

# Virtual Working Tips

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# Tips to Leading Virtual Teams (1/2)

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## New Work Norms

Set up a daily morning team huddle. Align on what online collaboration tool to use and how often it will be updated, what instant messaging system to use. What core working hours are. How to communicate if you need downtime in the day. What shared drive will documents be on.

## Be Flexible

Take a much more tolerant, flexible and empathetic approach than you may have done in the past. The vast majority of people are home with their kids, families, a full house, vying for physical space. There are new dynamics at play, more background noises of kids screaming, dogs barking, more interruptions, more flexibility in work hours.

## Check in Regularly

With members of your team that need more help, do 1-1 check ins so you can have a pulse on progress and resolve roadblocks early. It will also allow problem solving and course correction where needed. Be clearer than usual on what you expect, by when, by who. Expect that priorities will change; focus on goals not activities.

## Use Video over Audio

People have short attention spans, more so when you have the option of hitting mute. Do more video than audio calls to establish connectivity and pull people into discussions. There is reduced multitasking when on video calls.

# Tips to Leading Virtual Teams (2/2)

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## Connect Informally

Find ways to connect informally. Some ideas include: a virtually hosted coffee chat where people can talk non work and catch up, virtual birthday/farewell celebrations, team Whats App chat groups, show your new workspace photos, A Friday virtual fireside chat, A parents huddle to share best practices on juggling it all.

## Regular Feedback

Invite constructive feedback from your teams on what is working and what needs to change. Listen to their point of view, ask questions, follow through. Act quickly to implement changes and tweak styles of working or communicating. Equally give live constructive feedback to people: positive or developmental.

## Create Shared Leadership

Find ways to involve others in leading the team. Examples include: assigning responsibility for special projects, identifying and sharing best practices; or getting members to coach others in their areas of expertise; or assigning them as mentors to help on-board new team members; or asking them to run a virtual team-building exercise.

## Celebrate Milestones

Keeping up morale is important. Find ways to celebrate small and big milestones. Always appreciate people for showing initiative, commitment, leadership. Send small notes of encouragement (*"You ran today's virtual meeting like a pro"*)

# Tips for Virtual Meetings

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## Best Practices

Circulate the agenda in advance to give people the chance to read/prepare. On the meeting day send reminders with logistics + agenda. Capture and circulate next steps post the meeting promptly.

## VC Etiquette

Test your internet connection in advance. Look sharp, use headphones and test your audio/video. Mute your line when you aren't speaking. Use a virtual background if needed.

## Inclusion

Open the meeting with introductions and allow time for round-robin check ins. Try and involve everyone in the meeting, look out for hand gestures and people trying to speak but getting cut off by others.

## Build Engagement

Bite the urge to multitask while in a meeting. Ask questions and use names to bring attention back to the room. Watch out for cues like heavy sighs, incomplete responses as indicators of tapering attention.

## Get Feedback

Capture feedback from the participants around what worked well and what could help improve these meetings. Make changes to your strategies promptly.

# Communication Tips

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## Stay Calm

If you are anxious, you will transmit that to others.

Take a minute, pay attention to your emotions, practice mindfulness and come back to being the most rational version of yourself to your team.



## People First

Among the frantic activity to ensure business continuity, don't lose focus of your people. Stop to check in, to show appreciation, to answer questions or concerns.



## Stay Positive but Realistic

Its okay to not have the answers; even as a leader. Be transparent about the situation at hand , the steps being taken. Trust and confidence will build from effective communication.



## Regularity

Communicate everyday. Share personal stories, challenges, tips. Share informative updates. Be simple and succinct in your messages.

# Sample Language for Communication

## Appreciative

"It's incredibly uplifting to see the commitment, energy and spirit with which you have helped us make this transition to remote working"

"Over the last week we have handled everything thrown at us with skill, fortitude and compassion"

"100% of us are working from home and serving clients while dealing with un expected situations- this is a testament of the culture we have built over many years of hard work"

"Because of all of you we have been able to serve our clients without disruption, thank you for standing by each other"

"Thank you for your support and understanding in a rapidly evolving situation as we make efforts to support our business"

"Our teams have demonstrated flexibility and ingenuity to get work done while also juggling multiple responsibilities on the home front. Thank you!"

## Positive but Pragmatic

"We will have many more challenging weeks to come, lets stay in close communication and continue to demonstrate what a great team we are!"

"We will see ups and downs over the next few weeks, but this situation can make us more compassionate humans, more cohesive teams and a much more resilient institution"

"We are coming up with new ways to make work from home more engaging, please send in your ideas and tips"

"Its a normal human response to feel some social distancing fatigue but now is not the time to let down our guard or become complacent while the situation evolves. Please continue to take care of yourself, we will get through this together."

"It's been a week since we switched to a remote working model and it's been an interesting and challenging experience for all of us. Colleagues have made the effort to stay connected, lead and support each other at this unusual time"

# Stress Management Tips

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## Meditation

A few minutes of meditation can help you centre and calm fear-based thoughts.

We recommend an app called [Headspace](#). Its a scientifically proven mindfulness, meditation and sleep app.

## Breath Work

Nothing calms the nervous system as quickly as deep breathing. Here is an easy technique to use called the 478 Method. Repeat this 5 times. Breathe in deeply through your nose for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds exhale through your mouth for 8 seconds.

## Movement

Any form of movement positively impacts your mood and your sleep patterns. Go for a walk, practice yoga at home, stretch, put on some music and break into a dance, do an online zumba class.

## Gratitude

Start a gratitude practice where you list 3 things you were grateful for at the end of a day. After a week you will find yourself mindful of events as they occur, making mental notes of what to journal later. According to UCLA's Mindfulness Awareness Research Center, regularly expressing gratitude changes the molecular structure of the brain and makes us healthier and happier. Read more [here](#)

## Frequent Breaks

If you are overwhelmed by the pace of the day or a difficult conversation try the following 1) Call someone you love 2) Sing your favorite song 3) Soften the muscles in your face 4) Stretch your legs 5) Gently massage your hands 6) Ask for help 7) Take a break and rest.



# Work from Home Tips

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## A Normal Work Day

Wake up at the same time and get dressed in office clothes. Remember to end your day at the time that you normally would. Keep your work and home boundaries clear.

## Plan your Day

Have a schedule and create a plan. Which meetings are important? What you want to accomplish for that day?

## Distractions

Try and find a place in the house where you can set up office. Working from anywhere and everywhere increases the chances of being distracted.

## Good VC Etiquette

Test your internet connection in advance. Look sharp, use headphones and test your audio/video. Mute your line when you aren't speaking. Use a virtual background if needed.

## Stay Connected

Use technology for instant communication (slack, google hangout). Communicate any changes in your availability. Be clear about deliverables and timelines with everyone you work with.

## Talk to your Family

Discuss what changes need to be made to allow you to work effectively. Communicate your daily schedule to your family so they can plan around it. *"Today I have a video call from 4-5 pm"*

# Resources for Children

We created this list of resources to help those with children at home



- [This site](#) collates valuable information including 150+ enrichment ideas for supporting kids off from school.
- Many academic topics, multi language are available on this app called [Khan Academy](#). They also have daily schedules for students ages 2-18
- [Hour of Code](#) offers Coding for kids. How to code tutorials in over 45 languages
- [Crash Course](#) is a YouTube channel with engaging educational videos suitable for high school students on a wide range of subjects, from anatomy to world history
- [Google](#) has partnered with Khan Academy and other learning creators to bring parents & families resources and activities to make the coming days as educational and fun as possible
- Free [online drawing lessons](#) for kids led by favorite Artists and Illustrators

# Resources for Information on COVID-19

We created this list of Reliable Resources to help ensure people have access to accurate information



- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) Official [Twitter account](#) has real time updates
- The [WHO website](#) is a reliable source of information and covers answers to commonly asked questions.
- A continuously updated data visualisation map of COVID-19 country wise can be found [here](#)
- We can each help by following [these basic steps](#) that will make a difference.
- The [Centre for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) in the United States is another reliable source of information.

# Contributors

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**Deepak Dhawan**

**CEO, Founder Talentonic**

Deepak has spent 40+ years in the HR world helping thousands of executives hone and expand their leadership skills thereby enabling change in their organisations. His passion in helping companies strengthen and transform their culture and HR practices has been the common thread in his career.



**Manavi Dhawan-Guha**

**Partner, Singapore Practice**

Manavi leads our Singapore practice and brings 15+ years of experience in HR Management and Leadership Development. Her strengths lie in helping leaders succeed and designing and executing change. In her decade long career at McKinsey and Company, she led their India People Team, designed multiple people processes and helped leaders hone and expand their leadership skills.



**Anuj Khanna**

**Head of Organisation Effectiveness Consulting Practice**


Anuj enjoys working with top teams to drive end-to-end organization and performance transformation. This work typically involves deep engagement with the organization, including fostering mindset and behavior change, supporting leadership development, and helping top teams achieve greater alignment.


# Talentonic HR Solutions

Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Singapore

 [contactus@talentonic.com](mailto:contactus@talentonic.com)

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