REMOTE WORK – EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Below are considerations and tips for departments and supervisors in reviewing remote work opportunities for an area or individual staff.

Consider the nature of the work and the nature of the work-related interactions involved.

➢ Those that don't require significant cross-functional communication are prime candidates for remote work.

➢ The higher up in the organization a position is, the more the leadership need to be (literally) present.

➢ True for managers of large groups: face-to-face meetings with individual employees and with teams is easier -- and much more personal -- when you are in the office. If you're able to do a hybrid, consider regular in-person meeting opportunities and the best times for sharing specific information in-person vs. OK to do virtually.

➢ Would it be *nice* to have someone on-site vs. *critical*?

➢ What tasks can be done off-site vs. on? Flesh these out and make a plan for how they will be shared, evaluated, and measured. Who else does each task affect? How might work need to change to accommodate remote vs. in-person communication/environment?

➢ Consider a trial period/test run for new staff or those transitioning from in-office to remote.

Selecting Remote-working Employees – Skills and Attributes

➢ #1: Must have excellent communication skills, particularly if working on a team with frequent collaboration.

➢ Ability to present ideas clearly to necessary groups. (What does that look like? Timeline? Format?)

➢ Must be OK (preferably thrive) without daily interaction with colleagues and peers.

➢ Patient; strong critical thinking skills.

➢ A learning mindset.

➢ Does not procrastinate.

➢ Strong prioritization and organization skills.

➢ Independent, autonomous, and proactive.

➢ Self-disciplined. Adaptable.

➢ Well grounded. Ability to meet deadlines.

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TIPS for Managing Remote Workers

➢ Focus on results, not on time. (Must be able to move away from tracking hours.)

➢ Set specific, measurable goals. Set specific timelines/deadlines. Require regular check-ins.

➢ Set up **weekly** (monthly too long) virtual meetings with your entire team.

➢ Have a monthly meeting with every team member, both those in the office and those who work remotely. Have the employee give you updates on what they have done AND ask how you can help.

➢ **Know the communication style of each employee**. Share team info using multiple communication methods to reach all employees. Consider and prepare for communication breakdowns in your team and be ready to *help* them address.

TIPS for Employees for Efficient Remote Work

➢ Set a clear work schedule and/or routine. Have a set start and end time and figuring out when certain tasks/work are done most productively (i.e. work the same hours as your team for communication; schedule two four hour blocks during the day so you can fit in errands or other before/after/in between). Be visible online for collaboration with colleagues.

➢ Set up your office space and "go to work". Working in the same space or way you do at home will reduce focus and commitment.

➢ Ensure you have scheduled regular check-ins, especially if part of your team is still in-office. They have more organic opportunities to meet and you might need ask for meetings to get the same info.

➢ Consider putting your personal phone on airplane mode and block websites that may distract you. Create a strong boundary between work and personal life.

➢ Prepare for technology failure. Ensure you have a back-up plan for when you laptop freezes or Wi-Fi is not connecting.

➢ Keep some of your work offline (i.e. physical notes, to-do lists, Kanban board etc.).

➢ Take regular breaks. We all need a minute to regroup or relax in the middle of project. It's the same on-site. (Suggest a few minutes every hour. Not to exceed 15-20minutes per break.)

➢ Keep an organized work desk. Clutter lowers productivity, regardless of who sees it. Consider changing the scenery occasionally too (work from a coffee shop or sit outside), if possible.

➤ Keep consistent and transparent communication with your manager to let them know how you're doing – both professionally and personally. If you need help with something, speak up.

➤ Lack of in-person human interaction is a big issue when it comes to maintaining good work communication. I recommend visiting the office every once in a while, if you've got the chance to stay connected and get accustomed to their work culture.

➤ Get up and move. Physical activity is important to brain function, productivity, and overall health.

UI Resources/Forms

➤ Workplace Flexibility: https://hr.uiowa.edu/well-being/family-services/workplace-flexibility

➤ Flex Work Agreement: https://hr.uiowa.edu/well-being/family-services/flexible-work-arrangements/flexible-work-agreement

➤ Operations Manual: https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/human-resources/flexible-work-arrangements

➤ Contact your HR Rep or UI Family Services