

6 KPI solutions for effective remote work management

With the abundance of affordable smart devices and internet bandwidth, remote work has never been as appealing as it is in 2020. Companies and startups across the globe had started to adopt remote work solutions even before the COVID-19 pandemic was underway.

According to [Business 2 Community](#), 3.4% of the world's population had shifted toward remote work before COVID-19, with 43% of US employees already working remotely. Based on [Medium](#), 78% of workers would take a pay cut if they could shift toward remote, with 77% being more productive than office-based colleagues.

The value proposition of working remotely is only bound to increase from here, as it can [improve business communication](#) and lead to better overall performance. But how do we measure that performance accurately? Which KPI solutions can we use to determine the efficacy and success of remote employees without micromanagement or intrusion on their privacy? Let's discuss the ins and outs of KPI solutions for remote work management, as well as the benefits of their practical implementation.

Purpose of KPI tracking in remote work management

What is the role of KPI tracking in corporate environments? Being an entrepreneur is difficult, especially if you are directly in charge of a team of employees in a startup or small business. Add remote work conditions to that, and it becomes very difficult to keep track of who is doing what at any given moment.

Data by Small Biz Genius indicated that 40% of employees prefer remote work due to flexible scheduling, with 18% of the global workforce being exclusively remote. Whether your company belongs to eCommerce, SAAS, data science, or any other industry, shifting toward remote work management sooner rather than later can be beneficial.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) represent a critical overview of whichever project you currently work on and its main goals. KPIs are inherently objective and are used to segment large projects into smaller, more manageable milestones. As such, the main purpose of KPIs in the corporate, and especially remote, environment can be broken down as follows:

- More informed decision-making, prioritisation, and evaluation of the workflow

- Around the clock overview of the project's progress and ability to shift goals efficiently

- Effective team-wide progress tracking and scheduled evaluation opportunities

- Focused team motivation and efforts given the concrete goals and milestones

- Mitigated margin for error and higher quality of the final product

Effective remote work KPI solutions

Implement the SMART methodology

The first step in making sure your employees can keep track of KPIs is to determine the KPIs themselves. The most important element of setting KPIs is to ensure that they are as concrete and practical as possible. Goals with vague

descriptions and those which lack numeric values can often lead to confusion and mismanagement.

Setting up your KPIs via a reliable methodology such as SMART can amend those shortcomings. SMART is a methodology which emphasises measurable, empiric, and time-sensitive goals for project management. By writing your KPIs through SMART, you will never end up with undefined or vague goals for your team. This is an efficient solution for remote work management since it will allow you to safely delegate and monitor different projects without worry of miscommunication.

Settle on a dedicated remote work platform

When it comes to remote work management, you should settle for a platform your team will use going forward. Project management platforms come in a variety of feature lists, and you can choose whichever one suits your existing workflow the most. Some of the choices you can safely rely on include Asana and Trello, in addition to Google Docs for overall file sharing and management.

The KPIs you decide to track can all be added to the remote work platform and be available to everyone on the team 24/7. Opt for a centralised work management approach instead of using informal communication channels such as social media or instant messaging apps. Regardless of the business idea behind your startup or company, working on a dedicated, team-wide platform will significantly improve your team's abilities to fulfill KPIs.

Focus on objectivity and clarity

Whether you work with a tight-knit group of likeminded individuals or manage remote work employees from overseas, your KPIs should be as clear as possible. Make sure to use actionable verbiage, short sentences, and numeric values, which will ensure clarity for each objective.

For example, "Create X posts for Facebook" is a clear KPI for your social media content manager. However, "Social media content for next week" is not a clear KPI, and it will lead to miscommunication. Put yourself in the position of your team members and try to think of how you'd like your own KPIs to look like. You can clear up any confusion or misunderstanding about KPIs in scheduled video calls with your remote work team to hammer your point home.

Align project & team member goals

Employee engagement plays a large role in the way your remote work team members perceive the work you delegate to them. Each individual comes with their own set of principles, professional goals, and development plans. A great way to entice individuals to work on your project KPIs is to align the two

together.

Talk to your team about their long term development plans and where they'd like their careers to go. You can write and share KPIs with individuals based on their personal development plans to encourage their productivity. Remote work management is as much about coaching and mentorship as it is about raw productivity and results. Be a friend instead of a distant manager, and try to align individual with shared goals as much as possible.

Recognise and reward

While moment-to-moment productivity matters, so do the wellbeing and satisfaction of your remote work team. The KPIs you set up and track can serve as a great way to introduce rudimentary rewards to your workflow going forward. As a project manager, you have the opportunity to effectively reward your colleagues for a job well done.

Small incentives such as discount coupons or vouchers for their favourite online services or free takeout lunch can do wonders as signs of gratitude. Given the COVID-19 social distancing and the fact that your team might be separated by country lines, only remote gifts should be taken into consideration. Do your best to get a feel for what each of them likes and dislikes during meetings to determine how you can reward them for fulfilling project KPIs. This will greatly boost their morale and sense of belonging to the team, not to mention encourage them to fulfill KPIs even more going forward.

Group KPI check-ins

Lastly, you should never evaluate KPIs by yourself and without direct input from your team. Make evaluation a team effort and talk to everyone about how the project is progressing. Use the opportunity to directly address each KPI and how well the team handled it for that week or month. This will give you valuable insight into how each team member thinks and how you can build on the KPI foundations you set up.

Check-in ensures that every remote work member does their best to contribute to the team in order for them not to stand out as detractors. Treat KPIs as a common interest which will reflect on everyone equally and not as something you passed down to the team. Such an approach will significantly improve the ownership and engagement of your remote work team in regards to the KPIs you set up.

Remote work management KPI mistakes to avoid

To wrap things up, let's take a look at the other side of the KPI coin – the potential pitfalls you can come across. While KPI solutions for remote work

management are extremely beneficial in the long-run, they are still prone to cause bottlenecks if you mismanage them. Thus, make sure to eliminate the following issues if they rear their head in your business' workflow to ensure maximum productivity for your remote team:

KPIs for the sake of KPIs

While KPIs can make your job as a remote project manager easier, they can also cause severe issues. One of the main problems most teams face is that their KPIs exist just for the sake of being there. KPIs should always be meaningful and used to help the team manage their workflow more efficiently. If KPIs are written mechanically and without intimate understanding of the project they refer to, they can have the opposite effect for the team.

Lack of periodic KPI reevaluation

It's not a shame to admit that a certain KPI isn't working out for your team – and that's ok. However, make sure to periodically evaluate the efficacy and usefulness of your KPIs to avoid workflow problems. Measurable goals for remote work management belong to the entire team – they are not orders to be handed down top-to-bottom. Talk to your team members as a group to determine their stance on the current KPIs.

Insignificant KPIs

You should always aim for a set number of KPIs for each project you manage remotely. There is no need to break down every action your team will perform and then track it carefully. This approach borders on micromanagement and can lead to poor morale and productivity as a result. Set your KPIs up into two categories: short term and long term goals. Place smaller actions into the former while bigger team efforts can be in the latter. This will signal to your team that short term KPIs are a priority, which will lead to the long term goals as well.

A solution-oriented remote workflow

Using KPI solutions is all about creating the best possible remote work conditions for your employees and colleagues. KPIs should never be be-all-end-all goals, which will determine how your project turns out. Instead, they are to be used as helpful tools which can enhance day-to-day workflow.

Start by choosing a reliable remote work management platform and set up baseline KPIs to test them out. Consult your remote team and trim down and streamline KPIs each passing week. Before you know it, you will settle for an effective KPI solution for remote work management, which speaks to your team's workflow and business needs.

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