

TIPsheet

Out of Sight but not Out of Mind: Four Ways to Keep Remote Employees Connected

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Valuing employees for their individual contributions is at the core of any strong corporate culture and much more important than an employee's physical presence. In the tradeshow industry, extensive travel is very common, resulting in more remote employees. In my department at CDS, 50 percent of employees hired in the past year work remotely in a variety of positions—all requiring constant communication. Here are four ways to stay connected that have been successful with our remote employees.

1 **Hire great employees, not just good ones.**

Hiring people with the right skills and experience is certainly important, but hiring great employees who adapt to your culture and have an outstanding work ethic is even more critical. The right remote employees should have a desire to work remotely and with other remote employees. With the right leadership, remote arrangements cultivate productivity and high job satisfaction. Your company's hiring goal should always be to hire the best candidate regardless of geographic location.

2 **Make communicating easy.**

Communication within the company needs to be very easy and frequent. All team members should know each other's work arrangements and adapt to the various meeting tools such as GoToMeeting, Join.me, and Slack. Remote employees should be willing to communicate in many ways and take advantage of collaborative tools such as Jira, Google Docs, or Workfront. Using video conferencing for company meetings helps employees feel connected.

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3 **Keep** remote employees closely involved with the corporate headquarters.

Remote employees should always feel part of the team. You should get to know each remote employee personally to establish loyalty and trust. Keep your remote employees closely involved with the corporate headquarters by inviting them to visit for any business reason, sending holiday and birthday cards, and offering opportunities to participate in local events. Encourage all employees to share business and personal experiences as well as include remote employees on companywide committees.

4 **Mimic** a traditional office atmosphere.

When working remotely, employees should have the ability to experience a traditional office environment. This includes having easy access to resources such as technical support for a computer hardware or software problem. Setting up a home office that mimics a traditional office environment or allowing employees to find a shared office space can contribute to a successful and rewarding remote experience. Your goal should be to make remote employees feel like they are working under the same roof. Empower remote employees to participate in local job fairs or industry events to demonstrate that their local presence is important.

No matter where your employees are physically located, they all work for the same company. Working remotely is a trend that is not going away—being out of sight does not mean being out of mind. In today's workforce, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution, so the most successful companies strive to be flexible in order to attract and retain the best employees. Keeping connected and maximizing the positive aspects are the keys to success for both remote employees and companies.