

5 Pitfalls of a Remote Workforce and How to Solve Them

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Dear Shareholder!

Since the completion of the Reverse Merger with Cruzani, Inc., BOWMO™ has received many inquiries as to whether we are running the virtual or the brick-and-mortar office.

Our answer is very simple: Since the BOWMO business model caters to remote business organizations, BOWMO, as a business entity, promotes and operates in a completely virtual environment for the following key reasons.

COVID-19 and its variants continue to change how we work in unexpected and predictable ways, and as such, the workplace has transformed into remote and hybrid work environments. Before COVID expanded globally in January 2020, working from home was an option for a minority of office workers. Now, many workers will only consider remote positions.

This blog highlights five pitfalls of a remote workforce and how to address each situation.

1. Increased Worker Activity Does Not Equal Increased Productivity

Multiple studies have reported increased worker productivity resulting from remote work. No doubt, workers are completing more work tasks, but are they doing the *right* things? Is productivity actually increasing?

Business priorities change frequently—by the day and sometimes by the hour. Asynchronous communication apps like Slack, WhatsApp, native text messaging, and email are excellent tools to help coordinate worker tasks. Acronyms, slang, poor writing skills, and language differences can create miscommunications and lower the productivity that these tools were created to prevent.

Face-to-face video or in-person communications remain our best methods for group work, orchestrating tasks, and holding individuals accountable for on-time, on-quality completion of work.

Identifying opportunities to automate repetitive business processes or tasks can achieve significant productivity gains. Artificial intelligence–powered applications and workflow automation platforms can automate repetitive tasks and eliminate errors. Mapping your current business processes will help you quickly identify opportunities for improvement,

automation, and eliminate redundancies. [Watch this TEDx Talk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMt-v0dtNB0&t=19s) to help you get started



Human resource (HR) processes such as recruiting offer approval routing, hiring documentation management, onboarding, training, and performance management, are some examples of processes that contain multiple opportunities for automation.

2. Decreased Quality of Life

Working from home can increase employees' quality of life, but when the boundary between work and family is gone, it can be difficult to turn work off. And bosses also can feel that it's permissible to contact employees at any time of day. When your job is always with you at home, employees can feel the pressure to be available at all times. When working from home, appropriate boundaries between work and life can result in a higher quality of life.

3. Spreadsheet Chaos and Data Silos: Do They Hinder Productivity?

When employees and teams work in isolation, spreadsheets are used to coordinate work and organize data across the team. Spreadsheets and files stored on a shared drive can help ensure that each team member has the latest information. Controlled file sharing also reduces unnecessary messages among team members requesting the latest version of a file or the status of a task.

When workers are remote, the data they use can be siloed in different apps. For example, different marketing teams might be using different email platforms to manage social media outreach activities. Various design engineering teams are likely using different design apps, depending on what they prefer.

To solve these challenges, organizations should establish standards for procedures and file formats that facilitate easy data sharing across the company.

4. An Organizational Culture Is Now Imperative

Nurturing an organizational/team culture becomes more important as work becomes more remote. This type of culture will influence how workers are treated and how they do their work. Hiring for the right organizational fit becomes even more critical with a remote workforce, as bad hires in leadership roles will erode culture and cause increased turnover. Below are several things you can do immediately to nurture a productive and healthy organizational culture.

4.1. During the interview process, questions should be asked to gather information from each candidate on the organizational cultures where they've worked and the cultures where they are the most productive. Interviewers' instincts, or gut feelings, can no longer be accepted as the dominant justification for hiring a specific candidate. Intuition-based hiring often leads to bad hires and higher turnovers. To watch a short video describing how to interview candidates for a team, click or go to



https://www.interviewmastery.com/selecting_excellence_from_interviewmastery_bowmo

4.2. Implement a buddy system where newer employees are paired with more seasoned employees. This helps assimilate the new employees into the organization rapidly.

4.3. Generate meeting minutes and a task list during every meeting to document action items and assign who is responsible for completing each task. Track attendees and create a rolling task list for meetings that occur frequently. Strike-through the task when completed, and celebrate completions.

4.4. A team huddle should occur two to three times per week for remote workers. This essentially replaces the natural team interactions in in-person work environments.

5. Increased Demands on Managers

Managing a remote workforce requires weekly one-on-one check-in sessions with each direct report. Too many managers do not have weekly calls with their team members. The result is isolated workers prioritizing their own workloads, and employees who are unaware of changing department priorities. Weekly one-on-one sessions also keeps the manager informed on each employee's progress on key initiatives and cognizant of any personnel issues that need to be resolved quickly.

More frequent communications are required to lead a remote workforce compared to an in-office work environment. A remote workforce also requires a flexible management style that trusts and informs subordinates. *Situational Leadership* by Ken Blanchard is a valuable leadership text whose principles are more relevant today than ever. Situational leadership is a manager's ability to use different management styles depending on the situation and the people involved.