

Avoid Loneliness When Working From Home

Running your own business from home can achieve two dreams at the same time: You are in charge, and you get to do it without leaving your living quarters.

Many small-business owners have found a niche for their product or service. That niche allows them to work from home, thus minimizing overhead, ending long commutes, and even allowing them to work in their pajamas if they wish. Plus, they are in charge and are able to showcase their skills and abilities.

“Yet working from home, while having its benefits, also has hurdles to overcome,” says Glenn Muske, the North Dakota State University Extension Service’s rural and agribusiness enterprise development specialist. “Ask home-based business owners and you will get a list of issues that they have had to deal with in making their home-based business work.”

Probably the most common issue is a feeling of loneliness. This may occur at any time. Some feel it when starting their business. They perhaps have been surrounded by work colleagues and now they have no one with whom to bounce around ideas. Or loneliness may develop as the days, months or even years go by.

A second issue is the risk of becoming a workaholic. This happens when you have no one to take you away from work. Working from home makes slipping into the office to work on just one more project so easy to do.

Third, home-based business owners also may say that at times, they just run out of creativity and new ideas.

“Overcoming these issues is not hard,” says (Insert name and title) of (Insert county). “There are easy ways to overcome these issues. The hardest step is just doing them.”

Things you can do include:

- Recognizing your patterns. Do you sit in the chair and continue to work, or do you keep going back to the office to do just one more thing? Schedule downtime for yourself and stick to it.
- Working at the local coffee shop or a restaurant if you feel you have to work. While a library is a nice location and quiet, getting out means interacting with people. You have enough quiet at home. Now you need to be around people who are interacting.
- Finding local networking events, even those that occur in the middle of the day. You work at home because it allows you flexibility. So take advantage of it.
- Attending events that aren’t work-related. Again, you have the chance to work at different hours. So if you find a social group or personal learning opportunity you always have wanted to attend but it occurs during the middle of the day, go for it.

- Rewarding yourself. When you get something done, head out for lunch, go for a walk, hit the gym or spend some time with family.

Running your own business from home offers great opportunities. Take advantage of them and make them work for you with imagination and commitment.

For help, contact your local Extension Service office at [insert phone number and email address]. Also visit NDSU's small-business support website at www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness and sign up for the monthly newsletter. Or check out Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/NDSUextsmallbiz> or Twitter at @gmuske.

Other resources include <http://powerofbusiness.net> and www.eXtension.org/entrepreneurship. The Small Business Administration and its related organizations, such as the Small Business Development Centers and SCORE, also can be valuable resources.

###

For more information, contact glenn.muske@ndsu.edu or call (701) 328-9718. You also can visit our website, www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness.