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ALL IN THE FAMILY

The benefits of working from home

By: [Queena N. Lee-Chua](#) - @inquirerdotnet Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:18 AM August 25, 2017

Most businesses— whether [family](#) enterprises or multinationals—do not permit employees to work from home. Given our dismal traffic, telecommuting should be an option for motivated employees who don't need constant supervision—but stringent one-size-fits-all company regulations do not grant leeway for certain employees to work from home or a café.

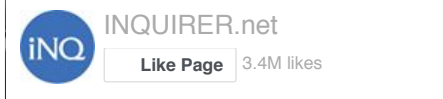
The constant presence of employees, particularly leaders, to oversee everyone is often cited as essential for [family businesses](#) .

While that may be true, the option to work one or even two days a week away from the office may be a wise economic and psychological decision.


In 2016, journalist Rachel Nuwer discussed telecommuting in “Scientific American Mind,” and in this two-part series, I summarize the most evidence-based studies.

In 2007, business professor Ravi Gajendran of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and psychologist David Harrison of the University of Texas at Austin analyzed studies of more than 12,000 employees and discovered that those who worked from home were less stressed and had better work-life balance.

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companies than those who worked solely in the office.

In 2015, the authors reported another benefit for employees who do not get along with their boss.

“Employees who perceive themselves as being in the doghouse at work are especially eager to reciprocate any favors that provide relief from that situation—such as working from home—by stepping up their performance,” they said.

That same year, economist Nicholas Bloom of Stanford University and James Liang of the travel agency Ctrip chose 249 employees to participate in a program where half of them worked from their homes and the rest stayed in the office.

As reported in the “Quarterly Journal of Economics,” instead of slacking off and wasting company resources, the work-at-home employees boosted company profits, to the tune of almost \$2000 per employee.

They were 13 percent more productive, because they focused better, took fewer breaks and finished tasks earlier.

A year later, similar results appeared in “Computers in Human Behavior.”

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Psychologist Nico Van Yperen of the University of Groningen studied more than 650 employees in several industries and discovered that those who prize independence and who can integrate work at home and in the office remain motivated to finish tasks even as they work from home.

Those who stayed in the office lose motivation when difficulties arise. After all, exhausted workers have no choice but to continue working if they stay in the office, says Van Yperen, as compared to those at home who can take a nap or a stroll to clear their minds, and then continue working afterwards.

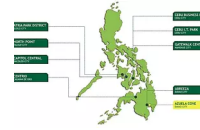
“Roughly a quarter of full-time employees in the US work from home for at least part of an average day, according to federal records,” says Nuwer. “If the trend extends so that 25 percent spend half the workweek telecommuting, then some big savings are in store, estimates Global Workplace Analytics, a research and consulting group.”

Look at the stats: “\$170 billion saved by businesses in real estate costs, \$466 billion worth of work gained through increased productivity, up to \$7,000 saved by individuals on work-related costs (such as transportation and dry cleaning), two to three weeks of free time gained by workers spared their commute, 51 million tons of greenhouse gases reduced by taking cars off the road.”

The catch? Tune in next week.



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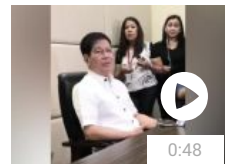
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