THE SWITCH TO TELECOMMUTING

by:
Louie R. Sanchez
Teacher II, Mariveles National High School - Camaya

March 16, 2020, marks another history to our nation. This is the day when our president Rodrigo Duterte declared an enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) lockdown in Manila and the entire Luzon in an attempt of preventing the spread of Coronavirus disease 2019 (CoViD 19) that killed many people in other nation. This event made Filipinos stay at home, leaving their jobs for a month, uncertain if they can survive without their bread and butter. The situation then opens the door to working from home.

The current pandemic that the world is experiencing pushes opportunities for home-based jobs known as telecommuting. President Rodrigo Duterte signed the Telecommuting Act, Republic Act No. 11165 which has been informally dubbed the "working from the home act". According to (Smith Freehills, 2019) the act allows private-sector employees to work flexibly from home or any place outside the office with an internet connection, to increase employee productivity, performance, job satisfaction, and to resolve issues of long commutes to office workplaces. There are tons of home-based or remote jobs available online such as customer service representative, virtual assistant, telemarketer, copywriter, technical writer, project manager, digital marketing manager, web content manager, online English teacher, CAD designer, animator, internet researcher, and so on.

According to (Pineda, 2020) there are three ways one can work from home: 1. Remote setup with your company where your current company offers the option to employees to work outside of the office. 2. Full-time freelance/employee where you offer services to multiple clients and do it full time (freelancer). Alternately, you can commit to a single client with a fixed schedule and be a "full-time employee". 3. Part-time
freelance/employee where you do it on the side while doing your main job. There are a lot of perks one can get from having a home-based career. You can have more time for yourself and your family because you can control your schedule. You can have a less stressful working environment because you do not have to deal with co-workers and you only compete with yourself. You can save more, as you do not need to worry about your fare or gas, your budget for meals you will buy during breaks or lunch. You can avoid long hours of commuting to and from the office. You have flexible time because you can decide when to start and when to finish your task. You can enhance your skills especially in terms of communicating with clients. Like any other career opportunity, establishing a home-based career has its downfall. If you love talking to other people face facing, then working from home might be a great challenge for you due to isolation. If your area has a bad reception for internet connection, then working from home will be hard to establish.

One of the major requirements for a home-based job is to have a stable internet connection, most of the time home-based job workers needs to have two reliable service internet providers as one will serve as a back-up. If you are after job security, then you might think twice before entering a work-from-home job. Most works from home jobs are under projects or contracts and they do not offer benefits like PhilHealth, Pag-I big, and Social Security System (SSS), but it's still up to you if you want to have a voluntary contribution for the said benefits especially if you are a freelancer.

The idea of maximizing income while staying at home is a great opportunity for us Filipinos, but before you decide to switch to a home-based job you must know the requirements needed to succeed. First, you must have the drive to work independently. This means you won't have a face-to-face interaction with people, sometimes you will feel lonely, and the challenge is to motivate yourself to work on your own. Second, you must have the essential equipment for the job such as having a computer either laptop or desktop that has an i3 processor and above, a noise-canceling headset, a webcam with an acceptable resolution and the most important is a reliable internet connection. Some clients require a backup internet connection and generator in times of power outages.
Third, you must have superb communication skills. Most clients are looking for employees who are easy to catch up with the job and the best way to make them believe in your potential is your ability to communicate effectively in written and in verbal form. Those are the most essential requirements in landing a home-based career. So, if you are decided enough to make the switch to telecommuting you can start signing up on online job portals like UpWork, Indeed, Jobfinderph.com, OnlineJobs PH, BestJobs.ph, etc. to find clients that will give you jobs suiting your skills. You can also join Facebook groups such as Filipino Virtual Assistants, Home-based jobs, or ESL Teachers Philippines. Those mentioned Facebook groups, post online jobs where you can apply and successfully have the dream career in the comfort of your own home.

References: