

Building a Strong Remote Team

Executive Summary
Leadership Academy Team D
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In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the State of Missouri implemented remote work in the departments that make up the executive branch of state government. In the After Action Reports (AAR), remote work came first among the activities that should be sustained beyond the pandemic. Each of the 16 departments should make remote work a permanent component of their operational plans, not only in response to emergency situations, but also to reap its clear organizational advantages: engagement, productivity and service.

Research and experience show that remote work contributes to operational success. To leverage its potential, our key recommendation is this: **Integrate remote work into day-to-day operations.**

Leaders must manage and communicate with remote teams differently, so leaders should integrate existing tools with best practices to implement these strategies for successful remote work.

Communicate often and intentionally to create behaviors and mindsets that support remote work. Use communication tools such as collaboration software, dashboards and huddle boards to support operational excellence, enhance intentional communication, track progress, provide transparency and manage expectations.

Coach team members and train leaders in the skills they need to support the successful implementation of remote work.

- Use Engage 2.0 for coaching and professional development.
- Attach professional development to MO Learning paths on building trust, communication, effective coaching and feedback, leveraging technology, meeting tools, what success looks like, work/life balance. (See Appendix for specifics.)
- Make the most of collaboration software. (See Appendix for specifics.)

Consistently apply accountability practices for qualitative and quantitative work. Employ strategies to ensure role clarity, set clear expectations, provide feedback, track team progress and establish regular check-ins.

Create onboarding programs that connect remote employees to team, culture, and values of organization. Begin with recruitment, screening applicants for the skills necessary for the job and for the ability to work in remote environments. Develop an initial plan for each new employee that includes introductions, a small project, training milestones, opportunities for feedback and face-to-face meetings.

We cannot lose momentum! According to the Team Health Report, over 27% of state employees continued to work remotely on July 10, but each day more are transitioning back to the old status quo. Now is the time for a paradigm shift throughout state government. Implement these recommendations and create an environment that is supportive of remote work at little to no cost.