Motivation boost from afar. Employee motivation when working from home.

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Those who work from home or on a mobile basis are less motivated than colleagues at the office. This is shown by a large-scale study by Harper Business, published in July this year in the *Harvard Business Manager*. Additionally, motivation is lowest among employees who have no choice as to where they can work. With this in mind, a pandemic that has relocated millions of people to working from home – at least temporarily – is not exactly helpful. Because after weeks of virtual collaboration from home, there is the risk that employees' motivation will decrease more and more – and with it their ability to concentrate and their work efficiency.

The following five typical motivation killers are particularly burdensome for many employees – this applies even more in the case of remote work:

1. **Meaninglessness**

A person who sees no meaning in his work can hardly be motivated. When working from home, this motivation killer is frequently strengthened when employees no longer receive feedback on their work because they have no direct contact with the company. Companies have the best chances against meaninglessness when they develop clear objectives with their employees and discuss the successes together. It is just as important to communicate the reasons behind decisions regularly. And this also works remotely.

2. **The classic demotivator: a poor company climate**

Resentment, petty jealousies and workplace bullying demotivate employees and damage the company climate immensely. The cause can mostly be found in a lack of communication. Often, there is already a lack of respectful and attentive communication between the superiors and the employees – also among each other. Respect and attentiveness must be demonstrated authentically by the managers in order to anchor them in the company culture. This lays the foundation for appreciation, team work and a feeling of belonging.

3. **Wasting of potential**

Recurring, monotonous tasks without the prospect of optimisation or changes make employees sluggish. If the (technical) discussions between colleagues that usually develop spontaneously at the workplace then nearly stop completely due to the need to work from home, one quickly ends up working to rule. Training in the form of online webinars are the perfect opportunity to strengthen individual potential, including – or especially – during a pandemic. Additionally, within companies, modern collaboration tools can be used to set up virtual knowledge spaces in which employees can exchange subject-specific knowledge.

4. **Poor equipment**

Largely underestimated but a real motivation killer: when the basic technical equipment – from IT equipment to the software to the slow internet line – does not do its job, people quickly lose the desire to work. Additionally, when the furniture does not meet the ergonomic requirements of a workstation or there is no pleasant indoor climate, health can be hindered. Many sick days are due to back pain, muscle tension and incorrectly set air-conditioning systems. The investments in optimal basic equipment in the form of high-quality furniture and a modern IT infrastructure are very

low in comparison to the costs of a lack of motivation.

5. **Micromanagement**

Micromanagement is the poor quality of managers of interfering in every little work process of the employees. Why should an employee make the effort to perform assignments conscientiously if they are constantly overruled or performed again? Concomitant with this is disregard for employees' performance. To avoid misunderstandings in the team, the distribution of tasks should be defined and updated at regular intervals. Take mistakes in learning processes on board and optimise workflows together with your colleagues.

When architecture curbs motivation.

If, in future, the occupation of offices is reduced due to the increase of remote work from home, the space gained as a result of this can be used for innovative purposes. Project rooms, creative zones and casually designed break rooms encourage employees to connect with each other, exchange ideas and stimulate processes together. Attractively designed rooms are part of extrinsic motivation. Only the freedom to work independently on solutions that also make sense to the employees activates intrinsic motivation and binds it to the room. The rest then comes by itself or, "Work that makes you happy is already half done!"