

CURRENT TRENDS IN MANAGEMENT, THEIR INFLUENCE AND EMPLOYEES' RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Zuzana KAPSDORFEROVÁ , Petronela ŠVIKRUHOVÁ *,
Veronika ZÁBOJNÍKOVÁ , Matej ČERESH , Karol FRONC 

*Institute of Economics and Management, Faculty of Economics and Management,
Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Trieda A. Hlinku 2, 949 76 Nitra, Slovakia*

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Abstract. The current market development is very dynamic and it is necessary to adapt to it. Based on several studies, new trends applied in business management were identified. The most significant influence on management trends was the coronavirus pandemic, which in the first months of 2020 had several unexpected socio-economic global effects, forcing governments around the world to take urgent measures. The most common restrictions were strong social distancing and changing the daily routine of millions of office workers around the world. Lockdowns imposed in most countries have led to a sudden shift of corporate activities from offices to employees' homes, with office buildings either legally inaccessible or businesses choosing to do so in line with official guidelines and prioritizing employee well-being. Reactivating the economy is a key challenge for policymakers. The article points out the impact of crises on current trends and directions in company management, evaluates work from home, and points out its advantages and disadvantages in the Slovak Republic and selected companies. The main research method was questionnaire research. The aim of the questionnaire survey was to find out the state of home office use in the Slovak Republic, and employee satisfaction with this type of work. Opening the market in developing countries for companies and multinational companies and the form of homework office, made possible by the internationalization and decentralization of businesses, are characterized by different ways of working. The work is a product of various historical, political, and social elements, and as a subject of study, it is in various fields of knowledge that are subject to the interference of changes in all its areas. Therefore, workers and organizations must adapt to new ways of performing tasks.

Keywords: home office, crises, change management, work productivity, trends in management.

JEL Classification: O31, O32, M54.

Introduction

With the upcoming of new political, social, economic, and technological configurations, dramatic and rapid changes occurred in the world of work. New global configurations bring various work modifications, methods, tools, processes, and information. Examples of these changes are a change in supplier-customer relations, limited access to resources, production flexibility, multitasking, e-leadership, project management, circulation management, risk management, working from home, application of information and communication technology, and artificial intelligence at work. The work is a product of various historical, political, and social elements and as an object of study, it is in a scenario in different fields of knowledge that are subject to the interference of changes in all its fields. Employees and

organizations must face new challenges and adapt to new ways of managing and developing tasks. The manager's task is to effectively achieve the primary goal of the company, which is prosperity. The effectiveness of the manager's work is influenced by many factors, which are influenced by the methods and tools used in the performance of managerial tasks. A company that wants to maintain the quality of its products, processes, and services must regularly improve. On the basis of many studies carried out in the world, we carried out similar research in the Slovak Republic. In the presented article, the results of a pilot survey aimed at identifying new trends in management and working from home, which arose on the basis of global crises, are presented.

* Corresponding author. E-mail: petronela.svikruhova@uniag.sk

1. Literature review

In the last century, the definition of a crisis consisted of the characterization that a crisis is the result of chance, unexpected events, and destabilization (Homer-Dixon et al., 2015). The crisis had an exceptional, acute, urgent, and dramatic nature for the company, which had the mission of bridging the adverse and critical events for the company (Su et al., 2022). Many currents of crisis management have emerged, which have tried to solve the same problems: understanding why crises are difficult to predict, starting a real prevention effort, and regaining control of company and organization activities (Kadárová, 2018). The nature of crises has changed. The crises of the world today have a different character from those of the past. The number, types, forms of crises, and their duration, which affect businesses, are currently increasing continuously. Terrorist attacks, military conflicts, the climate crisis, the global economic crisis, and the Covid-19 pandemic cast doubt on the ability to predict and manage these crises in a short period (Dijkzeul & Sandvik, 2019). In the past, crises most often developed slowly, and it was usually possible to prevent them or blunt their effects with the help of professionally managed planning. In recent years, the nature of many crises has changed significantly:

- arise suddenly after a one-time event,
- they very often threaten not only the immediately affected company but the entire industry,
- increasingly intensive automation makes businesses much more prone to crises, especially in sectors dependent on information and communication technology,
- businesses react to the emerging crisis in a clueless, inept manner, making quick interventions regardless of their later effects (European Council, 2022).

The consequences of crises in management have the greatest impact, especially on human resources. In times of crisis, even more, experienced executives must look for appropriate solutions to eliminate it and adapt the management environment for the operation of the business (Gibbons, 2023).

In 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, paralyzing all areas of economic, social, and economic life around the world. The impacts of the pandemic have an incalculable value, but we can state with certainty that the losses are significant and hardly recoverable (Haywood, 2020; Svabova, 2021). A study from the United Kingdom dealt with inequalities in the impact of the pandemic on the labor market. In it, the authors present the difference in the impact of the lockdown across diverse groups of workers. The same study was conducted on the American labor market. Their results are similar. Approximately 10% of people under the age of 30 reported job loss after the first two weeks of the lockdown (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020). The majority of workers who started working from home were among employees with a higher income. Specifically, up to 72% of workers with an income of more than

£40,000 in England and 66% of workers with an income of more than \$50,000 in America. Among other things, all employees experienced a decrease in the average time worked. A quantitative study describing the impact of the corona crisis on employment and hours worked by small businesses in the four most affected service sectors in America recorded up to a 60% drop in employment in the first months of the pandemic, half of which was caused by the complete closure of the business. At the time when the CARES act was adopted in the United States of America, 60% of businesses had already laid off at least one employee (Kurmman et al., 2020; Lord, 2020).

The war conflict is among the determinants of business crises in the external environment in the international-political environment. The war conflict affected the economy to a great extent. Most often, companies had to deal with a drop in demand for their products and services, followed by problems in logistics, interruption of supplier relations, suspension of new investment activities, interruption of already agreed contracts, and last but not least, problems with payment (Kilpatrick, 2022). Despite these facts, we must state that every crisis has brought something new to company management and created new trends in business management. Another key factor identified from previous research that impacts change management is strategic internal communication. Change initiatives that lack strategic internal communication will inevitably fail. In fact, through effective internal communication, change implementers are helping employees better understand what and why they are making changes (Yue et al., 2019). Previous research has shown that good internal communication is believed to reduce uncertainty associated with change and reduce employee resistance to change (Rahaman et al., 2020).

The positive impact is reflected in employees' welcoming attitudes to change, believing it will benefit them. Note that openness to change refers to an employee's behavioral intentions and psychological readiness for change, rather than actual behavioral support for change (Augustsson et al., 2017).

We are currently in a time when IT technologies are overwhelming the world. They directly affect our lives and their quality. Of course, this also affects the companies themselves, which are trying to automate their processes as much as possible or introduce digitization. Economic entities (enterprises) by European requirements are the main factor in the socio-economic development of both the region and the industry and the national economy as a whole, as they provide employment, production of consumer goods, development of knowledge and skills of society (Synetska et al., 2022). All this needs to be managed responsibly and using these technologies to create value for the company. Managers currently play a significant role in companies in the introduction and management of IT (Křištofik & Šlampiaková, 2019). Work intensification and increased managerial control dominate the findings of existing research on technologies at work. Research on the labor process has tended

to focus on those in “traditional” workplaces outside of the home (Hodder, 2020).

Changes in the organization/society can be influenced by external factors (which can be less controlled by managers, such as technological changes, increasing complexity of life that creates complex communication systems, and social changes) (Li et al., 2019). The internal factors through which changes in the organization act are represented by the processes of decision-making, communication, interpersonal relations, leadership, management style, etc. In addition to the factors mentioned, there are several factors that, by their very nature, cause change (Kratcoski, 2023). Driving change requires a systematic series of tests accompanied by constant feedback. The manager must be aware of the problematic situation of the change to act in this direction (Holbeche, 2019). This requires a step of diagnosing the problems and the causes that create the problem, as well as the effects that these conditions have or can have on each type of problem. Understanding the nature of the causes that produced the positive and negative symptoms is vital at this stage. Also, the manager and his team will create the necessary resources involved in these ways of acting and implementing the changes. Fundamental changes in the organization simply do not happen. Change involves the development of a truly complex process in which forces that push for change and forces that oppose it are confronted (De Mast et al., 2021). This process includes several stages: awareness of the need for change and growing interest in initiating change among the managers of the organization, diagnosis of the situation from the information collected and analyzed by the actual change, implementation of the selected version with all appropriate measures and fostering new values that support behavioral change.

To facilitate transitions and change, managers must first be able to identify the exact reason for the resistance. This resistance to change is common to all organizations. Here are some common reasons: People usually find it convenient to keep doing something the way they've always done it. It is difficult to teach them something new (Lawrence, 2023). Changes always bring about alterations in a person's duties, powers, and influence. Therefore,

people adversely affected by such changes will always resist. People who stick to their habits instead of taking risks and doing new things will always resist change. This can happen due to insecurity or lack of creativity and will (Creasey, 2022).

Although change is almost always met with resistance, it is certainly possible to overcome it. Managers should try to help their employees adapt to changes and facilitate new variations in their operations. First, managers must be able to convince employees that the changes they propose are necessary (Lawrence, 2023). They need to show how employees and the organization will benefit from these changes. Second, management can keep the following considerations in mind for the smooth implementation of changes: Changes do not have to happen all at once because it is easier to implement them gradually (Lawton & Pratt, 2022). Managers must consider the perspective of all employees who will be affected by the proposed change. If managers project leadership by first adapting themselves to change, employees are less likely to resist, and adequate pre-training of employees can help them embrace change with confidence (Sirkin, 2023).

It is always a good idea to encourage employee participation when managers are planning changes. Since the changes are intended for employees, they must have a say in the planning process. Such participation will reduce the likelihood that they will resist the implementation of changes (Lawton & Pratt, 2022).

2. Material and methodology

The article aims to point out the impact of crises on current trends and directions in company management, evaluate work from home and point out its advantages and disadvantages in the Slovak republic and selected EU countries. In the conducted pilot survey, which was carried out in the months of March–August 2022 in 213 companies. The surveyed companies operate in the field of finance, insurance, and accounting (26%), trade (21.5%), logistics (5%), construction (13%), information technology (6.1%), education (9.4%) and state administration (19%; Figure 1). A pilot survey with a questionnaire is only appropriate for some research questions.

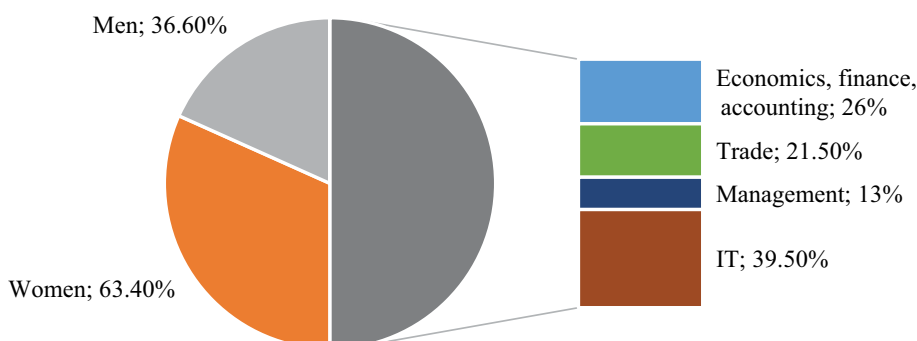


Figure 1. Structure of the respondents

The types of information required to answer a research question and the individuals from whom the researcher wishes to elicit information determine its suitability. Based on the above, we chose a questionnaire as the main research method to fulfill the main goal. The aim of the questionnaire survey was to find out the state of home office use in the Slovak Republic, and employee satisfaction with this type of work. The questionnaire was divided into two main parts. The first part contains general questions concerning the employee. The second part contains questions related to the use of home office in the company where the respondent works, satisfaction with working from home, advantages and disadvantages of home office and other basic information aimed at finding out the status of home office use in the Slovak Republic. The data were collected online. In total 246 employees and 213 companies participated in the survey. A total of 156 women participated, i.e. 63.4%, and 90 men, i.e. 36.6%. Most respondents belong to the age category of 41 to 60 years, exactly 110 respondents, which represents 44.7%. More than half of the respondents, namely 148, i.e. 60.2%, have higher education related to a master's degree.

3. Results of the research

3.1. Current trends in business management

New global configurations bring various modifications to work, routines, and information management procedures. Current trends in business management include home office, 4-day work week, ESG, project management, outsourcing, and use of artificial intelligence and new technologies. With the advent of crises and the development of digital transformation, the human resources industry has undergone a significant change. The use of artificial intelligence is the biggest trend in recent years, not only in HR but in almost all areas. The topic of the home office has become an important global issue for companies in recent years. Companies introduce it for several reasons, e. g. lack of office space, the performance of the work task did not require integration at the workplace, mothers after maternity leave, etc. The coronavirus pandemic and government measures to prevent the virus from spreading have affected society in many ways. One of the most observable "results" is the marked expansion of remote work, most often working from home. Due to the circumstances, both employers and employees were forced to quickly adapt to the new situation. Most of them had almost no experience with this form of work, where the software is used. A study from the United Kingdom dealt with inequalities in the impact of the pandemic on the labor market. In it, the authors present the difference in the impact of the lockdown across different groups of workers. The same study was conducted on the American labor market. Their results are similar. Approximately 10% of people under the age of 30 reported job loss after the first two weeks of the lockdown (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020). Most workers

who started working from home were among employees with a higher income. Specifically, up to 72% of workers with an income of more than £40,000 in England and 66% of workers with an income of more than \$50,000 in America. Among other things, all employees experienced a decrease in the average time worked. A quantitative study describing the impact of the corona crisis on employment and hours worked by small businesses in the four most affected service sectors in America recorded up to a 60% drop in employment in the first months of the pandemic, half of which was caused by the complete closure of the business. At the time when the CARES Act was adopted in the United States of America, 60% of businesses had already laid off at least one employee (Kurmman et al., 2020).

3.2. Development of home office in the world

In Table 1, we can see selected countries in which people work from home from 2017 to 2021. This is a percentage of the share of employed persons who work from home, aged 15 to 64, in total employment. From the table, we can conclude that in 2021, most people worked from home in Ireland (32%). If we were to compare this value with the year 2017 or 2018, i.e. with the years before the pandemic, we can claim that the biggest reason for the introduction of working from home in Ireland was the Covid-19 pandemic, because in 2017 the share of working from home in total employment was 5% and in the following increased to 6.5%. Which is 25.5% less than in 2021. Luxembourg, Sweden, Belgium, and Finland are among the other countries that used the home office the most in 2021. Compared to Ireland, the proportion of people working from home in Luxembourg was higher between 2017 and 2019. So we can say that more people were already working from home here before the pandemic. In the selected period, the value of this share was in the range of 11% to 28.1%. The highest value was in 2021, on the contrary, the lowest was in 2018. During the pandemic in 2021, this value increased from 11.6% in 2020 to 23.1%. In Sweden, the value of the share of workers from home ranged from 5% to 27%. The highest value was in 2021. This was a significant increase compared to previous years. Most people worked from home in 2020 when the pandemic began. In the following year, this share decreased to 24.8%. The fewest people worked from home in 2017, i.e. 12.3%. On the contrary, in Romania or Bulgaria, the home office is the rarest. In these countries, the values of working from home range from 0.4 to 2.5%. Which is a significantly low value compared to other countries. As for the European Union, in it, most people worked from home in 2021, namely 13.4%. On the contrary, at least in 2017. We can observe a smaller increase in 2020. This share increased from 5.4% to 12%.

In Figure 2, we can see the selected countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the countries with the largest value of the share of workers from home in total employment in the years 2017 to 2021. The values of the

Table 1. Share of employed persons working from home aged 15 to 64 in total employment in % (source: own processing based on Eurostat, 2022)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Romania	0.4	0.4	0.8	2.5	2.4
Bulgaria	0.3	0.3	0.5	1,2	2.8
Hungary	2.5	2,3	1,2	3.6	4.5
Croatia	1.4	1.4	1.9	3.1	4.6
Serbia	3.1	3.3	4.9	7.2	5.0
Slovakia	3.5	3.6	3.7	5,7	6.6
Greece	2,3	2.0	1.9	7.0	6,7
Cyprus	1,2	1,2	1.3	4.5	6,7
Poland	4.5	4.6	4.6	8,9	6.9
Czechia	3.9	4.0	4.6	7.2	7.2
Italy	3.5	3.6	3.6	12.2	8.3
Lithuania	2.6	2.5	2.4	5.4	9.1
Spain	4.3	4.3	4.8	10.9	9.5
Slovenia	7.2	6.9	6.8	7.4	10.6
Latvia	2.1	2.9	3.0	4.5	11.0
EU – 27 countries (from 2020)	5.1	5.2	5.4	12.0	13.4
Portugal	5.9	6.1	6.5	13.9	14.5
Estonia	5,7	7.4	6.6	12.2	14.9
Malta	4.4	5.8	6.1	14.8	14.9
Austria	9.5	10.0	9.9	18.1	15.9
Switzerland	4.0	4.1	3.9	4.9	16.0
Norway	5.1	5.5	5.0	4.7	16.4
Germany	4.8	5.0	5.2	13.6	17.0
France	6,7	6.6	7.0	15.7	17.0
Denmark	8.8	7,8	7,8	17.0	18.1
Netherlands	13.7	14.0	14.1	17.8	22.5
Finland and	12.3	13.3	14.1	25.1	24.8
Belgium	6.9	6.6	6.9	17.2	26.2
Sweden	5.0	5.3	5.9	:	27.0
Luxembourg	12.7	11.0	11.6	23.1	28.1
Ireland	5.0	6.5	7.0	21.5	32.0

share of workers from home ranged from 3.5 to 6.6 Compared to 2019, in 2020, this share increased by 2%. Also, few people work from home in Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. In Hungary, the fewest people work from home compared to other countries. Compared to the countries with the highest share of working from home, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe do not significantly prefer working from home. However, it was a good means of stopping the spread of the Covid-19 disease.

3.3. Advantages and disadvantages of working from home

Working from home can be an attractive career move. It removes most of the traditional aspects of going to work, such as commuting and dressing in business attire while reducing social interaction and standard means of accountability. Depending on the preferred work style and cultural priorities, this can be beneficial or harmful for people. Some studies show that working from home is more productive and leads to less turnover, and stress, and ensures almost zero percent absenteeism. There is a balance between work and everyday life. Less travel leads to increased fuel economy and reduced air pollution.

The following table lists the advantages and disadvantages of working from home from the perspective of the employee and the employer.

Remote work often requires the use of technology applications such as platforms for online meetings, communication, and team collaboration. Everyone can acquire technical skills that they do not normally use in the physical workplace and. Working from home also requires consistent communication between teams and managers, which likely requires more emails, phone calls, video calls, and chats on messaging platforms. Regular use of communication tools can improve skills (Herrity, 2023). Based on a survey carried out in 213 companies operating in the Slovak Republic, it can be seen that employees also value the ability to concentrate on work, reduce stress, time and fuel for traveling to work, time spent with family, and health

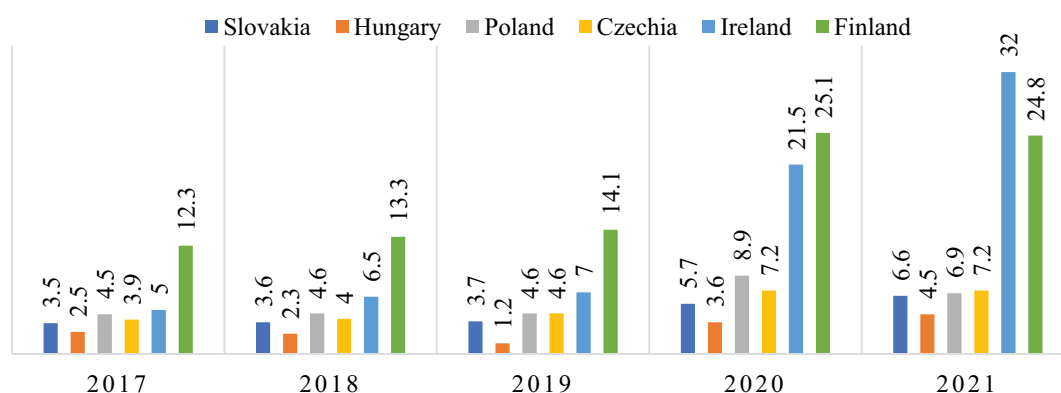


Figure 2. Share of employed persons working from home in total employment in %

when working from home (Figure 3). Working from home also requires consistent communication between teams and managers, which likely requires more emails, phone calls, video calls, and chats on messaging platforms. In Figure 4, we can see the disadvantages of working from home during the pandemic. According to the survey, insufficient technical equipment (16%), followed by social isolation (15%) and technical problems (12%) are considered to be the biggest disadvantage. Another disadvantage with a high percentage representation is the imbalance between personal and work life, which reaches 11%.

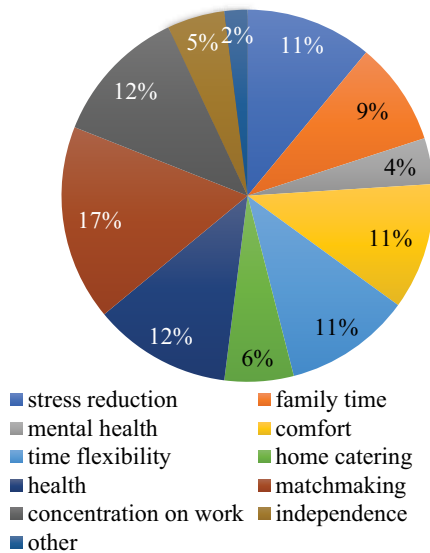


Figure 3. Advantages of working from home office

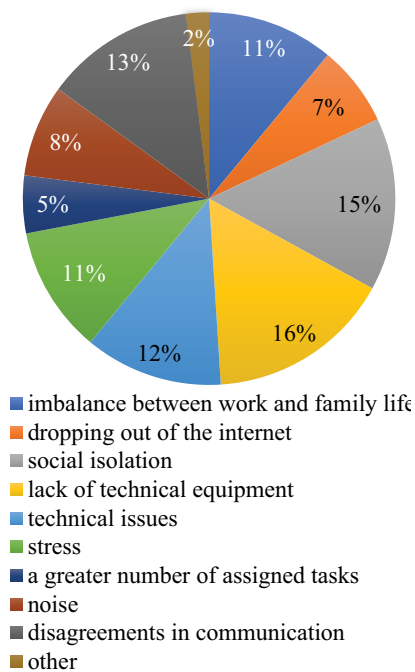


Figure 4. Disadvantages of working from home office

Table 2. Overview of the advantages and disadvantages of working from home from the perspective of the employee and the employer (source: own elaboration)

	Employee	Employer
Advantages	Growth of labor productivity	Zero employee absenteeism
	Stress reduction, time flexibility	Savings in overhead costs
	Work-life balance	E-Leadership
	Saving time and fuel	Work monitoring through IT
Disadvantages	Work organization and strict self-control	Limited control of employees
	Inability to separate work and private life	Organizational complexity
	Lack of personal contacts	Insufficient legislation (OSH)
		Costs of performance of work

Conclusions

Working from home can be much more productive than working in an office, and more enjoyable at the same time. Still, some people struggle to get work done, focus, and meet deadlines. There have been several studies on the effectiveness of working from home, suggesting that productivity, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction improve when working from home compared to working from an office. In a survey conducted by us in 2022 among company employees, we concluded that working from home reduces social interaction and causes an imbalance between work and family life but on the other hand, a traditional aspect of going to work like commuting and dressing in business attire was eliminated. Working from home is always beneficial or harmful for people. There is nothing in between. Stress reduction. Finding a space in a home where one can focus on work with relatively few or no distractions may be challenging but the time flexibility provided in the working hours allows them to work when they are most productive. Both benefits and problems of social isolation may leave the employees left out of their work due to communication, information sharing, and decision-making. Sometimes face-to-face with your co-worker is everything that can develop a more meaningful solution and better results. Technology as well as high-speed internet in this digital-age technology is the backbone of remote workers. Many employees struggle with the home office setup and technology arrangements. Mental health when working from home is also very important, respondents have difficulty finishing work and devoting themselves to other household activities or hobbies.

From both the employee's and the employer's perspectives, the home office is perceived positively for several reasons: productivity improves significantly when

working from home, at the same time, life satisfaction increases and employees appreciate the savings in commuting to work. The productivity of the organization is intrinsically connected with the combination of technologies, processes, and trained people, and therefore it is closely related to the performance of its employees, which has as the main factor the ability to achieve an increase in the quantity and quality of income from their tasks. A productive organization provides its employees with engagement, development, and respect so that they can be productive in any aspect of their lives. Peak productivity is approximately 40 hours per week. If an employee works more hours, he spends more time at his desk or computer but does less. Productivity is not tied to a specific time or place. We are unique and work better under different circumstances. The joy of working from home is that everyone can set the conditions that suit them best. If an employee wants to maximize their productivity, they need to know what their priorities are and focus on working on them.

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