

NEWS BRIEF

Provided by Mark Richard Insurance Brokers


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Coronavirus in the UK

Its all about people – how to manage and look after your employees during the lockdown

PART ONE

Lockdown top tips for your people to look after their mind and body

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- ✓ **Take** regular screen breaks.
 - ✓ **Find** time for fresh air. Maybe get out to the garden or a local park to make the occasional call.
 - ✓ **Make** sure you take a proper lunch break and don't eat it back at your home work station.
 - ✓ **Exercise** regularly, here's some of popular tips from our teams:
 - Carve out at least 40 minutes each day to go for a walk/jog (maybe during your lunch break).
 - If you can't get out, do a home workout – a fun way to start the day with children too.
 - » Stop working every couple of hours for a short burst of exercise (you can do a lot of push ups in a minute!)
 - Set yourself a realistic daily steps target – gadgets like FitBit watches and fitness apps are great for this and some smartphones track your steps anyway.
 - Stay hydrated, it really makes a difference.

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- ✓ **Learn** a new skill in your spare time to keep your brain active outside of working hours.
 - ✓ **Make** sure you keep some time for yourself too (e.g. headphones on and switch off for a while listening to music or to one of your favourite podcasts).
 - ✓ **Make** a cuppa every so often to get away from your screen and to also stretch your back.
 - ✓ **Allow** yourself the odd snack, healthy if possible, though someone did recommend eating loads of ice cream – everything in moderation, I suppose.
 - ✓ **Ask** for help when you need it, you will have a supportive team just a message or call away – some days will be easier than others.
 - ✓ **Stay** calm, you're doing your best. Remember 'bad news sells' so only rely on trusted media outlets with stories that are fact-checked.



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PART TWO

Keeping Remote Employees Engaged During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in unprecedented workplace changes for organisations across industry lines. While the government is enforcing a UK lockdown, requiring individuals to practise self-isolation and social distancing, employers like you must make necessary adjustments to allow your staff to work from home.

Prioritise Communication

Remote employees can often feel like they're left out of the loop. As such, it's important for managers to communicate on a daily basis. Consider scheduling a daily check-in to see how employees are doing during this new working arrangement and if you can do anything to help them. Be sure to communicate any important company news as it presents itself, too.

Remember that communication is a two-way street, and be sure to listen to any concerns that employees may have. The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation, and many employees may be feeling overwhelmed or anxious. Listen to their concerns and evaluate whether there's anything that you can do to help mitigate those feelings. Remote employees may start to feel isolated, so it's important to remind them that they're not alone, especially during these uncertain times. Since burnout is the result of prolonged and chronic workplace stress, it's important to know how to recognise the signs of workplace stress.

Set Clear Expectations

Be sure to communicate your expectations for your employees while they work from home. Employees who understand your expectations will be more motivated to meet those expectations. If you want employees to be online for specific hours of the day, communicate that. If you want a daily report of what they are working on, be sure to ask.

With that being said, you should be mindful that not all employees may have the ideal telecommuting setup as schools are closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, be patient and understanding with your employees. Encourage them to take paid time off if they need it during these times to tend to their other responsibilities, such as taking care of children.

Recognise Good Work

Recognising and rewarding employees for their hard work is a key factor in boosting engagement among your telecommuting employees. Employee recognition can take many different forms, but the main goal is to incentivise continued productivity and dedication from your employees. For example, you could send out a team- or company-wide email detailing what an employee did and why it's exceptional. Sometimes, recognition doesn't need to be formal or grand for it to be effective. For example, a personal thank-you email or message can go a long way in making employees feel valued and engaged while they work from home.

Encourage Work-life Balance

Remote employees may have difficulty establishing a healthy work-life balance. Because there may not be a physical separation between their workspace and their personal space, employees may feel like they need to be available for work 24/7, which can lead to unnecessary stress and, eventually, burnout.

As such, you should communicate the importance of having boundaries to your staff. Suggest that they work their normal hours and then step away from their computer until it's time to start work the next day.

Demonstrate a Collaborative Culture

Employees tend to be more engaged when they feel like they're part of a team. When they're working from home, it can be hard for them to buy into that mentality. As a manager, it's your responsibility to make sure that employees understand that even though you may not be in the office together, you're all working together towards the same common goal.

Consider sending out regular communications reminding that you're there to help them meet any deadlines or provide any assistance while they work from home.

Summary

Leveraging technology in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic can help keep employees healthy while they do their job from home. By keeping these five tips in mind, your organisation can keep your remote employees engaged during the pandemic.

For additional teleworking guidance and insurance solutions, contact us today.

As I'm sure you will appreciate you may not be able to reach us immediately, and your patience would be very much appreciated. That said, one of the best ways of contacting us will be to email your Account Executive. You can phone if you prefer but please be patient if you don't get through.

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Many thanks for your cooperation during this unprecedented time