



Green Chemistry & Commerce Council

MEMBER UPDATE

Tips for Remote Work from the GC3 Team

As this week has unfolded, and the GC3 team has been connecting with our members, we suddenly realized that what we do every day – work remotely – is something very new for many of you.

While GC3 is headquartered in Massachusetts, we currently have people working in Washington, Vermont, Rhode Island, the District of Columbia, Colorado, Germany, Virginia and California. This year, Joel Tickner was working in Europe until just 10 days ago. Almost all of our work together is done across state, country and continental boundaries. We connect regularly among ourselves and with our members, wherever they are. We bring our members together for substantive dialogue, to collaborate on developing work product and run most of our projects virtually. It's in our DNA.

We've figured out the hard way what works...and what doesn't! We look forward to connecting in coming weeks on all of our projects, just as we always do, but in the meantime, we'd like to share some ideas in hopes of making your transition to working from home go a little more easily. These are uncertain days but sharing what works can help us all navigate through.

Set and Maintain a Schedule

Plan out when you'll wake up, eat breakfast, start work, take breaks, etc. This will add some normalcy to an abnormal situation and ensure both your work time and non-work time are protected from each other. The schedule will likely need to shift some from day-to-day – especially if you have kids home from school—and that's fine. Just try to enter each day with a sense of what's going to happen when.

And then share your schedule (verbally or written) with your family. Highlight when you will be on a conference call, or focused on writing, and truly need to be left alone. Also note the times you are working but are available for some interaction.

Enjoy the Peace

If you're at all a morning person, and the waking hours of your fellow household members make this possible, try waking up earlier than normal and make use of those quiet, wee hours of the morning. Wake up, make some coffee, and then read the news, read & draft emails, or refine your plan for the day. Then, as the rest of the world, and perhaps your household, wakes up, take that shower, and enter into the day's regular schedule.

Set a Dedicated Workspace

This may not be possible for all, but it doesn't have to be fancy. And it doesn't need to be a separate room. A table in the corner of a quieter room will do. Wherever you can find it, a consistent space will add to the helpful routine of each day, and subtly help to set those work/home boundaries.

Sequence Family & Work Time Strategically

Do you have an important, not-to-be interrupted conference call during the day, and younger kids at home? If so, consider scheduling a block of quality time with the kids just prior to the meeting. This will allow you to get them fed, or exercised, and then redirected to a new activity as your work call starts. This (hopefully!) minimize distractions during the upcoming meeting. This can be a good idea for pets, too. Give the dog some attention & exercise before the meeting may make for a more peaceful work hour to follow.

Take Advantage of Your Extra Time

With no daily commute, you've got some more time to make use of. Use it to keep the rest of your home life a bit more manageable and easier. Get the laundry going or do a little prep work for dinner. Give the dog an extra walk. Using this time to help make your home-self less harried will help your work-self have a more focused and productive day.

Take Breaks and Get Outside

If you're blessed with long swaths of work time, it can be tempting to hunker down for hours on end, determined to make this home-office thing as productive as possible. Avoid that temptation. Your regular workday at the office is likely sprinkled with moments away from your desk, interaction with others, and walking outside. Make sure your home-office schedule maintains these breaks. Your body needs movement, your brain needs breaks, and your soul needs stimulus beyond what's at your desk or on your computer.

At a minimum, walk away from your workspace to refill your coffee, or water a plant. Head outside for a 10-15 minute walk a couple times each day. Close your computer for 20-30 minutes at lunch and step outside. If you have mindfulness or exercise routines that are still possible given the current restrictions, make sure they remain a part of your schedule.

Take Time to Connect

Often, the biggest change in switching to working at home is the loss of easy conversation with colleagues – whether you in fact have a water cooler or not. As these days unfold, take the time to reach out and check on your teammates – you can phone, email, video conference, Snapchat, FaceTime, whatever. But taking a few minutes to check in on those who work with you, even if you can't connect immediately, helps us all stay connected as a community, working through these challenging days.

Keep safe and stay healthy!

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