

Name: Making “Work from Home” Work for You

Class Description: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us have found ourselves working from home. Some of us might have the ability to work from home during part of our regular work week, and post-COVID, may have a greater ability to work off-site. In order to provide major benefits, working from home should be structured in a way that keeps you productive and healthy, and keeps command staff happy.

Bio: Todd Loggins currently works from home full-time as a Senior Customer Success Manager for SmartForce. Prior to this, he was an Intelligence Analyst at the Austin Regional Intelligence Center (ARIC) tasked with Cyber-Security Intelligence as well as the other day-to-day fusion center activities. Prior to that, he was an Intelligence Analyst at the Colorado Information Analysis Center (CIAC), tasked with doing Marijuana Intelligence analysis in post-commercialization Colorado. When not thinking about weed or hackers, Todd enjoys visiting National Parks and hanging out in the rivers of Central Texas

Working from home:

- **Intro**
 - Bio
 - Things that are causing us to work from home
 - COVID
 - Flex Hours
 - Technology
 - Anecdotal: City of Austin pushing for more remote work
 - Outlook
 - Probably going to be more able to work from home in the future
- **The Benefits**
 - Personal
 - More time at home
 - Less commuting (Gas \$, vehicle maintenance, environmental)
 - Travel flexibility
 - Organizational
 - More Productive (~8 hours/week)
 - Cheaper (Less Overhead) ~\$1900/employee
 - Less attrition (~50%)
 - <https://www.inc.com/scott-mautz/a-2-year-stanford-study-shows-astonishing-productivity-boost-of-working-from-home.html>
- **The Pitfalls**
 - Personal
 - Social Life and Skills can suffer
 - Can challenge relationships at home
 - Organizational
 - Reliant on technology
 - Less Comradery
 - For Public Sector: The public generally isn't thrilled about the idea (anecdote)

- **Strategies for Personal Success**

- Make a plan

- Communicate plan w/ Significant Others/Family & agency stakeholders

- Hours working (flexible?? Strict??)
- Tangible results to report
- Regularly scheduled team meetings

- Home

- Do kids/pets need to be in certain areas?
- Communicate your expectations and get your partner/family's expectations?
- Example: I close my door when I'm on a call or my partner is on a call. There's a need to explain that you aren't doing so out of annoyance, but that you don't want the other person to feel "trapped" or like they can't make a sound.

- **Have normal hours**

- Keep your 9-5 (or whatever)
- (But you don't have to drive now!!!)
- You have some flexibility to work off hours, but it shouldn't be a habit. Probably just as much as you're already doing.
- Anecdote: When I first started working from home, I would be crushing it until 6ish, then remember something at 10pm and stay up until 2am working on it. I don't do that much anymore. I like sleeping and boundaries are important.

- **Plan your weeks**

- Schedule yourself enough time to get the work done that doesn't involve other people.
 - For me: Mondays and Fridays are generally self-paced days. Mondays: Get ready for the week. Fridays: catch up and prevent Sunday scaries.
 - Tuesdays are internal days.
 - Wednesday and Thursday are client heavy meeting days.
 - A lot of flex in that.

- **Treat your day as a workday**

- "Wear Pants"
 - Funny way to say: dress for the workday you think you're going to have. I have found that the way I dress each day impacts my work. On self-paced days, sweatpants work great. On Fast-paced client days, I'm generally wearing jeans and a polo. I like to think that casual friday attire is the best WFH attire.
- Family/Roommates should know that you're working
 - Balance chores/errands with true break time

- **Pace yourself**

- You can't go full bore for 8/10 hours
 - Guilt associated with taking breaks
 - Guilt associated with coworkers who are in the office/in the field

- Major imposter syndrome when first starting WFH. Feel the need to “prove that you’re working”
 - Take walks. Do some pushups. Make a shake and think.
 - **Chat with coworkers (about non work related things)**
 - Your brain needs human interaction and distractions
 - Anecdote: In the last year, I’ve tried to be more mindful of my coworkers as people, learn about their life/family/etc. and follow up with them.
 - (If possible) Have a workspace that is separate from your main living space
 - If you have a guest room or nook that you can work in, do it.
 - The couch gets uncomfortable after two days.
 - You don’t want to leave work and be in the same place.
 - (in normal times) Work “off-site” every once in a while (OPSEC Reminders. Do so on low impact days or in a situation in which you can manage content displayed appropriately)
 - Coffee Shops
 - Public Library
 - Vacation rental
- **Application to Analysis**
 - Planning
 - Network requirements (VPN, hotspot, etc.)
 - Anecdote: at the onset of COVID-19, certain VPNs were blocking one of our cloud storage CDN’s and users couldn’t access BW.
 - Backup services: Always need two ways to do something. If you can’t access NCIC for Criminal History, can you at least access another service like LINX to give you an idea? Or have you established relationships with dispatch so that you can request copies while remote?
 - Security Requirements
 - If working in a cleared environment, what’s your plan to work at home? Can you save all of your unclassified work for certain days? Schedule it out and clear w/ super.
 - Technology requirements
 - If you’re using arcGIS Desktop, you’re going to have a bad time.
 - Do you need a separate hard drive for case info? Do you need a better internet connection/plan?
 - Approval guidelines and timelines
 - Get comfortable with review changes in word/google docs
 - Collaborative technology needs to be planned and tested beforehand.
 - Preferred Contact Methods
 - Can you forward desk number to cell? Does your provider have a computer app so you can answer calls on your computer? Do your detectives have a way to get in touch? Can you create a task tracker to manage everything in one stream?
 - Big question: (OPINION TIME) Who pays for upgrades? If you push for

WFH, it will be hard to also sell that your agency should pay for any upgrades you need. But if your org moves to mandatory or encouraged WFH, they should cover most of the tab.

- Working
 - Device Needs: Multiple Screens, Keyboard/Mouse, headset/microphone
 - Printer? Probably not.
 - Set up screens how you like them.
 - Good phone service and hotspotting capability.
 - Daily Needs: A lot of pens, notebook, post its. Some folks prefer One Drive.
 - Whiteboard/Bulletin Board
 - Priority Deck. Above laptop to show today's priorities.
 - Temporary solution would be index cards pinned/taped up.
 - Request/Task Log (Google sheet, Excel sheet, something shareable)
 - Shift Briefing/Show Up
 - Need to have virtual F2F or phone call w/ command staff or Sgts to explain Show Up material. Emailing over docs is not enough. You have context and insight that is hard to capture on a document.
 - When on calls:
 - Turn off radios
 - Virtual backgrounds: all about them