HRInsights

Boosting Self-motivation for Remote Employees

Many organizations are expanding remote work options to more employees than ever before. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has led to many employers expediting use of this practice—sometimes out of business necessity.

Before expanding remote work options, employers often first address obstacles such as establishing expectations and ensuring all employees have the technology they need. Once initial challenges are addressed, employers have an opportunity to plan for best use of the remote workplace—including how to boost self-motivation for remote employees.

Challenges of Managing Remote Employees

Remote employees face unique challenges. While numerous studies show that remote employees can achieve levels of productivity that are the same as or higher than their non-remote peers, this isn't without obstacles. According to a study conducted by the Harvard Business Review, remote employees were less motivated than employees who work in an office, while employees who did not have a choice in their work location were found less motivated than those who had a personal choice of their location.

Other challenges remote workers face may include:

- Lack of face-to-face interaction
- Social isolation
- Limited or lack of access to necessary information
- Distractions within their home

Leaders can take steps to address these challenges and partner with remote employees to boost motivation.

Motivating Remote Employees

To boost self-motivation for remote employees, leaders can consider the following practices:

- **Empower employees to solve meaningful problems and experiment**—According to the Harvard Business Review, employees who are allowed to solve meaningful problems or experiment report higher motivation—regardless of where they are working. Consider how to find ways to engage employees with high-level contributions.

- **Measure motivation**—Communicate to employees that self-motivation is the desired outcome. Set goals and measure accordingly to reach them. This could be completed through productivity measuring tools—or even through surveys completed by employees.

- **Allow employees to showcase their achievements**—Employees take pride in their work—when in remote locations, natural opportunities to showcase and discuss accomplishments may be scarce. Find ways to let remote employees talk about their achievements, such as during team meetings.

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Supporting Each Employee

Motivated employees can lead to effective and productive remote teams. Leaders can consider how to best support their remote employees. Considerations include:

- Schedule one-on-one check-ins—By gauging how each employee is doing, leaders can evaluate how to meet the unique needs of each employee.

- Provide emotional support—Asking open ended questions can allow employees to speak their minds. Leaders should focus on being good listeners and providing appropriate support.

- Establish expectations—An increased level of ambiguity can stress remote employees out— by establishing clear goals and objectives, employees can stay on the same page with their manager.

Remember, each employee is unique. Some employees may adapt well to a remote environment, while others may need individual support to achieve a high level of performance and personal well-being.

Empower Remote Employees to Succeed

Every business is different, so there isn't one right way to best lead remote employees. Create practices and expectations that work best for specific teams and individual employees. Contact NYSIF for additional resources regarding best practices for utilizing the remote workspace.

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