TURBINE®

Your office in a backpack

how to run your business from anywhere

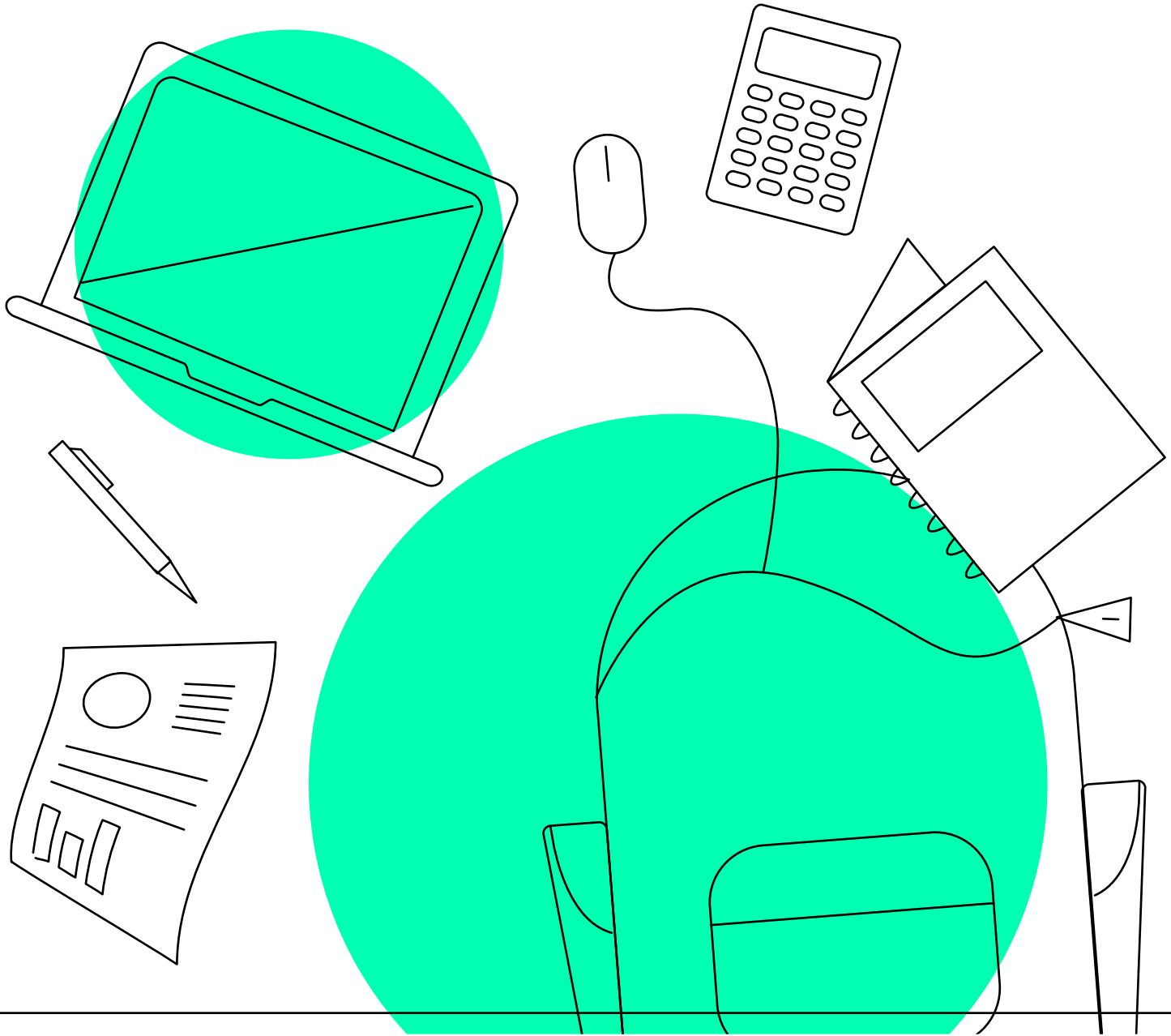


Table of contents

No office? No worries **3**

Finding a place to set up shop **5**
Alternatives to working at your desk 5
How to find places with WiFi, coffee and seating 7

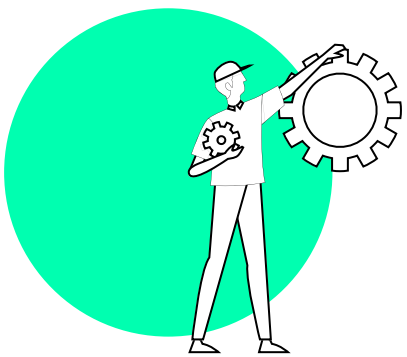
Getting connected – and staying connected **8**
Secure WiFi on the go 9

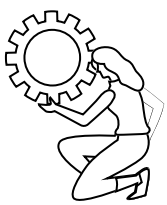
Keeping in touch **10**
Calls, conferencing and messaging 10
Connecting with clients 11

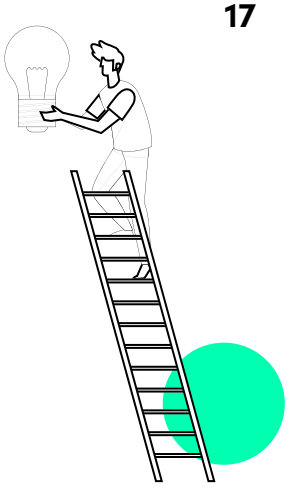
How to stay organised **12**
Automation, automation, automation 13
Cut the paperwork 13
Taking care of business admin 14
Use project management software 15

Less is Moore **16**

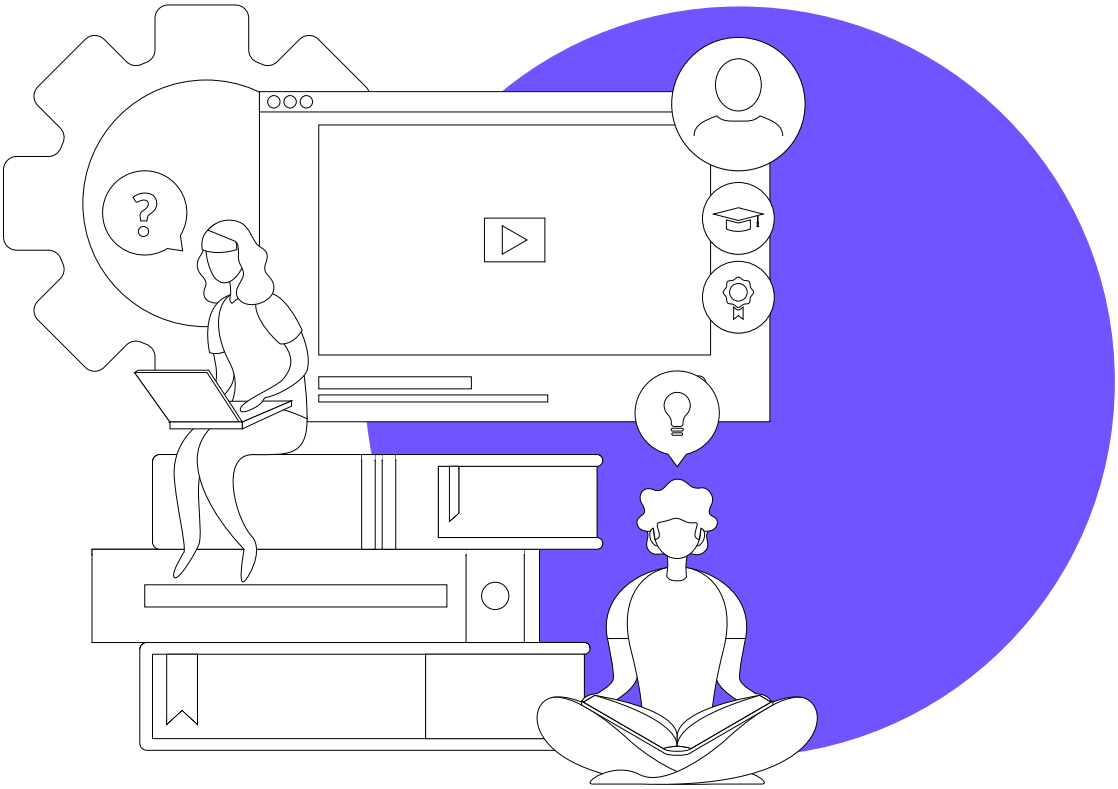
A little bit about Turbine **17**







No office? No worries



Basecamp has an office in Chicago, but its employees are spread out across twenty-six cities. Buffer encourages its staff to 'move or live anywhere' and so do Upworthy and Mozilla, among many others.

The rise of the digital nomad has sprouted many survival guides, books, tips and 'hacks' for remote working and managing distributed teams. But when it comes to remotely running a business – which involves keeping on top of staff, clients, finances and more – the stream of resources runs a little shallow.

This is somewhat strange given that many business leaders see remote working as an inevitable part of the future, with more than half of organisations in the UK set to embrace it over the next year alone.

Despite the lack of literature, it is possible –and advisable - to run your business remotely and here's why:

- **Reduced overhead costs**. Before Buffer went 100 percent remote, a significant portion of the company's monthly expenditure went towards an office that only a few team members used. If you have a distributed team, ditching the office will enable you to save on rent, furniture and utilities so you can invest in more important things – like your staff.

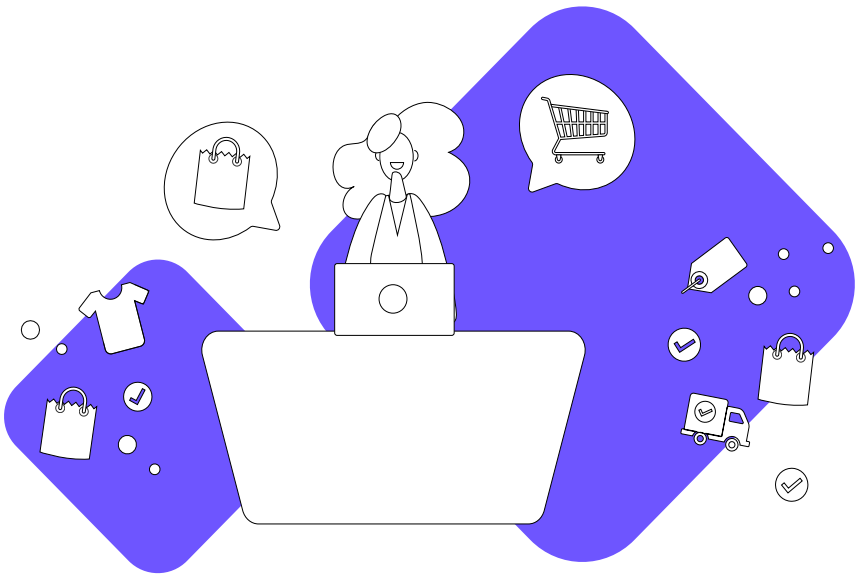
- **Improved employee retention**. Research conducted by economists at Stanford University found that companies with flexible working conditions had happier, more productive employees. Remote staff took fewer sick days than in-office workers and were less likely to resign, saving companies an average of $2,000 per person.

- **A happier work life**. If you're a selfmotivated and independent 'go-getter' then you might be more suited to working remotely than sitting in an office from nine to five. Running your business from anywhere will enable you to work when you're most productive, in a way that suits you and helps you achieve a better work-life balance.

- **Wider talent pool**. Having a distributed team means you're not restricted to the talent pool in your city, or tied down to business opportunities that exist only in your area. Instead, you can take your pick of the finest talent from the farthest regions.

Now, running your business from anywhere sounds appealing – but how exactly do you do it?

This eBook will give you all the tips and advice you'll need, from finding a good place to work and setting up your mobile broadband, to going paper-free and automating processes.



Finding a place to set up shop

First thing's first: while technically you can run your business from anywhere, some locations are better than others.

To be productive you need reliable internet, comfortable seating, access to toilet facilities and a steady supply of beverages – just to name a few. Tackling your inbox from a remote cabin in East Siberian taiga might be fine for a few hours, but it's not an ideal place to run your business in the long-term.

Alternatives to working at your desk

Fortunately, you don't have to venture as far as Siberia for a change of scene or a place to set up shop. There are many great alternatives to working at your desk.

There's the obvious:

A local coffee shop. Working from a café gives you the opportunity to meet new people, engage with your community and network. Even in today's digital world, networking is critical to gaining exposure, getting new ideas and finding opportunities.

A library. This is a particularly good option if you need silence to get work done. Most libraries have a no-phone rule, free WiFi and ample seating space. Plus, you can take a break and surf the stacks to find some inspiration.

A co-working space. Most people are accustomed to having their own desks, cubicles and places where they feel comfortable working. As a result, many of us don't consider co-working spaces as a viable office alternative. This is, quite frankly, nonsense; a co-working space can benefit any business owner or remote worker if it has the right features. Here's how to find the right one for you.

And the less obvious:

- **A Coboat**. Yes, it's a boat that sails the Mediterranean, carrying entrepreneurs and digital nomads.

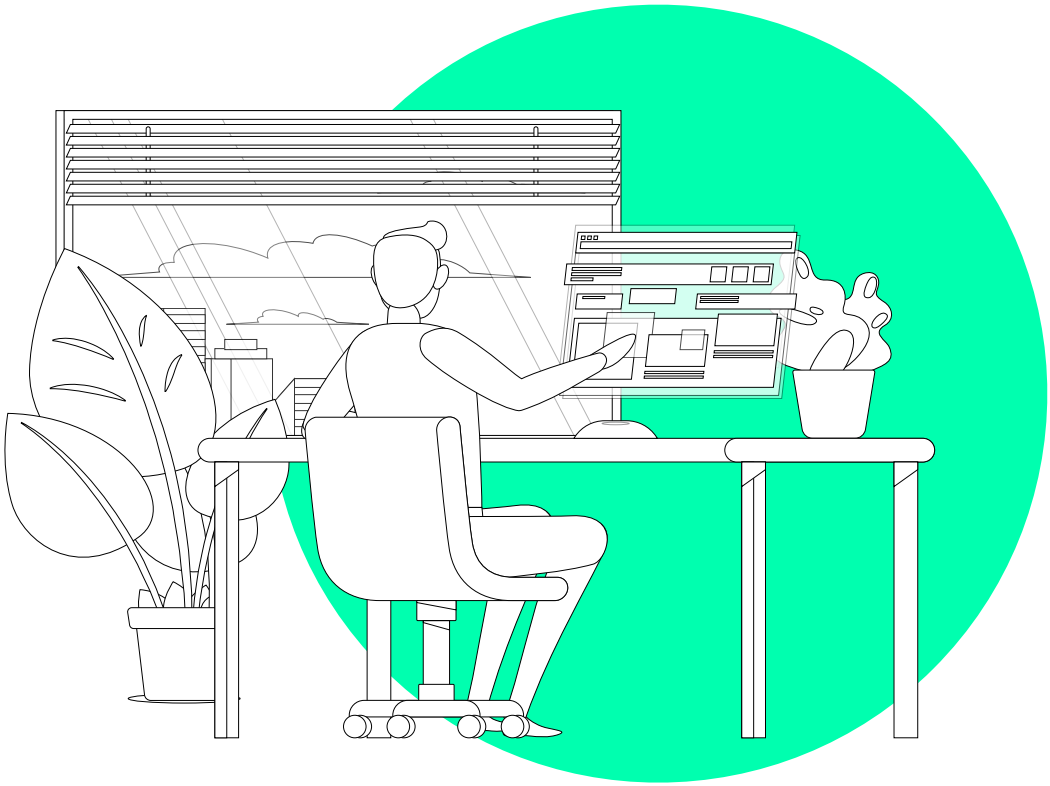
- **Hacker Paradise**. Fancy settling down in Bali for a few months? What about Tokyo or Barcelona? With Hacker Paradise you can travel the world and get your work done at the same time. It's a win-win.

- **The Surf Office**. This is a community driven workspace in Lisbon and Gran Canaria that brings work and play together. For more ideas, check out our round up of 10 unique alternatives to working at your desk.

How to find places with WiFi, coffee and seating

If you're still struggling to find a place to set up, there are a few online tools that can help you out. Try:

- This list of train operators that provide onboard WiFi facilities in the UK
- Workfrom, a searchable website that lists great places to work and be productive
- These curated lists on FourSquare
- Nomad List, for places to live and work around the world
- This collection of the best co-working spaces in major cities including London, Paris and Amsterdam



Getting connected - and staying connected

Once you've found a place to get some work done, you need to get yourself online.

While the free WiFi in your local library or Starbucks is convenient, you do need to be aware of the risks before jumping online. Free WiFi can be dangerous, and without the proper protection you can put yourself at risk of:

- **Snooping**. Open WiFi networks are generally unencrypted, meaning that anyone in range can see what web pages you're visiting, what you're typing into forms and which websites you're logged in to.

- **Man-in-the-middle attacks**. This is a technique that some attackers use to intercept an encrypted message and trick the end-user into thinking it is from a legitimate sender. In some cases, the hacker will alter the message to include malicious code.

- **Malware**. If you're file-sharing on a public WiFi network, an attacker can easily plant infected software on your computer. They can also gain access to a cloud service - like your email or file storage app - enabling them to steal your files, turn your microphone and camera on and take other information like passwords and credit card details.

So, for starters, educate yourself about the risks of public WiFi and what you can do to increase your security online.

Secure WiFi on the go

You can also forego the risks of public WiFi and make sure that you've got reliable, safe internet access by investing in a mobile broadband device. Similar to a smartphone, a mobile broadband device receives data from a 3G or 4G network to give you internet access.

These devices are safer than public WiFi networks, and come in three basic forms:

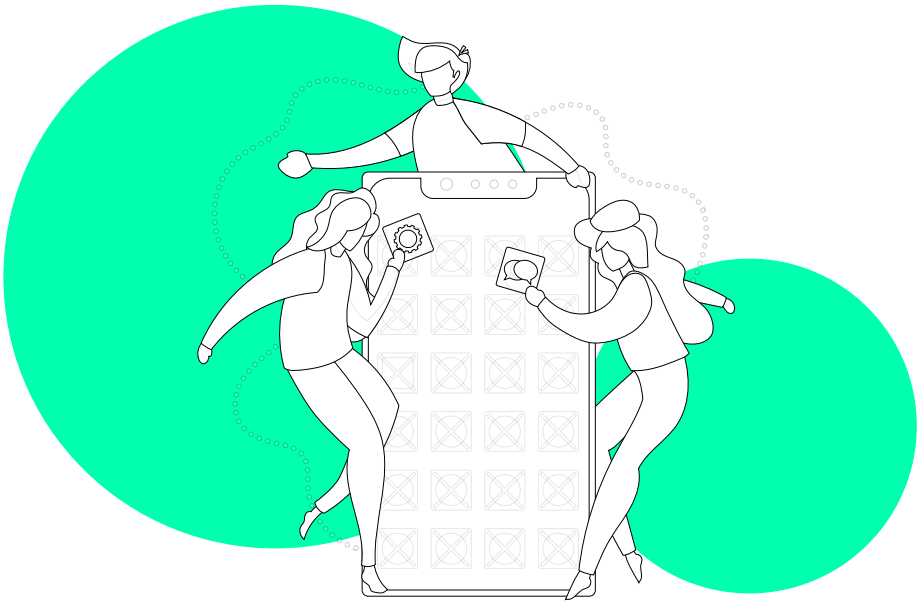
- **Wireless mobile broadband (MiFi)**. These are pocket-sized devices that allow you to create your own WiFi hotspot wherever you are.

- **USB Dongle**. As the name suggests, this is a USB device that plugs straight into your laptop to connect you to the web.

- **SIM cards**. If you've got an iPad or some other kind of cellular tablet, you can get a SIM card with an internet-only plan and use it to get online.

- These devices are available from most mobile operators. It's worth doing a bit of research into different payment plans, download speeds and device types to find one that suits you. This guide by PC World is good place to start.

Keeping in touch



Getting online is only half the battle. When you're running your business from outside the office, you need to stay in touch with colleagues and clients because isolation can wreak havoc on collaboration and day-today operations.

Calls, conferencing and messaging

This is where conference calling software and instant messaging apps can come in handy. There are some notoriously bad options out there, but these tried-and-tested tools are worth your time:

Skype for Business
GoToMeeting
Zoom
Slack
Google Hangouts
Yammer

Think you need a desk phone? Think again. Use your mobile phone or a VoIP service, like Skype or RingCentral. Cloud services like these are generally cheaper and come with more flexible plans and licensing options, so you can upgrade your service standard as your business grows. Many software products come with free trials, so sign up and give a few of them a go before making your final decision.

Connecting with clients

Of course, your employees aren't the only people you need to stay in touch with. When you're out of the office, keeping up to date with your client relationships can be hard, but there are ways around the obstacles:

- **Email**. It's not rocket science – email is a simple, easy way to stay in contact with your clients, whether it's responding to a query or just checking in to let them know they're on your mind.

- **CRM**. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software is a must for the mobile boss. The right software keeps all your client data, such as correspondence, contact details and a log of what they've recently viewed on your website, in one place. We recommend HubSpot – it's easy to use and even has a mobile app – but there are plenty of choices.

- **Face-to-face meeting**. Heck, you're out of the office anyway, what's to stop you popping in to your client's office for a little face time? For all the wonders of video-conferencing software, nothing beats human interaction and it can do wonders for your professional relationships.

How to stay organised

If you want to run a business from anywhere one thing you definitely need to be is organised.

Staying organised when you're never at your desk or always on the go can be a challenge. It's not easy to tick off your to-dos, attend meetings and keep on top of your inbox when you're constantly in motion or working in a busy, public environment.

But it's not impossible. Process automation, specialist software and project management tools can make a world of difference. But, before you get started, revisit the basics with our helpful guides:

- 5 morning routine tips for a more productive day
- 6 ways to escape admin and get work done
- 10 extreme time management practices

Automation, automation, automation

Professionals spend an average of 41 percent of their time on 'discretionary activities that offer little personal satisfaction'. In human speak, this means we spend a lot of our time on tedious, time-consuming tasks – like admin – that we don't find terribly rewarding.

Bureaucratic processes steal time, money and motivation from your business – but a little automation can go a long way. With some neat tricks and nifty technology, you can automate those time-consuming (but essential) tasks and focus more on delivering better outcomes for your clients, or growing your business.

To get started, check out our beginner's guide to workplace automation for tips and advice on how to automate things like:

- Administration and finance tasks
- Marketing
- Communications
- HR and purchasing

Cut the paperwork

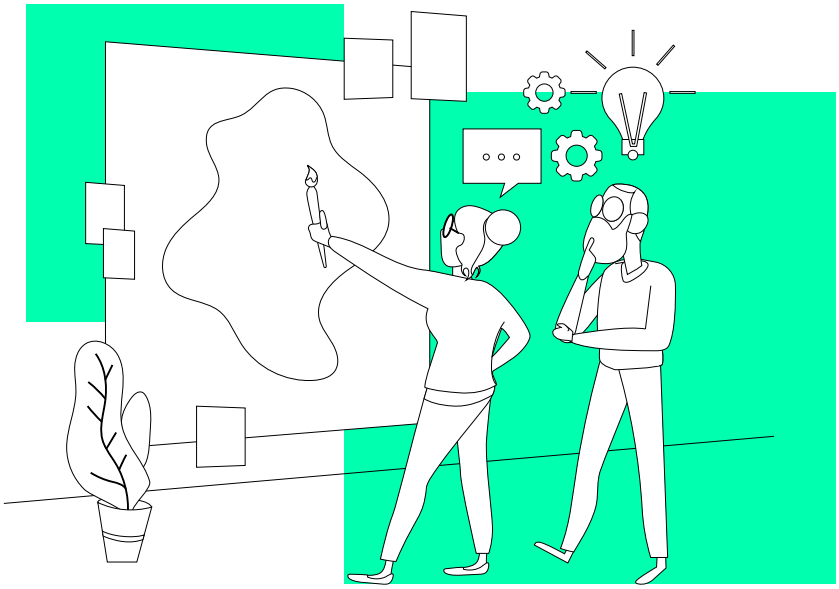
When you're out of the office, access to printers, scanners and fax machines isn't always an option. Fortunately, you don't actually need them – or the reams of paperwork they spew out.

Save documents digitally with apps like Evernote Scannable and store them in the cloud. Dropbox, Microsoft OneDrive and Google Drive are great options if you're in the market for an enterprise cloud storage provider that allows you to store, share and manage access to your documents.

You can also invest in an external hard drive for backups and extra peace of mind. Here are some top picks:

- Top 10 external hard drives 2016 – TechRadar
- 7 best portable hard drives 2016 – PC Advisor
- The best external hard drives of 2016 – PC Mag

But what about documents that need the old pen and ink treatment, you ask? Well, contracts and signed documents can be handled without hardware, too. Software like EchoSign and DocuSign let you send, sign and track contracts with your digital signature. In most cases, a digital signature is considered just as valid as an ink one.



Taking care of business admin

Internal processes, like purchases and timeoff requests, can be paperless as well. Apps like Turbine let you log and approve expenses and time-off without needing to print or sign a single document.

You can even manage your payroll and accounting from outside the office with software like Xero to handle your invoices, reconciliation and bookkeeping.

Use project management software

Keeping track of your activities and deliverables is key to staying organised and facilitating collaboration across your team. It can be difficult to know how to prioritise without a team around you, but a project management tool keeps everything in one place so you can see what needs to be done.

Popular options include Basecamp 3 (which we've reviewed here) and Wrike, but there are many more to choose from. Turn to Capterra for an almost-exhaustive list of the top project management tools, complete with reviews and ratings.

Less is Moore

> *It's easy to get sidetracked with technology, and that is the danger, but ultimately you have to see what works with the music and what doesn't. In a lot of cases, less is more. In most cases, less is more.* - Herbie Hancock

In 1965, Intel co-founder Gordon Moore observed that the number of **transistors** on circuit boards had doubled every two years since the development of the first computers. In turn, processing power had doubled as well. So as computers shrunk in size they became more powerful.

Moore's Law (as it came to be known) was thus associated with the notion of doing more with less. And though the concept is usually invoked in the context of computers and software (or music, in Herbie Hancock's case) **the notion applies to running your business, too**. It is possible to do more with less, like running your office out of a backpack!

The key is having the right knowledge and attitude. Running a business is a challenge; running one with limited resources and no dedicated office space is even more challenging. Knowing this - and embracing it - is essential to making it work.

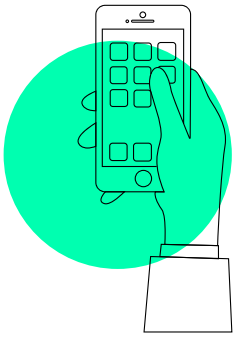
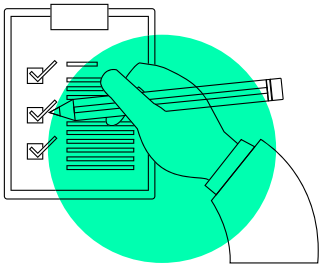
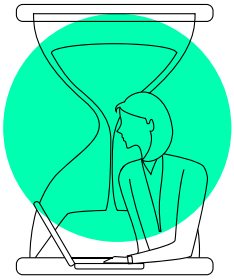
You don't need an office or a room full of paper to run your business. Success can be found anywhere – so what are you waiting for?

A little bit about Turbine

TURBINE®

We love the paperwork you hate.

Instead of paper forms for purchasing, expenses and time off, Turbine lets you take care of everything online.

You can get control of spending, see exactly who's off and why and complete your admin any time, anywhere.

Why not take the tour? Or get in touch with us to see what Turbine can automate for you.