

Leader's Guide to **Navigating Change** in a Remote Workplace



Navigating change in the new remote world

We are experiencing an unprecedented time of change and uncertainty. As leaders tackle uncharted territory, how do you lead your workforce through change in the new working world? This guide offers advice and best practices for leaders to successfully navigate change in a remote working world.

For executive leaders:

Learn how to lead your workforce through uncertainty and change

For IT leaders:

Learn how IT teams can support business continuity in a remote workplace

For HR and L&D leaders:

Learn how to enable employee success in a remote workplace

For people managers:

Learn how to help employees work from home productively

Executive leaders:

How to lead your workforce through uncertainty and change

Advice from: Darren Shimkus,
President of Udemy for Business

As executive leaders, we are being put to the test and must rise to the challenge of leading our workforce through today's unprecedented change and uncertainty. At Udemy, we are fortunate to have great leaders across the company, from HR to IT to Product, coming together to devise, implement, and communicate our response quickly as events unfold in real-time. While we are continually improving and evolving our response as leaders, here are a few tips and lessons learned from our experience on how to lead through change and uncertainty.

Calm is more valuable than panic

This might seem obvious, but when you are feeling seemingly infinite stress is the **exact** moment your team needs to see you calm. It can be hard to remember that in a time of crisis, leaders should strive to exude a sense of calm. Remember, calm is more impactful than panic. Your employees will look to you to determine their own sentiment. It's crucial for leaders to be the calm in the storm and show confidence in the path you're taking. Demonstrating you're the unflappable captain navigating your ship through uncharted waters is crucial. Showing that you are prepared as an organization, informed as a leader, and making calculated and strategic decisions in a time of crisis builds confidence.

Suggested course: [Exceptional Leadership: Leading at a Higher Level](#)



Exceptional Leadership: Leading at a Higher Level

Ron Carucci

4.4 ★★★★★ (61)

Authenticity as a leader

Be sure to show your authenticity and vulnerability as a leader. Calm is essential, but authenticity means avoiding sugar-coating your communications; instead, be transparent and straightforward about the situation. Employees appreciate this honesty. Today's environment requires you to show your vulnerable side and bring your whole self to work as a leader. As you work remotely, this might be including your dog in your Zoom meeting or letting your kids run by in the background. The more employees see a 360-degree view or the "human side" of their leader, the more confident and trusting they will feel about your leadership.

Overcommunicate and lead with empathy

We strive to always put our people and communities at the forefront of our decision-making. Empathy and communication are the most critical priorities for us to lead our workforce and business through this time of change and uncertainty. And we're communicating more than ever at Udemy. We're hosting more frequent all-hands meetings, Q&A sessions, weekly virtual "Kitchen Table" talks, and we're reaching out directly to employees. It's not just about communicating the big things but also connecting with people on a personal level. For example, this might mean posting fun photos of ourselves on our Slack channel or participating in our virtual pet happy hour.

However, as a leader, you have to think carefully about how you communicate in our new remote world. Leaders often transmit their feelings about the business through subtle body language, but employees can't see these cues in a remote environment. Conversely, video conferences can magnify even the most subtle of nonverbal cues. Check in with yourself and think about what your words, tone, voice, and entire manner are communicating. How do we replicate nonverbal communication and casual hallway conversations? To compensate for this, overcommunicate to every group possible, watch every signal, and be intentional about the message you're sending to the team.

Tap into key stakeholders as your "response team"

In any crisis, the first step is to create a small response team of key stakeholders. We held daily standup meetings for our executive leadership team to discuss the rapidly unfolding situation and strategize our response. The leadership team continuously monitors the latest news, keeps pace with local and national health authorities, and follows how large enterprises respond to the situation. Our top concern is our employees and their families' health and safety. Nothing is more important. We are also laser-focused on how Udemy can help our students, instructor partners, and customers in this trying time.

As a second step, create working groups to conduct scenario planning across several business continuity

issues. For example, one of our working groups focused on what it would mean if we all worked from home. Another group analyzed possible scenarios on how our product would be impacted. In our scenario planning, we focused on reacting to what might occur in the next two weeks. In a fast-moving crisis, we were planning for what would happen next, rather than the current situation. Being predictive in our scenario planning enabled us to move quickly and announce mandatory remote work to help protect our employees and community.



Adding some fun to a recent video call.

Build a resilient organization

An organization that is able to navigate these fast-changing and uncertain times usually lays the groundwork long before the crisis hits. There are several elements of our company that helped us be prepared and resilient in this time of change. Here are a few key elements that can help an organization be resilient in uncertain times:

Agile planning principles

We already used an agile planning process which we've been implementing across functions to meet our quarterly and annual goals. Having this muscle enabled us to put together a rapid response plan on the fly.

Moreover, we can't stay on autopilot with our goals and strategy and charge straight ahead. We have to ask ourselves: What has changed? What doesn't matter anymore? What really matters now? We are constantly re-examining everything we're doing in this new world.

At the same time, alignment absolutely matters. If we're all not rowing in the same direction, we're just going in circles.

Cutting-edge IT infrastructure with built-in redundancies

We were already building our IT infrastructure to be the "best of breed" to support a globally distributed workforce. This included video conferencing, internal communication tools, and key digital project management tools. As part of long-term preparedness and resilience, our Engineering Infrastructure team also built redundancies into our cloud server infrastructure by relying on multiple cloud and internet providers to ensure our business can continue without any downtime even during a crisis.

With more people around the world spending time at home and learning new skills online, traffic to Udemy.com has increased dramatically in recent weeks. However, our infrastructure could scale quickly, enabling us to respond to a sudden spike in traffic and usage on our product. Our Engineering Infrastructure team has been essential in adding capacity to ensure tens of millions of learners, instructors, and customers have access to our platform when they need it. As an e-commerce and SaaS business, redundancies in our IT infrastructure were critical for our business continuity and preparedness. For other businesses, preparing for a crisis might involve building in redundancies and diversity in your supply chain.

Learning mindset and change agility

In addition, it's essential to develop change agility within your organization and workforce. At Udemy, we've been working on developing this competency over the last year and are seeing the payoff in these uncertain times. This isn't about the traditional approach to change management where we think through how to cascade change down. Instead, we focus on helping individuals build the skills necessary to thrive in changing environments. For example, because we're a fast-changing startup, we developed a Change Agent workshop to help our employees build change agility and resilience. Our workshop incorporated escape room puzzles and quick-changing rules to simulate an environment of surprise and sudden change. We recently took this workshop virtual for our remote workforce

to help our teams develop the tools and mindset to navigate the current situation of change and uncertainty.

Workforce planning

Workforce planning is a vital element of business resilience and crisis preparedness. Managers need to take an inventory of skills at the team level to understand which individuals can help employees impacted by the pandemic or crisis. You'll want to support employees who need to take time out to care for a child or a loved one. For example, having a buddy system for employees to cover each other's jobs if someone is out is prudent planning even without a crisis. Upskilling and reskilling employees is also another strategy for short- and long-term workforce resource planning.

Suggested course:

Change Agility in the Workplace



Change Agility in the Workplace: Become a Change Agent

Shelley Osborne

4.2 ★★★★★ (75)

Plan for what's next

Post-COVID-19, there's no doubt that what we're experiencing now will fundamentally shift how we work. Remote work is happening at scale and will become more accepted. This opens up the talent pool to candidates in all geographies, not just in the cities where you have offices. Business travel and conference attendance will likely be re-evaluated. Online learning has officially gone mainstream. Our instructors are helping millions of students around the world in a time where learning has never been more important. Businesses, governments, and organizations are focused on supporting their employees right now, and they're turning to online learning. Outdated training models have been thrown out overnight, and companies are pivoting to virtual, asynchronous approaches.

Organizations need to start thinking about what happens in a post-COVID workplace. Will they let people choose to work remotely if they prefer? Will they need a smaller office footprint as a result? Now that learning has gone digital, will they continue to rely on digital learning tools as part of their training resources? Will organizations reduce business travel to only what's essential? These are some of the lasting effects that might redefine the workplace over the next few years.

We are living through an unprecedented time which will no doubt go down in our history books. There are many lessons learned and challenges for leaders as we lead our workforce through this uncertain time and keep our employees safe. As leaders, we must do our best to run the business prudently, understand and anticipate what's happening, and chart an intelligent path through a fast-changing situation.



Darren Shimkus,
President of UdeMy for Business

As President of UdeMy for Business, Darren is at the helm of an online workplace learning business helping organizations support their workforce through a time of uncertainty and change. Darren has nearly two decades of experience building and leading high performing sales, marketing, and product management teams through change. Prior to UdeMy, he served as Senior Vice President of Global Sales and Business Development at Mophie, responsible for driving revenue across the Americas, EMEA, and Asia. Darren worked previously at the Corporate Executive Board (CEB), serving in various product development, sales, and general management roles. He received his BA from William & Mary and his MBA from Stanford University.

IT leaders:

How IT teams can support business continuity in a remote workplace

Advice from UdeMy's experts: Amrith Nambiar, VP of IT, Vlad Berkovsky, VP of Infrastructure, and Frank Osborne, Director of Information Security

Similar to many organizations, UdeMy underwent a complete digital shift with a mandate that all employees work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. While our technical teams are experienced in empowering a worldwide employee base, transitioning the entire 600+ person global workforce to an at-home workforce required a swift roll-out of processes and best practices for remote work and business continuity.

Here are some of our technical tips to help your employees work successfully in their new remote workspace and ensure business continuity.

Cybersecurity

With employees working remotely on home networks, cybersecurity is more important than ever for companies of all sizes. Here are some suggested security measures companies should institute now, as well as the risks they should monitor carefully in the near future.

Implement single sign-on

Consider implementing a single sign-on (SSO) service for employees to easily and securely access the business apps and services required in their roles. An SSO tool allows employees to use one set of credentials to log in to all the apps and services that they've been given access to by the IT team.

Not only is it convenient for employees to have what otherwise looks like one account on a service like Okta, but it's also an essential tool in a company's security toolkit. The IT team has precise control over which services employees use, their permission levels, and can easily change access control when employees join or leave the company.

Suggested course: [Risk Management for Cybersecurity and IT Managers](#)



Risk Management for Cybersecurity and IT Managers

Jason Dion • 170,000+ Students Worldwide, Dion T...

4.5 ★★★★★ (2,244)

Require multi-factor authentication

Part of strong SSO use includes multi-factor authentication (MFA) at login. In addition to a username and password, MFA asks users to input a secondary credential, which can be retrieved from a linked phone app, text message, biometric recognition, or other authentication means. The additional layer of security mitigates the risk of a bad actor penetrating corporate systems with just an email address and password alone.

Provide recommendations on home network security

Home network security may not be as advanced as the corporate office. Internet of Things (IoT) devices and misconfigured or outdated network equipment may expose employees and company workstations to threats on home networks. Avoid public Wi-Fi at all costs, but if that's the only option, a VPN client should be used. Ensure company workstations and software are up-to-date and local firewalls are enabled. Endpoint threat protection solutions should be enabled on all workstations to alert your Security and IT personnel of endpoint risks.

Provide employee guidance on new security scams

With a workforce on high alert for communications and news on COVID-19, cybercriminals may take advantage of people's interest in the subject via email scams. While building awareness of and providing guidance on phishing attempts should already be part of a company's cybersecurity policy, it's important to revisit how employees can defend themselves against scammers.

Suggested course: [The Beginner's 2020 Cyber Security Awareness Training Course](#)



The Beginner's 2020 Cyber Security Awareness Training Course

Reza Zaheri

4.6 ★★★★★ (796)

Proactively outline safeguards employees should take to avoid falling victim to a phishing scam. For instance:

- Specify how employees should expect to receive official company announcements and directives during this time. Will it always be an email from the CEO?

- Be cautious with most emails. Brand impersonation is a common tactic of phishing scams. Even when an email is coming from what looks to be a trusted colleague, be aware of small differences such as an unusual number in an email address or strange formatting.
- Never provide sensitive information (passwords, financial information, etc.) on email or chat tools. If you've received a password reset email that you didn't request, reach out directly to the IT team.

On the back end, if your company hasn't already invested in security prevention software, now is the time to investigate solutions that prevent suspicious emails from reaching employees.

IT operations

With companies instructing their employees to work from home for the foreseeable future, IT leaders must adapt their typical internal guidance to include the unique requirements of each employee now working remotely. Here's how your team can help employees make a seamless transition to remote work.

Maintain consistent and transparent IT support

The new normal for IT teams will likely be centered around troubleshooting a fresh set of issues daily — from home office setup to internet bandwidth to home networking. In addition to ensuring VPN infrastructure is intact, there will be questions on cables, routers, or monitor recommendations.

Because employees can no longer swing by the office IT department and there are many new variables in technology usage, your team must be available and transparent on issues that may arise. A few ways your IT team can provide support for employees include:

- **IT office hours** - In order to get through the initial remote work transition, offer IT office hours for employees to drop in to a video call and ask questions to an IT staff member.
- **Up-to-date wiki pages** - It's helpful to update your internal IT wiki or intranet with troubleshooting tips, FAQs for new remote tooling, and more.

- **Allocate budget for IT office supplies:** It's important to make sure employees have a comfortable and ergonomic setup at home. If possible, allocate a budget for employees to purchase work gear like monitors, desk chairs, or keyboards.

Double down on communication & productivity apps

Vital to the successful transition to a remote workforce is the compulsory use of products that enhance communication and project management. Institute collaborative tools like Slack or Microsoft Teams for chat, Zoom or GoToMeeting for meetings and facetime, Asana or Jira for project management, and Google Drive for a cloud-based office suite.

For optimal use of tools like video conferencing, recommend that employees use a laptop or external webcam. The nuance and connection of face-to-face communication don't have to be lost in a remote company.

Keep an eye on security

It's worth repeating that the security of your systems is crucial right now to keep operations running as normal. Instruct your team to proactively stay up to date with relevant patches and updates to the software and tooling used across the company. Vendors with cloud-based products are seeing a spike in usage as global businesses move remote, so their products are adapting quickly. Stay well-informed of potential risks by taking bug reports from your employees seriously, maintaining regular communication with vendors, and following industry news sources.

IT infrastructure

Ensuring your IT infrastructure is prepared for a crisis is also an integral part of an IT business continuity strategy. Here are a few tips for building a technical infrastructure that can maintain your company's systems in a time of uncertainty and change.

For flexibility, adopt hybrid cloud infrastructure

Build your infrastructure on a highly flexible cloud environment. Don't rely on a single public

cloud provider for compute capacity. Build a hybrid infrastructure consisting of a private cloud (a hosted data center at a third-party offsite location) and a public cloud (a service like AWS, Azure, or Google Cloud). A hybrid approach allows you to quickly scale your systems by adding more server capacity to your public cloud platform as needed. Not only is it more efficient for your systems, but it also keeps your cloud budget under control. As site usage ebbs and flows, so can your server use and its related costs.

For high availability, create redundancy

Your infrastructure goal is to have at least N+1 redundancy or no single points of failure anywhere within your infrastructure platform. To achieve this, your site shouldn't rely on a single internet service provider. Instead, use multiple providers, which helps achieve high-availability goals.

For quick response times, use DevOps automation

Rely on DevOps automation tools and processes to ensure rapid response times. Embrace a strong DevOps mindset. Create a well-defined process for change and incident management with good visibility into your products' key performance metrics.

The DevOps practice includes a feature called Infrastructure as Code (IaC), an important automation tool as you scale cloud environments to accommodate site usage. IaC automates the provisioning of IT infrastructure so that developers don't have to manually provision servers or storage as they develop and deploy new applications.

Tech leaders in IT, security, and software engineering are quickly redeveloping business norms to face an uncertain time. By pivoting processes quickly and maintaining clear lines of communication with employees, your technical investments will continue to support business continuity in a new remote workplace.

Suggested course: Learn DevOps:
Infrastructure Automation With Terraform



Learn DevOps: Infrastructure Automation With Terraform

Edward Viaene

4.4 ★★★★★ (6,066)



Amrith Nambiar,
VP of IT at Udem

Amrith Nambiar brings over 15 years of experience to his role as Vice President of Information Technology at Udem. He currently leads the IT, Business Systems, System Architecture, and Procurement teams throughout the company. Amrith's prior experience saw him drive digital transformation, design enterprise systems architecture, and build IT governance strategies at companies including Workday, ServiceSource, and MindJet among others



Vlad Berkovsky,
VP of Infrastructure & Cloud Operations at Udem

Vlad Berkovsky is Vice President of Infrastructure, responsible for driving the infrastructure strategy, site reliability and security roadmap across Udem. With over 20 years of experience, Vlad has worked with a number of high-growth companies and across a variety of industries. Most recently, Vlad oversaw infrastructure engineering at Credit Karma, scaling the site to support over a 100 million of users. Prior to that, he was in charge of network engineering and security at Shutterfly Inc.



Frank Osborne,
Director of Information Security at Udem

Frank Osborne is the Director of Information Security at Udem. His career spans 20+ years of IT operations, security governance, and risk & compliance management. Prior to leading Udem's security operations, Frank worked on application security at Walgreens and spent years advising companies on best practices for compliance, vulnerability management, and regulatory requirements.

HR and L&D leaders:

How to enable employee success in a remote workplace

Advice from Udemy's experts: Cara Brennan Allamano, Senior Vice President of People + Places and Shelley Osborne, Vice President of Learning

We've spent a lot of time in the People function thinking about the future of work. Many of us have been moving our organizations towards a more digitally enabled workplace with collaborative tools like Slack for internal communication, online learning platforms, or Augmented Reality onboarding tools. At Udemy, we've been trying to lead the way internally for a different type of working environment, but that has dramatically accelerated in recent times.

We recognize that many People and Learning & Development (L&D) leaders are feeling anxious and uncertain. Here are a few strategies and concrete steps to help you navigate your organization through this time of unprecedented change.

Quick pivot: Mobilizing your People and L&D team

If you're making a rapid transition to remote work (or any significant change), the first step is to mobilize your People and L&D team to make quick pivots. This begins with doing an audit. We asked ourselves the following three questions:

- What do we have that's still working, and we should keep doing?
- What do we have that needs to be discarded completely?

- What do we need to build new and how does that shape the roadmap?

Currently, our L&D roadmap covers only the next two weeks because we have to be agile in these fast-changing times. This timeframe feels right because we're trying to maintain a balance between being prepared while also acknowledging we can't predict what's going to happen next. In short, we don't want to over plan in such an uncertain and unpredictable situation.

Our L&D team already follows an agile methodology, so we're used to being scrappy, delivering a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) — or what we call "V1" — and constantly iterating. We also frame our work through the point of need and time. This allows us to re-evaluate based on our current needs. Our team has been asking, "What matters now? What matters most? What doesn't matter anymore?"

Enabling remote work throughout the employee lifecycle

At Udemy, we address challenges through the lens of learning. When our leaders are considering how to tackle what lies ahead, we focus on our ability to have a growth mindset and learn through these challenges and opportunities. We believe in the importance of approaching problems by asking, "How do we learn through this? What are points of knowledge that we need to have as a foundation before addressing process change or policy change?"

The questions our People team considers are: “Where do we start and what is the prioritization? How do we leverage our resources to serve our employee community?” Our goal is to keep the employee experience as positive as possible. As we support our newly remote organization, we’re organizing our programs around the different stages of the employee lifecycle and reallocating resources to address them digitally.

Recruiting and interviewing

When shifting to an all-remote recruiting and interviewing experience, we emphasize aligning a candidate’s expectations with those of the organization and we’ve developed plans for how to do this remotely. It’s also critical to empower managers to make hiring decisions when they haven’t met someone in person. To help give managers the confidence they need to do this, we’ve leaned on our interview and decision-making training.

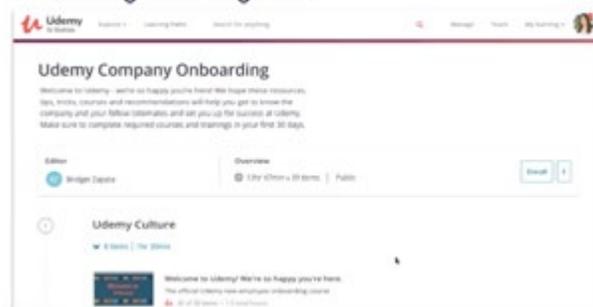
Onboarding

We transitioned from flying all new hires into our San Francisco headquarters to implementing fully remote onboarding in a week. To achieve such a quick turnaround, we triaged the core onboarding process and brought a lot of onboarding communications online and through our Udey for Business platform.

Luckily, we had already transitioned our onboarding from live presentations by executives to an online video course that we custom created on our Udey for Business platform. The video course featured executives introducing their different departments in a fun and engaging way and highlighted our founder Eren Bali’s inspiring personal story on why he founded Udey. When we audited our existing resources, the onboarding video course emerged as a useful tool that we could rely on in our new remote workplace.

In addition, we also leveraged the Learning Path feature on our Udey for Business platform to create a new Onboarding Learning Path. This curated path enables our new hires to access Udey knowledge quickly and at their own pace without physically being in the office. Without having a colleague’s shoulder to tap on for a quick question, our new hires can use this online learning path as an essential resource.

Onboarding Learning Path



Manager training — leading remote teams

In times of change, your people managers are on the front lines. They’ll be responsible for dealing with offboarding and performance management as well as the ongoing, day-to-day skills development, employee experience, and career development aspects of the employee lifecycle.

Keep in mind that for managers, it’s critically important to have tough conversations, coaching conversations, feedback conversations — all of the things that keep an employee really engaged in the office are the same things that keep them engaged out of the office. Be sure to layer in those conversations about point of need and time to help them prioritize work. Employees need to feel agency during this change. If it’s just a goal change on top that flows down, you’ll lose a lot of capability within your organization, the things that excite people about their jobs can become overwhelming, and anxiety can creep up.

Additionally, we already had our Manager Lab, a social peer-to-peer learning program for our people managers. We recently hosted a Manager Lab on “How to Lead a Remote Team” for 30+ people managers which we also broke out into smaller Zoom discussion groups (5 managers per group). The managers were given a set of questions to discuss as a small group — providing an opportunity to share issues and solutions. Managers then came back as a larger group and shared out ideas both verbally via Zoom and in the written chat function. Our managers were especially grateful for this session that came at a time when they were struggling to manage a team remotely overnight.

Supporting employees as they work remotely

The individual's need to develop change agility has become the most important skill we can help our employees enhance right now. There's a lot that happens on both an emotional and a neurological level as we adapt to change. Understanding that can help your employees better cope with any change they face. We created an online course with tips to help employees adapt to working remotely.

Suggested course:

Best Practices for Working Remotely



Best Practices for Working Remotely

Shelley Osborne

4.3 ★★★★★ (1,002)

Other skills that will help employees in a remote work environment include goal-setting and tools training, so they feel comfortable communicating and collaborating in ways that make sense at your company. A few Udemy courses that have been especially helpful for our new hires are: Feedback is Fuel, How to Manage Difficult Conversations, Growth Mindset, and Change Agility for Organizations.

Suggested course: Growth Mindset



Growth Mindset: The Key to Greater Confidence and Impact

Diane Flynn

4.2 ★★★★★ (27)

Offboarding

We also need to be prepared for remote offboarding as attrition will still likely occur, even during these uncertain times. In addition, we also understand that some organizations may require a reduction in their workforce in response to the current economic situation. This will involve strong soft skills from our managers in terms of having difficult conversations and managing through change. All this becomes much more critical as we become a remote workforce. This is why upskilling your managers with the right skills to manage difficult conversations is critical.

Suggested course:

How to Manage Difficult Conversations



How to Manage Difficult Conversations: Beginner's Guide

Markus Amanto

4.4 ★★★★★ (1233)

Putting people first: It's about being human first and foremost

How has the experience of shifting to remote work impacted our employees the most? The lines that used to exist between personal and professional lives have become blurred. We have kids that are walking into video calls, people living with new family members, and single people whose only connection to the outside world is their work environment. Each group has different needs and expectations from their employer in this new environment. During these uncertain times, the People team needs to provide emotional support as well. We already offered Ginger.io, a mental health support line, and the meditation app Headspace as wellness resources for our employees.

But in addition to those important support resources, we also wanted to make sure our special culture at Udemu continued to permeate the remote workplace as well. Together with our Culture Crew, a grassroots employee group, we brainstormed ways to keep our employees feeling connected emotionally as well. Some of these programs included:

- Virtual coffee chats, especially with new hires
- Virtual happy hours — our virtual pet happy hour was a particular success
- Hosting a Zoom background challenge
- Providing wellness resources like making our weekly yoga class virtual

In our recent Udemu Connect episode, we also encouraged our attendees to share and discuss ideas together via the Zoom webinar chat function. Here are some great programs that attendee People and L&D leaders shared as well:

- Healthy mind/body sessions to promote better productivity
- Weekly Lunch & Learns on topics such as stress and time management
- Group Peloton session
- Online trivia
- Webinar bingo
- Standup comedy contest
- Company Family Feud
- Virtual karaoke
- 30-min coffee breaks that include 3 random people
- Playbook for people managers on how to support

their team during these challenging times

- Curated online learning paths on Udemu for Business for employees

At an executive level, we've led with safety, family, and connection. We're in uncharted territory, and things are changing fast, but we feel confident that we as People leaders can continue to do our best to support our organization and employees through this unprecedented time.



A recent virtual pet happy hour.



Cara Brennan Allamano,
Senior VP of People + Places

Cara Brennan Allamano is the Senior Vice President of People + Places at Udemu and formerly led the People function at Planet Inc., Pinterest, and other San Francisco-based companies. She's a proven leader who has successfully built People functions in fast-growing companies, aligned HR strategy with strategic business needs, maintained high employee engagement, and successfully led organizations and employees through change.



Shelley Osborne,
VP of Learning at Udemu

Shelley Osborne has over fifteen years of experience across the education, consulting, and corporate sectors. She is the Vice President of Learning at Udemu, where she leads the company's learning strategy and continuous upskilling of over 600 employees globally. Before that, Shelley was the Vice President of Learning & Development at Farside HR Solutions, where she advised early- and late-stage companies on talent leadership, management training, and soft-skills development.

*Shelley is the author of an upcoming McGraw Hill book, *The Upskilling Imperative: Five Ways to Make Learning Core to the Way We Work*, which is slated for August 2020 release.*

People managers:

How to ensure employees work from home effectively

As businesses and governments help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, many companies are rolling out remote work for their employees. But how can People Managers ensure their employees work from home effectively?

Working remotely can offer many productivity benefits for employees. In fact, many employees embrace working outside the office, with 6 in 10 remote workers saying that they would like their job less if they had to visit the company every day to do the exact same job.¹ Remote work also cuts down on the stress and time of commuting and boosts productivity. With workplace distraction on the rise according to our Udem [Workplace Distraction Report](#) (think open seating offices), it's not surprising that many employees are getting more done at their quieter home offices.

Yet remote work is not without its flaws. IT support, emotional support, time management, and productivity hacks are all important aspects of enabling remote work. And companies rolling out company-wide remote work have a responsibility to put extra thought and care into the employee experience.

Employees who work remotely (especially if it's the first time) will need increased attention and support from the learning & development team. According to the Remote Work Statistics Survey, 67% of remote workers say they need more work-related training.²

As more employees work from home, consider how you can help these employees excel while working outside of a traditional office setting. In her course [Best Practices for Working Remotely](#), Shelley Osborne, VP of Learning at Udem, offers ways to help employees and managers navigate the new remote world. Her course includes

ways to communicate and stay accountable (and social), best practices for running meetings virtually, and advice for managers leading remote teams.

¹ <https://www.talentims.com/blog/remote-work-statistics-survey/How-to-master-4-key-skills-to-work-remote-effectively>

How to master 4 key skills to work remote effectively

To help managers coach employees in the new remote workplace, Udem instructors offer tips on how to master four key skills to help remote employees be more efficient and effective.

Time management

[According to Udem's Employee Experience Report](#), half of the survey respondents (and 53% of managers) said they could improve their time management skills. And while productivity tools have proliferated in recent years, 37% of survey respondents expressed some hesitation about the usefulness of these tools, indicating they can sometimes be more of a distraction than a help. For employees who work remotely, time management is especially important since their interactions with their manager will likely be more limited and productivity tools can become their lifeline to what's going on at the rest of the company.

In the Udem course [Time Management Mastery: Do More, Stress Less](#), time management and productivity consultant Alexis Haselberger identifies common roadblocks to time management and provides concrete, easy-to-implement strategies and techniques for

minimizing distractions and increasing focus. For example, Alexis recommends developing a customized task management system to capture, organize, prioritize, and document all that needs to get done.

Organizational skills

Respondents to the Remote Work Statistics Survey ranked organizational skills as essential for remote workers. It makes sense — organizational skills and productivity go hand in hand. Remote workers need to develop systems for keeping track of their projects as well as communication with their manager and coworkers. This is especially true when they're collaborating on a project with others and need to manage multiple versions and different rounds of feedback.

In [SUPERHUMAN Productivity 10x – The Secret Skill of Peak Performance](#), Udemy instructor Silviu Marisk introduces practical tips to help learners automate their routine to make productivity a habit, beat procrastination, and prioritize.

² *ibid*

³ <https://www.talentlms.com/blog/remote-work-statistics-survey/>

Suggested course: [Time Management Mastery: Do More, Stress Less](#)



Time Management Mastery: Do More, Stress Less

Alexis Haselberger

4.5 ★★★★★ (1,186)

Suggested course: [In Productivity 10x – The Secret Skill of Peak Performance](#)



SUPERHUMAN Productivity 10X: The Secret Skill Of Performance

Silviu Marisk - Effective Learning Lab

4.5 ★★★★★ (708)

Communication

Communication was named one of the **top 10 soft skills for the workplace in 2020**. There are a number of reasons for this — according to Google’s extensive research as part of Project Oxygen, being a good communicator is one of the eight skills that define a good manager.⁴ On the flip side, poor communication is also linked to employee burnout. And communication is one of the uniquely human traits that high-performing organizations foster in their employees, according to Udemy’s **Humanizing Learning Research Report**. For remote employees, clear communication is paramount since they don’t always have the luxury of tapping someone on their shoulder to ask a question or clarify a point.

In her Udemy course, **Speak Like a Pro: Public Speaking for Professionals**, executive public speaking coach Jennifer Hennings covers the essentials of storytelling so learners can better understand their audience, hone their stories, and pair data with narrative to make a lasting impression.

The Complete Communication Skills Master Class for Life from TJ Walker helps learners improve their assertiveness, persuasion, and business communication skills. This course is designed to help learners feel comfortable and craft meaningful and memorable messages. In addition, the Udemy course **Master Difficult Conversations** also teaches an essential communication skill for the remote workplace.

Self-discipline

Successful remote workers must be masters of self-discipline, both in order to get their work done efficiently and to make sure they stop working from time to time in order to preserve some work/life balance!

There are a number of Udemy courses that can help your employees who work remotely develop self-discipline. **Productivity Machine: Time Management & Productivity hacks** from sales coach and Udemy for Business instructor Patrick Dang introduces productivity-boosting mindsets, tools, and tactics. And **How to Build Self-Discipline** from best-selling personal development author Martin Meadows introduces scientifically proven tactics for developing self-discipline and resisting temptation. As more employees work from home, ensure that you’re providing the support your remote workers need by helping them to develop the essential skills we’ve outlined here.

³ <https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/managers-identify-what-makes-a-great-manager/steps/learn-about-googles-manager-research/>

Suggested course: **The Complete Communication Skills Master Class for Life**



The Complete Communication Skills Master Class for Life

TJ Walker

4.4 ★★★★★ (5338)

Suggested course: **How to Build Self-Discipline**



How to Build Self-Discipline

Martin Meadows

4.5 ★★★★★ (907)

Managing stress and anxiety

Finally, in these uncertain times, it's important to help your employees manage their stress and anxiety. As a People manager, this could mean showing empathy, frequently checking in with your employees to see how they're doing, and encouraging them to take a personal day off to relax. Working from home can mean working longer hours as personal and work lives blur. It's important to encourage your employees to take a break from their desk and go for a walk or take a virtual exercise class. Online Udemy courses like [Managing Anxiety and Stress](#) or [A Simple Guide to Mindfulness and Meditation](#) can help your employees manage their stress.

Suggested course: [Managing Anxiety and Stress](#)



Anxiety and Stress

Chris Croft

4.5 ★★★★★ (356)

Helping your employees navigate change

As we experience unprecedented change and uncertainty, leaders will play a crucial role in both supporting and leading your employees successfully through this uncharted territory.

Find out how our online library of courses and digital learning tools on Udemy for Business can help support your employees in a remote workplace. [Request demo.](#)

About Udemy for Business

Udemy for Business helps global companies stay competitive in the digital transformation of the workplace by offering fresh, relevant, personalized on-demand learning content powered by a dynamic content marketplace. Our global network of 57K+ expert instructors continuously supplies the market with courses on trending, popular, in-demand topics. We then curate 4,000+ top-rated courses for organizations around the world to help their employees do whatever comes next — whether that's tackling the next project, learning a new skill, or mastering a role.

We offer a learner-first approach that delivers an engaging experience personalized to an individual's interests and needs. Our content covers key business and technical topics ranging from development and IT to leadership, marketing, design, stress management, and more. In addition to a curated content collection for professional and personal growth, organizations can host and distribute their own proprietary content on Udemy.

Leading organizations including Eventbrite, Adidas, Booking.com, Pinterest, and HSBC choose Udemy for Business as their strategic learning partner to upskill their workforce and move skills forward. [Learn more at https://business.udemy.com/learning-for-leaders](https://business.udemy.com/learning-for-leaders).



Booking.com

Nordea