

# COACHING *for* LEADERS

**If you have experience leading/working virtually, what's one tip you have for others?**

## **Trending Responses**

Over-Communicate

- Communicate Intentionally & Check In Frequently
- Daily/ Weekly Check Ins & Virtual Meetings

Video Connection & Human Connection:

- Try to have as much virtual face-to-face as possible – don't fall to just email/ messages as they are not as personal- connect via phone or video if possible

Keep a Consistent Routine/ Schedule and Create a Designated Workspace

- Have a clear start and end time- don't overwork yourself
- Have a dedicated work space that limits distractions
- Get dressed for work
- Take breaks, exercise, etc.
- Schedule lunchtime away from the desk

Be Prepared for Technical Difficulties

- Keep It Simple
- Be Patient
- Understand everyone has different levels of experience
- comfortability with working virtually

Create Boundaries with Home Life & Work Balance

Practice Using Virtual Tools before engaging the whole team in them

Make sure you give virtual options that are available on all devices (i.e. FaceTime is only available for Apple users)

Give Clear Expectations, Timelines, and Create Frequent Check-Ins  
Trust & Transparency  
Don't micromanage

Tips for Virtual Meetings for You & Your Team:

- Have an agenda with clear roles & desired outcomes
- Mute your sound system when you are not speaking
- Connect from a quiet place
- Dress accordingly
- Be on time
- Be present
- Utilize chat rooms
- Have good lighting and angles for eye contact

Suggested Tools/ Resources/ Platforms:

- Zoom
- Skype
- Microsoft Teams
- Google Hangouts
- Slack
- Hi-Task App
- Webex
- Airtable

## **Selected Verbatim Responses**

On the agendas I send out in advance, I like to include the discussion questions, which help many folks feel better prepared and trusting from the start.

If you work virtually and normally have better accommodations at the work site (eg. full keyboard vs laptop keyboard, 2 or 3 monitors vs

laptop monitor only), be understanding that it may take longer to complete tasks.

Vary your communication channels (written, spoken, visual) based on situation and team member, and include all three. Tone of voice and facial expression are often valuable and can be missed in written communication.

Reach out regularly to your team. I find my team is less likely to reach out with questions when remote versus in the office. So opening that communication/check-in will help facilitate that interaction.

Don't expect the same levels of technical savvy from everyone you virtually interact with. You may have to reach out ahead of time and provide training on how to work and/or meet virtually.

ALWAYS test audio/ video setting are accurate at the beginning of your day, every day. Some settings change upon reboot and it's better to be prepared than scrambling at the beginning of a call, especially if it's customer-facing.

Tip 1 - Video conferencing should be utilized as much as possible, if available. It really makes you feel more connected and less isolated.  
Tip 2 (I know you only asking for one!) - greet your team over instant messenger in the morning, just like you'd do if you were walking around the office!

Be intentional about setting up your space not just for function, but for inspiration, creativity and fun. It's too easy to get mega-serious when working at home, so small cues (think a bouncy ball, an exercise ball to sit on, a silly toy or a lighted candle or essential oil) go a long way toward reducing stress and reminding yourself to take breaks and let go.

Reach out to check in on people more often, create time just to virtually connect. Not to micromanage, but to create the opportunities for spontaneous conversations that won't otherwise happen.

Don't treat everyone equally. If some of your staff are rock stars and are productive, don't make them report to you in the same way that staff who are under-achievers (or you suspect they aren't as productive at home) do. Don't punish the masses to account for one or two that you need to keep extra tabs on.

Try to lead in the same format you already lead. If you speak face to face, find an app that allows for that type of interaction. And continue to trust your staff in the same way you do when they are in close proximity.

Be patient and cognizant of the fact that everyone may not have high speed internet.

Discipline. This will help you keep on working efficiently, will boost your self esteem and will protect you from depression. Keep your routine as if you were going out to work: wake up early, take a shower, dress up nicely, have breakfast and then start working, checking emails, etc. Arrive to video calls on time.

Prepare a clear Agenda for the day/meeting with what to expect and who will be leading which topic(s) for the meeting/day.

Create boundaries between work and home or you will be working 12 hour days. Boundaries can be physical (a closed door/separate room) or affirmation/commitment based (I commit to working 8 hours a day, completely shutting down and focusing on family). Finally, take breaks by getting out for a short bit of physical exercise.

Daily 5- 10min call w team at the start of the day. What happened yesterday, plan for today, and what obstacles are you facing.

Dave, I listen to your podcast every week. I have for several years now. Our community is not who we should be focused on. The most at risk community are the hourly workers that can't work remotely and are simply going to be laid off. We are fortunate. We can work remotely. Millions can't. So many people live pay check to pay check. Cancellations and closures means they can't pay their rent. School

closures mean they scramble for care for their kids and for those on meal assistance more hoops to access services. My tip is let's all do whatever we can to support these people. Thank you Dave

- use a fit-for-purpose online conferencing platform. I consider Zoom to be the best in class. Similarly use a high quality sound bar or headset.
- where possible, use a live camera feed instead of voicing over powerpoint etc. It's important to retain that face-to-face element.
- ensure communications are two-way, and feature genuine dialogue rather than a lecture format. When addressing groups in a Zoom meeting, there's a 'raise hand' function to facilitate this.
- For me, it's more effective to have frequent short one-on-one check-ins than, say, a weekly or fortnightly meeting. This is because working remotely can become very emotionally and psychologically challenging, quite quickly. Being able to see the faces of your colleagues often is key to managing isolation and de-motivation.
- make space in online conversations to check in with each other and to indulge in some small talk. In other words, don't neglect the social glue that is part of normal office life. Find ways to enquire about each other's lives and wellbeing in a way that feels genuine for both parties.
- have an easy way to share documents and to work on them collaboratively if needed.
- consider implementing mini surveys like this one with your team to gather quick feedback on what's working well or not so well. It's easier to tweak your approach to remote leadership than it is to get back a team member who has drifted into an isolated or disengaged position. In fact, I would say disengagement is the number one risk for a remote working situation. Be proactive and collaborative in mitigating this risk.