During extended periods of remote work, you can make a difference helping associates remain connected, reducing feelings of isolation. Think in terms of following the MAP: Morale, Activity, and Productivity. Managers who have been through pandemics, extended shut-downs, and other similar events have shared their wisdom on how to engage in ways that foster strong levels of morale, activity, and productivity. Here is what they had to say.

**Be Proactive**

- Identify daily activities that can maintain productivity and produce results.
  - For example, help an associate develop deeper product knowledge to produce marketing materials, a task which was previously done by multiple people.
- Recommend learning courses associates can take online and ask them to share key learnings in virtual meetings.
- Consider the importance of observing your regular routine to minimize uncertainty and possible distractions.
  - Keep your regular alarm to wake you up
  - Go through your usual morning processes
  - Maintain your regular working hours, if possible

**Stay Connected**

- Establish a cadence of informal, one-on-one touch-base calls with direct reports.
  - Associates appreciate the attention.
- Stay in touch regularly to share, highlight or explain information about business and organizational updates.
- Set up instant messaging chat rooms with your team.
  - To communicate quickly and easily
  - Request that chat room participants let others know when they will be unavailable, so the team knows when to cover for them
- Send instant messages or email notes with friendly reminders and questions about projects, work objectives, and daily work.
  - This substitutes for hallway conversations and maintains focus on productivity and accountability.
- During a chat call:
  - Chime in and stay engaged.
  - Set Post alarms in chat rooms—especially internal ones—to ensure that chats are being read instantly.
  - Use Alarms when urgent chats are not read or reacted to.
Keeping Remote Associates Engaged | Tips for Managers

**Focus on Wellness**

- Send positive reinforcement comments to the team.
  - Encourage associates to practice self-care and to ask for help when needed.

- Be flexible; suspend judgment when hearing children, other adults, barking dogs, or other noises in the background during calls.
  - Childcare, eldercare and pet care situations vary and take time to organize.

- During meetings, ask associates to share quick stories about something in their home lives that is meaningful to them.

- Encourage scheduled time away from the computer for a mental break.
  - Prepare meals
  - Get some fresh air outside
  - Do a workout
  - Help children with school/homework

**Have Fun**

- Ask associates to share pictures of their working space, outdoor view, lunch, and pets.
  - For privacy reasons, avoid pictures of other people, including children.

- Host virtual happy hours.
  - Toast the end of the week with a libation of choice in a virtual gathering.

- Have a step (or other physical activity) challenge.
  - Associates can submit their daily walking/running steps on an honor system.
  - Provide weekly incentives for winners.