

**BLOGS**

Diversity & Inclusion

Employee Well-being While Working Remotely

“The Modern Workplace” has taken on a new meaning during this time when many employees are working from home, social distancing, and, often, balancing increased responsibilities for homeschooling, childcare and caring for older relatives. My modern workplace often includes Zoom meetings while my daughter watches cartoons or plays in the same room. Telephone calls are sometimes interrupted by a request for a snack. I have a friend who starts her workday after her children go to bed and goes to sleep herself around 3:00 a.m., just to get a few hours of sleep before her kids are up again at 6:00 a.m. People like to use the term “new normal,” but there is nothing normal about what we are experiencing. Work and home have combined to create what some have described as a never-ending Saturday, Groundhog’s Day or the [Flat Spot](#). Working from home can be great. Working from home during a global pandemic is not great. Accordingly, employers should be mindful of employee well-being during this *abnormal* time. Here are some things to consider:

- Monitor employees for burnout and overworking, which is common when working remotely. [Here](#) are some tips for avoiding work from home burnout.
- Schedule virtual team lunches or other times for employees to stay connected.
- Connect employees that are new to working remotely with employees that have experience working remotely pre-pandemic to offer advice and answer questions.
- Send weekly updates to employees regarding the status/timeframe of the remote working policy and the eventual return to the office. Likewise, solicit employee feedback regarding office reopening.
- Maintain a dialogue with employees regarding their motivation and ideas for maximizing their motivation while working remotely. [Here](#) are additional ideas for keeping employees motivated while working remotely.
- If an employee is working remotely while caring for young children, focus on the employees ability to perform the job, consider the length of time the employee will be working remotely, and whether there are any adjustments or accommodations that can be made on a temporary basis to allow the employee to work most productively.
- Leaders must continue to prioritize inclusion. Consider creating a list of your team members with their photos and keep it in front of you as you work. This will help you make more conscious decisions about workflow or tasks and remind you to reach out to all of your staff instead of a select few.
- During this pandemic, many women are bearing a disproportionate amount of responsibility in caring for children and family. Consider scheduling regular check-ins with parents and caregivers; watch out for biased language in performance reviews of female employees with children; and foster a culture in which men and women are



encouraged to speak up when they see someone being inadvertently silenced, overlooked or routinely interrupted in meetings and discussions. [This](#) article explores these ideas and more.

- Remember the Introverts — Some employees may have a harder time contributing on video calls or may prefer not to be on video. [Here](#) is a great resource for help in conducting meetings that are fair to introverts. It suggests the following:
 - Before the meeting: Share the purpose of the meeting, provide any relevant data ahead of time and list the specific discussion questions you plan to cover.
 - During: Proactively give introverted thinkers the floor with questions like, Jamie, from the discussion so far, what really stands out for you?
- After: Circulate a meeting summary and proactively solicit ideas that might've come to mind after the meeting. You can close your email with something like, "Does anyone have a new insight about this situation since we met? If so , I'd love to hear it."

Keeping the above ideas in mind will help employers navigate this unprecedented situation. If you have a specific employment question, please feel free to contact [me](#) or any Lathrop GPM employment attorney.

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