LEADING TEAMS REMOTELY

Covid-19 is evolving quickly and leaders (including us!) are having to adapt quickly to empower employees and ensure that the work of our teams can be done remotely. There is no playbook for this – we are in uncharted waters – so we would like to share practices that are working for us that might also enable your teams.

The majority of recommendations, right now, are centered on what the individual can do to minimize disruption and create normalcy, but what action can leaders take today to support your team's success? We'd like to share a few things that have been working for our teams and leaders across Pariveda.

There are three things that you can do now to support your teams' success: create structure, set expectations, and foster team connectedness.

CREATE A COMMUNICATION AND MEETING STRUCTURE AND STICK TO IT

To start with, we've created a common understanding of what meetings look like completely virtually—requirements around cameras being on, sharing dress code expectations, and sending reference materials beforehand so that we can all be on screen. Establish what works for your team and stick to it. Indexing on structure over ambiguity right now will be to the benefit of everyone. Consider mapping out how to use your different communication channels as well as the appropriate response time frame for each. We can't assume that our employees know our expectations around response timing. If we're expecting a response to an email within a day, a slack message within an hour, and a phone call as soon as possible, we have to establish that as part of our standards. We've found that saying these things out loud, writing them down, and making them a part of our work from home culture is tantamount to success. Once structure is established the accountability can then shift to the employee to ensure that they're successfully communicating and letting others know when they're busy.

SHARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS AND CONTEXT EARLY AND OFTEN

Being remote limits our team's ability to take in subtle cues or read the room and respond accordingly. In response to that gap, we are carving out time for questions in every meeting, hosting virtual office hours for team members to drop in and utilizing productivity tools to understand what the team is working on, track progress, and collaborate virtually. For our leaders, the least obvious, but maybe most impactful, practice has been to overcommunicate with context. We share more context than we normally would so that our teams are operating with the most complete information possible. The example that we set (and other leaders on our team set) will have the largest impact on how our teams operate moving forward.

INSTITUTE PRACTICES TO PROMOTE CONNECTEDNESS

Our employees are experiencing this pandemic both personally and professionally—supporting both perspectives is important to keep our employees engaged and supported. We have a regular practice of "check-ins" at the outset of our meetings. This allows employees to share their mindset and gives us a scan of our current team's sentiment. Employees feeling engaged with their team has tremendous impact on productivity and provides stability in uncertain times. To promote connectedness virtually, and to get as many ideas on the table as possible, we've let our employees know that we're in experimentation phase and we crowdsource ideas. We're trying a lot of things to maintain our culture (virtual coffee chats, game night, increased 1:1s). Our plan is to keep consistent with what works and shelve the rest.

We're all adapting in real-time to respond to our new circumstances. We hope these practices that have proven effective for us will be helpful for you and your teams.