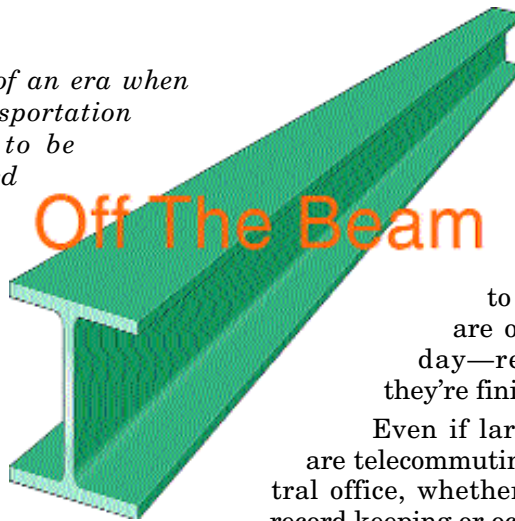


*"The skyscraper is an artifact of an era when technology was frail and transportation inefficient, and people had to be together to do their jobs. The need for new ones now is nil. There is no logical reason to ever build another Empire State Building" — David Birch, president of Cognetics, a Massachusetts marketing and economic forecasting firm, as quoted in the October 20, 1996 Chicago Tribune*



quoted earlier, one of the benefits touted for telecommuting is the ability of a worker to run errands during the day or take a break for a tennis match. I'm not sure how many employers are going to be thrilled that their workers are only at their desks six hours a day—regardless of how much work they're finishing.

Even if large portions of your workforce are telecommuting, there's still a need for a central office, whether it's for administrative work, record keeping or occasional meetings.

Also, there's the societal costs to consider. As fewer workers are based in downtown areas, the result is suburban sprawl, less funding for museums and cultural arts, and increased roadway and infrastructure costs.

And finally, there's a prestige factor involved. When Chicago's suburbs received new telephone area codes, there was some grumbling. But when the city itself split into two area codes, one essentially for the central business district and one for everyone else, businesses losing the 312 area code were unhappy about a perceived loss of prestige. The same prestige factor holds true for a business's address. Locating your business in the world's tallest building is a lot more impressive than in the spare room of someone's townhouse.

As long as there are advantages to a downtown, central location, and as long as newer buildings offer more advanced features, there will be a market for high-rise construction.

**Scott Melnick**  
Editor & Publisher

Proponents of telecommuting, the growing phenomenon whereby employees work from their home and keep in touch electronically, are adamant in their belief that their time is coming. Studies have shown that with telecommuting, productivity increases and overhead decreases, two obviously desirable outcomes. It also is viewed as an employee benefit, and therefore is a useful tool in employee recruitment and retention.

Still, I'm not convinced that the age of the centralized office is dead.

True, working at home decreases distractions and therefore should increase productivity. But it's also true that many of these so-called distractions are actually quite useful in promulgating information exchange between members of a combined workforce. Employees who are scattered at remote sites often are unaware of the activities of their co-workers, which, while increasing individual efficiency, decreases combined efficiency.

There's also a control factor involved. Right or wrong, employment compensation is based in part on hours worked. In the Chicago Tribune article

Who's Who at MSC	Advertising in MSC	AISC Officers
<p><b>Editor &amp; Publisher: Scott Melnick</b> ph: 312/670-5407 email: melnick@aiscmail.com</p> <p><b>Exec. Editor: Patrick M. Newman, P.E.</b> ph: 312/670-5417 email: newman@aiscmail.com</p> <p><b>Sr. Tech. Advisor: Charlie Carter, P.E.</b> ph: 312/670-5414 email: carter@aiscmail.com</p> <p><b>Sr. Tech. Advisor: Jacques Cattan</b> ph: 312/670-5430 email: cattan@aiscmail.com</p> <p>Editorial Offices: One East Wacker Dr., Suite 3100 Chicago, IL 60601-2001 fax: 312/670-5403</p>	<p><b>Account Manager: John Byrne</b> ph: 847/699-6049 fax: 847/699-8681 email: jabber10@ix.netcom.com</p> <p>Advertising Offices: 2400 E. Devon Ave., Suite 267 Des Plaines, IL 60018</p> <p>To receive a media kit, call, fax or email</p> <p style="text-align: center;">John Byrne</p> <p>or view advertising information on AISC's home page on the World Wide Web at:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><a href="http://www.aiscweb.com">http://www.aiscweb.com</a></b></p>	<p>Chairman: Robert E. Owen 1st Vice Chairman: Robert D. Freeland 2nd Vice Chairman: Robert G. Abramson Treasurer: Jerry Milligan Secr. &amp; Gen. Counsel: David Ratterman</p> <p>President: H. Louis Gurthet, P.E.</p> <p>Vice President: Morris Caminer (Finance &amp; Administration)</p> <p>Vice President: Nestor Iwankiw, P.E. (Engineering &amp; Research)</p> <p>American Institute of Steel Construction, Inc. One East Wacker Dr., Suite 3100 Chicago, IL 60601-2001 ph: 312/670-2400 fax: 312/670-5403</p>