



COPING UNDER QUARANTINE; EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT & REMOTE WORKING





SWITCHING OFF WHEN HOME BECOMES YOUR OFFICE




As the number of COVID-19 coronavirus cases increase globally, employers are being encouraged to accommodate and prepare their employees for working remotely for an indefinite and unclear period.

It can be hard for employees to suddenly adapt to working in their home space, and it can be a frightening time causing levels of stress and anxiety.




Remote working has several advantages, such as more flexibility, increased productivity and less sick days and lower absenteeism. However there can be disadvantages too such as lower work:life balance, decreased sense of belonging and connection and a lack of communication.

There are many steps employers can take to ensure their workers are staying engaged and connected to the business, whilst maintaining their wellbeing, productivity levels and work:life balance.

Advantages of remote working

-  **Increased productivity**
-  **More flexibility**
-  **Less sick days & lower absenteeism**

Disadvantages of remote working

-  **Lower work:life balance**
-  **Decreased sense of belonging and connection**
-  **Lack of communication**



PRIOROTISE EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

People are really struggling emotionally; we are in a situation that is surrounded by negativity and feels like the world is ending. This can be a very overwhelming time for some, so the most important thing to consider is the wellbeing of your employees.

During the initial transition period from working in an office to remote working, expect productivity levels to be lower. Prioritise the wellbeing of your employees over how productive they are being at this time.

Instead of checking workers have worked a full 40-hour week, ask how their first week working remotely has been and try to assist them in overcoming any challenges they are facing.

Remind people of their value at the company and the positive attributes they bring to the team.

This will help to create a positive mindset, boost team morale and help employees to continue to feel connected to the business despite being outside the office — thus resulting in more productivity.

If you use an employee rewards scheme that offers a wellbeing service, make sure your workers are comfortable with how to use it before remote working is implemented.



COMMUNICATION IS KEY

When faced with uncertainty and fear, it is easy to let communication decrease as people immerse themselves with their workload.

Frequent communication has a major influence over employee engagement, so make a point of checking in with your staff regularly. Try and utilise video and phone calls where possible; this can provide a level of interaction that an email or message doesn't.

In a period where employees are going to be stuck in one room all day with little interaction to the outside world, this can be very beneficial to their wellbeing and keeps them engaged and motivated with work.





EFFECTIVE REMOTE WORKING

Since Government advice strongly suggested home-working where possible, many companies have been preparing their teams for remote working. Before the Coronavirus outbreak, many businesses would have already implemented a work-from-home policy in place, but for those that didn't, this is uncharted territory.

Many employees may be worried that they don't have the correct set up at home to start remote working. Be sure to assist where possible by allowing employees to take their desks, chairs and desk equipment home, and provide them with a work phone and computer where possible.

Avoid allowing employees to use their personal devices to work remotely as this can make it hard for them to distinguish between work life and home/social life, which can lower their motivation, wellbeing and productivity.

Make sure to offer them any training and assistance they may need on setting up their home office, especially on technology such as Microsoft Teams.

Encourage and assist employees to establish and maintain a good routine. Suggest workers continue with the routine they would've had when coming into the office, dress for work and adhere to their usual working hours; these are all good foundations to start on.

It is also important to encourage them to take a lunch break away from their desk just as they would at work and suggest employees avoid looking at screens and try to socialise with others working from home in their household.

REMOTE WORKING



62%

of remote workers want employers to provide better technology that helps them stay connected with their colleagues



20%

of remote workers said the biggest struggle of remote working is feel lonely

ENSURE EMPLOYEES HAVE A FUNCTIONAL WORK SCHEDULE

When home becomes your work environment, it can be very easy for your work:life to become unbalanced. It is important for your employees who will be remote working to establish and maintain a functional work schedule.

You can assist by scheduling regular conference calls and video meetings to help implement a schedule and to also allow employees to feel as though they are still in the office setting with regular meetings. You can also avoid overloading remote working employees with more work than usual to prevent them from working outside normal business hours.

Ensuring that your team have the right software such as Microsoft Planner and Microsoft Teams is essential, as you can set tasks and share documents to keep employees on track and motivated while being managed by team leaders and line managers.

Encourage employees to take regular breaks to help boost productivity. Suggest implementing the 'Pomodoro' Technique, which suggests that everyone works in bursts of productivity with little periods of inactivity in between. This happens very often in the workplace; however, it is easier to get back to productivity after inactivity. At home, this can be difficult, and it can be easier for inactive periods to last longer than they would at work. The 'Pomodoro' technique will help combat this.

THE PMODORO TECHNIQUE





DEFINE GOALS FOR REMOTE WORKERS

By setting goals and targets for your employees working from home, this can give them something to work towards and help to keep them motivated.

It is important to set realistic goals while being mindful of their new working environment. Try not to bombard them with too many goals and targets at one time or set unrealistic deadlines as this may overwhelm employees, and during an economical time that is very stressful and uncertain you need to ensure the wellbeing of your employees is the main priority.

KEEP YOUR TEAM UP TO DATE

Now more than ever the need for communication amongst teams is very important. Not only should you check up on their progress on tasks but ask how they are coping with the switch to remote working to show that you are considering their wellbeing.

Make sure to keep your employees as up to date as possible with everything business and COVID-19 related. If you don't inform your employees about the internal reorganisation you are implementing or the impacts Coronavirus is having on the business on time, they are going to try and source the information by themselves.

This can lead to misinformation spreading amongst employees which can result in unnecessary fear and growing concerns, which can demotivate and unengaged employees.



GIVE EMPLOYEES A SENSE OF BELONGING

Make sure to check up on employees who are remote working often, whether by phone call or video call, try and avoid email threads. Staff are going to be stuck in the same room all day with little contact from the outside world, so not only call wellbeing levels drop, but so can morale.

By offering them a form of communication, whether it be about a project they are working on or just a quick catch up to see how they are coping, it can make all the difference in their overall performance. Be sure to remind them of their value within the business to keep them motivated and to elevate levels of wellbeing.

PREPARE TO BE FLEXIBLE

With the imminent closure of schools on the horizon, parents are going to be faced with more challenges than ever before.

It is going to be a stressful time to be remote working with bored children to worry about. It is important to check up on employees with children to reassure them that you understand the situation and you will do your best to accommodate it by allowing flexible hours where possible and make sure to offer support and listen.

We hope this resource has helped you, if you need any further resources around mental and physical wellbeing, please visit our

Business continuity and keeping your employees engaged through Covid-19

page on our website, you will find everything we offer our clients employee's there, for free during this time.

We hope you get some comfort and value from these.

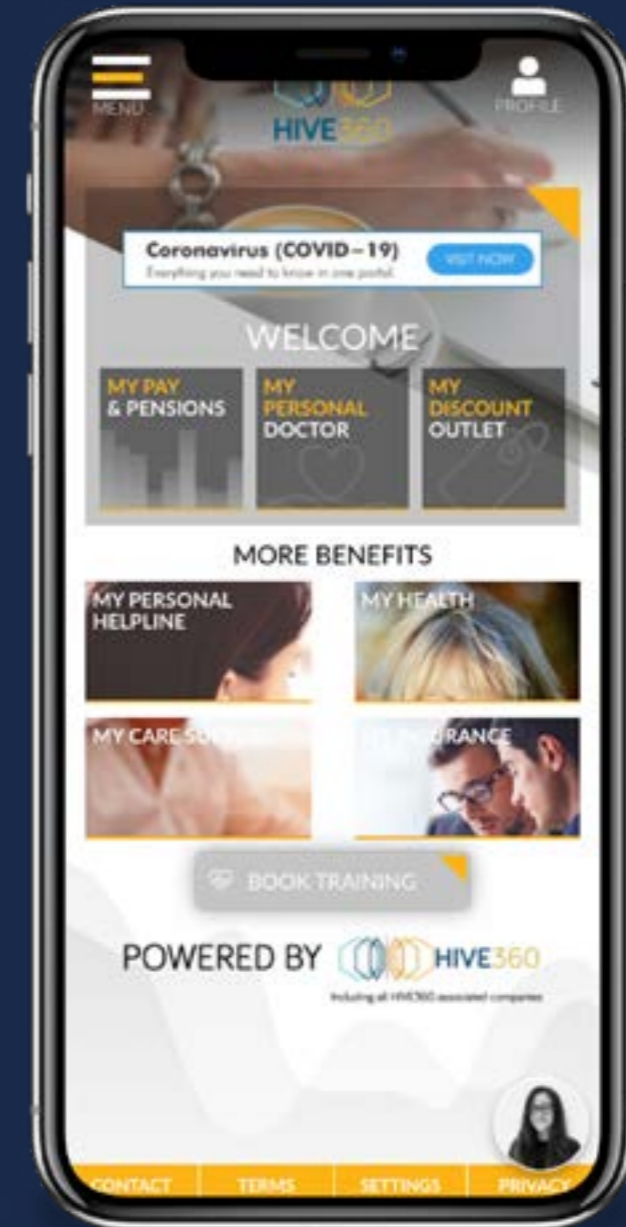
Stay safe, stay healthy, stay at home.

WHO ARE HIVE360?

Hive360 empowers businesses of all sizes to achieve better engagement with their people.

We believe that everyone deserves the best work-life experience and that great communication, wellbeing support and financial benefits are the cornerstones of this.

Our game-changing engagement platform delivers better communication, vital healthcare support and attractive lifestyle benefits in the palm of your hand.





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