Managing remote teams - a visibility framework for leaders

The remote workplace is now a mainstream model of work for knowledge workers worldwide. When the pandemic forced us to rethink work, thanks to the sophistication of technology and the resilience of the workforce, the physical workplace made a successful transition to becoming distributed, digital, and remote, We surprised predictions, prejudices, and ourselves by how efficient and productive we, as a collective workforce, performed in our new normal.

This digital and remote workplace has eliminated archaic processes and thought patterns, but nevertheless, it has forced us to rethink and re-evaluate our definitions of success, productivity, efficiency, and human connectedness. Even as we do away with obsolete processes, we are encountering challenges in human interconnectedness that we once took for granted. One of the biggest challenges that are disrupting teams is visibility at work.

Visibility- to see and to be seen; the ability of a team to acknowledge and appreciate the work of individuals has become increasingly difficult in the remote workplace. As knowledge workers, we thrive on knowing that our work is recognized and valued within our organizations. This is how we take credit for hard work, plan our professional trajectories, and build our networks of influence. This individual visibility snowballs into building team morale where every individual comes together to be innovative, collaborative, and supportive towards a shared purpose and vision.

The ability to have our work noticed, which was once taken for granted in physical workspaces, now needs an intentional effort from individuals and leadership to yield the same benefits. And the onus is on people managers to ensure that their teams feel seen. As a leader, what can you do to help support your team?

1. **Build a culture of trust, fair practices, and due recognition**

   Your team's performance is dependent on your ability to build an environment of trust, excellence, and camaraderie. Such a culture allows your team members to self-evaluate their performance, seek support from their peers, and collaborate towards shared goals.

   As a leader, communicate and sincerely uphold fair and transparent performance assessment and management practices. Stay aware of your personal or organizational biases and create a process centred on data-driven decision making. Set clear goals, communicate strategies and evaluation criteria, allow conversation and questions, and ensure data-facilitated performance management. When employees believe in fair leadership processes, they become more trusting of their work to be recognized. (Hatica can help - here's how)

   As an organization, come together to recognize accomplishments and celebrate the small wins of individuals, both personal and professional. Encourage your colleagues

to build each other up. Teamwork and team spirit need mindful cultivation and nurturing.

2. Personality types and Participation

Pay attention to your people and their diverse personalities - are these individuals introverts, extroverts, type A individuals, B players? How do your individual team members work? Who likes detailed explanations and overviews, who prefers to think out loud, who are the silent enablers that support the louder voices in your team?

Understanding your employees' unique strengths, drawbacks, and personality types is key to delegating the right tasks and facilitating the right processes and communication in your organization. Paying attention to your people will help you give them the time and space they need to contribute effectively. Visibility is tricky when working with remote introverts and extroverts. Understanding the differences will help you truly see all your team members.

Stay perceptive of who speaks in team meetings, which opinions and voices get run-over, and which personalities drive the conversation. Channel your perception into planning subsequent communication that emphasizes fair and equal participation. Create space for softer voices and less-popular ideas - particularly those that are different from the majority.

3. Be present

As a leader, keep your (virtual) doors open. Be accessible and reliable, and when you connect with your team, connect authentically. Remember that remote interactions are intention-driven - they need consistent and inclusive communication.

Be the leader that has regular and thoughtful feedback: Meta-analytic studies have shown that individual and team feedback improves performance by around 25%. (ref) Give structured, relevant, and useful feedback and display sincerity in your comments. Allow for your team to absorb your input while staying open to receiving feedback and ideas. The process will align your team within a framework of professional mindfulness and allow one-on-one conversation about strategic goals.

4. collaboration

In remote teams, collaboration tools become more important. Use your technology efficiently to centralize your processes and communication so that your team can perform at optimum efficiency. Streamline virtual tools that can be shared across the team - so people don't work in silos. Build an async work culture with accessible documentation, a healthy comment culture, and encourage the use of emojis or GIFs when pertinent.

5. Structure social visibility and team solidarity

Create space for fun and informal congregation, be it on bring-your-pet-to-work zoom calls, or impromptu slack chats. Make space and time for self-expression and emotions. Understand that remote teams often end up in silos without prompt and

planned interventions. Create opportunities for socializing and review the effectiveness of these efforts and how they translate to work projects.

If your team works across time zones, show solidarity by taking a share of the early morning or late evening calls so one time zone doesn't feel disadvantaged.

Visibility and being appreciated at work is a fundamental and intrinsic motivator for most workers. Creating a space where good work is acknowledged and celebrated will go a long way in helping your team perform better.

💡 Hatica can help: Visibility is tricky, especially as we navigate remote and hybrid workspaces and use a multitude of tools to get our work done. The good news is that technology and data can help in work visibility in a way that is factual and superior to cursory methods that a traditional office relies upon. Take a demo of Hatica's work analytics platform to know how data-driven insights can help you gain visibility into your teams, their work and processes that power your workplace, and how you can make them better