

Trends in Working From Home

With both rising gas prices and increasing numbers of home computers, plus demands from employees for more flexible work schedules, many employers now are allowing their staff the option of working from home. A recent article (<http://triangle.bizjournals.com/triangle/stories/2008/08/25/daily22.html?surround=1fn&brthrs=1>) confirmed this trend, noting a new survey by a professional association (<http://www.worldatwork.org/waw/home/html/home.jsp>) claims that 42 percent of U.S. companies surveyed said they offered “teleworking” programs to employees this year, compared to only 30 percent in 2007.

This trend sounds enticing, as it can save all parties involved considerable money and time if done properly. However, as a person working from home, you need to make sure you have the necessary work space and tools to complete your job efficiently. We recommend you consider the following actions:

- A multifunction inkjet printer (http://www.pcworld.com/article/123861/top_10_inkjet_multifunction_printers.html) can copy, scan, fax and of course print in both color and black and white. Best of all, it takes up relatively little space to perform all these tasks.
- An office chair and a desk (http://www.humanscale.com/products/freedom_index.cfm) that are designed for ergonomic support, so that you can be comfortable while working on your computer.
- Adequate lighting (http://www.bobvila.com/HowTo_Library/A_Panelized_Home_Creating_the_Lighting_Plan-Miscellaneous_Lighting-A1418.html), so that you do not strain your eyesight.
- Packing or shipping materials (<http://www.ups.com/content/us/en/resources/prepare/materials/index.html>) such as envelopes and tape may be required if you are mailing items to clients or your office.

As to where in your house you should work, it is a personal decision. While some people prefer an actual office room, others find it more relaxing to work in their bedrooms or living rooms or even outside on their patio, if it is a pleasant day. Obviously, a laptop computer allows more variety on where you choose to work at home. The key choice is to find a spot with the least amount of distractions nearby, as well as an electrical outlet located conveniently near you (no laptop battery has been developed yet to last longer than a couple of hours without recharging).

One necessary item you cannot buy, but nonetheless it remains important, is to make sure you have support and understanding from the rest of your family that even though you are at home, you are at work too. It does not mean you should be immediately accessible to talk or eat with them or do chores for them, although you can be once you reach your break period.

Work remains work no matter when or where it occurs. Just let them know that now you have an advantage in that you can get home quicker to do the things with them you previously did after work. That should make them happy, as well as make your workday from home a lot easier to handle.

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