Establishing Work from Home Policies

1. The goal of the work from home policy is to provide structure for remote working as circumstances evolve and to eliminate uncertainty for employees.

2. Ask questions up front such as:
   a. What are the elements that should be included in the policy?
   b. Who are the people who will be impacted?
   c. Who are relevant stakeholders?
   d. Who are the people whom should be involved in decision making regarding the policy?

3. What basic elements should be in the policy?
   a. Basic requirements, tech, and internet.
   b. Team communication.
   c. Alignment and accountability.
   d. Education for managers and employees.
   e. Feedback loop and compassion.

4. Stakeholders who will be impacted by the policy could include employees, managers, vendors, and customers.

5. Other individuals or departments who will inform the policy may include IT, human resources, management, employees, and legal counsel.

6. Technology, information, and employee needs may comprise such things as a computer, faster internet service, and a contact list for emergencies.

7. Comfy and productive home office resources may consist of a standing desk, adequate electrical outlets, headphones, and an area or space with a closed door.

8. Security considerations when protecting organization data may include Two-Factor authentication and a VPN (virtual private network).

9. Consider consulting legal counsel and human resources to minimize risk, understand labor laws, and confirm appropriate state regulations.

10. What is a work-from-home communication plan?
    a. Set of written or verbal policies and guidelines.
    b. May have crafted messages for different stakeholders.

11. Why is a communication plan needed?
    a. Helps set proper expectations.
    b. Communicates changes at once for consistency.
    c. Provides transparency which builds trust.

12. A communication plan may be disseminated through video chats, emails, all-hands meetings and directly by management to their team and others.

13. Pitfalls to avoid when crafting a communication plan:
    a. Timelines out of anyone’s control.
    b. Definitive statements.
    c. Promises that cannot be kept.

14. Make sure the communications are flexible and compassionate because everyone’s situation is different.

15. Considerations for employees including ensuring individuals know who to give feedback to and how feedback should be delivered.

16. Solicit feedback from all employees. Ask employees: What they need to be successful?
17. Considerations for managers including ensuring managers know how to document and organize feedback, as well as how to analyze the feedback.

18. How to document and compile feedback?
   a. Google form or something similar.
   b. Employee engagement survey.
   c. Simple spreadsheet for ad hoc feedback.
   d. Create listening and sharing sessions with managers.

19. Frequency?
   a. Feedback loop will be ongoing.
   b. Collect data.
   c. Implementation.

20. Other considerations include allowing for autonomy within teams.

21. Symptoms of uncertainty may show up as micromanagement, a culture that does not trust and an effort vs. results-based work environment.

22. Employee training opportunities that lead to productivity include topics such as accountability, time management, proactive communication, and work-life balance.

23. Training opportunities for managers include topics such as expectation setting, building trust, setting results-based performance goals, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance.

24. Resources may come from the organization’s professional development team, online learning platforms (e.g. LinkedIn Learning), PDFs, guides, or web searches.

25. Benefits of a pilot program:
   a. Can help work out kinks before rolling out to a larger group.
   b. Trains managers and employees.
   c. Allows leadership to craft a policy that will work.

26. How to start a pilot program:
   a. Choose a small group of early adopters likely to be adaptable and engaged.
   b. Be inclusive in the creation of the policy.
   c. Track success.
   d. Consider a workforce or organization transformation consultant as a guide.

27. Solicit feedback regarding productivity, happiness, and communication styles.

28. Incorporate social engagement through events such as virtual happy hours, trivia sessions, etc.

29. Different types of situations at home to keep in mind:
   a. Working parents who might need to pick their kids up from school.
   b. Working parents who need to homeschool their children due to stay-at-home orders.
   c. Caretakers of loved ones who need doctor visits.
   d. Employees who live with roommates in shared living quarters.
   e. Employees with pets.

30. Be flexible with scheduling and consider modified daily work schedules.

31. Ask employees how they can feel supported and if they have any unique needs, including accommodations, while working at home. Contact ADA and Accessibility Services with any questions regarding accommodations.

32. Lead with compassion, be respectful, and build a culture of diversity and inclusion.

33. Communication platforms and tools may include a team Slack channel, Google shared drive, Microsoft Teams site, group email, shared calendars or meeting apps with video capabilities.
34. What types of communication tools should be used for different communication needs?
   a. Tap-someone-on-the-shoulder type messages – perhaps use instant messaging.
   b. Longer communications, like ideas or project plans – perhaps use email.
   c. Permanent documents – perhaps use a shared document or drive.
   d. Emergencies – emergency phone call or Slack channel or shared drive.

35. Figure out response times and expectations:
   a. Address time-sensitive matters that need timely responses.
   b. Consider that interruptions by emails and messages may be distracting and unproductive.
   c. Understand if people do not respond immediately, it does not mean they are not working.
   d. Avoid work-life imbalance by considering not emailing or responding after hours.

36. General team proactive communication guidelines:
   a. Know the preferred method of communication for each other.
   b. Ask follow-up questions.
   c. Decide on frequency of group or project meetings.
   d. Schedule individual check-ins between supervisors and direct reports.

37. Individual jobs and tasks help contribute to success:
   a. Managers should be trained on how to identify alignment and accountability for each role.
   b. Employees should understand how their role relates to larger organization objectives.
   c. Teams need to determine clear, measured objectives regarding what success looks like.

38. Create an outcome-based environment:
   a. Employees should know what stats and outcomes for which they are responsible.
   b. Employees should never have a question about what success looks like.

39. Hold employees accountable for outcomes:
   a. Update team stats and outcomes each meeting to see how projects are tracking.
   b. Discuss any obstacles so managers can be supportive.

40. A quiet place to work:
   a. Closed door for calls.
   b. Good pair of headphones to zone in on tasks.
   c. Expectations for family and friends while working to avoid distractions.

41. Plan out the day:
   a. Create a calendar or to-do list of daily or weekly tasks.
   b. Prioritize tasks.
   c. Know productive times and plan the day around them.
   d. Create blocks of uninterrupted time.
   e. Refresh and take small breaks or walks.
   f. Plan specific time for house responsibilities.

42. Think of how this policy will perform in light of new changes and how it can be improved.
43. Continue to listen to employees and track performance.
44. Revisit this work-from-home policy annually to make sure it is still relevant.