



## THE AGE OF THE WORK FROM HOME PROFESSIONAL

How to successfully work remotely during COVID-19.  
Read to find out how to win a \$40 Amazon gift card!

Companies across the United States have shifted from traditional, open-space offices to remote workplaces because of COVID 19. Many firms even decided to close their office locations permanently and work from home after employees said that less commute stress, location independence, and schedule flexibility improved their work life.

As a young professional in the glazing industry, working from home may be an adjustment from your career expectations. Outside factors like work-life balance, productivity, time management, virtual coworker relationships, and maintaining

mental health also make achieving your job goals challenging.

Fortunately, SCGMA is here with advice on how to overcome common obstacles, helping you succeed in your field while working remotely.

### CREATING WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY

Part of being a professional includes learning how to set boundaries, like keeping your work life and personal life separate. For example, it's easy not to keep track of your work hours and postpone break times. However, making a habit of these actions leads to burnout and weakens mental health. By switching up your work patterns, you will set proper boundaries while also being more productive.

A great place to start is by creating – and sticking to – a daily routine. You can set



alarms for breaks and lunch time to focus on yourself, and start the day by changing out of your pajamas to get into work mode. Finally, you can go through the process of “leaving the office” by tidying up your workstation and shutting off your computer at the end of the workday.

Matt Aragon, the SCGMA YPG Committee Chair, shares how he maintains work-life balance, saying, “I have found that taking a walk right after work, usually at the same time each day, helps me create a boundary from work and transition to my personal life, preventing me from being stuck on “work mode” into the late hours of the night.”

Applying these tips allows you to set rules for yourself while also focusing on personal needs.

It is also important to dedicate a place in your home as a workspace. Doing so will allow you to have all your materials in one place while also keeping the rest of your home work-free. This also allows you to get in the habit of working in a controlled space like in a traditional office.

Ultimately, the worst place to work from is your bed, since being overly comfortable



reduces productivity and gets associated as a workspace.

Finally, another way to create work-life balance and increase productivity is by being away from your workstation during breaks. Instead of spending all day at your desk, try exercising, meditating, having lunch, or taking a walk.

Tina Edwards, an SCGMA YPG Committee Member, shares how she takes her breaks during the day, recommending, “going outside for your lunch break is a great excuse to get away from the computer. If you don't have a backyard or front yard, consider driving to your neighborhood park to have your lunch.”

Overall, these methods are great for pressing pause on your workday because they allow you to clear your mind and prevent fatigue.

**Taking a walk right after work, usually at the same time each day, helps me create a boundary from work and transition to my personal life.**

**- Matt Aragon, SCGMA YPG Committee Chair**

## MASTERING TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management is a skill that helps professionals from any field achieve success. Individuals can complete a greater portion of tasks in a shorter amount of time, all while lowering stress, increasing productivity, and achieving goals.

The best way to begin mastering time management is by planning and measuring goals correctly. This is generally associated with SMART goals, which stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based. SMART goals allow individuals to plan goals effectively and set clear descriptions while tracking success. Remember to write down your SMART goals and review their progress regularly to determine if you are taking proper action, are near success, or need to make adjustments.

Another aspect of time management is arranging tasks based on importance or urgency, like completing highly prioritized assignments first and pushing back those that are less time-based. You can also organize timelines with a calendar to document deadlines, project descriptions, and set time limits. Also, creating your task calendar the day before instead of in the morning helps with productivity, being

able to identify free time for breaks or other assignments and be able to adjust your time for potential setbacks.

Finally, setting an alarm 15 minutes before your next task allows you to add finishing touches to a project before moving on. You can also take a quick, five-minute break to get reorganized before your next assignment. While adjusting your time may be tedious at first, you will get in the habit of working diligently and efficiently, noticing positive results in the long run.

## BECOMING PART OF THE TEAM

Part of assimilating into office culture is meeting your coworkers and learning about each other's work habits, likes and dislikes, and behaviors. Before remote offices, receiving feedback from your coworkers included reading their body language, like their tone of voice or facial expressions, to determine their reactions. Now, the most common way of getting feedback is by email or over the phone, limiting that personal interaction.

When working from home, meeting other employees and identifying the tone behind an evaluation may be challenging, but there are still ways to experience company culture in a virtual environment.





A great start to getting to know your coworkers is by turning on your camera during virtual meetings. Allowing others to see you helps them put a face to the name when receiving one of your emails or Slack messages. Also, make sure that the work area behind you is clean, organized, and professional before going on a video call. If you do not want others to see your background, upload a virtual background that is professional and shows a hint of your personality. Just be sure to preview your background before the meeting to make sure your face is clearly visible.

Occasionally, you will be given the opportunity to host a meeting of your own. Although talking points and presentation materials are crucial for your presentation, it is also important to make sure your audience is engaged. A great way to engage coworkers while also learning about each other is by hosting a quick ice



breaker at the beginning of the meeting.

Grace Llorin, the SCGMA YPG Committee Events and Marketing Chair, explains why she prefers to begin meetings with discussion starters, saying, “I like to start my meetings with a riddle or icebreaker question to get people comfortable and to remind everyone that we are all real people, which can be easily forgotten when working remotely.”

Employers may also host virtual break times, parties, or games after work to build community among employees. While most of these remote activities may be voluntary and a little awkward, do your best to participate. You will be able to network with your coworkers and supervisors while also learning about them and the company’s culture. Always remember to be professional in an after-work event because your coworkers are getting to know you, and whatever you say or do will reflect who you are in their eyes.

Finally, when receiving feedback from your team lead, leave emotions aside. Do not spend time trying to determine their tone or take it personally when they do not reply after a few hours or days. Chances are they are more occupied than usual.

“

I like to start my meetings with a riddle or icebreaker question to get people comfortable.

- Grace Llorin, SCGMA YPG Committee Events and Marketing Chair

”

Instead, follow up if they have not replied after a day or two in a polite, professional tone, even if you think the other person sent a harsh email or spoke critically during a phone call. Being a professional includes keeping your cool at all times. Finally, do not be afraid to ask questions or restate assignment details. Open communication builds trust and reduces miscommunication on both sides.

## MAINTAINING MENTAL HEALTH AND SELF CARE

Americans' mental health has declined over the last few months because of coronavirus, making it harder to overcome negative emotions. Feelings of stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, and isolation are taking a toll on individuals nationwide, which can be reflected in an employee's job performance.

Fortunately, there are methods for overcoming these emotions while also taking care of yourself. For example, you can clear your mind by meditating, exercising, or practicing one of your hobbies on your free time. Do not skip meals, maintain a balanced diet, and sustain a regular sleep schedule. You can also lower anxiety by drinking less caffeine or alcohol. Also, take time to reflect on why you are experiencing negative feelings and try opening up to friends, loved ones, or a professional therapist.

Tina Edwards, an SCGMA YPG Committee Member, recommends connecting with nature during stressful times, saying, "nurturing a plant or tending to a garden

is a great way to relax and take our minds off daily worries and concerns. It also allows us to see beauty when everything around us tends to look grim."

Nurturing a plant or tending to a garden is a great way to relax and take our minds off daily worries and concerns.

- Tina Edwards, SCGMA YPG Committee Member

If you are not experiencing negative mental health but know somebody who is, do not be afraid to reach out and offer support. You can connect with coworkers by asking about their wellbeing and discuss what you both are doing to cope during this time. If someone is depressed or showing emotional instability, remember to assess the risk of suicide or harm, listen without judgement, provide reassurance and useful information, encourage professional help, and encourage self-help. Finally, even if your coworker does not open up right away, do not force them but instead let them know you can provide support if they need it.

## SUPPORT HOTLINES

Emergency Medical Services - 911  
Call for life-threatening situations.  
Available 24 hrs a day.

National Suicide Prevention Line -  
1-800-273-8255

For someone who is suicidal or under emotional distress. Available 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week.





# GAME TIME!

Play to win a gift card  
by answering these  
questions!

Now we want to hear from you! All participants who answer the following questions will be entered to win a **\$40 Amazon gift card!**

Send your answer to [info@scgma.com](mailto:info@scgma.com) along with your first and last name to see if you're the winner. Good luck!

- How do you work from home and what methods help you achieve your work goals?
- What show have you binged watched during the pandemic that you love and would recommend to your fellow YPG's?