The Tens: Getting Work From Home Right

1 Understand the work that needs to be done. With digitization and automation, many organizations have lost track of the work they do at the detail level. Many processes and procedures are assumed to be embedded in software. That may be true for transactions, but collaboration remains ad hoc, filling the gaps in processes, or working outside of systems where work hasn't yet been automated. WFH requires recognition of this work.

2 Map team interactions. Beyond understanding the work, it is also important to map the relationships between teams, how the information flows, and which tools that span teams may require rationalization, handoffs, or translation/transformation between processes.

3 Select the tools that best support the work. This means tools writ large. Not just the right collaboration tools and repositories, but also the right hardware, security, VPN, and anything else that will make the experience good for employees and keep the data secure.

4 Provide training and guidance on collaboration tools. Teams need to master the tools they use. Suboptimal use of tools leads to misunderstandings, delays, and rework. Invest in learning time and content.

5 Redesign processes to recognize work from home constraints. If automated or transaction work requires updating for WFH, redesign it to match the current realities of the work experience. That means balance, simplification, and other improvements to optimize workflow and communications.

6 Establish a way to assign work, prioritize, and track progress. Beyond the execution of the work itself, create a way to assign work that is visible and transparent. WFH experiences offer fewer opportunities for casual knowledge transfer. Even with regular staff meetings, formal public assignments will benefit from open documentation and status updates.

7 Co-create WFH guidelines. Don't just send out acquired guidelines or those developed by a small team. Work with remote workers to negotiate their needs, the boundaries, and the expectations they see and incorporate that feedback into the guidelines. Ensure that employees see themselves reflected in policy and practice.

8 Create a WFH support program. Beyond the guidelines, organizations need to develop WFH support programs that include regular check-ins for employees and contractors, and enhanced remote worker training for managers.

9 Encourage a community of practice focused collaboration. Organize Communities of Practice as a way to listen and learn, to discuss and resolve emergent issues, and to act as a focal point for those charged with continuously improving the WFH experience.

10 Don't be afraid to adjust as you learn. Communities of practice charters include listening, adjudicating, and recommending. They should also be asked to take the lead on updating or creating policies and practices that reflect the organization's learning.

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