

A good remote working day

– reflections on the new flexible working life

Flexible working life with more time spent working from home opens new opportunities for building good work habits.

For instance, it might be a good idea to align your expectations with your nearest manager regard to your duties, planning and prioritisation in order to achieve a good work-life balance – and avoid the feeling that you never fully meet expectations in either role.

However, there are many other ways of energising yourself and making sure that you have a good working day. Perhaps you can benefit from the following suggestions?



Working or not working

Think up routines that signify whether you are "at work" or "not at work". You could for instance:

- take a walk with a pod cast in your ears before "arriving at work"
- dress in work clothes when you "arrive at work" – this might also improve your on-line meetings
- put on loud music if you want to rev up your brain
- get an overview of what you have got out of the way in the hours set aside for work and what you are planning to get done tomorrow as a sign that it is quitting time
- don't stay "at work" longer than you usually do
- have a regular walking or cycling appointment at the end of the working day so you can "get home from work".

On-line meetings

Presumably, most of us have got used to them by now. Here are some tips for good on-line meetings:

- On-line meetings are just meetings. What applies in the real world still applies. Remember to choose a moderator, set an agenda and follow up.
- Be an active participant in the meeting as you would at a physical meeting – stay focused and keep the meeting time to a minimum so you can free up time for other things.
- Remember to take short breaks – and MANY of them. At least 5-10 minutes per hour.
- Everyone should have their camera turned on. It cannot be repeated often enough. Video rocks. It is all about trust and relationships.
- Use different formats all the time, such as joint discussions: You can ask questions during the meeting, put up your hand, ask questions in the chat room, etc.
- There is no need to share everything. It's OK to have a professional and a private persona.

- Think about whether there are places in your home where you do not want a camera.
- Consider whether there are tasks that you do not want to perform from home, e.g. professional disagreements or the discussion of delicate issues.

Plan your working day

New ways of working provide new opportunities for better planning. You could for instance:

- get more done in a few hours without distractions than in a whole day where you are also helping your kids with their homework or have to listen in on your partner's on-line meetings
- introduce quiet time. 1-2 hours marked in your calendar to concentrate on your own work and where you are not available via email or phone
- activate an out of office response if you are unavailable for a prolonged period of time
- also make it easier for your colleagues to concentrate on their work. Are you sure that they should be copied in on your next email?
- take breaks. Enter the breaks in your calendar so you remember to take them
- activate an out of office response during lunch breaks so customers and colleagues are not disturbed; and nor are you
- enjoy that you can go out and breathe some fresh air and even experience daylight in winter.

Stay in touch with your colleagues

Feeling overlooked or forgotten is almost the worst thing that can happen to a human being. Everyone is responsible for maintaining good contact with colleagues. You could for instance:

- invite them for a digital coffee break with no more than four others from the team (if you are more, the on-line conversation will not function so well). Arrange it so that you hold your coffee breaks in different groups every week so that everybody gets to talk to everybody else over time
- call people instead of automatically emailing them, for instance every day at 10 am while you are brewing yourself some tea or coffee
- discuss the day's global news from 9-9.15 am every day, and you are set up for the day
- make a 10-15 minute on-line presentation for your colleagues about a topic you are passionate about. You will add to your common pool of knowledge, and you can rehearse your presentation technique on-line. You may even record the presentation and perhaps use it in other situations.

Create calm and find time to look after yourself. You could for instance:

- make exercise a regular thing. Did you know that just two minutes of exercise for every hour you sit still can dramatically prolong your life and energise you here and now?
- benefit and find new energy and more time by using a daily wheel in which you plot in your activities – both work and recreational activities – and in that way find ideas to make more time for yourself
- talk to your colleagues or immediate superior about adjustments in your working day and let them inspire you
- ensure that you use the time you have saved ironing shirts and commuting for something worthwhile, enhancing the quality of your life.

