

How to make global remote work, work for you

It's never been more important to be a great remote collaborator. Both from the technical aspect, knowing how to use the tools and dynamics of collaboration in the industry, and from the human aspect, enhancing the work of your colleagues. But how to get there? Ariel Camus, Founder and CEO of online coding school Microverse offers advice to startups looking at remote teams.

The place where you are born shouldn't determine your opportunities in life. As someone that has worked remotely since 2012, managed remote teams since 2014, and grown a remote-first company that now spans 20 countries since 2017, I've experienced that the freedom to live, hire, motivate and enjoy life is much higher when you are able to work globally and remotely.

One of the biggest advantages of being able to work and hire globally through remote work is, of course, access to top talent. Most companies struggle with a shortage of talent but by looking globally, there are a million more opportunities to hire than if you're just hiring locally.

Another benefit is diversity - attracting or being surrounded by people from all around the world from different cultures; finding talented people who are great at collaborating; and integrating the ideas of others.

With many complicated challenges facing the world today, such as climate change or uncertainties over Covid-19, the power of working together on a global basis can't be underestimated. Tapping into a diverse and wider talent pool can drive innovation to solve complex problems together.

But you can only have a great remote workplace if you have a great team. So, what makes a remote team great and how do you keep them motivated?

Formulas for success

There are two different frameworks for tackling this:

autonomy + mastery + purpose

autonomy + trust + transparency

The first is a simplified formula for ensuring successful and motivated teams – the essential ingredients for maintaining passion for working on complicated problems. The second framework is the essential formula for making remote work, work.

Autonomy

When employees are in different locations, they can't count on a colleague being available, so they need to be able to work independently. They need to become adept at making decisions in other ways, to ensure time is freed up throughout the day for focused work. Autonomy doesn't mean no collaboration or interactions at all. It just means that employees are not blocked by those interactions to progress their work.

Mastery

This is about helping people improve their skills through learning and practice. By ensuring that everyone has the information and all the support they need, they can grow in their roles and master what they need to be able to complete the task at hand.

Purpose

Outcomes are what give people purpose. You need to align tasks around clear results and help people understand what they are working towards. One of the best ways to do this is via objectives and key results. They allow you to define aligned goals across teams with well defined, quantitative key results and a focus on outcome.

Trust & Transparency

In order to have autonomy, you need to hire people you trust. Don't try to control the hours they work or insist on knowing when they're working. Implementing surveillance is counterproductive. Without trust remote work is not possible.

Transparency gives people the information they need when they need it, which gives you autonomy. But transparency also allows you to build trust because when people are transparently sharing their decisions, work, progress, roadblocks and doubts, then you're more likely to have the right conversations to be able to build trust with each other.

How to improve efficiency

Be aware of multiculturality

When you start hiring globally, expect a high level of multiculturality. Not just different time zones but also different accents, religions and cultures, which can all have an impact on the way you communicate and give feedback.

For example, in some cultures people are more direct or indirect; stricter or flexible; more emotional or less emotional, and so on. There is no right or wrong, but unless you agree and understand that there are different ways in doing things, it's hard for multicultural collaboration to work.

Document Everything — it's an example of transparency

It is super important that you document things so the information is available and easily accessible to all team members.

Don't use acronyms and abbreviations, and link every piece of relevant information so that anybody reading it understands what is being said and why.

If something doesn't get documented, people don't have the context, which means they can't autonomously participate.

Communicate Asynchronously

Due to time zones, people will work at different times of the day. Remote teams need to be able to work around asynchronous communication and collaboration (messages that aren't shared or received in real-time). The importance of strong documentation can't be overstated.

Define core working hours and run efficient meetings

Establish a set of hours where you expect everybody in the organisation to be available for synchronous communication. At Microverse we only have two

hours of core working hours a day where we can all attend meetings. Any meeting should have an agenda that is linked to documentation or a conversation that has happened prior.

Establish priorities

It is not uncommon for someone working globally and remotely to be working on five different things at the same time. It's important that they are not expected to jump from project to project every minute of the day. Try to establish how to prioritise work, so it's less about meetings and more about deep work.

Get and give feedback

Trust can be given, but it also has to be earned. Work with people who are open to receiving feedback and growing. Written feedback across time zones is more likely to be misinterpreted or considered less timely. At Microverse, we use Loom as it lets you record your screen, audio and camera to share messages. This makes it less likely to be misinterpreted in the feedback they are receiving while still allowing for feedback to be given and received asynchronously.

In conclusion

Remember the concept of autonomy, trust and transparency, and think about what you can do for these three things to work in harmony.

Think about ways you can work and master the art of communicating asynchronously and concisely.

By keeping people happier and more motivated for longer, they're more likely to be successful professionals and key members of your team.

Ariel Camus is founder and CEO of online coding school [*Microverse*](#).