Top 25 Remote Staffing Tips

Retain your Staff, Keep them Accountable
while Working from Home

Introduction

Times are changing! In the age of the coronavirus, how are you going to keep up with your competitors?

Sometimes the solution is to simply suspend all operations or let your employees go. These are difficult times both for workers and for businessmen alike.

Not every business model can go remote. But for those who can, remote staffing gives an opportunity to reduce costs, continue normal business operations and keep staff safe. It is also an opportunity to identify which positions can be outsourced within your organization.

Without further ado, here is our guide to remote staffing…

A Checklist of Gadgets

✔   **Time Monitoring Tools**

☐ Time Doctor is essential for transparency and adaptation within your organization.

☐ It is like Agile project management on auto-pilot! This tool will help your organization avoid time theft.

☐ Time Doctor is going to be your best friend if you are paranoid about employees not working when they say they are.

- Here at iSuporta, we use it with all our agents and send clients reports everyday.

- What it will do, Time Doctor will take screen-shots every ten minutes, along with mouse clicks and keyboard strokes.

- It even pauses the timer if your remote staff are not working.

- Software like time doctor and similar are the norm in outsourcing centres in the Philippines and India.

http://www.timedoctor.com

✔ Project Management

http://www.asana.com

From the creators of Facebook, comes Asana! It's literally like Facebook for work.

It is incredibly easy to learn and it will allow everyone in your team to stay organized. Make and assign tasks, create projects within a task. Depending on your preference you can use traditional Kanban boards similar to Trello or view as a list. **This software is also free!**

Make sure your remote employees are using work emails to sign up to workspaces so you maintain control. Our second picks for project management are Slack and Trello.

- Make sure that you see the specific tasks your employees are working on.
- Guarantee status updates on any given task.
- Collaborate online in a single hub and see your work represented visually.

☐ Make changes to tasks in real time.

✔ **Computers and Equipment**

You need to make sure that all the PC's that are needed by your respective staff members are in check. Also, have them accounted for by your HR or IT and have your remote staff sign them out.

✔ **Headsets**

For call centers or live chat situations, you definitely need to provide remote employees with high quality headsets. We recommend **Jabra or Plantronic**s. We run a call centre with hundreds of agents, take it from us, bad quality phone calls will decrease your bottom line and ruin brand reputation!

✔ **Internet Connection**

☐ Make sure their Internet connection is up to par, especially for voice calls.

☐ For remote employees that will be using VOIP, it is imperative they have a reliable connection.

☐ Too complicated? Here's an idea: Call your staff on Skype and do a screen share and have them go to www.speedtest.net - In our opinion they should have at least 5 MBPS.

✔ **Tables and Chairs**

Do they have tables and chairs to house your office PC's? If so, you may need to issue them a table and a chair as well that is best fit for the PC's you're going to lease to them.

☐ CPU's
☐ Headsets
☐ Keyboards

- ☐ Mice
- ☐ Monitors
- ☐ Power Cables
- ☐ other Peripheral connections

✔ **Work in the Cloud.**

Google Drive will allow you and your remote staff to work on word, excel, powerpoint and more in google. The best feature is that all docs are edited on the fly so it is very easy to work as a team on the same document.

Warning: Make sure you familiarize yourself with sharing and security features. It is possible that a rogue staff member can easily delete all shared files if not set up properly. Check out Google's drive setup for admins

✔ **Google Sheets**

This allows you to collaborate and input data in real time, on the cloud and ensure that your employees are working in a timely fashion in the interest of data consolidation.

http://sheets.google.com

✔ **Google Docs**

Word processors, Slides and Resumes and eBooks, these are all the essentials of content marketing and content creation. But even for an Accounting firm, the best way to collaborate is on the cloud.

http://docs.google.com

✔ Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)

Especially for remote staff in third world countries, make sure they have a failsafe power supply. This is especially important for tasks that are highly sensitive and require saving.

HOUSE RULES FOR REMOTE STAFF

✔ Daily Reports to Supervisor

If this is a customer support team of some sorts, you will still need to have your Floor supervisor check on them to ensure full compliance with company metrics. Let them provide telephone connections or cellular communications with each other.

✔ Face to Face Calls with you

This is another way to reassure your employees that you are there for them. Face to Face calls gives you the opportunity to check on their progress but at the same time helps them in turn if they have any pressing questions about the project.

✔ QA on their metrics and performance

- ☐ You can do this through Skype chats or Trello.
- ☐ Make sure that you grade them, how long does it take them to close the call or to attend to a customer's request?
- ☐ If you've done this in person, then you can move to Zoom instead.

✔ The use of Zoom or Skype to record calls

- ☐ Zoom or any call recording apps are crucial.

- This is the basis of your QA methods and in checking the performance of your team.
- If you are an Accounting firm, then keeping track of your conversations is absolutely paramount.

✔ **Daily Meetings with Supervisor to improve performance**

Make sure that you also consult their Supervisor from time to time or daily to ensure that your supervisory staff is getting the job done.

And here's another thing you need to consider before closing your office and sending your internal staff to work from home

✔ **Will there be in house personnel to report to the Office?**

IT and server maintenance are important. Do you have janitorial staff? These are questions you may need to ask as the world faces a global quarantine.

✔ **How are you going to maintain office premises while it's not being used?**

- Are you going to keep the office?
- How many staff are required to come in every day?
- Versus how many of your core operations are going remote?

✔ **How many staff are allowed to report to the office in your State or region?**

- Are there any curfews in the State you're in?
- Are you the only person allowed to go out of the house?
- If social distancing measures are not that stringent, you can take advantage of using what minimal staff you have to keep things going and mobilize your employees.

✔ **How often are YOU going to come to the office?**

If you're not needed at the office premises per se, it's time to close the building. Adapt these measures for social distancing and keep in touch with your internal staff to make sure you can

✔ **Will you and your team Supervisor agree to meet, in the flesh to make sure things are running?**

If you can help it, use Skype or Zoom. Talk with your supervisor over the phone if you have to. If they have any needs, then make sure you, as the CEO are there for them.

Finally, here's a list of things to make sure your employee morale is boosted

✔ **Remind them their contributions matter**

If coronavirus is leaving them feeling down, then remind them that their contributions matter to you. Letting them feel that their work is exemplary is important if they are to carry on in any shape or form.

✔ **Cut them some slack if they experience technical problems**

- ☐ If they experience Internet failure or power cuts, then cut them some slack.
- ☐ For voice agents however, you may need to get them a UPS and backup Internet connection,
- ☐ Work with your IT to ensure their connection is functioning for all possible scenarios.

✔ **Talk with your clients. Personally, tell them of the new situation.**

- ☐ This step is especially important.
- ☐ You want your clients to be assured that you are willing to deliver the quality of work they require of your services.
- ☐ Inform them of possible setbacks but also your willingness to wade this crisis.

✔ **For Data Entry Tasks and offline tasks, don't bother so much, just ask for a day to day update**

- ☐ For any Accounting tasks that don't require online connections per se, then you don't have to bother so much with the perfection of their Internet at home. All you need to do is occasional QA for the accuracy of their numbers.

✔ **Standardize your day to date updates: Will you call afternoon? Or will your employee Skype you?**

☐ It's important to set a schedule every time you talk to employees.
☐ This ensures that they will be forced to meet their quotas on a set schedule.
☐ And even if you choose not to run something like Time Doctor, they will nevertheless still be working unequivocally.

This checklist isn't a one size fits all approach. But working from home and managing your remote staff like you always do is definitely possible.

Ultimately, what you want to do is hire the right people. If even before the coronavirus hit, you know you can trust your team, then you can trust them. But you can weather the setbacks together with excellent IT, superb equipment and a willingness to compromise **without** compromising the quality of products or services you offer.

How Can I Manage Thousands of Remote Employees?

All of those tips are all good and well if you are a small to medium sized business. But what if you have thousands of workers?

The truth is, you can't manage everyone or keep everyone on the payroll. But if there are literally thousands in your company who may need to stay in to keep your operations afloat, and because you care about their livelihood – then there are ways to work around that...

1. **Compartmentalize them through Departments**

If they have different job functions such as retail, order taking, delivery, logistics and even key accounts personnel then segregate them.

There's no reason to feel overwhelmed if you can departmentalize them and make sure that all of their work is being **compartmentalized.**

Compartmentalization is what counters the feeling of being overwhelmed with let's say 800 to a thousand staff. If most of them have to go to work at home, then compartmentalize and delegate them to their respective supervisors.

For example:

Human Resources:

    a. Sarah
    b. Tom
    c. Veronica
    d. Jerome
    e. Alvin
    f. Hera
    g. Melissa
    h. Jimmy

You don't even have to use their full names, assuming you know them all personally, then you can simply segregate them and allow them to work with you on the basis that you want.

But let's say you have another Team such as Sheena, Karen, Joseph, Jax and Lorn? And they are your Customer Support?

No problem, account for them, list them on your sheets, and perhaps create a separate Trello (http://www.trello.com) board for each of your departments so you can check on their progress and make sure that all of them are submitting their quotas to you on time.

2. Contract for Equipment and Data Security

If the idea of sending hundreds to thousands upon thousands of workers home with their computers are daunting, then take it a step at a time. Have a Contract for their Equipment and the Data Security they hold. This means your staff have an extra accountability of keeping your Office computers safe and keeping the same level of encryption they have in protecting your data.

    a. First tier – IT

Your IT department can issue them the computers and have them sign their Equipment contracts.

    b. Second Tier – Have it filed in HR

As your HR also mostly functions as asset management personnel have them file and account for these computers and pieces of equipment themselves as well.

    c. Third Tier – your signature

It should be with your signature or the signature of others in higher management that allows them to work with these tools you are providing them as long as they sign the oath to take good care of your company assets.

3. Require Daily Updates or Meetings with their Supervisors

This is important. Through their daily updates, their Supervisors can keep in check about what activities have been accomplished and what their pipelines are in the following weeks. You don't have to micromanage this or check on every single aspect. However, you can request them to update these on Google Sheets or Trello to ensure the trackability of this content.

Finally, have automated Time Doctor reports sent out to staff and supervisors everyday as well as having your HR check time doctor manually. This creates an environment whereby remote staff know that they are being looked at, similar to an office environment.

You can do this. Don't let Covid-19 stop you from continuing your operations, allowing your team to keep their jobs and allowing you to continue being of service to your clients.

<p align="center">If you need to Let them Go</p>

If you can't manage thousands or hundreds upon hundreds of staff or send them home, then you need to consider another option. You may need to suspend operations on their departments. If you can, you're going to have to provide them some sort of recompense of letting them go.

Or, you might need to keep them on hold until you are ready to employ them again after it has cleared.

The truth is, you're going to need to be prepared for maybe thousands of workers to flock to you. The end of the Covid-19 crisis will create a need for jobs.

But the steps are the same. If you need to lay some of your workforce off, then take note of them and compartmentalize them. Place them on an excel sheet and list down their contact info.

This is where your Data Entry skills come in handy. Or if you need at least one HR staff to operate while the rest of your team is working remotely, then make sure that they do all of these employee recording procedures properly and by the book.