

As we join what *Time* calls "the [World's Largest Work-From-Home Experiment](#)," here are some tips that I thought were very useful from Gallup for remote leadership. If I can be of more assistance to you and your staff, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Individualization is key. Managers need to ask each team member to describe the conditions under which they [perform best](#), their concerns about their workflow and their emotional response to the situation.

- Take time on calls or video conferences to ask “how are you doing?”, “are you set up to work from home successfully?”
- Research shows remote workers are most likely to feel isolated or disconnected between 2-4pm. Is this a time when you can host check-ins, team meetings, quick chats or updates to keep people engaged and energized through the rest of the day?

Managers in strengths-based businesses have a huge asset -- they can predict employees' reactions. Whether that means a driving need to complete projects, keep promises, maintain relationships or any other motivator, those traits are powerful ... and different for everyone. Managers will need to [individualize to the person](#) to get the best performance. A one-size-fits-all response never fits anyone very well.

Set expectations early and clearly. About half of all U.S. employees -- remote or not -- don't know what's expected of them at work. That's a bad beginning, and it'll get worse for employees sent home without good guidance. So managers must make expectations crystal clear: *X* is the work you should do, *Y* is the quality standard, *Z* is the deadline. Executives should provide higher-level expectations aligned with the company's purpose: We'll keep our customers engaged by doing *X*, we'll maintain our standards by doing *Y*, we'll fulfill our mission by doing *Z*. The more detail, the better.

Communication. Employees who are accustomed to working in-house may feel cut off from the resources, information or relationships they need to do their jobs well, so plan for more conference calls. It's OK to pad socializing into the timeframe; indeed, it may be vital for people who need lots of interaction to keep their energy up. Managers will have to be diligent about [communicating productively](#) -- coaching high performance requires frequent conversations, and there won't be chance conversations in the hall. But *your* staff needs to hear from you too, especially as economic fears worsen, to maintain their trust in leadership. Keep the lines of communication open, honest and broad. Send emails or post videos about your reasoning, intentions and expectations. Make it easy for managers to know your thoughts and contribute their own.

Support your managers: A sudden change in the practice of management can be hard on managers. They may worry about disruptions to the workflow they're accountable for. Some may feel they have to be physically present to be good coaches, unsure that they can engage workers from a distance. Rather more negatively, there are still some managers who don't trust workers they can't see. All of them will have to manage workers in a new way, and fast.

So give them your support, both practical and emotional, during what may be a tough transition. Invest in management development and coaching ahead of the budget plan, and be affirming about the situation and understanding about altered deadlines. Just remember, your managers always need to know you have their back -- but never more so than when they feel insecure.

Looking Ahead

Gallup finds that [43% of U.S. employees](#) work remotely some or all of the time, and many, many studies show remote workers are more productive and profitable than in-house employees. So don't worry -- telework can succeed spectacularly. Although your company will have to learn quickly, your people may perform at levels that surprise you.