

# A Brief Guide to Managing Remote Teams

(AKA Virtual/Distant/Dispersed/Home-Workers)

## Challenges

- Communication failure, misunderstandings
- Isolation and uncertainty
- Duplication or omission
- Impersonal
- No team feeling, greater chance of conflict, blaming and 'blinking'
- Demotivation, don't feel involved or sense of ownership
- Lose sense of bigger picture, can lead to "not my job"

## Tips

### **Clarity of Roles and Tasks**

- Team involved in meeting to (re)establish purpose, roles and tasks to achieve objectives
- New members welcomed and briefed effectively

*Manager's role: take time to make sure procedures are in place and being followed. Allow for as much social interaction as possible, e.g. through online meetings. 121s and feedback become crucial.*

### **Clarity and use of Communication Procedures**

- Virtual whiteboard/weekly diary system (who's doing what?)
- Variety of meeting types – telephone, teleconf, videoconf, online message boards
- Email codes in 're:' box: e.g. 'info', 'act by:', 'update'.
- More complex and/or emotive issues require "richer" communication media.

*Manager's role is to make the best use of the time available for communication & team meetings.*

### **Team Sense – The Personal Factor**

- The team agrees upfront: shared goals/vision, roles, standards and processes. This is reviewed regularly through: "What's working? What's not working – what do we need, how shall we do that?" process at face to face or video-conf meetings as appropriate.
- Face to face meetings/workshops including team building events, socials at least 3-4 times a year
- Allow for social chat in phone calls and video meetings.

*Manager's role: Phone/video people regularly (e.g. once a week) to ask how it's going.*

### **Knowledge Management**

- Keep everyone up to date & informed.
- Stay in the loop, so you know what your team are doing.

*Manager's role is to be a 'hub' – all relevant info and decisions made are sent on to the 'hub' who can then collate and disseminate to the rest of the team.*