



The Way to Improve Efficiency and Mutual Trust by Transforming to Remote Work



**SUBMITTED IN THE PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,
SIAM UNIVERSITY, BANGKOK, THAILAND**

2022



Title of Research: The Way to Improve Efficiency and Mutual Trust by Transforming to Remote Work

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Major: International Business Management

Degree: Master in Business Administration (International Program)

This independent study has been approved to be partial fulfillment in
Master of Business Administration Program

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20 / May / 2023

Abstract

As information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become more commonly employed, and as high-speed internet has become more readily available, remote working (also known as teleworking, telecommuting, distributed work; or flexible work arrangements) has become more common in corporate nowadays. Due to the worldwide COVID-19 epidemic in early 2020, many employees worldwide were compelled to self-isolate and work from home as an alternative. Even though this new working model benefits both the business and the employees in many aspects, the adoption rate of this new working model is not very high due to its drawbacks. In this study, I will illustrate the benefits and disadvantages of this new working model, focusing on work productivity and mutual trust, which are the two most important factors that concern corporations when faced with the choice of adopting this new work model. After analyzing the data from previous studies, we can consume that mutual trust will have a significant impact on colleague relationships and job productivity in the remote work model. However, until recently, only a few researchers have focused on the role of mutual trust in maintaining a good relationship and fostering higher productivity in a remote working team and how to develop it in the workplace. This paper makes an in-depth study of the previous articles. It puts forward new suggestions on achieving higher efficiency and mutual trust under a remote working model for companies and individuals

based on the current situation. Furthermore, it will serve as a guide for the firm in establishing a mutual trust connection in remote working team.

Keywords: Remote Work, Work Efficiency, Mutual Trust.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In this section, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Tanakorn Limsarun, advisor and Assoc.Prof. Dr. Jomphong Mongkhonvanit, Dean, Graduate School of Business, Siam University, Bangkok, Thailand for their thoughtful and caring supervision by means of their educational excellence. I am most grateful to them especially for their deep understanding of the Independent Study and their support and strong good communication skills.

Hou Rong

25.08.2022



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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Remote working (also known as teleworking, telecommuting, distributed work, or flexible work arrangements) has grown in popularity as information and communication technologies (ICTs) have advanced in their capabilities, particularly with the spread of high-speed internet in recent decades (Allen et al.,2015). The ability to work remotely, away from the office, is primarily due to the widespread adoption of various emerging technological tools widely available to individuals and businesses (Ter Hoeven &Van Zoonen,2015). Employees can work remotely efficiently and effectively with the help of virtual meetings on Zoom, Cisco Webex, Google Met, and other similar platforms.

Krantz-Kentkrantz (2019) utilizes data from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) from 2013 to 2017 to estimate that 20.5 percent of workers work from home in some capacity on a typical day. According to an Upwork poll, one out of every four Americans will work remotely by 2021(Krantz-Kentkrantz,2019). Due to the worldwide COVID-19 epidemic in early 2020, many employees throughout the world were compelled to self-isolate and work from home as an alternative. In 2020, 12.3% of employed people worked from home regularly. Finland (25.1 percent), Luxembourg (23.1 percent), Ireland (21.5 percent), and Austria (18.1 percent) had the most significant percentage of workers working from home (Eurostat,2021). According to reports, 16.8% of professionals conduct most or all of their job remotely, which includes those who work from coworking spaces, coffee shops, and their homes, among other places (Ozimek, 2020).

Remote employees were happier than onsite employees; "those who work remotely believe they're happier in their employment 29 percent higher than onsite workers," according to the study (Bernazzani, S. 2019). When telework is utilized to reduce organizational and transit expenses and environmental concerns, it may increase the Continuity of Operations and encourage management effectiveness. It can also improve worker motivation and work-life balance.

Although it appears that the transition from traditional jobs to remote work will be successful, the reality is very different.

1.2 Research Problems

Even though the transition to a remote work model is becoming the new normal in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many companies, as well as certain workers, are hesitant to adjust to this new model (Kniffin et al.,2020). The main reason for the transformation's failure is that there are no appropriate telecommuting management standards in place, which leads to misconceptions among workers who work from home, resulting in ineffective and unproductive work. Employees who work from home are also concerned that they would be alienated from the firm and will lack a sense of belonging due to their extended absence.

Many studies have shown several benefits to using this new model in the workplace. However, not all businesses are supportive of remote work. Many managers and business executives believe that workers can not work efficiently and effectively from home since there are many things may easily divert attention away from work, resulting in decreased production."31 percent of U.S. knowledge workers don't currently work remotely because their firm doesn't allow it, "according to Zapier's Remote Work Study from November 2019 (Zapier,2019).

Remote employees were happier than on-site employees;"those who work remotely believe they're more comfortable in their employment 29 percent higher than onsite workers, "according to the study. As previously proven in the Deloitte report, reducing the stress of remote employees is one of the things that managers are interested in since unproductive and uninspired workers bring less money or even lose money to the organization. One of the issues that all firms will almost certainly experience and discover is how to reduce stress while remote work. Even if everyone understands how to use email, audio, and video conversations, it takes some time to grow used to utilizing them as the exclusive means of contact with coworkers. Productivity would plummet, just as it does when people are stressed. And how can you combat worker disengagement and low productivity? The issue is the repercussions of remote work on employees, and one of them is undoubtedly stress. Because it has a negative consequence, it should be eradicated or at the very least reduced. The primary source of concern for stressed workers is their productivity and job motivation.

1.3 Objective of the study

In this study, the central focus of this research is on how to transition to a remote work model successfully. To address this critical topic, I will demonstrate the benefits and disadvantages of remote working to urge businesses to adopt this new working style. In order to answer this vital issue, we will look into techniques to increase job efficiency and build mutual trust between employers and workers.

1.4 Scope of the study

This study covers the advantages and disadvantages of working remotely, namely the conflict when adopting this new kind of working model. Although some studies proved that this new model benefits a lot for the corporate and the employees. There are many concerns about the lower efficiency. Also, this study will try to discover the obstacles of adopting to this new model and how to overcome those challenges with a suitable strategy. This paper was documentary research based on past studies of various scholars from journals, magazines, books, newspapers, etc., and other electric sources what have been studied remote work and its impact on employee motivation and performance and how to improve work efficiency and mutual trust.

1.5 Research Significance

This research looks at the benefits and drawbacks of working remotely, specifically the conflict that arises while implementing this new working style. Even though several studies have shown that this new approach benefits both the company and the employees. The decreasing efficiency is causing a lot of anxiety. This research will also look at the hurdles of implementing this new model and how to overcome them with the right strategy. This study was based on previous studies of numerous scholars from journals, magazines, books, newspapers, and other electronic sources who researched remote work and its influence on employee motivation and performance, as well as how to increase work efficiency and mutual trust.

2. Literatures Review

2.1 Conflicts of Remote Work

Working from home might be advantageous for many individuals, but it can also be stressful for others. Many studies and research on working remotely have been undertaken; some have detailed the downsides, while others have demonstrated the benefits.

Working remotely may be beneficial to both employers and individuals. Based on employee-reported and supervisor-rated job performance, several studies and workforce surveys have indicated that employees can be as productive as or more productive at home (Allen et al., 2015; Mehdi & Morissette, 2021). Working from home allows employees greater flexibility in scheduling, more control over their work environment, less travel time, and possible cost savings on professional attire, transportation, and eating out (Mello, 2007). According to several studies, workers who work from home experience less stress and have a better work-life balance than those who work in offices (Anderson et al., 2015). People are happier with their professions when they have the opportunity to work remotely, according to several studies. Allowing workers to work outside of the physical office may also result in cheaper overhead expenses for the company and the ability to recruit and maintain a diverse workforce. Remote work may also be more ecologically beneficial since it consumes less energy and reduces road congestion (Pearce, 2009). For some companies and people, remote employment has drawbacks. First, employee productivity is uncertain since some employees' attention can be quickly diverted by other factors. According to a Statistics Canada survey from 2021, 58% of new teleworkers said they were as productive per hour as they were at their traditional workplace, while 10% said they were less effective. Extra hours can have a detrimental impact on employee well-being, resulting in lower work satisfaction (Delanoije et al., 2019). Reduced productivity was found to be prevalent due to a lack of engagement with coworkers and other hurdles to coordination and collaboration, according to the Statistics Canada survey.

Hickman (2019) did qualitative exploratory research to determine how distant employees could be isolated. Isolation may have a negative hurt job performance, according to the findings. Employees require frequent social connection, engagement, management communication, and peer-to-peer collaboration, according to Grant, Wallace, and Spurgeon (2013). A well-known issue to distance working is the loneliness people might feel when they are removed from their coworkers

(Makarius & Larson,2017). Organizational overhead expenses may not be decreased in all circumstances, and the lower carbon footprint of remote work might be undone if, for example, individuals fly more for business retreats or drive more for errands when working from home (Wilde & Buritica, 2021). Working remotely affects certain employees' mental stability, according to research by Perry, Rubino, and Hunter (2018). Employees with high degrees of emotional stability and autonomy, for example, have lower stress levels. Employees with low emotional stability but high degrees of independence, on the other hand, maybe more susceptible to stress. Working remotely, on the other hand, isn't always a bad thing. It was observed that working remotely has several advantages for employees (Schall,2019).

2.2 Work Efficiency

Employees who work from home say they are approximately as productive as those who work in an office, according to the UK Household Longitudinal Survey (Etheridge et al., 2020). Working remotely has a little long-term effect on work-life balance, according to Bellmann and Hubler (2020), and switching to WFH boosts job satisfaction only momentarily. Commute time does not appear to predict increased WFH work hours (Barrero et al. , 2021). Reduced commuting time, more flexible work hours, and higher productivity are among the benefits mentioned by respondents.

They predict that WFH use will stay four times higher than before the outbreak. Employees at WFH work an extra 0.8 hours each day, according to their estimates. Employees also attend more meetings with more people, according to their findings. Employees of Microsoft have also been given similar proof (Teevan et al., 2020). Employees in a broad sample of companies in 10 countries consume Internet information, according to Kwan (2021). Bloom et al. (2015) examined a Chinese company's call center personnel. The output of individuals assigned to WFH grew partially due to greater productivity and partly due to longer hours worked. Employee satisfaction has improved, while attrition has decreased. Call-center workers at a prominent US corporation were evaluated by Emanuel and Harrington (2021), including those who were abruptly transferred to WFH in reaction to Covid-19(Emanuel; Harrington,2021). They conclude that remote work has a negative selection impact, with more productive individuals preferring to stay in the office. For contact center employees that operate autonomously and follow scripts, WFH may be a viable option. Professional

chess players, according to Kunn et al. (2020), have extraordinarily high cognitive demands but no cooperation. When compared to in-person competitions, they exhibited inferior quality performance when playing online during Covid-19. Of course, the peculiar nature of their job makes it impossible to extrapolate generalizations from their findings.

According to Yildirim et al. (2016), good culture improves employee performance and commitment. Employees are encouraged to accomplish their jobs with vigor and passion in a productive culture. As a result, it is possible to conclude that organizational culture is linked to work satisfaction, commitment, and performance. There are many strategies to boost staff productivity, including the following:

Motivation: In recent years, many businesses have discovered that focusing on activities that excite people is critical to achieving organizational goals effectively and efficiently. This is because, in addition to raising worker productivity and performance, motivation increases job engagement by making work more relevant and exciting. (Ekerman, 2006; Kamery, 2004).

Communication: Effective communication allows a company to achieve high levels of coordination and collaboration across its teams, whereas its absence will reflect challenges in the execution of business activities or, more importantly, cause harm/conflict among workers.

Workplace stress is also seen as a societal problem (Mizuno et al., 2006), with a variety of elements interfering with workers' physical and mental capacities, as well as influencing their health care (Conway et al., 2008).

2.3 Mutual Trust

"A solid conviction in the dependability, honesty, or competency of someone or something" is how trust is defined (Oxford English Dictionary, 2013). Many scholars have spent the last few years delving into trust (Dias and Lopes, 2021; Lewicki & Hanke, 2012; Balliet & Van Lange, 2013). Every company is different, but trust is a necessary element for success, especially in unpredictable times like these. Trusting others inspires loyalty and devotion, but also contributes to the growth and improvement of others, resulting in increased participation. Organizations with a culture of trust will perform better in 2021, whether people have been going to a physical workplace since the beginning of the epidemic, will be summoned back to the workplace shortly, or have the benefit of working anywhere for an extended period (Mullen, 2021). Trust, as Aron Ain puts it, is the "magic

glue" that binds personal and professional connections together. Everything becomes feasible when we trust each other. Furthermore, if employees do not trust their bosses, they will not be able to work correctly. Employees will be hesitant to make decisions and must seek permission for everything. They won't go the additional mile if they aren't sure that others will back them up. If people believe their bosses will not back them or take credit away from them, they are less likely to come up with fresh product or process innovations (Career Press, 2017). Trusted leaders, according to Andrea P. Howe, creator of The Get Real Project in Washington, D.C., and co-author of The Trusted Advisor Fieldbook (Preece, 2011), may benefit firms by increasing employee engagement, innovation, and productivity. When it comes to telecommuting, trust is crucial. When working remotely, the cost of doing business rises due to a lack of trust. Furthermore, the distrust that comes with telecommuting can exist between team members and between the organization and its consumers, adding to the online collaboration process's communication expenses. Organizational performance, effectiveness, and efficiency are all influenced by trust (Driks and Ferrin, 2002). Trust encourages collaboration, minimizes or eliminates conflict, and creates favorable employee recognition and attitudes toward management, all of which contribute to increased employee work satisfaction. Integrity and dependability, according to most academics, are two components of trust. In employee-employer interactions, trust refers to how much one person depends on information from another and how confident they are in their relationship partner. The upward flow of communication is broken when employees do not trust their supervisors; on the other hand, the downward flow of communication is harmed when managers do not trust the employees with whom they work (Daniel, 2003). There is a link between employee transparency and organizational trust. Management trust may have a more decisive influence on managerial decision-making. Furthermore, Hasen and Salman (2016) found that trust has a positive and significant relationship with employee performance because building trust builds confidence in each other's competence and reliability. As a result, trust among employees creates organizational synergy and leads to improved employee performance because trust is based on reliability and competence.

The 5 C's, as Rajeev points out in his article, make up trust. The author of another recent Forbes piece, "Performance Management in the Age of Social Detachment," discusses why releasing people is a beneficial approach for overall performance and productivity (Rajeev, 2020). According to research, employees' readiness to accept remote working methods is linked to

managers' willingness, which is frequently rejected due to the danger of losing control (Susan, 2020). The mistrust stems from the fact that there are numerous uncontrollable factors in the remote supervision process will result in increased supervision costs, such as adding after-hours punch-in and debriefing sessions, where superiors can check their assistants' working time using the collaboration platform's background records, or requiring subordinates to inform the specific time to complete each task in the log summary.

2.4 Past Research

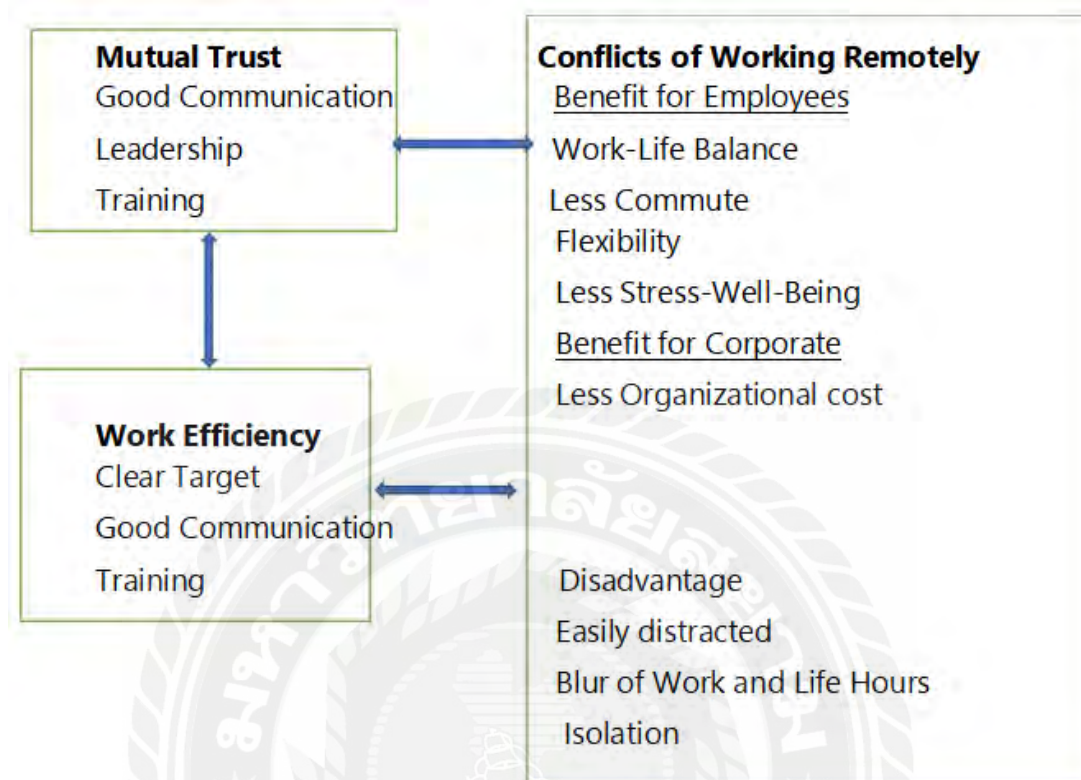
The significance of trust in the workplace has long been acknowledged. Teleworking became more popular in the 1990s as networked communication technology advanced, reducing face-to-face interactions and leading to the formation of virtual companies and distant work models. Virtual labor, altered the character of group work and resulted in a craving for new kinds of belonging. In addition to assisting them in building trust, he emphasizes that trust cannot be taken for granted in this setting, and that its importance must be acknowledged and handled. This is per Kostner's (2001) conclusion, which includes a remark from Jimmy Treybig, former CEO of Tandem Computers. "Building trust over email is difficult. With the assistance of technology, we do a lot of communication. However, human engagement is required." The necessity of creating trust online is emphasized by Stoner and Hartman (1993). Focusing solely on technology will not lead to success. It warns that a lack of trust impacts outcomes, highlighting that building and maintaining trust in virtual teams is particularly tough. Leadership style in virtual teams, according to Furumo, de Pillis, and Buxton (2012), influences the initial building of trust and the subsequent degree of participation of team members. Designers of interactive systems, which are the foundation of virtual work and TELWORK, must include social elements as well as technology, according to Preece, Rogers, and Sharp (2011). This supports Lewicki and Bunker's (2008) assertion that the building of trust is inextricably tied to the formation of relationships. Persons are hesitant to undertake virtual commerce with people they have not met in person, according to Brown and Lightfoot (2009). According to the findings, individuals are hesitant to work with someone they have never met since there is no personal connection to aid. Still focused on leadership, Caza (2015) found that subordinates' trust in leaders grows as long as they believe the leader's emotions are genuine. Holland, Cooper, and Sheehan (2017) found that trust in leaders is positively connected with the

leader's direct support. Furthermore, businesses may not be able to maintain high performance and profit from their expertise if leaders lack confidence, according to Kim (2017). According to Haynie et al. (2016), trust is a crucial factor in determining employee attitudes and actions in the workplace. Transformational leadership style, perceptions of organizational support, and perceptions of fairness were shown to have the most vital connections in Dirks and Ferrin's (2002) study, which focused on the link between trust in leaders and the antecedent factors of trust.

One of the shortcomings of the trust literature, as several researchers have pointed out (Schoorman et al., 2007), is the one-way view of trust, while trust between assistants and supervisors might be reciprocal. Mutual trust refers to the complimentary trust that subordinates and supervisors have or display toward one another at any one time (Serva et al., 2005). Mutual trust arises when supervisors and subordinates have similar levels of confidence in one another and feels that the other is aware of their intentions and trust. Brower (2009) further suggests that, in addition to the benefits of trust in the leader and felt trust, mutual trust has a favorable impact on employee outcomes (or being trusted). Furthermore, while organizational experts have claimed that mutual trust is required for stable and long-term relationships and more effective collaboration, there is no empirical proof of mutual trust's impacts.

It's simple to see how a lack of trust is a significant issue in today's corporations, let alone in remote teams. Quality communication is critical for employees' psycho-emotional well-being, according to Daim et al. and Barhite (Daim et al., 2012; Barhite, 2017). According to their findings, a lack of nonverbal communication and poor communication quality can cause anxiety, uncertainty, and miscommunication among employees, resulting in a drop in productivity. According to Raiiene and Jonuaskas (Raiiene; Jonuaskas, 2013), intensive work with ICT significantly raises employees' stress, with negative repercussions connected with a decline in subjective quality of life. Another significant problem of remote employment is establishing trust (Ospina, 2017). The level of trust in virtual teams is usually lower than that of colleagues who interact live (Benetyte, 2013). Because lack of trust can be a barrier to efficient virtual task execution, trust is even more crucial than in conventional teams that confront uncertainty and don't know all team members completely (Mogale, 2010).

Conceptual Framework Model



3. Finding and Conclusion

According to the research on mutual trust, there are several reasons why mutual trust is vital in the workplace, mainly while working remotely. Employee behavior clearly impacts on business performance because many individuals may control their work intensity to some extent (Brown et al., 2011). Employee trust in the workplace has the potential to impact employee behavior and, as a result, corporate performance. The efficiency of teamwork, on the other hand, is determined by the amount of trust among team members (Lerner et al., 2009; Suddick & De Souza, 2007). It's worth emphasizing that mutual trust is a coordinating mechanism that facilitates essential aspects of collaboration (McComb&Hebdon,2013). Some academics believe that collaboration comprises five essential components, known as the "Big Five": team leadership, mutual performance monitoring, supportive behavior, flexibility, and team orientation (Salas et al., 2005). Furthermore, creating a team atmosphere of trust and togetherness is one of the foundations for efficient performance monitoring. From another angle, trust is a critical component of effective inter-professional collaboration (van Schaik, O'Brien, Almeida, & Adler, 2014). Employees should have faith in their

managers, and managers should have faith in their employees. "Effective leaders must not only win the trust of their subordinates, but also learn to trust their subordinates," according to a 2009 article released by the University of Kentucky's School of Management.

Organizations with high levels of trust will be more productive, have less stress and anxiety, and be more innovative. When teams is drastically decreased as teams work online from home, how trust works in this new and enlarged workplace becomes highly crucial. Managers who have previously "micromanaged" their personnel will need to adapt their tactics, as detailed in the HBR article *How to Stop Micromanaging Your Team*. However, more trust and, with it, higher employee autonomy are required. The favorable impact of informal flexibility and working from home adds to the argument that schedule management is highly desired and necessary for people to "enjoy" their jobs. "The key to working from home is to have good communication with your supervisor - and to precisely know what is expected of you.

4. Recommendation

Trust is more important than ever in businesses and teams, as it reduces silos, stimulates collaboration, deepens cooperation, drives engagement, and controls the never-ending process of change, resulting in higher productivity in remote work modes. It's no secret that in the workplace, individuals desire and require trusted connections. However, as crucial as they are, teams have difficulty establishing and maintaining them over time. In any group, trust is formed and broken. It goes hand in hand with the field of human connections. Managers may foster confidence in their teams by giving information as honestly and transparently as feasible. Managers can also foster trust by praising their employees' successes and abilities. When teams operate remotely, it might be more challenging to maintain efficient communication than when they work in the same office.

Managers must keep the team engaged in this circumstance and ensure that team members receive the knowledge they need to complete the task. To accomplish so, managers must use the following tactics to build channels of communication within the team:

Create a variety of communication channels - Today's businesses have a variety of communication channels to select from, each with its own set of goals. For project talks, check-in dialogues, and virtual team meetings, teams can use video conferencing software. For urgent

concerns, casual chats, and real-time information exchange, instant messaging software may be the ideal option. Teams might debate their expectations for the communication channels they should utilize as part of creating team standards. According to Akkirman and Harris (2005), there are processes to ensure that communications are effective and that all groups are happy in communications:

i) Developing and maintaining information technology and network infrastructure, as well as providing continual training.

ii) The organization altered its organizational structure to become a process-based organization, allowing employees to complete a process in a single quick flow from start to end.

iii) The company implemented a results-based management system.

iv) Established a paperless company in which information was maintained in digital format, allowing all employees to access the most up-to-date information from anywhere and at any time.

Improving Team Transparency - In building trust, Brake (2006) lists five critical factors that should be considered by all team members,

i) Communicate openly and frequently.

ii) Make your actions as transparent as possible.

iii) Be accessible and responsive.

iv) Keep everyone informed.

v) Do what you say you will do, be consistent and predictable.

For high-performing teams, transparency is a must. Employees typically agree that there should be greater openness in the workplace, yet it might be challenging to develop a transparent team atmosphere while working in remote teams. Employees may feel uneasy among one other or with their superiors if there are no open lines to communication. Managers must create an example of transparency by sharing honestly with their staff and encouraging them to be open and share their views or ask questions. Managers should also encourage employees to share their abilities and establish clarity around the strengths and shortcomings of people within their teams. One of the most essential generators of trust is transparency. It refers to why followers are interested in learning about a leader's intentions and behaviors. It also reflects an increasing desire to establish open lines

of communication with high management. Openness and honesty are essential components of effective communication. It connects to the demand for clarity among personnel. Shared principles, clear expectations, and performance feedback must all be communicated by leaders. They must back up their words with acts, which is why integrity-consistency in words and actions - is so important.

Being a competent communicator isn't enough to restore and strengthen trust. It entails mending fences and fostering an environment that fosters favorable employee expectations. They must convey their aims and capabilities in a clear and consistent manner. Employees' faith in their senior management is influenced by internal communication. The "richness" of communication is one factor that leaders must consider. Richness refers to face-to-face communication that comprises high-quality information. Employees prefer informal opportunities to create connections with their top managers over formal "stuffy" communication (emails or memos). According to the CIPD survey (2021), many managers highlight the need to "go see" their people. Employees want to meet and hear from their leaders in person. They are able to communicate with them on a more intimate level as a result of this. Leaders must see their followers in person and on a regular basis in order to build trust.

Managing a remote team might be more difficult than managing a regular in-person team. While managers may struggle at first with their lack of awareness of their employees' everyday activities, remote teams may function just as well as any other team - 79 percent of employees say working remotely increases their productivity and attention.

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