Managing Remote Teams

Tips for supervising virtual environments

HIRE

People who are:
- Reliable
- Dependable
- Positive
- Flexible
- Self-motivated and productive without direct supervision
- Passionate about your mission
- Willing and able to lead, but also to follow

For over 20 years, The Dibble Institute has operated as a remote team.

Here's a list of things we have learned along the way.

COMMUNICATE

- Assume positive intent from co-workers. Many visual aspects of communication are missing in remote settings and there is room for misunderstandings.
- Communicate MORE often than you would in an office setting because there are fewer face-to-face moments to rely on.
- Be extra specific with messages. I.e. Instead of saying “I like your idea,” try “I like your idea of using Face Book for our new program campaign.”
- Pick up the phone for a conversation if an issue isn’t resolved after three email attempts.

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Use robust online systems for connecting and sharing data. I.e. Salesforce, QuickBooks, Zoom, Google Drive, etc.

If you are a nonprofit, join TechSoup for discounts on tech. Some companies offer their software for free to non-profits.

Pay for good tools: computers, hard drive backups, wifi, phones, etc.

Consider moving the whole team to one operating system to make tech assistance and team sharing easier.

Every project needs a clear leader. This creates responsibility and minimizes “too many cooks in the kitchen.”

Take time to connect personally during staff meetings and on special occasions.

Celebrate success with spontaneous phone and video calls.

Hold regularly scheduled whole group and work team meetings.

Hold at least one in-person multi-day meeting for annual planning and team building.

Regularly update and review job descriptions where employees may have taken on new tasks that are not readily apparent.

Set high performance expectations.

Develop inclusive leadership skills in management staff to improve collaboration.

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