

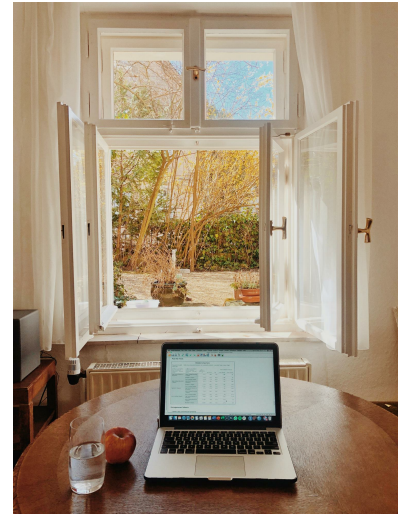
The WFH Culture

SEPTEMBER 29, 2020

The work from home culture is changing the way organizations conduct their business. Is it here to stay? Read on to know more.

The one thing that the ongoing pandemic has made popular is the Concept of WFH (Work from Home). WFH has always been a part of most industries seeking flexible working methods but the lockdowns at the beginning of the Virus outbreak made this concept the only option for organizations across the globe. WFH got the limelight and how. Organizations were reluctant initially but had no choice. And once they identified a method to the madness, many are wanting to use it on a long-term basis.

Most companies which can depend on this concept on a long-term basis have highlighted this concept as THE way to work going forward; they gave away their office assets and high rentals and facilitated their workers to organize mini offices & work spaces in the comforts of their own homes. Whilst there are the other businesses, which can rely on this concept on a short-term basis have adapted and adopted the concept innovatively and identified ways to make this an effective model till time demands. Sure there are two schools of thoughts here too and even the CEOs seem conflicted and have their own opinions - While Bill Gates says that it will continue, Narayan Murthy says that it is not a permanent solution.

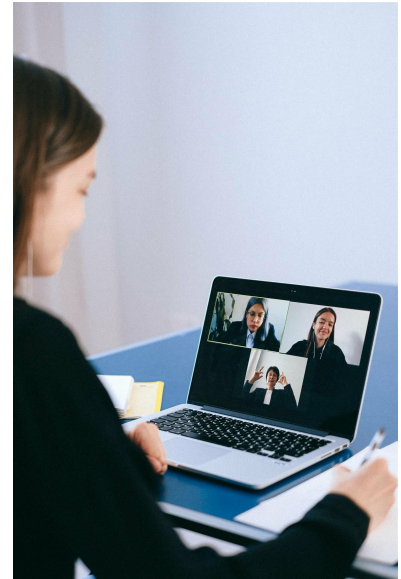


Seeing your boss talking to you sitting on a plush sofa with a book cabinet in the background or sometime a beautiful credenza behind him displaying artifacts collection of his travels, family portraits and indoor plants has become the new normal. This is giving us an insight into people's personal likes which might not have otherwise been possible in the office setting. The Boss now seems more humane and approachable. The erstwhile boardroom exchange of glances and smirks between colleagues have now been taken over by the exchange of private chat messages on Zoom while the call is ongoing; the communication is still on and human nature does find a way to transact (pun intended).

Few concepts which organizations were wanting to achieve have got hastened with the WFH culture. For instance, paperless organizations have become possible, making organizations more efficient and effective by eliminating waste and removing non-productive processes. Organizations have also been able to eliminate stringent hierarchies and boundaries between various functions by being more collaborative. Optimizing the number of employees on payroll by

bringing in more numbers on short term, contractual, consultant and part-time contracts.

I have long been part of the work from home culture even when it was uncommon and can say from my experience that it is not that glamorous as it is being made to sound. WFH has its own drawbacks. Intra-personal behavior for one: how does one behave when they are working alone at home is a major area to focus on. Being conscientious and self-disciplined are the prime needs in-order for one to continue to be productive. Working with online teams need the Trust factor to be heightened with the focus on deliverables and are quite challenging. Man being a gregarious being needs the constant affirmation of community and therefore, the WFH isolation can have an increased effect on mental wellbeing. Work life balance seem to be in jeopardy with the demarcation of workplace and home diminishing. Flexi hours for sure but the demon of being always on call hangs on one's head constantly.



In my opinion, while there are pros and cons to this concept, organizations need a proper prep and planning as well as train individuals to WFH. Organizations in the future need to find ways to be more engaging with employees working from home. Proper checks and balances need to be charted out to keep the employees more focused and productive if this is the way forward or else the best method would be to opt for a partial WFH and partial work from present office, leveraging the good from both the worlds -- as a good balance so that the overall employee and business growth can move ahead in tandem.