



Get the most out of your money.

Essential Guide to Remote Working

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Financial Essentials - helping people understand and manage their money

This chapter is part of the Financial Essentials online course that is currently in development.

The course is being designed in a non-technical way to help people understand and manage their money more effectively by covering a range of topics that are relevant to everyone, regardless of their age. Being able to understand and manage our money and keep it safe is essential to allow us to work towards achieving our future plans and dreams and live without financial fears and worries.

The course will cover: income and income tax, national insurance, budgeting, borrowing, interest, savings, investments, pensions, insurance, gambling, security & fraud and this Essential Guide to Remote Working. The course is created by Chartered Financial Planners from accredited training provider Wizard Learning.

This [crowdfunding project](#) featuring the new sport of Extreme Chicken Racing will allow the design of the basic learning material and the set up the online course.

The training will be available as an e-learning course and also used for face-to-face training. It will be offered free where possible or at a minimal cost to cover the website maintenance costs.

Introduction

Many employees, directors and business owners are now carrying out their work from home; some for the very first time. This can be disorienting and can bring many challenges. For some it can be difficult to adjust to the lack of interaction with others. It is vital employers are aware of this and offer support to make for a smoother transition.

Remote working is essentially a way of working which is outside of the traditional office setting, so instead of commuting each day to an office, remote workers can instead potentially work more flexibly in a way that suits them and from a place that suits them.

The success of remote working very much depends on the technology available and effective communication between the employer and employee, not just to get the work done, but also to ensure that the relationship and engagement remains positive.

Each of the following sections covers a key topic for remote working.

Create a designated workspace

If it is possible, a dedicated room in the house is ideal; this separates work from home and can help to minimise distractions. It may also mean that it is possible to be able to physically ‘shut the door on work’ at the end of the working day.

If it is not possible to have a dedicated room, a dedicated space within a room can be created. Members of the family should be informed when you can be interrupted and when you cannot. At the end of the day, packing away the laptop and paperwork into a cupboard helps to ensure there is a switch between work time and home and leisure time. The office/space should be as comfortable as possible - not too hot or cold and with a desk that should be at a comfortable height with a suitable chair that is not going cause a bad back by the end of the day.

Scheduling

For some, creating a timetable helps to keep them on track. It can be easy when at home to be distracted by domestic chores and continuous coffee breaks; anything can be a distraction to stop the actual work getting done! A timetable allows a plan to be made of the day’s work as well as including time out for tea or coffee, lunch and exercise. Taking regular breaks is essential and getting fresh air will help to re-energise, returning to work with renewed focus. Having a timetable in place, with specific tasks to get done, means a great deal of satisfaction at the end of the day when those work items can be ticked as being completed.

At the same time, lack of interruptions can mean that work is completed more swiftly, leaving time for personal development, preparation or relaxation.

Keep motivated

It can be hard to stay motivated when remote working. There’s no-one visible to keep you on track and offer encouragement so it’s essential to keep in touch with colleagues to ensure that motivation doesn’t slip and the feeling of isolation doesn’t take over. With the technology now available it’s easier than ever to keep in touch, for example through Skype, Facetime, Teams or Zoom. Seeing people by using video really helps to ensure that relationships with colleagues stay strong. Applications such as Asana, Slack or Trello can also help keep tabs on

tasks, allocation of jobs and progress. Supervisors are often able to log in remotely to set tasks and/or engage in monitoring.

Stay professional

It is easy to fall into a trap of not getting ready for the work in the same way as when going to an office each day. Working in pyjamas may seem like a fun or naughty way to work, and probably more comfortable, but it can affect the effectiveness of the work being done. Some remote workers find dressing each day in a business-like manner ensures they feel ready for work and professional.

Using technology

As technology continues to advance, remote working becomes easier and more common. It is, of course, essential to have a secure and reliable internet connection as well as the hardware and software necessary to get the job done. Employers also need to consider Data Protection issues and policies around “IT Use” and “Bringing your own Device” are now more important than ever. Employers and employees should all refresh on Data Security and make sure they are not victims of hackers.

Video conferencing helps to keep work colleagues connected. Getting used to seeing others and being seen also helps with motivation as well as keeping projects on track.

Depending on the numbers in the meeting, it may be necessary to give someone the ‘chair’ and when someone wishes to talk they raise their hand – it’s essential that everyone feels like they have a voice. Accessing video conferencing is straightforward - the meeting host sets up the meeting and provides users with a link (and a possibly a code or password). Background noise can be an issue and it may often be better for attendees to mute their own microphones whilst they are not talking. Using the camera may seem odd at first but it is well worth getting used to it to feel more connected.

Video conferencing can be done via a smartphone as well as via a laptop, which for some might be easier. For phone use, the relevant app will need to be downloaded first.

Most video conferences have features such as messaging as well as screen-sharing where documents, websites and videos can be displayed for all to see. You might even want to start or end your meeting with an online quiz where you are the quiz master. You can use quizzes designed for this purpose from Wizard Trivia - see this [Business Quiz](#) which you are free to use. For additional quizzes from Wizard Trivia contact admin@WizardTrivia.com.

For team members needing access to the same files, cloud storage maintained by a third party enables documents and folders to be accessed and available from anywhere. Two of the main providers of this service are Google Drive and Dropbox.

The main benefit is, of course, that every team member can get hold of the information they need and can update it in real-time whilst maintaining security of those files and shared work projects.

Summary

There are many advantages to home working; many find they are more productive working in clothes they are comfortable in, having music in the background and altering their hours, which might not be possible in an office.

Remote working can also offer more flexibility; some managers may not mind when the work is done as long as it is done. For parents, this means that they could start work earlier in the day so they can stop work when the children come home from school. Saving the commuting time means more time to do other things with the time normally spent in the car or on a train. Commuting is stressful and many find their health and wellness is improved without the daily grind of it.

Happier and healthier employees are much more committed to their company and produce better work. This is good news for the company, of course. Another benefit to the company is that cost savings can be made in renting office space and office furniture.

There are also enormous benefits for the planet with less pollution due to less commuting to work.

Typically firms opting for remote working may offer a balance of some days working from home and some in the office.

There are some downsides to consider, as mentioned above, and staying in touch with others is key to ensuring that isolation does not become an issue. Childcare or caring may also cause issues. Just because you are in the house, it does not mean you can deal with two or three jobs at once! One thing for sure is that once the postman knows who works from home, taking delivery of all the neighbours' parcels soon becomes a regular occurrence!

Help improve people's financial knowledge

See our donations page [here](#), and our most frequently asked question is:

QUESTION

How do I select my chicken, claims free access to Financial Essentials and watch the race?

ANSWER

Put in the comments page after donating the name of your chicken (choose from Sparky, Phoenix, Stormzy, Pumpkin or Blizzard) and also add "Access to Financial Essentials when completed". A video of the race will be place on this [page](#) on the 7 June.

If you win we will send out your towel in July and access to the course is expected to be July or August.

When is the race and how can I watch it? - The race will take place Sunday 7th June and a video of the race will be added to crowdfunder.co.uk/extreme-chicken-racing-for-financial-essentials.