

SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE TO MEASURING TELECOMMUTING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Performance management is a cycle that builds on continual feedback and ongoing evaluation – both positive and developmental. The process includes setting clear expectations and performance outcome measures, observing behavior and performance, providing feedback, support, corrective action, and conducting regular performance evaluation meetings for the telecommuting employee.

Telecommuting Arrangements for Staff Employees

SHSU permits employees to telecommute on a temporary, case-by-case basis when doing so serves the best interest of the University and is approved in advance by the department head. The [Finance & Operations Human Resources Policy HR-17 Telecommuting Arrangements](#), provides guidance for SHSU supervisors and staff for telecommuting arrangements. Telecommuting is defined as approved temporary performance of work assignments from a remote location other than the employee's regularly assigned place of employment. Telecommuting that exceeds five business days requires prior written approval of the department head and Division Vice President. Telecommuting may be approved for intermittent or consecutive periods of up to six (6) months. The policy requires supervisors to define expected performance outcome measures appropriate for the proposed telecommuting employee's job assignment before approving a proposal. This guide will assist supervisors with how to set performance outcome measures and overall tips for managing remote employees.

Overall tips for managing remote employees

When you are in the same office as your employee, it is easy to provide feedback and gauge reactions. When your employee is working remotely, supervisors may face different challenges. So how do you manage the performance of remote employees? Here are some practical tips from Jack Altman, *Lattice Magazine* ("Performance Management for Remote Workers," January 2, 2020) and Yael Zofi, *AIM Strategies*, ("The Innovative Manager," October 2019) to keep in mind when supervising telecommuting employees.

Set expectations from the onset

When employees know what to expect, they can perform accordingly. One of the biggest problems remote employees have is understanding parameters for acceptable behaviors, interactions, and workflow. Unlike on-campus employees, remote employees cannot learn from just observing their peers and manager. Without direction, they will have a much steeper learning curve for knowing what is expected of them. Therefore, it is critical that you clearly define work requirements from the beginning. Make sure all employees know what is expected of them, which may include:

- Meeting set performance metrics on a weekly basis

- Accomplishing predetermined goals
- Providing project updates
- Sticking to task timelines
- Working agreed-upon business hours

As long as each person knows what he or she is accountable for, having some flexibility will help build loyalty and trust.

Set up a schedule for regular check-ins

Regular check-ins keep both supervisor and employees updated on progress and expectations. When you manage remote employees, checking in regularly helps to facilitate feedback and build rapport. Having regularly established one-on-one meetings will keep you updated throughout the year and provide opportunities for employees to speak directly to you about successes or problems they might have. Employees are eager for feedback, and your undivided attention is important for them. Remember to take notes after the meeting of any issues that need to be addressed and appropriate action items. To a manager, these things are easily overlooked or forgotten when the person is not in view; however, such matters often remain at the forefront of your remote employee's mind.

Try to use video conferencing when possible

Communication with your employees is vital for success. Technology can make managing remote employees easier with the use of available video conferencing technology such as Zoom, MS Teams or other popular applications to provide feedback. A supervisor may require that a remote employee have a camera and keep it turned on for such meetings. Discussing items face-to-face requires more attention from the supervisor and accountability from the employee.

Implement required status updates

Ask employees to keep a weekly log of their work. That way, both parties can keep track of what is getting done. Even if you do not look at the log every day, you will be able to see progress over time. These updates are also helpful for both of you to reference during one-on-one meetings and evaluations. Such records help keep a manager from overlooking accomplishments while keeping employees accountable.

Set Performance Outcome Measures using SMART Performance Goals

Goal setting is one of the most powerful ways to direct energy and focus, measure, and evaluate employee performance. It is an absolute necessity when managing the performance of remote employees. Goal setting is a powerful driver of performance. Goals work best when they are challenging, meaningful to the employee and have a defined/measurable outcome. Remote

employees need to have action items and goals with deadlines established by their supervisor. Deadlines help employees to plan work, create task calendars, and clearly understand what is expected of them. Deadlines provide opportunities for regular check-ins to see if an employee is managing assignments according to your expectations. Follow up on action items with employees to see how goals are being met.

Setting performance goals can typically be accomplished with the use of a SMART goal:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic *and*
- Time-bound

Goals work best when they are a stretch to meet, but not so difficult that they are unattainable. The more specific and measurable the goal, the more likely it is the employee will achieve the desired results.

Effective Examples of SMART Goals:

- By X date launch the web page advertising the new service to students.
- Handle at least XX service calls per day with fewer than Y callbacks for the same problem.
- Enhance division visibility by publishing an article on X topic by Y date.
- Process travel reimbursements within X business days.
- Publicizing our upcoming event on a variety of social media outlets, resulting in XX event registrations on our website.

Appendix: List of LinkedIn Learning Library Resources

The following is a list of video courses on managing remote or telecommuting employees available through the LinkedIn Learning Library. You may need to provide your SHSU credentials the first time you access the library. To access a course, click on [LinkedIn Learning Library](#) or type the URL <http://linkedinlearning.shsu.edu> into your browser's address bar. Input any of these titles in the search bar at the top of the page.

Managing Telecommuting Employees

| Video Title | Description |
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| <i>How to Build Virtual Accountability</i> Building virtual accountability LinkedIn Learning 57 minutes | In this course, Mitch Simon walks through the fundamentals of virtual accountability, tips for trust-building communication and methods to help build and demonstrate accountability. |
| <i>Managing Virtual Teams</i> Managing a remote work team LinkedIn Learning 55 minutes | In this course, instructor Phil Gold provides managers with a clear approach for getting the most out of their remote teams. He zeros in on the key factors that will ensure productivity, engagement, and growth, as well as a manager's role in building trust, removing roadblocks, nurturing connections with team members, and setting clear goals. |

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| <p><i>Leading Remote Projects and Virtual Teams</i> Introduction to remote project management LinkedIn Learning</p> <p>29 minutes</p> | <p>In this timely course, Cyndi Snyder Dionisio guides you through the unique aspects of remote project management, from engaging virtual teams to choosing the right technology and collaboration tools. Get tips for conducting effective remote meetings and overcoming the unique challenges associated with leading remote teams.</p> |
| <p><i>Managing Skills for Remote Leaders</i> The increase in remote workers LinkedIn Learning</p> <p>1 hour, 12 minutes</p> | <p>In this course, leadership coach Dr. Mary Jean Vignone teaches you how to be the best possible manager in a remote work environment. Mary Jean shows you how to adapt your leadership style and voice to a virtual space, fostering a trusting and supportive environment that sets your remote teams up for success. After completing this course, you will be better prepared to navigate this changing work landscape.</p> |
| <p><i>Building Connection and Engagement in Virtual Teams</i> Building connection and engagement in virtual teams LinkedIn Learning</p> <p>41 minutes</p> | <p>As a manager, whether managing your team face to face or virtually, you need to achieve goals and drive results. If your team is disengaged and disconnected, achieving business goals is challenging. In this course, organizational psychologist Erin Shrimpton teaches you how to apply principles of coaching and organizational psychology to foster connection and engagement and help your team thrive and deliver in a virtual work environment.</p> |