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■ CAREER ■

REMOTE WORK

Is it better than on-site jobs?

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The remote vs on-site debate started some time during 2020 and is still ongoing. Since then, some very interesting statements have been made by the top dogs in business, including Elon Musk, Chairman of X (formerly known as Twitter), stating “They should pretend to work somewhere else,” when asked to comment on the belief that on-site work is an antiquated concept.

On the other hand, Jack Dorsey, founder and former CEO of X, stated that his company can get talent anywhere. Echoing his sentiments, a spokesperson for Dorsey’s other founding company, Square, stated that they want employees to be able to work where they feel most creative and productive.

Remote work has its pros, including being less time consuming and more comfortable as well as flexible, thus offering a superior work-life balance compared to offline jobs. This balance is arguably much needed at a time when 9-hour workdays have become the norm in Bangladesh.

However, there are very few remote jobs available in the country, possibly due to a lack of infrastructure and the general dismissive attitude of employers towards the concept. What does this mean for the employees?

In the epicentre of commercial activities in the country, time is money but nobody seems to have enough of it because they are always stuck in a gridlock. According to the US National Bureau of Economic Research, Dhaka is the slowest city in the world in terms of traffic.

This indicates that people spend hours on the road commuting, wasting away time and energy that they otherwise could have used to be more productive, or even to recharge for the next day. Remote work can save workers hours every week, allowing them to enjoy a better standard of living while contributing to decreased traffic congestion in an overpopulated city.

Moreover, companies will have access to a larger talent pool if they offer remote opportunities. The arrangement could also impact employee retention rate by lowering turnover as people most likely will not want

to give up the flexibility it offers.

Offline work does have some merits including the chance to bond with co-workers, networking opportunities and the ease of dialogue at any given moment. However, it is difficult to ignore the toll it takes on workers in the form of unpaid commuting hours, cost of transportation and poor work-life balance.

The most constructive solution would be to meet in the middle. A hybrid work arrangement can relieve office workers from the draining nature of a full-time offline job, while allowing them to reap its benefits.

As technology advances, it only makes sense to use these advancements to our benefit in pursuit of efficiency and a better quality of life. With an open mind towards changing norms and a commitment to solving issues rather than accepting undesirable situations, we can finally start practicing a healthier and more modern approach to work.

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FCR01TOP1/24
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