UNIVERSITY
HUMAN RESOURCES

Telework Success Tips for Employees

Employees who telework often learn that working remotely is different than they expected and that it requires specific skills and habits. The following tips will help you to be a successful teleworker.

Define your workspace

It can be easy to sit on the sofa with your laptop and expect to get work done. Experienced teleworkers will tell you they tried that, and it simply doesn't work! Establishing a dedicated workspace gives your brain a cue that it is time for work. You should ensure that your workspace has the basic furniture for you to be comfortable performing your tasks, adequate lighting, and that it is free from hazards such as electrical or computer cords in your way.

Master the basics

- Add your telework schedule to your email signature line.

- Set up call forwarding and learn how to access your voicemail from home.

- Know how to connect to the UMD VPN and other online tools you regularly use.

- Plan for video calls/meetings by making sure you know how to turn on your computer's camera and microphone and being aware that your colleagues may be able to see the background behind you.

Set and track daily goals and share your progress

You may be surprised by how differently the workday passes without the comings and goings of an office to break things up or influence what you do next. Start each day of telework by writing down what you need to achieve and then track your progress. Pay attention to how long tasks take you and start adjusting your daily goals to match your current rhythm. Communicate with your supervisor and/or colleagues if you think your telework plan needs to be adjusted.

Eliminate distractions

If home is where your heart is then teleworking can mean pets, children or a favorite hobby are only a few feet away. Depending on your living arrangement, you may need to hang a "do not

disturb" sign so your family members don't interrupt you. Pets often need a closed door to keep them away and you might need headphones to block background noise.

Prioritize privacy

Whether you are in your home or a common area, take five minutes to assess the privacy of your workspace. Can someone standing behind you read your computer screen? Are your windows open so your neighbor can hear your phone call? What information do you need to secure before grabbing a cup of coffee or heading to the restroom? Your personal privacy matters too, so see if there is anything around that you would not want visible during a video conference call.

Stay connected

Even if you telework for only one day a week, you may feel that you are missing out on communication that is happening in the office. Teleworking requires you to be more intentional about staying connected to co-workers, colleagues, and your supervisor. Here are some tips to consider:

- Plan for regular check-ins with your supervisor to share status updates and to learn about any new initiatives.

- Keep your agreed upon office hours and be accessible and available to take calls, respond to emails and attend meetings.

- Use instant messaging tools (i.e. Skype, Slack, Google Chat) to stay connected to colleagues.

- Schedule phone or video update meetings with key colleagues and co-workers to stay abreast of happenings and projects.

Dress for work

Dressing casually is definitely a perk of working at an alternate location, but "getting ready for work" is a daily ritual that many successful teleworkers swear by.