

# Best Practices for telecommuters

## ***Executive Summary :***

So your company has instituted a teleworker initiative and you are one of the lucky employees who get to work from home or the library or any place else that has a WI-FI connection. Is this too good to be true; spend all day drinking coffee and feeling like you are back in college with no cubicle or office to report to every day? Well it might be. The first thing you must know is whether you are allowed to work where ever or do you need to use only company equipment to connect to the corporate network. Another issue that might scuttle your coffee drinking plan is do you use a company provided phone? In the following document we will look at some “Best-Practices” for working remotely.

## ***Best Practices:***

Up till now you have gotten up each morning to start your pre-workday routine; you may shower, check your email, have breakfast, check your email, kiss the wife and kids goodbye and get in the car or bus or train. Some of that should not change. It is still a good idea to get “ready for work” One of the hardest things is to get the spouse and kids and dog to understand that you still have to work even though you are at home. A routine helps to reinforce the idea that you are going to work for both you and your family. Continue to take that morning shower only now you can do it after some extra sleep since your commute has been greatly reduced.

The next big question is where should I work? If you have an office already setup then you are ahead of the game. If not setup an area that you can close off to the rest of the world. This can be as simple as an closing the door to an unfinished basement. Make sure you have ample light, electricity for your office equipment (Computer, monitor, router, printer, and anything else that your employer feels you need to accomplish your job). In order to hold all of your equipment make sure that you have a desk. While this might not seem important a desk is designed for you to type on a keyboard. A table can be too high and this can cause all sorts of pain in the hands, wrists, and arms. While we are on the subject of pain make sure you have a comfortable chair. A standard wooden or thinly padded kitchen chair can lead to all sorts of pain and loss of productivity. A good ergonomically designed chair will allow for a better quality of work.

Take a couple of small breaks during the day. When you were going to the office everyday you would most likely take 5 minutes to talk to your co-workers and stretch your legs. After sitting for a long time it is still a good idea to stretch your legs. While you

may not be able to walk down the hall to visit your co-workers it is important to keep in touch with them especially those who do not telecommute. A recent study published by RPI management professor, Timothy Golden said that while your moral may be higher those in the office may be lower. So take time to keep in-touch with your co-workers. While it is a good idea to take a break it is not wise to sit down and watch your favorite TV shows all day.

While you are at home how do you make sure that managers other than yours and other executives know that you are still employed by the company. The company gave you email and in some cases a phone; use them. Obviously you don't want to abuse them but if you are answering phone calls and emails after normal business hours it should get you noticed. Don't think because you telecommute you are working in a vacuum. You still need to be as agile and adaptable as when you were in the office. It should be blatantly clear that all the same rules about work apply no matter where you are working.

Some other best practices that should be followed: Do not think that because you work from home you don't still need dependent care. In order to get your work done you need to be able to concentrate on your work and not on the kids. Depending on your job you may have more time to participate in your kids lives but you still need to get your work done.

Remember there will be a period of adjustment to your new work environment. If you are a very social person it may take a bit longer but if you can keep motivated then you should start to enjoy telecommuting.