

Coping with Covid-19: SWEP employees find the positives amid the uncertainty

Due to the global pandemic, our employees had to learn to cope with the 'new' normal that it brought about, including a much more virtual working climate. For many, this meant that the home office would become the standard for their working days while webinars and Zoom/Teams sessions would become as much a part of their daily routines as airplanes and rental cars were just a short time ago.

Since around mid-March, SWEP North America – like many other companies – started making decisions on office closures and planning 'work from home' arrangements with a large majority of their employees until they could get a grasp on the situation surrounding the virus.



Angela Butler (AR Accountant - Finance) was one of these workers from our Tulsa, OK factory that has been able to work from home due to her role. She has experienced both advantages and disadvantages with her new working circumstances.

In her area, the main negative that she has seen has been how the large number of people working from home daily – coupled with school age children doing virtual learning from home - have put a huge strain on internet infrastructures, leading to frequent outages. Despite this, she stresses there are far more positive takeaways that she has experienced during this time like how she has become better at dealing with challenges, planning for the unexpected, and improving her time management skills.

Angela has also seen how resilient the SWEP team has been, adding 'One thing that really sticks out to me is the strength that our teams have shown while working through COVID-19. We have all worked hard together to find efficient ways to communicate and overcome any issues we have faced.'



Another US based employee from our Duluth, GA sales office also reflected on his experiences during these unusual times, which also saw his family welcome a new baby amidst all the change and upheaval of 2020. Damir Nalic (Industrial Sales Manager – SWEPE Duluth), husband and father of two, saw the main benefit from his new work/life balance being the extra time he was able to spend with his wife and children and helping to share the virtual learning responsibilities of his eldest. He saw this as a time that strengthened them as a family saying, “We have regular movie and game nights now, so we have really bonded a lot as a family, which is very special.” Regarding the work side of things, he was initially concerned about not being able to visit his customers face to face and get that immediate feedback. However, once he was still able to see some encouraging discussions and interactions over virtual platforms, his worries dissipated, and he was able to continue to move forward successfully within his role. Damir urges those that face the same challenges to reach out to others during this time because everyone is experiencing the same trials adding, ‘Sometimes just hearing that other voice on the end of the line lets you know you are not alone in this.’



One employee was able to give some insight into how our team members down in South America are coping. Carla Luongo (Branch Manager, SWEPE Brazil) was used to a makeshift home office, but the 100% full-time aspect of it due to the pandemic did cause her to have to make some adjustments. Being home with her daughter and trying to work at the same time was a big challenge at first, but once a routine was created, everything started to run more smoothly. Even though she misses the good energy and wonderful office environment with her colleagues, she realizes it's necessary to find other virtual ways to keep your coworkers and customers close. Carla also has some advice to others that are in the same boat when it comes to finding a good working balance and figuring out how to handle the new working environment, “Your activities can pay off more at home if you are focused and committed. If you get organized and plan your day, then your work can actually become much more efficient than at the office.”

As we move forward, it's important to remember that we are not in this alone and there are people all over the world and in different organizations trying to find the best way of coping and thriving in this ever-evolving new way of life and business. Remember to ask for help when needed and try to slow down to focus on the positives that have come out of this new, demanding chapter in our lives.

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