

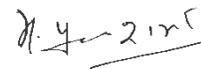
Teleworking V/S Corporate Culture

Teleworking or telecommuting i.e. work from home is on rise, worldwide, inspite of the fact that the option of work from home (WFH) is not feasible for all the sectors. Wherever possible, the days per week of employee telecommuting are increasing quite fast. Almost one in five workers in many parts of the world, viz. in the Middle East, Latin America and Asia telecommute frequently, and nearly 10 percent work from home every day, on the new economy jobs, according a new Ipsos/Reuters poll. In the US, as reflected in the latest American Community Survey, 2.5 percent of the US employee workforce has reported, home as their primary place of work. But, Indeed the regular telecommuting in the US has grown by almost 73 percent between 2005 and 2011. While, the overall growth of the workforce in that country is only 4.3 percent. So, the percentage of telecommuters in US, in the total workforce is growing very fast. According to Telework Research Network, 20 to 30 million US Workers are doing work from home, at least once a week. The Option of WFH is being increasingly offered by companies to their employees to better manage their work-life balance. Hence, it is now an accepted norm in many companies, especially in the IT and ITES sectors wherein, they believe that this promotes a good work-life balance and enhances productivity as well.

In India as well, telecommuting is becoming popular and the trend is on rise since last 10 years. Microsoft India, Dell and several employers in It sector offer flexible working to their employees to enable them to better manage their work-life balance. Indonesia and Mexico do not lag much behind India, in the area of flexible work-place trends. But WFH has yet to gain popularity in several countries like, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, France and Italy in Europe and Canada in North America.

In the US, it is also being reported that of late, even many faculty members do choose to work from home rather than in their offices in the business schools. They say it allows them to be more creative and enable them to focus more intently on their research and teaching preparations. But an online survey by the Faculty of Management Studies of the Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University has revealed that majority of the faculty members do not subscribe to this view. Rather, they contemplate a series of distracting organizational, institutional and cultural consequences on account of faculty members being away at a distance, from each other and the institute for most of the week or even for a part of the working week.

Probably, it was the same reason why the Yahoo has recently insisted to sustain corporate culture and synergy of cohesive team work by putting an end to most of the telecommuting for its employees. Marissa Mayer the president and CEO of Yahoo drew a lot of flak from within the IT industry and outside, particularly from some of Yahoo's 11,500 employees when she revoked the WFH option. Yet, she fought off well all the attacks, describing it as a critical time for the organization to pull together inside the office. According to the internal memo circulated by her, she had stressed on making the work place to be the absolute best place to work, communicate and collaborate, where, working side-by-side is crucial. That is why she explicitly insisted wanted that all are present in their offices. By June, all employees, especially those who have been working remotely full-time, are expected to report to a Yahoo! Office. Contrary to the popular expectations, the corporations like Google and IBM, that also offer the WFH option to their employees did not follow the suit. Yet, it has now raised a pertinent question: do companies compromise on productivity and corporate culture, when they allow employees to work from home? This question needs to be addressed with further studies to follow.



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