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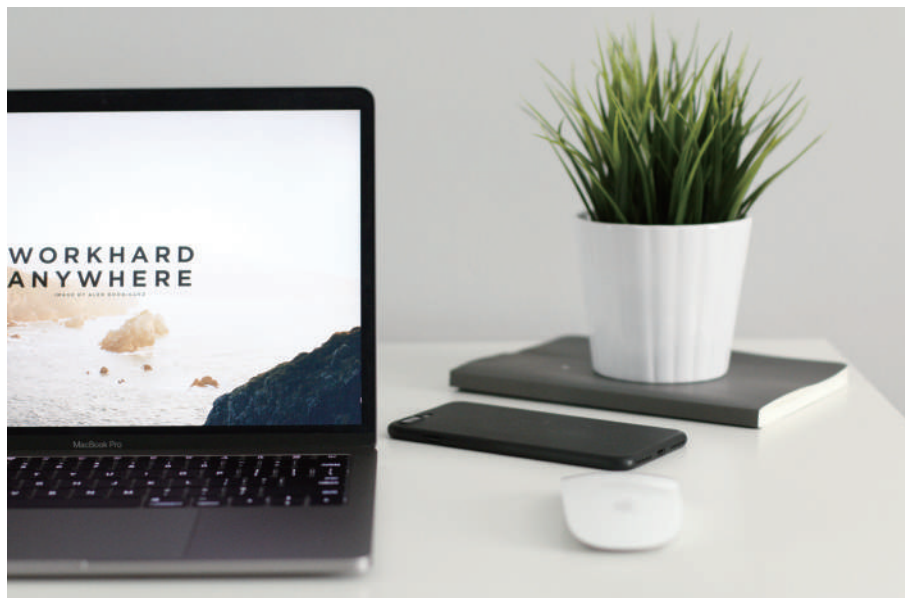
Keeping up productivity when working remotely

With businesses adopting flexible policies to ensure a better work-life balance for their employees, a growing portion of workers are finding themselves working remotely in different offices, from the local cafe or shared working space café and from home. Such policies bring so many benefits, such as eliminating commute time or giving employees the flexibility to juggle their personal commitments whilst working. Working on the couch in pyjamas with your dog snuggling beside you does sound quite ideal. Also, not having to think about what to wear or having to spend time looking presentable can save you a lot of time. Despite these perks however, people may find themselves struggling to maximise productivity due to the multiple distractions at hand.

What steps can you take to ensure you optimise your time and work efficiently without your manager micromanaging your day?

Plan out your day

Write down the hours that you will be working and taking breaks, making sure that these hours are realistic and feasible around your personal schedule. Once you set these hours, don't compromise them with other commitments unless critical. After setting the hours, write down all the tasks that you aim to complete that day and arrange them in the order of priority, noting down an estimate duration of how long each task will take to complete. Allocate the tasks into your time windows accordingly, and work through them top to bottom to ensure that you complete the important tasks first. By doing this, you will be able to get through your top-priority tasks in time, even if you fail to get through to the end of the to-do list.

Allocate a work space

Even if you don't have a space available to make into an office, find a personal space that you can mark as your work station. Try to stay away from the bed or the couch — find a place where you can maintain a good posture and concentrate for long hours. Keeping consistent with the work space allows your brain to become accustomed to working when you enter this area, boosting concentration levels and productivity. Working from home also narrows the boundaries between work and life and makes it more difficult to switch on and off from work. Designating a work area solves this problem by separating work from your personal life.

Remove distractions

Smartphones, social media and internet surfing are usually the main culprits to our procrastination. Unless being on social media is a part of your daily job, turn off your notifications or log out of it completely so that you do not get distracted every time you receive a push notification. Once we grab our smartphones, we often find ourselves wasting unplanned hours idly scrolling through our social media newsfeeds. It takes strong determination to simply check the notification and put our phone away, so it is best to eliminate the distraction in the first place. Keep your personal phone somewhere out of hands reach so that it takes effort to get up and get it.

Communicate with your colleagues and managers

The perks of working in an office environment is that you can easily communicate with your team and keep them up to date with the work that you are doing. When working remotely, it is difficult for your team to know your progress, and this can lower the productivity especially if you are working on a team project. Find tools that you can utilise with your team members to ensure that you keep each other updated and accountable, as effective communication is key to enhancing efficiency. It is also helpful to give your team or manager access to the to-do list you have created for the day, so that they know what you are working on at what time. This gives allows you to adjust deadlines in accordance to your realistic schedule and ensures that miscommunication doesn't become an issue in meeting your manager's expectations.

Flexible and agile work policies are helping employees juggle their personal commitments and balance their work and life. If you are a person who spends most of the time working remotely or at home, keep the above tips in mind and ensure that you can show your employer that your productivity is not affected by your environment.