

## Remote Work @ Hotjar

This piece was ghost-written for Ryan Robinson, Customer Success Manager at Hotjar. You can see the live version [here](#).

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## An introduction to remote work from a remote company

Curious to know how things work at a [fully remote company](#)? I'm Ryan, Customer Success Manager at Hotjar, and I've been part of a remote team for almost two years. I've got plenty of insight to share!

A few weeks back, I held a virtual meeting with more than 20 of my co-workers where we all talked about our experience, the benefits, and the not-so-good parts of our life as remote workers. Let me take you behind the scenes...

### What is remote work?

Remote work describes any type of work that doesn't have to be performed in a traditional company office. Remote workers can do their jobs anywhere in the world (including their home, a co-working space, etc.) where they have access to high-speed internet.

### Why is remote work important in 2019?

A recent study found that [70% of global professionals work remotely at least one day per week](#), while 53% work remotely at least half the week. With such a large (and growing) segment of the workforce going virtual at least part of the time, businesses who are equipped for remote work can **get a competitive advantage and recruit the best employees from anywhere in the world**, without being restricted to a physical location.

### How we work remotely at Hotjar

[Hotjar](#) has had a 100% distributed team from day one, so the founders knew they needed processes and practices that allowed remote workers to thrive. A few examples of how we work remotely:

- **Document processes publicly:** to work as a unified team, we need to be able to be on the same page regardless of where in the world we are. A lot of our processes are documented publicly in this [Team Manual](#), and anybody can take a look at how we work, what tools we use, etc. and understand if our way of working can work for

them.

- **Trust co-workers and be flexible:** nobody at Hotjar controls or monitors our working hours, except for ourselves. Our [leadership team](#) trusts each one of us to get our work done by the due dates we set with our teams.
- **Establish a rough structure for the work week:** although Hotjar doesn't micro-manage each employee's time, we do have rough guidelines for where we focus our energy each day of the week. For example, we have 'core hours' between 2pm and 5pm CET where we should aim to be available, while Friday is our 'demo' day where we all come together for an hour and share what's been shipped and accomplished during the week.

Having this structure in place allows teams across different continents to align their efforts and stay focused.

- **Encourage employees to block out time for personal care:** whether we need to head to the gym or take a sick kid to the doctor's office, Hotjar encourages self-care. After all, healthy employees (mentally and physically) make for a stronger company.
- **Regular retreats in interesting places:** we love technology, but nothing can replace a real, live human interaction for building rapport. That's why we get together twice a year for [in-person meetups](#) places (check out our most recent meetup videos from [Malta](#) and [Tenerife](#)).
- **Include virtual team-building activities:** when we're not running off to exotic locations, we engage in [virtual team-building activities](#), which vary from one team to the next. One example is our 'bonfire' meetings, which you'll read about next.

## The 'bonfire' meeting that gave birth to this blog post

Every Wednesday, we have a regular meeting we call 'the bonfire' where we discuss things that aren't strictly related to work. It's a way to connect, have fun, share knowledge, and get to know new employees.

It was one of these bonfire meetings where we had a conversation about remote work. I wanted to find out more about my co-workers' experience (and maybe learn a trick or two), so I created a Trello board to facilitate the discussion. People would submit answers and upvote their favorites, and their ideas became the foundation for this piece.

## The benefits of working remotely

The first thing I wanted to discover was the biggest benefit(s) of working remotely. There are a lot of valuable [stats about remote work](#) out there, but I was interested in my co-workers's first-hand experience. Here are some of the results:

- **Freedom and flexibility:** you can block out appointments, pick up the kids from school, and find your own balance of work-life integration. It doesn't have to be 9-5!
- **No daily commute:** you don't *need* to drive anywhere. Of course, if you want to get out of the house to hit a cafe or a co-working space, you have that option as well.
- **Wear whatever you'd like:** want to do that Zoom meeting in your Pink Panther boxers? As long as you're wearing a decent shirt (and you never stand up), nobody will be the wiser.
- **Take care of family needs:** parents with kids don't have to negotiate with their bosses to pick them up from school or take them to football practice.
- **Live anywhere:** working remotely gives you the freedom to live anywhere your passport will allow—as long as the time zones overlap efficiently (for example, at Hotjar we work across EMEA + US hours only). Whether you want to stretch your Euros in Nicaragua or visit family in South Africa, all you need is a laptop and an internet connection. In fact, we've got quite a few digital nomads on our team—who live a life of endless travel—and I'm lucky enough to be one of them!

### Potential drawbacks of remote work

Of course, remote work isn't all rainbows and unicorns. I want to give you the full picture, so here are some potential drawbacks we discussed:

- **Distractions:** whether it's a crying baby, a talkative neighbor, or that guy at the co-working spot who takes all his calls on speaker phone (we all know *that* guy), you'll face distractions you might not face in the office.
- **Burnout:** remote workers can sometimes forget to block out time for themselves. Since we're always connected, it's easy to work until the wee hours of the night—but it's not healthy!
- **Isolation:** an extravert, by definition, is someone who draws their energy from being around other people. For some of them, Zoom isn't enough to get their fix of human contact.
- **Communication issues:** without regular video meetings that foster healthy, honest communication, teams can struggle with misunderstanding. Words via email can be

taken out of context, and something can be lost with a phone call as well (since a great deal of communication is nonverbal).

## 5 ways to stay productive while working remotely

Some of my co-workers are seasoned remote workers, but for others, remote work is still a bit of a new thing. This is where learning from other people's experiences helps:

- **Set boundaries:** whether it's with your kids, the UPS driver, or the overly-talkative grandma at the local cafe, you've got to set healthy boundaries. Remote working is still a new concept to most people, and they need to understand that when you're working, you're *really* working.
- **Take breaks:** working alone, it's possible to dive into the rabbit hole and forget to eat or drink for hours. This isn't good for you, and it isn't good for your productivity. Taking regular, scheduled breaks will keep you sharp.
- **Change locations:** some people find that their creativity peaks when they change locations. For example, you might work at home in the morning for a bit, then head to a co-working space or a library, and end up in a cafe in the afternoon. Try different locations and see what works best for you.
- **Track your time:** do you get easily distracted? There's a whole bunch of [time management apps](#) available that will help you track your time and stay focused.
- **Disconnect for at least a few hours each day:** unless you're a world leader, you don't need to be constantly available. The world will keep turning if you go offline for a bit.

## 3 tips for finding remote work

Based on our experience, there are basically three types of remote workers:

- **Regular full-time or part-time employees** who work remotely because the company allows, encourages, or requires it
- **Contractors** who have agreed to work for a company for a specified period of time
- **Freelancers** who take individual assignments

Although freelancers and contractors are more common in the remote work world, the list of partly- or fully-virtual companies is growing (especially in tech). In any case, the following techniques can help you find remote work no matter which category you fall into.

## 1. Search remote job sites

There are a number of websites where remote companies advertise job listings. Here are three good ones:

- [WeWorkRemotely.com](https://www.weworkremotely.com)
- [Remote.co](https://remote.co)
- [Remotive.io](https://remotive.io)

These websites are great because they tell you which companies use at least some remote workers. In other words, even if you can't find a job posting in your field, you can use these sites to accumulate a list of employers who hire remotely—then you can reach out to the hiring managers at those companies.

## 2. Network with people at co-working spaces

Even if co-working isn't something you want to do every day, it can be helpful to join a co-working community for the connections alone. After all, remote workers know (and work with) other remote workers. Talk to enough people and you're bound to stumble across a few leads.

## 3. Join online forums dedicated to your field (Facebook groups, LinkedIn, Reddit)

Yes, all forums have a few trolls, but there are also many hard-working professionals who want to help each other chase their dreams. Whatever your area of expertise, when you build strong relationships with people in your field, they'll be happy to recommend you—even if they've never met you in the real world.

## A final note from the Hotjar team

The team at Hotjar has just passed 75 people, but we're aiming to reach 100+ by the end of the year. We're ambitious, fast-growing, big on personal development, and spread all over the world. [Wanna join us?](#)