How To Effectively Work From Home

PRESENTATION BY: THE GOODWILL CAREER PATHWAYS INSTITUTE

"Your reputation and integrity are everything. Follow through on what you say you're going to do. Your credibility can only be built over time, and it is built from the history of your words and actions."

- MARIA RAZUMICH-ZEC

Telework-What is It?

The official definition of "telework" can be found in the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010: "the term 'telework' or 'teleworking' refers to a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work."

What is Needed to Telework? (Tools)

- Computer Access
- Internet
- Telephone
- Software
- Other (This includes specific workplace requirements, tools of the trade).

What Soft Skills Do You Need?

Teleworking is not for everyone, nor is everyone who has an opportunity to work from home as efficient as they could be at the process of it. There are some soft skills that you need to be effective at teleworking:

• A good attitude

• Time management skills

• Ability to navigate multiple projects without being told to

• Must be a self-starter

• Ability to limit distractions and keep focus

• Creativity

• Can work by yourself for long periods of time without socializing (this is really tough on extroverts)

Soft Skills For Success

Communication
Public Speaking
Leadership
Team Work
Decision Making
Time Management
Stress Management

Positive Attitude
Inter personal Skills
Flexibility
Work Ethic
Professionalism
Responsibility
Conflict management

What Can Make Teleworkers Less Effective?

The long and short of it…DISTRACTIONS. Distractions are the #1 cause of why employers deem telework less effective overall. However, this is a controllable aspect of your workday that can be navigated. It is largely based on *perception*.

- Distractions happen at the office or at home, however, it is more noticeable when there are gaps of time in your performance at home that cannot be accounted for and it elicits an emotional response many times from an employer because they cannot **see** what is going on. In the office, they know that Stanley from Security came by to ask a question. At your home, the employer has no idea that Stanley from Security made a call to you. All they know is that you are now away from your computer and not accepting their call.

- You must manage ***perception*** when you are teleworking and that is an added stressor and an added task.

How to Manage Distractions

- Distractions at home are challenging! You see that laundry that just needs to be turned over. There are many tasks that you are aware of at home that are of a personal nature. When you are not working on work related tasks and you make the *choice* to focus on a task that does not fall under your job responsibilities, this can be viewed by an employer as time fraud.

- Save the task for lunch breaks or mid day breaks so that you keep focused on the tasks at hand. Remember, you are having to balance your activity with any potential perception.

- Working from home without the distractions of an office environment may also allow you to complete more work than normal.

- There are 8 hours in a working day. The excuse of "I normally only get X done in my day so I can finish early" is dishonest. Account for your time and if you find yourself flying through tasks, then pace yourself! Check for the quality of your output.

- Complete an *honest days work for an honest days pay*.

Create a Plan

Start your day with a plan. This is a part of time management. Have a list of tasks that you need to complete and give a priority to each task. The Covey chart of Urgent and Important is a great way to do this. (See our Time Management Training). Here is what you plan can look like:

Urgent and Important	Important but Not Urgent
Move files from desktop to OneDrive before IT closes doors (1)	1-1's with Employees (1) Follow-up on Partnerships (Call) (3) Create Schedule (2) Send Partner Email (4)
Urgent and Not Important Check email (2) Follow-up on email correspondence (3) Write up employee A (1)	**Not Urgent or Important** Call potential vendor back and let them know we are not going to be in office right now. (1)

Over-Communicate

Remember, you are having to manage perception and projects simultaneously. So, create a communication plan between the stakeholders that you need to maintain contact with. Whether you send hourly updates, a noon and five o'clock update, or just something at the end of the day, *overcommunicate.*

- *Share status updates*
- *Create a form you can share with your leaders about your projects*
- *Send incomplete projects for feedback*

Do not go quiet. If you are quiet and never communicating, then it creates the illusion that you are not doing what you are paid to do while you are teleworking.

Use your communication mediums to have conference calls.
- Microsoft Teams
- Google Hangouts
- Zoom
- GoToMeeting

Using Communication Technology

With the communication technology available, if you are unsure how to use it then locate some tutorials on how to best use software for communication.

- Microsoft Teams: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voO6YhA7kSs
- Google Hangouts: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjm0P5Yb0DE
- Zoom Meetings: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arIDQBALrEw
- GoToMeeting: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKJ-Ei4z8k8

You do not have to be in isolation while working from home! However, be aware that you are on camera when you are using this software. So, whatever you have going on in the background others will see. Your barking dog will be heard unless you are muted. That bathroom trip you thought wouldn't be visible, is available for all to see unless your camera is off. Be aware of offensive artwork, others in your household who may be walking in the background, and things that you say while on a conference call or video call. Never underestimate the fact that your microphone may be on.

Please, Take Breaks When You Need Them…

Our eyes were not intended to stare at a computer screen for 8-10 hours a day. Please get off your couch, away from the dining table, or outside of your office periodically. Your body does need some circulation.

- Go outside for a walk
- Make some coffee
- Do 10 minutes of Yoga for good health
- Please, take your restroom breaks
- Tend to that chore that you needed to complete during your 10-minute break
- Take a brain break- but get up! Don't just stare at another screen as that really defeats the purpose.

Self-care is so important while working from home!

Final Thoughts

You are a representative of your organization while you are working from home. Be a good steward of your resources, this opportunity, and be responsible.

• How you behave during telework can be a deciding factor on whether or not your organization will continue to allow people to have this working option moving forward.

• Working from home is a privilege, not a right. Follow the tips in this presentation and ensure that you get to work from home successfully!

• Remember, do the right thing!