



HOW TO KEEP YOUR COMPANY CULTURE CONNECTED ACROSS STATE LINES

Here's how you can build an employee engagement program that transcends distance and time zones.

Namely  HR for Humans

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INTRODUCTION

Modern technology has allowed remote work and offices to flourish. Companies are able to tap into job markets they previously couldn't reach, allowing them to find and recruit top talent from all around the world.

But while there are many advantages to hiring remote workers, there are many challenges as well. Working across different time zones and lack of face-to-face time are just a few of the challenges your team will have to overcome with the right tools and strong communication. And let's not forget the compliance headache having employees in multiple states can cause for your HR team.

Luckily, messaging platforms like Slack, video conferencing, and HR compliance software can help you navigate these difficulties.



The real challenge?

Keeping remote employees engaged with your company culture and happy at work.

So how can you build an employee engagement plan that transcends distance and time zones? Here are a few ideas for how to create a great employee experience for all your employees—regardless of their location.

INVEST IN THE RIGHT RESOURCES

Invest In The Right Resources

In order to have great remote employees, you have to set them up for success. Give them the tools they need to perform their jobs well, share clear expectations, and establish an ongoing communication routine. **Here are two ways to make sure your remote employees feel welcome and are set up for a successful career at your company from day one.**

Employee Directory

The first few months at a new company can be overwhelming for everyone. On top of learning a new industry and getting up to speed, odds are your new employees are trying to memorize their new coworker's names, titles, and responsibilities. This can be especially difficult when employees aren't located in the same office as their coworkers or work from home!

That's why having an easy-to-use employee directory that employees can access anywhere, anytime is so important. The right human resources information system (HRIS) lets your employees look up their colleagues' email addresses, phone numbers, job titles, and even a headshot, so your employees can put a name to a face.



Remote Employee Stipend

To help your remote employees be productive and comfortable at home or wherever they choose to work, consider offering a monthly or annual stipend that they can use to upgrade or outfit their home office. The stipend can go towards installing faster wifi, joining a coworking space, or buying a new keyboard, ergonomic desk chair, or even desk plant—anything that can improve their day-to-day experience and make them more comfortable working at your company.

ORGANIZE FACE-TO-FACE TIME

Organize face-to face time

It can be easy to feel cut off from the rest of the company when you're a remote employee or working in a satellite office. Not to mention, it can be even more difficult to meet people outside of your team. Introducing internal networking opportunities or events that allow your employees who are remote or based out of your smaller offices to meet their new colleagues isn't just good for employee engagement, it could actually drive your bottom line. **Employees who have a best friend at work are reportedly twice as productive as employees who don't.** Here are a few ideas on how your team can build a community that includes every employee and allows them to build meaningful connections at work.



Coffee and Donuts

At Namely, we have a bi-weekly program called “Coffee and Donuts” that randomly assigns an employee with a buddy. Participating employees then set up a time to meet with their buddy, grab a cup of coffee or tea (donuts, optional!), and get to know each other. If matched employees are in the same office, they can grab a coffee in the cafeteria or head out to a nearby cafe to pick some up. If employees are not in the same office, they can share a cup over video chat or phone call.

This program is a great way to expose people to colleagues who they might never have met before or otherwise.

Employees can learn about new areas of the business, discuss projects they're working on, and just get to know someone new on a personal level.



TIP: Not sure coffee and donuts is a good fit for your organization?

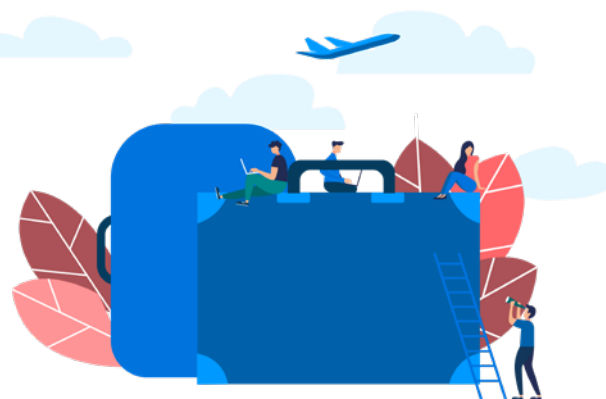
Try introducing a new hire buddy or ongoing mentorship program instead!

ORGANIZE FACE-TO-FACE TIME

Bring Them To HQ

It's hard to get your employees to buy into your business' mission and values if they've never seen or experienced them first hand. If your company has the means to do so, host orientation for remote and satellite office employees at your head office.

Fly them out, put them up, and show them what makes your company unique. It gives them an opportunity not only to learn about your business and brand but also to meet their new coworkers and get a feel for your culture.



That said, orientation shouldn't be the only time your remote employees visit your main office. Be sure to allocate money in your quarterly or annual budget to bring these employees back to town. It can be for your annual user conference, quarterly business reviews, sales kick-off, team offsite—you name it! It's important to give them facetime with their peers and remind them they are a valued member of the team.

When your remote employees are in town, make sure to plan a team dinner, happy hour, or group activity so everyone can get to know each other outside of the office and create some fun memories together.

Executive Face Time

Make sure your executives regularly visit your satellite offices or connect with remote employees when they're passing through their cities. Their presence alone can help boost morale and remind employees that their contributions are seen and appreciated at the even highest levels. It also gives your C-suite leaders and opportunity to learn about your different offices, hear feedback from employees, and share ideas.



TIP: If your execs have travel plans that bring them nearby your remote employees, encourage them to schedule time for coffee, dinner, or drinks with any employees in the area.

ORGANIZE FACE-TO-FACE TIME

Coordinate Events Across Offices

Try to plan events across all your offices at the same so everyone can join in the reverie. For example, if you want to host a hot chocolate bar in your New York and California offices, pick a time that would work for both—like 4:30 pm ET and 1:30 PM PT. This way all of your employees can celebrate at the same time. You can even share a live feed of the events in other offices so everyone can see what the other offices are up to.

Don't forget about your remote employees!

Make sure they can enjoy the fun too. For example, put together a small hot chocolate care package in this example, send them a restaurant gift card if you're having a team dinner, or send them a bottle of their favorite drink if you planned a department happy hour—anything that reminds them you're thinking of them and that they will be missed at the event!

Host Remote-Only Events

Happy hours are a great way to encourage your employees to unwind and get to know each other outside of the office—and remote employees shouldn't have to miss out on all the fun!

Consider hosting a “virtual happy hour” for all of your remote employees.

Encourage them to log on to a video conference call with a beverage of their choice and participate in some casual chatter with their fellow telecommuting colleagues. If people are reluctant to speak up or if the flow of conversation dies down, be sure to have an HR rep on the call ready to jump in with some questions to keep the conversation going.





OPTIMIZE MEETINGS

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If you have remote employees or multiple offices, odds are your employees will have many meetings across multiple time zones and over the phone or on video chat. Here are a few ways to make phone and video calls more productive, convenient, and fair for all participants—regardless of whether they're in the office, across the country, or around the globe.

Choose When To Meet Wisely

Try to choose a meeting time where everyone can attend, so no one is left out. It will not only help you ensure everyone's voice is heard, but it will also ensure everyone is on the same page.



TIP: If certain meetings require your employees to wake up extra early or log on late, try moving those meetings around periodically so no one gets the short end of the stick.



Try Fully Remote Meetings

When the majority of the meeting's participants are in a room together, your remote participants can feel cut off and have trouble getting their opinions heard. Between in-person attendees speaking over each other and slow wifi, people dialing in might have a hard time keeping up with the flow of conversation.

Want to even the playing field? Have everyone on your team, even those in the office, take calls virtually. That way, everyone is more cognizant of taking turns speaking and including their remote colleagues in the conversation.

Too extreme? Consider investing in a new meeting technology. Ever been on a video call where participants were off-camera? It can be hard identifying who's speaking if you can't see them.

The Meeting Owl pivots its head to capture whoever is speaking, so the folks at home get a front-row seat to all of the action and can see and hear like they're sitting in the room themselves.



RECOGNIZE YOUR EMPLOYEES

When your employees do a good job, let them know.

RECOGNIZE YOUR EMPLOYEES

Recognize Your Employees

When your employees do a good job, let them know.

One Gallup study revealed that companies that approach employee recognition strategically had nearly 25 percent lower turnover rates than companies who didn't. Whether it's with a shout out at the company all-hands meeting or a handwritten thank you note, employees love hearing that their contributions matter.

25%

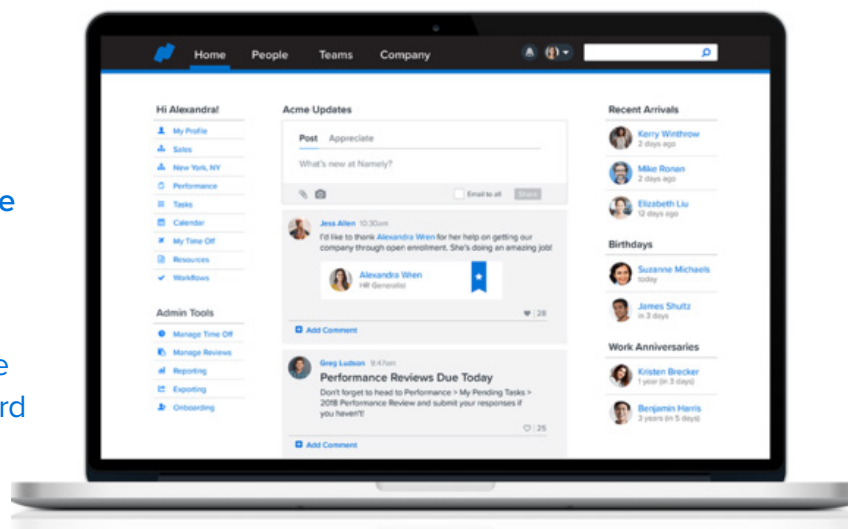
One Gallup study revealed that companies that approach employee recognition strategically had nearly 25 percent lower turnover rates than companies who didn't.

But when it comes to acknowledging your employees' accomplishments, make sure your remote employees aren't out of sight and out of mind. Be sure to highlight not just the great work your employees at your head office produce, but also the contributions of your remote and satellite office employees. Some companies even introduce remote employee-specific awards to honor their telecommuting staff, like a "Remote Employee of the Month" award.

Another great way to acknowledge your employees is to allow them to thank and reward their peers for a job well done.

Namely's acknowledgment feature allows employees to give shoutouts to their colleagues and post them on the company feed for everyone to see and celebrate.

Peer-to-peer recognition programs allow employees to nominate a colleague that has gone above and beyond at work and, sometimes, reward them for their hard work.



Giftcards, extra PTO days, a sweet treat, or an old fashioned handwritten note—a little acknowledgement can go a long way to motivate your employees to continue to do their best work.

CONCLUSION

Maintaining a cohesive and consistent company culture is hard enough in one office, let alone at a new satellite office 2,000 miles away or for all your remote employees scattered across the globe.

Luckily, technology can help lessen the burden.

A great HRIS, like [Namely](#), can help bring your employees together wherever they may be. Between detailed org charts, company resources, an employee directory, paystubs, and time management, Namely is your HR dream come true. It keeps all of your company information organized in one place so your employees can find and access the information they need, whenever and wherever they need it.

That's not all: Namely's interactive social feed allows you to share important company news and updates, pictures from company events, as well as celebrate important employee milestones, like birthdays and work anniversaries.

Interested in learning how Namely can help you engage your remote employees?

Sign up for a personalized platform walkthrough today!



ABOUT NAMELY

Namely is the #1 HR Software company that empowers midsize businesses to build better workplaces. Its cloud-based software brings HCM, benefits, insights, payroll, and time into a single-view platform to help modern HR teams make data-driven decisions about their people and understand what's really going on in their workforce.

The Namely ecosystem includes powerful integrations with market-leading applicant tracking, identity management, ERP, compliance, E-Verify solutions, and more. Serving more than 1,400 clients with 280,000 employees globally, the company is backed by leading investors, including Altimeter Capital, GGV Capital, Matrix Partners, Scale Venture Partners, Sequoia Capital, Tenaya Capital, and True Ventures. For more information, visit www.Namely.com.

Visit www.Namely.com or request a demo to see how Namely's HR software can help your organization.