1. Remote Possibilities

Work is changing! There’s a shift, the ground is moving under our feet. Changing technology and business conditions are shaking paradigms about the distribution of work over time and geography. People work together for months - without ever meeting face to face. That makes work more exciting because you can put the work anywhere to get the best skills, the most efficient labor, etc. Geography was once a limitation. It’s not anymore.

It’s still a new and unfamiliar landscape for many people, and sometimes a little orientation is needed. That’s where the Remote and Mobile Worker’s Guide comes in. This is a book of resources and ideas to help you live, lead, and succeed in a remote and mobile world.

Everyday more is learned about the remote concept... and it becomes more grounded than ever. Whether you’re a newcomer to this world, or an “old pro” you’ll find something useful. But don’t stop here. This world is changing so fast that you’ll need to pursue information in lots of places. Use this as a starting point, and we’ll give you references, phone numbers to call, Websites, etc., to go from here.
Why Is This Happening?

Many people have had happy, productive careers without working remote. Why should now be any different? The answer is not a simple one; it must be approached systemically. The reasons are social, political, economic... and they are all converging at this point in time to make the remote environment not just possible, but necessary. Consider these categories of reasons:

**Customers:**
Customers are everywhere and anywhere. They want support that is geographically close. And if you don’t provide it, your competitors will...

**Society:**
Increasingly, workers expect business to accommodate their lifestyle. People want the flexibility of working from remote locations. Plus many workers with needed skills may not be willing to move for the company.

**Information:**
The nature of work itself has changed. Work revolves less around physical products and more around service and information. Such work does not require co-location.

**Politics:**
For example, in the U.S., some states already have legislation that requires a certain percentage of your workforce to carpool or telecommute to reduce pollution. Companies that don’t comply must pay fines.

**Technology:**
Unprecedented technological advances such as e-mail, video conferencing and faxes have made it easier than ever to work together when separated.

**Economics:**
The economic advantages to remote work are numerous. For example, companies can save substantial investments in office space, or in the expense of moving employees and their families.

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Unprecedented technological advances such as e-mail, video conferencing and faxes have made it easier than ever to work together when separated.
**What Is Remote?**

There's a lot of confusion over the term “remote.” If you work in the same office as your co-workers but spend a lot of time on the road, is that remote? Can the term remote be used to apply to someone who works the night shift? Let’s set the record straight on these and other issues.

### Remote Is Time And Place:

- Most people equate working remote with having a home office, or being connected only by a phone line or modem. But remote is really much broader than that. **Remote** is not only a separation of geography, but a separation of time as well.

### The Remote Lexicon:

Here are some terms that, though often used interchangeably when referring to remote, have very important distinctions:

- **Co-located** is a term meaning “in the same location.”

- **Mobile employees** are those who don’t work from any one particular location. They work at home, at customer locations, in hotels, on airplanes... Usually they are in transit.

- **Remote management** is the management of employees who are not at the manager’s location.

- **Telecommuting** is when work tasks are performed by employees working at home instead of a work location.

- **Teleworking** is the use of technology to change the location of work.

- **Virtual workplaces** are where work tasks occur by electronic means and not at any centralized location.

- **Telework centers** are commercial, non-territorial work spaces for mobile employees. (“Hotelling” is an example.)

- **Distributed work** is activity which is spread out over time and space.

- **Virtual teams** are composed of members who are physically separated, so face-to-face communication isn’t possible or is infrequent.

- **Groupware** is software designed to help remote or mobile employees work together on the same project.

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**Adapted from The Lotus Institute and The Institute for the Future**
What Do We Really Know About Mobility & Remote Work?

Actually, we know quite a lot – particularly about mobility. The subject has received a massive amount of study from management researchers over the past decade. Human Resource surveys have produced data from many companies that has been reported in the New York Times, Herald Tribune, Asia Today, Human Relations Today and many other sources. Here’s what the surveys revealed. Note that many of these statements are true for remote work as well.

**The Good News:**

- Between 70% and 90% [of respondents] report that their companies are better off because of mobility. This is true across all occupations, all geographies, all ages, both men and women and those with and without dependents.
- Mobility changes where work is done.
  - More time is spent at the customer location (up 3 to 6 hours/week)
  - More time is spent at home (up 5 to 7 hours/week)
  - Less time is spent at the office (down 6 to 12 hours/week)
- Changes are evolutionary, not revolutionary.
- Mobility increases productivity and job effectiveness.
  - About 90% of employees say so
  - Easier to concentrate, meet deadlines
  - Can work during “peak” hours, not just 8-5
  - Ability to mix and match venues for different kinds of work
  - Greater flexibility to close deals
  - Less wasted commute time
- There is less wasted social interaction.
- Mobility enhances morale.
  - Greater commitment to the company
  - Greater focus on the job, not “office politics”
  - Greater flexibility to balance work and personal/home life
- Mobility increases customer satisfaction.
  - More accessibility to customer (technology, etc.)
  - More time spent at customer location
- Mobility enhances employees’ ability to balance work and family life.
  - Flextime helps parents be more accessible to children
  - Flexiplace helps deal with unexpected family challenges (sick child, etc.)

**Some Areas Of Concern:**

- Mobility diminishes the camaraderie of the department. More than 50% said mobility had a negative influence in one study. Many bemoan the loss of informal contacts.
- Mobility requires a new style of communication.
  - Ad hoc “management by wandering around” is dead.
    - Many are not using adequately the tools that are at hand
    - Without disciplined communication, the employees struggle.
- Mobility blurs work and family boundaries.
  - Difficult to leave work
  - Some feel like they are working all the time (during holidays etc.)
  - Some are not fully optimizing the new mix of venues offered by mobility

From Effective Leadership in a Mobile Environment
This could be a variation on the old line, “When is an office not an office?” The answer used to be. “any time it’s not in a high rise, filled with other people and support resources, and the primary place you go to get work done.” Today people get work done in lots of places. In this fast moving, global (and mobile) society that we live in, we’re getting used to “conducting business” in a variety of settings, and moving easily from one to another many times during our work week.

This chapter will help you maximize your productivity no matter where your “office” happens to be at the moment. And, at any “moment”, it could be in:

- a hotel room
- a Tele or Productivity Center
- your home
- your car (or Hertz’s)
- an airport anywhere in the world

So, read on for things like “tips” for setting up an office in your home (or in a suitcase), as well as how to draw boundaries between work places and non work places (when both are everywhere these days) and more.
Equipping Your Home

To set up a home office is to enter the world of gadgets. Shopping for a simple desk lamp will present you with electronic options you never thought you'd need. So where should you spend your money? Here are some non-negotiables.

### Phone Lines:
- Get two (in addition to your home line). One line is for voice communications, the other is for data (fax machine, laptop computer, etc.). If you can only get one additional line, consider a line-sharing device. These permit connection to your phone, fax and computer from a single phone line and automatically route incoming and outgoing transmissions to and from the appropriate equipment.
- Cordless phones are worth the extra expense – you can continue talking and go to the door to sign for a package simultaneously. But beware - calls to or from cordless phones are not “secure” and voice communications can be picked up by others. Sensitive or confidential material could be jeopardized. Get a speaker phone – you’ll be glad during those long conference calls. Make sure it has a mute button to filter out sounds of crying babies, lawn mowers, barking dogs, etc. You’ll also appreciate a speaker phone if you are put on hold waiting for a response from one of those technical support call centers. You can go about your other business, keeping an ear cocked for a “live” person to pick up on your call.
- If you get a phone that has two lines, be sure you can turn off one of the bells, so your business calls don’t interrupt your personal time.

### Voice Mail/Answering Machines:
- You will need either voice mail or an answering machine. In some countries Voice Mail is a service you order through your local Telecom provider. One of its major advantages is that it can receive calls while you are on the phone with someone else. Also, some may perceive it as more “professional,” since it resembles office phone mail. The disadvantage is that you must dial a phone number to retrieve your messages - and you won’t even know whether you have a message until you pick up the handset. Voice mail has a monthly service fee.
- Answering machines are simpler. Most have a digital counter that tells you when you have a message - and how many. You can retrieve it simply by pressing the play button. The disadvantage is that callers cannot leave a message while you are using the phone, you will need to enable call waiting, which some may find annoying.

### Lighting:
- Get an adjustable desk lamp. The rule to remember is light the task - not the desk. Lamps with tiny halogen bulbs are generally more expensive, but produce a light that is brighter and more closely resembles natural sunlight. They are also lower wattage and create less heat - worth considering in a small office.

### Printing:
- Printing is a very important capability. If you’re in a main office or site, you can use one of the systems printers there. But if you’re remote, you’ll need to consider a printer at your remote location. The good news is that there are a number of all-in-one printers available today. One of the best examples is the Hewlett-Packard OfficeJet series. It’s a printer, plain paper FAX, copier and scanner all in one, and at a reasonable cost. The copy quality is good, and the print quality is excellent. One word of caution: ALWAYS have spare ink cartridges available. Both black and color if used. When these machines run out of ink (with no warning, by the way), they DROP! And that could be at the end of a critical print job or right in the middle, even in the middle of a page!

**You’ll Need:**

- A desk lamp
- A speaker phone
- An adjustable desk lamp
- An all-in-one printer

*Note: All opinions and experiences are shared by readers who have used these products and services.*
Setting Up Your Office Space

There is no one way to set up a home office.Ultimately, yours must reflect your personality and complement your working preferences. Still, a lot can be learned from the many people who now work from home offices. Here are some tips offered by actual home office workers to consider as you set up your home work space.

Separate Yourself:
• Have an isolated work area from your family area to do your work. Put the home office upstairs or in the basement to minimize household distractions and, away from daily household traffic.

• If possible, set your office up in a part of the house where you can leave and shut the door at the end of the day.

• Sources of natural light should not come from directly in front of you or behind you. This can cause glare on the screen, or fatigue to your eyes.

• Instead, configure your work-space so that the natural light source is to your side. Likewise, overhead lighting should be to your side - if you use it at all.

Get Comfortable:
• When you set up your office, stress ergonomics and aesthetics as well as organization. Since you’re at home, you have fewer constraints – and a comfortable, inviting environment will make you more productive.

• If you can, set up your office in a place with lots of light and windows you can open to get fresh air.

• Keep your office cleaned up and organized so that you will want to go there every morning.

Wolves of Experience

“I couldn’t stand the computer cables, extension cords and other wires that had become an ugly, tangled mess hanging off of my desk. I went to the hardware store and bought some inexpensive pieces of PVC pipe to run them through. It is much more manageable and looks a lot better.”

– Dick R. Charlotte
If you can, build shelves under tables and desks. You can fit a lot of shelves into a closet as well. Go to one of those organizing stores that sells storage solutions for additional ideas.

- Use the 80/20 rule for supplies - stock only the 20% of office items (paper clips, folders, printer paper, etc.) that you use 80% of the time.

**The IRS Home Office Deduction: Can You Claim It?**

If you’re in the U.S. there is a lot of confusion around the IRS’s home office deduction - partly because the IRS is constantly modifying who is eligible for this deduction. For more specific information, call the IRS Tax Information line at 1-800-829-1040 or 1-800-829-3676. (TDD: 1-800-829-4059) In other countries, consult your local tax office.

**Vokes of Experience**

“Furnishing your home office doesn’t have to be elaborate or expensive. Be creative... build some simple bookshelves, claim that unused table in the corner of the basement as a worktop, buy some simple hanging folder racks at a discount department store.”

“That’s what I did... and it works great!”

Cindy C. Toronto
Getting Comfortable

You may have seen diagrams like the ones below, full of measurements, angles and other details that perhaps seem excessive. Talk to anyone who has suffered any kind of repetitive stress disorder (pain and nerve damage caused by any kind of repetitive action such as typing), and they’ll tell you to take this kind of information very seriously.

Working in a home office, you may spend more time behind your computer than ever. Worse, you may not have access to the ergonomically-designed office furniture you used in the past. To avoid discomfort or even more serious health risks, consider the following.

- Invest in a good chair. Get one with an adjustable height, lower back support, swivel base and wheels. Arm rests can also increase your comfort.

- If you spend a lot of time on the phone, consider a headset. Make sure your headset has an amplifier, a comfortable pad for your ear, and a quick release feature. Spend a little extra... it is well worth it in the long run.

- When seated with your hands at the keyboard, there should be a 90° bend in your elbow, a 90° angle at your waist and another 90° at your knees. There should be no bend in your wrists as you type. A keyboard wrist pad may be helpful.

- Your feet should rest comfortably flat on the floor. If they don’t, get an adjustable footrest (available at most office supply stores). Don’t let your feet “dangle.” This puts pressure on your back and upper legs.

- Place the monitor directly in front of you, 18 to 24 inches away. You should not have to turn your head left or right, or up or down to look at your monitor. Ideally, the top edge of the screen should be on a parallel plane with your eye level.
Setting Boundaries

Boundaries go both ways. You need to guard against allowing your personal life to creep in while you are at your desk working. (And it will: the plumber needs you to show him where the leak is, your spouse asks if you can transfer the linens from the washer to the dryer, the dog wants to go for a walk...) Likewise, your work world can spill over into your evenings and weekends more easily than ever.

**Communicate Boundaries:**

- Consider a “family conference.” Gather family members to discuss the change to a home office. Give everyone a chance to voice concerns and help create some ground rules. Lay out some ground rules for yourself – when you will work, when you won’t, how much separation you will keep between your two roles.

- Make sure you draw the line with other people in the house. They need to understand that you are “at work” during specific times, and should use the same criteria for interrupting you at work at home as they did when you were “away.”

- If other family members are at home while you are there, make it clear that “you are not there” when you are working.

- If you have children, be firm that you are at work and they cannot wander in and out of your office as they wish.

**Have Separate Worlds:**

- Create as much separation between home and work as possible. Have a work space and telephone line dedicated to your home office. Consider getting a telephone with a ringer that can be turned off during the evening. (That way, you can still receive voice mail without being disturbed when you are with family.)

- Have a work space, and only do work in that location. If other family members are at home, they must understand you are at work and not home to visit.

- Take real breaks and meal times. Don’t eat in your office.

- Don’t kid yourself into thinking you can take care of children and work from a home office in a full-time capacity. You can’t.

**Resist Workaholism:**

- On average, quit working the same time you usually did when you were “back at the office.”

- Don’t sit with your laptop in front of the TV or in bed. Just because you can doesn’t mean you should!

**Voices of Experience**

“Over the last few years I’ve worked from home more and more. At first, I was often interrupted by my family. I found that I had to be very clear with family members as to when I’m ‘at work’.”

Vivian M.
New Zealand

IBM Management Development ©1998
Staying Motivated

Everyone who has considered working from home has asked themselves this question: will I be able to keep myself motivated? It's an important question, and one that will require some honest self-reflection. The truth is, it can be a struggle even for self-disciplined people. Here are the personal thoughts of some home-based workers about the issue of motivation - and their tips for keeping it strong.

“Since no one is around to keep me accountable, my wife has agreed to perform that role. A couple of times a day, she'll stick her head in and say, ‘What are you doing?’ or ‘Are you getting a lot of good work done today?’ I found that a little accountability is all I need to keep me going.”

-Hank P. Alpharetta

“I stopped feeling guilty about taking breaks. I now plan them. I will time a 15 minute break with the alarm on my microwave, and during that time do something fun. I’ll read a magazine, call a friend, etc. If I plan my breaks, I’m more focused when I get back, and I spend less time than I used to back at the office when I would stop to chat with an associate! I also exercise over the lunch hour two to three times a week. It’s a great way for me to get reenergized for the afternoon.”

-Brian H. London

“It's important to have a startup routine. I get up, shower and get dressed and have breakfast – just as if I were going to the office. I make it a point to be sitting at my desk by 8:00. Psychologically, going through the routine triggers a shift in mindset where I leave “home” and enter “work.” Likewise, I have a shutdown routine, where I file papers, turn off the computer and leave the office, shutting the door behind me. This allows me to return “home.”

-Gail H. Vista

“I removed all of the arcade games from my computer’s hard drive. They were just too tempting.”

-Tae D. Seoul
And No Matter Where You Are...

If you’re one of the many “road warriors” who find themselves working from cars, airports, airplanes and hotels, there are lots of little things that are needed to set up an office on the road. Anything you need to help you get your work done, or feel like you’re at home qualifies. Those international airline travel kits are great for packing those PC gadgets that need to be taken everywhere. Some of the things a road weary team member should carry are:

• A family photo, your favorite pet or just a small photo album so you can take your family with you.
• A cell phone to stay connected.
• A lock for your laptop.
• Travel pack - includes scissors, tape, post-its, post-it flags, glue stick.
• Modem saver - not all hotel phones are analog, a modem saver will protect you from burning up your modem - particularly critical during foreign travel.
• International Travel converter pack - for AC adapters - These are a must if you need to stay connected when you travel! An added bonus - you can plug your American hair dryer into foreign hotel wall outlets!
• Auto/air power converter - to plug your laptop into your airline seat or your car lighter.
• Extra phone cable and adapter - to extend the length of your modem cable if the plug is out of reach.
• Miniature screw drivers (just in case).
• A listing of phone numbers to bail you out of tough situations - your principle company support numbers, technical support numbers for the hardware and software you are packing, travel and credit card agency numbers, numbers for doctors and others you may have to consult for a medical emergency.
• TCP/IP Dialer ID and Password.
• Your mail server name and destination server address.
• A diskette with a copy of your e-mail address book and internet bookmark files.
• Blank diskettes
• An all in one organizer like the IBM WorkPad - it’s a calendar, an address book, a to do list, a calculator and a memo pad that fits in the palm of your hand. This is a great all purpose tool that can reduce what you carry. Periodically, you can “synchronize” selected organizer files with your laptop so you won’t have to open up the latter if you are in a hurry to access the information.
• Sync cable to connect your organizer to your laptop.
And Something You Won’t Have to Carry...

If you don’t want to carry the extra weight of a portable printer, most hotels have a business center where you can print from a diskette, make photo copies or receive faxes. The large office supply stores frequently offer these services also. If you’ve forgotten your diskettes one way to get a quick printout is to send a fax to your hotel from your laptop. The copy won’t always be great, but usually will get you by. There are also local copy shops around most corners these days for those last minute emergencies.
More Sources

List below your own favorite sources of information for equipment, software and travel.

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III. Keeping In Touch

Do you need to get in touch with your salesman, who is making sales calls somewhere in Bangkok? Page him. Do you need your lawyer in New York to review a contract before the customer walks in your door half an hour from now? Fax it. Do you need the collaborative opinions of engineers scattered all over the globe for a new product you are developing? Send them all an e-mail and ask them.

These are the privileges of technology – the hero of remote work. The communication revolution lets you reach anyone, anywhere, anytime... whether you are in a conference room in Okinawa or lounging on a beach in St. Croix.

But this brave new world can be an unfamiliar one. There's more to using the technology than pressing the “on” switch. Instead, approach it as one learning a new language. The rules are all different, the nuances are difficult to pick up. And, as in language, there's no substitute for lots and lots of practice.
Using The Right Technology

Marshall McLuhan said, “The medium is the message.” In other words, how you say it is as important as what you say. Some are susceptible to the “Aspirin Doctor Syndrome”: applying the same solution to every problem or issue. Your communications can be greatly improved by considering the nature of what you have to say, and then matching it with an appropriate technology.

“The Media Selector”

Once you are familiar with all the technology available, you will soon be able to intuitively select the one that is most appropriate for your communication. If you’ve never considered the issues involved in choosing, use “The Media Selector” tool, shown below.

Consider the nature of your communication. (“Criteria,” along the top axis.) For example, is it urgent? Is it sensitive or private? Is it complicated?

Let’s say you’re finalizing a draft of a not-yet-public partnership and you want to share it with your boss. Documentation is important (your boss must have a copy), so e-mail, faxing or overnight mail are options.

You decide that the contract is too long for your boss to labor through it on e-mail. Likewise, because of its sensitivity, you don’t want it sitting on the office fax machine for every passer-by to see. Thus, you decide to overnight the contract.

This isn’t rocket science. You intuitively make decisions like these all the time. Still, the chart below may aid you in deliberately considering the pros and cons of each of the technologies listed in the far left column. (Note that the Media Selector assumes that you are not co-located with the person with whom you want to communicate. For example, it assumes that a face-to-face meeting cannot be arranged immediately.)
Using Notes E-Mail

E-mail is wonderful. It’s fast. It’s cheap. It’s as easy as typing in a message and pressing “send.” However, it is not a panacea for all remote communication. Here are some issues to consider to get the most from using e-mail.

Set A Context:

Communication is more than words. Even a simple spoken exchange between two people is complex in non-verbals, inflection and context. All of these are lost when sending e-mail. Thus, whenever you send an e-mail, provide your audience with adequate context:

• Make your subject lines explicit. Help your reader decide if they need to open your note right away (it’s urgent), or if they can wait.

• Say it in the first paragraph. Tell the reader what you want right away, don’t make them wade through pages of notes to find out there is nothing required, or to try and figure out what you need from them.

• When you’re replying to an e-mail note, use reply and respond with your answers or comments inside the body of the note. Some e-mail managers permit the use of colors or fonts on your response, so that the person receiving the message can pick out your comments from theirs.

• Sending long notes? Some e-mail managers will let you create sections to package selected topics - a great way to give your audience a preview of what you have to say and avoid intimidating them with a long document. You can put a box around your section headers and change colors or fonts. Have fun and make your documents more interesting to read in the process!

• Don’t send large attachments unless they’re absolutely necessary. If those presentations are stored in a shared data base like groupware, link to them instead. Storing it one place where the whole team can get to it is a more effective way of sharing information and has less impact on everyone’s individual hard drives.

• Clean out your mail folders regularly. It’s easy to have the same document stored multiple times because every time you get a response with a reply attached we tend to file it again. Wait till the conversation is over and store the last one with all the attachments or go into your folders regularly and delete the duplicate notes. If your e-mail manager permits it sort documents by size (click the down arrow by size) so you can go after the biggest documents first. If you find large attachments, pm in a folder on your hard drive and delete them out of your mail. You only need one copy so why not get them out of the way?

• Use the search bar to locate documents you know you’ve seen but can’t find. Most e-mail managers have search features which will search the subject lines and the document contents (but not attachments). It’s a great way to find things quickly.

• If you travel a lot, create a printing folder where you can move documents until you get to a location where you can print. This is a great way to get notes out of your way until you’re able to deal with them. Another advantage to this approach - when you are ready to print, you can highlight the entire folder contents, initiate the printing process and go about your other business while the printer chugs merrily away, printing your stack of e-mail.

Volunteers of Experience

“We were frustrated that people weren’t responding to our e-mail. We asked around, and discovered that our coworkers were getting such an enormous amount of e-mail, they were unable to sort through it all. So we created a system for prioritizing in the subject line. For example, we would mark a message as being “HOT, FYI,” etc. We communicated the new standard, and got everyone to buy into using it. Now it’s easier to sort through our e-mail appropriately.”

-Bob M. & Dick B.
Minneapolis, Charlotte
**Watch That Tone:**

- Update your stationary header to reflect your mood or personality if your e-mail manager has this option.
- Choose an appropriate priority term if you are adding this information to the subject line of your e-mail. While “Urgent” gets everyone’s attention, don’t forget to use “Normal” and “FYI” when they make sense. Always saying “Urgent” will make people accuse you of crying wolf.
- Assume your personality won’t translate. Again, without the presence of non-verbals, it’s very easy for people to misinterpret your humor, sarcasm, etc. – especially people who have never met you. As much as possible, relay the facts and avoid writing that could be misinterpreted.

**Know E-mail’s Limitations:**

- It isn’t that fast. Many people think of e-mail as being very fast. However, even though it can be sent quickly, it’s possible that the receiver will not read it for a full 24 hours or longer. And you may not check your e-mail for a reply for an additional 24 hours. This

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**E-Mail**

E-mail is a good medium if:
- Documentation is needed.
- Information must be mass-distributed.
- Cost is an issue.

E-mail is a poor choice if:
- Immediacy is required.
- You must have human connection.
- Security is of utmost importance. (Do not assume e-mail is absolutely private.)

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**Attack of the “Smilies”**

Dry humor, sarcasm, frustration, irony... none of them translate very well to e-mail without the non-verbals and context you would receive in face-to-face communication. Thus, misunderstandings can happen easily.

That’s where smilies come in. Made popular through communication over the internet, smilies are typographical equivalents of facial expressions. To “read” a smilie, simply tilt your head so your left ear is almost touching your left shoulder. You’ll then recognize the symbol :-D as a sideways smiley face.

Thus, an e-mail sentence such as “My team members have lost their minds. :-)” can be recognized as a joke, and not taken at face value.

There are literally hundreds of these clever symbols. Here are a few of the most helpful. Just for fun, see if you can identify the characters on the very bottom row; answers are provided at the bottom and on the right.

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**Just For Fun:** Identify these smilies. Answers below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>:-)</td>
<td>Smiley face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>;-)</td>
<td>Wink – light sarcasm or inside joke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:-</td>
<td>Devilish grin – heavy sarcasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:-D</td>
<td>Goofy guy wearing glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:-</td>
<td>Laughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:-/</td>
<td>Perplexed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:-</td>
<td>Indifferent, disapproving, negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:-P</td>
<td>“Nyah, nyah, nyah...!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:-&lt;</td>
<td>Snooty guy (with upturned nose)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:-@</td>
<td>Screaming “aaaaaagh!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:-O</td>
<td>Shouting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Know E-mail’s Limitations:**

- It isn’t that fast. Many people think of e-mail as being very fast. However, even though it can be sent quickly, it’s possible that the receiver will not read it for a full 24 hours or longer. And you may not check your e-mail for a reply for an additional 24 hours. This
Voice Mail

It’s easy to take shots at voice mail. (“To review your message, press one... to speak with a human being, press two...”) But look beyond the sometimes clumsy interface and you’ll appreciate the technology that was one of the first to liberate the quick sharing and retrieval of information over time and space. Still, even after years of familiarity, there is a lot we can learn to leverage the greatest use from this medium.

Before The Message:

- Know what you’re going to say. Make some quick notes of points you want to cover. Long, rambling and redundant messages are irritating. If possible, limit the message to just one topic. Try to keep it short – usually within 3 minutes.

The Beginning Of The Message:

- State your name. Don’t assume the caller will recognize your voice. (It may sound distorted.)

- State what you’re about to say. For example: “This might be a long message, Joe. I have three quick things: One, Constance reviewed your notes and has an answer; two, I have a concern about the production estimates; and three, I need to update you on my schedule for this week. Okay? First, regarding Constance...” Provide a brief outline, launch into an orderly sharing of information.

- Speak clearly. Speak in an even pace. Enunciate your words. Don’t use the speaker phone.

The Rest Of The Message:

- Don’t keep repeating yourself. This is an annoying habit. Say the information once – if the recipient doesn’t get it, he can choose to replay it. The only exception is your phone number, which you should repeat. (Some people say you should say it once at the beginning and at the end.)

- Specifically detail “next steps.” How do you want the recipient to respond? Call you back ASAP? Just think about what you said, and you’ll call Thursday? Take any other kind of action?

Retrieving Your Messages:

- Return messages quickly. The purpose of voice mail is not to avoid people! Treat your messages like your “in basket.” Check them when you return from lunch and as often as possible when you are away from the office (or at least as often as your answering message indicates you will check).

At the very least, respond to say “got your message – I won’t be ready to address it until Monday. I’ll call you back.”

adapted from PhonetiCs, Dallas TX © 1996
Answering Calls:
• Leave a detailed message to answer incoming calls. Limit the length to 15 seconds. Include the following information:
  - Whose voice mail this is
  - Where you are (on the other line, in San Diego for a conference, on vacation, etc.)
  - How long you will be unavailable, how often you will check messages and how often you will return messages
  - If applicable, other ways of contacting you (pager number, etc.)
  - An alternate contact or how to speak to a real person. (“Dial 1 to reach my assistant Eddie, or call my associate Deanie in Lexington at…”)

Home Answering Machines:
• Don’t leave any sensitive or personal messages on home machines. Some assume that a home answering machine is as secure as voice mail. In reality, you never know who is going to pick up the message. Instead, consider leaving a message on a home machine that says, “Susan, I just left a detailed message on your office machine that I think you should hear. Could you check your office messages tonight? Thanks.”

Voice Mail
Voice mail is a good medium if:
• The recipient isn’t in the office.
• The message is urgent.
• The message is short, and has a single-subject.

Voice mail is a poor choice if:
• The info must be referenced often, or requires documentation.
• It is technical in nature (numbers, formulas, etc.) or very detailed.
• The message is sensitive or extremely confidential.

Pet Peeves:
• In addition answering machines can’t “answer” if the line is busy. So, when you’re deciding which to use in your home office, consider how much time you’ll be on the phone. If it’s a lot, a voice mail service will avoid your callers getting that annoying busy signal.

“...I don’t remember numbers even of close associates, because I have them programmed into my phone’s speed dial. So I wish even people I know would leave their phone number on messages.”

-Jan S., Singapore

“...One thing that bugs the heck out of me is when the caller leaves a phone number that is given at warp speed and mumbled, and I have to listen to it several times to get it.”

-John W., Alexandria

“...I hate it when people go on and on and on. Just say what you need to say and hang up!”

-Susan G., Laguna Niguel

“...I hate it when people don’t update their phone message. Like “Hi, this is Joe, and I’ll be out all day Tuesday...” when today is Friday. When this happens, I leave a polite reminder as part of my message. They always seem to appreciate it.”

-Chris W., London
Phone Conferencing

No matter how good technology becomes, there's still no substitute for engaging in direct conversation with other human beings. Conference calls do that! For small conferences, you can use your phone. For larger ones, check out your locally available tele-conferencing services.

**Setting It Up:**
- Make it clear who will set up and initiate the call.
- Set a time for the conversation to begin and be on time.
- Across time zones share who has to call during non work hours.
- Determine the agenda as well as the length of the call in advance.

**Keeping It Moving:**
- Use the mute button. If you are at a home office, for example, the other party does not need to hear your dog barking at squirrels or the buzzer from the dryer.
- If you can use a speakerphone, do it. If your listener does not have a speakerphone or headset (see the Voices of Experience on page 11), be aware that long calls can be fatiguing. (By the way, never hold the phone between your shoulder and ear while you do something else with your hands. This creates tension that your neck and spine were not designed to handle.)
- Know where the microphone is located on your speakerphone, and speak directly into it. Some people mistakenly talk into the speaker. The microphone is usually located far from the speaker.

**For Group Conferencing:**
- Agree who will set it up. Typically, someone will need to arrange the group call with the phone company. That person will be responsible for then contacting each of the participants in advance to confirm the exact date and time of the call, how to join into the conference, any passwords, etc.
- Begin the call on time. If you are late, you will hold up everyone else – and waste money.
- Make sure everyone has necessary papers, information, etc. Before launching into the discussion, double check. “Everyone should have a fax copy of the marketing materials I sent last Tuesday. Also, did everyone read the e-mail that I forwarded from our client group? Good. Let’s begin.”
- Use groupware to schedule the call. Some groupware packages (such as LotusNotes) have specialized tools for setting up meetings or other conferencing activities. The originator sets the time and date on his own calendar, selects the attendees, gives out the call-in number and password if used and sends the invitation out via e-mail. Recipients of this e-mail have the option of transferring the information to their own calendars or refusing it. If the sender has response is required, he will receive e-mail notification from prospective attendees of their intentions.

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**Voices of Experience**

Don’t wait for the conference call to begin the communication! A lot of the work could be accomplished in advance, e-mail or fax to plan your call, e.g., discuss topics, share information, agenda, time frames. Calls can be shorter and can be used for clarifications and decisions!

-Norman A.
U.K.
Voices of Experience

“I had a manager who would spend the first 30 minutes of a conference call sharing detailed information. Finally, he’d say, “Does anyone have comments?” No one would speak up. After 30 minutes, they had fallen into a passive, non-collaborative mode. I learned to set a tone for interaction right away, to get people plugged in. Even as I’m sharing information, I make sure people have lots of chances to be engaged and share. It makes a big difference.”

—Art E.
Ontario

- Be hyper-sensitive to process. Have the group move together explicitly, and “check in” constantly. (e.g., “Did everyone understand Mark’s point? Does anyone have any other suggestions? Is it okay to move on to the next topic now?”)

Speak clearly and one at a time. When interruptions occur, check in again. (“I’m sorry Suki. You go first. But I have a point to share when you’re done.”)

- Keep people engaged. It’s easy for people to “check out” during a conference call without anyone noticing. To make sure everyone is engaged, ask lots of questions and call on people by name.

- Ask exception questions. Ask questions that will result in the fewest responses. For example, asking “Does everyone have a copy of the budget?” will mean a lot of participants will answer “yes” and the one person who says “no” may not be heard. Instead, ask, “Is there anyone who does not have a copy of the budget?”

A Quick Look At...

Phone Conferencing

Phone conferencing is a good medium if:

- A dynamic, collaborative exchange between people is required.
- “Human connection” is important.

Phone conferencing is a poor choice if:

- Recipients are unavailable to communicate at the same time.
- The communication is an exchange of simple information that is not time-sensitive. (E-mail may be a better choice.)
Faxes

It’s hard to remember when every office environment did not include the screeching tone of a fax machine. Even families are even beginning to purchase them for household use. Here are some thoughts for using fax machines, and avoiding some common pitfalls.

Digital Or Hard Copy?

Almost all of us now have a PC equipped with a modem and fax software, and have discovered that there are lots of advantages and limitations to faxing digitally. Here are some advantages of both faxing technologies – and evidence that you’ll probably want to continue using both.

Traditional Fax Machines:
- Can fax documents not in your computer – such as magazine articles
- Quality of type and images is typically better
- No learning curve for computer software

Faxing From Your PC:
- No sharing an office fax
- May be faster – you don’t have to print a document and walk to the fax machine and feed it through
- Can be done anywhere (with a laptop PC)
- Saves paper
- Can program for faxes to be sent automatically at a later time when rates are lower.

The Cover Page:
- The cover page should include:
  - The date & total number of pages
  - Info on how to reach you
  - Names of all parties who should see the fax
  - If applicable, a “table of contents” indicating what follows
  - A reference to next steps
- If the following pages are not numbered, go through and hand-number them.

Other Faxing Etiquette:
- For very long faxes. Call before sending to make sure the recipient has enough paper, and also to get “permission.”
- Baby sitting. You can’t always depend on your machine to fax all pages in a document. Sometimes pages stick together. Thus, you may wish to “baby sit” the fax, monitoring it as it goes through. Page numbering is critical, because it helps the recipient confirm easily which – if any – pages are missing.
- Receiving faxes. If you have special requirements (“call me first so I can switch on the machine”), make sure all senders have this information. Check your paper frequently to make sure you are always ready to receive a document.
Phones, Cellular Phones & Pagers

Earlier, we pointed out the advantages of Phone Conferencing. Voice mail, e-mail and other forms of indirect communication are a necessity in this mobile world, but sometimes, you just need to talk **directly** to someone; to interact, to test for understanding, to get commitments, to reach an agreement **right now**! Telephones do that. In this on-the-move world, the cellular phone can be a blessing. It allows co-workers, bosses, customers and families to summon us no matter where we are. To make sure that the technology is truly a blessing and not a curse, here are some thoughts to help you remain a good steward of mobile communications. But first one caution on...

**Public Phones:**
- **Thieves steal calling card codes.** Shield your dialing from prying eyes when using public phones at airports, hotels, etc.
- **So you’re in Tobago** and you need to phone your client in Gambia. You pick up the phone and, uh, stare at it... tripped up by inter-international dialing again! Let this site supply a guide to all those confusing numbers. Countries are listed in alphabetical order (no search). [http://kropla.com](http://kropla.com)

**Where Not To Use Your Cellular Phone:**
- **While you are driving.** In several countries, it is against the law to make calls while driving. In the USA, it isn’t. If you need to make or receive calls, pull over to the side of the road. If possible, have a hands free” speaker option installed in your car.
- **In an aircraft.** There is good reason why airlines don’t permit the use of cellular phones and pagers. They emit signals that interfere with important navigation systems.
- **In public meetings, at church, at a funeral, at a movie or play, in a restaurant or any other place where you will be disruptive.** 
- **Near other golfers** on a golf course. Apparently, some golfers are very peeved by this.
- **In a hospital.** Sensitive hospital equipment can be disrupted by the use of your cellular phone.

**“Do’s” For Cellular Phone Usage:**

- Resist the urge to yell into your cellular phone. Your voice is transmitted at the same volume as it is over a regular phone.
- Protect your phone. When you leave your car, put it under your seat, in a glove compartment or anywhere it can’t be seen. If your phone has a digital SIM or “Smart card,” remove it from the phone.
- New technology and features are being developed all the time. For example, there are services that allow you to receive either voice or text messages, alert you to another incoming call when you are on the line, or allow you to automatically divert calls. Check in with your cellular service provider for new services that could benefit you.

**Using Pagers:**

- Remember that there are some places where your cellular phone won’t work. Ask your dealer for a coverage map of your region, or regions in which you will be traveling.
- Answer your mobile by name and as quickly as possible.
- Don’t forget to recharge your battery periodically, or keep a spare.

**Cellular Technology**

Cellular is a good medium if:
- The recipient’s location is unknown.
- You are in a remote location where you have no access to any other communications.
- Immediacy is key, as in emergencies.

Cellular is a poor choice if:
- Personal boundaries are an issue. (Some people don’t like the constant access offered by cellular.)
- Cost is an issue. Using a cell phone can become expensive.

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"Do's" For Cellular Phone Usage:

- Resist the urge to yell into your cellular phone. Your voice is transmitted at the same volume as it is over a regular phone.
- Protect your phone. When you leave your car, put it under your seat, in a glove compartment or anyplace it can’t be seen. If your phone has a digital SIM or “Smart card,” remove it from the phone.
- New technology and features are being developed all the time. For example, there are services that allow you to receive either voice or text messages, alert you to another incoming call when you are on the line, or allow you to automatically divert calls. Check in with your cellular service provider for new services that could benefit you.

**Using Pagers:**

- In public, use your pager’s vibrating mode if possible.
- Consider creating special codes for family members. For example, they could input a special number to indicate “No big rush - call whenever convenient” or another for “emergency.”
Express mail is an invaluable service. Unfortunately, untold millions are spent to overnight documents that could have been sent in the regular mail.

Are you an overnight addict? Next time you find yourself tempted to use an overnight service, seriously evaluate whether the delivery can wait three or four days. Here are some tips for saving money on overnight mail:

• Combine fax and mail. Drop a hard copy in regular mail – and fax another copy so the recipient can have an immediate copy in the interim.

• Plan your work to include time for regular mail. What a novel idea. As you plan your work and communications, build in a few extra days for the postal service to do its job.

• Go digital. If you are sending a document from your computer, perhaps you could instead attach it to an e-mail. (See tips for this in the e-mail section)

Tips To Make Life Easier:

• With many overnight carriers, if you don’t send the package “Guaranteed Overnight,” it costs 40% less – and there’s still an 80% chance it will get there tomorrow. It’s not a bad deal if the risk of a two-day turn-around does not bother you.

• And many carriers will pick up at your home... if you call before noon, they’ll come in the afternoon; after noon, the next day.

• Be sure to mark “Saturday Delivery” and/or “No Signature Required” if you want those options. It’s easy to forget to do this – and it could result in the recipient not getting the package until one or two days later, thus defeating the purpose.

Do You Really Need It Tomorrow?

The mail is a good vehicle if:
• The recipient must have a hard-copy better than fax-quality.
• The communication is too unwieldy to fax – such as a binder.
• The recipient does not need it today.

The mail is a poor vehicle if:
• Speed is an issue. (Regular Mail)
• Cost is an issue. (Overnight mail)
• The recipient’s location is not static, or can’t be guaranteed.
Groupware (Collaborating in a Shared Space)

How do teams work together when members are hundreds, if not thousands of miles apart, when some team members are sleeping while others are awake, or when there are no common work hours? There are several groupware options on the market. This section describes TeamRoom and WorkRoom, two applications that run under LotusNotes.

**TeamRoom & WorkRoom**
- IBM TeamRoom and IBM WorkRoom give teams the opportunity to work together from any place at times convenient to each team member. This collaborative space allows teams to write proposals, develop strategies, and work product plans—all from different desktops in different time zones at different moments around the world.

**How Are They Different?**
- Both TeamRoom and WorkRoom are Notes applications where people share a space to have discussions, share information, make decisions and develop deliverables.
- Both let you participate whenever and where ever you choose.
- Both keep a record of a group's work in a way that makes sense to its members.
- Only IBM TeamRoom comes with experienced consultants who strengthen high performance teaming behaviors (mission alignment, goal setting, roles clarification, codes of conduct, shared leadership, etc.) during a custom implementation.
- Only TeamRoom lets you coordinate work by directing information and discussions to certain team members.
- Only TeamRoom lets you manage work by assigning actions and due dates and by marking actions 'complete'.

The Case for Groupware: While teams separated by distance are typically plagued by communications problems, studies show that groupware reverses the trend and promotes frequent collaboration.

![Probability of Employee Collaboration Across Distance](chart1)

![Number of Team Member Collaborations per Week](chart2)

Groupware (Contd.)

Do's For Working In A Collaborative Space

• Make sure team members understand how to use a collaborative space and that everyone agrees to a 'code of conduct' around the use of the space.
• In writing Subject Lines, formality isn't important: feel free to be conversational. A Subject Line should let people know what new information your document adds to the discussion thread. Be clear about what you want the reader to do.
• When your descriptive Subject Line is all you need to say, let people know that they don’t need to open your document (as they will find emptiness) by putting an asterisk (*) at the beginning of your Subject Line.
• When you want to edit someone else’s work (like a proposal draft), create a Comment and select ‘yes’ to copy the contents of the original item into your comment. Then make your changes in a different color or font so people can see what’s changed.
• Activating your Permanent Pen can be an easy way to edit in a different color or font.
• If you began a discussion in a collaborative space, then you should manage the discussion to a conclusion. If the discussion gets off track or stalls, make a comment that refocuses it.
• When a discussion has reached a conclusion, the originator needs to make a final entry that indicates what happened by starting the Subject Line with DECISION: or FINAL: and including the final version or the decision taken in the details of the comment. Then change the Filing Option to file in One Week.
• Add these two SmartIcons to your desktop to save you time and energy working in a collaborative space. Edit Mark Selected Read and Edit Mark Selected UnRead.

Don’ts For Working In A Collaborative Space

• Don’t stay directly connected to the server copy of your collaborative space. The response time will be awful. Keep a local copy of the collaborative space on your workstation and replicate on a regular schedule.
• Don’t allow the collaborative space to get cluttered. File your documents and discussions you originated that are no longer active.
• Don’t delete things from your collaborative space. A better practice is to File it with a comment that it is incorrect or not current.
• Don’t keep using e-mail or phone calls to do individual work that should be in the collaborative space. Doing that makes sure that only certain individuals know what’s going on. Collaboration is about working together.
• Don’t expect team members to respond in just a few minutes to a request or a comment you make in the collaborative space. Give people time to read what you have put in and to react.
• Don’t forget that teams are only as good as the relationships between team members. Take time to invest in your team relationships.

Vokes of Experience

“Many people think that collaboration is about communication. However, communication and collaboration are fundamentally different activities. Communication is a necessary but not sufficient condition for collaboration. The key ingredient, the key medium for successful and effective collaboration is the creation and maintenance of a shared space. You cannot create shared understandings without a shared space. That is the real challenge.”

-Michael S., MIT Sloan School
Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, “I travel not to go anywhere, but to go.” It’s a nice thought, but he never had to negotiate through the mobs at Hong Kong’s Kai Tak Airport!

When it comes to business travel, it’s getting harder and harder to find true disciples of the Robert Louis Stevenson philosophy. A 1994 MCI/Gallup Poll found that only 19% of business travellers thought that business travel was “glamorous” or “fun.” 53% of those same respondents said being away from loved ones and missing the daily events of life posed a real problem.*

Being remote often means travelling. Juan can work at point A, far away from Harry at point B only for so long until the need will arise for them to meet face to face. When that time comes, one or both of them will need to pack a bag and enter the hectic world of business travel.

The time will come for you, too. That isn’t a given is that, in transit, get lost, lose sleep or wrinkle your. Consider this chapter your roadmap.

*As reported by Christopher J. McGinnis, 202 Tips Even The Best Business Travelers May Not Know. ©1994, Irwin Professional Publishing
Note: This chapter contains suggestions for products that might aid you in travel, as well as ordering information. These suggestions are in no way meant to imply an endorsement of these products or their manufacturers on the part of IBM.
Packing It In

What is there to say about packing that it merits a full section in this book? A lot. Data were collected for this book through research and surveys of many seasoned business travelers. There were more impassioned responses received on packing than almost any other subject. You think you know it all when it comes to packing? You may be surprised!

**General Packing Principles:**

* **Never Overpack.** F目的地 two of everything -- one for home, one for travel. Keep a suitcase ready to go at all times.

* **Avoid duplication.** Find out if your hotel provides hair dryers, irons and toiletries. Don't pack items that will be provided.

* **Keep essentials close.** Pack essentials in a smaller bag (carry-on size, if you are flying). Include medicine, eyeglasses, and a charge of clothing (including underwear), all within easy access. Also carry on valuables, such as jewelry.

* **Make a list.** Before packing, create a list of items needed on the trip (or use the ones provided on these two pages) to avoid taking excess things and ensure that important belongings aren't left behind.

* **Don't overpack.** Limit packing time to one hour, or lay out all the clothes for the trip and then put half of those things back to prevent overpacking.

* **Good luggage is worth the cost.** If you are flying, use small, lightweight luggage that can be carried on the plane to save time upon arrival. Also, look for rugged, soft-sided luggage, which offers additional flexibility and fits easily in overhead bins or under seats.

* **Carry on an extra set of clothing.** (Turtleneck, hose, socks, and underwear especially.)

* **Fold and pack.** To make the most of limited space, fold socks and belts to fit inside shoes (which has the added benefit of helping shoes keep their shape). Tuck in gorge to the corners of the suitcase. Travel-size versions of toiletry items also allow for additional packing space.

* **Pour spare shoes and clothes within color schemes like black and navy, and coordinate your watches around them. Mix and match uniforms for different functions. Consider wearing basic garments, such as jeans and casual slacks, more than once.

* **Avoid wrinkles.** If possible, choose clothes made of easy-care fabrics such as cottons, washed silks and light knits. Button, zip and fasten everything before packing. Fold clothes backwards to minimize wrinkles in the front.

* **Top to bottom.** Layer clothing and accessories together according to when they will be used, placing the items you'll need first at the top. Of course, once you check into a hotel, you'll want to hang up slacks, shirts, blouses, etc.

Continued on next
Packing (cont.)

Don’t Forget...

- An alarm clock (even if the hotel has one)
- Prescription medication in its original bottle
- A back-up pair of contact lenses or glasses
- Postage stamps
- A little pill box, packed with your favorites (antacids, aspirin, allergy medicine, etc.)
- A fold-up umbrella
- Dental floss (one of the strongest threads around - multiple emergency uses)
- Scotch tape (removes lint, fixes hems, seals bottles... and much more)
- Sample-size containers of shampoo and perfume. Put in plastic bags to protect your suitcase in case they burst
- “Comfort” items, such as a family photograph, an inspirational book or a pillow from home

Ingenious Solutions:

- Missing Buttons. For just $3, you can purchase a double pack of Missing Buttons - a temporary quick fix for lost buttons. Each Missing Button is a pearlized shirt style that attaches like a tie tack. To use, just push through the existing hole and snap on the stud. For more information, call 1-800-788-3333. Outside of the U.S., use country code 01.
- The Proctor-Silex’s travel iron. Like others, it folds flat for easy storage. It also includes dual voltage circuitry for international use. It includes a zippered travel case and sells for $28. For more information, contact www.hambeach.com.
- Braun’s Style Shaper cordless curling iron. This unit is ideal for other international travelers because it is powered by disposable butane cartridges. Each cartridge heats to full temperature in about 90 seconds and provides about a month’s usage. It sells for $30 and comes with a cool cover so you can slide it in a bag immediately after usage.

Ingenious Solutions:

- Buy a ‘compression bag’ from a camping or sporting goods store. These tubular nylon bags have straps that tighten and shrink the bag, great for clothes where wrinkling isn’t a problem - such as socks, underwear, dirty clothes, etc.

“Have this nagging feeling I forgot something”

“Let’s see, we got my tickets”

“I have this nagging feeling I forgot something”

“Let’s see, we got my tickets”

“Brought my briefcase... Ever remember my umbrella?”

“OH NO! My suitcase! STOP THE PLANE!”

- Dick R.
- Charlotte

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## Leaving Your Home Alone?

In you are leaving your house unattended when you travel, here’s a checklist that will ensure your home will still be in good shape when you return.

- □ Arrange for the watering/care of any plants.
- □ Arrange for someone to pick up your mail. Stop the delivery of your newspaper.
- □ Unplug your electronic equipment, even if you have surge protectors. This includes computers, microwave ovens, TVs, VCRs, etc.
- □ Alert neighbors that you’ll be away. Write down numbers so they can reach you or another family member in case of an emergency.
- □ If the home will be unattended for a long period, throw out any perishables in the refrigerator and empty the trash. Run the garbage disposal, just to make sure there’s no food in there that can cause odors.
- □ Update your office voice mail so callers will know how to reach you. Do not change your home answering machine to indicate you are gone.
- □ Purchase some electrical timers from the hardware store and set a few lamps and a radio to turn on and off at different points during the day and evening.
- □ Dial your thermostat up to a higher temperature (or lower during winter) to avoid paying for cooling/heating the house when no one is home.
- □ Turn off ceiling fans and anything else with electric motors.
- □ Turn off the water to your washing machine - hoses have been known to burst when no one is home.
- □ Turn the water-heater’s thermostat to the “low” or “vacation” setting.
- □ During the winter, take precautions for possible freezes: leave faucets dripping, etc.
- □ Do one final walk-through to make sure all doors and windows are locked. If you normally keep a key hidden outside, bring it in.

### The Travel File

Here’s a good idea you may not have considered: Use a manila envelope to create a travel file of important documents to carry with you every time you travel. You only have to do the work of setting it up one time. Afterwards, store it in between trips. Some items you might include are:

- Tickets
- A travel itinerary, including confirmation numbers
- Schedules of the major airlines - just in case you need to arrange an unexpected flight
- Photocopies of important contents in your wallet, including your driver’s license and all credit cards (as well as the 1-800 numbers to call in case you lose them)
- Copies of prescriptions for medicine
- A copy of the prescription for your contacts or eyeglasses.
- Proof of insurance
- Photocopies of your passport and visa (if you are travelling internationally)
- Emergency contact numbers (keep an extra copy in your pocket, in case something happens to you)
- A color photograph of your bag or suitcase. If it’s lost at the airport, it will be easier to identify and retrieve.
Flying

Some people spend a significant portion of their lives sitting in a plane seat. For them, discussions of carry-on luggage and seating assignments aren’t just small talk. These are serious lifestyle issues. You should take this stuff seriously too. As the remote world puts more and more people in the air, tips like these will help separate you from the herd.

**Where To Sit:**

- **Non-reclining seats.** Valuable lesson: don’t sit in front of an exit row. These seats do not recline back.

- **Getting Out!** Count the number of seat backs between you and the exits. In a smoke filled cabin, it could save your life.

- **Lots of leg room.** The emergency exit rows have leg room that even surpass the seats in first class. Often, these seats are held until the last minute in case of a full flight, but you may be able to get one by asking.

Bulkhead seats are good because you can use your laptop computer without someone’s seat back leaning into your workspace.

**Saving Precious Time:**

- **Don’t check luggage.** If there is any indisputable, unanimous truth of flying, it is this: standing at a baggage carousel is a colossal waste of time. If it’s humanly possible, make everything fit into your carry on. (Another benefit is you reduce the chances of misplaced baggage to zero.)

- **Board the plane quickly.** Especially on full flights, overhead storage for carry-ons fills up quickly. Plus, if you board ASAP you are assured of getting your pick of magazines and a pillow and blanket on night flights.

- **Know where you are going.** Get personalized maps and door-to-door driving instructions at www.MAPQUEST.com.

**Travel Smart:**

- **Do research ahead of time.** www.BIZTRAVEL is a good all purpose travel Website we recommend. It gives you everything from driving directions and frequent flyer tracking to exchange rate and country entry requirements.

- **Don’t know what the weather will bring?** Several Websites provide international weather data and forecasts for travelers. Try the National Weather Service at www.nws.noaa.gov or the Weather Channel at www.weather.com

**Join The Club:**

- **Frequent Flyer programs.** All major airlines offer frequent-flier programs, many of which are free to join. Miles earned can be redeemed for upgrades from economy class seats to business or first-class. There are many opportunities to earn miles without flying - from hotels, car rental companies, credit cards and other businesses.

- **Airport clubs.** Being a member of an airport club is like having an office at the airport. Major airlines have networks of private clubs at airports they serve. Memberships cost a few hundred dollars a year but travelers get access to a private lounge where they can plug in their computer, send a fax or meet clients - well worth it for the serious business traveller.
Seatmates From Hell:

Some people love to meet the folks sitting next to them on a plane. If that’s you, then skip this section. However, if you cringe at the thought of someone you don’t know trying to buddy up with you, here are some actual suggestions from other business travelers for preserving your peace (adapted from USA Today.)

• One business traveler said he tried everything – and then discovered a solution that really worked: tell your seatmate you sell life insurance. He swears that they shut up quickly. (Another reported that saying she worked for the government tax office also produced the desired silence.)

• A regional sales manager for a tissue company says she has learned to “play sleep,” or bury her face in a newspaper to avoid conversations.

• Some travelers pack deterrents. One consultant wears headphones even when he’s not listening to anything. “It’s also a good way of trying to get someone away from you who wants to talk the entire flight.”

• The NoiseBuster is a $79 set of headphones that use what is called active noise-canceling technology to block out all external noise. This little device comes in handy anytime you are trying to relax and block the outside world. Call Noise Cancellation Technologies at www.nct-active.com.

• One associate said he always talks to the person next to him – but he waits 20 minutes before the plane lands before introducing himself. That way, he gets most of his work done at the beginning of the flight.

• According to a survey of business travelers, the least desired seatmates are: the person who talks too much, a person with a cold or an illness, a large person and an arm-rest hog.

• The easiest solution is the most obvious: simply get up and change seats, if any are available. You can score points by saying “I’m leaving to give you more room.” Hey, you’re just a nice person.

• One more novel approach: honesty. Just say “I really don’t care to talk, thank you. I need to rest/work/read.”
Layovers Made Simple:

• **Profiting from delays.** If you are delayed, ask the airline to “240” you. According to rule 240, they must pay for your expenses – be it a hotel overnight, or any expenses incurred while getting you on a competitor’s flight. If there are baggage delays, airlines must reimburse you for a new set of toiletries and new clothing. Maybe this is your chance to get replace that worn shirt! ;-) 

• **Making good use of the time.** When you have a layover, you can get a lot accomplished by making phone calls from the airport. Especially when you are on a time deadline, you’d be surprised how much work you can accomplish. A cell phone makes it easy to make calls if pay phones are unavailable.

• **Minimizing the risk.** If you have to travel late on a Friday night, never take the last flight listed! As one business traveller put it, “Staying over in Cincinnati on a Friday night is not my idea of a fun time....” Note that your greatest chance of being delayed is between 4 pm and 9 pm.

• **Just in case...** If you have to change flights, call and let someone know which flight you’ll be on, as well as arrival time (if you have time.)

Beating Jet Lag:

• **It’s all in the mind.** If you are changing time zones, mentally shift your clock based on where you are going as soon as you get on the plane. This will begin the acclimation process.

• **It’s all in the mind, part II.** Watch Jay Leno (or whatever you normally watch at home just before you fall asleep). You’ll trick your mind into thinking it’s time for bed, no matter what time zone you’re in.

• **Sleep lovers: Head West!** When traveling East, get up early in the morning. When travelling West, sleep in as late as possible or practical. In general, westbound trips are considered easier.

Volks of Experience

“A lot of people don’t realize that airlines prepare many different meals besides the ones they pass out en masse. They have special meals that are sugar free, lo-cal, kosher, vegetarian, low sodium, Moslem, Hindu, etc. They are prepared closer to the time of departure and usually taste better. All you have to do is ask for one – there’s no additional charge. Recently, while all the other passengers were having dry sandwiches, I was dining on shrimp!”

Dan M.
Chicago

Editor’s note: Many of these special meals must be requested 24 hours in advance, or when you make your reservation. Delta’s Seafood Platter is particularly good.
Hotels

The hotel industry is in a state of transition. The technology explosion combined with the increase in remote and mobile work are forcing hotels to rethink and reconfigure their services and amenities. We’re witnessing a radical transformation - but the pillows are still unbearable. Go figure.

**Beating The Phone Scam:**

Many hotels charge access fees for the use of their phones. They can range from 50 cents to $2 - and even more internationally. Sometimes you will be charged the access fee even if you use a calling card.

In the U.S. all but two of the 25 largest hotel chains subscribe to AT&T service. Don’t let that fool you - hotels routinely mark up the rates by as much as 300%. (Some even have a “block” feature that prevents you from using other, cheaper services, although this is becoming less common in the U.S.)

How can you beat the system? Three thoughts:

- Make as many calls from a business site as possible and limit the number you make from your room in the evening.
- Go down to the hotel lobby and use the pay phone.
- On many hotel phone systems, you can press the pound (#) key between calls, thereby making several calls in a row without hanging up. That way, you don’t pay the access fee multiple times.
- Use that calling card. Using your company or personal calling card will save you over 50% on charges. Often it will avoid the hotel access charge.

**Other Advice:**

- Think twice about pulling the heavy dark curtains across the window. They’re a little too effective and can trick you into thinking it’s still dark outside.

**Making**

- Make reservations far in advance. Business travel is booming - and hotels are becoming increasingly difficult to find.
- The money-saving question. Always ask, “Is this the best rate available?” You’d be surprised at the many rate options that can be negotiated.
- Ask for a corner room. Sometimes the rooms are nicer, and may have additional windows. Plus, you share only one wall with another guest, instead of two - very helpful if you are sensitive to the muffled sounds of coughing, etc., from the next room.
- “Noisy rooms.” If you are a light sleeper, you might request a room that is not near an elevator or ice machine, or pool. These areas tend to be very noisy - even during the night. And consider investing in one of the white noise machines available today. They are small, and emit sounds that can vary from simple “white” noise to waterfalls, rainfall, etc.; all designed to block out extraneous, distracting sounds.

**Voices of Experience**

“When it comes to wake-up alarms, always have a backup system. I was once awakened by a call from members of a class I was teaching that day. They said it’s 8:30... where are you? My room clock said it was only 5:00 am! Some hotel clocks have weird features. I’ve had some where the alarm was controlled by the radios volume dial. So by turning down the radio, I unwittingly turned off the alarm. You never know. The moral is... bring your own alarm! Plus, arrange a wakeup call just for insurance.”

Minneapolis
Driving

If You Rent A Car:

• **Just say no to cellular rentals.** If you choose to rent a cellular phone when you rent your car, be aware that the prices for usage are expensive. Rates can run $1.95 a minute or more. A 10-minute call can cost as much as $30. True story: one frequent business traveler forgot her cellular phone and decided to rent one at the Hertz counter. She made 1,100 minutes of calls without asking what it would cost. “Imagine my surprise and horror when I received a bill for $2,345.18,” she said.

• **Get the premium Service.** This is offered by most car rental companies (Hertz Gold Service, e.g.) and will save you time and inconvenience by avoiding the delays at the rental counter.

• **Directions.** Use the computerized directions available at most car rental locations.

• **Getting the best cars.** Ask the car rental agent for the car with the least amount of mileage on it. It will be newer and thus be in better operating condition. This is especially useful if you will be driving long distances.

• **Reserve a compact.** Most car rental companies have more large cars than they do compacts. If you make reservations for a compact, there’s a chance none will be available, and you’ll be upgraded for free.

• **The Global Positioning System** is a satellite system that provides on-screen maps and audio instruction inside the car to help you find your destination. The system works exceptionally well — if you’re in a strange city and have a lot of driving to do, ask for a car that provides this option.

Taking Your Own Car:

• Get oversized plastic cartons to create a virtual filing cabinet in the floorboard of the back seat.

• Consider belonging to an Automobile Travel Club. Their Emergency Road Service benefit alone is often worth the annual dues.

Driving Safely:

• Keep a file folder labeled “Maps.” Every time you jot down notes on how to get to a client’s or friend’s place, put it in the folder.

• When you travel, keep an extra car key in your pocket or purse so you don’t lock yourself out of the car.

• Many places in the U.S. and other countries require headlights when you use wipers. If you are unsure, always use both.

Consider Putting The Following Items In Your Trunk:

• An ice scraper
• A small shovel
• Traction mats, cat litter or sand to help a stuck car gain traction
• Flashlight or candles (in addition to light, candles provide warmth). Also, some matches
• Extra windshield washer fluid
• Flares
• Jumper cables
• A blanket
• Gloves
• A first aid kit
• Cloth or paper towels
• Basic tools (a wrench, screwdriver, etc.)
• A spare set of tennis shoes
• A map of the country you’re in
International Travel

When it comes to international travel, make no assumptions. It can be a maze of paperwork, regulations and cultural challenges. When travelling internationally, expect to spend much more time in preparation – and in educating yourself on the country to which you are travelling.

**Before You Leave:**

- **The FIRST and LAST word on International Travel.** There is an endless maze of cultural, language and geographical differences from country to country. Do your research before your foreign stay. Read, surf the web, view films and talk with those who have been there.

- **Double-check that flight.** Some international flights still require reconfirmation 24 hours in advance. Find out how far in advance your airline requires reconfirmation.

- **Get currency before you leave.**

- **If you are taking company property with you,** check with your company's export regulations. Some countries have laws about bringing computer equipment in or taking it out.

- **Get plugged in.** Power varies widely in different countries. Hotels usually have adapters for hair dryers, razors, etc. You can get information about adapters at theSharper Image Website, [www.sharperimage.com](http://www.sharperimage.com). Also, check out the Road Warrior Kit (Z35624-00) which has electrical and telephone connections for every country. If you have questions, check out the Website [http://warrior.com/index.html](http://warrior.com/index.html).

- **Do your homework.** When travelling to another country, consider getting a travel book to learn about some of the customs - tipping, laws, etc. Be familiar with the political, cultural and economic conditions of the country.

- **Be prepared for international networking.** If you travel frequently to a particular country, have your business cards printed in English on one side and in that country's language on the other.

**Visas, Passports, Documentation:**

- **Passports the EASY WAY.** Apply for your passport several months in advance of your trip. In the U.S., for details, get a four-page fax from the State Department, Passports. You can apply for them the EASY WAY by dialing (202) 647-3000 from your fax machine and at the recording, punch in code 1015.

- **Visas.** Ensure that you have the required visas. Make photocopies of your visas, and keep them separate from the originals. AmEx International Travel or your local travel agency will tell you if you need a Visa.

- **Always carry The Travel File.** The Travel File is an extremely useful file of extra copies of important documents that becomes especially useful when you are travelling internationally (see page 37 of this book). Make a third copy of everything in the travel file and leave it with someone at home.

- **Medicine issues.** Keep any medication that you require in its original container, and carry a doctor's prescription for any controlled drug. Carry a medical certificate for syringes if you require them for medical purposes.

- **Vaccinations.** To find out about health conditions or which vaccinations you need for the country to which you're travelling, in the U.S. call the Center for Disease Control at (404) 639-3534 or the State Department at (202) 647-5225. The CDC website is [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

- **Driving.** If you are a member of an Automobile Travel Club, you can usually obtain a temporary International Driving Permit for the country to which you are travelling. Call your Travel Club for details.
Entering & Leaving:

• Entering. You can’t always just breeze in and breeze out. Sometimes, when you arrive at your international destination, you must be prepared to present two things: 1) Proof that you have sufficient funds to sustain yourself when you are in the country; and 2) Evidence (such as a visa) that you will be accepted into the next country listed on your itinerary. In many countries, you must show your return tickets before you may enter.

• Leaving. Some countries impose exit controls, such as exit permits, proof of payment of local taxes if applicable, payment of sometimes very costly fines for visa overstays, etc. In some countries, you must register with local authorities if you are not staying at a recognized hotel. Otherwise, your departure may be delayed or you may be fined when you leave.

Beating The Phone Scam II:

Earlier, we described the costly access fees that can add up when staying at U.S. hotels. When lodging internationally, the problem is exponentially worsened due to surcharges. “While surcharges for in-room calling have all but vanished from hotels in the USA, hefty surcharges are still an issue . . . at many hotels worldwide,” says Jonathan Craig, AT&T market manager. Regular phone use can cost you hundreds of dollars. Here are some tips for saving:

• To avoid exorbitant charges, always ask what the surcharge is for using phones and always use a calling card.

• If you need to make a high volume of calls while in another country, you may benefit from callback services. For U.S. employees traveling abroad the process is simple. When you’re a member of a call-back service, to place a call from overseas, first dial their number. As soon as it rings once, hang up. Within 30 seconds, the phone you just called from will ring - and when you pick up the phone, you will hear a U.S. dial tone that will allow you to place your call without surcharges.

For more information, investigate these callback companies:

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<th>Callback Companies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kallback</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.kallback.com">www.kallback.com</a></td>
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Check with your Travel Agency for availability of this service in other countries.
Keep Your Hands To Yourself

When Richard Nixon, former U.S. President, used to flash his famous “peace” gesture, it didn’t go over well in Britain. There, the gesture is considered obscene.

Therein lies one of the hidden pitfalls of cultural diversity. Unless you have sufficiently soaked in the culture of the country to which you are travelling, you may find it better just to keep your hands in your pockets. Even more importantly, remember that you are a visitor to this country. Maintain some sensitivity to the ways others act, communicate and live.

• Learn key phrases. Sure, you can mime your request of “I need to find a bathroom” to the delight of non-English-speaking bystanders. It would be much more helpful if you knew the words. It’s practically a necessity to know a few survival phrases such as “Take me to the _____ hotel...” “Where is the men’s room” or perhaps “I’m sick of sushi... could I please just have a cheeseburger?” Countless resources are available, from books to software.

• Learning by software. There are CD-ROMs available that provide audio and video language lessons using real-life situations. They come in a number of languages. Your local Travel Agency should be able to refer you to one. In the U.S. one easy-to-use language title is Learn to Speak from The Learning Co. This CD-ROM includes 30 chapters of audio and video lessons, using real life situations. It is available in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian and Japanese and retails for $110. For more information, call 1-800-852-2255.

• The pocket translator. A credit card sized calculator that translates from one language to another and has spell correction, currency/metrix conversion, and international telephone codes is available. Check with a local travel specialty store. In the U.S., you can order one called Franklin Electronics Translator Travel Ace at 1-800-266-5626 for about $30.

• Don’t draw attention to yourself. In general, be low key with your demeanor, dress, jewelry and communication. Otherwise you may irritate the locals or even catch the attention of customs officials, thieves, etc.

• Understand and be understood. Culture matters! Understanding culture can mean the difference between success and failure in international business. Get smart.

Talking The Talk:

• What you meant: “OK!”
  • What you said: “You’re a zero!” (France); “Give me coins.” (Japan); Obscene gesture (Brazil)

• What you meant: “Waiter! Check, please!”
  • What you said: Vulgar gesture (Mediterranean)

• What you meant: “Hi there!”
  • What you said: “You have five fathers. You’re a bastard.” (West Africa)

• What you meant: “Not so good.”
  • What you said: “Something is critically wrong.” (Most countries)

• What you meant: “All right!”
  • What you said: “Up yours.” (Australia); An insult (Ghana)

Adapted from USA Today
Health, Safety and Security

Business travel is hard. It requires physical stamina, street smarts and good choices. Here are some tips to get you there and back in good shape.

**Protect Yourself:**

- **Prearrange your taxi.** Melissa Klett of Houston travels frequently to Seattle. She has found a cab driver who will meet her at the gate, carry her luggage, and see her safely to her hotel, day or night. She calls him before every trip to give him her flight number. “As a woman traveler, I don’t have to worry.” Naturally, such service is rewarded with a good tip. She also has found special cab drivers in Oklahoma City and Detroit. (Reported in USA Today)

- **Be self-conscious.** Be vigilant about luggage, brief case, purse, etc. Thieves target out-of-towners. Luggage (especially if it looks expensive) and rental cars mark you as a potential target.

- **Be aware of your surroundings.** One traveller offers this reminder: “I always make sure that my doors are locked, and at night I also put a chair by the door. I also check windows and patio doors to ensure they are locked too. When walking to my rental car, I always look under the car and in the back seat.”

- **Let someone know where you are.** Leave your itinerary and hotel info with someone at home or at the office so you can be located in case of emergency.

- **Exercise.** If you have a regular exercise schedule, it’s more important than ever to stick to it when you are travelling. Try to stay at hotels that have exercise facilities. At the very least, bring a jump rope, or do situps/pushups/stretching exercises in your room. (Some hotels are now offering step, rowing and other exercise machines that they will bring up to your room for you. Inquire to see if any are available.)

- **Travel Safety.** A Website that will help you avoid catastrophes when you’re on the global road, www.safewithin.com.

**Food & Drink:**

- **Moderation.** The biggest trend is an old one but it’ll become more important: eating sensibly, exercising reasonably and not excessively drinking. Just because somebody else is paying for it doesn’t mean you have to load up on food. Overeating makes you slow and doesn’t give you that bounce.

- **Watch fat and calories.** A recent report showed that some restaurant chains dish up nearly grotesque levels of fat and calories - often three times the typical amount. If the restaurant offers a “light fare” menu, make your selection from those items.

- **The justification you’ve been looking for.** One of the safest liquids to drink in developing countries is beer. It is too acidic for microbes to live in. Also, it has very little fat and lots of liquid carbohydrates. In fact, it is liquid bread. To be safe, drink beer constantly. :-)

- **International concerns.** Diarrhea is one of the most common ailments that affect international business travelers. To avoid bacteria that can make you ill, bring or buy your own bottled water. (Don’t even brush your teeth with local water.) Also avoid dairy products. The exception is plain yogurt. Eat lots of yogurt; it kills acidophilis bacteria.

**Hotel Safety:**

- **The safest hotel rooms.** Request a room near the stairwell on the 3rd to 6th floor. Thieves usually target lower floors, and fire hoses and ladders usually can’t reach above the 6th floor.

- **Make it look like you haven’t left.** When out, put up the “DO NOT DISTURB” sign and leave the TV on so would-be thieves will assume you are still in your room. (At the front desk, you can leave special instructions for the maids to ignore the do not
disturb sign and enter your room.)

• **Lock up valuables.** Don’t hesitate to use the hotel’s safe for valuables such as jewelry. As much as possible, leave your valuables at home.

• **Hotel safety basics.** Never say your room number out loud. When there’s a knock on the door, always look through the peephole first. Use all bolts and locks on your door.

• **Security escorts.** Ask security to escort you to your car in the parking lot – especially at night.

• **Be prepared for fires.** Keep a flashlight by your bedside, as well as a pile of your keys, shoes, a change of clothes and medication ready to go.

(Source: 202 Tips Even The Best Business Travelers May Not Know by Christopher McGinnis, Irwin Professional Publishers)

**Flying Comfort:**

• **Bring support pillows.** Travel accessory companies offer a U-shaped neck-support pillow, covered with soft cotton. It’s a great way to sleep on a plane without hurting your neck or messing up your hair. It can be ordered for about $10.

  Another useful accessory is an inflatable lower back pillow for approximately $30.

• **Dehydration & flying.** Drink lots of water when flying. One rule of thumb is to drink one glass of water for every hour you are in the air. It’s easy to get dehydrated on an airplane. Don’t drink alcohol. (However, one frequent flyer recommends drinking half a bottle of champagne. He says “it’s the only way I can sleep on a plane – and the carbonation is not without its medicinal effects.”)

• **Sinuses.** If you have a cold or sinus problems, air travel can do terrible things to your inner ear. Make sure you take decongestants before flying. It may make you dehydrate more quickly, so drink more water.

• **Exercise & circulation.** When sitting for long periods of time, your feet can swell one full shoe size due to poor circulation. Keep your legs and feet moving. Take an occasional walk to the bathroom, just for the exercise.
Travelling With Your Computer

Imagine walking around a crowded airport with $3,000 cash in your pocket. You would be afraid to take your hands off of it, right? Nonetheless, thousands of laptop computers (often worth more than $3,000) are stolen or damaged every week due to simple negligence. Here are some thoughts for protecting your hardware and data.

Protecting Your Computer From Theft:

• It could happen to you. Theft of laptop computers is very common. (See “Some Sobering Statistics.”) A good general rule is never take your eyes off of your computer, and never leave it unattended. (One traveller had hers stolen from an overhead storage bin, just a few rows ahead of her.)

• Purchase security software. CompuTrace software, developed by Absolute Software of Vancouver, British Columbia, is a great way to protect your computer. The software is free (available on the World Wide Web) and installs invisibly on your computer. Here’s how it works: On a frequent basis, CompuTrace silently and transparently uses the computer’s modem to place a scheduled call to Absolute Software’s monitoring center. With each call, the computer’s serial number and originating telephone number are logged. If your computer is stolen, simply call the CompuTrace 800 theft hot line and your account will be placed on alert. The next time the stolen computer’s modem is connected to a phone line, Absolute Software’s tracing system immediately pinpoints the location of the stolen computer. Although the software is free, the monitoring service costs $60 a year. Contact Absolute Software at e-mail: Sales@ComputerSecurity.com or call 1-800-466-7636.

• Beware of this airport scam for stealing computers. Two thieves look for someone with a laptop, placing themselves in front of him or her at the metal detector. Once the victim puts the laptop on the conveyor belt, the first person goes through the metal detector. Then the second goes through, but is carrying something that will set off the alarm. While he slowly removes his jewelry, empties his pockets, etc., the first person takes the laptop while the victim is still “trapped” on the other side of the metal detector. Moral: Never let the computer leave your possession.

Some Sobering Statistics

Laptop computers are replacing luggage as targets for thieves at airports, hotel rooms and car-rental counters. Here are some U.S. statistics:

• Roughly 2,000 computers are stolen daily.

• One of every 10 laptops is stolen at an airport, according to Safeware, an insurer of personal computers.

• Corporate data theft reaches around $1.1 billion per year.

• PC theft has increased 400% since 1992.

• Theft accounted for more than 60% of all dollar losses reported for portable computers last year.

• Soaring losses will force laptop insurance rates up 15 to 20%. Now, an annual insurance premium of $69 covers losses up to $5,000.
Packing The Computer:

- Concealing it. Travel Pro has a carry-on bag with wheels, much like the ones you see flight attendants carrying. However, theirs is unique in that it has a detachable computer case built in that can be accessed without disturbing your clothing. Even better, the computer bag is incorporated into the suitcase so that would-be thieves won’t know you have a computer. (Plus, you don’t have to carry a heavy computer bag over your shoulder.) The bag is approximately $200. Contact Travel Pro at www.travelpro.com for more information.

- Distribute the weight. Backpacks with special laptop compartments are also available. Some even have wheels and can be used either way.

- Always pack an extra charged battery.

Hooking Up:

- And when you get to your hotel and stare at that funny looking phone outlet, you ask yourself, “Why did I go to all the trouble to carry this thing with me?” If you travel internationally a lot, consider a universal modem adapter. One is called World Connect and it allows you to connect your laptop to international phone lines from all the world’s major business centers. For more information, call 1-800-841-8553 in the U.S., or 215-804-0333 outside of the U.S. The Website address is www.kkiw.com.

X-rays & Computers:

- The truth about x-ray machines and computers. You’ve probably heard that you should never send your laptop computer through an airport x-ray machine. Likewise, you may have also heard that this is a myth, and no real damage can be done. So which is true? Actually, X-rays are harmless, and can do no damage to the magnetic data stored on your computer's hard drive. However, the power supply on airport x-ray machines creates an electromagnetic field that can corrupt or erase computer data. (Hand-held electronic organizers are more susceptible than laptop computers.) Many travellers report having sent their computer through the x-ray machines with no adverse effects. However, there is a small risk; the choice is yours. As is always true with computer data, make sure you have back-up files made before travelling.
From a management point of view, being remote creates some interesting challenges.

Some of those challenges lie in the startup and maintenance of remote work assignments. Don’t make the assumption that each of your employees is equally adaptable. You will need to help them. Just because someone is a top performer doesn’t mean he automatically has a high capacity for change. Likewise, you may need to help clarify some realistic expectations for the employee as she faces her remote work assignment.

For some managers, the challenges occur at a deeper, personal level. There are very real issues of trust and control to deal with. Plus, your very role as a manager is also challenged as you make the transformation from director to facilitator.

But the good news is that, in many ways, managing remote employees is surprisingly similar to managing your co-located employees. And for every challenge you face, expect to discover some exciting opportunities.
If You Have Any Say In The Matter...

Often, the move to a remote assignment is one that is handed down to you, the manager. However, sometimes you may have a choice as to whether certain employees will work remote or mobile. If so, spend some time thinking through the issues. Is there a compelling business case for sending your employee remote, or hiring an employee in a remote location? Are some employees better suited for remote work than others? Here are a few issues to consider.

**For The Employee, Consider...**

- ...whether the employee works well alone, without having frequent face-to-face collaboration with others.
- ...whether the employee is more focused on outputs and results than activity and processes.
- ...whether the employee manages his or her time well.
- ...whether cultural issues will have an effect on the feasibility of remote work. In Japan, where home space is often small and many elderly parents live with children, IBM is looking at leasing suburban office space to save commuting time.
- ...whether the employee requires a lot of supervision and feedback.
- ...the current performance. Is it already good? Employees with good performance are more likely to do well when remote.
- ...whether the employee sees advantages to working remote beyond lifestyle or convenience.
- ...whether the employee is a self-starter/ thinks entrepreneurially.
- ...whether the employee embraces change easily.
- ...whether the employee has manageable social needs. Is the employee able to be socially separated from others?
- ...if the employee will truly do his best work when he can “hide” from management.
- ...the employee's level of experience. Is she familiar with the tasks and the business?
- ...the employee's skills and comfort level collaborating electronically; e.g., using e-mail, fax or groupware.

**For Yourself, Consider...**

- ...whether you are willing to manage without having high control.
- ...if you can communicate well when you are not co-located with employees.
- ...your level of trust in your people?
- ...whether you are comfortable managing only results, realizing that you won’t be able to observe activities & behaviors.
- ...if you are knowledgeable and can model the way in using a wide range of communication technologies.

**For The Work Itself, Consider...**

- ...if the work is information-based.
- ...whether the work can be accomplished without a great deal of face-to-face contact.
- ...whether the work is physically portable? (i.e., everything needed to do the job can be taken home in a briefcase, or can be accessed electronically.)
Setting Expectations

Now that you’re facing a remote arrangement, you and your employee have a lot to talk about and a lot of expectations to clarify. This is best accomplished through a face-to-face dialogue in which you talk about all the issues, boundaries and expectations of the new work arrangement.

Talk About Communication And Participation:

• This is a shared responsibility. It is not only the manager’s job to keep up with the employee; the employee must also be proactive in staying connected.

• Prioritize the use of communication technologies. Discuss the media the employee will use. Establish ground rules for their use (such as correct e-mail protocol). This book may be useful in providing suggestions.

Wakers of Experience

“I would not try to overtly sell someone on the idea of working remote. I still believe that being co-located with a team can be more productive and fun. But, of course, this is not a choice anymore. I believe the job requirements should determine whether someone works remote. Too many people are doing it simply cut of personal convenience. That alone isn’t a sufficient reason.”

-Nancy L. Armonk

Talk About Accessibility:

• Prioritize responses to technologies. For example: “Consider phone mail the most urgent communications. When you receive a message respond within 24 hours…” “Respond to pagers within two hours…” “Respond to e-mail within two days…” Make sure the norms you establish are known throughout the organization.

• Discuss work boundaries. Agree with the employee on the typical working hours. Reveal any boundaries to communication. (“Don’t send a fax after 11:00 p.m. - you’ll wake us up…””) Clarify policies regarding vacation and overtime.

• If the employee will have a home office... Discuss the possibility of your visiting the home office at the employee’s convenience. The purpose of this visit is not for checking up. Rather, it is to review her needs for equipment and supplies, consider safety issues, build relationship, etc.

Talk About The Work:

• How will work be assigned and reassigned? What will the employee do? How will the employee receive training or mentoring?

Talk About Performance Management:

• Who will do the evaluation? Based on what criteria? (In establishing criteria, make sure you stress results vs. activities.) How often will it happen?
Talk About Career Management:

- The reality of the remote business world is that the individual must take on much more responsibility for his own career. The employee must take ownership of where it is going and begin identifying competencies, training and mentors he will need to get there. The manager’s role is one of encourager, critical evaluator and obstacle-remover.

Talk Specifics, Answer Questions:

- The employee will have a lot of questions about her new remote work assignment. Here are some areas in which employees commonly have questions:

  - **Taxes:** For example, the employee may have questions about taking a home office deduction or about the depreciation on her car due to business use. You may direct the employee to a tax advisor, or your local governmental tax agency. In the U.S. call the IRS Tax Information line at 1-800-829-1040 or 1-800-829-3676.

  - **Worker’s compensation:** Review the law, and discuss safety issues – especially as they apply to being on the road or working in a home office.

  - **Security:** Is there any information or materials that may not leave the IBM property? Are there any restrictions on information sharing that the remote employee needs to know? Are there any passwords or other security issues created by remote electronic access?

  - **Resources:** Who will provide what? You may wish to be very specific. Discuss computer equipment, office supplies, additional phone lines, resources for professional development, administrative support, etc.

  - **Insurance:** Who is responsible if the cellular phone is stolen from the employee’s car? What if the baby spills orange juice on the laptop computer at the kitchen table? Make it clear whose insurance covers what.

What about your expectations?

Employees may not be the only ones with inaccurate expectations. Here are some important things to remember as you become a manager of remote employees:

- A remote assignment is not a perk or reward for good employees. It is a solution for meeting organizational goals. Avoid creating a perception that employees are “entitled” to any form of working remote.

- This is not necessarily a permanent solution. The best remote working assignments are the flexible ones.

- If you are currently co-located with your employees, you might consider the implications of going mobile yourself. As a manager, you may be better off staying co-located.

- Your supervision does not need to suffer. Realize there is a difference between close supervision and good supervision. You will begin managing based on results rather than process.
Effective Leadership In A Remote World

As previously indicated, the tasks involved in leading and managing remote and mobile employees aren't very different from managing the employees down the hall. Leadership models apply to both scenarios. The challenge is not what you do, it's how you do it. How do you observe performance? How can you respond to employees you can't always see? Here are some thoughts.

What Hasn't Changed...

The manager’s job still focuses on two areas; people processes and business processes. And it can be described by looking at its components or inputs and outputs. The manager has a series of objectives to achieve (input), contends with and leverages a set of conditions (inputs) to do that, and draws upon certain skills and competencies (input) to produce an organizational climate and the desired business results (outputs).

Over time, as a manager, you’ll be faced with a wide variety of situations that you have to deal with. Each one requires an assessment on your part as to what actions would be the most effective. Those actions will tend to fall into patterns of behavior that you use to plan, to organize, to motivate, and to control. And those patterns you use to get work done fit into categories that make up your managerial styles. Some managers have multiple styles and are able to fit the style to the situation. Others have a narrow range of styles and tend to respond to everyone and everything in the same way. Ideally, in balancing the various inputs on the diagram above, the manager will adopt the “right” style to deal with a particular situation.

Hay McBer has studied Managerial styles extensively and identified 6 basic styles or behavior patterns. They are: Coercive, Authoritative, Affiliative, Democratic, Pacesetting, and Coaching. The most successful managers are those who have a broad array of styles. The first challenge for the manager is to understand which styles fit into their patterns of behavior/their comfort zone, and second, to determine which one to use. The latter requires an assessment of a number of characteristics in any given situation, including:

- the nature and experience of the employee(s)
- their performance strengths and weaknesses
- the nature and complexity of the task
- the time pressures
- the risk associated with deviation from performance
- the resources available

What Has

The “trick”, of course, is how you accurately assess these things in a remote environment. The remote environment is one of those “conditions” that you have to deal with. And in it, more and more, you’ll have to rely on the people who work for you, those who are closest to the situation, to provide you with the information you need to determine which style you should invoke, which skills or competencies you need to draw from, and whether you will need to alter your objectives. So communication is the key... from your employees to you so that you understand all of the characteristics in a given situation, and from you to them so that they know which style you’re using and what your expectations are.

It’s still basic stuff, but, like everything else, it requires that you carefully think through what you’re going to do and how you’re going to do it. Your company’s Management Development or HR Department may have materials on management styles that you can share with your employees.

Adapted from Hay McBer, McBer & Company, 1992
Staying Connected

As we stated on the previous page, managing in a remote world isn’t much different from managing in a traditional work environment. You’re still managing business processes and people processes. In people processes the areas of remote focus can be grouped into the five categories shown below in the Connection Model.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on each of these five areas, offering practical advice and learnings based on real experience.
Building Trust

What are the remote employees doing right now? Are they doing the work correctly? Are they even doing it at all? You may not know. That’s why trust is so important in a remote environment. Ideally, strong bonds of trust exist between the manager and all employees, whether they are remote or not. But a remote workplace truly puts trust to the test.

Tips For Building Trust:

- Call often enough to mix casual conversation with business topics. Take an interest in their home life and significant others.
- Find ways to share with the employee what is going on in the larger organization. Share information from other meetings you attend. Do this sometimes with the whole group in conference calls, and other times share one-on-one.
- Thank employees for their responsiveness to your requests.
- Keep your commitments.
- Empower people to make decisions.
- Do not constantly check up on employees. Assume that they are doing what they are supposed to be doing.

Visiting The Home Office:

At some point, you may decide to visit your employee’s home office. Regardless of your agenda, this visit will quickly become an exercise in trust. Here are a few things to remember to make the visit a trust builder and not a trust destroyer.

- Don’t drop in unannounced. Remember that you are going to somebody’s home – as well as their office. Set an appointment so the employee has enough time to put away dirty laundry, etc.
- Don’t judge. Your employee’s lifestyle or standards may not match your own. If you would rather not work with rock music playing but it doesn’t seem to bother your employee, don’t make it an issue.
- Watch for safety issues. Watch for overloaded electrical outlets, extension cords near walkways, shaky furniture, etc. Let the employee know that this is a legitimate concern of yours, since the company doesn’t want accidents to happen. However, be respectful of your boundaries when you suggest changes. Adopt a mindset of caring and not control.
Building Relationships

Have you ever lived (or do you now live) in a separate state or country from either your parents or your kids? Then you have already experienced firsthand some of the challenges of having remote relationships. However, just as rich, strong connections are possible with your distant loved-ones, it isn’t much different with your co-workers. Consider:

**Tips For Building Relationships:**
• Make building relationships a priority. If you neglect this critical area, task functions will take the sole priority.
• Seize every opportunity to see employees.
• When creating schedules for business, build in social time as well.
• Facilitate the sharing of personal information. (For example, begin phone calls with informal, friendly conversation.)
• Understand the individual styles and personality preferences of employees.
• Learn some personal things about the employee.

**Some Good News:**
There was initially a lot of speculation that the mobile work environment would greatly damage relationships. Studies and experience are showing this to be far less of a problem than people originally predicted.

Here are some of the benefits of remote work to social interaction:
• Company cultures tend to promote “groupthink” (a phenomenon in which groups begin to think homogeneously - no one “thinks outside the lines”). Being remote removes people from potentially limiting norms, adding richness and variety to relationship - as well as to the way business issues are approached.
• Being remote can initially cause isolation and loneliness, but people soon approach building relationships with a new energy and proactivity. This spills over into other areas of their lives.
• People are more encouraged to pursue relationships in the school board, the chamber of commerce, the church, or the neighborhood.
• Reputations are built more on outputs and quality of work – and less due to politics and schmoozing.
Performance Management

It may surprise you that the remote environment typically has a positive effect on performance management. With employees out of sight, managers must rely on more objective (and fair) performance measures, such as output.

Tips For Performance Management:

• Focus on the “right work.” Track process by results. Maintain a copy of the objectives, and make a copy for the employee.

• What criteria should be used to evaluate remote employees? Simple. Ask: “How is productivity measured now?” For remote employees, the measures will be pretty much the same.

• Performance should be done on an event basis. Annual 360° feedback alone doesn’t get it done. Input should be provided for each work event. As the events accumulate, a picture of performance will begin to appear.

• Provide employees with timely and ongoing feedback, either in person, by telephone or through a note.

• Establish definite times to review the progress of tasks. Assist employees in organizing their work.

• Find out what types of recognition your people want. Offer recognition such as thank-you’s, awards and promotions in person if at all possible. Announce recognition at unit meetings.

• Encourage verbal feedback among members.

• Examine the way you measure employees’ performance to make sure you are not encouraging competition. If you are, change it.

“Since you aren’t there to observe performance, employees need to take more responsibility to let you know what they are doing. How about encouraging them to fax or e-mail their accomplishments against their goals quarterly or semi-annually? Use that information as a basis for a phone conversation to learn more about what they are doing and to make any needed joint decisions about priorities, etc.”

-Vesuvius
Enabling Remote Employees

When empowerment became the hot management buzzword a few years ago, some wondered when the trend would pass. The rise of the remote workplace offers a definitive answer: never. It’s hard to talk about the remote concept without the “E” word coming up. So if you haven’t adopted an enablement mindset yet, now would be a good time to start.

• Equip your employees. You can’t just expect employees to act enabled because you said so. First, you must provide them with the skills and training to let them make decisions you used to make.

• Communicate constantly. Let employees have all of the information that would allow them to make better decisions. Encourage them to tell you when they think you are taking over or meddling.

• Let them make mistakes. Since remote employees have fewer interactions with their manager, they may make more errors in interpreting boundaries. Expect this to happen. When your remote employees make judgment errors, coach them but don’t usurp their authority as they learn the job.

• Don’t do your employee’s job. Even if you know how to do it better, or if they don’t do it like you would have, do not take control. This is the cardinal rule of empowerment.

• Trust employees. Be comfortable not knowing what all your people are doing in detail.

• Follow through. Adopt an enablement mindset and reinforce it daily. Support decisions made by employees. Provide frequent acknowledgment of positive employee-initiated actions. Refer superiors directly to the responsible people in your department.

Q and A

Q: How can managers create empowerment among remote employees?
A: “My most empowering remote manager trusted me to do my job. When I went too far or not far enough, we had a good conversation to clarify what she expected in similar situations in the future.”

- Susan G.
Orange County

A: “On the one hand, you should allow the employee to generate his own work and set his own schedule. On the other, empowerment is great but without boundaries there is chaos. Those boundaries need to be identified — and it should be done as a joint effort.”

- Andre G.
Paris

A: “Don’t just ask employees what they did this week. Ask if you can help deliver the results!”

- Rick A.
Minneapolis

A: “When I used to call my manager for help, he often responded by saying ‘why are you calling me for this?’ I realized that was his way of empowering. He was challenging my thinking that I should go to him for help.”

- Harold B.
Sydney
Communication

Often, communication used to happen by accident. Spontaneous conversations by the coffee machine or walking to the parking lot produced many rich, valuable exchanges. In the remote work world, there is no “water cooler conversation.” Thus, you need to be vigilant in keeping in touch with the people you manage.

Tips For Communicating:

• **Update your voice mail and calendar.** Keep them current so that all team members know how to reach you. Model the behaviors of being accessible and responsive.

• **Set priority levels for technologies.** Establish norms for how and when people will respond to communications. (Refer to the earlier section in this chapter on Setting Expectations.)

• **Optimize the mix of media.** Use the right technology depending on the nature of the message and not your skills. As a manager you must become a “technology pro.”

• **Consider individual styles.** Teach team members to take communication styles into account when communicating. Depending on personality preferences, for example, some may be “bottom line” people, whereas others want all the details. Engage in open dialogue on styles.

• **Create a regular forum for connecting.** Have a monthly conference call, use groupware, begin a department newsletter... use any format to keep communication flowing. (Refer to the earlier section on groupware.)

• **Develop team slang or jargon.** Just as married couples do, many groups eventually form a kind of jargon or series of inside jokes in which a single word can carry a great deal of meaning. Seek to develop this kind of bonding communication with employees.

In a 1994 HR Research study at IBM, more than half of the respondents agreed that mobility had a negative effect on communication. The upside is that this created a hyper-sensitivity for communications. They became more frequent, more focused and clearer. People began to practice communication as a skill. In your own organization, foster a mindset of learning, openness and a desire for everyone to become “technology literate.”
Doing the work. That’s what it all comes down to. After you’ve considered all the technologies, clarified all the expectations and entered the remote world, can you make it work? That’s when you reach the moment of truth.

Or is it? Actually, the moments of truth may have come earlier, as you were considering the technologies and clarifying the expectations. The rest isn’t so difficult. If you could do the work before, you can do it now.

And therein lies one of the great surprises of the remote workplace: it really isn’t all that different. So while this chapter is designed to provide you with some ideas and challenge your thinking, it makes no effort to tell you how to do your job. You’re already the expert on that subject.
Resisting The Change?

For many employees, a remote assignment is like a dream come true. But for others, it is a mandated change that produces a lot of anxiety. This is, after all, a radical new way to work – and for some, the words radical and new are not comforting when the subject is their career. From an emotional point of view, here's a look at the road that lies ahead.

You are unique. The way you experience change will not be the same way everyone else does. However, research has shown that people generally react in similar patterns when dealing with major changes.

This model, adapted from Transitions by William Bridges, divides change into three components: endings, the neutral zone and new beginnings.

**Endings:**

You will be able to manage the transition better if you understand what makes transitions successful. During the beginning of the transition curve, productivity can drop as motivation and energy drops, and anxiety rises.

Success comes by acknowledging the ending, and that you must leave the old behind. Think of the big changes in your life: the birth of a child or a major move. They may have been good changes, but each one started with an ending, or a letting go of something.

**The Neutral Zone:**

Most mistakes in managing change take place in this neutral zone. This is the necessary limbo that you experience between the old sense of identity and the new one. You are sandwiched between the parting of the old way and the uncertainty of the new way. Here are some tips for making the most of this critical rebuilding time:

- **Don’t rush it.** Acknowledge that you are in the neutral zone. Take the time you need to let go of the past.
- **Ask “Why is this happening?”** Most people regain a sense of control if they understand the environment that has brought them to this point. Talk to your manager about the organizational changes that led you here.
- **Look ahead.** On the other side of this change are some exciting possibilities, and new work philosophies that can be liberating to you.

**New Beginnings:**

Move forward with optimism and confidence. As you collect more information about your new roles and new responsibilities, you will begin to adopt your “new identity.”
Taking Care of Yourself

We all need a sense of connection to other people and to the world around us. And if you aren’t careful, a remote assignment can be an impediment to getting that connection. In the remote world (as in all areas of life) you will need to take responsibility for getting your needs met.

**Meeting Basic Needs:**

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs illustrates the basic needs that are common to all of us. Only when the basic, fundamental needs are met can successive levels be addressed.

Both the remote and mobile environments can offer some very real challenges to getting every level of these needs met. Consider:

### Physiological

These are survival needs, such as food, drink, and health.

**Remote Challenges:**

For example, if colleagues are in a different time zone, sleep hours can be disrupted for work.

**Mobile Challenges:**

The remote workplace can wreak havoc on diet and nutrition, since a cookie jar is always steps away in the kitchen. Plus, dining at fast food restaurants constantly is not good for the diet.

### Safety

These are physical and emotional security needs, such as clothing, shelter, and protection against attack. It also translates to unemployement benefits, retirement plans and job security.

**Remote & Mobile Challenges:**

Isolation can result in feeling “left out.” Co-workers are not around to provide the safety that comes from inclusion.

**Travel Challenges:**

The fear of accidents while flying and driving is a real problem for many travellers and their families.

### Affection

Remote & Mobile Challenges:

Even though you may not get lots of big bear hugs from your co-workers, they still provide important affirmation and acceptance. When working remote, you must take special efforts to build relationships with co-workers. Also, don’t let workaholism pull you from your family.

**Travel Challenges:**

Travelling a lot adds the stress of separation from your partner and family. Maintain balance, building in time for family trips, holidays, rituals and daily contact.

### Esteem

Esteem is the need for self-respect, accomplishment, and achievement.

**Remote & Mobile Challenges:**

In a remote and mobile world, managers and co-workers don’t always see what you are doing – although they will see your outputs. Take extra efforts to make sure the work you’ve accomplished while remote or mobile does not remain hidden. Exercise and a healthy diet can also contribute to your sense of self-esteem.

### Self-fulfillment (Also called Self-Actualization)

Most people have a sense of wanting to “be all they can be” and to help fellow human beings.

**Remote & Mobile Challenges:**

In a remote and mobile world, you generally accept more responsibility for your own development and self-fulfillment. Consider volunteering for professional and community organizations to “give back” and to enhance your skills and self-worth.

### Getting Organized For Self-Care:

- **Plan for goals and relationships.** Many personal planners, such as those by Day-Timer and Franklin Covey, offer pages to plan the achievement of personal goals and the building of relationships. If you’ve never been motivated to use these pages before, reconsider. The remote environment makes this kind of planning almost a necessity.

- **Exercise.** Get on an exercise schedule that includes a combination of aerobic exercise (such as jogging or Jazzercise) and strength training (lifting weights.)

- **Eat well.** Income Opportunities magazine reported that 36% of Americans who work from home or home-based business say they eat more than they did before. (Only 17% reported losing weight.) Increase your consumption of vegetables, fruits and grains. If you are travelling, look for menus that have healthier offerings.
When Do You Need Others?

Remote work may involve periods in which you are isolated from others... whether you are in a home office, hopping from one hotel to another, or simply located miles away from your manager or co-workers. For some people, this isolation is a real concern. Here are some “connection points” – times in which connection with others in the organization may be of value.

Don’t Think You Need Help? Think Again.

Some of the work you do is clearly individual in nature, such as submitting expense reports. There are also times when your work requires the help of others – such as when others have information that you don’t have.

But there are also times when you don’t have to have the help of others to do your work. Resist the temptation to do this work always on your own. Almost any work can benefit from collaboration, and it will often be worth your time just to call a colleague and say “let me run a thought by you.” (Remember, these valuable exchanges often happened spontaneously when you were co-located. Now you must compensate for the loss of “water cooler meetings.”)

When You Need Social Connection:

• Some people can work days in isolation. Others start going nuts in a matter of hours. Here are some signs that you may need to take some initiative in connecting with others:
  - You feel as if you are “out of the loop,” that others in the organization are moving forward without you.
  - You feel listless, anxious or your concentration is waning. These may be symptoms of loneliness or even depression.
  - You feel claustrophobic, or have “cabin fever” from being alone in your car, hotel or home office for too long.

Generating possibilities:

A lot of work involves generating ideas, possibilities, information or solutions. Isn’t this work best accomplished with others? How can you do generative work when you’re separated from people?

Typically, there are at least two points in your thinking where the perspective of a team or group member is valuable. The first part is divergent thinking in which you are exploring possibilities, generating ideas and considering many solutions. As a remote worker, you will generate much of this thinking. But at some point in the process you should touch base with others to avoid “narrowthink.” Are there any other possibilities and solutions you haven’t considered? Are there ways you can be challenged to think “outside the lines?” These are perspectives that are offered best by people who are not immersed into the content and process with you.

The second part is convergent thinking... a narrowing of possibilities. Now that you’ve generated options, you must begin to focus on a solution. Again, as you engage in this filtering process, a second “touch-base” with a team or group member can be extremely valuable in grounding you.
Is This Going To Work?

Sure it will work. However, there are some barriers that can make success more difficult. Here are some areas to consider.

How Much Will I Have To Adapt?

Really, anyone can work well in a remote environment. But there are some personalities that are more predisposed to this kind of work. Your chances of success are greater if:

• ... you work well alone.
• ... you focus more on outputs and results than activity and processes.
• ... you already manage your time well.
• ... you don’t require a lot of supervision and feedback.
• ... you are a self-starter, or if you think entrepreneurially.
• ... you embrace change easily.
• ... you are able to be socially separated from others.
• ... you are already very familiar with the work and the business.

If you’re thinking “this list isn’t me,” don’t panic. Instead, ask, “What can I do?” Can you find training or align yourself with someone who can help?

Can I Stay Focused?

Everyone has experienced the challenge of trying to stay focused and motivated to do the work. If you struggle with procrastination now, it will likely remain a problem once you are working in a remote setting.

Why do you procrastinate? It’s probably due to one of the following reasons:

• You’re afraid of failing. People commonly put off tasks because they believe they won’t do them well or correctly. This produces an intimidation that blocks the motivation to work.
• You’re afraid of succeeding. This isn’t as odd as it sounds. Success usually produces change – and some people are very comfortable with their current position in life. Success is a threat. “The Self-Defeating Personality” is a common phenomenon for this reason.
• Anxiety. Is there a lot of pressure on you to perform? Is the task too difficult? Are there problems in other areas of your life that produce anxiety? All of these could dilute your focus.
• Frustration. Frustration is a symptom of many different problems. Perhaps the work is too hard – or too easy. Or maybe you feel like you don’t have the support of supervisors, co-workers, etc., in your work.
• Loneliness. Let’s face it – some people have a tough time working in a vacuum. Sometimes you may just need some human contact so you can work.

Identifying and understanding the source of your procrastination is an important step in overcoming it. Note that some practical suggestions for staying motivated appear in the section entitled The Home Office.
Getting Ready

Just as you didn’t learn to ride a bicycle by jumping on and going, you must approach the remote work assignment thoughtfully and with openness.

The Expectation Dialogue:
In the chapter of this book entitled Managing From Afar, managers are encouraged to engage in a dialogue of expectations with you, the remote employee.

You should also be assertive about making this dialogue happen. After all, there are some important matters to discuss that could help you – such as who is going to pay for what (if you are mobile), or how and when you will communicate (if you are remote).

When this conversation takes place, there are some specific things your manager will need to know from you. You can begin thinking about them and taking notes now so you’ll be ready.

• How much time will you be spending in the alternate work location?
• When and how often will you talk with your manager? How will you keep your manager abreast of your work and progress?
• If you have a home office, what kinds of requirements will you have for technology, supplies and space?
• What kinds of administrative support will you need?
• How will you make the transition from the office to the alternate work location?
• When will you work? What will be your hours?

Other Things To Think About:
If you are mobile...
• When will you be available to your family?
• When will you take breaks?
• How will you dress?
• What interruptions will you allow?
• How will you handle messaging needs?
• Where are resources such as photocopy stores and faxes located?

If you are remote...
• How do time zone changes affect how you engage in conference calls or otherwise do your work?
• How much travelling will you need to do?

Setting A Work Schedule:
• Consider the amount of time you will be spending at the remote location.
• You should establish personal work rules and routines. What will they be?
• If you are setting up a home office, what kinds of space requirements do you have? What can you do now to begin setting up your home office? (Review the chapter of this book entitled The Office Not at the Office.)
• Other considerations for setting a schedule:
  - Be structured and consistent in your work hours.
  - Work at times when you can be reached by your manager or your clients.
  - Honor the needs and boundaries communicated to you by your boss.

Other Things To Think About:
If you are mobile...
• When will you be available to your family?
• When will you take breaks?
• How will you dress?
• What interruptions will you allow?
• How will you handle messaging needs?
• Where are resources such as photocopy stores and faxes located?

If you are remote...
• How do time zone changes affect how you engage in conference calls or otherwise do your work?
• How much travelling will you need to do?
Choosing Your Challenges

Now that you live and work in a remote world, part of the deal is that you take more control for your own career, growth and development. In the absence of clear succession plans, here are some thoughts on finding personal satisfaction as you begin to take control of your own destiny.

In his book *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes a “flow channel” or zone in which some people are able to spend much of their careers and lives in a heightened state of personal growth and richer experience. His concept of flow in a nutshell:

1. Let’s say you’ve stepped out onto a golf course and held a club for the first time. You have practically no skills, and your only challenge is to hit the ball. It may not be particularly hard, but you enjoy it because the challenge is just right for your beginner’s skill level. At this point, you’ll probably find yourself in a state of flow, but you won’t be able to stay there for long.

2. Over time, your skills will begin to improve. Soon, you will no longer be content to simply stand there swinging at the golf ball alone. You reach a state of boredom. You must seek out more difficult challenges if you are to remain interested.

3. Let’s say you call your manager, who is an accomplished golfer, to join you on the golf course. Now you are in a scenario where the level of challenge is too great for your level of skill. This produces feelings of anxiety or frustration.

4. Over time, as your skills continue to grow and you seek out progressively harder challenges that match your skill level, you will dip back into the flow zone. This is different from the flow state in step 1, because it is now a richer and more complex experience.

The state of flow is one of deep concentration and enjoyment. Over time, as you accept different work tasks and assignments, flow theory states you will eventually become bored by the stale opportunities you find at that level, or you will become anxious and frustrated due to your low ability. So your motivation to enjoy yourself will cause you to again seek out the flow zone... only this time at an even higher level of complexity. You can see why flow is a dynamic state that encourages continual growth and progressively higher levels of self discovery.

One of the realities of working remote is that you accept added ownership of your career and your ever-growing “toolbox” of skills and competencies. Likewise, you must be proactive in pursuing opportunities and assignments that continue to build your skills, bring new levels of challenge and spur you on to higher levels of growth.

You may choose to share this model with your manager, as a context for an ongoing dialogue in which you work together to match you up with the right opportunities as your career evolves.

Managing Your Boss

Your boss needs your help! In a remote workplace, managers can’t manage the way they managed in the past. They can’t see you, hear you or observe what you are doing on a daily basis. They are less likely to know what you need, what your problems are and how they can help. Here’s how you can help by managing your boss.

Get Inside Your Boss’ World:
• What are your manager’s goals and objectives?
• What pressures does your manager face?
• What are his strengths, weaknesses and blind spots?
• What is her preferred work style? How does your manager prefer to communicate?

Assess Your Own Needs:
• What are your own strengths and weaknesses?
• What is your personal style?
• How are your needs and styles compatible or incompatible with your manager? What can you do to compensate for differences?
• How predisposed are you towards dependence on authority figures? What steps can you take to become more autonomous?

Helping Your Boss:
• Help your boss manage the right thing. In the old world, your boss managed processes. Today, she can’t see process; she can only see products and outcomes. Help your boss shake the old mindset, and challenge her to manage based on results.
• Stay in touch. What are you doing? How are you doing? What do you need? Do you want help? Is your work successful? They’re fundamental questions, but your boss isn’t likely to know the answers unless you tell her.
• State your expectations. Discuss with your boss your expectations of him in a remote environment.
• Be up front. Let your manager know what’s going on. Don’t withhold information. Honesty builds trust.
• Handle problems. You are empowered. Don’t call your manager every time you need help. Learn where your boundaries are, and move assertively within them.
• Take control. You own your job and your career. Let your manager know if you want to do the work you’re doing, and if you are able to do the work. Identify your own competencies, and establish plans for growing in areas that you deem important.
• Don’t be a pest. Be selective in the way you use your boss’ time.

Adapted from Managing Your Boss, by John J. Gabarro and John P. Kotter, © 1980 Harvard Business Review
Myth & Reality

Myth: Teamwork and remote work are incompatible concepts.

Reality: Surprisingly, they're not. Team members can function collaboratively even when they are not co-located. The remote workplace has some effect on teams and teamwork, but not as much as you might think. Essentially, the challenges your team will face in a remote setting are the same ones that make teamwork difficult to begin with.

One benefit: Even in teams, a significant amount of work is still individual in nature. The remote environment sometimes can help to ensure that such tasks do not consume the resources and time of the team as a whole.

Lipnack and Stamps say it this way in their book, Virtual Teams, Reaching Across Space, Time and Organizational Technology: Successful virtual teams always focus on three key elements:

- People
- Purpose
- Links

Of course, all are important to the success of any team, no matter where it's members are located.

Clearly, the diversity of skills that exist on the team, the ability of different people to step forward and drive different aspects of its work, and the ease with which the team fits into the larger organization of which it is a part; the people element, is critical on all teams, but more so in the virtual team, where leadership tends to be less well defined.

And, while all teams rely heavily on a mission, vision, common purpose, calling; whatever you want to name it, virtual teams, operating quite often as they do outside of the structure and rules of the larger organization, need it even more. Ensuring that every task fits into the larger picture; “what are we trying to get done here?”, keeps the team moving together, leverages the diversity, and harnesses the energy of its members.

But links are what really set the virtual team apart. Because while all teams need links, virtual teams need a depth and breadth of them beyond that required of a co-located team. Links must support relationship building, enhance communication, make up for the lack of face to face interactions, and structure the process of getting work done. And they must do all of this such that they are seen as enablers, not just another layer of technology that gets in the way.

So... as we've been discussing in this entire book; PCs, Groupware, Cell Phones, Faxes, Phonemail, E-mail are all tools that make these critical linkages more doable. But equally important is our ability to use them properly and to fit them into the human, personal side of team building that still needs to be done in any team.

Adapted from Virtual Teams, Reaching Across Space, Time and Organizational Technology, by Lipnack and Stamps, John Wiley and Sons, 1997
Creating A Sense Of Connection:

- Send birthday e-mail.
- Send photo Christmas cards.
- Insure everyone has an equal amount of information.
- Have periodic mandatory meetings, if possible, with an informal gathering afterwards.
- Treat all team members with equal respect and dignity.
- Whenever possible, get everyone together socially - for dinner, for “fun in the sun” outings, etc.
- Create a photo and bio directory of your team.
- Create a name for your team, or even a logo. Print them on team t-shirts and jackets.
- Ask other team members for help.
- Identify team members who require more contact than others, and make it a point to touch base with them more often.
- When you send e-mail, write in a casual, informal style as if you were talking to the recipient.

New Team Members:

- Assign a team member to be the initial focal point for questions.
- Bring the new member up to speed on the team’s “purpose statement, code of conduct and any other schedules, procedures, etc. (This is a good time for the whole team to review these things and adjust or modify them, if needed.)
- Facilitate the new person getting to know members on a personal basis.

Departing Team Members:

- Transfer work tasks to other members.
- As a team, determine the impact of the person leaving and make plans to handle it. Consider informal roles the person has played and determine how to compensate for this loss. (For example, the member may have been a mentor to someone, the “group clown,” the nurturer, the organizer, etc.)
- Have some kind of farewell meeting or event to provide closure for all members.
There’s a lot more that could be said about working in a remote and mobile world.

Or, depending upon how you look at it, there’s really little else to say about it. The answers are already out there in your work styles and preferences, and your own experiences. Ultimately, the best way to learn to work in a remote world is to work in a remote world.

This book has tried to be helpful in alerting you to the issues associated with being remote. If you would like to find out more about this exploding work concept, there’s a wealth of information available. Research the internet. Visit the business section in the bookstore. Talk to other friends who have done it and succeeded (or failed!). Share what you have learned with others.

But most important, stay positive, stay healthy and stay connected. Don’t let the word remote fool you. You’re closer to opportunities than you ever were before.
is not an interactive medium.
Office