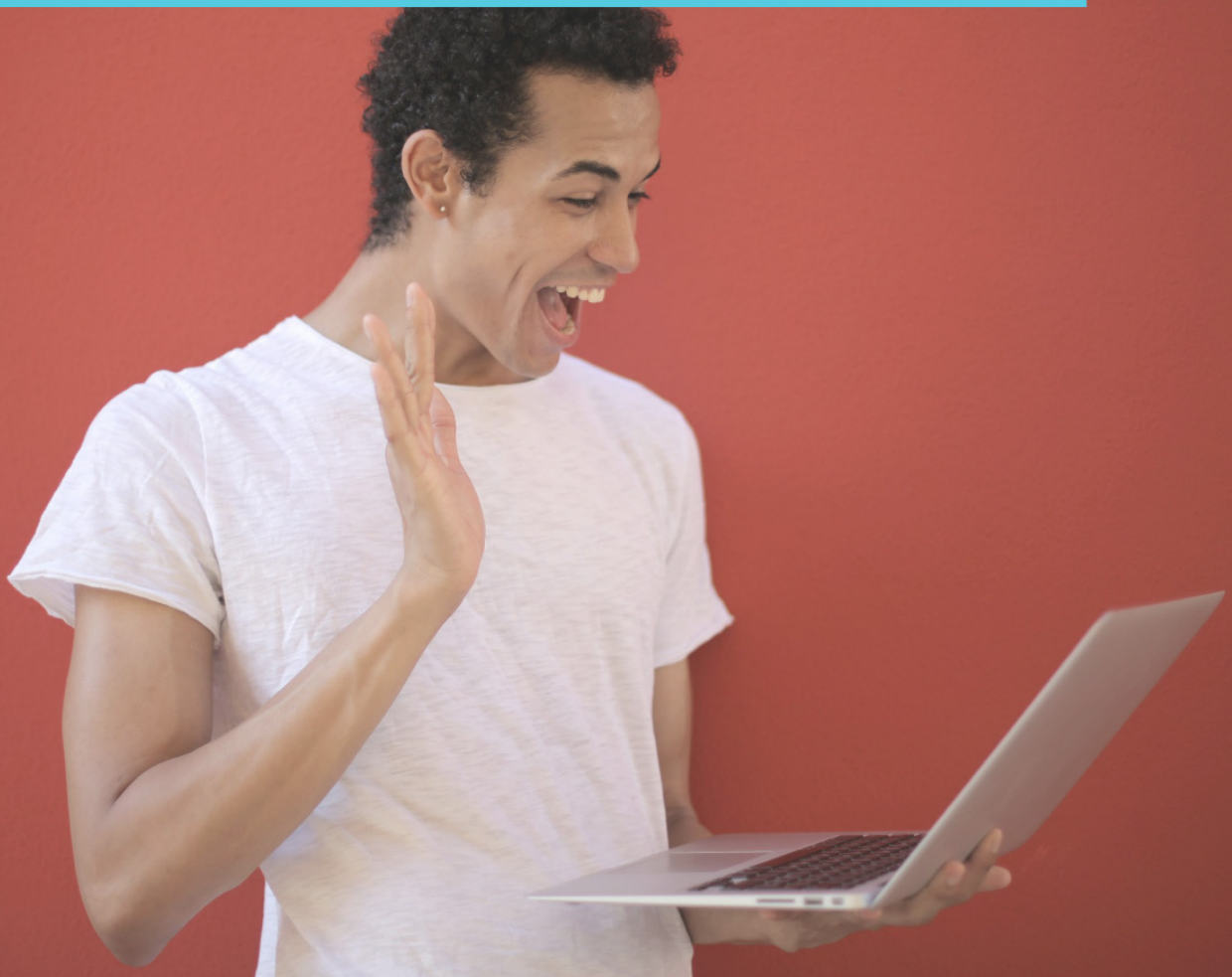


ADAPTING COMPANY CULTURE TO SUPPORT YOUR REMOTE WORKFORCE

A guide to fostering a strong company culture - whether your teams work from home or in the office



Will 2020 Go Down in the History Books as the Year That Changed the Way We Work for Good?

With businesses quickly shifting to remote solutions during lockdown, 2020 has heralded significant changes to the nature of work on a mass scale. Employees and leadership teams alike have been [surprised by the relative ease and efficacy](#) that working from home offers, meaning more companies are likely to embrace elements of [remote work moving forward](#). Indeed, it seems like a 'new work order' is already here, with giants like [Twitter](#) announcing their employees can now opt to work remotely permanently.

So what does this mean for company culture? And does culture actually even matter outside of a traditional office environment?

A 2020 survey showed that company culture is important for [83% of employees](#) when choosing where to work. A third of those surveyed believe company culture is even more important when working remotely. Experts agree that the 2020 pandemic and its consequences have been a ["catalyst for culture change"](#) and as teams ride this momentum and adapt to a long-term digital worksphere, employee wellbeing, satisfaction, unity and recognition will be vital building blocks for company culture.

In this time of transition, companies need soft skills such as [communication, empathy, and trust](#) and teams need to be unified in support of their company's [vision, mission and core values](#) in order for culture to flourish. Fortunately, these skills are not bound to any geographical location.

For many CEOs and managers, the future of work will pose some challenges but rest assured, there are also plenty of exciting opportunities to evolve your company culture and support your staff.

Read on to find out some top strategies for strengthening your company culture and facing any potential challenges.



Challenges in Keeping Company Culture Alive Remotely

Engagement

Employee engagement levels can [take a major hit](#) due to the challenges that arise when you're team is not physically together. It is crucial that employee engagement is nurtured as it promotes strong business outcomes as well as higher employee satisfaction in the long run.

Removing barriers to effective remote work is the first step. Next, getting buy-in from your team as you're putting in place strategies to build a stronger company culture will be vital.

Communication barriers

Effective communication is one of the foundations for a strong company culture. But [20% of employees](#) see collaboration and communication as their biggest struggle when working in multi-location teams. This can lead to social isolation, lack of transparency, confusion and even mistrust. Figuring out the best frequency and way to communicate in this new situation will be a trial and error process but it's worth investing the time to get it right.

Lack of transparency

Similarly with communication barriers, losing that daily contact with your team can sometimes slow down the transfer of information.

When access to information is delayed, it can lead to a frustrating slowness in the way the business runs. In fact, [84% of employees](#) confirm that workplace challenges or concerns drag on for a few days or more when teams are not physically together. This can eventually breed stagnation, confusion or secrecy.

Social isolation

When parts of a team are working remotely, loneliness is one of the [most common complaints](#). Many employees miss having informal social interactions in the office. There's no denying that remote work drastically changes the social nature of work and can lead to a dip in employee engagement, negatively impacting culture. Sometimes, this can lead to employees feeling [less "belonging"](#) to their organisation and this can even cause higher staff turnover rates.

How can managers overcome these challenges and foster a positive company culture for their multi-location teams?



7 WAYS TO FOSTER A POSITIVE COMPANY CULTURE FOR YOUR MULTI- LOCATION TEAMS

HUMAN- oriented

Tip #1: Double Down on Your Values

Building a company culture that makes employees feel invested in a shared mission is powerful as it bolsters [intrinsic motivation and a sense of belonging](#). Maintaining this purpose while working remotely however [can be difficult](#). So, it's important to splice out a few clear company values to inspire and guide your team.

Ask yourself, what does your company stand for? Upon what principles do you operate? What qualities do you search for in your employees? Next, ask how you can keep these [values at the forefront of every action](#) taken by your company?

Keep coming back to these values, talking about them often so the whole team builds a shared vocabulary rooted in the mission of your business. Integrate your values into processes, onboarding and daily standups.

By highlighting examples of values-led actions employees have taken, you are practicing inclusion and recognition, adding to a positive company culture.

As a leader, set an example and transparently share your decision-making process for a new project through the lens of your company values. This is known as [culture in action](#).

Lifting company values up as shared signifiers of success and purpose will help unify your team, strengthen culture and give your employees a sense of working towards something bigger than themselves.



Tip #2: Create Opportunities for Employees to Socialise

[Studies](#) have shown that personal interactions make work more enjoyable, meaningful, and less isolating, which can have a significant impact on motivation and company culture.

There are endless ways to facilitate teams bonding virtually: you could set up a weekly happy hour over Zoom, run trivia nights, book clubs, meet-ups to casually discuss different podcasts or articles, or create a channel in Slack to share what you're streaming on Netflix.

Running a weekly or even daily yoga or meditation class is another great option which will nurture your team's physical and mental health too.

Are some employees new parents? Invite them to create a WhatsApp group or host a (much needed) virtual coffee hour and send them a bag of coffee beans.

Wherever possible, try to encourage fun and unique moments for your team to get to know each other, building a deeper sense of trust and strengthening culture.

Keep it inclusive, be considerate of people's time and remember: the leadership team can (or should) get involved too.



Tip #3: Keep Communicating

There is little doubt that effective communication is a cornerstone of a successful company culture with [80% of remote workers](#) believing that more frequent team communications would improve intrapersonal relationships.

The amount of different platforms, apps, and channels available can be overwhelming at times. The last thing you want is for communication to [become a struggle](#), so your communication tools need to be [carefully considered](#) when working from anywhere.

The key here is to get your communication channels set up quickly with clear purposes so everyone knows where to congregate virtually.

Ensure everyone has a smooth internet connection and in the transition period, over-communicating can be the best way to go.

Information needs to be easy to find and open lines of communication between team members must be accessible in order for culture to thrive.

From there, encourage collaboration and engagement between colleagues wherever possible because there's no reason you can't still be collaborative while working from different locations.



Tip #4:

Establish a (Virtual) Culture of Trust

When working remotely, trust goes many ways. Employees need to feel that they can trust leadership to be accountable and accessible, that they can trust their colleagues and also trust in the mission and culture of their workplace.

As a leader, you need to genuinely trust your employees. With less immediate visibility over what your employees are working on, it might be tempting to over-manage them, asking for constant updates or tracking the hours they're online, but this is a surefire way to demotivate.

There's a fine line between micro-managing and [abandonment](#) so it's important for you as a leader to set the standard of trusting and being trustworthy.

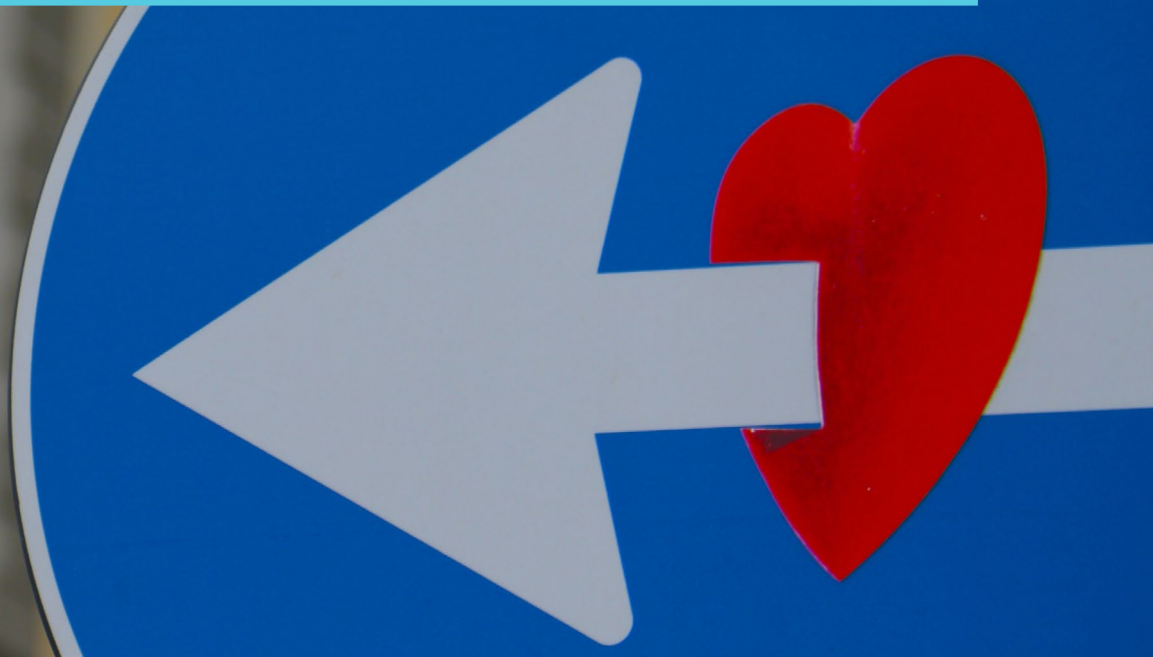
Leaders should embrace a [people-centric approach](#) and place greater trust in their employees.

You can implement a culture of trust online by being present, engaged, prepared and accountable. Set the standard by outlining clear times you'll be online, show up to meetings on time and be active and responsive on your team communication channels.

As a manager you can go even further by establishing a [culture of sharing](#) - sharing failures, struggles or stories with your employees to spark a deeper human connection and build a trusting culture of mutual respect.

Tip #5:

Provide Guidance, Structure & Empathic Leadership



Going through a crisis and experiencing significant shifts to the way we live and work can take its toll on the mental health of your team.

[Studies](#) reveal that most employees rely on their managers' advice on how to react to sudden changes or crisis situations, so it's important that you instill as much confidence as possible in your employees in order to support them and foster the company culture.

In the new work reality, employees look for [empathic, authentic and transparent leadership](#) - a skill set that managers also have to be able to execute virtually.

Times have been really tough and the world may seem unrecognisable for many of us.

Lead with positivity. Show empathy by letting your employees know it's alright if they take some time to adjust to a new way of working but also share a clear action plan with them to instil confidence that you will guide them through it.

Be sure to set realistic goals at an individual, team and organisational level so employees [know what's expected of them](#).

And above all, try to care for your team. It can be easy when working remotely to burn the candle at both ends as the boundaries between work and home life blur, so be aware of your employees [overworking or burning out](#).



Tip #6: Celebrate the Small Wins

Recognition is a powerful [intrinsic motivator](#) for employees. And in the current climate, it's worth noting that especially "during periods of disruption, employees' desire for being recognised increases [by about 30%.](#)"

You likely already have a structured schedule of employee 1:1s, yearly reviews and formalised feedback loops in place, but whilst these provide impact at an individual level, they're often too infrequent, top down and not transparent enough to impact your company culture.

Employee dissatisfaction often stems from feeling unnoticed, underappreciated and undervalued. You can tackle this by celebrating micro moments of success, [highlighting small wins](#) on a more frequent basis.

And remember, it's not only your job as a CEO or manager to recognise your employees. Instead, create opportunities for peer-to-peer appreciation and encourage positive recognition between colleagues.

By establishing a culture of celebrating small wins, our eyes become more attune to seeking out these winning moments and seeing the best in our colleagues.

This practice ultimately leads to [increased employee engagement and productivity](#) as appreciation leads to effort, and effort leads to success.

Tip #7: Gather Employee Feedback



Beyond yourself, your employees will be putting your organisation's values into action each day so they're the best people to assess whether the company culture is thriving. By asking them directly, you'll show them that you care about their wellbeing and satisfaction levels.

According to Forbes, "employees who feel their voice is heard are [4.6 times more likely to feel empowered](#) to perform their best work".

Whether it's through casual conversations, quarterly or bi-annually 'culture check-ins' or more formal surveys or meetings, get in the habit of asking for ideas to strengthen company culture. You can gather and evaluate [employee sentiment](#) at the same time.

By making these check-ins predictable and regular, it also makes culture less elusive and easier to build a shared understanding within your organisation.

Chances are, your employees will suggest something you'd never have thought of and that's great! That level of buy-in means they're taking ownership over the company culture, signalling higher employee engagement, retention and less staff turnover.

The next step? Share the results of the feedback where possible and show that you are actually acting on those suggestions in order to [foster a stronger sense of company culture](#).

Moving Forward into the Future of Work

The nature of the way we work is changing and we are waking up to the realisation that a company's culture is not dependent on the four walls of an office, espresso machines, or ping pong tables. It's not even reliant on us being in the same city.

In fact, when working remotely, [culture itself becomes the “office” environment](#), creating important markers for purpose, participation, connection and impact.

We've all heard horror stories of toxic company cultures, so using the above strategies in an ongoing way will help you to foster a thriving company culture that will intrinsically motivate your team and [encourage loyalty and pride](#).

Still not sure where to begin? We're happy to help you get started and create a strong and purpose-driven company culture for your multi-location teams.

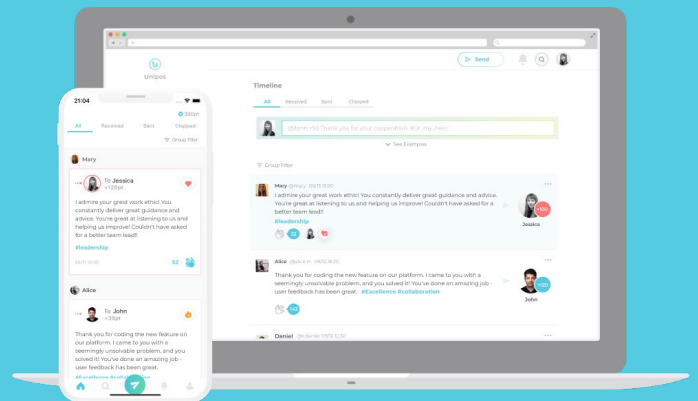


Connect, Recognise & Engage Your Teams - Whether They Work from Home or in the Office

Unipos helps teams across the world to connect, recognise and celebrate one another, creating transparent, collaborative and purpose-driven company cultures.

Users send messages, along with virtual points, to their teammates, thanking them for small, everyday collaborations and providing positive feedback.

All points collected through the platform are donated to a sustainability initiative of their company's choice, so each employee personally contributes to a bigger cause, enhancing their sense of purpose.



Do you want to find out how Unipos can help you foster a strong and collaborative company culture?

Then contact us today:



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