

# 10 TIPS FOR MANAGING A VIRTUAL TEAM

The COVID crisis has forced Federal workforce leaders to take a crash course on managing remote teams. Here are some ways you can quickly build essential skills to successfully lead remote workers in the "new normal."

## 1 EXPAND YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Are you a traditionalist? Must you see your team to know they are working? Embrace the gig economy and all that technology and working from home can do to help enable your staff to give their best and be even more efficient and effective.

## 2 AUGMENT MEETING DESIGN

Realize that virtual meetings may need different types of agendas and strategies to get everyone involved. Introduce new ways to engage staff and aid in team cohesion and idea collaboration remotely.

## 3 ESTABLISH TEAM NORMS

Develop ground rules and expectations for the individuals on the team. Do they need to respond to emails within a specific time period? Are they supposed to be always on, or are they permitted to sign off entirely? Must they work regular business hours, or will you benefit from staggered schedules?

## 4 ASSESS INDIVIDUALS NEEDS

Keep connected with staff and find out what challenges they are dealing with in all facets of life during this new normal. Keep your finger on the pulse of the needs for each person and try to remain flexible to changes that may be required in work schedules and accessibility daily and weekly.

## 5 HOLD PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE

Once your team members are clear on the new expectations, hold them accountable for delivering. If things start to slip, connect with them 1:1 to address the issues as they occur before they become bigger issues.

## 6 PROVIDE ADDED TOP COVERAGE

Try to alleviate the stress on the team caused by politics and shifting priorities to allow them to focus on execution. This means taking more on yourself and sheltering them from some of the uncertainty and minutia that may be coming from above.

## 7 PROACTIVELY ADDRESS ISSUES

Be sure to manage tough conversations via video call or audio call rather than over email. These things can fester and not only disrupt productivity but spread throughout the team if not addressed quickly.

## 8 INCREASE SELF-AWARENESS

Be aware of your own challenges and identifying new mindsets and practices to manage more effectively. This is a new time, and you must give yourself the grace to grow and learn on a parallel track with leading.

## 9 TRIPLE CHECK TONE AND CLARITY

Now that your direct reports and colleagues don't see you every day, be sure to pay attention to the tone of the messages you deliver to the team. Focus on calm, confidence and empathy, even if you are overwhelmed, frustrated and anxious yourself.

## 10 RECOGNIZE ADAPTABILITY

It is difficult to keep remote staff motivated, especially at a stressful time that was as unexpected as it is unprecedented. Make time on calls to celebrate the teams' adaptability and recognize individual achievements and contributions.

