

## Working from Home

Written by Steve Marr  
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With the onslaught of COVID 19, hundreds of thousands of workers were transferred quickly to working from home. Companies needed to maintain work efforts while at the same time complying with shut-down mandates.

This transition in a short period of time from office to at-home work is unique. Future textbooks will no doubt be written on how to effectively migrate employees from office to home. For now, each institution has employed best practices available.

The technology to make this migration possible is already here. In many instances there are few things you can do at the office that you can't do at home. Telephone calls can easily be re-routed, and meetings can happen on Zoom or other platforms. I've been using GoToMeeting and Zoom for a number of years as I have reduced my travel to visit clients.

One challenge for managing at-home work is to understand productivity standards outside of the office. Some tasks like billing is easy to measure, others are more complicated.

As companies reopen, some offices are keeping many employees at home to maintain social distancing. My perspective is that many companies will continue to look for ways to allow staff to work at home. One major advantage is the reduction of real estate cost. Fewer office employees mean less square feet to pay for. In New York City the average office space per employee is \$14,000. Clearly many locations average less. However, the business owner needs to consider not only the cost of the rent but the need for leasehold improvements, utilities and other expenses associated with renting space. While staff can be called in for periodic meetings as necessary, in many cases they don't need a cubicle to do their work.

Wise companies should create a transition plan when virus complications begin to ease. Many managers will believe that the emergency has passed. They are ready to welcome everybody back to the workplace. However, this may or may not be a good decision.

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Management should understand what elements of their business were effective from remote work and which ones failed. Perhaps they could create a plan to strengthen what failed. Another advantage of working from home is that staff is less likely to leave. They value working from home as a tremendous benefit. No commuting time gives more family and discretionary time.

Scripture tells us, “for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.” (Proverbs27:24, NIV) We need to be flexible and change business models as needed. Existing business models will not last forever. If we fail to adjust, the riches of our business will not last.