

The Top 10 Tips **For Working from a Home-Based Office**

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There is a significant rise in the number of people working from home. Below are some simple tips which may help you become more productive and effective.

1. Delineate office space.

Create the space you will call your office and make it off limits to others, if at all possible. Make sure this space is comfortable and inspiring to you. Avoid clutter because it detracts from your energy and motivation levels.

2. Establish and communicate work hours.

Avoid distractions and interruptions by letting people know when you are working. Create boundaries and standards and make sure you honor them (expect others to honor them, as well). Don't deal with personal problems during work hours. Instead, set aside specific times for taking care of personal issues.

3. Create an abundance of supplies.

Make sure you have enough paper, staples, paperclips, tape, toner, postage stamps, etc. on hand so you don't run out in the middle of something big. The last thing you need during a busy time is to have to stop everything to run out to pick up something. Plan ahead!

4. Have and maintain the necessary equipment.

Determine what you'll need in your office to function at optimal level. Purchase, rent, lease or borrow whatever you need and be sure to keep it in tip-top shape.

5. Back up your files periodically.

Avoid a natural disaster. Computers do crash. Make sure that when yours does you have all the pertinent data you need to get yourself back into business fast.

6. Build a network of resources to turn to for help.

You can't possibly do everything yourself! Ask for support and accountability from your family and friends. Also, develop a team of professionals you can turn to or refer others to for their expertise. Find some experts and models to guide and inspire you, as well.

7. Utilize networking opportunities.

Avoid feeling isolated. Join a personal or professional networking group, create a mastermind group, meet a colleague for lunch, partner with someone, volunteer, join a local gym, attend classes or seminars, connect with former co-workers, make contacts on-line through the internet, give talks to professional organizations, conduct a workshop, etc.

8. Set clearly defined, achievable business goals.

Write down your goals and keep them visible. Be sure they are exact, attainable, realistic and trackable. Rather than establishing many far-reaching goals, set small reachable goals that lead to larger more distant goals. Stay in action. Celebrate your accomplishments along the way.

9. Allow yourself to enjoy your 'commute.'

Use the additional time you have gained by not having to drive to the office to enhance your personal life. Take a break and do something you enjoy. Be a good boss and take care of yourself physically and emotionally.

10. Establish systems for managing child care and household chores.

Get good reliable child care whether it's in your home or outside. It's important to keep the children away from you when you are working so that you have the opportunity to have focused, creative and productive work time free of distractions and interruptions. Create back-up arrangements, as well. Get a low cost housecleaner to assist with the household chores or use other effective means to keep your house in order (e.g., delegate some responsibilities, divide household chores, let go of perfection!).

About the Author:

Natalie Gahrman is an internationally certified professional coach and work/life expert who works with organizations to underscore the causes of stress and productivity issues and teach their employees how to better self-manage their burgeoning workload – in all aspects of their lives. She delights in helping entrepreneurs, executives, and SuperBusySM Parents balance their work and personal life, achieve better results, and create more fulfillment and congruency in their life.

She is the author of the award winning, *Succeeding as a Super Busy Parent* and *Tools for Creating Success, Fulfillment and Balance in your Work, Family and Personal Life*. Natalie has helped thousands of people at every level of the business manage the complexities of life's challenges through individual & group coaching, workshops & keynote presentations, on-line advice, a monthly column in *Moms Business Magazine*, and her free e-newsletter (which you can subscribe to at www.theprioritypro.com). She is a contributing expert for *Parenting Magazine*, *BlueSuitMom*, *iVillage*, and *MyPath*. She has been featured in a number of articles and on TV and radio in the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK.

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