



PRODUCTIVITY AT HOME:

Remote Workforce Monitoring

They say home is where the heart is. Well recently, it's also where the work is.

Once upon a time, everyone thought that working from home would get in the way of one's "work-life balance" and reduce employee productivity. However, the onset of the pandemic which forced many employers and employees to shift to remote work, proved such surmises to be more imagined than real.

Data shows that [50%](#) of employers say that they will have a flexible or hybrid office even after the pandemic. Moreover, an increase in productivity in IT and digital departments was reported by [68%](#) of organizations worldwide.

Employers have also cited other benefits of remote work like reduced expenses and the hiring advantage over other companies that don't offer work-from-home arrangements. If you haven't started recruiting remote employees yet or if you're looking at expanding your remote workforce, you can check out the best practices in remote workforce recruitment [here](#).

With a ton of employees looking for remote work opportunities and a vast area to look from, recruitment will be a breeze. The real challenge lies in remote workforce management, wherein there is danger of shaking up the balance between the right of employers to control their workplaces and the employees' expectation of privacy.

Here are some tips for monitoring remote employees.

Define Tasks and Set Deadlines.

For remote employees, an output-based work system is the best fit. Laying down tasks with pre-defined required hours of completion will make it easier to monitor and measure their performance and productivity. You can also have your employees set up a timer for each task so you can gauge whether a specific task takes longer or is faster to complete. You can use this data to make adjustments in the hourly budget.

Set Regular Meetings.

Virtually meet with your employees weekly, monthly, or as frequently as needed, for updates and goal-setting. You can also use this time to have them report on their accomplishments, concerns, and challenges at work.



Use Employee Monitoring Tools.

- **Work Hours and Productivity**

These tools provide remote workforce solutions for attendance monitoring and time tracking of projects and tasks, as well as automate timesheet calculations.

- **Tasks**

With an employee monitoring application, you can oversee the daily tasks of your employees and get real-time updates. Moreover, task reminders and notifications to employees can be automated.

- **Communication**

Some employee monitoring tools also have built-in work chat and enable automated follow-up on tasks.

Exercise Caution.

Employee surveillance must be implemented by employers with caution.

When the pandemic pushed employees into remote work, the number of searches on the term “employee monitoring” and “employee monitoring software” shot up as companies were looking for ways to monitor their workforce offsite. However, employees may have also contributed to the search volume for fear of having their employers intrude on their privacy.

Although employers have the right to control their workplaces by monitoring employees’ verbal and written communication and computer web activity, employees also, in some cases, have reasonable expectation of privacy.

- **Verbal and Written Communication**

The [Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986](#) allows employers to monitor all employee verbal and written communication for legitimate business reasons. The law makes no reference as to whether the communication to be monitored can only include business communications, thus it can be inferred that the term “verbal and written communication” includes the employees’ personal communication.

Most employers are given discretion as to the extent of monitoring employees. However, regulations in some states require notice to or consent from the employees.

- **Computer Web Activity**

While employees have no expectation of privacy when using a company device, employers heighten their risk for security incidents and data breaches due to the massive amount of data that they acquire from monitoring employees’ web activities.

- **The Bottom Line: Better Safe than Sorry.**

Employers’ right to control their workplaces and monitor employees can come with a price, so it is better to have privacy safeguards in place. Here are a few you may want to implement:

1. [Give your employees notice \(or ask for their consent if required by your state’s regulations\).](#)

Notice to employees may be included in their employment contracts or in the form of a policy or memorandum. The notice must state the purpose, nature, and extent of the surveillance.

2. [Put up organizational and technical security measures.](#)

- a. **Organizational Security** – Draft and implement policies, guidelines, and procedures on data privacy and security in work-from-home arrangements and conduct employee orientations on data security.

- b. **Technical Security** – Use tools that reduce vulnerabilities in software and hardware like antivirus and anti-malware software, encryption, and firewalls.



Regardless of how you monitor your remote employees and their productivity, it’s important to be able to establish trust and confidence from the beginning, to prevent employee resignations because of micromanagement or due to them feeling unsafe with their personal information. [Talk to us](#) and together, we’ll come up with solutions and strategies for your remote workforce management.

