

Technology

# Microsoft CEO Says Remote Work Can Feel Like ‘Sleeping at Work’

By [Isabelle Lee](#)

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Satya Nadella, chief executive officer of Microsoft Corp., speaks during the Future Decoded Tech Summit in Bengaluru, India, on Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020. *Photographer: Samyukta Lakshmi/Bloomberg*

Microsoft Corp. has been a major beneficiary of the work-from-home boom spurred by the Covid-19 pandemic. But Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella is realizing the pitfalls of being away from the office for so long.

Online meetings can make employees tired and make it difficult to transition from a work mindset to private life, the executive said at The Wall Street Journal CEO Council on Tuesday. "When you are working from home, it sometimes feels like you are sleeping at work," he added.

Video meetings can be particularly enervating, the CEO noted, citing brain studies on the subject. "Thirty minutes into your first video meeting in the morning, because of the concentration one needs to have in video, you are fatigued."

He also said remote work misses some of the benefits of the office. "Video meetings are more transactional," he said. "Work happens before meetings, after meetings."

Microsoft has a new product that attempts to address this. Together Mode places participants on video calls in a virtual space, such as an auditorium, meeting room or coffee bar to try to recreate an office atmosphere.

[Read more: Companies plan to shrink offices as remote work becomes “new normal”](#)

Microsoft shares have surged more than 30% this year as corporate customers sign up for more of the company's cloud services and internet-based software subscriptions to help their sprawling workforces work from home.

Nadella said the pandemic is teaching him about the value of transitions between work and personal activities. "I am learning more about transitions," he said. "So how do you transition? Do you have dinner with the family?" He said he has paid attention more to his schedule.

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He also sympathized with employees joining companies while working remotely. "You need to on-board them, on-board them successfully," he said. "Learning, re-skilling, upskilling is going to become a huge issue."