



Commentary: What? Work From Home?

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August 6 2022 1:00 AM

GLEN CARBON - What? Shake the dust off your clothes and get back to the office?



About a month ago I was talking with my executive assistant, and we both noted how long it has been since we went out to an event. It had been a while for both of us - about two years. It had been so long that we actually had to shake the dust off our suits.

I started thinking about the need to go into the workplace. When you think about staff working from home, what are you thinking? Hmm...maybe they are in their pajamas watching TV or playing video games on their laptops? Well, my view is quite the opposite. Since the pandemic and even before, I allowed my staff to work from home and here are my findings. Staff increased productivity more than when they were working in the office. It's like getting an extra day's work from each employee. They said they took shorter breaks and HR discovered staff was taking fewer sick days and took less time off. They also reported higher job satisfaction and less office drama and to my amazement, they were never goofing off.

So, if you are wondering whether your employees need supervision to stay focused and if they are able to resist the main distraction of the bed, the TV, and the fridge, I encourage you to look at the success of their work.

The bottom line is this. I found out that I had nothing to lose and everything to gain by allowing my staff to work from home. Working from home has benefited our Council in so many ways. When severe weather is in the forecast, and when it's summer and kids are out of school – it has been a benefit. It could be given as part of a promotion or granted in lieu of a bonus. As we compete these days to hire and retain the best employees, I am able to offer the option to work from home and be more attractive to a potential new hire.

The need to go into a workplace five days a week started because people had to do factory work and make products. So, if you still treat employees like that, you will find yourself at a disadvantage. Many of my suits still have dust on them, and I'm perfectly happy to keep it that way.