

# Staying connected

A virtual working arrangement can make you a more productive and efficient employee. But working from home can be isolating. Because you're out of sight, you want to ensure you're not out of mind for those at the office. You can use the initiatives below to help keep your performance on track, develop your career, and hear the latest news from the office!

- **Regular face to face “check-ins” with your manager.** Take advantage of face-to-face time with your manager and co-workers whenever possible. Meet with your manager regularly, attend the occasional meeting, pop in for birthdays and other celebrations at the office, be seen at company events and have lunch with colleagues. This helps maintain personal relationships with co-workers and managers.
- **Keep in touch.** Stay in contact on a daily basis with colleagues via email, text, Skype, phone or instant messaging. Communicate when

you'll be out of the office due to appointments and other obligations. Maintain a personal connection. Ask what's new, how things are going and if they're available to have coffee with you the next time you're in the office.

- **Status updates.** How does a boss who is remote from you know that you are pleasing your customers and co-workers? As a virtual employee it's critical that you share your accomplishments with those who need to know about them. Send out status updates, relevant metrics or whatever is needed to ensure that your work and workload is getting recognized. Keep a “kudos” file of complimentary emails from clients or colleagues. This can help provide a good overview of your accomplishments throughout the year, in addition to providing backup for your ongoing service that isn't "seen" by your remote manager.
- **Network as much as you can.** When you work from home, you rely on the Internet to help build a successful professional network. But don't forget about conferences and other networking events. It's important to leave your home office and attend business functions in your company and in your industry so you can expand your network and build your professional reputation.
- **Be accessible.** Make sure that you are every bit as accessible as the worker in the next office or cubicle. Respond quickly to emails and calls so that there is no doubt that you're an integral member of the team.
- **Foster strong relationships.** Having advocates back in the office is essential for virtual workers. Your ability to get things done still depends on your personal relationships with co-workers.
- **Volunteer.** Offer to help plan the annual staff recognition day, publish the company's newsletter, or serve on the company's health and wellness committee. Volunteering at work helps keep you visible – and appreciated.
- **Stay focused on excellence.** Whether you work in a home or corporate office, always meeting deadlines, delivering outstanding work and having a positive “can do” attitude will get you noticed.

Today's technology is making it possible for an increasing number of people around the world to work from home. By 2020, one in three people in North America are expected to be working virtually. It's a new way of working that requires specific skills and, for the right people, working virtually has tremendous personal and professional advantages.