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WORKING FROM HOME (WFH)

A New Breed of Workforce



TECH TIPS

By Kelly McNeil, TechBldrs, Inc.

While we all may have taken a day or two to work from home in the past, a large-scale transition to a work from home environment like the one we've seen can present its own brand of challenges. It's uncharted territory for a lot of us. Businesses are facing questions they've never answered before, like "what does a normal day of working from home look like?" and "do we need specific policies for working from home?" and is everyone on "flex time now?"

As we've been supporting our clients through this transition to our "new normal," we've noticed a few common concerns

1. Remote workers are not the same as non-mobile WFH workers:

We've heard these two terms used interchangeably a lot over the past month, but there are some important distinctions between the two. Remote workers are used to setting their own hours and having their equipment be prepared for both office work and work out in the field. Employees who are now non-mobile WFH employees aren't used to these same circumstances, and as such require a little more support to get set up and work from home. They may not even have a productive space to work in, free for distractions.

2. Less security: Security can be lower at home because many offices have intelligent Firewalls in place to act as a first defensive barrier against malicious attacks. At home, most people don't even know what a Firewall does, and rely on Comcast or Verizon to provide one, which they don't. If your employees are working at home with business data,

now's a great time to have them brush up on their phishing identification, hacking recognition, and other cybersecurity skills. (Hint: you can read about them at techbldrs.com/blog/)

3. Company policies, standards, and norms must be considered before they happen:

Have you ever thought about a WFH worker tripping and falling in their own home? Is that now a Workman's Compensation Claim? Or how do you know if they are working or taking a PTO day? We all benefit from the structure of a normal workday: habits we're used to, co-workers we can easily communicate with, routines we've gotten into. Setting up some new or modified WFH company standards, norms, and policies is a must to head off the types of issues this workforce activates. Some things to consider are work time and work space expectations, dress code, employee communication standards, and use of video. And remember, if you change your employee handbook, you need to get employees to sign-off.

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TECH TIPS

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4. Video calling and weekly check-in:

You can't replace in-person interaction, but you can get close with face-to-face video calls, something we strongly suggest. Applications like Microsoft Teams (we only recommend Zoom for external, non-private communication) can be used to get valuable "face time" with co-workers. For one, video calling is quicker than sending emails back and forth. And it also helps capture some of the feeling of interacting with other employees — something we're all missing as we self-isolate at home. At TechBldrs, we've also found that morning video meeting "huddles" are useful for keeping everyone updated, informed, and on the same page, and showing up for work.

5. Tracking software: The idea of monitoring employees' work-related activity on a company computer can be a touchy subject. People think it's Big Brother. But the best time to implement tracking software is before you need it. This can save you by collecting the evidence you may need BEFORE HR issues erupt. Tracking software, like ActivTrak, runs quietly in the background collecting activity and periodic screen shots so that you can access it if

you need to. We only suggest installing tracking software on company computers, and never on personal computers, even if your employees are using them for work.

Treating WFH as the remote worker sweeps a lot of new questions that no one wants to face. Most companies hope that all their workers are positively productive, but hope is not a plan.

Still have questions? Want to know what else you can do? Call us at 610.601.8017 for advice or for a free employee phishing test, or check out our blog at www.TechBldrs.com/blog for more tips!

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