

Working remotely for organisations

Description



Remote working has become a much more popular alternative for organisations since the global pandemic in 2020. Organisations are noticing the financial and productivity gains associated with remote working. As a virtual assistant, this can offer increased career progression, job security and a flexible working schedule. Some organisations, called Remote First Companies, are now emerging and operating solely online without a physical office space. These companies are leading the way for remote working standards and hiring employees from a more diverse range of professions than ever.

The Type of Work

THE MANY SERVICES A Virtual Assistant CAN PROVIDE:



Executive administration



Sales & marketing support



Back-office operations



Personal life tasks



Specialized skills



Growing Interest

GROWING INTEREST IN REMOTE WORKING

42%

of remote workers would like to increase time working remotely

400%

increase in number of people working remotely at least once a week since 2010



40%

of telecommuters want to work the same amount

62%

of workers aged between 22 and 65 work remotely some of the time

18%

of remote workers want to work less from home

Tips for Working Remotely

PILLARS OF WORKING REMOTELY



proper technology



secure connections



clear expectations



communications programmes



trust



testing effectiveness





Cost of entry

Cost of Entry: Medium Cost €€

A benefit of working with remote working organisations is that they will often provide access to relevant software, while some may even pay for your laptop, phone and Wi-Fi costs. Typical costs to consider before starting are:

- Laptop costs; a high-spec laptop may be required for some roles (€€)
- Wi-Fi costs (€ - depending on local area rates)
- Mobile Phone, Bill pay plans (€)
- Online Education Upskilling Courses (free or with membership) (€)
- Software Subscription Costs (€€)



Environmental Impact

If approximately 4 million workers adopted remote work, there would be a reduction of 3 million tons of greenhouse gases, the equivalent of planting almost 92 million trees. Indeed, remote working reduces carbon footprint by:

- Reducing daily commuter traffic, which implies less CO₂ emissions and improves air quality in built-up areas. 🌳🌳🌳
- Using less single-use plastics as workers typically eat and drink from home. 🌳🌳

- Using less energy to power computers, lights, printers etc. left on unnecessarily for prolonged periods of time. 🌱🌱🌱
- Printing less as e-files and PDFs become the norm. 🌱🌱



Good Practice

Six Principles of Good Practice:

- 1) **Proper Technology:** Make sure your technical equipment is up-to-date and with enough memory power to process the daily VA tasks. Having basic technical equipment might not be enough for all your tasks, so you might need better devices.
- 2) **Secure Connections:** Given the nature of remote working, a strong internet speed is a must-have for employees. Typically organisations will request an Ethernet test of your Wi-Fi speed before offering a role. Ensure your Wi-Fi network is securely encrypted.
- 3) **Clear Expectations:** Ensure that your employer is aware of your professional expectations for your role as well as your limitations. This reduces the risks of burnout or frustration towards the employer's expectations.
- 4) **Communication Programs:** Use them! Communication programs are a great way to get to know new colleagues virtually and ask questions to senior members of the team. This is especially important if you are



working in a “mixed” environment where some colleagues work from a shared office space, since it helps you be part of the team.

5) Trust: Trusting your team and managers is crucial for a strong working relationship when working remotely. Emails can easily be misinterpreted, and poor communication can lead to unnecessary added tasks. Building trust ensures that all team members feel comfortable seeking clarity and that a healthy working culture can thrive.

6) Testing Effectiveness: A challenge of working from home can be sustaining motivation. Keeping a ‘To Do’ list and daily personal progress report can improve motivation and performance while also offering an objective record for your manager on your effectiveness in your role.



Challenges

Although remote working offers many benefits it does come with its own challenges. Some key challenges are:

- **Loneliness and Lack of Social Interaction with Colleagues:** This can negatively affect mental health and work motivation. Working as part of a “mixed team” can be particularly challenging as your colleagues have opportunities to form connections in person.
- **Communication and Collaboration:** Communicating virtually can bring its own challenges as non-verbal cues and quick access to informal



clarifications on tasks are impacted. Organic collaborations can also be harder to come across.

- **Work – Life Balance:** Are you working from home or living at work? When working from home, separating your working day from your personal life can be challenging. This is especially true if you do not have a home office space from which you can close the door and switch off after work.



Some Solutions

- **Connect:** Using communication platforms and scheduling “remote social time with colleagues” can help you overcome isolation and stay connected. It may also be helpful to explore what social activities are available for remote workers within your organisation.
- **Communicate:** Ensuring that an effective live communication process is in place for the people you work with is crucial. When being assigned tasks, you should check right away that you are fully aware of what is required to avoid asking your colleagues to clarify again later.
- **Seek Out Opportunities:** Proactively seek out opportunities for collaboration with prospective colleagues. Send them an email or a Slack message like you would informally approach them at their desk or in the canteen.



- **Create Healthy Boundaries:** Create healthy workday routines that involve bookending your workday with enjoyable activities (i.e. going for a 5-minute walk before/after work, doing a workout ect.). Having a separate work phone and laptop can also be helpful if financially viable. Crucially, if you are off the clock – you are off the clock. Avoid the urge to work late or answer emails unless necessary.



Who is this tool/ activity for?

Remote working offers opportunities for people to develop their career from the comfort of their homes while usually providing better job security than freelancing alternatives.

Remote working is an excellent career move for individuals who:

- Have a good working knowledge of remote working platforms (SLACK, Google, Trello, Todoist etc.).
- Have strong time management and organisational skills
- Have initiative and are self-motivated.

Conclusions



- Working remotely for an organisation can be a great way to ensure job security and career progression while not losing your autonomy.
- Now, more than ever, is an excellent time to explore working from home as job posts for virtual assistants become more readily available.
- Starting out as a virtual assistant can be expensive. Invest wisely and ensure your software subscriptions are relevant to your work.
- Proper technology, secure connections, clear expectations, communication programs, trust and testing effectiveness are core principles to ensure you follow good practices as a virtual assistant.
- The challenges associated with working remotely have been widely researched. Using online resources, you can support yourself to overcome these and excel in your career as a remote worker.

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