Demonstrating Presence Regardless of Work Location

AMWA 2019

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Agenda

Introductions
The Survey
  • Background
  • Objectives
  • Methods
  • Limitations
  • Results
Discussion
Presenter and Panel Introductions

- Name
- Current Work
- Relevant Background
- Interest in this Workshop
“Working Remotely”: A Definition

For the purposes of this workshop, working remotely is defined as performing ones work while located at a site different from a client or onsite place of employment or team location.
The Survey: Background

- Many people have successful careers working remotely
- Working remotely is becoming more of the norm in many industries
- Concerns exist for some employers/clients regarding remote worker performance and for some workers for reduced growth opportunities
The Survey: Objectives

• Survey was designed to capture:
  • concerns about working remotely
  • solutions that successful remote workers utilize

• Successful solutions can be shared with those who are interested in a successful career working remotely
The Survey: Methods

Survey Structure
- Participant Background
- Participant Concerns about working remotely and/or managing workers who work remotely
- Participant Best Practices
- 17 Questions: 14 with selections to choose; 3 free-text

Survey Creator and Reviewers
- Workshop lead created
- 4 reviewers: 2 similar background of creator and 2 different background

Survey Recipients
- BioBridges database of consultants and clients in the area of medical communications
- AMWA Engage: Medical Writing & Communication Digest
The Survey: Limitations

**Survey Structure**
- Unclear definition of “working remotely”
- Several open-ended questions = complicated results to summarize

**Survey Creator and Reviewers**
- Survey questions biased toward creator’s background, work location, and emphasis on client and colleague concerns
- Limited prereviewers

**Survey Recipients**
- Recipients biased towards those working remotely
# The Survey: Background Information Results

## Respondent Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>209</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry</strong></td>
<td><strong>Majority of respondents:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biotech/device/pharma: 76%, Academic 5%, CME 4%, Other 15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years in Current industry</strong></td>
<td>0-2: 5%, 2-5: 12%, 5-10: 13%, 10-15: 19%, 15+: 51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management Experience</td>
<td>yes: 66%, no: 15%  (yes: onsite only 15%, yes: onsite and remote 35%, yes: remote only)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Currently Working Remotely</strong></td>
<td>yes: entirely: 63%; yes: mostly onsite, some remote 13%; yes: basically remote, some onsite 16%; no: 8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worked Remotely in Past</td>
<td>yes 84%; no 16%</td>
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### The Survey: Background Results Summary

#### Majority of respondents:

- Biotech/device/pharma (76%)
- 15+ years in industry (51%); 5-15 years (22%)
- Management experience (66%)
- Significant experience working remotely, both currently (92%) and in the past (84%)
Q: I work (or would like to work) remotely and worry that working remotely may create the perception that I am passive, indifferent, unavailable, or disconnected.
The Survey: Remote Work Solutions

Q: I manage or have managed remote workers and have had the concern that, by working remotely, they may be perceived as passive, indifferent, unavailable, or disconnected.

TRUE

FALSE

N/A
Q: I manage or have managed remote workers and I have found that it takes more effort on my behalf to ensure they are not perceived as passive, indifferent, unavailable, or disconnected.
Q: I work remotely and/or manage remote workers and find it essential to stay on top of technological advances to stay relevant, engaged, and connected despite working remotely.
Q: I work remotely and/or manage remote workers and find it essential to communicate in more detail about my work with my manager and/or colleagues to ensure I am not perceived as passive, indifferent, unavailable, or disconnected.
Q: I work remotely and/or manage remote workers and find it essential to deliberately shift my techniques, depending on each manager or client environment, to stay relevant, engaged, and connected despite working remotely.
Q: I work remotely and/or manage remote workers and find that one can stay relevant, engaged, and connected despite working remotely by (select all that apply):

- Actively reaching out to onsite team members/managers via email or instant-messaging on project-related work topics
- Proactively communicating with my manager
- Proactively communicating with a team or project leader
- Proactively communicating with colleagues
- Actively pursuing career advancement opportunities
- Actively pursuing ongoing education, such as certificates and/or advanced degrees
- One or two of the above
- All or most of the above
- N/A

0%  5%  10%  15%  20%
The Survey: Stay Relevant, engaged, and connected despite working remotely by:

- Actively reaching out to onsite team members/managers via email or IM on project-related work topics: 73%
- Proactively communicating with colleagues: 72%
- Proactively communicating with team/project leader or manager: 66%
The Survey: “Proactive Communication” Means…

- Take initiative
- Build relationships
- Use technology wisely
- Be consistent
- Be authentic
Communicate so no one is surprised ...update before they ask ...set expectations at start...email or call before they ask ...initiate interaction... keep my workload and schedule visible...communicate before a crisis...send initial correspondence ...before executing...anticipate issues, questions, updates.... anticipate team/project needs ...reach out to say hello...speak to stakeholders ... ask questions vs "I didn't know so…”...reach out about projects... make suggestions...get in touch when communication has not been scheduled...start the interaction...confirm on target...identify/address potential pitfalls...initiate meetings, emails, phone calls without prompts...raise concerns, ask questions, respond quickly...be engaged...be accessible at all times...over-communicate...communicate possible timeline impacts before urgent...initiate rather than waiting or reacting...
Build relationships before needed... make contact to provide updates or just to check in... communicate with others as I communicate in person...... make your presence known rather than waiting for others to come to you... walk around and say hello... however appropriate, be accessible... get to know people by asking questions and share info about oneself (professionally of course!)... learn what is important to your boss/client/team... don’t assume...
Sometimes an email, sometimes a phone call... email is less effective than phone or SKYPE... use email when time zones are a barrier... use focused subject lines for emails... phone/text when email does not work... send notifications such as "I received your project and can meet the deadline"... phone communication is essential if not onsite... deal with immediate problems by phone... when feasible, do face-to-face time... make calls... answer the phone!... be willing and available for conference calls... be sure your cell service works well or use a landline... confirm your phone sounds clear and professional...
Proactive Communication = **BE CONSISTENT**

Send regular **full project updates**... update on **project progress**... ensure **expectations** are clear... check in **throughout** not just when problems... inform via **spreadsheets or other tools**... provide **consistent updates/ progress reports** to the team/lead... keep **leaders in the loop**... check in periodically with **status updates**... provide regular updates and **relevant industry news**... proactively communicate **even minor schedule changes**... send emails when going offline to **avoid perception as unavailable**... have **standing meetings**... communicate **consistently** as opposed to waiting to hear... keep all informed of **project status or availability to take on additional assignments**... provide a **scheduled weekly status update**... report on **status updates and concerns** before being asked... keep **people in the loop**... email **weekly summaries** of project status, meeting participation... maintain **continued communication** with colleagues, team members, and manager
Care about the people with whom I work...communicate in a **judicious and relevant** manner - not just a rehash...ask **questions**, **listen**, **explain**...ask as many questions as necessary...reach out **without hesitation**...state what **does not seem to be correct**...be **critical**...find the **balance** between proactive and overwhelming...**engage as a peer with subject matter experts**...communicate **openly and frequently**...provide **unsolicited input**...don’t be a **nuisance**...keep **true to one’s schedule**: help clients respect my schedule, which assures them I’ll respect theirs...be **honest** and **accurate** about ones availability and capabilities...
The Survey: In Summary

Many people have or want **successful careers working remotely** and it is becoming more of the norm.

The purpose was to **understand concerns** associated with working remotely and **identify best practices** for a successful remote career.

Responses are from **209 medical communications**; limitations of developer **biases** and **limited** respondents.

Majority worked in **biotech/device/pharma** (76%) 15+ **years** (51%), **mgmt** experience (66%), with **experience working remotely**, (currently [92%] and past [84%]).

The respondents shared over **500 best practices** for those wanting a **successful remote career**.
Thank you!

Most importantly, thank you to our respondents, who took the time to freely share their best practices!

Thank you to our panel for digging in and sharing their time and best practices!

Thank you all for attending and participating!