



## Can we all work effectively from home?

The point of view of Debbie Kent,  
TalentSource Life Sciences Global Head



Having been home-based for the past 20 years, I am used to setting myself up for the day. I am disciplined enough not to eat lunch at my desk and although I work full-on, long days, I try to 'leave' my office for the evening and close the door.

It is however, a sensitive subject, whether we can all work effectively while being home-based. Some say it is isolating, while others say they get more done and some say they miss out on the 'absorption' of communication from those around them. It can be a challenge for companies to get the balance right. For this reason, many managers prefer their teams to be office-based, making it easier to manage.

With the current pandemic raging and many of us now working from home, what does this mean for the future?

Many companies have a work-life-balance concept and a working from home policy, but what does this really translate to?

The answers lie within the company culture and come down to trust and whether you can effectively measure productivity. Productivity can be difficult to quantify if you work in a services industry such as a CRO.

Some companies only have a work-life-balance concept just to have a policy in place, but can expect their staff to do more hours than a normal working day as part of their office culture. While other companies do not have a fully remote-working policy.

If you have high performing teams, who are driven to succeed, you will not have any issues with workers being home. However, if you have employees who are demotivated and disengaged, it takes a lot more effort on the part of the manager to keep oversight and drive performance.

A few key steps managers should take: ensure they work in a clear way, pass on understandable goals and instructions, regularly check-in with the team on progress.

This can help employees understand their role, explaining how this fits into the company strategy, encourage ownership of tasks while holding people accountable for their results. If performance then does not meet the expected outcome, circling back to check and control for the future can also help drive performance.

There are a lot of benefits for both parties if working from home is successful. Some of those benefits are no loss of time spent commuting, savings on facility costs, less time spent 'catching-up' and office politics. These benefits can lead to a less stressful environment and better work-life-balance, without having to try too hard.

We all have to be mindful of the reputation of the 'home-worker'. Those who do not usually work from home should be careful to set themselves up for success by preparing to be productive. This can help persuade those who are sceptical that working from home can be a great solution for work-life balance in the long-term.

As we look to the future and life after 'COVID-19', I think it is a perfectly reasonable suggestion that a much higher percentage of people who want to work from home can do so, but also remember that not everyone wants to work in this way.



**Debbie Kent** \_\_\_\_\_  
Global Head  
of TalentSource Life Sciences

Debbie joined CROMSOURCE in 2016 as Global Head of the CROMSOURCE flexible resourcing team - TalentSource Life Sciences Department, leading a large team of business managers and recruiters throughout Europe and the Americas. She has worked in the pharmaceutical industry since 1992, with prior roles within the management team of the FSP Department at one of the top 5 CROs, as Head of Insourcing and also has experience within a niche biometrics CRO, as Marketing and Business Development Manager.

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