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## Remote Management: Unique Challenges

The further apart we get geographically, the closer we need to be in terms of communication and collaboration. But, these two critical conduits to [successful management of remote employees](#) will not magically appear. There are specific skills and protocols that need to be learned—because there are challenges and logistics inherent in the remote workplace model that don't exist in the traditional centralized workplace.

There's also a strong mindset, being fueled in large part by the exponential growth of online social networking, for groups of people to communicate regularly and collaborate naturally. Among other pursuits, this is showing up in training environments—where socially networked groups are learning together and sharing experiences. In essence, they're creating self-directed training environments.

So, what are some of the ways remote environments differ from centralized workplaces?

1. **Promoting a vision.** It's hard enough for leaders to promote their corporate vision when you have everyone in one place. Multiply the difficulty by a factor of two, three or more when you have remote worker teams. An article in the December issue of Training & Development Magazine (T+D) quotes Diane Valenti, president of Applied Performance Solutions. She points out, "It is already difficult for new leaders to drive their vision down the organization and when people are out in virtual teams, I think it is going to be even more imperative that communication happens so that everybody is working toward the same vision. I think it is going to be a lot harder to tie all of the pieces together."

Remote employee management excellence won't happen in a vacuum. Training remote employees and managers to get on the same page, vision-wise, will require consistent dedication and diligence.

2. **Tying together different age groups.** When a 50-year-old and 25-year-old sit in the same room, you have a controlled environment in which to establish communication. When those two people are separated by miles, it is more challenging to find common links and bonds that can help the communication process.

Notes Bonnie Hagemann, CEO of Executive Development Associates, in the T+D article, "The younger generation is really good at relating to their generation, but they may not be as good relating to other generations. What are they going to do when they have to relate across generations? That is the piece we are really going to have to teach them—the art of communication." Once again, that won't occur in a vacuum. Remote employee training can provide a path to bridge these natural gaps.

3. **Finding a common language, literally.** Hagemann points out, "There will be a greater focus on learning and development. Learning professionals are going to be so important to the future of the workplace. Executives are going to come to us and say, 'We have a workforce spread across five countries and in three different languages, can you figure out how to teach this person [to] lead that global workforce?'"

Valenti adds, "The workforce is going to be much more global. I worked on a project earlier this year and on my team we had a Russian, an Italian, and a Greek. There were no individuals who were born in the U.S.—all

immigrants. This is the future. We are going to be reaching out into the world for talent—especially if the economy tanks. We are going to be looking for business opportunities in other parts of the world. We are going to be working with a much more diverse workforce. Trainers are going to need to be much more aware of cultural norms in other countries. We can't assume that everybody does business the way we do business."

[Remote employee management training](#) teaches workforces how to be up close and personal—no matter where they're located.

Tags: [global workforce](#), [remote employee management](#), [remote employee training](#), [remote worker](#)

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