

MARKETING

How to be a successful and persuasive communicator while working remotely

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Working from home while multitasking will require special persuasion skills to convince decision-makers in the absence to face-to-face meetings

By **Juliet Huck**

As social distancing becomes the new normal throughout the United States and the world, professionals across industries are making drastic and immediate changes to their work and presentation styles.

With the quick shift to working from home, business leaders, lawyers and sales and marketing teams are navigating new terrain figuring out how to effectively communicate in a way that will achieve a desired outcome while working remotely.

There is nothing quite like the energy and connection that a face-to-face interaction can create, but we have to try to work with what we have got.

With that being said, just because we are in a period of social distancing does not mean that work and persuasion come to a halt.

Remote work was a rising trend before the COVID-19 pandemic, with **regular work-at-home growing 173 percent since 2005**.

With so many additional businesses moving to a work-at-home structure for the time being, it is safe to assume that broader long-term adoption will become even more prevalent over the coming years.

It is a good idea for professionals to start learning now how to connect remotely to stay ahead of the curve. Here are a few tools and tactics that will help you become a successful and persuasive communicator via a remote connection.

Stick to the basics

Even through a remote connection, the basics of persuasion apply.

It is vital that you do your homework and learn about the decision maker.

Just because you are not meeting face-to-face does not mean that you can skip the groundwork you would regularly complete. What are your target's demographics? Do they have any special interests?

You will need to establish an even stronger bond to persuade via remote means, so flex your research talents and learn about your target.

You should also continue to find their needs and pain points. Learning this information will help you demonstrate to your decision maker that you understand their goals, even if you cannot see them in person.

Establishing a strong sense of understanding will help you build trust and allow you to position yourself as an advisor. This trust will be critical for remote persuasion.

Leverage technology

Although working from home can create another level of separation from your target, technology has progressed leaps and bounds when it comes to interpersonal communication.

Tools such as Zoom and Skype for Business allow your audience to see your face. You should leverage your entire technology suite to help you persuade remotely.

Visuals must lead your decision maker to your desired conclusion. Create polished presentations to either show via conference call or email ahead of your meeting.

When you might not regularly do this when meeting face-to-face, you may consider incorporating a video presentation as well.

Video can be a terrific way to establish an emotional connection with your decision maker, providing for a unique story telling opportunity complete with visual and musical cues.

Nearly **90 percent** of professionals indicated that a strong narrative was critical in maintaining their attention. Engagement with your story is more important than ever, as you will be competing with additional distractions including family and pets.



Working from home will require enhanced skills to convince prospects

Practice and develop a style

Personal energy exchange is very difficult via a computer screen. You must determine who you are as a presenter in this new medium. How can you be more dynamic through remote connection?

Before jumping on a conference call, practice on your computer by recording yourself and playing it back to see how you present on camera. Think this is taking it too far?

Consider the first time you had to leave a professional voicemail and were put on the spot to communicate your needs in a brief message. It took time to sharpen those skills and you are probably a pro now.

The same is true for online presentations. It might take a few rounds to get comfortable, but at this point in your career there's no time to fumble. "Practice makes perfect!"

Be memorable

Would you do a face-to-face meeting and not follow up? Absolutely not. You would always follow up with your decision maker and you need to continue that with a remote connection.

Think about ways you can stand out in the crowd. How about an old-school, handwritten thank-you note sent to their home?

During a time when personal connection is minimized, it might be an opportunity to brighten your customer's day and build trust.

Just make sure you send to the correct address. If they are also working from home, a note to the office will get lost in the shuffle.

Persuade from a distance

While many professionals are used to persuading through face-to-face interactions, the current climate calls for a new tactic.

Just because you cannot meet in person with your decision makers does not mean that you can't still do your job.

Learning to effectively persuade via remote connection is possible, and by following the basic principles of persuasion, leveraging your technology suite, setting time to practice and developing ways to be memorable, you still have a strong chance at leading your decision maker to the desired outcome.

WHILE REMOTE persuasion may take a bit more effort and preparation, you can get the results you seek if you take the time and keep these guidelines in mind.



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