



8 Mistakes
Managers are Making
for Remote Teams



The Shift to Remote Working

In March of 2020, companies worldwide were forced to shift to a remote work model in response to the growing world health crisis.

After a year of navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, the concept of remote work has moved from a niche offering to a standard and expectation. As a result, organizations are being forced to change their operations from top to bottom to meet the growing changes in their workplace; as Jason Eger of [Eger CPA's](#) stated, "the shift in mindset has happened quickly to a remote environment, so firms have had to adapt to keeping company culture and team camaraderie."



As companies continue to evolve their practices, retrospect has given managers the opportunity to reflect on their blunders and adapt accordingly. In this blog, I will be reviewing **eight common mistakes managers make when leading remote teams**.



Mistake #1

Failure to Document/Pay Overtime

With workforces shifting towards remote models, employers have faced the difficult challenge of monitoring the hours in which their teams are actually working. These challenges have made nonexempt workers into potential headaches for human resource teams, as well as threats to overall labor costs; as nonexempt employees, staff members are entitled to receive overtime pay rates for all hours worked over the standard 40 hour workweek.

Unable to use the same compliance measures as they had pre-pandemic, managers face the possibility of employees working overtime more often than in office. Without their previous safeguards, nonexempt workers could be enticed to work beyond their typical

eight-hour workday; tasks previously considered "off-the-clock" work, like responding to emails, now can be added to an employee's recorded work time. This new found freedom and lack of monitoring has left for **the possibility of increased claims for overtime wages**, impacting the overall cost of labor for a company.

Similarly, improper monitoring of hours and wages could put organizations at risk of breaking the standards set by the FLSA. Requiring managers to keep records on work time and wages, the FLSA protects employees and designates a federally mandated minimum wage and overtime rate; **organizations unable to keep these records could face disciplinary action from the U.S. Department of Labor.**

Even though the pandemic is subsiding, (the amount of) remote workers is still increasing... (managers) must maintain accurate time records of hours worked.

Larry Kagan - Baron Payroll

In order to address this challenge, management teams have pushed to implement new policies and procedures to cover employees working from home. Among these changes, employers have turned to utilizing software applications to easily log and monitor

work hours, such as [CAVU HCM](#). Assisting in the record keeping of wages and hours, CAVU's solution ensures companies meet FLSA requirements while allowing managers to accurately monitor team member work times.



Mistake #2

Failure to Register Out-of-State Employees

As a result of the rising commonality of remote work, employees have the ability to successfully operate from anywhere. While a perk for

employees, and a potential advantage for hiring managers, the ability to work from any location does introduce new tax compliance concerns.

When a company is expanding to a new state, or has hired a new employee in a different state...they're not used to the local state (and potentially local municipality) taxation, laws, compliance, etc.

Larry Kagan - Baron Payroll

On the state and local level, standards for registration, statutory laws, and tax types differ; for example, unemployment insurance may need to be paid in certain municipalities while others do not have such a requirement. Under current guidelines, employers are required to adhere to the local standards relative to where their employees are working.

For employers, this means remote workers could create a tax presence in states outside their company's location; because companies must oblige to the local and state regulations of the employee they are liable for any inadvertent errors. In a worst case scenario, **improperly registering out-of-state employees could result in an IRS, state, or local tax audit.**

As a result of this potential threat, it is imperative employers successfully manage cross-border taxes. To do so, companies should have a firm understanding of their employees' locations and any related tax guidelines; differences in standards for workers compensation, state withholdings, and unemployment need to be factored in as well. Further, businesses should keep their employees informed on state tax regulations and the penalties for violation. To more

confidently navigate cross-border taxes, managers should consider utilizing a [payroll management solution](#).

For more information on local, state, and federal tax regulations, visit [CAVU's free resource center](#) >



Mistake #3

Assuring access to labor rights documentation

As a result of the hasty transition to remote environments, many companies were unprepared to provide the appropriate information and conditions for their workforce.

Among the things that fell through the cracks, labor rights documentation has consistently been forgotten by management teams. These documents provide employees with knowledge

of their freedoms, rights, and expectations as authorized workers in the United States. Readily available in the physical workplace, labor rights information is often accessible from employee handbooks, posters, and other means.

Due to the nature of remote work, however, spreading this information must be done digitally.

On common mistakes by remote managers

Electronic onboarding and electronic labor law posters ... labor law postings are still required for remote workers. Something not considered by many employers.

Joe Sharpe - CAVU HCM

Even in a remote environment, **employers are required to have labor law information easily accessible for their employees.** To meet this demand, managers should have electronic labor law posters and documents accessible within their virtual workplaces.



Inability to comply with these requirements **could result in disciplinary action from the U.S Department of Labor.**

Mistake #4



Return to Work Policies and Procedures

Once considered taboo, the pandemic broke the stigma surrounding working from home. Over the course of a year, employees have proven that certain responsibilities and tasks can be accomplished as successfully away from the office as in it. Further, many workers have become comfortable with the idea of working remotely, noting increased satisfaction in their daily lives without reporting losses in productivity.



Still, plenty of companies have opposed the idea of entirely remote workforces. Instead, many are expected to return to in-office environments or use hybrid work models. While different work environments are not inherently problematic, **forced hybrid and in-office models have become a point of friction between team members and**

management. As the job market continues to grow, employees now have an abundance of options to meet their own personal needs, including a fully remote environment. Employers who implement return to work policies that their team members oppose risk the chance of quality contributors looking elsewhere.

Further, the pandemic has yet to end. As a result, policies and procedures should reflect the recommendations of local, state, and national health experts. Because employers are responsible for their workers, **an inability to take the current health crisis into consideration could lead to an eroding trust between the staff and management.**

To avoid these mistakes, employers should stray away from the temptation to “return to normal” and instead build upon the experiences of the last year; managers should also seek input from their employees in order to make informed decisions regarding return to work policies and procedures. This includes the type of work environment implemented, as well as day-to-day operations (meetings, task management, etc.). Additionally, employers should take into consideration local vaccination rates and current COVID19- health recommendations before returning to office.

Mistake #5



Missing Relevant Tax Credits

Tax credits are entitlement subsidies: explicit amounts of money, measured dollar-per-dollar, that eligible companies can subtract from their total taxes owed. While criteria and eligibility ranges by state and industry, common credits are awarded based on overall earnings, size of payroll, employee backgrounds, geographic location, and more.

Already confusing in a traditional environment,

remote work increases the possibility that managers fail to claim eligible tax credits; the ability for employees to work anywhere and the increased potential for poorly communicated information further complicates the process.

Solving these challenges, CAVU’s Tax Claim service researches, applies, and recoups tax credit claims your organization is eligible for, as well as stores all team member information in one unified location.

Mistake #6



Lack of Peer-to-Peer Interaction

Less concrete than other mistakes managers make, lack of peer-to-peer interaction is an understandable by-product of a remote work environment. Unlike in-office, virtual community requires intentionality; there are no virtual equivalents to water coolers, in-person lunch breaks, team building activities, and company outings.



While some employees thrive independently, others gain more fulfillment in their jobs through meaningful engagements and conversations with their coworkers.

A lack of peer-to-peer interaction can create feelings of social isolation, which can impact productivity and overall outlook for an employee. Further, community and conversation is an integral part of establishing a company culture.

On how to manage teams remotely

Engagement - daily stand up meetings, huddles, team activities. Having the tools to manage a remote workforce - video, chat, employee channels of communication. Company handbooks that are updated to support geo workforce, electronic, and current to meet today's millennial and remote work cultures."

Robert Digby - Apex HCM

To alleviate the feeling of social isolation, managers should adapt their remote work environment to encourage conversation and collaboration. Beyond meetings and daily check ins, managers need to create intentional virtual opportunities for teams and departments to interact. Employers should also encourage staff members to take ownership of their culture and lead their own

virtual engagements, such as coffee breaks or celebratory meetings, similar to how in-office operations allow employees to plan parties. **Mistaking accountability measures for interaction, however, should be avoided;** requiring cameras or creating redundant meetings for the sake of it is not a helpful solution. Like with most things, managers should take employee input into consideration.

Mistake #7



Issuing Insecure and/or Insufficient Technology

When the business world collectively shifted to a work-from-home model, few people were prepared to take on their roles from their

homes. As a result, most organizations have started offering their employees company issued technology, as well as stipends to

improve their remote offices. Still, many report having insufficient technology related to their day-to-day responsibilities.

Technology has made remote work possible, insufficient equipment, however, limits employees abilities to do their jobs successfully.

Additionally, while technology has made remote work a feasible option for many companies, it also has posed additional security risks for organizations. **With employees using personal devices and internet servers, the risk of data**

breaches has grown exponentially.

To combat potential security threats companies can issue approved, secure devices to each of their employees; alternatively, they can require employees to only use approved equipment that meets security requirements. Additionally, employers can require their workers to utilize remote servers and virtual private networks (VPNs) to establish a safe remote environment. Further measures, such as encryption and access restrictions, can be taken as well.

Mistake #8

Not Prioritizing Employee Input

Perhaps the most common mistake among remote managers, not fully prioritizing the feedback, experience, and wellness of employees is a potentially detrimental error that risks alienating workers and losing team members. Unlike historical work environments, most organizations have navigated remote work for the first time together, both employees and employers. As a result, employees reasonably expect that both sides should be included in the design and implementation of new practices.

Still, many employers fail to genuinely consider the needs and wants of their teams. **As a result, unheard employees could grow disillusioned with their management team, leading to increased rates of turnover and a potential loss of valuable key contributors.**



Additionally, after a year of remote work, many workers rightfully feel they have earned the trust of their managers to operate independently; implementing erroneous changes, such as overly invasive monitoring programs, can lead to a disconnect between managers and their workers. Further, **implementing changes that do not consider the health and personal concerns of employees will erode the trust between the two parties**, especially in light of the changes brought by the COVID19- pandemic.

Like products to consumers, work environments (whether remote, hybrid, or in-person) are only attractive if they meet the needs of the laborers. With a pulsing job market that has commoditized different work environments, employees are more empowered than ever to pursue the job that best fits them.

To address this mistake, managers should intentionally seek input from their staff members and adapt accordingly. This includes anything from workforce management, to meeting structures, to decisions to move in-office.

More than ever, companies must assure there is **clear communication of expectations and needs between the employer and employee.**

Frequently Asked Questions



1. How do you effectively manage a remote team?

At the end of the day, managing a remote team has many of the same [best practices](#) as leading in-office teams. Team members still expect communication, respect, and trust from their leadership.

In order to effectively manage a remote team, employers should establish clear expectations, goals, and requirements for their workers, as well as develop standards for communication and engagement. In order to provide support for their teams, managers should implement daily check-ins and other ways to effectively communicate challenges. Additionally, employers should establish intentional times for non-work related conversation. Doing so helps foster a better sense of community, improve social interactions, and increase team cohesion. Effective managers also encourage team members to proactively create opportunities that grow personal connections, like virtual team outings.

Business communication platforms, like Slack and Zoom, offer companies the ability to effectively interact through chats and video calls. Additionally, these solutions make managing a remote team easier through tools such as integrated calendars and task management features. Managers can use the platforms to host training sessions as well.

Additional services, such as [CAVU](#), provide employers with tools to manage payrolls and other human resources needs.

2. How do you engage a team virtually?

When managing a remote team, it's important to ensure high engagement from your employees. Managers should focus on using training, video conferencing, daily check ins, and more to encourage social interaction and increase communication. When appropriate, remote teams should be encouraged to have face-to-face interaction through video calls; additionally, remote employees should be given the opportunity to create their own engagement opportunities, such as lunch breaks or virtual parties.

To help aid the burden of a work-life imbalance, managers should prioritize the health and wellness of their employees. Instead of trying to work as they would in the office, employees should be encouraged to take advantage of their remote work environment when appropriate; this could look like flexible work hours, breaks to cook healthy meals, the ability to step away for a workout, etc.

In order to best engage a team, managers should take into account the personalities of their remote employees and the culture of their company.

3. What makes a successful virtual team?

There is no single solution for successfully managing remote employees. Still teams with set expectations, sufficient training, high levels of engagement, and clear forms of communication thrive in the remote environment.

Successful remote teams can operate independently on projects, as well as maintain focus on collective goals and challenges. Congruently, a successful team member is also able to remain productive, even without the direct oversight of a supervisor.

Successful remote teams ensure new employees and existing team members have a clear understanding of their projects, roles, and responsibilities related to their department. Companies should build their remote teams intentionally, prioritizing rhythm and chemistry between coworkers. Supervisors managing these teams can leverage solutions like Slack to communicate with and lead their remote employees.

When using platforms like Slack or Zoom, well-managed teams have an established language to avoid miscommunications. Further, cohesive units create opportunities to interact and grow their relationships, developing the remote equivalent to the office water cooler. Teams should also have a deliverables dashboard to [easily track commitments and observe productivity](#); leaders should be wary of using the platform to micromanage, however.

Managers should foster a sense of shared leadership and empower team members to manage projects and coach one another. Doing so helps grow engagement, as well as further develop skill sets. Additionally, delegating leadership responsibilities allows managers to reallocate their time to more important tasks.

Like in-person operations, remote teams should have a cohesiveness to them. The chemistry and relationships should feel as organic as they would if employees sat right next to each other, as opposed to on opposite sides of a screen. Beyond all else, a successful virtual team maintains a strong level of trust and respect.