



20 Do's and 20 Don'ts for Effective Homeworking

Working from home is becoming increasingly popular, both with companies and with the people who work for them. Whether you are a Senior Director working from home for a day, or a Teleworker who works five days every week at home, the rules to successful and productive home working are much the same. There are, potentially, so many more distractions at home and, of course, nobody can see what you are doing - although advances in technology mean your boss will know whether you are on the phone or not. Successful teleworking involves remaining focused, targeted and determined, avoiding all distractions to meet the end of day goal each and every shift.

Here are a few ideas to help you achieve this, taken from 20 years of experience we have of managing home working teams.

- 1. DO Create the Right Work / Life Balance**
 - Be organised and plan work well so that shifts are not elongated unnecessarily.
 - Consider your partner before agreeing to overtime or an hours change
 - Turn your computer off when you are not using it. Certainly any work related programmes. If you can, shut your office door when not working.
DON'T just drift into longer and longer hours – it's very easy to do this at home.
 - Never cancel an important family engagement to do more work
 - Remember the benefits of working from home and **DON'T** compromise them unnecessarily
- 2. DO** take your allocated breaks or if you are free to choose your own, make sure you take them regularly.
DON'T use breaks sitting at your computer, surfing the net or other domestic duties.
- 3. DO** get fresh air when you can, particularly at lunch time, take a walk of at least half a mile.
DON'T stay in and have a large lunch! This will invariably make you less alert in the afternoon.
- 4. DO** prepare each day as if you were going to work in the office. Get up at a reasonable time, have breakfast where you would normally – not at the computer and prepare what you need as if you were going into the office.
DON'T just slope in with seconds to spare as you will not be in the right frame of mind.
- 5. DO** dress appropriately for work – not necessarily suit and tie (although some do).
DON'T sit there in your dressing gown or unshaven (gentlemen!). It will definitely impact your attitude.



6. **DO** call or MSN somebody if you are feeling a bit down, or just to stay in touch regularly.
DON'T overdo it, bring them down as well, if you are having a bad day, and don't just do it to gossip!
7. **DO** have a radio quietly in the background. The companionship this can offer, even if you are not really listening to it, is invaluable.
DON'T have it loud enough for a caller to hear or to hamper you hearing the customer or concentrating.
8. **DO** target yourself constantly. Even if you are set targets, set your own (e.g. how many more contacts before that next cup of tea!)
DON'T be unrealistic in your targeting otherwise you will soon tire of it.
9. **DO** share good news. If you get a big sale or hit your target, let somebody know. If you receive such a message, respond in a positive fashion, don't just ignore it. 'Well done' doesn't take long to type on MSN!
DON'T brag or de-motivate colleagues by doing it though.
10. **DO** keep yourself hydrated. Your brain needs to be kept hydrated to function properly.
DON'T overdo the caffeine.
11. **DO** eat sensibly, have plenty of fruit available. Snacking is much more of a temptation when you are at home all day.
DON'T fall to the temptation of extra buns and biscuits. Being overweight is likely to have a negative impact on your attitude to work and life in general.
12. **DO** exercises regularly when you are sitting and between calls. Stand up and talk when you are on the phone sometimes, particularly important calls or when you are nearing a sale.
DON'T sit for more than half an hour.
13. **DO** make your environment pleasant. If you don't have a view, create one artificially with scenic pictures or motivate yourself with pictures of something you are working for – a holiday, the kids or a new car maybe.
DON'T work in a messy work space, this will undoubtedly hamper your efforts to serve your customers well.
14. **DO** smile when you are talking to people; it is easier to slip into a reserved or depressed mood when nobody is watching you.
DON'T let events at home cloud your mood. It is harder to leave home problems at home when you work there.



15. **DO DO DO** try to build rapport with everybody you speak to, whenever you can. They may be the only people you speak to all day – so you might as well enjoy it!

DON'T become process driven and forget that you are speaking to a live person

16. **DO** set goals and action plans for the day ahead. If possible do the thing you are looking forward to the least, first.

DON'T become complacent thinking that you will just take the day as it comes.

17. **DO** become familiar with other people in the team, communicate with them regularly and meet whenever you can (team meetings and social occasions). Find out where the nearest Teleworker, or colleague to you, lives and form a relationship if possible.

DON'T become isolated. You are still a team and teams help each other. Don't lose interest in your colleagues just because you don't see them every day.

18. **DO** use your Team Manager for support – it is what they are paid for! Don't always wait for them to contact you. Let them know how you are doing and if you need help.

DON'T see it as a sign of weakness asking them for support or motivation.

19. **DO** prepare for, and participate in the all team meetings. As well as relaying important information, Team Leaders should make them fun events.

DON'T miss meetings for any reason. It is your chance to communicate with the outside world and let your feelings be known.

And finally

20. **DO** stay positive!

DON'T let one bad shift, or even one bad call, get you down.

Consultants at Specialist Call Centre Services (SCCS) are experts in the development and management of home based teams. They established some of the UKs first organised Teleworker teams in 1988 and have run home based, outsourced teams, for major organisations such as BUPA and Norwich Union.

More recently they have advised companies, like Autoglass, on effective home sourcing, as well as providing training to Team Leaders, Agents and Managers on how to obtain the best results from this hugely cost-effective strategy.

SCCS have also helped companies to select the most appropriate people to work from home, based on their experience and a best practice recruitment model. It is equally effective with internal and external Teleworking applicants.

This advice and support has had a dramatic impact on the cost, staff attrition, staff absence and performance.