

# The pros and cons of working remotely

According to Global Workplace Analytics, telecommuting has increased by 115% since 2015 among non-self-employed workers, however, working remotely does come with some challenges.



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ManpowerGroup South Africa's managing director, Lyndy van den Barselaar, says: "A successful remote worker is disciplined, dedicated and proactive, and has impeccable communication skills."

In South Africa specifically, one-third of workers work from outside one of their company's main offices for half the week or more, according to a recent study carried out by Regus. The survey, which canvassed more than 370 business people in South Africa, also found that 62% of people work remotely for at least some of the time.

## Not necessarily the same as working from home

While remote working is clearly a growing trend, it is not necessarily synonymous with working from home – only a minority of respondents said that they worked exclusively from home (12%). Rather, workers suggest that they work remotely in order to remain productive while travelling to and from meetings within the same city or in other cities (59%).

"As the business landscape continues to evolve, and the digital transformation changes the way we live, work and communicate, remote working is set to become more prevalent," explains van den Barselaar. "Remote working has both advantages and disadvantages, and needs to be well managed by employers and employees alike, to ensure the highest chance of success."

## Advantages of working remotely

- Increased control over working time and conditions.
- More flexibility in achieving a work/life balance.
- Independence, self-sufficiency, and more autonomy over how you perform the work.
- Reduced travel expenses.

## Disadvantages of working remotely

- Can hinder career mobility.
- Greater need to be self-motivated.
- Can make one feel less connected to the overall organisation, its mission and vision.
- Reduced social interaction can lead to feelings of social and professional isolation.

“A concern that many employees who work remotely have is remaining ‘visible’ within the organisation – feeling part of the team and being considered for promotions, raises important new projects,” says Van den Barselaar.

## **Tips for maintaining organisational visibility**

In order to ensure the best chance of success, Van den Barselaar offers the following tips for maintaining organisational visibility while working remotely:

- Schedule regular check-ins with your employer or manager, to ensure you are aligned with tasks, processes, and projects, and that you are able to discuss any concerns.
- Instead of using the telephone for virtual meetings, use video conferencing and other video technologies where others can physically see you and interact with you. Dress as you would if you were in the office, to maintain your professionalism.
- After you have successfully completed projects and tasks that are critical to the organisation, communicate with your team or management on what you have achieved.
- For the times when you do have to visit the office, maximise face-to-face time by scheduling meetings throughout the day to build and maintain relationships with your colleagues and management.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Running into challenges on projects or tasks can seem more stressful when you are separated from your team or leaders. Do not be afraid to reach out and ask for help, for fear of seeming incompetent or bothering anyone. It is important that you are able to communicate effectively in all situations.
- Offer to plan the annual conference, publish the company’s newsletter, or to work on a critical project – all tasks that can be done remotely with today’s technologies. This will help you to establish your role in the team, and let your colleagues and management know that you consider yourself part of the team despite being separate from them.
- Remain committed to deadlines, planning and productivity. Make sure to plan carefully around your deadlines and goals to ensure that you remain productive. Your employer trusts you to be productive and efficient, and it is important that you take this responsibility seriously.

“It is important to continue to be committed to your role, and to adding value to the organisation. Not only will this bode well for your career development, but also for the organisation’s bottom line,” says Van den Barselaar.

“Working remotely requires hard work and dedication. While it is certainly not for everyone, the trend is set to keep growing and changing the business landscape - which means employees and employers alike need to take note of the way it influences their organisation,” Van den Barselaar concludes.

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