



VANDERBLOEMEN

REMOTE WORK POLICY

OVERVIEW

This Remote Work Policy outlines the guidelines and expectations for employees temporarily and permanently working remotely and for employees working from the Central office. The standards have been put in place to ensure the success of the regional expansion and future growth of Vanderbloemen. The decentralized business model will produce greater efficiency in our processes, capital for growth, cost savings, employee retention, and regional/local presence.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is “remote working”?

Remote Working allows employees to work from an **approved** location and/or on the road during business travel. It is not an entitlement nor a companywide benefit and does not change the terms and conditions of employment with Vanderbloemen. The work location must be consistent with the standards of the Central office, free from interruptions, have an acceptable video backdrop, high-speed wifi, print capabilities, and the ability to close the office door.

All remote locations must be pre-approved by the COO.

For further clarity, working remotely is not working from home, attending a children’s event, traveling to a vacation, running personal errands, taking care of a sick child from home, taking care of a parent, etc. All of the examples listed are considered PTO or Comp Time and do not qualify as working remotely.

What are the benefits of remote employees?

Remote work has a host of benefits for employees and employers. Flexibility in work location removes the stress of commuting, giving employees more hours to spend with their families, which in turn makes them happier and more committed.

Having regional remote offices also helps employers recruit the best people without requiring the employee to move to the city where the central office is located. Regional remote employees have the benefit of living in communities where they have put down roots and established life long relationships.

Below are 8 benefits that have great statistics to back up the advantages for remote employees and the employer.

1. Increase in employee efficiency and productivity.
2. Reduced employee turnover.
3. Lower stress and higher morale.
4. A decrease in real estate costs and overhead.
5. Greater employee engagement.

6. Positive impact on the environment.
7. Meets the demands of younger employees.
8. Healthier personal relationships.

How does an employee receive approval to work remotely?

Consultant's and Vice Presidents mainly may work remotely by following the guidelines below.

1. Request remote workspace approval.
 - The Remote Work request form must be submitted a minimum of two weeks prior to the expected working dates.
 - The employee is only eligible to use the approved worked space when working remotely.
2. Submit Remote Work Dates
 - Temporary remote employees must submit requested dates to their manager and COO for approval a minimum of one (1) day prior to the requested dates.
 - The employee's manager and the COO must approve the request considering all elements mentioned above specifically:
 - Is the employee's calendar up-to-date?
 - Has the remote work location been approved?
 - Frequency and length of time of the request.
 - Request that spans more than a week requires additional meetings and strategic workflow meetings with managers and team members.
 - Employees who need to work from home for unforeseen reasons (e.g. illness or temporary difficult commute) should file their request as soon as possible, so managers can consider and approve it. In most cases, this will be treated as PTO/Sick days and not remote working.

POLICY

The remote work policy sets the rules of engagement and expectations for employees working away from the Central office for a temporary or permanent timeframe. Additional Vanderbloemen policies, such as codes of conduct, attendance, social media use, confidentiality agreements, etc. that apply to the Central office employees still remain policy for those working remotely.

Eligibility

- Consultants, Vice President's and C-Level's are eligible to work remotely as long as the guidelines in this policy are met and approval has been received from the COO.
- Temporary remote work arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects or business travel. These arrangements are approved by the COO on an as-needed basis and with no expectation of ongoing continuance. Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the company.
- All new employees that are eligible to work remotely are required to work from the Central Office during the time frame outlined in their employee agreement prior to telecommuting. During the time in the Central Office employees will be properly on-boarded, receive extensive job & remote training, and learn & experience the company Culture. When the employee is not traveling for business, workdays from the Central Office will be Monday - Thursday. Virtual attendance at the Friday All Staff meeting is mandatory.
- The Remote Employee Agreement must be signed by all telecommuters.

Required Software Tools

All computers must have similar software in order for the technology provider to use VPN to dial into the employee's computer and assist their needs. The technology provider will also push software updates to all computers within the company and manage the virus protection. In order for remote working to be successful as a company, all staff members must participate in the standardization of software.

- Zoom Video & Voice Conferencing

Zoom helps bring teams together in a frictionless environment to get more done. The cloud platform for video, voice, content sharing and chat runs across mobile devices, desktops, telephones, and room systems.

- HubSpot Meeting

HubSpot Meeting puts the power to book meetings in the hands of your prospects, clients, candidates, vendors, and meeting requestors. Meetings will automatically sync to your Google Calendar where others can always see your most up-to-date availability. A “Schedule A Meeting” icon will be a part of all employee’s email signature. Which will give ease to arranging meetings.

- Google Slack Extension

Connect your Google Calendar to Slack so you can see daily summaries of your schedule, respond to event invites, and even start Zoom calls right from Slack.

- Dashlane

Dashlane is a password manager application that enables users to securely sync their data between an unlimited number of devices. Dashlane helps manage it all by giving the ability to store, secure and access important account passwords intelligently and automatically.

- Google Calendar

Google Calendar is the time-management and scheduling calendar service used by the company. Employees are required to use Google Calendar instead of Apple, Outlook, or any other service.

- Google Drive

Google Drive comes equipped with Google Docs (Word), Google Sheets (Excel), Google Slides (PowerPoint) and so much more. It is the required software for creating and storing documents, spreadsheets, and slides. Google Drive is a safe place for company files and puts

them within reach from any smartphone, tablet, or computer. Files in Google Drive – like your videos, photos, and documents – are backed up safely and will not be lost. Employees can easily invite others to view, edit, collaborate and leave comments on any of the files or folders.

- **Google Chrome**
Google Chrome is a cross-platform web browser and has everything you need to make the most of the web. Chrome works on any operating system and all devices. It is the web browser of choice for the company. Many of the “add ons” used in various applications are provided by Chrome.

Availability & Calendar Management

All employees are required to use and maintain their Google Calendars with up to date and accurate information pertaining to their daily work schedule. Employees working from the Central or a Regional office are required to show at least 40 hours of work on their calendar with the combination of PTO, CTO, and Work Time.

- **Work Hours**
Employee’s calendar times should be accounted for between the hours of 6:00 am - 9:00 pm CST (Company working hours). This will assist with serving our clients on the East and West coasts, as well as internationally. As we incorporate an automated system (HubSpot Meeting) for scheduling meetings, it is imperative that all employee’s availability is accurate between the hours stated.
- **Calendar Sharing**
Employees are expected to share their calendars with the entire Team. Google Calendar default settings must be set to “*Make Available for Vanderbloemen*” See *All Event Details*. This will assist with scheduling meetings internally and managing work productivity.
- **Drive-Bys**
Try to avoid the “*do you have a minute*” meeting. When you need to have a conversation with a colleague, go to the Google Calendar and schedule some time to chat, even if it is a 15-minute meeting.

- Calendar Items

As a rule of thumb, items that go on your calendar should be commitments you make with others and yourself. It's not designed to be a task list manager, however, it should include blocks of time that are marked out for tackling those "To Do" items.

Here's a list of items that everyone should include in their calendars. No details are needed for off work, PTO/Comp, or personal calendar entries. However, details are required for working time and should include work location.

- Appointments: work, medical, family, etc.
- Meetings: work and personal
- Commute and Drive Times
- Workouts
- PTO or CTO
- Off Work "Out of office"
- Time Blocking Work
- Lunch

- Calendar Legend

Here are some standard calendar scheduling terms to use that will provide consistent language throughout the company.

- Off Work - This term is used to signify that an employee's workday has not yet begun or has ended for the day.
- PTO - This term is used to indicate when an employee is on approved Paid Time Off for personal errands, non-work meetings, children's events, and vacation.
- CTO - This term is used to indicate when an employee is on approved Compensation Time Off. CTO is given to an employee for working more than the allotted time for travel or other activities like working on the weekend.
- Lunch - No explanation needed!!
- Personal - This term is used to indicate when you are at a personal event or appointment such as Dentist, Car Repair, etc.
- Commute "Available For Calls" - This term is used to indicate that you are en route to a destination and available to take phone calls.

Best Practice Calendar Tips

- **Plan Ahead**
Set aside a day each week to review and update your calendar with new meetings, personal appointments, work hours, etc. Calendars should have accurate information on them a minimum of 7 days out.
- **Deal With Conflicts**
Clear up calendar conflicts. If you said yes to a meeting and now a higher priority meeting or unexpected situation has come up, decline in a timely manner.
- **Create Talking Points**
Most meetings can take place within 30 mins. Have a set agenda and talking points ready to maximize the time.
- **Just Say No**
When appropriate, decline meetings that don't pertain to you or meetings that you will not add value to. This will help to avoid unnecessary time-stealer appointments.
- **Time Block**
Always make time for your work and priorities. Block time out on your calendar for the task and assignments on your To-Do List. This can help keep you on track while keeping distractions, procrastination, and unproductive multitasking at bay.
- **Create Gaps**
Avoid back to back appointments. Allow at least 15 minutes between appointments which will give you time to unplug from the current meeting and prepare mentally for the next.

Paid Time Off (PTO) and Compensatory Time Off (CTO)

All PTO/CTO requires pre-approval.

- Weekend CTO Accrual
When an employee works a *full day (8 hours)* or *two full days (16 hours)* on a weekend (Saturday/Sunday) they are eligible to take CTO (time worked) within a 10-day window. Comp Time can not accrue or carry over the past 10 days and does not count against the employee's PTO.
- Weekday CTO Accrual
Employees required to work or travel after 7:00 pm, local time, during a weekday can earn comp hours. Non-weekend Comp Time acquired must be taken within 10 days and will not accrue or carry over.
- Out Of Office Notice
Employees should turn on their Google Out of Office Notifications when on PTO or CTO. In the notification always list a colleague that can be contacted for immediate assistance.
- Comp Time
Comp Time can NOT be taken during Weekly All Staff Meetings.

Responsiveness

We strive to have rapid response not only to clients and candidates but also to our fellow colleagues. Remote employees are required to communicate at a level consistent with employees working from the Central office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the company.

Below are the standards set for responsiveness internally and externally during working hours, 6:00 am - 9:00 pm CST.

- Phone/Video Call
 - Use the phone and/or video calls for extremely time-sensitive and complicated questions/communications.
 - An immediate, as soon as possible, the response is expected.
 - Use video calls for most things like weekly one on ones and weekly team meetings.
- Slack
 - Slack messages are time-sensitive, but not necessarily urgent.
 - Use Slack for important, can't-wait-for-the-next-meeting communication.
 - Do not use Slack if a response is not needed immediately.

- When you see a person's notification in Slack as "green" and they do not have ZZZ over their notification, it means they are available for a video call on Slack or Zoom.
- Email
 - Email messages should be responded to within 24 hours/1 Business Day.
 - Use emails for interacting with outside clients (people not on your direct team)
 - Any communication with attachments and lots of details.
 - Any communication that each party needs to save for their records.
 - Try to respond quickly to set expectations when you will get to that task and/or to acknowledge you received the communication.
- Personal Text Messages
 - Use text messages for urgent questions.
- Time Off Communication
 - Before 6:00 am and after 9:00 pm CST immediate communication is not expected, but when available is greatly appreciated.
 - When an employee is on PTO, CTO, or Off Work please do not slack, text or call. Email is the preferred mode of communication. It is always nice to put in the subject: READ AFTER TIME OFF.

Productivity Measurements

Performance evaluation and productivity for remote employees will be consistent with that received by employees working from the Central office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives.

Remote employees are not exempt from regularly scheduled meetings. Below is a list of required /mandatory meetings all remote employees are required to participate in.

- Supervisor Meetings

Supervisors are required to meet one on one with their direct reports once a week. This meeting gives employees an opportunity to update their manager on current projects, discuss any pain points in their work area and give a general overview of how they are doing professionally and personally. This is also a time for the manager to build a relationship, give positive and constructive feedback on the employee's work, and provide course corrections where needed.

- Vice President Meetings

Vice President's (VP's) are permitted to attend all meetings in person or virtually. VP's are exempt from attending meetings when on approved PTO.

- Weekly CEO Meeting

- Comp Time may not be taken during the weekly scheduled CEO meeting.

- Weekly All Staff Meeting

- Comp Time may not be taken during the weekly scheduled All Staff meeting.

- Project Report

Each week, all remote employees are required to submit a Project Report to their supervisor. The report should outline: what you're working on, project updates, questions and/or approvals needed from the supervisor, and just in general things, the supervisor needs to know. The report should be sent to the supervisor prior to your weekly meeting. This is a requirement for remote working. Failing to complete this on a weekly basis will remove the ability for an employee to work remotely.

Office Space & Equipment

All regional remote employees will be provided with the proper office space and tools needed to be successful in their position. Working from a Starbucks, kitchen table at home, etc is not an acceptable Remote Working location.

- Personal Home Office

The company will not provide internet, printing, remote location expenses, etc for home offices. The company will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space. Tax or legal implications under IRS, state and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office solely rest with and is the responsibility of the employee.

- Environment

All remote locations must be free from interruptions such as barking dogs, kids in the background, excessive noise, etc. The location must be appropriate for video conferencing.

- Equipment / Tools

Employees will be provided a laptop and a Zoom Conference account that can be used for video meetings and conference calls. Office supplies will be provided by the firm as needed.

Equipment provided by Vanderbloemen will be maintained by the company. Equipment supplied by the employee will be maintained by the employee. Vanderbloemen accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. Remote employees must sign for all company property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon offboarding from employment, all company property must be returned to the company.

Tech Support

The company provides in house technical support for the Central office only. Remote employees are required to use Apple Support for laptop hardware issues. Apple can be reached at 800-275-2273 or <https://getsupport.apple.com/>.

Contact the Operations team for all software issues.

Data Security

Most companies work on secure networks, but when the information is taken out of the office, security is not guaranteed. Consistent with the companies expectations of information security for employees working at the Central office, remote employees are expected to ensure the protection of proprietary company and client information. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password updates, shredding of confidential documents, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

Dashlane (computer and mobile app) will be leveraged to share passwords and mitigate password security risk for the organization. Employees should share company-related account passwords with their supervisors.

Virus protection software will be maintained on all computers.

Company & Client Confidentiality

Company and client confidentiality go hand-in-hand with data security. As stated in the employment agreement, confidentiality is key to the success of our business, and employees are expected to uphold the confidentiality of clients, candidates, and internal company information at all times, even when remote.

Termination of Remote Privileges

Remote working arrangements for any employee may be discontinued at will and at any time. Every effort will be made to provide a minimum of 30 days' notice of the termination of an employee's privilege to work remotely. However, there may be instances when adequate notice can not be provided.

Not living up to the standards outlined in this policy can be grounds for termination from the Remote Work privilege and/or from the company.

Remote employees can be off boarded for the reasons listed below.

Failure to:

- Maintain calendar;
- Respond appropriately during working hours;
- Protect client and company confidentiality;
- Complete business development requirements as applicable; and
- Submit weekly project status report to your supervisor.

Remote Video Calls

Here are some Best Practices that will help make the virtual presence pleasing and professional.

- Check Video & Audio Settings

Video: Enable the mirror effect. When you raise your left hand, your hand on the left of your screen rises. This effect prevents confusion when you show people things, or when you have to hide something you notice in the video view.

Audio: Always mute microphone when joining a meeting. Automatically adjust microphone or mic level. This setting is usually enabled by default, and fine to leave on, but if you hear

complaints from others that your voice is fading in or out or echoing, try disabling this. Other software on your computer, or the microphone itself, maybe be applying changes or effects that are competing with the Zoom conference software's settings.

- Minimize Network and Computer Disruptions

Close competing applications: Limit the applications that use processor power and network bandwidth. Many programs are constantly pinging the internet, even when not being used, thus causing bandwidth issues. To engage in the smoothest possible meetings, close any applications you don't need to use for the meeting itself.

Test Wi-Fi before the call: This is the most important rule, but also the most ignored. Your connection may seem fine for Web browsing, but that task uses a lot less network bandwidth than a video call. Head to Speedtest, the go-to site for seeing how fast your computer can transfer data across the wider Internet. Zoom uses 1.2 Mbps (megabits per second), both upload (from you to the Internet) and downloads (from the Internet to you), for a group video call, and 1.5 Mbps both ways if you want to see all the participants in a thumbnail video gallery.

- Use The Right Lighting

As with photography, it's better to have the light source behind the camera, rather than behind the subject. Here are some easy ways to improve your lighting.

Make use of lamps: You can angle and redirect LED desk lamps, and they have multiple brightness levels and color temperatures. Bounce the lamp light off a nearby wall rather than pointing it straight at your face.

Try not to mix light sources: Natural light is great for office space, but for the light that's reaching your face, stick to either a lamp setup or a window slightly off to your side—not both.

Don't use Venetian blinds behind you: The light streaming in through the slats will wreak havoc on many a camera's automatic light adjustments. Better to use blackout shades or curtains, and to bring in other light like lamps.

- Get Good Sound

Use an external microphone: Almost any plug-in device—a desktop USB mic, a USB headset or wireless headset, or the built-in microphone on our USB webcam pick—will sound better than the built-in microphone on a laptop. Just make sure your add-on mic is selected in your meeting software’s settings as the input source.

Use headphones whenever possible: Although some laptops and software can automatically mute the microphone when other people are talking, they’re not perfect. Headphones will prevent feedback loops that result from your mic picking up other people speaking.

Add fabrics to counter echo: If other people are hearing room echo on your calls, the most practical solution is adding fabric to the room to absorb sound. Area rugs, carpeting, drapes, and blinds are reasonable things to try.

- Optimize Camera Position and Backgrounds

Keep your webcam slightly above your eye level: Assuming you have your monitor set up ergonomically—with your gaze falling about 2 inches below the top edge of the screen—this means you’ll be looking straight ahead at people on the call, which feels more like an in-person meeting. If this is not the case, try setting your laptop on top of a riser or large books to achieve this goal. You can also shrink your video window for the call and move it to the top of your screen, near your webcam, to keep your gaze there.

- Keep It, Professional

Minimize or eliminate interference: Avoid dogs, cats, children, spouses, siblings, or anything else moving behind you.

Don’t wear a strapless top or deep V-neck: Besides the potential appearance of being topless when cropped on video, you risk exposure because your video camera is positioned above you.

Don’t spin or roll in your wheeled chair: The effect is disconcerting on video, and the resulting vibrations may sound louder than you realize when your microphone picks them up.

Default to Video: Try to utilize Zoom or the video feature on Slack over text, email, or slack messaging. Refrain from handling any conflict over email or text, only through video.

Best Practice for Emails / Video Calls

- Emails
 - Only send emails to those it actually pertains to. Note in the first line of the email each person's name you want to read the email.
 - The people you cc or bcc on the email may not read the email fully. To be sure someone reads an email you send to another person, forward them the email.
 - Before sending or copying an email to your supervisor, make sure it is time-sensitive. If it can wait for your next 1:1, there's no need to copy your supervisor.
 - Create a folder within your email called, "Updates." Each week, put emails in that folder that you need to update your supervisor on, but you do not want to copy or forward that email to them. Then, each week before your 1:1, go through that "Updates" folder and add the contents of those emails to your Weekly Agenda.

- Video Calls
 - If there are less than 10 people on a video call, do not mute unless 1 person has a barking dog or any type of interference in the background. If so, then just that one person should mute.
 - When you are on a video call, remove distractions (News, podcast, responding to an email, etc).
 - If there are more than 10 people on a video call, everyone is on mute except the leader. The leader uses "Fist or Five" when taking a poll with the group.
 - Fist - zero or no to the question
 - Five - a 5 on a 5-point scale or yes to the question.
 - Be on the video call a little early so that the meeting can start on time. Adjust your video camera, turn off technology, and close your door. All things to be done before the video call starts.

- During a video call with more than 10 people and you are on mute, if you want to ask a question, raise your hand. Once you are acknowledged, then unmute your microphone.

Zoom Meeting Helpful Tools

Waiting Room

Utilizing the Waiting Room feature allows the host to control when a participant joins their meeting. This gives the host ample time to make sure everything is ready to go without interruption. As the meeting host, you can admit attendees one by one or hold all attendees in the waiting room and admit them at one time. You can also choose whether to have all or only some of your participants in a waiting room. [Click here](#) for step by step instructions on how to use the Waiting Room feature.

Breakout Rooms

Breakout Rooms allow a host to split meeting participants in your Zoom meeting into separate sessions. The meeting host can choose to split the participants of the meeting into these separate sessions automatically or manually and can switch between sessions at any time. The host also has full control of when breakout rooms start and stop. [Click here](#) to watch a brief video demonstrating the Breakout Room feature.

Co-Hosting:

The co-host feature allows the host to share hosting privileges with another user, allowing them to manage the administrative side of the meeting, such as managing participants, screen sharing or starting/stopping the recording. [Click here](#) to watch a brief video demonstrating the Co-Hosting feature.

CONCLUSION

Remote work is about flexibility and trust for both the company and the employee. It's a great option that gives a more balanced outcome for our Stewardship of Life value, specifically for our frequent travelers. The culture of the company and value placed on collaborative work will not go away, however, be enhanced as we leverage technology to better serve The Church.