

EARLY CAREER CHALLENGES IN REMOTE WORKING



CHALLENGES IN REMOTE WORK

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Microsoft is the latest multinational firm to tell its Irish staff that they can work permanently from home. The tech giant employs around 2,000 people at its Sandyford campus. This announcement followed the recruitment company Indeed informing their 1,000 Irish staff that the majority will be allowed work from home indefinitely, either partly or fully. Indeed identified that the vast majority of its staff will work in either a hybrid or remote format indefinitely. This shift to remote working disproportionality challenges the early career employee.

There is a large volume of studies on the positive benefits of remote working, but most of that research is interviews and surveys with people who have self-selected into remote work. To have a job without a workplace, you must build an office of the mind. Structure, routine, focus, socialization, networking, stress relief—their creation is almost entirely up to the individual. People who have already built strong social and professional networks may not suffer much from the lack of face-to-face contact at the office, but for those still trying to make such ties, remote work can be alienating.



WHAT CAN COMPANIES DO TO SUPPORT THE EARLY CAREER REMOTE WORKER?

1. COMMUNICATION

Many successful remote managers establish a daily call with their remote employees. This could take the form of a series of one-on-one calls, if your employees work more independently from each other, or a team call, if their work is highly collaborative. The important feature is that the calls are regular and predictable.

2. MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Assigning mentors to early career employees is an excellent way for early career staff to learn the ins and outs of the company. The mentor can not only help learn about the company culture (this is the right person to talk to), but can also help answer some of the mundane questions that are bound to pop up (how to fill out an expense request).

3. BE CLEAR

One of the best ways to ensure success in a remote team is to be clear about everything. It is important to ensure that the team knows what is expected of them. What are their goals, and what are the expectations for their role? How will you measure success and productivity?

4. REMOTE WORK TRAINING

Many employees have little to no experience working remotely. This means they might have issues with dealing with the necessary technology, managing distractions, staying organized at home, or a host of other concerns. Fundamental training areas include, time management and organization, remote communication etiquette, remote accessible training resources, emotional and mental well being and ergonomic working environments.

5. DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS

Naturally, upskilling when working remotely or self-isolating needs to be conducted digitally.

Thankfully, there are many tools and platforms out there for you to choose from. Things to consider include, access available training (inhouse or linkedin learning), attend virtual events (webinars, conferences etc), give ownership e.g. focus on upskilling a new technology and train a colleague, recommend reading or podcasts



6. SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

One of the most essential steps a manager can take is to structure ways for early career employees to interact socially (that is, have informal conversations about non-work topics) while working remotely. This is true for all remote workers, but particularly so for workers who are in the early stages of their career.

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