HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY WORK REMOTELY

If you are new to working remotely, it can be challenging to stay focused and engaged. It is not always easy, but with a few tips you can maximize your productivity while still enjoying your work.

Experiment with Your Work Setup

- As a remote worker, you have a lot of flexibility over your work. Think about where you are setup and if you are comfortable. Check to see if you need a new home chair since you will be spending more time than you may be used to in it.
- If your job allows, experiment with the time of day you are working. Try starting early in the morning and ending a little earlier in the afternoon. Or push your whole workday later. It may even be possible for you start early, take breaks throughout the day and end later. Once you find the times that work for you, check to make sure you are still working your assigned number of hours, or that you are working long enough to complete assigned tasks.
- Don't forget, even though you are "working from home", you may not have to actually be "working from home". You might find you are more productive setting up at a local coffee shop or co-working space. Wherever you find is best for you, you will want a strong internet connection to keep you connected to co-workers.

Create Work/Home Boundaries

- It is easy for remote workers to lose their grasp of a work-life balance. You begin to associate being at home with working – you begin working when you wake up and don't stop at your usual time because you are not changing locations to go home at the end of the day.
- Establish clear office hours. Decide what times you will be working and when you finish for the day, do not complete any more work tasks. Share your office hours with co-workers and family. Make sure they understand when you will be working and when you will be off.
- Continue to dress as you would be going into an office. This will ensure you feel like you are at work. Your energy, motivation and performance are linked to how you feel mentally and physically.

Prepare for Your Meetings

- Keep your camera on during meetings. This will show you are focused on the material and helps you stay engaged during the call. Turning on your camera is an essential part of effectively communicating with your team. The lighting should be adequate, so your face is fully visible.
- Pay attention to your background and remove all distractions. Keep your background simple with either a blank wall or something that shows you are in a home office. If your living situation does not allow for a simple background, virtual choices can be a good option. Choose something professional, i.e., bookshelves instead of a tropical beach.

Create Accountability for Yourself

- Set clear time blocks for your daily tasks and projects. You can also give yourself deadlines, so you know exactly what you need to be working on. Use your calendar for everything you may be doing that day. Even blocking an hour in the morning to check emails and then again before lunch can keep you on track. Don't forget to schedule yourself a few breaks throughout the day.

Be Visible at Work

- Check in with your team and boss to let them know what you are working on as much as possible. This will not only keep you on track but will also let them know who is available should they have a question about a project.
- Be responsive when someone sends you a message. If you are working on an important task and need to focus, let them know you will get back to them as soon as possible. This does not mean you should be available all day, but it shows you are able to respond when you are available.

Talk with Your Team

- Remote workers often find it difficult to stay in touch with their team. There will not be the casual meeting in the hall or break room. Keeping in contact will make you feel like you are part of a team.
- Scheduling check-ins is a good way to stay connected. Spend some time together asking how they are doing, what they are doing outside of the office and if they have anything special coming up. It only needs to be a few minutes but can foster deeper relationships which in turn makes working remotely more enjoyable.