How Mobile Workforce Management Technology Can Help You Manage Your Virtual Office

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At times, managing people can be a real chore. It certainly doesn't get easier when the only thing connecting your team is a few cables and a couple thousand pixels. Fortunately, the same technology that frees users from cube life also provides some pretty nifty ways to tackle mobile workforce management. After all, a virtual office is still an office.

Workforce Management in a Nutshell

When the topic of workforce management is discussed — virtual or otherwise — two main aspects boil to the surface fairly quickly. The job really comes down to coordinating efforts and equipping your team members with everything they need to succeed. Accomplish that, and the rest is just minutiae. For teleworking employees, however, you'll need a slightly different strategy. First up: orchestrating a team you can't see.

The right technology can make mobile workforce management much simpler and more effective.

Coordinating the efforts of your team is a simple matter of communication. Since you aren't often going to be physically available to your team members, this requires a certain mastery of technology. Actually, that's not entirely true. Rather, a certain level of technology is required to master communication in a virtual setting.

Ultimately, the best communication technology is the one you and your team are most comfortable with. Some offices thrive on phone systems, some love text-based chat, while others still prefer visual communication through video conferencing solutions. Either way, it's imperative to choose the technology that poses the least resistance to your team's communication.

Tips for Managing with Technology

Whatever piece of communication technology you use — and perhaps you are using several — here are a few key strategies to keep in mind that will help you get the most out of each:

- **Visibility:** The technology you choose to communicate and coordinate with your remote team must empower visibility. Something as simple as a "presence" indicator that lets team members know who is available and at what capacity will go a long way toward keeping communication flowing.

- **Tracking:** Remote team members can be tough to manage due to the autonomy a few hundred miles provides. To make management easier and encourage productivity, a little tracking goes a long way. Before you break out the ankle bracelets, just know that those same communications platforms likely have time-tracking capabilities as well. Cloud phone systems even provide built-in analytics and reporting, which allow for a real-time and historical record of employee call activity to gauge productivity.

- **Collaboration:** Unless you work in an industry where each individual contributes in complete isolation, you'll need some way to collaborate, be it on documents, communications, ideation, etc. Again, the idea here is to make it as seamless as possible. Look for technologies that tackle collaboration in an inclusive manner while still providing clear ownership and organization.

- **Fun:** This one goes back to one of the greatest shortfalls of mobile workforce management. When people rub elbows on a regular basis, they naturally form social bonds. This, called by another name, is culture. While it happens naturally to some extent in a physical office, it takes much more discipline and effort to create the same kind of atmosphere in a virtual environment. Some advice? Give your team members the tools to creatively express themselves, even if it doesn't directly help productivity. No matter how much you disdain animated .gif images, they may just bring your team closer together.

When all is said and done, managing remote teams doesn't have to be an exercise in futility. With a well-cultivated crop of supporting technologies, coordinating efforts and equipping your team for success becomes a trivial affair.

Contact Vonage Business to learn more about how cloud-based communications can aid your company.