



EBOOK

Leading in the

NEW NORMAL

Four Strategies for Leading a Virtual Workforce

Ken^{THE}Blanchard[®]
COMPANIES

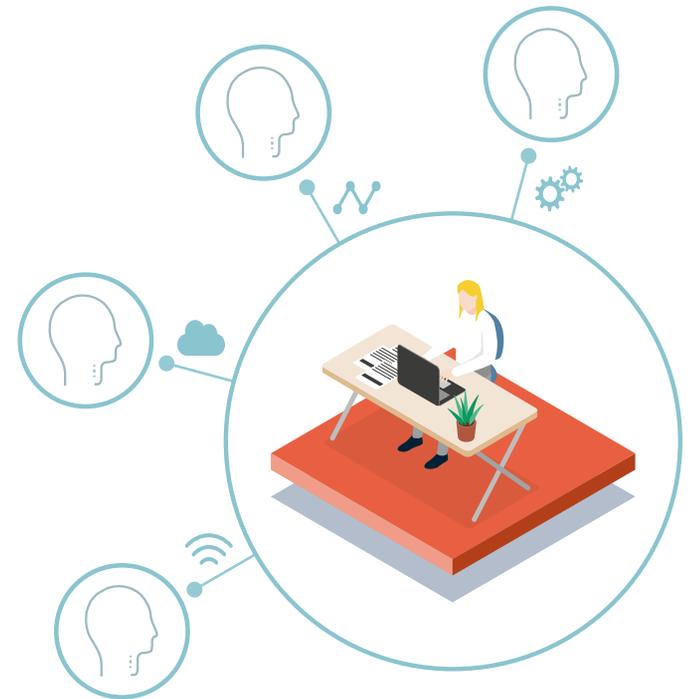


In late 2019, the International Workplace Group (IWG) global workspace survey of more than 15,000 workers showed that more than two-thirds of professionals around the world telecommute at least one day a week, with 53 percent working remotely at least half of the week.





Given current world events, that number is vastly different today. Now, millions of individuals around the world have shifted to a full-time work-from-home status. As a result, leaders who once led primarily in a face-to-face environment are being challenged with the task of embracing a new role as a virtual leader, perhaps for the first time.



Other findings from the IWG survey indicate that the current work-from-home paradigm might

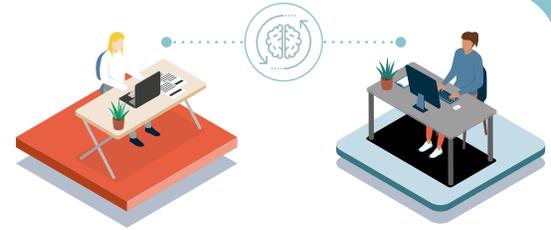
NEVER

shift back to working full-time from a corporate location.

The results show a major power shift toward the employee—they now have more input on how they work and where they work. Employees, now used to the flexibility of working from home, may demand this as their new normal, especially if they've demonstrated they are just as productive and competent working from home. This makes the role of the virtual leader more vital than ever to organizational success.

Develop a Servant Leader Mindset

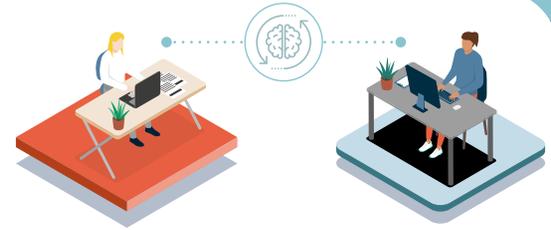
WHY IT'S IMPORTANT



Servant leaders care about both people and results—they know the only way to get results is through their people. So they focus on the needs of their people first, knowing that their people will, in turn, take care of the customer. Most leaders have deliverables and project responsibilities beyond leadership. Without employees at your door asking for attention, it's easy to focus on your own priorities first and your people second. Whether or not you are aware of it, your team can sense when they are not your priority. You can accomplish impressive results on your own, but it's important to remember that the value you add is multiplied when you focus on leading your team toward success.

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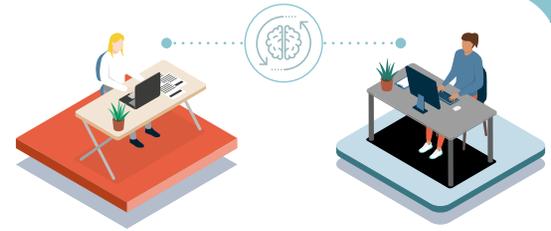
HOW TO DO IT



Focusing on others makes them feel important and fosters inspiration. Inspired employees take the initiative and often suggest process improvements to make work easier and provide better results. They also take the lead on their own projects and tasks. As your team members become more competent and committed, they help you achieve your results.

Develop a Servant Leader Mindset

HOW TO DO IT

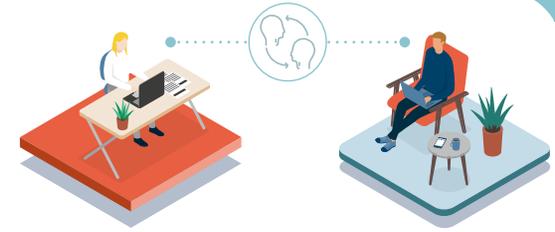


Key attributes of a servant leader include

- Setting clear goals in a collaborative effort with direct reports
- Praising progress and recognizing accomplishments
- Revisiting goals often enough to make sure everyone is on the same page
- Involving people in discussing their own development
- Giving people the direction and support they need when they need it

Be Attentive and Mindful

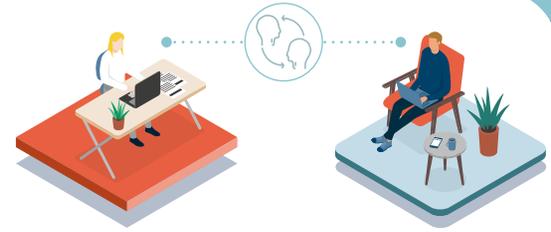
WHY IT'S IMPORTANT



Leaders need to be attentive and mindful in their conversations with team members. That's important in a face-to-face scenario, but it's essential in a virtual work environment. Attentiveness means knowing the goals, motivations, needs, and experiences of team members and recognizing when changes occur. Because working effectively in a virtual environment requires a high level of independence, leaders must consistently communicate their desire to connect personally with team members.

Be Attentive and Mindful

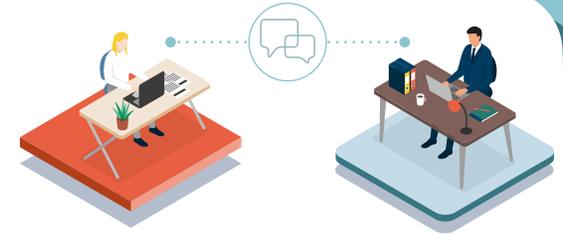
HOW TO DO IT



- **Be present.** Leaders need to practice being more present in meetings and calls and help others be more present as well.
- **Pay attention to individual differences.** Know what motivates each person and which approach to use in a virtual work setting.
- **Lead with intention.** This is about the leader taking a minute to think before they act and focus on the energy they want to bring to every interaction.

Ask for Feedback and Act on It

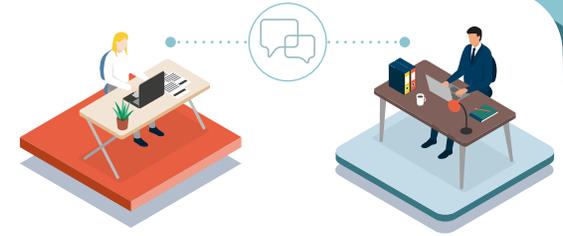
WHY IT'S IMPORTANT



As a virtual leader, you can't observe visual clues such as shifts in body language or eye contact that might signal discomfort, misunderstanding, or ineffective communication, so two-way communication becomes even more important. To be effective, leaders must put their egos aside and solicit honest feedback from team members.

Ask for Feedback and Act on It

HOW TO DO IT



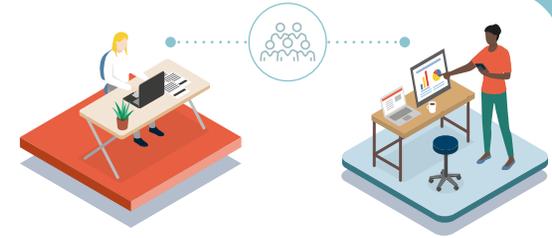
These three questions can work wonders if you ask them regularly and act on them cheerfully:

- **What do I do that helps you?**
- **What do I do that gets in your way?**
- **What could I do to help you be more successful?**

If you don't get feedback the first time you ask, repeat the questions regularly. And when the gift of feedback comes, accept it graciously and use it to strengthen and benefit your relationship with your team members. They will appreciate your efforts.

Foster Community

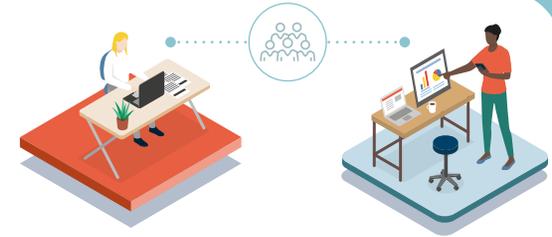
WHY IT'S IMPORTANT



Most leaders are unaware of how much they connect to an organization and a team by being on-site. Face-to-face, leaders pick up cultural cues and norms by observing behavior, dress, language, and communication patterns. Effective virtual leaders work diligently to connect team members to the larger organization by actively facilitating collaboration, creating the team culture, and helping virtual workers unite to build community spirit.

Foster Community

HOW TO DO IT



- **Build trust.** In a virtual environment, it's easy to be out of sight, out of mind. Being present is one way to build trust.
- **Provide technology support.** Too many people who are newly remote workers have only laptops and don't have a separate monitor. Organizations should show people they care by providing them with the equipment and support they need.
- **Invest in connection.** Leaders need to dedicate time to talk—just catch up, check in, and stay connected.
- **Celebrate success.** Celebrating is all about recognizing individual and team contributions. Look for ways to do that in the virtual world.



In many ways, good virtual leadership is the same as good face-to-face leadership. It's about doing all the important things leaders need to do, but in a different medium and environment.

Research shows that anything leaders do in a face-to-face environment, they need to do more of, and better, in a virtual environment.





To learn more about how Blanchard virtual solutions can help your leaders and your organization lead in the new normal and thrive in these challenging times, visit

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