How to Work From Home Effectively During The Coronavirus Outbreak

Top Five Tips

As Organizations across the United States and abroad move their non-essential workforce out of the office and into work from home situations to help 'flatten the curve' of the coronavirus spread, it's important to leverage best practices to improve your effectiveness and efficiency while working virtually.

#1. Minimize Distractions

Be purposeful in minimizing distractions when working from home. Studies show that it takes over 20 minutes to get back on task after being distracted or interrupted.

- Designate a quiet area for your home office, preferably with a door that can be closed.
- Turn off the television, podcasts or loud music. Consider silence, white noise or soft/classical music instead.
- Complete household chores before or after work like usual.
- Set mental parameters to avoid social media, online shopping and other online distractions during work hours.

#2. Secure the Tools You Need to be Effective

Work with your supervisor to obtain the tools you need to be effective at work each day. Balance the cost of new tools against the benefit of enhanced effectiveness and efficiency. Examples you might consider are:

- Laptop/Computer
- Internet access
- Headset
- Mouse
- Printer/Paper/Ink
- Larger monitor

#3. Stay Connected

Stay connected to your peers and supervisor just like you would at work, and don't ruminate independently on something longer than is needed. If you would normally pop into a colleague's cubicle to ask a question, do the same thing virtually using the tools and technology available to you.

- Make a quick phone call instead of spending time typing out an email.
- Use text messaging.
- Leverage instant messaging.
- Use screen sharing and video conferencing tools.
- Be prepared for and engage in any regular team or supervisor updates, meeting or huddles.

#4. Establish a Childcare Plan

As the coronavirus pandemic forces school systems and daycare facilities to close, a childcare plan is the first step toward keeping kids safe and engaged at home while also creating an effective work environment for adults.

- Consider if you, your spouse/partner or other household members can work alternate hours allowing one adult to work while the other provides childcare. When the children are asleep (early morning/late night or during the day for naps), both

adults can resume work.

- Consider asking a non-elderly family member or friend (who you trust is otherwise practicing social distancing) to assist with childcare.
- If the first two options are not available, discuss working more flexible hours with your supervisor to accommodate when your children are sleeping.
- Finally, consider babysitting solutions like Care.com or Sittercity.com. If using this option, ensure social distancing practices are agreed upon in advance.

#5. Establish Boundaries and Expectations at Home

Given the unprecedented events unfolding, especially for younger children, your presence at home may seem like a day off work. Set clear expectations with your family and friends about your work from home expectations for yourself and them.

- Be clear that you should not be interrupted unless it's an emergency.
- If you are taking an important call or need an especially quiet environment for a period of time, let others in the home know.
- Try to work approximately the same times each day so others know what to expect.
- Set expectations that your work computer and paperwork are confidential and not for household use.

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