

Building a Remote Work Culture

How to Help Your Employees Thrive



With great challenge comes great opportunity.

As teams move to working from home, we have a chance to reinvent what a workday looks like, how we support our employees, and capitalize on new opportunities to build success together.



INTRODUCTION

Your workplace may be remote – but there’s an opportunity to make company culture and community stronger than ever.

In the best of times, work nourishes us. It provides a sense of achievement, enables us to form healthy relationships, and feeds our sense of competence and contribution. A great workday is like a satisfying meal, leaving you filled, happy, and enriched.

But the events of 2020 have caused the tables to turn. COVID-19 has impacted employees on a personal level – with 42% of employees reporting their mental health has been impacted since the outbreak began¹. As a result of the increased stress, anxiety, and uncertainty, their morale, productivity, efficiency, and job engagement has declined, too.

Now it’s up to us as business leaders to nourish work. In today’s rapidly changing business landscape, we need to look at how we support our employees from fresh, new perspectives. We need to experiment with unconventional ingredients and unexpected flavors to spice up your employees’ work from home experience and help them through this difficult time.

This guide can help you along the way.



What's in this guide:

01 **Make the Most of Remote Work**

Using this opportunity to increase productivity, employee retention, and more.



02 **Support Employee Work-Life Balance**

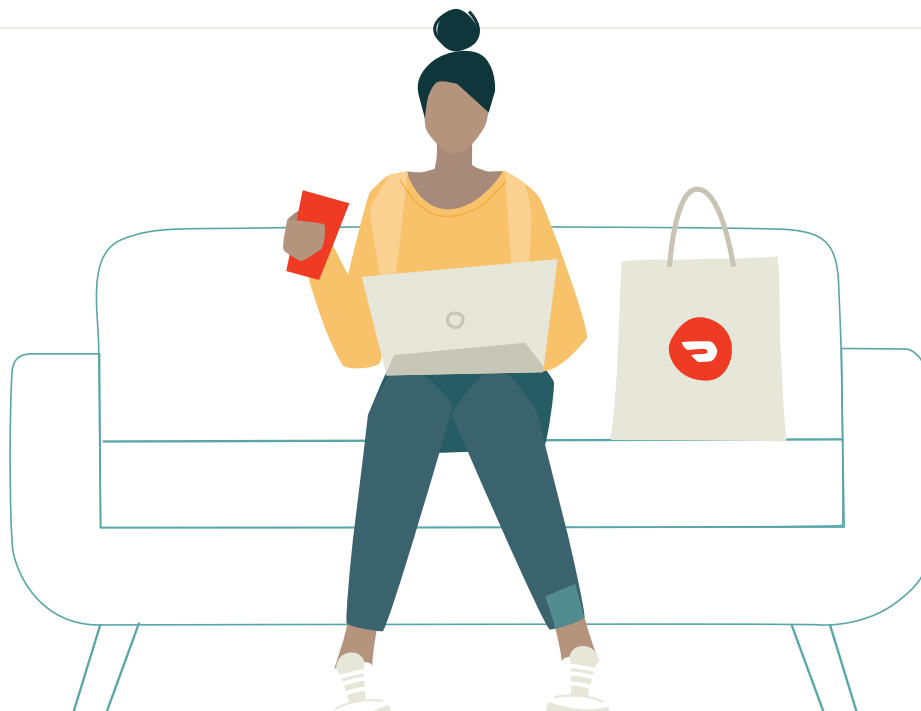
How to move your team from adapting to thriving as they work from home.

03 **Build Camaraderie Among Virtual Teams**

Nourishing your teams, improving communication, output, and company culture.

04 **Redefine Workplace Benefits**

Reinventing the way companies support their remote staff through strategically designed perks.





PART I

Make the Most of Remote Work

For people and human resources teams, this year has been one for the history books. You've grappled with unprecedented safety concerns. You've worked to accommodate a growing demand for health benefits. You've adapted to accommodate hiring freezes.

As if that weren't enough, you're now leading the transition to remote work — a shift impacting workforce processes, culture, and everything in between.

If the past several months have shown us anything, it's that remote work is here to stay. From traditional global corporations like Amex² and Google³ to trend-setting upstarts such as Airbnb⁴, many companies have already committed to work from home through 2021. Some companies have made even more drastic commitments, like REI, which is selling⁵ its brand new eight-acre corporate campus to embrace remote work indefinitely.

Employees across industries are largely in agreement with this transition —

52%

52% of American workers⁶ report that they want to continue working remotely.

² American Express, [Temporary Work From Home Policy](#), September 10, 2020

³ Business Insider, [Google will extend employee work-from-home until summer 2021](#), July 27, 2020

⁴ Airbnb, [Work From Anywhere](#), August 26, 2020

⁵ CNN, [Outdoor Retailer REI to sell sprawling new and unused headquarters to shift to remote work](#), August 14, 2020

⁶ IBM, [IBM Institute for Business Value survey](#), 2020

This new normal has completely reinvented office culture, forcing employees and employers alike to adapt to a whole new set of rules.

Now's a great time to establish or update your company's work from home policy to reflect your current practices. Below are some thought-starters of things you may wish to include in your policy.

- ✓ Employees may work from home full-time or part of the time, depending on their desired schedule.
- ✓ When remote, employees must have uninterrupted access to the Internet and relevant devices.
- ✓ While working remotely, employees must follow all established cybersecurity protections observed in the office.
- ✓ All employees are expected to work within regular business hours (pre-approved exceptions may be made for travel and alternate time zones).
- ✓ Employees must be able to take calls in a relatively uninterrupted area where they can be heard.

All this is to say: remote work is no longer the perk or privilege it used to be – it's simply the way work is done.

So it's up to leaders like you to make it as engaging, enjoyable, and productive as possible for your workforce. You can do this by providing unique perks, benefits, and policies that fit today's remote workforce instead of holding on to yesterday's – and in subsequent sections, we'll tell you how to do just that.



⁵CNN, [Outdoor Retailer REI to sell sprawling new and unused headquarters to shift to remote work](#), August 14, 2020

⁶IBM, [IBM Institute for Business Value survey](#), 2020

PART II

Support Employee Work-Life Balance

With COVID-19 causing nearly every office to go remote, employees now live at work. So if finding a work-life balance was difficult prior to the pandemic, it might seem next-to-impossible now. In July 2020, telehealth organization Mental Health America reported a 420% increase in anxiety screenings per day and a 520% increase in depression screenings per day over January.⁷

51%

51% of remote employees worry about striking a balance between work and personal time⁸

22%

22% of remote workers find it difficult to unplug from technology⁹

On top of that, more individuals are grappling with mental health conditions caused by isolation, loneliness, and uncertainty.



Working from home has long been considered a flexible workplace benefit – but rather than experiencing unparalleled freedom, many employees are now confined to their home or apartments. With fewer viable social plans, a nonexistent daily commute, and 24/7 access to a computer, many employees are finding their workday extending beyond their requisite working hours. **So how can you ensure your employees will thrive in a remote setting?**

⁷ MHA, [COVID-19 and Mental Health](#), August 1, 2020.

⁸ Forbes, [The Future Of Work Post-Covid-19](#), 2020.

⁹ Buffer, [The State of Remote Work 2019](#), 2019.

We are in this together

Supporting your staff through thick and thin

The separation between work hours and home hours no longer remains, but employers can provide valuable encouragement to help employees find balance in new, creative ways. Use the following list of work-life balance tactics to find inspiration for your own employees.



Implement flex hours.

Enable your staff to spend time away from work — whether it's providing them a fixed amount of “free hours” per week or letting them set their schedule. Focus on performance metrics: as long employees complete their work, flexible scheduling is a great way to earn their trust and improve happiness.



Institute walking meetings.

After many months of virtual meetings, employees have video fatigue. Encourage your team to get outdoors and take audio-only calls on-the-go. Companies like Google, Facebook, and LinkedIn have already implemented this policy¹⁰. Studies have found that just 30 minutes outside can improve office workers' productivity by almost 50%¹¹. Taking this time can also help break up the day and provide mood-boosting benefits.



Encourage meals away from the computer.

Most employees are guilty of eating lunch at their desks (at least some of the time). Offering DoorDash's [DashPass for Work](#) as a benefit can help remind your employees to take regular mealtimes. With a DashPass subscription, they'll receive zero-dollar delivery and reduced service fees on every order they make, removing the stress of cooking and enabling them to enjoy time with friends, roommates, or family.



Establish meeting-free days to help everyone get work done.

Two-thirds of all workers lose valuable time each week due to meetings — which can cause them to have to backtrack or work overtime to finish projects. While face-to-face time can help people feel connected, it can also hinder productivity. Establish one or two days per week with no internal meetings, and limit client or partner meetings on these days where possible.

¹⁰ CNBC, [LEADERSHIP: The meeting hack loved by CEOs at Google, Facebook and LinkedIn](#), 2018.

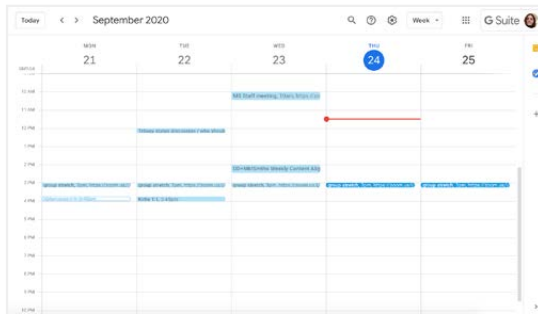
¹¹ The Independent, [Productivity improves 45% after workers spend just 29 minutes outside, research shows](#), 2020



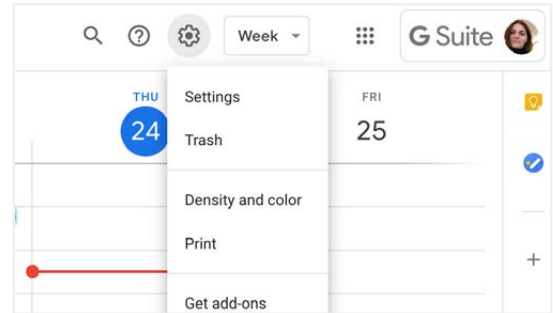
Teach employees to block off their calendars.

Without boundaries to the workday, it’s easy for people to lose track of time. If your company uses [G-Suite](#) or a similar email platform, employees can set “working hours” on their Google Calendar. An individual’s working hours appear for everyone at the organization and let others know to avoid scheduling meetings outside of these hours. Here’s how to walk them through it:

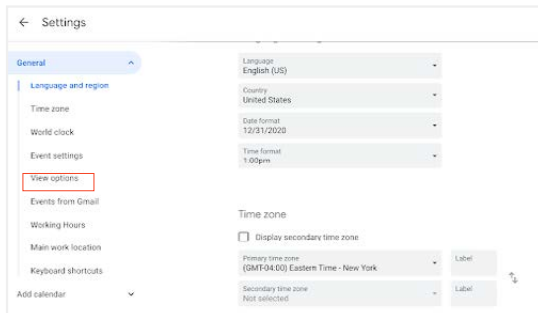
1 Open the Google Calendar application on your computer.



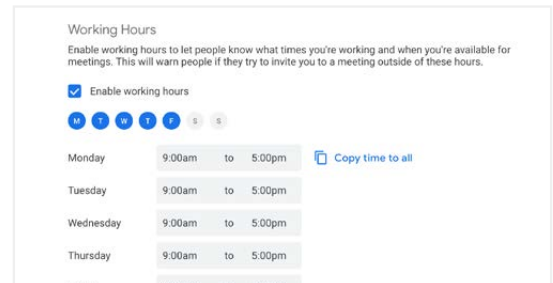
2 Visit the settings feature at the top right.



3 Under the left menu, visit “General” and scroll down to Working Hours.



4 Select the days and hours you’ll be working—whether it’s flex-time or the company’s standard business hours.



Utilize Slack status updates so employees can show what they’re up to.



Online messaging services like [Slack](#) are excellent for keeping in touch, but employees can’t be expected to check and respond to messages at all hours. Encourage everyone to set a Slack status update – such as a to indicate they’re having lunch, a for when they’re out on a walk, or a for when someone is in a meeting. ([Slack integrates](#) with your Google Calendar to automatically update your status based on your schedule.) This minimizes disruptions and keeps everyone in the know.



Schedule meeting buffers to minimize fatigue.

With meetings sandwiched back-to-back, your team may be seated for hours on end. Establish a short buffer punctuating sequential meetings so staff can stand up, move around, and grab water or food to come into the next meeting refreshed. Google Calendar has a [“Speedy Meetings” feature](#) that does this for you, automatically shortening meetings you set by 5 to 10 minutes to give you some built-in breathing room.



Offer employees a work-from-home stipend.

Employees may be working from their bed, their couch, or their kitchen table – which can only exacerbate a poor work-life balance. If your budget allows and/or you’re fully transitioning away from an office space, it’s a good idea to help your employees furnish their home offices with everything they need to work. Consider offering a stipend or reimbursing costs for items like desks, chairs, monitors, computer mouses, and wifi so employees can have a separate working and living space.



Accommodate parents as they work through a school year of unpredictability.

Working parents are especially struggling to manage work and parental duties. Whether school is in-person or virtual, parents have to help their children navigate a series of changes necessitated by COVID-19, while staying on top of their work responsibilities. Encourage the parents on your team to spend extra time off with their kids, and host open, honest conversations with staff to determine how to support them. Show your team getting through this difficult time is a joint effort.

Right now (and for the foreseeable future), your employees need you to acknowledge that things are different – and they may feel more burned out than usual. The key to a successful balance in the new normal is to help employees enjoy their life outside of work.

As they struggle to balance work with their at-home responsibilities, give them back some down-time by taking away the need for meal-prep. [DoorDash for Work](#) aims to help you enhance the employee experience by offering convenience and delicious cuisine at their fingertips, enabling them to maximize their time in and out of the office, even when that’s the same room.



PART III

Building Camaraderie Among Virtual Teams

There's no denying that socializing across a screen is just different. Employees have less opportunities to connect outside of the office environment, but there are ways to make the connections they do have more meaningful.

More importantly, the community aspect of a company comes down to who's on your team – not where you're working from. Even without a shared physical office, it's more than possible to generate connections, start conversations, and create opportunities for your employees to bond.



Food makes people feel good.

One of the most powerful and surprising ways to boost camaraderie among virtual teams is with food. Even before remote work took off, companies in the know put the culture-building power of food to work, with 35% of companies providing office meals to encourage team building. Plus, more than 55% of employees report daily food in the workplace makes them feel more appreciated by their companies. And a workforce that feels good is always more creative, connected, and co-operative.



Dine and unwind, together.

The lunch hour is an excellent time for employees to both bond and temporarily focus their attention away from the workday. Generally speaking, on and off the clock your team can connect over shared bites (even when everyone is on a different time zone!). With [Expensed Meals](#) from DoorDash for Work, your team gets a flexible spending budget each month to order meals whenever – like on a team hangout.



Eat, drink, and work merry.

Holidays are highly associated with food and celebration, making them great opportunities for you to build a spirited culture. When the next holiday rolls around, ditch the gift exchange – and have your people pitch in a few bucks for a well-appointed party with quality food that will surprise and delight. You could even turn any annual holiday parties your office observes into virtual events.

Better still, keep an eye out for food-centric holidays: National Pizza Day, National Cookie Day, and, of course, Thanksgiving. You'd be surprised how many chances the calendar year offers you to gather employees together for merriment and a great meal.

With [Employee Gift Cards](#) from DoorDash for Work, everybody can order what they want – and enjoy their meal together.



Feed culture and connection.

The bottom line is, people who eat better, feel better, and therefore make stronger workplace connections. A [DashPass for Work](#) subscription can give your employees instant access to a whole range of healthy local options, delivered to their door, with \$0 delivery fees and reduced service fees on any order. Introduce it to your employees and see how it lifts morale and overall satisfaction.

More ways to bring teams together.

Just because we're isolated doesn't mean we need to be alone.



Schedule virtual happy hours

Virtual happy hours can be surprisingly engaging – especially now that, for the most part, people are comfortable with video conferencing. Keep it small (less than 10 people is ideal), encourage people to dress snappy, and use the Zoom grid view so you can see everyone's faces at once.



Fun tip: Make “Quarantinis”, a spontaneous mixed drink with whatever liquor you happen to have available.



Provide learning opportunities

Virtual events like webinars and other online training engage your people and increase the value of your workforce. But they can also be bonding experiences when shared. Use a learning management system to deliver training to a select group of people who share a common need (building management skills, learning a new technology, etc). Or reimburse qualifying online courses or educational programs on platforms like [LinkedIn Learning](#) and [Coursera](#) to foster employee growth. Give employees a forum to discuss and apply their leanings so they grow together.

You could also let small groups of employees shadow a more experienced mentor through a project that would otherwise be on-site. Where it makes sense, you can punch up these learning events with DoorDash for Work [Expensed Meals](#) – just like you'd have in the office. With Expensed Meals, employees have a set recurring budget they can use to order working lunches, late night snacks, and everything in between.



Host volunteer days in your community

If your employees are in a position to do so, volunteering can be a great way to spend time in the local community while also connecting with their colleagues. Whether it's attending a neighborhood clean-up day or assisting at a food bank, a (socially-distanced) volunteer day can help your team feel good – and feel closer to one another.



Create a quiz composed of fun facts about your team

Use a free app like [Kahoot!](#), which combines video chat with a fun, colorful quiz interface. People can see each other and socialize during the game play. Or simply send a BuzzFeed quiz around before a Zoom hangout and get people to share their answers. Pick one with a fun, personal angle, such as “What breakfast food are you?”. It's hard not to laugh when you hear someone explain why they're a muffin or a bagel.



Have a team movie night over Zoom

One person plays the movie on their screen. They share their screen. Everybody else can chime in for running commentary as you watch, so you get that feeling of sharing an experience together. Oh, and don't forget the snacks! (Which, of course, DoorDash can deliver to your employees' doors.) To make the experience seamless, use the [Netflix Party](#) browser extension, which makes it easier for groups to stay on scene and share dialogue around the film's events.



Create a fantasy sports league

For the uninitiated, fantasy sports are where people create imaginary teams out of real players and have imaginary games which are won and lost based on how those players are performing in actual, professional games. People absolutely love it – even if they don't typically love sports. There are plenty of apps and sites to choose from to manage the process, like [NFL Fantasy](#) and [FanDuel](#). Watch live games together the same way you host a movie night. Provide a one-time [Expensed Meals](#) budget for games so employees can get their fill of wings.



Create a virtual watercooler

Message apps such as Slack and Microsoft Teams are where employees hang out during the day, share weekend stories, pet pics and the like. The lines between work and team bonding are blurred on these apps, and that can be a good thing. Not only does it help employees make strong and far more frequent personal connections, but it also enables a more dynamic, continuous conversation that can drive engagement and productivity. For further engagement, initiate a fun conversation starter like a “joke of the day” for people to respond to.

Employees can have free reign to create their own niche channels, too — whether it’s for discussing anime or sports. And beyond fun and games, you may consider bringing people together through employee resource groups offering shared support for LGBTQ employees, BIPOC employees, and other communities that may require a forum to speak openly.



Encourage creativity

Looking to bring employees together — and create inspiration that translates to their work? Adobe’s executive creative director Adam Morgan instituted free-flowing creativity workshops for his writing team¹³. Essentially agenda-less meetings, these sessions were reserved for discussing anything but work — from art to film to books to movies. The resulting project-based conversations and brainstorming sessions took place on a deeper level and employees found their creativity and productivity enhanced.

But the possibilities are truly limitless. You could hold a virtual painting session, create an a capella group, or host a writing group to allow employees to interact and get the creative juices flowing.

¹³ Adobe, [5 Ways to Remain Creative and Efficient While Marketing from Home](#). May 12, 2020.



Beat the afternoon slump with a virtual stretching session

Don't look now, but sitting and staring at a screen can be as detrimental to your health as obesity and smoking¹⁴. Fortunately, "deskercising" is a thing. Designate a colleague to lead your team through a series of virtual stretches and exercises you can do at home – there are loads of sample routines online, including these guides from [VeryWellFit](#) and [Healthline](#). Who knows? You might create a healthy new habit that actually sticks.



Attend a virtual trivia night

Lots of pubs and other venues are hosting [virtual trivia nights](#). Get your team to sign up and play together. Or, create and host your own: write your own questions, or find a pre-made, work-specific set online that's ready to roll. Prizes are optional – people's innate desire to win is all that's required for a spirited competition.



Host a fitness challenge

A fit workforce is a win for company finances: decreasing healthcare costs and absenteeism, and boosting energy and productivity. Set a big goal like "walking" from one nearby city or landmark to another – and track your virtual steps with a fitness app. You can turn it into competition with a "[step bet](#)," set an Activity Rings completion goal for employees with an [Apple Watch](#), or even do old-fashioned flexibility or plank challenge to up the stakes. In short, wellness matters.



PART IV

Redefining Workplace Benefits

Work isn't what it used to be — and neither are employee benefits and perks. If the pandemic has proven anything, it's that benefits can be crucial to help employees tackle the unexpected. Employees value both traditional benefits and unique perks more than almost anything else.

According to a recent survey, more than 70% of employees feel their benefits packages are extremely important for their financial health, job satisfaction, and overall well-being¹⁵.

And a whopping 79% of employees see robust benefits as a higher priority than a pay raise¹⁶.

All this is to say: find new ways to reward and motivate your team (that go beyond the standard) in this ever-evolving era. Benefits can show employees that they have your full support — and ultimately keep retention and morale high.



Unpacking unexpected benefits and perks

Use the below list to discover unique benefits to offer your employees.



The benefit	Why it matters
Celebrations for birthdays, holidays, and special occasions	Celebrations help employees feel acknowledged and add moments of levity to the work week. They also provide an opportunity for team bonding. Consider providing a gift for the honoree, such as a DoorDash Employee Gift Cards they can use on their own time.
A work-from-anywhere policy	Now that the office is becoming a thing of the past, there's nothing tying employees to a certain geographic location. 30% of employees see location flexibility as the main benefit to working remotely. A work-from-anywhere policy can make it easier for employees to travel, visit family, or even move to a new area (while still getting their assignments done).
A company store with the essentials	Hand sanitizer. Masks. Gloves. The new essentials of today are ever-important – but hard to come by. Create a company store where employees can safely restock on in-demand items.
Wellness program or reimbursement	Keeping a healthy lifestyle can positively impact all other areas of someone's life, both personal and professional. A virtual wellness offering or reimbursement for online fitness classes can keep employee spirits high and help them maintain a good work-life balance.

The benefit	Why it matters
Meal perks	In a survey of DoorDash for Work customers, 91% of companies believe food helps employees feel valued. Offering food-based benefits is a simple way to give back to employees. DoorDash for Work has a buffet of options – from Expensed Meals to DashPass for Work – that employees can enjoy on their own time and schedule.
Wifi connection	With employees working from home, their internet usage is sure to go up. Providing a built-in stipend on pay stubs ensures staff can plug in and log on seamlessly.
On-demand IT support	Tech issues can hinder the workday and cause headaches – but either outsourcing or providing internal IT support on-demand for your team can make all the difference.

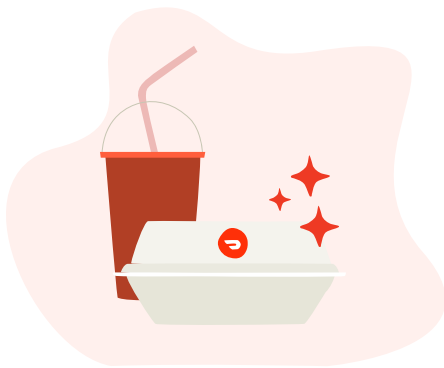
Great benefits like the above fit today’s unpredictable landscape and go beyond the bare minimum – helping employees feel valued and happy. And when employees are happy, their productivity, creativity, and motivation will soar.

CONCLUSION

Finding a New Routine

The workplace may look different now than it did a year ago (and it may look vastly different just a few months down the line), but your support for your employees is unwavering. DoorDash for Work is by your side at every turn to make your job — and your employees' lives — a little easier.

Ready to revolutionize workplace benefits? Speak with a DoorDash for Work representative today to learn more about our work from home-ready offerings.



Expensed Meals

Offer employees a convenient way to enjoy working meals without the added paperwork and burden of reimbursement. With a pre-set budget for employees that can be set for one time or on a recurring basis so their breakfasts, lunches, dinners, or late-night snacks are covered.

DashPass for Work

Searching for a competitive benefit to keep your employees satisfied? DashPass for Work enables employees to enjoy their favorite restaurants with zero-dollar delivery and reduced service fees. They can place unlimited orders both on and off the clock, making this the perk that keeps on giving.

Employee Gift Cards

A gift card is the perfect way to acknowledge any occasion and show your appreciation for employees. From birthdays to anniversaries to “just-because” moments, give your staff the gift of choice with a DoorDash gift card.

[Get Started](#)