

The Decline of Work Efficiency at Home

By: The Late Submissioners

Josh Baker, Alain Bui, Jennifer Butz, Brandon Diaz, Dylan Vu, Pono

Halemano, Kinshuk Dasgupta

Team ID: B3

Executive Summary:

As a group, we want to study and understand the relationship between workers who work from home or have worked at home with their workplace. We interviewed at least ten individuals using a short response survey and a multiple choice survey. As a whole, our participants have had difficulty adjusting to their new workplace at home. Which consist of reasons like procrastination, inadequate instructions and communication etc. Our participants either have worked from home previously or currently work at home now. For our employee recommendations, we highly suggest that participants take breaks and work in a more friendly and productive environment, like a cafe. Organizations can help by setting expectations and equipment loans.

Background Information:

On March 15, 2020, the United States began the covid-19 shutdown. Companies, both big and small, suffered and their workflow was interrupted. New strategies were immediately required to respond and shift employees to working from home. Remote work was rumored to negatively impact efficiency as employees lost motivation, invested less or unscheduled time into their work, and struggled to differentiate their work lives with their personal lives. In this report, our team researched to understand the relationship between remote work and work efficiency.

Research Method:

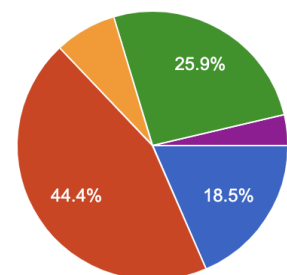
For our research methods, we decided to use qualitative data and quantitative data for our research in order to understand worker efficiency and how workers perform during work at a home setting. The surveys taken were done anonymously by individuals who work from home or have worked from home with different jobs from one another. We originally thought we would meet each individual and ask them interview questions regarding how their work at home experience was. But we ultimately decided that creating google surveys would be much more efficient and allow their participants to take the survey at their own pace. We also did not want to risk the safety of the participants nor the researchers because of the spread of COVID-19. Our group used two forms of data within our research:

1. Short Response Survey Data for individuals who have or currently work at home
(Qualitative Data)
2. Multiple Choice Survey Data, ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*
(Quantitative Data)

Adapting Struggles among employees:

Our group wanted to focus on how difficult it was for our participants who originally worked in a workplace and then transitioned to working at home. Our survey data showcases that 27 of the 27 (Red & Blue) participants found that adjusting to their new work lives at home to be difficult. While on the other hand only seven (Green) of our participants found that working from home wasn't too difficult. This indicates that for most workers, transitioning from working at home was tough.

Adapting to a new work routine was a struggle
27 responses



Organizational Transitions:

Employees are not the only groups who struggle in the transition from working at home.

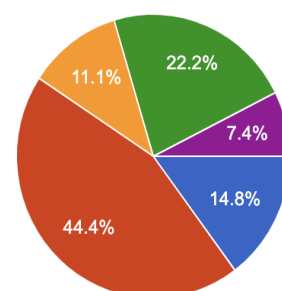
Executives and board of directors also have to adjust to working at home and find innovative ways to help their workers stay engaged and efficient. Like one of our participants mentioned that the company gave the workers an “allowance for people to purchase electronics they need for home”. However, some companies have not been able to adapt well in light of the rise of COVID-19, this can prevent workers from working efficiently and having peak performance. One of the participants stated that their work was “slow” to implement more efficient communication standards. Others have also said training their new employees was “sometimes difficult” because of the lack of hands-on interactions. Companies weren’t able to help guide their workers with projects that physically needed them to be present, it hurt their production because they couldn’t “fulfill projects”. Some companies were better in adapting to workers at home, which seemed to allow workers to be efficient within their company. However, companies who had a tough time adapting to the pandemic, struggled as a whole and it also reflected on their workers and their products.

Inadequate Guidance:

Another aspect our group wanted to focus on was how well the participants were instructed or guided from within their work. At the workplace, asking for help or going to upper management for guidance is beneficial and in most cases are accessible within the company.

However, because of the pandemic, these participants were forced to work from home and were expected to be efficient at the same rate. As expected from the data, 16 of the 27 participants (Red & Blue) of our participants

I do not get adequate guidance while working from home
27 responses



agreed that getting guidance from coworkers was much more difficult than it was in person.

With limited resources for our participants to reach out for help in their workplace, high work efficiency has been hard to maintain.

Procrastination:

One of the major problems our participants have faced when working from home is

procrastination. As human beings, it can be difficult for us to stay engaged and

focused on a specific task set by our

workplace or organization. Over the past

year our participants have been in the

stages of procrastination. Looking at the

data, 13 of our 27 (Blue & Red)

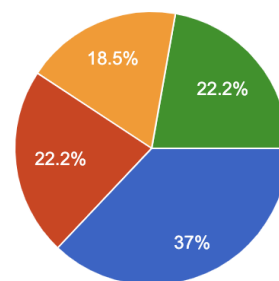
participants leaned towards procrastination at home more often. While only six participants

(Green) haven't procrastinated when working from home. Working at home has negatively

affected the work habits of most of our participants.

I tend to procrastinate more working from my home

27 responses



Communication:

Communication is key and communicating with fellow coworkers can be the difference

between an efficient and a struggling business or organization. When the pandemic occurred,

our participants were forced to stay at home and perform their work duties away from their

coworkers and peers. Some of our participants felt that "getting a timely response was the

main difficulty" when communicating with their peers. When assignments are urgent and

there are deadlines to meet, contacting your coworkers can be difficult and may not respond

in time. One of our participants also says that "Getting quick answer and reply from peers or

colleagues are challenging when working from home. Those things move very fast when you

in office”. When our participants are in office, they don’t realize how efficient they really are until they start working from home. Other participants mentioned briefly that they communicate through “team chats or calls” but others miss the “face to face” interactions among coworkers.

Problems & Solutions:

After conducting our research, remote working has statistically shown a negative impact on the efficiency of workflow for employees. The most common effects were as follows: adaptation struggles for employees, organization structural changes, inadequate guidance from the company, procrastination, and communication within the company. Based on our qualitative and quantitative findings, our team has compiled a list of recommendations to tackle these problems.

Adaptation Struggles for Employees Recommendation:

1. Promote employee breaks: Encourage employees to take breaks outside. Companies already encourage their employees to take breaks, but it is emphasized to do them outside. Encouraging employees to take walks allows them to stretch, detach from work, and destress from their projects that they were focused on.
2. Change of Scenery: Suggest employees to work at their local cafes or work in a designated room at their home. Work at a cafe will give employees the social atmosphere that is missed when working from home. A designated work space allows employees to disengage from their work life physically when they leave their “office.”

Organizational Transitions:

1. Workshops for employees: Employees will struggle with the transition between office and working from home. It is recommended companies address and offer workshops to listen to their employees struggles to better tackle the situation. This can serve as a well-being check and managers can utilize their emotional awareness to understand their employees.
2. Equipment Loans: Equipment is not accessible to all employees, which will affect workflow at home. Companies should initiate a loan program that employees can utilize to better equip themselves for their new work environment. If an employee is terminated, all items that were loaned out will be returned, and if any damages are made, repairs and fines will be issued.

Inadequate Guidance and Procrastination:

1. Settings Deadlines: Employers are encouraged to have strict deadlines with expectations set in order to better guide employees and reduce procrastination. Having multiple deadlines for a single project will guide employees to finish their work in a timely manner.
2. Setting Expectations: Expectations are important for employees. Remote work is difficult because employees may miss the scope of the project. With set expectations, there is a fine focus that employees can identify what needs to be done, and work can be delegated.

Communication:

1. Setting an Expectation: Companies should be utilizing a messaging system, an example is Microsoft Teams, and there should be an expectation set to have messages be read at a maximum of 30 minutes.

2. Scheduling weekly meetings: Encourage management to schedule weekly meetings with their department. These meetings can be anytime, but there should be an expectation to make a minimum of 2 meetings a month. This will allow employees to catch up, and people can be on the same page.

Conclusion:

Through the implementation of the recommendations listed, companies can better support their employees with their workflow. The listed recommendations can allow all employees to be on the same page, have the same tools at their disposal, and employees will tackle their work life imbalance. Encouraging relationships and socializing for the company through teams and other means will improve work from home as the social aspect will still remain. All of these implementations can drastically change an employee, manager, and companies overall experience, which can increase and tackle the decrease in efficiency of workflow.

Resources:

- Google Short Response Survey
- Google Multiple Choice Survey
- Professor Mariam's Lecture Slides