



5 Ways IT Managers Can Keep Their Remote Teams Engaged



Mechdyne IT Services

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the workforce in many ways. The “new norm” is flexible hours and/or the ability to work remotely.

Working remotely can be a significant benefit to employees and employers, but it’s important to stay productive and not allow a drop in performance. This is especially true for IT teams who are no longer co-located with end-users for direct and hands-on support. Now is not the time to let important performance metrics slide. Disruptions and times of change are when organizations lean on support teams the most.

So how can a manager keep a newly remote IT team engaged and high-performing? Below are five ways that can ease the transition.

Keep the Communication Channels Open

It’s fairly easy to find yourself immersed in the task at hand when you’re working remotely, and then when you look over at your other monitor you see 15 missed emails and 20 missed instant messages from your support team. Having different lines of communication open to your team is critical as the group works remotely. Email and messaging applications can work well, but it may also be necessary to share a phone number where the manager can be reached.

Another important piece of communication with the team is when you are unavailable to jump on a call or join a meeting. While collaboration time is a definite must, managers need to make sure they communicate with their teams when they will, and won’t, be readily available to offer support.

- Use technology to your advantage
 - In most meeting software, you can set your status and even customize the message. Use this as a means to always keep your team in the know.
 - Whether you’re available or not, let your team know!
- Employees can’t walk up to your desk anymore
 - Make sure you’re responsive to your teammates and get them the help they need.
 - Working remotely and not receiving help when needed can create a stressful work environment. Establishing, and communicating, who are other points of contact for help alleviates one form of stress for teammates and you.
 - If you’re not in the office, a different phone number where you can be reached will also open another channel of communication.
- When possible, set standard hours to make yourself available
 - If you can afford to block out a few hours of your day dedicated to helping your team, do it!
 - Some managers follow the “the morning is for me; the afternoon is for you” mentality. This can be helpful when working with a larger team.
 - Keep your calendar up to date. The team can’t see if you’re in meetings all day, so they’ll rely on your calendar to check your availability.



- Make sure you have redundancy
 - If you're the only one that can answer questions, you'll find yourself drowning in requests.
 - Train backups and create experts on the team to help provide guidance and answer questions when you're not around.
 - When you're out of the office, or away from your desk, make sure the team knows who to contact for immediate assistance.

Always Keep Performance Metrics at the Top of Mind

Transitioning to a remote work environment can be a drastic change of pace for many people. The one constant is that support teams are still expected to perform the same job duties that they did in the office. Users still need support. The need is possibly even greater than before as they work in non-office environments and organizations lean more heavily on support teams during changes/disruptions. It's important to remember that even though your employees are remote, they should still be hard at work and driving business growth.

Work with the team to determine how work might need to change when done remotely. Maybe new tools or workflows are required. There may be a different way to achieve support goals, but the metrics are still the same. Continuing the same level of support when working remotely is commendable. This is the support team's time to shine!

Service Desk Scorecard - September						
Metrics						
Voice AHT	Total AHT	ASA	Call Offs	Rejected Calls	Resolution	Satisfaction
9.66	7.52	3.23	0	0	60.60%	100%

Example Service Desk Agent Scorecard

- Frequently communicate performance metrics to your team
 - Strong performers will not only be satisfied with their job, but they will help the business hit desired company goals
 - Show your team where they can monitor their performance wherever possible
 - Check in on a daily/weekly basis to make sure they know how they're performing
- If you don't have concrete goals, set them!
 - A good goal is something that you can define with a yes or a no. (Did I hit my number of calls this month? Did I receive perfect customer satisfaction scores this month?)
 - Measurable goals enable allow an individual to take action based on whether they were on or off-target. Daily or weekly goals can roll up into monthly ones and tend to be more manageable rather than just evaluating an entire month at once.
 - Make sure your team is fully aware of what you expect of them!
- Set team goals as well as individual ones!
 - Teamwork and buy-in develop when teammates feel that their individual performance contributes to the overall goals.
 - Create the mentality that your team succeeds or struggles together. There is no "I" in team!

Encourage Health and Wellness

Working from home can foster bad habits and affect teammates' physical and mental health. There are no more gym stops on the way home or at lunch, and no more runs in the morning around the complex. [Stress and burnout are real and can lead to issues outside of work.](#)

Stressed or burned-out teammates not only produce less but miss more work and report low job satisfaction. As work and home lives converge, these effects can be heightened. Health-dedicated employees will find a way, but some who can't devote the time or energy, need to be reminded and encouraged of the importance of health and wellness. Talk with your HR team about available programs or ideas for personal support.

- Start a wellness program!
 - It doesn't have to be anything fancy – a gift card to Amazon or reimbursement for wellness purchases can be enough to get teammates started.
 - Reward your team for achieving personal goals, going to the doctor, and receiving vaccinations.
- Stir up some friendly competition!
 - Weight loss percentage competitions will encourage healthy habits.
 - Start a steps competition and pair up your teammates. This encourages teamwork and a healthy lifestyle!
- Build a company cookbook.
 - Families around the world are becoming 5-star chefs in their very own kitchens. A cookbook can be a great way of getting the team's families involved as well!
 - Encourage your team to submit recipes they love and build a cookbook of employee favorites.

Make Sure Your Employees Feel Heard and Valued

Not having a personal, face-to-face connection can take a toll on someone's perception of their value. Knowing their voices are heard and valued helps teammates counteract stress or burnout-related issues. This is because teammates can go to their managers to discuss problems with an understanding that the other person is listening to understand and help.

While this may seem simple or obvious, letting teammates know you are listening and attentive to them can have profoundly positive effects. In the office, a high five or a pat on the back could make someone's day. How can you duplicate that remotely? Maybe increase the number of scheduled calls each week to check in and simply ask how someone is doing.

- Give out spot incentives
 - Spot incentives show your team that you care about their performance
 - Pick a few key metrics to measure and publicize them. Give your teammates something to work towards.
- Check in with them!
 - There's nothing more powerful than a positive check-in
 - Odds are, your employees are doing at least one positive thing throughout your workday. Identify it and let them know you noticed!
 - Compliment them, praise their good performance, and remind them how much you appreciate them.

- Publicly praise your team!
 - In a remote work environment, you may find yourself having more meetings than you did in the office.
 - Use team meetings as an opportunity to complement the group's performance whenever possible.
 - Use specific, tangible, examples of how the team impressed you and express your gratitude.

Conclusion

Large work environment changes, like the transition to remote or hybrid work, can disengage teams and derail performance. Taking proactive steps now can save everyone's stress and frustration. Disruptions and times of change are when organizations lean on support teams the most. Productive and effective IT teams can remain that way with some extra effort from their leaders.

About Mechdyne IT Services

Our 100% US-based IT professionals offer a full range of IT support services including an ITIL best-practices-driven service desk that enables end-users to get back to work quickly and improve the businesses for which they work. Mechdyne IT Services is a business unit of Mechdyne Corporation, a global technology leader creating distinctive electronic, software, and service solutions that enable discovery.

For more information, please visit [mechdyne.com/it-and-audiovisual-services](https://www.mechdyne.com/it-and-audiovisual-services).