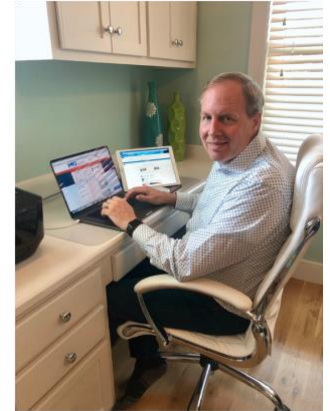


MAG CEO Shares Lessons Learned for Working Remotely

At the MAG we have been in a work from home environment from the start. The following are some of the key learnings I discovered when I transitioned from a corporate office to a work from home environment:

- **Establish a morning ritual** – While working from home offers more flexibility, I have found it helpful to create a ritual around work time. If you like to start your day with walking your dog, followed by coffee and getting ready for your day, keep your routine as consistent as possible.
- **Create a dedicated workspace** – Whether you have the space for your own office or not, it's beneficial to create a "work area" to create boundaries between work and home. For instance, I have a separate space that is dedicated to working. My family knows when I am in that space, I am at work.
- **Communication is key** – At the MAG we have instituted several tools to help keep us connected. The following is a list of the tools and how we use them:
 - Zoom – We use the conference, video and screen sharing functions as the connection point for all of our meetings. This allows us to not only hear each other but to see facial expressions and to share and edit documents live on screen that we are working on. For larger meetings, we leverage Zoom's polling capabilities to engage the attendees while sharing perspectives with less friction. In those large group settings, Zoom also allows the ability to enable or disable muted lines which can be leveraged to minimize background noise with the ability for attendees to "raise their hand" for an open line or "chat" to individuals or the broader group within the tool. These features allow broad participation in a remote environment with limited disruption.
 - Dropbox – We store all of the MAG work documents in Dropbox, similar to SharePoint or Box, which allows all staff to access documents from any location. It also allows multiple people to iterate on the same document while notifying users if the document is currently being edited to avoid multiple versions.
 - Monday.com – This workload and project management tool allows us to track project deliverables and milestones assigned to various people. We manage a shared conference and travel calendar there as well, which helps us ensure MAG representation at key events (although we're pausing on travel of that nature for now).
 - Text Messaging – For those that may not have an instant message tool within your corporation, we find that simple text messages consistently work well during our daily work, as well as when we travel. This is a dependable tool we use when we need a more instant response. It also allows us to communicate when we may be on a separate call to get aligned.
 - GoToWebinar – All of our larger scale gatherings like webinars are done via the GoToWebinar platform. It shows current attendees, allows them to ask questions, chat to individual attendees or the entire group in attendance, and provides polling capabilities.
- **Take breaks** – It is easy to sit down at the computer and not realize the day has come and gone and you have not gotten up at all. I try to drink plenty of water during the day, which means I have to get up to fill my cup often. Leverage the capabilities of reminders on your smart watch or block your calendar for short breaks. Most importantly, ensure to set aside sufficient time to eat a snack and lunch. Zoom can also enable a virtual lunch hour with your colleagues to socialize the way you would if at the office.
- **Establish a time when you turn work off** – When you work at home, your office is just steps away, and there is always something that needs to be done. Try to set up a time when you won't go back to your work area. While you may still need to be connected in this constantly changing environment, it may mean turning to mobile devices to stay in-touch versus being in work mode all the time.
- **Become a good listener** – Without as many verbal and visual cues and regular touch points it is important to learn to listen not just to the words but also the feelings attached to the words. It is easy for an email or text to be interpreted incorrectly so make sure to read them twice before responding. Update your contact list with mobile phone numbers for all your teammates and colleagues you work with often and pick up the phone to reach out. Talking live seems old school anymore, but it works just fine; and in many cases it may offer better communication than email or text.



John Drechny
MAG CEO

We are all in this together. We are focused on supporting the merchant community's efforts to serve your associates and customers, especially as we transition to this "new normal." Please reach out to [me](#) if there is anything we can do to help you and your company during this challenging and unprecedented time.