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## *Working from Home: Does it Work?*

For years I have worked from home. During the times I am not directly meeting with clients I am working at home honing my QuickBooks and coaching skills, learning about new business and marketing trends to share with my clients, writing articles, polishing up my website, and all the general administrative tasks associated with having a small business. Some days working from home can be a challenge due a lack of motivation and too many distractions. I am sure I am not the only one who has struggled with this. So, does working from home really work?

Many people succeed in working from home, while others fail miserably. Why is that? One of the biggest reasons for failure is lack of motivation due to the environment. When we are home we tend to be conscious of home related tasks versus when we are at the office we focus on work related tasks.

Following are four basic steps that will ensure you are productive and efficient when working from home.

### **Establish Workspace**

One of the most important parts of your home office is the specific place where you actually perform work-related tasks. Whether you are using a spare bedroom or any part of the house as your home office, there must be enough space to organize work materials. This is also where you should be spending your working hours at home. For example, if you establish your office in a spare room, do your work there, do not try to complete work in the kitchen. Having an established work space at home will ensure two things: it will prevent any form of distractions while you are working at home, and you will gain more organization with all of your work needs. Regardless of your working style, most people find having an established work space lends greatly to productivity.

### **Have the Right Office Furniture and Equipment**

You need to determine the nature of your home business and your work style to determine which furniture and equipment you need. Consider how you like to work when buying a desk, if you like to spread papers out you may like an L-shaped desk. If you work space is in a corner of a bedroom, an armoire may work best. Make sure you have good equipment such as a computer, printer and proper communication systems. Nothing is more frustrating and time consuming than equipment that does not function properly. The right furniture and the equipment will increase your efficiency.

### **Set Your Boundaries**

Self-employed individuals who work from home become their own boss. Therefore, it is easy to assume a relaxed approach towards work and neglect your tasks. It is important to come up with ways to avoid distractions, whether it be playing around with your kids for awhile, chatting with a friend through email, or getting caught up in housework. If you are working in a room with a door, simply closing the door may be a good signal to other members of the household that you are not to be disturbed. Another way of avoiding distractions is to turn off your personal phone during your work hours, just as if you were in an office. Limiting time checking email and social media sites will also increase your productivity and

efficiency. Of course, you should give yourself a short break every so often, allowing an allotted amount of time, then returning to work.

### **Create Work Organization and Routine**

People who work from home tend to neglect the needs of organizing their home office and schedule due to lack of motivation. The best way to achieve organization is to treat your home office as you would any regular office. Then, practice basic organizational skills when it comes to filing your important documents or arranging your schedule. Being organized refers not only to the cluttered mess on your desk, but also to how you organize your schedule to ensure all your priorities are met. One of the benefits of working from home is that you may be able to organize your work schedule to fit your family needs or your biological clock (maybe you are a night owl who comes alive after midnight!)

### **Make it Work**

Does working from home work? Once you establish your workspace, have the right furniture and equipment, set your boundaries, and create your routine then working from home should work for you! If it doesn't then of course, you could always go back to working in an office. However, if you are like me, just the thought of that motivates me to make it work!