



PSYCHOLOGY GROUP

THE ROLE OF LEADERS IN SUPPORTING REMOTE TEAMS

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During uncertain and stressful times, staff will look to leaders for guidance, support, and clarity. Key business practices may look a little bit different for the time being, but the functionality of leaders and managers to guide, support, ensure productivity and accountability remain integral to a business' success.

COMMUNICATION

Consider your organisational policy on working from home. Once determined, have an open and transparent dialogue with your team or staff members about what this means, and how you can best support each person in relation to their workload, deliverables, and home environment.

- Dialogue should be as open and transparent as possible, and in line with their role, experience, and ability to meet required outcomes.
- Consider reasonable touchpoints via technology in lieu of ad-hoc office conversations, such as a 5-minute call to confirm the day's targets/ deliverables
- What does each person's role require and what do you need to know to feel confident progress is being made? What was the prior baseline?
- Utilise the baseline when considering how much additional contact is needed; if an employee didn't require close supervision or multiple daily check-ins prior to working at home, they are unlikely to require additional monitoring. The mode of communication may change but retain comparable frequency.
 - If a person was highly autonomous in the office, it is unlikely additional support or communication outside prior standards would be required.
 - Low-autonomy roles may require more frequent support and structure.
- If your business previously had staff incentives such as bonuses to motivate outcomes, strategise/discuss directly how to otherwise motivate employees.
- Try to avoid making assumptions that somebody is not working if they miss a call or similar. We're not always at our desks in the office, either!

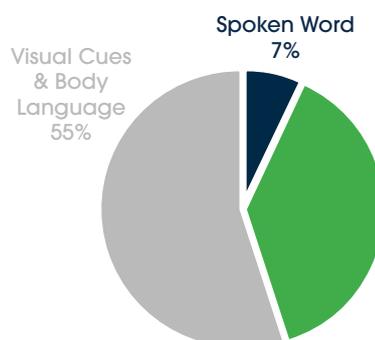
Communication works through a series of filters and interpretation of meaning. It's all about perception of what we think the other person is saying.

Communication is primarily through visual stimulus; if we take away visual cues, as is potential in a 'working remotely' scenario, 55% of how we interpret meaning is lost. Unless, we communication face to face virtually as much as possible.

Take this into account also if relying on emails, as you then also take away your ability to impart meaning through tone.

L: Albert Mehrabian's 7-38-55 Rule of Personal Communication

Elements of Personal Communication



Voice Tone
38%

TOP TIPS

Think physical distancing, rather than social distancing: Check in on your staff regularly. Ask them how they are, before talking about their work.

Adjust and clarify your expectations for employee deliverables and how you will measure productivity.

What modes of communication does your team have access to? How will you utilise them and for what? Is everyone aware and sufficiently equipped?

What resources does your organisation have available to support employees? How are you ensuring information is readily accessible to all employees?

Think about and plan how to look after yourself in a sustainable way over a prolonged high-stress time. Who will you debrief with and how?

VIDEO LINK: [TIPS FOR WORKING FROM HOME](#)

SELF CARE

Leaders are often busy looking after everyone else's needs.

- Consider how will you maintain a connection to your peer group and Manager?
- Reframe negative thinking, e.g., instead of focussing what is bad about a remote workforce, ask "what's good about it?" instead.
- Establish a routine and set boundaries for your schedule.
- See OPRA's "Working Remotely" information sheet in the resources library.

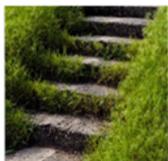
EMPLOYEE PULSE

It's more important than ever to understand your employees' perspectives and concerns. Utilise OPRA's quick pulse survey to gauge and respond in an agile, supportive way.

ABOUT OPRA

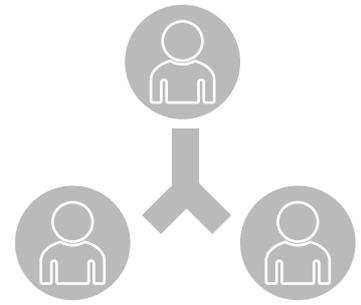
OPRA Psychology Group was established in 1997 and is a specialist organisational psychology consultancy. We work across Asia-Pacific with offices in most major cities.

For service relevant to current circumstances and support available, click here to access our [RESOURCES LIBRARY](#)



ENABLE SOCIAL CONNECTION

It's beneficial to create avenues for informal conversations, such as we're able to have in offices. chat groups in online applications such as Zoom, WhatsApp or Microsoft Teams can enable this. Informal activities such as having morning tea via video conference, help to mitigate a sense of isolation.



TEAM CHECK INS

- Talk to staff about what they need from you. Understand their circumstances and how they may be impacted in working remotely.
- Transfer all usual team events (e.g., planning sessions, birthdays, etc.) and meetings to a virtual format, with face to face conferencing where possible.
- Establish how you will keep in touch with each team member, ensure you are across their work and maintain a connection as to how they are coping. Consider a quick call to start the day, or similar, as a touchpoint.

PRODUCTIVITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Understand that, for the time being at least, there is a new "normal". Working from home doesn't translate identically from an office-based routine. You won't have the usual visual, high-fidelity cues that someone is working. This means re-setting your expectations for this context.

- Be aware and empathetic that some staff have challenging circumstances to work within, e.g., children at home, no office space, housemates, etc.
- Get to know your staff's circumstances and model your communication strategy on individual needs, or as the work requires e.g., certain times of day may work best, some people may want more frequent contact, etc.
- Supply appropriate equipment to help improve efficacy and ergonomic setup, if possible.
- It's important for staff to feel a sense of control: try to avoid checking up on them constantly. Instead, focus on outcomes. How/when they get the work done might be different to in their traditional environment, but the outcome and overall quality should be to the same standard.
- Have check-points or milestones and project plans to monitor progress; create opportunity for discussion as to challenges, have solution-focussed dialogue
- Adjust your expectations for the short term; this is a change for everyone and will require some figuring out! Trust your staff, and look to accountability through results, rather than hours at a desk.



OPRA won the internationally acclaimed Brandon Hall Award 2019 for Best Advance in Career Management and Planning Technology.

For more information please email contact@opragroup.com or contact your local OPRA consultant.

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