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## WORK FROM HOME (WFH) – STUDY ON OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

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*Abstract: Covid even though has created havoc but has presented many business sectors a great opportunity for who were able to acclimatize to work from home (WFH) practices. Such crisis mandates not only the business but employees doing WFH also need to fine-tune this model with learning how to carry it out appropriately. This WFH model has both opportunities and threats on both the ends i.e., business and employees. While business can draw a lot of benefits in terms of widening talent pool, saving costs etc. Also, when employees are working from home, they are working with the same business having same responsibilities, deliverables and need to meet the targets with no change in timelines. Employees working from home have the opportunity to work in a stress free environment with good health and wellbeing. However, the challenges are also faced by both the ends and these challenges need to be mitigated in order to make the WFH truly successful.*

**Index Terms - Remote work, work from home, WFH.**

### I. INTRODUCTION

The business world goes through troublesome occasions regularly. Right now, we are being undermined by the Covid Coronavirus. Before, this infection shook the actual establishment of the business world, there were many more infections but none of them impacted deeply like this one. Furthermore, this infection has been truly the only one which has changed the way the business world works.

The world work market is evolving every day. In the past working was considered as unsafe by most of the organizations. But due to existing circumstances, work from home (WFH) or remote working has become now increasingly mainstream. Idea of remote working has brought a great deal to breather to the businesses.

Obviously, whenever you see opportunities then there would be presence of threats as well. WFH is certainly the novel model of working and till all organizations adjust to it and every one of the various kinds of methodologies have been made, there will consistently be threats emancipating from the same.

### II. METHODOLOGY

The paper attempts to review the available literature in public domain and summarize the threats and opportunities of WFH from business perspective as well as employee perspective as well.

The objective of the present study is:

- i. To understand the threats and opportunities of WFH from business perspective.
- ii. To understand the threats and opportunities of WFH from employee perspective.

### III. BUSINESS AND WFH

The number of people doing WFH has grown 115% in the last decade with WFH growing faster than other working methods. In fact, Global Workplace Analytics' report states that it has grown by 173%. Businesses which adapted quickly, saw many positives from lockdown due to suddenly shift to WFH model. While this may have brought some short term negatives like investing in new technology, new processes and new ways of working but provided long term benefits like increased revenues, profits, etc.

Some of the benefits of WFH can be summarized for Businesses below:

- i. Attracting top talent : WFH greatly expanded the talent pool as it encompasses all geographic areas. As a result, businesses are in apposition to attract top talent, rather than settling to the best available talent in that specific geography.
- ii. Reduce employee turnover: WFH decreases pressures of employee attrition due to challenges in physical conditions or commutes or life events.
- iii. Cost Cutting: Remote workers reduces the requirement of real estate and cuts down the costs involved in keeping an office operating, such as computers, phones, electricity, heating, and air conditioning.

- iv. **Improve productivity:** A study conducted by Professor Nicholas Bloom from Stanford revealed that WFH employees typically work a true full day (or more) which is not possible when you have employees coming late to the office or who leave early many times in a week. The study also found employees doing WFH were less distracted as it was much easier to concentrate at home. In addition, employees can work when they are most productive, even if that means late at night or early in the morning, and they tend to work extra hours per week.

While these benefits can be real, but there can be potential challenges as well. Companies can face challenges with employees scattered across the globe leading to issues in communication, culture, and performance.

#### Challenges of remote work

- i. **Communication issues:** Coordinating teams located across different time zones may create communication issues with more difficulties getting added the tone and body language was not visible.
- ii. **Organization working culture:** WFH workers may have lesser opportunities for developing bond with colleagues, also they may not understand the company missions and values. This may result in employees experiencing isolation, loneliness, and dissatisfaction with their roles and may lead to not being a part of the company culture.
- iii. **Monitoring employee performance:** It is difficult to monitor employee performance without physical presence of team in the office, especially where employees need to work for specific number of hours on daily basis.
- iv. **Security issues:** The shift to WFH often requires a transition to the cloud resulting in new security risks, leaks, breaches, and hacks. It may also lead to mixing of personal data and work data on the same device and apps as they use it for official and personal purpose, which may unintentionally lead to online attacks.

#### IV. WFH AND EMPLOYEES:

Such crisis mandates not only the business but employees doing WFH also need to fine-tune this model with learning how to carry it out appropriately. Also, when employees are working from home, they are working with the same business having same responsibilities, deliverables and need to meet the targets with no change in timelines.

For an employee, WFH may turn out to be a lot easier as they will work at home which is a familiar environment. Also, working from home can reduce their anxiety. WFH gives an opportunity to employees to look back and evaluate their work which is lot easier and lot better.

Working environment can be quite stressful for lot of employees. WFH gives the time to employees to assess the work better and improve their current results by improving their methods, something which they couldn't do at the workplace.

Some of the benefits of WFH for employees have been listed below:

- i. **Flexibility and agility:** WFH enables more flexibility and agility in working arrangements. Since employees no longer in the office, they may be willing to work flexible hours.
- ii. **Increased staff motivation:** By working from home, employees will feel more trustworthy from their employers because the employment relationship is not closely monitored and employees have a degree of autonomy to continue their work. Employees will also be more willing to develop home work procedures that are more suitable for them, helping them to be more motivated to do their best.
- iii. **Improved staff health and wellbeing:** WFH does not need to travel to work, which can be stressful. Saving time will give employees additional health benefits, such as getting more sleep, spending more time with their families, exercising, or preparing healthier meals.
- iv. **Less need for regular holidays:** Even if employees are still working, working from home feels like leaving the office to rest. Employees who work from home feel more energetic and can spend more time with their families, so they don't feel the need to take so many vacations.

Challenges of employees working from home:

- i. **Working from home doesn't suit everyone:** WFH may not be suitable for everyone's personality or ability. Some employees may prefer the routine and structure that working in an office environment provides. Some employees may prefer personal interactions with their colleagues and also find that face-to-face training with managers is very beneficial in helping them complete tasks and achieve their goals.
- ii. **Staff feeling isolated:** People working from home may feel disconnected from colleagues and the entire organization, which is naturally allowed by the office environment.
- iii. **Home distractions:** If employees do not have a dedicated, quiet working space at home, WFH can eliminate distractions that may occur in the office, but they may be easily distracted by household noise or other family members.
- iv. **Potential burnout:** Although the office physically separates work and family life, working from home may make employees forget to distinguish between work and family life. This can make it difficult for employees to know when they are out of touch with work, leading to longer working hours, increased stress, and inevitable burnout. Employers should encourage employees to take regular breaks and remind them of the importance of asking for leave.
- v. **Cost of working from home:** WFH may mandate initial training costs and provision of appropriate equipment such as laptops, mobile phones and other IT equipment.
- vi. **Mental health being impacted:** If employees cannot find a daily routine that suits them, they struggle to separate work and family life and feel isolated, then turning to work from home may have a negative impact on employees' mental health.

## V. CONCLUSION

Many business leaders and employees appreciate the opportunity to work virtually, while some evidence suggests remote work can increase productivity and satisfaction (Bloom, Liang, Roberts, & Ying, 2015). Several explanations for this association have been offered, including greater employee work flexibility, reduced commute times, and fewer meeting distractions (Collings, Nyberg, McMackin, & Wright, 2021). The sudden shift to mass remote work has resulted in drastic changes to some facets of HR. Overall, it seems clear that many organizations are embracing a future that involves WFH. Employers are now also grappling with how to deal with a workforce in which many employees are eager to continue working from home. Some business considerations include how to maintain high productivity over time, how to reduce costs effectively (e.g., some may not have to move to high-cost-of-living environments), mitigating technology risks, and other challenges. Whereas employee considerations on WFH include to create a work life balance, keeping good mental health and overall avoiding burnout. Hence these challenges faced by both the sides need to be mitigated in order to make the WFH truly successful.

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