REMOTE LIFESTYLE FOR BUSINESSES

TAL CUBE

Website

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Introduction

The sudden jump to remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic is one most businesses are not ready for. It is an unprecedented type of scenario in which a vast majority of organizations are not well prepared to suddenly move their entire workforce into remote work.

When you are able to adapt your business to a remote working lifestyle through the effective use of new technological ways to engage and communicate with your teams and groups, you are able to hold your employees accountable, monitor your progress, and overall manage your business for success.

However, adapting to this change and adopting a remote lifestyle for your business is easier said than done. If you are not sure of the appropriate starting point, we are here to help you through it. We have pulled together a six-step plan to take your business remotely in the best way possible.

Step 1:   Get Comfortable With Working Remotely

Step 2:   Accommodate Your Workforce

Step 3:   Educate Your In-house Employees

Step 4:   Outsource Specialist Talent Teams

Step 5:   Leverage Brand Communication Trends

Step 6:   Ensure Cyber Security

STEP 1:
GET COMFORTABLE
WITH WORKING REMOTELY.

During this period, questions are definitely being raised. Questions like how does one get comfortable working from home? How does one adjust to the sudden change? Is it possible to work effectively and be productive?`

Adopting an effective remote working culture or lifestyle is going to be a challenge for most businesses whose employees have never done this before, making it necessary that every team or group has to have a re-launch.

For a scenario like working from home, it is essential to mould a new operating system through the utilization of visual elements like video conferencing-could be Zoom, Google and others.

This brings the team together, operating as one, as well as taking decisions on the new situation on the ground. However, a manager should be able to ask questions like how often should we communicate? What are the necessary tools required for effective operation? What are the different preferences of everyone?

To save you the trouble, thinking on how to work comfortably from home, here are five top working home tips you employees can follow:

CREATE A PERMANENT WORKSPACE

The major aim of creating a permanent workspace in the home is "Focus". An area in your home can be designated, it could be an empty or spare room converted to an office equipped with comfortable office supplies. However, regardless of the space or location available ensure that the environment is serene enough to work and you are able to focus on the task at hand.

"Create a permanent workspace by designating an area in your home for high productivity."

INVEST IN QUALITY TECHNOLOGY

In this period where most business operations have to be carried out remotely, It is important to invest in quality and necessary technology. For a scenario like working from home, we are aware that technological devices such as desktop, laptop, tablet, or phone systems are needed to effectively carry out your office activities from time to time. In addition to this, a high-performance router will save you from many technology hassles. A router from several years might be prone to common network issues.

"Acquire quality technology, needed to effectively carry out your work activities from time to time."
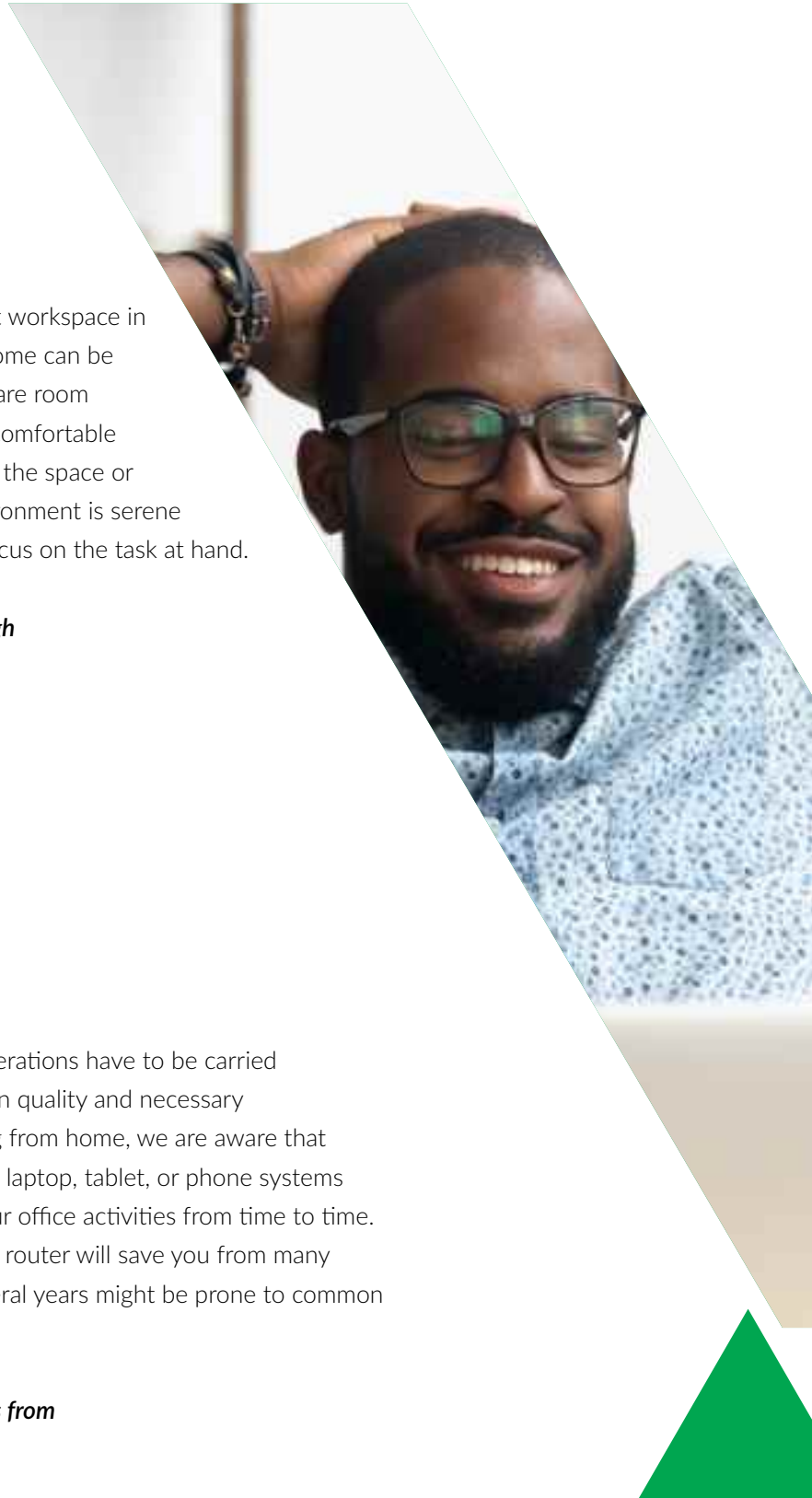
SET REAL WORK HOURS

Now, we have the office space all set up with the necessary and effective technology for high productivity. It becomes necessary to set real work hours for yourself while working remotely if you are going to make working from home an everyday commitment. You have to discipline yourself and stick to the specific business or work hours you have set for yourself. You should also ensure to avoid distractions which can hinder you from following the set work hours hence reducing business productivity.

DISCOVER YOUR HIGH PRODUCTIVITY PERIODS

The beautiful thing about this tip is the flexibility in setting your work hours. The question is, do you know the period at which your productivity is at its peak? Or should I say do you know when to work best? Every individual is more productive at different times in the day. Some individuals are most productive in the morning; while some are most productive and focused in the afternoon. For others, their most productive time during the workday is the evenings. *"Discover your time. Build your work schedule at your most productive period."*

CREATE A VISION BOARD

It is normal to be bored and discouraged after working from home for a long period of time. You might also struggle with enjoying your work. A vision board is just the right item for your use. It serves as a source of motivation, inspiration, and drives towards the attainment of your set goals. It is a board that can be used to write notes and post pictures of your dreams and aspirations towards the goals you have set for yourself.
"Create a vision board with your goals, aspirations, and prospects, both personally and professionally. Never stop reading them; consistent reminders bring you closer to your goal.

STEP 2:
ACCOMMODATE YOUR WORKFORCE.

According to a prolific investor and founder of Angelist, Navel Ravikant, remote work is the future we all must get ready for. I guess the future referred here has arrived. Remote work is about more than just the advancement of technology, it's something that has the potential to aid the way we work, manage and lead. The challenges of managing remote employees and solutions to these challenges.

While there are big benefits of working remotely, there are new and unique challenges with managing remote employees that managers never see coming. Some of which include:

ISOLATION

A 2018 Neuroscience report agreed
that when mice were removed from
their highly social structure and system by
researchers, then isolated from their group,
signs of social interaction atrophy were shown
by their brain cells. In other words, the separation
from their social structure affected their brain cells.
We should understand that prolonged isolation and
loneliness in humans is detrimental and can lead to
anxiety and depression.

As a manager or a business owner, be aware of this. Ensure to
engage your employees socially, check up on them to be sure
they are getting involved in activities that will improve their
productivity. Isolation and loneliness to a large extent can hinder
their work progress and level of productivity.

COMMUNICATION

Face to face communication at all times helps to sense intent in messages passed
between you and your employees. As a result of the abrupt change in a work routine,
face to face communication might be difficult to achieve. Therefore, communication
can get muddled if teams never meet face to face. Trust and collaboration suffer when
workers are isolated from others.

*"Close attention to relationship building and a process to ensure good communication is really
important. When the group or the organization has a strong culture that supports collaboration,
this can stand-in for many of the detailed steps- it really helps"*

— *Jennifer Stine, former head of executive and professional education of Massachusetts Institute
of Technology*

To create a successful communication strategy for your remote teams and employees, you need to implement the right software. Having the right tools and adopting good communication practices will help your employees working remotely feel like they are part of a team.

Some of the most popular tools used to allow seamless face to face/video conferencing, instant messaging, and meeting scheduling include:

Zoom: great for getting face time with your employees and teams.

Slack: this is a chat tool that can serve as a replacement for the more casual conversations you'd have in an office setting.

Google Calendar: an easy way to share and view team members' calendars for seamless meeting scheduling. Additionally, Google Calendar has a setting that allows users to indicate their working hours.

Google Drive: important for documentation of projects which can be accessed by multiple team members at once.

Formstack: this is a tool that can streamline communication among virtual teams. It can be used to facilitate annual reviews, measure employee engagement, and gather feedback on in-person company retreats.

EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT

Remote employee management can feel like a totally different challenge than managing people you work with side by side. This implies that things that work for your employees at work might not really work for them now that they work remotely.

Some of the ways in which you can effectively manage our employees who work remotely include:

- **Provide easy access to information:** employees new to working remotely are often surprised by the added time and effort needed to locate information from coworkers. Even getting answers to what seem like simple questions can feel like a large obstacle to a worker based at home. You could help reduce these obstacles by providing easy access to any information they would need to get their jobs done better and on time.

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- **Establish structured daily check-ins:** this could take the form of a series of one-on-one calls, if your employees work more independently from each other, or a team call, if their work is highly collaborative. It should be regular and predictable.

- **Provide different communication technology options:** there are circumstances when quick collaboration is more important than visual detail. In these situations, provide mobile-enabled individual messaging functionality (like Slack, Zoom, etc.) which can be used for simpler, less formal conversations, as well as time-sensitive communication.

✓ **Establish rules of engagement:** managers should establish "rules of engagement" with employees as soon as possible, ideally during the first online check-in meeting. Remote work becomes more efficient when managers set expectations for the frequency, means, and ideal timing of communication for their teams.

✓ **Provide opportunity for social interaction:** helps to reduce feelings of isolation, and promote a sense of belonging.

✓ **Offer encouragement and support:** acknowledge the stress they are facing with this new way of work and empathize with their struggles. Once you ask the question, be sure to listen carefully to the response, and briefly restate it back to the employee, to ensure that you understood correctly. Let the employee's stress or concerns (rather than your own) be the focus of this conversation. Then offer an encouraging feedback.

STEP 3:

EDUCATE YOUR IN-HOUSE EMPLOYEES.

It is true that training remains critical to staff and the growth of the company, even when teams are dispersed. Positive results like reduced turnover, increased productivity and healthy staff has been cemented into the rudiments of most company culture as a result of the fleeting trend to remote working.

However, companies are adapting approaches and techniques in training their in-house employees who now have to work remotely. Here are foolproof ways to train remote employees without compromising their learning experience or breaking the bank:

CREATING AN ONLINE COURSE

In the past, creating an online course used to involve various technical experts, however, today it is no longer that difficult to create an online course with which to get your employees working remotely up to the speed with the new technicalities that come with working from home.

Creating an online course can be a source of stress considering how busy you and your employees would be while adapting to working remotely but with expert help you can easily build online courses for your employees, resulting in a scalable training program that will improve the performance and engagement of your employees.

When looking for help with creating an online course for your employees, there are things you should look out for such as; course structure, content, and deliverability.

Course Structure: This is the collation of all the training materials you have gathered into a cohesive way while thinking about the paths each employee will take when going through the course. Each module should be more difficult than the one before it and should be made on the skills and knowledge that they gained in the previous module.
Online tests/quizzes/surveys can also be included in each module to improve engagement. This will help you to track the progress of each employee as they proceed from one module to the next.

At TalCube, we offer specialized course structure creation and modification services to meet the needs of your employees.

Course Content: The content of your online course is expected to solve a specific need or issue your employees will face or currently facing with remote working. It should cover topics that your employees haven't learned before or the skills and knowledge that they lack, however, keep in mind the learning needs of each employee in your workforce. With all these in mind, you should be able to create or curate the contents that will make up the material for the course.

TalCube's team of talents can help you create and organize time-saving and impactful course content using the resources your company already has or making specialized research from trusted sources on the content topics while taking note of the learning goals you have for your employees.

Course Deliverability: This is the mode in which you intend to deliver your online course to your employees. The course content can be passive or active. For passive, it usually involves your employees understanding concepts by only watching or listening. Active however involves more complex learning goals which would get your employees more engaged.

The use of interactive elements and activities such as infographics, discussion boards, group assignments, personal stories, and gamification is important. Ensure to always check for these things when looking for specialists to help you create online courses for educating your employees working remotely. As you create more online courses for your workforce, you will get to know what is important, their preferences and how best to keep them engaged, thus, deliver the best online training experience to them.

At TalCube, we do all these and much more ensuring you deliver a resourceful and great online course for your employees. You can learn more about creating your first employee training program **here.**

SIMPLICITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

You'll probably agree that from online banking and email to social media accounts and Apple IDs, the average human has hundreds of numbers, letters, and special characters swimming through their head each day. This makes it important to utilize the "Single Sign-On (SSO) method."

Today, SSO allows people to access all their cloud-based applications with the same login details. SSO gives remote employees the flexibility to learn from anywhere when combined with mobile integration. The biggest tech brands, which include Google and Facebook have been seen to embrace the use of SSO. Therefore it is advisable to introduce the use of SSO if you are yet to.

KEEP TRAINING IN ONE PLACE

It is quite difficult to provide an on-premise training workshop when your work arrangements become more flexible. Certainly, there is always the option to arrange a means by which all employees can meet at a location, but you'd rather direct the money to upskill your staff through the introduction of remote employee strategies.

The only concern right now is how to deliver the same training to your employees at the same time, employees who might not be in the same room or building. With a cloud LMS like TalentLMS, high-quality remote training can be delivered when hires are being added to the database and their onboarding can be tracked wherever they are.

CONVENIENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Companies deliver learning needs to their workforce which successfully boosts staff performance meeting their business needs. Therefore, for high-quality output and productivity continuous learning, skills and development must be presented on the part of business owners or managers to their teams.

LMS apps for iOS and Android to a large extent, have proven to allow your remote workforce to learn on-the-go and at the right time through the utilization of technological devices available. In other words, employees can gain access to training using their personal devices.

STEP 4:
OUTSOURCE SPECIALIST TALENT TEAMS.

There is a slight difference between the word "outsourcing" and "offshoring" which many people and business owners confuse.

With offshoring, you hire talents to handle some of your business services so as to take advantage of the lower costs they offer.

Outsourcing, on the other hand, is not about getting a cheap workforce at a cheaper rate but getting your work done by specialists. People who are equipped with the right skills and experiences to get your jobs done.

The new remote work landscape does not in any way hinder the process of hiring for vital positions. The abrupt transition to full-time remote work could be beneficial if you are recruiting, coupled with the fact that it may be quite challenging for companies. Equipping recruiters with the acquisition of necessary technology and adequate reporting channels, to a large extent, aids the opportunity to snap up top-notch talent for your team.

Whether you are a hiring manager or a job seeker, both the employer and candidates need to prepare for the remote video job interview adapting to the change in the system. Here are tips for ensuring a smooth process in conducting virtual interviews from home.

ENSURE STABLE WI-FI CONNECTIVITY

Although one of the essentials required while working from home is Wi-Fi, it is, however, important to ensure your home connectivity is stable, and test the connectivity strength in advance. To ensure stability, it is important you scout out the perfect location in your home suitable for conducting a video call when hiring.

Test your Wi-Fi connectivity and stability. To avoid obstruction or hindrances while working from home, ensure your home Wi-Fi connection is stable and strong enough in advance.

MAKE USE OF VIDEO CONFERENCING TOOLS

"The day before the interview, download the software to your computer, launch it and run a practice session with a friend to test audio and video properties," said Ribero.

These settings should be saved on your computer; they should also be tested again one hour before the interview, so they can be adjusted quickly if need be. To avoid technical difficulties or challenges, get familiar with the video conferencing tools; practice them prior to the interview.

PICK THE RIGHT LOCATION

Choosing the right location is one of the most important things to consider, as it is necessary to scout out the perfect location in your home to conduct a video call.

"Pick a place where you are on a single-color background or at least one that is not too busy," said Ribero. In other words, be sure the room is well ventilated and does not have background noise.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

You might feel much more comfortable putting on pajamas or sweats when you are working from home full-time, Ribero's recommendation to candidates is "Look as you would in your first week of work" in the office. In other words, to look professional and create the office setting, interviewers and candidates should dress formally.

Are you thinking of switching to full-time remote working for your business? You can learn more about the type of services you can outsource to specialists **here.**

STEP 5:
LEVERAGE BRAND COMMUNICATION TRENDS.

A strong social media marketing plan is one of the components that help to expand businesses further to potential customers. Brand image planning and contents are the basic keys to improve your social media marketing campaign. However, this is not left to the two basic keys mentioned earlier, leveraging current communication trends to engage and attract potential clients is essential to the growth and development of your business enterprise.

The coronavirus pandemic outbreak spreading further across the globe, causing havoc and anxiety to a large extent, has added a new entanglement to be put into consideration when leveraging brand communication trends. We can as well conclude that this outbreak has led to the appreciation of the human race and a huge concern for the immediate health of humans across the world. However, there are some key considerations that you need to keep in mind when leveraging these new trends in global communication:

BE FAMILIAR WITH YOUR BRAND

It is advisable for brands to consider their options on how they can reach out within this crisis, how they can do the right thing and be good examples to others. This is very important as it can determine if a brand would survive this outbreak or get crushed under all the information out there.

FOLLOW CURRENT TRENDS

Brands should keep abreast of the current trends, ensure their messaging aligns with important trends, and be flexible enough to adjust to their communication strategy
accordingly.

BRAND TONE IS IMPORTANT

This period might not be the right period to be sarcastic even affinity, rapport, understanding and even a certain type of humor may go a long way. This statement implies that you have to consider the tone of your voice during communication.

STUDY CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR

With the abrupt shift to working from home, business elements will be impacted. However, one has to be aware of these impacts, identify them, and then offer relevant policy changes and shifts in line with the evolving needs where necessary.

In addition to this, brands should provide accurate information to customers, at the same time; reach out to your potential customers.

TalCube's team of talents offer reliable digital marketing services for entrepreneurs and small business owners looking to cut through the noise, grab the attention of prospects and get them interested in their brand.

Click **here:** to learn more about how we can help you create and manage your digital marketing campaign.

STEP 6:
ENSURE
CYBERSECURITY.

We are aware that cybersecurity hinders our electronic devices from malicious attacks, disruption or misdirection of services, they provide unauthorized access to one's data centers. However, in order to ensure cybersecurity, avoid the use of unsecured public Wi-Fi networks which are prime spots for malicious parties to spy on internet traffic and collect confidential information.

In addition to this, avoid hurrying the process of securing a remote workplace; take a moment to review the best practice of acquiring a productive remote workplace. This is because haphazard preparation can abruptly turn a remote workspace into an open door to cybercriminals to take charge.

PERSONAL COMPUTER vs COMPANY COMPUTER

Questions like this might just pop up "How will the new remote workers gain access to the company's computer? Will it be through their personal system?
Let's not doubt that most remote workers will be forced and much more comfortable to use their personal devices as well as home networks for work tasks. However, we should also realize that these systems will often lack the tools built into business networks such as strong antivirus software, customized firewalls and automatic online backup tools leading to an increase in online threat and hacking of devices.

Here are a few tips on how to secure our devices while working from home:

- ⊘ Secure a safe workspace at work

- ⊘ Use a strong password

- ⊘ Set up two-factor authentication

- ⊘ Backup your data

- ⊘ Set up firewall

- ⊘ Strong antivirus software

- ⊘ Install update regularly

- ⊘ Use encrypted communications

- ⊘ Lock your devices

RECAP

ADJUST TO
REMOTE WORK

Ensure to have a business re-launch as it is essential to help mould a new operating system for your workforce through the utilization of technological tools and elements.

ACCOMMODATE
WORKFORCE

Provide the necessary technology needed to help facilitate working from home. Create a communication strategy that will help with the new and unique challenges that come with managing remote employees.

TRAIN
EMPLOYEES

Help your employees adapt to remote work by creating scalable training programs that will improve their performance and engagement with new technicalities that come with working from home.

HIRE
SPECIALISTS

For business services which your in-house employees lack the right skills, ensure to hire specialists that possess the right skill set and experiences to get your jobs done.

LEVERAGE
TRENDS

Leverage current communication trends with remote working to engage and attract potential clients.

SECURE
CYBERSPACE

Secure your devices and that of your workforce from malicious attacks, and disruption or misdirection of services.

Master these elements and adopt the remote lifestyle with the help of TalCube's team of talents ready to provide these services for your business. We make transitioning to remote work, a walk in the park.

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