(Home-) Office ?

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„Beginning in June, we're asking all employees with work-from-home arrangements to work in Yahoo! offices."

Marissa Mayer
President &
CEO of Yahoo!

„Remote work is on a rapid ascent, and not just among hot tech companies like Github, Automattic, or thousands of others. [...] Worse than simply being late to that party is to try to turn back the clock and bait'n'switch your existing workforce."

David H. Hansson
Ruby on Rails creator
Partner at 37 Signals

The ideal setting

- The best people available on the planet

- Highly passionate with a common culture

- Open, honest and direct communication

- Shared vision, clear goal and few management

- Trust all around

- One big office, no commute and travel

- Everybody loves to work from 9 – 5

- Highly creative environment

- Productive for all with right amount of meetings

You have to **choose**!

Some choose the **office**

- Face to face communication

- More creative environment (?)

- Social context

- Water cooler kitchen talks

Some choose the **office**

- They don't trust their employees

- They want to stay in control and want to keep an eye on everybody

- It is a company policy, whether it makes sense or not

- They want to save money

The agile history

- Created in an office context

- Work with the existing people of the company / team

- Remote work was always "alien"

- Most agile people don't want to work remote

Agile

But remember …

You choose!

… this is a compromise.

Some choose **remote** work

- Best talents available

- Family flexibility

- People are different, so everybody works when he/she is energized and in the flow

We think…

... both ways are possible

... both ways are equally good

... each way focuses on different aspects

Some examples

Github

- Biggest Git / SVN hoster

- > 150 people, 2/3 remote

- No managers • No deadlines • No Meetings • No workflows

- Inspired by opensource work

- Asynchronous discussion with pull requests & chat

- Optimize for happiness with side projects

- Family-friendly

- Invest in internal tools

http://zachholman.com/posts/how-github-works/

Automattic

- The people behind wordpress.org and wordpress.com

- 190 employees

- Vision: enabling people to publish

- Philosophy: transparency, meritocracy, longevity

- Everyone starts with support

- Data-influenced not driven

- Autonomy, empowerment and trust

- Tools: P2, IRC, IM, Skype

37Signals

- Ruby on Rails inventor. Product company: Web collaboration software

- 36 employees around the world. 13 have desks at the HQ in Chicago.

- Company get together

- Customer support is staffed during office hours

- Four hours overlap for collaboration and team feeling

- 40h work week. Distributed around the clock.

- Use screensharing and screencast

- Weekly discussion thread: "What have you been working on".

- Office are interruption factories and remote work is almost Zen-like

- Meetings are a rare treat
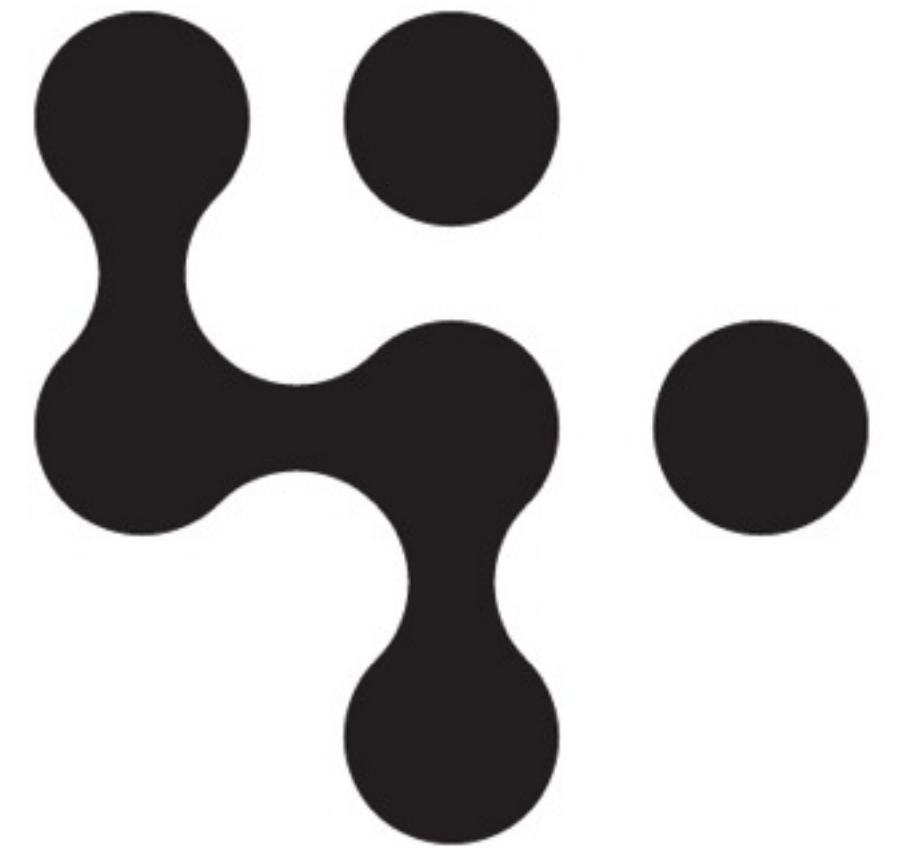
Other examples

- 37Signals

- Automattic (160 employees)

- Genuitec

- GitHub (100 employees)

- Kalypso LP

- MCF Technology Solutions

- ProofHQ

- Treehouse

- Copyblogger (source)

- YouNeedABudget

- StackExchange (50/50)

- MySQL (70/30)

- GrantStreet

- SoftwareMill

- Mozilla

- 10up

- Art & Logic (70 employees)

- AsmallOrange

- LullaBot (35 employees)

- AppendTo (23 employees)

- UniversalMind (65 employees)

- Basho (115 employees, 50% remote)

http://scottberkun.com/2013/how-many-companies-are-100-distributed/

How does it work?

#1
You need to **trust** people

#2
Aim for total **transparency**

#3
You need a **strong vision**

#4
You need **face time**

#5
Build a **remote as default** culture

Personal lessons learned

- Know how you work best

- Get out of the House

- Eliminate distractions

- Work in a productive space

- Use collaboration tools

- Technology still sucks (for certain tasks)

- Don't forget to call it a day

- Brainstorming sessions don't work well via Skype

- Face-to-face is different than for non-remote teams

Conclusion

- Remote work is a viable option

- Remote teams can be equally good / efficient / effective as co-located teams - or even better

- "Do, or do not" - mixed settings suck

Is remote work the preferred option for new companies?

Thanks!

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