

9 Work From Home^(WFH) Tips For Young Creatives





We asked agency up-and-comers and their managers to drop some insightful truths about the new world of work and agency life.

WFH RAWKS

WFH SUCKS

THE
STRUGGLE
IS
NEW

WFH DROOLS

THE
STRUGGLE
IS
REAL

WFH RULES

THE
STRUGGLE
IS
DAILY

WFH WORKS

Young
creative
talent,
tug your
ear over
here...

Balance work & life like a boss.

The work-life balance can get fuzzy if you let it. You know the saying... with great flexibility comes great responsibility. For many, work and life are ever-shifting, ever-entwining things now. Sometimes life will take priority. Sometimes work will take priority. And that's OK. But having them both under one roof can sometimes lead to squishy moments. *Ask yourself:* Do I have the discipline to stay on task at home? Are there reminders I can set, habits I can create or spaces I can design to help me keep work "at work"? What are my nonnegotiable boundaries, are they realistic? Be honest with yourself. Stay flexible.

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**You need to
 set boundaries
 for yourself.
 It's really easy
 to find yourself
 working late
 when you
 don't need
 to be."**

— Corie Baker, Art Director

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**Keep your
 workspace
 clean and
 free of
 distractions."**

— Jennifer Clotfelter, Junior Visual Artist

01

Admit that you don't know what you don't know!

02

— Bronwyn Lipka, Junior Art Director

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Ask lots of questions. When I first started, 50% of the stuff my coworkers were talking about went right over my head. Don't be scared to ask what they are talking about.”

It's totally OK! You're new to this thing. No one expects you to know much of anything yet. Everyone understands, because they were new once too. So ask lots of questions. Speak up when you're not sure what to do next. Be honest. Be vulnerable. Be open to feedback and coaching. *Ask yourself:* How much time is my silence wasting? How much is my silence hurting my work? My personal brand? Speak up. Be curious.

Admit that you don't know what you don't know!

02

—Melissa Barton, Group Creative Director

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A big part at the beginning of your career is to be a sponge and learn all aspects. Also, ask to shadow other departments, like project management, finishing, etc., so you can see the big picture of the agency. Being engaged in every step of projects early on helped me not only to understand the process, but to build great relationships right away.”

03

Don't Houdini behind your screen.

In a work-from-home world, you've got to be deliberate and intentional about every single interaction. Some of your coworkers will see you several times a day, some a few times a week. Others, maybe just once a month. *Ask yourself:* How am I showing up to my teammates? What were my previous few interactions like? What unconscious impressions am I leaving them with? Perception is reality. Be aware. Be engaged.

— Kelly Drummond, Associate Creative Director

“ Make yourself visible, even when it's uncomfortable. Interact with the Slack channels, share pet photos, sign up for a mentor, put your camera ON (most days), make small talk before meetings... it takes more effort these days to meet colleagues, but it's really important. And remember that a lot of people are probably just as uncomfortable as you are.”

Sure, everyone is busy. But everyone is also human (and Martian). They've been where you are. They empathize with how hard it is to start a new job on top of starting a new job virtually. They're here to help. Never stop yourself from asking questions or soliciting feedback on your work because you feel like you're imposing. You're not. Creating in a bubble is hard. So don't.

Instead, ask yourself: Is my question searchable? Who is best to help me in this moment? How timely do I need this answer/feedback? Should I send a follow-up to remind them I need something? Have I communicated my needs and timing clearly?

Conversely, if you find yourself with time to spare, reach out to coworkers and managers to see who and how you can help. Someone might be drowning in silence, and your help could make all the difference.

04

— Ciara Panachia, VP Creative Director

Ignore that
“I don't want
to bother so-
and-so” pang.

“Set up time to share the work as often as possible, especially while you are learning communication styles and ways of working. Don't wait for an internal creative review to share something if you have thoughts you want to run by a lead on how you want to approach a project, or if you need help on approaching a project, or if you are just plain stuck.”

Develop communication strategies that work for you.

05

Video, email, IM, phone call, text, in-person, shared docs. There are more forms of “work” communication than ever. Take a hard look at the various tasks and connects you have with your team and determine which work best for each. *Ask yourself:* Which channels and tasks are flexible? How can I make every channel work harder for me?

— Andrew Furca, Art Director

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If I have a large meeting where my only objective is to pay attention, I usually take it while riding a stationary bike.”



Learn your creative rhythm. Protect it.

06

Beyond getting to pop in a load of laundry between meetings, the single greatest benefit to work-from-home is that you're now 100% in charge of your creativity. Everything from your creative environment to your creative schedule (to some extent).

Ask yourself: When/where do I do my best thinking/designing/writing/creating? When/where do I knock out my tasks most efficiently? How can I structure my days and weeks to be inspiring and productive? Am I properly communicating my preferred way of working with my team — while being flexible and respectful of theirs?

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You're no longer confined by a cube or even a time of day to create. Night owls be night owls. Early birds be early birds. As creatives, we've always been "always on"... now we just have more control over all of the levers. Don't forget to make time to fill your funnel."

— Tom Drennen, Executive Creative Director

07

On the surface, this sounds like it's in direct conflict with "you're never bothering someone," but knowing how your coworkers prefer to structure their days and collaborate goes a long way toward knowing when and how to engage them.

Ask yourself: Have I asked my coworkers about their preferred ways of working? Collaborating? Are there things that I'm doing that may be knocking them off track? Can I use tools like "schedule send" or "status settings" to show empathy?

Respect your coworkers' work styles & creative rhythms.

We're accustomed to this happening face to face. Now it's a digital-virtual dance. Find the ways to collaborate that work for you. Hone your collab skills through those tools, and advocate for them. But also, be open and flexible to ways of collab'ing that work for others. All our brains work in beautifully different ways. In the words of Ted Lasso, 'be curious, not judgmental.'"

— Seth Barnhill, Creative Director

— Christina Kane, Associate Creative Director

“I have a standing ‘open patio policy.’ Anyone can just pop in and work with me from my patio. I know some teams that will set up an open video call and just work independently and chat like they would in an office. There’s no instruction manual. You have to get creative. Build the culture you’d thrive in.”

Curate your own micro-culture.

An agency has a culture. An office has a culture. A team has a culture. There’s nothing holding you back from curating your own work-from-home culture. How you work, where you work, with whom you work... the tools and possibilities are all yours. *Ask yourself:* How can I promote behaviors/activities I value with my team? Are there people in the agency who aren’t on my team that I’d like to connect with more frequently? Can I create an IM or email group around a shared interest? Can I create a work group with other young creatives from the agency? Be deliberate. Be inspired.

08

Be your own advocate.

Truth bomb. You are on your own island. But so is your manager. You've got to set up the right infrastructure to get the food and water and shelter you need. Your manager will absolutely do their best to help set it up. But they can't anticipate everything. And behind every best intention from your manager is now a distance and an inevitable blind spot. They no longer see how you walked away from that review. Or see you struggling to find that layout. They don't know your partner dumped you last night. *Ask yourself:* How can I get what I need? *Don't ask:* Why am I not getting what I need?

— Kristi Piziks, Creative Director

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Picking up a coworker's vibe is a challenge virtually. It takes longer to see if someone is rocking it out or struggling, or if someone is super-happy vs. feeling down.”

09

W F H



WORKS

— Bobbi Bowers, Executive Creative Director

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It sounds counterintuitive, but the beauty of working remotely is that it's often easier (yes, really) to connect with others now than it was before.

If you have a question for your manager, reach out to them. If you want to get your team together, set it up. If you want to know how another team approached a similar assignment, ask them.

Use the tools you have at your disposal to facilitate those connections, and don't wait for someone else to do it for you.”

WORKS

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