

The 3 Problems Everyone Has When Working Remotely (and How to Solve Them)

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In hopes of containing Coronavirus (and keeping the global economy as stable as possible), many businesses all over the world are doing their part to limit unnecessary person-to-person interactions by requiring some or all of their employees to work from home for the time being. And while employees may feel less anxious about contracting the illness or even excited to cut out their commutes, adjusting to #remotelife after working in an office is not an easy transition—even if it's for only a few days or a few weeks. Just like in most disruptions to routines, productivity can be a problem as individuals figure out what works best for them in their new set ups

The good thing is since the rise of incredible Internet work tools like Slack, Zoom (and we must say, [InVision Freehand](#)) have made remote work possible, many people have transitioned to working from home before and have come out productively on the other side. We know a thing or two about working remotely because there is no InVision office—all of our 700 employees work remotely all over the world, whether that be in their homes, or at co-working spaces, cafes or even on the road. We reached out to our fellow distributed workforce partners (as well as our own InVision employees) for their best #remotelife tips on tackling the most common problems...

1. The problem: Isolation

Jeff Ong, design director at Automattic (a completely-distributed, nearly 1,000-person company) said that starting at the company was a drastic transition for him, especially as his previous jobs were at high-touch, shoulder-to-shoulder environments that rely upon a kind of physical “mind-meld.” In offices, employees shape their creative problem-solving muscles by arguing, commiserating, and celebrating together. Even seemingly non-work activities like grabbing coffee or lunch or going on an impromptu karaoke outing together can help develop non-verbal unique communication skills between coworkers. However, when workers go remote, these daily opportunities are gone. And since the onus is on the individual, it's likely they'll choose to focus their time on “work” rather than relationship

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building—meaning they often feel disconnected from coworkers and spend more time communicating and aligning than they would in an office.

Solution: Digital tools for connection

To help push past a sense of isolation, Jeff says explicit time and attention must be given to creating and maintaining meaningful relationships and communication skills. Connection to colleagues can start in small ways, like Slacking throughout the day to see how people are doing, hopping on Zoom to say hello, and sharing stupid memes and stories.

Instead of “mind melding” in a conference room, employees will need to over communicate transparently, so nothing falls through the cracks.

2. Problem: Lack of structure

Omna Toshniwal, a product manager at MetaMask, says that impromptu sessions in a co-located office help maintain a sense of constant ideation and space for alignment, tackling issues as they arise. However, these are few and far between in a distributed workforce.

Solution: Regularly scheduled check-ins with flexible agendas

Omna found that putting standing one-on-ones on the calendar allowed informal chats to happen on a more regular cadence. While not everything may be shared during this meeting, it also opens the line of communication for sporadic messages throughout the week. For these updates, she recommends creating a Slack channel or DM with your colleagues to document issues as they arise.

“If needed, teammates initiate a call and others can jump on,” Omna says.

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3. The problem: Burnout

For Rachael Kleinman, InVision's director of feature stories, one of the biggest shifts for remote work was actually the lack of disruptions through the day.

"From when I log on in the morning to when I sign off at night, I am super focused on getting things done," she says.

And while that may seem like a benefit, it also leads to less than ideal outcomes like forgetting to eat, being sedentary all day, or working late into the night—all things that heighten the risk of burnout.

The solution: Time-blocking

Rachael found that building time into her calendar to get up, walk around, go outside, ensures that she has some time away from the screen that allows her mind to wander.

"When I honor that time (confession: I need to get better), I always feel refreshed and recharged," she says.

What's next?

Ultimately, when it comes down to it, the secret to good remote work is treating it like you would at your office. That can mean things as small and significant as getting showered and dressed before signing on, to bigger actions like frequently asking your manager for formal and informal feedback (and giving it back to them, too). While your work from home situation may be temporary, good habits and discipline practiced while at home can translate to making strides in your career when you're back at the office.