



# WORKING FROM HOME: SUCCESS TIPS FOR TELECOMMUTERS

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# 10 WAYS TO AVOID WORK-AT-HOME TRAPS

**BY JACK WALLEN**

You've finally convinced your boss that working from home is not just a viable option, but the best option to ensure you remain a productive member of the team. Or maybe you've ventured out on your own and now you enjoy a home office.

Solitude.

Peace.

Productivity.

But don't think it's all rainbows and pajama parties. In fact, working from home offers plenty of traps that working in a standard office environment doesn't typically produce. As a long-time member of the working-from-home department, I've learned how to avoid most of them. Here are some suggestions to help keep you on track.

## 1: AVOID THE DISTRACTIONS

When you're working from home, the distractions will hit you like an avalanche. And unlike when you're working in the office, these distractions are often enticing. Television, bed, loved ones, exercise, shopping... you name it. The distractions will come in all shapes and forms. You must train yourself to avoid them, at least up to a point. Although it may be tempting to carry your laptop to the bedroom and work from bed, the next logical step is to take a nap. You'll get nothing done and wind up scrambling to meet deadlines at the end of the day.

## 2: KNOW WHEN TO QUIT

This is probably the single most challenging pitfall you will face. Working from home makes it easy to keep on going... in the evening, when you should be giving your attention to yourself or others. This isn't so much about having a rigid clock-out time, but knowing when you've completed all you need to complete that day. Once you've finished those tasks, quit. Step away from the office and be done. If you continue to work beyond your daily task list, you set yourself up to blur the boundaries between work time and personal time.

## 3: SEPARATE THE OFFICE FROM THE REST OF THE HOME

This is primarily a psychological trick, but it's important. If you don't separate your workspace and your home space, you will always feel like you are at work. That feeling will do a serious number on your psyche. Don't let it happen. Unfortunately, not everyone has the luxury of a spare room to serve as an office. In that case, do what you can to separate your work area from the rest of the home. This may mean using curtains or a standing screen to block your

office from the rest of the house—or working in a basement. If you can't do that, at least make sure to step away from your work desk at the end of the day and don't look back.

## 4: DON'T FORGET TO SOCIALIZE

This one is tough for some. The idea of working alone is appealing to many people. The problem is, when you work by yourself day in and day out, it can become easy to retreat within and stop having any connection with the outside world and other people. After a while, this becomes the norm and those social skills will start to suffer. Make sure, on a daily basis, that you socialize—and not on Facebook! You need face to face and mouth to ear communication to keep these skills sharp. Don't let working from home retool your mental and emotional makeup to that of a hermit.

## 5: SET A FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE

You may have heard this advice: Work a normal schedule when you work from home. But I can tell you, this will drive you bonkers. One of the benefits of working from home is flexibility. You're doing your job and all of a sudden your spouse needs you to help with a task. You say, "Sorry, I'm at work." Then you spend the rest of the day feeling guilty. Or you look outside to see the sun finally poking through the clouds. Why not take a walk? Oh, but that schedule was carved in stone by the powers that be of the powers that be. No, actually, it wasn't. So long as you can achieve your goals on a daily basis, don't worry about keeping a rigid schedule. Otherwise, you lose one of the best perks of working from home.

## 6: DON'T BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF

Even though you're being flexible, you should make sure you don't let family and friends take advantage of you. That is not to say you have to set unyielding boundaries, but this will be on you. When your spouse, children, and friends have distracted you from work enough for the day, it's time for you to say "no." It's easy to give in to those requests. But if those requests prevent you from getting the job done, you have allowed yourself to be taken advantage of. It will be crucial (especially if your spouse is also stay at home) to set some boundaries early on.

## 7: DRESS FOR WORK (IF NEEDED)

Some people need to dress the part. Others, like myself, can work in pajamas all day and still be productive members of society. But for those of us who spend our days in "soft pants," here's the catch: The more time you spend in your jammies, the harder it will be to put on actual clothes to step out into society. The next thing you know, you're going to Target in your "Iron Man" pants like you're a 10-year-old (guilty). If you need the familiar structure that comes along with the khakis and button downs, don them daily. In fact, if you need a routine, get up at a regular

time, shower, dress, and step into your office and do the daily grind in the comfort of your loafers and best casual Friday wear.

## 8: BE DILIGENT ABOUT DATA SECURITY

This one is tough to satisfy. When you're working in an office, the company is responsible for the security of your data. But when you're working from home, that may not be the case. If you are freelance or contract, you're on your own. So you must take precautions to protect and back up your data. This is especially important if you're handling sensitive client information. Encrypt the data, keep it on a non-networked machine whatever you have to do to keep it safe from prying eyes. If you use a cloud service, make sure you use something like [Boxcryptor](#) to encrypt that cloud data.

## 9: GET THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

You may not have an IT department budget behind you to keep you in laptops, tablets, desktops, printers, etc. If you're a freelancer or contract for hire, this is completely on you. You will need to make sure you have the equipment you need. If you run into an instance where you don't have the tech to get a job done, buy it. (Remember, in some cases, it will be a tax writeoff.) Don't hesitate to purchase what you need to do your work. Keep your machines running smoothly, your printers in ink, and have everything on hand that will enable you to get the job done without "making do."

## 10: PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

This covers a number of factors. First, keep good documentation for tax purposes. You'll most likely have a lot of expenses to claim. Speak with your accountant so you know exactly what you need. Also—and all freelancers and contract workers will understand this—make sure you have enough in savings should things go belly up. Working from home (especially when you don't have a company as a safety net) can be a bit less secure than standard employment. Planning for the future means making sure you have a future.



# 11 WAYS TO ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

**BY OLIVIA KRAUTH**

Working from home is an increasingly popular choice for tech professionals. Last September, a report found that [74% of workers](#) would be willing to quit their current job for a gig that allowed them to work remotely.

With options offered by cloud technologies, collaboration platforms, and advanced devices, more people can work from wherever they're the most productive while still remaining connected. In addition, some office cultures are shifting to be more accommodating of remote workers—the aforementioned report found that 83% of professionals already use technology to connect with coworkers who aren't physically in the office.

But even though some workplaces are allowing for increasing remote work, productively working from home can be challenging for some professionals. Distractions like household chores, kids, and easy access to a TV may prevent at-home workers from accomplishing as much as they want or need to.

Here are 11 tips from current and former remote workers that can help eliminate those distractions and boost productivity while working from home.

## 1. PLAY BACKGROUND MUSIC

Many professionals said playing music or an audiobook during the workday helped increase their focus. One option is [Brain.fm](#), an artificial intelligence-driven (AI) music app designed to help people focus.

"I switch this on and within minutes my productivity skyrockets," said Dylan Hey, a remote worker at [Leadfeeder](#).

## 2. BREAK UP YOUR WORK

While some people can sit down and remain focused on a project for hours, most will get burned out and then become easily distracted. Find a schedule that works for you, but remember to take breaks. Hey recommended the [Pomodoro Technique](#), which separates highly focused work sections with short breaks.

## 3. USE A CALENDAR OR TO-DO LIST

Several remote workers said they use a to-do list or daily calendar to remember what they need to do and stay focused on those tasks. Some also used these lists as a brain dump area, so they could write out any distracting thoughts or personal to-do items, allowing them to focus on their work.

Planning out your week, including work and personal goals, could also help decrease distractions, said Chelsea Krause, head accounting writer at [Merchant Maverick](#). Knowing you have made time for personal tasks like laundry may make you less worried about getting them done during your working hours.

## 4. GET DRESSED

Maintain a schedule similar to one you would follow if you worked in an office, including getting out of bed and putting on clothes other than pajamas, said Phil Lanides, a senior media strategist at [MSL Group](#). Follow this by having set hours, including a designated lunch break.

## 5. LEAVE THE HOUSE

This tip is twofold: Leave the house for long and short breaks. Spending a day working from a coffee shop can give you a change of scenery and take you away from distractions like kids or pets, Lanides said.

Leaving for a short break can also be helpful. A lunch break or a walk can help you refocus your energy.

## 6. CREATE A SET OFFICE

Try to not work from your couch. Instead, designate a home office, preferably something with a door to separate yourself from outside distractions. Use the home office space only when you're working, to help give yourself a feeling of being at the office, Lanides suggested.

Also, set up the office with equipment similar to what you would have at the office. For example, if you use two monitors at work, have two monitors in your home office, [remote worker](#) Jeff Moriarty recommended.

## 7. BATCH TASKS

[Writer](#) Fiona Adler recommended knocking out similar tasks in one batch to maximize productivity. Have a bunch of calls to make or emails to respond to? Do them all at the same time instead of doing a few and waiting on the rest. This could help clear out smaller tasks, which can be mentally distracting when trying to tackle bigger projects.

## 8. POST YOUR SCHEDULE

If there are other people home while you're working, it may be helpful to post a schedule on the door of your home office. This can help kids or significant others know when you're free and when you're busy and shouldn't be distracted.

A schedule can also make working from home seem more official, so people might be more inclined to respect your boundaries and less inclined to ask you to run errands in the middle of the day, said Trinity Manning, CEO of [OnceLogix](#).

## 9. KNOW YOUR DISTRACTIONS

Pinpoint your major distractions, Krause said, and eliminate them before you settle down to work. Without an issue hanging over your head, you're more likely to focus on your tasks.

"If my kitchen is a disaster, I know I won't get any work done," she said. "I'll stop what I'm doing and clean the whole kitchen since I can see it directly from my desk while I work. To help keep myself focused during the day, I make sure the kitchen is clean before my work hours begin."

## 10. DEAL WITH YOUR PERSONAL PHONE

Several remote workers said checking social media on their phones can be a huge distraction.

"It's so easy to pick up your phone, open Facebook, scroll through Twitter, like a bunch of photos on Insta, and before you know it, 20 minutes have gone by," said Lindsay Wissman, a remote worker at [The Content Factory](#).

Some recommended simply turning off the phone during work hours, while others suggested putting the phone on vibrate and turning it face down so you can't be distracted by notifications. Find a way that works for you while keeping you available for calls, if needed.

## 11. USE VISUAL TOOLS TO STAY ORGANIZED

If you get distracted or stressed by thoughts while working, try using visual tools like a dry erase board to draw things or take notes. It can also help you understand a project in a different light.

"I tend to feel trapped in my computer screen when I plan," said J.R. Duren, a personal finance expert for [HighYa.com](#). "it's almost like the small space restricts my ability to see the big picture."



# FIVE HIDDEN DOWNSIDES TO WORKING FROM HOME

**BY MACY BAYERN**

With innovations in mobile and remote connectivity, more professionals are opting to work from home (WFH) instead of coming into the office. In fact, 3.9 million US employees work remotely, according to the [2017 State of Telecommunicating](#) report by Flexjobs and Global Workplace Analytics.

Working from home is ideal for many people, especially those who have trouble focusing in a public space. “Some people perform better at work, some people better at home,” said Jimmy Carroll, partner and director at [TetraVX](#), a company specializing in the management and creation of collaborative technologies. The success of WFH is dependent upon the personality of the individual, whether or not the person can be productive in a relaxed environment.

Companies need to use the WFH rule on a case-by-case basis. Some positions may require the workers to stay in the office, and some employees may not be disciplined enough to work outside an office space. “It’s very situational, depending upon what the real deliverable is from the person that’s involved,” said Dan Ryan, founding principal at [Ryan Search and Consulting](#), an advising firm focused on aiding clients in talent acquisition and development.

Working from home does offer many perks: You decide where you want your office to be for that day; you save money and time by skipping the office commute; you don’t have your boss breathing down your neck; you may feel more mentally at ease in your own space. And from the employer perspective, remote work allows companies to choose the right candidates for the job regardless of where they live.

While staying in sweatpants instead of putting on slacks is undoubtedly nice, there are some disadvantages to anyone adopting that work style. Here are five of the biggest WFH problems and some ideas on how to solve them.

## 1. LACK OF MOTIVATION

Being at home has its own distractions. The office may have the sound of keyboard clicking, phones ringing, and coworkers talking, but your house brings in a whole new set of temptations—such as household chores, kids, and TV. And if you work in or near your bedroom, the three o’clock slump could make a nap feel just in reach.

A solid option for staying motivated is to reward yourself. Break up your work into intervals. Do consistent work for an hour, then take 10 minutes to relax. Whether it's walking outside, treating yourself to a snack, or turning on the news, reward your work with a small break. Numerous [methods and apps](#) are available for managing your work/break schedule.

## 2. NO WORK/HOME BOUNDARIES

When you worked in the office, home was where you retreated to when the day was over. Now that you're working remotely, the office and your house morph into one. Not only do you lose your happy place, you also have to deal with the distractions that come with that. If you have kids, pets, or roommates, you also have a whole new array of distractions. Maybe you're trying to have a Skype conference, but your dog is barking its head off. Cujo just killed your professional aura.

There are a couple of ways to fix this. First, create your own office area. Find a designated space in your home to be your workspace, preferably a separate room with a door, but a dining room table works too. If you confine yourself to that space when you work, you can compartmentalize. Work is less likely to overtake your personal life. Second, post your work schedule. Print it out and put it on your workspace door or even on the refrigerator, so everyone will know when you're occupied.

## 3. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Communication is essential when working from home; however, you can't go poke your head in a co-worker's office to get a quick question answered anymore. While instant messaging on apps like Slack and Skype for Business is useful, Carroll said that some organizations give too many options of communication. If your co-worker has their IM app up and is on the phone, they may not see the email you sent to their inbox.

"You have to set up some policies in regards to, not just how you communicate, but what the expectation is for that response," Carroll said. "Then give those individuals the proper tools in order to facilitate that communication." Set regulations for how you will communicate with coworkers and keep yourself accountable. If you want to use IM to communicate, make that known. A good way to keep supervisors in the loop is to send in plate checks. At the start of the day, send your boss a game plan with what you are working on. Send another one at the end of the day, explaining what you completed. This keeps you on your boss' radar, while keeping yourself responsible.

## 4. SECURITY CONCERNS

"Security is a huge, huge issue when you have remote workers," Carroll said. Working off a home network introduces all kinds of risks and vulnerabilities to corporate data. Even if you've never had a cybersecurity issue on a personal device with your home network, that doesn't mean you are always safe.

Security is difficult to manage and control, Ryan said. “When people are working remotely, depending upon who their ISP is, that opens up other probabilities and introduces other variables that aren’t necessarily there when you’re within a confined network within a workplace.”

A virtual private network (VPN) and multifactor authentication are viable solutions, Carroll said. With a VPN, a private, encrypted channel is connected between your device and a VPN server. No one but the user and the VPN sees or accesses the information, not even internet service providers. Multifactor authentication is widely popular as well. Users must provide at least two separate pieces of evidence proving their identity, which will then gain them access to the respective site.

## 5. NO CAMARADERIE

The final downside to WFH is isolation. If you’re not in the office, you miss out on day-to-day camaraderie. Your co-workers form connections through daily office interaction, meetings, and Friday happy hours. “Sometimes it can get cliquey, Carroll said. “I mean, all work is still just like high school in a lot of regards, right?” But at home, it’s just you and your computer.

You can still be present without being physically present. Skype into meetings! Instead of having meetings with co-workers over the phone, suggest Skype. Meeting face to face creates a better connection than just hearing someone’s voice. Also, keep up with office events. Ask to be included in team-building activities or casual outings. If working from home provides you with your best work ethic, then do it—but don’t sacrifice friendships along the way.

# THE 10 WORST THINGS ABOUT WORKING FROM HOME

**BY BECKY ROBERTS**

Three years after being released from my daily commute, I find myself reflecting on some of the less appealing aspects of working from home. So I decided to stop working for a minute (see #4) and jot down a few of the negative aspects I've begun to notice.

## 1. YOU GET LAZY

If you don't believe me, get a pedometer and measure the number of steps you take from the time you wake up to when you go to bed. A consultant friend of mine did that for two weeks and to her horror discovered that she averaged 156 steps a day—nothing more than bathroom and fridge trips. In the office, you generally have farther to go to get food, coffee, and water and go to the bathroom. Plus you walk to meetings, go out for a smoke break, go visit a friend.

## 2. YOU BECOME UNWITTINGLY UNCOUTH

After you've spent some time working alone, you start to lose your normal social inhibitions. You no longer remember to suppress certain crude (and sometimes noisy) behaviors, and you may sometimes pick or scratch various areas not normally picked or scratched in polite company. And then on that one day a year when you're expected to attend the annual staff meeting, you let one fly during a pause between speakers.

## 3. YOUR CATS WREAK HAVOC

Cats invariably want to sit wherever your attention is directed, which for most of us means on the keyboard or in front of the monitor. Sooner or later, you'll get up to fetch a cup of coffee or do a set of squats (yeah right) and the cat will stretch... and you'll be left explaining exactly how you managed to delete that table from the database or why you sent that particular picture to the CEO.

## 4. YOUR NEIGHBORS DON'T GET IT

Neighbors: Oh, you work at home, how nice for you. In their mind that means you spend the entire day goofing off because (a) you set your own hours; (b) no one is watching you; and (c) that is exactly what they would do. This translates into frequent pop-ins. How you doing? Working. Oh that's nice, did you see what's happening in the park? No, I'm working. Right. I don't think they should do that, those trees have been there

since I moved here in 1953. Um, excuse me, but would you mind leaving? I need to work. Oh “work,” ha, ha, that’s right. Mind if I put the TV on?

## 5. YOUR BOSS BECOMES A STRANGER

It’s so long since you last saw your boss, you forget what he looks like. There you are, summoned back to the office for the big upgrade. You pull into the parking space nearest the front door because you’re way too early, as you live in a different time zone. A car pulls in beside you and a man gets out and glowers at you. You’re in my parking space. Is he serious? There are no reserved signs. You break a sweat in the already uncomfortable suit you’re not used to wearing. Then he smiles. Whoa — Steve? Hey Steve, I didn’t recognize you. Wow you got fat! Which takes us to:

## 6. YOU FORGET THE UNWRITTEN RULES OF POLITE INTERACTION

Having had no one to talk to except the cats, dog, and occasional neighbor (who doesn’t employ you so he doesn’t count), you haven’t talked to anyone since your last visit to the office and find you’ve unlearned all the normal rules. Out come the curse words, the borderline jokes, and inappropriate comments. You know — all the stuff you’re used to sharing with Rover.

## 7. YOU GIVE IN TO WORK AVOIDANCE

On those odd days we all have, when you don’t feel like working, there is no one to make you do it. So instead of taking a vacation day, or even pretending to be sick, you waste the entire day staring at the computer, getting distracted by what the cat just hacked up in the corner, staring at the computer some more, staring into space, and then spending the entire evening feeling guilty for a wasted day.

## 8. SICK DAYS ARE A THING OF A PAST

Because you can lie down in bed sucking down Dayquil all day and still manage to administer the network, you don’t call in sick. To feel justified in calling in sick, you have to be unconscious or in hospital. And even in hospital there is generally free wireless.

## 9. THERE ARE NO DEPARTMENTAL LUNCHES

Oh wait, that’s a good thing.

## 10. YOU'RE IMPRISONED IN YOUR WORKPLACE

And the number one worst thing about working from home is that you never, ever leave the office. That report you were meant to write wakes you up at 2:34 AM. Normal people make a mental note to take care of it as soon as they get to the office, after a cup of coffee of course, and go back to sleep. Not you. You sigh, set a reminder on your iPhone, and try to sleep. But your computer is right there, just across the room. You didn't even bother to turn it off. Oh well, might as well write the report now. Can't sleep anyway. Next thing you know, your stomach is making odd gurgling noises and you have the beginning of a caffeine withdrawal headache. It's 1:35 in the afternoon and you have yet to leave your seat.



# FIVE TIPS FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF WORKING FROM HOME

BY JAMES KENDRICK



I've been working at home for a long time and I've adjusted my setup over the years to the one I have today. These adjustments have been aimed at helping me get the most done with the fewest distractions, while helping me avoid the isolation that working outside a corporate office can create.

## 1. CREATE A DEFINED HOME OFFICE SPACE

One problem with working at home is the fact that that's where you live. That sounds obvious but I regularly run into other home workers who admit they are working all the time. A common factor is that they have their desk/office in a part of the house that is a high traffic area. Their families are constantly interrupting them during the day.

This steals focus away from the work tasks at hand and is a terrible thing to do. It's no different from bringing your kids to your cubicle at work every day. You wouldn't do that and you shouldn't do that at your home office.

If possible, create an office space at home that is clearly defined and away from the daily trappings of home life. The family should understand that when you are in your office, you are not to be disturbed. Explain to the kids that when Mom or Dad is in the office, they are to treat it as if you are working in an office outside the home.

## 2. GET THE BEST OFFICE CHAIR YOU CAN

A good office chair can cost upwards of a thousand bucks, but they are worth their weight in gold over the long haul. You spend hours each day sitting in the chair at the desk, so getting a good chair is crucial.

Be sure the chair you use has a full range of ergonomic adjustments. You need to get it adjusted just so, height, tilt angle, and lumbar support in particular. Your back will thank you.

## 3. TRY TO KEEP CONSISTENT WORK HOURS

A big trap that many home workers fall into is working all the time. It's easy to do when your office is right there in the home.

The best way to avoid this is to keep consistent work hours. Get up and go to work at the same time each day, just as you would if you worked in a corporate office. This trains you to follow a typical schedule, making it easier to shut down at the end of the workday.

## 4. TAKE LOTS OF BREAKS

This is obvious, but many home workers get so wrapped up in work they rarely step away from the desk. That's the fastest road to burnout, even working at home.

It doesn't matter what you do on your breaks. Go for a walk, step into the kitchen for some water, or read a book. The point is to let your mind rest and recharge. This is vital over the long term.

## 5. REACH OUT TO COWORKERS EVERY DAY

Isolation is the bane of home workers, and a good way to combat it is to video chat with coworkers regularly. This is a good tool for putting a face on the ones you collaborate with, just as you would in a real office.

It also ensures that you're never out of your colleagues' minds. It's as important for them to regularly see you working as it is to fight isolation. It's also a valuable stimulation of work thought processes. We feed off each other in the big office; we should do it at the desk at home.

## TREAT WORKING AT HOME LIKE GOING TO THE OFFICE

There are lots of other things you can do when working at home to keep home and work life separate. These five ways are some of the most important and should be a good place to start. The key is to treat working at home as you do going to an office. The venue has changed but the work ethic must remain the same.

If your work allows you to get stuff done outside the home, occasionally go to a coffee shop or similar environment. Working in a coffee shop may be a cliché, but it's a good way to fight isolation.

# HOME WORKERS: GET OUT AND MEET PEOPLE

**BY JAMES KENDRICK**

I've been working at home for almost a decade and find it rewarding both personally and professionally. Contrary to what many think, it's not easy to do right and be successful. There are lots of issues that home workers face, not the least of which is isolation.

I've written about working at home and the occasional outside session at the local coffee shop. I've covered how to create a "virtual cubicle" most anywhere, unique venues for working, and how to be a good citizen while working in public. Heck, I've even mentioned the "outlet addict", those who work remotely but can't seem to untether from the power outlet with mobile gear.

There's no need to rehash all of those subjects so I'm going to share a change in my work routine that has made my good home working routine even better.

About a year ago I realized I was slipping into a routine that was keeping me isolated from the real world. I was happy working in my home office but I was missing vital interaction with others. That was not only less than ideal for me personally, but it wasn't helping in my work covering mobile tech. Besides work colleagues, I wasn't talking to folks enough to keep current with the tech people are using and why.

## MEET AT LEAST ONE PERSON EVERY WORKDAY

Once I confronted this, I made a commitment to myself that I would meet at least one new person every day. I would have to spend much more time outside my office, but if I was serious about meeting people that's the way it had to be.

This decision was one of the best I've made in years. I head out at least a part of every day to work remotely and use these excursions to meet new people. I approach folks at sidewalk cafes, coffee shops, and just about everywhere.

When I first started approaching people it was with trepidation. I was concerned I would be interrupting them and they wouldn't appreciate it.

I have discovered my concerns were overstated. If I approach someone too busy to give me five minutes, they tell me and I move on. That's not common, as I've discovered that when I approach folks in a friendly manner and courteously, many are happy to speak with me.

People love to talk about themselves and their work. Those passionate about their work are especially happy to spend some time talking about it. These conversations are always interesting and often cross my area of mobile tech coverage. They are a good way for me to get my finger on the pulse of how people use technology in their work and personal lives.

## THE BIG CITY, ART, AND THE CIRCUS

Not every approach will help you in your work, but it's a great way to meet interesting people from all walks of life. My experience has been quite good and I've met some outstanding individuals.

I met someone who knows the inner city where I live probably better than anyone. I've become good friends with the sibling of one of my favorite novelists. I befriended a nice, unassuming guy who ran off and joined the circus. I met an artist who uses a tablet to sketch her creations before committing them to canvas. A tattoo artist uses his tablet to show his portfolio to clients to help them choose the right art. Once the design is selected he uses the tablet camera to show the client how the finished tattoo will look on their own body, all before picking up the ink gun.

I'm following the circus guy's adventures around the country as he's striving to make the biggest show on earth work like clockwork. He's reinforced an important lesson to me about mobile tech, explaining his use of a first-generation Android tablet. He uses it because it does everything he needs and most important, because he likes it.

I've been following the inner city guy as he uses the cloud, technology, and his old phone with a shattered glass face to completely run his business. He's been excited as he's shifted business functions to his mobile phone and other technologies and it's been a joy to listen to his enthusiasm as he shares how well it works.

These are just a few of the interesting people I've met and befriended. There are many more who have expanded my circle of friends and acquaintances in various ways. Others have helped me understand how and why they use mobile technology, which has directly impacted my work.

Best of all, some of the folks I've met have become friends. A professional voice-over talent and his wife I am privileged to call good friends. Another friend works on secret trading apps for a major bank, and yet another runs a refinery that produces chemicals we use every day. Friends are a wonderful asset and good friends are priceless.

## MEET THE STAFF

A successful strategy I've employed to meet new people is to introduce myself to the owners, managers, and staffs of the restaurants and coffee shops I frequent for remote work sessions. This is an obvious move but not for the reason you might think.

Once I come to know the employees I explain how I try to meet new people and that I encourage them to bring patrons to meet me. This is a fantastic way to get introduced to new folks and I don't have to do anything else to make it happen. This results in a steady stream of people being sent my way, and they're usually receptive to sitting and talking a while.

While working in a favorite lunch spot one day, the manager brought a guy to meet me who is developing an accessory for a popular mobile device. Another time I met an app developer for mobile devices who is worth keeping my eye on.

## ALL ABOUT OPPORTUNITY

Setting out to meet at least one person a day has been one of my most rewarding undertakings. On a professional level I've learned so much from a wide variety of individuals I would not have met otherwise.

I've been able to get firsthand information that directly affects my work, something that would never have happened sitting back in my cozy home office. I've met people in industries I cover, and others involved peripherally.

The work benefits I've obtained have been good enough, but the personal growth is even better. I've made new friends who have improved my life, from many different walks of life. I am richer for this beyond description.

Setting out to meet a new person every day won't be easy for everyone but it's worth a shot. It may not have such a dramatic impact on everyone's work as it has on mine, but making new acquaintances is in itself its own reward.



## CREDITS

### **Global Editor in Chief**

Jason Hiner

### **Editor in Chief, UK**

Steve Ranger

### **Managing Editor**

Bill Detwiler

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### **Senior Features Editors**

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Conner Forrest

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Dan Patterson

Teena Maddox

### **Chief Reporter**

Nick Heath

### **Staff Writer**

Alison DeNisco Rayome

### **Associate Editor**

Amy Talbott

### **Multimedia Producer**

Derek Poore

### **Cover image:** iStock/

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