REMOTE WORK BEST PRACTICE:
KEY SOFT SKILLS

TEAM BUILDING, COMMUNICATION, RECRUITMENT,
RETENTION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

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RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR DAY
JOHN'S HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

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Welcome and Introduction

- Academic Background- PhD Social Science and MBA
- Work Experience
  - UK- business development, project management, strategy and post doctoral fellowship program.
  - US- Ensures research monies arrive at the university and are directed to the correct projects. Departmental leadership and Diversity and Inclusion work.

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AGENDA

- COMMUNICATION AND TEAM BUILDING

- ACCOUNTABILITY

- RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION WITH DEVELOPMENT

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This Is Not Normal Remote

Additional Challenges of Remote Work During Pandemic

- NO CHOICE ABOUT WORKING REMOTE
- ABNORMAL SCHEDULES AND NEEDS
  - LIMITED CHILDCARE OPTIONS
  - PARENTS TEACHING SCHOOL
- STAFFING CHANGES
  - HIRING FREEZE IMPACT
  - NAVIGATING FURLOUGHS

- Impact on faculty = impact on RAs
- No time to ramp up and learn how to work remotely
  - Offices unprepared for remote work, paper files
- Video meetings
  - Volume, poorly led

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And Remote Work Can Fail

Communication is key

INCONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION OF REMOTE WORK

**Studies show remote work can be effective or not effective**

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Setting Remote Work Up to Fail

MANY COMPANIES FOCUS TOO MUCH ON TECHNOLOGY AND NOT ENOUGH ON PROCESS. THIS IS AKIN TO TRYING TO FIX A SPORTS TEAM'S PERFORMANCE BY BUYING BETTER EQUIPMENT. THESE ADJUSTMENTS ALONE MIGHT RESULT IN MINOR IMPROVEMENTS, **BUT REAL CHANGE REQUIRES A RETURN TO FUNDAMENTALS.**

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Why Remote Work Fails
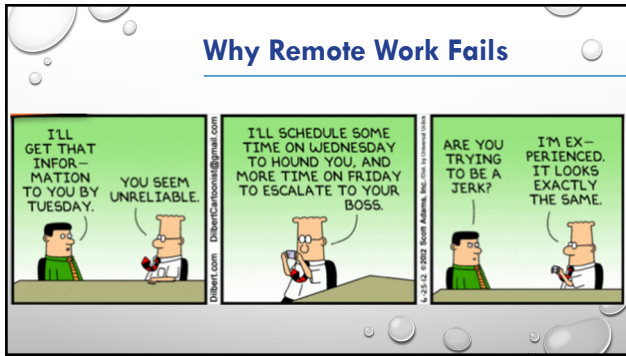
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Why Remote Work Fails

- Lack of proper training or resources to work remote productively
- Supervisors untrained managing and monitoring remote workers
- Challenges for supervisors to manage if not face-to-face.
- Some supervisors are uncomfortable having employees work offsite
- Employers find that remote workers—and the teams with which they work—aren't as productive as when they're onsite
- Employees feeling disconnected or out of the loop
- Communication - too much and too little
- Burnout and technology fatigue
- Being "seen" - building work identity

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Plan for Success

Failure is not an option…

How long are you planning for remote work?

What are campus plans for return to the office?

What is working and what is failing for staff?

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Starts with Leadership

Communication

- **Transparency**
- **Adapt communication quantity to employee needs**
- **Acknowledge this can be hard and it's not a normal remote situation**
- **Follow up / Explain why**
- **Acknowledge successes / celebrate**

Model Your Expectations
- **Set boundaries for your work**
- **Take vacations**

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Starts with Leadership

What will you measure?

Explicit metrics and key performance indicators (KPI) and ensure they align

Priorities, Goals & Projects

Evaluate
Communicate
Document progress
Limit assignments and set clear deadlines

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Staff Engagement

Communication

- **Remote communication is different – use different strategies than face-to-face**
- **Discuss and Document Norms**
  - Expectations for response times
  - How team uses different tools (chat vs. longer messages)
  - Video conferencing: expectations for camera use & why it's important
- **Training on Using Tools, Leading & Attending meetings**
  - Electronic filing system
  - Project Management
  - Comm. Tools: Slack, Zoom, Teams, Asana/Trello, Box

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Staff Engagement

Taking the Pulse

Anonymous Survey

One-on-one conversations with staff about remote work

- Overall experience with remote work
- Office set up needs
- Ability to prioritize and organize work
- Communication needs
- How relationships have changed for better or for worse with campus stakeholders

Next steps based on information gathered

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Staff Engagement

Team Building

Address Lack of Community & Culture
- Bring people together
- Knowledge - aims and foundations of university and team, focus on values
- Nurture an online meeting place
- Social activities

Culture must be created within your team!

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Staff Engagement

Team Building

Some prefer the distance of Zoom / Teams
- Everyone comes to an equal playing field
- No side conversation, no cliques going off to lunch together afterward
- Speaking up may be easier for some when there is the separation of a monitor – and a chat option!
- Starting a new job remote without anxiety of new place

Some suffer with no in-person engagement
- Energy is different

Be aware of emotional tolls for all employees
- Check in with people individually and in their most comfortable venue (phone, email, live video)

Informal/social connections are as or more important than formal

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Staff Engagement

Productivity

Tools

How staff structure their days

Goal-based vs. time in seat

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Staff Engagement

Team Building: Then & Now

Then	**Now**
• Meals together • Fun days out (sporting events, bowling) • Staff retreat • Open office doors • Recognition programs	• Virtual water cooler chats • Get to know your co-workers activities • Fun Slack/Teams channels • Virtual office hours • Recognition programs • Virtual happy hour with a theme • Virtual scavenger hunt

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Staff Engagement

Monitoring vs. Development

Accountability

Metrics

Development

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RECRUITMENT INTO THE FIELD

- EVERYONE HAS A "HOW I BECAME A RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR" STORY.
- BARRIERS TO ENTERING THE FIELD
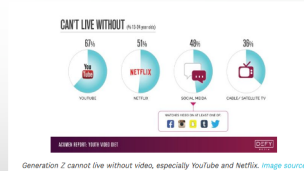- RECRUITING THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST

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RECRUITMENT SPECIFICALLY INTO THE FIELD

- RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR TRAINEESHIP (UCSF)
  - ONE YEAR PROGRAM ACROSS THE RESEARCH ADMINISTRATIVE
- RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT OFFICE (UCSF)
  - INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (PRIMARILY AIMED AT POST DOCS)
  - AAAS- ALTERNATIVE CAREERS FOR PHD GRADUATES(RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION)
  - GRADUATE DIVISION OCPD TRAINING PROGRAM- SIMULATION MODULES
  - INTERNS FROM GSICE (*GRADUATE STUDENT INTERNSHIPS FOR CAREER EXPLORATION* PROGRAM (*GSICE*) PROGRAM IS TO SUPPORT MENTORED CAREER EXPLORATION)
- HAVING AN INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP PROGRAM WILL ATTRACT YOUNGER CANDIDATES TO YOUR WORKPLACE GIVING THE EMPLOYER THE OPPORTUNITY TO HANG ON TO THESE CANDIDATES AFTER THEY OFFICIALLY GRADUATE.

HTTPS://HR.SPARKHIRE.COM/TALENT-ACQUISITION-2/THIS-IS-THE-SECRET-TO-RECRUITING-TO-GEN-Z /

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KEY FACTORS IN RECRUITMENT

- THE INTERVIEW PANEL
- SMART PHONE FRIENDLY
- VIDEO
- HIGHLIGHT GROWTH AND POTENTIAL
- GEOGRAPHY

CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT (IN 13-24 year old)

Generation Z cannot live without video, especially YouTube and Netflix. Image source

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RETENTION

RECENT POLL FOUND THAT 58% OF MILLENNIALS INTENDED TO STAY IN CURRENT ROLE >3 YEARS

AVERAGE VACANT POSITION CAN TAKE OVER 42 DAYS TO FILL! – IS THIS ON TRACK WITH YOUR INSTITUTION?

TURNOVER HIGHEST THAN ANY PREVIOUS GENERATION JOB MOVEMENT:
- AVERAGE MILLENNIAL CAN HOLD AS MANY AS 20 DIFFERENT JOBS DURING A CAREER

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WHAT IS YOUR RETENTION PLAN NOW?

Have you asked why your workforce is staying or leaving?

Do you know what is important to them?

Are you able to control pay increases? Are you using those effectively?

Livability in your city

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RETENTION

Provide flexibility in working

Investing in training and development

Playing on Passions

Appreciation and feedback

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INVESTING IN TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

MENTORSHIP   TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES   PRESENTING   TRAVEL

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MENTORSHIP

DOES YOUR INSTITUTION HAVE A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM?

DOES YOUR NCURA REGION HAVE A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM YOU CAN GUIDE PEOPLE TO?

DO YOU HAVE A NETWORK TO CONNECT TO OTHERS IN THE FIELD NOT AT YOUR INSTITUTION?

TYPES OF MENTORSHIPS:

- **REVERSE MENTORING-** A UNIQUE TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP WHERE A MORE SENIOR PERSON IS PAIRED UP WITH A YOUNGER EMPLOYEE. THE SENIOR PERSON HELPS THE MILLENNIAL WITH LEADERSHIP WHILE THE MILLENNIAL HELPS THE SENIOR PERSON WITH TECHNOLOGY. BOTH GENERATIONS ARE ABLE TO LEVERAGE EACH OTHER'S STRENGTHS.
- **STANDARD MENTORING-** THIS IS THE CLASSIC MENTORING MODEL WHERE A SENIOR PERSON MENTORS SOMEONE LESS SENIOR IN CAREER GROWTH. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE WITH THIS MENTORSHIP IS THAT THE LESS SENIOR PERSON IS NOT PROVIDING VALUE TO THE OTHER PERSON.
- **BUDDY MENTORING-** THIS MODEL INVOLVES TWO PEOPLE ON THE SAME LEVEL IN THE CORPORATE HIERARCHY TO WORK WITH ONE ANOTHER.

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TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

EMERGING GENERATIONS WANT TO BE WITH A COMPANY THAT INVESTS IN THEM AND THEIR SKILLS

WHAT IS ALREADY OFFERED AT YOUR INSTITUTION FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT?

WHEN ASKING FOR MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN - HOW CAN YOU ASSIST YOUR EMPLOYEE IN MAKING LEARNING POSSIBLE IN THEIR SCHEDULE

- HALF TIME SPLIT WITH OTHER UNIT
- SHORT TERM DECREASE IN JOB DUTIES
- SPECIAL PROJECTS

GIVE THEM THE CHANCE TO LEARN AND GROW EVEN IF THAT MEANS EMBRACING A LATERAL MOVE

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PRESENTING

FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN PRESENTING... LET THEM

MAKE OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESENT TO COLLEAGUES AT YOUR INSTITUTION, ACROSS DEPARTMENTS, AND ACROSS YOUR REGION

ENCOURAGE YOUR EMPLOYEES AND CO-WORKERS TO SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE, THEIR PROCESS, AND GIVE BACK TO THEIR DEPARTMENT

BENEFITS OF PRESENTING:

- OWNERSHIP OF TOPIC
- BECOMING AN AUTHORITY
- PRESENCE
- DEEPER CONNECTION WITH INSTITUTION AND PROJECTS
- CONFIDENCE

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Long Term Impact

When Work Returns to the Office

- What will the policy be on remote work?
- How will the decision impact your staff?
- Has remote work worked for your staff?
- If you hired remote staff during stay-at-home orders, what will staff need to know about working in the office?
- Checking in equipment borrowed from the office/purchased by office

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Long Term Impact

Considerations

If you continue remote work…

- Have a policy
- Document arrangement in writing
- Trust is key
- Carefully communicate policy changes
- Objective requirements for who can telework
- Safe remote work site
- Security
- Logistics

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Long Term Impact

Hiring

Retention or issues with reliability
- Hire right
- Document department processes - to manage turnover
- Incentives for remote workers
- Hiring in cohorts

Onboarding experience
- Some people may have less anxiety (they don't have to walk into a place where they don't know anyone!)
- Some people may need more 1:1 time
- Schedule dedicated time for training, manager 1:1s, office hours

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Long Term Impact

Training & Onboarding

1 **Build Trust**

2 **Provide Resources Needed to Start Work**

3 **Connect with the Department**

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