

FEATURES OF ORGANIZING REMOTE WORK OF COMPANIES DURING A PANDEMIC

Kislaya T.,

*associate professor of management and economic department
Institute of Entrepreneurial Activity, Minsk, Belarus
e-mail: tatiana_kislaya@tut.by*

Working from home (WFH) also called telecommuting or telework is becoming a common practice during a pandemic.

According to the research of Stanford University rising share of employees now regularly engage in working from home, but there are concerns this can lead to “shirking from home”. The scientists of Stanford University reported the results of a WFH experiment at Ctrip, a 16,000-employee, NASDAQ-listed Chinese travel agency. Call center employees who volunteered to WFH were randomly assigned either to work from home or in the office for nine months. Home working led to a 13% performance increase, of which 9% was from working more minutes per shift (fewer breaks and sick days) and 4% from more calls per minute (attributed to a quieter and more convenient working environment) [1].

Home workers also reported improved work satisfaction, and their attrition rate halved, but their promotion rate conditional on performance fell. Due to the success of the experiment, Ctrip rolled out the option to WFH to the whole firm and allowed the experimental employees to reselect between the home and office. Over half of them switched, which led to the gains from WFH almost doubling to 22%. This highlights the benefits of learning and selection effects when adopting modern management practices like WFH [1].

Since January 2020, there have been changes in the legislation of the Republic of Belarus, in particular, the concept of “remote work” has appeared in the Labor Code. It became possible to regulate the relationship between the employee and the employer when working in a mobile mode.

The experience of the Belarusian company A1, one of the mobile telecom operators, shows that remote work has not led and does not lead to a decrease in efficiency.

The main priorities of A1 strategy during the crisis caused by the COVID-19 epidemic are safety, convenience and personal preferences of employees. For example, of all surveyed employees (the sample was 88% of all hired personnel), 90% of employees positively perceived the conditions of work in a remote mode, of which 50% spoke in favor of working in a hybrid format, and 20% would prefer to work completely remotely [2].

A1's management has taken the following measures to provide employees with a comfortable working environment:

1. The business processes of the company were preliminarily assessed and prioritized.

They identified those divisions that can perform their functions remotely without losing productivity and maintaining the smoothness of work processes. First of all,

these are the departments that are not directly involved in customer service and equipment operation.

2. The staff was provided with the necessary equipment and software.

In the shortest possible time, about 400 laptops were issued to employees who previously worked on stationary personal computers. So, in just two weeks, more than 80% of employees, whose functional responsibilities allowed working remotely, switched to a remote format.

3. Were ensured data security.

This has become a key condition that must be strictly observed when organizing remote work.

4. Were ensured correct communication.

From the point of view of communication at the company level, everything was also debugged long ago. Thanks to the corporate social network, which the company has been using for three years, its employees have access to the company's news anytime and anywhere.

In this way the frequency of WFH has been rising rapidly during a pandemic. According to the Stanford University researches they found no negative spillovers onto workers who stayed in the office. Home workers also reported substantially higher work satisfaction and psychological attitude scores, and their job attrition rates fell by over 50%. Furthermore, when the experiment ended and workers were allowed to choose whether to work at home or in the office, selection effects almost doubled the gains in performance.

References:

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