

Study: Teleworkers more satisfied than office-based employees

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Employees who telecommute the majority of the work week are more satisfied with their jobs compared to those working mostly in the office because working remotely alleviates more stress than it creates, according to a new study by a communication researcher at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM).

The study, conducted by Kathryn Fonner, UWM assistant professor of communication, and Michael Roloff, a professor of communication studies at Northwestern University, compared the advantages and disadvantages of each [work](#) arrangement. A paper outlining the results appears in the November issue of the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, published by the National Communication Association.

The main benefit reported by participants who telework at least three days a week is the decreased work-life conflict that a flexible work arrangement allows. Alienation from workplace communication, often cited as the biggest disadvantage of telework, was reported as minimal by the study's participants. Teleworkers reported exchanging information with others less frequently than office-based [employees](#), but both groups reported similar timely access to important work-related information.

Results of the study pointed to multiple reasons why telework is linked to high job satisfaction, namely that employees working remotely are, on average, shielded from much of the distracting and stressful aspects of the workplace, such as office politics, interruptions, constant meetings and information overload, says Fonner.

"Our findings emphasize the advantages of restricted face-to-face interaction, and also highlight the need for organizations to identify and address the problematic and unsatisfying issues inherent in collocated work environments," says Fonner. "With lower stress and fewer distractions, employees can prevent work from seeping into their personal lives."

In addition to implementing telework arrangements for employees, organizations may consider several other strategies to boost [job satisfaction](#) for both office-based and distance workers, she adds, including:

- Limiting the number of meetings and mass emails.
- Streamlining office communication by creating a repository of information that can be accessed at any time.
- Designating certain times when, and spaces where, office-based employees can work uninterrupted.
- Creating a supportive climate where employees can register concerns without fear of retaliation.
- Encouraging employees to disconnect from workplace communication when they are finished for the day.

Provided by University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

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