

5 employee engagement initiatives for remote workers





Insights brought to you by Busuu

At Busuu, we offer online language training that gets results – from stronger working relationships to faster business growth.

Our ultimate mission? To break down language barriers in the workplace so both employees and the wider organisation can thrive. We do this by offering award-winning courses in 12 different languages, one-to-one online tutoring, options to tailor content to individual business needs, and the means to measure success with our Management Platform.

Leading organisations around the world, such as Puma, Uber, Rolex, OECD and DHL choose Busuu to upskill their workforce in a scalable, cost-efficient way – and for access to metrics they need to prove tangible ROI.



In our post-pandemic climate, employers are under increasing pressure to enable flexible work options, including remote work, part-time and work-from-home arrangements.

This is especially true for those wishing to attract top talent. Research conducted by IWG, the International Workplace Group, showed that 80% of workers in the US would turn down a job if it didn't offer flexible work.

And while 85% of businesses say that flexible work has improved productivity, HR leaders and executives cannot quite shake the feeling that a remote workforce is more challenging to engage with.

So what initiatives could you implement to ensure your remote workforce remains engaged and productive?

Find five of them below.



1. Champion clear, considerate communication

Good communication is challenging enough in person. With a scattered workforce who rely on online tools to coordinate efforts, it becomes a minefield – especially now that **95% of businesses rely on internal channels more than in-person meetings.**

Ensuring nothing is lost in translation, therefore, is of the utmost importance when you're talking to people sitting dozens – or thousands – of miles apart. Think about how to adapt your tone to each communication channel. Adding a friendly emoji to an urgent instant message can go a long way. Jumping on a quick video call, even, can avoid hundreds of misunderstandings down the line.

Miscommunications are challenges you can solve with initiatives or programmes that focus on improving communication skills, sympathy and humanity. They should always enable people to break down technology barriers, and help them remember the humans behind the screens.





2. Leverage project management tools

While, if you're not careful, technology can be a foe for one-to-one conversations, for cross-team communication it's a friend.

It's easy to forget how much we rely on 'water cooler talk' to feel connected and generate ideas. Therefore, investing in – or making better use of – project management tools is paramount.

Using tools like Jira, Asana or Trello to communicate details you might consider superfluous, for example, ensures you don't assume knowledge. Actively moving tasks to your 'Done' pile allows for clearer visibility of overall progress.

And being active on topic-specific groups on tools like Slack for off-the-cuff conversations encourages a steady flow of creative ideas your employees can get excited about.

3. Promote personal development

A Gallup poll recently found that 87% of millennials and 69% of other age groups believe opportunities for career growth are as important as salary and benefits. In short, they want to advance, learn and develop.

This should inspire you to look at initiatives such as growth plans, mentoring programmes or language courses, which are often at the top of employees' wish lists in terms of personal and professional goals.

The reason? [A language training and development programme](#) allows employees to be more competitive in the global marketplace, boosts productivity and improves company culture – especially when it comes to cross-cultural efforts.

A point to remember for L&D leaders: it's also important to ensure remote workers go through these programmes within work hours, so as not to confuse boundaries between personal and professional lives even further.

4. Implement group learning programmes

In LinkedIn's recent workplace learning report, 95% of people state that learning together helps to create a sense of belonging. What's more, 84% believe that learning is more engaging when you work together. With remote working becoming a norm during these unprecedented times, group learning initiatives in L&D really do help to foster employee engagement.

Especially since, one of the key challenges for remote and flexible workers is the lack of social interactions with colleagues, clients and supervisors.

This is especially concerning when, according to the Gallup research, close work friendships can boost employee satisfaction by up to 50%. Employees with a best friend at work are also 7 times more likely to be fully engaged, but a lack of face-to-face interactions could hinder these beneficial connections.

Which is why you can do your part by enabling group learning sessions and communal activities, even if it's via group chat or video conferencing.





5. Enable passion projects

The most famous programme designed to enable passion projects was undoubtedly Google's 20% time policy. It allowed employees to take 20% of their working day and work on personal projects, which could benefit the tech giant. Gmail, AdSense and Google Maps all started as passion projects.

However, L&D professionals are quick to point out that [the policy was never checked, enforced, or even possible to implement](#). This comes as no surprise to those in positions who often struggle to [justify spending and prove ROI](#). To complicate things, remote workers tend to be seen as having a privileged position, and more inclined to procrastination.

The key here is to understand how Google did it in the first place. The 20% time policy, it turns out, isn't a policy at all. It's an option, which exists to allow employees an opportunity to think freely and creatively. That is to say, it's just another tool-set HR leaders can offer to allow employees to create their ideal work-life balance, which could help with the **\$300B a year lost in the US to stress in the workplace**.

The key message?

Putting time and money into your employee engagement strategy can be the key to numerous benefits for your organisation.

It increases productivity, improves retention and even boosts company morale. All of this also has a positive impact on employer branding.


But not all engagement initiatives will succeed – especially if employees see through them as cynical attempts to give them company-worthy skills, or to monitor their activities when they aren't present on-site.


For best results, the engagement programme you choose needs to meet the needs of **both each individual employee and the wider business.**



At Busuu, we believe our digital & smart language-learning platform is one of those ideal programmes, and one of the most efficient ways of supporting employee engagement in a remote setting – both in the short and long term.

To see how Busuu's language courses can improve employee satisfaction, engagement and company culture, contact us:

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