



Timely Information for Personal Success

Will Fancy Office Buildings Become Extinct?

By Mike Jacquart

You're likely aware that more people are working from home than ever before. According to a recent survey from Indeed, more and more jobs are enabling employees to work remotely. Out of the 500 employees surveyed, 55% percent said they were allowed to work remotely, and among those, 75% said this perk improved work-life balance, and 60% said that their productivity improved.

Small businesses were among the least likely to allow their employees to work from home, although 40% of small business employees surveyed stated that they supported the option to do so.

This begs the question: *"Should the modern employer be less focused on providing state-of-the-art office spaces if employees would rather skip the commute and work from home?"*

What Type of Worker are You?

I have worked in lots of different work environments, everything from quiet and secluded, to noisy and open. Co-workers who largely went about their business each day – versus colleagues who liked to chat a lot. As a result, part of *any* decision about remote work needs to address what type of worker YOU are. Are you a self-starter, self-motivated, and okay with having little face-to-face interaction with colleagues? If that *isn't* you, remote work might be a bad idea.

Type of Work Matters

In addition to *individual* differences, the *type of work* the business does, as well as its *size*, also need

to be taken into account. Certain professions, like writing, editing, and graphic design, are much more conducive to remote work than other fields. When I started working from home (I still prefer that term over "remote" work!) more than seven years ago, the only big change in my daily routine was that instead of being handed a paper proof, I received it electronically at home.

Remote Work can Reduce "Brick, Mortar" Costs

"Brick-and-mortar" issues such as construction costs, office rent, etc. are another big consideration for any business thinking about allowing more employees to skip the office commute and work from home. It used to be that if a company wanted

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Healthy Recipe: Ginger-Cranberry-Raspberry Relish

INGREDIENTS:

- One 12-ounce package fresh cranberries
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup crystallized ginger, minced
- 3 cups raspberries (2 pints), fresh or frozen (not thawed)

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 58
- Carbohydrates: 15 g.
- Protein: 0 g.
- Sodium: 2 mg.
- Fat: 0 g.
- Fiber: 2 g.

DIRECTIONS:

❶ Pulse cranberries in a food processor until coarsely chopped. Transfer to a medium bowl. Stir in sugar and crystallized ginger. Gently stir in raspberries – it's fine to crush some of them.

❷ Cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours to combine the flavors.

Tip: Cover and refrigerate for up to 1 week.

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 395 Grove St., Iola, WI 54945
 Phone: 715-445-4386
 Website: writeitrightllc.com
 Email: mjacquart@writeitrightllc.com

Editor/Publisher: Mike Jacquart

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Questions and Answers

Consider an After Work Cocktail

Q: *My office mates like to get together after work ... usually on Friday. I'm not much of a drinker, so am I making a mistake if I say "No"?*

A: In some cases, yes you probably are. Are you in fact being asked, or are you asking to tag along? That's important! If it's the former, remember you don't have to partake in alcoholic beverages to go out with colleagues after work. You can politely decline a "drink" and just have soda... or even water.

The idea isn't to promote drinking – it's the camaraderie that sometimes only builds in a workplace when people unwind after working all day that's important. If you are asked, and say no – unless you have a good reason for declining – you are more or less implying that you aren't interested in your work mates' company. Is that the message you want to send?

Finally, just remember to NOT use this as a time to gossip about your boss or other co-workers! If someone else gossips, that doesn't mean you have to join in! And if it turns out the get-togethers are just opportunities for colleagues to B...H about the boss, you can politely decline the next time. But you have nothing to lose to go.

Office Buildings...

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to expand, it was almost automatically looking at building (or leasing) a bigger building.

Today this can be a murky matter. The firm might be better off sticking with the physical size building it has, and encouraging (wherever applicable) more employees to work from home. What a cost savings!

Or what if you are an EAP practitioner or other behavioral health professional with an *individual* practice? Chances are, the cost of renting an office, especially if you live in an expensive city where space is at a premium – such as New York or Chicago – is even *more* cost prohibitive than it is for an employer!

Then there is the complex matter of how to manage employees who work from home – an area that I believe is going to become a big EAP issue in the near future. *Part two of an article by Jan Makela in this month's "Employee Assistance Report" offers some great advice.*

Summary

It's a lot to think about, but even if you haven't had to consider these issues yet, you very likely WILL need to examine this emerging trend in the near future. Who knows? It might even involve fancy office buildings becoming largely a thing of the past. ■

Mike Jacquart is editor and publisher of "Employee Assistance Report." He may be reached at mjacquart@writeitrightllc.com.