



Tips and tools for future ready managers

Volume I: Goals and productivity



Set yourself up for success and improve trust, productivity and collaboration on your team.

High-performing and collaborative teams are built on powerful and positive human relationships. It's about authenticity and positive intent to achieve something meaningful together. In this volume of our handy guide for managers, you'll find some tips and tricks that will help you lead your team and coach them on how to work well together, whether near or far.

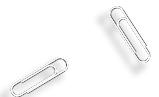


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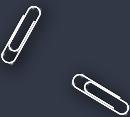
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Things you don't want to miss in your next team check:in



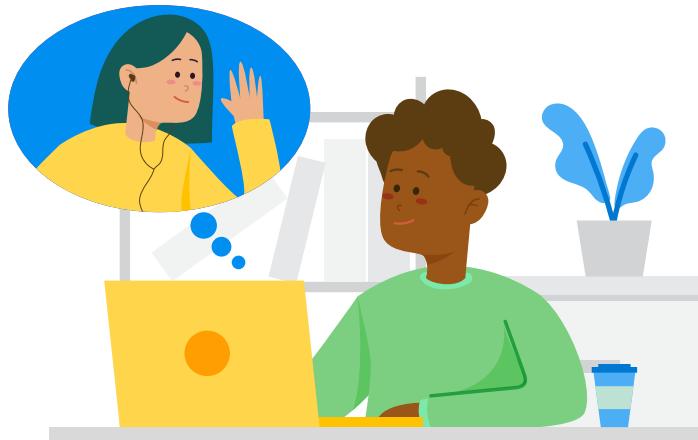
5 simple habits of leaders

who make ‘work from home’ really work

Does your management style really drive progress in a Covid-ravaged world?



Although remote work was on the rise long before the current global crisis made it a necessity, everyone today is realizing the need to prepare teams to work virtually for the long haul.



9 out of 10 organisations have encouraged their employees to work from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Gartner.

Leading tech-first companies like Twitter, Facebook, Microsoft, TCS, Airtel and Shopify are even preparing some if not their entire workforce to work remotely indefinitely.

While most of us have been working virtually for a few months now, it certainly hasn't gotten any easier. From 'Zoom fatigue', to feeling the need to be 'always on-line', to inadvertently micro-managing one's team, more and more teams seem to be struggling with the new normal.



The pressures might not ease up, but here are **a few things you can start doing as a team leader to nurture remote-friendly, high performing and impact-focused virtual workplaces:**

Rhythm: Is the daily rhythm of work working for everyone?



With **the new work day being 3 hours longer for homebound employees** according to a recent study by Davis and Green, people are feeling more burnt out and anxious than ever before.



As a leader, it's helpful to redefine the cadence and nature of team communication, ensuring synchronous check-ins like Zoom catch-up calls are used sparingly and judiciously while giving team members more flexibility around how to structure their days.

High performing teams report benefitting from quick daily sync-ups and longer weekly team meetings/standups. Successful team leaders also make time for one-on-one check-ins at least once a month and discuss not only employee progress but the overall employee experience as well.



#1 to-do:

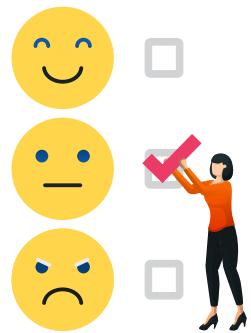
This week, try setting up well planned recurring check-ins with your team and block calendars for a fixed time to monitor your team's progress against goals while encouraging a sense of autonomy.

Reporting: are you falling prey to micro-management?

While you might already be outlining priorities and establishing clear goals with your team, it is also important to break down these larger goals into specific tasks with accountabilities so as to track progress, build transparency and drive coordination virtually.



Although initial studies encouraged managers to err on the side of over-communication, **65% of team leaders across industries surveyed by the University of North Carolina reported extensive meetings actually prevent them from completing their own work.**



To give your team members more control over when and how they connect with their coworkers, encourage your team to frequently document their progress when they are 'disconnected'. This way, you can utilise team wide check-ins smartly to enable self-management within your team, offer a sounding board to solve problems, and leverage the collective intelligence of the team as a whole.



#2 to-do:

Try out a better collaboration and check-in tool this week, from basic shared Google Docs to the more nuanced Mesh.

Recognition: a little thanks goes a long way

If celebrating our healthcare and essential workers has reminded us of anything, it is that recognition and appreciation are more important now than ever before. Insufficient employee recognition at work has been proven to damage business results, and it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see why. (Speaking of rocket scientists, any thoughts on the recent SpaceX launch?)



In one poll by Interact/Harris, **63% of 1,000 U.S. knowledge workers claimed they were not adequately recognized for their achievements.** This need is only heightened in the socially distanced, virtual workplace.

Social recognition goes a long way in boosting employee morale – and usually starts a chain reaction of positive reinforcement further motivating employees to achieve their targets!



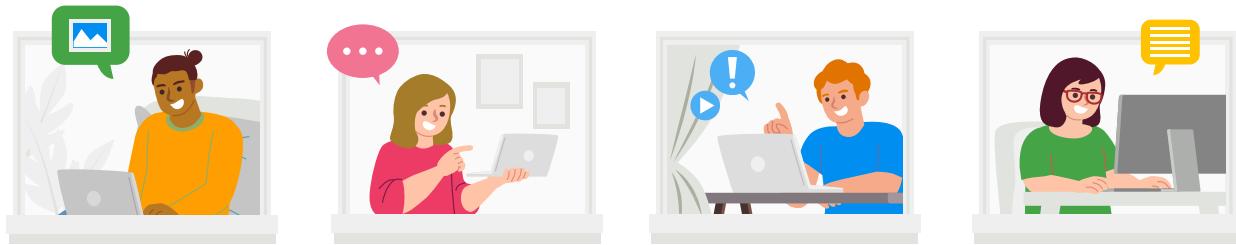
#3 to-do:

Recognise at least one person for a job well done today - start with a simple Kudos on a social group but advance to a more long lasting and value adding platform like Mesh - the socially powered, team management network!

Recovery: physical distancing doesn't need to mean emotional distancing



While remote-work might be the future of work, **working remotely in a crisis is certainly unprecedented** and everyone is adapting to their own unique circumstances at home.



From something as simple as choosing an asynchronous check-in over an intrusive phone call or going tech-free on Sundays, to something as exciting as a social happy hours over Zoom on Friday evenings, you can do a lot more to improve the work-life balance of your team members right now than you initially thought possible.



#4 to-do:

On your next check-in, ask everyone one thing you could do to make their work day easier. The answers might surprise you!

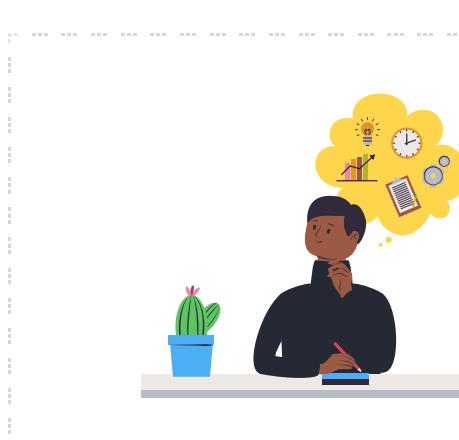
Role-modeling: are you leading by example?



Actions speak louder than words, especially when it comes to **good digital habits carried out virtually**.



If you feel video mode in conference calls improves communication, turn yours on first. If you want everyone to take ownership of their daily to-dos, share yours first. If you want people to do daily check-ins report their progress authentically, consider sharing your own and possibly even calling out things you're struggling with.



#5 to-do:

Call out the one thing you're going to change and why. It will hold you accountable and might even inspire others to do the same!

From goal setting to goal achievement

You've set your company-wide goals - now what?

Must-read insights for managers looking to share feedback effectively



So your organisation managed to set their strategic roadmap / annual operating plan / company-wide strategic goals at the start of the year (sidebar: is anyone else overwhelmed by the sheer variety of strategic planning methodologies and tools out there?!)



In view of the recent global developments, you might have even found yourself pivoting your business model or evolving your work priorities to be more 'agile'.

But does that really mean you're set for success?

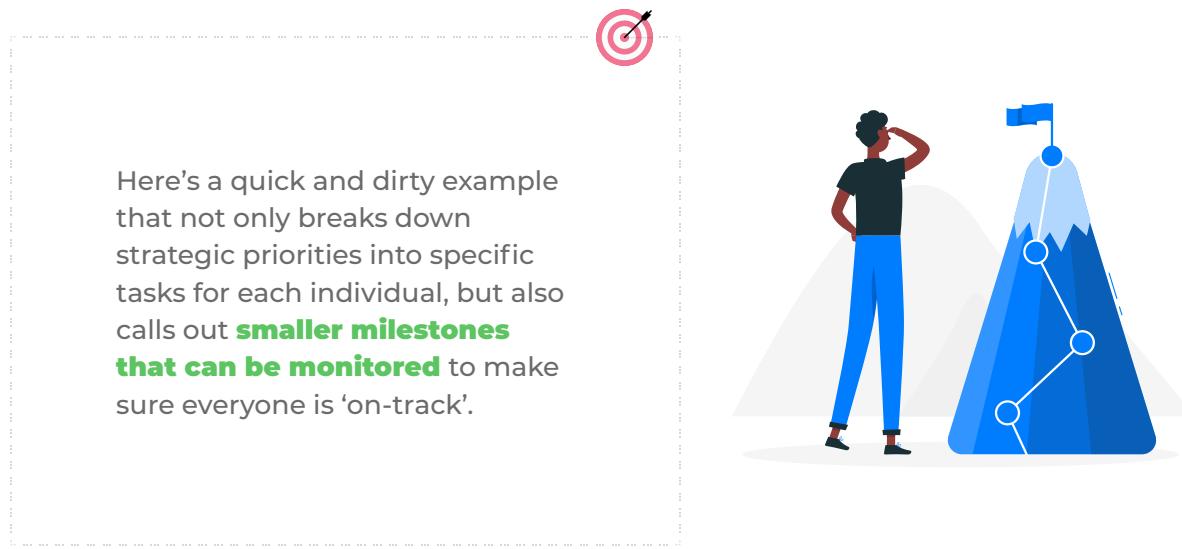
Having an idea, or setting goals for everyone to accomplish is easy (65% of organisations have an agreed-upon strategy) — but executing them well, and in a manner that inspires your teams to bring their best to work everyday, is a whole other ball game!



This is probably why only 4 out of 10 employees feel they're aware of their companies on-going priorities and goals. So what can you do to set your teams up for success? Read on to find out.

1. Break it down into bite-sized pieces:

Whether you follow KPIs or OKRs as your guiding light, make sure you're able to provide the last individual contributor in your team clarity on exactly what is expected out of them in the next week, month, quarter. This requires some level of objective thought, and an effective **cascade** of milestones through the organisation.



Company CEO and Founder

6 month milestone:
To make Mesh the market leader in employee engagement and performance management tools
by 01 Dec 2020

Marketing and sales lead

6 month milestone:
To increase paid app users from 500 to 5000 from small and mid market, high growth stage businesses
Deliverables:
• 15 product demos for businesses with 50+ employees by 30 Jun 2020
by 01 Dec 2020

Engineering team member

Deliverable
Set up product demo content for @MarketingSalesLead
by 10 Jun 2020

Business development team member

Deliverable
Update CRM daily with lead generation details for demos conducted
by 9 Jun 2020

2. Check-in without micromanaging

By jointly articulating milestones, you've already set the stage for an outcome-focused approach towards team management. However, to avoid being a micromanager (as discussed here), encourage your team to self-report their progress (complete/on-track/delayed) prior to team check-ins

Doing this in advance is also more efficient, as you can use your time on team-wide calls to discuss what's going well and the way ahead (i.e. new tasks to be taken up). Collaboration tools like Mesh help you do this by allowing you to allocate and track progress against tasks or deliverables.



We also suggest you take out time for 1:1 check-ins where you discuss constructive feedback and coach team members in areas that are best addressed individually.

As suggested by Elizabeth Saunders at HBR, you might find this particularly helpful as your team is keen to demonstrate their value while working remotely. This will not only help you not fall prey to micro-management, but also engrain a sense of ownership and accountability within everyone.

3. Celebrate small wins and recognise a helping hand:

Nothing drives employee engagement more than recognition for meaningful progress made at work. By appreciating a job done well or meaningful progress made at a complex task, you're able to showcase to all team members what 'good looks like'.



But to truly nurture a positive work environment, we encourage you to go one step ahead, and encourage peers and even cross-functional team leaders to share praise where deserved!



As the new world of work evolves, so must our ways of getting work done, especially when it comes to remote teams. However, here at Mesh we believe in helping teams and organisations find ways to simplify the often painful process of managing your people and projects, while also accelerating goal achievement and boosting employee engagement.

How to run team check-ins like a (great) boss

Things you don't want to miss in your next team check-in



Have you heard the saying – ‘people don’t leave their company, they leave their manager’?

The (not so) hidden impact of managers



A Gallup poll of more 1 million employed U.S. workers concluded that **the No. 1 reason people quit their jobs is a bad boss or immediate supervisor.** If you've ever held a job, you'd agree that our relationship with our manager is extremely critical to shaping our work experience.

Then what, as managers, can we do to give it our best? Like in any relationship outside of work, communication and trust are key here as well. But building a strong and trusting relationship with your team isn't as simple as having an open-door policy. It takes guided effort, consistency, and some time to build.

When it comes to building and nurturing team relationships, one major contributing factor is how managers run their team check-ins or stand-ups.

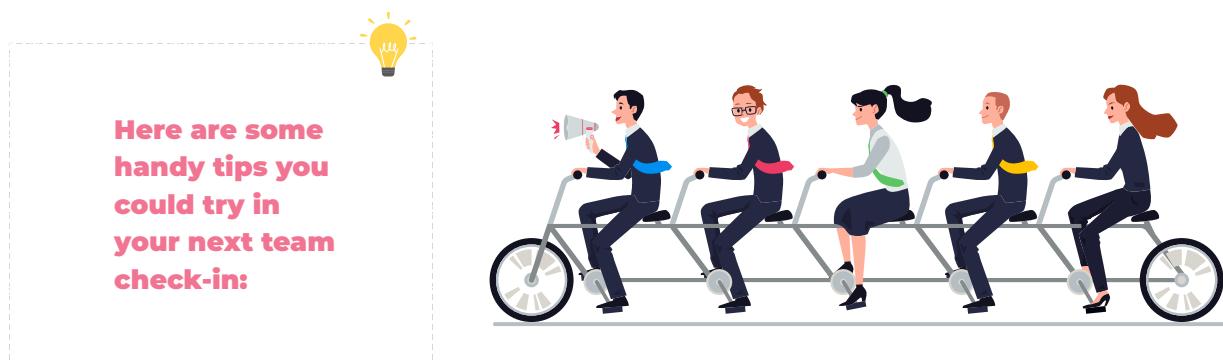
Running value-adding team check-ins requires a significant mindset shift. These are no longer just for project status management, but also an extremely crucial building block of both performance development and team collaboration.



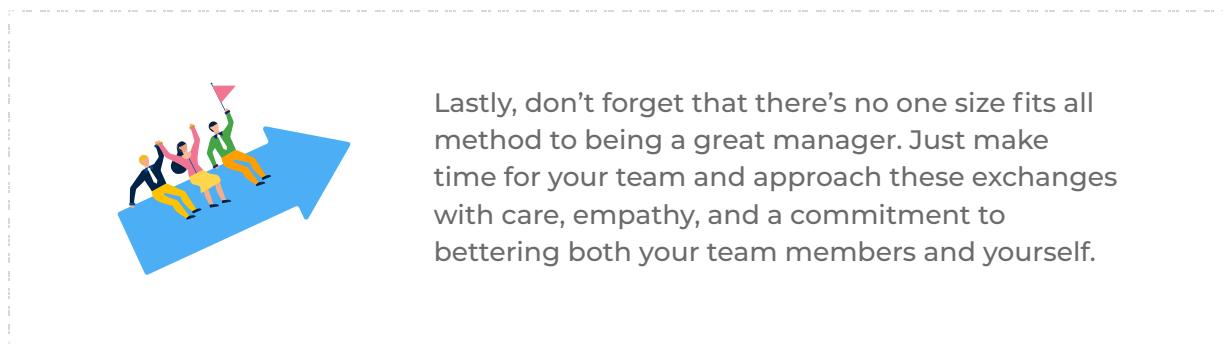
Start off with having a set rhythm to your daily / weekly team check-ins. As a leader, it is your responsibility to keep these check-ins purposeful and streamlined. **No one wants to be wasting an hour on a team call they only got 5 useful minutes out of!**

Next, have a strong grasp on what goals you're gunning after, what the progress till now has been, and what you want your team to do next. It's totally alright to be the policeman and steer the call back on course if you feel someone is getting distracted from the agenda. No one wants to be wasting an hour on a team call they only get 5 useful minutes out of!

One challenge you might face is putting a hard stop to your old habits as an individual worker. Your initial instinct might be to jump into the work alongside your team, give too many directions or even want to fix what they've done to reach goals on time. You'll quickly realize that this isn't sustainable. Ultimately, what it means to be a manager is not to micromanage but to guide a team to reach goals so they can run autonomously.



1. Have a set rhythm or frequency and try to hold one at least every two weeks if not every week
2. Focus on 'what' the deliverables are, and by 'when' they need to be completed. Leave the details of 'how' that gets done up to each person
3. Ask, don't tell. Encourage them to think and make decisive calls rather than follow your directions if you really want them to learn
4. Think ahead. Anticipate challenges, roadblocks and expectations down the line. Mould your questions accordingly
5. Sow seeds of new ideas / 'thought starters' that will inspire everyone to do more individually and collectively
6. Do a quick mindset check at the start to see if anyone's feeling overwhelmed or could use a helping hand. To really build trust, share your own vulnerabilities first! It could be anything from a tough call with a client to a fast approaching timeline
7. Remember that your job is isn't just to get the job done but to help them grow by letting them test, learn and fail without fear



Want to be a great manager through COVID-19 and every other challenge you'll face?

We built Mesh to specifically help managers and leaders like you make the most of the time you invest in team productivity and development.

Sign up now for a free trial of the social performance management tool designed for today's workforce. With easy to use, handy features like a social recognition feed, strengths recorded against hashtags for easy analysis, 1:1 notes, goal cards, task progress tracking and all in one team hub, you'll never worry about productivity and development again.

