



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.



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.