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## Remote work—a win-win situation



Markku Joutsen

On 20 September, the national remote working day will be celebrated in Finland. The organisers of the campaign day—Finland's Environment Administration and Microsoft—wish to promote flexibility at work as well as the well-being of employees and environment.

Working remotely is not possible in all lines of work. An increasing number of people can, however, work anywhere provided that a mobile phone, a laptop and data connections are available.

More and more people would also be happy to exchange the hours spent caught in a traffic jam for free time, and the chaos in the offices for an environment that allows concentrating in real work. As many as 90 per cent of Finnish workers would like to work remotely at least occasionally.

While Finland is one of the pioneers in remote work in Europe, there's still room for improvement. More than one third of wage earners sometimes continue their working day at home, but only one out of seven has agreed upon the matter with the employer.

Many organisations offer no possibilities for remote working. Resistance to change may be lurking in the background along with a fear that an employee who is not present is not working.

I personally have many years' experience with remote work both as an employee and an employer. I sincerely believe that everybody will benefit.

If a worker can be trusted at the workplace, he or she can also be trusted outside the workplace. There is no need for spying.

How to separate work and free time without physical transition? The solution resides between one's own ears. Since knowledge-intensive work does not end by doing, anyone working remotely must set limits to her or his work.

If the flow is on or a deadline drawing nearer, lots of work can sometimes be done at one go. Afterwards it pays to take time for recovery.

Is the mingling of work and free time a benefit or a drawback? The answer depends on both the worker's personality and situation in life. For myself working from home has been the best possible way to combine entrepreneurship and being a single parent.

From the employer's and also from the worker's viewpoint one of the best aspects of remote work is that it enables the recruitment of people regardless of their place of residence.

While writing this, my colleagues are toiling hard in their home offices in Tampere, Heinola, Nummela, Espoo, Jyväskylä, Helsinki, Hollola, Nurmijärvi, and Gran Canaria. The fact that this magazine is now in your hands proves that it works.

*Leena Laitinen*

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