MAKE WORKING REMOTELY WORK FOR YOU

With technology capabilities constantly advancing and becoming increasingly portable and dynamic, it comes as no surprise that more and more companies and employees are taking advantage of opportunities to telecommute. Many corporations are ditching traditional office space practices and allowing their employees to work remotely with the goal of attracting better talent, increasing productivity, reducing costs, and improving retention. In addition, more people are seeking out the opportunity to work remotely, as they enjoy the flexibility and lifestyle this option affords them.

While working remotely can reap many benefits, there are a few adjustments that often need to be made to ensure telecommuting works smoothly for both employees and employers. Keeping these practices in mind can help you to work remotely in an effective and efficient manner.

FIND A DEDICATED WORK PLACE

When telecommuting, there are a variety of places from which you may choose to work, with the most popular choice being to work from home. No matter where you choose to work remotely, it is crucial to have a dedicated work area.

While working from your kitchen counter or couch may seem convenient, not having a
separation between work and play/relaxation can be problematic for some. For example, having to clean dishes off your counter to begin work, or having the distraction of the television in front of you while attempting daily tasks, can negatively impact motivation and productivity. In addition, without a dedicated work environment in your home, it may be difficult for you to feel as though you can ever truly disconnect from work. Designating an office or area of your home that is strictly dedicated to work can assist in making certain that you are focused and comfortable when telecommuting, and also ensure you can unplug from your daily workload when the time is right.

In addition to working from home, some people enjoy working from local coffee shops, office-share spaces, or even outdoors. As long as you have the tools and surroundings you need to stay productive, changing your work location can lead to an expanded attention span, increased drive, and new, fresh ideas.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

A reduction in in-person interaction with your coworkers and supervisors inherently comes with the territory when telecommuting. For this reason, it is of the upmost importance to take advantage of various communication tools – phone, email, video conferencing, instant messaging, etc. – in order to establish a clear line of communication with your team. It is key to be as visible and accessible when telecommuting as you would be if you were working in the office.

In addition, it can also be helpful to identify your coworkers’ preferred methods of communication. Some may prefer email, while others may prefer online video conferencing. Become comfortable with the various communication tools used by your company, and connect with your coworkers in their preferred medium to increase efficiency. When appropriate, it may also be useful to send occasional status reports and updates so your coworkers and supervisors have a clear understanding of your workload and the tasks that are in-progress or completed.

STAY ACCOUNTABLE

Without the accountability that automatically comes with working in an office setting, remote employees need to implement tactics to stay accountable to their coworkers and supervisors.
One solution is to develop a consistent routine. Establish clear goals and deadlines for each workday to keep yourself on-track, and to ensure you are spending your time efficiently. Keeping a daily to-do list and devoting 10-15 minutes of each day to organization can also assist you in achieving your intended levels of productivity.

Whether you have countless emails to address or multiple projects to manage, keeping them organized will allow you to set priorities and make staying on top of your tasks much more manageable.

**STAY ACTIVE**

Not only can exercise lead to improved brain activity and memory function, but it can also increase happiness and productivity. Working remotely can make it easy to forget this important part of your day, but there are a few simple ways to work physical activity into your telecommuting routine.

First, be sure to designate time for breaks in your daily schedule to divide the workday into manageable timeframes. During these breaks, consider using a stationary bike, taking a brisk walk, doing sit-ups/squats, or lifting small weights. This will make it possible for you to add exercise to your routine in increments, allowing you to potentially workout for longer than you would in a single period. In addition, engaging in practices like meditation or yoga can help you relax, stimulate your mind, and relieve the stresses of the week.

In some cases, it may be easier for you to complete your workout before or after work rather than taking periodic breaks throughout your day. Whether working out in the morning gives you a much-needed boost of energy, or working out at night alleviates your stress, identify a schedule that you can stick to, giving you the best chance for success.

**TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR OPPORTUNITY**

In our fast-paced and busy world, it can be easy to forget that working remotely can often offer a host of opportunities. Depending on the flexibility of your career, telecommuting may allow you to set your own schedule. If this is the case, when appropriate, take advantage of opportunities to travel, spend time with your family, or try new activities or hobbies.

When managed correctly, telecommuting can bring many benefits to both companies and employees. Keeping these practices in mind can help to ensure you are setup for success when working remotely!