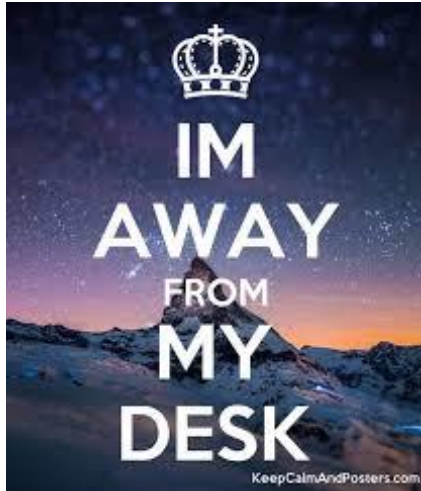


Airbnb: Offices Are Over. Apple: Come Here and Hold My Beer.

HR Brew | Sam Blum | May 12, 2022



The new pandemic workplace policies outlined by each company will be worth watching.

In the modern workplace odyssey that is Return to Office, there are two prominent ships in Silicon Valley charting very different courses: One is sailing toward tradition; the other is sailing into a new, hybrid sunset. The good ship Apple announced that all employees at its corporate headquarters in Cupertino, California, must report to their desks “three fixed days” a week, while the pirate schooner Airbnb instituted a “live and work anywhere” policy, according to a letter CEO Brian Chesky sent to employees last month.

Apples to office. Apple has been easing workers back into its corporate campus gradually, according to The Verge. In a March email to employees, CEO Tim Cook laid out a RTO timeline that had employees return to the office once a week by April 11. Three weeks later, that expectation doubled to twice a week. And later this month, on May 23, employees will be expected to file into the office at least three days a week, on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

The announcement has been met with resistance by some Apple employees, who voiced their misgivings about the company’s RTO policy in an open letter to company leadership. Chief among the concerns expressed by Apple Together—a group of “Apple workers in retail, corporate, RCC, and AppleCare uniting to change Apple,” according to the group’s Twitter page—was the disconnect between the company’s product marketing and the company’s seeming inflexibility on full-time remote work.

“We tell all of our customers how great our products are for remote work, yet, we ourselves, cannot use them to work remotely?” the group asked.

Last Saturday, The Verge’s Zoë Schiffer reported that Ian Goodfellow, Apple’s director of machine learning, was leaving the company due to its RTO policy.

Open Airbnb. Chesky’s letter outlines a five-point strategy, which we’ll share here verbatim:

- You can work from home or the office
- You can move anywhere in the country you work in and your compensation won’t change
- You have the flexibility to travel and work around the world

- We'll meet up regularly for gatherings
- We'll continue to work in a highly coordinated way

Insider reported that Chesky said on an earnings call that more than 800,000 visitors flocked to Airbnb's careers page in the immediate aftermath of the announcement. For his part, the CEO doesn't see much of a future for the office as an institution, telling Time in a recent interview: "I think that the office, as we know it, is over." If that's true, somebody should really start a company that makes it easier for people to work from anywhere, maybe by connecting them with short-term home rentals when they travel?