



Managing Remote Workers

Don't Overthink It!

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Outcomes



During our time together, we will discuss

- Key Factors to consider in determining if creating a remote workforce is optimal for your division and institution.
- Policies, procedures & other current practices to review in light of a remote workforce.
- Ways to engage your team in a remote setting.

Two perspectives on remote work



The employee

“I have this awesome job and I get to work from home! I can roll out of bed, usually wearing my pajamas and don’t even need to brush my hair or my teeth. I get to pick when I want to start the day because my boss isn’t around to check. I sometimes will be on camera, but most of my meetings I just don’t turn it on and no one says anything. I get to leave work to run errands, walk the dogs, and can take breaks whenever I want. No one says anything! I will say, that I get a lot accomplished during the day because I don’t have anyone dropping by to chat in my office. I do miss having coworkers though.”

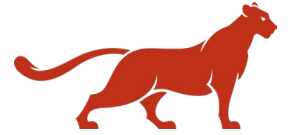
Two perspectives on remote work



The supervisor

“Remote work is horrible. I have no idea when my employees are working and when they’re not. I rely on technology to see if they’re ‘on red or green’ to see if they’re active. There is no sense of teamwork anymore and hardly anyone is on camera when we do meet. I wonder if they’re actually paying attention or multitasking—or worse—online shopping during our meetings. I honestly don’t trust that the employees are being productive and I know that the television is on in the background all day for some employees. That’s it—I’m bringing everyone back into the office full time.”

How did we get here?



Mostly a reactionary response that has been prolonged and not evaluated

Spring 2020 Pivot out of necessity; Schools scrambled to shift work location
Some schools were more thoughtful than others; some are still in crisis mode

Productive Rationale

- Reviewed based on their philosophy
- Reviewed how services can and should be delivered
- Thoughtful policies
- Based on trust
- Opportunity to review space needs
- Review curricular needs
- Recognized individual nature of employee types

Negative Implications

- Maintained status quo of remote work without review
- Pivoted back to in person without consideration
- Policies were draconian and proscriptive
- Based on lack of trust
- Not based on how services can be offered
- View that all employees are the same

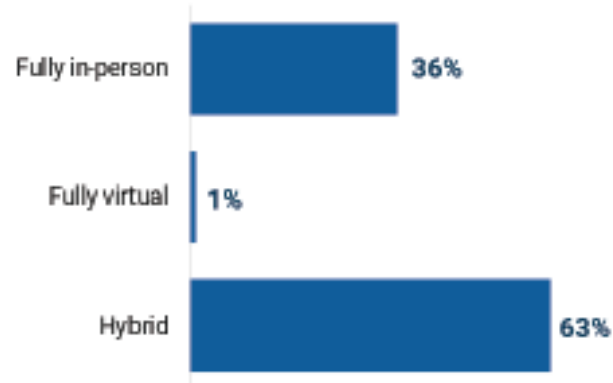
Where are we now?



Three and a half years after Covid-19 pandemic, The Chronicle of Higher Education conducted an online survey from July 12 – 24, 2023 on workplace environment.

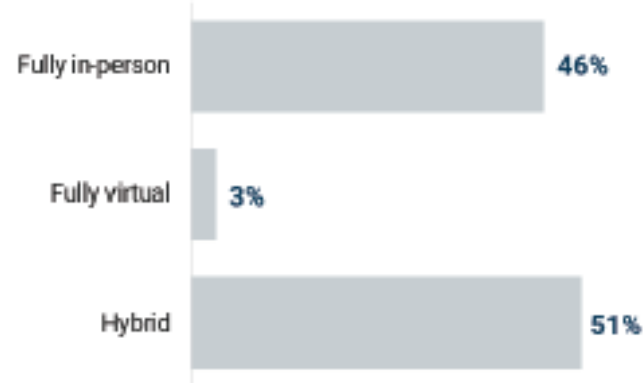
How is your work force operating?

■ Academic and Administrative Leaders



What best describes the workplace expectation for your role?

■ Faculty



Source: Chronicle survey of 873 academic administrators and faculty members

Considerations for Remote Work



It Can Be Done

When thinking about if remote work is the right choice, consider...

- What are the needs of your students and community?
- How does service align with instruction type?
- Do current employees value this service model?
- Could this be used as a recruitment tool for hard to fill positions?
- Could you provide additional service hours to students with no additional cost?
- What is your leadership/board's appetite for remote work?
- What external regulations or expectations exist (including politics)?
- What would your infrastructure allow for?
 - Technology/information security
 - Policies & procedures

Policies & Procedures



Putting practice into policy

Policies should be broad and location-agnostic

Allow for flexibility based on operational needs even in the same division

Remote work location is not the same as flexible work schedules

Establish items provided by the institution and those provided by the employee

Set institution-wide designations

- What positions/departments are remote
- What positions may be filled by employee who doesn't reside in state
- What expectations exist for remote employees and supervisors
- What is the length of time to designate positions/departments

Setting the Stage at Valencia



Here's what we took into consideration

Multi-campus system

Student enrollment trends/needs

Employee experience

Service needs and modalities

Space opportunities via remote work

Financial opportunities

Setting the Stage at Valencia



Here's how we chose to act

Developed of Flexible Work Policy & Procedures

Each non-instructional position classified into one of four groups

Fully remote, Partially remote, Partially onsite, Fully onsite

Investments in technology for remote workforce (HEERF!)

Dedicated [IT support for the remote workforce](#)

Extensive communication college wide

Updating employee FAQs to address changes in procedures due to remote work setting

Expanding training for supervisors by leveraging technology

“we’ll try this...” philosophy

Continual feedback and conversations

Financial Services at Valencia



Decision made to become primarily remote

Factors in the decision

- ✓ Sale of administrative office due to overall decreased need for space
- ✓ Accounts Payable could provide services more efficiently in remote setting
- ✓ Business Office could expand office hours to serve students
- ✓ Accounts Receivable could be conducted virtually through emails, OneDrive.
Third party sponsors reluctant to exchange data virtually were forced to move during Covid.
- ✓ Technology advancement (Zoom, Teams, Who's Next, OneDrive) provided necessary resources to conduct business virtually.
- ✓ Business productivity increased and employees were very happy with this work arrangement.

Communicating the Status



Informing employees to reduce uncertainty

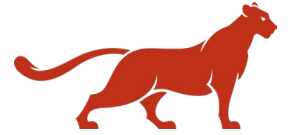
Maintaining Existing Processes

- Use the opportunity to clarify
 - Identify what remains unclear
 - Update processes to apply to current/new conditions
 - Widely communicate the changes
 - Create tailored messages for specific audiences
 - Provide multiple opportunities for employees to ask questions

Adapting to New Processes

- Develop communication plan using multiple forums
 - Responsibility of senior leadership, supervisors, and employees (peer to peer)
 - Host in-person or remote town halls; continue regular meetings virtually with “camera on” policy
 - Provide written guidelines

Training and Development



Giving employees the tools they need

Supervisors/Leaders

- Establish routines in a remote setting
- Set expectations for remote work
- Manage requests for flexible work
- Comply with ADA Accommodations
- Evaluate employee performance and performance management
- Create time for “water cooler” conversations with your employees
- Acknowledge career milestones and accomplishments
- Provide tools for team success in remote setting (time management)

All employees

- Learn how to perform work in a remote setting – ask for help if struggling
- Develop effective communication strategies
- Stay engaged in a remote environment

Engaging in a remote setting



It doesn't have to be difficult!

Change your thinking to change your practice

Informal communications in remote environment is critical, so schedule frequent check-ins with your team

Remember that not everyone is happy working remotely

Building inclusive meetings

- Leverage breakout rooms and chat features

- Require cameras

- Facilitate deliberate conversation

Be deliberate about what conversations are best in person and what are best remotely. Consider calling instead of sending an email!

Leverage hybrid status to engage employees in person

Share the responsibility among your team

Group Discussion on Remote Work



Take a few minutes to reflect on the following questions

If your institution decided to shift to a hybrid or fully remote work environment:

- What policies would you need to adapt?
- How would communication need to be enhanced?
- Would employee training need to be modified?
- What do you think would be the greatest benefit to hybrid/remote work?
- What is your major concern regarding hybrid/remote work?



Questions?

Thank you!

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Check Out Code

1:10pm - 2:00pm – 223D

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