

Creating a Remote Work Plan

A Sample Letter to Your Team About Working Remotely:

The following is a template for creating your own letter to colleagues and supervisors about your proposal for working remotely. It's a tactical approach to handling the basics of your workspace, impacts on your workload and availability. It includes best practices for productivity, collaboration and connection that come from years of experience from remote workers around the world. You could also 'flip' this letter if you are a decision-maker on remote work to give people guidelines on what they should expect and do.

Instructions and 'fill in the blanks' are provided in brackets. Of course, remove or edit whatever you'd like in your own version.

Feel free to copy it into your own individual/team communications and adapt it. Attribution is great but not required. Linking to this post is always fine. Re-posting it without permission isn't, though.

Dear Team,

I'm beginning to work from home, like many people, and I want to share my plan for how I am going to maintain connection, collaboration and productivity. I found a sample 'note to your team' for setting up a remote work strategy at causeit.org/rethinking-remote, and used it to prompt my own note to you.

First of all, I'll be maintaining a structured work environment and work schedule to keep focused in these new circumstances. I'll be working from **[time]** to **[time]** on **[days]**. Outside of that schedule, you can reach me best via **[method of contact]**. If you have communicated with me on a work channel like e-mail, and need me to check it outside of office hours, just send me a heads-up via [method of contact] to check my e-mail; this will help us all avoid fragmenting our time and provide for work/life balance while keeping work time productive.

Details of my workspace

Some basics and context about my current setup at home:

- I **[have/do not have]** robust internet. My speed test results are **[fill in the blanks below from [Google Internet Speed Test](https://www.google.com/internet/speed) or link to your results on [speedtest.net](https://www.speedtest.net)]**:
 - Upload speed: **[insert number]** Mbps
 - Download speed: **[insert number]** Mbps
 - Latency (which affects lag on video calls/remote desktop usage) **[Insert number]** ms
- My internet **[is/is not]** shared with other parties who might affect my bandwidth
- My internet connection is suitable for: **[delete any which do not apply]**
 - Web browsing and e-mail

- Voice calls (requires latency of no more than 60 ms, ideally under 30ms and up/down speeds of 0.5 -> 1Mbps)
- Video calls and screen-sharing (has the same latency standards as voice calls and up/down speeds of at least 1 Mbps, ideally at least 3 up and down)
- **[if applicable]** My work computer **[does/does not yet]** work with our remote access software and VPN (virtual private network)
- I **[do/do not have/do not know if I have]** backup internet via my **[personal/business]** mobile phone's 'hotspot' or 'tethering' feature.
- I **[have/do not have]** a dedicated workspace **[with/without the ability to control background noise and distractions]**
- My workspace **[is/is not yet]** ergonomically sound.
- **[ONLY if you feel comfortable sharing this]** My **[family, household and/or community]** responsibilities are being affected by the current circumstances. This **[will/will not/may]** directly affect my availability and productivity by, for example, **[provide example, such as needing to be able to step out of a meeting to care for a loved one]**.

Requests about my Workspace

I have the following needs/requests regarding my home workspace [delete any which do not apply, and indicate if it is a need or request]:

- I **[need/need to upgrade/need help troubleshooting]** internet at home
- I need to know who to contact with technical questions
- I need help to make sure my computer can connect to our work systems reliably and securely
- I need a **[desk, standing desk, standing desk converter, computer upgrade, computer I can take home, ergonomic keyboard, external ergonomic trackpad/mouse, laptop riser, monitor, monitor stand, headset, speakerphone, webcam, privacy screen, other accommodations]** so that I can focus and sustain my productivity without injuring myself. I will **[buy these through the company/buy these personally and request reimbursement/buy these on my own because I am an independent contractor]**.
- I need to be able to **[insert ways to deal with personal impacts]**.
- I need a recurring **[internet stipend/phone stipend/home office stipend]** for this to be sustainable.
- I need a one-time investment of **[amount of money needed for [expense types]]** in order to set up my home office. **[Some/all]** of that is for items which will become company property.

Workload and other impacts

My workload will be affected by working from home in the following ways [use all that apply]:

- I will have **[more/the same/less]** work than usual
- My collaborative work on **[projects/type of work – give examples]** will be affected **[provide details]**

- I will not be able to perform **[some of my]** usual responsibilities **[provide details]** because **[provide rationale]**
 - Because of this, I can take on additional workload in **[provide areas you know or think will be useful]**
- I will have increased workload and responsibilities in **[provide details and any requests for support]**

Making this sustainable

The longest I can sustain **[most of]** my work is **[provide timeline]** without going into our usual work locations or having an equivalent. However, the longest I can sustain working on **[specific, particularly-affected areas of work]** remotely is **[provide timeline]**. This can be extended by **[provide strategy which would enable working remotely longer, such as redefining your scope of your responsibilities or recalibrating client expectations, and how long that would help]**.

Urgent and/or important unforeseen impacts

In addition to the more obvious impacts described above, we will need to discuss how to minimize the impact of remote work and current circumstances on **[describe all that apply and provide specifics—consider things like major events, business development, benefits, planned projects that haven't started yet, and, of course, budgets]**.

As I notice additional impacts, I will be in communication about them and request that you take a moment to consider if there are any which I might have missed.

Practices for productivity

Every week, I will provide an update on my work plan for the week covering what I've done recently, what I will do this week, where I need support, decisions I will make, decisions I need others to make or need guidance on, and where I can offer support. **[Every day I will provide a smaller version of this update]**. These updates will come via **[conference call, e-mail, chat/messenger, group text]**. I would really appreciate seeing your plans/updates as well.

I will work online using **[Google Drive, Office 365, Sharepoint, Slack, etc.]** My primary mode of communication will be via **[e-mail, messenger, phone call, text, etc]**. **[When we're e-mailing, to make sure we're all up to date, please cc: me more often than usual so I know what's going on in other discussions.]**

I suggest we shift or add to our regular meetings. **[In particular, I think we would benefit from a weekly/daily 'stand-up' meeting to synchronize our work plans for the day.]** Here are some specifics: **[list schedule changes, and additions/removals of meetings, especially team meetings]**

I suggest we **[provide any other suggestions, such as upgrading to 'groupware' like Slack, Google Drive, Office 365 or SharePoint]**.

Next steps

- Please confirm that these strategies work for **[the rest of]** you and the company.
- Please work with me on timelines and expense management related to my home office setup requests/needs listed above.
- I believe that we urgently need to make decisions about **[insert a list of key issues and the decision to be made]**
- Please respond with similar details about your own strategies for remote work so I know how we will connect and what support you will need. You can find a template of this note at causeit.org/rethinking-remote
- Can we meet to discuss these next steps? **[suggest times if necessary]**