

Working from Home

Research Report 2020



KENNEDYFITCH

The Advantages of Working from Home

1. Increased Productivity

- Employees spend 12% less time participating in large meetings, while interactions with customers and external partners increased by 9%, meaning their focus is on work that really matters.
- Employees are involved in 50% more activities that they themselves have chosen, a dramatic increase from 3% to 6%. This means they are involved in half as many activities that someone else has requested and they are taking responsibility for their own schedules.
- Number of tasks rated as tiresome dropped from 27% to 12% and the number of tasks that could have been done by someone else decreased from 41% to 27%. Our work is more effective and worthwhile.
- There is more time for work that matters, due to effective time allocation.



2. Increased Employee Retention and Satisfaction

- Employees are able to fit work around their personal lives. They have to commute less and have more time for childcare and other needs. Furthermore, working from home can create better trust between employers and employees which will increase job satisfaction.
- In [Crain's Future of Work Survey 2020](#), 78% of participants mentioned how flexible schedules and telecommuting are the most effective nonmonetary ways to retain employees, which is an 11% increase from last year.

90%

of employees say more flexible arrangements would increase morale

A survey of 1001 exclusive remote working employees showed that they were 57% more satisfied with their job than the average American.



3. Better Focus

In the office we are interrupted more frequently than when we are working from home. It takes an average of about 25 minutes to resume an original task with complete focus after an interruption.

4. Less Costs

PwC did some research regarding the costs and benefits of working from home. They calculated the total benefits for employers as well as for employees.

- Employer: approximately €1,681.4 (in millions) per year. Taken into account are factors such as office space, gas, electricity and catering.
- Employee: approximately €1,120.2 (in millions) per year. With benefits such as less time spent using the car and public transport avoiding travel time, there are less gas and electricity bills.. Diminished childcare costs were also a significant factor.

The Challenges of Working from Home

1. Less Trust

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Other ways in which employers monitor their respective employees is by keeping track of what they type, recording internet activity, taking screenshots, and using a device's webcam. Employees physical locations are also monitored using GPS, as well as their productivity levels, among other things. This can come across as extremely invasive as people are working from their private home. This invasiveness is especially apparent when employees are working from a personal device, they can feel observed, judged and distrusted.

As a company you need to make sure that the people that work for you are comfortable and do not feel the stress brought on by certain productivity objectives, and the use of surveillance software that monitors their every move. A consequence of this is lower employee retention and satisfaction, and people also may start to cheat the system to make it look as if they are working. "Measuring keystrokes and tracking website visits is surveillance, not leadership."





2. Less Work-life Balance

While you are working from home, you are never far from work. A Nulab survey of remote workers showed that 72% are not working from a dedicated workspace, and 40% are not even working from a dedicated desk. 8 in 10 employees want to better balance work and family in the future.

3. No Transition

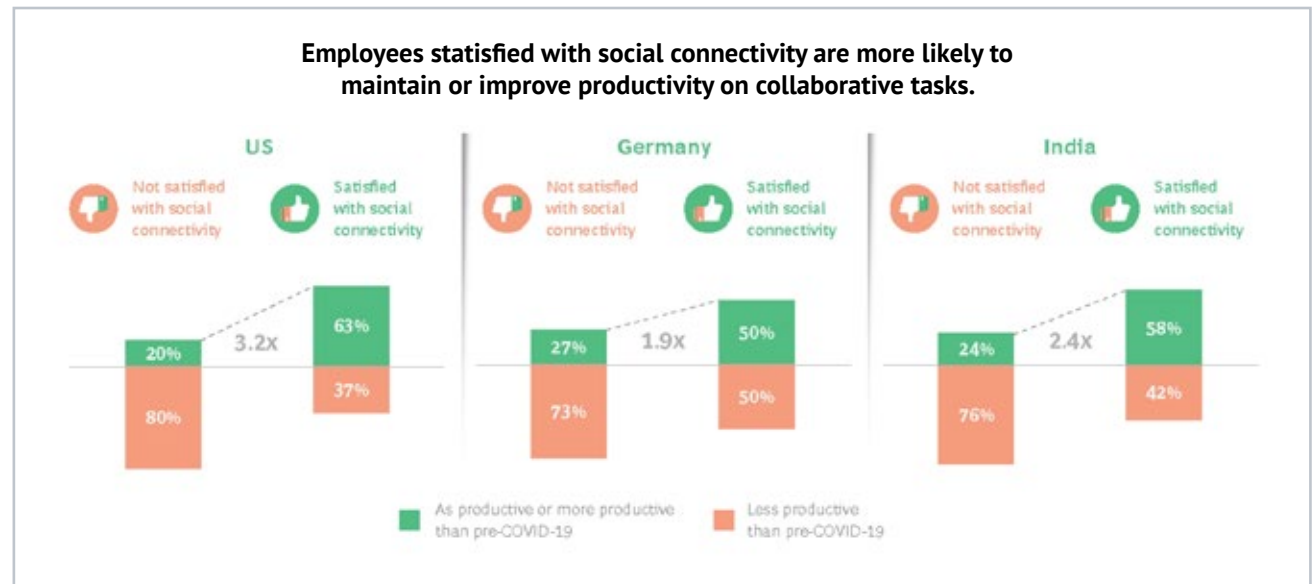
Across the globe, every workday people commute an average of 38 minutes each way. Being on the road helps a lot of employees adjust between home and work. This journey creates an important separation between work and their personal lives, which is missing while people are working from home. The switch is harder to make while constantly being in the same environment. This will make it harder to create a healthy work-life balance. Are there ways we can create this transition?

4. More Burnouts

Fully remote workers are experiencing more burnouts than on-site workers. Before the pandemic remote workers, both part-time and full-time, had lower levels of burnout compared with employees who were always in the office. Remote working right now is missing the autonomy and flexibility of pre-COVID and people may feel as if they are “trapped at home”. Employees with high levels of burnout are 63% more likely to take a sick day and are 13% less confident in their performance.

5. Missed Social Opportunities

Social connectivity is intrinsic in enabling us to be collaboratively productive. Employees who were satisfied with the social connections they had with their colleagues are two to three times more likely to have improved productivity on collaborative tasks. These connections are better established on site according to data of 12,000 employees based in the US, Germany and India. How are we able to create opportunities for people to connect informally while at home?



Source: BCG

People Most Severely Affected

1. Negative Impact Women & Parents

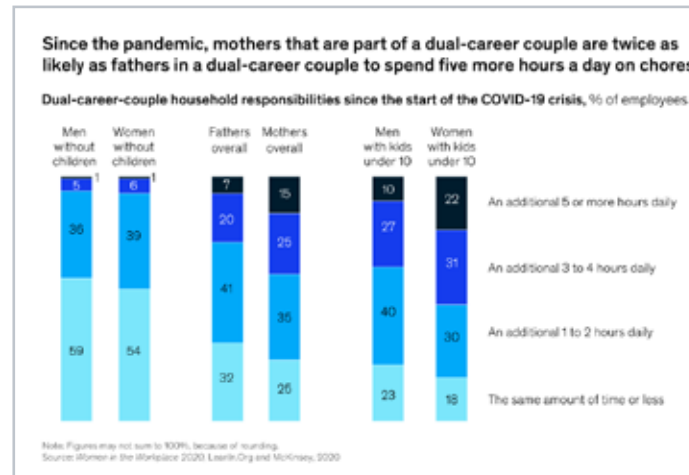
In [McKinsey's Women in the Workplace Study](#), results have shown that the effects of COVID-19 have had a negative impact on gender disparities and their implications for women at work.



For one thing, they are being laid off at a higher rate. For the first time in their research, they have found that women are considering moving down the career ladder or leaving the workforce altogether. This will have a huge influence on achieving gender parity in leadership roles in the coming years. Women are also more likely to be on furlough, 12% vs 10%. Since the pandemic, mothers that are part of dual-career couples are twice as likely as fathers within dual-career couples to spend five more hours a day on chores.

2. Women in Health

“Women will be the hardest hit by this pandemic but they will also be the backbone of recovery in communities.” There will be even larger COVID-19 impacts for women who already live on the economic margins. Women spend 3 times as many hours as men in unpaid care and domestic work which has increased during COVID-19 with children being out of school and the increased care needs of elderly people. Data has also shown that as women represent 70% of the health workforce, they have suffered more infections by COVID-19 than their male counterparts. In Italy 66% of infected health care workers were female and in Spain this number even reached as high as 72%.



Source: McKinsey & Company



3. Workforces

- Tourism activities are responsible for around 10% of all employment. Because of the crisis, international tourism has been crippled.
- Long term disruptions in supply chain and trade in the agriculture sector are threatening livelihoods, especially of those in already poverty-stricken rural areas. This sector provides a means of life to more than one billion people around the world.
- Young people who work in industries that are hit hardest by the pandemic. 178 million youth, which is the same as 4 out of every 10 young people employed globally, were working in areas such as wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, accommodation, food services and other services.

Women are over-represented in sectors most impacted by COVID-19. In the accommodation and food industry, 59% of employees in that sector are women. In the arts and entertainment industry, this number reaches 63%.

What do our workers want and need

Workers

- 75% of workers say it is important for companies to retain flexibility in the post pandemic work environment.
- Employees being able to set their own schedule completely, increased from 7% to 22% during the pandemic.
- 74% of employees want their employers and managers to focus their leadership style on empathy and support.
- Employees want their employers to deliver on skills development.
- 1 in 3 employees are willing to change jobs and go work for another employer in the same sector if they offer them an opportunity to learn new skills that is not provided by their current employer.
- 78% of employees say that feeling trusted to get the job done is important for their working life after the pandemic.

Great Change

43% of workers asked, believe that the pandemic and our way of working has ended the office 9-5. The preference of people is to spend 2-3 days a week in the workplace and the other days working from home.

After experiencing working from home, people do not want to give up their flexibility regarding when and where they work, it has given them the ability to allocate their time more efficiently and effectively.

More Reassurance


Before going back to the workplace, employees need the reassurance that their health & wellbeing is a new priority. Trust is the new currency. People who trust their employer are twice as likely to feel positive about returning to the workplace, 44% of employees feel this trust compared to 23% of employees who do not trust their employees.



Working Parents

A LinkedIn study found that 60% of workers say that their employers have not made accommodations to their work schedules to help with parenting duties. 9 in 10 parents want to retain the flexibility that working from home during COVID-19 has created for them. Lockdown has shown them that flexibility is possible in more jobs than originally thought.

A survey of 1500 people by Bright Horizons found that 53% of parents believe flexibility will increase their productivity, while 58% believe it would also increase their loyalty. What matters most to parents while looking at the workplace, home, and the future, is highlighted on the left.

Workplace:	Home:	In Future:
 <p>Being able to separate work from home</p>  <p>Socializing and collaborating with colleagues</p>  <p>Less distraction, more comfortable working space</p>	 <p>Avoiding the commute</p>  <p>Spending more time with family</p>  <p>Getting work done at times that suit</p>	 <p>Opportunity to learn and develop career</p>  <p>Employment security</p>  <p>More remote work options to better blend work and home</p>

What Our Workers Want and Need

Hybrid Model

Working from home has proven its advantages but also the challenges it brings. A hybrid model will give you both the advantages of working from home as well as those of working on-site for your employees.

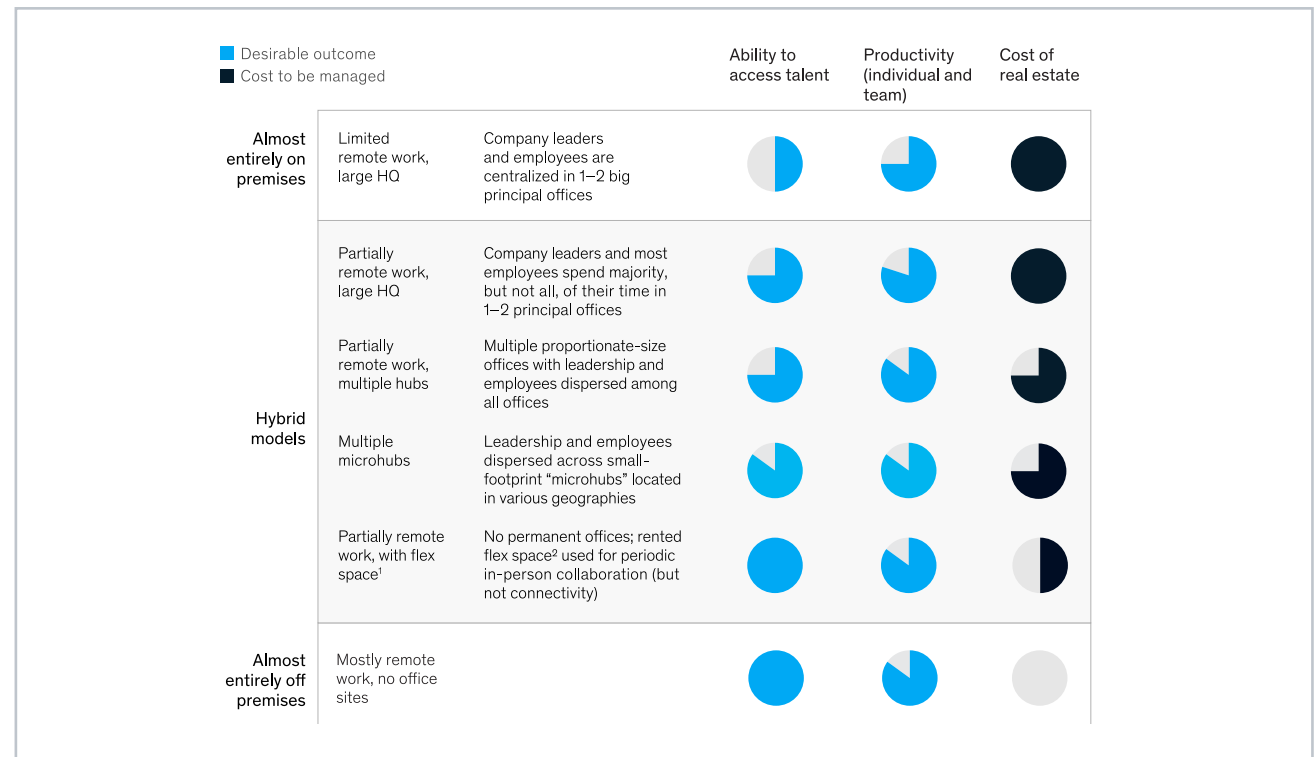
This new model promises greater access to talent, increased productivity of employees and small teams, lower costs, more flexibility, and an improved employee experience (McKinsey, 2020). In order to make this work, the culture, organization and way of working needs to change. We need to create practices for the new normal and not just slightly adjust our old ways. We need to reimagine our post pandemic organizations. "Interactions between leaders and teams provide an essential locus for creating the social cohesion and the unified hybrid virtual culture that organizations need in the next normal." (McKinsey, 2020)

While looking at the six models on the right, also consider other considerations not mentioned that are in your company. Working on site will create better communication and creativity. Social interactions are intrinsic in encouraging positive workplace cultures, it will be very beneficial to have a divide between remote and on-site work during the week. "Where, and when, work gets done will be determined by what makes the most sense to drive the highest levels of productivity and engagement." George Penn, VP, Gartner.

When the hybrid model is effectively utilized, companies will be able to better recruit talent, achieve innovation, and create value for all stakeholders. Organizations are able to create a future of work that is more flexible, digital, and purposeful. (BCG, 2020). "Hybrid work is the best of both worlds: structure and sociability, and independence and flexibility." (Ro, 2020). The hybrid model is not something new, it has been trending for some years. The pandemic has drastically accelerated its progress. (Roe, 2020)

Reasons for the hybrid model:

- Enabling distributed teams: effective communication through technology
- Commuting and productivity: higher productivity, less distractions, more time to actually work
- Financially viable: access to talent with no geographical bounds, no commuting



Practice to Action

4 steps to reimagine work and workplaces

Step 1: Reconstruct how work is done

- Identify the most important processes for every major business, geography, and function the company has. Involve employees in this process in order to create a complete understanding and an ideal way of working. For example, employees can be present in the office for the initial planning of a new project, after which they can then work remotely during the execution.
- Reflect on the organizational culture and values. What are the interactions, practices and rituals that promote our culture? How can we reconstruct and strengthen this to strengthen our culture while working in a new way?

Step 2: Decide 'people to work' or 'work to people'

War for talent has been high, but with new practices, people may not need to relocate anymore, they are able to work remotely. Organizations need to consider the value that remote work could bring to their organization, the opportunities this offers, and how this can be achieved.

Step 3: Redesign the workplace to support organizational priorities

Determine the necessities and purpose of your office space. Is it necessary to have more collaboration rooms and less individual working space? Work on virtual collaboration models, such as Mural. The boundaries between being physically in the office and working from home need to collapse in order to maintain productivity, collaboration, learning, and to preserve the corporate culture.

Step 4: Resize the footprint creatively

A transformational approach to reinventing offices is unavoidable. Simply adjusting the existing footprint will be ineffective, companies need to look with a new set of eyes at how much and where space is required and how decisions will influence outcomes. Alongside that, during resizing there is also the potential to reduce real estate costs, with smarter, newer and more creative ways of working at the office.



Practice to Action



More Empathic Leadership

By showing good leadership and by being there for their employees, organizations can come out even stronger after this pandemic. As a company, go back to the foundational needs, the basis of the employer-employee relationship. Look at physical safety and security, job stability and flexibility. These factors will help create a relationship of trust and empathy in the organization.

Managers and Leaders

- Focus less on “management by walking around” and rely more on inspirational forms of leadership
- Cultivate informal interactions. For example, this can be achieved by leaving part of the meeting agenda free allowing employees to discuss relevant topics.
- Role model the right stance. Recognize the effect of your actions and how they will be interpreted by others.

Culture & People

Culture is the thing that brings a workforce together, it is the shared experiences, behaviours and beliefs that bring people together.

- 85% of communication is lost through the absence of body language. We do not pick up others’ nonverbal cues appropriately. On-site working has a higher chance of people understanding and interpreting what is meant correctly.
- 70% of an employee’s engagement is owned by a manager. This is the same for remote and onsite workers. Managers need to have meaningful conversations with their employees to increase engagement.
- Give your employees a voice, identify the best possible ways to do this while people are working from home. Employees who feel that their voices are heard are 4.6 times more likely to feel empowered to deliver the best possible work.

Sources

The advantages of working from home

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The advantages of working from home

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What do your workers want and need?

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- [BBC, 2020](#)
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Best Practices for Companies

- [McKinsey, 2020](#)
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Practice to Action

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- [Mural](#)
- [Moss, 2020](#)
- [McKinsey, 2020](#)
- [Cheesewright, Susanka, and Reitz, 2020](#)



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Our expertise stems from 20 years in HR transformational leadership roles in large multinational organizations and is underpinned by academic education and practical training in organizational science, business administration, Human Resources, coaching, team facilitation and psychodynamics.

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