



The Association of
Accountants and
Financial Professionals
in Business

Managing Remote Teams

Note-Taking Guide

Presented by IMA Leadership Academy

TODAY'S AGENDA

1. Introduction
2. Are You Ready to Manage a Remote Team?
3. Overcoming the Challenges of Managing Remote Teams
4. Tips and Techniques for Being an Effective Remote Manager
5. Close

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After this session, you will be able to:

- Define remote work
- Identify the challenges and opportunities of managing a geographically disbursed team
- Assess your readiness to manage a remote team
- Describe tips and techniques for effectively managing a remote team



REFLECTION



1. What experience have you had with working remotely?

How did you feel about working remotely?

2. What characteristics make a good remote manager?

DEFINITION OF REMOTE WORK

A group of professionals working together to serve a common purpose while being geographically dispersed across regions, states/provinces, and/or countries.

A dispersed team generally reports to the same organization and manager, and is jointly responsible for achieving a set of goals and objectives.

Source: See Bibliography [11,12,17]

UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS

- Working with top professionals from anywhere
- Attracting employees and partners who might not otherwise consider your company
- Focusing more on results than on administrative tasks and meetings
- Happier employees who enjoy work flexibility while developing themselves professionally
- Reduced costs and burdensome office policies and conflicts

Source: See Bibliography [6,23,24]

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL REMOTE WORKING

- Specific goals and KPIs
- Good collaborative practices
- Videoconferencing capabilities
- A variety of communication tools
- Remote access tools
- A focus on completing tasks and hitting deadlines rather than on hours worked



Source: See Bibliography [24]

LEADERSHIP STYLES THAT WORK REMOTELY

Transformational	Transactional	Situational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive and nurturing • Aims to inspire and motivate • Values the identity of the individual while building a strong team identity • Finds the <i>purpose</i> behind the work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on goals and outputs • Delivers efficiently and with quality • Getting things done • Not effective for innovation and change • Effective for refining existing processes and helping to be more efficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapts to what the situation requires • Requires a high level of adaptability and flexibility • Requires the ability to quickly analyze a situation and apply the correct approach

Source: See Bibliography [7]

SELF-ASSESSMENT

ARE YOU READY TO MANAGE A REMOTE TEAM?



Instructions: For the 10 statements below, rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means that the statement does NOT describe you at all and 5 means that it describes you completely.

1. I am capable of developing team members even at a distance.

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not describe me at all</i>		<i>Sometimes describes me</i>		<i>Fully describes me</i>

2. I am comfortable with team members working independently.

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not describe me at all</i>		<i>Sometimes describes me</i>		<i>Fully describes me</i>

3. I have specific goals for the team and for each individual.

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not describe me at all</i>		<i>Sometimes describes me</i>		<i>Fully describes me</i>

4. I have strong collaborative processes in place already.

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not describe me at all</i>		<i>Sometimes describes me</i>		<i>Fully describes me</i>

5. The organization has good conferencing capabilities, and I am comfortable using them.

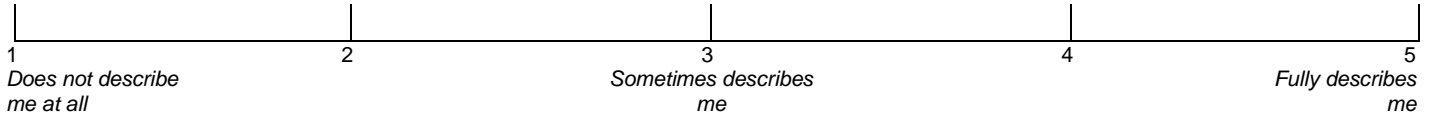
1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not describe me at all</i>		<i>Sometimes describes me</i>		<i>Fully describes me</i>

6. The organization has remote access tools, and I am comfortable using them.

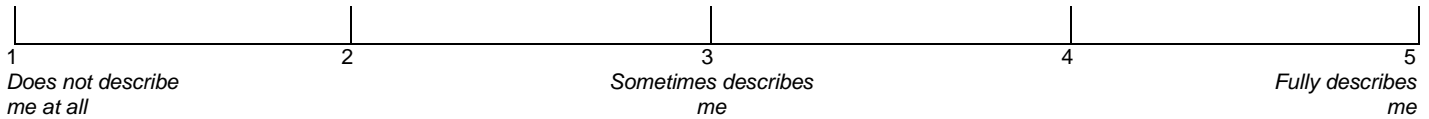
1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not describe me at all</i>		<i>Sometimes describes me</i>		<i>Fully describes me</i>



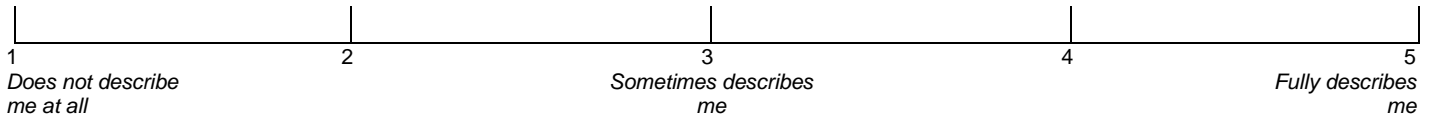
7. I am focused on getting things done.



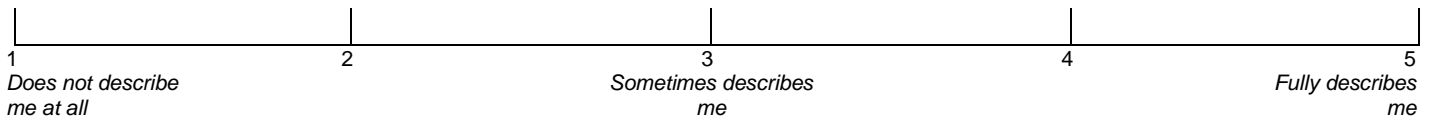
8. I like to help team members find the purpose behind their work.



9. I can quickly analyze a situation and adapt my approach accordingly.



10. I am comfortable using a variety of communication tools—phone, email, chat, and social media.



The more statements that fully describe you, the more ready you are to lead a remote team. You do not, however, need to have all 5's. If the majority of the statements are 4's and 5's, with maybe one or two as low as 3, you're probably pretty able to manage a team while further developing your abilities.

Areas that I can develop to be a better leader of a remote team:

THE CHALLENGES OF LEADING REMOTELY

- Lack of face-to-face time
- Lack of access to information
- Social isolation
- Distractions at home
- Communication
- Varying time zones



Source: See Bibliography [3,11,14]

OVERCOMING THE LACK OF FACE-TO-FACE TIME

- Establish regular check-ins
- Provide several different communication technology options
- Establish “rules of engagement”

Source: See Bibliography [14]

OVERCOMING THE LACK OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- Establish shared storage
- Establish “rules of engagement”
- Map out sources of information



Source: See Bibliography [14]

OVERCOMING SOCIAL ISOLATION

- Establish regular check-ins
- Provide opportunities for remote social interactions
- Offer encouragement and emotional support

Source: See Bibliography [14]

OVERCOMING DISTRACTIONS AT HOME

- Provide guidelines for establishing a good remote workplace
- Encourage mutual support and interactions to overcome distractions
- Be patient



Source: See Bibliography [14]

OVERCOMING COMMUNICATION HURDLES

- Make a variety of communication technologies available
- Establish regular, scheduled check-ins
- Establish “rules of engagement”

Source: See Bibliography [11,14]

ADJUSTING TO TIME ZONE DIFFERENCES

- Establish “rules of engagement”



Source: See Bibliography [11]

TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

- Newly remote employees
- Structuring priorities
- Managing performance
- Providing support
- Developing relationships

ONBOARDING NEW REMOTE EMPLOYEES



- Start early
- Get employees online ASAP
- Provide a digital employee handbook
- Create a sense of belonging
- Provide an individualized remote onboarding plan
- Initiate professional development and personal growth from the start
- Encourage collaborative learning

Source: See Bibliography [4]

STRUCTURING PRIORITIES



Organizational Changes

- Write clear briefs for every project
- Change the format of all business meetings to include remote workers
- Make everything transparent, clear, and documented
- Set clear expectations for working hours

Reporting

- Weekly one-on-one
- WAR (Weekly Action Review) meeting
- End-of-day check-in

Source: See Bibliography [13,24]

MANAGING PERFORMANCE



- Set clear expectations
- Focus on outcomes, not activity
- Resource your team
- Treat remote employees as local
- Engage on a daily basis
- Schedule video-based coaching
- Help them get aligned with the organization's mission and values
- Calibrate performance
- Make work visible
- Be flexible

Source: See Bibliography [1,8,18,22]

PROVIDING SUPPORT



1. Provide emotional support
 - Regular check-ins
 - Virtual social activities
 - Discussions about mental well-being and work-life balance
2. Provide clarity
 - Give information and take input
 - Get leaders involved in conversations
3. Provide tips for making remote work easier
 - Make online training available
 - Give time to deal with personal lives
 - Allow flexibility

Source: See Bibliography [2]

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS



- Be accessible
- Make time for informal conversations
- Use video
- Schedule weekly calls with clear agendas
- Be considerate of time zones and cultures
- Have in-person meetings upon occasion
- Level the playing field

Source: See Bibliography [15, 16, 19]

THE 3 C's

Connection	Communication	Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a buddy system • Do virtual team-building exercise • Host virtual coffee or happy hours • Create a team goal that everyone is responsible for • Send them swag • Create a mini book of team bios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use video on calls • Lead a brief daily huddle for the team and weekly one-on-ones • Lead quarterly live team meetings with recognition • Hold Q&A sessions with executives • Begin meetings with icebreaker questions • Set up email for feedback and recommendations • Conduct focus groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow remote workers to lead/own major projects • Assign problems to several remote workers • Invest in state-of-the-art collaboration tools • Mind the time zone • Ask the team to create a team charter • Hold a monthly Team Innovation Meeting • Recognize, reward, and celebrate collaborative behavior

Source: See Bibliography [5]



ACTION PLAN

1. Go back and review your self-assessment that we completed near the beginning of the session on your readiness to manage a remote team.
 - Are there any adjustments you should make to your ratings upon further consideration?
 - Is there anything you would add or change to the areas you can develop?

2. For each of the three major topics from this webinar, what is one thing you can do in the next week and another in the next month to be a better manager of a remote team?

Readiness to manage a remote team	Overcoming the challenges of managing remotely	Being an effective remote manager
In the next week, I can:		
In the next month, I can:		

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