TOTEM TOP 10

One Remote, All Remote
RETURN TO WORK & CONSIDERATIONS FOR A HYBRID WORKFORCE

Totem is an SBA 8(a) certified, minority-owned business

The sudden shift to remote work in 2020 required organizations to adapt quickly and without the luxury of thorough planning. With "Return to Work" on the horizon, or well underway for some, many leaders are reevaluating their culture around remote work.

We're sharing our Totem Top 10 to guide the evolution of your remote or hybrid workforce.

How do we manage the return?

...or *do we* return at all?

1. **Determine what's realistic before you commit.**
2. **Adopt a proactive, equitable mindset.**
3. **Invest in tools – the *right* ones.**
4. **Weave it into process.**
5. **Rethink rewards.**
6. **Build the ability.**
7. **Expand recruitment, rethink retention.**
8. **Optimize onboarding.**
9. **Measure successes (and shortcomings).**
10. **Support staff through change.**

01 Determine what's realistic before you commit.

Is your organization structured in a way that enables long-term, remote staff? Review organizational charts and job functions to determine what roles can perform indefinitely in a remote environment. Evaluate the past 18 months to determine whether remote work is effective so far, considering not only performance metrics, but also employee perspectives.

Is a fully-remote or hybrid workforce right for you?

02 Adopt a proactive, equitable mindset.

To enable even a single employee to work remotely, companies must adapt to support the success of a hybrid workforce: "One Remote, All Remote." Lack of adapting for remote roles can lead to disengagement of remote staff and inhibit team collaboration. Adopt a similar mindset to ensure you embrace remoteness proactively vs. retrofitting it into what exists today. Create a culture of equitable opportunities and processes for *both* remote and non-remote staff.

03 Invest in tools – the *right* ones.

As many experienced in 2020, remote work requires unique tools like high-quality video conferencing, collaboration platforms, and work management software. At the start of the pandemic, you may have chosen hastily to fill a time-sensitive gap in solutions. But long term, it's important to get it right, not just to get it done. Assess how well your remote-enabling technologies are working and reconsider the best solutions to enable your long-term success.

04 Weave it Into process.

A company that transforms its work model must also adapt processes. Meeting culture, for one, must actively account for remote participants. Not just with quality teleconference equipment in meeting spaces, but also an inclusive process for engaging remote staff in discussions, presentations, and whiteboards. Review and optimize processes to account for the unique experience of hybrid teams or risk many hiccups along the way.

05 Rethink rewards.

Consider how staff are measured today and how that might change in a future model. For example, if your competency model measures staff on communication skills, you'll want to account for new ways to encourage this in a hybrid work culture (e.g., encourage more proactive updates on work progress or place emphasis on the clarity of written emails). These changes must trickle down to performance plans also so that all staff are measured accordingly.

06 Build the ability.

Employees may require training to build new or adjusted skills. Don't assume that 2020's practice made perfect. Consider building training on topics like virtual management or virtual collaboration to establish – and keep these skills – at the forefront of your culture. Offer trainings not only to remote staff, but also to on-site collaborators. For federal organizations, Telework.gov offers free training and resources for effective telework.

07 Expand recruitment, rethink retention.

Remote and hybrid work models allow you to greatly expand your hiring reach, providing increased access to talent, sometimes at a lower cost. Adjust your recruitment strategy to account for this opportunity. Furthermore, remote work models can help you retain staff who relocate or have unique flexibility needs. Consider how a revised work model impacts your retention strategy, in turn allowing you to truly maximize its value.

08 Optimize onboarding.

Onboarding looks a little different without a tour of the breakroom. Revisit your onboarding program to ensure it embraces employees near and far. Maximize the plan for an employee's first-day visit and build thoughtful goals and checkpoints at 30- and 60-days post-hire. Where a first week office visit isn't in the budget, or isn't yet safe, schedule purposeful activities for days 1-7, including virtual "meet & greets" with leaders and the team.

09 Measure successes (and shortcomings).

Rethink what staff contributions and productivity look like, shifting the focus more toward tangible output and away from physical presence or online activity. Refresh or identify new key performance indicators (KPIs) and cascade success measures from your mission, vision, and strategy all the way down to individual performance plans. Track the success of your new work model with quantifiable measures and make proactive improvements when you fall short.

10 Support staff through change.

Any shift in work model, or even the return to the office, involves many moving parts with real human impacts, both logistical *and* emotional. This requires you to thoughtfully build awareness and understanding of the changes among staff. Especially if it means communicating a new work model – and its impacts – across the workforce. Create a thorough change strategy addressing communications, training, leadership engagement, and cultural reinforcement.