Academic Analytics Guide to Working from Home

I. Virtual Communication

- Important to emote a little more than usual. Let people know you are smiling with your voice.

- It can be hard to understand intention with limited facial cues and body language. Give people the benefit of the doubt!

- Using a tool like Teams or Slack for internal communication is essential. Be sure to update your status so people know whether you are available or away from your desk. Also, be sure to respect other people's availability status. It is bad form to write to someone while they are in a meeting.

II. Virtual Meeting Etiquette

- Don't be afraid to let people know you can't hear them or if their sound quality is off—they will appreciate knowing!

- Use the chat feature to let meeting participants know if you have to step away (better than interrupting the conversation).

- Make a conscious effort to pay attention to your colleagues. If possible, don't do other work, stay off of your phone, etc.

III. Daily Routine

- Some folks find it really important to get dressed for a day at the office to help send a signal to your brain that it's work time. Others find it liberating to roll out of bed in their PJs and get right to work. Our colleagues run the gamut.

- Whichever style fits you best, remember to bake in breaks throughout the day. It's easy to sit down in front of your computer and work eight (or more) hours straight. Great for productivity, but not so much for mental health.

- When you work from home it becomes easier to let work interfere with family and personal time. Set physical and mental boundaries between your personal life and work life and stick to them.

IV. Equipment and Space

- An external speaker with a mic is a great investment. (We use Jabra.)

- Bluetooth (but also wired) headsets are particularly useful – a wired set of earbuds or AirPods (especially if you have a Mac) are great for web-based meetings as they reduce feedback – and Bluetooth headsets allow you not to be totally tethered to your computer.

- Break the printer habit. Most of us only maintain electronic files.

- Have a back-up plan in case you lose connectivity (many of us use cell service for this).

- Create the ability to stand while working.

- If possible, set-up in a designated office or workspace rather than your bedroom. This makes it easier for your brain to respect work and personal boundaries.

V. Building a Virtual Team Ethos

- Virtual happy hours are a great way to boost morale. Get the team together at the end of the day/week for a light-hearted gathering with games and an open dialogue about anything at all. Beverages and webcam are optional.

- Make a point of saying good morning to a new person every day, not because you need something, but because you haven't talked in a long time.

- Make a daily effort to initiate non-work-related chats with colleagues to help stay connected in a more human way and to maintain/build relationships.

VI. Challenges

- Dogs/kids
  - Background noise from family members is going to happen. While it's definitely a good idea to take steps to get everyone situated (fed, toys, etc.), it turns out people understand. In fact, it can actually help humanize you a little bit and build some goodwill with your colleagues—almost everyone has had a similar situation.

- Doorbells and deliveries
  - Consider a doorbell camera and/or hang a "No Soliciting" sign by your door. This helps reduce the amount of unnecessary distraction and this way you do not to have to leave a meeting to open the door for someone trying to sell you aluminum siding.

- Cameras
  - Be aware when your camera is on.
  - Get a camera cover. Black electrical tape works great.
  - You can also just disable your camera from within the control panel/settings.

- Staying Focused
  - Turn off notifications (news, Pinterest, private chats).
  - Put your phone out of easy reach in order to minimize the temptation to check it during a meeting.

- Missing Human Contact
  - Not surprisingly, introverts often do better working from home, while extroverts, who get energy from interacting with other people, can find it more challenging until they get the hang of it. Here are some tips from our more extroverted colleagues:
    - Chat with team members. Liberal use of GIF's helps!
    - Virtual happy hours are a great way to proxy human interaction.