

Best Practice

Service: Consulting
Solution Suite: Professional Development
Best Practice: Remote Worker Agreement (RWA)

Overview

AMS has seen many companies embrace the concept of a remote workforce and before you know it instead of increasing productivity they have decreased it significantly. In each one of those scenarios we can trace it back to missing components of the Remote Worker Agreement (RWA) or even worse (and most commonly) no agreement at all. If your company is considering a shift toward leveraging a remote workforce the effort you put in on the front end to create the structure will ultimately determine the success of the effort.



Having a RWA is important because it helps to solidify the expectation from both sides of the employer/employee equation. Successful remote workforce efforts can usually be traced back to an established best practice including a RWA as the cornerstone. Here are some guidelines to follow in order to get the most out of your RWA:

1. The RWA should embrace the cultural, operational and process standards of your specific organization and/or business unit.
2. The RWA should include any performance metrics associated with the remote worker.
3. Projects should be defined as attachments to any RWA via statements of work with measurable deliverables.
4. The RWA should cover the macro elements of work hours, work duration, accessibility, environmental and technology (including phone).
5. The RWA should depict protocol within your remote/virtual team.
6. The RWA should define security and confidentiality aspects of the work environment.
7. The RWA should define the technology infrastructure and how it is to be managed.

Usually, there is a process manual accompanied by measurable standards, and all of this is aligned through human resources. That's why a "template" approach is not really effective to design a dynamic RWA.

There are also organizational change elements to consider because you get into the "why can she/he work from home and I can't" scenario. Therefore, not only do you have to embed your controls into the agreement, but you also have to look at the environment in which the concept will be deployed. Sometimes we see an organization create a business case and then a model for the remote worker effort. Once that is in place they start to attach the working elements to the framework. Addressing things like, who is eligible and why, who is capable and why and who is interested and why.

One last thing you will need to consider is the legal implications (HR) because you are reassigning workers' responsibilities and expectations by changing their work environment. For example, if you have an issue with a non-productive employee who is working remotely; if you have not formalized the new employee expectations within the environment it makes it very difficult to address performance issues. This is another reason why deploying an enterprise wide remote worker initiative should not be taken lightly.

The development of an RWA for one of our clients usually includes the following:

1. Collect data about the remote workforce, its development and deployment schedule.
2. Identify the critical measurement criteria associated with the remote workforce.
3. Validate assumptions after data collection with the management team.
4. Design a RWA which includes standards, process and protocol.
5. Design a training session to accommodate the remote worker and the remote manager.

AMS can assist with the organizational challenges associated with the development of a RWA as well as any competency development areas surrounding the deployment of a remote workforce.

Please contact an AMS Business Development Manager for more information. [Contact Us>](#)