

THE PERCEPTION AND ACCEPTANCE OF HOME OFFICE IN
THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Employees are seen as a company's greatest assets. Human Resource Professionals focus on selecting, recruiting and hiring the top talents in order to ensure the best personal fit and highest performance. In today's highly globalized and dynamic environment not just the talent requirements matter. Often also the company profile and facilities have a significant impact on the employees' satisfaction and productivity. In this regard, employees have developed a greater interest in working in more green, flexible and innovative environments (Bollier 2011). *Flexibility and innovation* in particular are driven by the ongoing development of the internet and other new technologies such as mobile devices and virtual environments. As a result employees are no longer bound to the employer's office facilities to complete their work. *Nationwide Internet access* and the use of mobile devices such as laptops, smartphones and tablets allow employees to execute their daily work duties from any location, including their own home. Social-media and teleconferencing create new ways of communication and change the way employees complete daily tasks on a personal or professional level. In particular *Information Technology (IT)* companies have recognized this potential and introduced new technologies to allow *more flexibility in completing work from any place*. Hence, *IT-companies have departed from centralized hierarchies and strict control management systems to more dynamic working environments (Brocklehurst, 2011)*. The question is how the concept of *home office* is perceived in the IT-Industry and if there are any differences in the perception and acceptance among employee, their supervisors and HR decision makers. In this regard, the dissertation aims at analysing the perception and acceptance of the home office in the IT-Industry. In a first step it is important to understand the terminology and general characteristics of the home office and related concepts such as teleworking, telecommuting and remote work. The dissertation will focus on the concept of home office, but use other terms interchangeably. This dissertation is an exploratory study, with a qualitative methodology, using the technique of interviews. Action focused on designing, evaluating and coding interviews. To gain a wider perspective three different interview scripts have been designed. The goal is to obtain information from a director/management level point of view, to understand the perspective of the HR Department and last collect the insight and view of the employees. For this purpose a sample of twenty-four individuals with different titles and positions working in the IT Industry have been chosen and agreed to conduct the interviews.

Resumo

Os colaboradores são frequentemente vistos como o maior ativo de uma empresa. Desse modo, os profissionais de Recursos Humanos concentram-se em selecionar, recrutar e contratar os melhores talentos, a fim de garantir o melhor enquadramento pessoal e o melhor desempenho. No atual ambiente altamente globalizado e dinâmico, não importam apenas os requisitos de talento. Geralmente, o perfil da empresa e as instalações têm também um impacto significativo sobre a satisfação e produtividade dos colaboradores. Neste sentido, os funcionários apresentam um maior interesse em trabalhar em ambientes mais verdes, flexíveis e inovadores (Bollier de 2011). *Flexibilidade e inovação*, em particular, são impulsionados pelo desenvolvimento contínuo da Internet e outras novas tecnologias, como dispositivos móveis e ambientes virtuais. De tal forma que os colaboradores não necessitam de permanecer nas instalações do escritório do empregador para realizar o seu trabalho. O *acesso à Internet em todo o país* e o uso de dispositivos móveis, como laptops, smartphones e tablets permitem que os colaboradores executem suas tarefas diárias de trabalho de qualquer local, inclusive a sua própria casa. A rede social e a teleconferência criaram novas formas de comunicação e mudaram a forma como os colaboradores realizam as suas tarefas pessoais e profissionais diárias. As *empresas de Tecnologia da Informação (TI)*, particularmente, têm reconhecido esse potencial e, conseqüentemente, introduzem novas tecnologias para permitir que os seus colaboradores desfrutem de maior flexibilidade para realizar os seus trabalhos de qualquer lugar. Assim, as empresas de TI afastam-se das hierarquias centralizadas e sistemas rigorosos de gestão e controlo e aproximam-se de ambientes de trabalho mais dinâmicos (Brocklehurst, 2011). No entanto, a questão é como é que os colaboradores da indústria de TI lidam com o conceito de *home office* e se existe alguma diferença na percepção e aceitação entre os colaboradores, supervisores e decisores de RH. Neste contexto, esta dissertação tem como objetivo analisar a percepção e a aceitação do conceito de home office na indústria de TI. Numa primeira etapa, é importante compreender as características terminológicas e gerais do home office e conceitos relacionados, como o teletrabalho e o trabalho remoto. No entanto, a dissertação foca-se no conceito de home office, mas usa também outros termos intercambiáveis. Esta dissertação é um estudo exploratório, com metodologia qualitativa, por meio da condução de entrevistas. Isso significa que a ação se concentra na concepção, avaliação e codificação de entrevistas. Para ganhar uma perspectiva mais ampla três diferentes guíões de entrevista foram concebidos. O objetivo é obter informações a partir

de um ponto de vista de um nível diretor/gestor, para compreender o ponto de vista do departamento de RH e, por último dar também aos colaboradores uma voz para expressar seus pensamentos acerca do home office. Para este efeito, uma amostra de vinte e quatro indivíduos com diferentes títulos e posições de trabalho na indústria de TI foi selecionada e concordou em participar nas entrevistas.

Executive Summary - Sumário

O objetivo geral da pesquisa é apresentar a percepção e a aceitação do emprego de home office na indústria de Tecnologia da Informação, tendo como referência o ponto de vista de colaboradores, profissionais de RH e diretores. A fim de atingir este objetivo chave de pesquisa, uma série de sub-objetivos foram definidos da seguinte maneira:

1. Revisão de literatura existente e coleta de informações
2. Identificação dos principais paradoxos acerca do emprego de home office
3. Determinação das principais vantagens e desvantagem do home office
4. Apresentação das principais conclusões acerca da percepção e aceitação do emprego de home office

A finalidade geral deste estudo é investigar a percepção e aceitação do emprego de home office entre os profissionais da indústria de TI. O guião de entrevista é conduzido com base em questões que objetivam a resposta das duas mais importantes questões:

1. De que forma o home office é visto?
2. O home office é aceite como um modelo de trabalho opcional?

A Corporação de TI escolhida para esta dissertação é líder mundial em software de banco de dados por mais de três décadas e meia. A Corporação tem desenvolvido tecnologias e adquirido empresas best-in-class ao longo dos anos. Consequentemente, a liderança tem-se expandido para toda a gama tecnológica, por meio de servidores e armazenamento, banco de dados e middleware, através de aplicações e computação cloud. A empresa também oferece aos clientes um sistema integrado conjunto, hardware e software projetados para trabalhar em conjunto na resolução de problemas de negócios. Esta empresa multinacional americana foi criada em 1977 e desde então experimenta um

crescimento contínuo. Com sede na Califórnia, eles operam globalmente, tendo mais de 145 escritórios em vários países ao redor do mundo. (Informações retiradas do site oficial da empresa). O nome da empresa permanecerá confidencial a pedido da própria. Ao longo do semestre de intercâmbio na Universidade de Genebra, a partir de setembro de 2013 até fevereiro 2014, decidi basear minha pesquisa no mercado suíço. A Companhia possui dois grandes escritórios na Suíça: um escritório está localizado em Baden, que fica na parte de língua alemã, o segundo é em Genebra, na região de língua francesa.

As entrevistas foram realizadas nas instalações de ambos os escritórios em Baden e em Genebra. A empresa selecionada é caracterizada por atuar principalmente nas grandes áreas metropolitanas, e por uma tecnologia baseada numa cultura de vida e trabalho progressiva. A empresa possui políticas e regulamentos de home office em seu local de atuação. O gigante de TI oferece aos colaboradores a possibilidade de escolher entre três categorias de home office. Cada funcionário possui um laptop da empresa e um telemóvel (chamadas e cobertura de internet). Os funcionários que comunicam numa base regular (mais de 50%) recebem o valor dos custos das linhas básicas de equipamentos de voz, conexão de dados de banda larga e as despesas mensais de equipamentos e objetos de home office e adicionais despesas relacionadas. Os escritórios são modernos, abertos e integrados, sem mesas atribuídas. Além disso, quartos tranquilos estão disponíveis para aqueles que preferem trabalhar num espaço fechado e tranquilo. Salas de reuniões e de conferências estão disponíveis e são utilizadas regularmente. Tecnologias de informação e telecomunicações são amplamente acessíveis e garantem contínuo trabalho e fluxo de comunicação.

Esta tese de mestrado é um estudo exploratório, com metodologia qualitativa, utilizando o método de entrevistas. No total, vinte e quatro entrevistas foram conduzidas em inglês, focadas nos colaboradores que realizam home-office de uma indústria dinâmica de TI na Suíça. Três guiões foram concebidos de modo a atingir diferentes perfis de entrevistados. O guião para o representante de Recursos Humanos contém 29 perguntas com foco no desempenho, processos de entrevista de RH, desenvolvimento de carreira e avaliação dos teletrabalhadores. O Diretor respondeu a 18 questões relacionadas com a estratégia de home-office da empresa, o apoio e custos relacionados e o desempenho dos colaboradores. O maior grupo de todo o processo de entrevistados é de vinte colaboradores que trabalham em casa, os quais foram questionados em um total de 22 perguntas com o objetivo de avaliar as vantagens e desvantagens relacionadas com o seu estilo de trabalho específico, e

descrever sua percepção e aceitação acerca do home office. Todos os participantes desta pesquisa trabalham a tempo integral pela empresa. O contrato regular não destaca e incentiva home office, mas existe a possibilidade de realizar home office. A Companhia fornece "Regulamento para Home Office Work", o qual explica as categorias do home office, como se inscrever, o processo de aprovação e regras adicionais.

Para identificar as experiências subjetivas individuais dos teletrabalhadores, os dados foram gravados e as entrevistas presenciais foram semi-estruturadas durando entre 20-40 minutos. O principal ponto de contato, o diretor da Campanha, interagiu com os colaboradores de home office e enviou os convites por e-mail para que estes participassem. O autor recebeu os detalhes de contato das pessoas que concordaram em participar das entrevistas, de forma a ser possível marcar reuniões por meio do contato via e-mail. As entrevistas foram realizadas nos escritórios da empresa em Genebra e Baden. A entrevista mais curta durou 15 minutos e a mais longa durou 1 hora 33 minutos. Todos os participantes foram informados e assegurados, antes da entrevista começar, que o nome da empresa e seus nomes não seria revelados. Uma breve introdução ao tema, as finalidades e os procedimentos desta dissertação foram também fornecidos no início de cada entrevista. As reuniões foram realizadas numa atmosfera muito amigável, com a possibilidade de comentários, troca de opiniões e diálogo.

Table of Content

Abstract	III
Resumo	IV
Executive Summary - Sumário	V
Table of Content	VIII
List of Figures	X
List of Tables	X
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Research Purpose	2
1.3 Overview and Relevance of Existing Literature	3
1.4 Research Objectives	4
1.5 Scope of the Study	5
1.6 Structure of the Dissertation	6
2 Literature Review	7
2.1 Key Characteristics of Home Office	7
2.1.1 Terminology and Definition of Teleworking	7
2.1.2 Facts and Figures about Home Office	10
2.1.3 The Profile of Teleworkers and the Role of Management.....	10
2.1.4 The Importance of Trust.....	12
2.1.5 Advantages and Disadvantages of Home Office	13
2.1.6 Interdependencies of Home Office and HR-Practices	17
2.2 Paradox of Perception Theory Framework.....	18
2.3 Characteristics of the Information Technology Industry.....	21
2.4 Conclusion of the Literature Review	22
3 Research Methodology	23
3.1 The Environment and Organization	25
3.2 Research Sample	26
3.3 Procedures.....	29
4 Home office in Practice: Findings and Evaluation	31
4.1 The Perception of the Home Office	31
4.2 The Acceptance of the Home Office.....	37
4.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Home Office.....	39
4.4 Productivity and Performance Management	43
4.5 Home Office and its Impacts on Work-Life Balance.....	47
4.6 The Future of Home Office	48
4.7 Home Office from a Human Resource Management Perspective	49
4.7.1 Importance of Home Office for Recruitment	49
4.7.2 Recruitment Processes and Practices	50
4.7.3 The Impact of Home Office on Employee Retention	51
4.8 Conclusion	52

5	Conclusion	53
5.1	Summary.....	53
5.2	Critical Reflection, Limitations and Suggestion for future Research	58
6	Bibliography	59
	Appendix	64
	Appendix A – Interview Scripts.....	65
	<i>Interview Template for Directors</i>	65
	<i>Interview Template for Human Resource Professionals</i>	66
	<i>Interview Template for Employees</i>	68
	Appendix B – Interview Answers	69
	<i>Directors</i>	69
	<i>Human Resource Professionals</i>	75
	<i>Employees</i>	86

List of Figures

<i>Fig: 1: Key research objectives and sub-objectives</i>	4
<i>Fig: 2: Structure of the Dissertation</i>	6
<i>Fig: 3: Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) five steps process to support the analysis of text or narrative data.</i>	24
<i>Fig: 4: Advantages of the Home Office</i>	39
<i>Fig: 5: Disadvantages of the Home Office</i>	42

List of Tables

<i>Tab. 1.: Advantages and Challenges for Organizations and Employees (Madsen 2001)</i> ..	16
<i>Tab. 2: List of interviewees with additional data</i>	28

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The developed world has been shifting from industrial-based national economies to an information-based global economy. In today's era of broad internet access, millions of people use electronic tools and devices to perform their job outside the traditional office. Some employees work from wherever it makes sense without any specific location. Others telecommute primarily from home. All these changes facilitate a revolutionary transformation in the nature of work(Hill, Ferris, Martinson 2003).

Dwayne Spradlin, the President and CEO of InnoCentive, a global leader in crowdsourcing innovation problems, has also noticed various changes in the work style and place with predictable consequences. In his opinion, the workplace of the 21st century may not even be a workplace (Bollier 2011). The uncertainty over the job requirement in the future is not the only dilemma. There has been a lot of confusion about the work venue as well. Terms such as telework, telecommuting, home office, remote work and virtual office describe different options concerning the work venue. Therefore it is important to have a clear understanding and terminology of the above stated concepts. It will be provided under the literature review in chapter 2.1.1. This dissertation will primarily focus on home premises telecommuting, described as home office.

New technologies have evolved rapidly and play an important role in the execution of personal and work related duties. Such technologies enable remote communication through video-conferencing, chats functions, communication platforms and so on. Smartphones and laptops for example support a complete mobile Web experience (Bughin, Chui, Manyika 2007). The worldwide leader in networking, Cisco Systems, emphasizes the appreciation of human capital by organizations and the highly increasing role of collaboration through platforms. In their paper "*Transitioning in Workforce 2020*," they expressed that by 2020 building employee value and attaching greater value to each employee will become not just an organizational aspiration but an economic need. Getting back to the importance of collaboration, Cisco has launched an enterprise-wide platform called Integrated Workforce Experience (IWE). It is designed to change how the company works by integrating a broad range of communication, collaboration, knowledge management, search and personal tools to increase productivity (Cisco 2011).

There is a strong emphasis on the use of virtual communication technologies and less physical contact. On top, the home office is supported by the employee contract where the physical attendance on the employer's premises is not always required (Warner & Witzel 2004, p. 3-6). An example covering the regulations of the home office can be provided upon a request. Home office is a concept, which has emerged in the United States in 1970's. It gained popularity and remain stable growth over many years. World at Work 2011 Special Report indicates the total number of people in the US, who worked from home or remotely in 2008 account for 33.7 million. In Europe incomparably to the US, home office practices are relatively new. There is not much gathered data either. Based on published in 2010 findings from Welz & Wolf, the overall average proportion of employees involved in telework in 2000, was about 5.3% in the 'older' 15 EU Member States (EU15) and 4.2% in the candidate countries.

1.2 Research Purpose

More and more companies allow their employees to work from home, on the customer site or while travelling. Competitive advantage is achieved and sustained through possessing the best talents and retaining them. This is why competition on a market place made companies meet the requirements of employees (DiMartino 1990). Nowadays, for many employees the autonomy of work, flexibility and work-family balance can be achieved through the possibility of working from home. The main purpose of this dissertation is to research if there is a pattern on the subject based on information gathered through interviews with teleworkers in IT industry.

The main question is to assess the perception of the home office and analyse the degree of acceptance. Therefore two additional aims are to achieve. First, to present relevant definition of employees working out of the office accordingly to three main dimensions: frequency, place and tools. Second, it is crucial to identify existing paradoxes in the subject of home office, in order to understand why home office work mode is often described and perceived as incoherent.

1.3 Overview and Relevance of Existing Literature

The home office is a fairly new topic within modern, mostly international organizations. Mann and Holdsworth in their article (2003) called: “*The psychological impacts of teleworking: stress, emotions and health*” mentioned, that in the oil crisis of the 1970s in the United States, it has been noticed, that if 1 in 7 urban commuters dropped out, the US would have no need to import oil. It was appealing example and highlighted costs savings behind such thinking. According to Dimitrina Dimitrova and her (2003) article “*Controlling teleworkers: supervision and flexibility revisited*”, telework has been around since the 1970s, when computers made information work portable. In her opinion teleworkers or telecommuters are workers, which have become known for the use of computers, laptops and communication technology in order to do their work outside the traditional office. Dimitrova stated two sides of the mirror. The home office was promoted as a win-win situation, where happy employees are relieved from the watchful eyes of their managers and from the rigid office working hours. This should lead in to higher productivity. Furthermore, the home-office was promoted as a great idea for lowering office costs. On the other side the author pointed the other, less optimistic side of teleworking, which brings difficulties of managing remote employees and the possibility of losing the collaborative spirit in an organizational culture.

The Cisco’s report “Transition to Workforce 2020” reveals the future of business and labour direction. The Twenty First Century workforce is in the stage of transition. New technologies and ways of communication will affect operational infrastructures, the corporate culture as well as talent acquisition and retention. Our perception of what a job is and what it should be is adjusting to the existing dynamic environment and increasing work standards. “*Making the Network the Organization*” ranks number two in McKinsey’s Quarterly insights and publications from December 2007 about the *Top Ten-Enable Business Trends To Watch*”. McKinsey explains how building and managing flexible networks by companies speed up service delivery and improving quality. Clearly, for this multinational cooperation the pool of talent is not limited by any location. By using Web technologies to expand access to experts around the world, the company set up innovative communities where office premises are not required.

Another argument, which confirms the relevance and importance of home office in today reality is expressed by time crunch of employees or the 24/7 economy. More noticeably social movements to “take back our time” have emerged. Employees are demanding more

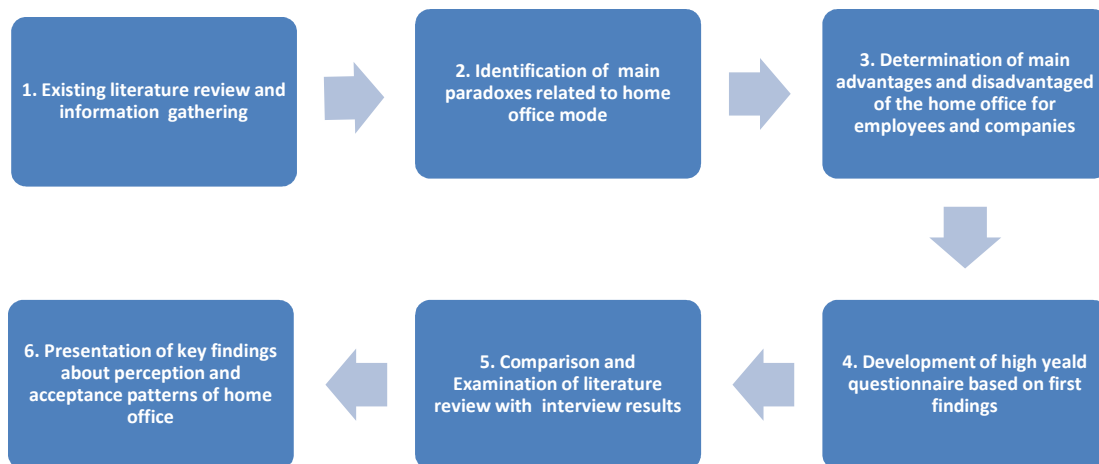
flexible working hours and ask to reduce the constant work pressure (Galinsky, Bond & Hill 2004). The scope of home office presented in Galinsky & Bond studies from 1998 is impressive. About half (55%) of US companies allow their employees to work from home occasionally where one third allow their employees to work at home or off-site on a regular basis.

1.4 Research Objectives

In order to ensure consistency and successful completion of this master thesis, the author has set clear objectives which will act as guidelines. The overall research objective is to present the *Perception and Acceptance of Home Office in the Information Technology Industry*, from employees, HR professionals and directors point of view.

In order to pursue this key research objective, a number of sub-objectives have been defined as follows:

Fig: 1: Key research objectives and sub-objectives



Source: Authors' own illustration.

For the purpose of this dissertation the above stated research sub-objectives are used as a general guideline throughout the entire thesis.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The general scope of this study is to investigate the perception and acceptance of home office among professionals in the IT Industry. Interviews with twenty-four participants with higher education, full time contracts and various nationalities were conducted in English. This study was conducted in the private sector of an international IT corporation in the German and French speaking part of Switzerland. The general complexity of this study lays in capturing the perspective and views of employees, HR people and directors.

The author has designed an interview scripts, which is almost the same for all three target groups. A slight modification has been made in the interview script for HR people and directors. The idea is to use different or additional questions to gain a deeper more completing understanding of topic from different perspectives. Hence, the interviews for HR professionals for example contain additional questions, with the idea to gain insight related to the strategic importance in HR processes and tasks related to home office. The interview script for directors was shorter and aims at relating the home office to the power of supervision.

The interview questionnaire is designed using a variety of questions that should yield to the answer of the two most important questions:

1. How is the home office perceived?
2. Is the home office accepted as an optional work model?

Additional questions provide for insight and a broader view on important topics such as profitability and productivity of teleworkers, work-life balance and the need for performance measurement.

1.6 Structure of the Dissertation

This master thesis is subdivided into five different chapters:

Fig: 2: *Structure of the Dissertation*



Source: Authors' own illustration.

The introduction gives the reader a general overview about the research. It highlights the relevance and importance of the topic and sets the purpose and objectives of this work. A detailed literature review is provided in Chapter 2. This chapter is designed to deliver a depth understanding of the theoretical background and the existing literature. It has four main areas: Key Characteristics of Home Office (Chapter 2.1.), Paradox of Perception the Theory Framework (Chapter 2.2.), Characteristics of the Information Technology Industry (Chapter 2.3.), and Conclusion of the Literature Review (Chapter 2.4.). After providing a detailed understanding of the relevant literature and the theoretical framework, Chapter 3 focuses on the applied research methodology, and its key characteristics. This chapter explains all the relevant details of the research method, the design, execution and analysis of the conducted interviews. Chapter 4 presents the findings and analysis of them. It is combined of seven main areas: The Perception of Home Office (Chapter 4.1.); The Acceptance of Home Office (Chapter 4.2.); Advantages and Disadvantages of the Home Office (Chapter 4.3.); Productivity and Performance Measures (Chapter 4.4.); Home Office and its Impact in Work-Life Balance (4.5); The Future of Home Office (4.6.); Home Office from a Human Resource Management Perspective (Chapter 4.7.) The last Chapter 5, summarizes and recaps the study subject of the research, relevant theory and findings. Critical reflection, limitations and suggestions for the future research are also presented.

2 Literature Review

The following chapters aims at providing a general overview about the home office based on existing literature. The goal is to familiarize the reader with the most important aspects of the topic, clarify the relevant terminology, and present key finding and other crucial information.

2.1 Key Characteristics of Home Office

2.1.1 Terminology and Definition of Teleworking

World at Work 2011 provides a definition of all teleworkers, which is: “*Employees or contractors working remotely at least one day per month during normal business hours. All teleworkers also include titles such as telecommuters, teleworkers, mobile workers, web commuters, e-workers and anyone who usually works in an office settings, but works remotely at least one day per month during normal business hours*”. The major issue may come from the fundamentals such as the definition of telework, which in Europe is not categorized as a legal category. This means that literature reports have to rely on functional definition only. Moreover, probably there never will be a separate legal category of teleworkers, as many different groups of workers use various tools to telecommute outside the traditional work place. The national literature defines telework, as a person working on a place, which is not the employer's premises with means of telecommunication (Huuhtanen, The Health and Safety Issue for Teleworkers in The European Union, Consolidated Report). Taskina and Bridoux (2010) telework refers to a professional activity, performed remotely from the location where the result of the work has to be delivered on either a full-time or part-time basis and that requires the use of Information and Communication Technology. This definition points out three main characteristics of telework:

1. Location(s)
2. Frequency
3. Regular need for the use of Information and Communication Technology

Location indicates that telework can be exclusively based in one location remote from the employer's main premises. It can include home, satellite offices, telecentrers orotecottages, client's premises, modes of transportation and other places of transit. It can also take place in a combination of locations. The second characteristic, the frequency of telework, can vary from less than 20% of the total working time defined as ‘occasional’ to

more than 90% called permanent. Different arrangements involve a frequency in between occasional and permanent telework, is termed alternate. Finally, telework always involves the use of ICTs. Golden, Veiga and Simsek (2006, p. 1340) described telecommuting as: “*a ubiquitous alternative work mode*”. They grasp rapid growth and advances in information technology and various communication tools as the main reason enhancing the popularity of home office. In their opinion the majority of teleworking people are professional-level employees, who perform part of their tasks roles outside of the company’s physical boundary using information technology as the main tool for operation and communication. Employees can also work in multiple satellite offices or other remote location away from home, telecommuters most commonly allocate their work time between an office and home.

In Haddon and Brynin (2005) we can read that nowadays highly skilled and well educated knowledge workers, which are very result driven and self-discipline radically. For Stanworth (1997), the general term of ‘teleworker’ refers to someone who works at a place other than where the results of work are needed using ICTs. Moreover, teleworkers are seen as employee with autonomy to organize their own time and location of work, enjoying high trust relationship and discretion to manipulate the hardware and software. In the article, she has mentioned Huw’s study (1990), which found out that teleworkers were often carefully selected by line managers as a reliable and trustworthy. These teleworkers were described as information age workers, because they are usually well-paid with relatively scarce skills, with high trust relationship and some degree of autonomy over their work preferences. Celia Stanworth mentioned in the article, that many employees combine home and office work, thereby ‘hot-desking’ is becoming more widespread in occupations where teleworkers are expected to visit clients, such as consultants, sales and technical managers. Madsen (2011), summarized the literature and variety of models and numerous theories. Some of them are related to the decision of telework consist of plan behavior, reasoned action, expected utility, expectancy, prospect, agency, institutional, critical mass, job characteristics, economic, and job decision theories. Accordingly to the article employees need theories contain motivation, human relations, career development, and career resilience. Additionally, telework communication and support theories included social exchange, social networking, interpersonal communication, and social interaction. Finally, theories related to work and family influences include spillover, segmentation, work adjustment, ecological, role conflict, role overload, and job strain theory. Many companies nowadays provide people the opportunity of completing their work away from

the office (Bailey & Kurland 2002, p. 384). Virtual offices fluid structures give worker more flexibility and let them work from home or any other desire location. Based on Child (2005, p. 198) three main criteria characterize virtual organization:

1. *lack of physical structure* which refers to the fact that virtual organizations often exist in different geographical areas and therefore don't need strong infrastructures in such. Employees connect via the internet with computer devices to setup virtually rather than being in a strict physical relation.
2. *mobile work-* fluid structure impact on virtual organizations and their employees by being more flexible when it comes to choosing a work venue. Virtually connected infrastructure does not emphasize the employee physical location.
3. *flexibility and responsiveness-* due to companies highly adjustable setup, virtual organizations can act and react in a much more flexible and highly responsive manner than traditional organizations. The hiring process is much faster as there is no need to provide and setup specific physical requirements.

For the purpose of this research, the author will follow the general description provided by the World at Work 2011 Special Report of all teleworkers: "*Employees or contractors working remotely at least one day per month during normal business hours. All teleworkers also include titles such as telecommuters, teleworkers, mobile workers, web commuters, e-workers and anyone who usually works in an office settings, but works remotely at least one day per month during normal business hours*".

In this dissertation the terminology of home office and telework are used to describe the employees working location, which is mainly home. Thereby it doesn't exclude such working places as satellite offices, customers offices, public transportation and so on. To describe people working outside of the office premises, mainly occasionally (less than 20% of the total working time), using Information and Communication Technology on a regular basis the author use interchangeably the following terminology: teleworkers, telecommuters or home workers.

2.1.2 *Facts and Figures about Home Office*

According to Grote and his paper from 2010 the desire to work more flexible is very high in Switzerland. He mentioned, that in the Swiss HR Barometer 2010, two thirds of the 1400 people surveyed expressed that they would like to be able to also work from home. Only 23% actually have this possibility. This means only a third of people can actually make use of working from home. However, based on Grote information it is already a rise, as in 2002 only 11% had this opportunity.

And how widespread is telework in Europe? It is a tough question because, definitions vary throughout Europe and no comparable national statistics on telework are yet available. Teleworking practices appear to be relatively new in Europe. The majority of countries have just started gathering statistics on telework. Therefore, the national data do not yet have a solid foundation. In 2000, the overall average proportion of employees involved in telework was about 5.3% in the 'older' 15 EU Member States (EU15) and 4.2% in the candidate countries. In 2005, the overall proportion had increased to 7% for the entire EU27. According to the findings of the *European Working Conditions Surveys* (EWCS) from 2005, which covers the 27 EU Member States (EU27) along with Norway – the highest percentage of employees involved in telework was observed in the Czech Republic, 15.2% of employees were doing telework for a quarter of the time or more. Bulgaria noted the lowest percentage, with only 1.6% of workers using telework. In terms of different sectors of the economy, higher use of telework can be found in real estate, financial intermediation and education, where around 15% of the workforce regularly engages in telework at least a quarter of their working time (Welz & Wolf 2010). World at Work 2011 Special Report indicates the total number of people in the United States, who worked from home or remotely for an entire day at least once a month has dropped by 7.5 million, from 33.7 million in 2008 to 26.2 million in 2010 (International Telework Association and Council 2014). The report explains the decline due to a combination of factors, such as fewer Americans in the workforce overall due to high unemployment, higher anxiety surrounding job security, and lack of awareness of telework option.

2.1.3 *The Profile of Teleworkers and the Role of Management*

Based on the World of Work Report from 2011, the 2010 employee survey provides a demographic profile of those who telework. It illustrates a man, around 40 years old, college graduate (almost half, including 25% with post-graduate degrees). They have autonomy to work when, how and where they work best in order to deal with families

issues. There is not such a gender bias, as flexibility offering are used equally by both men and women, as reported by a majority (65%) of surveyed employers. Home as a place for teleworkers maintain its position at the top of the list of common locations for teleworking in 2010. Madsen (2011) mentioned analogous demographic similarities of individuals who telework, which include married employees, women, parents with children at home, mothers of young children, well-educated employees, and managers or professionals. She suggested that only certain individuals which specific profiles are suited to telecommute. They have proposed characteristics observed as crucial to teleworkers success. It is commonly assumed and reported, that teleworkers should be self-starters, focused, motivated, self-reliant and organized. Moreover, she grasped more similarities among the majority of telecommuters such as relatively high job satisfaction, work autonomy, commitment to the organization and feelings support by the organization. Home office enhances employee autonomy by giving them greater control over their time management and work situation. This autonomy appears to be a key determinant for the quality of work. Following Thompson, Vivien, and Wai, (1999), satisfied teleworkers report “higher productivity, satisfaction with the organization’s performance appraisal system, technical and emotional support from management, lack of family interruptions and greater loyalty to the organizations” (p. 34). The possibility of teleworking gives individuals, who may not have been considered in the past such as disabled or parents of young children being candidates for job opening.

Research has also been conducted in areas related to organizational culture, teleworking adoption and telework management. Conner (1986) found that managerial attitude and top management is very important for successful adaptation of telework programme, However, style alone does not determine the success or failure of a telecommuting program. He reported that effectiveness, managers training and the level of experience directly contributed to the success of the programs. Successful managers seem to be experienced, well-educated, with high levels of personal achievement. For employees it is easier to be supervised by managers which share negative information on a regular basis, react to negative feedback constructively and to display a high degree of loyalty to subordinates.

As Dimitrina Dimitrova (2003) explained, that telework managers expect higher productivity and lower office costs and that employees are attracted by higher autonomy. She believes that a remote working environment without constant observation of supervisors and directors yields into higher democratic supervisory procedures such as management by results and supervisory retention based on trust, commitment and self-

control. On the other side the author observes the need for more systematic supervision. Managers increase telephone contacts and regular meetings, closely monitor deadlines and required progress reports. Some managers also resist allowing their employees to telework as they fear to lose control over their subordinates.

2.1.4 The Importance of Trust

Trust and the Virtual Organization. How do you manage people whom you do not see? Charles Handy, the author of this article, has noticed that already one half of the available workforce in the European Union is outside the organization, not in fulltime jobs. Even though a sense of place is as important to most of us as the sense of purpose, the office in the future will be more like a place for meeting, eating, and greeting, with rooms reserved for activities, not for particular people. Most meetings will have to be scheduled, even those on video and will become more infrequent. In Handy's opinion, such a virtual environment requires trust to make it work. Hence, technology on its own is not enough. Felstead, Jewson and Walters (2003) have published an article about Managerial Control of Employees Working at Home. One of their research interview questions was related to the issue of trust. In their studies trust was repeatedly emphasized by managers as a necessity and an unavoidable element of their supervision of home-located workers. This is explained by the absence of visibility, which managers had to adopt and cope with. Trust referred to a relationship of moral obligations from employees to deliver expected results and being productive without the need for monitoring and daily task checks. In the absence of visibility trusted workers are required to watch and discipline themselves. In practise they have noticed home-located work was permitted to those with high performance and certain personality characteristics. The selection process intended to eliminate those lacking personal attributes of self-discipline, self-motivation, reliability and diligence from working at home. From their research studies trust was more conceived in individualistic and psychological terms rather than an attribute of workplace relationships. Handy defines the following rules of trust.

Trust needs presence. It is natural that we do not trust people we do not know well. This is why it is crucial for managers to have the possibility of working together with their subordinates. It helps to observe their working style and personality before approving or denying teleworking.

Trust needs bonding to achieve the same goal. The goals of the smaller units have to be aligned with the goals of the whole company. Vision and mission statements attempt to deal with integration, but need to be constantly reminded, reinforced to keep them alive and present in every aspect of the company. They also need to be backed up by personal example and exhortation. Companies that allow teleworking must create a real learning culture in order to enable collaboration and should secure the same mission and vision well known for all employees on every hierarchical level. Moreover, the choice of people is crucial. This is why recruitment and placement become key along with the choice of group leaders. These topics will require the serious attention and collaboration between senior management and HR Professionals.

Trust requires leaders. Leaders which will be look upon and treated like a role model. The presence of such leaders provides a good example of trust-based organizations which can be highly beneficial for the overall situation of any company.

2.1.5 Advantages and Disadvantages of Home Office

After providing definitions, explaining and differentiating the most relevant term related to home office and providing insight into interesting facts and figures this chapter will focus on highlighting the most significant advantages and disadvantages captured by various publications. This chapter will focus in more details on pros and cons of the home office in order better understand the implications of the home office on employees.

Many employees who start working from home experience a better balance of home and work life. The balance is typically determined by the absence of stress or conflict (Madsen 2001). It might be a consequence of being less time away from home and use this time, which otherwise they will waste on travelling or being in the office rather than with their family or children (Mann & Holdsworth 2003). Another positive outcome linked to travelling is to reduce its costs. It eliminates money spend for a daily public or individual transportation. Ideally, employees working from home save both, personal time and costs associated with making the trip. In the general view, one of the most important pros is increased labor flexibility. Decision upon the task schedule, working hours and execution depends completely from the worker. Completing tasks on time is the main priority rather than the way it is executed (Lillie 2001). A comfortable work environment is another valuable advantage. Employees have the freedom to design and create their work place according to their wishes and desires. They can independently decide which equipment

they like to sustain best comfortability and personal taste. In most cases, formal dress code is not a requirement, which puts away the pressure of dressing accordingly to the office standards. Last but not least, various literature sources document higher productivity among people working from home than for example their colleagues working from the traditional office premises. An explanation for this discovery can be linked with fewer distractions, less interruptions and flexibility when planning the work schedule. Furthermore, most employees engage in home office by choice, which gives them more motivation to prove that this alternative style of work is successful (Kurlands & Bailey 1999).

A common claim is that teleworking can save organizational money. The International Telework Association & Council reported that teleworking employees can save their employers 10,006 dollars each in job retention costs and reduced absenteeism. In Switzerland home office has an impact on the election of qualified applicants and higher satisfaction, leading to resignation avoidance, which can easily save 100'000 francs (Grote 2011). Moreover, according to Hylmö & Buzzanell (2010), telework enables firms to be flexible and adaptable, reduce costs, display concern for the environment and employees' quality of life and enhance technological linkages for work and communication.

On the other side there is also a solid list of disadvantages: social isolation, lack of support, increased working hours and reduced career visibility. These are the main ones described by the literature. Social isolation brings up two dimensions. The first is the lack of social interactions, which might have a negative impact on the mood and emotions. The second one is the absence of co-workers or support staff. This in turn can result in more working hours to solve problems and clarify questions. Communication by email and telephone might not always be as reliable as face-to-face contact (Mann & Holdsworth 2003). This in combination with isolation, lack of support from co-workers and managers is perceived as the main social failure which can reduce motivation and lower the performance. Lack of technical support can be catastrophic for home-office workers in case they entirely rely on technical devices (Gray 1995). The specific "available any time" home-office setting provides an environment, which increases working hours. It might come with difficulties to differentiate easily between work and private time.

Portable devices can be in use any time. This might be a reason to extend regular office hours. Another big disadvantage of home-office is less career visibility resulting in slower

career progression. Because of decreased presence in the office teleworkers are on risk of becoming 'out of flow' in evaluation, resources allocation, advancement and compensation of the company. The risk of getting 'out of the work loop environment' remains higher (Mann & Holdsworth 2003). Nevertheless, telecommuting also operates as a threat as it dissolves attachments based on cultural factors and rituals, friendships and other workplace relationships. Teleworkers simply are not there to experience and perhaps do not value these connections that much.

Finally, the home office may prevent organizations to maintain a sense of identity and to develop a culture of adaptation that allows employees to participate while it avoids dissolution (Hylmö & Buzzanell 2010). Telework for those who do not want to pursue full career on hold, but have made the choice to give their primary time and energies to their families can be perceived as ideal solution.

The interviews aim at understanding the employees' opinions and views on the home-office. In particular the advantages and disadvantages of the home office will be analyzed. Different representatives will be interviewed to provide a broader view on the research topic. *Tab. 1* summarizes possible advantages and challenges for organizations and Employees (Madsen 2001).

Tab. 1: *Advantages and Challenges for Organizations and Employees (Madsen 2001)*

ADVANTAGES FOR ORGANIZATIONS	ADVANTAGES FOR INDIVIDUALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adherence to government regulations ✓ Improved employee recruitment ✓ Improved employee retention ✓ Improved productivity ✓ Improved quality ✓ Improved satisfaction ✓ Improved morale ✓ Increased organizational commitment ✓ Opportunities for better service ✓ Promoted diversity ✓ Reduced absenteeism ✓ Reduced expenses ✓ Reduced office space requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Avoidance of office policies ✓ Better work/family balance ✓ Ability to work with disabilities ✓ Less stressful child care issues ✓ Flexibility to relocate ✓ Improved morale ✓ Improved productivity ✓ Improved quality of life and work life ✓ Increased autonomy ✓ Increase family and leisure time ✓ Increased job satisfaction ✓ Increased technical skills ✓ Less distractions ✓ Lower stress level ✓ More community ties ✓ More flexibility ✓ Reduced commute time ✓ Saves money on gas and parking
CHALLENGES FOR ORGANIZATIONS	CHALLENGES FOR INDIVIDUALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Alignment of goals and mission ! Attitudes of in-office employees ! Career promotions ! Clear common aims and procedures ! Communication concerns ! Compensation and benefit packages ! Consistent policies and contracts ! Coordinating work ! Corporate buy-in ! Creating synergy ! Disruptions in work team ! Employee accountability ! Initial financial investment ! Management control and trust ! Management and staff training ! Measuring productivity ! Organization culture ! Redesign of processes ! Reduced informal mentoring ! Reduce networking ! Security issues ! Technical support ! Thorough organizational and individual assessment ! Union concerns ! Unrealistic expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Accessibility to others ! Career development and promotions ! Development of interpersonal skills ! Handling expenses ! Interruptions from home ! Intrinsic motivation ! Isolation and social satisfaction ! Lack of management or improper management ! Reduced informal communication ! Reduced informal mentoring ! Reduced informal training and development ! Reduced social networking ! Remaining “visible” ! Self-efficacy ! Shared work space in the office ! Tendency to work more hours ! Unrealistic expectations ! Work space in remote locations ! Work/personal life blurred

2.1.6 *Interdependencies of Home Office and HR-Practices*

Madsen (2011), focuses on Human Resource Development (HRD). The main goal is to identify and determine factors that influence the performance of employees and organization.

Home office programs have been found to be one such factor. Nowadays, many corporations are implementing programs without taking the time to assess, design, develop, and evaluate them first. The major mistake and reason for failures can be the fact that companies are allowing employees to telework without first addressing the benefits, challenges, and implications inherent in this type of intervention. As a result many programs sooner or later fail such as at Yahoo when CEO Marissa Mayer's decided in 2013 to pull Yahoo employees back to the office. What happened at Yahoo? Why did the home office fail after all? These are tough questions and it is certainly not easy to find all answers to draw a complete conclusion. Each telework condition is influenced by many factors such organizational culture, the type of work being done, the skills and the unique situation experienced by each employee, the management style and relationships with subordinates. Thompson (1999) realized that teleworking may yield into many advantages for each worker and thereby to the whole organization. Adoption of teleworking may produce significant economics, environmental and social benefits in the long run. Teleworking has significant potential for improving the living and working status of employees. This in turn increases their efficiency and allows organizations to gain competitive advantage. (p. 46)

In Madsen's article recommendations for HRD practitioners include teleworking interventions:

1. Be prepared to design new approaches to evaluate, educate, organize, and inform workers.
2. Assess and include interventions elements related to formal guidelines and policies, infrastructure such as technical tools and training, job design, availability, communication, task scheduling, meeting scheduling, performance measurement, sustainability of work, non-teleworkers buy-in, cultural change and more.
3. Design appropriate training and development interventions because managing remotely requires new skills and attitudes on the parts of both managers and employees.

4. Assist managers in designing an appropriate amount of social interaction required to maintain effectiveness and reduce unanticipated problem.
5. Train workers to adapt to a new environment and cope with the challenges it poses.
6. Design or utilize existing assessment instruments and procedures that can assist companies ensuring that workers and managers can be successful in this new relationship.
7. Train managers to monitor telecommuting programs carefully and react in an expedient manner to correct any undesirable consequences.
8. Ensure that any telework intervention is first supported by top management and then strategically aligned with the organization's goals and objectives.

Telework should be treated as important and meaningful area of future HR Professionals. It is clear that with current and expected advances in telecommunications technology and social media new generation will communicate with less face-to-face interaction relaying mostly on internet and communication tools such as phones. Home office programmes should be discussed in meetings with time to share and exchange experiences. Carefully well designed and implemented policies, procedures and effective programs do outweigh the challenges and problems that employees and employers may confront. HR practitioners should be at the forefront of home office interventions in the workplace. As growth in telework accelerates, especially in international organizations, where virtual teams collaborate and communicate globally, it is natural to face new changes and challenges. Nonetheless, teleworking can be effective in improving both individual and organizational performance (Madsen 2003).

2.2 Paradox of Perception Theory Framework

According to Apgar (1998), two important issues arise in telecommuting. The first one is managing the worker and second is related to managing the work. Apgar states, that employees must learn how to work from an alternative work location and how to work away from colleagues, managers, and administrative staff. In addition, workers new to a telecommuting work environment should have the chance to learn how to gain discipline through training and home office programs. This is crucial for success in this tough environment. He explains further that from a managerial perspective a successful supervision of subordinates means to possess new types of knowledge about the work and personal habits of the employees. Additionally, it requires a culture of trust between manager and worker in order to build a solid balance between micromanagement and

freedom of employees to complete their duties on their own. Teleworking forces managers to not only think about what work will be done by the employee, but also to reflect on the required support to complete different tasks question the impact of the work on other tasks. Many researchers perceive telework as a difficult topic to research. It is characterized by an incoherent nature full of uncertainty, ambiguity and paradoxes. This in turn might explain why so many organizations are reluctant to embrace home office. These tensions also reveal that telework can operate not just as a success but also as a threat to the coherence of the organization. Moreover, paradoxes are important to consider as a part of an organization system, because they simultaneously provide limits and possibilities for organizational enactment (Hylmö & Buzzanell 2010). This authors investigates telecommuting as success and a threat to fundamental processes of many organizations. Furthermore, telecommuting involves remote work, which separates workers in time and space from their managers and co-workers. Hence, inconsistencies tend to emerge from more complex social situations. For Peailson and Sounders (2001) a paradox is a statement of two seemingly contradictory perspectives, both of which are perhaps true.

Peailson and Sounders describe examples of paradoxes in their publication *There's no place like home; Managing telecommuting paradoxes*. The main essential paradoxes for this research are listed below.

Paradox 1: Increased flexibility and increased structure

Peailson and Sounders state that the major attraction of telecommuting is the ability to stretch time and space. They have quoted John Chen, chief executive officer of Sybase Inc. In his opinion creativity shouldn't be restricted by time or space. He has noticed that telecommuting is almost a requirement. Because stretching time allows employees to work during whatever hours they choose. It breaks the rule of standard 9-to-5 office hours. Home office also provides flexibility and increases the ability to manage efficiently teleworkers own time. Working from home provide comfortable environment, because employees work in whatever clothes they want, at whatever pace they want and with environmental factors preferred by them. This can a cold room or a warm one, with music or without and so on. From the company perspective, enhanced flexibility may be used to attract new employees and retain valued employees by maintaining or improving their morale and increase their productivity. In the end this can save a lot of costs associated with hiring and training. Nevertheless, the flexibility that might result from home office requires managers to implement structural changes in the work environment in order to accommodate the interaction patterns of telecommuters with their managers and group

members. Informal discussions do not occur. Thereby, it is harder to develop work relationships. In such settings it is essential that managers and co-workers as well should not exclude teleworkers and schedule all formal meetings, reviews, and other communication with them. Moreover, managers should also keep track of work schedules to make sure that there is adequate work coverage. Policies and home office regulations should be clear and provided for each employee.

Paradox 2: Greater individuality, more teamwork

The most suitable jobs for telecommuting appear to be related to tasks and activities which can be performed in isolation. Such activities include administrative work, presentations and so on. However, it should not lower the commitment to teamwork. Employees which are part of virtual teams, or groups of people who use technology to transcend spatial, temporal, and organizational boundaries may be composed entirely of telecommuters. Still, every virtual team member should have the ability from time to time work from the local office. For the majority of people the need for affiliation is as strong as need for the purpose. A solution might be to allow employees in virtual teams to interact with local teams. In order to deal with this paradox, Peailson and Sounders suggest that managers must resolve issues involved with establishing goals for teams and individual workers and devise appropriate reward systems.

Paradox 3: More responsibility, greater control

Peailson and Sounders tried to demonstrate in the third paradox the dependence between employees, which are not visible and thereby not observable by managers and the frequent fear of losing control by managers. Furthermore, managers still have the need of control, which lead them to understanding and evaluating their subordinates' processes for completing tasks, as well as to see their outputs. Micromanagement in teleworkers case doesn't really work well. Instead progress reports are often used.

It is possible to dealt with the three paradoxes constructively although they can be problematic for managers. Peailson and Sounders apply four strategies to deal with paradoxes. The four strategies are adapted from a theory developed by Poole and Van de Ven (1989). This theory emphasizes the acceptance of the paradox and the analysis. After acceptance and analysis, managers can devise a set of methods to handle the problems or reduce the tensions that occur and in the end use them constructively. Paradoxes may occur because of differences in the point of view. This is why it is so important to always clarify the point of view first. Different perspectives need time to be taken into account. Hence,

new perspectives might help to resolve a paradox. To manage the inconsistencies successfully, organizations should rethink the fundamental way how work is done. Thinking through different social paradoxes provides insights into how to improve managerial practices in nowadays highly dynamic work settings.

2.3 Characteristics of the Information Technology Industry

ECONOMY WATCH-Follow The Money, published an article in June 2010 about the Information Technology (IT) industry. Following their research it becomes obvious that IT, hardware and software are integral part of nearly every major global industry. Hence, the IT-industry has become one of the most robust industries in the world. They have described IT as knowledge based industry, where the efficient utilization of labor forces helps economies to achieve a rapid pace of economic growth. Mostly it serves as a medium e-governance and assures easy accessibility to information. ECONOMY WATCH listed IT as responsible for increased productivity, particularly in the developed world and therefore is a key driver of global economic growth. High demand from customers and enterprises characterize this rapidly growing sector. Accordingly to ECONOMY WATCH The Information Technology of America (ITTA), explains information technology as encompassing all possible aspects of information systems based on computers. Many various services come under the domain of the IT-Industry. In the article from 2010 some of them are listed as follow:

- Systems architectures
- Database design and development
- Networking
- Application development
- Testing
- Documentation
- Maintenance and hosting
- Operational support
- Security Services

The Global Information Technology Report 2013 make clear that the IT-Industry is characterized by an innovative environment and a wide use of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs). Moreover, both emerging and developed economies are focusing on innovation, competing globally for talent, resources, and market shares. Information flows and networks have spread across borders in ways that could not be

imagined before the onset of the Internet. Thereby, many business models have been redefined, the workplace has been redesigned, small start-ups have evolved into large companies and entire functions of society such as education, health, security, privacy are being rethought. ICTs has gained great importance and is accountable for stronger competitiveness, accelerated growth and job creation. Not surprisingly ICT has never before been the subject of so much attention and concern. Nowadays, corporations need to reinvent themselves to maintain or restore their competitiveness, retain or regain market shares, and create jobs. They constantly seeking new ways to improve productivity and find new sources of growth through new technologies. Otherwise they wouldn't achieve competitive advantage in such dynamic and continuously changing markets. Finally, the world needs to address environmental and social challenges to ensure a more sustainable development path and a better quality of life for its people. It appears that the home office working concept is as an interesting solution.

2.4 Conclusion of the Literature Review

The literature review in this chapter provided a detail overview of the most important literature relevant to this dissertation. The chapter systematically introduced and presented existing literature and research according to home office, teleworkers and managers profile, the importance of trust, advantages and disadvantages of home office. It also provided insight into the perspective of HR professionals, described the characteristics of the IT industry and last but not least dealt with home office paradoxes of perception. The first part of chapter 2 started with defining the background and the most relevant terms. The idea was to provide a clear understanding of various terminologies and to specify which one will be used for the purpose of this dissertation. The next chapter described the profile of employees suitable for home office investigate what kind of managers are capable of supervising their subordinates working away from the office. Next, the importance of trust was provided. Additionally, a reflection of the advantages and disadvantages based on the Madsen table was introduced to gain an overview of the pros and cons of the concept. The literature review covering the IT industry aims to highlight the importance of the industry for the research.

3 Research Methodology

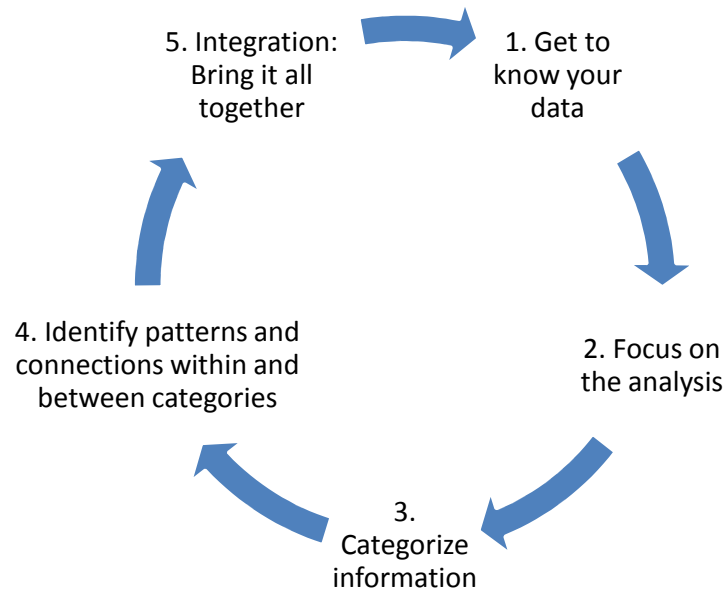
In addition to the secondary data provided in chapter two, this chapter will introduce and explain the research methodology, which provides the primary data for this master thesis. First an explanation and presentation of the applied Research Method of this studies will be ensured. It will include Tools of the research, the Research Sample and corresponding procedures.

Chapter 3.2 will then present the design and execution of the conducted interviews. This Master Thesis is an exploratory study, with a qualitative methodology, using the technique of interviews. Qualitative research is the most adequate to exploratory studies when there is not a lot of knowledge about the issue. In this case, the main aim is to access individual perceptions through interviews. According to Patton & Cochran 2002, qualitative research is characterized by its aims. It relates closely to understanding some aspects of social life. The method of data analysis generates words rather than numbers which is typical for quantitative research. The most common criticism related to qualitative research lies in small, not representative samples. Because of the small sample size, doubts about how far we can generalize the results are very common. Moreover, findings lack rigor and might be biased by the researcher's own opinion. In some cases surveys have limitations and cannot answer questions in a deep, broader way, such as: What is your opinion about the home-office support system based on your experience in the IT industry?

No survey can deal with such a constructed question. It can be only addressed through qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups. In general, qualitative methods aim to understand the experience and attitudes and typically answer questions such: what, how, why, how many, how much. Content and confidentiality are the two key issues, which should be considered by every project researcher (Patton & Cochran 2002). The narrative data obtained from the interviews, also called a text, must be analyzed after completion of the interviews.

As depicted in **Fig. 3** Taylor-Powell and Renner 2003 suggest five steps of the analysis-process.

Fig. 3: Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) five steps process to support the analysis of text or narrative data.



Source: Authors' own illustration based on Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003).

Taylor-Powell and Renner suggest to keep in mind that the analysis process is fluid. Moving back and forward between these steps is more than likely to occur. An interview is described as method of asking questions. They can be either qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative questions, which will be appropriate for this thesis, are open-ended, so the respondents provide an answer in their own words. Semi-structured interviews outline various questions closely related to the main topic of this dissertation. The author of this dissertation has chosen the interview method, because it provides the best possible means to gain fundamental insight and context of teleworkers views and opinions about home-office. It also allows each of the respondents, to describe what is important for him/her (Department of Health and Human Services 2009).

For the purpose of this dissertation it is adequate to use exploratory studies, when you don't know a lot about the issue, when you want to access to individuals perceptions. In total twenty-four interviews have been conducted focusing on home-office employees

working in a dynamic IT industry in Switzerland. Three scripts were designed in order to target different interviewees. The script for the Human Resource representative contains questions focusing on performance, HR interview processes, career development and teleworkers evaluation. The Director should answer questions more related to the Company home-office strategy and support, related costs and employee performance. The largest interview group, which is twenty employees working from home, receive questions aiming to evaluate advantages and disadvantages related to their specific work style and to describe their perception and acceptance of the home office.

3.1 The Environment and Organization

The chosen IT-Corporation for this dissertation has been a worldwide leader in database software for more than three and a half decades. It has further developed technologies and acquired best-in-class companies over the years. Consequently, leadership has expanded to the entire technology offering, from servers and storage, to database and middleware, through applications and into cloud computing. The company also provide customers with a joint integrated system, hardware and software engineered to work together, in order to solve the business problems. This American multinational Corporation was established in 1977 and since then experience continuous growth. With the Headquarter in California they operate globally, having more than 145 offices in multiple countries around the world. (Information taken from the official Company Website). The Company name will remain confidential upon the request. During the exchange semester at the University of Geneva from September 2013 until February 2014 the author has decided to base her study research on the Swiss market. The Company has two major offices in Switzerland. One office is located in Baden, which is in the German speaking part. The second workplace is in Geneva in the French speaking region. The interviews were conducted on the premises of both offices in Baden and in Geneva.

Switzerland, officially called the Swiss Confederation, is a country with four official languages. Well known global cities like Zurich and Geneva are recognized as economic centres for many international corporations, including the second largest United Nations office. The country is situated in Western and Central Europe and borders to Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Liechtenstein (www.about.ch). The Swiss population is made up of approximately 8 million people. Switzerland has also a high percentage of foreign residents, totalling 23.3% in 2012 (www.bfs.admin.ch). This setting enriches my studies and interview experience as 13 different nationalities were among the sample of 24

professionals. The Networked Readiness Index (NRI) published by The Global Information Technology Report from 2013 confirms that Switzerland has with its high-tech economy a wide use of ICTs a favourable environment for teleworkers. This Index aims to measure the ability of countries to leverage information and communication technologies (ICTs) for improved competitiveness and well-being. The ability depends on multiple factors that measure the environment for ICTs, the readiness of a society to use ICTs, the actual usage of all main stakeholders, and finally, the impacts that ICTs generate in the economy and in society. Switzerland is categorized in a group of countries with Advanced Economies, being number 6 out of 144. (Bilbao-Osorio, Dutta & Lanvin, 2013).

The selected company is characterized with locations primarily in large metropolitan areas and a technology based and progressive work-life culture. The company has e home office policies and regulations in place. The IT-Giant offers employees the possibility to choose between three home office categories. Every employee is equipped with a company laptop and a cell phone (calls and internet coverage). Employees who telecommute on a regular basis (more than 50%) receive on top of the basic equipment voice lines, broadband data connection and monthly expenses for furniture and additional home office related expenses. The offices are very modern, with open-space style and no assigned desks. In addition quiet rooms are available for those who prefer working in a quiet, closed space. Meeting and conference rooms are available and used on a regular basis. Information and Telecommunication Technologies are widely accessible and ensure continues work and communication flow.

3.2 Research Sample

All participants in this research were full-time professional level employees. The regular employee contract doesn't state and support home office, but employees have the possibility to apply for home office. The Company provides "Regulation for Home Office Work", which explains the home office categories, how to apply, the approval process and additional rules. In this regulation working time is 40 hours, which does not change regarding the place. Regardless of the working place employees are obliged to work 40 hours. The home office regulation document states that it is the responsibility of the employees to ensure smooth workflow, communication and reachability. Employees have the possibility to choose between three home office categories.

Category A enables employees to work exceptionally/occasionally at home. Employees still have dedicated desks in the office. In order to receive category A, employees need approval from their direct Manager.

Category B concerns employees working at home on a regular basis, but less than 50%. Employees have an option of having dedicated or shared desk in the office. In this case the approvals from the Manager and HR Director are required.

Category C is for employees primarily working from home, which is more than 50%. (Documents available upon a request).

According to the research sample, of 24 interviewees, 19 were men (79%) and 5 were women (21%). Their average age was 36 years with a range of 27 to 57 years. All employees were full-time workers, mostly regularly working from home, however less than 50% (category B). These employees had generally been telecommuting for at least one year and worked in a variety of professional level positions throughout the company. Work is assigned by portfolio and territory and guided by revenue targets. Most of the interviewees, sales executives, work towards and annual revenue target and have quarterly target. Telework enhanced their ability to plan and schedule work, help them to accommodate diverse work pressure, and made daily schedules even more tailored to their needs and priorities. The majority of interviewees were senior employees, performing successfully over years, with a profile of very autonomous, confident and self-motivated workers. Interview evidence suggests that the major reason for the employees to choose home office was to minimize travel time, achieve greater concentration and flexibility leading to better work-life balance. Half of the respondents (12 out of 24) are employees working less than 5 years in the company, mainly in the same position. Another 12 interviewees can be profiled as an experienced employees working for many years in the same company and progressing internally by promotion and position change. The author could divided two groups among them. Six employees belong to those working for over 10 years in the same company and another six are in the range of working more than 5 years, but less than 10. All names provided in Tab. 2 are fake to protect interviewees identity. *Tab. 2* provides an overview of the interviewees.

Tab. 2: List of interviewees with additional data

Name	Position	Nationality	Gender	Age	Years of employment in company
1. Henry	Sales Representative	German	Male	57	15 years
2. Harry	Sales Representative	Swiss	Male	30	4 months
3. Marcus	Sale Representative	French	Male	29	3,5 years
4. Mike	Sales Representative	French	Male	39	6 years
5. Alan	Sales Representative	Swiss	Male	36	8,5 years
6. Edi	Solution Consultant	Macedonian	Male	28	9 months
7. Timi	IT Operations	Scottish	Male	34	12 years
8. Donald	IT Consultant	Kosovo-Swiss	Male	27	2 years
9. Darry	Alliance Manager	German-USA	Male	36	7 years
10. Victor	Territory Manager for Switzerland	French	Male	32	7 years
11. Herard	Facilities Manager for Switzerland	Swiss	Male	29	1 year
12. Mikaduo	Account Manager for Hardware and Infrastructure	Bosnian	Male	38	2,5 years
13. Alevory	Senior Licences Manager Consultant	Swedish	Male	29	3,5 years
14. Robert	Campaign Manager	Macedonian-Swiss	Male	27	2,5 years
15. Olivier	Alliance and Channel Manager for Switzerland and Scandinavia	Danish	Male	41	6 years
16. Hollon	Database and Operations Marketing Manager	Belgian	Female	46	19 years
17. Martina	Account Manager	French	Female	40	15 years
18. Lukas	Global Alliance Manager	Australian-Hungarian	Male	40	11 years
19. Serum	HR Consultant	Korean	Male	42	6 months
20. Philip	Graduate Recruitment Consultant	German	Male	30	3 years
21. Sarah	Business Analyst Operation	Swiss	Female	36	2 years
22. Scharon	Head of Business Operations	Belgian	Female	32	6 years
23. Salomena	Alliances & Channels Director	Swiss	Female	4	3 years
24. Gregory	Distribution Director	Swiss	Male	50	10 years

Source: Authors' own illustration.

3.3 Procedures

To identify the individual subjective experiences of teleworkers, the data was gathered by taped, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews that lasted between 20-40 minutes. The main point of contact, the Campaign Manager, interacted with home office employees and send e-mail invitations to participate. I have received the contact details of those who agreed to process with interviews. Following up I was able to set up interview meetings by contacting the volunteers via email. The interviews were conducted in the company offices in two locations, Geneva and Baden. The shortest interview lasted 15 minutes, the longest went on for 1 hour 33 minutes. The author has designed three different questionnaires, each suitable best for the group sample. The interview script for the director contained eighteen questions, employees had twenty-two questions and HR Professionals answered twenty-nine questions. All participants were briefed before the interview has started and assured that company and their names will remain undisclosed. A short introduction to the subject, purpose and procedures of this dissertation was also provided in the beginning of every interview. Meetings were held in a very friendly atmosphere, with the possibility of comments, exchanging views and dialogues. At the end of each interview the interviewees have been asked to provide a short post interview feedback. A reminder email to do so was sent shortly after each interview. In the after interview follow up the interviewees were asked to share their experience, if they liked the interview process, what they think about the questions (order, quality, relevance) asked during the interviews and point to improve. 90% of participants responded and send by email interview feedback.

The Transcription of the files from voice recorder yielded 90 pages of single-spaced text. Following each interview the author transcribed files from the voice recorder. I took notes in margins, compared and interrogated categories using generative questions and categorized answers in order to notice similarities, leading to patterns development. The author has specified 4 categories and followed codification process presented below.

List of categories and criteria for the codification process**Category 1- Participants' Profile**

Question : 1,2,3,4,9, (Employees and HR Professionals script)

Question : 1,2,9, (Directors script)

Category 2- Acceptance of the Home Office

Question: 5,6 (the same in all scripts)

Category 3- Perception of Home Office

Question: 7,8,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22 (Employees and HR Professionals)

Question: 22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29 (Related to HR perception and practices)

Question: 3,4,5,6,8,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18 (Directors script)

Category 4- Advantages and Disadvantages

Question: 10,11,12 (Employees and HR Professionals)

Question: 7 Directors script)

4 Home office in Practice: Findings and Evaluation

In the previous Chapter 3 research methodology focused on environment and characteristics of the organisation where interviews were held, combined with description of the research sample with participants profile and procedures taken along the whole research process. Chapter 4 presents finding, which the author had discovered after interview execution, data collection and its further analysis. Analysis evaluation will be also provided in this chapter.

4.1 The Perception of the Home Office

The starting point of the qualitative research is the investigation of the interviewees' perception about the home office. To do so the following first general question was placed:

What do you think about the home office in general?

Additional seven questions were used to gather further insight about: the perception of other people working from home, opinion of their teleworking peers, about other companies offering home office, if they would like to do remote work and if there is a correlation between home office and loyalty. The analysis will begin with the description of the general perception among all 24 participants. Further key findings will be elaborated and presented upon this general view by introducing step by step other questions. In some of these additional questions where sample accounts for 22 respondents, means that directors were excluded.

The evaluation of the first general question clearly highlights a positive attitude toward home office. There is not a single negative perception or denial about it. The majority of the respondents were very enthusiastic about the home office work style. This doesn't mean that they did not see any negative aspect associated with the home office. The respondents were fully aware of the challenges that a home office concept brings along. For example, the need of self-discipline and high motivation undermined with a tough work environment was seen a big challenge to sustain if they stay too many days at home. It seems that the frequency of the home office plays a crucial role in balancing the entire situation.

Alliance and Channel Director, states *"I think it is a tough environment. There are lots of good and bad things about it. I think everyone should have the possibility to stay at home, but not because they get out of bed late and stay in their pyjama all day. More if they want to concentrate. In my case it is a perfect solution, when I have to work on sensitive things, such as performance appraisals"*.

Another example is Robert. As a Campaign Manager he likes the idea of home office if it is used on special occasions or when the advantages of working from home can be clearly justified. But it is also perceived as a double-edged sword: there are many drawbacks for a daily horizontal interaction between employees from the same or other teams. Many employees expressed that the home office is a great idea. But it shouldn't be overdone as the benefits decline with higher frequency. One, maximum two days of home office a week are seen as the best option to sustain efficiency while balancing family, private and work life. According to experience of the interviews especially administrative tasks or activities that require a quiet and comfortable working environment are ideally performed from home. Mikaduo, Account Manager for Hardware and Infrastructure, sees in the ability to work from home an ideal way to reach inner balance. He explains: *"For me it is a perfect balance between sitting in the office and meeting other guys, talking about business and then between when I am at home, doing some strategic work and I am not interrupted by other guys, who want to go for a coffee, or talk with me. I reach a perfect balance between office and home work"*. For David, the home office offers a unique way to balance major aspects of his life. He clarifies: *"I am very positive towards it. For example, it is the best way to balance family and work life. I have a little child and without home office my wife wouldn't be able to work, so I think it is very good solution and it gives us lots of freedom and the possibility to organize our entire life in a positive way"*.

Generally, there are more positive than negative voices regarding the home office. The perception goes towards a helpful, very interesting solution with various advantages. In the same time, there is awareness of existing incoherencies. Employees are the one, who should make the best practise out of the opportunity to work from home, for their own and company benefit.

Also the perception of the interviewees regarding their colleagues working from home echoed an optimistic picture. 17 out of 22 (77%) of the respondents had a positive attitude towards their colleagues who work from home. The majority would like to telework on a regular basis. The attitude toward colleagues doing home office depends also on their private situation, which in turn should co-determine high or low demand for telework. It is most beneficial to do teleworking when employees have family and small kids, live away from the office or need to work on tasks requiring silence and focus. An interesting finding is that those who don't work from home or only on exceptional basis tend to be not so much in favour of the home office concept itself and colleagues working from home. On the other side there is the common notion that not all positions are suitable for home office.

Positions that demand high level of cooperation with other peers, face-to-face meetings and knowledge sharing on a regular are more efficiently executed in the office.

Robert, the Campaign Managers explains: *“It doesn’t make sense if your knowledge is asked every day on a regular basis by your colleagues. In this case you should be in the office. If you are a manager or director with a regional team sitting in the same office, than you should be more present, because it requires to be a role model. It also doesn’t make sense when you have lots of meetings or if the completion of your work depends from another department. When you work together with marketing or sales, you have lots of interdependencies and recreational reactions. In this case it makes it much easier when you are in the office. If you work closely in teams, it is important to be together, share and create knowledge. If you take care of clients, than you need to know what is going on and exchange information face-to-face”*. This insight underlines the importance of dependencies, cross-functional and departmental cooperation. In other words this means that certain activities and functions require more presence than others. This doesn’t mean that the home office is not applicable at all. It simply requires a thorough assessment and planning as well as strong discipline to allocate the right resources to the right working place.

Trust is an important issue when it comes to Home Office and is an essential factor when it comes to decide whether an employee is allowed to work remote or not. This leads to the question who is eligible to work remotely and under which circumstances is supervisor or director ready to agree the home office application/ request? The findings show that an employee should demonstrate maturity, reliability, motivation, responsiveness and the ability to take ownership. Junior employees do not qualify for home office as they are not familiar with the processes and tasks. There is a lot to learn in the beginning. Hence, it is important to be present, interact, observe, practice and use the opportunity to clarify questions with more experience peers and receive immediate direct answers. Maturity alone doesn’t necessary describe someone who is working in the company long time. Maturity is more about personality, reliability and responsibility. This means to have the capability to organize business, private, family life in a healthy balance without neglecting work duties.

86% (19 out of 22) of the interviewees have a positive experience with other teleworkers as a result of high responsiveness and cooperation. The infrastructure and communication tools consisting of laptops, smartphones, virtual desktop phones, instant chats, conferencing solutions and so on provide all the necessities to be reachable, responsive and

to guarantee a frictionless cooperation. People working from home tend also to work more persistent with fewer coffee breaks and shorter lunch. Hence, they are able to achieve better results in a shorter period leading to higher efficiency.

Another interesting finding is the correlation between the ability of teleworking and loyalty. The majority of the respondents (64%) quotes that home office practices make them feel more loyal towards the Company. They believe that the concept of the home office helps the company to retain the work force as they value the given opportunity and corresponding trust. Consequently, employees are less likely to look for other positions and go so far to reject another job offer that doesn't enable home office. Edi, a 28 years old Solution Consultant, says: *"I do appreciate the freedom, which the company gives me. I had more offers coming, but they didn't give me this flexibility, this is the reason why I didn't change, even they have offered me better money"*. Generally speaking employees appreciate the telework possibility and perceive as a big advantage. Another example is 41 years old Oliver, who quotes *"I wouldn't say it makes me more loyal, but I would say it makes me appreciate the company more and it takes more time to leave. It is something that increases my satisfaction"*. Only 5 interviewees don't see any linkage between home office and their loyalty towards to the company. Home office might be used as a strategy to attract and retain employees. 82% rank companies with home office concepts in place higher resulting into a better perception. 34 years old Timi explains: *"Yes, I would rank this companies higher, purely because it shows me that these companies have HR and Management, which is looking at the best scenarios for their stuff. They are obviously caring about their assets and they provide flexible working hours and it is only a good thing"*.

The provided scenario of two job offers with identical conditions except that one offer allow teleworking and the other not, resulted that 86% of the interviewees would chose the job offer with home office as they believe to benefit clearly from more personal freedom and flexibility. Lukas, shares the following experience: *"I would choose the one which allows me to work from home, because they give me the power and possibility to manage my personal time and resources much better. I don't have to sit in the office from 9am to 5pm to be productive, but when you are obliged to do so, you are seriously restricted by providing the expected results while being there. We are working in a multimillion-dollar business that doesn't work from the office. Neither are the solutions we offer made for office use only. They are solutions that can be accessed and worked with from everywhere. It works from restaurants, golf clubs, theatres, cinemas. They work from social events and*

you have to work from where suits your customers best. Also the time means, that you need to work after normal working hours. I am talking about sales, like we are responsible for a big business, you need the freedom to work from outside of the office and you should require to meet your customers beyond working hours“.

It becomes clear that flexibility is not just a question of balancing work and private life for highly motivated people. It's represents also a serious question regarding profitability, that can be maximized with increased flexibility in the day to day business. Nevertheless, employees are not more satisfied working 5 days per week from home or remotely. 73% express that attendance in the office is needed and that 5 days a week would be a poor solution and not satisfying either. They would miss the interaction with other employees. Consequently, they are afraid of losing track of the major events happening in the cooperation which in turn might create distance, boredom, loneliness and lose up the connection with the company spirit and culture. But it is also a question of discipline. Some of the participants argue that deficiency in discipline makes it a real challenge to work all the time productively from home. Others record that a 100% remote setting would be contra productive for their job position as their daily tasks require deep cooperation and knowledge sharing on a regular basis. There is also a social and human component behind the concerns and a strong need to interact with peers, create a bond that goes beyond work related issues and know to be part of big construct. The next quote by Lukas highlight the social and human component: *“The human creature is a social creature, so people don't really like to leave on their own and be by themselves. It is stupid to isolate a local person to do just home office without any possibility for interaction. You must have feedback, interaction and crosscheck when you do home office. You need a feeling that you belong somewhere”.*

Directors have agreed, that IT industry is quite tough environment and very result driven. They could see positive outcomes of home office, when it helps to focus and cuts travel time, which eventually increase employee effectiveness. In their opinion everyone should have the possibility to occasionally work from home upon a rational reason. Who should be allowed to do home office on a regular basis? They described a profile of trustworthy subordinates, with certain personality requiring maturity, high level of self-discipline and motivation, with ability to take ownership. Directors perceive IT industry as a very innovative and providing excellent environment to telework. Nonetheless, they believe home office possibility is not restricted to this industry. They clearly expressed, that any company even outside IT, which have VPN access and provide suitable Information

Technology Communication tools, to ensure continuous communication flow can be successful, and have the same possibility of implementing beneficial home office practices.

Key findings:

- employees and HR professional have positive attitude toward home office mode
- home office is perceived as helpful, very interesting solution with various advantages
- all respondents distinguish high awareness of the challenges that a home office concept brings along
- frequency of the home office plays a crucial role in balancing the entire situation
- 73% express that attendance in the office is needed and they would not like to work 5 days a week from home
- the majority would like to telework on a regular basis, where 1 to 2 days of home office were described as a perfect frequency
- employees with a family and small kids, living away from the office or these need working on tasks requiring silence and focus expressed high demand for teleworking
- positions that demand high level of cooperation with other peers, face-to-face meetings and knowledge sharing on a regular basis are more efficiently executed in the office
- trust is an important issue and it is an essential factor when it comes home office approval
- employee described as successful teleworkers should demonstrate maturity, reliability, motivation, responsiveness and the ability to take ownership
- home office practices help retain employees and increase their loyalty toward to the company.
- 82% rank higher and perceive better companies with home office possibility
- Flexibility and time management help employees to balance work and family/private life and increase their profitability in the day to day business execution
- directors see positive outcomes of home office, when it helps to focus and cuts travel time, which eventually increase employee effectiveness
- directors believe home office possibility is not restricted to the IT industry

4.2 The Acceptance of the Home Office

Three major aspects have been taken into consideration to investigate the acceptance of home office:

1. Are there home office regulations in place?
2. Do managers regardless of existing regulations allow their subordinates to work from home?
3. Is teleworking accepted among peers and other managers?

To start with, the findings show that the basic employment contract does explicitly not allow home office. However, there is a Home Office Regulation in place. Any employee wishing to work from home needs to ask his or her supervisor for approval. Most of the interviewed employees (46%) have an Home Office Agreement in place. 36% stated that there is an informal agreement between them and their manager to work from home. 18% indicate that they would like to obtain such an agreement as well. As managers and directors have decision-making power it is up to them to approve or reject any request. All interviews report, that their supervisors approve and support teleworking. Managers of virtual teams, or managers who themselves are located in a different country than their employees tend to fully accept home office practices under the condition that subordinates deliver on time and achieve targets. One example is the Alliance and Channel manager for Switzerland and Scandinavia. Oliver quotes: *“My manager is not sitting in this country, so he doesn’t really care where and when I work, as long as the work is done”*.

The proximity of the supervisor to their subordinates creates a clear contrast. Supervisors who are working at the same location or same premises or are in close reach only allow telework on an occasional basis. This means less than 50%. They prefer their employees to work as much as possible from the office. The reasoning is to avoid the challenges explained in Madsen’s Table. Robert, 27 years old, shared the following view on the matter: *“Our supervisor allows home office, but on an exceptional basis. For example, when there is public holiday coming on Friday, than he would allow us to work on Thursday from home. In general he doesn’t like us to work from home or to have fixed home office days. The reason why, as I understood is that other employees might also demand it and it might create a chain reaction. This isn’t beneficial for the team”*.

The research shows that the company has not one single approach to the concept of home office. How the home office is implemented and executed depends on the preferences of the decision makers. Hence depending on the management and working style of the

supervisor the home office will be dealt with differently. The two interviewed directors prefer to have their whole team in the office and under direct control. Nevertheless, they do allow their subordinates to work from home occasionally or under special circumstances. Prior to working from home they demand a valid justification, the scope of the work and a clarification of what will be achieved. Darry, who is working for 7 years in the company, experienced different managerial approaches. He recalls: *“The first manager wasn’t supporting it too much. The second said you can work from wherever you are. The third, and current manager, is in between. She wants us to be in the office, but she fully understands us when we work from home and she wants us to write her a message to inform her”*.

If the teleworking is reasonable clearly depends from the environment and duties to be performed. In the investigated IT Company home working from home is perceived as a standard and accepted from the majority of employees and managers. Still, not every employee is allowed to work from home because the job description and specific role is less or more suitable for teleworking. This might cause ambiguity for some employees. Therefore a clear justification should be provided why somebody is allowed to telework is denied to do it. One HR consultant explains: *“We have home office policy, where the general rules are laid out. It is not suitable for every kind of position. For example, the receptionist won’t have home office, but than for other positions it depends from different variables. As an HR-Consultant, I am allowed to do it, tomorrow I am on home office, but it really depends the job you do”*. The interviewees practice home office and feel that it is generally accepted by their peers. They in turn also accept that other teams or individuals work on frequent or less frequent basis from home. However, they also understand it is very personal and there might be voices against it. Employees who are not allowed to work from home seem to oppose the concept of teleworking.

Key findings:

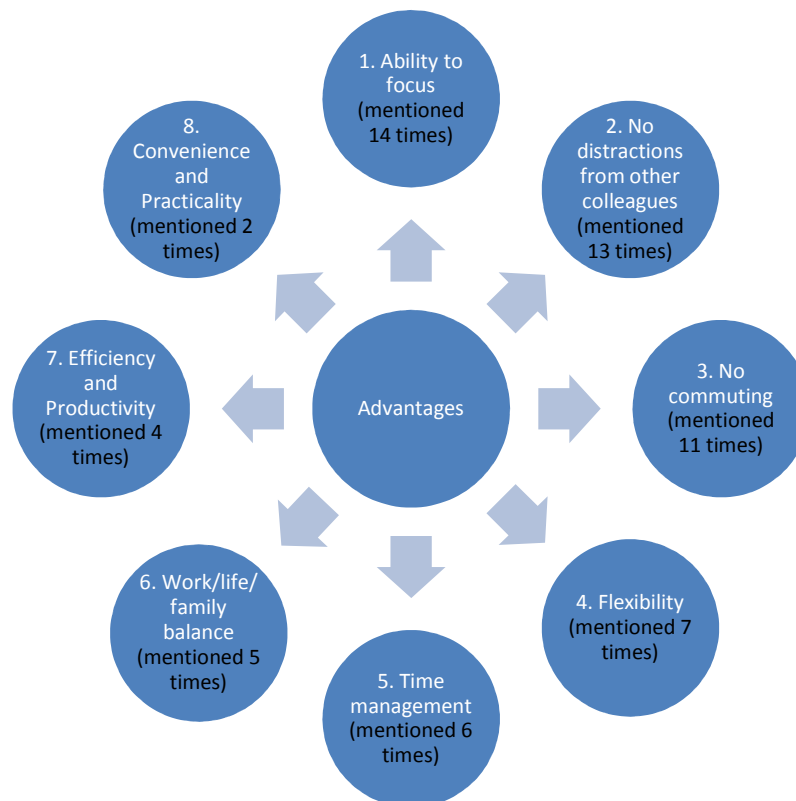
- in the investigated IT company teleworking is perceived as a standard and accepted from the majority of employees and managers
- the basic employment contract does explicitly not allow home office, however Home Office Regulation are in place
- in order to work from home employees need to apply and ask his or her supervisor for approval
- most of the interviewed employees have an Home Office Agreement

- all employees supervisors approve and support teleworking to some extent
- managers of virtual teams, or those located in a different country than their subordinates tend to fully accept home office practices on a regular basis
- managers working at the same location or the same premises as their subordinates tend to allow to work from home on an occasional basis
- the company does not have one, single approach to the concept of the home office. How the home office is implemented and executed depends on the management preferences and their working style
- factors such as: employees' duties and tasks, position and the role itself decide if it is possible to work from home

4.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Home Office

After careful analysis and a detailed review of the answers eight main advantages are identified within the concept of teleworking as depicted in *Fig.4*. The advantages are ranked from the most important to the least important.

Fig: 4: Advantages of the Home Office



Source: Authors' own illustration.

The first finding is that there are overall more advantages than disadvantages seen in teleworking. All of the interviewees could point out a few advantages based on their own experience. The ability to focus in a quiet and comfortable environment was mentioned as the biggest benefit. Martina, who works since 5 years as Account Manager, and 15 years in the company quotes: *“Silence is the most important for me, because I have no interruptions from my colleagues. I can focus at home and be more productive, when it comes to administrative work, or when I have to deal with contracts and legal issues. Home it is the best place to complete work that requires focus for a loner time and that can be done by myself”*. For Mikaduo, Account Manager for Hardware and Infrastructure, it is the quality of work when he can focus without interruption from his colleagues . He clearly points out: *“Nobody is interrupting me, so I have really time to work the whole day. All strategic plans and customer offers I can prepare in a comfortable environment, not in the small area or quiet room in the office. For me it is more work quality when I work from home”*.

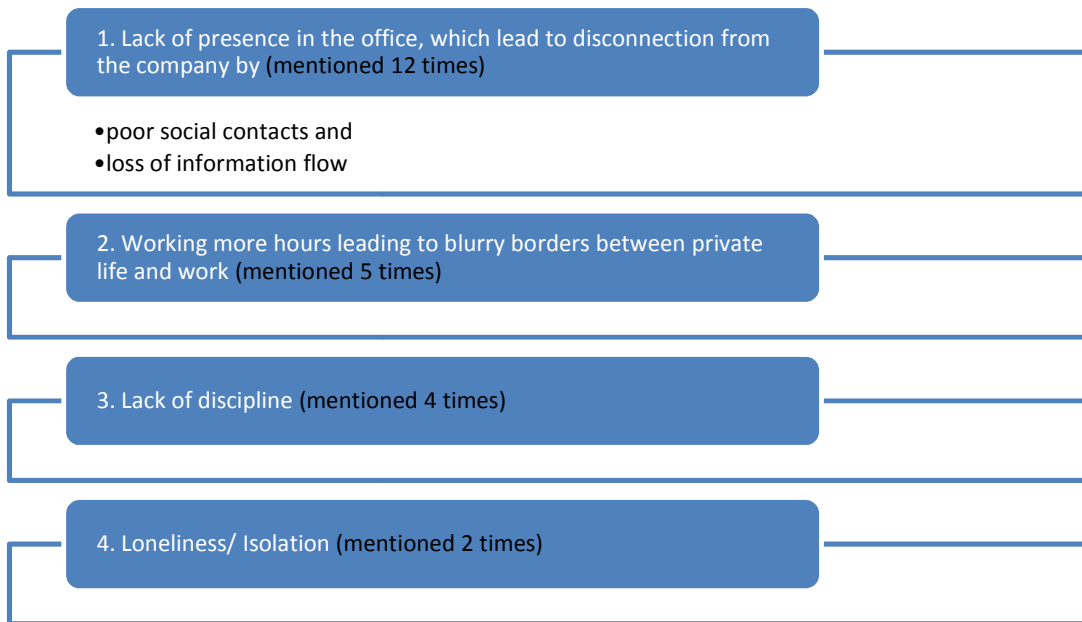
Few years ago the company has restructured and modernized the office design, creating open space offices. The main reason was to cut costs, facilitate employee communication and knowledge sharing. There are no assigned working spaces. Every employee can change places and sit where ever they like across three floors. The question is whether an open plan layout results in higher employee satisfaction. Jungsoo Kim and Richard de Dear categorically contradict the common industry-accepted wisdom, that open plan layout enhances communication between colleagues and improve the overall work satisfaction.

The research with a sample of 42,764 respondents working in 303 office buildings shows that noise and the loss of privacy distract employees and are identified as major causes for workspace dissatisfaction in open-plan office layouts. The study was published in article called *Workspace satisfaction: The privacy-communication trade-off in an open-plan office*. The interviewees of the thesis confirm this fact. They report to be unsatisfied and even annoyed by distractions from their colleagues in the open style office. Alan, Sales Representative, works for 8,5years in the Company shares the following notion: *“When I am working at home, no one is coming to my desk asking questions and so on. I can concentrate. I have experience in this company, that so many young people, who are let say 2 years in the company don’t know about the processes and approvals, and they come from everywhere and ask questions, and I spend a lot of time explaining people stuff, and I am not here to do it. It is not, that I don’t like to talk with people or help, because I like hearing stories or just talk about the weekend, but sometimes it is just too much. So at home, I can just focus and work without any interruptions”*.

The home office also eliminates commuting. Most of the interviewees perceive this gain as an important advantage. They are able to save precious time, cut commuting cost and even contribute to a more environmental friendly work. Alevory who works as a Senior Licences Manager Consultant states: *“I save time, costs and do less harm to the environment as there is no need to commute so often”*. For Sarah from Business Operation it is simple. She quotes: *“I don’t waste four hours every day for transportation. That’s the most important thing for me”*. Marcus is a Sales Representative who is working in Switzerland for 1,5 years. In his previous job he was working for a company in Paris. *“Home office cuts all commuting costs and time. I am from Paris, where home office is not really popular. When I was working there, I had to spend 1 hour and 30 minutes in metro one way so it was 3 wasted hours per day. Sometimes there was an issue on the metro line, so when I arrived to work I was stressed. When I was about to leave work I felt angry, because I knew it means being home very late mostly around 9 pm”*.

Not surprisingly flexibility is seen as a further important advantage. The home office and corresponding flexibility allows the respondents to allocate their tasks and manage time according to the workload and private schedule. They felt more productive and efficient, because they could allocate time according to their most important priorities. Darry explained: *“It helps me to organize not only professional but also family and personal related task. It could be that on Tuesday I have to look after my child and I don’t have time to work between 2pm and 4pm, but I will work from 8pm to 10pm, so it gives me a lot of freedom and flexibility”*. Especially parents of young children seem to profit. It allows them picking their kids up from school or kindergarten and for many moms with small kids, teleworking is the only option to simultaneously work and take care of the family.

On the other side there 4 main disadvantages identified as illustrated in **Fig. 5:**

Fig: 5: Disadvantages of the Home Office

Source: Authors' own illustration.

The interviewees state that their absence in the office causes several disadvantages. The most important disadvantage is the disconnection which might cause poor social contacts and lack of information. Henry, Sales Representative shared the following view on the matter: *“Naturally, you have less interaction with other colleagues, if you are not in the office. It can lead to missing some important information. I wouldn't do more than maximum 3 days a week of home office. I need this interaction with my colleagues from the commercial point of view but also from a personal one as well”*. Harry, another Sales Representative a similar opinion: *“I think the lack of presence in the office would be the main disadvantage. Another one would be the lack of visibility for your manager and also not knowing what is going on in the office. You don't talk that often with your peers, so you don't know what is happening on the customer side either”*. Another example is Marcus who has the following point of view: *“When I started working in Switzerland, I came to the office every day for the first 8 months, in order to build the relation with my colleagues. After that I started home office. With an established network I was able to do home office. It would be one of the main disadvantages, because when you start directly doing home office, you won't be able to establish this connections, so you might feel excluded”*.

Home office might also lead to more working hours. The interviewees confirm that they work more hours at home. It makes it extremely difficult for them to draw a clear border between the time used for work or private related duties. Victor, a Geneva based employee notes: *“Another disadvantage is, that when I am working from home I don’t take many breaks, and I force myself more because I have the freedom and I have to show I use it the best way. I tend to work more at home, because I feel bad about not being in the office. Maybe, because of the trust given from the management, I sometimes overdo things. There are blurry borders between private life and work/ professional life”*.

90% of participant stated that they could not work remotely on a full time basis. They would feel lonely and all by themselves. It would lead to disconnection from the company and loss of team spirit. Alevory expressed: *“You are alone. You have less exchange with your colleagues. Less company and team spirit. You are all by yourself”*. Lukas, the Global Alliance Manager with over 10 years of experience belong to a virtual team. He emphasizes the importance of time management, strict rules and personal discipline, especially while teleworking. He says: *“If you don’t consciously allocate your professional time from your personal time you will be confused and very stressed. Time management is essential. It is not the same, when you go to the office, because everyone works so you work too. At home the cleaners come, your mum calls, you have to take your dog to the vet and pick up your kids, and if you cannot manage that, what when your customers call and a need fast answer. They don’t care where you are. When they ask questions, they are looking for fast answers. Sometimes I need to provide them an answer within an hour. This is why, you have to work from the morning to the evening, even when you are at home and leave everything behind. The rules are strictly the same”*.

4.4 Productivity and Performance Management

This part of the research aim to analyse where employees feel more productive, in the office or while teleworking? The majority (45%) of respondents answered their productivity depends from the task, which they have to perform. They suggested that administrative tasks, or tasks that requires lots of focus and no distractions are better performed in a comfortable environment such as home. On the other side, they pointed out, when it comes to information exchange, collaboration with other team members it is more practical and beneficial to be in the office. Martina expresses the following view: *“It depends what you have to perform. What kind of tasks you have. Sometimes you need to*

share information with other colleagues from different teams and for this you have to be in the office. But if you have to work on a business case or contract, than you don't need other colleagues, so you can better focus on your work on your own from home“.

The findings show that the highest productivity is achieved in healthy mix of home and office work. There is one part of the respondents who feel more productive at home, while the other part is able to work better and faster in the office. Sharon, Head of Business Operations said: *“I am more productive at home, as I can focus more and concentrate on more demanding, detail tasks. On the other hand, in the office you meet so many people and you obtain so much information from everywhere. Working only from home? I wouldn't like to do that, because it would limit the inside unofficial information. I would feel very isolated at home. If I have coffee with my colleagues, maybe it is not productive, but I can gain very important information, which you don't capture when working from home“.*

42% of respondents feel more productive working from home, because it gives them required concentration and flexibility. They perceive home as a place free of distractions. Such an environment is the determinant for higher effectiveness and efficiency. Philip, Recruitment Consultant, prefers to work from home: *“I would say at home I am more productive. In the office I have more distractions, such as colleagues asking for something or going for coffee. And I don't have to commute, so I save time“.*

Only two employees feel more productive in the office. Their positions require high cooperation and the exchange of information with other employees. One Sales Person feels more productive on the premises of the customers. Working there enables him to do a big part of negotiation and gather the most important data and information to close the deals. After a customer visits he prefers to work from home to concentrate on complex tasks, such as contracts and agreements, because it requires focus and comfort, which home space guarantees.

Measuring employee performance while working from home is an area where researchers have very divergent opinions. The question is whether it is necessary to control teleworkers at all. For the interviewees themselves it is not reasonable to measure performance while working from home. It takes away the feelings of trust that is essential to work from home. Hence, there is no understanding why a supervisor in the first place approve telework and the require performance measurement. 30 years old Harry explained: *“No, I think it should not be controlled, if I work 10- 20% from home. This is about the trust, flexibility and*

freedom the company gives you. I think putting a measurement on it doesn't make any sense. It would be against the employee“.

The evaluation of the interviews also indicates that there are different notions on how to measure performance when a mix of home office and normal work mode is applied. For sales people it was clear and straightforward. The best way to be evaluated is based on targets, which are delivered every quarter. Edi, 28 a years old Solution Consultant, states: *“I am measured based on numbers, so performance measures work well in my case. My boss cares if I deliver and have good numbers, in this case I can be working from home, train or wherever I like. Place doesn't matter, results do“.* Responsiveness and social control for many interviewees were the best determinants to know if someone is really working from home during office hours. Because of the high workload it is impossible to enjoy some spare time on a regular basis during working hours. Manager and co-workers would instantly notice. Scharon made the point: *“There is indirect control of your co-workers, if you are online or not. Someone sends you an email and see if you respond or not. People notice when you work or not. There is this social control and people are busy, so they must work hard every day, because otherwise people would notice very fast if you lack something or if you don't respond. Direct control is not necessary and maybe would take away the loyalty from employees, because they would feel that they are not trustworthy“.*

The findings also point out that the measurement depends from the job, and thereby it is important to implement suitable KPIs based on the job description and expectations. No matter what, the indicators should be reasonable, logic and smart. Control systems cannot become a burden and stress factor for both, employer and employees. Constant monitoring and checks should be avoided. On top there is a lot of administrative work involved on both sides. Subjective and objective factors should be taken into account. Lukas has the following opinion: *“It is necessary to measure employee performance. It is important to measure both factors, subjective and objective. My company does it pretty well. Now, when we are managing complex businesses and when targets are very high, but the economic situation is tough, they consider how much difficulties you have to go through on a specific market to achieve your target in order to be successful. They are very conscious about it. They also look for the ability to work in teams and if you help from your team members. How much you can manage company processes and resources also matters“.*

For directors and some managers the challenge is clearly how to control and measure the performance of employees while they work outside. They agree that there is a link between the ability to work from home and satisfaction, loyalty and performance. However, they have never done any research among employees according to home office performance. Neither did they try to obtain information regarding their opinion on the matter, how the satisfaction levels might be affected if there might be a link between home office and effectiveness. This missing information is important in order to improve the overall concept. Directors expressed their understanding to use both, subjective and objective factors to fairly measure their subordinates. But in practice they do not monitor employees when they work from home.

Key findings:

- respondents condition their productivity from the task, which they have to perform
- administrative tasks, or tasks that requires lots of focus and no distractions are better and faster performed from home
- for information exchange, collaboration and knowledge sharing it is more practical and beneficial to be in the office
- for the interviewees it is not reasonable to measure performance while working from home, because it takes away the feelings of trust that is essential to work from home
- constant monitoring and checks should be avoided
- for sales people the best way to be evaluated is based on targets, which are delivered every quarter
- for directors and some managers the challenge lies in control and performance measures of employees working outside of the office premises
- directors agree that there is a link between the ability to work from home and satisfaction, loyalty and performance
- directors do not monitor employees when they work from home

4.5 Home Office and its Impacts on Work-Life Balance

It is well known that work-life balance is one of the most important workplace attributes—second only to compensation. Thereby, it is essential to analyse whether there is a positive impact of home office on work-life-family balance (<http://www.worktolive.info/work-life-balance/>).

The evaluation of the interviews concludes that there is clearly a positive effect on the work-life balance. Only one respondent disagrees. 27 year old Donald, IT Consultant with two years of working experience in the company expresses the following concern: *“There is not necessarily a benefit, because I cannot separate my free time and work time if I work from home”*. Still, the majority of the respondents point out that working from home allows them to manage private and family life in more healthy and balanced way. It also mitigates the pressure and stress connected with commuting. The extra time, which they normally spend each morning on the way to work or in the traffic can be devoted to the family or used for other private duties. Here is how 57 years old Henry explained his situation: *“It is a positive point, because if I am working from home 3 times a week I save my commuting time. It is 9 hours a week, which I can use for my family or my job, it is my decision. Normally, I am using it for private things”*. For the majority of these professionals working full time, having extra time with their family or being able to drive and pick up their kids up from a school is crucial element of their wellbeing. Scharon, mother of two small kids quotes: *“I have two small kids, which requires doctor visits. Doctors here in Switzerland are not that flexible, so if you have a flexible schedule it takes away a lot of pressure. I can be at home, taking care of my kids and still be working online and I don’t need to feel guilty or having the impression that people discriminate me. It has no impact on my professionalism. I think it would be differently, if I would be absent and wouldn’t have the tools to work from home. It takes pressure away from me, as I know I won’t be perceived as less skilled or less ambitious than people who are constantly in the office. The flexibility is great too, because if something in your private life is unexpected you can handle it easier”*.

Maintaining a healthy balance between private and family life means reducing stress. As Marcus notes: *“Yes, definitely I would say it is one of the main advantages. Especially in our IT environment, where big companies ‘consume’ employees by demanding a lot of work and keep expecting great results in the midst of an economic down turn, being able to do home office can keep employees really motivated and reduce the pressure”*. Another

important, insight is that the respondents are fully aware that it is their own responsibility to sustain a healthy work-life balance. Neither the company nor the supervisors really takes measure to ease all responsibilities that exist at work and beyond. In this regard, the home office is a very suitable and flexible tool to ease time management issues and ease the challenge of balancing work and private related issues. Lukas, a 40 years old employee states: *“You have to balance it, because nobody else will help you to do so. If you are not able to do that, don’t go for home office. It helps me and I can balance it as a Senior Sales person. Ten years ago, it wasn’t for me. Now I work for this Company for over ten years and I know how to deal with it. Now I have different possibilities, I can meet my customers or take them for dinner”*. Victor, 32 a years old Territory Manager has a similar view. He explains: *“Home office helps me to balance all my duties. But it depends also from your own personality. It is you, who is making the balance, so you should know when you have to stop and when to start”*.

4.6 The Future of Home Office

The acceleration of information technology has changed every aspect of life and work. Thereby it is important to assess the future trends and to analyse how the use and frequency teleworking may change. The analysis of the interviews indicates that the use of teleworking will become more important. 22 participants (92%) point out that teleworking will increase in the future. It is believed that the cost pressure will force companies to reduce working space and introduce more shared desks. The chosen company is a perfect example. During the elaboration of the research a whole floor out of three was abandoned due to the high work space cost per employee.

The interviewees also underlined that the future of the home office depends from the organizational as well as country culture. Further determinants for the future development of teleworking are the job specifications themselves, the company vision and management style. The IT Industry itself has a very favourable environment and should facilitate the accelerations of home office. Martina, with 15 years’ experience shares the following point of view: *“For a certain businesses, yes, it will increase, because it costs less for the company and it provides more open, shared sources such as shared desks. When we are talking about IT-Industry or internet businesses of course they will continue to motivate people to work from home. They will provide and sponsor the internet access and home office equipment. But if you work in a manufacturing or in a supermarket they don’t have*

many possibilities, as their employees need to be at the workplace, because this is the job requirement. It might look different in 10-15 years. For the new generation, the way they use technology and how they communicate is changing their perception. They integrate the technology very fast compared to older people. You explain them once how an iPad works and they are instantly on it. Internet and technology is the future and everything connected with it will be in the main interest”.

Globalization is another reason for the increase and importance of virtual teams. Communication and video conferencing solutions allow meetings and interaction through time and space. Henry expresses the following view on globalization and its consequences: *“Globalization is accelerating fast and there are more and more virtual teams. For example, my manager is sitting in the Netherlands, his manager in turn is located in Finland. The costs of physical meetings are simply too high. This is why home office will be on rise“.* Robert, the 27 years old Campaign Manager talks about a ‘green revolution’: *“I think home office will become a trend, because technologies support and facilitate it. In general people pay more attention to environmental concerns, better and healthier food, work-life balance, equality for women in the working space and so on. There is greater awareness for the wellbeing. And home office will become a crucial part of it“.*

The increase of social media will also facilitate home office. The interviewed HR-Professionals believe that the home office will play a crucial role in the war for the best talents. Serum, HR Consultant, treats teleworking as a future trend, especially for the young generation: *“I would say it is a trend and it is demanded especially from the young generation. They want to have a better work-life balance instead of monetary benefits. They rather go for more free time, because they want to enjoy life“.*

4.7 Home Office from a Human Resource Management Perspective

4.7.1 Importance of Home Office for Recruitment

In order to gain a complete overview of the subject it is important to also evaluate home office from a human resource perspective. For this purpose, also two HR Professionals have been interviewed. The interview script has been modified accordingly. The main purpose is to understand the interdependencies between home office and human resource management practises. As there is demand for teleworking, it is also vital to recognize the importance of home office in terms of recruitment and talent management.

In this regard the research investigates if home office is an important attribute in the selection of an employment position.

The evaluation of the interviews highlights that the demand for home office is driven by three major aspects:

1. Age
2. Previous experience
3. Family situation

Both, the interviewed human resource professionals and employees respond that career starters ask in their first jobs for a pc, smart phone and/or car allowance. With more maturity and a family in place also the need start to change. Employees with previous home office experience and young parents display strong interested in teleworking possibilities. They tend to ask about the possibility of working from home as early as possible in the hiring process. Philip, Recruitment Consultant, explains: *“Home office is getting more and more popular. Maybe not such for young graduates, because they ask more for a pc, a phone and a company car, but I have more candidates with kids and they ask more often if it is possible to work from home and have the flexibility in case the kid gets sick“*. Serum, HR Consultant, indicates that the ability to do home office is seen as a standard in the IT Industry. He notes: *“Here in the IT industry people take it as standard, because lots of them already did home office and thus are familiar with the concept and benefits. It is important for them, and they tend to ask for it during the interviews”*. Another interesting aspect to investigate is the gender difference. One could expect that they might be differences between males and females. However, the findings reject this theory. Both genders note that teleworking is more about personal needs and the attitude towards how work is executed than gender driven. Philip refers to his latest experience: *“Yesterday I had an interview with 31 years old father. He has son and he was asking if there is the possibility to work from home. Hence, I believe it is more about personal needs than about gender“*.

4.7.2 Recruitment Processes and Practices

The home office regulations in the observed company state that employees need to apply to work from home and that an approval is required. Most of the positions require office presence. Recruiters do not proactively promote the ability to work from home either. The core essence of the recruitment is about the perfect fit of the candidate who should qualify with a set of certain skills. Such skills include education, experience, performance or

achievements to mention a few. Beyond skills also motivation and interest of the candidate to work for the company are considered. There are no differences in terms of recruitment procedures when teleworking is involved. The recruitment processes and practices remain always the same. But telework, if demanded, is clearly positioned as an additional benefit.

The evaluation of the interviewed HR Professionals shows that during interviews a solid majority of applicants/candidates ask about the possibility to do home office. The question is whether every candidate qualifies for home office. From a recruitment perspective there is a certain profile as Philip explains: *“I would look for someone with great motivation and discipline. Maturity would be an important aspect as well, because home office demand the understanding of responsibilities outside the office and most young graduates don’t possess these qualities. They might be more likely to abuse the system“*.

4.7.3 The Impact of Home Office on Employee Retention

This section deals with the question whether home office can help to retain employees. Both interviewed HR Professionals strongly agree that teleworking facilitates the retention of employees. But it is seen as a double edged sword and might create conflict. The possibility to telework is highly appreciated and once implemented it might be taken as granted. Hence, the cancellation of such an agreement bears the possibility that some employees might terminate the work contract. Not only the cancelation of an already approved home office request is a sensitive issue, also the denial or the neglect of an initial request prevails incomprehension. The 42 years old HR Consultant shares the following experience: *“I know one case, where someone was struggling with the employment situation because of the manager’s blockade to work from home. This person expressed that the ability to work from home is essential, a must have as she has to look after their children. Teleworking was so important to her that she would change the job in case her request would be denied”*. Overall it can be said that home office has an impact on the retention of employees. For some it is more important for other less. But once in place it is difficult to take it away, especially if it is explicitly demanded to telework.

4.8 Conclusion

The majority of the interviewees accept the concept of home office and perceive it as a very beneficial advantage. Home office is used occasionally, in most cases less than 50%. It helps employees to find a healthy balance between private, family and work related duties. It also contributes to higher motivation and retention of the employees. Less commuting results in time and cost savings for and contributes to the environment. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to work in a comfortable undisturbed surrounding. This in turn enhances the efficiency. The ideal task to be performed at home require concentration over a long period. This can be administrative task or the formulation of complex contracts or important presentations. The research shows that the interviewees were also aware of the drawbacks. The most listed disadvantages are the lack of social contact, disconnecting from the company culture and spirit, solitude, the need for strong self-driven discipline and overwork. The proximity of the supervisors to their subordinates defines the attitude towards home office. Directors located in the same premises prefer to work closely with their employees. Therefore, they are not really in favour of home office. Teleworking is still accepted, but only occasionally or on a special request. This is explained with the importance for collaboration and knowledge sharing between employees and teams. The perception of teleworking radically changes for managers who work globally or with virtual teams. What matters are results and that the work is done rather than from where to work. Trust, maturity and a certain profile entitle an employee to work from home. Directors see the benefits of teleworking reduced travel time and higher effectiveness. The interviews point out that there a clear link exists between the ability to work from home and their loyalty, performance and satisfaction. Supervisors do not monitor teleworking activities. On top no research has been conducted on the matter and feedback was not collected either from the employees. The IT Industry provides favourable conditions for home office. But any company that has an innovative infrastructure and communication tools in place is suitable to execute home from anywhere.

HR Professionals on the other side indicate that employees with young children and leaving further away from the work place are most likely to apply for home office. The concept of teleworking becomes more and more important. This can be also noticed in the recruitment of new hires. Candidates show great interest in teleworking and clarify if they are granted such an option. There is also a common notion that teleworking helps retaining employees.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary

After providing a detailed interview analysis the findings were evaluated and presented in Chapter 4. The key findings were summarized and highlighted in order to obtain a better understanding and overview of the major subcategories. Chapter 5 aims at providing a general summary, evoking the general objective and six sub-objectives stated earlier on in this Master Thesis. The main goal of this dissertation was to understand the degree of acceptance and perception of the home office in the IT Industry. The master thesis consequently provides the reader with a detailed literature review about home office and additional relevant information. The theory also covered the paradoxes often occurring in home office work. A sample of 24 interviewees in IT-Industry was researched in order to draw a conclusion about the acceptance and perception of the home office. The applied interviews were designed to identify the current use of home office, common practices as well as the participants acceptance and perception.

To clearly highlight the outcomes of the conducted research the author recalls the sub-objectives, which have been already stated previously as:

1. Existing literature review and information gathering
2. Identification of main paradoxes related to home office mode
3. Determination of main advantages and disadvantages of the home office for employees and companies
4. Development of high yield questionnaire based on first findings
5. Comparison and examination of literature review with interview results
6. Presentation of key findings about perception and acceptance patterns of home office

Research Objective 1

In order to understand the background of the home office mode the author has researched existing literature and gathered additional information. The majority of sources date back to the 1970's, the time when the home office was born in a form of low paid, clerical jobs, which could be performed from home. The invention of the Internet and other technologies have accelerated the spread of home office practices. Innovative, global corporations possess the necessary information and communication technologies to allow their highly skilled, mostly managerial level employees to work outside of the office premises. This concept provides greater flexibility and freedom and was introduced to achieve higher

employee performance. In return, working remotely requires trust in return by the supervisors.

Research Objective 2

The conducted research based on interviews with employees, HR professionals and directors discover three main paradoxes are aligned with the introduced theory of Peailson and Sounders (2001). The participants have noticed paradoxes of increased flexibility which leads to more structure. It means that home office provides flexibility, but at the same time undermines the importance of efficient time management required by remote workers. This explains also the need for self-discipline, motivation and commitment to clear goals which have been agreed up with the supervisors. The second paradox deals with greater individuality by teleworkers and the fear of losing company spirit and culture as well as relationships with co-workers. The jobs most suitable for home office appear to be tasks and activities which can be performed in isolation, because employees can fully focus in an environment free of distractions. Such kinds of activities include administrative work, presentations, important contracts and so on. However, the need for affiliation is as relevant as the need of purpose for the majority of the respondents. This is the reason why they appreciate the possibility of working occasionally from home. They prefer to be in the office in order to connect and socialize with other peers and to foster collaboration. The last paradox deals with greater employee responsibility to execute work from home, whereas managers are confronted with the fear of losing control over their subordinated. Employees appreciate the given trust and approval to work from home. Therefore, they feel morally obligated to utilize the chance and aim to work as good from home as they would from the office. Managers on the other side prefer their subordinated to work from the office in order to avoid losing control with less visibility.

Research Objective 3

The gathered information and evaluation of the results clearly determine some main advantages and disadvantages of using home office. The key advantages for employees are listed below:

- The ability to focus at home without experiencing any direct distractions from other colleagues, in contrast to open space office formats where they are prone to ongoing distractions
- No need for commuting leading to time, cost and environmental savings and benefits

- Higher flexibility and better time management resulting in improved work-life balance due to execution of work based priorities and personal needs

The key disadvantages for employees working from home are seen in:

- Social isolation and lack of presence in the office leading to disconnection from the company spirit and culture
- Restricted social contacts and loss of information flow is simply not acceptable

The interviewees clearly stated no interest in working from home five days a week and expressed the need for face-to-face social relationships with co-workers and managers.

From the company point of view the main advantages were seen in:

- Improved employee recruitment, retention, productivity, satisfaction and organizational commitment
- Reduced costs connected with smaller office space requirements

The company challenges are:

- Attitude of in-office employees
- Career promotion
- Distribution in work teams
- Management control and trust
- Measuring productivity

Research Objective 4

The literature review and findings are related to various theories, such as:

- Home office paradoxes
- Advantages and disadvantages from the employee and the company perspective
- Teleworkers profile and role of management, the importance of trust
- Interdependencies of home office and HR practices

Three scripts were designed in order to target different interviewees. The script for the Human Resource representative contains 29 questions focusing on performance, HR interview processes, career development and teleworkers evaluation. The directors should answer 18 questions related to the company's home-office strategy and support, costs and employee performance. The largest interview group, twenty employees working from

home, received 22 questions aiming to evaluate advantages and disadvantages related to their specific work style and to describe their perception and acceptance of the home office.

Research Objective 5

The interview results show significant similarities with the findings of the theory presented earlier in this dissertation. Participants expressed three major paradoxes:

- Increased flexibility which leads to more structure
- Greater individuality, more teamwork
- More responsibility, greater control

These findings reaffirm the described theory of Peailson and Sounders (2001).

The majority of advantages and disadvantages stated by employees and for companies resulted from the interviews are also in line with those listed by Madsen (2001).

The profiles of the interviewed teleworkers proof analogues and demographic similarities as mentioned by Susan Madsen: married employees, parents with children at home, mothers of young children, well-educated employees and managers or professionals. The notion of many researchers, that only certain individuals with specific profiles are suited to telecommute, is confirmed by respondents of the authors research. Based on articles and the evaluated interviewees, teleworkers should be trustworthy, self-disciplined, focused, motivated, self-reliant and organized.

According to Conner's findings from 1986, which were confirmed after interviews analysis, stated that specific managerial style on its own, does not determine the success or failure of telecommuting. The author of this dissertation could notice various managerial styles. Failure or success was highly dependent from participants on their own, not their managers. Nonetheless, the majority of interviewees believe, it is easier to be supervised by managers which trust them, share information on a regular basis, react to negative feedback constructively and display a high degree of loyalty to subordinates. Dimitrina Dimitrova (2003) explained that telework managers expect higher productivity and lower office costs and that employees are attracted by higher autonomy. In her opinion, which was confirmed by the participants as well, only environment without constant observation of supervisors and directors yields into higher results. Charles Handy (2010) and Felstead & Jewson & Walters (2003) discovered that a technology on its own is not enough. Trust it requires to make home office a success. This notion was also confirmed by respondents. In

all studies trust was repeatedly emphasized by managers and employees for the overall success of telework. Trust helps managers to deal with the absence of visibility, which they had to adopt and cope with. Trust drives employees to deliver the expected results and to be productive without the need for monitoring and daily task checks. The research shows that telework is an important aspect of work for employees, managers and directors. Therefore, HR Professionals should also pay close attention to the topic.

The respondents indicate that due the development of telecommunication technologies and spread of social media less face-to-face interaction will be necessary. Instead Internet and communication tools will become more important. Thereby, HR Professionals should assist and help managers/ directors with design of home office programmes as well as the implementation of policies and procedures. This is important to outweigh the challenges and problems that employees and employers may be confronted with.

This interviews outcome confirms Madsen's (2003) opinion of importance and interdependencies noticed between home office and HR practices.

Research Objective 6

In order to achieve this objective, the author has focused on demonstrating the perception and acceptance patterns of home office based on previous interviews. This paragraph provides also the overall Research Objective, which is to demonstrate findings according to: *The Perception and Acceptance of Home Office in the Information Technology Industry*. Based on the findings gathered through this dissertation it can be concluded that the majority of participants working in the IT Industry widely accept and perceive well home office mode. The Company has designed home office policies and regulations, which provide employees structure and guidelines for the application process and other requirements to work from home. In the majority of cases the Company didn't encourage employees to work from home, but workers demanded such possibility created by various private situations. For many employees it was demanded after a child birth. Other reasons were long distance from the office and require commuting. Also the need for concentration was a key finding. In order to complete tasks that require focus the home office was preferred over the open space office format. In terms of recruitment, HR Professionals don't use home office as a proactive benefit to attract young talents. Nonetheless, they are aware of its impacts which home office brings along.

Due to the need of high collaboration directors preferred to see their employees on-site. As they have stated it gives them visibility and greater possibility of control. However,

directors fully understood the need for occasional teleworking and approve remote work under certain private circumstances or other justified reasons. The situation is different when employees a part of a virtual teams and their managers work from another country or remotely themselves. Under these circumstances it is important not from where work is done, but hat targets are achieved on time.

To conclude it deserves attention that providing “optional” use of home office does surely have a positive impact on employees overall satisfaction, appreciation, effectiveness and motivation. However, based on the findings of this dissertation certain employee profiles and the maturity level need to be possessed in order to leverage the benefits. Otherwise it may be abused and severe in consequences for both, the company and employees private life. Therefore it is advised for any employer to closely consider the optional use of working from home as a general incentive to positively influence employees.

5.2 Critical Reflection, Limitations and Suggestion for future Research

Even though the dissertation and the conducted employee interviews present significant results, there are a couple of facts that should be reflected critically. First of all, it should be mentioned that the research sample was made up of a small number of participants. The sample consists mainly from one IT Cooperation conducted in two different locations. The future research could be conducted with a bigger sample in various IT Companies. The view of two directors, both office based and two HR Professionals may seems limited. Expansion for future research should aim to receive a broader picture according to perception and acceptance, including a bigger number of HR people and Directors supervising both, office and virtual teams. Further research should also examine home office procedures, policies, guidelines and the role and importance of such structures for employee awareness and overalls success of the company. The role of HR Professionals helping managers in the process of establishing strategies for future home office programs, trainings and awareness of advantages and disadvantages and managerial solving telework paradoxes programs should be in great concern for future researchers.

In addition to that, it should be mentioned that the executed research was primarily limited to the geographical area of Switzerland. Within further research it should be considered to expand this population to other geographical areas and observe whether the gathered results would differ between countries and regions.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Interview Scripts

Interview Template for Directors

Person:

Position:

Date:

Time:

Age:

Nationality:

1. How long do you work in this company?
2. How long do you work in the same position?
3. Are the employment policies allow you and your subordinated to do home office?
4. What do you think about the home office in general? What is your opinion?
5. Is home office demanded, accepted and practiced from your subordinates?
6. Independently from the contract, why or why not do you allow and foster your employees to work from home?
7. What are the main advantages and disadvantages when working from home for the company and the employees?
8. Whom would you give the possibility to work from home?
9. Do you, as a director work from home? How often? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?
10. When is beneficial for employees to work from home.
11. Does the IT industry provide a suitable environment to support home office? If yes describe how, If not why it doesn't?
12. What industry/environment is the best to implement and successfully execute home-office?
13. Do you think home office policies and strategies are necessary?
14. Do you think, there is a link between the ability to work from home and employees satisfaction and performance?
15. Do you monitor employees working from home. If yes please describe how?
16. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home? Is it necessary at all?
17. Have you done any research among employees according home office? (Their opinion, satisfaction, link with effectiveness and motivation etc.) If yes, what are the outcomes?
18. Tell me please, if you see home office as something what will increase or become a trend in the future? Why?

Interview Template for Human Resource Professionals*Person:**Position:**Date:**Time:**Age:**Nationality:*

1. How long do you work in this company?
2. How long do you work in the same position?
3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?
4. Would you like to have a contract, where home office is explicitly allowed?
5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?
6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?
7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?
8. What do you think about the home office in general?
9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?
10. What are the main advantages when working from home?
11. What are the main disadvantages?
12. In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.
13. Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?
14. Under which circumstances do you think does it make sense to work from home?
15. Could you imagine to work only from home?
16. What do you think about other Companies allowing their employees to work from home. Do you rank them higher?
17. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?
18. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?
19. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?
20. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home and give performance appraisal?
21. Why home office in some cases and some companies doesn't work?
22. Is the possibility of working from home important for the future candidates?
23. Have you notice greater demand for home office according to a gender?

24. Do you state home office if it's possible to the new candidate during interview process?
25. What candidate profile are you looking for when it comes to position with flexibility and home office execution?
26. Does home office help to retain employees?
27. Does the recruitment process looks the same for a person working from the office and person doing home office?
28. Do you have home office policies in this Company.
29. Tell me please, if you see home office as something what will increase or become a trend in the future? Why?

Interview Template for Employees

Person:

Position:

Date:

Time:

Age:

Nationality:

1. How long do you work in this company?
2. How long do you work in the same position?
3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?
4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?
5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?
6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?
7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?
8. What do you think about the home office in general?
9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?
10. What are the main advantages when working from home?
11. What are the main disadvantages?
12. In which aspect do you profit most from the home office?
13. Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?
14. Under which circumstances do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?
15. Could you imagine to work only from home?
16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?
17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home?
18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't? Please explain why.
19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?
20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?
21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?
22. Tell me please, if you see home office as something what will increase or become a trend in the future? Why?

Appendix B – Interview Answers

Directors

Interviewee: 1/24

Person: Gregory

Position: Distribution Director

Date: 22.02.2014

Time: 15.30

Age: 50

Nationality: Swiss

1. How long do you work in this company?
10 years.
2. How long do you work in the same position?
3 Years.
3. Are the employment policies at oracle allowing you and your subordinated to do home office?
Yes, maximum half day.
4. What do you think about the home office in general? What is your opinion.
It's a question about the maturity of the people, if you build up a new team or integrate a new subordinates, a home office approach is not applicable. Networking and collaboration between other line of business or colleagues, are key elements to be efficient and successful in our business
5. Is home office demanded, accepted and practiced from your subordinates?
Yes, few subordinates are using the possibilities, but the demand is low at the moment.
6. Independently from the contract, why or why not do you allow and foster your employees to work from home?
Its again about the maturity and if the collaboration is crucial.
7. What are the main advantages and disadvantages when working from home for the company and the employee?
The main advantages are efficiency and productivity. Disadvantages from my perspective is knowledge sharing and team building.
8. Whom would you give the possibility to work from home?
All trusted subordinates
9. Do you as a manager work from home? How often? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?

- Yes, I do. It is early morning and evening, regularly but not half or full-day
10. When is beneficial for employees to work from home?
When it helps to save travel time or it increases their effectiveness
11. Does the IT industry provide a suitable environment to support home office? If yes describe how, If not why it doesn't?
Yes, there is no difference to the office environments, we deliver VPN-Services to each employee, which allow him to access the systems from everywhere.
12. What industry/environment is the best to implement and successfully execute home-office?
None specific.
13. Do You think home-office policies and strategies are necessary?
Yes, we have one.
14. Do You think, there is a link between the ability to work from home and employees satisfaction, loyalty and performance?
Yes, there is a link in my opinion.
15. Do You monitor employees working from home. If yes please describe how?
No, I don't.
16. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?
I don't have any experience in this field, so it is hard to say.
17. Have You done any research among employees according home office? (Their opinion, satisfaction, link with effectiveness and motivation etc.) If yes, what are the outcomes?
No, we haven't done any research.
18. Tell me please, if you see home office as something that will increase or become a trend in the future? Why?
Yes, because all the new technologies such as all social media will support virtual teams and make them efficient and more collaborative

Interviewee: 2/24

Person: Salomena

Position: Alliances & Channels Director

Date: 21.02.2014

Time: 16.00

Age: 40

Nationality: Swiss

1. How long do you work in this company?

3 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

I have changed 9 months ago. I had the possibility of home office since the beginning.

3. Are the employment policies at oracle allowing you and your subordinated to do home office?

The fact is, that I don't support home office in my team. Obviously, we do have home office possibilities, but in order to get tax release you have to apply for it. My team is based here in Baden, so I prefer to have them in the office.

4. What do you think about the home office in general? What is your opinion.

I think it's a tough environment. There are a lots of good and a lot of bad things about it. I think everyone should have the possibility to stay at home, but not because they get out of bed late and stay in my pyjama all day, more if they want to concentrate or if they need to work on sensitive things. As a manager of my team when I work on the performance appraisal and someone can walk to my desk and see the screen, so I rather in this case stay at home and do it from there.

5. Is home office demanded, accepted and practiced from your subordinates?

It is demanded. It was normal for my team before I took over to stay at home on Friday and Monday. When I took over, we had a team meeting and I communicated how I would like to proceed with the team. Most stayed pretty much the same, so there was no huge change. In my team, they need to exchange with sales, marketing, presales, with so many department within this company that staying at home will not help them to get this job done. Especially in lines and channels, cooperating among each other and other departments is crucial to be successful. We are the only team, which has team targets, no revenue target, so it is even more important that we work together.

6. Independently from the contract, why or why not do you allow and foster your employees to work from home?

I don't support it, because of the importance of collaboration with other peers, managers, departments. I obviously allow it, when it is noted in advance, as long as I get a message or an email and they communicate to me it is fine. I have two young fathers in my team and if they have to stay at home because the kid is sick and they cannot give the baby to the childcare they need to stay home. That is not an issue. If they tell me I have a plumber coming home this morning and I have to be here or if they need to work on something important in peace.

7. [What are the main advantages and disadvantages when working from home for the company and the employee?](#)

I will start from the employee side. The main advantage is to stay focus, not to be distracted by coffee breaks and chats. It gives them the flexibility to work in a good environment. Disadvantages is that you get distracted by everything else. If you don't like the task, suddenly you realise you have to do your laundry, or clean your windows and so on. You can be tempted to watch TV, stay in bed and walk in a pyjama the whole day. From the employer side I think the advantage is to keep the employee motivated, give them the ability to adjust to a situation, which happens. Challenge can be the trust issue. Is the employee really working from home, so he answers the email and phone as in the office. Disadvantage is that I don't have the control. Lack of collaboration also is a disadvantage. It's a huge challenge for me too, as a director, because if they don't communicate I have to run after them and chase.

8. [Whom would you give the possibility to work from home?](#)

A reliable person, structured, trustworthy, responsive with ability to take ownership. Interested and motivated. It is the personality what I am looking for. It is not really about the age, but when I have junior in my team, there will be no home office possibility for them, because they have to learn and they don't learn anything when they are at home. I have someone in my team, she doesn't report to me, but she was new in the company and for the first few months there was no possibility of home office. That was her choice.

9. [Do you as a manager work from home? How often? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?](#)

It is more circumstantial. It is according to my schedule, when something comes up or I need to concentrate.

10. [When is beneficial for employees to work from home?](#)

I don't really think is beneficial for them to stay at home when they have a family, because they will get distracted when there is a crying child and so on. It is beneficial for their private circumstances. For the employees it can be beneficial, when they have to stay at home and concentrate.

11. Does the IT industry provide a suitable environment to support home office? If yes describe how, If not why it doesn't?

I wouldn't limit it just to IT industry. We are international company, so we are virtually organized. A lot of people are from all over the world, and work in different countries and have to collaborate with each other.

12. What industry/environment is the best to implement and successfully execute home-office?

You need tools to work such as laptop, internet and phone if you need more tools than you are probably in trouble. I wouldn't limit it to any business. I used to work in a company called Citric and they don't have an office. It is a big company, we are talking about 6,5 thousand employees. The all have home office, so their employees work remotely from home. I personally thought it doesn't make sense, because there was no collaboration among the colleague unless we triggered it. So, I work with colleague of mine a she leaved nearby so we would meet for a coffee and work together. In my opinion 100% home office doesn't work, because companies need collaboration and face-to-face relations. You can do as many videoconferences you want, but in the end the handshake and meeting is something totally different. Feeling the company and the environment is something completely different too. When I talk about home office is once in a while not permanently.

13. Do You think home-office policies and strategies are necessary?

Yes, I think it is necessary. To regulate and make the structure. To guide employees.

14. Do You think, there is a link between the ability to work from home and employees satisfaction, loyalty and performance?

I don't know if they appreciate the company, but they do appreciate the ability of working from home. And to adjust it to their private or work circumstances.

15. Do You monitor employees working from home. If yes please describe how?

No. It is because the idea of monitoring. It is awkward for me and I really don't have time to do it. Nonetheless, Friday afternoon and Monday morning home office is too obvious.

16. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

If I would have somebody working from home all the time I would definitely implement soft targets, MBOs and KPI or how many visits or partners meetings they had. So I would arrange extra measurements adequate to the position.

17. Have You done any research among employees according home office? (Their opinion, satisfaction, link with effectiveness and motivation etc.) If yes, what are the outcomes?

No. I haven't done anything like this.

18. Tell me please, if You see home office as something what will increase or become a trend in the future?

On one side I think it is increasing due to more specialize jobs and to avoid commuting. On the other side, there are many companies which gave the possibility of home office or remote work and it didn't work for them. I think it will be stable, in a sense of having home office only. But what I think it's going to increase, not just in IT progressive companies is the flexibility of employees and mix of home office and office work. That is definitely going to increase.

Human Resource Professionals

Interviewee: 3/24

Person: Philip

Position: Recruitment Consultant

Date: 30.01.2014

Time: 11.00

Age: 30

Nationality: German

1. How long do you work in this company?

Years

2. What is the position? How long do you work in the same position?

Years.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

No, it doesn't.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

In the end no. As long as my manager agrees with me working from home its fine.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

My manager understand my situation because she was a recruiter before, so she used to do the same job working from home. She supports me.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Yes, it is. My manager is based in South Africa and my others recruitment colleagues are working from different places such as Dublin, The Netherlands, Spain, Germany. This is why we can do home office, because my manager in South Africa cannot control us in the end. My recruitment colleagues have all the flexibility they want, so they can work from home or they can come to the office. As a recruiter I do phone interviews, so it doesn't really matter where I am. The major thing is, that I need to get my work done. It's about the target you should reach, not about 8 hours in the office. In my virtual team, since we are all distance and working in different countries we all have team phone calls and there is no different treatment according to the workplace.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

When I am coming here to the office its different. This is the reason why I am coming at least once a week to the office, because I don't want to feel detached from my colleagues from the office. It is important to have some social contact with them,

- so they perceive me as a part of the company. Still I have to say since I am working from home I am not that much connected with guys working from the office.
8. **What do you think about the home office in general?**
I love it. It gives me great flexibility. I can get more work done from home. I don't have to commute, so I can save time. I can make my appointments without asking my manager and have a flexible schedule.
9. **How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?**
Once a week I come to the office, the rest I work from home.
10. **What are the main advantages when working from home?**
Flexibility is number one. I can also get more work done so it's time saving. Usually, when I am here in the office I start work at 9am, when I am at home I start at 8.00am, 8.15am. Time management. I am not distracted and at home I feel more focused.
11. **What are the main disadvantages?**
Lack of social contact is the biggest one. It can be tough to work on your own for a long period. I miss being a part of a team. On the other side, distraction from colleagues going for coffee, cigarettes and lunch breaks are the major reason of time waste.
12. **In which aspect do you profit most from the home office?**
Flexibility in the end, it is the main aspect for me.
13. **Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?**
I would say at home I am more productive. In the office I have more distractions, such as colleagues asking for something or going for a coffee. And I don't have to commute, so I save time.
14. **Under which circumstances do you think does it make sense to work from home?**
In any job which you don't need face-to-face contact. As a recruiter, I do everything over the phone, so it really doesn't matter if I stay in Geneva, Munich or Copenhagen. This is why my manager can work from South Africa and manage a team working in Europe. I think more and more jobs you do from the office, you can also perform from home. As we have collaborative tools like Skype, internet chat, email, video conferences, companies might realise it doesn't make sense to come to the office every day. Managers may appear more in the office, because they need to be available for quick checks or questions from the employees, so it does make sense they are in the office.

15. Could you imagine to work only from home?

Yes, I can imagine. I wouldn't do it for the rest of my life but 2-3 years it would be fine.

16. What do you think about other Companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher.

Yes, I do rank the higher. I think they look after their employees needs and are flexible to adjust.

17. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?

I don't really know how others are working from home, but it depends from the employee, company culture and the company itself. My virtual team is very responsive. We have this intern chats, so we can communicate all the time and there is plenty of tools to communicate. For the company, the most important thing is if the target is reached. It means the employees are productive. No matter how and from where you will do it.

18. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?

I have a wife I don't have any kids yet. My wife finish at 6pm so I try to finish around that time too. Since I do home office our private life is better, because I can get more things done in a shorter time. I have the flexibility to drop something at the post office during my lunch break, sort something out which I am doing during the day so we don't need to do it after work or during our free time off. As I will have kids I will make one separate room like a proper office, but for now on I am working from the kitchen as I have very nice view from the window I prefer to work from there. I don't have kids yet, so I cannot tell you about the family situation, but I have a recruitment colleague, she has two kids and working from home and she can pick them up from school and work in the evening, when kids are sleeping. My manager got a kid recently, and she reduced the working time, so she works just 2days both from home so it's even flexible this way.

19. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?

Yes, because if I will be changing the employer, I would ask if there is a possibility to work from home. If they wouldn't have this flexibility of course I wouldn't change.

20. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

As a recruiter we have sort of soft targets, it means we have to make from 10 to 15 hires for a quarter, so far I always achieve or overachieve it. In our case it's based on clear targets. Nowadays you have to proactively look for candidates. In my case the performance appraisal is once a year. It's a performance appraisal revenue and we discuss targets for the next year. I discuss my achievements focusing on meeting the target. I can come up with ideas about projects I want to work on, not just recruitments. Every quarter we are getting bonuses according our performance, so it is like a check and review.

21. Why home office for some companies do work well and for other doesn't work at all?

For me it's always question about people, not really about the company. Teams and managers have very important connection. It might be if you don't feel connected with the manager, and you don't like him or her and you have the opportunity to work from home, maybe you are less loyal. If you are well integrated with the team, your salary is on a good level, I think you don't have any reason to cheat your manager or employer when you have the opportunity to work from home. In the end it doesn't matter if you are doing home office or staying in the office, if you are not well motivated you won't work well.

22. Is the possibility of working from home important for the future candidates?

It is getting more and more popular. Maybe not such for young graduates, because they ask more for a pc, phone and car from the company, but I have more candidates with kids and they ask more often, if it is possible to work from home and have the flexibility in case the kid get sick. My wife doesn't have any flexibility. It's from 9am until 5.30pm with one hour lunch so if she need to have a doctor appointments, she has to ask if she can go and its more problematic.

23. Have you notice greater demand for home office according to a gender?

No not really. Yesterday I had an interview with a 31 years old father, he has son and he was asking if there is possibility to work from home. I think more than gender, it depends on the personal needs.

24. Do you state home office if it's possible to the new candidate during interview process to attract them?

Right now I am more recruiting for positions, when they have to work from the office. If the position will have home office flexibility I will use it.

25. **What candidate profile are you looking for when it comes to position with flexibility and home office execution?**

I am recruiting for the inside selling position, when they are selling over the phone so it's not really home office related, but if I would recruit for home office I would look for someone with great motivation and discipline. Maturity would be important aspect as well, because home office demand the understanding of responsibility, even outside the office and most young graduates don't have it, so they might be more likely to abuse the system.

26. **Does home office help to retain employees?**

Yes it does. Home office possibility with good salary.

27. **Does the recruitment process looks the same for a person working from the office and person doing home office?**

Almost, there are not many differences. You are looking for someone very motivated with interest for the position and you base on the past performance and education plus achievements. I am also checking how this people interact on the phone, are they engaged, are they passionate, how is their voice and so on. I can already get a lot from this phone interview.

28. **Does your company have home office policies for recruitment.**

Yes, we do have home office policies.

29. **Tell me please, if You see home office as something what will increase or become a trend in the future?**

Yes, because people want more flexibility. I think companies which won't have home office possibility will have huge disadvantage and will be more difficult for them to attract future employees.

Interviewee: 4/24

Person: Se-Sung Yoon

Position: HR Consultant

Date: 06.02.2014

Time: 9:15

Age: 42

Nationality: Korean

1. How long do you work in this company?

It is 6 months.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

6 months.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

No, it is not clearly stated in the contract, but its and option. Depending on the business needs, mostly on the request of the employee, or it depends of the kind of job you are doing.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

We have home office policy, where the general rules are laid out. It is not suitable for every kind of position, for example the receptionist, they won't have home office, but than for other positions it depends from different variables. For example for the HR, I am allow to do it, tomorrow I am on home office. For me the contract I have now its ok for me.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Yes, sure.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Yes it is allowed, accepted and well perceived. My managers does home office too. She sits in Austria, but she comes to our office regularly. For others, it is allowed too. In the HR department, we communicate who is in the office, so the other can do home office. One person from the HR team have to be always at the office. In case if somebody comes with questions. For some things you have to be here, because you need to sign and print documents, find them in the personal files, so you should be at the front for the people.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

To them it is really individually. For other people, it is a nice thing to have. For me, I see it as a benefit. If it wouldn't be possible I could leave without it. In my previous job I didn't have this possibility, but it is rather see as a benefit and it is employee driven.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

It's a big topic actually. In HR you say, this is modern working environments and the office layout here has not enough working space if everybody would come to the office. This way you can save some space. Especially for the young generation, which emphasise the good work-life balance they would request it. On the other side, it is not easy for older employees, because if you not used to it, you might struggle in the beginning. It is a challenge to make it right, because it is not easy not to mix private and professional life while working from home. With nowadays technology and VPN and internet access you can work from anywhere, so it is good for companies but more a challenge for employees. They tend to work more hour and the Swiss law is not laid out for home office and modern working style in any global companies. There are some challenges and restrictions, as the government want to imply working hours, question is, how would you do this while working from home. How do you record this. It is forced due to many burnout cases. If you had the chance as an employee working from home and you got used to it, than it is really good thing. For the employer in the long run it pays out to trust their employees. The employee needs to have certain maturity level in my opinion to do it right. There will be always advantages and disadvantages of home office.

9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?

For myself I choose whatever I want upon my needs. I have chosen to do home office once a week.

10. What are the main advantages when working from home?

If you have some private things to do, for example when you have to go to the doctor and I don't lose my working time. I can get better work life balance. It is perfect when you want to be alone , if you don't want to be disturb. You also don't have any traveling time.

11. What are the main disadvantages?

You have to be very discipline and not to get distracted by anything else. Keep the working hours is very important. Not to lose the contact to the people, to the team, not to lose the information flow.

12. In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.

I would say the work/life balance, that you tend to have in you private life. That I have the flexibility of my working hours.

13. Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?

If I have to write a paper or revision a policy it is better from home. It is hard to say where I feel more productive, it really depends from the task.

14. Under which circumstances do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?

Many news you get you get it from the gossips. For my job its very good to be here and chat with people. Sometimes it's not needed and people can work from home, they only communicate by phone or email, but its fine for them, as they don't need this direct contact and news and so on. For kick off meetings and certain milestones everybody should be in the office and having face-to-face meetings, it makes a huge difference. .

15. Could you imagine to work only from home?

No. I don't think so, because I have so much HR things that I have to be here in the office. I have documents here, which I should not take home. From the social point of view I want to be here in the office.

16. What do you think about other Companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?

Companies which allow employees from home, show they trust employees and give them the required flexibility and it means a lot. I would rank them higher.

17. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?

It's hard to judge, you only see the output. The way you get to the goal is not that important. People who show the presence for 8 hours in the office doesn't necessary mean that is a better employee than somebody who is only 6 hours here.

18. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?

For me it is really good, but it is a challenge, so I need to be more discipline when I do home office and not to get distracted. You need to have separate office room at home.

19. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?

I would say I really appreciate it, because it is not allowed anywhere, it is a privilege. It depends from the company and the job. Employers do it to be more attractive and to attract the best talents. They want to be seen like they do something extra for

employees. I am sure there are people, who has experience home office possibility and won't work for a company which does not offer home office possibility.

20. [What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home and give performance appraisal?](#)

It really depends from a job if you can measure it. For example sales people is based on their performance, on the target they have. For HR is more qualitative, so it is harder to be objective. For someone, who does deliver doesn't matter how long he needs to do it and where he does the job. The end outcome is the most important. There I something like social interaction and indirect control, such as when does he come to the office, when does he leaves and so on. In the end what I want to say is that if you show the presence it doesn't mean anything and it doesn't guarantee the results. What is important is the outcome, if you deliver on time its fine, the rest should not matter, but is does for the rest of your colleagues, because they have their own perception. If the boss is more visible in the office it is perceived different, than when he is not around. I believe it has an influence on employees.

21. [Why home office for some companies do work well and for other doesn't work at all?](#)

The trick is, if it doesn't work when it is allowed, than it has to be reshape. Like in yahoo it was a big controversy when miss Mayer announced that everyone should be in the office, because before she has done lots of home office, as she has a little child. In Microsoft they have this team building exercises and they let their employees to work from home, but they look after the right measures and criteria. If you make deals with customers it makes a difference when you are face-to-face with this customers and if you are on the phone with him. I think it comes more from the employer, they don't have the control, maybe the managers are not really convinced to do home office, because they feel like they have more control over their employees when they are around.

22. [Is the possibility of working from home important for the future candidates?](#)

For some yes. It really depends from the young generation or employees previous experience. Here, in the IT industry people take it as standard, because lots of them experience it already. If it is important for them , they tend to ask during the interview. It is more individual.

23. [Have you notice greater demand for home office according to a gender?](#)

I think it is more the personal situation more than anything, so would not necessary see the demand coming from the gender. Maybe, when they have very small kids, otherwise I don't think this is a gender case. First and the most important is the job you are doing.

24. [Do you state home office if it's possible to the new candidate during interview process?](#)

I am not doing so much recruitment in my current position, so I can speak for my experience. When I had the Interview here it wasn't mentioned from my manager. I mostly talk about the job itself, the tasks and compensation. It was about, is this the right company for me? Am I the right candidate for this company? It depends and come from the candidate than from the person who interviews.

25. [What candidate profile are you looking for when it comes to position with flexibility and home office execution?](#)

I would say in general you always look at the hard skills first, working experience, education these are the most important things. If this doesn't match usually the candidate is not suitable. It is hard to judge the personality suitability towards to home office. You would concentrate more on a business working experience. In Switzerland normally you do not take people straight from their university experience, so you demand to have some years of experiences.

26. [Does home office help to retain employees?](#)

Yes, I would say so. Certainly, I know one case, someone who has struggle with the team because of the manager who didn't want to allow his employees to work from home. This person said that it is needed, because of kids and that she has to look after them with appointments and so on. If the manager would not agree, for this person it would be a reason to change her job. For these people who demands it, it is must have, otherwise they will look for another company.

27. [Does the recruitment process looks the same for a person working from the office and person doing home office?](#)

I think it is very similar almost the same, because you always look at the hard skills. I also don't think home office is the topic discussed on the interview, unless the candidate would like to talk about it.

28. [Do you have home office policies in this company?](#)

We do have policies, candidates get them when they sign the contract. So we have a sheet with all benefits for our employees for Switzerland. Home office is not that

explicitly mentioned during the interview process. Bottom line, it does depend from the job you are doing, but yes we do have home office policies clearly stated.

29. Tell me please, if you see home office as something that will increase or become a trend in the future?

The trend will be to work from home, or maybe from smart offices, when you rent a room near where the people leave and they work from there and connect. With the technology, which more and more companies have offered, this would be the trend in my opinion. I don't think regular office will be seen as a trend. Simple things such as traffic here in Switzerland and the green restrictions may let companies open for new solutions. I would say IT companies are the leaders in this trend, as they have the tools and the equipment available for their employees, so they can easily work from home without any interruptions. In my previous job I could work from home too, but the internet connection was so slow it made it a hassle. For Cisco I have heard they have huge screens for videoconferencing, with crystal clear picture and they can have videoconferences with anybody all around the world working. If you talk to this person, it feels like this person is just next to you. It is still not the same as face-to-face meeting, but it is way much better than just a call. It makes possible to work remotely. I would say it is a trend, and it is demanded especially from the young generation, which want to have a better work-life situation instead of lots of money. They rather go for more free time, they want more to enjoy life.

Employees

Interviewee: 5/24

Person: Alan

Position: Sales Representative

Date: 07.02.2014

Time: 09:30

Age: 36

Nationality: Swiss

1. How long do you work in this company?

8,5 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

I started with partner management, but it is also sales position, so it slightly shifted. Yes, the option of home office was from the begging there, with all different bosses I had.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

No it is not stated. I was told that maybe if I want to have more than one day home office, than I should fix it, because in case of management change I should have it approved from the HR, but it was always fine. If you do more than one day from home, than you should ask for approval and have it stated.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

No, I really don't care. In the end if my manager doesn't understand that I work enough and doesn't trust me than I think I am in the wrong company.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Absolutely, I mean he understands the situation. He knows why I do home office. He is fine with it and we never had any problems.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

It's not only my colleagues and managers, but customers as well. For instance, some of this customers already know they cannot have me for Tuesday afternoon meeting, so while planning a meeting they are aware of it. It is just a question of communication. There are some meetings you have to attend, so than I move my home office day, but I like to have them fixed to plan my private life.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

I think it is well perceived. Nobody said anything to me, so I guess they are fine with it.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

I think it's great. Especially this times, when we have lots of pressure and people tend to do more than they really can. If I am at home I can arrange myself the way I like. There is no colleagues coming with some story, which I don't have any interest in. For me home office it's an arrangement. I have a small child, and when my wife needs to do some stuff I am taking care of the kid for 3 or 4 hours. Than my wife comes back and I can get back to my work again. It's very handy for a modern family.

9. [How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?](#)

Tuesday afternoon is blocked for me to do home office since 2 years, because of the child. I need to look after her, put her to bed for a nap and then during this time I can work again. When the child wakes up I look after her for 1, 2 hours and then my wife comes back and takes over, so I can work again. It is important for me, because I don't want to be a father, which is always away from my children. If you missed your kids time when they small, then it's no reason to have children, because this way you work only. Friday morning or afternoon, half day I block as well, but this is one or two days in a month, and it is more flexible.

10. [What are the main advantages when working from home?](#)

No one is coming to your desk asking questions, so you can concentrate. I have experience in this company, that so many young people who are let's say 2 years in the company don't know about the processes and approvals, and they come from everywhere and ask questions, and you spend a lot of time explaining people stuff and I am not here to do it. It is not that I don't like to talk with people, because I like hearing stories or just talk about the weekend but sometimes is too much. So at home I can just focus and work without any interruptions.

11. [What are the main disadvantages?](#)

I see the disadvantage not from the home office side, but from my work period, you can say seasonality. Only when the quarter ends and it is very busy, sometimes happen when the customer say, listen you have to come over to the office to finalize the contract and you have to do it. So it interrupt plans, because maybe my wife had something already scheduled, but then she needs to call it back or cancel. Otherwise I cannot see any disadvantages. If it comes to me I would like to work even more, like 3 days from home.

12. [In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.](#)

I have no distractions I can focus.

13. **Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?**

It's the customer side, at their offices I feel most productive, because I do already a big part of negotiation there. I have long term relations with this customers, I negotiate with them. If it's about internal processes than it is more comfortable to do it at home, because I have to think how do I want to sell that internally. We have an agreement with the customer, when he tells us what he needs and then I need to think how do I sell this terms or conditions within the contract to the company, because they need to approve it. This requires focus, because I write long sentences as I am working on a big contracts with 15-20 sentences. First, the best place to work is the customer side and if I am talking about not having any distractions and feel more comfortable is home, and the last one is here in the office but stay in a quiet room, not in an open space.

14. **.Under which circumstanced do you think does and under which it doesn't make sense to work from home?**

I think everyone has to do the administrative part of his job, so everyone could have one day home office. People will be more relax and productive. For me it is again about the circumstances and the timing. It doesn't make sense, when the quarter ends, because it is busy time, every day you need to close contracts and you need approvals from you managers and signatures are required, so it does make sense to be here in the office.

15. **Could you imagine to work only from home?**

No, not really, because I need to be in the office, share some points and ideas. But I could work 2 full days from home, I wouldn't have any issue with that.

16. **What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?**

Each person is in a different situation, and I know that the social life change, family life change and the whole market moves, because women have higher position than they had 10 years ago. I see lots of people doing home office under special circumstances too, maybe when they wife is sick or on a vacation and this people don't have to be so responsive and work the same hours. Women want changes as well and nowadays they would like to have both, family and work. Home office allows them to do it, in a more flexible manner, so they don't have to stress that

much and have still the feelings of being skilled and in a respected position. Mostly people combine work with private life, and even if they work less or with breaks I think they do manage to be responsive and productive and make the work done. Under this special circumstances, which I have already mentioned I understand if people are not always available. Another way of doing home office is, when you have few presentations to prepare and you lock yourself at home and just work on it. In the end you need to be selective, you don't have to answer your emails straight away if you have more important things to do. It is about selection and priorities. So I expect someone to respond fast when they have to be responsive, because it is important.

17. **What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?**

I think within the IT industry or when you do marketing its fine they allow you to work from home. I personally rank this companies higher. I am very comfortable with this company, because they have very loose way to work with people and the same about home office. You need to think also about not if the company just allow to work from home, but if the company creates favourable environment to achieve your goals or targets. I know many start-up companies, they let employees work from home, 5 days a week, but in this case lots of people fail, because they are not able to do properly their job just from home. And they end up having basic salaries, not reaching their target and in the end being fired. It is more about to have this freedom of going to your manager and express what do you need and arrange something around it. After my first year in this company I made my numbers and the HR came to me and said I can do 1 day of home office, because they think I work too much. It tells me a lot about the company and that they keep a close eye on their employees and prevent unhealthy behaviour. They came to me with this proposition, so maybe this is why I feel very comfortable about it.

18. **Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?**

I would take the option of home office, that is the whole package for me.

19. **Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?**

Yes. In the end it is about knowing how much energy you have and how often you meet your friends and do sport or music. I experience, when the child was born times can get tough, especially after closing in May when is very stressful. I do home

office on Tuesday to stay with my child and on Friday afternoon I play basketball to release the pressure. So it does let me balance myself and my family.

20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/ company?

No, I don't think so. For me is the package and the perception of trust my manager have towards to me. If they give me the possibility to do home office, but they don't really feel comfortable with this option it's not good approach. I will always negotiate the home office.

21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

Target measurements in the end of the year.

22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?

From how it develops it will be tougher because of the market and economy situation for a short time of 2 years, but after that it will loosen up. People still are train to make carrier straight after college. To do the best, to work hard and they are unbalance. They overwork, and it is still well seeing. On the other hand, a lot of people, who will work very hard in their young age, won't be able to take it any longer and they will demand home office. After that, home office will become a standard and will be seeing as a trend, maybe also discussed on a general meetings.

Interviewee: 6/24

Person: Alevory

Position: Senior Licences Manager Consultant

Date: 17.02.2014

Time: 13:00

Age: 29

Nationality: Swedish

1. How long do you work in this company?

3,5 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

In the same department and I had the possibility to do home office from the beginning.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

No, it doesn't and it doesn't really matter for me to have this kind of contract.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

I have one.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Yes, absolutely. He doesn't really care when and from where I am working, the job needs to be done. My manager is in Munich since last year. Previously I had one, which was working from this office. They both had the same approach.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Yes, some accept it some don't. It is very personal.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

Some employees are allowed some are not to do home office. I think it is very personal thing, and you have to be very honest with yourself if you are efficient to work from home or not.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

I think it's good, because I have less disturbances and I am more efficient when I am working from home. I can focus more on things and tasks I have to do. I save lots of time, because I don't have to commute and it is up to me if I work during this time or treat it as my private time, which is good.

9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?

It is 2 days a week. Normally I work from home on Fridays, because the office is quite empty and I schedule my week this way that all administrative job I have I do on Friday. It really depends from my schedule. Sometimes I work 5 days from the

- office, sometimes just 3, so it really depends what I have to do, if I have any meetings and so on.
10. **What are the main advantages when working from home?**
You save time, costs and the environments according to no need of commuting. You have the ability to work in a place, when is more quiet, it is perfect when I have to write a report or do my administrative work. In the office a lot of people are running around and disturb.
11. **What are the main disadvantages?**
You are alone. You have less exchange with your colleagues. Less company and team spirit, you are more by yourself.
12. **In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.**
It's a mix. I combine tasks. When I have customer meeting in a different city I don't have to come back after that to the office. I can come back home straight away and connect myself from home. This way it is more efficient, because I actually work more hours when I am at home than in the office.
13. **Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?**
At home.
14. **Under which circumstances do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?**
When you have team activity and you have to collaborate with other people it does make sense when you are in the office. It is crucial to have people in front of you and it is definitely more constructive to be with this people in the same room. If you have administrative tasks to do, or something you need to do on your own and you need to focus and be in silence and dig deep into the subject, then I suppose home environments is perfect. You have no people asking you questions and getting you out of the working flow.
15. **Could you imagine to work only from home?**
No, I could not imagine that for myself. I would miss any interactions, the news which keep me up to date and what is happening with your peers. It is important not to lose the company spirit. I am social person and I would not like to stay all alone.
16. **What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?**
From my experience they are very responsive and it is easy to cooperate with them. Of course according to certain tasks, when the team should be together it is not the same quality of communication, but when you have tasks which doesn't require

- anybody else cooperation I think people tend to be more efficient and work more hours, this is what I can see from my experience.
17. **What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?**
It doesn't really matter for me. I see home office as a small aspect of work. If my boss would tell me to come to the office 5 days a week I would do it. It would not be on my company judgement criteria. Of course if you do home office, you receive certain tasks from your employer and so, it should be appreciated. As people cannot control you when you are doing home office, so they rely on trust.
18. **Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?**
I would probably go for the home office company. It gives me more flexibility.
19. **Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?**
Yes, as I said before with commuting. It takes me one hour in total to get me to the office every day, so either I work 8 hours or then I am doing home office. This way I am home already and it leads to have more time for my family and friends, so it definitely is a plus.
20. **Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?**
Yes, because the company puts a lot of trust into me, so I want to give something back and do the best job I can, in order to fulfil the trust and give something back.
21. **What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?**
Yeah, to a certain level. If you have 50/50 it's hard to measure anything because you have overall target which you have to achieve and when I do it while working from home or the office it's hard to quantify I would say. I wouldn't know how to measure it. I think it should be seen as some kind of bonus for the employees. For a better work life balance.
22. **Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?**
I think it will increase, because companies have to provide less working space as it gets cheaper for them in the long run. Everybody is equipped with a laptop and a mobile phone, so it is easy to communicate. It really depends from the industry and the environment you are working in. Sometimes home office is impossible, because you need the customer contact if you have representative role. I would say for many industries in general the home office works well.

Interviewee: 7/24

Person: Darry

Position: Alliance Manager

Date: 21.02.2014

Time: 9.30

Age: 36

Nationality: German/USA

1. How long do you work in this company?

7 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

I have been changing. I had 5 positions. I have the possibility of doing home office since 3 years. It has change with the managers, as different managers have different types of working.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

No, it doesn't state anything.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

It would be a disadvantage for me if it would state that home office is not allowed. I think the open system, which this company has is perfect, because you can apply for home office days and they are very flexible. The managers have the freedom to decide, so do employees.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

The first managers it wasn't supporting it too much, but he accepted it, but he wanted people in the office. The second manager said you can work from whenever you are. The third manager now, she is in between. She wants us in the office, but she fully understands us when we work from home and she wants us to write her a message to inform her.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

It is very depending on manager. Most of peers are fine with it and treat it like something extra.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

The ones who have family, they have to do home office sometimes. The have to pick up kids from the crash and so on. So 50% are open to home office, the other 50% are in the office.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

It is very positive thing. I am very positive towards to it. For example, it is the best way to balance family and work-life situation. For my wife which stays at home

- offers the possibility to work from there. Without home office my wife wouldn't be able to work, so I think it is very good solution. We have a little child and it gives us lots of freedom and the possibility to organize your entire life in a positive way.
9. [How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?](#)
Once a week. It is fixed, it is Tuesday, because my wife is working the whole day, so I have to bring my son to the crash and pick him up from there. I have to be there to look after him and make lunch.
10. [What are the main advantages when working from home?](#)
To organize not only professional but also family and personal life. Freedom of organizing your time, you can call it also time management. It could be that on Tuesday I have to look after my child and I don't have time between 2pm and 4pm, but I will work from 8pm to 10pm so it gives me a lot of freedom and flexibility.
11. [What are the main disadvantages?](#)
No, not really. In my case I cannot see any. Maybe that it is hard to switch off and stop working. Without any real breaks I tend to work the whole day.
12. [In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.](#)
When I do home office I get more done than when I am in the office, because no one comes to me and ask questions, so I have no disturbance and I can focus on my work and concentrate more. I can also organize my personal life very well too. That would be two main aspects for me.
13. [Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?](#)
At Home. It gives me the freedom of organizing tasks according to the priority and no disturbances.
14. [Under which circumstanced do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?](#)
It doesn't make sense if you have a position when you have to interact with people on a regular basis in the office. For example if you are presales you need to be in the office, because people from sales come to you and ask questions. They need quick, instant explanation, so it wouldn't make sense to sit at home. As a manager if you see that this person is not very productive and successful and if they don't achieve numbers home office wouldn't help them. It does make sense when you are in a certain position when you can afford it. Like when you are sales and you are visiting customers outside the office. If you see that people are self-discipline and they know what they are doing then you can rely on the same quality also from home.

15. Could you imagine to work only from home?

Yes, I could imagine.

16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?

I would say, yes they are responsive and concerning the quality of work. Sometimes I have the feeling that some of this people are now working. So it can be that some people misuse it. When I work from home it is more, because I don't really make coffee breaks and I work the whole day.

17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?

I know that in IBM it is very common that they work from home. The system seems to be very positive for them. I have someone who works for Yahoo and they just change, so everybody has to work from the office. I think some companies maybe exceeded it. It is hard to get the right balance. I do see these companies in a "better light". I perceive them better.

18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?

I wouldn't take it as a main criteria. I would say I would prefer to choose the employer which gives me more freedom.

19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?

It does.

20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?

Yes. It is a form of trust, so if the employer says ok, you can work from home, they trust you do a good job.

21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

In IT companies the measure it based on numbers, so it makes no difference where you are, you have to deliver. They are not interested where you will do it.

22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?

In the IT sector I would say yes. It will become more and more as a trend. If you would look at his office 3 years ago everybody had their family picture on the desk. Since 2 years it is open office structure and we are not the only one, Google has the same. It will become a trend to be more flexible, to work more from home.

Interviewee: 8/24

Person: Donald

Position: Consultant-IT Advisory

Date: 21.02.2014

Time: 09:00

Age: 27

Nationality: Kosovo/Swiss

1. How long do you work in this company?

Over two years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

Over two years. Since August 2012.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

Yes.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

Indifferent, I do not necessarily need to have it.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Yes, my managers support home office.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Yes, most of my peers and managers accept home office.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

Depending on the position and the stage of a project. There are two perceptions, first is the individual working from home, needs to finalize an important task where he/she does not want to be disturbed or in the second case in some instances, it is perceived as for someone having not much work, that this person can stay at home and sporadically work from home.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

In my view if one has the discipline to be productive when he/she works from home it is an interesting solution. I believe it is an alternative to the our recently introduced concept of desk sharing. It happened for instance in November and December when most of the colleagues were in the office that it was hard to get a desk. In this situation I guess home office would have been a good alternative. Taking into account that we are in a client-facing industry, where a close collaboration with client and team-members is crucial. I would say that in such instances home office is not an acceptable solution. it is contra-productive when in crucial stages of a mandate, your supervisor or colleague is working from home. If there is something important to be discussed I personally believe that such discussions should happen

- face-to-face and not via phone or e-mail communication which prolongs the decision time.
9. **How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?**
I rarely work from home, unless it's on a weekend or the night before we have a kick-off meeting where I need to prepare something.
10. **What are the main advantages when working from home?**
I can be more flexible and do some more work which is related to personal tasks. For the company it is a cost motivational factor, less infrastructure costs. The company does not need to invest highly in infrastructure if most of its employees are at the client's site or work from home.
11. **What are the main disadvantages?**
Proximity, not interactive or lower decision speed, whenever you need to have clarified something the person in charge is not in the office or at the client but working from home. In some instances even though the person is supposed to be working from home, he/she is not available. I often see communicator status "do not disturb" and in this case often such person does not pick up the phone. From a company perspective one cannot guarantee and control if the colleague is doing productive work.
12. **In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.**
I hardly work from home. I only profit when there is not much work to do and have to do some administrative work.
13. **Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?**
In the office. Interaction with colleagues from the team, whenever there is a pending or having open point to discuss, one will be able to answer questions. At home I do not have a docking-station, adjustable desk. For me personally from home there is too much interruption, like TV, fridge or family members.
14. **Under which circumstances do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?**
It does make sense to work from home when you have less interaction in order to do administrative work. It is not reasonable, when one has deadline to meet and collaboration is crucial, when you are on a project where you are supposed to be at the client's site, especially when there are new joiners and one needs to introduce them to our work, sharing knowledge.
15. **Could you imagine to work only from home?**

- No. I need to have face-to-face communication with colleagues and clients and I do not possess the discipline to do so.
16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?
My experience made so far does not convince me from working from home. Especially in important stages the people who were doing home office, where not responsive and cooperative. I believe that they are productive, but it takes them much more time to respond and to finish the tasks. Imagine you receive a response from your supervisor at 11pm which you sent out on 6pm, would you think he/she was busy or he/she just was doing some private tasks and sporadically responds after some hours using his/her mobile phone.
17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?
If they can measure and control their productivity it is an alternative. Probably only applies for companies where less social interaction is required, like IT programming.
18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?
With all listed above, I would choose the one which doesn't allow to work from home. Even though there are plenty of advantages but I believe the drawbacks cannot be ignored.
19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?
Not necessarily, because I cannot separate my free time and work time if I work from home.
20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?
Yes as it is a sign of trust. As long as one fulfils his tasks or achieve the target.
21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?
Responsiveness. It is a general question in our department right now, how they measure performance.
22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?
If you consider what innovative companies such as Google, Red Bull do, I doubt that it is going to gain importance. It might however, remain stable over time. And again, it depends on the industry. But I see a trend where companies try to lock their employees having a gym, relax lounges, laundry service just to name a few are examples how companies try to make employees spend more time in the office and even their free time. Thus, increasing loyalty.

Interviewee: 9/24

Person: Edi

Position: Solution Consultant

Date: 28.01.2014

Time: 14.00

Age: 28

Nationality: Macedonian

1. How long do you work in this company?

9 months.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

9 months.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

It doesn't. You need to have an approval, so it's a special approval process, which you need to follow. I didn't do that. I just work from home. My boss is ok with it. I have an American contract.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

For the position I am having it always imply, because I need to work from any location. This kind of contract doesn't change anything.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

He does and actually he doesn't care where I work. As soon as the work is done I can do it from the beach.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

The home office usually doesn't change anything on the perception. They accept the home office.

7. What do you think about the home office in general?

I think it's a very nice way to balance private and professional life. It gives certain type of flexibility to arrange your day, because I have lots of late night calls until 1am, 2am. So it gives very good flexibility to plan my social activity, my private and professional appointments.

8. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?

I have certain days when I don't go to the office since years, which is Friday. For me its blocked home office. If I have late night meetings (conference calls) at 8,9,10pm which goes until 2am. It's because my team is in the US. I never go to the office. Monday for me it's an office day, to start on the same page, discuss activities and to

- get in touch with guys, so they know I am here. It's my personal arrangements, I do it since 10 years. So usually I am coming to the office once a week, max twice a week.
9. [How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?](#)
In the IT industry home office is part of the culture, so everybody expects it to some extent. If you don't have inside sales or inside job, where usually home office is forbidden its ok to do it. Companies becoming more flexible and I would say in IT home office it's a standard, which employees expect to have.
10. [What are the main advantages when working from home?](#)
The main advantages for me are flexibility, time management, flexible schedule. That I have no travel costs and travel time.
11. [What are the main disadvantages?](#)
The main disadvantage is that it is hard to disconnect. I have my lunch in front of the PC. It is often that I don't have so many breaks.
12. [Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home?](#)
I am more productive at home as I can totally focus on my work. I have no interruptions from my colleagues and the socialize part of the normal work routine such as chats, no coffee breaks, no gossiping.
13. [Under which circumstances do you think does it make sense to work from home?](#)
When you are flexible because you don't have team which you need to cooperate and work with on a regular, daily basis. For example people doing inside sales need to be in the office. They work with a team on a regular basis and they need each other support. High demand for collaboration isn't suitable for home office. Managers should be present as well, in order to manage their team as they are driven by short term results and the performance will suffer if they won't be in the office. Marketing guys should be more present, as they have to be in touch with the field.
14. [Could you imagine to work only from home?](#)
Yes I can easily. No problem for me.
15. [What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?](#)
My colleagues working from home are very well connected. My virtual team is always reachable for me, as I am for them too. But in general you need good discipline and regime. It's not a good idea for a young, junior consultants, because

- they think it's a holiday time and they can do whatever they want. You need to have experience and discipline to do your job properly from home.
16. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?
- I feel positive. They accept employees private life and understand other priorities they have in a daily routine. I would work for companies offering home office.
17. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?
- It does balance my private life and work life. I have the flexibility to arrange my day around priorities I have.
18. In which aspect do you profit most from the home office
- Time management is the most important aspect for me. I can sleep longer, meet friends. I don't have my boss to control me, and I can work in comfortable clothes.
19. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?
- I do appreciate the freedom, which the company gives me. I had more offers coming, but they didn't give me this flexibility this is the reason I didn't change, even they have offered me better money.
20. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?
- Based on numbers, so performance measures work well in my case. My boss cares if I deliver and have good numbers. In this case I could be working from home, train, or wherever I like. Place doesn't matter, results do.
21. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?
- I would choose the one which offers to work from home. It's all about the advantages I am getting from the freedom when work from home.
22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?
- I don't see it as a future trend. Home office is going to be restricted to a certain roles, functions and personalities. In many cases home office doesn't work. I used to work in HP, and they had a system which would monitor if you are in front of the pc. They would ask to come back to the office if you won't deliver. It's about the trust and how you use or misuse it. Presence in the office is not necessary because it doesn't make you more efficient. Managers control is not necessary a good thing, because people can be more self- confidence when nobody I looking over their shoulder.

Interviewee: 10/24

Person: Harry

Position: Sales

Date: 17.02.2014

Time: 09:15

Age: 30

Nationality: Swiss

1. How long do you work in this company?

4 months.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

4 months.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

Yes, it does. It is stated there.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

Yes, I have one.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Yes. Since I started I haven't really done so much of home office, but I know it is possible with the time. My previous manager in my other job had to support me, because I was working remotely, sometimes in the train for 3, 4 hours. So, it was both, the ability to do home office and work while I was travelling.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

In my current team we don't do it that much. My current manager doesn't really enjoy when we are not in the office, because our job requires a lot of activities with the peers. Home office is not look bad upon, but it is not promoted. However, some people do it and there is no question about it. I think it all depends on the individual situation. For example if you meet your client late afternoon, it doesn't make sense to go back to the office and it's not a problem for anybody. But if you are not on the customer side and spending 4 days a week doing home office, than it is probably not a good idea for you.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

I think they enjoy it and see it as a privilege and an advantage.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

It is great option, if you don't overdo it. For example, I was in Bern and in Basel last weeks and by the time I get home it would have been more time on the road and then getting back to the office and going back home, sometimes it just doesn't make sense to go back to the office. It is easier to go straight home and connect yourself again in

- a quiet place. It is definitely nice thing you can do, but I still would like to be in the office. If I am working at home it is perfect, I can do both things and easily combine it.
9. [How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?](#)
- I would say every two weeks, so let say 3 times a month.
10. [What are the main advantages when working from home?](#)
- First of all not driving and avoiding traffic and safe time is the main advantage. Also if I have to do some work, which does not require me to cooperate with other people. Sometimes it is more destructive if I am in the office with colleagues and I go for a coffee and I start talking. So if I have something I really have to focus on, than it is better to work from home.
11. [What are the main disadvantages?](#)
- I think the lack of presence in the office, this would be the main disadvantage. Another one would be lack of visibility for your manager and also not knowing of what is going on in the office. You don't talk that often with your peers, so you don't know what is happening on the customer side.
12. [In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.](#)
- Time management. Sometimes commuting doesn't make sense so by doing home office employees can be more productive.
13. [Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?](#)
- It depends. When I have to make customer calls I go to the quiet room in the office, but I could easily do it from home and it is nicer. On the other side if I don't feel motivated, but I am in the office and I see my colleagues working it motivates me too. It is question of being motivated, at home or in the office doesn't really matter to me.
14. [Under which circumstanced do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?](#)
- It makes sense if you are a bit sick and you don't feel 100% ok, you better stay at home and do your home office. You don't have to wear suit and tie, you can take it easy and get better, but still work from home. It safes you sick days and you don't infect anybody. It doesn't make sense when you are working in a team project or making presentation and the other person is doing home office. In this case you have

to do everything over the phone and it is not an easy task. It is much more convenient and faster to do it in the office.

15. Could you imagine to work only from home?

Yes, if I would not need to meet anybody and cooperate. If the job makes sense. My current job is a contact base, so it wouldn't make sense for this position.

16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?

My experience is that people who work from home, when you call them, they are pretty quick to get back to you. I also have noticed if I do home office I am in my quiet zone, so I do things better and faster. Sometimes I am not motivated, I have one of these days, and then it doesn't really matter where I am. If I have to deliver on time, it's the task, which dictates where it is more convenient to do it. If I know that I am working on a very important deal and it will be worth it I can work on the weekend from home or after my working hours. Home office sounds very nice with time for food and all your things, but you need to perform, so if you have things which need to be done you want to make it happen and push yourself hard to deliver. The working hours really depends from the person, it is an individual thing. I have self-consciousness and if I am at home I need to work and feel obliged to do it. No one will really know, but I would feel bad if I wouldn't do my job properly. For some people home office is great, like people with little kids. Because it gives them the possibility of looking after their family and working in the same time.

17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?

If a company is giving a privilege such as home office, it is a sign of giving a lot of trust to the employees, so I would rank them higher. They probably care about their employees and their work life balance. Also, at the end of the day, if you are doing a good job it shouldn't really matter if you are doing it from home or the office. I personally think it is better if I am more in the office, it should be 80% in the office and 10% to 20% at home.

18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?

I would take the one with possibilities of home office. It is a clear benefit for me.

19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?

It definitely does. If I would be at home and my girlfriend would have holidays in the same time it wouldn't be that good, because it would be too much distractions. I do have a separate room at home, which allows me to do my work there, so this is the good thing. It works well when there is time, when I don't have to be in the office, like for example on Fridays, because not so many people are here in the office.

20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?

Yes, it does. I see home office as a privilege. When I meet other colleagues they tend to complain that they have to stay in the office and work for long hours. To be honest, I see it as a really lucky situation for me, so I try not to abuse it and I value it a lot. It does make me want to stay in the company longer. They are giving me something extra, so I try to be more in depths to work well.

21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

No, I think it should not be control, if you do this 10 to 20% from home, because this is about the trust, flexibility and freedom the company gives you. I think putting a measurement on it doesn't make sense, because you control someone and takes away everything I have mentioned before. It would work against the employers. It needs to follow certain achievement path, milestones and so on.

22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?

I think it would go up, because it is costs savings for companies. They don't have to rent large rooms, and I am pretty sure if everyone from this office would be always here, it would be very difficult to get a desk. Obviously, it helps in work life balance a lot. In Europe especially with employee benefits and social consciousness it make sense that home office become more and more popular. Companies search for talents, so it becomes very competitive. It could be seeing as something what attracts employees and saving costs. Place where you work doesn't really matter that much anymore, but the final outcome of your job does, so I would say it will increase in the future. With all technologies and tools and the young generation might be more required and expected.

Interviewee: 11/24

Person: Henry

Position: Sales

Date: 06.02.2014

Time: 15:15

Age: 57

Nationality: German

1. How long do you work in this company?

15 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

I have changed companies, but I always worked as a sales. Within first 5 years I didn't have the possibility to work from home and then for the last 10 years I have the permit to do work from home.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

Yes, it is. For me it is a bit special, because from the HR perspective there are special regulations for employees who are leaving in another country like me and therefore there is an agreement between Germany and Switzerland, which states that I may not have more than 50% of my time working from home. I need to be 50% of my time in the office.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

I have one.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Yes, no problem. It is approved and supported by my manager.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Here within the cooperation it is commonly agreed. If you have sales function you naturally need to communicate with your colleagues and customers, so to do remote work it wouldn't be a good idea. But mix of 50/50 is just perfect, because half of our workload is purely administration and we can do it easily from home.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

I think all of my colleagues they are really happy that we have the possibility to work from home. Some of them work 80% from home and only 20% from the office. For us is enrichment and it's good to have this possibility.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

In general I am very positive about it, but naturally there are also some dangerous things. Like not being controlled so you have to be very much self-driven and self-controlled and if you don't have the ability it could be a problem. Especially when

- you have a family and children, if you are working from home there are more reasons to get distracted and not to work.
9. **How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?**
- Normally I worked from home 3 days a week. It depends if I have meetings here in the office or with customers. Usually, every Monday I am in the office and then it depends. Most of our colleagues are in the office on Monday, so it makes sense to be here as well to have the interaction. The rest is up to me depending on the schedule for the week.
10. **What are the main advantages when working from home?**
- Time saving, because I have to drive 140km, this way I am not wasting 3 hours per day, so I see it as a big advantage.
11. **What are the main disadvantages?**
- You might lose social interaction with other colleagues, but it depends from you how you work. Naturally, you have less interaction with other colleagues if you are not in the office. It can lead to missing some important information. I wouldn't do more than max 3 days of home office. I need this interaction with my colleagues from the commercial point of view and personal too.
12. **In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.**
- Time saving.
13. **Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?**
- Naturally, if you are at home you can work more and concentrate more on administrative things as no one is calling you and interrupting. Productivity it is something you have in your own hand so I think not a big difference. Naturally the sales part of your job is collecting information about customers and this is more easy to get in the office.
14. **Under which circumstances do you think does it make sense to work from home?**
- If you have to work manually you have to be in the workplace, but in our positions in the IT company it is possible for almost all functions in this cooperation to work from home. This company is also pushing savings from the office space.
15. **Could you imagine to work only from home?**
- No. It is not for me. I personally would miss the social interaction. It is important part for me.

16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?

This depends from the person. I had a colleague I had this impression when he works from home he wasn't easy to reach. Others work from 8am until 6pm and they are easy to reach, and they are quite disciplined. Even on weekends, so they might work more.

17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?

I think it is very attractive for their employees. If I would go to another company I would ask if they will give me the possibility to work from home or not. This would be one of my points before taking my decision.

18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?

I would choose the company, which offers the possibility of home office. For me it's important, because I'm used to it and I have good experience so far.

19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?

It is a positive point, because if I am working from home 3 times a week I save my commuting time. It is 9 hours a week, which I can use for my family or my job it's my decision. Normally I am using it for private things.

20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?

It keeps me in a good mood, but it is not most important to be loyal. Other things are more important for motivation and being loyal such as money, feeling to be valued employee and good contact with your manager, possibility to move to another position. Home office would be in top 5 points, but not most important.

21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

Not in our department, because we are in the sales department, so it is very target and numbers driven. If you achieve them you can work from wherever you like, how many days you like.

22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?

Yes, I believe so. Globalization is going on and there are more and more virtual teams so my manager in sitting in the Netherlands his manager is sitting in Finland, so the costs for meeting in person would be too high. This is why the direction of home office will be on rise.

Interviewee: 12/24

Person: Herard

Position: Facilities Manager for Switzerland

Date: 07.02.2014

Time: 13.45

Age: 29

Nationality: Swiss

1. How long do you work in this company?

1 year and 3 months.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

The same time in this position. After few months I asked my manager if I can do home office time to time and he agreed. I have the permission and can work from home since 6 months.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

No, it is not stated in my contract.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

No, it is not necessary for me.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Yes, he fully supports me.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Yes it is accepted by pretty much the majority, because it is like a standard. It is just much easier to schedule appointments and doctor visits in the middle of the day.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

I have spoken with a person who does home office and he was very happy about it. I guess if you do it on a regular basis, for longer period, you don't really wish to get back full time to the office. This was my impression I had after chatting with this person.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

I think there is a certain point where it is good, but it can be also too much. In my opinion 1 or 2 days per week it's enough of home office. If you can easily separate work from daily life, if you have a separate room where you can work it should be ok. I like to have this feelings that home is about resting and relaxing not working. This is why I prefer to work from home time to time, not on a regular weekly basis. If it is too much I could lose borders and the social contact with peers and managers.

9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?

- Once a week maximum, but it is generally once or twice a month. It is not really planned, so it is spontaneous according to my appointment or when I had intense day before.
10. **What are the main advantages when working from home?**
I concentrate on my work, so I can do it in half of the time than if I would be in the office.
11. **What are the main disadvantages?**
As I have mentioned, the social part can be missed if I would do too much of home office. If I have only one day it should be fine.
12. **In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.**
I can shut down and have my work done in shorter period, because I can focus just on my work. Let's say if I have to do a report once a month, it is probably better to do it from home. It is great, because I am flexible for appointments and so on.
13. **Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?**
At home. But I like also to work in the train.
14. **Under which circumstances do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?**
For positions, which need to be in the office like secretary or facilities coordinator they need to be present, because the job is in the office. For the rest should be allow to have one day home office or the way I am doing it. If your job description says you have to perform your tasks in the office, than you should be in the office.
15. **Could you imagine to work only from home?**
I guess I could do it.
16. **What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?**
More people are available longer hours than when they work from the office. It is easy to reach this people too, because they work anyway.
17. **What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?**
Overall I think it became very common in international companies. CEOs' of smaller and medium enterprises prefer to have their people in the office. It's the matter of the mind-set. But it is actually changing a bit, because my wife works for small lawyer company and they got the possibility to work from home. It was basically their

proposition and they organize the system, so all documents can be access through VPN, so they can work from home too. Maybe than it's not a matter of size, but the technology, which nowadays it is easy and affordable. I rank this companies better, because it is a feeling of trust, because in the end you need to do your job and the possibility to do so doesn't have to be related to the office

18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?

I would choose the company offering home office.

19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?

Yes, it's a good thing to have, so it let me balance some aspects of my life when I need it.

20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?

No, not really. There are other more important things I value higher. But there is feelings of appreciation.

21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

It is a bit difficult to measure. If the manager see that after allowing home office the productivity decrease than maybe it is the reason to call it off.

22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?

There are countries that it will increase in other will decrease. For example for Switzerland it will be increasing a bit in my opinion. In general it is on the growth, because I think we are not on the pick time yet.

Interviewee: 13/24

Person: Hollon

Position: Database and Options Marketing Manager

Date: 06.02.2014

Time: 14.00

Age: 46

Nationality: Belgian

1. How long do you work in this company?

19 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

I started in Germany for 4 years and then 15 years in Switzerland within the same company. In Germany I didn't have this possibility to work from home. I am in my current position for 5 years. During my first 10 years in Switzerland I worked from the office and for the last 5 years I got the possibility to work from home.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

It is stated in the contract, with many home office possibilities. Then it's upon every employee to state which option to choose after consultation with the manager. Because if you work remotely from home you don't get a desk in the office.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

I have one and it is stated if it is permanent or time to time.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

She doesn't care. For her it is the same if I work from home or from the office. She works mainly from home. As long as the job is done it is fine.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Some managers like it some don't. It depends, because teams Swiss based, when everybody is from Switzerland tend to be more office based. My team is global, so it doesn't matter. My manager is sitting in UK and his manager is in Germany, so basically they don't care. I am not seeing them, so it is the same if I work from home or the office. Some managers when they have the whole team sitting in one office they prefer to have them working in one office. It is driven by easier, better control.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

Most of these people really like it, because they have kids and they can pick them up without asking anybody for an approval. For them it is very convenient. You can do from home whatever you need as well. For most people it is important and makes this employer more interesting. People also like it, because they don't have to waste time on commuting.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

I think it's a valid option. I personally prefer to go to the office. I live very close to the office, it's like 8 minutes away and as my team is global and virtual I prefer to meet local people from this office otherwise I will be all alone. However, I value the option, that I can do home office. I have also option to move my job to Germany and such possibility gives me good feelings to have this freedom of my work place. Even so I am going to the office every day, I have the freedom to decide and this makes the difference for me. It would be very strange if I would have to be in the office from 9am every day until 6pm.

9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?

No, I don't really work from home.

10. What are the main advantages when working from home?

Maximize efficiency, you save the time you lose on commuting. You can focus more and concentrate on the most important tasks, because in the office there is always something going on and there are many distractions.

11. What are the main disadvantages?

You don't have direct communication. If you are new and you start from home office than it's harder to communicate, as you don't have the relations established. For a big, international cooperation not everything is transparent. For example, if you have an issue and you would like to solve it you ask someone and this person can help you or guide you to someone else. When you ask 2 or 3 people you gather different information and get different options, so it's easier to solve the problem.

12. In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.

The freedom of choice. If you have very high level employees they like to have this idea of freedom. It is more from psychological point of view, because you cannot pay for this state of mind. You have the feelings you can decide.

13. Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?

It depends on the work you need to do. If you need to do reporting in Excel or Power Point presentation home office is more efficient. If you have to come up with new ideas and concepts than I would say office is better, because you can easier exchange ideas. If you have the creative work than office is the place.

14. Under which circumstances do you think it does and it doesn't make sense to work from home?

- It does make sense for work you need to really concentrate and focus on, that you need to be very precise and you don't want to be distracted. It doesn't make sense with everything what is connected with customers, and team direct contact.
15. [Could you imagine to work only from home?](#)
No. I think time to time you need to work with people. I need the social contact.
16. [What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?](#)
I don't see the difference. I think its character base. If people are productive they are productive at home and in the office. You can reach people with all tools you have. People might actually work longer hours even after office time and this is normally the case.
17. [What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?](#)
I think in the IT companies home office is very common and widely accepted. Lots of public companies are still office based, because they don't have the technology and tools available. Yes, I do rank them higher.
18. [Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?](#)
I would pick one which gives me the home-office possibility, because of the decision I have.
19. [Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?](#)
It does. In the sense, that if I would like to go to my yoga class I can easily do it as I don't have fixed working hours and I don't have to be in the office. I can work from home after my class but I have the freedom to decide. For families it is very important. For all mams with kids I know, home office it is must have, as they need to be at home or pick up their kids, so it let them balance the family/work situation.
20. [Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?](#)
Yes, it makes me more loyal and motivates me.
21. [What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?](#)
The measure is that everyone gets the feelings you get your job done.
22. [Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?](#)
Yes, I think for younger people its normal to share information through the internet or social media. They used to communicate with people from different platforms and areas, even with people they have never seen. They used to share information with strangers. The younger they are it is more demanded. For big employers it is must that they allow home office and using social media channels.

Interviewee: 14/24

Person: Lukas

Position: Global Alliance Manager

Date: 10.02.2014

Time: 14.00

Age: 40

Nationality: Hungarian/Australian

1. How long do you work in this company?

11 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

Last 5 years.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

Yes, it does.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

I have one.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Absolutely. It is a requirement for my job to have home office. It is a very special team I work for, because it is international team and most of our meeting we have outside Switzerland. We are global team, so we work with global partners, globally. We have international customers too. Different companies grow, such as in finance, acid management, manufacturing and medical devices, and what we do is to build our devices into devices or system, which our partners created. We are just a component.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Not as much here, but it is increasing on popularity. Depending on life situation of people working for this company. It is IT company, so lots is possible to sort out through email, web meetings and so on. Socialization however is one limit. I do find it very hard sometimes. I work from home and it is tougher, because I have many web meetings and calls to make. It is a lot of pressure, so it is bad that you are at home on you own and you have no way to get out of this pressure. You need to find the ability to balance home office. You mental dedication and the way to manage it is extremely important. You have to make decisions and if you don't you can ruin your life and it happened to some of my colleagues from the team. They spend Christmas at home, but they weren't for the family because they were on their emails all the time. Home office is dangerous if you don't know how to do it.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

- Very small team I have. We rarely see each other, because everyone travels. They come in when they think they need to talk with other colleagues. Otherwise they don't come. There is a lot of different life's in this team. If people see you here in the office, they will consider you as a part of the team, so you should come quite often. At least twice a week I would say.
8. **What do you think about the home office in general?**
It's a good idea. I believe that's the future. Companies save lots of costs. As long as the social part is there it is fine. I think it is required more and more.
9. **How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?**
Every week I do home office. It is upon my schedule. The planning is two weeks ahead, this is how I plan it and booking my flight if I have to or prepare meetings and so on. Generally I spend at home 3 days a week. Sometimes I travel for the whole week and then I am at home for few days and work from there.
10. **What are the main advantages when working from home?**
It is managing your time better and you can react to a customer needs faster, because you don't have to travel if you don't want to. Also, when you dedicate your time on complex approval and administration, you can do it at home and send it by email. It is good because you are not distracted, especially when you on a high level manager of leader of the company. You can work from anywhere around the world. Home office doesn't mean you have to work from home.
11. **What are the main disadvantages?**
If you don't consciously allocate your professional time from your personal time you will be confused and very stressed. Time management is essential. It is not the same when you go to the office, because everyone works so you work too. At home the cleaner comes, your mom calls, you have to take your dog to the vet and pick up your kids, and if you cannot manage that you can lose customers. Because when they call, they often need fast answer. They don't care where you are, sometimes I need to provide them and answer within an hour. This is why, you have to work from the morning to the evening even when you are at home and leave everything behind. The rules are strictly the same.
12. **In which aspect do you profit most from the home office?**

I believe it is time efficiency. Personal freedom of organizing my time. For my company it is saving costs, because we are not allocated to any desk and any office and it means no costs.

13. **Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?**

It is more productive at home doing home office because I can concentrate on my time and there is no distractions, as my colleagues don't distract me. If I go to the office my colleagues want to talk to me all the time and this is very distractive.

14. **Under which circumstances do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?**

It makes a lot of sense, but you need to have lots of discipline. You have to be a senior in the company in order to do this. If you are junior and you are starting, you really have to learn first how to work in the office. When you learn that than you can try to work from home. For example, based on my job I really need to hunt customers and make calls. Hunting means to look for new customers. We usually do it in the morning. From 9am until afternoon. Lunch time is for administration and afternoon you are meeting customers, so I try to keep that discipline even when I work from home. What you really need it is a place free of distraction and in this case home office helps.

15. **Could you imagine to work only from home?**

It is possible but it wouldn't be very efficient. I have to be honest. You always tend to meet your colleagues and socialize with them. In my team everyone works from home. I haven't seen my team members for over a year and this is getting very distractive, because you don't feel like you belong any more to any team. This is why, my manager decided to have our team meeting in the end of March 2014. To see each other, spend some time together and socialize. In the office you have the social interaction with your colleagues and it is very important. Even when you work from home you need to socialize with your colleague and get the appreciation from them or your manager. You need this feedback and interaction with them. Human creature it is a social creature, so people don't really like to leave on their own and be by themselves. It is stupid to isolate a local person to do just home office without any possibility for interaction. You must have feedback, interaction and crosscheck when you do home office. You need a feeling that you belong somewhere and you can crosscheck your work

16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?

Everybody is different, but am sure this principle is the same for everyone. This principle is that you have to manage your time much better than in the office, because if you are in the office even if you don't do anything you are making the impression that you are useful. Home office is pretty dangerous, because you have to show your results. This is why companies allowing their employees work from home more and more. They exactly know what matter is results. I work in sales and what matter in sales is the volume. Of course, when you work from home you cut costs because you don't take space. This is why companies can rent and hold only a limited office space. Do I see my colleagues as productive as I am, of course do. Do I believe is important for my colleagues to represent the company in front of the customers the best way, yes I do believe so. I don't think junior can do home office. It should be applied by other companies more and more, because it is a great opportunity to manage your family, rather than being in the office every day. It is dangerous as well when you don't share and separate your family and private time from work. You can ruin your family by being always on the phone or on your laptop. It is not just a responsibility for your company to manage time and give you the freedom it is also huge responsibility for yourself to manage your time the best way you can. It is dangerous to be lost in your computer system and concentrate more on your work and forget about your family. It should not be that you work 24/7 and no one should do that. You should be conscious about your time. Sometimes it can ruin someone's life.

17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?

Similar to my company such as IBM, they also allow their employees to work from home. I believe the principle of working from home is the same or very similar for all companies, however the company culture is different. I know IBM is not very good at it and they are not good at paying commission anymore. A lot of colleagues join my company from IBM. Working from home really means that you are working from wherever you are. You can travel, so you can work from the plane, from the train station or a bus, with your family and so on. During the last two weeks I was working from Australia, which is on another continent, so I started my work at 5am

and stopped at 3pm. Nobody realized that I am in Australia. Of course some of my colleagues knew, because I had an emergency, so I told them, but I spoke with customers too and they had no clue where I am. Home office it is a global thing. If you are calling from Africa, where is the same time zone as in Europe, nobody would realized that you are not in Europe. So do I see other companies well allowing home office, yes of course, but the company culture need to determine it. The principles of home office are all the same, but it vary from a company to company because they all have different culture and ways to support their employees.

18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?

I would choose the one, which allows me to work from home, because they give me the power and possibility to manage my personal time and resources much better. I don't have to sit in the office from 9am to 5pm to be productive, but when you are obliged to do so you are seriously restricted by providing the expected results while being there. Business, and we are talking about multi millioner business doesn't work from the office, it works from a restaurants, from golf clubs, theatre or cinema. They work from a social events. You have to work from where suits your customers best. Also the time means that you need to work after normal working hours. I am talking about sales like we are responsible for a big business, you need the freedom to work from outside of office and you should require to meet your customers beyond working hours.

19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?

You have to balance it, because nobody else help you to balance it. If you are not able to do that, then don't go for home office. It helps me and I can balance it as a senior sales person. Ten years ago it wasn't for me. Now I work for this company for over ten years and I know what helps my business and what works best for my company. When I was younger and I worked from the office very little was happening there. Now I have different possibilities, I can meet my customers, I can take them for a dinner. Next week I am going to Geneva and I will meet this customer, he was very busy and he said he is not available, so I told him listen I am here in Geneva next week around 7pm, why won't we meet for a dinner and just talk informally. And he said yes, let's do that and I can pay him a dinner and he can tell me about his issues.

20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?

Yes, actually. When I am in the office my colleagues know that I have meeting or I am on a customer side. I am never there to waste my time. I appreciate it more, because the company gives me more freedom, so I have more personal time, which is very important for me.

21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

It is necessary to measure employee performance. It is important to measure both factors, subjective and objective. My company does that and they do it pretty well. Now, when we are managing complex business and our targets are very high and the economic situation is tough they consider how much difficulties you have to go through on a specific market to achieve your target in order to be successful. They are very conscious about it. They look also at the ability to work in a team and if you help people from your team members and so on. How much you can manage company processes and resources also matter. Both subjective and objective factors are very important.

22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?

I think home office is already a standard in many cooperations, especially in IT. I believe it will grow in the future. With growing population, increasing travel time and difficulties on developing your workplace I believe companies will consider home office more and more. Because of various technologies you can monitor a person working away from the office, so you can have a control over his or her work. Definitely it will grow huge as you know for yourself it is very important area for studies and HR research. We cannot forget that when you force people to be in a close office, like animals, when you put too many animals into a small space the escalation might be out of the equation. If you don't have enough of your personal space and you are forced to work with someone, you are not happy about it and you don't appreciate it. Socially it will make a big difference. It is all about happy work/life balance. Balance means that both sides of an equation has to be fulfilled, the personal space and the space free of disturbances. Both sides of the equation have to be very smart managed, by the cooperation management. You are in the area where you can help them to make this balance.

Interviewee: 15/24

Person: Marcus

Position: Sales representative

Date: 04.02.2014

Time: 10.00

Age: 29

Nationality: French

1. How long do you work in this company?

3,5 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

First position was business development for 1 year in Dublin, after I was tele sales for one year in Dublin as well and after that I moved to this position, so I am field sales representative for 1,5 in Switzerland.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

Yes, we are allowed to do one day per week. Officially if we want to work more than one day from home we need an approval from the manager.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

For my job the contract I have its pretty fine, because I am on the field so I am meeting customers and working on the field and I can come to the office when I need, so it is pretty flexible. The company is very open about home office. For me personally the contract I have is fine.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Yes my manager supports home office and he is a big fan of home office.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Yes it is. I don't know if this is because of Switzerland and the mountain area, but people like doing home office especially on Friday or Monday, so it is very popular here.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

It's well perceived. It is positive, because especially in the open space office which is the majority of space, it is very difficult to focus and your are always disturb by other colleagues because they have questions, so at home it is more possible to focus and get the work done I need to do. If someone would like to reach me and ask a question he or she can call.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

I am a big fan of home office. I studied in the Netherlands for one year. Home office is very popular over there, so lots of companies have no offices. Basically in

- Amsterdam you have big canter with meeting rooms, where you can do your cooperate meetings. When I was there I discover that and I knew this is the way I would like to work.
9. [How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?](#)
- It is one day per week, but If I would have the possibility I would extend it.
10. [What are the main advantages when working from home?](#)
- It cuts all commuting costs and time. Especially me, I am from Paris where home office is not really popular. When I was working there I had to spend 1,5 hour in metro one way, so it was 3 wasted hours per day. Sometimes you have issues on the metro line, so when you arrive to work you are stressed. When you leave work you are angry because you will be home late, around 9pm. Also for the family it can be a huge advantage to being able to bring your kids to school and pick them up, so the flexibility is a great advantage. One more is that you can totally focus on things you need to work on and concentrate just on it. As I mentioned already more offices have working open space, so it's very easy to Be distracted.
11. [What are the main disadvantages?](#)
- Working too much from home could cut the information of what is going in the office. Like if the company is not doing well and there will be lay off you need to be aware of these news in order to take actions. Also the relations with people you need to establish to feel integrated with the company. For example when I started working here in Switzerland I came to the office every day for the first 8 months in order to build the relation with my colleagues. After that I started home office. When the relationship was build I was able to do home office. It would be one of main disadvantages, because when you start directly doing home office you won't be able to establish this connections so you might feel excluded.
12. [In which aspect do you profit most from the home office?](#)
- To focus completely on work, without any disruptions. You can do it faster and you can combine it during your gaps time, when you are waiting for an answer with other tasks like washing etc. So you have time for your personal life.
13. [Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?](#)
- I would say I am more productive at home.
14. [Under which circumstanced do you think does it make sense to work from home?](#)

I cannot really see why people cannot work from home because with all new telecommunication technology, the web conference, phones, chats, emails, etc. I think most of people will be able to work from home. There are many tool in order to get the needed information and work from home such as accountants or programmers. I don't really see barriers for working from home. It's also a matter of culture and mind, because I know for example in France it is very difficult to do home office, because the French people don't have this mind set of working from home. They need to go to the office and even stay late in the office, not that they really have to be there, but to show that they are busy, they have certain status and show the importance of being there. I have also a long distance relationship, so it will be handy doing home office going to Germany on Thursday work from there and have the whole weekend to stay with here. In this time of globalization and movement more couples are together but leaving in different countries, so it will be great to combine work with the relation.

15. Could you imagine to work only from home?

Yes, I can imagine working just from home 5 days a week.

16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?

Yeah I think here in our company people are really focus and true so when they work from home they are connected and you can reach them as they were sitting two meters from me. The company is not losing anything, because in the end the work is done and the employee is happy and in a good mood. If you work from Friday at home you can already feel the weekend and work smoothly and you are less stress so you are more productive.

17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?

I think it's a good strategy. The company has a chance to attract new employees. For example in France Wednesday is the kids day, so people allowed to do home office can stay at home, look after their kids or bring them to sport classes and so on. They feel more in control and less stress. I do rank them higher.

18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?

The one with home office possibilities.

19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?

Yes, definitely I would say it is one of the main advantages. Especially in our IT environment when big companies 'consume' employees by giving them a lot of work and according the bad economy expecting great results being able to do home office can keep employee really motivated and keep away the pressure.

20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?

Yes, I think so because when you do home office you feel like a gift or an advantage from the company you work for so you need to be loyal and work well even from home.

21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

The connectivity time on the internet as we have a special system you need to log in to the VPN connection, so they can measure that. And when we do home office we should be connected the whole day from 9am until 6pm. They could also do mysterious calls in order to assess the responsiveness and connectivity.

22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?

Yes, I think more and more employees will have to travel to use the new technology and at certain point companies will have to notice that having big offices it's a cost, which should be reduced by having smaller offices and giving employees the possibility of working from home. Especially during crisis facilities management for big companies it's a big matter. The independent employees with their own agenda and customers meeting should be allow to do home office and treat it as a standard. It's a state of mind, because I know when I have to work and when I don't, so I don't have any problem if I have to open my computer on Saturday and look after a big deal because I know it's worth it. It depends of a job as well. For some employees like HR people will be better to be in the office but for software developers or sales person it's better to be more flexible and work from home.

Interviewee: 16/24

Person: Martina

Position: Account Manager

Date: 10.02.2014

Time: 11:00

Age: 40

Nationality: French

1. How long do you work in this company?

15 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

5 years. Since then I am allowed to do home office.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

I don't really remember, but I don't think so.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

No, it doesn't really matter for me.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Yes, my manager allows me to work from home if it is required.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

They are doing the same, most of them are allowed to work from home. For example today in the afternoon I will return home and work from there, because one of my daughter is sick and we have a doctor appointment, and after that we will return home and I will continue working. It is not an issue, because you are connected to the system. We have instant messenger, so it is the same I am reachable from home.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

They perceive it well. It lets them arrange the time the best way.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

I like home office when I need to concentrate, because in the office we are working in the open space, so it is very noisy. You are always interrupted by your colleagues. If you are working on the legal points of the contract or something you need to focus on it is the best to work from home.

9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?

Generally I am coming to the office, but in two main circumstances I am choosing home office: when I need to focus and have quiet environment and when one of my daughter is sick . Last three months I had five time home office. So it is not something what is fixed, but it depends on my work and circumstances.

10. What are the main advantages when working from home?

Silence is the most important for me, because I have no interruption from my colleagues. At home I can focus and be more productive. When it comes to administrative work or contract and its legal side it is easier and faster performed from home. Work which I have to stay focus for a longer time and I don't need others in order to finish the task.

11. What are the main disadvantages?

It depends from the person, but you might get into different things which you have to do during the day while being at home and supposed to work. No socializing, I wouldn't be able to stay at home all the time without any information flow, it's not good for my position.

12. In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.

The silence and quietness of staying at home.

13. Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?

It depends what you have to perform, what kind of tasks you have. Sometimes you need to share information with other colleagues from different teams and for this you have to be in the office. If you have to work on a business case or contract, than you don't need the others, so you can focus and work on your own from home.

14. Under which circumstances do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home? Do you rank them higher?

When you have to concentrate more on tasks and you don't need others it does make sense to work from home. It doesn't make sense when your profession requires high level of cooperation and face-to-face meetings.

15. Could you imagine to work only from home?

No, I couldn't.

16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?

Generally yes, they are responsive and productive. Of course there are exceptions. We have instant chat, phone calls, emails, so we have lots of tools, which let us connect. I have a feeling that it's not about the hours which I work, because you can do your job faster from home as you focus more.

17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home?

In the IT companies its kind a standard and mandatory. I cannot see any issue with allowing their employees to work from home. Of course, as I said before it depends

- from the job and task you have to perform. I see this companies which offers home office in favour. I wouldn't join any IT company which does not offer home office possibility.
18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?
The one which offers home office.
19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?
Yes, clearly for me it does let me balance my family and private life. As I have mentioned before, if one of my daughters is sick I can be with her and still work from home. If I have a customer meeting late afternoon after the meeting I can go straight home instead of coming back to the office for one hour, and I can reconnect from home. It safes my time so I don't have to stress that much.
20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?
No , I cannot see any link between me being loyal and home office possibility.
21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?
Again it depends from the job, if people are remote workers than it has to be measures by the KPA. It can be that other people do home office just time to time. In this case it can be check by responsiveness of emails or calls. In my case it is measured based on the specific agreed before target, but I am not sure if there is a specific link between the target measurements and working from home.
22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?
For a certain businesses, yes it will increase, because it costs less for the company and its more open, share source such as share desks. If we are talking about the IT industry or internet businesses of course they will continue to motive people to work from home. They will provide and sponsored the internet access and home office equipment. But if you work in a manufacture or in the supermarket they don't have many possibilities, as their employees need to be at the workplace, this is the job requirement. It might look different in 10-15 years. For the new generation the way they use technology and how they communicate is changing their perception. They integrate the technology very fast compare to older people. You explain them once how the iPod works and they are instantly on it. Internet and technology is the future and everything connected with it will be in the main interest.

Interviewee: 17/24

Person: Mikaduo

Position: Account manager for Hardware and Infrastructure

Date: 07.02.2014

Time: 10:20

Age: 38

Nationality: Bosnian

1. How long do you work in this company?
2,5 years.
2. How long do you work in the same position?
2,5 years and can do home office since.
3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?
Yes it does.
4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?
I have one.
5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?
Yes, definitely. My managers likes most when I am at the customer side and let me work from home too.
6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?
Generally speaking, yes it is. I think most of my colleagues are jealous because they cannot do it. Some managers think differently and they would like to have their team in the office. From my point some administration work is easier to do from home.
7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?
They would love to do it on a regular basis.
8. What do you think about the home office in general?
It's for me perfect balance between sitting in the office and meeting other guys and talking about business and then between when you are at home and doing some strategic work, you are not interrupted by other guys, who want to go for a coffee with you or talk about business. I reach perfect balance between office and home work.
9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?
2 days from home, 3 days in the office. There are no particular days, everything is according to my schedule. I have lots of customer meetings, so I am changing the days.
10. What are the main advantages when working from home?

Silence of working from home. Nobody is interrupting you, so you have really time to work the whole day. All strategic plans and customers offers I can prepare in a comfortable environment, not in the small area of quiet room in the office when everybody is listening anyway. For me it's more work quality when I work from home.

11. What are the main disadvantages?

I'm not sure if there are any. I can think of just one. If you are at home and you don't have regular internet signal it is difficult or impossible to work.

12. In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.

The silence and quality of work, which you do from home it's much better.

13. Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?

At home. It is because I can focus and concentrate on my tasks.

14. Under which circumstances do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?

It does, when you have administrative work or work which requires high focus and concentration. For me it doesn't make sense when my son is at home, because he asks if we can play and interrupt my working flow. When it comes to positions inside sales and tele-sales these people should be in the office, because they have to monitor what they are doing and their jobs require high cooperation between each other. Managers not necessary need to be every day in the office.

15. Could you imagine to work only from home?

I wouldn't do it, because it is too much form me. I need exchange of information with my colleagues. I have technical presales and they work on different offers with me, so I need to interact with them and it is easier when I sit together with them. It can be heavy to do it over the phone or email.

16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?

You have maybe two different type of people working from home. One is the one enjoying the home settings, they sitting in their jogging pants and doing nothing because they like their free time and take advantage of it. So they don't work the whole day, but they work very intense for few hours. The other type of guys they work the whole day very intense . They are at home, they need to be very productive, because they know that there is no chance to do this kind of job in the office, because

- of all interruptions. So most people need to find out what is their home working style. Most people are very responsive and reachable. From people who I am working with didn't have any bad experience.
17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?
- I had my former two companies they also allow me to work from home, so it's more and more common. It's a good thing for the employee when the company shows them the trust. For me it is a good signal from the company.
18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?
- I choose the company, which gives me home office possibility.
19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?
- Yes, definitely. If I work from home I have the possibility to bring my son to school, than go to the city of Zurich, have a coffee and start my work day at 9am from home. It is, as I start my working day in the office. It's easier, I don't have any pressure.
20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?
- Absolutely. I appreciate a lot that my company gives me the possibility to work from home on a regular basis.
21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?
- I don't know if you can measure it. I think we are at the same organization and it is based on targets. You have monetary targets, so in the next 3 months you need to bring to the company certain amount of money.
22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?
- It is a trend. In my opinion everything has to do with our own perception of how you do it and how you take it. Home office is not for everybody. You have people who take their work home and then they don't work, so it is always a danger. From my point of view it's a big trend in Switzerland. Microsoft for example encourage their employees to work from home on a regular basis.

Interviewee: 18/24

Person: Mike

Position: Sales Representative

Date: 10.02.2014

Time: 10.00

Age: 39

Nationality: French

1. How long do you work in this company?
6 years.
2. How long do you work in the same position?
5 years Sales Consultant, 1 year Sales Representative.
3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?
No, it doesn't allow.
4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?
Yes, it would be easier to have it in the contract.
5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?
My new manager allows it, the previous one wasn't ok with it.
6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?
It depends from the position. But generally it is accepted
7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?
From the flexibility point it is very important for them, especially those who have kids.
8. What do you think about the home office in general?
It is good to be flexible. Great that it is allowed. I use this possibility.
9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?
I would like to do it once a week, in my current position I cannot do it so often. It is in a case when something comes up and I need to stay at home.
10. What are the main advantages when working from home?
No commute time. I mean I spend 2 hours in my car per day.
11. What are the main disadvantages?
Being alone at home, not meeting anybody.
12. In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.
To combine work with family responsibilities, such as bringing my daughter to school and pick her up.
13. Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?

- Office, because of my position, as I have to cooperate and meet with other sales guys. I can see home is the best for preparation and doing administrative work.
14. Under which circumstances do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?
- It doesn't when you have to meet customers, when you work in cooperation with your team and your job requires lots of face-to-face cooperation. It does when you can work alone, when you need to focus on preparation and administrative tasks.
15. Could you imagine to work only from home?
- No. It is because of the social aspect. Lots of things happen when you meet people, when you talk and have direct contact with people. I don't see myself working alone from home.
16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?
- For sure. They work hard from home long hours. It is question of trust, we are all grown up we are IT people for 10-15 years, so we trust people working with us are responsive, productive and can cooperate easily. If I take for example people from support working very often from home they are reachable. They work is to reach customers by the phone. I have to say I know them, but I don't have such a strong relation with them. I have absolutely no idea how is their family, and so on. It is not the same type of relationship, which I have with guys from the office I work on the regular basis.
17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?
- Great if the company allows home office to their employees. I do rank them higher.
18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?
- The one which offers home office, because it is an advantage.
19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?
- Yes, it does. It is about more time I have while working from home, which I can give to my family or help my wife.
20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?
- There is no link for me. There are different variables, which matter more.

21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

Productivity of employee should be measure if you work from home or the office. From my position the job needs to be done, from home or from work it doesn't matter. It is based on numbers.

22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?

In general I would prefer see more people working from home. There wouldn't be such a heavy traffic. There are lots of position, which place doesn't matter, because they can be done from anywhere. In my opinion it could increase.

Interviewee: 19/24

Person: Olivier

Position: Alliance and channel manager

Date: 07.02.2014

Time: 14.25

Age: 41

Nationality: Danish

1. How long do you work in this company?

6 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

Within the same position, but the company change slightly internally. Since the beginning I have the possibility of doing home office. I came with the request and I would never take a job where home office would be prohibited.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

It is not stated in the contract, but you have an option of home office or remote work. I am officially office worker, but with the option of doing home office.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

No. It doesn't really matter for me as long as I am flexible.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

My manager is not sitting in this country, so he doesn't really care where and when I work, as long as the work is done.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

It is broadly accepted, but when you start to overdo it people start to question what you are really doing, so you shouldn't really do it every day, because people would like to see you as well. It is kind a touchy subject, because some people are allowed some are not and it depends from the manager too.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

They broadly speaking accept it because it is treated like a standard.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

I think it's great. Home office is good, because we have lots of work to do and big part of it is in excel or presentations with certain deadline, this is when I do home office. I get much more work done, because I work without breaks.

9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?

- Normally I try to do it once or twice a week, but it vary because sometimes I have to travel. It depends from my schedule. I don't have fix home office days. It is very flexible.
10. **What are the main advantages when working from home?**
Flexibility due to my work and private life, because I do a little bit of house jobs during this time like cleaning the dishwasher. I have peace and quietness, so I don't get disturb from people coming to me and ask questions.
11. **What are the main disadvantages?**
I don't see many. Probably, if you do it too much, because you don't feel the people, like the tensions of sales guys. You need to know what they want and be there for them. If you stay too much at home you don't get this feelings any more. Otherwise I don't see any disadvantages.
12. **In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.**
Productivity is number one reason.
13. **Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?**
I would say home.
14. **Under which circumstanced do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?**
It doesn't make sense if I have to meet people and interact with them. Also when I need to collect information from different people I think it is easier to do it in the office. If I have to do something about, I don't possess the whole knowledge myself than office is the right place to be. It does make sense, when I have tasks I really need to focus on.
15. **Could you imagine to work only from home?**
No I couldn't do it. It is because of the social part and as a marketer I need to be with people and feel them, customers, partners, inside employees.
16. **What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?**
It's more like an expectation I have, because when I do home office I need to work so I suppose the rest think the same. We are all professional people, so I expect to behave this way and be responsive and cooperate. You have always weak guys, which try to misused the opportunity of more freedom, but mostly I believe people are more productive working from home. You set priorities when you are working from home because you need to focus, so you may not answer your emails straight

- away. So I answer when I feel ready to answer, but if it is something important I am there.
17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?
I do rank them higher, because I would never take a job in a company when it wouldn't be possible to work from home. I would hate not to have the flexibility, I might not use it, but I have the possibility. It is just as high as good sellery for me. For me it's a part of negotiation.
18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?
I would say the one which gives home office.
19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?
It surely does, because they are situation when you have to pick up your kid half an hour earlier from school, and when you work from home you have the possibility to do it. It is that I want to spend some time in the evening with my daughter, but when she goes to bed I would pick up my laptop and work more. It is the time management and you should make best out of it.
20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?
I wouldn't say it makes me more loyal, but I would say it makes me appreciate the company more, and it takes more time to leave the company. It is something what increase my satisfaction.
21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?
No I don't think it is necessary to measure employees working from home. I mean, I don't see the link of performance with home office. It is more target driven or task driven not applying to the place and way the job is done, but the final outcome. I think it is very difficult to measure home office work. We are all professional people and earn ok money, so I expect from people that if they are doing home office they do work.
22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?
It is something that people will required more and more. I also hear many companies are going back and abounding home office. I believe there are lots of people which they will benefit from home office, especially because we have so many tools and the technology is progressing. It is a bigger trend to do more of home office. I think also companies becoming more flexible.

Interviewee: 20/24

Person: Robert

Position: Campaign Manager

Date: 20.02.2014

Time: 17:00

Age: 27

Nationality: Macedonian/Swiss

1. How long do you work in this company?

2.5 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

1,5 years I the same position. I have the possibility of doing home office since 1,5 but I started to request it since 1 year.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

No it doesn't. I was not aware, that we have home office policies, under which circumstances you can apply for home office. Nobody inform me about the possibility of choosing home office optionally.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

It would be better to have one. Not just the possibility of doing home office, but an explanation under which circumstances you can do it. It would be good if before signing the contract I would be ask upfront if I agree or not to do home office.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

He does on exception basis. For example, when there is public holiday coming on Friday, than he would allow us to work on Thursday from home. In generally he doesn't like us to work from home, to have fixed home office days like Wednesday afternoon and Tuesday morning for example. The reason why, as I understood, is that people would ask for more and it wouldn't be beneficial for the team.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Yes. I mean the characteristics of our IT industry and of the positions is where home office is very common. You can see people coming in just once or twice a week to the office. It is very accepted. Sometimes I can hear people who are not allowed talking about home office in a negative way, because they question if they work at all from home, but normally it is accepted. It is very private thing and it depends, some managers don't like when people from their team work from home. For example my manager doesn't like it. But I have met managers who don't care as far as the numbers and performance are right its fine.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

What I know from my colleagues is that they favour home office and they like the concept of home office, but they also want to be in the office. They would never choose to work 5 days in a row from home or be away for very long. The home office is demanded when they have meetings outside our premises, when we have tasks to do which demands lots of concentration, or a lot of repetitive task, which you can easily do from home. On the other hand people like going to office to share experience, share some questions they have about processes. It also gives them a feeling of being in the office, which means they really work for the company and the social aspect is very important. At home you might become distance and it could be hard to integrate.

8. [What do you think about the home office in general?](#)

The home office in my opinion is double edge sword, because on one side it is an instrument which allows companies to respond to the increasing difficulties of recruiting people as lots of people have kids or leave away and they are not willing to make the whole sacrifices of moving. It is very good to give people freedom and show them trust, let them do the job the way they want to do it. I don't really trust home office to all, because I think some job positions you have to be in the office, when you have daily interaction. From my experience in the company there are teams which I have never seen. They sit somewhere no one knows where. They have remote contract and come to the office once a year if they are needed. This is when you start to think about your colleagues and what are they doing. In general I am in favour of home office, when it is on special occasion, if you can justify why you do home office.

9. [How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?](#)

I don't work from home on a regular basis, so I don't have a schedule. I don't have the maturity yet to demand such a request. In my case it is very specific. When you have Christmas and it is a public holiday between two days than I wouldn't drive back to work from the office, so I prefer to stay at home and work from there. Or when I am going to a customer or to a marketing agency than after the afternoon meeting I don't drive back to the office, but instead I work from home. When I know I am going to travel I take day off just to prepare myself.

10. [What are the main advantages when working from home?](#)

The quietness. Your own speed of work you can have. You are in a comfort zone, so when you have very stressful job and you are sitting in front of the desk and are noisy and busy it can stress you even more, so working from home is very outbalancing the daily stress factors. It can increase productivity when you can do your work faster than being in the office. When you have family and kids it can help people to balance it. If you are someone who travels a lot home office it's a very good alternative to compensate the time you are away from your family.

11. **What are the main disadvantages?**

You have no face in the company. Some people might question if you do your job at all, so they question your input as they don't see you present. You limit your career progression as you don't show your direct presence. You isolate yourself socially, so it is harder to network and integrate yourself in a team. It is also hard to share and gain knowledge. It is harder to get certain things done, because in the office you can just walk over and ask somebody.

12. **In which aspect do you profit most from the home office?**

Time saving for commuting and I am more productive. In my case is that I can sleep out until 10am, but then when I wake up I go full on. I have this quiet zone, which allows me to concentrate and get something done.

13. **Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?**

In my case productivity depends from the tasks I am doing. For example I can work 2 months on consolidating thousands of data and statistics, so it doesn't really matter if I work from home or office. I can be productive in both cases. For myself being in the office however makes me a bit more productive, because the premises of work and just walking through the door give me the feelings of work to get my pc on the desk, get my coffee and water and begin. I can set myself a timeframe, which I have to do and follow. When you do home office you have all the freedom to extend, to push back, to delay. It also depends who I am working with. If I would know I have to exchange tasks and information I would prefer to be in the office as it is faster to do it in person.

14. **Under which circumstances do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?**

It is less about circumstances but more about maturity. What kind of results someone shows, because I think if someone shows constant results he or she will be efficient at home too. How much you trust this person. Someone can be 10 years in the office

and you might not agree to let him work from home, or he might not like it. If you work more and longer in the company you get trust and if you also show results than it should make sense to let you be more free and flexible if you require such thing, or come to you with such proposition. If you have very long way to commute it makes more sense that you stay 1 or 2 days at home. If your work requires a lot of individual work, let's say you have special expertise on one particular field than you can work more often from home. It doesn't make sense if your knowledge is asked every day on a regular basis by your co-workers sitting in the same office. If you are a manager or director than you should be more present because it requires to be like a role model. It doesn't make also sense when you have lots of meetings or if your work depends from another department. When you work together with marketing or sales, if you have lots of interdependencies and recreational reactions when one cause the other. It makes it much easier when you are in the office than. If you work closely in teams it's important to be together, share and create the knowledge. If you share clients than you need to know what is going on and exchange the info face-to-face.

15. [Could you imagine to work only from home?](#)

No. I would feel lonely. I am very outgoing person. I like chats with my colleagues. I like coffee breaks. In my case I learn and gain lots of knowledge just by listening other colleagues. Being in the office allows me to be more productive. 5 days it's not a balance for me. It would make me not feel that I create value and if you don't feel it, you cannot be motivated. So I don't think I would feel motivated working 5 days a week from home. It is a question of discipline as well. Can you make the routine, without someone watching over you. I know for myself I feel more disciplines when I am in the office.

16. [What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?](#)

So far I have made very good experiences from people working from home. They reply emails in 10-20 minutes. It's is not that they are at home and you cannot reach them. I don't know if they work more or less, but in the end we are very much results driven so the question if somebody is working the same hours or not has to be according the activity you are doing. If the task is very repetitive, when you are in an accounting department and make numbers entry than probably you have to work the

same hours, because you have to report what you have done. In other functions like sales, people don't care how much you work, the results counts. Being 14 hours in the office and having poor results it is not a deal. It is about if what is demanded is delivered or not.

17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?

It has become an extra, a strategic benefit place by companies, which they use to attract talents to show them they trust and give the flexibility. I think it depends to whom you report, where do you sit, if you are just one in your country you can do home office because there is nobody around you have to work with, but it has to be taken very carefully into consideration in a way when does it make sense to allow home office, which activities and to whom. Because we have seen cases, when people didn't come to the office for years and then people didn't know who this people are and when they investigated it came out they had another part time jobs or established online shops. On one side it becomes an asset and it is demanded and appreciated. It shows that the employer trust employees. But in our position no one question if you come to the office at 7am, 8am or 10 am. Nobody cares the job has to be done.

18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?

That is a very rhetoric questions. I would take the company which offers home office.

19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?

Yes. It does. Because I can enjoy a coffee with my girlfriend or you can go for a lunch to your parents or for a walk, instead of eating in a canteen or in a restaurant. You can just combine and do something with your family. It is extra time. So you are more flexible when they are sick or when they have performance or go for training and so on. You can combine all this things.

20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?

Yes, because it increases my satisfaction and my perception of the company. I feel more being trusted and appreciate it.

21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

It depends from the job you do. If you have a sales job you can measure it in the end of the month. If you have administrative job and it is not quantitative how do you measure it? It's not an easy task. It is more about communication and the working plan agreed with the manager and execution with constant update rather than measure and over control. The employer should never give home office possibility if he has to implement control and monitoring system, which drives the employer and employee crazy. Home office should be based on trust. Not that every evening you have to report what have you done during the day. Like this I would never do home office, because it means so many procedures and creates something like big brother house with no trust at all.

22. [Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?](#)

I think the home office in general I see it as a trend, because technologies allowing it. Like in our company we have web conferences, inter calls, instant chats, so we have all tools. But the quality of better food, balance family, women working from home, for pregnancy all this let's call it 'green revolution' and home office will be one of it. On the other hand there is a competitive war for talents, so the very good employees if they demand it they will place it as a request when being hired. In general overall I don't see it on a huge increase, because the bottom line is, you should be present in a company. Home office will increase in a service industry, IT, Consulting industry. In production facilities and construction and so on wont increase because the presence is crucial.

Interviewee: 21/24

Person: Sarah

Position: Business Analyst Operation

Date: 06.02.2014

Time: 13:30

Age: 36

Nationality: Swiss

1. How long do you work in this company?

2 years and 3 months.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

Before I was assistant for the county manager and after 7 months I have changed to business operation. During both positions I had possibility of home office, but this was the issue and reason why I have change my position in the first place. It was, because the home office didn't really work out. It was agreed I can do home office twice a week, but this was not really doable, because if you are the assistant it is good if you are always with your manager. My boss mostly had time after 5pm and I wasn't in the office any more, so this was the problem.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

No, it is not in the contact. I think I would have to apply for it, but for now it's just an agreement between me and my boss.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

Actually it would be good idea, because if there is any change in management which can happen, I would have to negotiate again.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Yes, it's just an agreement between both of us.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Yes, I things so. What is important, I am reachable when I have to be. I think it is accepted, because people know that I leave far and I have to travel a lot. In this company it is quite usual to do home office, some people work exclusively from home and they don't come to the office at all. The company is ok with it and people are used to it. One manager I know from here is totally against home office. He doesn't like that people are not present and that they work from home.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

I think not all people agreeing with it. There are employees who like it some don't.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

It has both sides. Advantages and disadvantages. For me big advantage is that I can work more undisturbed, so I can concentrate better, because it is just me at home, and I can focus on my work. I can also organize my work that when I have something I really have to concentrate on I do it at home and not in the office. And in the office I concentrate on work where I need my colleagues and when I need to discuss stuff with people. For me it's good like now, having 2 days when I can concentrate more. This way I work more efficient.

9. [How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?](#)

Two days a week I am working from home. It is fixed for me as Tuesday and Friday. There are changes sometimes because of a meeting, which I should attend. Tuesday as my former boss wasn't in the office and Friday, because there is not so many people this day in the office. I am in the office when managers are here and when I have important meetings.

10. [What are the main advantages when working from home?](#)

I can concentrate better on work which demands longer work period and organize myself better. I don't lose 4 hours a day for transportation. That's the most important I think.

11. [What are the main disadvantages?](#)

I am not present in the office, so if someone has any question for me for example about the tool than I cannot explain it directly let's say on his laptop I have to find other ways such as web conference or over the phone. Sometimes it is more complicated. You also don't get inside information about what is going on in the office.

12. [In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.](#)

Time I save to commute.

13. [Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?](#)

More efficient to my tasks is probably home office, but I need to be in the office to see what are the problems from the sales people and how to improve them. And on the personal discussion I get much more than over the phone or emails. If I am looking for information its harder to get it from home, but if I need to fully concentrate home is the best place to work from.

14. [Under which circumstances do you think does it make sense to work from home?](#)

If you are leaving far away from your working place it makes sense to work from home like in my case, because I wouldn't be able to commute all 5 days. Probably for women with little children. The position is very important, let's say for HR people it is important to be in the office or for managers too. On the other hand for some positions such as software engineer it makes sense to work from home. It depends from the position.

15. [Could you imagine to work only from home?](#)

No. It is because I would lose completely track of what is happening in the company. It may happen you are working for company you don't know any more. Social part is very important too, because for my position is better I know people and people know me through the direct contact. It makes easier if you know someone.

16. [What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?](#)

It normally works out fine. Mostly, if I call someone I don't know if he or she is at home or in the office. My manager works from home as she has a little baby. She communicates that she might not be reachable at certain time and then we all know so its fine. The communication needs to be clear, but I didn't have bad experience that someone was not reachable at all.

17. [What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?](#)

In general its fine. The company needs to adjust if the work can be done from home. It depends from the position too. Maybe some companies don't allow home office based on some principle, but for me it's not really understandable. I guess I rank them higer.

18. [Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?](#)

It depends from the distance from home, because if the distance would be big I would choose the company which offers home office. If they both would be nearby than it wouldn't really matter.

19. [Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?](#)

Yeah, definitely. It is important for me because if I am leaving the office at 6pm than I am at home around 8pm, so it's much less free time. Days when I work from home I can save a lot of time and do something else instead like payments or shopping.

20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?

I am happy that the company let me work from home. My former boss could see I have difficulties within the first position, because of the travel time, so he tried to help me and ask if I can move to the region, but because of my private situation it wasn't possible. He looked for another position for me within the company, so I don't have to resign. It was a great help and support I appreciate it and I feel happy about it. It was like a chance from the company, because if the home office wouldn't be allowed I would have to leave and look for another job.

21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

I think this is a big problem of many companies that they do not control their employees working from home. Here we have so much work that we do not control the time. If I wouldn't work while being home it would show straight away. It would be remarked immediately by my boss and my colleagues. This way, even if I do shopping over lunch I work more in the evening after office working hours. In the end the work has to be done and it's not a discussion if I have worked or not.

22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?

I think the request is here and people would like to do it, so it will be more allowed because of the interest from employees. Of course you need to have the right equipment, so won't be for everybody possible to work from home. The need is here from the employees, especially women with children. It will become a very popular topic in the future.

Interviewee: 22/24

Person: Scharon

Position: Head of Business Operations

Date: 06.02.2014

Time: 16:00

Age: 32

Nationality: Belgium

1. How long do you work in this company?

6 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

1 year in the same position. I was able to do home office since 4,5 years. It is since I have fix contract,. The home office is an option only if you have fixed contract.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

The contract doesn't, but I have special home office agreements.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

I have one.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Yes, otherwise I wouldn't have such contract. He supports it.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

It is widely accepted in this company. You have permit for it. We are small team, so we can agree and swap who is doing home office who is in the office. Make sure that there is someone always present from our team in the office. Of course it's not that I always do home office, as I have the agreement I am allow to do it once a week, but it might be that I don't do it, when I have meetings or when is more stressful closing time I'm coming to the office.

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

Big acceptance. Not by everybody, but by the majority it is accepted.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

I see home office as a big advantage within the company. It is the biggest reason, why I am still working for this company. To have this flexibility. For me is pretty important.

9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?

Previously I have done it twice a week but I had different role that time. Now it is once a week, but again, I am not taking it every week. It depends from my schedule. Normally I take it on Friday, because not so many people are in the office on Friday,

- so there is not such a big difference if I am present or not. It happens that I have important meeting on Friday, so I reschedule my day and come to the office. First, I look if it fits with my work schedule and then adjust it with my private appointments. It is pretty flexible, it is also visible as it is in my agenda.
10. **What are the main advantages when working from home?**
I can combine my family life with business, as I have two small kids. It allows me to have this combination, to be a working mam.
11. **What are the main disadvantages?**
None for me.
12. **In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.**
Combine my private and family life. And I can focus more at home, more strategic thinking, which I don't do in the office because it is more day to day operation as it is very intense open space office with many distractions.
13. **Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?**
I am more productive at home, as I can focus more and concentrate on more demanding, detail tasks, but on the other hand in the office you meet so many people and you get so many information from everywhere. Working only from home I wouldn't like to do that, because it would limit the inside unofficial information. I would feel very isolated at home. If I have coffee with my colleague maybe it is not productive but I can gain very important information. You don't capture it when you work from home.
14. **Under which circumstances do you think does it make sense to work from home?**
When you have face-to-face meetings it is better to be in the office. When you base on calls and teleconferences than it makes sense to work from home.
15. **Could you imagine to work only from home?**
No, I cannot imagine. It is about isolation and losing the social aspect of information flow, and unofficial meetings which also happen, for collaboration when you have to do something with others. I have to cooperate with people this is my function, so for me this is not an option.
16. **What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?**
Working in IT gives you flexibility in a sense that you have flexible hours and you can work from home. The only thing, you have to be always online and responsive,

so it is a requirements and attitude everybody has. I don't really see the difference from people working from home and those who work from the office. They are responsive. On the other hand I feel like I am working longer hours when I am at home, because you don't take real long breaks. I have the impression I want to be always reachable and I want to show I am present. Sometimes I shut down my computer much later than if I would be in the office. I don't do long lunch breaks, but I can do stuff like pick up kids from school, make sure my kid is ok and I come back and keep working. It makes this day heavy, because I am doing double shift.

17. [What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?](#)

I think they are more attractive to employees. When I think about banks or governmental organizations they require physical presence, even if there is no real need to be there. The IT industry is more flexible. They are easy going and they have policies and possibilities, so I rate this companies higher. If I would change job I would look for a company with home office permission. I don't want to lose that. For me it extremely add value.

18. [Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?](#)

I would choose a company with home office possibility.

19. [Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?](#)

I have two small kids, which requires doctor visits. Doctors here in Switzerland are not that flexible, so if you have flexible schedule it takes away lots of pressure. You can be at home, taking care of your kids and still be online working. You don't need to feel guilty or having impression that people discriminates you. It has no impact on your professionalism. I think it could be different way if you are absent and you don't have the tools to work, than it wouldn't be well perceived. It takes pressure away from me, as I know I won't be perceived as less skilled or less ambitious than people who are constantly in the office. The flexibility is great too, because if something in your private life is unexpected you can handle it easier.

20. [Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?](#)

In the beginning, when I started to do it, yes it worked this way. I thought that my employer trusts me to give me this freedom, so I need to be more loyal. But now,

after many years it's something normal and I don't need to show additional loyalty. I am still loyal, but its ok.

21. [What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?](#)

I don't feel control is necessary. The main point is, that the company trust you to do the work from home. Everybody, who has chosen to be loyal is working without this control. If you have motivated employee, he will do his job if he is in the office or working from home. I think it has nothing to do with the additional freedom, because you give the freedom, they know you trust them. There is indirect control of your co-workers, if you are online or not. Someone sends you an email and see if you respond or not. People notice when you work or not. There is this social control and people are so busy they must work hard every day. If you lack something or you don't respond people will notice it very fast. This way, direct control is not necessary and maybe would take away the loyalty from the employees, because they would feel that they are not trustworthy.

22. [Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?](#)

I hope, and think it will. It save your travel time, which has also environmental impact. It is positive for the company, because they don't need such big office space. It has lots of benefits for both. I see it as a trend, which will continue to grow. IT industry is more in the lead, because it is very innovative sector and has necessary tools to work from home, but the public sector will be affected too. It is also question of cultural differences, acceptance or not, but I think it will continue to grow in all sector. For example I am from Belgium and there, I know some people think if you are not in the office you don't work.

Interviewee: 23/24

Person: Timi

Position: IT Operator

Date: 12.02.2014

Time: 18.00

Age: 34

Nationality: Scottish

1. How long do you work in this company?

12 years.

2. How long do you work in the same position?

I started off on help desk position, then moved to look after the IT need for the entire division. I went back to the IT department as a Business Analysis Manager role and after the last restructuring I am now in the training department.

3. Does your employment contract allow/support home office?

No, not really. I suppose you have the terminology from the HR perspective for teleworkers and people connecting from home. From the IT perspective I can come home, connect and can do whatever I have to do from my home office.

4. Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?

Yes, I would like to have this option of doing home office stated in my contract.

5. Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?

Yes, when I ask he has no issues.

6. Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?

Yes, it would be on a case to case basis. People travel a lot, so they need to be connected while travelling, otherwise they would lose too much time and in the end wouldn't be productive

7. How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?

Those who can work from home perceive it as an advantage.

8. What do you think about the home office in general?

I think it is very practical. I think also that a lot more work could be done at home. If you look at the nature of my work I don't necessary need to be at the office to do the majority of my job. In terms of any interruptions, I think it would be great to work from home. However, I need office for relations with other peers, meetings and networking. So overall it is very positive, but it shouldn't be exclusively done from home.

9. How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?

It is anything what I require. If there is something urgent that need to be done I would work as much as I can from home. Officially it is Monday to Friday in the office, but I would connect from home and work if it is necessary. When my daughter is sick I would stay at home, look after her and work on my things in the same time. I can be available any time.

10. [What are the main advantages when working from home?](#)

No interruptions that will be the most important. To be able to close your door and work straight through. The convenience and practicality of working from home. No commute costs and time lost.

11. [What are the main disadvantages?](#)

The only, which I can see is that it is blurry what constitutes to be at home and actually at work. Working as an IT means I am always connected, so it's hard to switch off and it might reflect in your work/life balance. And of course, you need to be equipped, so you need the right tools, the right devices and fast internet access to do your job well.

12. [In which aspect do you profit most from the home office.](#)

No interruptions for an extended amount of time and the ability to finish a big piece of work.

13. [Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home? Why?](#)

Again it depends more from the environment. If I can schedule easily my appointments and I know I won't be interrupted if it would be at home or in the office it doesn't really matter to me. If I would have once a week home office possibility it would be perfect, because if you look at what I am doing at work you will see that I don't need to be there except any meetings I have to attend. And I think having that one day at home I could be even more productive than I am now.

14. [Under which circumstanced do you think does or it doesn't make sense to work from home?](#)

It does make sense, if you simply have to deliver a piece of work, whether it is development or designing training programme, coming up with a piece of work, home office is perfect for. You are sitting down and you are on your own from start to finish. It doesn't make sense when you have to physically interact with other colleagues, when you need to be at meetings and meeting stakeholders, clients etc.

15. [Could you imagine to work only from home?](#)

I will need to go to the office. I cannot imagine myself working only from home. For me the human aspect will be missing. Technically you can do everything calls, conference calls and so on, but somehow I need the human interaction. It is possible, but I don't think you will be optimally performing when you will just and only work from home.

16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?

Yes, I would say that they are more productive. Based on experience I have, people working from home are a lot more contactable and reachable from home than they are in the office. I had good interaction with somebody working from home. It was somebody from company doing sales, so my interaction was purely sales but any time I called, any time I had to ask for something and meet them I got a reply in like 10-15 minutes. Because they were working from home, they weren't doing anything else. I think people working from home are a lot more efficient and they want to have their job done as fast as it is possible and then have some free time with family or friends. On the other side it might be more difficult to switch off, as people working at home have all devices connected all the time. It is very personal I would say and every person is different.

17. What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?

Yes, I would rank these companies higher, purely because it shows me that this companies have HR or Management which is looking at the best scenarios for their employees. They are obviously caring about their assets and they providing flexible working hours and it is only a good thing. If I would look for a job and I would get the possibility of working from home than it means I don't have to commute every day, so I will look for jobs in different areas further away from my place. From the employee perspective it would be only positive if companies are doing it.

18. Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?

I would decide to work for the company, which gives me the home office possibility, because it gives me the flexibility.

19. Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?

For me it is like a trust thing. It shows me that I don't have to be in the office to keep an eye on me. You know you will be productive no matter where you are. And the company trusts you to deliver. It does let me balance, because I am more flexible can be there for my family.

20. Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/company?

Not really, there won't be any more loyalty than already is, but I is certainly making me see the organization in a bit more human manner, rather than some kind of faceless entity that just hires.

21. What do you think is the best way to measure employee performance while working from home?

You have to measure it for sure, but I would say the home office is not the mechanism to measure, it is more your performance plan and path. This is measured, whether you do it or not it has nothing to do with home office. If you need to be monitored while working from home than the whole idea doesn't make sense, because the company should believe you are autonomous and you can work efficient on your own from home.

22. Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?

It would only increase for sure. If you look at the global economy it's getting better but in term of virtual meetings, virtual conferencing all this technology is there and it is mature enough now to accommodate that. Samsung, Apple and other devices are everywhere now, so you are nonstop connected. You cannot avoid it. The lines blurred now between personal and work devices, so people are always connected if they work from home or the office. To me, because of the progress and technology it will be just easier to execute. It is not going to decrease or go away.

Interviewee: 24/24

Person: Victor

Position: Territory Manager Suisse

Date: 04.02.2014

Time: 14.00

Age: 32

Nationality: French

1. **How long do you work in this company?**
7 years.
2. **How long do you work in the same position?**
It's been 2,5 years in this position and since 2 years I am doing home office.
3. **Does your employment contract allow/support home office?**
Yes, as long as you leave in Switzerland you can do home office within the company. I don't have any particular dates it depends from my schedule.
4. **Would you like to have a contract where home office is explicitly allowed?**
I have one.
5. **Does your manager independently from your contract allow you to work from home?**
Yes. It is not a topic which we talk about, because as I am a sale person as long as I make the numbers I do it the way I want.
6. **Is the home office accepted among your peers and managers?**
Yes. It depends what is your work environment but it is accepted for most of the people and most of the managers.
7. **How do your colleagues perceive employees working from home?**
It is natural, so we do it and it is not something what we talk about. It is accepted and perceived as a standard.
8. **What do you think about the home office in general?**
It gives me lots of flexibility, so I can combine personal things and if I have something important to work on I can easily do it from home. I am more efficient because nowadays the office is mostly open space with lots of people around it means that you can be interrupted by other people frequently. When I am at home I am not interrupted, so I can work on tasks, which require high level of concentration and it helps a lot to get the work done faster. It's is pretty positive.
9. **How often do you work from home? Is it on a regular basis or depending on the circumstances?**
My frequency would be one or two days per month home office. It fits my requirements.

10. What are the main advantages when working from home?

Flexibility, you can concentrate more. It also save commuting time.

11. What are the main disadvantages?

Social, because again when you work in the sales organization we need to talk with many people to know what is going on here in the office and at the customer side, so being at home cuts you out from the office world. You are missing important information, coming from unofficial communication, so from my perspective it is important to be in the office. Another disadvantage is that, when I am working from home I don't take many breaks and I force myself more, because I have got this freedom and I have to show I use it the best way. I tend to work more at home because I feel bad about not being in the office, so I want to proof I do my best. I think people are working more from home. Maybe, because the trust given from the management, so sometimes they overdo things. There are blurry borders between private life and work/professional life. And if you are working from home your apartment might start to look like an office.

12. In which aspect do you profit most from home office?

Flexibility and time management combined with silence while doing home office.

13. Where do you feel more productive: in the office or at home?

It depends from the task. In the office I feel more productive. My work is about people and how to communicate with them. I need to come up with a good project. When I am at home it is possible, but it is more difficult. It depends very much from the task. Some tasks are better to do from home some from the office.

14. Under which circumstanced do you think does it make sense to work from home?

When you have to work as a team on a project, if you have to communicate and exchange ideas than its better to do it in the office. If you have to make a report or administration stuff, which doesn't requires anybody's help, it is more efficient to do it from home.

15. Could you imagine to work only from home?

No. I would get bored. It is about the need of social contact.

16. What do you think about other people working from home? Are you convinced that they work the same working hours as they would in the office? Are they responsive and productive? How does it affect the cooperation?

People are more reachable and it requires less time to get things done, so they are more effective. One thing I noticed is that when people are sick they tend to work instead of

- resting, so event that they might be not 100 percent they are still working, so it is very good from the company view.
17. **What do you think about other companies allowing their employees to work from home? Do you rank them higher?**
For me home office it's a nice thing to have, but it is not very important since I am doing it twice a month. So if the company has reasonable arguments why they don't allow employees to do home office, than I understand it. These companies ask you to work when you are in the office in the building, but when you are after working hours they respect your private time/life.
18. **Which company would you choose, all dimensions are the same except one company give the possibility to work from home the others don't. Please explain why?**
Depends from the reason why or why not they allow you to work from home or not. If the company gives me the flexibility to work from home that's fine, but if they don't and they have reasonable answer that's fine for me too. I will always evaluate the role and the reason why the company has chosen certain approach towards to their employees. The reason is that home office is not something super important for me, this is why other things come first when it comes to a job choices.
19. **Does home-office let you balance your work/family/life situation?**
It does. It depends from your own personality. It is you making this balance, so you should know when u have to stop when to start.
20. **Does home office encourage you to be more loyal towards to the employer/ company?**
Yes, because my employer trust me and this is why I get this freedom. If I use it I have to proof I am loyal to the company. In the end it's a good deal for me and my employer.
21. **What is the best way to measure performance of employees working from home**
I base my answer on my own career, for the last 7 years I work for sale, so it is based on your numbers and the target you achieve or not. If you achieve them while doing 100 percent home office its fine. It is mainly based on your results.
22. **Do you think home office and remote work will become more important in the future/ become a trend?**
Yes. I see it as a trend. Nowadays you have the tools that allows you to work from home or anywhere else and access all important data. The mobility in the IT industry is very trendy and the goal is to make everything mobile. In the end you can be more efficient when you work from home, so employers will take advantage of it too.