

Equipment Checklist for Remote Teams

Remote Work Leadership Series: Part 2 of 2

Your team has gone remote. Use the following checklist to keep team members productive at home.

Immediately:

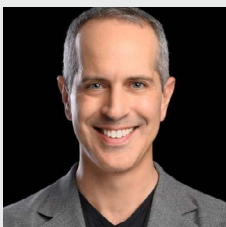
- 2 power strips, with cords long enough to do the job they need to do! And of course, with enough outlets/USB ports for all the things.
- Over the ear headphones with a mic. Forget earbuds when you're wearing them all day. I've really liked my Plantronics Voyagers. They're not the best, but what makes them great is the mic: it picks up only what's right in front of it, which means even when I swing the arm up, people have a hard time hearing me. In a house where there are opportunities for weird sounds (kids? pets? anyone?), a mic that reduces the possibility for hot mic moments is something worth having.
- A notepad, sticky notes, and a printer. Yeah, I know: save paper. Still. There's a lot of context that gets lost when you work away the office; for instance, you'll no longer be walking past that cube with the ATL Braves pennant that just happens to remind you to call your demanding customer based there. You'll no longer overhear things, run into people, etc. At home, you'll need to recreate that context for yourself. And while technically some of it can be done digitally—via tickler files and reminders—my personal experience, and more importantly the science, tells us that when it comes to creating context, there's no school like the old school: writing things down helps us commit ideas to memory better than anything. So, paper.
- Dongles, cords, adapters, and plugs. (Am I on a Mac? Yes—why do you ask?) I use a QGeeM 7-port adapter. I also have a USB-C / USB3.0 adapter. No more unplugging one peripheral to make space for another one. And every year, I buy plenty of extra phone cords, because I'm not blaming anyone, I'm just saying there were two in this drawer yesterday and now they're both gone...
- Small, closable storage containers. The Container Store and OfficeMax have tons of options. Keep pens/paper in one, small supplies in another, business cards and notes in a third, etc. Because this is your home as opposed to a conference room, you're apt to leave something behind if you use a different room to work one afternoon. Which will just as likely find its way to that pile of random stuff

in the kitchen (and from there, into the garbage or a junk drawer) as back to your office. Keeping things in small boxes makes them stand out and reduces the chances of (1) leaving them places, or (2) having them go AWOL if you do manage to leave them someplace.

- A small speaker. Sometimes, you'll want to take your headphones off. And you should.
- Don't laugh: a diffuser. I've learned that smells are a great way to define a space. It's your work space—make it smell like you want to be there.
- Cord management strips. Take a few minutes after setting up to hide those cables, or at least neaten them. It makes such a difference to reduce wire clutter. Keep in mind, I'm also the guy who used to untangle phone cords, and who likes his shoelaces to lay flat.)

If it goes long term:

- A shoji screen. Making a lot of video calls? Throw this up behind you for a quick-and-easy professional background.
- A standing desk. I have a large standing desk. I liked my older, smaller one better. Whatever the size, getting up is critical when you no longer even have the walk to from the car to the office.
- A monitor. They're cheap and having the large screen makes a major difference in productivity (at least for me). It also helps define a central work place in the house, which has a surprisingly positive psychological effect. BTW, I ditched my dual monitor set up in favor of a single, 27-inch monitor. Easier to manage.
- A keyboard and trackpad/mouse? Sure. Maybe. I use mine about half the time.
- A little shelf. This little \$10 shelf of mine has saved me ungodly amounts of time searching for things. Things like dongles, cords, and adapters. I have mine mounted to my monitor, in a perfectly out-of-the-way-but-not-so-out-of-the-way-that-I-forget-about-it spot. It's where I keep my QGeeM when it's not in use. And if my camera is not in use, it's where I keep the Logitech bluetooth adapter so there's no accidental "on."
- Speaking of: An HD camera. Video call quality is night and day with one of these things over the built in cameras on the computer, especially when good lighting is hard to achieve. Position it at eye level. Also, [these](#).
- Storage. IKEA FTW. End tables and nightstands make great under-desk options. And for files, I use accordion folders: every year, I get a new one and drop all my receipts, legal docs, bank statements, and the like for that year in it. One year, one folder. Done.



About the Author

Jason Seiden is Chief Marketing Officer at Moovila, makers of the smartest project management software on the planet.

He works remotely from Chicago, collaborating with a team based in South Carolina and that extends out to Germany and Costa Rica.

Connect with him on Twitter [@seiden](#), or follow him on LinkedIn at [in/seiden](#).