

A work-from-anywhere blueprint


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Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios

Business leaders everywhere are scrambling to reverse work-from-anywhere policies. At Axios, we are not: We are all-in on allowing everyone to work where they choose.


Why it matters: This approach is not without controversy and complications, so I wanted to share this rethinking of work and lifestyle.

 **The big picture:** I have talked with dozens of CEOs and hundreds of workers about this raging debate.

- **The CEOs privately say** they are convinced that with work from home, [productivity dips](#), culture softens, [creativity wanes](#) and a few but not

inconsequential number of employees will get paid to [do yoga and chill](#).

- **The workers retort:** This is nonsense. Most adults are fully capable of working better without time-sucking commutes and noisy, distraction-filled offices. Sure, they might exercise more or take breaks at home, but that ultimately makes them better employees.

 **Between the lines:** I do worry about two big risks of working from anywhere:

- **Younger workers benefit** more than they realize from being in the trenches, in person, grappling with tough, teaching moments. There is a magic in human interaction.
- **It is way harder** to create strong emotional bonds with colleagues and your company from your couch. People stay in jobs and thrive when they feel tight connections.

Here are four steps Axios takes to mitigate the risk:

1. **Hire self-motivated, driven people.** You need to screen hard for those who naturally blend work with life, motivated by passion for their craft, not money or rules. Clock-punchers or check-cashers are very problematic in a WFH world.
2. **Create new human interactions.** We take the money reserved for office space and spend it on company retreats, team off-sites, and regional and local meetups. We encourage employees in the same city, regardless of their job, to get together at a bar or for coffee.
3. **Communicate until you annoy yourself.** A good CEO or manager should be writing to — or Zooming with — their teams at least weekly and ideally more to amplify the purpose, the strategy, the goals, the common pursuit. This is more than most employees ever got when everyone was in person. We created software — [called HQ](#) — to do this

easily and effectively.

4. **Create new performance measurements.** Each of our leaders is in the process of coming up with better data to make sure everyone is doing the right thing, in the right order, at the right speed. The bigger you are, the more important this is. We will share it with staff so they know the expectations — and how to beat them — at home 😊.

Every employee needs to know that with great freedom comes great responsibility. If you work from home, the more you see colleagues in person, the better. The more you connect by something other than text, the better.

- My personal view is that if you are lucky enough to live near a physical office, use it. I go in every day I am in town.
- If you are not near an office, force yourself to connect with others often and consistently, on the phone or Zoom.

The bottom line: I am big on living in the world we have, not wish we had. The truth is people moved away, started new lives and habits, and often have a lot of choices where to work.

- It's our job to tap into this and turn it into the best virtual, dispersed workplace ever.