

The Key Ingredients for a Successful Remote Administrative Workforce

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During these unsettling circumstances, we're all concerned, we're all trying to keep ourselves and loved ones healthy and safe; that's the top priority of course. But the other top priority is maintaining continuity at work so that the business can function, as seamlessly as possible, to make it through these difficult times.

A DASH OF PREPARATION

One shocking development during this pandemic was how fast the COVID-19 scenario escalated; so quickly leading to drastic measures like regulating businesses, limiting gatherings, and eventually mandating office closures. The limitations even extended to personal matters, such as denying a spouse's presence at the birth of their child; truly a level that was unimaginable. These are certainly challenging times, and with all the planning and anticipation one might do to be prepared, it's tough to think of everything. The experience to date has been one focused on flexibility and learning, and as the Chief Administrative Officer for Berdon, below are insights and best practices that have been instrumental in keeping the Firm's administrative functions operating efficiently and productively.

Some areas are more difficult than others to shift to a fully functional remote environment. For instance, the Mailroom was a tough one, but due to some proper planning and dedicated team members, we've quickly developed an effective process, which consisted of the following:

- Ensuring the team members had scanning equipment and mailing supplies at home
- Making arrangements with messengers to pick up and deliver mail to a team member's home, as well as to different employees after it's been sorted
- Scanning and emailing the mail to firm employees
- Working with our shipping vendors to arrange for retrieval of undelivered packages

While not 100 percent perfect, things have run pretty smoothly to help keep operations moving and personnel engaged, productive and employed.



A PINCH OF TECHNOLOGY AND A GALLON OF PATIENCE

This was just one example of how preparation has helped keep administrative functions operating during the pandemic. However, preparation may not be enough. Generally, administrative work involves teamwork and collaboration, so it's essential to have the right technology (i.e., Zoom, Jabber, Microsoft Teams) to help administrative personnel stay connected, work together and clarify issues that may be confusing or misinterpreted via email alone. In addition, incorporating an enhanced level of patience and understanding can assist in sustaining administrative duties in today's "new normal." Coping with things moving a little slower, and just being more patient with team members who may need additional guidance or support, is something that should be incorporated into everyone's daily operations, both professionally and personally. Leading a large team spread out over multiple states, combined with rolling out new processes, making logistical arrangements, and encouraging folks to keep morale high, is quite challenging and definitely requires an extra level of patience in order to succeed.

Companies that weren't ready for, or comfortable with, the teleworking concept prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, have certainly been forced to adapt. And it is suspected that those that were not prepared, or lack the technology and patience to adapt, may be struggling to maintain operations and survive—emphasizing the importance of having the right recipe in order to successfully evolve and conform to the ever-changing socio-economic, political and market dynamics.

