

Five strategies for effectively managing a work-at-home solution





Table of contents

Introduction to work-at-home management	3
Strategy 1: Practice empathy and patience	4
Strategy 2: Strengthen online training capabilities	5
Strategy 3: Amplify communication	6
Strategy 4: Maintain performance expectations	7
Strategy 5: Recognize and reward good work	8
Conclusion	10

Introduction to work-at-home management

With the vast lift and shift of brick-and-mortar contact center employees to an at-home environment, supervisors and their team members are quickly learning how to adapt. Because working from home as well as managing workers remotely can be challenging for those accustomed to walking the operations floor, Work@Home industry leader HGS has developed a set of best-practice strategies to help ease the transition.

“

With the right tools and tips, managers can ensure their virtual employees are supported, productive, and engaged.

—[wework.com](https://www.wework.com)

”



Strategy 1:

Practice empathy and patience

The recent urgency to avoid heavily populated workplaces has necessitated that many brick-and-mortar contact center employees immediately begin working from their own homes. Those who were already working remotely—as well those they live with—had previously undergone the careful considerations and accommodations needed to allow for virtual work in the household.

Now that working from home has been fast-tracked for many companies, employees may experience an overwhelming sense of disorientation in a non-traditional work environment, compounded by feelings of isolation without their teammates close by. Leaders must take care to empathize with their direct reports, find collaborative ways to work through the sudden rearrangement, and ensure that they are comfortable with the home-based adjustments to technological and security protocols.

“

Understanding how connection complements technology is a vital part of crushing expectations and leading a remote (but connected) workforce.

—[Forbes](#)

”

Strategy 2:

Strengthen online training capabilities

Preparing a remote, digital workspace often requires extra time and patience. Your virtual employees along with your home-based leaders may be unfamiliar with technology such as setting up video bridges or coordinating conference calls, but with proper training, they'll acclimate and in turn become trainers of these new tools themselves. Over time, they'll be able to speed up onboarding processes by sharing their tech-savvy knowledge with newcomers.

According to [Harvard Business Review](#), remote workers benefit from having a "richer" technology (e.g., video conferencing) that provides many visual cues that participants would have if they were face-to-face. These visual cues not only allow for increased "mutual knowledge" about coworkers but also help reduce the sense of isolation among teams.

“

We can't take it for granted that everyone inherently understands video or chat technology. Make step-by-step how-to guides, walk through virtual processes with your teams in real time, and encourage questions along the way.

—**Marco Colaiacovo,**
HGS Work@Home Go To Market Lead

”

Strategy 3:

Amplify communication

Once all tools are in place, the governance model used on site to communicate with employees must be reviewed and adjusted for the at-home environment. Conversations should shift from a performance-based discussion to more of a “check-in” system—and frequency should be enhanced.

The “out of sight, out of mind” mentality is a real threat to performance and ESAT. Listening to different employees’ needs is vital, as some workers may desire more attention or guidance than others. Take note and try to accommodate individual requests to create personal connections that will lead to an overall more cohesive team. [HBR](#) suggests allowing for time at the beginning of team calls to discuss non-work items; for example, catching up with each other about activities everyone participated in over the weekend, and [Fast Company](#) suggests creating a “How I Work” document that asks employees questions about their feedback style and meeting preferences, such as whether they’d rather take part in videoconferencing for one-on-ones or engage in group catch-ups.

“

Don't leave employees in the dark

According to research from [Own Labs](#), a video conferencing company, employees receiving a company-wide message are three times more likely to feel prepared to work from home than others.

”



Strategy 4:

Maintain performance expectations

Performance and contact resolution shouldn't suffer due to an employee's physical location. The customers are the same, and the requests don't differ. Thus, performance expectations should be consistent with those connected to a brick-and-mortar setup. An exception to equivalent performance standards is NPS, which is often notably higher in Work@Home models due to a lack of contact center background noise. The ideal Work@Home agent is free from all external distractions, allowing for a deeper and more personal connection with the customer.

Again, good communication around employee goals will keep performance levels high. "Memorializing tasks and actions is key to managing commitments," according to [Forbes](#) magazine. This means remote workers must have the willingness and ability to competently capture assignments and track milestones, while strong leaders will empower their employees to take pride and responsibility in their work and to strive for improvement each day.

*Among performance-based remote statistics, [85% of businesses](#) confirm that productivity has increased in their company because of greater flexibility.

Percentage of businesses confirming that flexibility increases productivity*



85%

Strategy 5:

Recognize and reward good work

To nurture connections with remote workers, leaders should make recognizing service excellence a priority, just as they would in the traditional workplace. Although the format may change from a lively office festivity to a group celebration via video chat, teammates can still congratulate each other and share in the camaraderie over their colleagues' achievements.

Encouraging staff to think of creative new ways to observe others' efforts and accomplishments will also strengthen the bond among team members. Providing some swag like company-branded water bottles or coffee mugs for home offices can also be an excellent connecting factor, serving as a daily reminder that the employee is a respected and important member of a larger work family. From hosting virtual pizza parties to promoting casual days like wearing a favorite sports jersey, creativity and thinking outside the box are key to building effective programs virtually.

By disrupting the current processes with new ways to care for your employees, the ensuing ESAT results will be your ROI.

“

Although recent events have expedited the traditional due diligence of implementing remote workers, the trend was already steadily on the rise. As leaders in the customer experience industry, it's our duty to leverage and further develop the technology and tools to support this expanding workforce and to continue providing excellent care for both our clients and their customers.

—Marco Colaiacovo,
HGS Work@Home Go To Market Lead

”

Conclusion

During periods of great change as well as times of “business as usual,” it’s important for leaders to acknowledge their teams’ feelings of uncertainty or stress, to provide affirmation of confidence in their abilities, and to use positive language and continued encouragement. Reassurance is key, Monster says, and even if employees are miles apart, quick check-ins via IM, video conferences, or phone calls can make all the difference.

For additional information, please visit the HGS Work@Home website, or email our HGS Work@Home expert, **Marco Colaiacovo**.