



Helping Leaders, Individuals and Teams
Learn,
Communicate &
Connect

KCS

Kacik Consulting Services, LLC

Tips to Work Effectively From Home



Many of you either have the opportunity to work from home, or during this time of the coronavirus, have been directed to work from home. For some folks, it's a blessing, and for others, it's a curse. So here are some tips for you, your family and your team to help make it work well for everyone.

- Tips for You -



Joy Conley Kacik
Professional Experience

Joy has 35 years of experience as a professional negotiator, trainer and organizational development specialist building effective leaders and teams. She has done extensive facilitation of strategic planning initiatives, group conflict resolution, training design, communications, management and coaching.

Joy is a conference speaker, team and leadership development consultant, facilitator and a Certified Professional Coach.

As an Insights Discovery® licensed practitioner, Joy provides clients the added value of the Discovery® Portfolio of tools when working with individuals, teams, leaders and



- **Designate a specific place in your home that will be your work space, free from the flow of the family and hopefully as free from interruptions as possible.** That way, you can set up there and not have to constantly be disconnecting and moving your stuff only to set up again after breakfast or after toys are cleaned up. What if you don't have a room to use or even a corner of a room? I have a friend who converted a closet to his office. He opens the louvered doors in the morning and there's his office. When he's done, he closes them and it's back to the guest room ready for visitors if need be.
- **Organize your space.** Think about what you need and arrange the space so you have what you need at your fingertips and there's a place for everything. It's a simple concept, but powerful – "A place for everything, and everything in its place." Invest in bins, file boxes or accordion files or even a filing cabinet if need be to house your notebooks and files. Today, most of us keep a lot of our documents electronically, but there's still always stuff that needs a place. Maybe you need a cube bookcase with basket bins that slide into the cubes for easy access. You don't have to spend a lot of money. There are lots of great options out there. Browse office supplies in stores or online and see what's out there. Furniture stores have great options too. And be sure to have the basic supplies so you're not running to the kitchen junk drawer for a rubberband, scissors or the stapler.

organizations to create inspiring visions for collaborative, cohesive teams to produce superior results.

KCS

Speaking Topics & Virtual Training

Is your organization looking for a professional development speaker or trainer, a webinar or a workshop?

I design team and leadership development training workshops and virtual training, talks and webinars.

Here are a few of my most popular topics:

Handle Difficult Conversations with Confidence

Don't stay up all night trying to figure out what to say. Learn a scripting technique for difficult conversations which allows you to clearly communicate the issue, why it is of concern, propose a solution and inspire positive outcomes for a joint resolution.

Quick-Start Your New Leadership Role: Position Yourself for Success

Use your first few weeks in a new leadership position to start off on the right foot.

- **Keep household chores to quick breaks.**

Working from home can give you lots of freedom which can make things easier or become a distraction that keeps you from getting work done. For example, I have found it easy to do laundry during the work day. I organize my loads and then when I take bathroom breaks, I move a load to the dryer and throw in the next load. Here's the clincher – I wait to fold it until after work hours. That way, I'm doing something quickly without getting sidetracked by all the work I see that could be done around the house. I limit myself. It's easy walking through the house to see things to be done and stop to do them. Except for days I have morning client calls, I usually set my work hours from noon to 7 pm. I can do my chores in the morning so they don't distract me, my husband cooks dinner and I've got a nice chunk of time to work without chores staring at me. Be thoughtful and strategic and find what works for you.

- **Avoid distractions.** *"It takes an average of about 25 minutes (**23 minutes and 15 seconds**, to be exact) to return to the original task after an interruption, according to Gloria Mark, who studies digital distraction at the University of California, Irvine. Multiple studies confirm this."* I've worked at home long enough to realize this is true. You look at a text that just comes in and you stop to deal with it because it will only take a few seconds, but then it leads to something else. Even when I simply answer a question from my husband standing in the doorway of my office, I lose momentum. So have designated times to check email or your phone and in-between those times, work on the task at hand.

- **Stay focused.** This seems simple, but it's harder than one would think with all the distractions there can be at home. To do this, it makes a huge difference to have a list taped above your laptop with a handful of tasks, in prioritized order that you want to focus on for that day. Plan your week ahead and then have your list for each day. When you do have a distraction, one effective way to get focused quickly is

Identify quickly where to put your energy, gain the support and confidence of direct-reports, and impress those above you by demonstrating your ability to produce results.

Managing People Through a Change Process

Once you understand the three phases of change and what to expect in each, you can focus on what you as a leader can do differently during each phase to facilitate an easier, more productive transition.

Be a Strategic Thinker

Identify techniques to look at your work, your processes and your organization in ways that further the organization's vision. Execute strategies to increase efficiency, profitability and customer satisfaction. Doing this also serves to highlight your talents and skills and make you more visible and promotable.

Stress is an Inside Job!

Understanding your stress is the first step toward reducing it. Take the opportunity to identify your stress-provoking thought patterns. Begin to invest in your thinking and get the return of your life!

Coaching & Mentoring Skills

Be the kind of mentor or coach whose supports colleagues and direct-reports to help them capitalize on their strengths and move forward toward their goals.

to remind yourself from that list what you were working on and get right back to it. For more help with planning your to-do list, check out my January 2018 article "Manage Your Time – Don't Let It Manage You".

- **Create your work schedule.** To take advantage of the flexibility of working from home, it's helpful to create a schedule of work hours for each day. It may make sense to stick to your normal work schedule as closely as possible to avoid interruptions in connectivity and productivity with your team. Decide what hours you will work and what hours you will use for chores, picking up the kids from school or taking time for something else that's of importance to you. Just letting it happen organically, for me at least, usually quickly turns to chaos and feeling totally unproductive. The flip side of this can be learning to limit your work hours and having designated home and family time lest you find yourself just working all the time and neglecting yourself, your friends or your family.
- **Find ways to build activity into your day.** You are not walking to and from the parking lot, not having to move to different rooms for meetings, not traveling as far for water or bathroom breaks, etc. Those missed steps add up. So plan some ways to get steps and activity into your day. Walk the dog, walk the stairs, get the mail, use the bathroom at the far end of the house or on a different level, take a conference call on a stationary bike, use your kitchen breakfast bar as a stand-up desk for part of the day, etc. etc.

- Tips for Your Family -

- **Start with a family meeting.** For everyone in the family to buy-in, just like any other team, it helps for them to be involved in the solutions and

Everything is Negotiable - Do It Skillfully!

Come learn rules, skills and tips from a seasoned negotiator to boost your confidence and bring you results. Learn to ask for what you want and successfully counter reactions. Learn important skills in negotiations that apply at any level – from beginner to advanced.

Results Leadership Part I

As a leader, you are no longer an individual contributor and your recognition comes from the results produced by your team. The key to success is in how you write your goals. You will learn how to write goals to drastically increase your rate of success as well as your ability to hold people accountable. We will also explore another important aspect of leading for results, which is creating a vision that others want to follow

Results Leadership Part II

Two important aspects of accomplishing goals are: first, measuring and tracking and second, giving and receiving feedback. As a leader, you need to be checking in, coaching and providing feedback along the way to assure the goal is met by the deadline with all its elements intact.

Leadership Skills

(Best used as a follow-up to Results Leadership Part I and II)

What are your leadership

collaborate on the agreements. After all, working from home not only has to work for you, it has to work for your family members too.

- ***Help your children by scheduling time with them during the day.*** You may have children at home with you. If they are young, you may need some help to give you the focused time you need to work. If they are a little older, you may agree on scheduled breaks every so often so the kids get used to having your time and attention, but for short intervals. It may also help them to remember not to interrupt you if your office door is closed or if you set a timer for them to know when the next break is coming up that you'll be spending with them. There are lots of issues that can be discussed and resolved at the family meeting. Give it a week and see how your agreements work and be prepared to tweak them.
- ***You control your phone and door bell.*** You pay the phone bill and guess what – that means you get to decide when you use the phone. Just because someone calls doesn't mean you have to answer. Let it go to voicemail. If someone comes to your door during the day and you worked at an office, they wouldn't get to talk to you. So, you don't have to answer the door either. You're working. Let it go. If there are other family members at home, discuss this at your family meeting so members know what to say to callers or visitors if you are in work mode.
- ***Being home doesn't mean you're now available for everything!*** While this is a given, living it is another issue. Everyone may agree that you're at home to work, but unless there's discussion, agreements and reminders of those agreements, it's very easy to have constant pop-ins to your work space with 15-second questions that become that interruption that takes away 23 minutes and 15 seconds of your productivity. Even my dog demands to go out more often than she needs when I'm

styles? Yes, styles plural. Research shows that effective leaders use multiple styles for different circumstances. Good leaders constantly assess the needs of their team and seek ways to provide development through proper training, coaching and feedback. In this session, we'll focus on good techniques for supervisory oversight and keeping your team on the cutting edge of best practices. Whether you are a first-level supervisor or a CEO, the skills apply!

Public Speaking & Presentation Skills

Whether you are a good speaker or someone who gets tongue-tied when having to speak to a large group, this session will include techniques for speaking with ease in front of one or a hundred as well as simple things you can do to make the difference between being a good speaker and a great one.

Effective Time Management Skills

Learn some critical basics that will help you get more out of each day without going into overdrive to do it. You'll learn tips to create a realistic schedule, time-saving methods and ways to develop consistency to increase your productivity even further.

Running Effective, Time-Saving Meetings

Make meetings far more productive so you get more done in less time and without redundancy. There are things to do

working at home. Those puppy-dog eyes begging for a trip outside are my biggest downfall.



- Tips for Your Team -

- ***Stop the unnecessary emails and texts.*** By that I don't mean to stop necessary communication, but you can stop the little replies that are unnecessary. For example, and I don't mean that politeness has to go out the window, but when you email someone on your team for something and they email you the answer, you can all agree as a team to stop sending a "thank you" reply. I only recommend this if you agree as a team, otherwise, it can seem like you were unappreciative if they're used to expecting that from you. Here's why it's good to talk about the types of emails you can eliminate. If you send something someone asked you for and you get a ding that they've sent a reply, you have to stop and see if they just emailed a thank you or perhaps you didn't understand their request and they need more or something completely different. If you ignore it, what if it's the latter? But if you stop to look at their reply and it's simply a thank you, you just got caught in another one of those 23-minute productivity-losing distractions. Here's another tip – if you need only send a few word message – put it in the subject line followed by EOM (end of message). That way, they know they don't have to even take time to open the email. They see your message in the subject line. An example would be replying to what time the meeting is tomorrow – "9 am EOM"

before, during and after the meeting so you have time to address the issues the meeting was designed for, it uses everyone's time efficiently and you leave on the same page with a plan for what follows.

Working Effectively With Your Manager

Everybody has a boss, even if you're the CEO who reports to a board. It can be challenging at times, but there are ways to develop a good relationship that is productive for both of you. Setting up communications is the first step. Rather than letting communications just happen, which often ends up not going so smoothly, it's best to be deliberate about how you will communicate, when and for what types of issues. While you need to support your boss's goals and objectives, you need support from him or her as well. There are ways to set that up for mutual benefit and so that you grow in the process and are prepared for future opportunities. Learn how to handle questions, mistakes and more in ways that elevate your image to the boss and help you get the support you need.

Networking – Opportunities for You Personally and for Your Organization

Networking is an essential skill in the business world. You'll learn how to be prepared for a networking opportunity, whether it's planned or spontaneous and how to start conversations and leave a good impression that allows the conversation

- **Start every day or every other day or at least once a week with a short team check-in conference call or virtual meeting.** If you're thinking this is a time-waster, think again. If you're used to being together, a check-in helps keep you connected when you can't physically be in the same workspace. It also gives you the opportunity to review what's happening, give each other quick updates and share some camaraderie. Remember I said above that working from home, for some, can be a curse? Well, we all have different personality styles. For some, asking them to work alone is the worst thing you can do for their productivity. Some people desperately need people connections to work effectively. That morning check-in call or zoom meeting could be the very fuel that keeps them going.

- **Set up an informal daily team/group chat.**

One of my clients shared with me that her team leader started a group chat, which has been used much less for business and much more for social relief. One day, they all sent pictures of their pets. Another day they sent pictures of their work-from-home spaces. She said, "It is nice to have a more casual means of communication than email, which we need to use so carefully these days."

- **Use cameras when attending virtual meetings.** Seeing each other helps you connect better than just hearing each others' voices. Even if you want to enjoy working in your PJ's, keep a shirt, blouse or nice top handy for client, team or other professional calls with video.

- **Designate a team email-check time or times during the day.** To avoid having to check your email with every ding, if the team agrees to some times during the day for calls or email checks, then you can all have an expectation about getting answers or being able to call each other when a phone call would be far more efficient. These ideas

to continue. I'll also share with you the value of "Informational Interviews" and how to use them for your own career growth and opportunities within or outside your current organization.

Transitioning Into Retirement

Transitioning into retirement can evoke all kinds of thoughts and emotions. Become familiar with the three phases you will experience as you navigate this important change in your life. Approach this time with creativity and explore four different transition models for retirement. Examine ways to take care of yourself through the process. Receive a workbook with tools to help you through the transition and create a future that will truly satisfy you.

KCS Services

KCS Coaching Services:

- **Personal Career Coaching**
- **Job Offer and Salary Negotiations**
- **Executive Coaching**

KCS Consulting Services:

- **Leadership Development**
- **Team Development**
- **Customized Training and**

aren't set in stone, but they are things to discuss as a team to come up with solutions that will help everyone be more productive.

Facilitation

- Strategic Planning

- **After a week or so of working from home, start with a team meeting!** It may take you a little while to be able to think about what would work, so give it a little time and then meet as a team to talk about how to make working from home work for the team. Agree up front to put your challenges on the table. If you're challenged by something, chances are others are too and you can work together to find solutions.

If I can help your team understand each other better and improve communications during this work-at-home shift, reach out to me. I have ways to provide solutions through a virtual format. I'm here to help.



Click below to schedule time with me.



 LinkedIn

 Email

 Website

Copyright © 2016 Kacik Consulting Services, LLC, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

2408 West Street

Brookfield, VT 05036

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

This email was sent to [<<Email Address>>](#)
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Kacik Consulting Services LLC · 2408 West Street · Brookfield, VT 05036 · USA

