

## Transcription - Professional Home Office

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. Today, I want to explore with Fulyana the idea of working from home. We have in many of our other podcasts, talked about having a home office, working from home and increasingly as during 2020, many of us have had the opportunity to work from home or were directed to work from home in some cases. We've had to change our lifestyle and our work style to accommodate that change in work activities.

As the time wore on during 2020 and we became a little bit more comfortable about working from home, there are also other things that came in to our thinking about that activity and not so much about being disciplined which we've talked about before, or having a work space which we've talked about before, but it's about the image that you present in terms of your business, particularly if, like Fulyana and I, you are your business. So I wanted to explore for those of you who are faced with the opportunity to choose between having an office and a work space separate to your home life, or in fact if you are making the decision to combine those two.

Increasingly I believe in the work arena, there will be more opportunity for individuals to provide contract consulting, individual services to a larger organisations, so more opportunity for people to be working from a home base. Added to that for me, is that at the moment, my partner and I are looking for new premises. He, for the past 28 years, has worked from home, I have worked intermittently in the corporate world in other businesses where there's been a physical presence that required me to be there. I guess, for the last six years, I have worked from the home base, from a home office. So for us, it's been an interesting exercise to try and find somewhere that meets the criteria for us to have work space as well as living space. But what has become obvious to us is that we want something that looks like and sounds like, an office space, as part of the image for the business. So we don't necessarily want a standard suburban house as our office / home space because we don't feel that gives the right image in terms of the business. So it's a consideration that we wouldn't normally have thought about to any great extent until now, when it becomes more necessary for us to have a business presence, I guess is the best way to put it, in terms of what people might see if they drove past, what people would see if they came to have a meeting with us. Then that became another decision that we had to make about whether we wanted to actually have people have meetings with us in this space or whether we would use the commercial spaces that are around to have those meetings. We're actually looking for premises in

Newcastle, in New South Wales, which is a, it's not a major city like a capital centre, it really does have the feel of a country town that's become a city and that's what we like about it. There are lots of opportunities, lots of multinational hotels in the area where we would have the opportunity to use their meeting rooms as our meeting space. That was another decision that we we might. So it's been a filtering process of what is it that we want in terms of our work area, our work image because for both of us, we would choose work over any other activity. For probably 20 years, we haven't had a television and we don't see any need to have a television. We do watch some other entertainment channels but we pick and choose what we want to watch, we don't have a set routine that says are we finished work, now we'll watch something for this period of time. It's very much of a choice of have we done enough today, have we finished the list (for me) today and will we have some relaxation time? We don't need that setting. We don't have children living at home so we don't need the room for them. We don't have time, or we don't make time I guess, for gardening or those outside activities. Many of you know that I have other activities that I do with floral art. So it means that I travel a bit and my partner does sailing. That means he's out a couple, sometimes three sessions in a week for sailing so we don't need a yard to look after. We don't entertain, if we want to see people we'll go out somewhere to see them. Lots of considerations, that would be normal for people who have those sorts of responsibilities, are not things that way we would consider for our location.

It comes down to us (you will be surprised at this) having a list of the things that we need in a location and the things we would like to have in a location, the things that would be nice to have and the things that we don't need. Often it's those things that we don't need that has helped us filter the properties that have been on offer.

So what I'm going to suggest to you today is that you start to think about the things you don't need when you're talking about a home office and you make sure that they are not distractions, or they are not things that impinge on your ability to be professional when you're working from a home office and to have a professional image. It's that image thing that I want to focus on today rather than the actual work space that you've got because the image that you feel that you are projecting about you and your business is going to make you feel as professional as you can.

I agree with you Kim about the importance of making sure that your home office reflects your image and your brand. It is very important. I'm going to look at this in two bits. One is where people like yourself and myself that are predominantly

working from the office all the time and we have planned to do, I agree. So I'll come back to that.

For those who actually had no choice with this Covid and had to work from home, again it's very very important. I know you don't have many choices, particularly when you have small space as an office, as well as sharing it with the rest of the family. However, I think we've done it long enough now to know that there might be subtle things we could do. For example, cover things behind you if you're doing video conferencing and making sure that you're still presentable for whoever you're meeting with, is it a client, is it your colleagues, that you're not in your gardening gear. Your brand and image matters, no matter what. You want the pride in that brand and image.

For the situation you're talking about Kim, I think it's super important that you plan and I'm not surprised at all how much planning you went into, and the thoughts of what you don't need and how to get them out of the way. That's really good and that makes it easier and more focused. So what you're doing, you're saying what is my must have? What are the ones that are going to compliment my image and most of the time, yes I'm working remotely with my clients from my home office, but often, or sorry at times, they will come in. Is that going to be at the ready all the time? So that if it's a short notice, I get a phone call, the space is always dedicated to that whether it's a small place, big space or not, is irrelevant. What's relevant is, is it professional? And that's the word you use. So to me, I agree with that. I think, when we're talking about "professional", we're talking about that brand, we're talking about projecting a consistency in our offering.

In other words, if you pride yourself on your business that is attention to detail and making sure everything is perfect, organized, whatever you're doing for the client, when the client comes to your office, whether it's through the screen or physically and see a huge mess, they will get the impression that what you're saying and how you're acting might not mesh and it gives them the wrong message which you don't want to do.

Working from home is also as much about you as the client as well. So you want to be comfortable, you want to make sure that if you have the opportunity to plan, and in this case, looking for accommodation that serves both your office and home, yes, look for all the good things that we learned many years ago - the ergonomics, the direct sunlight, all of those. If you've got the opportunity to do that ahead, it's great. If not, and you've got short time to do it, then maybe you look at things like lighting. I know that one of my clients has kindly pointed at that

when we talk, video conferencing, where I'm sitting appears to be dark and I've done everything I could and it still isn't right. So I'm still working on that. Those subtle things make a difference in the way we project, in the way we feel comfortable and in the way we feel proud when somebody comes in and you're meeting with them about what they came for and not to distract with all the unimportant things.

I'll just summarize - image, brand, style, professionalism. It's all projected through the work space you or walking in whether it's virtual or walk in.

Fulyana's summarised that really weel for all of us, so let's leave it there. What we've talked about today is profesionalism and is about your image regardless of where you are located. It's very easy to maintain it when we were in an office environment, we're in the corporate environment, when we're surrounded by other people doing the same thing. It is as important to do it when you're not in that environment.

For now I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.