

Exploring the Remote Collaboration Working In Hr Trends with Reference from Online Source

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Organizations and enterprises that were already equipped with the tools for remote work and collaboration managed to continue their operations without any interruption.

The COVID-19 pandemic caught everybody unawares and upended how this world functioned. Nobody had anticipated that this outbreak would come down so heavily upon individuals, organizations, and governments globally. With all kinds of businesses severely hit, this has been the year enterprises worldwide have gone from talking about remote working plans to actually putting them into action. Millions of people—including many who had never previously worked from home—have been forced into working from their homes all of a sudden.

Organizations and enterprises that were already equipped with the tools for remote work and collaboration managed to continue their operations without any interruption. However, many businesses had to deal with the daunting task of adapting processes such as recruiting and onboarding new talent to the current circumstances. As there's no physical office to welcome new employees and connect them with their colleagues, the HR managers need to think of new strategies to bring the onboarding and training processes in line with the new normal.

In the past, remote employees have had a bad reputation. Many employers believed their workforce would be too easily distracted at home, where their managers couldn't keep an eye on their direct reports.

Remote work was very rare a decade ago. Working from home was usually only available as a special arrangement to accommodate families in specific cases. However, teleconferencing and telework technology have advanced to the point where some businesses thrive with completely remote teams. In fact, it's not uncommon for businesses to allow their employees to work from home once or twice a week.

Remote work can also help prevent the spread of illness, helping companies avoid lost productivity and protecting public health. For example, the outbreak of COVID-19 prompted many employers to shift to a remote work model for all employees possible in a bid to limit the spread of the coronavirus.

To determine the effectiveness of communication technology and working remotely, we'll examine the history of working remotely, the current state of the workforce, and predictions for the future of remote employment.

IS REMOTE WORKING EFFECTIVE?

A decade ago, most employers would have balked at the idea of employees regularly working from home. One major concern most employers had for working remotely was a loss of productivity. How productive and efficient can an employee be when they're not under constant supervision by co-workers and supervisors?

To better understand the effectiveness of remote work, Airtasker surveyed 1,004 full-time employees – 505 of whom were remote employees – throughout the U.S. about their work habits and productivity. The results indicate that remote workers are actually more productive than their office-based counterparts. The study found the following:

- Remote employees work an additional 1.4 more days per month than in-office employees, which is nearly 17 additional workdays a year.
- Remote employees take longer breaks on average than office employees (22 minutes versus 18 minutes, respectively), but they work an additional 10 minutes a day.

- Office workers are unproductive for an average 37 minutes a day, not including lunch or breaks, whereas remote employees are unproductive for only 27 minutes.
- 15% of remote workers said their boss distracted them from work, which is less than the 22% of office-based employees who said the same thing.
- While these statistics may encourage both employees and employers to implement a work-from-home program, remote employees also reported higher levels of stress and more difficulty finding work-life balance than office-based workers. However, according to the American Psychological Association, remote work can increase employee satisfaction when implemented correctly.
- Ultimately, working remotely is effective, but it has to be put into practice correctly, and it may not be the best situation for every employee or every business.

HOW REMOTE WORK HAS EVOLVED

- There was a time when remote work as we know it wasn't even a possibility, because the technology didn't exist. If your colleagues and business partners wanted to get in touch with you when you were out of the office, they couldn't email, text or direct-message you. You would've needed to provide an alternative phone number, a pager or even a fax number to have a work-related conversation. Even full-time "remote" positions were different from what they are today.
- "Ten years ago, remote employment basically meant a telemarketing or customer service position at below minimum wage," said Samantha Lambert, director of human resources at website design company Blue Fountain Media. "It rarely was connected with a full-time career. Now, technology affords us the ability to get the same job done, no matter where in the world we are. [It has] enabled us to be in contact with co-workers or clients at any time."
- One of the most helpful technologies for seamless remote work is video conferencing. Live video feeds help out-of-office workers see and speak to one another in real time, anywhere with an internet connection, which is the next best thing to a face-to-face meeting. But this capability wouldn't be possible without the widespread broadband internet adoption of the past 10 to 15 years.
- This technology has advanced so quickly that many companies have even done away with traditional offices and instead run their businesses out of coworking spaces to accommodate their largely remote workforce.
- "Shared office spaces, where remote employees can gather to work, have been created and are more widely available in different cities," Lambert said. "This in itself represents the growing amount of remote workers in recent years."
- Remote work also presents unique opportunities in the face of crisis, such as a natural disaster or an epidemic. For instance, as COVID-19, commonly known as the coronavirus, rapidly spreads worldwide, the ability for many workers to perform their job duties entirely from home can help protect both the public health and the continued success of the business.

THE CURRENT STATE OF REMOTE WORK

- Because of these advances in communication technology and internet access, teleworking has become an accepted practice in many offices, both in the U.S. and globally. This type of work isn't done entirely from home: Remote workers turn to coffee shops or coworking spaces, and some even travel the world while maintaining their career goals.
- "The modern workforce is increasingly mobile, collaborative [and] dynamic, and comprises multi-generations, all with differing communication preferences," said Stacey Epstein, CEO of Zinc. "These workers span multiple industries ... all who represent unique challenges when it comes to staying connected while on the job."
- However, many companies have resisted this work trend for various reasons. Some business owners may fear a lack of productivity in their employees, while others haven't invested in teleconferencing and telework tech to support remote workers. Still, many other businesses have dipped their toes in the remote workforce by creating a work-from-home policy for one or two days a week, or as an exception for a few employees.
- According to a survey by Buffer on remote work, 75% of remote workers said their companies don't cover internet costs, and 71% said their employers don't pay for coworking spaces for their employees. These stats are marginally better than the previous year, in which 78% of companies didn't cover internet costs and 76% didn't pay for coworking spaces. While the desire and expectation of working remotely increases significantly every year among the workforce, companies are only slowly adopting remote-friendly policies.

- On the other hand, adopting a remote working policy can save companies money by removing the need for expensive office space (or satellite offices) while allowing workers the freedom to create their own schedules and work from wherever they please. It can be a win-win situation.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Fast Company predicts that remote work software, like mobile work tools and virtual reality conferencing, will become the preferred form of communication – even over face-to-face meetings. AI will also likely play a major role in managing remote staff.

These advancements might put companies more at ease. The transition to managing a remote workforce might be daunting, but with the right tech and hardworking employees, it can be a seamless process.

In the long run, fighting the change may do more harm than good. Many employees now expect remote work opportunities. According to Buffer, 99% of current remote workers would like to work remotely, at least some of the time, for the rest of their careers. That's nine points higher than the figure from the same survey in the previous year.

Furthermore, according to Global Workplace Analytics, 37% of remote employees would take a 10% pay cut to continue working from home. Because of this increasingly popular trend, some refuse to accept an onsite position, knowing they can find a more convenient and flexible gig elsewhere.

Instead of resisting the change, organizations should improve their remote work policies and capabilities. If your company is concerned about productivity and performance issues due to a companywide ability to work from home, Lambert recommends creating standard key performance indicators (KPIs) for both management and employees. This way, she said, remote team members are aware of expectations, and their performance can be monitored.

VIRTUAL TRAINING: BEST TIPS & PRACTICES

As the COVID-19 pandemic resets major work trends and business models, HR leaders are required to change their current HR strategies, move to digital and revisit their workforce, employee planning, performance, management, and experience strategies. Virtual training has assumed greater importance, which needs to be carefully evaluated and adapted. Some tips that can prove useful in this regard are:

RAMPING UP ONLINE TRAINING SESSIONS

In a work-from-home scenario, people work from different locations. Under such circumstances, virtual training sessions can help people across the world join the program with ease; it also allows for effective time management. Hence, virtual onboarding and training sessions are picking up steam. Now, worldwide, enterprises are firmly rooting for virtual business transactions, virtual recruitment processes, and working from home. Organizations must invest in ramping up remote training, including reskilling, up skilling, and multi-skilling.

MAKE TRAINING SESSIONS LIVELY

Since the training is done in a simulated environment, considerable responsibility lies with the trainer and the trainee to be diligent with the sessions. In addition, the selection process for trainees becomes very important. The trainer plays a key role here in terms of keeping the sessions interesting and exciting so that the trainees remain attentive throughout and are able to retain whatever is taught. To make training sessions effective, it is vital that some ground rules are set such as making the training content more impactful and value-adding.

Incorporating the Pareto Principle in Training

Named after the economist and philosopher Vilfredo Pareto, the Pareto principle lays out that 80% of the results or outcome spring from 20% of the causes. The principle asserts that there is an unequal relationship or imbalance between inputs and outputs. This principle, popularly known as the 80/20 rule, has to be kept in mind while dealing with matters concerning HR activities as well. The 'vital few trivial many' also has to be observed, which is relevant to IT/ITES industries broadly.

II. CONCLUSION

Training through Reskilling and up skilling

To make the most of the hired talent, it is important that HR managers undertake reskilling sessions so that the employees can continue the same job, albeit in a more efficient manner. The potential candidates, upon being hired, should be up skilled and multi-skilled so that they can multitask as well as become equipped to occupy higher designations within the company and become more productive in the long-term. The existing senior management should also be trained and re-trained to take up more competitive job responsibilities.

Well-planned onboarding paves a clear path for employees as they join a new company. Even in these unprecedented times, the shift to remote work does not have to rob new employees of the traditional experience. By implementing new and innovative practices that are ideal for remote working models, companies will become more attractive to prospective employees. Such novel practices will also help maintain business continuity.

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