



REMOTE WORKING IN THE TICKETING INDUSTRY

BOOKING  PROTECT



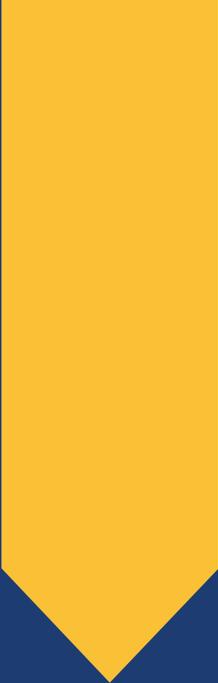


The coronavirus pandemic has changed working environments across the world. Businesses have been working tirelessly to ensure employees are set up to work effectively from home, ensuring no disruption to service.

Any significant level of change is bound to cause anxiety for managers and staff members. No sooner have we all become used to remote working before we're expected back in the office.

Will businesses adapt to meet employee demands for flexibility? The "new normal" has certainly put pressure on organisations to be more aware of the benefits of remote working. Of course, this isn't a solution for every business. Any scenario in which the quality of customer service decreases must be reviewed.

Let's face it - remote working isn't for everyone, and it's the manager's responsibility to keep an eye on their team and ensure all tasks are complete and customers satisfied.



SERVING CUSTOMERS EFFECTIVELY FROM HOME

- **Cat Spencer, Business Development Manager**

Customers expect prompt, professional responses regardless of situation or scenario. It's up to organisations and its managers to ensure standards never slip if remote working is set to become a permanent fixture.

If your organisation is planning to introduce remote working as a working option, there are a few points to take into consideration.

Ensure staff members have the right equipment and remote working set up. This is particularly important if employees are taking calls from customers or partners. There should be limited background noise and disruption where possible. Advise your team to work in a quiet area of their home and find effective ways of managing disruption within their household.

It's presumed that any organisation with staff working remotely will have considered its IT infrastructure. It's imperative that all data and customer information is secure and accessed safely by trusted employees.

Staff members should never work on their own devices, or leave devices unlocked and unattended. Your customers trust you with their data, and it's your responsibility to ensure it is in safe hands. All employees should be given extensive cyber security training, so they have full understanding of their responsibilities.

One of the key differences for remote workers is lack of constant managerial supervision. Employees can browse Facebook, get distracted by household chores or simply fancy taking a long lunch and there's no way a manager could prove or prohibit these behaviours. It is a matter of trust.

You could consider setting targets and goals or arranging a call each morning to establish daily tasks. This will help managers to clearly identify how well individuals are performing. If someone doesn't hit their targets or is clearly offline for longer than they should be, it's obvious they aren't putting your organisation's customers first.

There are many benefits to working from home - flexibility, lack of commute, freedom to work in a style that most suits the individual, less stress from a physical working environment... These should be considered rewards for working effectively from home.

If someone is unable to fulfil their half of the bargain, then remote working may not be for them. It's a style of working that simply doesn't suit everyone, after all.

Ensure you listen to your staff and take their concerns into consideration. Perhaps they work most productively in the office for some tasks, and at home for others. Find out what your people really think by keeping those lines of communication open.

Use anonymous feedback surveys to gather insight or increase manager one-to-ones to give your employees the support they need. As we all know, an engaged employee is significantly more likely to provide a better service for your customer. So it's in your organisation's best interests to keep your team happy and dedicated to working hard.

As an organisation in the ticketing industry, it's important you give your customers the very best experience whether staff are working remotely or not. Just as you would send your team an anonymous survey to check in, consider doing the same for your customers.

Find out how your customers feel about your service, and what they think can be improved. Don't just assume everything is tickety-boo. Always strive to improve and offer even greater service to your customers. But, in order to do that, you have to discover what your customers really need.

There's no doubt about it - we really are entering "the new normal". But businesses need to view this as an opportunity to grow and evolve, with customer experience still at the very heart of these changes.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

The Booking Protect team have been working remotely since the very start of the coronavirus pandemic. As any one of our partners will know, the team are extremely sociable and friendly people and thrive off developing great relationships with the people we work with. So working from home presented a potential challenge. We're proud to say our people have excelled and continued to provide the very best service for our customers during the hardest of times.

We caught up with our Business Development Manager, Cath Healy, to find out what remote working life has been like for her during the lockdown period...

GETTING USED TO THE ROUTINE

One of the hardest things for me was getting into a new routine. I think I've got my routine down to a fine art now, though...

I start the morning by doing a quick 20-minute walk to get some steps in before the day starts. It's been good for motivation when the temptation is there to go from bed to desk to sofa to bed, which isn't a healthy routine!

I then join a Microsoft Teams meeting with my Booking Protect colleagues. It's great to see their faces and catch up! I've probably had more contact with the rest of the team through working from home than when I was in the office. This is mainly because it's been essential to keeping spirits up when you could so easily start to feel isolated.

The rest of the morning is spent responding to emails. The focus is on answering client queries and working on projects that have been on the back burner whilst also supporting the accounts and refunds team.

At lunchtime I try to get another quick walk in as I find it helps with the post-lunch crash. I try to eat a nutritious lunch and have even given a bit of baking a go for relaxation. I promise that most of the baked goods get given away to friends though!

Then it's time to go back to work for the rest of the afternoon. I normally have a call with a client or a prospective client.

We're working with several organisations who are moving their integrations forward in this down time so they can be ready to make the most from offering refund protection when the situation improves. We always try to make everything as easy as possible for our clients and their customers.



HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK?

On Wednesdays I join the INTIX Weekly Wisdom webinar with over 300 ticketing professionals. It's a true insight into what is happening both here and in North America. You get a real feel for whether things are improving and get insight into the challenges organisations are still facing. It's a real community of like-minded folk.

BIGGEST CHANGE?

I'm normally very camera shy, so one of the greatest changes for me has been switching my webcam on for video calls with the team, clients and prospects. I hated the thought at first, but now I find it odd if someone else doesn't activate theirs! It's been fascinating seeing people in their own lockdown environment.

MY FAVOURITE THINGS ABOUT REMOTE WORKING

- ▶ It allows more flexibility to multitask and therefore be more productive
- ▶ There's no commute, so more time is your own
- ▶ I can't forget to take my lunch to work!
- ▶ It doesn't have to be 9 to 5 schedule, so I can better organise my time

WHAT I MISS ABOUT WORKING IN THE OFFICE

- ▶ There's a lack of interaction with others, so you have to make the effort to call colleagues and stay connected
- ▶ It's easy to get distracted when working from home, but creating a new routine helps



PRIORITISING WELLBEING

- **Andy Romero-Birkbeck, Founder of We Are Wellbeing**

It's tough for employees to manage their own wellbeing when working remotely. As businesses become more likely to flex office working and remote working, it will become even more challenging for employees to receive the full wellbeing support they need.

Organisations can support employees by offering a programme of wellbeing services. No, this doesn't just mean free fruit or a beer fridge on Fridays. Most people have had quite enough of that while working from home.

The key is to truly listen to employees and discover where they feel they need the most assistance. Maybe your team is struggling with managing a nutritional diet while working from home, but another team across town may need more help with managing finances. How can you know how to target your wellbeing efforts, if you don't know what help your team needs?

From arranging wellbeing webinars to training your management team, it's important wellbeing remains at the heart of your workplace culture. Don't let standards slip if you are managing a team remotely. Invest in an Employee Assistance Programme or annual health checks to demonstrate your real commitment to improving your team's wellbeing.

During such financially challenging times, it's easy to put any investment such as wellbeing services to the back of your mind. But the ROI can be great. A happy and healthy team has lower absence rates, higher productivity, better performance and a greater chance of staying loyal to your business (which obviously lowers recruitment costs).

There are also services available that can directly help push your business goals forward and help not only your people, but your organisation to thrive. Motivational Maps, for example, help you to discover what motivates your team and your business. So if you're looking to renew an action plan for a post-coronavirus era, now's the time to discover how best to motivate your people and drive your business to success.

Whether your team is remote working, heading back to the office, or planning a healthy mix of the two - don't forget that all team members will be experiencing anxiety and uncertainty during these challenging times. A motivational email or virtual team catch-up simply won't be enough to help them to truly manage their wellbeing effectively.

As an organisation, it's your responsibility to put robust plans in place now to support your people through these changes.





Q&A WITH JODY HUDSPITH, REFUNDS ADMINISTRATOR

Starting a new job is always a little bit stressful. But what about joining a new team during lockdown? The usual initiation routines such as making a cup of tea or showing someone around the office are long gone, potentially leaving new employees feeling a little left in the dark. Not here at Booking Protect.

When we welcomed our new Refunds Administrator, Jody Hudspith, to the team we made sure her experience was just as welcoming.

We catch up with her to find out what starting a new role during lockdown has been like...

HOW HAS THE ONBOARDING PROCESS BEEN WHILST WORKING FROM HOME? HOW HAVE YOU GOT TO KNOW THE REST OF THE TEAM?

The onboarding process was really smooth. On my first day I had a Teams call with everyone and was introduced via video chat. It was certainly different but a good ice breaker. The team made me feel welcome from the get-go.

HOW ARE YOU REGULARLY CONNECTING WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES?

We have a daily Teams catch up to outline a plan for the day/week ahead. This works well as it gives some structure to the day which I find helpful, especially working from home with all its distractions.

IS THIS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE WORKED REMOTELY? HAS THE EXPERIENCE BEEN DIFFERENT TO HOW YOU ORIGINALLY EXPECTED?

Yes. I have been pleasantly surprised with how good the technology has been. It has enabled me to be trained remotely by screen sharing and video conference calls.

I am a first-time mum working from home with an 11 month old so I was initially worried about how I would manage juggling home life and work life. However, I find the flexibility of working from home great. It allows me to work around the needs of my family as well as giving me some time away to focus on my work.

DO YOU HAVE ANY TOP TIPS FOR PEOPLE STRUGGLING TO WORK EFFECTIVELY REMOTELY?

Plan your day effectively, setting yourself goals for certain times of the day. Turn all distractions like the TV and radio off and get yourself into work mode. Eat healthily, stay active and drink plenty of water to help you feel more energized. It will give you more focus on the tasks ahead.

HOW DO YOU FEEL THE LOCKDOWN WILL IMPACT BUSINESSES IN THE TICKETING INDUSTRY?

I think remote working works for some but not all, so I think that it's been a welcomed opportunity for many to experience. Personally, I still prefer an office environment. At least now we know that it can be done and that it's an option in the future for organisations to explore.





WORKING FROM HOME TIPS

- **Anna Coles and Chloë Hearne, Implementation Consultants, Tessitura Network**

The transition from working in a busy office to being at home can be difficult, particularly if you're the kind of person who thrives off the energy of others. If this is you right now then please know that you're not alone.

Our advice to you is to have patience, be open to change and take each day as it comes – it does get easier! In fact, once you've moved on from convincing your friends and family that yes; you do get out of your pyjamas and yes; you do actually do work and yes; you do find it more productive — then working from home is great!

At Tessitura Network we have been a remote company since our inception so the working from home world is not a new one for us. It works successfully on a global basis for all 220 staff members. How? The answer is simple: communication.

We communicate everything! You might say we're guilty of internal over-communication, but when you can't rely on the chitter chatter of the office then you need to ensure that information is available via a number of different channels.

We use Slack to keep conversations ticking over, Yammer to focus on topic-specific and all-company communications, and GoToMeeting to make virtual meetings more productive. We also encourage webcam use as this definitely promotes the feeling of being in an office! It might surprise you to hear that e-mail is our least used internal channel.

Having the right box of tools for remote working makes a big difference and is paramount for staying connected with colleagues and continuing to work as a team.

Overnight, COVID-19 forced a lot of the world to transition from being office based to home based. Unless you're suitably prepared with the right tools, environment and routine, then it can be a difficult flow to get into. We've therefore compiled our top five work-from-home tips that help us on a daily basis and ensure that we can all reap the benefits from being home based:

1 - DEDICATED WORKSPACE

One of the classic working from home myths is that we all just sit on the sofa with Netflix on in the background, staring at a small laptop screen for eight hours a day. Whilst this may be true on day one of lockdown, it doesn't need to stay this way.

Just because you don't work in an office building doesn't mean you can't have your own home office. Have a place that you go to specifically for work, ideally separate from the main living space.

It helps if you have desk space but at the very minimum have somewhere that is consistently used for work and not leisure time. Make that work space pleasant and comfortable by adding plants, having natural light and being near a window for fresh air. This all ensures that you start every day in the right frame of mind.

2 - USE THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY

The obvious upside to working from home is being able to work in a distraction free zone (unless of course you are caring for dependents) and really focus in on your tasks in hand.

The downside is that it can quickly feel like you're cut off from the rest of the organisation. There's a whole array of tools such as the ones above that complement remote working and allow you to remain connected with your co-workers.

It's important to remember that technology doesn't just need to be used for conducting meetings, but can also be used for social gatherings, quizzes and virtual team competitions! Be creative and innovative with your use of it.

3 - ROUTINE

Routine is a funny thing. You get people who thrive off it and others who can't bear it, but if you think about it pre-lockdown we all lived by some sort of routine. We got up at the same time, ate the same thing for breakfast, took the same lunch break, and commuted to work at the same time. Work was a routine whether or not you realised it.

When it comes to working from home everyone's routine can be vastly different, but it's important to keep one up. Some of our colleagues enjoy exercising first thing before sitting down to work — try taking a short walk in the mornings to achieve the same feeling of having a commute into the office each day.

Planning to do something after working hours is also a great way of disconnecting. Having a post-work commitment, whether it be personal or inclusive of others, is a great way to ensure that you finish on time. This could be exercising, dog walking, cooking/baking, doing a virtual class of some sort or even just sitting in your garden with a nice cup of coffee!

There is no right or wrong here but have a routine that works for you.

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4 - GET MOVING

Exercise is vital for overall physical and mental health, but what you soon realise when you're home-based is that you can easily get to the end of the working day having barely moved.

Our top tip here is to set small but achievable goals that mean you mimic the amount of moving that you likely did in the office when you made that round of tea for your colleagues or took a trip to the toilet that was up a flight of stairs!

This can be a walk around your home in-between tasks, investing in a standing desk to ensure you're on your feet more or simply standing up between meetings. Set reminders throughout the day using gadgets in your home such as a smart speaker, smart watch or your mobile phone! Anything to get you up a frequent basis to help get that circulation going!

5 - DON'T STAY HOME ALL DAY

This last tip is probably the most important. Chances are you're suddenly working from home because of imposed restrictions in your region but this doesn't mean that you need to solely exist

within your home for all 24 hours of the day. Make sure you take some time to get out, even if it's just a ten minute blast of fresh air at the end of the day – having that time outside and away from home can really help cement the end of the working day and allow you to return to switch into leisure mode.

Similarly, when the world opens back up, if you don't find working in your home stimulating then get out of your house and into a public environment. This might be a coffee shop, a library or a rented desk in an open office space.

It's really important that you take some time to learn your preferred environment and it's completely fine if this is ever changing. Some days a bustling coffee shop might be what you need for some inspiration, other days you might need silence to tackle that last piece of a puzzle. Find whatever works best for you.

These are just some of the many tips we have about working from home and how to get the best out of it, but the biggest takeaway is to know that working from home does not mean working alone.

In fact, we actually feel closer to our remote colleagues because the time we spend together is much more infrequent and so feels richer and more meaningful. That, and we see each other's faces every morning at 9am and are in constant conversation throughout the day. Implement some of these steps, particularly the technology tips and you'll soon feel ready to work remotely without feeling remote!

▶ THE FUTURE OF THE TICKETING INDUSTRY

It's interesting to look back on our previous predictions of the future of the live entertainment industry. It's likely the industry will start to adjust and evolve following the pandemic, with more ticketing businesses open to remote working and flexibility.

As long as home working doesn't impact that all-important customer experience, it's likely businesses will start to introduce flexible options as part of its employee benefits package.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON REMOTE WORKING?

We'd love to find out. Head over to our LinkedIn page and tell us your views!