

# FPP BizNewz

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MANAGEMENT • INVESTMENT • ECONOMICS • ENTREPRENEURSHIP • TECHNOLOGY

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# is working from home a dream-come-true for introverts or vice versa?

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The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly altered the way we work, learn, socialise, and play. The highly contagious disease has forced many countries to take drastic measures, such as temporary closures of businesses, schools and universities, as well as religious institutions, in order to prevent the outrageous disease from spreading further.

Currently, the increasing number of confirmed and positive cases of COVID-19, the emergence of new deadly, aggressive, mutated COVID-19 variants, and the recent spike of the basic reproduction number, known as R-naught or R0 of the COVID-19 infections, have forced the government to implement stricter Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) under the Movement Control Order (MCO 3.0), of which Work-From-Home (WFH) policies have been reintroduced (Tharanya Arumugam & Teh Athira Yusof, May 21, 2021). Following the implementation of MCO 3.0, 80 per cent of government servants and 40 per cent of private staffers have been ordered to work from home (Rashvinjeet & Jo Timbuong, May 22, 2021). To safeguard people's well-being by juggling between life and livelihood, businesses and essential services must operate in order to survive, and as a result, many companies have had to exercise Work-From-Home policies.

Work-From-Home, also known as telecommuting or remote working, is a situation in which employees are permitted to work in locations other than their office, a centre point of an organisation. Working in remote areas usually means working at home, but it can also mean working somewhere other than the office. Contrary to a popular belief, remote working is not a new trend. Brie Weiler Reynolds, a Career Development Manager, has written on his blog flexjobs.com that the rise of remote working over the last decade is actually a return to a more traditional way of working. People had used to make a

living where they lived before offices and factories became the primary places of employment. Farmers have grown crops on their own land, cattle breeders have bred cattle on their farms, and artisans of all kinds have set up shops and sold their wares in their homes.

As technology has advanced, innovations, such as computers, laptops, mobile phones, smartphones, and the Internet, platforms for employees to work in remotely have been conveniently provided, hence, they are able to collaborate virtually with their colleagues. Many businesses have become interested in this way of working after realising numerous benefits it has offered to both the organisations and their employees, such as increased productivity, better work-life balance, improved employees' mental and physical health, and much lower operating costs. Companies, including Fortune 500 firms, have jumped on board and formalised employee telecommuting programmes, which are still in use to date.

Working from home may appear appealing to some employees because they believe that they are empowered to perform their duties without constant supervision. However, it may not be necessarily suitable for all employees as different personalities may perceive it differently. As introverts, they are more interested in how other introverted personalities view telecommuting. Unlike extroverted ones, they are more excited about the opportunity to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. They do not mind working alone as, for them, working from home makes them more productive than working in the office with all of its distractions. While we acknowledge that teaching entirely online from home has increased our workloads as academics, the flexibility that comes with remote working has allowed us to spend more time with our families while still fulfilling our work responsibilities, thereby, increasing our commitment to the job and organisation. Furthermore, having more 'alone time'

relieves the pressure of socialising, which can be exhausting at times, has allowed us to concentrate more on our tasks. Nonetheless, we would like to know what the general consensus is on this subject, as ours is merely an opinion.

According to Olivia-Guy Evans's perspective written in her article '*Introvert and Extrovert Personality Traits*', introverts are reserved, quiet, and shy by nature, and preferring solitude, small group interactions, and less stimulating activities. Based on these, many people believe that working from home is an ideal working environment for those introverts. This is because there is neither pressure to interact with others nor distractions that can impede them from working. This notion has been shared by Head of the Department of Management at the University of Toronto David Zweig who has stated that *"it makes sense to think about introversion as one of the personality traits that may adapt better to working from home as introverts generally don't have any problem(s) working in isolation, they prefer quieter activities and they are not the people who are always looking to be the center of attention"*.

Han Pong Yeh, a blogger and fellow introvert, has agreed that working from home is a 'dream- come-true' and written on her blog, [introvertdear.com](http://introvertdear.com), that when her company was announcing that all employees would begin working from home, she herself was feeling a sense of relief, joy, and even victory after suffering through all those years of office life.

Arindam Goswami, on the other hand, has refuted the notion that remote working is an ideal working environment for introverts. He has written in [hrkatha.com](http://hrkatha.com) that humans have a natural desire to socialise; however, being isolated and secluded for an extended period of time can lead to mental-health issues, such as mental anxiety and extreme loneliness, even in introverts. He also gives credence to the fact that while introverts value

solitude, they also stay hungry for social interactions but only in moderation. Another issue that he has brought up is that working from home means being surrounded by family all the time, which is not always a good idea even for the introverts. While family is important, being constantly surrounded by them can deprive the introverts of something sacred, which is the opportunity to find personal space. Typically, the introverts require a lot of 'alone time', but not getting enough of it due to working from home and being continuously surrounded by loved ones simultaneously can lead to emotional exhaustion, surprisingly. Likewise, blogger Mitchell Demeter has also subscribed to a belief that working from home is a 'pitfall' that has mentally consumed those who have been identified as introverted compared to their extroverted buddies, which is astonishing and demanding us to take a moment to process this.

Based on the above viewpoints, we can conclude that, while working from home can be immensely beneficial to introverts, it is not the best idea for them at all times. There may have been other aspects of remote working that are not covered in this article, which may undermine introverts' motivation and commitment to their work responsibilities. However, it is up to them to figure out how to avoid the less desirable aspects of working from home in order to remain devoted to their work and organisation. Being either introverts or extroverts is not anyone's fault. This is because different personalities have their own uniqueness and the preference of the working environment and feeling comfortable with this flexible atmosphere would be dictated by these personalities and other influential factors.

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