

# Nine Myths of Work-from-Home

The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted millions of employees from commuting to their worksite to working from home. As things begin to return to normal, employers will be considering the pros and cons of fitting Work-from-Home into their business plans for the long term. Here are some of the myths about working from home and the facts and experiences that address them.

1  
MYTH

## Work-from-Home employees are less productive

Studies about remote work have proven that productivity increases when workers make the switch from the office to working at home. A [two-year Stanford University study](#) found a productivity boost of 20% to 30% in Work-from-Home employees. A 2014 Harvard [study](#) showed similar results, citing increases in productivity levels up to 13.5% once employees began working remotely. In 511 Contra Costa's recent [Work-from-Home experience survey](#), 76% of managers said their team's productivity was the same or better working from home. For many workers, it is simply a matter of being able to focus better on their work when they remove themselves from the distractions of a noisy office. The Harvard study also found that remote workers took fewer sick days and worked more hours than their on-site counterparts.



2  
MYTH

## Work-from-Home employees are harder to manage

While supervisors may not see every employee at their desk every day, the same attention can be given to every member of a work team whether they work at a different office, from their home, or at the next desk. Setting clear expectations, planning workloads, scheduling check-ins, and monitoring the performance of all staff are the keys to success.

In a 2020 [Global Workplace Analytics](#) study, 66% of managers reported that their ability to manage their team's performance was the same or improved when the team worked from home. This is supported by the 511 Contra Costa survey where 72% of managers said they spend the same or less time managing Work-from-Home employees.

Managers may want to try working from home for themselves. Understanding the challenges and benefits of working outside of the traditional setting can help them better manage their Work-from-Home staff.

3  
MYTH

## Work-from-Home employees make their own schedules

While employees who work from home may have a bit more flexibility in when they start and end their workday, they still need to meet deadlines, collaborate with coworkers and attend meetings – whether in person or virtually. Employers and employees should agree to a schedule for Work-from-Home staff and share it with colleagues at the office. Maintaining a set schedule ensures that coworkers, customers, and clients can still reach Work-from-Home employees when they need to. On the flip side, it can also allow Work-from-Home employees to preserve a work/home balance by preventing 'work creep' and expectations by others that they should be available at any time.

4  
MYTH

## Virtual meetings aren't as productive

Virtual meetings can be just as productive as meetings in an office thanks to video and teleconferencing systems that offer chats and shared screens. They can also be more flexible when dealing with time constraints, conflicting schedules, and staff in multiple locations or different time zones.

5

## MYTH Work-from-Home employees never come into the office

[Global Workplace Analytics case studies](#) find that working from home two to three days a week strikes the best balance of focused work and collaboration with coworkers. Even those who work from home full time may still benefit from visiting the office for the occasional meetings, check-ins or trainings. Maintaining regular contact with coworkers and supervisors and participating in meetings on site can be valuable to keeping a good workflow.



6

## Work-from-Home is unfair to employees who remain at a worksite

Eligibility for a Work-from-Home program should be determined by the job description and tasks, not the employee in the position. As part of a Flex Work program, employers should clearly define the tasks and job positions that are eligible for Work-from-Home, focusing on the needs of the business. Employers can help avoid bad feelings by sharing clear program guidelines, defining eligible positions, and by setting clear expectations for the volume and quality of work to be performed by all employees – whether working from home or not.

7

## MYTH Working from home is ideal for everyone

Even when a job position is compatible with Work-from-Home, the employee in the position may not be. Not everyone has the traits to make them effective or happy working from home. Some people thrive in a more structured environment or work best in a busy, social atmosphere. Testing out a Work-from-Home schedule with employees can allow them to find the balance of time spent in and out of the workplace that best suits their work style and personality.

8

## My job isn't suitable for working at home

Not all jobs are suitable for working from home, but the COVID-19 pandemic has proven that many people can adapt and work effectively from home. While some jobs require an employee to be on-site, there may be some tasks within a position that can be done from home. If at least one day's work each pay period can be completed off-site, then an employee could reasonably become an occasional Work-from-Home employee.

9

## The technology needed to work from home is too complicated

User-friendly audio and video conferencing tools have allowed even those with limited technical know-how to stay connected with coworkers. For most, working from home requires little more than a computer and a cell phone. Employers with expectations of Work-from-Home employees using more advanced network connections, software systems, and conferencing tools can provide training to those employees to ensure success.

A 2020 [Global Workplace Analytics](#) study found that 81% of employees were satisfied with their Work-from-Home technology and the amount of down time they experienced due to tech issues was virtually the same at home as at the office.



511 Contra Costa provides these free employer resources to assist businesses exploring flexible work options for their employees. Employers should review the legal, financial and personnel issues associated with Work-from-Home and flexible schedules with professionals equipped to understand their specific business needs.