



Remote Work Advocates Warn Companies About COVID-19 Corona Virus Work-From-Home Strategies

A few months ago, 2020 was predicted to be the “year of remote work.” But even the most optimistic telecommuting advocates never anticipated the launch of the [world’s largest work-from-home experiment](#) before the end of the first quarter.

Due to using [telemedicine to treat patients under quarantine](#) to [protecting economic development](#), the virtual business world has [unusually high confidence in outbreak control](#) and seems to be hailing remote work as the hero here to rescue the world from the economic repercussions of coronavirus. There is no doubt that remote work has reached an unprecedented tipping point, but it may not be tipping in the direction you think.

The "world's largest work-from-home" experiment could have long-term economic ripple effects.

10 Tips for **Employees** to Work From Home Efficiently

1. The Right Equipment

Without the right equipment, well, you might as well go back to the office now!

You are going to need the following to be able to complete basic functions outside of your normal work environment:

- Laptop or computer
- Stable and reliable internet access
- Secure remote access to the company's internal network/intranet
- Access to corporate emails
- A work phone

There are many innovations in technology that will make remote working life much easier so it's worth regularly researching what is out there to aid you.

Having access to the company intranet is a start but there are other technologies on the market that can help build stronger communication within teams and improve overall organization.

2. Designate a Space for Work

As much as you might want to wake up and work directly from the comfort of your own **bed**, in the long term it's not going to aid in your productivity.

This doesn't mean you need to go and create an exact office space in your house with office furniture, office chairs, office desks and desk chairs, but just have an area that can be used solely for working purposes so you can differentiate when you are in the working zone.

Work where you work and sleep where you sleep

Make the space inviting and comfortable so you don't mind spending time there, but try and keep it away from any areas of distraction like the television or children's play space.

3. Set Yourself Working Hours

One of the hardest aspects of working remotely is concentrating on the task at hand.

It's easy to become distracted by the TV, what's happening on Facebook, visitors popping over or the mound of laundry that needs doing.

It can also mean you find yourself working sporadically throughout the days, evenings and weekends which can negatively impact the work-life balance you are striving for.

Working remotely doesn't mean you should work from home

So set some rigid working hours where you shut everything off (there are apps you can use to block out distractions such as Social Media sites) and focus on the work that needs your attention.

4. Get Some Structure in Place

Structure your workday by planning out which tasks need to take priority and how many hours you are going to spend on each job.

Also schedule in time to take breaks as you would do in the office, so you remain productive and ready to start the next challenge.

Understand the difference between efficiency and productivity

Without a set structure in place, it is very easy to get distracted and then your work time will end up eating into the precious time you spend with friends or family after your workday should be over.

5. Communicate Like Never Before

When you are working remotely, what you are required to do can be lost in text translation and things may not be as clear as if you were discussing a project in person which means more effort needs to be placed on communication on a whole.

Remote work has many advantages, but effortless communication is not one of them

It is beneficial if you can supplement email or text communication with frequent face-to-face and voice interactions depending on what type of discussion you are having.

Video conferencing and talking on the phone helps convey tone of voice and body language that are fundamental to communication being effective and are better to use for more serious, in depth work challenges.

If you haven't understood a message clearly, don't be afraid to clarify job requirements regularly so you and your employer are sure you are on the same page.

6. Use Flexibility Wisely

As long as you are getting the work completed to a quality standard prior to the specified deadline, then you should be able to work the hours that you know you are most productive which is the beauty of being flexible.

You know better than anyone when you do your best thinking and working so take advantage of it.

Flexible working opportunities can benefit everyone: employers, employees and their families

Unless your employer expects you to be available to communicate in real-time during their business hours then this is something you should strive to achieve as you would within the office to ensure the working relationship remains strong.

7. Track Your Progress

There are apps available online that track the work you're doing and some even take spontaneous screenshots, keeping you accountable and more productive to work when you tell your employer you are working.

Don't waste your time. Track it, and make it work for you.

It stops procrastination problems such as internet browsing, as you are aware that the screenshots are sent directly to your employer for review – so be careful what you are looking at while the tracking app is active!

8. Avoid Distractions

With no colleagues or managers around to check in on you, it's easy to become distracted.

There are always other household errands that need doing, but you are best to put those off until after your structured working hours as if you were not at home.

Ask friends and family not to contact you during your designated working hours

Also ask friends and family not to contact you during your designated working hours, the same as if you were in the office as it is all too tempting to have some human contact while you are supposed to be focusing on a job.

9. Take Accountability

If you are unable to complete something remotely, be accountable and transparent about it.

Communicate any problems you encounter immediately with your Manager, Client or Team so they can seek extra resources if need be.

Communicate any problems you encounter immediately

Sometimes you need to be in the office to get certain tasks completed and that's okay.

Working remotely doesn't always fit well with all jobs you are given, so figure out which days can be used away from the office and which days require some time within the official workplace.

10. Take breaks

It's important to take breaks from your work to boost productivity.

How many times do you sit down to get work done and find yourself “working” and yet getting little completed?

That's not necessarily a tip specific to remote workers, but at home you don't have the cues for lunch breaks or time away from your desk that rejuvenate you ready for the next challenge, so you need to schedule that time in.

10 Tips for **Employers** on How to Manage Remote Staff

1. Set Clear Expectations

With remote working leaving the employee more in control of their work day structure, it is down to you as the employer to make your expectations extremely clear.

The best managers – always – set clear expectations

Ideally, you need to be answering the following questions so the employee knows what is required of them:

- Urgent tasks to be accomplished and take priority over the next week

- General objectives going forward
- Whom to contact if issues arise
- How many hours per week they are expected to work
- How much work per day/week they should be completing
- Your level of availability and how you can be reached

The best way to check understanding is to ask questions relating to what you have discussed to make sure you are working towards the same goal.

2. Monitor Progress Regularly

It's good management practice to regularly monitor progress on any projects being completed by remote workers or a remote team so you can foresee any issues that staff are facing and need extra support with or just so you are fully aware of how well your remote staff are progressing.

Clarity is the pathway to solid results

Without the ability to just pop in and catch up with your employees face to face when they are out of the office, this is an important step to schedule in, whether it be daily or weekly is up to how you wish to manage your staff.

3. HR Management Software

Having HR technology in place is going to give you some much needed extra support with your remote workers.

A Towers Watson survey shows that half of managers don't set effective employee goals

For example, if employee personal details need updating, reports need running, objectives need setting and tracking, it's as simple as asking them to log in to the employee portal and deal with it in real-time.

4. Interact Effectively

With home workers frequently working for long periods of time alone, they don't always get the human contact, support and team morale that they need to remain motivated.

Employee motivation is the key to a happy and productive workplace

By interacting with the remote workers, keeping them updated on news from the office and paying interest in the projects they have on will boost productivity and although remote workers tend to be more independent and appreciate being trusting to work alone, they still don't want to feel forgotten about.

5. Trust in the Worker

Rather than micromanage your remote workers, inadvertently going against what they desire in a more flexible work-life balance, you need to trust that your staff will complete the tasks they have been assigned to the best of their ability within the time needed.

Micromanagement is just plain bad management

If reliability and trust issues arise from remote working, it's worth having a conversation about whether remote working suits the needs of the individual and company, addressing the problem like any other underperformance issue.

6. Explain the Reasoning Why

In a working from home, remote environment, it's easy for the employee to feel cut off.

As an employer, you're more aware of how each person's work is impacting the long-term organizational goals and so this is something you have to explain to them clearly.

Expectations take many forms

Visual aids showing your staff the link between what they're doing remotely and the progress of the business goals creating a comprehensive

understanding of the impact they have on the company will greatly enhance productivity and employee satisfaction.

7. Communication is a 2-Way Street

Being a great communicator is important, regardless of the role that you choose and in the working relationship between the employer and remote employee, both parties need to have effective communication techniques for this to be beneficial.

Employee engagement cannot be achieved by a mechanistic approach

Not only is communication important for creating, maintaining and celebrating goals and company culture, as an employee you keep the remote worker engaged as part of the team.

HR management software can aid communication as the employer or remote worker can both access the system from whatever location they are at, with a secure internet connection.

8. Ask for Feedback

To make sure that your remote staff are conducive to co-workers, projects and the company's objectives and anyone else that requires work from them, 360 degree feedback is a great tool to implement on a quarterly or half yearly basis.

360 feedback is a performance appraisal tool to measure employee performance

This can be easily managed using HR software so they can contribute and view their review from the location they are working from and see what objectives are set as a result of the outcome of the review process.

9. Be Transparent

Still along the same lines as communication, being open and transparent with your remote team is likely to help you get the best out of how they work.

Clarity is king and queen

With remote workers having to organize and manage their own workload and prioritize around the hours that suit them, being transparent in case any problem arises gives that worker the opportunity to solve the issue or request more support.

10. Give Examples of How You Like Work Completed

Let your remote staff how you truly like to work.

If you prefer regular updates to weekly updates then explain that to them.

If there are certain things that are more of a priority to you as the employer then it's your job to explain that to them and it's their job to see that it gets done to your requirements.

Clear expectations are a manager's best friend

If you don't thoroughly explain the way in which you wish to work, then you cannot expect the remote worker to meet your expectations.

* * *

As you can see, working remotely isn't always as easy as people assume; there's isolation, fear of missing out on something and miscommunication to name a few.

To overcome those drawbacks, a successful remote worker has to be proactive, driven and hardworking.

With lesser support available for the remote worker, the only way for them to survive and still achieve their desired career goals is to push themselves to be the best with willingness to work whatever hours are necessary to ensure that all jobs are completed on time.

So to recap, to effectively work remotely the top 10 tips for working from home include:

1. Ensure you have the right equipment
2. Designate a separate space for work
3. Set yourself working hours
4. Get some structure in place
5. Communicate effectively as both the employee and employer
6. Set clear expectations
7. Monitor work progress regularly
8. Implement HR software to support remote working
9. Interact effectively
10. Trust in the worker

WORKING FROM HOME 101: The Complete Guide to Remote Work

With today's advances in technology allowing those with a stable internet connection and proper resources the means to work remotely, employers and employees alike are opting to take up this more flexible approach to working.

10 Tips for Employees to Work From Home Efficiently



1. The Right Equipment

There are many innovations in technology that will make remote working life much easier so it's worth regularly researching what is out there to aid you.



2. Designate a Space for Work

As much as you might want to wake up and work directly from the comfort of your own bed, in the long term it's not going to aid in your productivity.



3. Set Yourself Working Hours

Set some rigid working hours where you shut everything off and focus on the work that needs your attention.



4. Get Some Structure in Place

Structure your workday by planning out which tasks need to take priority and how many hours you are going to spend on each job.



5. Communicate Like Never Before

It is beneficial if you can supplement email or text communication with frequent face-to-face and voice interactions depending on what type of discussion you are having.



6. Use Flexibility Wisely

You know better than anyone when you do your best thinking and working so take advantage of it.



7. Track Your Progress

It stops procrastination problems such as internet browsing, as you are aware that the screenshots are sent directly to your employer for review.



8. Avoid Distractions

There are always other household errands that need doing, but you are best to put those off until after your structured working hours as if you were not at home.



9. Take Accountability

Communicate any problems you encounter immediately with your Manager, Client or Team so they can seek extra resources if need be.



10. Take Breaks

At home you don't have the cues for lunch breaks or time away from your desk that rejuvenate you ready for the next challenge, so you need to schedule that time in.

10 Tips for Employers on How to Manage Remote Staff



1. Set Clear Expectations

With remote working leaving the employee more in control of their work day structure, it is down to you as the employer to make your expectations extremely clear.



2. Monitor Progress Regularly

Without the ability to just pop in and catch up with your employees face to face when they are out of the office, this is an important step to schedule in.



3. HR Management Software

Having HR technology in place, like CakeHR, is going to give you some much needed extra support with your remote workers.



4. Interact Effectively

By interacting with the remote workers, keeping them updated on news from the office and paying interest in the projects they have on will boost productivity.



5. Trust in the Worker

If reliability and trust issues arise from remote working, it's worth having a conversation about whether remote working suits the needs of the individual and company.



6. Explain the Reasoning Why

As an employer, you're more aware of how each person's work is impacting the long-term organizational goals and so this is something you have to explain to them clearly.



7. Communication is a 2-Way Street

Not only is communication important for creating, maintaining and celebrating goals and company culture, as an employee you keep the remote worker engaged.



8. Be Transparent

Still along the same lines as communication, being open and transparent with your remote team is likely to help you get the best out of how they work.



9. Ask for Feedback

To make sure that your remote staff are conducive to co-workers, projects and the company's objectives and anyone else that requires work from them, 360 degree feedback is a great tool to implement on a quarterly or half yearly basis.



10. Give Examples of How You Like Work Completed

If you don't thoroughly explain the way in which you wish to work, then you cannot expect the remote worker to meet your expectations.

