

globally trending remote

work skills



welcome to brighter

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Introduction



As businesses around the world adjust to the fairly new remote work setting, organizations are equipping themselves with best practices, remote work skills and competencies. They are gauging employee readiness to ensure business continuity and productivity of remote workers.

Competencies, once considered to be ancillary, are now at the forefront due to COVID-19. At different levels, employees need distinct skills to steer their way through the present remote working environment. Team leaders need to be able to lead their teams effectively; individual contributors need to be accountable for their work. First-time managers need to be better at planning and organization. Other employees need to be effective with their communication skills, and so on.

Businesses need to create the requisite comprehensive framework of skills/competencies to drive their businesses during these difficult times, to achieve the same levels of productivity as in a brick-and-mortar office setup. These competencies can be unique to one's company's culture and vision. Organizations should reach out to assessment partners to create a customized survey and assessment or rely on an existing test designed for the purpose.

Trending Remote Work Competencies

With nearly all industries across the world forced to transition to remote working, we asked seasoned professionals to share with us the types of skills they desired in a remote worker or what they found to have contributed the most to a productive remote team.

“The most important characteristics of a successful remote worker include responsibility, dedication to the team and the business, the ability to work independently, and flexibility.”

Daniela Andreevska

Marketing Director, Mashvisor

While hiring or developing employees to work in a new ‘normal,’ the following are the most sought-after competencies by organizations:





Effective Communication

Demonstrating the ability to put across one's thoughts and ideas clearly and succinctly using appropriate language.

The need to put across one's point in a clear, concise, and succinct manner has never been more critical than during the remote work setting. Effective communication is the foundation for collaboration and teamwork and ensures trust and transparency.

"Among the competencies that make top performers in the WFH mode, I'd say that communication skills are the key. Much of the work communication happens through messages, and written words can often create misunderstandings. People who don't hold in their concerns but address them as they arrive are the ones that thrive in remote communication. The way they communicate is also important - kindly but openly works the best."

Milos Djordjevic

Co-Founder, SaveMyCent



Adaptability & Flexibility

Demonstrating the ability to adjust and adapt oneself to change and not bog down in dynamic, ambiguous, and constantly evolving situations.

The sudden transition to work-from-home has been a real test of adaptability for most people. The ability to quickly adapt to this new 'normal' with continued enthusiasm is a highly desirable skill in employees in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world.

"Remote workers also need to be flexible and adaptable since you never know when that emergency video conference call may arise to solve a customer problem. In addition, if you work for a global company, early morning or late evening conference calls with clients on the other side of the world are common occurrences. Have good time management, but at the same time, be flexible."

Dean Calhoun

President/CEO, Affyigility Solutions

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Self Direction

Demonstrating a strong will to achieve the aimed goal. Focusing one's energy and resources to finish what one has started.

With no continuous supervision, self-discipline, perseverance, self-motivation, result orientation, and passion are salient characteristics that can help achieve the same outcomes as in an office environment. Every organization needs these characteristics in their workforce.



"I think the competencies that drive the ability to work from home productively come down to structure, motivation, focus, perseverance, and self-discipline. These are similar to an in-office environment but are heightened when at home when the inherent structure of an office is missing, along with the peer pressure to stay on task. Organizations can help employees to level up in these competency areas by providing a clear game plan and even some training around how to create structure and boundaries when working from home, how to stay motivated and connected to coworkers, and how to identify and reduce the distractions of a home environment."

Alexis Haselberger

Productivity, Time Management & Leadership Coach

"Working remotely requires another level of discipline and motivation from working in an office. There is less oversight on your work and you don't have a physical boss looking over your shoulder to motivate you. More than ever, you need to be able to take ownership of your responsibilities and persevere to ignore all the distractions at home to get to work."

Adam Sanders

Director, Successful Release

"Whether you work in a brick-and-mortar office environment or as a remote worker, it's all about achieving results that move a company forward. Great remote workers understand this and know that it's not about how many hours you work, but the results you achieve. In addition, great remote workers don't "sand-bag" their goals and objectives that can be achieved with minimal effort. Great remote workers set both realistic goals and stretch goals."

Dean Calhoun

President & CEO, Affyigility Solutions



Accountability

Demonstrating the ability to take responsibility for one's actions and decisions. Following through on the commitments, without passing on the blame to others in case of failures.

Takes ownership of one's work, working independently, rectifying mistakes quickly and learning from them to make remote work easy for all involved stakeholders. It builds a culture of trust without the need for micromanagement.

"Effective remote workers are honest and candid with other remote coworkers. They say what they can and cannot do, and if they make mistakes, they take responsibility for those mistakes without making excuses. They are transparent with their direct manager and communicate clearly when personal issues around the house may be impacting their schedule or ability to be focused."

Dean Calhoun

President/CEO, Affygility Solutions

"Things aren't always going to go well. Organizations need people to be open and honest when something needs to be revised, to accept help from others, and to integrate small adjustments to measure changes incrementally."

Leigh Smith

People Director UK, AnywhereWorks



Planning & Organization

Demonstrating the ability to detail out the steps required to accomplish one's objectives and an understanding of the resources needed to achieve them. Demonstrating the ability to prioritize tasks and shuffle between tasks to maximize efficiency.

Much like in a brick-and-mortar office setting, completing work in an organized manner by prioritizing tasks by optimally utilizing time and resources, and understanding the impact of one's work on others, is a crucial component of remote workers' productivity.

"It's almost needless to say, but excellent organizational and time management skills are a must for remote workers. Since a remote worker won't have a manager staring over their back all day, they need to be able to break down a project into specific tasks and establish self-imposed deadlines for accomplishing each task. The most effective remote workers keep a well-managed calendar, with blocks of time carved out to do highly-focused, uninterrupted work."

Dean Calhoun

President/CEO, Affygility Solutions



Collaboration

Demonstrating the ability to work effectively with one another to accomplish common goals and objectives.

Being able to envision themselves as a part of a team, understanding common goals and objectives, and making joint efforts towards them, are the foundation of collaboration. Virtual collaboration between employees and teams is key to driving every business forward as a vast majority of the workforce operates remotely.

“This, for me, is the most important competency. Regular collaboration with others helps with the completion of projects, and also prevents the feeling of isolation that can come with working from home. Make use of video call software to keep in touch with your team.”

Leigh Smith

People Director UK, AnywhereWorks



Openness to Learning

Demonstrating the ability to commit to learning new skills and effectively modifying one’s knowledge with the availability of further information.

Employees need to quickly assimilate new ways of working with the same effectiveness and be willing to adopt new ways, skills and technologies. Remote working needs employees to be agile and proactive to keep pace with dynamic situations.

“Some of our employees adapted easily to the new tools, but others didn’t. Some of this may have had to do with their home office environment, but I think a big part of it was that there were just too many things thrown to them all at once that they had to learn and implement all at once -- and we are a tech company, so there is, in theory, a high aptitude level for learning new digital programs.”

Russ Nauta

Product & Editorial Lead, Credit Card Reviews

How Mercer | Mettl Can Help?

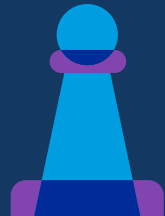
Mercer | Mettl is your one-stop-solution for scientific assessments if your organization is looking to assess its workforce based on the competencies mentioned above or by introducing an assessment in your recruitment process to evaluate candidates on remote skills. Our subject matter experts can help your organization to identify and define competencies and skills in line with your vision. It can also customize assessments that are unique to your remote work challenges and circumstances.

Mercer | Mettl has also created a free* remote work survey, with a suite of tools, to enable businesses to manage the COVID-19 disruption. The remote work survey is a short, 22-question survey covering three broad parameters (organizational initiatives, managerial effectiveness, and coworkers' support) to help an organization understand the areas that they need to address to help their employees through these disruptive times. This survey and the assessment can serve as a starting point for organizations. These can help organizations decide on their area of focus, who to train, who can continue working from home, and who to call back to the office after normalcy is restored.

Here are our recommendations based on the findings of our survey:

1. Identify remote work skills and competencies required to work effectively in the current situation or reach out to our team of experts to help you to identify them. Skills can vary across levels and job-roles. For instance, if the survey indicates ineffective managerial skills, an assessment can be designed to evaluate your organization's managers. For issues related to coworkers' support, personality traits such as collaboration, flexibility, communication, empathy, and so on, can be routed through the assessment.
2. Share your objectives and goals with us and get a customized assessment, unique to your business requirement.
3. Assess your employees and identify the skills gap for developmental initiatives.
4. Consult our L&D experts to get individual development plans (IDPs) to increase the productivity of remote workers.

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“Businesses need to prepare and equip themselves for crisis monitoring and handling. Situations like COVID can emerge anytime, and it is imperative for businesses to make sure that productivity does not suffer and work-from-home is a viable option here.”

Saurabh Jindal
CEO, Talk Travel



About Us

At Mercer | Mettl, our mission is to enable organizations to make better people decisions by making credible people decisions across two key areas: Acquisition and Development. Since our inception in 2010, we have partnered with 2900+ corporates, 31 sector skill councils/ government departments, and 15+ educational institutions across 90+ countries.

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