

How can I maintain relationships with my co-workers while working remotely?

It can be difficult to maintain long-distance relationships with your co-workers if you work from home or a remote office. It is crucial to regularly keep in touch with your team members to ensure that you are always on the same page when it comes to projects, assignments and other work-related goals.

In addition, having positive relationships in the workplace helps to facilitate a sense of camaraderie and makes working with one another a pleasant experience. Consider the following information to learn how to maintain relationships with your co-workers while working remotely.

Consider Time Differences

Remember to be considerate of your co-workers who work in different time zones. Working even an hour ahead or behind your co-workers can affect your daily communication with them. Always keep their schedules in mind by avoiding calling during their lunch hours or when they usually take breaks. Try not to send them requests or assignments right at the end of their work day, unless absolutely necessary. They will likely try their best to be mindful of your work hours as well, so make sure this consideration is mutual.

Email

Email is the communication tool you are likely to use most frequently while working remotely. Email is a great way to communicate extensive information to your co-workers which they may not have time to listen to on the phone or will have to reference later. Try to be as clear as possible in your writing in order to avoid any miscommunication. Remember to always double-check that you are sending your email to the correct person, and that all attachments you intend to send (if any) are, in fact, attached. Always be pleasant in your email communication and include a greeting at the top. Do not hesitate to ask how their day is going if appropriate, as this can add a nice touch to an email.

Instant Messaging

Instant messaging is a great, informal way to stay in touch with your co-workers. Many companies offer an instant messaging service specifically for their employees to use. This is great for quick and simple questions for your team members, or to just ask them how their day is going. Remember that although it is your priority is to get work done, it is OK to check-in with your co-workers every now and then about how their work day is going or about recent events that have been happening in the office. This can keep you in the loop about what is going on and also help you create a positive and enjoyable relationship with your co-workers.

Phone

Sometimes, it can be difficult to brainstorm ideas and solutions to problems with your team members via written communication. It may be helpful to schedule regular calls during the week for this purpose, in order to freely discuss these things without having to type excessively or send multiple e-mails back and forth. In addition, some concepts are difficult to explain in writing and may be best verbally communicated to your team members. Phone calls are also much quicker than waiting to receive e-mails from one another, as long as the other person is free at the time you call. Check their calendar first, if possible, to ensure that they are.

Meet-ups or Video Calls

If your home or remote office is not very far from the main office, try to meet up with your co-workers every once in a while. Initiate a monthly or bi-monthly outing with them and encourage them to think of ideas for future outings. The outing can be food or beverage-related or can include activities.

If you work very far from your co-workers, consider scheduling video call meetings with them instead of just teleconferencing. This way, everyone has a chance to actually see one another during the discussion.

Face-to-face meetings or calls can help you form new relationships with your co-workers or rekindle past relationships you may have had if you previously worked in the same office.



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