

Euphoria Business
Phone
Solutions

When being remote demands connection

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OUTLINE

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Introduction

We're living in interesting times. We're all in this together, apart, and our mission, should we choose to accept it, is going to be to figure out how to maintain our business and personal connections while living and working in isolation.

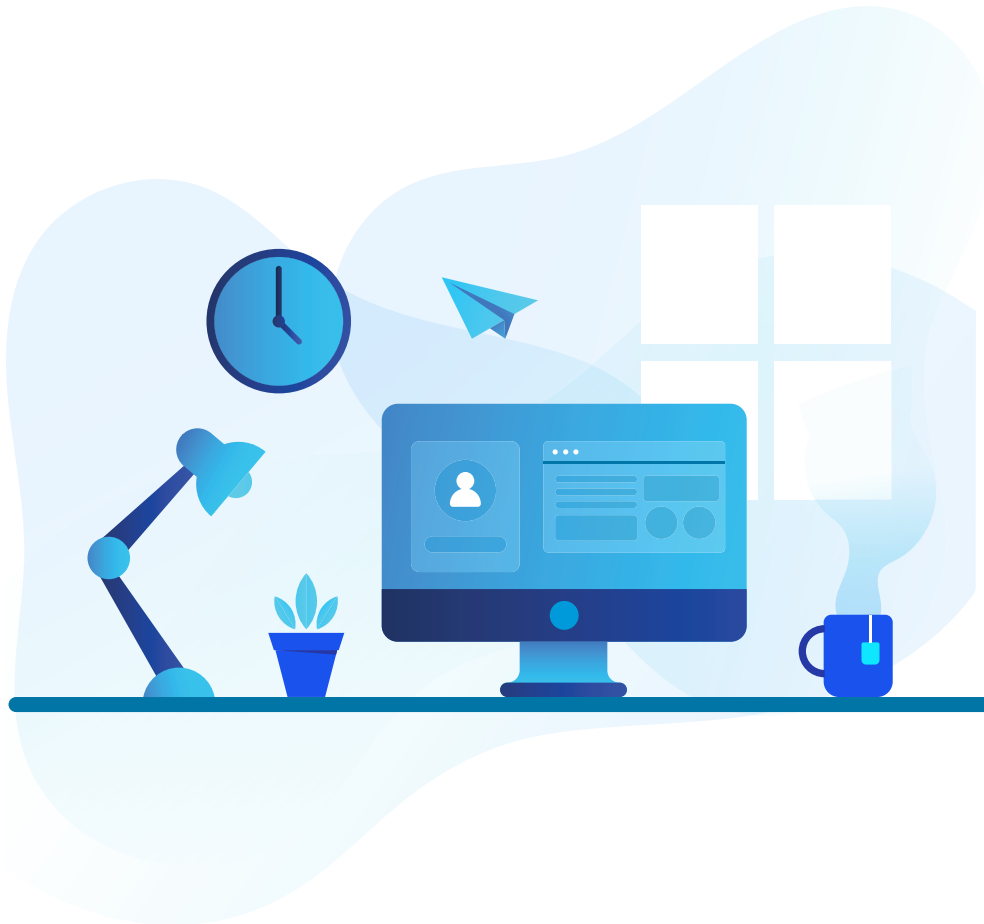
After decades of taking glacially slow interest in enabling remote or mobile work for their employees, local companies are today faced with having to make this work – and pronto!

In an effort to help ease your journey, Euphoria Telecom has put this e-book together. What follows is a week in the life of a newly remote worker – we hope it helps you and your teams get where you need to be.

Early-adopters of remote and mobile working have recognised the [benefits](#), and realised that mobile/remote working offers opportunities to keep employees out of traffic, provide them with flexible work hours that enable higher quality of life, and reduce expensive office space costs.

Now that more of us are being encouraged to live the 'work from home' dream, albeit in some cases temporarily, many are going to have to learn a few key lessons - and quickly.





DAY ONE

How you gonna call?

Remote working has been built on the concept that work does not need to be conducted in a specific place to be exceptional. We can deliver magic from anywhere, is the premise. And it's true, we can, but we need to ensure we're properly set up.

The very foundation of remote working is cemented by reliable access to three tools – a computer, the internet and a phone. Without a phone and a means to connect that phone to your office and customers, you'll only end up, well, phoning it in.

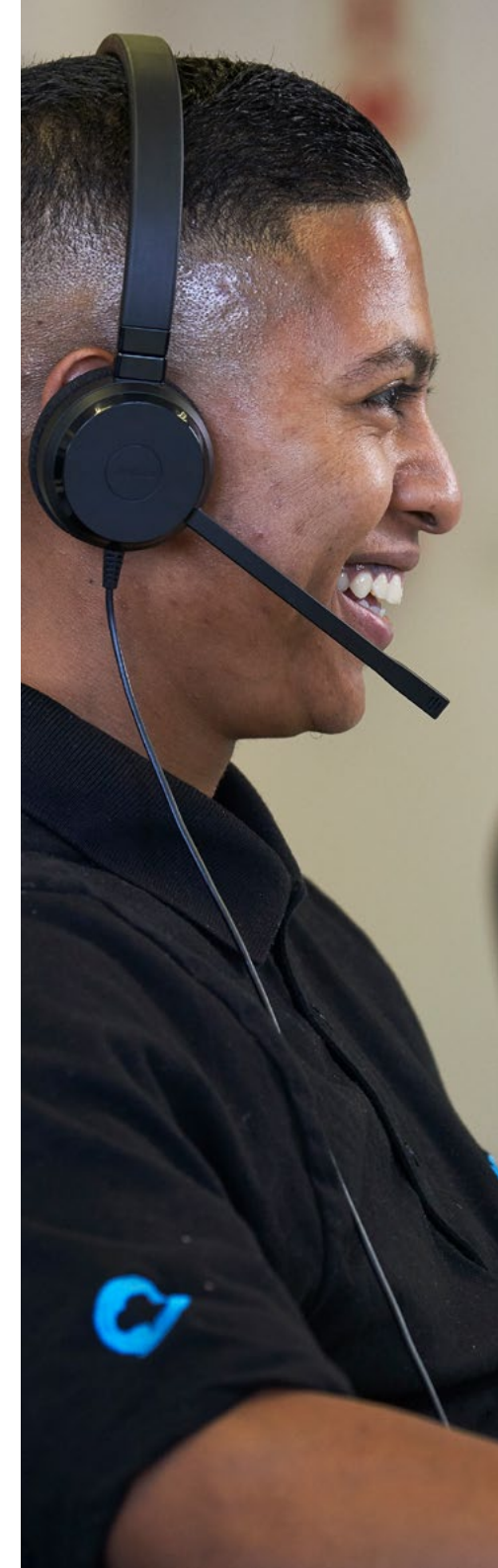
Euphoria can work with you to help you move your teams from the office to their homes with a full understanding of your requirements and deadlines.

Here's what we offer:

- 1. Support** – we're not just talking about customer care here, your team is now working in an environment where IT is not across the hall so the team taking care of your business (at home) phone solution must be trained in dealing with people with different levels of tech savviness, and be helpful and available. Euphoria's is. Whenever and wherever you need us. Meet our amazing Support Team [here](#).
- 2. Innovation** – your remote workers are going to have varying requirements and the solutions proposed by your telecoms partner must align to these and beyond. Think about what you're going to need remote workers to be empowered to do. Is everyone connected via fibre or will some staff require dongles? Will you need video or virtual conferencing and is there enough bandwidth to support this?

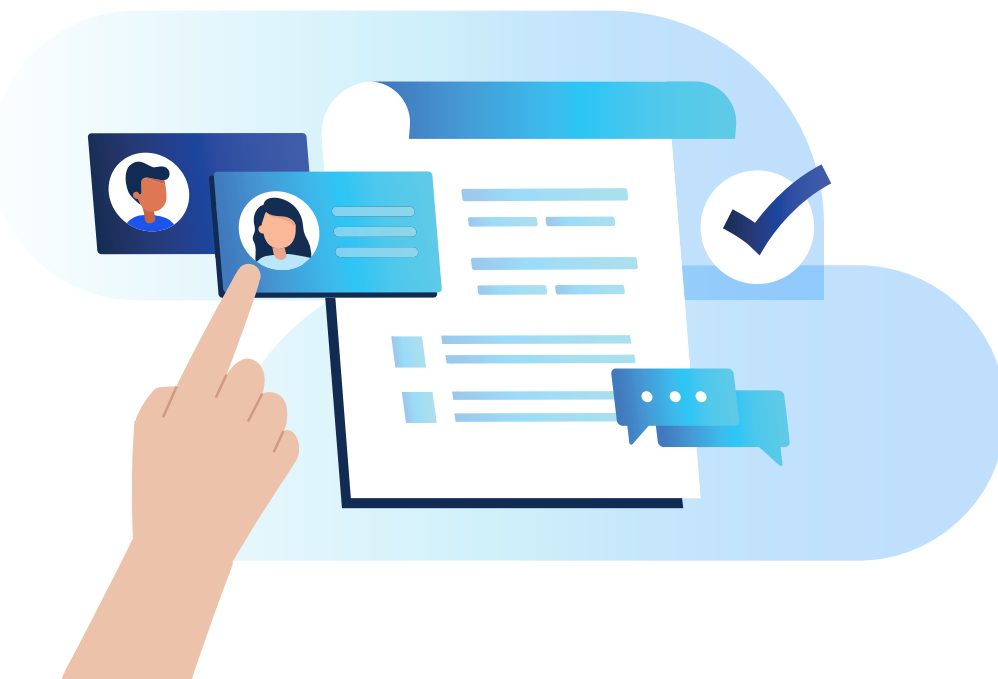
There's quite a bit that needs to be done to move to a remote office set up, including enabling conferencing and ensuring work extensions are rerouted. What is the plan to move office lines with as little interruption to business-as-usual as possible? And can your provider do it for you? Do you need everyone to have handsets or can they take work calls on a browser-based phone or a mobile app that puts their deskphone into their pockets?

If you're a Euphoria customer the answer is yes, we enable virtual conferencing, yes extensions can easily be rerouted (and calls between them are free), switching the destination of incoming calls can be done at the flip of a switch, and you can take calls by connecting your work handset at home, using our browser-based softphone or our mobile app. And by the way - our mobile app not only makes your deskphone an 'anywhere' phone, it's also free for 3 months (to 30 June, Ts&Cs apply). We're also offering a free browser phone and free remote installation until 30 June (subject to some terms and conditions) to help you keep your people connected and working wherever they are.



3. Cost - Running remotely using standard mobile or landline costs can become expensive and, in order to save costs, many businesses are investing in cloud-based IP telephony solutions and cloud-based [contact centre](#) solutions. Your setup will be unique to your requirements and your solutions partner should ideally be flexible in terms of the packages available to you – this is not a one size fits all situation. Of course, if you're a Euphoria customer you know this and you're loving the savings we're bringing you now you've gone VoIP in the cloud. If you want to change the solution you're using to better suit your changed working circumstances - give us a call. Hear some of what our happy customers have to say about how we've helped them to build a better business [here](#).

4. Management - Even though it's business unusual, management of your teams and your time still needs to happen, particularly if you're running a call centre with SLAs in place. Here Euphoria can help too - your teams can log into our Agent Workspace remotely, making it easy for you to monitor time and attendance and all those other variables that are critical to keep your operations running smoothly. For a brief overview of Version 3 of Euphoria's powerful, upgraded platform click [here](#).



Customers calling into your business don't know where the people they're talking to are sitting and it doesn't matter to them either - as long as their queries are attended to quickly and professionally. Euphoria can help you ensure this happens, quickly and seamlessly.

DAY TWO

Producing output productively

Productivity tools are an important consideration for businesses managing a newly remote workforce. The basic suite your team needs will include connectivity, communication, office productivity and business tools (like CRM & ERP). In addition, they will likely need productivity tools that help them get more achieved, in less time, particularly if they are very new to remote working.

If you're looking for a one view dashboard that shows you exactly what each remote team member is working on and how much progress they're making at any given point of the day, consider [Asana](#), a free team management tool that allows you to delegate, organise and track.

[Slack](#) is highly rated for its ability to keep all project and team related communications in one place, accessible from anywhere. It does this by streaming all project communications via channels, giving everyone on the team a shared view of progress with instant messaging tools enabling consistent access and updates.

For general cloud-based office productivity, look at [GSuite](#). GSuite lives online so is accessible to all and it creates a safe, secure community that enables users to communicate (via Gmail, Hangouts Chat or Hangouts Meet), create (using shared

documents like sheets, docs and slides), access (using Google Drive to store and share) and control users, devices and data. GSuite does offer storage, but if you find there is an additional need for storage space that all team members can access securely, [DropBox](#) is another tool available freely.

Lastly, for those who seek the reassurance of the face-to-face video conferencing meeting, access to [Zoom](#), [Whereby](#) and [Skype](#) is a mere click away.

It doesn't all have to be business either, apps like [House Party](#) are adding a major social element to the lives of remote workers, so don't forget to schedule your team Friday afternoon social. Zoom, in particular, is great for after work drinks or a braai as the professional edition can manage up to 500 users, in one 'room' comfortably.





DAY THREE

Put some pants on, dude..

The idea of working remotely may seem exciting at first but be assured, the stories you hear of people staying in their PJs til noon, showering and changing into new PJs are generally told by people who aren't doing this remote thing right.

It's vital that you treat every work day as a work day. Get up, brush your teeth, eat your breakfast, get dressed – then, spend some time figuring out your new routine and tweak it so you know you can stick to it.

You can lose the uncomfortable shoes and jackets, of course, but the closer your home working environment and life resembles that of your old 9 to 5, the quicker you'll adapt to the new way of working.

Find somewhere in your space to make into your office - and stick to working there. If you work in bed you'll only find yourself with a nice dose of insomnia.

Set it up as best you can with a decent desk, light and chair to minimise sore eyes, back and neck pain and the like. The more office-like it looks, the easier it will be for you to slip into work mode when you sit down there.

If you cohabit or (especially or) have younger children at home, try and find a space with a door you can close to avoid your colleagues being treated to a "watch my housemate walk past on their way to the shower in their towel (or less)", or the kids take on the Macarena at full volume during a board meeting.



Take regular breaks. At the office you'd be getting up to walk to meetings or get coffee or lunch and so on, and you will miss this (and get stiff and sore as a result from sitting for too long). So get up and walk around or watch a podcast or do some yoga. Take a lunch hour every day - block out the time in your diary. A proper break is as important to your new work set up's success as your phone.

Also, if you need to fit a few chores into your day, nobody is going to stop you and besides, with all the productivity tools we mentioned earlier, you'll have plenty of free time to get a load of laundry done.

DAY FOUR

But moooom!

Speaking of household demands, working from home today probably means you're isolating and, in the most ironic ironies, many of you will be doing this with your family. What to do when your kids need attention, or when the cat creeps up onto your lap during a conference call?

The key here is routine, again. Along with your new work day, you're going to have to create a new ordinary day for the people who share your home. Luckily for you, the world has opened hundreds of virtual doors that will help keep everybody in the house entertained – check them out:



- For the big humans, how does a free virtual visit to 17 European museums sound? [Demotivateur France](#) is making this happen – virtual tours of The Louvre on one side of the world all the way through to the J. Paul Getty Museum on the other, art lovers will not want to miss this amazing opportunity. [Insider.com](#) is also bringing Broadway musicals to the monitor for a limited time – don't miss out.

Safari fans missing the great outdoors will be pleased to see that [Blue Sky Society](#) and [Africa Geographic Magazine](#) are bringing the African wildlife to your screens – at no cost to viewers. Take in the majestic beauty our wildlife has to offer from the comfort of your new office.

- Lest we forget the small humans, here, the world has gone completely mad sharing free resources from every corner. [Disney and The Kennedy Space Centre](#) are offering free online science lessons and activities

shaped specifically to educate and entertain the kids stuck at home.

Continuing the home education line, [Kids Activity Blog](#) has listed over 120 resources all offering various educational activities, including virtual field trips, science games, crafts, games and challenges.

Take a quick gander through YouTube and you'll also find [celebrities](#) like Oprah Winfrey, Chrissy Metz, Kristen Bell, Wanda Sykes, Sarah Silverman and many more reading stories that your children will love as well as lessons in how to [draw](#), [paint](#) and even [dance](#)!

- Not to forget the fur kids, you might find you're at a loss of how to keep the non-verbal furies entertained. Fear not, [FourPaws](#) has a few cool ideas that are easy to do and keep the dogs from chewing the couches (in other good news, most of them can be managed by those smaller humans we referred to earlier).



DAY FIVE

Physically distant; socially connected

If ever there was a time where social is showing its true power, it's now. But this power can work in all sorts of ways – here are a few tips to make sure you use online platforms in the best way possible to create and maintain meaningful workplace connections.

Future Workplace's 2018 [Global Workplace Connectivity](#) study tells us that almost half of an employee's day is spent using technology to communicate versus in-person, and that slightly more than half feel lonely always or very often as a result. The study may be two years old but it is still relevant today.

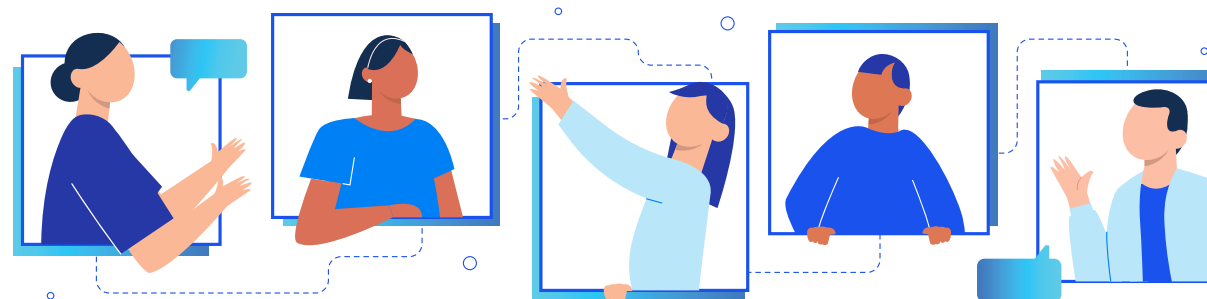
Loneliness is a real challenge for remote workers. When you're remote, you can easily feel left out. In an ordinary world, you'd miss work events, year-end parties and even birthdays and it's not every company that makes an effort to include you. One of the positives of this new working world is that you're not alone, as many or all of your colleagues are now living the same life, but the need for more effort to stay in touch and be visible and present is ever more important.

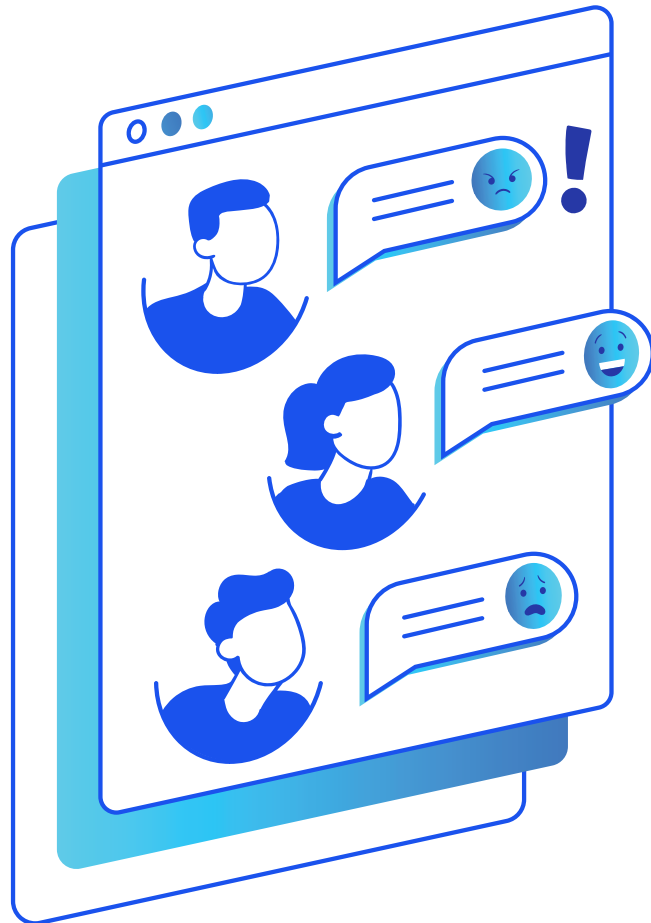
Managers especially may struggle and it is very important for them to trust their teams and be open to new ways of working, creating and communicating.

Ideas that help remote teams connect are varied and there are some really cool ideas to be found online - managers should research ideas that will work for their individual staffers and the team as a unit.

A recent [Rescue Time](#) blog talks about frequent video calls, scheduled during working hours that are proving to alleviate alone-ness by simply seeing everyone else's faces. Another initiative is their online book club, which sees employees adding books to a shared reading list (think Google docs), the company then purchases copies (paperback, eBook or Kindle versions) for anyone who wants them and they meet on Slack to discuss.

Small steps that remind us that we're not all nameless, faceless ones and zeroes can mean the difference between remote employees leaving the company and delivering their best selves every day.





DAY SIX

Reality used to be a friend of mine

No matter how amazing working remotely sounds – I mean, you're not stuck in rush hour traffic twice a day, right? – it isn't for everyone. During this time, managers are going to be faced with the truth of the matter, some personalities are just not made for isolation, no matter how long it lasts.

But transferring your office company culture into your remote working environment could go a long way to addressing feelings of separation.

Communication plays a vital role in ensuring all remote team members are on the same page from the get go and the first things that must be made crystal clear are boundaries and expectations. Setting these upfront will help make sure everybody knows exactly what is expected from them while keeping easily distracted staffers on point.



- Yes we're remote, no, we're not always "on" – make the expected working hours and deliverables clear, at all times. Working into the night can easily lead to tired, demotivated staff, so be clear around what's okay and what isn't okay.
- Set face to face team check-ins – once your teams have had time to set up their home routines, plug into them by asking for a set time that suits them every week for a team check in.
- Set individual weekly check-ins – here, we're not only talking about team meetings but also individual check-ins and make sure this isn't all about work. Ask people how they are, what they did with their weekend, how they're managing their time alone and then move onto how the work delegated to them is progressing. Pay attention to their responses and support where you can.
- Whether your check-ins are virtual conference calls, video conference calls or Whatsapp check-ins, respect the usual [meeting protocols](#):
 - set clear objectives
 - follow an agenda
 - set meeting ground rules
 - take breaks
 - clearly outline next steps (including deadlines and responsibilities) at the end of the meeting

In addition to expectations from a deliverables point of view, when it comes to building a remote company culture, it's critical that employers consider different methods of team building while integrating company values into the home office environment.



Technology, connectivity and apps have all but paved the way for businesses here and it's actually quite easy for employees to spend time with each other, virtually. As mentioned earlier, Slack is a great communication platform for colleagues who need to stay in constant contact, sharing files, posting photos or collaborating with live chat features that keep everyone in touch all through the day - very much like in an ordinary office.

One vital tip to take on board would be to remember that the absence of tone in emails or texts can be taken in a variety of ways - so try and be friendly, conversational and positive. Whether this is achieved through the use of emojis, gifs or small talk, it's important that it happens.

And, of course, we must not forget to come up with fun ways to connect on a social level. Weekly drinks and snacks at the office not only form an important part of most company cultures but are also the perfect way to wind the work week down. With apps like [House Party](#) and [Whereby](#) freely available, this should be no different in a remote working environment.



DAY SEVEN

Rest

No, seriously. Rest. It's all too easy to get really carried away when you work from home. If boundaries are not set, and even, in some cases, where they are, many remote workers don't unplug and not switching off can really hurt the individual and affect the team in the long run.

Tips from local [recruitment specialists](#) include the following suggestions for daily habits to work on that will help you continue your personal development while working from home, including:

- 01** [Get dressed](#) into work clothes on work days and find 20 minutes to sit in the sun. Measured exposure to the sun boosts serotonin (happiness hormone) levels in your body, helping keep you calm and alert.
- 02** Start each day with one question – what is my [purpose](#) today? Ideas that support finding your answer include subscribing to news aggregators like [Feedly](#) and joining a community like [WeWork](#) or [The Resource](#), which will help grow the feeling of belonging.
- 03** Write down three things you are [grateful](#) for and do one good deed for someone else (if you're short on ideas, here are [52](#) of them – one for each week of the year).
- 04** Find a way to exercise every day (there are [many](#) free [resources](#) online for all kinds of [activities](#) and at all kinds of fitness [levels](#)) and find the time to pray or [meditate](#).
- 05** Limit [screen time](#) (TVs and phones) and find ways to spend quality time with your family. Set up a board game or go and visit the Louvre (virtually, of course).

There are many other ideas to include but they should all be decided by the individual using their own personal motivators and drivers. If YouTube'ing your favourite comedian brings you joy, or if it's reading something good on [Cracked](#) or listening to a few new bands – do this, at least once a day. Drink water. And when the work day has ended, switch off.



DAY EIGHT

Look forward

In an ordinary life, being offered the opportunity to work remotely would be dreamy and the benefits to your staff are [proven](#). The way we're going about it right now may not be ideal but it is not impossible to realise a smooth transition from desk to home if you use the tools available to you.

Remote and/or mobile working are well understood but have not been adopted widely in South Africa to date. Aside from providing an option for companies looking to manage the impact of Coronavirus, mobile/remote working also offers opportunities to keep employees off congested roads during peak hours, provide them with flexible work hours that enable higher quality of life, and reduce expensive office space costs by moving some workers home permanently.

With modern technology, many companies elect to work virtually - only ever meeting online or meeting face to face only for a quarterly or annual get together. For more traditional organisations this could be an opportunity to explore more flexible work hours, to meet the needs of their employees and work around ongoing considerations like load-shedding and high traffic volumes.

If you have any questions on how we can help you operate remotely more easily, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're all in this together, remotely, and Euphoria Telecom is here to help you in any way we can.



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