

How to Build Employee Culture with a Remote Team or Virtual Office

Apr. 6, 2021 | Posted by Phil Spensieri

Whether your staff have been working from home for the past year or rotating between home and the office, there is no doubt that for most of us there has been a change in our working environment. Regardless of where your team works, it is so important to make sure they still feel in touch with the company and the best way to do this is to create an effective company culture which can produce several benefits for your employees, including reduced turnover, increased productivity, and overall happier employees. Now that many of my clients have successfully transitioned to virtual operations, I've been encouraging them to continue fostering a culture that is supportive and receptive to the needs of their employees.

Simply because most of us are working virtually these days, it doesn't mean that our company culture should come to a screeching halt. Here are my recommendations for building an effective employee culture in a virtual setting.

Communication is key

It's no surprise that communication plays a big role in establishing culture within a company. Think about a company that doesn't openly communicate amongst its team members. How do you think they perceive one another, and how do you think the public perceives them as a whole? Companies should strive to embody the values set forth in their vision, starting from the top-down. This ensures that even though your employees may be working virtually, they'll be aware that they're working towards the same common goal(s).

Make sure you are meeting with your team at least once a week, ideally via a video call. Being able to see each other's faces is extremely important for understanding emotions and levels of engagement. It's also helpful to create a welcoming environment for new employees who may have started with your company after the initiation of your virtual operations. I also suggest you try to initiate and engage in non-work-related conversations with your team, too. During team meetings, for example, you might want to dedicate some time to informal chit chat to create a sense of comradery among your team.

Make time for some fun

We may be limited in our abilities to host in-person gatherings at the moment, but that shouldn't stop us from encouraging our employees to relax and have a little fun.

Employee burnout is an issue that business owners need to be aware of and mitigate as best as possible. Although businesses tend to appreciate hard-working employees who always go the extra mile, it's important not to enable your employees to work beyond their means.

Instead of creating a culture of non-stop work, let your employees know that it's ok to slow down once in a while. I recommend hosting virtual luncheons or happy hours, trivia breaks or other non-work related events to help break up their work day. You might want to even run a contest, or online game like Kahoot!

Recognition goes a long way

When's the last time you genuinely thanked your employees for their contributions? As a business owner myself, I understand how busy our schedules can be, but we should never be too busy to recognize the people who keep our businesses running.

Recognition doesn't need to be costly; in fact, a quick email or message thanking someone on your team for their efforts can often do the trick. But if you do choose to spend some money, small tokens of appreciation such as gift cards for coffee or food delivery may also be appreciated by your employees.

While many large companies resort to formal recognitions such as "Employee of the Month", I encourage you to focus on recognizing your entire workforce at this time rather than focusing on one individual.

Now that many companies are choosing to permanently keep their virtual operations, the need for an employee culture will be even greater. Contact Todd Ringler at toddr@tabny.com today to find out how we can help you accomplish this and any other business-related challenges you may have!