

## Things That Will Make You Successful As A Remote Worker

When Gallup released its report revealing that 43% of the American workforce now works remotely, plenty of people toiling in traditional offices took notice. After all, telecommuting seems to present the best of all worlds.

Not only does working from home cut out killer commutes, but it saves money for both businesses and workers. American Express saved upwards of \$10 million by instituting remote working. And a ConnectSolutions survey of remote workers found that 30% of respondents experienced annual savings of more than \$5,000.

Perhaps that's the reason so many startups like Trello are moving to an all-remote staff. And of people who have gone the telecommuting route, a whopping 90% say they have no plans to ever go back to working in a corporate setting, according to Buffer's "State of Remote Work 2018" report.

The benefits of going remote come with some challenges. Truly, remote working isn't for every person — or every position. To make the experience incredible, you must prepare for the realities of working from afar.

Is the Grass Really Greener? It Depends on Your View.

Most individuals who have never worked from a home office think it's as easy as setting up a desk and chair and making sure they have reliable internet access. But going full-tilt into telecommuting involves much more.

Remote working requires a different mindset and new set of expectations. If you're not ready to handle the power of mapping out your day, you may actually find it to be more stressful than conforming to the traditional structure of 8-to-5. In addition, some workers, such as managers and C-suite executives, can struggle to support their teams if they aren't on-site.

Of course, these difficulties don't mean you need to jettison your dreams of saying sayonara to business clothes and a gas-guzzler. The key to effective telecommuting is education and preparedness. Steel yourself against predictable drawbacks and inconveniences by focusing on long-term success strategies.

Update your definition of professional communication.

Using a cracking-up smiley face emoji in a work email may feel wrong, but joining a remote workforce means making yourself emoji-savvy. Not only do companies with remote employees and contractors often use proprietary internal management systems, but they have gravitated toward communications platforms like Slack. And Slack isn't just a place to talk shop; it's a virtual water cooler for rapid-fire, fun chitchat between team members thanks to custom emojis and more.

Kuty Shalev, founder of Cleverttech, encourages everyone at his company to get comfortable using technology not just for work purposes but as a means to forge common experiences from afar. As he explains, "The simple act of using emoticons as reactions to the posts and comments of others has proven an effective way to incentivize better communication, improve transparency, and personalize

each team's communications." Bottom line: Emojis can go a long way in communicating your message's tone.

Defend yourself against inertia.

Your high-school physics teacher told you that objects in motion tend to stay in motion, and those at rest will stay at rest. The same principle holds true for remote workers. A telecommuter who keeps busy tends to get things done; a telecommuter who gives in to laziness or distraction will have trouble keeping up. If you know that you have difficulty staying on task, protect yourself with a barrier of self-discipline fostered by smart work-at-home habits. For instance, you may want to live by a locked-tight calendar.

It's OK to set aside some time occasionally to toss laundry into the washing machine or take the dog for a 15-minute power walk. However, don't let yourself fall into the trap of avoiding your work tasks. That said, be sure to delineate part of your day for "home life," too. Remote workers notoriously report that they feel on-call all of the time, and some even go over and above their stated hours. Draw boundaries for yourself and stick to them; you'll be more productive and feel less stressed.

Surround yourself with support to avoid loneliness.

For extroverts, working from home can be particularly tough. But even introverts may find that being alone for large parts of the day is difficult. Not surprisingly, about one-fifth of telecommuters say they feel lonely, according to the Buffer report on remote work. Being part of a community, even a virtual one, helps chip away at isolation and reduces anxiety. Remote workers should seek out solidarity by building a support system of friends, family members, and other teleworkers.

Another way to boost camaraderie is to occasionally work out of a coffee shop, local co-working space, or another hotspot where remote employees like to hang out. You'll meet like-minded people and feel like you're part of the crowd, even though you'll all be working on assignments for different companies.

Statistics indicate that remote working is on the upswing, so getting ready today will help you navigate the world of telecommuting next month or next year. The more you plan for being at home full-time or part-time, the better your overall experience will be.

Credit: <https://www.forbes.com>