

ADAPTATION

Employee Engagement

9/15/2020



Employee Engagement

Written by: Jesse LaDousa, Chief Customer Officer

By now most of us have figured out the new normal of [remote working](#), school, happy hours, birthday parties, and even dinner gatherings. From tiny phone screens to large TV displays, we have learned to stay connected with our co-workers, friends, and families in new and interesting ways over the course of this year.

Many companies offered a work-from-home option to employees prior to this year and many took advantage of it frequently. It's a convenient option to manage the need for dedicated quiet work time, personal appointments, or child's school needs. While this option was a welcomed benefit with most employers, most of us are still anchored back to in-person office time. The majority of our time is spent at work, with co-workers and employees, engaging in face to face discussions and collaboration.

With this largely gone now, we have replaced this collaboration with small video boxes on technology platforms that still allow us to meet and see each other; albeit without the same benefits as in-person. For those of us that crave our prior levels of personal interaction, how do we continue to achieve the same level of productivity and connectedness for ourselves and our employees with this shift in approach?

Anyone that has interacted with Clientek over the years knows how collaborative and social we are. From our open concept workspaces, large conference rooms, and frequent collaboration sessions, to of course, our employee BBQs, tournaments, and social outings. We struggled early on with how to maintain this core part of our culture but knew we needed to adapt quickly or risk losing one of the things that makes this a great place to work.



We've long practiced a management tactic we call "MBWA" (Management by Walking Around). It's amazing what you can learn by simply leaving your office multiple times per day and walking around the rest of the office. Stopping to say hello to an employee, seeing how their day is going and asking, "What are you working on?". This simple activity can provide great insight into project work being done that should be celebrated, or even give view into a struggles that could be dealt with by another set of eyes looking at the problem. With this option largely gone these days, we had to determine how to continue this important practice without the perception of formalizing it, thereby killing the whole benefit.

As a long-standing Microsoft Gold Partner, we heavily utilize Microsoft Teams as our collaboration platform. Through the chat function and video conferencing capabilities we have learned to continue our "MWBA" approach by simply "dropping-in" on people during their workday. If you see them online, green, and available, start a video call to see how things are going. Make these impromptu – no more than 5 minutes (unless needed) and then let them get back to what they were doing. Do this as frequently as you can to let them know you are still engaged and ready to help them with whatever they need.

I'd love to hear what you are all doing to stay engaged during this time. What new tactics have you learned and use regularly?