

HENRY KURKOWSKI



REMOTE WORK TECHNOLOGY

Keeping Your Small Business
Thriving From Anywhere

Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Introduction](#)

[CHAPTER 1: You Can't Go to the Office: Where Do You Go from Here?](#)

[Disaster Strikes](#)

[Management Work Policy](#)

[Top Concerns of Management](#)

[Do Not Fight the Tide](#)

[Productivity and Job Performance](#)

[Adjusting to the New Work and Home Balance](#)

[Maintaining Growth and Profitability](#)

[Let's Get to Work](#)

[Notes](#)

[CHAPTER 2: The Remote Workspace: Set Up Your Mind and Your Space](#)

[Your Work Zone: Distinguished from the Rest of the House](#)

[Set Healthy Boundaries with Family and Friends](#)

[Self-Motivation from Home Can Be Perilous](#)

[Take Breaks and Don't Feel Guilty](#)

[Create a Morning Routine Different from When You Were Commuting](#)

[Set Daily Goals](#)

[Communication Habits: Respond Quickly and Use the Right Tools](#)

[Get Dressed for Work](#)

[Set Yourself Up for Success Right from the Start](#)

[Notes](#)

[CHAPTER 3: Office Technology: Stay Connected and Competitive](#)

[VoIP: From Desktop to Soft Phones and Features](#)

[Email, Chat, and Channels](#)

[Videoconferencing](#)

[Team Collaboration Tools](#)

[File Sharing and Cloud Storage](#)

[Cybersecurity](#)

[Business Tech Advantages](#)

[CHAPTER 4: Choosing Technology: Getting the Right Digital Tools for You](#)

[Scale to Meet Your Needs](#)

[First-Time Setup](#)

[After the Sale](#)

[Total Cost of Ownership](#)

[Focus on Your Pains](#)

[Upfront Costs](#)

[Operating Costs](#)

[Choosing Wisely](#)

[CHAPTER 5: Time Management: The Result Is What Matters Most](#)

[Being Productive](#)

[Productivity Apps](#)

[Monitoring Remote Workers](#)

[Time Managing as a Whole](#)

[CHAPTER 6: Group Tasks: Keeping the Teamwork in Your Team](#)

[Remote Work Fatigue](#)

[Encourage Boundaries](#)

[Expenses for Home Office Needs](#)

[Gratitude](#)

[Collaboration Tools and Usage](#)

[Too Many Video Meetings](#)

[Results over Schedule](#)

[Bring Back the Break Room](#)

[Your People Are Your Best Assets](#)

[CHAPTER 7: Client and Team Meetings: Making the Most of It](#)

[A Quick Case for Virtual Meetings](#)

[Before You Start](#)

[Prepping Your Space](#)

[Prepare Your Devices](#)

[Prepare Yourself](#)

[Etiquette](#)

[Engagement and Communication](#)

[CHAPTER 8: The Watercooler Has Moved—Engagement and Socializing Remotely](#)

[The Impact of Social Isolation](#)

[Be on the Lookout for Isolation](#)

[Self-Assessment](#)

[Combating Isolation](#)

[Engagement](#)

[Social Needs](#)

[Company Values and Mission](#)

[People First](#)

[Notes](#)

[CHAPTER 9: Generational Struggles](#)

[The Generations](#)

[There Is No Generational Gap at Work](#)

[Work Styles](#)

[Common Ground](#)

[Notes](#)

[CHAPTER 10: Creating the Right Remote Team Culture](#)

[You Already Have a Company Culture](#)

[What Is Company Culture?](#)

[Maintaining Culture When Remote](#)

[Cultural Fit](#)

[CHAPTER 11: Operations and Administration](#)

[Company Accounts](#)

[Human Resources](#)

[Losing People during the Switch](#)

[Remote Hiring Process](#)

[Attributes and Skills](#)

[Remote Onboarding](#)

[CHAPTER 12: The Complete Package](#)

[Work Remotely with Added Confidence](#)

[Make Your Space Your Own](#)

[Team Strategies](#)

[Technology Is Your Asset—Choose Wisely](#)

[Scalability and TCO](#)

[Make the Most of Your Time](#)

[Keep the Faith](#)
[Keep the Client and the Team Happy](#)
[Be Mindful of Signs of Isolation](#)
[Stay Social](#)
[Generations and Personalities](#)
[Leadership Grooms Your Culture](#)
[The Right People](#)
[The World Is at Your Fingertips](#)

[Index](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Dedication](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[End User License Agreement](#)

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1

[Figure 1.1: Top concerns of managers of remote teams](#)

[Figure 1.2: Percent of workers who had ever worked remotely during the begin...](#)

[Figure 1.3: Immediate remote workflow elements](#)

Chapter 2

[Figure 2.1: Eight things to look for in an office chair](#)

[Figure 2.2: The perception and impact of clothing formality](#)

Chapter 3

[Figure 3.1: Top four services for videoconferencing](#)

Chapter 4

[Figure 4.1: The potential downtimes compared by percentage of uptimes](#)

[Figure 4.2: Commercial software industry timeline](#)

[Figure 4.3: TCO for SaaS applications](#)

[Figure 4.4: TCO for traditional software applications](#)

Chapter 5

[Figure 5.1: Top workplace distractions](#)

[Figure 5.2: Measuring productivity](#)

Chapter 6

[Figure 6.1: Remote work planning](#)

[Figure 6.2: Remote employee burnout](#)

[Figure 6.3: How leaders can support remote workers](#)

Chapter 7

[Figure 7.1: Cost of meeting face-to-face](#)

[Figure 7.2: What people do while on a conference call](#)

[Figure 7.3: What people do while in a virtual meeting](#)

Chapter 8

[Figure 8-1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs](#)

[Figure 8-2: Effects of social isolation on health and mortality](#)

Chapter 9

[Figure 9.1: Birth years of four primary generations in the workforce](#)

[Figure 9.2: Survey: What would make remote work better?](#)

[Figure 9.3: The population of the United States by generation in 2019](#)

Chapter 10

[Figure 10.1: Company culture is a top priority for job seekers and employees...](#)



Remote Work Technology

Keeping Your Small Business Thriving From Anywhere

Henry Kurkowski

WILEY

Foreword

When Henry reached out to me about the prospect of penning an introduction to this book, I enthusiastically agreed. After all, as a founding partner of High Alpha, I had recently gone through the process of overseeing our transition from a traditional office environment to a hybrid/remote-first organization. Early on, during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, my partners and I made the decision to fully transition our team to a remote-first work environment. Throughout the process, I took a very hands-on approach to shaping our strategy, specifying our tech and software infrastructure, establishing our safety protocols, hardening our security procedures, maintaining our winning culture, and effectively managing communication with our team. I know firsthand what a monumental task it is to quickly transition an entire organization from on-premises to remote work while maintaining productivity and minimizing disruption. We ended up managing the transition remarkably well, but had *Remote Work Technology: Keeping Your Small Business Thriving from Anywhere* existed when we began our process, it would have saved us an enormous amount of time, energy, and second-guessing.

It is of course an understatement to say that we are living in unprecedented times. Mega-trends such as the rapid adoption of cloud technology, the meteoric growth of e-commerce, the work-from-anywhere movement (fostered by access to nearly ubiquitous broadband and 5G), and the advent of the gig economy are reshaping how we do business. When those trends coalesce with a pandemic, political unrest, and society's demands for greater equality and more equitable access to opportunity, it creates both

opportunity and perils aplenty. Strong leaders remain focused on opportunities for business transformation and growth, but the road to capitalize on those opportunities is often littered with pitfalls, and the potential for missteps is very real. We are on the precipice of a massive shift in how work gets done, and remote work will play a central role in that shift.

In our current context, there may be no more salient topic for a business leader than understanding how to rapidly transition to a remote work environment. After decades of flirtation with remote/hybrid work environments, every business in the world now has to confront the very real possibility that much of their workforce will transition to remote work. And up until now, there really was no road map for businesses to rely on as they rapidly remade themselves into remote-first organizations. Thanks to Henry and *Remote Work Technology*, that map now exists and is accessible to anyone who might require it.

When making the shift to a remote work organization, there is much to consider. Frankly, the list of decisions is downright overwhelming. Henry's approach, detailed here, demystifies the process while providing a flexible structure that can be applied by any business—large or small, traditional or progressive.

As is always the case, business leaders attempting to navigate uncharted waters would do well to seek out and implement the advice of those who have seen it before. I can think of no finer guide to help the reader navigate the quickly evolving landscape of remote work than Henry Kurkowski. Henry has spent the bulk of his career working at the intersection of technology, culture, and organizational transformation. His sincere passion for unlocking the hidden value in small businesses and his unparalleled ability to translate the esoteric into practical

language is on full display in *Remote Work Technology*. Henry has written the definitive guide to “going remote” and, if you read its contents, I'm confident it will position your organization to thrive in the years ahead.

Kristian Andersen
Partner, High Alpha
www.kristian.vc

Introduction

My first time working remotely was in 2002. I was working in commercial finance, and I had a client that was busy buying up hotels in South Florida to then convert them into condominiums. The client had a constant flow of properties that he was readying to purchase, and time was an important factor to his business plans. At that time, I was traveling back and forth from Fort Lauderdale to Indianapolis once a month. DSL was just rolling out to smaller cities, and I was lucky enough to have access to faster Internet than the dial-up speeds that many homes and small businesses still used. Smartphones were not yet a thing, but personal digital assistants (PDAs) such as the PalmPilot were all the rage with businesspeople on the go. My main tools were email, an eFax account, and a Sony Ericsson mobile phone, which I still have to this day. With these high-tech tools at my command, I felt unstoppable. I came to fully appreciate that I didn't need to be in the office to work with equity investors, lending institutions, or commercial real estate agents.

I became hooked on the freedom that the virtual office provided, and I saw the advantages that the virtual office can provide an organization. I believed in this so much that I've designed the companies that I helped cofound to operate with remote workers and a decentralized office in mind. Our teams are distributed across the United States, and many of our developers are working from other countries. We extend that remote capability at the client level as well. We use our cloud dashboards and the automation features of our software to remotely manage thousands of devices at our clients' locations on a daily basis regardless of where they are located. However, most

small businesses are not designed from the get-go to operate with distributed teams or collaborate remotely. That fact became obvious in 2020.

The outbreak of the coronavirus caused us to avoid other humans and take shelter in our homes. We as people were not fully prepared for it, and neither were an overwhelming number of small businesses. There was a great deal of struggling in the beginning weeks of the shutdowns. Mistakes were plentiful, and stress was at an all-time high. But it doesn't take a global crisis to force a business to suddenly go remote. Hurricanes, fires, and other disasters can catch companies unaware. Many times, the company owners and managers are not sure what to do to keep the company going if they suddenly can't work from their HQ. This book is written to help with that problem and offer real solutions. Just as my companies empower our clients with SaaS technologies and the automation that comes with them, my desire is to help set up more small businesses for their own success through this book.

As a tech guy, I am also a sci-fi buff. So, I am thrilled to quote one of the great leaders of the sci-fi world, Captain Jean Luc Picard: "What we do in a crisis often weighs upon us less heavily than what we wish we had done, what could have been." I want you to be in a position where you don't need to worry about what you wish you had done. I don't want you to have to be burdened with what could have been. I want you to be able to thrive and have your people feel secure when a crisis strikes your company. That is the purpose behind this book.

The information and best practices within are not limited to a crisis situation. This book is a guide for startup companies, for independent contractors, and for business leaders who want a road map to make their company operations virtual, or even to create a hybrid of traditional

and distributed teams. Being able to run your company remotely is about the power of choice. It is the freedom to take your company further and be able to have your teams do meaningful work from more places without being tethered to any physical space.

With the right technologies, anyone can work remotely. But it takes more than tech to be successful at working remotely, and certainly it takes more than tech to successfully lead a remote team. That's why I discuss in detail the importance of healthy company cultures that empower their people through trust and transparency. There are some downsides to working remotely. Many workers during the pandemic spoke of Zoom fatigue, feelings of isolation, feelings of being disconnected from the company, and lowered employee satisfaction. It is wildly important to keep these very real problems in mind when taking the team remote. This means adjusting management styles, altering how productivity is measured, and enabling higher levels of engagement.

“There are no ordinary moments.” That is one of my favorite quotes by Dan Millman. It certainly is an apt one for the year 2020. Nothing about 2020 was ordinary. But in that year, business leaders were able to garner deeper insights about virtual teams, learn how to drive the success of these teams, and thrive in the remote working world. By the time you reach the end of this book, you will be able to do the same.

Henry Kurkowski
www.theremoteworkbook.com

CHAPTER 1

You Can't Go to the Office: Where Do You Go from Here?

Indianapolis, April 3, 2006 - Public safety officials are still concerned about Sunday's storm damage to the Regions Bank tower downtown. The straight-line winds blew out windows on several floors and peeled away parts of the building's facade.

While the wind is responsible for the initial damage to the city's third tallest building, wind will keep the area around it closed for at least another day. Channel 13 Meteorologist Jude Redfield says the wind speeds are expected to be up to 25 miles per hour through Tuesday afternoon. That means falling glass and debris from the Regions building are still a big safety concern.

Three sides and 16 floors of the building are damaged and it will be a while before the tower is repaired. Spokesperson Myra Borshoff says that is bad news for tenants.

"For the foreseeable future, this building will not be occupied...Right now, our focus is securing the building and making it safe."

In the short term that means protecting pedestrians and drivers from falling glass and metal. And, Borshoff says, that means keeping the area around the tower off-limits.

"I would say for at least for the next few days, those streets will not be available and you should probably plan to leave 15 to 20 minutes early."

Mayor Bart Peterson agrees. "When we are sure nothing is going to fall off the buildings, then we will reopen the streets."

But the businesses and their employees who work at One Indiana Square will have to wait longer. Getting back to business for them means finding temporary office space elsewhere. Susan Matthews, with the

building's management, says they are doing their best to help. "We are in the process of contacting tenants, assessing their needs, and helping them find space."

Building owner Mickey Maurer says they'll do what is necessary. "That's part of being local. We're here. We told those tenants we'd stand behind them, and we've got a plan, we've got an army put together, and we will stand behind them."

Hotels and office buildings in the downtown area have reached out, offering their extra space. One Indiana Square has about 30 tenants and 1,000 employees. Among those are accounting firms who are eager to get back to work with tax day just two weeks away.

Lynsay Clutter-Eyewitness News, Area around Regions Tower to stay closed, WTHR, April 4, 2006

Disaster Strikes

Imagine that you are awakened in the wee hours of the morning to be told that there was a fire in the middle of the night. Although nobody was harmed, your workplace has been severely damaged and is unusable. What is the first thing that pops into your head? Does your mind dart to worry about the various company files and assets that were in the office? Is the anxiety of upcoming project deadlines lumping in your throat? Do you race your thoughts around trying to figure out how to keep the team working and the company operational?

All of these are valid concerns, and there is no correct order of priority. This type of scenario has happened countless times around the world. Sudden man-made and natural disasters have interrupted the flow of business for centuries. In the preceding news report from WTHR in Indianapolis, you can see a good example in which roughly

1,000 workers of over 30 businesses were suddenly displaced without warning.

How Long Will the Crisis Last?

The building mentioned in the Eyewitness News story from April 2006 is the third largest building in Indianapolis. The storm that hit the downtown area was identified by meteorologists as a derecho. A derecho is a series of fast-moving wind storms or thunderstorms with powerful straight-line winds that can rival the force of hurricane winds. That storm hit downtown Indianapolis late on Sunday, April 2. By Monday, businesses were told that the building was unstable and unsafe for anyone to gain entry. In fact, the surrounding streets were also closed off due to falling debris. Over the course of a weekend, dozens of businesses were turned upside down and displaced.

Nearly three months would go by for many of those tenants who were without a place to work and were unable to access their company assets or client files. That Monday morning, the business owners and managers were coping as best they could. Many were hoping that they would be out of their office for just a few weeks at most. Few, if any, realized that it would be months before they could return.

WTHR had a follow-up report when many workers returned to the building to open up their offices and called it a kind of homecoming. That second report was published 10 weeks later on June 10, 2006. They also reported on that day that there were still many offices that remained under repair and unable to open for business.

COVID-19

The 2020 pandemic forced businesses around the globe to close their offices. Most of those businesses either figured out how to work remotely or stopped operations for a

period of time. People who thought that such a long-term interruption of day-to-day business couldn't happen to them suddenly found themselves dealing with it as their new reality. This begs the question, how many businesses were ready for an emergency in which the whole company needed to suddenly work remotely?

BEST PRACTICES

Get a company continuity plan in place for your business to make sure your company can survive and thrive in case of various types of crises.

Prepping the Whole Team

I have worked on the board of trustees for a nonprofit organization where I and several other board members were tasked to come up with a detailed continuity plan for the organization. A continuity plan is a vital document that outlines various courses of action to help a company not only survive but continue to thrive when disaster strikes. Of course, such plans are something that you want in place *before* your interruption in business occurs so that you are not left scrambling or arguing over the correct decisions to make in the midst of your crisis event.

With nonprofit or for-profit businesses, putting such plans in place demonstrates good stewardship and that you take your responsibilities to the stake holders of the organization seriously. Part of that plan needs to be a remote work contingency.

A large portion of the workforce already has the ability to work from home due to the proliferation of broadband. In fact, according the US Census Bureau, just prior to the

COVID-19 crisis, about one third of workers had worked remotely and roughly half of information workers are able to work from home. However, being able to do work from home on a long-term basis and actually doing so are very different things. Historically, there has been some pushback from management on overseeing a remote and distributed workforce.

Management Work Policy

According to the International Workplace Group, an international provider of office space, business lounges, and conference centers, more than 50 percent of companies surveyed in 2019 did not have a remote work policy in place.¹ When asked the reason, they simply cited that it was a long-standing company policy. In other words, they prefer managing their people in person.

Many times, the reason companies avoid working remotely is due to the company culture. There is a camaraderie that comes with being in the same room and bouncing ideas off each other. There is an energy in that room that cannot be duplicated in a video conference.

Other times, remote working is frowned upon due to employer preferences in management styles, and sometimes it is simply that management does not like change. In working with thousands of small businesses across the US, I have seen clients at all management levels resist introducing new technology and new methodologies. Many times, that resistance to change comes in the form of “that's just how we've always done things.”

From the experience of managing my own companies, I certainly understand that initial resistance. Changing processes is a disruption, and it can be uncomfortable to learn new methodologies in day-to-day operations,

especially if it makes a dramatic alteration in how a company manages its business.

Some leaders believe the best way they can manage people and performance is in person. There is trepidation in trying a new office format, and there are concerns about a potential loss of productivity during the learning curve of running a company in a new way. But when disaster strikes, we don't get the luxury of having many choices. When it comes time to adapt workplace operations in an emergency, the situation quickly becomes sink or swim.

IBM and Yahoo!

In the late '90s and into the early 2000s, IBM was making headlines for its progressiveness in allowing a large portion of its workforce to go remote. It added that the profitability of the company had greatly increased due to this strategic move. Having workers go remote reduced overhead by getting rid of 78 million square feet of office space. The company sold off 58 million square feet of that space for \$1.9 billion. By 2009, IBM had 40 percent of its employees working remotely and was considered a pioneer in a remote working revolution.

However, in May 2017, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that IBM was giving its remote work employees a choice: either move back into one of the company's regional offices or leave the company.² The move was intended to increase the speed of productivity and create better collaboration between teams.

In 2013, the new CEO of tech giant Yahoo! made headlines when a company memo was leaked. In it, Marissa Mayer abruptly ended the renowned company perk of working from home. Again, collaboration was cited as the main reason for this sudden switch. Here is a part of the memo:

*To become the absolute best place to work, communication and collaboration will be important, so we need to be working side-by-side. That is why it is critical that we are all present in our offices. Some of the best decisions and insights come from hallway and cafeteria discussions, meeting new people, and impromptu team meetings. Speed and quality are often sacrificed when we work from home. We need to be one Yahoo!, and that starts with physically being together.*³

When these events happened, many large companies followed suit and ended or discouraged work-from-home policies. Companies such as Honeywell, Best Buy, Aetna, and Bank of America all changed their telecommuting policies in order to have better control over the workday and have more face-to-face collaboration. Does all this mean that remote working is detrimental to a company's efficiency? The short answer is that it can be, but it does not have to be that way. Certainly not anymore.

In the second half of 2020, HR consulting and benefits firm Mercer surveyed 800 employers to ask about the productivity of workers who went remote due to the health crisis. Ninety-four percent of the employers surveyed said that productivity was the same as it was prior to the pandemic, with 27 percent of those reporting that productivity was actually higher. On top of that, 73 percent reported that one quarter or more of their employees would likely remain as remote workers after the pandemic.

In November 2020, a study commissioned by tech giant Microsoft showed similar findings. Boston Consulting Group and KRC Research conducted the study and polled 9,000 employees and managers from large companies across 15 European markets, asking about productivity of remote workers during the pandemic. Thirty-nine percent reported that the newly remote workers were as productive

as they were before going remote, 34 percent reported that they were somewhat more productive, and 10 percent stated that they were significantly more productive. So what's the difference between 2017 and 2020 when it comes to the idea of remote work productivity?

Consider the leaps we have taken in residential broadband speeds since 2017. Today there are gigabyte home internet routers and network switches. High-speed cellular networks and 5G can act as backup connections to help keep people working. The technology for remote work today far exceeds what was available in 2017. Another point to take into consideration is that there has been a wake-up moment in management styles due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is now a deeper understanding of how to create stronger collaborations between teams and how to better use the technology that is available.

Top Concerns of Management

Some of the first concerns managers and team leaders will have will be about functionality, such as how to get the team to function cohesively while separated and how to manage their newly distributed work force. Both of these concerns can be overcome if you don't fight them. Let's take a look at managerial obstacles.

According to 2019 a survey by OWL Labs,⁴ some of the concerns that managers have about a remote workforce include diminished productivity, loss of employee focus, and even concerns about the long-term career goals of employees ([Figure 1.1](#)).

Top Concerns of Managers of Remote Teams



Figure 1.1: Top concerns of managers of remote teams

Source: Modified from Owl Labs, State of Remote Work 2019, September 2019.

The truth is that a good number of managers have some anxiety about managing remote workers. Managerial skill sets get honed by repetition. For years, those management skills relied on large amounts of small face-to-face check-ins and quick meetings with staff members. Many people in leadership positions still gauge dedication by who stays late and who comes in early.

That style of management makes the move to remote working difficult and is the reason many companies chose not have a remote working policy.

I've had the unfortunate experience of working under managers who were always on the lookout for slackers. Everyone knew that if the manager was coming around, you had to make yourself look busy. If you were not doing something productive when they came by, they would find something for you to do or you would get sent home. That was their management style, and cracking the whip was something that permeated into the company culture.

That kind of management style is the antithesis of a productive remote work environment. Vocalized expectations, setting productivity milestones, and creating a culture of trust will go far in the switch to a distributed workforce. We will go into detail on those points in later chapters.

Do Not Fight the Tide

If you go swimming in the ocean and find yourself pulled away from shore by the riptide, the best advice from experts is twofold: Do not panic and do not fight the tide.

Do not panic is sound advice for any situation, but *do not fight the tide* is the key to survival. The reason why is simply put: you can't win that fight. The undertow that is pulling you away from the safety of the shore is strong and consistent. If you try to fight the tide, you will feel like you are making some headway, but in the end, any forward motion you get will be incremental and won't get you to shore. The only thing your struggle will accomplish is a severe depletion of your resources.

To survive, you need to go with the flow. Let the riptide take you out and when it stops pulling at you, then you act. You first swim parallel to the shore and out of the current that brought you to where you are now. Then you are in the proper position to get back on track to your goal of getting

to the beach. You need to take the same approach if you suddenly find yourself in circumstances where you don't have a space for your employees to work.

For this book, I interviewed a number of business executives whose companies suddenly shifted to working remotely. Some of them resisted the need to go remote in the beginning. I've asked those people what they might do differently should they again find themselves in similar circumstances. The responses from them were all similar. Although they feel they adapted quickly to their situations, they would most likely accept their need to move to remote work earlier on.

One of the business leaders whom I interviewed is David LaRosa. Below is a segment of our discussion where he describes the series of events that caused his company, Verso, to go fully remote. Accepting the circumstances instead of fighting them removed stress and the pressure of timeliness and ultimately made his agency and its company culture emerge stronger from it all.

It was 2018, and at the time Verso was about 28 people. We had a lovely space in downtown Santa Monica overlooking Broadway, one block from the train and six blocks from the beach. It was a nice space.

It was a very rainy week in February. The first call came on a Tuesday morning—our largest account would be ending the relationship within the month. We had been working together for four years, and at the time we had probably 8 to 10 people working on that account daily. It rained a lot that day. The second call came on Wednesday night. I was at the office late, and our second largest account needed to end its relationship within 30 days as well. It rained a lot that day, too...

The first step, clearly, was layoffs. We had 28 people in January, and by March we were down to 11 people.

The next step was getting rid of our space—it was overhead we didn't need. I found a space down the street that was much cheaper, probably because of the large construction project happening right behind the space. I think they are still working on it today, but it was very nice for the price. However, when I went to have the last walkthrough, the space was flooded, and the tenants next door—a well-known editing house here in LA—were carrying their computers out in the rain. They said, “Don't lease this space. It floods every time it rains, and the landlord is a crook.”

So, I paused because we had two weeks left on our old lease. During those two weeks, I suddenly had to fly to South Carolina to deal with a family emergency. As the lease ran out, my working remotely from South Carolina started a company trend. The whole team started working from home rather than take the train or drive two hours to the office in LA traffic. We had the

tools already, so I said, "OK. Let's try this!" It's been over two years."

David LaRosa, CEO and Creative Director, Verso

Fighting the need to work remotely will only cause your operations to flounder. You will waste two valuable resources: time and money. On top of that, you will put the morale and the outlook of your team in jeopardy.

Remote Working Is Older Than You May Think

To help relieve anxiety about a sudden switch to remote working, business leaders should realize the long history that exists in working from home with nontraditional or flexible hours. The idea of flextime was created in West Germany in 1967. German manufacturer Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm developed flextime to combat work issues such as employees showing up late and poor morale, which resulted in low productivity.

Allowing employees to change the set of regular hours they worked but still work the same number of hours had incredibly positive effects on performance. It also had a dramatic effect on commuting. Having entire shifts of people all entering and exiting the building at same time created congestion and anxiety for workers to combat.

The term *telecommuting* was first coined in 1972 by engineer Jack Niles when he was interviewed while working remotely on a NASA communications system. The gas shortage of the late 1970s prompted author and economist Frank Schiff to push the idea for the American people to work from home. He wrote an article for the *Washington Post* suggesting that if only 10 percent of the millions of work commuters would do their jobs from home two days a week, they would greatly reduce pollution, road congestion, and employee stress levels. They would also