Tips for digital balance while working from home

Technology has become a larger part of our lives, since many are now forced to work from home. A large variety of tools is available to help us stay in touch with our colleagues and continue to work. At the same time however, these changes have also given rise to numerous new challenges. For many, the constant flow of messages, easy distractions, a surfeit of communication tools, overflowing inboxes and walking the tightrope between work and private life have become a source of extra stress.

It is therefore advisable to ask ourselves some questions:

- ⊘ How to deal with the many messages we receive?
- ⊘ How to communicate efficiently with our colleagues?
- ⊘ How do we avoid distractions and keep our focus on our work?
- ⊘ How do we deal with e-mails and telephone calls after work hours?
- ⊘ And how do we keep aside sufficient quality time for our family & friends?

We have gathered together a number of useful tips to help you along the way:

Restrict the number of messages that you allow in
Screen pop-ups on your PC for incoming emails, WhatsApp or Messenger notifications on your phone, etc. Many of these are not urgent at all. So is it necessary to constantly receive notifications about them? Or would it be sufficient to just check these applications at regular intervals? Turn off as many notifications as possible, during and as well as after working hours, and notify your colleagues or clients how they can best reach you for urgent matters, for example by calling you.

Focus on one task at a time
The internet is an exciting world. Before we even realise it, we have already spent an entire day at meetings, looking things up, checking the news or following social media. Afterwards we wonder what exactly we did all day. A much better alternative is to focus on one task at a time, not get distracted, and only switch to a new task when the first one is completed.

Keep your inbox clean
We understand that it's tempting to leave a few emails in your inbox, but over a period of time' you will have hundreds or even thousands of emails in your inbox and 'that becomes a source of stress. Look at your inbox as if it were your desk: the cleaner it is, the clearer you can think. It's better to move old mails to an archive folder and tidy up your inbox each day or each week.

Create moments in which you're away from the screen or the Internet
Whether you're at work or at home, it helps to turn everything off from time to time while you focus on what's important. For example, you can use airplane mode on your smartphone to block all incoming messages. The alternative 'Don't Disturb' mode for example, can still allow urgent calls from pre-selected contacts. What matters is that you have a little time every day to unwind, relax and enjoy some time on your own or with your family, without technology.

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