

Jersey Post

COMMUNICATING THE CHANGE TO REMOTE WORKING



COVID-19

#keepbusinessworking

The coronavirus lockdown changed the business world's collective attitude towards remote working. Now, there is a need to rethink our working formats and find the best solution for our businesses and our staff.

If you're in the process of transitioning to remote working or considering whether it is a possible fit for your business, it's important to communicate. Make sure you explain the options available to your managers and staff. Transparency is key to implementing a successful programme, as Jersey Post discovered with the positive implementation of their new way of working.

Background

With over 350 employees, based not only in Jersey but around the world, operating a network of 21 post offices across the island, providing postal delivery services six days a week to all Jersey residential households and businesses and offering a range of complementary business services, Jersey Post's offering is vast. As a lifeline service, it was important to ensure the change in permanent working format was seamless.



The change needed

Jersey Post's aim was to provide a more flexible way of working, where employees have the choice to meet their own particular circumstances but continue to meet the needs of the business. To achieve this, Jersey Post chose to invest in change.

How

As the island eased out of lockdown restrictions, Jersey Post issued a staff survey to see how their team were feeling and what they wanted to see. Following this, Jersey Post chose to focus on reviewing their approach to location, working hours, and dress code.

To communicate the way forward for working, Tim Brown, the Chief Executive, wrote a letter to all of his colleagues outlining the new approach. This business letter used a friendly tone to reassure those reading, show the value of each team member with the use of "colleague" by placing everyone on even ground and, more importantly, offer choice.

The results

Jersey Post decided that one model does not suit all. Instead, they offered options and support for remote working as well as guidelines on flexible working, office hours, and a more relaxed dress code. Staff now have the option – if their role allows – to work full time from one location or to split their week between their home and the office.

Since implementing their new way of working arrangement, Jersey Post have received primarily positive feedback from their team and are already noticing the difference.

Reporting:

- higher productivity rates,
- quick response times,
- positive interactions,
- and more discipline around arranging regular catch ups.

To help maintain regular social interaction within the team, colleagues can gather for a cup of tea at 3pm on a Thursday. The only rule is not to talk about work.



Though many staff have taken the option to work from home for part of the week, or full time, there has been a gradual drift back to the office for some team members as they decide which is the best working model for them.

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Final thought

The communication around the changes were instrumental in the seamless transition, with buy in across the company as all the different teams made the announcements together. Staff were involved from the beginning through the survey and kept up to date with communications.

Top Tip

Jersey Post's advice is to remember that everyone's circumstances and working styles are different as you find the best way forward to meet the needs of the majority. As with all situations, you may have a minority who try to bend the rules, are lazy, or who disagree but rather than focus on this minority, it's important to look after those who will benefit the most.

Letter from Jersey Post Chief Executive, Tim Brown



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Dear Colleagues,

This is a follow up to my call of a couple of weeks ago. As I said on that call, following the change in working practices we all adopted during Covid-19, and the advice to continue to observe some measures, we have reviewed our approach to place of work, working hours and dress code.

You may remember we went out to you with a survey on your preferences for working from home or in the office, and what you would need for it to continue. Taking into account those results, we now want to move towards a more flexible way of working where the employee has more choice to meet their own particular circumstances, whilst still meeting the needs of the business. Therefore, with your manager you are encouraged to discuss changes you may wish to make.

Firstly, **place of work**. We are currently working on changes to the first floor (and once finalised these will be circulated) to make it more suitable for multiple use i.e. permanent working in the office, flexible working and break out spaces. We hope to make these changes by the end of September/early October.

With this new space you will have three options:

1. Some roles can only be performed in the office so, if you hold one of these roles, you will have no option but to work in the office. However, from time to time people in these roles may work from home with their line manager's approval. You will be provided with:
 - A laptop;
 - Docking station;
 - Monitor, keyboard and mouse in the office;
 - Your own desk, chair and locker;

All "resident" workers will be seated in the same area. Although teams will be located together, this will only be for those permanently working in the office. Other team members who work from home will use the hot desk area.



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2. There are those roles that can be performed from either home or office. In these cases you will have a choice, however, your manager may require you to attend meetings in the office from time to time. In certain circumstances you may also need to come into the office at short notice. If you choose to work from home, you will be provided with:
 - A laptop;
 - Monitor, keyboard and mouse;
 - £150 towards a desk and chair (or the option to take one from the office).
 - In the office you will be provided with:
 - i. Access to a hot desk;
 - ii. Docking station (you will need to bring in your own mouse and keyboard);
 - iii. Screen;
 - iv. A locker for work and personal items;

3. Some roles may require only a certain amount of time in the office, or (under Option 2) you may want to work some days (part days) at home and some days (part days) in the office. In these cases, you will be provided with:
 - 3 or more days at home:
 - A laptop;
 - Monitor, keyboard and mouse;
 - £150 towards a desk and chair.
 - In the office:
 - i. Access to a hot desk;
 - ii. Docking station (you will need to bring in your own mouse and keyboard);
 - iii. Screen;
 - iv. A locker for work and personal items;
 - 3 or more days in the office:
 - A laptop.
 - Docking station;
 - Monitor, keyboard and mouse in the office;
 - Your own desk, chair and locker.

If you choose to work from home, you will be required to confirm that the environment is suitable or acceptable for home working. You will be required to re-confirm this on an annual basis. It is also imperative that when working for home you respect the confidentiality of the work you are doing, keep all company items secure, and understand your responsibilities under company policies, particularly around IT security and data.

Secondly, **working hours:**

- The senior manager for each team has been asked to define what the core hours are that must be covered.
- The building (RdP) is open from 6am to 10pm Monday to Friday and 6am to 1pm on Saturday. If work permits, you may work in the office during any of those hours, including split shifts.
- The senior manager must ensure they have enough cover (and whether it needs to be covered in the office or can be covered when working from home) during the normal working day (any period of time between 9am to 5pm except for some operational support roles that need to match operational hours) but that does not mean everyone has to do these hours.
- Within these guidelines individuals and the team can organise their hours to be as flexible as the manager believes is appropriate and still deliver the cover required. It is important to note that this is about the Team providing a balance of hours not just one individual.
- Revised working hour patterns must be set and not subject to frequent change.

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- Your manager must be informed in advance if you decide to flex your hours from your normal pattern.
- This policy removes any remaining “Flexi-time” or “time off in lieu (TOIL)” practices that still remain.

Finally, **dress code**. Just four simple rules:

- Smart casual in the office and when you are on a video call working from home (visible half!);
- Respect your colleagues both upstairs and in operations as well as visitors when you decide what you wear;
- Ensure you meet all health and safety rules and advice;
- Any senior manager or Director has the right to ask you to go home and change if they think what you are wearing is inappropriate.

Having relaxed the rules I am also concerned that we don't all lose touch with each other and can't put names to faces particularly for new recruits, new recruits won't have the opportunity to meet us, trainees and apprentices have no opportunities to shadow what we do, and that we lose too much of the face to face social interaction. So, Covid 19 rules willing, individual teams and the business will look at ways of getting people to know each other through team meetings, events in the office and even social events. Don't forget, RdP is still our home and everyone is welcome to drop in for a cup of tea and a catch up with colleagues. Your ideas are very welcome.

This is probably going to take us all time to get our heads around and there will be some trial and error. It may take different teams different times to agree a way forward as this is not just what you or I want but it must work for the business, as well as your wider team and colleagues. We will trial this new way of working from September and review after 3 months.

All I can say now is let's give this a go and see where it gets us!

Your senior manager will be in discussions with you over the coming weeks about the art of the possible.

Keep safe.

Yours sincerely

Tim Brown
Chief Executive