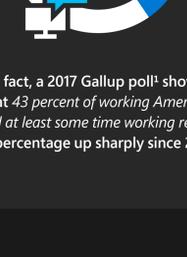


# Make remote workers your secret weapon

Every day, thousands of workers end their morning commute in their home office.



In fact, a 2017 Gallup poll<sup>1</sup> showed that 43 percent of working Americans spend at least some time working remotely, a percentage up sharply since 2013.

Globally, 70 percent of employees are estimated to work remotely at least once a week.<sup>2</sup> That trend is only going to accelerate as younger workers enter the workforce.

They love the flexibility of remote work, and see it as a desirable perk.

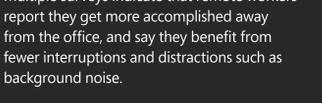
*Remote workers*, teleworkers, telecommuters—whatever name you like, they represent a powerful tool a business might not be using to its full advantage.

That's because work-from-home types have *three characteristics* that could make them a business's secret weapon.

## 01 They're happier

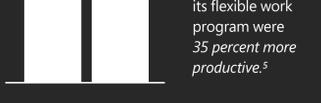
Remote workers regularly report they're more satisfied with their jobs and feel more valued than their office-bound colleagues.

Polls show that most remote workers are at least as engaged with work as their in-office peers, and often are more so.



## 02 They make the talent pool deeper and wider

Accepting remote workers makes it easier to find quality candidates, especially for industries with demanding, specialized jobs.



## 03 They get more done

Multiple surveys indicate that remote workers report they get more accomplished away from the office, and say they benefit from fewer interruptions and distractions such as background noise.



Remote workers take fewer breaks and fewer sick days.<sup>6</sup>

Given that backdrop, it's time businesses understood the potential impact of an energized, empowered remote workforce.

Here are three ways to make the absolute most of your mobile employees:

## 01 Make an extra effort to ensure great communication

Organizational development experts agree that *communication is key* to making remote workers a productivity secret weapon. But it's a two-way street.

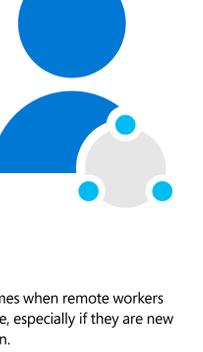
Managers need to take steps to make sure they're in touch with a remote workforce, while employees also need to make communications a priority.

Here are some ways to achieve that:

### Use technology to your advantage

Phone calls or emails are great, but nothing beats video for creating a "you are there" conversation.

Video conferencing with remote workers lets participants pick up visual cues they wouldn't otherwise get.



### Take charge

Make sure your remote workers are not out of sight and out of mind.

Managers need to be proactive, stepping up their frequency of communication versus workers that see in person regularly, even if it's just a quick chat to check in.

To foster their sense of engagement and relevance, actively solicit input from workers who attend meetings remotely via tools such as [Microsoft Teams](#).

Prioritize team meetings. When people feel connected to what the team is doing, they'll have a better sense of how they are contributing, which can boost their morale and motivation.

### Make time for the personal

Offices aren't only for work, they create a *work "family"*, often with strong bonds that can contribute greatly to their sense of well-being.

Try to provide remote workers opportunities to build the same connections.

During online meetings, take a few minutes of time to talk about life outside of work.



### Face-to-face is still important

If there's a special social function at the office, make sure remote workers are invited, even if you know they are unable to attend.

Try to schedule times when remote workers can be in the office, especially if they are new to the organization.

## 02 Embrace individualism

With collaboration becoming a more and more important skill, it's critical for managers to put together the strongest teams possible.

Often the most effective teams are made up of people with different strengths. Remote workers inherently bring a slightly different perspective to the teams they are on, so try to take advantage of that.

### Emphasize the output, not the process

Remote workers don't have to show up in the office just for appearance's sake.

Set goals for your remote workers and let them figure out the best way to reach them.

### Give people room to discover how they work best

Remote workers often report that being away from the office gives them the chance to work when and where they're most productive.

Encourage them to discover their best approach and provide as much flexibility as you can.

### Recognize great work

Remote workers don't always receive the same recognition as in-office people.

Make a special point to recognize their contributions.

## 03 Invest in technology that makes remote work more productive

Having remote workers doesn't guarantee greater productivity. But a well-thought-out plan paired with the right tools can help.

While many companies sell digital tools that help remote workers, [Microsoft](#) offers an entire productivity ecosystem built to empower mobile and remote workers.

### Microsoft 365 represents a complete, intelligent solution to empower remote employees to be creative and work together, securely.

[Microsoft Teams](#), which is part of Microsoft 365, is a great way to connect with remote workers via chat-based messaging, audio, or video calls, as well as sharing documents and other information.

[Yammer](#), also part of Microsoft 365, provides a social-media-type experience that can help remote workers stay engaged with company culture, news, and knowledge sharing. People can join relevant groups, build on the work of others, get fast answers to workplace questions, and more.

## Turn your remote workers into a competitive advantage

Given the right tools and management, telecommuters can give your business a competitive edge. But you need to make sure your remote workers have what they need to become a potent secret weapon.

Choose technology that can create the best mobile work environment for your employees with Microsoft 365.

[Learn more](#)

<sup>1</sup>Gallup State of the American Workplace. February 2017.

<sup>2</sup>CNBC. "70% of people globally work remotely at least once a week, study says." May 30, 2018.

<sup>3</sup>Remote.co. "10 Stats About Remote Work." March 2017.

<sup>4</sup>Forbes. "How to Effectively Work with Generation Z." June 27, 2017.

<sup>5</sup>Forbes. "Are Remote Workers More Productive than In-Office Workers?" March 7, 2017.

<sup>6</sup>Hubstaff. "Are remote workers more productive? We've checked all the research so you don't have to." July 25, 2016.

<sup>7</sup>Forbes. "Are Remote Workers More Productive than In-Office Workers?" March 7, 2017.

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