



www.theengine.biz | admin@theengine.biz | (09) 869-3990

Why work from home is a fad doomed to failure

My first day of work in the home office, I dressed for the part – work pants, shirt, shoes. I was starting my own business, and I kicked off that first day promptly at 8 am too. I just didn't count on the lawnmowers ruining the mood: giant atmosphere killers, those lawnmower blokes.

Then there's the dog next door that barks all day when the neighbours are at work and the fact that I had to park a heater virtually under my feet to stay warm. Working from home wasn't going to be as romantic as I imagined.

Just wait for school holidays and the battle to remind the family that, "No, dad's not home – he's working". Yeah right. Then, when the school holidays are over, the loneliness sets in unless the cat is enough company for you. For me, it's just a little too much solitude (and I'm a writer).

Finally, at risk of belabouring the point, there's the temptation to work when you should be at home. Thoughts like 'I'll just nip down for five minutes and finish that last task...' On a Sunday. There were days too when summoning the energy to work seemed like mission impossible.

For those people who were recently made redundant (or unemployed for other reasons), the idea of starting a work from home is exciting. It may also be necessary at the beginning for financial reasons. However, if you aim to go on and achieve focus, productivity and ultimately growth – make the 'work from home' aspiration a short-lived thing.

While many Kiwis are smitten with the idea of working from home since the Covid-19 lockdowns of 2020 – and it possibly is easier if you aren't running your own business – don't expect it to last. Already some corporates are ending the experiment and recalling employees back to the office. And for good reason.

One of the explanations given by big companies is that the 'work from home' experiment makes the business less innovative. You do, it seems, need many hands to make light work. Being around other people stimulates our thinking, generates ideas, motivates us to strive harder and encourages us to remain focussed longer.

This is particularly true for the self-employed or a small business owner with only a handful of staff. It turns out there's something called 'social facilitation' in which the presence of other people engaged in a similar task can boost motivation.

Social facilitation refers to the findings that people sometimes show an increased level of effort due to the presence of others (Simply Psychology).

Research by Floyd Allport (one of the founders of social psychology) demonstrated that the energy of other people acts as a substitute team even when those people are not engaged with your business (it's the reason why some people find working in a café so productive).

Ultimately, I moved to a shared office space at The Crate. The sense of community is great, but the 'spirit' of productivity, energy and enthusiasm you get from being around other working people are tremendous. Being mostly business owners or self-employed, the cynics are few and far between, and that's a positive – even for the employees of businesses located in the shared working space.

No lawnmowers and no dogs barking. Air-conditioning, hot barista coffee, the buzz... it goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway – we need people, and they need us.

If you would like to know more please contact [Andy Prentice](#)

Resource supplied by The Engine's provider:

