

Working From Home

by Bill Corden



In the last few weeks, what with lockdown and everything, I've had to conduct some of the household business necessities over the phone and it's been quite funny.

Almost everyone I know who's still in the workforce (I'm long since retired) works from home and I've never really delved into their current "work from home" routine.

I do know that when I myself worked from home many years ago, I didn't exactly score high on the production meter. I got up about 10 am, did my write-ups and file updates at the kitchen table, still in my dressing gown, with a piece of toast and marmalade in my hand. Phoned into the office and gave them the impression that I was working like a dog, watched a bit of Oprah, went out for a walk, had lunch and then made a few client calls before I called it a day. It was the best job I

ever had.

I felt sure I was going to get raked over the coals for doing next to nothing but when I attended the office for one of those bi-weekly "team building" sessions, the boss was usually full of praise for my work. "What the heck were the others doing?" I thought to myself quite often.


So in this new world where lots of people are working from home, I take special interest in the way different businesses deal with me as a client.

If, say, you phone your bank early in the morning, maybe 8.30am, it's highly likely that you'll get an initially flustered response, as your now teleworker has only just got out of bed or is making breakfast for the kids who have to be rushed to school.

You can usually hear them chirping in the background as your banker tries to sound professional. Of course they can't give you the information you need because they haven't signed in yet and it's not at their fingertips like it is in the branch. They will call you back, which gives them time to clear the table and drive the kids to school.

When they do call you back it's a much more composed individual, they're connected to the mainframe and the only thing missing is the hum of the normal office background sounds that you were used to in pre-covid times. These sounds are replaced by the dog barking or the kettle boiling or another cell phone ringing in the background. To get the information you need you have to have all your credit cards out of your wallet and be ready to read them the numbers, your driver's licence is essential and of course, your password (which is always different from the one on your bank card).

It's a completely different experience when you have to phone your car dealership! Even though they're working from home they know immediately who you are from your phone number,

because there's a possibility of a sale. They'll even send a car to pick you up No kids in the background, no dogs yapping, just as relaxing as afternoon tea. 

I won't even go into the frustrations of dealing with "work from home" employees of the cell phone companies. Usually you work harder from your end than they do at theirs. Try to get them to put you through to a supervisor and you'd be better off flying to Pakistan for a face to face meeting.