



Jim's Tips for Successful Working from Home

Jim's first experience in working outside a traditional office began over 20 years ago. Having been both in office and work from home several times now he firmly believes it just doesn't matter, one can be just as effective working from office, home or other location by abiding their routine and managing distractions. Here are a few key learnings.

Keep your Routine



Keep your routine as if working from the office. Get up, work out, get breakfast, get dressed and prepare mentally for your day.

Manage your Distractions



Science says it can take up to 23 minutes to refocus. The barrage of social media, TV and family can be ruinous. Schedule time for these just like rest of day so you can control.

Change your Location



You have the ability and flexibility to adjust during the day to match your work. Start on the porch doing email, end in quiet room on a conference call. Movement counters stagnation.

Establish your Workspace



Have a defined space set aside for work whether an office, a corner or kitchen table. You and others know you are working in that space. Space should allow you to disengage at end of day. It matters.

Have a Buddy



Make sure you keep in touch with friends and colleagues just like office. Those connections and input are critical. Instant messaging is a terrific tool for this.

Be Available and Visible



Turn on all tools in the morning when ready to engage. Ping a friend or two to check in. Always speak up during calls to insure your visibility and perspective is heard. Disconnection and apathy are fatal.

Know your Technology



Trusting that your chosen technology works is imperative. Sort out poor WIFI, cell services and meeting technologies before getting others on critical calls.

Take a Break



Just like the office, take a break every couple hours. Don't skip meals. Go for a walk, chat the neighbors, even take a 20 minute nap. You'll find new energy and focus.

Learn a New Way to Work



Enjoy the change. Learning to be self reliant and motivated can offer many new opportunities. The new normal is here.



Jim's Tips for Managing Remote Teams

Jim's first experience in working outside a traditional office began over 20 years ago. Having been both in office and work from home several times, he firmly believes location just doesn't matter, one can be just as effective working from office, home or other location by abiding their routine and managing distractions. Managing home based teams requires another layer of thought as well as purposeful interaction. A few tips for teams:

Develop a written charter



When engaging remote team members it's difficult to sense nonverbal reaction. To overcome this commit to writing out and getting agreement on team purpose, charter or scope of work.

Maximize technology



Blind conference calls are boring and ineffective. Tools like Zoom, Skype and dozens of others bring live video and interest. Use instant messengers to interact privately many times per day.

Be time aware



It's very likely that a remote team will cross multiple time zones. Be aware of zones, holiday schedules and be fair to everyone with scheduling.

Establish a business rhythm



Remote teams will settle into individual routines and schedules. It's important to define those key times for the team to come together, collaborate and report. Be consistent, equally important not to cancel.

Assign a buddy system



Purposely assign Buddies who can help and learn from one another. Isolation is the enemy of working remote. Make sure people are connected.

Be Available and Visible



Turn on all tools in the morning when ready to engage. Ping a person or two to check in. Let your team know that you're working, available and aware.

Engage every team member



As team leader you must find time to engage each individual separately. During team meetings it's critical to have speaking parts for every person to keep them engaged.

Plan a required event



Whenever possible create an event to pull a remote team together for personal interaction. Meeting, dinner, team events build trust and bonds that last.

Awards and recognition



It's the small things that matter. Highlight good work. Provide praise and rewards when appropriate to give individuals a sense of pride and value.