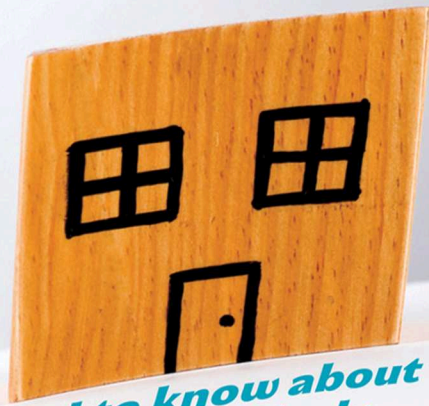


The **SUCCESSGUIDE** to:



# how to make working from home work for you



*Everything you need to know about  
working from home effectively*

**Rachael Ross**  
Foreword by Philip Smith, Home Business Network

*The Success guide to... how to make working from home work for you*

*Rachael Ross  
Foreword by Philip Smith, Home Business Network*

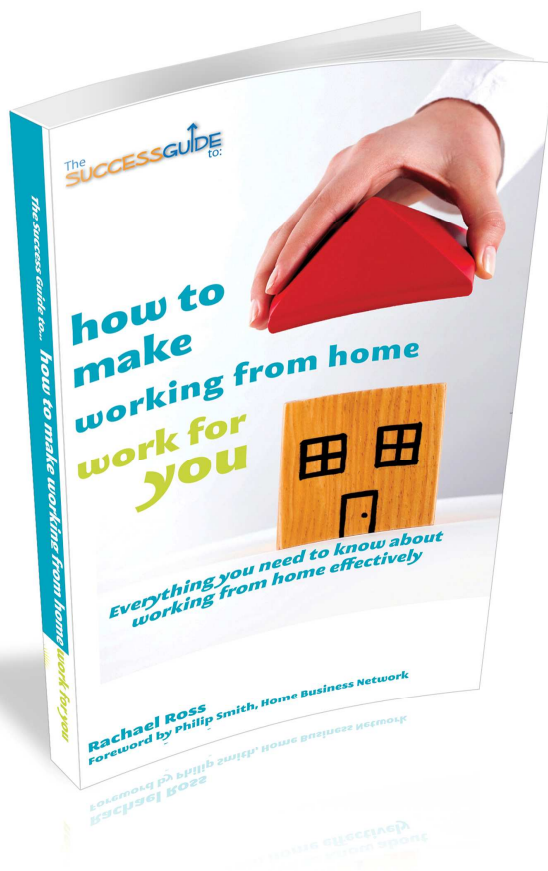
*Everything you need to know about  
working from home effectively*

# Rachael Ross

presents

**The Success Guide to**

## **how to make working from home work for you**



The good thing about working from home is that there is no more commute, you can choose when and where you want to work and you can wear what you want. But the downsides are trying to separate work and life, and how to deal with distractions, such as the ironing!

Home-working expert **Rachael Ross** has helped hundreds of people turn their homes into tidy and organised work spaces. In her new book, she shares her tried-and-tested tips and advice on how to create the order you need for working from home successfully.

Rachael makes readers aware of the benefit and pitfalls of working from home, addressing how to get your family members to respect your work space, how to master time management, how to set up your work space so it works for you and loads more to put you into a successful frame of mind.

For more information on Rachael see [www.purelypeppermint.com](http://www.purelypeppermint.com)

“The Success Guide to how to make working from home work for you” by Rachael Ross

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“How to make working from home work for you”  
by Rachael Ross

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## Reviews

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'I am a advocate of having an home based office and 'How to make working from home work for you' is an essential guide. Teaching you what you need to know and what it is really like to work from home.

**Sahar Hashemi**  
**Entrepreneur, co-founded Coffee Republic**  
**Turned best-selling author.**  
[www.anyonecandoit.co.uk](http://www.anyonecandoit.co.uk)

As someone based at home and who coaches others around home based businesses I will definitely be recommending 'How To Make Working From Home Work For You' to my clients! The practical exercise of noting changes to implement, ensures the reader takes responsibility for their actions.

I have started to implement one suggestion already. Since I work from a limited area, it is vital that I only have what is essential in arms reach. So all the extra files and folders are now in my document storage cupboard; easy to get to but no longer taking up important space or causing a distraction... amazing how these simple little things can make a difference to productivity!

**Yvonne Bignall,**  
**Director**  
**EHO Coaching Limited**  
[www.ehocoachingltd.com](http://www.ehocoachingltd.com)

Canadian organisation and efficiency guru, Rachael Ross, has just had her first book published in the UK, 'How To Make Working From Home Work For You'. The book is a step-by-step, desk-top learning guide with key chapters laid out with check-lists to help focus the mind and encourage the reader to actually think about how to accomplish things.

Not only does the book look at the home working environment, but also that most important element of all - yourself. Several chapters look at honing that personal performance, which makes this guide for us, significantly more beneficial than many other titles in the sector.

The emphasis is bang on, in our view; without the right frame of mind you can't even 'bring it all together', as Rachael says.

Rachael also looks carefully at the balance between a professional performance and the lifestyle benefits of working from home. Getting it just right can be very difficult and this book tackles the issues which need to be addressed and how.

All written in a friendly, open and clutter-free style, this book is an arms-length must-have for your home office and we will certainly be recommending it to our members.

**Len Tondel**  
**Director**  
**Home Business Alliance**  
[www.homebusiness.org.uk](http://www.homebusiness.org.uk)

Home-working adviser Rachael Ross has encapsulated her advice for struggling home-based workers in a commonsense guide. Ross' book is aimed at those new to the game, and those who are finding it less than easy going. The book is set out in easily digested chunks, with commonsense solutions to many of the perceived disadvantages of home-working.

Ross' real strength is her structured approach to personal discipline, so there are sensible suggestions for creating a physical environment conducive to work, achieving the right frame of mind and scheduling your work programme

**Lisa Thompson**

**Editor**

[www.liveworkhomes.co.uk](http://www.liveworkhomes.co.uk)

As Rachael says. If it suits you, working from home can "boost productivity and improve work/life balance, benefiting you, your employer, your business and your lifestyle. To make this happen she advises on how to make it clear to family and friends that your workspace and work time must be respected. And to draw a line between home and work life so that you are not always caught between the two.

**Julie McCarthy**

**Publisher**

[www.familyinterest.co.uk](http://www.familyinterest.co.uk)



This book is dedicated to  
Daniel Walberg Fuglesang, who always  
challenged and encouraged me.  
You are loved and always will be missed.



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## Foreword

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We are all well aware that thousands of small and medium-sized firms form the backbone of the UK economy out there. And we know that more people work for such organisations than the high profile corporate.

But few of us are aware of just how many of those businesses are based at home, and how great a role that sector will play in the economic revival. It's quite amazing really, just how many long running and successful businesses are based at the owner's home, ranging from one-man trades to companies employing tens of staff.

Yet it's a sector that has been largely ignored... until now. *How to make working from home work for you* will show would-be and established home workers how to make the most of the huge benefits of working from home – whether it's the spare room or garden shed.

This book is also a great help for those looking to avoid the pitfalls and has a wealth of advice on such critical issues as keeping the neighbours on side, selecting the correct IT equipment and maintaining a structured and clutter-free, and hence productive, environment.

It's tough working from home. You need discipline, dedication and drive. It's not for everyone, but if it is for you, then the following pages will be invaluable.

**Philip Smith**  
**Editor**  
**Home Business Network**  
**[www.homebusinessnetwork.co.uk](http://www.homebusinessnetwork.co.uk)**

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Kelly Ross, my brother and a talented amateur.

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\*Names of clients have been changed to protect their anonymity.

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## **Introduction...**

### **How to make working from home work for you**

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I'm looking at a cartoon of a girl sitting in a bubble-bath with her mobile phone to her ear. It's headed, 'Working from home helped her focus on the really important projects' and she's saying, 'Blah blah shoes blah blah di blah, let's do lunch darling, I need a new outfit, blah blah di blah blah'.

Meanwhile, somewhere in the world, at least one office manager is wondering whether his staff are currently slaving away in their home offices or skiving off with magazines, daytime TV, computer games or social networking websites.

**That's the stereotypical image of home-working.  
But it doesn't have to be that way.**

Being based at home allows you to establish a working environment that best suits your working style, and by making quick adjustments you can increase your effectiveness. It can also boost productivity and improve work/life balance, benefiting you, your employer, your business and your lifestyle.

As an expert in effective home-working, I've helped hundreds of people turn their badly behaved home offices into organised and efficient work spaces with productive workflow processes. In this book, I address the benefits and the difficulties of working from home and share my tried-and-tested tips and success secrets.

My previous career was in design and tailoring, so I know how you have to cut your cloth according to your needs. Similarly, no one solution fits all home-workers. In this book I pose many questions and provide many answers. Work through the book to find out what suits you best, so that:

- ◆ Family members will respect your work space
- ◆ Friends will know not to interrupt you when you're working
- ◆ You set up your office space in the best way for you
- ◆ You create a successful *frame of mind*
- ◆ You develop working habits that enable you to accomplish more
- ◆ You master time-management
- ◆ You won't be checking your e-mails at midnight
- ◆ You draw a line between work and home life
- ◆ Your clients will perceive you as professional
- ◆ You won't be tempted to stop work and put the washing in or watch the footie
- ◆ Your boss will respect the work you deliver
- ◆ You find out whether you're a 'filer' or a 'piler' and arrange your paperwork accordingly

Whether you already work from home or you're just thinking about it, whether you run your own business or work for an employer, whether you work full-time or part-time, there's plenty of useful advice in this book for you.

P.S. Working from home is an increasingly popular option for employers, employees and self-employed workers for various reasons. I'm writing this book at a time when the economy is wobbly and everyone is more financially aware. So I've included a bonus chapter with money-saving tips you just can't afford to ignore.

*Rachael Ross*





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## **Chapter 1**

### **Working from home...does it work?**

---

The idea of working from home sounds like a wonderful dream to many people. It could be the ideal working environment you have been longing for, but does it sound like a dream you could turn into a reality?

What would it be like if your commute was only one minute and you never had to struggle through the hoards of commuters on public transport, or sit in a traffic jam? What would it be like if you were able to work the hours that suit you best and not the hours set by head office? What would it be like to be your own boss? If this sounds like the ideal way to work, you now need to ask these questions :

#### **Would I like to work from home? and Could I do it successfully?**

An example of how it can successfully work is sisters Emily and Sophie. They are a dynamic web design team who with my help have made their dream of working from home become a reality. Initially the idea was something they had thought would suit them well, but just didn't know how to pull it all together. Now they are enjoying:

- A more relaxed start to their day, made possible by no longer having to commute

- Flexibility in their schedule which allows them to fulfil family responsibilities as their mother now needs extra care, sometimes involving regular hospital visits. With Emily and Sophie being in control of their schedule, one or both can be available when their mother needs their help
- A more conducive working environment. Emily was easily distracted by colleagues and found it difficult to complete projects when working in a buzzing and noisy office. This resulted in her feeling under pressure and stressed. Now Emily and Sophie have established ground rules that during certain important tasks Emily is left to work free from interruptions. This has resulted in lower stress levels and higher productivity for Emily

Yes, a home office can be the perfect place to allow the flexibility needed when creating your most harmonious and productive working environment. With that in mind, here is another question that needs to be asked:

**Can working from home realistically work for everybody?**

Are you self-motivated with enough dedication to carry on working even when there isn't someone looking over your shoulder?



Will the extra time you gain by no longer needing to commute be put to good use and not just squandered away?

Can you realistically say that you will be more productive and successful working from home?



### **A Purely Peppermint Thought**

Since so many tasks are computer based these days the question posed is:

**Can these tasks be achieved as successfully from a home office as they can be from the traditional office building?**

The answer is YES

As you continue to read the rest of this book you will discover dozens of tips and techniques that will ensure that you make working from home a success.

Now we need to look at whether working from home can work for you.

I have many clients who prove that working from home can suit a wide range of people. First you must have a willingness to implement any changes necessary and eliminate work practices which are currently letting you down. You also need to understand your strengths and weaknesses, when it comes to being based at home. And, importantly remember to incorporate your family and their needs into how you structure your day. More on all of that later.

---

## Benefits and drawbacks

With any decision there are benefits and drawbacks and working from home is no different. Throughout this chapter we will consider the benefits and drawbacks of *working from home*, but rest assured in the knowledge that for any drawback there is a solution.

- If the benefit you are looking forward to is to be your own boss, the drawback may be that you are now responsible for looking after everything, even the areas in which you are not an expert. The result could be that you are now spending too much time doing tasks you don't enjoy and not the job that brings in the money. You will find solutions for this drawback in Chapter 6
- Another benefit you may be excited to experience is having more time with the family but that may result in even more interruptions at home than when you were in the office. The solution for this drawback is in Chapter 7



- You are looking forward to finally working on your own and did not realise that you may miss chatting with colleagues, or going to the pub with friends after work. Slowly loneliness can creep in. For solutions to deal with that potential loneliness take a look at Chapter 8

**Further benefits you could enjoy:**

- ◆ Flexibility to schedule your day according to your needs
- ◆ Improved quality of life
- ◆ Improved productivity
- ◆ Saving on the start up costs
- ◆ Reduced stress
- ◆ A healthier lifestyle

Not only are there benefits to entrepreneurs or employees based at home, there are also benefits for organisations that encourage home working amongst their employees.

**An organisation could benefit by:**

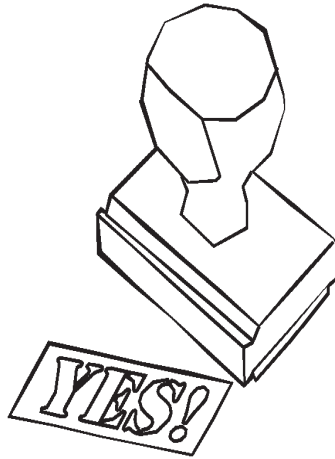
- ◆ Having higher staff retention
- ◆ Reduced overheads
- ◆ Increased pool of potential recruitment applicants
- ◆ Less absenteeism
- ◆ Increased profits

If you feel you could work effectively from home and want your employer to consider the possibility, start by compiling information to pull together a proposal. There are a couple of areas it should include. First, show that you can work successfully and effectively from home (including how you will ensure your focus is on work and not distracted by family). And second, show how the organisation will benefit by allowing you to change your office to a new home location (it could something like saving the company money, or an increase in your focus).

## Why do you want to Work from Home?

The decision regarding whether or not you are going to work from home is not a quick rash idea, but rather a purposeful choice. This is a choice made through careful consideration, research and investigation. I have just explored some of the benefits and potential drawbacks you may experience when working from home. The next step is to consider the reasons behind why you want to be based at home in the first place.

- Is it because there is a career or business opportunity of which you want to take advantage?
- Is it because you want to reduce stress and bring a little balance into your life?
- Is it because you are starting a company and working from home is the most cost effective way to get your business off the ground?
- Is it because you want to enjoy having control over your work schedule and be more available for the family?
- Is it because you want establish a work environment more suitable to your needs?





**Purely Peppermint  
Success Secrets**

Since you are making a purposeful choice,  
don't assume that you can work in a random manner  
without establishing  
a proper structure and effective systems.

Such a style of working will lead to chaos, frustration and far  
too much stress.

To help with your purposeful choice, you need to see whether  
working from home is even possible.

**Think about:**

- ◆ How will it affect the rest of the family?
- ◆ Is your job conducive to it?
- ◆ Do you have the space in your home?
- ◆ Can you keep work and home life separate?

When Hannah was looking at getting back into teaching, she  
gave me a call. Originally the possibility of working from home  
was never considered until an online teaching position became  
available. We were working through the process of making a  
*purposeful choice* when it became clear to Hannah that this was  
her ideal scenario. Not only would she be working in an area  
she loved, but the flexibility in the schedule meant she could be  
there for her children before and after school.

### **Personality traits**

Earlier I referred to the happy realisation that working from home can suit most people but only **you** will know if it will suit you. There are a variety of personality traits and skills that are beneficial when working from home.

#### **A few of the skills or personality traits you need:**

- ◆ To be able to work well as an individual
- ◆ To be self motivated
- ◆ To be able to manage your time
- ◆ To be hard working and focused
- ◆ To be confident in your abilities
- ◆ To be able to set goals
- ◆ To be able to self-discipline
- ◆ To be able to create a schedule and follow it
- ◆ To be able to evaluate situations and make quick decisions
- ◆ To be able to communicate well

Of course, you may not have every single attribute and skill, but by using the traits you have and being willing to ask for help in the areas that are not your strength or expertise, you will have success.

**Throughout this book I will be covering tips, advice and tried and tested solutions, for every home working situation.**

**So read on.....**