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Is working from home working for you? - by Stanley Hurwitz

November 20, 2020 - Front Section



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Are you as productive working from home as you were at your pre-COVID traditional office? Is your physical and/or mental health suffering? Has your kitchen become the company cafeteria? On your “new normal” work day, is your dog or cat the only one you talk to “in person?”

Many like working from home – especially if their daily commute has morphed from a 45-minute, stressful rush-hour crawl to a two-minute stroll from the bedroom to the home office.

You’re not the only one the pandemic has forced to work from home. Apple’s three million s/f Cupertino, CA, campus cost \$5 billion to build in 2017, housing 12,000 employees. Last Spring they instructed employees to work from home until further notice.

Harvard Business Review reported that “stress makes people three times as likely to leave their jobs, can impair strategic thinking, and dulls creative abilities... Burnout is a threat to your bottom line, one that costs the U.S. more than \$300 billion a year in absenteeism, turnover, diminished productivity, and medical, legal, and insurance costs.”

A U.N. report found that while employees are more productive when they work outside the conventional office, they’re also more likely to work longer hours, at a more intense pace, with more interference, often with greater stress. In an office, it’s easier to leave work at the workplace. At home, your office is where you live with an infinite number of pending tasks. As your personal and work life intersect, there’s more risk of burnout.

At home, there are more interruptions and distractions. Being home so much can turn you into a hermit, affecting mental health. And being sedentary, it’s easy to slip into bad health habits. The fridge is steps away. If it’s raining or cold, it’s so easy to skip that walk. And, mysteriously, lunch time stretches from coffee break until lunch time or later.

At a former “real” office, going for a cup of coffee on another floor gave me a chance to chat with colleagues, catch up on personal and work-related news, and stretch. Now, Mr. Coffee is 10 steps from my desk and the only one I’m likely to bump into is Emily Rose, our cat.

No matter where you’re working from – pandemic or not – it pays to interact with creative people. A proven PR pro will explore new ideas to build buzz and your bottom line. Phone, email or video meetings are safe, socially distant – and contactless! Please send me your tips and observations about ‘working from home.’ And if you need a dose of creativity to promote your business, let’s chat. Great PR doesn’t happen by itself.

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