

Amazon wants all of its employees to be working at the company's premises for five days a week from the start of 2025. They are not alone. It would seem that many small minded managers who believe that they have lost control of their workforces because some aren't within their sight lines for every working hour are moving in this direction, undermining the gains for so many that Covid made clear were possible.

These demands will, almost certainly, come from managers who share some very particular personality characteristics:

- * Many of them will be male.
- * The majority will be extrovert.
- * Most will be neurotypical.

As a result many of them will not understand the demands that having a family creates for many people who must reconcile childcare with working. One presumes that they have either never faced this problem, or they have always outsourced it to a spouse, or to professional care, which despite its cost they might be able to afford when not everyone can.

My second and third points are, however, in many ways much more important. I have been aware throughout much of my adult life that I am an introvert who finds the continual company of others a significant drain on my energy, which drain then saps my creativity. I have always found many of the demands made by extroverted managers decidedly difficult.

That sentiment has been exacerbated by the assumption made by all extrovert managers that all people must function as they do. In fact, the possibility that some people might function differently to them is something that never seems to occur to an extrovert. As a result they have not the slightest interest in the possibility that introversion exists, and therefore are never willing to accommodate it. They instead demand that the introvert learn to live in an extrovert world, which they have to do.

If only these extrovert managers had the slightest inkling of how introverts think most corporate away-days would be very different.

So too would meetings operate in entirely different ways with much more space for

people to contribute in different ways being made available.

This is also true of the workspace, where the modern extrovert manager's desire to crowd people on top of each other is fine for those of similar inclination, and totally destructive for the introverts who are treated as if they are the same.

The failure of the extroverts to realise any of this results in an enormous loss of productivity. The 'self-starter' so many companies claim that they want to employ is almost by definition not a 'team-player', which those companies also desire.

And whilst creativity for some might come from group work, for the introvert it is just as, if not more so, likely to come from simply going for a walk by themselves. Pushing people back into corporate offices closes all these possibilities for people for whom space and time alone is essential, and the companies doing this will suffer considerably as a result.

I now realise that this problem might be even greater when we come to the difference between neurotypical and neurodivergent people.

Neurotypical people do not have ADHD. Neuro divergent people do, and to indicate just how unreasonable even this language characterisation is, it is now thought increasingly significant numbers of all people under the age of 24 might have ADHD. In other words, they might be the up-and-coming neurotypicals, and not the neurodivergents.

This matters. Neuro divergent people with ADHD find it difficult to sit still for long periods of time, not least because of the excess of creative ideas that they so often have.

Very often they also have difficulty in expressing those ideas, at least in the first instance, and in ways that neurotypical people readily understand. In fact, one of the characteristics of these people is that they seem to have massive, supercharged, engines functioning within their brains, but these are then attached to 1970's Ford Fiesta style four speed gearboxes that have some considerable difficulty in communicating all the energy that they can create in constructive ways.

Like introverts, neurodivergent people need space, time and opportunity to deliver their best, which is very often incredibly creative output that does not, however, fit into conventional moulds, but is precisely what is required for innovation to happen.

Those who try to force neurodivergent people (and like introverts, there are a lot of them) to fit into neurotypical ways of working do as a consequence deny their organisations the benefits of employing such people, whilst also losing the actual productivity gains that they might have benefited from as a result of doing so, and all because their simplistic short-term productivity measures do not reflect the value that non-neurotypical and introvert people can generate.

Like so many corporate activities that are now recognised to be harming well-being, the failure to recognise that human beings do not come in one type, but do instead present in a wide variety of forms, is high up there on the list of the charge sheet that can be laid against them.

Amazon might want their employees back in the office, as do many small minded employers now, but it is likely that they will pay a considerable price for this feeble minded attempt to control people who know that they can work better away from the constraints that such environments impose.

When will we learn to trust people? If only we did, this world would be a better place.