Ferguson Partners

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Leadership In a Virtual World

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Survey Questions: Refresher

- 17 Questions

  - Mix of closed and open ended

- Responses pertaining to:

  - Trust across leadership teams and how the pandemic has impacted morale

  - Essential self-observed leadership behaviors necessary to navigate a remote workforce

  - Challenges and opportunities associated with motivating and engaging a remote workforce

  - Strategies and tactics employed to navigate virtual teams

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Survey Findings

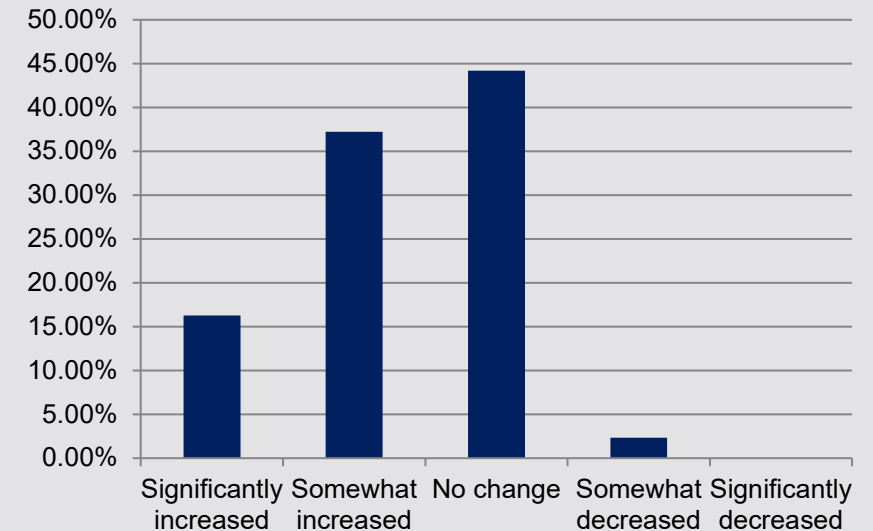# In Some Ways, the Switch to Virtual Has Been Easier Than Anticipated

The majority of respondents (91%) indicate success in managing a virtual team

I have managed my team successfully while working remotely.
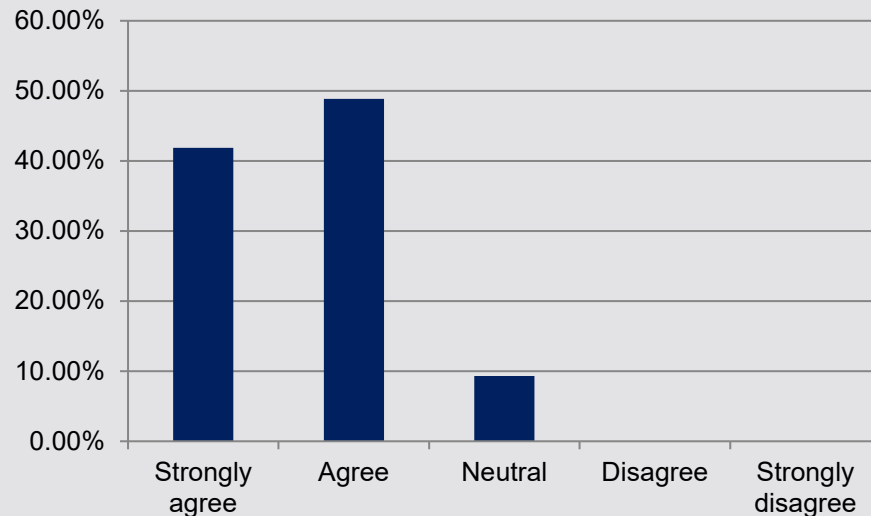
And remote work has not negatively impacted trust across most teams

Trust among my team has...

Remote Work and Motivation

Although **88**% of respondents indicate their teams have remained motivated and focused thus far...

Personal connection remains the most frequently cited impediment going forward.

Other frequently cited concerns include:

- Decreased spontaneous collaboration (**76**%)

- Burnout from overworking (**64**%)

- Decreased communication/ feeling out of the loop (**63**%)

- Negative impact upon organizational culture (**55**%)

- At home distractions (**55**%)

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Communication is Critical

1 Leading Virtually

When asked what is needed to successfully lead a virtual team, most respondents mentioned **frequent communication and building strong relationships**. Similarly, **63%** of respondents listed "Frequent communication" as one of the most important behaviors for leading virtually.

2 Engaging Virtually

Not only is communication important for *leading* virtually, it's also essential to ensure teams are engaged. The majority of respondents say **regular and consistent communication, as well as prior relationships, help contribute to teams operating successfully**.

3 Adjusting Virtually

It's clear that frequent and consistent communication is key to be successful when working virtually – but this doesn't mean it's easy. Respondents listed **staying connected, engaged, and difficulties with communication as the biggest challenge in adjusting leadership style**.

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Remote Work Is Here to Stay...in Some Form

According to a recent PWC survey of remote workers:

- 83% want to work from home at least one day per week

- 55% of employers anticipate their workers will adopt a remote working schedule long after the Pandemic ends

86% of respondents indicated they will adopt some from of hybrid work arrangement post COVID.

"We were using WFH frequently before COVID and I believe we will increase our virtual work in the future based upon this experiment."

"There is a place for WFH, and I now have a better appreciation that there is more value in WFH than previously understood. That said, the required human interactions are more forced and harder to develop..."

"We will likely settle into an ongoing 25% of our team working remotely on a daily basis."

"We see virtual work as playing a very important role in the post-COVID world. We see greater flexibility and acceptance of where/how we work."

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Greatest Challenges Leaders Face in the "New Normal"

Developing High Potentials Virtually

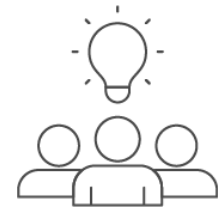Respondents cited a growing concern that top talent are growing stagnant

Onboarding Remotely

Indoctrinating new hires into a culture that may be "in flux"

Combating Burnout and Pandemic Fatigue

No concrete "end" in sight and the reality of continued work/home/etc. blending

Impromptu Creativity

When interactions are scheduled, how can organizations maintain creativity and collaboration?

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Breakout Session (20 Minutes)

You have been assigned a breakout room on Zoom and will automatically be placed with your breakout group. Identify a Leader for the group who will help facilitate the conversation, as well as a scribe who will capture notes and report back to NAREIM. Take 20 minutes to brainstorm the questions below. You may jump back into the main room to ask questions at any time.

1. What are the behaviors necessary for leading in a virtual environment? How can leaders further strengthen these behaviors? What negative behaviors might emerge? How might they be handled?

2. What does good team leadership look like, both in person and in virtual environments? What are the potential leadership risks associated with virtual environments and how can they be mitigated?

3. What's the best advice you would give other leaders when navigating a crisis like Covid-19 while operating within a virtual environment?

When completed with the 20 minutes, each team will join the main group and report back their findings. You will have a 5 minute warning.

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Group Debrief (20 Minutes)

How did your team answer the following questions?

1. What are the behaviors necessary for leading in a virtual environment? How can leaders further strengthen these behaviors? What negative behaviors might emerge? How might they be handled?

2. What does good team leadership look like, both in person and in virtual environments? What are the potential leadership risks associated with virtual environments and how can they be mitigated?

3. What's the best advice you would give other leaders when navigating a crisis like Covid-19 while operating within a virtual environment?

Based on the answers provided by each group, what are some of the key themes addressed today?

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Recommendations

Some of the following are important recommendations to remember when continuing to navigate a remote work environment:

1. If you've truly hired the best team, then prove it by trusting them to get their work done. Leaders who hover in remote work environments decrease performance and engagement.

2. Maintain a regular cadence of communication. Ironically, employees in multiple research studies have stated they have a greater sense of transparency from their leaders virtually and during the pandemic than when in the office.

3. Clarify expectations: revisit the strategy and vision often, while ensuring intended goals and outcomes are clear. "What good looks like" should be a daily message.

4. It's easier to focus on what's not working versus what is, so operate within what you can actually control. Identify the strengths of a remote workforce and start there.

5. Increase your spend and commitment to learning and development and talent management. Identify and stretch your high potentials to take on additional work and share in decision making authority.

6. Take care of issues immediately: this includes people who are disengaging the workforce

7. Celebrate organizational wins: when appropriate, recognize teams and people equally for contributions, especially those who may be the backbone of the organization.

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