



TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL REMOTE WORKING

Working from home can be great for productivity, particularly if focused work is what you do in your role, but it also can be a real challenge at the same time, especially if you do not have the right tools and you're not organized to work this way. Implementing these suggestions below, where possible, along with what works best for you in your circumstances, asking for support from your team and manager / employer, will go a long way to making the transition easier.

TECHNOLOGY / EQUIPMENT



Your employer should have given you the resources required for you to do your role at home, if you're still waiting on equipment, or the right software to carry out your role and communicate effectively with your team and clients, then please raise this with them straight away; do this right now if this is impacting on your ability to be productive.

GO TO WORK



Adjust your normal 'going to the office' commute to a 'going to work' mentality at home. Get up on time, make the bed, shower, get dressed and grab a coffee, then go to work. Move to the space or room that you are working in and start work as through you were still in the office. Take short breaks, have some lunch, finish, then get out of work mode by maybe changing into something more casual or having tea.

ENVIRONMENT



During this time, you may have other family members, friends or housemates that are also around the house whilst you're working, this can add a layer of pressure and will certainly provide a distraction to your work. If you have others in your home, establish a simple visual rule (something easy like maybe a Post-it note or item by your laptop which means "do not disturb, I'm busy working") so that others do not interrupt you.

Think carefully about where you 'set up shop' and purchasing / borrowing a desk and chair or other appropriate equipment may need to be considered. Secondly, but probably equally as good, is a dining table to work at. Other options are a kitchen worktop (ideally with leg space), ironing board (even adjustable!) and if you were one of the hoarders, perhaps use your stock-piled toilet tissue as a makeshift desk! Make sure you are comfortable.

SETTING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS



It has never been more important to have a healthy relationship of trust and confidence within your team, delegates and peers. Managers should make sure that everyone working from home knows what's expected of them. This includes agreeing:

- When employees will be available to work (childcare is likely to be a challenge for a lot of homeworkers during this time)
- How teams will keep in touch – video calls, regular and frequent catch-ups
- Rules around storing information and data protection – access to data in the cloud or laptop
- How performance is measured and what the expectations are of everyone
- Who employees should contact should they have any problems, or their circumstances change

Your employer should also support or make reasonable adaptations to your duties or working day schedule, to ensure you're able to perform at your best in a home working environment. Where applicable you should also have contact numbers or email addresses for your IT department close to hand



BEING PART OF A TEAM



Working from home can lead to some people feeling like they are not part of a team, being left out of decisions and ultimately not feeling valued. Hopefully your manager has scheduled a weekly catch up for those in your team, if they haven't, or you ARE the manager then there are some great platforms that are able to support audio or video conferencing. Possibly arrange a formal meeting where there is an agenda or less formal, but still work oriented, with a 'huddle vibe' where people give an update on live projects.

Frequent contact and collaboration across the team is essential to feel connected, Yammer or Slack are just two examples of how you can maintain the office 'vibe' through informal conversation and information sharing.

Another good, informal way to stay in touch with your colleagues, is to have a set time where there is a virtual open / drop in session where your teammates grab a coffee (from home of course) and drop in to say hello, stay for 5 or 25 minutes and then go on about their day!

Make the most of online groups, use this opportunity to find likeminded professionals via LinkedIn or other appropriate social media. There are some great digital networking groups out there, depending on the size of your company there may be an existing one already, or perhaps a great opportunity to set one up! Alternatively check out LinkedIn or EventBrite for digital meet-ups!

MENTAL HEALTH



It is very normal to be experiencing anxiety or stress at this time, here are a few suggestions as to how to alleviate this in both your work and home life (especially since they are so intrinsically linked at present!):

- 1) Only listen to official news updates, ignore a lot of the chatter on social media, whilst it can be informative and a channel of contact with 'the outside world', it can be particularly harmful too. Think along the same lines if tempted to use Google to diagnose any health concerns - don't do it!
- 2) Take breaks! A lot of us will often skip a lunch when in the office and work through to ensure the task is completed, however, this is not sustainable long term and certainly not when you're working from home. Use break times for your trip for supplies (if you need them), to take some exercise or to even try learning a new skill, also Netflix! :)
- 3) Ensure you switch off at the end of your working day. This is more important now as you can easily work for hours after your usual finish times and not even realise the time due to already being at home. It's important to recognise that some employees may find it hard to motivate and organise themselves when working from home. If this happens, the manager and employee should talk about this and take practical steps to help.

BLOCKERS TO SUCCESS



You may have to think differently about your tasks to see if any adjustments need to be made, it's just about thinking differently for a lot of roles - where practicable! Childcare is likely to be a concern for a lot of employees, in this situation employers and employees should try to agree different ways of working, where practicable. This could include working different hours, reducing or changing work targets, flexible deadlines where possible. The same approach should be discussed if the employee is caring for someone else such as an older relative or someone who is ill.