

4 Steps for Successful Home Working

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One of the biggest challenge's homeworkers are facing day-to-day is achieving balance. However according to new research from Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM) there are proactive steps we can take to help us feel more in control of our time.

According to Dr Rebecca Hewett, Assistant Professor in the department of Organisation and Personnel Management: "If we want to operate at our best, human beings need to have their three basic psychological needs satisfied. The first is autonomy, which is a sense of choice and control about how you go about your day. The second is competence, a sense of achievement in your day-to-day activities. And the third is relatedness, a feeling of connection with important people in your life.

"When our basic psychological needs are satisfied, we thrive. We are more effective in our work and home lives, we are healthier, and the benefits of needs that are satisfied in one part of our lives can spill over into another. But when these needs are not met, the opposite is true.

"For many of us right now, the uncertainty and lack of control in the world around us is threatening to undermine how we satisfy our basic needs."

Hewett has come up with four ways to help craft our work and combat a perceived loss of control.

1) Do a needs audit. If you're finding things difficult at the moment, can you identify why? What might not be satisfying your basic psychological needs? Maybe you are getting plenty of things done but you're missing human connection (so your need for relatedness isn't satisfied). Maybe you feel as though you don't have any control about things that are happening around you (so it's autonomy that's lacking). Or perhaps you feel that despite your best efforts you are struggling to get anything done (so your need for competence is the issue). Identifying the source of your frustrations is the first step because then you know what gap you need to fill.

2) Craft your day. There are lots of ways that you can craft both your work and non-work time and changes don't need to be big. If you feel you're not making any progress during your working day, taking 15 minutes out to watch a video or read some articles you find interesting could help satisfy your need for competence. Or taking time to call or video chat with a colleague about a non-work-related activity could help you to feel greater relatedness. Research suggests that people are actually more likely to craft their home lives when they have a lot to do, because crafting helps you to get things done more effectively.

3) Focus on your achievements across the whole day. You can make up for a frustrating day of work by celebrating achievements in your personal life, and vice versa. Think about your day as a whole and celebrate the small wins. If work didn't go so well today, focus on other tasks you have completed. It will give you a sense of competence.

4) Ask for help. One of the most effective ways to gain the resources you need to get through your day successfully is to ask for help. This could be help from your boss, partner, or other family and friends. Likewise, people are more likely to successfully craft their home life if they feel that they have autonomy.

The researchers believe work and non-work time are not separate, and we can harness energy from one to help us thrive in the other. Don't let work be your only priority. Life is about balance. It might seem strange to mix our two worlds but this is the 'new normal' and change is already here.

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For more information, contact Kate Mowbray at BlueSky PR on kate@bluesky-pr.com or call +447710022871