

# Creating a Productive Home Office\*

*\*In our untrained opinion.*

Small businesses and sole proprietorships are popping up in record numbers. Whether you followed a dream or got creative out of necessity, many of us are leaving the cubical farms for the home office. And while it sounds good on paper, it comes with its own unique challenges.



[ enlightened marketing ]

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## what you'll need

When you worked in a traditional office, you had a clear delineation between work and home life. In a home office, it takes a bit more creativity to create that distinction, but its necessary both for your well-being and to reduce the liabilities to your personal assets. Here's what *ska works* recommends:

- **Mail** - Rent a Post Office box or the UPS equivalent to keep your home address private. The PO box is cheaper, but the UPS option gives you a "real" address where you can ship packages.
- **Phone** - There are plenty of inexpensive, internet phone services available to up the professionalism of your business at a low cost; a business phone with options like "hold" and "night mode" (that turns off the ringer after business hours) is also a sound investment.
- **Website/email** -Even if your business lives totally "offline," searching for you online is often a litmus test for whether the average consumer will do business with you. Search for tools that cater to the small business - many of them include intuitive design tools, hosting and email addresses.
- **Banking** - Save yourself the migraine at tax time and set up a business checking account and credit card, which you can find for free.
- **Office supplies** - Stock up and let family members know that they are for business use only. This includes a decent quality office chair, an often-overlooked necessity.
- **Technology** - Only you know what technology is a necessity. You are often your only resource, so don't skimp, but search for deals online.

## finding the right fit

Once you have the tools you need, it's important to customize your workplace to fit your needs and preferences. You're going to be spending far more time here than you care to calculate, so it needs to work for you. Some things to keep in mind:

- **Location** - If possible, situate your home office in a secluded spot, far from your main living area, and ideally a room with a door that you can shut at the end of the day.
- **Lighting** - Experts recommend a table lamp with a translucent shade to minimize eye strain.
- **Ergonomics** - Be conscious of seat height, keyboard and monitor position, utilize a headset or speakerphone on long calls, etc.

## minimizing distractions

Home offices are surrounded by things you could be doing besides your work, to stay focused:

- **"Arrive" at work** - Consciously "leave" home when you enter your office. For some, it can be helpful to drive to your PO Box and then start work.
- **Household tasks** - Laundry, dishes, and cleaning are just a few steps away. To keep them from sucking up too much work time, designate a block of time every week to those tasks.
- **Kids** - If your children are old enough to be at home, "feed the meter" by giving them your undivided attention for short intervals throughout the day.
- **The internet** - Without a boss looking over your shoulder, it can be tempting to let your mouse drift. Download time tracking software to keep you honest by showing you just how much of your time is "billable."



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## experience

With a degree in finance and a passion for marketing, Sara created a diverse career that included work in marketing departments as well as agencies. In that time, Sara became frustrated by the lack of resources that took the approach of applying market intelligence to promotional initiatives. To fill the void, she started *skaworks*, providing impactful, strategic marketing services to businesses throughout New England.

She brings her broad experience and skill set, as well as her insatiable appetite for success to every *skaworks* project. And

each initiative is supported by a diverse and talented group of graphic designers, web developers, copywriters and print specialists.

## what we do

Sounds cliché, but at *skaworks* we like helping clients achieve their business goals. We endeavor to attain those goals by pulling from a full toolkit of marketing tactics, including:

- advertising
- branding
- collateral
- direct mail
- email marketing
- market research

- event marketing
- pay-per-click/search engine optimization
- public relations
- website design

## our approach

What does our tagline, “enlightened marketing” really mean? Every business has an 80/20 rule. At *skaworks*, we believe the 80/20 rule in marketing is that folks usually spend 80% of their time focusing on the piece that only has 20% of the impact – design.

Marketing is about saying the right thing, to the right people in the right way. If

you’re not doing that, the best design in the world won’t save you. By including *skaworks* in your marketing planning and execution, you can make your initiatives more effective. And who couldn’t use a little more bang for their buck?

## contact us

Talk to us about your under appreciated company, the exciting new product you plan to launch, or whatever is on your mind. Even if it’s beyond the powers of marketing, we promise to listen.

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