

Career killer home office?

That was the headline of an article in the Neue Zürcher Zeitung in December 2025 — with an exclamation mark, not a question mark. During the pandemic, many experienced just how well working from home can function — and that they are often more productive at home than in the office. Some even concluded that the place of work no longer matters. But is that really the whole truth?

Peter Näf

Doubts about this unreservedly positive view have existed for quite some time - particularly from an organisational perspective. Whether justified or not: some fear that employees work less at home; others miss the element of control. In addition, the question arises as to how a corporate culture can develop when people hardly ever meet in person.

After the end of the pandemic, many organisations hesitated to restrict freedom of choice around home office arrangements, fearing resignations. Since the labour market has shifted back in favour of employers, however, many are now ordering their employees back into the office.

Some even demand one hundred per cent presence. The pendulum has thus swung to the other extreme - almost as if working from home had nothing but disadvantages.

It's about visibility

From the employees' point of view, the focus for a long time was primarily on the benefits: higher productivity, a better work-life balance, no commuting and therefore more free time.

For some time now, however, I have been observing signs of fatigue among my coachees in connection with online coaching. For personal

conversations, they are once again quite happy to accept a longer journey — a first signal. But what does work from home mean for one's career in the long term?

When I work with coachees on self-marketing, the aim is to make their own performance visible to internal and external stakeholders through good storytelling - a challenge even without home office. As I described in my article "Why success does not speak for itself", even strong performance is often insufficiently noticed. Yet many assume it will be seen automatically.

In the context of remote work, a double invisibility emerges - professionally and physically. That this can be problematic for a career is also confirmed by research.

Out of sight, out of mind

Nicholas Bloom, Professor at Stanford University, concluded that a share of home office exceeding 40 per cent in a full-time role reduces the chances of promotion - due to a lack of visibility. Management professor Florian Kunze, head of the Konstanz Home Office Study for the German-speaking region, even advises people with high career ambitions to be present in the office four to five days per week.

Therefore, make sure in all cases to remain visible - both through physical presence and through deliberate storytelling. Seen in this light, the author of the newspaper article was probably right to choose an exclamation mark rather than a question mark in the title.

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