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Is working from home good for your career? Six drawbacks that point to no

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5–6 minutes

Working from home may be your preferred option, but is it the right move for your career? A 30-second commute to the couch or the dining table may sound great, but the price for this privilege could be an uphill battle in your professional journey.

The pandemic showed us that remote work is not only possible, but also comes with advantages. Now many organizations are offering remote work as an alternative. But if you do opt to work from home, even just some of the time, you likely have co-workers who are at the office more than you. As a result, they may have career advantages you are missing out on. Here are six drawbacks to working from home you should consider.

Your network will shrink

While we were all at home, new employees came on board, people changed jobs and others retired. Not just within your organization, but also in your industry and in your marketplace. You may have talked to them online, but face-to-face and in-person is how the best connections are made. The newcomers don't know you well and your previous contacts who've moved

elsewhere have probably lost touch with you, too. Virtual meetings are still possible, but they're not the same as connecting informally. If you're not in the office, there is less opportunity to catch up over a quick coffee or even to run into someone in the lobby or elevator with whom you worked in the past.

Your work relationships will falter

Over and over again, you'll hear people say they stay in a suboptimal job because of the people they work with. Our relationships with our co-workers obviously matter. Bouncing ideas off team members, sharing a laugh over a common workplace situation or going out for lunch together are all things that make work fun. Sure, these relationships are still possible from a distance, but they're certainly not as deep and broad.

Getting motivated will be more difficult

It may be true that you are less likely to be interrupted if you're working from home, so at least in theory, you should be more productive. But the reality is that home can quickly become humdrum. Going into the office adds variety to your day. You're not just sitting in front of a screen with periodic breathers to break the monotony. You're driving or taking transit, you're talking to colleagues, you're walking to meetings, you're joining others for lunch. And if you seem less motivated (compared with your co-workers), your boss and others will notice.

You will miss out on opportunities

The unfortunate truth is that out-of-sight can quickly become out-of-mind. Not intentionally, but it's human nature to focus on what is right in front of us. Your managers are no exception. If you're not present and visible, you may miss out on being considered for a

high-profile project or a skill-building assignment. Those opportunities are more likely to go to those who can be seen.

You will have fewer chances to make a positive impression

You know you do good work. But do others? Not just your boss, but the powers-that-be who can influence your success. When you work from home, you'll have to depend on your boss to spread the good word, and others will hear about it second-hand. But when you're in the office, you'll have more occasions to show, firsthand, what you are capable of, and establish your worth to your organization.

You are most likely to be 'rightsized' first

Rightsized, down-sized, laid off – they're all terms that end in the same place – losing your job. And if you fall victim to the first five drawbacks that come from continuing to work at home when your colleagues are back in the office, you can be certain you'll also be the first to go when it's time to start cutting costs.

Remote work has its advantages, and you may have come to love the informality and the convenience. But before you jump on the working-from-home bandwagon on a permanent basis, even if it's just for a fraction of your work week, consider what it might do to your promotability and career progress. If you're still steadfast in your desire to go this direction, the six drawbacks outlined above are certainly not insurmountable. But you'll need to take thoughtful and deliberate actions to overcome them.

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