

Coronavirus

14 tips on working from home



COVID-19

#keepbusinessworking

Many people are now working from home for the first time. 12 years ago, Susana Rowles set up Target Internet and made the decision that everyone in the team would work remotely. Some chose to use shared working spaces, most to work from home. Although it was a learning curve and some things can be hard, like tech support when things go wrong, overall Susana has found ways through the challenges and managed to build team spirit and a good relationship with employees.

This article draws on her top tips, resources and ideas on making the working from home experience both professional and manageable.

1 Get up and get dressed

You will want to look civilised all day as you will have unexpected video calls. Turn your video on, don't wait for the other person. This also helps to maintain a level of normality about the situation.

2 Define your working space

You need a base. If you are lucky enough to have a spare room that you can transform into an office that is great. Remember that working from the kitchen table is better than a sofa or your bed. You'll find that you will be in conference calls with very senior people in organisations who have humble home set-ups, so don't think your office space has to mimic exotic home set-ups shared on Instagram.

3 Tidy up the space behind you

We have all seen viral videos of conferences going wrong so consider where you are doing calls from and what might be in line of sight. No one wants to see your laundry hanging up behind you. If your kids walk in the room in the middle of a conference call, then relax. It's ok - don't freak out. People will understand.

4 Embrace all the communication tools

Download them all and use them all. Skype, Zoom, Webex, Teams, Facetime, WhatsApp, Slack. Learn to use them all properly. Having a back-up plan will also give you confidence. There is a lot of pressure on these tools at the moment and at some point, some might experience worldwide outages. Just move the whole meeting elsewhere. Make sure you know your personal meeting room URL, if you have one, and use that if you need to.

5 Time management

This is no different from what you do in the office but is more important when you are working remotely because you can easily get distracted and never action what you were supposed to. In the office you might remember to send an email because you see a colleague walk in. When you are working from home self-discipline is important.

6 Use a task list

You will need a way to record all the info for the tasks you need to do, and it is good practice to let others know what you are working on. If you aren't having regular catch ups with your boss and team members, then a task list lets everyone know what everyone else is up to.

7 Buy a decent pair of earphones

You might be working from your kitchen and the whole family are not interested in your conversation. Even if you live alone, the sound is better for both parties.

Continued overleaf...



Coronavirus

14 tips on working from home



COVID-19

#keepbusinessworking

8 Catch up regularly

Try to catch up with people regularly, but don't pester them as people need time to get on with stuff. Don't expect your colleagues to work exactly 9am to 5pm. Working remotely gives people the opportunity to work to a schedule that is more natural to them. Embrace that.

9 Remember to eat

It's very common to just move from one thing to the next and without the normal lunchtime break, next thing you know it will be 5pm and you've not left your desk.

10 Get fresh air

Working remotely can be quite intense and you need to take breaks from your screen. Being outside can really help so if you are allowed to then go for a short walk or have a cup of tea outside.

11 Don't over email or chat

Just don't! You can apply this rule now and keep it long after the COVID-19 crisis is over.

12 Develop different communication styles

You need to be gentler in your approach - a written comment may sound harsher than it would have been if it had been delivered face to face. The absence of body language can be difficult to replace. If you need to, follow up and explain what you meant. It can be easy to misunderstand each other without visual clues. Share your screen with colleagues and use visual tools like Skitch to point to things.

13 Managing family life

Working from home when the house is empty is one thing, it's another all together when you have children at home. Teach your children to read the signals, if the office door is closed it means you're on a call and

they must only interrupt in an emergency.

Children's interruptions are no worse than some of the interruptions that you would have when working in an office, try to remember that and not get frustrated.

14 Getting balance

Arrange time to spend with your family and time to work, it is a juggle - but it can be done. This could mean catching up on some work in the evening but it's also important to have downtime. Chunk your day into sections, some where you are working, a few breaks to help the family and spending time together, and time for yourself. Although productivity might decrease a little while you are getting used to a new schedule, once you can work out a schedule that works for you and the family, you will enjoy working from home.

Together we'll keep business working.

Information kindly provided by Susana Rowles



TARGET INTERNET

Please contact us at
info@jerseybusiness.je
for help and support.

Jersey Business
EXPERTISE. SHARED.