

Speaker 1: Welcome to Acceleration Partners' third episode of our outperform podcast where we discuss topics ranging from performance marketing, affiliate marketing and digital marketing to company culture, entrepreneurship, leadership and the like. On today's episode, we'll chat with our director of Talent and Culture, Emily Tetto about how you can get the career you want working remotely from home.

Speaker 1: So welcome, Emily.

Emily Tetto: Thank you, thank you.

Speaker 1: First off, what does it mean to work remotely?

Emily Tetto: Working remotely is not reporting into an office every day. For some people it's a couple of days a week, and for some people it's full time that they work remotely. So it's doing the work that you ... For us, doing the work that you need to be doing when you need to be doing it, but the where is really up to you.

Speaker 1: So for somebody who wants to work remotely from home, they think that that would be a good fit for them, what are some questions they should ask themselves before seeking a position with a company that has a remote work environment?

Emily Tetto: So first I would say that you want to do some internal reflection yourself, right? Why do you want to be working from home? Are you looking to work from home because you really want to travel? Are you wanting to work from home because you want more work life balance and you really don't want to commute? Do you want to work from home because you have other personal priorities in your life that you're just looking to balance? It could be a family that you're looking to balance. It could be that you are a professional or an amateur athlete and you want extra time not to be spent to commuting, but to actually be training for that activity, whatever it might be. So first you really want to know the why behind why you want to work from home to seek out the best environment for you.

Emily Tetto: So if you're looking to want to work from home because you really want to travel, for example, then you need a different type of role that will allow you to do the travel that you want to do. Also depending on time zone needs and when you need to be at work, you need to be looking for a certain type of job. If you're looking for a job just to provide you with more of that work-life balance for whatever reason that might be, and it doesn't need to be five days a week, or maybe it does need to be five days a week, than you're looking for something a little bit different. So

you really want to know the why behind why you want to work from home first to really make sure that you're looking for the right type of job.

Emily Tetto: Then the next few things that I would start to say, do you have the confidence to be able to work from home? And when I say the confidence, I'm thinking, when you're in an office or a typical office environment, you have people around you all of the time, so you'll get a lot of that affirmation if you're doing a really job, or you might get those subtle clues when maybe you're not doing something quite so right, you might need to shift gears. And it's really easy to ask questions, see people in the hallway, maybe see them in the cafeteria, grab coffee, make a lot of those personal connections where it's easy to build that confidence over time.

Emily Tetto: When you're working from home, you're sitting in a different type of an environment, you're a little bit more isolated from those regular cultural norms of have an office. So you have to have the confidence in your own abilities, the confidence to speak up and ask questions when you need to, you can't be shy, the confidence to ask if you're doing well or if there's something you need to be improving upon if you're not getting the affirmations that you're looking for over time, and just the confidence in your ability and your work.

Emily Tetto: I think one thing, especially as people start to work from home, if it's something new to them, they have a tendency to actually overwork because they want to prove that, "Yes, I know you can't see me, but I just want to prove to you that I'm doing a really good job and I want you to really know that I'm here." So they have a tendency to overwork. But somebody that has the really the right amount of confidence, even if they do do that when they start working, they can fall back into a really good routine. They have the confidence in their abilities, the confidence in themselves that they can be doing a really good job and they know that they're providing really good outputs even though nobody can actually see them sitting down in front of their computer every day, doing what they need to be doing.

Emily Tetto: The other things I might ask are just, what is your setup? Do you have a home office that will be good for you to be working from home in? If not, you'll have to start thinking about that before you, or at the same time that you start looking for a job. How are you going to set yourself up for success? Having a quiet space in your home, do you plan to go into a coworking space? How are you actually, and where are you actually planning to work every day?

Emily Tetto: So those are some questions that I might ask internally to myself as a candidate, somebody looking to work remotely. And then if I were to also think about what types of questions would I want to be asking my potential employer, there's a whole set of questions that I'd be wanting to ask my potential employer. You know, is there an office? If you want the option to go into the office every day, you want to know is there an office? You also want to ask that question and then ask a secondary question of how many people are there that work remotely? So, is this a remote position, but there are 100 people that are in the office and none of those people are remote, they're all in the office every day? That's going to change the dynamic of just a few remote workers to many in the office. Whereas, if you're looking at a potential employer where, like Acceleration Partners, every employee is remote, it creates a different dynamic across the teams.

Emily Tetto: Other questions you might want to ask, what are the cultural norms and expectations for remote workers or for those that report into the office? Is there a work schedule? Are people working on the same time zones? Are there some people that are not working on the same time zones? So how is everyone going to be able to connect? How do you talk to your teammates? It could be with collaboration on a project or it could be for learning. Is there a way that there is knowledge sharing that's happening with the group? Is there a way that people are collaborating? What tools are they using to connect in this remote environment? And then also a few more questions about social, if that is important to you. If people are remote, if you don't live near the home office, if that exists somewhere, what are the opportunities to connect socially? Does the company ever get together? Are there other people that live in your area that if you wanted to be able to work with them or meet with them that that possibility existed?

Emily Tetto: You really want to ask a lot of questions to try to dig into what the cultural norms are of the environment and what it really looks like and what it means when they say remote work. Because for every company, it might be a little bit different.

Speaker 1: When I tell people that everybody at AP works from home, I get so many people who say, "Oh my gosh, I could never do that. I need to interact with people, I need to talk to people." So I think that there's this big misnomer that you're just kind of, wherever you're at in your home, your home office or at the kitchen counter, and you're just in this your own little bubble. But I know with AP, we are so connected. And so I think that you brought up a good point is, it's important to ask those questions not only internally, what would you need? Do you need that face to face interaction? But also asking the company what kind of setup,

what kind of technology, what kind of software do you guys use to interact with one another? Because I never feel disconnected from my colleagues because we have so much of that here.

Emily Tetto: Exactly, yes. And I think that is a common misnomer that remote workers are very antisocial, that there is no team collaboration, everyone just works in isolation. That is definitely not the case here or in any really productive remote environment. I would say that's probably not the case. Remote workers are usually very social people. Usually people want to work remotely, not because they don't want to talk and connect with people. That would be your actual choice of job. Working remotely is because you're really looking for that flexibility or that work life integration that allows you to do the best of both worlds.

Emily Tetto: I think another common misconception is that remote workers are unreliable. "Oh, yeah. Jane's working from home today, so she's not available." Or, "Yeah, Jane's working from home, so you probably won't be able to reach her." In, especially at Acceleration Partners and in our environment, everyone's ... If we're taking off on vacation, yes, we've booked vacation and we're off. But if we're working, we are present, we are online, we are available. We are just not over the next cubicle or down the hall where, you know, through the computer, one way or another. So we use different tools here such as Asana and Slack and other types of team integration and collaboration tools where we're always connecting and talking.

Emily Tetto: I think one thing that's really great about Acceleration Partners and one thing that I talk to a lot of our employees about is that once people come on board, the one thing they're usually so surprised about is how connected they are with their peers like you mentioned, and how much of a team atmosphere that there is here, how available people are willing to get them up to speed, train them, be available for questions, and then the instant connections that people make. So I'm not sure if they're forced to make those connections sometimes because of the environment we're in, you're sort of forced into this. People have to help you and you've been helped, so you want to pay it forward and you want to help others, or not, but it's actually really, really great. And those are common misconceptions that if you're a remote worker that you're unreliable or antisocial.

Speaker 1: So I think that that brings up a good point of people, if they're going to work remotely, by and large need to have a pretty good level, or savvy, or comfort with technology. Because for everybody I know who works from home, a lot of times they have to troubleshoot. We do have internal tech support, but you

got to be able to troubleshoot and be comfortable learning and applying the technology that's available.

Emily Tetto: Yes, exactly. I would definitely say that's something that you would want to evaluate in yourself if that is something that you're comfortable with. And if you're comfortable with technology, that definitely makes it a whole heck of a lot easier. If you're not comfortable with technology, knowing that you're not comfortable with it, but also then knowing how you're going to get that support if you don't have a tech team onsite to help you out. So how are you going to get past that barrier, that technology barrier? Because the way remote work has really taken off over these past few years is because of all of the platforms that are available for people to connect remotely with teams that are in different locations.

Emily Tetto: So, I mean, these are tools that people are using that even if they're not working remotely from home, if they're working in offices, these are tools that teams are collaborating across offices, across time zones. And then these are the same tools that people are using that are in remote office environments. So the tools have really, really come a long way and made for collaboration to be so seamless. So being comfortable with technology and the platforms is definitely a plus.

Speaker 1: Going back to what are some misnomers about working remotely as we're kind of talking about this, so many people just assume that I'm a contractor working for AP and not an actual full time employee. And I think that the notion of working from home or working remotely from home a lot conjures up for a lot of people that they're having their own business, or they're freelancing, or they're contracting and they're not actually an employee with benefits and what have you. So I don't know if you want to speak to that a little bit, but I think that's a misnomer of that working remotely from home is either you're self employed or you have your own home business. And I think that that's ... I know I kind of assumed that. I could not believe that there was actually a company as successful and established as AP that everybody in the company works from home.

Speaker 1: So any thoughts and kind of how to weed through the difference between companies that are legit and work from home, remote cultures and companies that are more opportunities, if you will, opportunities to have your own business or opportunities to be a consultant?

Emily Tetto: Yes, that's a great question. I don't know that I have a perfect answer to that. You really just have to be able to do your research. There are a lot of work from home opportunities that ... or side businesses or consulting type businesses that are not full

time employee opportunities. But going to some of the standard job boards that you might look for, for any type of employment are a great resource where you're going to have a lot of really great jobs out there that have the flexible schedule that you might be looking for. And just doing your research and asking the right questions, that's a great question to ask if you're worried about it too. If you have a funny feeling that maybe it's not a full time opportunity, ask the question outright, are you an employee? Do you have benefits? Or is it a contractor situation? So you do want to ask those kinds of questions definitely.

Emily Tetto: But there are so many opportunities out there and there are other companies that are just like Acceleration Partners where almost the entire company, if not the entire company, are all remote. But you just want to find one that has a great setup, they want to be treating all of their people as employees. Everyone's a part of a team. They've put the right resources in place so that people can connect, and they're doing all of those same things and those same benefits that you would expect and want from a really great employer if you are traveling into the office, the only difference is that you're not and that you get to work from the comfort of wherever it is that you really want to be working.

Speaker 1: So let's say there's somebody who is hearing all this and they're like, "Yeah, I could work from home. I've got the setup, I'm comfortable with technology, I love collaborating, but yet I am disciplined, I can get stuff done." Where can they go? If someone is looking to work remotely, what are some resources that they can go to find out what positions are available as a remote job?

Emily Tetto: There are so many resources out there for people. There are websites that are dedicated just to this topic. There's a couple that come to mind, flexjobs.com, as well as remote.co that are both dedicated to this topic. There's also a lot of really great bloggers out there that talk about remote work and flexible work. One woman in particular that we work with at Acceleration Partners, her blog is the workathomewoman.com. Another one that comes to mind is workfromhomehappiness.com. She actually has a blog post about other bloggers about working from home that you can also check out. So there's a lot of really, really great resources out there as well as recruiters.

Emily Tetto: There are some recruiters that are dedicated to flexible work, remote work. There is one that comes to mind, the company name is Corps Team or Mom Corps, and they are a national organization located in multiple cities that also dedicate to this particular topic.

Speaker 1: Another one is a Glassdoor. I think Glassdoor, whether you're looking to work remotely or not, Glassdoor I think is just grown leaps and bounds as a resource for people who are seeking great companies, great company cultures because it shares all that from internally. The people who work there are actually the ones talking about what it's really like to interview with a company, work with a company, what the culture is like, there's pictures. So I think that's another great resource to, since you're not actually going into an office in most of these cases, to really get a sense of what it's like to work with that company.

Emily Tetto: Yes, Glassdoor is great. That's a great resource especially for remote positions. If you find a great company and you're looking at a remote position, going back to what we were talking about on really exploring the cultural norms and what it means to work from home, absolutely. Glassdoor is a wonderful resource to go back to, to see have people written reviews about this company? And what does it mean to work from home, definitely. There's other sites out there as well that maybe are not dedicated to remote work, but you can also use them to find remote jobs and just use the right keywords. So on Glassdoor, if you're looking through the job posts, searching for keywords such as "work from home" or "remote", those are great keywords to search for. Or if you're on other types of job boards, search for the keywords that you're looking to find.

Speaker 1: I know from my own experience, because I've talked a lot of people about how I found AP and working here, and one thing that I always try to urge or hammer a point is that it's very similar to any other process of applying. I mean, you really have to get a solid cover letter, you have to communicate yourself effectively because it's not necessarily from a network, or meeting somebody, or meeting them at a cocktail party or whatever. I mean, they don't know you, they don't see you, and so you have to put your best foot forward in your application process and communicate, I think, why you're wanting to work from home, what is it that attracted you to the position? And it shouldn't just be, "Oh, because I really want to make pancakes for my kids every morning and work in my Pj's." There has to be more to that.

Speaker 1: What kind of thoughts do you have on that? If someone is finding these sites and getting serious and seeing a job, they think, would they be a good fit for, what's some advice you'd give on how they could step up their game and really raise the attention of the person who'd be calling them or following up with them?

Emily Tetto: That's a really great question. I might go back to the first part when we started talking about the why and finding out why is it

that you want to work from home. So being a very authentic self where you can be open about why you want to work from home, who are you and why is this such a great motivator for you, and why are you going to be a great remote worker. So to your point, somebody that might come and if we say, "Well, why do you want to work from home?" And they say, "Well, I really want to get up and make pancakes in the morning." Well, you know, if you got up 20 or 30 minutes earlier, you can make pancakes and still get into an office. That's not going to motivate you to really want to work from home. Whereas someone that can be very authentic and say, "I have a lot of goals and I really want to run an iron man. And for me to be able to do that, I need to find more time in my day to train. I want to train two times a day and this is the schedule that I want to work out. This is how I'm going to make it happen."

Emily Tetto: This is somebody that has now said to their potential employer, here are my motivations. This is why I really want to work from home. This is my schedule. I'm disciplined enough to not only train to do an iron man, but now I'm disciplined enough to know when I'm going to train, when I'm going to work, and where my energy is going throughout the day. So someone like that is a great remote worker because they're empowered, they're motivated, they're determined, and they've shown exactly where they're going to ... and how they're going to spend their day. Not everyone has to be able to want to train for an iron man, to want to be a remote worker, but that's just what I mean by really just being your authentic self and really showing how you're going to be organized and be able to do the best work that you can be without having to be in an office every day.

Speaker 1: Yeah, absolutely. So where do you see ... You've been in this realm for quite a while, working in an office and also spearheading our entire structure of our organization for people to work from home. Where do you see remote work headed in 2017 and beyond?

Emily Tetto: I can only see it increasing. Even over the past couple of years, I've seen it grow more and more, and more companies talking about it and even some of the older, more traditional companies that are around that are offering more opportunities to work remotely. You don't have to just go to these specialty job boards to find remote work, you can find it on Indeed, you can find it on LinkedIn. You just have to type in the right keywords to find it. And there are some larger companies out there that do offer more remote work, or more flexible office schedules because people want it, people are demanding it and they're offering it, especially now that more of these tools that we talked about are coming out and making it that much easier. It's just a little bit of a mind shift in the employer's part that people can be

productive and can do their best work, working remotely from home.

Emily Tetto: There are some people I interview with that maybe work from home one or two times a week at their current employer and they say those are their most productive work days because they really are able to turn it off when they need to and really have the quiet time just to heads down in their work and just to get a lot done, and they can remove those office distractions. So it's changing the mindset of the employers, which I believe is shifting, especially as we have the newer millennial generation entering the workforce, and many more of those people are demanding more of a work-life integration and more opportunities to do these types of things. So the shift is happening and the tools are available, so I can only see it growing.

Emily Tetto: There's these other organizations that have started to sort of pop up that target remote workers and like traveling. There's one called Remote Year where you already have your employer that already allows you to work from home and this is an extension of that. So you've pre-negotiated with your employer that you're working from home and you're going to travel for whatever period of time, and that these other companies organize your trip for you with other people that are also remote workers so that you have travel accommodations, WiFi connection, but then you also have the ability to travel and do all of these other things with other people. So it combines work in travel.

Emily Tetto: There's a company called Remote Year, there is another one that I believe is called Yonder Work, where employees can travel for different periods and lengths of time and the organizers of these trips help to organize the coworking spaces, the accommodations, the travel and all of the activities. It seems like an extension of maybe like a really cool cruise, or if I think about maybe traveling abroad in college, it's sort of like that, but for an adult that is in the workforce.

Speaker 1: That's incredible.

Emily Tetto: Really cool that so many of these companies are popping up and really taking advantage of how remote work is taking off-

Speaker 1: Absolutely.

Emily Tetto: ... and what people are looking forward to do with remote work. They're looking for that flexibility.

Speaker 1: Yeah, absolutely. That's really neat. I know we talked a lot about the ability to work from home from an employee standpoint. I think that there's also so many benefits to employers and we've actually written a little bit about this on our blog, about how you as an employee, let's say you love the company you work with and you just would like to incorporate more remote work, maybe you have moved out further and don't want to do the commute. There are some really good resources, helpful resources to how to try to communicate to your employer to make that shift. And then from the employer standpoint, there's a really great book that we actually give out to a lot of our team members called "Remote" and it was written by the founders of 37signals and it talks all about the benefits both to employees, but also to employers about working from home and why it's on the rise and how it really is helping people get that work-life integration, so they're not ...

Speaker 1: We have a team member, and when she first came on, I was talking to her. She was commuting. There's of course [inaudible 00:26:10] traffic, but she was commuting like two hours one way. And so now she's working with us and she almost doesn't know what to do with all this extra time she has. So yeah. I mean, for anybody listening who has a company, Remote is a great book to check out. And same thing if you're an employee, that's a great book to read as well because it can help you communicate to your employer the benefits of, if you would want to kind of start making that transition. If it's a company you love and a job you love, you could still, hopefully, be able to transition some of that.

Speaker 1: Any other advice you'd give to someone who is looking to work remotely in the new year?

Emily Tetto: I think my advice would be just to go for it. Check out the resources that are out there. There are books, there's blogs, there's recruiters, there are plenty of resources out there to allow you to just gain more information yourself, become more knowledgeable about what it means, and to even start talking to other people that do it, how do they do it? Why did they do it? What are the pros? What are the cons? And just go for it. I would definitely say just go for it. Stop thinking about it, just go for it.

Speaker 1: Emily, thank you so much for taking the time to share your expertise about remote work. I think the idea sounds compelling to many people, but it doesn't always line up with reality, and you really provided some good insights for people to consider. To our listeners out there, if you'd like to learn more about Acceleration Partners and our remote work culture, be sure to check out our website and blog at www.accelerationpartners.com. We've got more insightful topics

to share with you to help you make 2017 your best year yet, so stay tuned.