WORK FROM HOME

A guide to help you stay connected, organized and productive while working from home or remotely anywhere!

Learn how to build a
"TRULY DIGITAL BUSINESS"

WORK FROM HOME

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The information written in this ebook is based purely on our experiences.
Authors of this book do not hold any liability in case of inefficient output or results.

All the websites, tools and platforms mentioned in this ebook have been mentioned because
we have tried and tested them and we use them to run our day-to-day operations at Codesign Labs.
We use various versions and different plans for these tools based on our requirements.

The sole purpose is to share our learnings, insights and experience and
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We will really really appreciate that :)**

For any queries write to us on 91@codesignlabs.com

Are you an Entrepreneur or a Business Owner?

Who is looking to learn how to build and operate remote teams?

Who is looking for solutions to make business scalable using technology?

Who is looking to optimize business operations and processes?

**If you've answered "YES" to any of these questions,
then this e-book is for you!**

FOREWORD

"Work From Home" might be new to some companies, but for us, it's a core aspect of our business!

When we started Codesign Labs, our team, clients and freelancers were placed not only in different cities of India but also in different time zones of the world. Stumbling upon problems, figuring our ways through various challenges, experimenting and learning on the go, we found our common thread to smoothen all our functions.

We now use the mix of right tools and techniques essential for running a 100% remote organization that enables us to work from anywhere. In the past 4 years, we have successfully validated our model with a workforce of more than 150+ people and we continue to push our boundaries, quite literally.

In the first edition of this e-book, we are hereby sharing with you our first-hand experience of building a 100% digital business. This e-book will act as a practical guide for you to stay connected, organized and be productive while working from home or remotely anywhere in the world and will teach you how to build remote teams and run them successfully.

We welcome you to the world of remote working!

ABOUT CODESIGN LABS

For a world connected and operating over digital networks, it seemed rather unfair to us, that startups and businesses were still struggling to find the right talent for their design, content and technology needs. With the vision to solve this problem, we started Codesign Labs!

Codesign Labs is a Design Ops Management Platform

We have always been versatile in serving clients from various domains placed in multiple locations across the globe.
We serve mid to large size businesses for their branding, graphics, presentations, social media designs, printing and packing designing needs.
Not just this, we take care of content development for their blogs, newsletters, print and promotional material, brochures, reports etc.
and tech development for their website and e-commerce platforms.

Our handpicked team of designers, developers and content writers from different cities of India comes together virtually to make this happen.
A large ever-growing pool of battle-tested freelancers with myriad styles, approaches and perspectives help us cater to all kinds of brands.

Today we work with 100 plus clients and 150 plus contractual freelancers spread across 20 plus locations in a 100% remote environment.
Last year itself, we helped our clients **save 5280 hours in Project Management i.e. 220 days worth of time!**
Need we say more?

Learn more about us at www.codesignlabs.com
Check our portfolio on Behance
Don't forget to check our Impact Report 2019-20 on our website

What's in this e-book

Part 1
Best Practices

Part 2
Essential Tools

Part 3
Self Discipline & Planning

Make a shift now to functional model that is incredibly simple and absolutely possible.
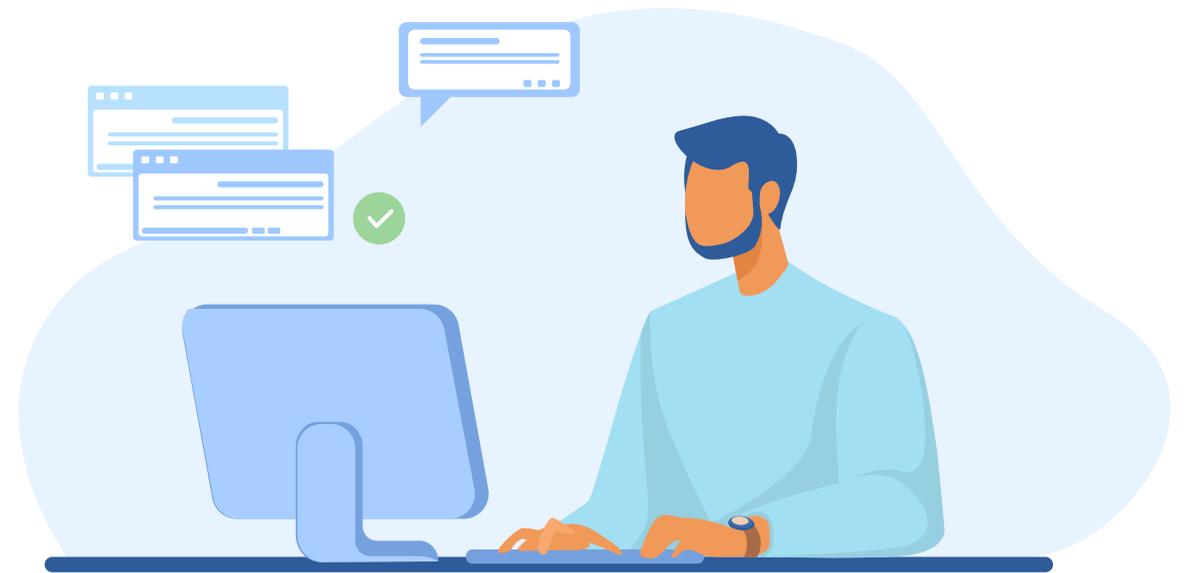
Part #1 Best Practice

'Work From Home' comes with challenges for employers as well as employees. This process can be eased out by making small changes to your routine, setting goals, and using the necessary tools.

Learn the best practices in this part and go remote step-by-step. It's simple!

Setup Team Communication & Time Overlap

1. Set Team Working Hours

Our team works 100% remotely. Whether it's our full time employees or our freelancers; everyone is working from different parts of the country. Thus it's essential for us to work together during common hours to achieve the maximum.

Set up a common login and logout time for everyone just like it happens in your physical offices.

Ask your team members to drop in a message as soon as they login. Start the day with catch-up calls right in the morning to get an insight on what your team members will be working on and what they will be achieving today. You could do these sprints twice or thrice a day.

Before they log out, make them submit the report on tasks accomplished and tasks still pending.

To make common login and logout time a habit, all you need is a little discipline.

2. Department Review

We are a design ops management platform but we have our departments in place for human resources, administration, finance, marketing, sales, project management and so on. Each department though functions on its own but still needs to be reviewed periodically.

It may not be possible for you to review their progress everyday but set up periodic reminders to review them and communicate beforehand to these department heads.

All you need is to set up a recurring event in the team calendar defining the review slot of different departments every week or fortnight.

To make the review process seamless, you can create a review format with standard questions that the team needs to fill in before the review.

Say goodbye to the conference room review meetings!

3. Communicate and Understand

The biggest drawback of working from home is that communicating with each other becomes a problem especially when we have been used to communicating with each other across the desks. And that's a problem.

While you start building the work from home processes; **lay a special thrust on effective and open communication and encourage your team to do the same.** While doing so, make sure it's not just a one-sided communication.

Be it about taking interim breaks or a task they are struggling with or task they did not understand, encourage them to reach out to you for each and everything. This will give them the confidence to be honest with you thereby increasing their motivation and productivity.

Transparent Communication and Empathy is the key here!

Setup Goals along with Tracking Matrix

1. Monthly, Quarterly, Yearly Goals

Setting up goals are important. And we all know why!

Goal setting is an exercise which a lot of us consider to be something which is meant only for big corporations or business whereas its important for any organization irrespective of its size.

Whether you are a team of 2, 10, or 100 people, it's important to ensure that each person knows the goals they are working towards, especially in a remote working environment.

Start with setting up monthly goals for each team and its team members and then further break them into weekly and daily goals. This will help them stay on track and align them with company's vision and mission.

When you know where you're going, you enjoy the journey!

2. Setup KRA and KPI

Not everyone will be as motivated as you are and when you're working remotely it's difficult to keep a tap on individual performances.

The best way to be less worried about your employees' performances is to **define their KRAs - Key Responsibility Areas and KPIs - Key Performance Index.**

In addition to broad goals and individual tasks, KRAs will define the area the person is responsible for. Also this will enable them to explore their role further without interfering with someone else's area, role or department.

On the other hand, KPIs not only act as a performance indicator but also a benchmark for your employees' growth which further leads to the growth of the organization.

Give your employees a chance to explore and grow by making the process tangible!

Setup System and Processes

Setup System and Processes

Good processes provide structure and direction for getting right things done at a right time.

Create a chain of commands for every task to be done so that its done in the right manner and you don't even have to spend a lot of time training people as to how it is done.

Standard processes to accomplish a task can ensure uniform delivery with minimal errors.
Hence, create standard processes for carrying out tasks under various departments. This helps to reduces the possibility of errors and makes the work processes efficient and seamless.

If possible, try and create SOPs to further streamline things.

It will be a time-consuming, but will be worth it at the end.

Building Great Remote Working Culture

1. Build Trust

While building remote teams, the biggest challenge at hand for us was getting people's trust especially because they were going to meet up and work with us online.

Start with trusting them and eventually get their trust by acknowledging their work whenever possible. Encourage them to share their thoughts without hesitation and make yourself reachable.

No one can comfort them better than you can, as a founder. Therefore, it's important for you to be within their reach.

Trust is the lifeline that drives the 'work from home' model.

2. Manage. Don't Micromanage

The worst habit that we often develop while working remotely is we start to micromanage. Because we are not sharing the same premise, doubts crop up if the team members are working properly or not or if they are handling the things the way they should be handling and so on.

Micromanagement is stressful not only for you but for your employees too. It makes them fearful and totally dependent on you for the smallest things. Give them space to explore and make mistakes, but be with them at each step so that can learn both about your methods and also about your expectations. Within a matter of time, we are sure, things will start functioning smoothly.

Stop micromanaging.

3. Work Culture

The biggest drawback of having remote teams is you can't eat together or party together and build a connect with each other. But ...

What if you can't celebrate birthdays together; you can still get cakes delivered to your team members' homes. What if you can't go out for team lunches or coffee together, you can have them delivered and then have them together over the screen.

We send gifts and flowers to our employees on their birthday and also distribute gifts on every new year. We also recognize "Freelancer of the Month" and reward them just to give them a sense of belonging to the community.

Use special occasions like Diwali or New Years to send out small gifts to them. These small gestures of cake/ lunch delivery or gifts on small occasions means a lot to them and brings a sense of belonging.

Thanks to technology, you don't have to be physically present to say that "YOU CARE"
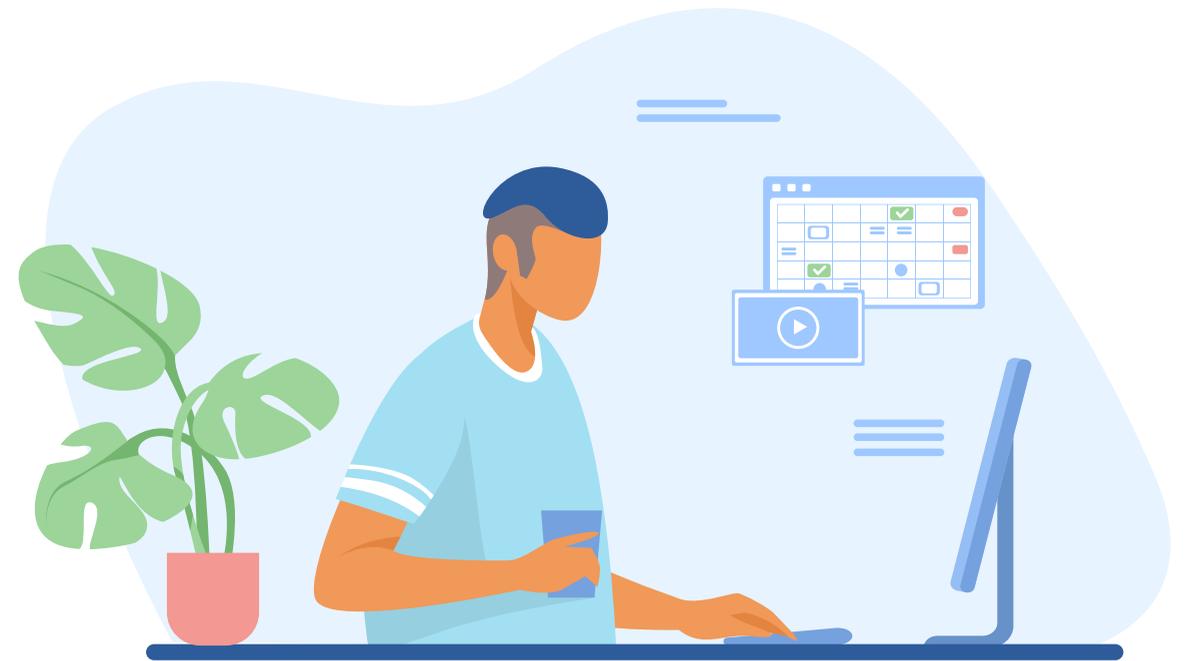
Part #2 Essential Tools

One may lose direction while working with 100% remote teams. Here's where right tools come into play. Right tools make sure that everyone is on the same page and does not let anyone's physical absence come in your way.

Here are some tools we've found handy as a rapidly growing team that will make your remote working easy and efficient!

Communication Tools

Flock

For instant communication and file sharing, get your team on Flock. Chat whenever you want to, just like you would reach out to each other in person in your office.

With features like an inbuilt directory, search, to-do list and notes Flock comes in handy for smoothly running your remote operations.

Do you still feel that your social connect is missing?

Other Communication Tools

Slack (Most popular)

Lark Suite

Project Management Tools

Asana

When working remotely, you will be needing task management tool used to structure your projects, align tasks, manage deadlines and organize work. For this our go-to platform is Asana.

Asana is a web and mobile application designed to help teams organize, track, and manage their work.

Forget creating multiple tasks lists and missing deadlines!

Other Project Management Tools

Trello

Jira (Mainly for tech development/tech teams)

Video Conferencing Tools

Whereby

For F2F meetings, connect instantly in just a click on Whereby.
Create a chatroom and use one link only to e-meet each other in seconds.

With easy screen sharing, no downloads or registration for guests and desktop and mobile access, Whereby should be your go-to tool for video meetings!

Another free tool, another problem solved!

Other Video Conferencing Tools

Skype (Old and popular)
Zoom (More comprehensive)

File Management Tools

Google Drive

For file collaboration, nothing beats Google Drive. As most of the organizations Gmail or Gsuite as their base email service which have integrated features like Google Docs, Google Sheets and Google Slides. This makes Google Drive the go-to solution.

With quick and easy integration all your team members can access files from anywhere.

Sometimes going back to the basics is what makes all the difference!

Other File Management Tools

DropBox

InVision (Mainly used by design teams)

Team Meeting & Appointment Scheduling Tools

Google Calendar

Whether it's scheduling a meeting with your team or meeting a client, Google Calendar allows you to keep track of the upcoming meetings, tasks, events and keeps you ready in advance.

This robust schedule service linked with your Gmail or Gsuite will help you optimize your work-life balance and will make sure you never get late for a meeting.

On-time meetings lead to great impressions. Isn't it?

## Other Appointment Scheduling Tools

Calendly

Setmore

Part #3
Self Discipline &
Planning

The comfort of your home can be an obstacle while working professionally. Self-discipline can align your work schedule and your priorities thereby keeping you motivated.

Following are a list of things you can do while switching from being an office goer to a remotely working team member.
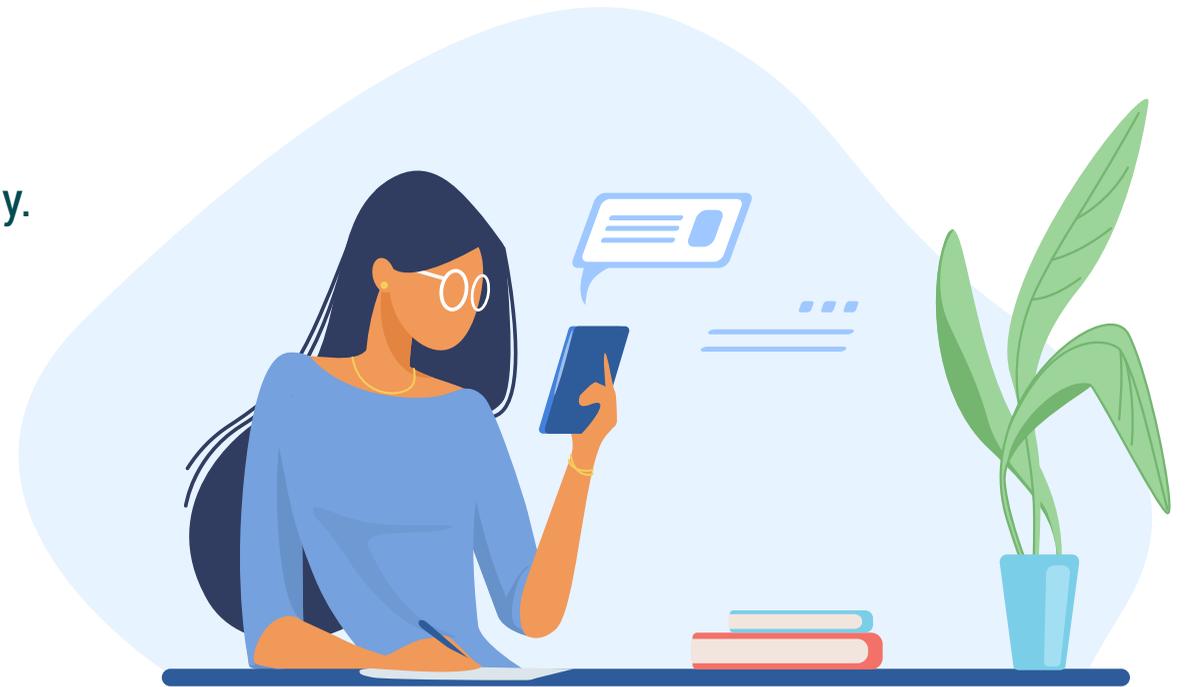
1. Get up and Get Ready

Rule number one of Working From Home is "Never work in your pyjamas". **Get up and dress up like you are going to the office**. This helps dust off the laziness and helps you to feel energetic and confident. Work from home, should not feel like work from home.

2. Setup up a Work Space

Working from your bed or your couch is the worst place while working from home. **A well-organized desk and a well-lit workspace will not only help you boost productivity but will also help you create a mental distinction between your home-life and work-life.**

Keep your desk clean and well equipped with stationery and other essentials so that you don't have to get up again and again.

At the end of the day, nothing will replace a comfortable chair, so make sure you sit upright!

Your workspace should be welcoming and should motivate you to push yourself.

3. Minimize Distraction

Randomly buzzing phone, email notifications and social media updates will definitely take away your focus. The key is to put your phone on a DND, keep it out of your reach, close all email and social media windows, especially when you are working on something which needs a lot of attention. Also when you work from home you are just a room away from your family and they might reach out to you many times in a day. Schedule time separately for work time and family time or household work so that you are able to focus on one thing at a time, guilt-free.
Keep aside time for family.

4. Take a Break

Sometimes the biggest challenge that people face while working from home is that they forget to take breaks. Try and work in sprints than doing a marathon, so that you don't burn out yourself and can be productive and efficient in the long run.

Take short breaks in between. Go Take a walk. May be get up and have a cup of tea or coffee!

Strike a conversation with your teammate if they are free (digitally) Watercooler channels are a great way of doing the same and yes, stay hydrated and do get some fresh air!

5. Organize Your Work and Plan In Advance

When you work from home, sometimes everything becomes important and you lose track of what's a priority and what's not. Organizing and planning things in advance can help you to finish the day's task list while keeping a tap on key focus areas and you will end your day with a sense of accomplishment.

You can do this planning either one day prior or at the start of the day.

Work From Home was always our **HERO**

In the beginning of 2020, who knew terms like Covid-19, Social Distancing, Quarantine and Work from Home would be phrases we would hear on a day-to-day basis. Safe to say, this screen keeps enough distance to deliver microscopic insights into what's happening around. Amidst the chaos that we are surrounded by, we know that the Coronavirus outbreak has shut down the market's hopes like never before. And most of the businesses have been forced to adopt the work from home model.

But does work from home really limit our business goals and boundaries?
Keeping the engine running is everyone's concern at the moment and juggling between clients, employees and finances might just need an efficient tweak in your business and operational model. So, slam dunk those doubts in your head and get set to adapt a functional model that is incredibly simple and absolutely possible!

With a 100% remote team of freelancers and full-time employees, our model justifies the strong foundation of Codesign Labs now more than ever.
It would be unfair to say that we haven't been affected by this pandemic, but fair to say that it has definitely not shaken our roots even in this unforeseen phase of adversity.

Over the last 1 week, we have seen a surge in social media posts wherein people have been asking for "Advise on how to build effective work from home processes". We are already publishing articles and making videos on the same to educate the community and this ebook was a part of a similar initiative.

If you still have doubts and need more in-depth advise, drop us your query by clicking on the button given below and we will schedule a call with you to help you with smooth migration to WORK FROM HOME or setting up REMOTE WORKING TEAM!

CLICK HERE
TO SEND US AN ENQUIRY

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