



Five things emotionally intelligent leaders can do to retain workers

1. Do not assume everything is okay if you don't get feedback.

Having remote employees makes it more difficult to spot someone who is struggling mentally and emotionally. The outward signs of stress could be a decrease in caring about things such as physical appearance, and stress, body language, and other signs of stress can easily be hidden when an employee is not physically present. Employees who are struggling may be hesitant to reach out to their supervisors or others for fear of being needy, dependent, or unable to do the work they were hired to do. To overcome the handicap of not seeing their people in person, emotionally intelligent leaders need to make the extra effort to be there for them when needed.

2. Screen time is the second-best option from face-to-face contact.

While screen time does not take the place of in-person interaction, it beats email and phone for communication. At least we can see the other person's face, giving us some feeling of being connected. Together with using their voices, emotionally intelligent leaders can demonstrate that they care by only limiting email use to information sharing but using screen time for any in-depth discussions.

3. Increase personal contact.

Leaders need to regularly check in on their employees, preferably via zoom or another screen platform. This needs to be done so that their people don't suspect that the purpose is to monitor their work or an attempt to micromanage. Emotionally intelligent managers can build trust with their staff by being open, transparent, and sharing their own struggles. Listening also connects us. According to Moshe Cohen, author of *Collywobbles: How to Negotiate When Negotiating Makes You Nervous*, by asking

open-ended questions and listening without interruption, emotionally intelligent managers demonstrate respect for their people while also uncovering their concerns and supporting their needs.

4. Look for opportunities to set up supportive networks for staff.

Not all people who work remotely have the same struggles. Some will have to look after children who are not going to school due to COVID. Others may be caregivers, looking after elderly parents at home. Leaders or human resource people could set up networking meetings to connect with and support staff with specific issues. Employee assistance programs could take the lead on setting this up and facilitating such groups. If unable to set up internal networks, leaders should investigate and develop a list of proven external organizations that provide support for various problems their staff may be facing. These could be shared with staff, and employees encouraged to use them and share their own experiences with them if they used them.

5. Set up virtual celebrations to celebrate successes and special events.

While personal gatherings and going out for a drink after work has fallen by the wayside, there is no reason not to have some fun virtually. Special themed events such as wear your ugliest sweater or some other article of clothing could still be fun. Prizes could be offered to the winner that everyone votes on. The most creative drink concoction that everyone would consume could be interesting. Providing their staff with memorabilia with the company name or logos on them, such as coffee mugs or articles of clothing to be worn during meetings, would help create a feeling of being part of the group while working virtually. Emotionally intelligent leaders could ask for ideas from the group, have them voted on, and have prizes for the most popular ones. Our imagination is the only limit to the things we can do in this area.

<https://real-leaders.com/five-things-emotionally-intelligent-leaders-can-do-to-retain-remote-workers/>