



The personal home office can be used for work and can still double up as a cozy guest room when family or friends are in town

## Work out of your home

An chic office at home can give your work and family life that much needed balance, says **Divya Sathyanarayanan**



**M**adhu Mani's three-hour office commute was taking a toll on both work and family life. That's when the Bangalore-based IT professional decided that a home office was the only way to strike a balance. Mani now works from home at least thrice a week.

"Working at one's own home office differs from the 9 to 5 grind as there is no disturbance and I can save the time spent on the commute," he says. "I enter my home office at around 9.30am and finish by 9pm, beginning and ending my day there."

Others like him have set aside space for a home office to cut travel time, enjoy flexible working hours and spend more time with the family.

Interior designers say more thought, and considerable money, today is going into designing home offices.

"Nowadays, people have become more conscious about brands like Armani, Versace, B&B Italia, etc. and know what they want in their work spaces," says Neha Gupta, head designer at Vivanta Interiors, a Delhi-based interior design firm. A home office can range from a basic one for about Rs 25,000 to upwards of Rs 12 lakh for a lavish workspace with high-end furniture and equipment. At a minimum, a home office needs to have a desk, a chair and a computer.

"The place where the person works needs to be a comfortable space to work within, separated from the rest of the home and living environment," says Sanjay Puri, founder and lead architect of Mumbai-based Sanjay Puri Architects.

A basic home office would occupy about 100-300 sq ft.

"Globally the concept of (small office) home office or SoHo is very popular and even people in India like to have their own workplace at home," says Atul Chordia, MD of Pune-based Panchshil Realty, which

has dedicated home offices in its residential projects.

A home office should complement the existing décor and design of the home. "In our apartments, we provide floor to ceiling length cabinets that can both display and conceal such spaces," says Ram Raheja, head, architecture and design at S Raheja Realty.

In cities such as Pune, where space is not such a constraint as elsewhere, home offices can be bigger.

A luxury housing project by Gera Developments in Pune, Gera's Isle Royale, provides for home offices with wireless internet or broadband connections, smart connectors and other technical backup facilities. That persuaded Prashant Khomne, who heads a distribution company, to pick up an apartment there as it would allow him to spend more time at home.

Other developers are seeking to make sure that office space is given due importance. Supertech's high-end residential project in Noida, Supernova, features a pantry/kitchen and a separate balcony for the office.

In one of its upcoming Mumbai projects, RNA Corp has designed the apartments in such a way that the office space is adjacent to the open balcony and overlooks the Worli sea face.

The home office space can also be a multipurpose area. "The personal home office can be used for work and can still double up as a cozy guest room when family or friends are in town," says Arjun Aggarwal, CEO of Bhartiya City, a private township in Bangalore, where the concept has been put into practice.

"The idea of office space in homes works better in cities like Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Bangalore etc., where there are large IT companies which have flexible working hours and a 'work from home' concept," says Ramesh Nair, chief operating officer at property consultancy JLL. 