



# **Telework: How to Telecommute Successfully**

*A 5 Step Guide Designed for the Modern Teleworker  
Hints, Tips & How to Stay Involved with your Employer*

**Written by  
Nicole Bachelor & Don Philpott**



**Government Training Inc.™**  
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Government Training Inc. <sup>TM</sup>  
Rights and Contracts Department  
5372 Sandhamn Place  
Longboat Key, Florida 34228  
[don.dickson@GovernmentTrainingInc.com](mailto:don.dickson@GovernmentTrainingInc.com)



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## About the authors

### *Nicole Bachelor*

Nicole Bachelor is a professional, experienced telecommuter and has lectured and taught extensively on this subject. Her upbeat, positive style communicates her balanced approach to creating a win-win for telecommuter and manager. Her focus includes the development of management process and tools that enable successful telecommuting.

She has been telecommuting exclusively for over 4 years, and working from home at least a few days per week for many years before that. Nicole, who works at a large, high-tech company based in Silicon Valley, was able to rise to top ranking in her job while telecommuting full-time.

Nicole was the author and key presenter of a national webinar series on How to Manage Telecommuters produced by Government Training Inc. The webinar that was set up to address the new federal government telecommuting initiative based on the Federal Telecommuting Improvement Act passed by conference in the winter of 2010.

### *Don Philpott*

Don Philpott is editor of International Homeland Security, a quarterly journal for homeland security professionals, and has been writing, reporting and broadcasting on international events, trouble spots and major news stories for more than 40 years. For 20 years he was a senior correspondent with Press Association -Reuters, the wire service, and traveled the world on assignments including Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Israel, South Africa and Asia.

He writes for magazines and newspapers in the United States and Europe and is a contributor to radio and television programs on security and other issues. He is the author of more than 90 books on a wide range of subjects and has had more than 5,000 articles printed in publications around the world. His most recent books are Handbook for COTRs, Performance Based Contracting, Cost Reimbursable Contracting, How to Manage Teleworkers and just released, How to Manage Teleworkers: Toolkit. All of these books have been published by Government Training Inc.

He is a member of the National Press Club.



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## Symbols

Throughout this book you will see a number of icons displayed in the margins. The icons are there to help you as you work through the Five Step process. Each icon acts as an advisory – for instance alerting you to things that you must always do or should never do. The icons used are:



Must Do

This is something that you must always do



No No

This is something you should never do



Tips

Really useful tips



Remember

Points to bear in mind



Checklist

Have you checked off or answered everything on this list?



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## **INTRODUCTION**

I have probably written the majority of this book while wearing my pajamas. For that matter, I have probably performed the majority of my job, for the last four years or more, in my pajamas.

Here's what a typical day looks like for me:

6:30 am – Roll out of bed and sit right down in front of the computer. Start looking through my inbox to see if any emergencies cropped up while I was asleep or if there are any urgent emails I have to respond to – especially from my European coworkers. Maybe take a phone meeting.

7:30 am – Get the kids up, fed, and dressed so when the nanny arrives she can take my son to pre-school.

8:30 am – Pour myself a bowl of cereal and hop right back onto my computer. I probably have back-to-back phone meetings now for the next few hours – group meetings that include my European counterparts.

12:30 pm – Notice the time. Notice my stomach growling. Drag myself away from my computer and go make some lunch. Take a break to chat with my nanny and play with my baby daughter. If I've been organized enough the night before to prep dinner, I turn on the crock-pot and let food start to cook. Take my lunch back to my computer and get back to work.

2:30 pm – Notice the time. Go take a shower and get out of my pajamas! Take another little break to cuddle with my baby daughter. Return to work and hop on the emails from my Australian coworkers so I can get a few back-and-forth conversations with them by email before the end of my day.

5:00 pm – Stop work. Poke at the food in the crock-pot. Let the nanny head home. Pickup my son from preschool, greet my husband when he gets home (and be thankful I got around to the shower today) and start the evening chaos with two small children, dinner, bath times, bedtimes, etc.

8:15 pm – Done getting the kids to bed. Return to my computer for 10 minutes to see if any urgent emails have come in from my Asian coworkers. Or if my boss (two time zones ahead of me) has been working in the evening, I can send a quick reply to him so he can have his answers when he first gets up in the morning (plus it looks like I'm working hard when he sees emails sent from me at 8:30 pm!).



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8:30 pm – Sit down to rest in front of the TV for an hour or two before I crawl into bed, pass out, and repeat the next day!

Some people might find this blending and melding of personal life and work an ideal, dream work situation. Others might be appalled. I will not lie to you and tell you that full-time telecommuting is right for everyone. However, for many people it gives huge advantages and for just about everyone, occasional telecommuting can really simplify life.

Nicole Bachelor

Note: Don Philpott has teleworked for the last 20 years – but not in his PJs!

This book will help you figure out if telecommuting is right for you, how to convince your boss to let you do it, and, most importantly, how to do it successfully.



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## **STEP 1. IS TELECOMMUTING RIGHT FOR ME?**

In general, the occasional day spent working from home (because you're expecting the plumber/cable guy/ important delivery or because you have a mid-day checkup with the dentist) is a common theme. But what about more serious telecommuting – either daily, or consistently for a few days per week?

### ***Advantages of Telecommuting***

Well first, let's examine the advantages. Although some may be obvious to you, you may not have considered them all. And these, stacked up against any disadvantages or concerns you may have, are worth considering.

- Roll out of bed and work in your pajamas!
- Eliminate your commute time (and spend the spare time as you choose).
- Avoid the cost of commuting.
- Avoid the frustration and road rage from fighting traffic during your commute.
- Improve the quality of the environment by taking one more car off the road.
- Reduce interruptions from co-workers and office buddies when you really need to focus and get things done.
- Save money by grabbing meals from the fridge instead of paying the over-priced cafeteria costs for lousy, less-than-healthy meals.
- Save time:
  - For yourself – you can be there to have breakfast with your children or make it to that soccer practice once in a while, or squeeze in your doctor or dentist appointment.
  - For your job – it's much easier to take early morning or late evening phone calls with coworkers in other parts of the world.
- Save money by not having to buy expensive office clothes (and not having to send them to the dry cleaners).



### *Potential Downsides of Telecommuting*



Remember

The list in the previous section looks pretty good huh? However, there are some potential downsides to telecommuting. You should not consider these as show-stoppers. This book will arm you with the knowledge to deal with these and more, and, in some cases, to use them to your advantage!

- Less face time with your boss and coworkers – out of sight can mean out of mind.
- Taking meetings by phone means you lose the information transmitted by eye contact, facial expression, and body language that you would get in a face-to-face meeting.
- More challenging to learn and receive guidance from co-workers or your boss.
- Fewer chances to directly oversee subordinates.
- Sense of isolation working alone in your home.
- Potential distractions in your house (the fridge calling you, the dirty laundry calling you, the fridge calling you, urges to tidy up around the house, the fridge calling you, an unexpected visit from the neighbor, did I mention the fridge calling you?).
- Interruptions from friends and family who don't understand that "working from home" still means "working."
- Working too much (yes, you read that right) – not being able to stop at the end of the work day.
- Losing your downtime opportunity on your way to and from work (assuming your commute isn't too frustrating and you enjoy a little time to think in the car or read on the train).

Now, we didn't write this list to frighten you. Knowing the potential pitfalls is half the battle. Most people simply fail to consider or acknowledge that there's anything to be careful of and that's why they struggle. But we know you're not going into this with your eyes closed – after all, you were concerned enough to buy this book!

The first two bullets relate to the lack of direct face-to-face interaction with your boss and coworkers. There are a number of techniques we'll discuss on how to deal with this.

The rest of the bullets can all be answered with some simple techniques we will discuss and just a little bit of discipline to stick to those techniques.

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#### **Telework is NOT:**

- ◆ Work extension: many employees take work home with them. This is remote work, but it is not considered to be telework within the scope of the legislation.