

Remote Work — Kawartha Small Business Podcast

Oct 1 Written By Brian Rump

Brian and Matt discuss all things about working remotely. We prefer you listen where you get your podcasts, but if you prefer to read the transcript, we use a pretty cool artificial intelligence tool to produce it with only some minor (and often comical) errors.

As always, if you have an idea for a show, want to be on it, or just want to talk to us about your business, let's set it up.

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Kawartha Small Business Podcast

Remote Work Transcript

Brian Rump 0:01

Why do small businesses resist remote work? This is the core of the Small Business podcast and we've got business conversations for the corporate commute. I'm Brian Rump from u group.

Matt Geraghty 0:12

And I'm Matt Garrity from Matty g digital. Something that's been on our minds of late is businesses reluctance to going all in on remote work. Why do you think that is? Brian?

Brian Rump 0:23

Oh, that's a really good question. I think it's multi causal and sounds like a really good theme for a podcast we can dive into it a little bit. So maybe what are some of your first thoughts on that reluctance?

Matt Geraghty 0:39

I've never really understood businesses reluctance to going all in especially from a service perspective. Retail is very different. I understand with retail like management. C level execs, do you call that from a retail perspective? I understand they don't need to be in an office. Particularly employees, they, of course, they need to be from a service perspective, you're selling online marketing for an instance. There's, in my opinion, no reason why you would ever have to have an office place. I think there's a couple different notes that I have here. Like, I think it may be just like a historical thing.

Brian Rump 1:22

And I hate but like the same, right? We don't like change.

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Absolutely. And I hate the buzzword being disruptive. And I feel like maybe that's something that people don't want to be in this case, but like they don't want to be disrupting the norm of having an office. I think communication now is the probably what business owners are most scared of, or at least what they will, on the outside tell people is the biggest concern for them. In my experiences like, however, communication is probably the same when working remote as it is physically or even better than working.

Brian Rump 2:05

Yeah, I think communication is one of those. I love it. Whenever you dig into any problem anywhere, the solutions, almost always we need better communication. And then nobody really does that. And there's some people and businesses that are excellent communicators, and they're going to be successful no matter what. So I think part of the communication is being able to improve and get better at it, to be able to use the tools that are available, and not being afraid to fail with some of those tools. You know, there's inner office, there's messaging apps, there's zoom, type calls, there's ways to connect everybody that's a little bit different. And you have to spend some time with your own business to find out which one have knowledge is going to work the best for the people who are there. And understand that that might take a little while to figure out

Matt Geraghty 3:09

for sure. So like video calls on now everyone in the world knows what zoom is. There's GoToMeeting there Skype. Even with like online messaging platforms, you can talk to people on what's the Google one Google Hangouts, Google, they have video conferencing to slack, which people know of. I speak to clients through text all the time. I speak to some clients using Instagram messenger, Facebook, messenger, WhatsApp, they're all available. Yeah, I think people and again, this goes back to probably the business owners and management. There's an expectation that if they're in the office, they can reach you at any given time. But that's not the case. Like just because they come to your desk or come to your office doesn't mean that you're going to be there.

Brian Rump 3:56

I hate to be gross but the right time, right. Yeah. You could be gone. Or you could be in the middle of something else. And it's not productive. You know, when you sort of are managing a company by some of that instinct, or reactivity, you know, you could spend all day and not get anything done,

Matt Geraghty 4:17

right? Absolutely. Yeah. Like you're in meetings, you're having lunch, you're going to the bathroom, like you're in the middle of something. I honestly might argue with you that communication is better when people are working remote because there's almost a sense that because there's a bit of a fear around it. And there is an understanding that a lot of people don't like it, that you need to be more accessible to people. So you are a bit more aware of like, Okay, if someone calls me I need to be available. I can't

be messing off. I need to be in front of my computer, all these types of things. And what you just said there too, I think is interesting because especially when working office, it's so disruptive. There's constantly people coming up to you and chatting and conversation and even more. They're like, Oh, this is a good time, you're probably gonna say yes. And you're gonna disrupt what yeah,

Brian Rump 5:04

that's, most people are like that. Like they're, you're going to be nice to your colleague and give them you know, that moment of your time.

Matt Geraghty 5:14

Absolutely. And I have found, I can recall one person maybe two, in the last year and a half that has been, I probably downright furious that they had to, like schedule a time to call me because otherwise he couldn't get ahold of me. And like, I wasn't ignoring the person. But it was just a matter of like, I was doing other things. I was on calls, meetings, working on work. But generally speaking, speaking, people are like, way less disruptive than they ever have been in my career. Since I've been working from home professionally all the time. They're very much like they'll text me or even like, leave me a message where it's like, Can we set up a call? Can we set up a meeting? So like, they're not really even expecting a out of the blue conversation. So I honestly think that communications better working remote.

Brian Rump 6:04

Yeah, and I think too, like just the benefits of working remotely are those being able to schedule in those calls. I know I personally, one of my things I hate the most is playing telephone tag with somebody and you're back and forth I getting voicemails, and it's so unproductive. Or if you're catch somebody, I remember when I used to work for the bank calling somebody to get some information. And they were like on a roof doing a roofing job. And like, that's not the right time to talk to that person because they don't have the information that you need. Whereas if we had just scheduled a call, even at say six in the morning, before they leave, you know, you could efficiently get exactly what you need from them. So, you know, I think, you know, this theme of that sameness and people not want it you know, we've always had an office we've always done This way, you know, there's that ability to change the ability to adapt to scheduling, you know, your tasks and your calls, you know, advanced that way you can be better prepared for those calls. You know, they can be more productive. So really, you know, being able to adapt and get used to that style of work, or more.

Matt Geraghty 7:25

I also wonder, too, are they concerned about like camaraderie, the culture relationships amongst people?

Brian Rump 7:34

I think that's a that's a big one. And I know I've listened to and read some different research on remote offices and what's better. Some of the latest research I've heard is that a mix is better in that task base work is better done at home where you can be more productive. But there is that you know, depending on your business, if you need that camaraderie Creativity together, you know some of that interaction and I think

people fear losing that. But there's ways to do it. The one organization called profit first professionals, which is linked to Mike Mickalowicz who's a business author. They have a team of professionals that work around the world. And they all work remotely. But what they do is every quarter, they fly everyone to their headquarters. And their headquarters is a tiny Office of like three people who have to sort of work together and that was only because the author's wife was like, you have to not work from our house. So they, but they fly everyone in they get hotel rooms for them. And they do like a couple days sort of intensive stuff, and they do some like real good team building. So that organization, you know, yet it might cost similar because they're putting extra costs, but they bring everyone together. They feel like they're a team. They have a, you know, in depth, you know, couple days together every quarter, but then they do all their tasks remotely so they still feel like a team. You know, it's easier to call people and have video calls if you've met them in person to bed and you know, created some stories together. So there's ways to adapt

around that. Right? You could have a

everyone works remotely if they're reasonably local. Maybe you get together for dinner once a month. together and you go out and you know, have some fun and build that

camaraderie.

Matt Geraghty 9:39

How do you think people feel like they're on a team?

Brian Rump 9:44

Feel like, like on a remote team?

Matt Geraghty 9:47

Yeah, just in general. Like, how do people period just feel like they're on a team like they have to be, like, physically, like, feel like I'm on a team. I see my I would say comrades, but T Once a month or quarterly like why if that is not maybe part of the pitcher, would they not feel like a team?

Brian Rump 10:09

Yeah, I think that's a good, really good question and that feeling of team because I think there's sort of two things to point out here. One is sometimes you could try to force feeling like a team too much. You know, I have no I've worked at places before where they try to have like mandatory, like weekend outings with like your family. And it's like, you know, that's great. You want to have that vibe, but that doesn't work for everyone.

Matt Geraghty 10:38

That's still challenging.

Brian Rump 10:40

People who are introverts might want to go hide outside of work and they don't want to necessarily see you. I think having I mean, a lot of conversations come back to

having a strong vision and mission for a company. And if you're have that clear vision that clear purpose, people will feel like they're on a team if they're working towards that. So if they're helping deliver on, you know, they're really good service for their clients. And they're, they feel like they're in a well organized, good spot. You know, you don't have to necessarily see people all the time to feel like you're on a team with them.

Matt Geraghty 11:23

Yeah, for sure. And similar to what you're saying, I guess it's just semantics here, but I think it's about values. So whether it's the vision and the mission of the strategy, or like you're working together with like minded people with share similar values. Maybe that makes us sound like a cult. But

Brian Rump 11:42

basically, but it's, you know, I think, you know, having that core values or core ideology is key to any business like people know what they're showing up to do every day. What their mission is the lie, you know, where they fit as well. Like, what's your role in delivering this and having that clarity. And I think, you know, to a lot of business owners, especially maybe smaller businesses who are getting into it, if you don't have that clarity, and you're sending someone to work from home, you might be afraid because you have no idea what they're doing all day. But if you have clarity of, Hey, this is your mission, this is how you support maybe someone else on the team. Like, then you're going to be focused and probably more productive from home in a shorter time period.

Matt Geraghty 12:36

Just thinking about how we often look back, and we laugh at how things used to be done. And I wonder if that's something that 50 years from now or even less, they're gonna be looking back on this conversation and being like, what do you mean people didn't always work remotely? Like, do you watch Mad Men? Or have you seen a madman?

Brian Rump 12:57

I've seen that and yeah,

Matt Geraghty 12:58

I guess a good example is like how much they've been Back then just casually throughout the day, we look back and like, wow, that's bonkers. And now, like, I feel like maybe this is something that we're going through now or we're having a conversation about, like, why are people not working remote and then 50 years from now, like, there's not gonna be any physical offices and they're like, man, they sure were weird back in 2020

Brian Rump 13:18

Oh, it's like, you know, the Mad Men era or I would I worked for bank, the bank. The old older employees who like banking had completely changed like they some enjoyed before computers, or they had kind of a computer but they would like in all the transactions like sort of at night time that managers used to drink at work all the

time. Yeah. Like they had I remember actually the one branch still had like, old old liquor bottles like under the sink like at the back from when that used to be a thing they would like change smoke, like, you know, even smoking in the workplace. was just a thing. Yeah, everybody did. Right? So it's, it is fascinating, like just thinking about that getting up and going to the office, you know, even the idea of like nine to five or, you know, eight to four or whatever. It's like, Why do I have to be at the office at that time? Right? It's arbitrary.

Matt Geraghty 14:24

And that's probably one of the things that I think is fair for a concern with business owners is making sure that people are available during specific hours. Yeah, I understand that. Yes, one of the maybe advantages of working remote is like you can maybe set your own hours, but generally speaking, like you do need to have that communication from whether it's nine to five, Monday through Friday, etc. So, like, I've been a part of a few companies, of course, that have had work from home policies, and they're kind of laughing You don't want to get too much into that. But the biggest thing that I thought was actually fair was telling people like, yeah, you need to be available during these times, because we operate from Monday through Friday, nine to five, most the service based businesses that we work with, for instance, are the same way need to be available to those people.

Brian Rump 15:19

Yeah. And I think that's really fair as well and setting up those expectations, depending on your business. So, you know, if you're a b2b and you're dealing with other businesses, you know, there's probably key times during the week where you need to be, you know, available for them to get information, do the things you're doing for them. You know, if you're a business to consumer, you know, you might have a more of a shift work set up or you might have different employees, you know, being on, you know, Manning their communications at different times. So that if it's important to you to get back to customers right away, you know, you have that quick turn around. So it's having clear sort of processes and systems and those, you know, expectations of availability. And then maybe you're flexible on, you know, when they're doing the work. Yeah, I know some people who, well, I'm a morning person, I like to sort of roll out of bed, and I could start working. But I also work with people who are like, nighthawks. And they do their best work at like, you know, 8pm to 2am. Sure, which for me is like, a non starter. But maybe they, you know, hang out during the mornings, and they'll answer emails and they'll be available, but they're not getting down and grinding out the work until late at night. So you just have to be clear about those. Those things.

Matt Geraghty 16:47

Yeah, for sure. I was thinking back to what we're talking about with camaraderie and culture and relationships and stuff. The reason why I always think it's kind of silly, where you can't build that Without being a person, like not to make it too personal, but like I bet I talked to my wife just as much via text as I do face to face. And that's not because like, we're not together anything is, like we text throughout the day. Like she'll do some stuff at night, I'll do some stuff at night or wherever, like, we're not always talking face to face, and your relationship is still the same. It's just as good. Like, I text my parents a heck of a lot more than I call them for instances. You know, like, I have friends that I've known since grade school and some that I haven't seen in months, or even like close to a year and we chat all the time, like text, face, Facebook,

messenger, WhatsApp, that's what I was trying to say. And like we've not skipped a beat. I don't think that has anything to do with like, Yeah, not establishing a culture or like with my wife. It is a thing about values. Like we have shared values and like that stays the same and strong whether we're in person talking or via text or something. So anyways, that's the part like, I don't That's just a personal reason why I've never really understood that whole part of the working from home.

Brian Rump 18:06

Interesting. What are some so if you were a small business considering doing more work remotely or work from home, what are maybe some tips to help people get started and make the best of it?

Matt Geraghty 18:18

Yeah, definitely as a employee or a freelancer some tips on working remotely. This Hi. I hate having to say in my opinion, like of course, because that's what I'm saying. show it's all pink. Let's stop.

Brian Rump 18:38

Right? This is not considered specific advice.

Matt Geraghty 18:41

Yeah, it's almost like you need to have a buzzer anytime I say in my opinion to like make it seem like yes, this is just my opinion. I know I've heard a lot of people say the opposite of what I'm about to say though. Starting with like having a routine. I have found that I did not skip a beat. When I went from working in an office to working from home. I got up did my normal thing that I normally do in the morning. I get eat breakfast, I would shower, I would get ready and I'd get dressed like I was leaving the house. Even if I wasn't. I would still always wear jeans. Like, I'm dressing like I'm going out but I'm not like wearing a suit type thing, but I always wear jeans. At least for the first long time I was I would always wear a shirt with a collar. The last couple months I've let that slip quite a bit and wearing more t shirts but still always wearing pants. They're not brand for Yeah, never wearing I never ever ever wear track pants. That's a big thing that people always like I love working from home my sweat so like it's nothing that's unprofessional because like I don't really care about that, but it makes me feel when I'm dressed like I'm ready to work. My mind is now in a different spot. Yeah. Doing what you need to do to feel

Brian Rump 20:02

that focus, right? Yeah,

Matt Geraghty 20:03

absolutely. Feeling focused is a big one. I'm also a huge supporter of having a separate work area. And I hear this a lot from people were like, I don't have anywhere to work. So like I work in the family room and my kids are always bugging me and I'm like, well, your kids are always bugging you because you're working in the family room. Like there has to be somewhere in your home that you can get away and designate to a specific area for your work like there has to be a desk or a table somewhere or like go into your bedroom and close the door. I started working in my basement which

was separate in like a big cavernous open area with a desk which was fine. We the basement was even open to the main floor. So like one of the first things I did before I started my business work from home was I put a door of the basement, even to make that separation. I since throughout that time built an office which is within the house, which is no different. I've got a door. It's locked. Yes, my wife and children will still try to get in the office door even when it's locked, but that's a different story leave there's ability to keep them at a

Brian Rump 21:15

reasonable barrier.

Matt Geraghty 21:16

Yes. I hear all the time people talking about like, they're on the couch working. That's the one I never ever, ever could imagine. And I don't know if it's because like, I don't want to cry, like make it sound like a wiener but like I had back issues a couple years ago. So like, I couldn't sit on a couch very comfortably, let alone to sit on a couch and work on the computer and like work on your trackpad and all this. I think it just goes back to like, feeling professional and like getting that state of focus. Like I sit on the couch at the end of the day. When everyone's asleep, and I'm ready to one wine like I don't need that mindset while I'm trying to work and then I'm sitting on the couch with Okay, maybe the TV's on or something and then you're distracted by that and you're not even as efficient Because you don't have your mouse there unless you have like some different setup so I'm just a big believer in those two things like have a routine. Act like you've been there before type thing like act like you're leaving the house, get dressed, get showered, all that kind of stuff and then having a separate work area is a huge one, in my opinion, like you can prevent those excuses like the people that are interrupting you during the day that you hear all the time. Like I hate working on being interrupted, you can prevent that. If you don't think you can, I will challenge you on it every single time.

Brian Rump 22:33

Yeah, I think that's good. I think the tip I would add in there as well is and I think this is a big gap with a lot of small business owners is making sure you have the right tools. So the right it tools, the right you know, there's a lot of free ones. There's some that you can pay a little bit for that make things easier, but I think a lot of people I've seen tried to do it and they don't have you know, they have like an old laptop. That's gathering dust in like the corner and they're like, Oh, you know, use this and work remotely and that it doesn't work properly. You know, you don't need to spend a billion dollars to get all the fanciest things. But when you have stuff that works and is comfortable, it's gonna make that barrier a lot less, as well.

Matt Geraghty 23:20

100% I honestly feel like the only work from home remote work policy any company should have should be based around how much that employee is allowed to spend for their office expenses or how much they're going to be given. Yeah, every workplace, like work from home policy is a complete waste of time to me, it should just be like, Hey, we trust you. We hired you act like an adult and be available and get back to us on time and be professional and adhere to customer service principles and our values. That's the only policy that should be in place. Not the big long constitutional doctrines, it should be, hey, we operate nine to five, be available during those times,

get your work done. Whenever you brought up a great point, like, people need to get ahold of you through nine to five be available for that. If you want to sit at the pool all day, just wait and answer emails, and then that night you can work and do the actual physical work that needs to be done. For instance, go ahead and do that. But the only other thing, like part of a policy should be like this is how much you can spend an expense. So like we don't want you going out there and buying like thousands of dollars worth of Mac books and all this kind of stuff. Like here's how much you can spend, maybe recommendations on like equipment that you're going to need. That's the only thing that I really believe should be part of some sort of like work remote policy.

Brian Rump 24:48

Yeah, no, I think that's good, good insight and good to have it clear and you know, specific and sort of links it back to them. Sort of values and purpose, right? If people aren't doing their work, that sometimes that's just proof that you don't need them. So I always say, you know, if you don't want to do work that could be arranged. You know, if you have the right people, and they believe in the mission of your business, and you're doing well, they're gonna do great. Absolutely, just as well remotely. And you know, there's a solution for any problem that you have that comes up because of that. So,

Matt Geraghty 25:31

absolutely. And maybe we are just at a time where maybe very quickly to tie it back to the one of the things I said earlier, like maybe very quickly, we're going to be laughing about this conversation in a year or two. And it's going to be almost exclusively working remote or from home. And the conversation will be will there be literally any value in working from a physical office, maybe in just a year from now?

Brian Rump 25:54

Yeah, it'll be interesting to follow it and see what happens. Any more thoughts? To share.

Matt Geraghty 26:00

No, I'm good. I highly recommend that people when they're working from home, try to follow some sort of routine. Find that routine for yourself. Like maybe it is the complete opposite of what I just said. Maybe you love rolling out of bed into your track pants and sitting on the couch and working in that works for you. But find something that is, like I said works for you. And you don't have any excuses for it being a disruption to your work, maybe.

Brian Rump 26:28

Yeah, awesome. That sounds great. All right. So that sounds like episode to me. Thank you everyone for listening. If you'd like to talk more about this with us, reach out on social media and we'll set it up. Thank you very much.

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I also wonder, too, are they concerned about like camaraderie, the culture relationships amongst people?

Brian Rump 7:34

I think that's a that's a big one. And I know I've listened to and read some different research on remote offices and what's better. Some of the latest research I've heard is that a mix is better in that task base work is better done at home where you can be more productive. But there is that you know, depending on your business, if you need that camaraderie Creativity together, you know some of that interaction and I think people fear losing that. But there's ways to do it. The one organization called profit first professionals, which is linked to Mike Mickalowicz who's a business author. They have a team of professionals that work around the world. And they all work remotely. But what they do is every quarter, they fly everyone to their headquarters. And their headquarters is a tiny Office of like three people who have to sort of work together and that was only because the author's wife was like, you have to not work from our house. So they, but they fly everyone in they get hotel rooms for them. And they do like a couple days sort of intensive stuff, and they do some like real good team building. So that organization, you know, yet it might cost similar because they're putting extra costs, but they bring everyone together. They feel like they're a team. They have a, you know, in depth, you know, couple days together every quarter, but then they do all their tasks remotely so they still feel like a team. You know, it's easier to call people and have video calls if you've met them in person to bed and you know, created some stories together. So there's ways to adapt

around that. Right? You could have a

everyone works remotely if they're reasonably local. Maybe you get together for dinner once a month. together and you go out and you know, have some fun and build that

camaraderie.

Matt Geraghty 9:39

How do you think people feel like they're on a team?

Brian Rump 9:44

Feel like, like on a remote team?

Matt Geraghty 9:47

Yeah, just in general. Like, how do people period just feel like they're on a team like they have to be, like, physically, like, feel like I'm on a team. I see my I would say comrades, but T Once a month or quarterly like why if that is not maybe part of the pitcher, would they not feel like a team?

Brian Rump 10:09

Yeah, I think that's a good, really good question and that feeling of team because I think there's sort of two things to point out here. One is sometimes you could try to force feeling like a team too much. You know, I have no I've worked at places before where they try to have like mandatory, like weekend outings with like your family. And it's like, you know, that's great. You want to have that vibe, but that doesn't work for everyone.

Matt Geraghty 10:38

That's still challenging.

Brian Rump 10:40

People who are introverts might want to go hide outside of work and they don't want to necessarily see you. I think having I mean, a lot of conversations come back to having a strong vision and mission for a company. And if you're have that clear vision that clear purpose, people will feel like they're on a team if they're working towards that. So if they're helping deliver on, you know, they're really good service for their clients. And they're, they feel like they're in a well organized, good spot. You know, you don't have to necessarily see people all the time to feel like you're on a team with them.

Matt Geraghty 11:23

Yeah, for sure. And similar to what you're saying, I guess it's just semantics here, but I think it's about values. So whether it's the vision and the mission of the strategy, or like you're working together with like minded people with share similar values. Maybe that makes us sound like a cult. But

Brian Rump 11:42

basically, but it's, you know, I think, you know, having that core values or core ideology is key to any business like people know what they're showing up to do every day. What their mission is the lie, you know, where they fit as well. Like, what's your role in delivering this and having that clarity. And I think, you know, to a lot of business owners, especially maybe smaller businesses who are getting into it, if you don't have that clarity, and you're sending someone to work from home, you might be afraid because you have no idea what they're doing all day. But if you have clarity of, Hey, this is your mission, this is how you support maybe someone else on the team. Like, then you're going to be focused and probably more productive from home in a shorter time period.

Matt Geraghty 12:36

Just thinking about how we often look back, and we laugh at how things used to be done. And I wonder if that's something that 50 years from now or even less, they're gonna be looking back on this conversation and being like, what do you mean people didn't always work remotely? Like, do you watch Mad Men? Or have you seen a madman?

Brian Rump 12:57

I've seen that and yeah,

Matt Geraghty 12:58

I guess a good example is like how much they've been Back then just casually throughout the day, we look back and like, wow, that's bonkers. And now, like, I feel like maybe this is something that we're going through now or we're having a conversation about, like, why are people not working remote and then 50 years from now, like, there's not gonna be any physical offices and they're like, man, they sure were weird back in 2020

Brian Rump 13:18

Oh, it's like, you know, the Mad Men era or I would I worked for bank, the bank. The old older employees who like banking had completely changed like they some enjoyed before computers, or they had kind of a computer but they would like in all the transactions like sort of at night time that managers used to drink at work all the time. Yeah. Like they had I remember actually the one branch still had like, old old liquor bottles like under the sink like at the back from when that used to be a thing they would like change smoke, like, you know, even smoking in the workplace. was just a thing. Yeah, everybody did. Right? So it's, it is fascinating, like just thinking about that getting up and going to the office, you know, even the idea of like nine to five or, you know, eight to four or whatever. It's like, Why do I have to be at the office at that time? Right? It's arbitrary.

Matt Geraghty 14:24

And that's probably one of the things that I think is fair for a concern with business owners is making sure that people are available during specific hours. Yeah, I understand that. Yes, one of the maybe advantages of working remote is like you can maybe set your own hours, but generally speaking, like you do need to have that communication from whether it's nine to five, Monday through Friday, etc. So, like, I've been a part of a few companies, of course, that have had work from home policies, and they're kind of laughing You don't want to get too much into that. But the biggest thing that I thought was actually fair was telling people like, yeah, you need to be available during these times, because we operate from Monday through Friday, nine to five, most the service based businesses that we work with, for instance, are the same way need to be available to those people.

Brian Rump 15:19

Yeah. And I think that's really fair as well and setting up those expectations, depending on your business. So, you know, if you're a b2b and you're dealing with other businesses, you know, there's probably key times during the week where you

need to be, you know, available for them to get information, do the things you're doing for them. You know, if you're a business to consumer, you know, you might have a more of a shift work set up or you might have different employees, you know, being on, you know, Manning their communications at different times. So that if it's important to you to get back to customers right away, you know, you have that quick turn around. So it's having clear sort of processes and systems and those, you know, expectations of availability. And then maybe you're flexible on, you know, when they're doing the work. Yeah, I know some people who, well, I'm a morning person, I like to sort of roll out of bed, and I could start working. But I also work with people who are like, nighthawks. And they do their best work at like, you know, 8pm to 2am. Sure, which for me is like, a non starter. But maybe they, you know, hang out during the mornings, and they'll answer emails and they'll be available, but they're not getting down and grinding out the work until late at night. So you just have to be clear about those. Those things.

Matt Geraghty 16:47

Yeah, for sure. I was thinking back to what we're talking about with camaraderie and culture and relationships and stuff. The reason why I always think it's kind of silly, where you can't build that Without being a person, like not to make it too personal, but like I bet I talked to my wife just as much via text as I do face to face. And that's not because like, we're not together anything is, like we text throughout the day. Like she'll do some stuff at night, I'll do some stuff at night or wherever, like, we're not always talking face to face, and your relationship is still the same. It's just as good. Like, I text my parents a heck of a lot more than I call them for instances. You know, like, I have friends that I've known since grade school and some that I haven't seen in months, or even like close to a year and we chat all the time, like text, face, Facebook, messenger, WhatsApp, that's what I was trying to say. And like we've not skipped a beat. I don't think that has anything to do with like, Yeah, not establishing a culture or like with my wife. It is a thing about values. Like we have shared values and like that stays the same and strong whether we're in person talking or via text or something. So anyways, that's the part like, I don't That's just a personal reason why I've never really understood that whole part of the working from home.

Brian Rump 18:06

Interesting. What are some so if you were a small business considering doing more work remotely or work from home, what are maybe some tips to help people get started and make the best of it?

Matt Geraghty 18:18

Yeah, definitely as a employee or a freelancer some tips on working remotely. This Hi. I hate having to say in my opinion, like of course, because that's what I'm saying. show it's all pink. Let's stop.

Brian Rump 18:38

Right? This is not considered specific advice.

Matt Geraghty 18:41

Yeah, it's almost like you need to have a buzzer anytime I say in my opinion to like make it seem like yes, this is just my opinion. I know I've heard a lot of people say the

opposite of what I'm about to say though. Starting with like having a routine. I have found that I did not skip a beat. When I went from working in an office to working from home. I got up did my normal thing that I normally do in the morning. I get eat breakfast, I would shower, I would get ready and I'd get dressed like I was leaving the house. Even if I wasn't. I would still always wear jeans. Like, I'm dressing like I'm going out but I'm not like wearing a suit type thing, but I always wear jeans. At least for the first long time I was I would always wear a shirt with a collar. The last couple months I've let that slip quite a bit and wearing more t shirts but still always wearing pants. They're not brand for Yeah, never wearing I never ever ever wear track pants. That's a big thing that people always like I love working from home my sweat so like it's nothing that's unprofessional because like I don't really care about that, but it makes me feel when I'm dressed like I'm ready to work. My mind is now in a different spot. Yeah. Doing what you need to do to feel

Brian Rump 20:02

that focus, right? Yeah,

Matt Geraghty 20:03

absolutely. Feeling focused is a big one. I'm also a huge supporter of having a separate work area. And I hear this a lot from people were like, I don't have anywhere to work. So like I work in the family room and my kids are always bugging me and I'm like, well, your kids are always bugging you because you're working in the family room. Like there has to be somewhere in your home that you can get away and designate to a specific area for your work like there has to be a desk or a table somewhere or like go into your bedroom and close the door. I started working in my basement which was separate in like a big cavernous open area with a desk which was fine. We the basement was even open to the main floor. So like one of the first things I did before I started my business work from home was I put a door of the basement, even to make that separation. I since throughout that time built an office which is within the house, which is no different. I've got a door. It's locked. Yes, my wife and children will still try to get in the office door even when it's locked, but that's a different story leave there's ability to keep them at a

Brian Rump 21:15

reasonable barrier.

Matt Geraghty 21:16

Yes. I hear all the time people talking about like, they're on the couch working. That's the one I never ever, ever could imagine. And I don't know if it's because like, I don't want to cry, like make it sound like a wiener but like I had back issues a couple years ago. So like, I couldn't sit on a couch very comfortably, let alone to sit on a couch and work on the computer and like work on your trackpad and all this. I think it just goes back to like, feeling professional and like getting that state of focus. Like I sit on the couch at the end of the day. When everyone's asleep, and I'm ready to one wine like I don't need that mindset while I'm trying to work and then I'm sitting on the couch with Okay, maybe the TV's on or something and then you're distracted by that and you're not even as efficient Because you don't have your mouse there unless you have like some different setup so I'm just a big believer in those two things like have a routine. Act like you've been there before type thing like act like you're leaving the house, get dressed, get showered, all that kind of stuff and then having a separate

work area is a huge one, in my opinion, like you can prevent those excuses like the people that are interrupting you during the day that you hear all the time. Like I hate working on being interrupted, you can prevent that. If you don't think you can, I will challenge you on it every single time.

Brian Rump 22:33

Yeah, I think that's good. I think the tip I would add in there as well is and I think this is a big gap with a lot of small business owners is making sure you have the right tools. So the right it tools, the right you know, there's a lot of free ones. There's some that you can pay a little bit for that make things easier, but I think a lot of people I've seen tried to do it and they don't have you know, they have like an old laptop. That's gathering dust in like the corner and they're like, Oh, you know, use this and work remotely and that it doesn't work properly. You know, you don't need to spend a billion dollars to get all the fanciest things. But when you have stuff that works and is comfortable, it's gonna make that barrier a lot less, as well.

Matt Geraghty 23:20

100% I honestly feel like the only work from home remote work policy any company should have should be based around how much that employee is allowed to spend for their office expenses or how much they're going to be given. Yeah, every workplace, like work from home policy is a complete waste of time to me, it should just be like, Hey, we trust you. We hired you act like an adult and be available and get back to us on time and be professional and adhere to customer service principles and our values. That's the only policy that should be in place. Not the big long constitutional doctrines, it should be, hey, we operate nine to five, be available during those times, get your work done. Whenever you brought up a great point, like, people need to get ahold of you through nine to five be available for that. If you want to sit at the pool all day, just wait and answer emails, and then that night you can work and do the actual physical work that needs to be done. For instance, go ahead and do that. But the only other thing, like part of a policy should be like this is how much you can spend an expense. So like we don't want you going out there and buying like thousands of dollars worth of Mac books and all this kind of stuff. Like here's how much you can spend, maybe recommendations on like equipment that you're going to need. That's the only thing that I really believe should be part of some sort of like work remote policy.

Brian Rump 24:48

Yeah, no, I think that's good, good insight and good to have it clear and you know, specific and sort of links it back to them. Sort of values and purpose, right? If people aren't doing their work, that sometimes that's just proof that you don't need them. So I always say, you know, if you don't want to do work that could be arranged. You know, if you have the right people, and they believe in the mission of your business, and you're doing well, they're gonna do great. Absolutely, just as well remotely. And you know, there's a solution for any problem that you have that comes up because of that. So,

Matt Geraghty 25:31

absolutely. And maybe we are just at a time where maybe very quickly to tie it back to the one of the things I said earlier, like maybe very quickly, we're going to be laughing about this conversation in a year or two. And it's going to be almost exclusively

working remote or from home. And the conversation will be will there be literally any value in working from a physical office, maybe in just a year from now?

Brian Rump 25:54

Yeah, it'll be interesting to follow it and see what happens. Any more thoughts? To share.

Matt Geraghty 26:00

No, I'm good. I highly recommend that people when they're working from home, try to follow some sort of routine. Find that routine for yourself. Like maybe it is the complete opposite of what I just said. Maybe you love rolling out of bed into your track pants and sitting on the couch and working in that works for you. But find something that is, like I said works for you. And you don't have any excuses for it being a disruption to your work, maybe.

Brian Rump 26:28

Yeah, awesome. That sounds great. All right. So that sounds like episode to me. Thank you everyone for listening. If you'd like to talk more about this with us, reach out on social media and we'll set it up. Thank you very much.