

[Home](#) > [Home Based Business](#) > [Work-Life Balance](#) > [Hit the Highway](#)

Hit the Highway

Create a mobile office and watch the bumps on the road to a working vacation disappear.

By Elizabeth Wilson | July 08, 2008

With more and more people working from home, Jeff Zbar spotted a potential new trend: the portable office. A Florida writer who loves travel, Zbar says every entrepreneur should find time to set off on the open road with family in tow.

But must business skid to a halt the second the door of the RV slams shut? Not when most of what can be done in a home office can easily adapt to the highway.



Jeff Zbar places his laptop in a mobile workmate office, an 18-inch cube that stores all the necessities of a portable office.

Courtesy: Jeff Zbar

14, and Zoe, 10, joined him on the almost 3,000-mile trip up and down the East Coast in a rented RV.

He's demonstrating his mobile office--and tricks he's learned after 19 years working from home--at various stops along the way. He's also giving out his tip-filled booklet, with advice to those new to the concept of a working vacation, or "workation," as Zbar calls it.

"I'm taking my office with me in an 18-inch-by-18-inch cube," Zbar, 43, says. "It's not about replicating your regular office--you can't sell it as a vacation and then work the entire time."

Called a "mobile workmate," Zbar's portable office is a wheeled case with telescoping handle and a place for everything: laptop, cords, GPS--all the necessary tools that can be stashed out of sight when it's more important to be fishing with the kids or playing in the sand on the Jersey Shore.

To prove it can be done, and to turn a little profit, Zbar embarked July 5 with his family of five on a four-week road trip he calls "Home Office Highway."

Zbar's wife, Robbie, a pediatric nurse practitioner, and children, Nicole, 16, Zachary,

Going Mobile



Tools Jeff Zbar recommends taking with you:

- Laptop with wireless mouse
- Power strips and extension cords
- iPods, cell phones, printers
- Outlet with surge protection
- A 25-foot extension cord
- Adapters and transformers for BlackBerry, camera and laptop
- USB flash drive
- Wireless broadband aircard
- Router to network several computers

Zbar projects he'll at least break even because he'll continue to work and because Office Depot, Verizon Wireless and RV Sales of Broward, a Florida-based business, are sponsors. Zbar says while on vacation he'll be working about 30 to 50 percent of what he would in a normal week.

Jerry Ross, executive director of Disney Entrepreneur Center (DEC), in Orlando, Florida, set up a seminar there for Jeff on July 24. DEC provides business counseling, networking opportunities and seminars for small-business owners.

"As a small-business owner, doing business on the road or on vacation is a necessity, and any opportunity to improve the process can produce huge benefits," Ross says.

Ross often works from the road and likes the appeal of an extended RV trip.

"I would love to have a little more room for my laptop, BlackBerry and my chargers. I had to hunt for electrical outlets all over the airport this weekend. My phone kept running out of battery, and the lady next to me in the airport kept reading my blog writings from my laptop screen," Ross says.

"Having a RV office would assist me in being able to stay in contact by having the technology always handy--not in the overhead bin--and always ready to go."

Traveling in Style

Pablo Camus, vice president of marketing at RV Sales of Broward, says the business began promoting portable offices in December and has sold eight

RV offices. His clients include a chiropractor, a beauty salon owner and a president of an entrepreneurial association.

"We can really pimp it up and remodel the interior," Camus says. Some use the RV exterior to promote business or rent it as a billboard.

"I wish I would have thought of this before when I had my mortgage company. I was paying rent of \$8,600 for my office per month," Camus says. "For that amount I could have had three or four top-notch motor homes and had my brokers driving around town."