

***“Is there any advantage to living in one place over another in this business? Or does email, etc. make telecommuting the norm?”***

I don't think there's any advantage to living in one place versus another. I have never even spoken on the phone with most of my clients as emails tend to be the method of communication preferred by my clients. This may be different for other translators, but I have moved several times and experienced no disadvantages. In fact, it's an opportunity to send a message or a card to all your past and present clients, as well as to potential clients in your new area, to tell them of your services and new contact information.

Indeed, I have found that you can use time differences in your favor. For example, I have clients in Europe who may receive texts for translation at the end of their business day, which is the beginning of mine. So I can have the translation in their inbox first thing in the morning – their client is happy with the quick turnaround and the agency is happy that they did not have to pay a rush rate to a local translator who might otherwise have had to stay up all night to do the job.

Speaking of time differences: if you would like to avoid middle-of-the-night phone calls, you might casually mention to foreign clients how many hours ahead/behind you are. Even in this business, clients do not always bother to check before they pick up the phone and if you don't have a separate business line, this could be inconvenient.

***“I am due to have my first baby in a couple of months. I don't want to work right after I've had my baby, so I'd like to take some time off. Should I let my clients know that I'll be taking “maternity leave” for a few months?”***

Personally, I wouldn't. I think some people would wish you the best of luck and write you off. They may think you'll be too busy with your infant, then toddler, and not able to fully devote yourself to their projects.

I would rather say you were going on vacation or if you'll be home and checking email anyway, simply say you're not available for the projects as they come up. You never know what will happen – you may find your in-laws have invited themselves to stay with you for a month and they would be thrilled to watch the new baby while you work for a few hours – and you might be thrilled to let them! So I would keep your options as open as possible and share the happy news with only a few of your most trusted clients if you have particularly good relationships with them.

Similarly, I would refrain from answering your business phone if you have babies or toddlers making noise in the background. It doesn't come across as terribly professional and you will likely be distracted anyway so it's best to let your answering machine take the call and return it at a more appropriate and peaceful moment.