

Be the Productive Leader Your Company Needs in Quarantine

May 6, 2020 5 min read

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Entrepreneurs tend to be social people, even the introverted ones. You can't run a company without talking to partners, vendors, employees, prospects and customers on a regular basis. Some entrepreneurs may flourish working from home, but more extroverted types could see their productivity slip during this frustrating period.

Owners of small businesses, caught between financial struggles and health hazards, must learn to operate as efficiently as they can from the safety of their own homes. Some companies will close their doors during this pandemic and never reopen. Others will weather the storm and position themselves to thrive on the other side. Founders can't control the end date of the quarantine, but they can control what they do in the meantime.

When the quarantine eventually lifts, founders who perfected their work-from-home processes will be able to use those skills for the rest of their lives. Instead of treating every day as an undiscovered emergency, take proactive steps to develop a system that empowers you to perform at your best when you're not in the office.

Delegate work wherever possible

You may save time without a commute, but don't waste that extra time on tasks that distract you from your real goals.

Administrative work, maintenance and bookkeeping take up valuable energy that you could direct toward more profitable areas.

As the business owner, every hour of your time is precious. Hire a virtual assistant to take care of your basic organizational needs. Use productivity and project-management tools to stay on top of progress without managing every detail yourself.

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The same applies for security as well. Hackers and phishers are working overtime to catch vulnerabilities, so use smart tools to stay safe and productive. Plume, for example, offers AI Security and Adaptive WiFi to keep connections reliable and secure when working from home while protecting your network from potential cyberattacks. If there was ever a time to invest in your home's WiFi security, it would be now.

Perfect the art of overcommunication

In an office, between-meetings conversations, body language and context clues make up a surprising amount of interpersonal communication. Without those crutches, you must give your regular digital-communication strategy more attention to keep your team, partners and clients on the same page.

When you talk on Slack, end every conversation with a clear expectation, such as "So I'm going to get you X, and you're going to have Y and Z back to me by the end of the day. Is that correct?" Practice using more bullet points and step-by-step lists in emails to give recipients clearer takeaways.

For your customers, create more content for direct communications and social media to maintain their connection to your brand. Call bigger clients directly to ask how you can

help them during these tough times.

Manage stress with a tight schedule and defined workspace

Working from home doesn't just change your office space. Under quarantine, you also change your commute, your morning routine, how you spend your breaks and how you close out the day.

Follow a rigid routine to stop yourself from giving in to negative thoughts or slacking on productivity. Get dressed in the morning as if you were going to the office. You don't have to put on a suit, but try trading sweats for slacks or jeans. Create your own commute by walking around the neighborhood to get in the right headspace for work.

Set short-term goals and log your benchmarks

You may want to create a three-year plan for your business, but that gets tricky when no one knows what the economy will look like six months from now. Short-term goals can relieve pent-up anxiety by providing concrete proof of your progress.

Set goals relevant to your company's needs, establish benchmarks by which to measure those goals, and adjust the benchmarks based on your ability. In the current climate, you likely won't be able to beat the sales goals you hit at the end of 2019. Create daily goals and weekly goals to provide more context for your work and keep your energy focused in a positive direction.

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When you leave work, leave work

Look – you're stressed, and you want to do everything you can to keep your business afloat. But you can't do any of that if you never unplug from your job and take a moment to breathe.

Dedicate time every day to get away from work. Spend time with your family, exercise in another room, go for a run or read a book. Your business deserves you at your best, but when you push yourself to the point of exhaustion, you eventually run out of gas. No matter how young you are or how much you care, you need sleep and time off to be the leader your company deserves.

One day, this, too, will pass. That day won't come this month or next, so don't spend the present waiting anxiously for the future. Learn how to be your most productive self at home so you can keep your business pushing forward during, and after, this crisis.

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