

# Working World Turned Upside Down

## The Checklist



Right now, worldwide we are experiencing a pandemic and total disruption to virtually everything in our lives.

In the world of work many companies are reducing face to face interactions, increasing use of virtual technologies and providing a level of flexibility that hasn't been available during normal times. The nature of some roles means working remotely might not be feasible but for those of us who can there are some key things we think employees and supervisors need to keep in mind.

When the working world has been turned upside, there is still the innate need to keep connected, be included and feel we belong for the duration of the disruption.

### Mindset for Everyone



- This is a significant disruption – the existing way of working can't fully apply because the structure or our working environments is disrupted. It is time to become more creative and flexible in approach.
- Move towards outcomes based rather than time/presenteeism based – for some employees their 'working day' is now going to need to be over a 24-hour period and not the usual 9-5 business day for many. For working parents or carers who may now need to entertain their children or look after others in an isolated home environment they need flexibility to be able to balance.
- Set realistic expectations and cut some slack – recognise your email might not be answered immediately. If you were expecting an immediate response then pick up the phone and understand if the reply isn't immediate.
- Use the technology we have available – utilise your technology and maximise its use - create streams/groups that you can use relevant to your business to message and stay connected. Create a channel for socialising – it can feel very lonely working remotely and for the extroverts we need banter and to be connected. For introverts – this may well be their ideal environment!

## Mindset for Employees



- Set up a spot to work where you feel comfortable – while working from your bed might seem nice initially, you will quickly find out it's not that great for your back, shoulders and neck. You need somewhere comfortable and where you can operate easily.
- Stick to your regular routines wherever possible – get up, get ready as if going to the workplace – then start work in your comfortable place.
- Eat healthily – it is really easy to snack and eat unhealthily when working remotely – Schedule your breaks and eat healthily each day.
- Move – yes you might be confined to your location but you can still do exercise – steps, power walking around the house.... try not to become sedentary.
- If you are a people person and feeling super lonely, connect with colleagues and chat – social media, a phone call with a coffee, video call – they can all help keep you connected. Being confined doesn't mean you can't have a conversation or virtual catch up.
- Communicate your work – let others know what you are working on and collaborate virtually as much as you can. Consider partnering with another colleague and keeping connected that way.
- Get a good amount of sleep – it helps your body recharge and reinvigorate itself.
- Try not to focus too much on the news – set a cut off time or limit the amount of time you keep updated with the disruption.

## Mindset for Supervisors/Leaders



- Do all of the above for yourself plus.....
- Are you aware of any pre-existing medical conditions that may increase the health risk to your employee? Be sensitive – some may not have disclosed those conditions previously to you. Reassure them it is purely for ensuring their wellbeing.
- Talk to the employee about what their working day might look like – create realistic expectations together and discuss how you are going to keep in contact with each other. Are they a new employee? What is their level of work experience and training? Will they need extra support such as another colleague who may be able to assist them in learning to working through problems.
- Consider establishing some guidelines e.g. respond to emails within 24 hours, use text or phone calls for urgent matters and some 'no call' time zones to ensure people aren't working at all hours. But they must be guidelines and flexible – every employees situation is going to be different.
- Check in regularly as agreed (virtually face to face or via the phone) with each employee ideally at least once a day
- Ask how they are doing both physically and mentally – create a scoring system e.g. a wellness score – on a scale of 1-10 how are you feeling today. Monitor how they score on a daily basis. Listen to what they are saying and the language your employees are using – some people will thrive in this disruption and take it in their stride, others will struggle. Make sure your employees know and can access employee support if they need to.
- Prioritise – what is urgent and absolutely required vs what is a nice to have? Equally this may be the opportunity to tidy up some of those policies/items that you never quite get around to and can be completed remotely.
- Be outcome focussed and not activity focussed – this means trusting your employees to deliver those outcomes – let go your focus on presenteeism.
- Still hold team meetings or one to one meetings – just do them virtually or via phone. Video conferencing is a great way to keep that connection going and for the team to continue to feel cohesive. Build personal time into meetings, allowing for 5-10 minutes at the beginning or end of meetings for everyone to give a personal update. Make sure each team member has a voice in the meeting so they feel connected and included in the team.
- Keep employees updated on the situation – consider using a specific title for those types of emails – make them obvious to the reader that this is an update. Only send an update if something has changed – don't keep cutting and pasting the same information as that gets annoying.
- Use reply all only as necessary – otherwise it can stifle everyone's work if it is not necessarily relevant to them. Send the email to whoever needs it but reply all isn't your way of connecting everyone to everything!