

Telecommuting: Dealing With Reactions From The Office

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Telecommuting may seem like a hard sell to your boss, but it will be an even harder sell to other employees in your work environment. There will always be one or more co-workers of yours that resents the fact that you are now allowed to do your work from home while he is still sitting in his little cubicle surrounded by the sounds and smells of a busy office. This envy can potentially lead to a lot of trouble, and you need to do what is in your power to diffuse the situation.

The first step is not to hold the decision over the heads of your fellow employees. Do not run around the office shouting in glee when you are granted permission to work out of your home. When you do go into the office to pick up mail or other pieces of hardcopy, be careful not to talk about how wonderful it is to work from home and avoid all the traffic that you just had to drive through to get to the office again. Above all, never complain about your home working situation. It might be more boring than being at the office, but no one is going to believe that that makes it worth complaining about. In fact, you will risk increasing the resentment of the other workers, who will likely ask themselves why you don't just come back then and let someone else have a shot.

When you are at your home office, act as professionally as you would at the business place. Answer the phone and any important emails promptly. If you promised that working from home would increase the efficiency with which you can do assignments, follow through by having them in early. This should be easier to do with the amount of time you save just on travel to and from the office; you will probably be amazed at how much more sleep you get and how much more aware you are.

Remember that while you are at home, the work at the office in town goes on. Post the hours that you are going to be working from your home office at your regular work station in the city office. That way, people who are looking for a signature or file will know that they will have to wait until you are back in or else try to go through someone else.

There are sometimes a few kinks that will need to be ironed out in the beginning stages of your telecommuting venture, and you need to keep in mind that although you will be minimizing them, they are being amplified by the boss and others back at the office. The best way to avoid these mistakes is by planning ahead. Make sure that you are not going to be distracted while at home at all for the first few months, until you have proven that you can deliver what you proposed. Keep working in professional clothes and resist the urge to sit down in your pajamas until the potential for a surprise visit from the boss has passed. Above all, retain regular hours from your home office and don't cave in to the temptation to go out and enjoy the sunny days. Your new opportunity is your new responsibility, and you have to show that you can make it work.