

COMMENT

Remote working: Avoid the trap of poor discipline

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AS SOUTH Africans face the reality of a 21-day lockdown to contain the spread of Covid-19, working from home has become the “new normal” overnight – and if properly managed, it can be just as productive as being in the office.

South African companies now join millions of businesses across the globe forced to learn fast and on-the-job how to manage a fully remote workforce.

At the same time, scores of employees suddenly experiencing the “freedom” of working from home may also be experiencing anxiety sparked by a lack of supervision and direction, having little time to adjust to a new way of working, fears of job losses, along with challenges of managing technology, keeping productive, staying connected and juggling family and work responsibilities.

Work in the time of Covid-19 presents unprecedented challenges for workers, business and the whole economy. Spread of the virus has made the adoption of technology and remote and flexible working inevitable, with a likely lasting change in the way we work.

Being cooped-up with children, spouses and even extended family also poses additional challenges and requires us to become masters of adaptability and agility overnight.

Successful working from home is dependent on an individual’s self-sufficiency, communication skills, adaptability and technological skills.

For those suddenly adapting to the new reality of working from home, it is easy to fall into the trap of poor discipline – ditch your daily routine, eat junk food, take “power naps” or tackle those DIY projects that there’s never time for.

To stay on track while working from home, try the following:

Operate in a business-like manner. Set aside a separate, dedicated workspace, free from distractions.

Keep to your daily routine. Get ready for work as you would on a normal day (don’t work in your pajamas!) and don’t be too comfortable.

Make a to-do list at the beginning of the day, prioritise tasks you need to accomplish. Stay professional and be connected.

Make sure to be reachable and responsive during working hours.

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