

Keep it fun! Ideas for team motivation during lockdown

While the most has been made of the Zoom revolution - hours of conference calls and connecting with colleagues, friends and families over the video-calling app, Zoom - there has been less focus on how companies are keeping their teams together.



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In this time when people are isolated and working from home, the idea of Friday afternoon drinks seems completely obsolete. On those occasions, colleagues from across the floor came together to connect on the week's events and in some instances introduce a personal element into the professional lives.

Now, in a move to keep up these connections some companies have created alternative WhatsApp groups where staff can connect, share memes and work on team building assignments.

“We started these challenges in the office at the beginning of the year,” says Jeff Cao, CEO of Vivo Mobile South Africa. “New to South Africa, it was important we at Vivo created a team that felt connected in and out of the office. We started with weekly physical challenges that came with incentives – who could do the most squats, for example, something that was fun and motivational.”

Now, for the duration of lockdown, this has continued at home. Added to the physical competition are fun dress up days – for example, one Friday had a 007 theme, which means everyone was encouraged to dress as their favourite Bond character for the weekly status meeting.

“When there is often so much going on at home in addition to work challenges,” says Hawa Hyath, marketing director, Vivo Mobile South Africa, “this idea of Jeff’s was a really clever way of keeping us working as a team.”

The mental health implications of lockdown are real. According to the SA Anxiety and Depression Group (Sadag) a spike in mental health issues is expected as people tackle social isolation, quarantine pressure for self-improvement, home-schooling and further financial pressures.

“By initiating these measures, Vivo has shown that it is truly invested in the health and wellbeing of the people who work for them,” says Sarah Bailey, a psychologist who specialises in work-life balance. “These workers may not be on the frontline, but everyone has been severely affected by these uncertain times, and it’s very positive to see companies being aware of their employees all around holistic wellbeing.”

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