

# Adjusting Expectations

VIRTUAL MANAGEMENT DURING A PANDEMIC  
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Managing people in the best circumstances is challenging. Layer on a global pandemic and even the most effective managers are struggling. How do you support your team during this significant transition? Can you adjust expectations without totally lowering the bar? What about keeping your team connected?

## DON'T

- **Assume everyone is handling this the way you are:** Similar to grief, your employees are dealing with this change differently. There isn't one way to think or feel. Recognize everyone is unique and has different challenges.
- **Expect employees to ask for what they need:** Employees have a hard time communicating they're overwhelmed. It's important you initiate the conversation with a simple question: What can I do to support you during this time?
- **Start meetings at 7:00:** Some employees have communicated their meeting start time has shifted to 7:00 a.m. People assume without the commute, a 7:00 a.m. start time is reasonable. Be the model. Just don't do this. Please.

## DO

- **Adjust deadlines and expectations:** Understand projects and deadlines established before the pandemic should be re-evaluated. New projects and assignments might need a longer timeline than before. Collaborate with your employees.
- **Check in regularly:** Employees need to know you're present. Most likely, you're not available for a quick office chat or hallway run in. Check in with the employees you manage weekly. Ask your employee which weekly check-in method is most effective for them (i.e. e-mail, phone)
- **Boost morale by sending a fun gift:** I had a leader send a box of popcorn to everyone on our team. We all opened our gifts during a team meeting.

## TIPS, RESOURCES & IDEAS

- **Learn to run a great virtual meeting:** Get creative and use virtual tools during employee meetings. Try using break-out rooms, the chat function and set a fun virtual background during your team connect. Check out this [HBR article for ideas](#) on increasing virtual engagement.
- **No more virtual happy hours:** Everyone means well with all the virtual happy hours. However, many employees are feeling obligated to attend and it's draining for many. Consider getting creative with other virtual activities. My favorite is a coffee vs. tea virtual meeting. Every employee brings their favorite cup of coffee or tea and discusses their choice as an icebreaker. Check out [this article](#) for ideas.
- **Learn to run a great virtual meeting:** Assign a facilitator, encourage participation and use video. Check out this [HBR article](#) for ideas on running a great virtual meeting.