REMOTE WORKING IN TERMS OF COVID 19

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ABSTRACT

A wide range of jobs in various industries can be done from home, including remote work. Namely, work from home, teleworking, remote office - it has several names, but no matter what you call it, it means working in an environment that is not the company's office, while ensuring that productivity does not suffer. It should be emphasized that the work must be done outside the employer's premises. The work is mostly done, but not necessarily in the house of the employee. Even companies that never thought a home-based business was possible had to make the change. Many CEOs and senior managers have changed their minds about remote working equally in a short time. They soon realized that their teams were just as productive from home as they were in the office outside, and some even more productive. Authors concluded that whether doing a job in a company or working for you, working from home can be a challenge whereas literature in this area can be extremely helpful.

Keywords: Remote Working, Freelancing, Work From Home, Employees

INTRODUCTION

Working from home has a much longer history than working in offices outside. The history of work from home dates back to the middle Ages, when craft and trade shops were set up within the living space. For example, during medieval times, most working-class Englishmen lived in one-story houses, which were 'a combination of a kitchen and a workshop for spinning, weaving, tailoring, or dining rooms and butchers' (Reynolds, 2017). In other words, medieval craftsmen made their crafts from home. This is proven by old buildings with large windows that still exist in England or France.

It is noticed that after the industrial revolution, the business from home continued to progress because the vendors, undertakers and schools had owners and teachers who live and work in the same building. Namely, despite the possibility of working outside the home with the industrial revolution, many enterprising people continued to work within their homes in the 19th and early 20th centuries. For women, this job usually includes washing clothes for external users, providing food and bakery products for sale to factory workers or performing "finishing work" for shoe and clothing manufacturers (Radović-Marković, et al., 2020; Radović-Marković, 2018). Recent research has shown that as many as 77% of people feel more productive when working from home compared to working in an office premises outside (Marinova, 2020). Another similar research has been done. Thus, Ishay's research showed that almost 65% of employees are more productive in their office at home than in a traditional workplace (Ishay, 2019). In this way, some myths were shattered and many doubts about teleworking were removed.

As more and more companies adopt remote working policies, working hours are generally adjusted to the employee's schedule and aligned with the employer's requirements. This means, at first glance, greater flexibility and freedom of employees and employers and less stress on both sides. Namely, there is an opinion that employers should nurture a "flexible organizational culture". How to build a team culture when working remotely? In order to build a dynamic team culture at a distance, it is necessary to work on motivating employees to adapt to the common vision and goals of the organization. This in turn encourages collaboration between teams that inspire new ideas and innovations.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A recent survey found that the majority (79%) of employees seeking flexibility in work are well educated and have managerial experience, while 73% felt that flexibility is a prerequisite for strong interpersonal relationships of employees (Ishay, 2019). According to Ishay (2019), the Gallup survey of good governance is a key factor in improving employee productivity and innovation. Remote employees require a different management style, so managers need to make sure they master the appropriate skills. Achieving these benefits requires strong, consistent leadership and constant communication. Founders and managers must set an example, be transparent and work to communicate the company's mission, values and goals. Some good starting points include (Freeport, 2020):

- Scheduling regular, comprehensive Zoom calls at least once a month to discuss the initiatives, present any new employment, and celebrate every victory, big or small.
- Organizing virtual activities to build a team, to encourage people to get to know the whole organization better

Most human resources experts agree that finding talent is getting harder and harder in their local markets. However, not only is the best staff difficult to secure, but existing staff can also look for work abroad or relocate for family reasons. Accordingly, some research shows that hiring remote workers reduces staff shortages. Certainly, by choosing the option of hiring geographically distant workers, the door is opened for hiring a far wider range of staff.

Enabling employees to work from home also empowers them to be independent and disciplined. In addition, it provides a sense of trust. From the employee's point of view, their employer shows faith in them that they can reconcile work and private commitments while still being productive even though they are not under the watchful eye of management (Schiller, 2020).

- It is a way to generate additional income for debt repayment or savings.
- It is easy to start if the individual already has the necessary skills and equipment to do the job.
- It enables greater independence in relation to permanent employment in a company.
- It is often flexible and allows you to work part-time or outside the working hours.

In the entrepreneurial literature, freelancers are often categorized as a version of an entrepreneur or manager (Burke, 2011). They work under contract for various projects for various companies, selling them their services (Kitching & Smallbone, 2008). The freelancer can choose the clients he will work for. But once he does, he loses control of the project he will work on and has no influence on the deadline to complete the work. The self-employed enjoy a high level of control, because no one puts pressure on them. They can plan the deadlines for the completion of the work themselves. In many countries, freelancers may choose to pay or not pay taxes. Their sole responsibility is to comply with the country's tax rules. No one will follow them

in particular because of taxes, because they would mostly work from home. It is therefore up to the freelancer to check with the tax regulator for any of the different types of taxes he must meet.

According to the Global Gig Economic Index, the United States ranks first among the top ten countries in terms of revenue from freelancers, while Serbia is ranked as the tenth country in the fastest growing market of "gig economy" in the world and with a growth of 19% total earnings of freelancers (immediately after Russia) (Figure 1).
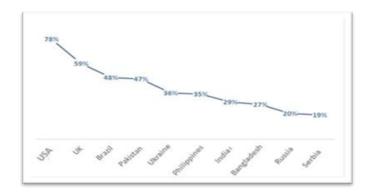

FIGURE 1
COUNTRIES RANKED ACCORDING TO THE HIGHEST REALIZED INCOME FROM FREELANCERS IN THE WORLD

Asia has become the centre of the freelancing. So, Pakistan, the Philippines, India and Bangladesh in Asia generated the most business income in this way.

Tradition *vs.* New Models of Work

The strength of tradition in countries such as Pakistan, Philippines, India Japan, China, Singapore and other Asian countries is reflected more in respect for the customs of corporate culture than in the advantages of new technologies. "In fact, although technology is available, organizational memory has prevented us from making full use of it" (Kobayashi, 2020, p. 1). Further, the collectivist culture of these countries prefers teamwork and team success more than striving for individual recognition, sharing responsibilities, helping each other and learning from each other. In this, they differ from Western countries, where people look to personal achievements, innovations, autonomy and individual heroes. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 for many companies was a chance to reconsider employee relations and to adapt and change their corporate culture for mutual benefit. Some research shows that about 88 percent of Japanese large corporations adopted remote work during 2020 (The Straitstimes, 2020).

Prior to COVID-19, many employers were reluctant to accept distant working because of the challenges they expected in terms of work organization and employee performance control. Namely, they lacked trust in employees. However, the new reality created by the emergence of the pandemic has influenced the gradual change of such deeply grounded ideas that have been cultivated collectively over generations. Thus, forced to work remotely, many teams have successfully adapted, often surprising even themselves. High-performance teams maintain regular morning and evening video calls, which keeps them in constant communication. Further, remote work has imposed a clear division of roles, increasing team productivity, unlike traditional roles in Japanese and Chinese companies. Accordingly, most people can be trusted to work in a disciplined and responsible manner remotely. According to a number of experts, working from home, defying tradition, workers and companies come to self-

awareness and begin to realize that it is a sustainable alternative. In Japan, companies such as Fujitsu, Hitachi and Ricoh, the construction materials group Likil, the glass manufacturer AGC and others have accepted remote work as the "new normal", expecting it to continue this way after the pandemic (The Straitstimes, 2020). For the mentioned and most other companies, one of the biggest challenges was choosing the best workforce management system that will be the most efficient in the newly created working conditions. Accordingly, immediately after the transition to remote working, a model of work was developed, taking into account the interests of companies, as well as their workforce. A recent Gartner survey found that optimizing technology solutions at this time was critical to organizing a successful remote work environment - especially when it comes to cost management (Rahim, 2020).

The Japanese government has recognized the importance of education and the value of training programs for people moving to remote work, by including them in work style and employment reforms. Consequently, the "Youth UP" project was launched, which provides opportunities for "distance internships" using Skype in order to provide job seekers with the necessary digital skills. The government's new workforce reforms require companies to adopt flexible work practices and a better work environment. The broader goal is to create a society in which more women and young people are actively involved in the labour market.

CONCLUSION

Almost half of the freelancers did not feel the impact of the economic crisis. Namely, since the global financial crisis of 2008-10, companies began to shift to contract workers, which led to the emergence of the gig economy, which is in full swing. Consequently, the question arises as to what the effect of the crisis will be caused by Covid-19 on existing forms of work. In addition to the great impact of the pandemic in the world that work from home is rapidly gaining momentum, there are many other reasons why working from home is a future trend. The increase in real estate prices makes it impossible even for large corporations to open offices in multiple locations. Providing work from home avoids such investments. Accordingly, this trend is expected to continue when the pandemic passes. This is confirmed by statistics from European countries and developing economies, which also show that working from home is the future of employment. Thus, Upwork estimates that by 2028, 73% of all its departments and branches will have remote workers (Allthingstalent, 2020). In addition to Upwork, other organizations also need to recognize and understand the growing influx of Generation Z into the workforce. For these workers born in the digital age, the concept of remote working cannot only be attractive, but it is also seen as a key criterion for achieving job satisfaction. "For the younger generations, as well as for the growing number of members of the older generations, the future of remote working has already begun" (Lee, 2020). In addition, changes in the management and leadership styles initiated by the pandemic can be expected, and to a greater extent than has been the case so far, encouraged work from home.

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