, for managers this new way of working presents challenges.

One-to-ones are a vital part of management and team support. They are even more important for remote managers as a way of keeping teams focused and motivated.



MANAGING REMOTELY – ONE-TO-ONES

THE SAME RULES APPLY

Conventionally, one-to-ones are intimate face-to-face meetings, held in person. They are important opportunities for managers and their people to connect and share feedback and ideas. For remote managers, in-person meetings are not always practical. But virtual one-to-ones should be no less effective if you remember the fundamentals. The same rules apply online. Good managers create safe spaces for open discussions. They ask the right questions, listen and challenge constructively. Teams need to trust you enough to share experiences and ask for help. Make sure if you have a one-to-one booked in, you give it your full attention with no distractions.

GET THE PRACTICALITIES IN ORDER

- Attention spans reduce in the virtual realm, thanks to distractions like Homes Under the Hammer. So, split your time. Turn an hour session into two half hours.
- Remote and international teams may work at different times. Schedule one-to-ones to make sure they happen.
- Time flexibility places the emphasis on outcomes. Be clear about expectations. If need be, set deadlines and arrange times when teams are expected to be contactable. Everyone should know what is expected of them and trust should be built on both sides.
- Be open to talk through non-work challenges. Team members might have children at home, or they might be carers. This is the starting point for conversations. The foundations need to be in place. (see questions chart)
- Block out time in your diary for open chats each week. It might be 45 minutes over a few days or a couple of mornings. Once you get in this habit, you'll find formal online meetings will decrease, as people will chat to you when they need you, freeing up more of your time.

GIVE IT A GO

- Your role as a leader is to balance the needs of the individual over the group. To help the team bond, arrange weekly group chats where people can ask questions.
- Don't always wait for scheduled one-to-ones. Drop in informally on people digitally to see how they are. This could be as simple as an email, whatsapp or a DM.
- Develop an accessible weekly schedule that everyone can add too. There is software that can collate this, or you could create a simple spreadsheet to send to everyone and ask them to add in their own availability.
- Make sure you have time everyday when your team knows you're available. You can schedule this in weekly, make it known through a message everyday at a certain time or use technology to let people know. This will also help you manage your workload. The more informal chats you can have, the less time you'll need for bigger chats.
- If practical, consider hosting daily huddles where people can ask questions. Set a time limit and keep them simple.