

# Coworking: How Freelancers Escape the Coffee Shop Office

and Tales of Community from Independents Around the World

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# Introduction

## **Who YOU are**

You are independent. You work for yourself as a freelancer or small business owner, or you work remotely for a company as an employee or contractor. You work from home, the coffee shop, the library, the garage, the basement, or a combination thereof.

You thought working from home on a flexible schedule in your PJs sounded like a dream come true. It felt awesome for the first month or two--maybe you made it a whole year--but now you're wasting away inside, little by little. It happened in tiny increments that you hardly noticed. First you stopped getting dressed and combing your hair. Then you stopped going out for lunch with coworkers or friends. Now your longest commute is to the fridge to make a sandwich. Pretty soon, your most meaningful conversation will be with the kid who delivers your Tuesday night pizza.

You have a sneaking suspicion that maybe you've lost your social skills. You keep multiple chat windows open and every device near you in case you get pinged by someone who wants to talk. Public events seem more daunting than ever. You can't even find your nice clothes. You're not sure you still OWN clothes that can be worn in public.

Your business has become your life and you've lost the separation between work and home. Some nights you work until 3 a.m. Some days you don't get up until noon. You've lost your balance, your social connections, your sanity. Maybe your business is suffering or maybe you're wildly successful, but either way, something is missing.

What you're missing is your tribe. You had a tribe in college or when you worked for a company. You didn't know it at the time, but you NEED people around you. Coworking fills that need. Coworking is a movement that was invented for you.

# What is coworking?

We believe that coworking happens anytime more than one motivated person gathers with the intention to work and create shared value for the benefit of the community.

Coworking is a phenomenon that happens in shared, collaborative workspaces in which the emphasis is on community (not space), relationships, and productivity. Coworking has its foundation in the freelance/self-employed realm, but has expanded to include and nurture small to moderate-sized businesses, nonprofits, remote employees, and emerging industries.

Coworking is a state of mind, a community, and more importantly a revolutionary element of the larger collaborative consumption movement. But figuring out how to get the most out of this new style of working can be difficult if you don't know what it's about or where to find it.

### **What this book IS**

The purpose of this book is to educate, inspire, and mobilize you--the current and future independent workforce--to research coworking, locate the right coworking space, and learn techniques to get the most out of your new community as well as how to give back to it.

Our highest hope is that we begin to remove job titles as the common denominator between people. Instead, we want coworking to be the new thread that binds independent professionals together. It's not about your job title. It's about the communities to which you belong. We want to accelerate your understanding of what it means to be a part of a coworking community, both locally and globally.

### **What this book is NOT**

Coworking, at its heart, is not just about having a desk or exchanging business cards with your coworkers. It never has been. It's about being part of a movement that is changing the face of work as we know it.

While coworking is not the only way to work, it is a vehicle through which people can develop their full potential and become more truly themselves. Coworking isn't an end in itself, it's a beginning. It's the road. Through coworking you can become a more well-rounded, balanced, tolerant, educated, motivated citizen of the world, all while realizing your personal and professional goals. Isn't that really what we're all after?

### **What makes coworking unique?**

Coworking is the answer for freelancers and other location-independent professionals who are tired of the isolation of their home offices and the distraction of their local coffee shops. Coworking acknowledges the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the independent workforce by providing a community where socialization and collaboration are readily available.

Anyone can locate a desk and a free internet connection, but coworking provides more. It allows you to participate in a global community that is part support system, part educational network, and part creative think tank. Coworking recognizes that we are social creatures that can accomplish more together than we can alone.



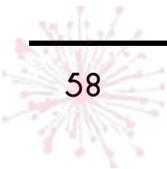
# Alex

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Independent since April 1, 2010  
Coworking since August 1, 2010  
Coworks at Cohere in Fort Collins, Colorado USA

As a mostly self-sufficient remote worker, I enjoy the social and creative aspects of coworking. I meet people that I otherwise might not know; I get to enjoy interesting conversations and participate in problem solving with others.

I think one of the fears of any remote worker is becoming isolated and losing the friends and social networks that naturally develop in a traditional office environment. Coworking helps me maintain ties with colleagues who have also found new remote positions as well as build new friendships and see familiar faces on a regular basis. We don't all work on the same projects or for the same company, but sometimes all it takes is a random comment or talking through a problem to spark an idea that makes you think about something differently.



*You thought working from home on a flexible schedule in your pj's sounded like a dream come true. It felt awesome for the first month, two months, maybe you made it a whole year but you're wasting away inside. Just a little. It happened in tiny increments that you hardly noticed. You NEED people around you to thrive. Coworking is the answer to that need. Coworking is a movement that was invented for you.*

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A first of its kind, this book helps independent workers realize that through coworking, we become better, more complete, well-rounded, balanced, tolerant, educated and motivated citizens of the world, while realizing our personal and professional goals.



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