

SABRE

Financial Service Consultancy

ORGANISATION CASESTUDY

Sabre Advisory is a small management consultancy which operates out of Jersey. They provide services to financial businesses related to the implementation of new software, working practices and project governance.

We spoke to one of the founding directors and a new, entry level Business Analyst in his thirties, whose highest previous qualification was a BTEC. The new starter had enrolled on two courses themselves prior to starting with the company, to support them in making a move into the financial services sector.



MAIN CHALLENGES OF MANAGING DURING COVID:

The business is a recent start-up established in 2020 during the pandemic. All staff are therefore new starters. When it was set up, the company operated out of central offices, but the business temporarily moved to remote working when a work from home order came into place.

The company director is an experienced manager, having run various teams for previous employers. He set up the company in 2020 with other partners after being made redundant. The new starter had joined the company early in 2021 as an entry level Business Analyst, after a previous a career in hospitality.

The new staff member is learning about a complex industry almost from scratch, whilst also tackling an entirely new, technical, job role. The manager is committed to upskilling his new staff member and believes in his potential. However, the upskilling process has been more challenging than usual during the pandemic. Ideally a new recruit would work closely with more experienced staff, learning by observation and able to easily draw on their knowledge and experience. Instead, the director has been very actively involved, and offered support remotely.

I think you've got to be more patient. You've got to learn to listen a lot more, and you've got to listen to more to what's not being said than what is. You've got to learn that, you know, communication over e-mail and video, it can be misconstrued, or you can write something that might have a very different meaning in a message. It's trying to correct that. I think you don't have that ability to talk in-person and you need to be very aware of how you come across, how you communicate, and generally be quite open about yourself as well

Manager

To keep in touch, the manager sets regular diary reminders which prompt him to check in informally with his staff and has met with the new recruit outside for a coffee and walks. They also meet via Teams which allows the manager and new staff member to swap documents easily and the manager to provide comments on his work. The manager has also utilised different methods to pass on information to the new recruit including links to relevant websites and training materials. They sometimes go through these together and record the sessions so they can be replayed as required.



“ There are times when I've got to stop what I'm doing to make sure that he's able to be coached through it and understands, and really give him the time of day. That's putting to one side whatever we've got going on to get him through that, to make sure he understands.

Manager

” The new starter was already taking an industry qualification which the company has supported him with, offering him time off to study and covering the costs of his exams. They are already working to find another course to continue his development. It has been more difficult during the pandemic to find the right training courses, and ideally both the manager and staff member would prefer this to be delivered face to face rather than online and as part of a cohort of other students who could provide another source of support.

The manager has, throughout the pandemic, stressed the importance of maintaining a work-life balance. He has encouraged staff to take time out during the day, to log off when their tasks are complete, and to try to keep their weekends free. He believes that is more important than ever to monitor staff well-being, although this is not always easy remotely. The new staff member has, from the start, been trusted to structure their working day in a way which suits them. Provided they complete their tasks on schedule they can, for example, take breaks to go for cycle rides when they are waiting for client responses. The new recruit appreciates the trust placed in him and this flexibility.

“ Everybody has got lots of different things going on, and home lives, and you know, it's also managing to get them to switch off as well. We're all connected all of the time, and we need that disconnect, and I think that has been quite important to manage is, you know, 'I don't want you on Teams on the weekend, I don't want you logging in unless you have to,' but really, sort of, spending that time communicating.

Manager

TOP TIPS FOR MANAGERS



Communicate appropriately, with clear expectations. Use the [CMI clear communication checklist](#).



Provide opportunities for new/low skilled workers to develop their skills and knowledge through [coaching](#), [mentoring](#), and [personal development](#).



Talk openly about [well-being](#), and lead using [emotional intelligence](#). In [Management Transformed](#) 72% of staff rated well-being as the top priority for 2021.

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