



YOUR WATER. YOUR FUTURE.

STEPHANIE LEE & DANA SHERMAN

# Managing Remote Workers

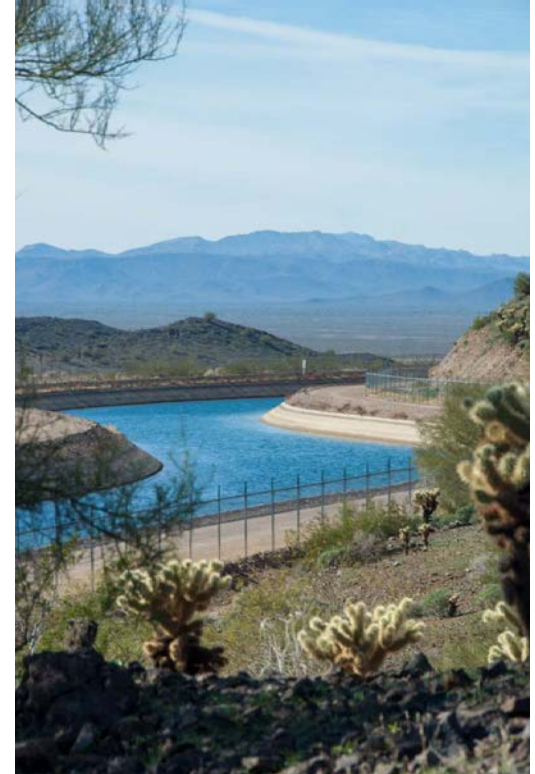
# CAP 101

Image:

- Water flowing leisurely downhill

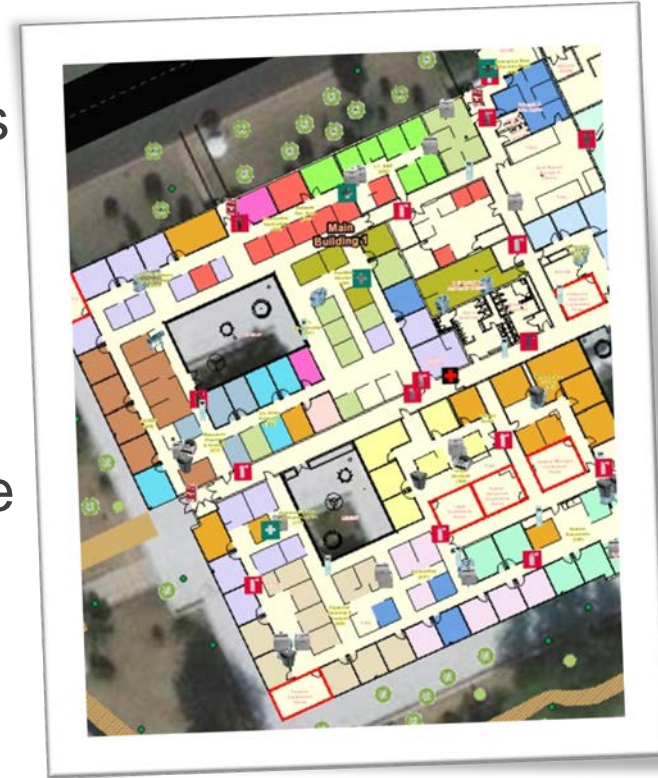
Reality:

- 336 mile system, moves 1.5M AF annually
- Lift water 15 times (AZ's largest power user)
- Lots of travel but no remote work policy
- Very collaborative environment
- Major focus upon developing leaders



# COVID Adjustments

- Transitioned almost all administrative roles to remote over three days
- Narrowed our strategic objectives
  1. Keep employees safe
  2. Keep water flowing
- Implemented split shifts reducing exposure
- Electronic workflows already being used
- Laptops, VPN/VDI, Jabber, WebEx rollout



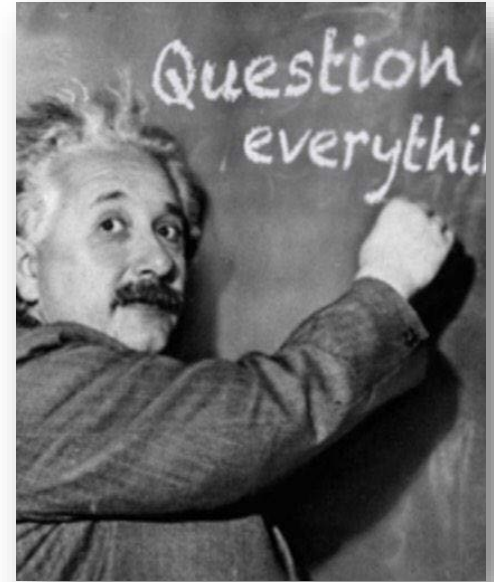
# Employee Response

- Short term mindset
- Not everyone had a good place to dedicate to work
- Some experienced a sense of isolation
- Some just wanted it over



# Managers and Supervisors

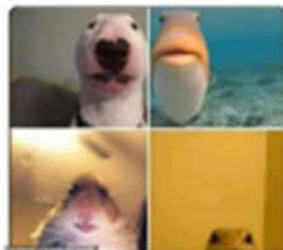
- 2½ months had passed
- Managing remotely was different
- Supervisors/crews worked different days
- How to define the need?
  - No defined structure, little experience
  - How to keep employees:
    - Connected and encouraged
    - Engaged and productive
- Share experiences, best practices
  - Learn from each other



## Keeping Connected Guiding Principles

- Best practices for engaging employees remotely are the same as in-person - extra emphasis on **communication** and **empathy**
- Focus on relationship and trust building practices that we learn in the Supervisor Academy and the Management University
- Increase regular face-to-face communication (Webex), IM (Jabber), email, use all the tools we have
- Ask open ended questions to get employees talking
- Chat about everyday things (i.e., cooking, hobbies, pets, family, the community) not just work related tasks
- Share struggles and frustration – create a safe space for others

me and my coworkers logging into all of our meetings remotely for the next couple of weeks



# Focus of Discussion

- What ideas do you have for connecting and engaging with your teams?
- What has worked well for your teams?
- How are you helping to facilitate team collaboration?



# Some Recurring Themes

- Know needs & what works for your team and team members
- Get out of your comfort zone, be vulnerable, try new strategies
- Ensure lunch and breaks (non-exempt away from workspace)
- Work/life balance – no natural transition between work and personal
- Maintain recognition/appreciation, celebrate successes/milestones
- Biweekly 1:1, early in week, “What do you need from me?”
- Move communication upward and downward
- Invite other managers to join your department meetings
- Some employees need more social interaction



## Ideas for Staying Connected

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#CAPArizona

- Virtual lunches
- Virtual celebrations (birthday/graduation/work anniversary)
- Fun games/exercises
  - Never Have I Ever
  - Share some good news
  - Team yearbook
  - Recipe sharing
  - The Voting Game
  - 2 Truths and a Lie



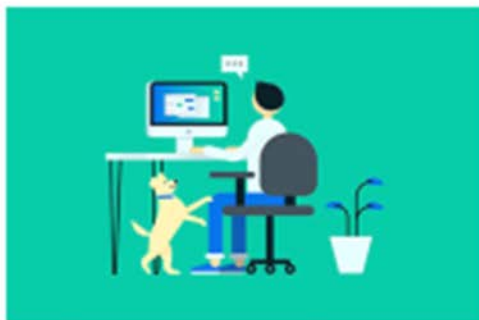
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## Open Discussion

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Have you had a team member struggle and how did you handle it?



## What if someone is struggling?

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- Performance has decreased
  - Reach out to them via Webex (can read expressions and body language)
  - “Check in” before “check on”
  - Ask probing questions
  - Show empathy without lowering the bar
  - Clarify expectations
  - Engage them in problem solving

<https://hr.az.gov/2020/04/how-to-manage-an-employee-who-is-struggling-to-work-remotely>

- Engagement has decreased
  - Look for warning signs
  - Reach out to them via phone or Webex
  - Make sure they have EAP information
  - Reinforce work-life balance

# IPMA-HR & SHRM Resources

## **A Dozen Consensus Best Practices for Managing Remote Employees**

<https://www.ipma-hr.org/stay-informed/hr-news-issues/hr-news-article/a-dozen-consensus-best-practices-for-managing-remote-employees>

## **How to Engage Remote Employees During the Coronavirus Pandemic**

<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/how-to-guides/pages/how-to-engage-remote-employees-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic.aspx>

## **Don't Micromanage During the Coronavirus**

<https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/people-managers/Pages/coronavirus-micromanaging.aspx>

# HBR Resources

## **How to Manage an Employee Who's Struggling to Perform Remotely**

<https://hbr.org/2020/05/how-to-manage-an-employee-whos-struggling-to-work-remotely>

## **5 Ways Leaders Accidentally Stress Out Their Employees**

<https://hbr.org/2020/05/5-ways-leaders-accidentally-stress-out-their-employees>

## **Begin with Trust**

<https://hbr.org/2020/05/begin-with-trust>

# Final Thoughts

- Develop capabilities
  - Collaborative team platforms
- Use outside resources
  - Dale Carnegie facilitated workshops
  - EAP
- Stress relieving activities
- Fun activities
- Share some good news





# KNOW YOUR WATER

## Questions/Discussion

Stephanie Lee, [slee@cap-az.com](mailto:slee@cap-az.com); Dana Sherman, [dsherman@cap-az.com](mailto:dsherman@cap-az.com)