

Working from home – It’s great or is it?

Are you like me and almost 70% of Australian small business owners, who share in the delight of working for themselves, being their own boss and working from home?

Are you also like me in that it took a year of interruptions, frustrations and poor results to get the ‘working from home’ balance going properly?

Having come from a busy workplace I was used to having people around me to discuss problems, share the load and keep me motivated but then I began working from home and had to come to terms with the glaring fact that all of those support networks were gone.

I quickly came face to face with the home based business owners’ two largest enemies – distractions and loneliness and whilst I’m over them now, I thought these few words may help you avoid going through some of the growing pains I had to face.

Reducing Distractions when working from home!

In my experience, when working from home, distractions typically come from two sources:

- They are self created (doing chores, socialising or goofing off instead of working) or
- From family and friends who drop in for a coffee or chat with the expectation that because I’m home it means I’m NOT actually working.

One of the simplest ways I found to reduce the impact of these distractions was to create physical separation between my living and work-spaces.

I converted a spare room into an office and set it up so it was clearly an office/work space with computers, printers, a proper desk and visitor chairs.

Next I installed a separate phone line for the business so work calls came to the work phone and private calls came to the home line – I also stopped answering the home phone whilst working and giving friends my business number.

It did take a little while but eventually, I trained everyone to respect that when I’m in my office I’m at work and when I’m out of my office, I’m available.

Reducing the loneliness of working from home

Another issue both I, and many of clients working from home, had to face is loneliness from the lack of connection with others during the work day.

Sadly, as much as I like her, my dog is no substitute for human contact!

Whilst it took a while to sort out, I now have a simple three pronged strategy for creating a workable balance between time on my own and time with others:

- First – I make a point of conducting my appointments at my client's premises or at a neutral café
- Second – I joined a couple of local business networking groups so I can share ideas with likeminded others
- Third – I engage and work with a business coach to keep me on track with my business direction and to keep me accountable for results.

Getting support from a coach/mentor

I'm often surprised at how many business owners I speak to have difficulty understanding why I would be using a coach (particularly as this is my profession) but I ask – how can you work without one?

If you think about every sports team, professional athlete, or top business performer they all use a coach because they know:

- The coach is outside of "the day to day game" - the coach is independent, objective
- Can see the bigger picture more easily
- Is able to provide impartial advice on ways to improve based on their knowledge and expertise

Other benefits I've found from working with a coach include:

- How they keep me accountable to my promises
- On track with my planned direction
- Provide an appropriate and understanding sounding board to discuss new ideas or initiatives

You can gain access to an experienced Business Mentor via our parent company - [The Small Business Mentoring Service](#). We have over 130 experienced Business Mentors.

The Mentors come from a wide variety of backgrounds and are available to provide you with the objective feedback and guidance you need for as little as [\\$100 per session!](#)

If you are working from home, engaging an experienced Business Mentor can be a great investment in your future!

Summary

It's nice to look back and confidently say "It's great working from home" and to be able to see how three simple steps – clearing distractions, getting out of the house to remove loneliness and engaging a coach – helped me turn frustration, and bad advice from my dog, into a thriving home based business with the freedom and lifestyle I originally desired!

Anthony M Turner
Small Business Mentor/Coach