

How These Successful Companies Created a Thriving Company Culture with Remote Workers

"It's weird to think this blog I started to simply be [an] online resume for freelance jobs now requires eleven people to run. I always thought the more systems, automation, products, and passive income I set up, the easier it would be. I would just sit on a beach," [wrote Matt Kepnes](#), founder of the decade-old travel website Nomadic Matt, when he introduced part of his remote team, distributed across the world, to his readers.

"But it seems the more we do, the more we create, the more projects I tell the team we're taking on, the more help we require. I guess that is the nature of the beast, but I would have it no other way," he added.

If you relate, if you feel like entrepreneurship isn't just sitting on the beach, if you feel you require more help than you currently have, today's article is for you.

4 Companies that Continued the Laptop Lifestyle as They Scaled, by Creating a Company Culture that Supports Remote Work

Building a team from scratch is never easy, and building a distributed one with remote workers might feel even more overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be.

As today's examples will show you, you don't have to sacrifice your laptop (or pajama) lifestyle in order to scale your business. Business owners everywhere found ways to scale their companies without limiting them to one location, while still feeling very connected to their teams.

[GitLab](#), an Open Source Software Development Tool, Sets Video Meetings for Employees in 160 Locations to Talk About Their Personal Lives

Gitlab is a rapidly growing 7 year old company. In the early 2017 interview you can watch below, CEO Sid Sijbrandij said that they grew from 9 employees in early 2015 to 160 employees in early 2017 – and 100% of their employees work remotely.

Sijbrandij's office/home is considered the headquarters – even though he's the only employee who works there – and the rest of the team is in 159 other locations across 37 countries. Even though the company offers to pay for office space, employees prefer to work from home.

Sijbrandij indicated they're not committed to this model forever – they're open to exploring options down the line – but it does work for them.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e56PbkJdmZ8>

As you can see, the company makes an effort to connect its employees with one another. They have video calls multiple times a week that are dedicated solely for people to share their personal lives, plus an annual offline retreat.

For the last one, they flew everybody to Mexico.

MeetEdgar, a Social Media Management Tool, Makes Sure Everyone Works at the Virtual Office at the Same Time

In a 2016 [Medium post](#), founder Laura Roeder shared she only hires employees who are in Pacific time zone through Eastern time zone.

"At our company, 'work from home' does not mean 'work whenever.' We have a central document with everyone's working hours translated in the different time zones, but we all work around a 9-5 schedule. If someone needs to modify their hours, they give the team a heads-up first," she wrote.

She added that each of the 18 company employees lets the rest of the rest of the team know when they're in the office and when they're taking a break through a Slack channel, and everyone sticks to a regular meetings schedule throughout the week.

Check out this quick video, where Roeder explains the company culture, including unique "remote worker" benefits, like having the company pay for its employees' house cleaning, since that's basically their office:

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFMEp6D7M74>

Trello, a Visual Collaboration Tool, Gives Employees All Over the World New York-Based Salaries

Like MeetEdgar, Trello set an obligatory time where everyone has to be available and easily accessible for each other. But with 85 employees all over the United States *and* the world, that mandatory time is only 12:00-16:00 ET, not the entire day.

As Elizabeth Hall, then-VP of People at Trello, explained in the following presentation, the company believes that hiring people from all over the world helps them create a product that serves their customers better, as their customers are all over the world, too.

Plus, the remote work model has enabled Trello to hire more parents than the average young startup.

According to Hall, everyone in the company gets New York based salaries, whether they work at the New York headquarters office or remotely from anywhere else. Remote employees get their home Internet or co-working space fees paid by the company. If you do work from home, the company will also give you all the equipment you need.

But, as Hall explained, Trello works hard to make sure no one feels alone. The team uses Slack for chatting, and they have chat channels in there about both work and non-work topics, like kids and music. Every week, several employees get on video calls that are dedicated to non-work issues. Hall said some people even co-wrote a song on one of those calls.

Then, once a month, there's a company-wide video call, and once a year, the company takes all its team members on a strictly non-work-related retreat somewhere in the world.

You can watch Hall's entire talk here:

Embed [starting at 0:10]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wy5dahX2ZM>

Yomali (Hey, That's Our Parent Company!), an International Company that Connects Millions of Buyers with Products They Love, Creates Multiple Avenues for Team Members to Connect Behind the Virtual Scenes

Here at Yomali (HelpGrid's parent company), we keep in touch with each other every day from multiple locations across the world by logging into Skype. Some of us chat via text, others via calls or video calls.

We also have weekly meetings via Skype or Zoom whose entire purpose is to get to know each other better. In these meetings, we use ice breaker questions like [these](#) and [these](#) to get the conversation started.

In addition, we have a company-wide "behind the scenes" Facebook group, where people share personal photos – say, of their families or hobbies – with fellow team members.

We have a closed group on Skype, too, where we publicly share our agents' accomplishments and kudos they've received, so we can celebrate these agents' success together.

And if you follow us on social media, you know that the fact that we're distributed all across the US, Columbia, Malta, United Kingdom, Romania, Israel and the Philippines doesn't really stop us from creating fun videos together for you, like this one:

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<https://www.instagram.com/p/BdIvI8HFQfD/>

Building a Business with Remote Workers Around the World is More Possible Than Ever, But Make Sure You Stay Sensitive to Cultural Differences

As you can see, companies everywhere found ways to connect – both online and in person – with their remote team members, so that employees get all the social benefits of working with other people, without giving up on the comfort of working from home (or from the beach).

Of course, when you work with people from all over the world, the strangest, most unexpected things might happen occasionally.

"I currently manage a team of 30 people from 20 very, very, very, very different nationalities [in 5 different offices around the world]," said Ricardo Fernandez, chief sales and marketing officer at Prodigy Finance, in the following TED talk, before he explained how common English phrases might mean different things in different cultures.

For example, one time, one of his team members in South Africa told him, "I'll call you just now."

Fernandez was excited – he wanted to delve further into the topic – so he waited by his computer in the Spain office, but no one called.

After 15 minutes, Fernandez reached out to verify they're indeed talking "just now," and the employee said yes, but... also sent him a graphic that explained what "just now" means in South Africa (see minute 06:10 in the video).

"For South Africans, 'just now' could mean 'we'll talk in the future, hopefully today, if not, tomorrow, maybe someday in the distant future.' You don't really know when you're gonna talk," explained Fernandez.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIoAkEpN8wQ>

As you'll see in the TEDx talk, Fernandez still recommends embracing remote work despite its complexities.

Just be aware that not everybody will have the same perceptions and that there might be misunderstandings, but remember that misunderstandings happen in in-office environments all the time as well, even when all the employees live in the same region.

Therefore, stay open to communicating with your team and clarifying when need to, and you'll gradually learn what works best for both your team members and your business.

Building a Business with Remote Workers is a Simple Way to Make a Huge Difference

Don't shy away from growing a remote team.

This is, after all, the way of the future for many people, and it can create opportunities that weren't previously accessible to many.

Whether you'll help people make a living while living their travel dreams, enable more parents to earn a decent salary while avoiding unnecessary commutes that take time away from their kids, or open new employment doors to people with disabilities, this is a simple way to make a difference through your business, and save on major costs along the way.