

Working from home?

by BRIAN LOCKHART

Working from home has many advantages.

You don't have to drive to the office, you can have a coffee break whenever you feel like it, and you never have anyone looking over your shoulder to see what you're up to.

If you have the type of job that requires a lot of concentration, you can lock yourself in your home office and be free of distractions.

It also has a lot of disadvantages.

It can be boring with no one else to talk to. You might miss those lunches with office friends or just having a conversation around the water cooler.

When I was at one company, I had lunch with the same three or four people for ten years. We enjoyed those half hour breaks talking about everything from movies, to what their kids were up to.

That friendship extended to monthly nights out to dinner and a casino or something similar.

Studies are now showing that working from home also means it may be harder to actually escape from your job. When you are working at the office, your day pretty much ends at a certain time and you go home.

Working from home means people may be tied to their job even more than they used to be.

Employers are now reporting they are more likely to receive a reply to an e-mail sent at night than they would when employees had left the office to return home and put the work day behind them.

The ability to work from home is, of course, limited to the type of work you do.

For some reason, many news stories referred to working at home as the new way of doing things.

However, the reality is most people can't work from home. Anyone in the trades, health care, manufacturing, and many other hands-on jobs, can't work from home. You can't cater a wedding from home, and you can't be a home decorator by suggesting colours to a client by e-mail.

A photographer has to be a location to get the shot.

It's hard to be a dentist over the computer, and patching up a pothole as a member of a municipal roads crew means getting out there and getting it done.

After two years of some people working from home, things are starting to turn around and employers are now expecting people to return to the workplace.

Not everyone is thrilled about going back to the office. Some people think it's their 'right' to work at home.

Unless you were hired in a situation where working from home was the original deal, returning to work was inevitable.

As an employer, having your people on site is a huge part of a company. It creates a company culture and fosters team work. Do you really want to work at a company where you have never met your co-workers, and a manager has to do their job remotely? How could you accurately do a job appraisal of an individual?

Many people who do work at home, can do so because they are working on some type of project. Most likely someone else is working on the same project and collaborating is a big part of putting the final project together.

The return to work has even affected the real estate market. When the pandemic hit and people started working from a home office, many big city dwellers thought it might be their chance to move to the country and enjoy a rural lifestyle while delivering their work over the internet.

Now that people are being requested to return to the office, the thought of commuting for a couple of hours with gas at \$1.70 per litre, doesn't seem like a great idea.

The local real estate market is slowing down because many people have decided it would be easier to stay put rather if they have to show up at the office every morning.

These are interesting times. Thanks to modern technology, this was the first time in history the option of working from home became a reality for many people.

Whether the trend continues for many people remains to be seen.

You might be in a position where your boss doesn't really care if they see you, as long as the work is completed properly and on time. That might be a best-case scenario for some.

If anything, the entire situation became somewhat of a huge social experiment.