

Working Remotely

***Black bold** are online resources/software

***Red bold** are fun ideas to try!

Top Challenges:

- Collaborating – shared team goals
- Combating loneliness – human connection
- Unplugging after work – drawing healthy boundaries

Benefits to the Organization:

- Staff log more hours on average
- Staff are more engaged overall
- Remote staff have the lowest tendency to be actively disengaged
- Remote staff save space and resources (\$\$) approx. \$11,000 per year per staff (Global Workplace Analytics)

Modern Staff Appreciate Autonomy

- Minimizes micromanagement of staff
- Remote staff work more effectively from their living room or a coffee shop!
- Gives staff the freedom to choose what works best for them at any given time
- 86% of people prefer to work alone
- Remote staff report loving their jobs more than those in an office!

Challenges to Consider:

Communication – the most important element of successful remote working orgs

Available Communication Tools

- Wormholes – create video conference rooms to stay connected and facilitate impromptu conversations
- Team chat apps – just using email to communicate puts your team at a great disadvantage; instant chat apps:
 - **Slack** – allows for file sharing
 - **Leo – a bot whose sole purpose is to help keep your team happy!**
 - **Microsoft Teams** – allows for file sharing

Tracking Progress, Measuring Results

- **Google's OKR** – (objectives and key results) shares each staff person's goals and regularly measures progress made toward those goals giving team transparency
- **iDoneThis** – smaller increments of progress by regularly sharing "dones"
 - A great way to support each other's work
- **Trello** – helps remote teams track what has been done, where everyone is at in their projects and what's next



Celebrate Success and Share Experiences

- Peer-to-peer recognition goes both ways with positive reinforcement and insight into the contributions made by colleagues
- Create daily activities to engage all staff online
- Schedule regular in person get togethers offsite in a location that is new to all staff
 - **Rent a pontoon boat and share a potluck lunch!**
 - **Meet at a state park and share a walk in the woods**
 - **Facilitate a beginner's painting event to spurn creativity – remember the wine!**
 - **Rent a campsite as a home base to hike, make s'mores and sing!**

Happy and Engaged!

1. Provide a platform for effective communication
 - a. **Once a week virtual lunch** – 15 minutes discussing work then 45 minutes chatting about personal things
 - b. "Morning check-ins" can feel like micromanagement (managing start times), instead try noon check-ins
 - c. Ask staff what they may need
 - d. Make sure all staff are included
 - e. Each staff person creates a 15 minute activity to engage co-workers on Friday afternoon
 - Celebrations
 - Recognitions
2. Have a "motivation committee"
 - a. **Each Monday morning, the committee sends out an inspiring message relevant to goals**
 - b. **Random messages or emails throughout the week to inspire!**
 - c. **Send "snack remote boxes" to each remote staff person (snacks and coffee)**
 - d. **Send appreciation cards to home offices – remember, you saved \$11,000!!**
 - e. **Weekly trivia contest**
 - f. **Set up a virtual coffee session using "Donut"**
 - g. **Hold an online campfire!**
 - **Send each team member a package filled with a candle, toothpicks, and s'more ingredients.**
 - **Share ghost stories**
 - **Create little competitions**
 - **Roast your marshmallow over your candle!**
 - h. **Live tea vs coffee tasting!**
 - **Send a package to each team member with four teas and coffees**
 - **Brew them at the same time and share what tastes good**
 - **Might try wine, too....**
3. Recognize great work
 - a. Highly recognizable using communication tools
 - b. Daily
4. Clarify goals
 - a. Provide clear direction of what is expected in terms of objectives and goals
 - b. Discuss with each staff person to mutually agree upon their goals
5. Place an emphasis on what's produced, rather than when!
 - a. One might work better from noon-8pm while another works best from 6am-2pm
 - b. Let them decide without unnecessary restrictions
6. Keep coordination of job functions in the forefront – understand how their role contributes to the success
 - a. Continual access to mission and vision statements
 - b. Project updates
 - c. Company performance records

7. Emphasize culture – fosters engagement
 - a. Build trust (**NO micromangement**) – bring team members together regularly
 - b. Create regular “events” for all to participate in
 - c. A common thread of culture is shared by all
8. Assist with time management
 - a. Balance of home chores and scheduling focused work time into their day
 - b. Provide tools and training which shows management cares and gives resources to help with success
 - c. Adopting collaborative project management tools can make a big difference
 - **Trello**
 - **Asana**
9. Get to know your remote employees
 - a. Meet with them one-on-one
 - b. Learn about what is going on in their lives
10. Cut out the fluff
 - a. A good flow of communication needs to be established and maintained
 - b. Eliminate too much face time
 - Cancel a scheduled meeting if it serves no purpose
 - c. Communicate when necessary then leave the remote staff alone to do their job

Avoid Isolation

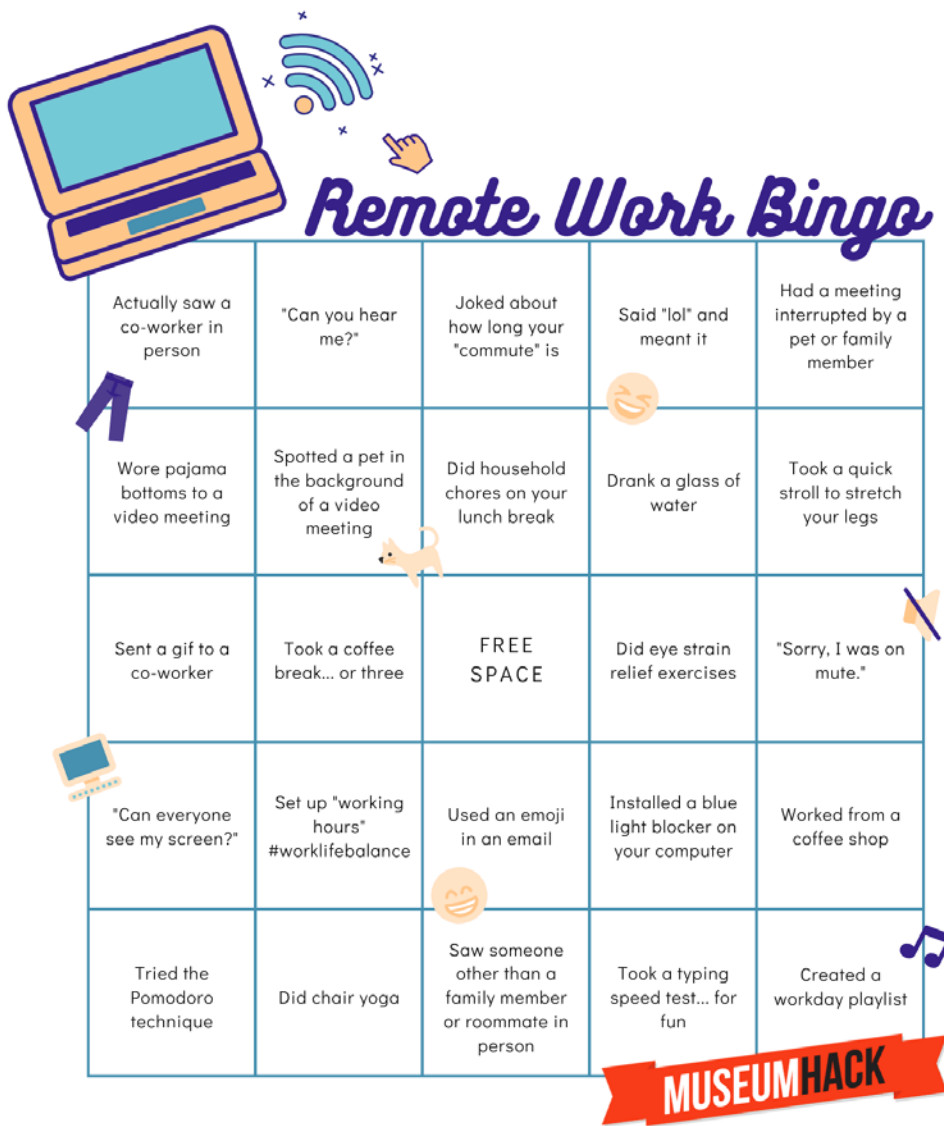
1. Make onboarding interactive engaging the entire team
 - a. New staff should have a project assigned on day one to avoid feeling lectured
2. Have regular trainings/activities
 - a. Identify activities in the training curriculum that challenge your team
 - i. Assign someone to research and lead the discussion around identifying the challenge and propose possible solutions
 - b. Team challenges – brainstorm new advocate recruitment techniques
 - i. **Reward all implemented techniques with the “snack remote box” delivery!**
 - c. Trending topics
 - i. Identify relevant topics
 - ii. Assign a topic to each staff
 - iii. 30 minute presentation on that topic schedule on same day at same time
 - d. Research professional development opportunities to offer staff
 - e. Participate in webinars of topics of interest to each staff person
 - i. Have them present to the rest of the team
 - ii. Lunch and learn platform
3. Clarify your mission and values
 - a. Constant reminders of “why” we do what we do
 - i. Fun
 - ii. Engaging
 - iii. Inspiring
 - iv. Authentic
 - b. **Create fun ways to post your mission and values in remote work places**
 - i. **Posters**
 - ii. **Photos**
 - iii. **Stories**
 - iv. **Vision board**

4. Make role expectations and goals transparent
 - a. Provide the tools and knowledge to complete the expectations of their role
 - b. Assign a new project – give them proper training and expectations
 - c. Regular one-on-ones with each team member to discuss progress and next steps
5. Create Communication Standards
 - a. Eliminate misunderstandings
 - b. Ask clarifying questions
 - c. Err on the side of over communication
 - i. Daily check-in reminds them they are not alone and you are available to help
6. **DON'T MICROMANAGE!!!!**
 - a. Give your team freedom = higher productivity!
 - b. Allow for a flexible schedule as long as the work is completed
 - c. Provide a time management tool
7. Call out a job well done!
 - a. Recognition for something small they did
 - b. Something out of the ordinary
8. Meet more often to feel better connected
9. Measure and improve
 - a. Use surveys to gauge staff engagement
 - b. Make improvements based on survey results
 - c. Reinforce actions that are already supporting your areas of strength

Fun Ideas to Engage Your Staff

- **Gather around the “water cooler” – reach out to each other to socialize online!**
- **Do a weekly book club!**
- **Do an online gaming night!**
- **Hold a virtual TV show screening!**
- **Pick up the phone to check in!**
- **AMA’s – leaders facilitate “ask me anything” sessions!**
- **Generate new event ideas with a reward for the best idea (snack remote box)!**
- **Online office games at teambuilding.com**
- **Can you hear me now? An online game that’s fun and engaging!**
- **Spreadsheet Pixel Art: when you add a little code to Excel Sheets that will automatically replace numbers with a color fill for that cell. You can then use these colored cells to “paint the numbers” and create pictures of animals, landscapes and similar. For virtual team building activities, you can do a short-term or long-term competition to see who on your remote team produces the best work of art.**
- **Show off your work space in a short video – make it fun!**
- **Quarterly Christmas – on the 25th of every three months, send a care package to your team: wine, chocolate, coffee, tea, gift cards...**
- **Shares pictures of your pets or kids doing funny things! (Use “Slack Channel”)**
- **Create an Origami zoo – send your team Origami paper and every week someone teaches the team how to fold an animal showcasing their ZOO on their work space (visible on Zoom!).**
- **DIY Craft Challenge: on “go”, you have 30 minutes to create a new invention (to solve a problem) with random things in your house. Ready! Set! Go!**
- **Recipe Roundup! Everyone shares their grandmas favorite recipe – put recipes in a hat and each team member “draws” one to make, then share pictures with the team!**
- **Renegade Garden – plant seeds from foods you’ve eaten (apples, watermelons, cucumbers) and after two months post pictures on how well your plants “grew”! Hint: try planting a garlic glove, point end up!**

- Remote work bingo! First to fill in their card receives a snack remote delivery!



- Remote Tai Chi – have a competition to see who can do it the most days in a row – snack remote box delivery!
 - Find a five minute video on YouTube
- That’s Right, Bob – everyone on the team simulates a newscast team: the first person says two sentences (starting the story), the second person says, “that’s right, Bob” and says two more sentences...continues through the entire team creating a random and hopefully funny story – record it to playback and laugh about at your Christmas party!
- Coworker Feud – just like Family Feud! Have a team member research top answers to questions – divide into teams and have at it! Winning team gets the snack remote delivery!
- Never Have I Ever: rated E (everyone) edition
- Virtual Dance Party or Happy Hour (alcohol not required) to break up your day!
- Remote Team Dinner – everyone cooks their own variation of the same dish, serve up and chat online!
- Three-minute push up challenge: play “Eye of the Tiger” and challenge your team to do as many as they can! Keep trying until you can do 100 in 3 minutes!
- Trash Challenge: find a location that requires trash pickup, take a picture of it, pickup the trash then take an “after” pic to share with your team!