



A Simple Guide to

Building a Strong Remote Company Culture



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Contents

3	Executive Summary
3	What is remote work?
4	What is a remote company culture?
4	Benefits of a strong company culture
5-6	What are ways to build a strong remote company culture?
7	How do supplemental benefits help strengthen a remote company culture?
8	Summary & Sources



Executive Summary

A company culture can be described as the norms and values reflected in the workplace. It is the identity, tone, and feel of a work environment. It is why people accept a job at a certain employer—and why they choose to leave.

Before the pandemic and the increase in employees working remotely, someone could participate in a physical interview and get a feel for the company culture. From checking in with the receptionist and speaking with employees to looking at the décor and signage on the walls, it was possible to form a basic impression of what to expect as an employee just from interacting with the workplace environment. But what happens when employees work remotely? How is the company identity demonstrated for potential and current employees? If your employees work virtually, continue reading to learn how to strengthen your remote company culture.

What is remote work?

Remote employees do their assigned tasks somewhere other than a shared office—in their homes, a co-working space, or a coffee shop, for example. A team of remote workers may live in different cities and time zones, but by using digital tools, they are able to collaborate and effectively operate the business.

Companies offer various schedules for employees—such as working remotely 100% of the time, working on site 100% of the time or splitting one's work week into a mix of remote work and on-site work (hybrid). More than half of remote workers feel more productive working virtually.² Even those in a hybrid arrangement feel more productive at home when compared to working at the office.²

In addition to better productivity, other benefits to remote work include access to a wider talent pool, increased flexibility and cost effectiveness for the business and staff, and improved retention.^{2,3}

As of June 2023, **12%** of full-time employees in the U.S. are fully remote, **59%** are full-time on site, and **29%** are in a hybrid arrangement.¹

- WFHResearch

62% of *remote* workers feel more productive at home.²

- Owl Labs

67% of *hybrid* workers feel less productive in the office compared to home.²

- Owl Labs

Hybrid workers **save \$19.11** each day when they work from home compared to the office.²

- Owl Labs



Building a Strong Remote Company Culture

What is a remote company culture?

To help employees do their best work remotely, an organization must actively work to create a dynamic company culture. According to the *Global Talent Trends 2022–2023: Rise of the Relatable Organization* report by Mercer, 72% of executives “are concerned with the potential deterioration of the organizational culture” as it relates to remote working.⁴ A remote company culture doesn’t happen naturally; it requires strategic efforts to make employees feel valued, safe, and truly connected to the company’s purpose. A company culture will not only inspire employees at work, but also outside the job.

The key to expressing a remote company culture is clearly communicating the company mission and values, then living them out through actions and decisions that are made in the virtual work environment.

Benefits of a strong company culture

With the increase of people working virtually, more organizations are navigating culture-building outside the traditional office space. No matter the work location, the signs of a strong company culture remain the same. They can include:

- Open communication and transparency
- Successful collaboration and teamwork
- Investment in people
- Good job satisfaction scores
- High employee retention rate
- Attracting top talent who find alignment with the company vision

40% of remote workers experience anxiety and depression.⁶
- Integrated Benefits Institute

81% of remote workers check email outside of work hours.³
- Buffer

21% of remote workers don’t leave home enough.³
- Buffer

A strong company culture keeps employees in tune with the company’s purpose and provides an ongoing experience that employees can identify with during their employment. A connection to culture leads to an increase in “employee performance by up to 37% and retention by up to 36%.⁵

Working virtually has its benefits, with 68% of people saying their general experience is positive.³ However, it also has its challenges: employees may experience isolation, poor work/life balance, overworking, feelings of being underappreciated, and a reduction in their overall mental health.^{2,3,6}

Designing opportunities to curate a healthy virtual work community through culture is imperative if employers want employees to thrive.



Building a Strong Remote Company Culture

What are ways to build a strong remote company culture?

In the same way that company culture is important in an office setting, it is also important—if not more so—in a virtual setting. While the goals are the same, the strategies are different.

Strategies can include:

Administer a strong remote onboarding process. As the business hires new talent, it is crucial to implement an onboarding program that welcomes employees while educating them about how to work virtually.

This action sets employees up for long-term success.

Establish a remote work policy. Outline guidelines for things like privacy issues, safety, security, work availability, scheduling and clocking in/out. Be sure to provide clarity around physical office workspace options or hybrid requirements, well-being offerings, and performance and feedback processes.

This action empowers employees with valuable operational knowledge.



Select and educate staff on how to use valuable remote tools.

The key to working remotely is having the right technology tools, software, storage, and tech support. Finding modern tools to communicate, manage projects and operate the business is essential. Moreover, educating employees on how to use and update them is also important. Some popular systems include Zoom, Slack, Microsoft Teams, Google Drive, ASANA, and MURAL.

These actions equip employees to do their best work outside of a traditional office space.

Identify clear communication expectations. Remote teams should be informed of how and when to communicate, meet virtually, collaborate, and send quick chats. Employees should understand if cameras are expected to be on or off during video meetings and conferences. Creating an atmosphere where employees can frequently communicate about business as well as water cooler chatter is helpful. Scheduling check-ins and weekly meetings also keeps teams connected.

These actions shape and improve virtual workplace communication.

Create a purposeful meeting tone. Since employees will be spending a significant amount of time communicating virtually, employers should make live interactions such as meetings as productive as possible so people don't burn out. This can be done by establishing an agenda, sending follow-up action notes, having a system in place to respectfully include everyone in the conversation when they have input or a question, inviting only key players vs. everyone in the department, and staying on topic during the meeting. Another way to show employees that their time is valued is by not scheduling meetings every day of the week or implementing a "No meetings on Friday" policy.

These actions foster a productive environment where employees can find balance, manage their time effectively, and are less fatigued with virtual meetings.



Find ways to reward and recognize talent. Whether employers use a social recognition platform or design a program in house, it is important to find ways to celebrate employees and allow them the opportunity to celebrate each other. This can be done by formally acknowledging their birthdays, anniversaries, and work projects. It can be a nice touch to check in with employees and ask them how they would like to be recognized—as some people may appreciate quiet applause. In addition to actually recognizing staff, there should be exciting reward options available. The social recognition platform or custom program can be designed to highlight achievements that are in alignment with the company’s mission and values.

These actions can encourage employees to continue doing great work while helping them feel seen and valued as contributors to the success of the organization.

Organize a social club. Virtual team-bonding and team-building activities allow a space for employees to connect and unwind. Planning can be done with a diverse mix of staff levels and should include non-HR staff, or it can be coordinated exclusively by a team. This “time away from the office” should be scheduled in advance so staff can be available to participate in the virtual fun. A monthly event calendar could include a variety of activities such as happy hours, book clubs, trivia projects, arts and crafts projects, and guest speakers. If employees are local, an occasional and optional physical team outing could be planned as well.

These actions build camaraderie and allow team members to learn more about one another in a relaxed setting.

Prioritize well-being initiatives and promote a healthy environment. Employers can remind employees to use personal time off/vacation time as well as offer shortened work weeks during the summer, around holidays, or after a busy time of the year. Taking time away from work allows staff to reset, reenergize and renew. Providing equipment or a budget to enhance the home office with improvements such as a standing desk, ergonomic chair, and better lighting can be an accommodating gesture. Offering various programs that support employees’ mental, emotional, financial, and physical health is also important. Options include access to online yoga and/or meditation sessions, paid volunteer days, inspirational and educational workshops, discounted gym memberships, financial planning resources, nutritional support, and mental health counseling.

These actions place employees on a path to flourish and prosper both in their personal lives and at work.



Building a Strong Remote Company Culture

How do supplemental benefits help strengthen a remote company culture?

If investment in people is an indicator of a strong culture, then supplemental benefits can be an asset to a company's benefit strategy. Supplemental benefits, sometimes called voluntary benefits, help bridge the financial gaps left by other types of insurance coverage. These insurance products help protect employees and their families from life's uncertainties. Whether it is a broken arm or a life-altering diagnosis, people all over the world are faced with medical setbacks every day. They can't always be predicted, and when they happen, they can completely disrupt an employee's life and finances.

Research shows that employees are more inclined to stay with an employer when they are offered a variety of benefits.⁷ Plus, supplemental benefits can help protect an employee's financial well-being, which can impact their engagement, productivity and retention.⁸

60% of full-time employees are stressed about their finances.⁹

- PwC

These robust additional benefit options are a win for employees because they provide access to group rates and convenient payroll deductions, with eligibility being unaffected by pre-existing medical conditions in some cases.

Health products like **accident, critical illness, disability, hospital indemnity** and **cancer** insurance can help protect employees' savings from high-deductible health plans, coinsurance, and copayments. Additionally, the benefits can be used however they'd like.



Accident



Critical Illness



Disability



Hospital



Cancer

Specialty products like **identity protection** and **legal insurance** provide peace of mind and financial protection, and **life insurance** provides a variety of options for safeguarding the future for loved ones.



Identity



Legal



Life

Some products even pay employees to stay healthy by offering wellness benefits for annual physicals, tests and screenings.

Supplemental products help employees prepare for the unexpected. They strengthen a remote company culture because they go above and beyond core medical benefits. This insurance coverage gives employees confidence in their comprehensive wellness package, supports employees' well-being, and demonstrates an organization's commitment to the health and wellness of their workforce.



Summary

There was a **20% increase** in remote job listings from 2021 to 2022.⁹
- FlexJobs

As remote work options increase, building a strong remote company culture is vital to attracting and retaining top talent.⁹ Companies should clearly communicate their mission and values, then demonstrate them through strategic actions and

decisions in the virtual work environment. A strong company culture provides a sense of connection for employees while actively combatting the challenges of teams not working in one physical space.

Leaders and HR managers can design and implement a plan that leverages numerous tools—such as smart technology platforms, partnerships, and supplemental benefits like those offered through Allstate Benefits—and allows staff to coordinate and participate in social events to build culture. This can lead to a healthy work environment where employees feel that they belong and are committed to the organization.

Sources

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This material is valid as long as information remains current, but in no event later than September 1, 2026.

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