

The RDC Retainer

Thoughts and Ideas to Help Build Your Organization

Managing A Remote Team

In a recent Forbes.com post, Josh Pittman the Regional Director of Specialty Sales at Nutrabolt, a fast-growing nutritional life science company, discusses the unique situations leaders face when managing a remote team and offers several tips on how to be effective.

Trust your team.

When you manage a remote team, you need to provide meaningful guidance and feedback without having face-to-face interactions or personally seeing their work. To be effective, trust what your staff members, information systems, and data are telling you. Without that trust, it's difficult to understand the issues and develop plans to address problems and/or opportunities. Make a habit of talking to each one of your team members at least a couple times a week over the phone (some weeks, a couple times a day) and interact on a thread constantly. Hold weekly conference calls to review performance and discuss specific topics to ensure each team member is contributing and adding value.

Set the right tone.

Set standards for review. Review everything you and your team do, whether it's a visit, an interaction, an event or a sale. Instituting this type of review helps to ease the difficult conversations, celebrate victories and implement good practices.

Build camaraderie.

To build camaraderie, team members need to communicate and learn from each other. Things like team travel, dedicated weekly calls and team retreats are several ways to accomplish this. It's also helpful to develop a hiring strategy that is predicated on recruiting people of different abilities with enough similarities to foster a team atmosphere built on competition and connectedness to the business. Having employees develop a general interest in one another's lives helps create an environment that is supportive.

Remote management and mobile workers are growing at a fast rate within many organizations. According to research by International Data Corporation, by 2020 mobile workers will account for over 72% of the U.S. workforce. Adapting and learning to accommodate for this shift in structure is important for leaders.

Pittman suggests that while much of a leader's management style can stay the same, there are changes to make and threats to consider whenever employees are working remotely. Knowing that the demands of a manager will diversify as the modern worker evolves helps leaders understand their people so they can better serve and lead them.

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