4 tips to progress your career when working remotely

Working remotely at least part of the week has become the norm for many Australians.

Almost half of the workforce (48%) have a flexible working arrangement, research for SEEK has found.

The benefits of working from home are clear – reduced stress, less commute time and better work-life balance to name a few. But does this come at a cost to career progression?

Remote work, relationships and your career

Leah Lambart, career and interview coach at Relaunch Me, explains that remote working makes employees less visible in the workplace and may impact their ability to build important relationships.

"This may not be an issue for employees who are well-established in an organisation and have already proven their worth and developed great working relationships," she says. "For employees who are relatively new, working from home may prevent them from establishing key relationships that will help them move upwards through the organisation."

Justin Boots, Director People Experience at Culture Amp, adds that the effects of hybrid or remote working on career development largely depends on the culture of the workplace.

"If leaders are regularly in the office, being more physically present may be a small way of positioning yourself for the promotion," he says. "Conversely, if your presence is not something that is required for a promotion, then being able to identify what the expectations of someone at the next level up are and starting to build your ability in that

area is a better use of your time."

With all that said, there are still ways you can progress your career when your role involves remote work. Here's how.

1. **Build relationships and network remotely**

Without opportunities to run into each other in the kitchen or chat in the lift, you may feel a lack of connection to anyone in the company outside your immediate team. Boots advises dropping a 15-minute "get to know you" chat into schedules.

"Most people across organisations want to connect, so will likely appreciate you doing the hard work on this for them," he says. "Also take advantage of purposeful connection opportunities. If your employer is putting on a lunch, get down there and take advantage of the time. If your employer is bringing everyone together for a few days, be present and fully committed to the event. These moments can help strengthen relationships and ultimately build better teams and outcomes."

Lambart proposes the following steps to maximise networking opportunities when working remotely:

- Identify key people in the company that you need to build relationships with to progress.
- If possible, make the effort to go into the workplace at least a few days a week to stay visible and to connect with other employees.
- Attend social events to stay connected.
- Pick up the phone to make a call instead of always sending an email.
- Set up one-on-one online meetings to get to know new employees.

2. **Document your wins**

When you're working remotely, your achievements may not be as visible as they would be in the workplace. Lambart suggests being more deliberate with noting down your wins.

"Document your achievements on a monthly basis so that you have a record of how you have added value to the organisation."

Don't focus only on the obvious "wins". Boots says to include things like problem solving and learning from mistakes, as these examples can be useful for progression.

"When looking to advance your career, sometimes not having the answers or even

getting things very wrong helps to demonstrate your ability to grow and learn.

Being able to articulate the problem you need to solve, and identify the people that are best placed to help you solve it, is a solid way of demonstrating your abilities."

3. **Conduct regular performance review conversations**

Lambart warns that working remotely may lead to less discussion with your manager about your performance. She says to counter this, you may need to be leading the charge.

"If your manager is not proactive in organising regular catchups, ask whether you can meet once a fortnight or month to have a check-in," she says. "This can highlight any blind spots they may have as to your achievements and progress."

4. **Improve your written communication skills**

Remote workers typically rely on written communication more than those who get plenty of facetime with their colleagues. As Lambart explains:

"For companies that rely on emails and messaging over phone conversations, then you need to make sure that your written communication is of a professional standard.

If your written communication is a weakness, use tools such as spellcheck and Grammarly to make sure that you are always writing in a professional manner."

Working remotely doesn't have to mean that your career development gets put on hold. With the right approach, you can position yourself for career success by taking advantage of the unique opportunities that remote work provides.

Check out the best work from home jobs in Australia here.

Source: Independent research conducted by Nature of behalf of SEEK, interviewing 4800 Australians annually. Published January 2023.

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