

FUTURE OF WORK & COLLABORATION

03 WHITEHALL GUIDANCE CAUSES CONFUSION

12 MAKING HOME WORKING WORK FOR YOU

18 A FUTURE WHERE NO JOBS ARE BORING



Learning at the Speed of Business

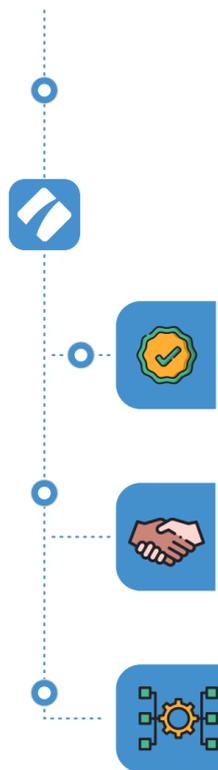
Empower your workforce with the most relevant business knowledge – expertly curated, summarised and tailored to your organisation’s needs. Discover our Corporate Solutions on getAbstract.com

}getabstract





Easy no code workflows to superpower any team.



Approvals

Contracts

Automations

Welcome to the future of work.

Sign up for free

www.process.st

FUTURE OF WORK & COLLABORATION

Distributed in THE TIMES

Contributors

MaryLou Costa
Business writer and editor specialising in marketing, tech and startups, with work published in *The Guardian*, *The Observer* and *Marketing Week*.

Cath Everett
Journalist specialising in workplace, leadership and organisational culture, with a focus on the impact of technology on business and society.

Rachel Muller-Heyndyk
Journalist focusing on workplace, culture and activism, with work published in *The Independent*, *The i paper* and *HR magazine*.

Tom Ritchie
Business journalist, specialising in human resources, leadership and the future of work.

Peter Crush
Business journalist and former deputy editor of *HR magazine*, specialising in human resources and management issues.

Mark Hillsdon
Contributor to titles such as *The Guardian* and *BBC Countryfile*, writing on topics including sustainability, wildlife, health and sport.

Oliver Pickup
Award-winning journalist, specialising in technology, business and sport, and contributing to a wide range of publications.

Jonathan Weinberg
Journalist, writer and media consultant/trainer specialising in technology, business, social impact and the future of work and society.

raconteur reports

Publishing manager
Helen Glynn

Associate editor
Peter Archer

Deputy editor
Francesca Cassidy

Managing editor
Benjamin Chiou

Digital content executive
Taryn Brickner

Head of production
Hannah Smallman

Design
Sara Gelfgren
Kellie Jerrard
Harry Lewis-Irlam
Celina Lucey
Colm McDermott
Samuele Motta
Jack Woolrich

Art director
Joanna Bird

Design director
Tim Whitlock

Although this publication is funded through advertising and sponsorship, all editorial is without bias and sponsored features are clearly labelled. For an upcoming schedule, partnership inquiries or feedback, please call +44 (0)20 3877 3800 or email info@raconteur.net. Raconteur is a leading publisher of special-interest content and research. Its publications and articles cover a wide range of topics, including business, finance, sustainability, healthcare, lifestyle and technology. Raconteur special reports are published exclusively in *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* as well as online at raconteur.net. The information contained in this publication has been obtained from sources the Proprietors believe to be correct. However, no legal liability can be accepted for any errors. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the prior consent of the Publisher. © Raconteur Media

[@raconteur](https://twitter.com/raconteur) [/raconteur.net](https://www.facebook.com/raconteur.net) [@raconteur_london](https://www.instagram.com/raconteur_london)

raconteur.net /work-collaboration-2020

REMOTE WORKING

Mixed messages cause conflict and confusion

The government's ever-changing guidance around working from the office has caused much concern for businesses. But what does this mean for the long-term viability of remote working?

Jonathan Weinberg

The coronavirus pandemic has turned work on its head with millions swapping everyday office life for working from home, but how long can this new working pattern last?

During the summer, the UK government made a strong attempt to persuade employees in England to return to work if the right COVID-secure protocols were in place. Just weeks later it abandoned a follow-up ad campaign as cases of oronavirus began to rise.

Then just last week, in an address to Parliament, Boris Johnson was forced to return to the advice given early in the pandemic, telling "office workers who can work from home to do so". However, he also added: "In key public services – and in all professions where homeworking is not possible, such as construction or retail – people should continue to attend their workplaces."

Such conflicting messaging has led to confusion among employers and employees, not least those fearing for their jobs and livelihoods as the prospect of redundancies grows. This is now compounded by Chancellor Rishi Sunak's unveiling of the new Job Support Scheme to replace the current furlough scheme on November 1, something described by him as "to support only viable jobs".

Now in the face of the current second surge of COVID-19 cases, many employees remain fearful about social distancing when commuting or working close to colleagues.

In all four nations of the UK the advice is now to work from home if possible, something that had always been the case in Wales. In fact, the Welsh government had previously tweeted its longer-term hopes for such an ideal saying: "We think this is an opportunity for a permanent change. Our aim is for 30 per cent of workers to work from or near home. This will reduce traffic, support local businesses and provide flexibility."

A number of major companies were still embracing home working anyway, including Google and NatWest, while across professional services, such as the legal, accountancy and financial services sectors, others had continued to encourage it given many people saw personal benefits to their lifestyles.

So where does this new approach leave bosses and workers in the short, medium and long term? How viable is it to keep the return to work on hold and instead focus on remote working?

Chris Herd, chief executive of Firstbase, a platform for companies to supply and manage physical



A near-empty St Pancras train station in June 2020

equipment for remote teams, says a third of companies he speaks to are getting rid of the office entirely, with others expecting employees will work from home two to four days a week.

A Twitter thread he wrote about the 2020s being the "remote work decade" went viral with thousands of likes, and Herd insists government advice is focused on the wrong future. He says: "Workers everywhere have thrived during the most difficult conditions imaginable. The government should be looking at remote work as an opportunity for mass benefit: better work-life balance, closer relationships with family and friends, reduced pollution through the reduction of commuting, and increased inclusivity, diversity and accessibility of opportunity.

"The economy will likely redistribute to wherever remote workers happen to operate from, leading to a renaissance of smaller cities and towns. Remote work isn't just about the future of work, it's about the future of living."

This view is backed by Opinium Research on behalf of Ricoh Europe, which found 53 per cent of the public believed the traditional office space would no longer exist in ten years; in September 2019 it was 24 per cent. Seven in ten also thought remote and flexible working terms will be written into more contracts in the future.

But Nicola Downing, chief operating officer of Ricoh Europe, believes a blended approach would eventually be logical, where staff can choose to split their working time between the office and elsewhere. She explains: "I've fully appreciated the extra time with family and lack of commute, but we must remember not everyone has had the same experience. For most people, the office is undoubtedly the place where they're at their most social, spontaneous and effective.

"Leaders must equip them with the right technologies and processes so they can be connected, productive and dynamic from anywhere."

However, even before the government's latest guidance, a poll by the TUC released in early September showed how three quarters of workers had at least one concern about returning to the workplace, with 34 per cent citing social distancing as a factor. Meanwhile, a separate study by TUC and BritainThinks found that just 38 per cent of workers said they knew their employers had carried out COVID-secure risk assessments.

When speaking to Parliament on September 22, the prime minister appeared to give one indication of countering this on a wider scale. He explained how retail staff would have to now wear masks and that COVID-secure guidelines within retail, leisure, tourism and other sectors would become a legal obligation.

Steve Vatidis, executive chairman at Smartway2, a smart buildings company helping organisations to adapt workplaces, believes ensuring workplaces are safe, clean and adhering to guidelines can be possible with the right technology in place. He says: "The new normal may be easy for a small office of ten, but for offices with over a thousand staff, multiple floors and various meeting rooms, it's a logistical nightmare.

"Understandably, some employees will feel wary of returning. Businesses need safety nets of advanced monitoring to ensure social distancing, hygiene and contact tracing of staff, which can help workers feel comfortable to venture into the workplace."

However, with the Ricoh Europe research also showing 26 per cent of people had felt pressured to return to the office, Jason Braier, an employment and discrimination barrister from 42 Bedford Row Chambers, explains there are legal risks in adopting a "come back or there will be consequences" approach.

He says: "Older employees and those with disabilities may be most resistant to returning to the office out of fear of catching the virus. Dismissing them, or subjecting them to detriment for refusing to return, places the employer at risk of various discrimination claims.

"Statutory protections are also in place for employees who genuinely fear being at work would place them in danger of catching coronavirus and arguably for those whose refusal to attend stems from fears they might catch the virus when commuting.

"Employers should treat concerns with sympathy and work together with staff to reach an acceptable solution rather than taking drastic action they might later come to regret."

3/4 of workers in England and Wales have at least one concern about returning to work outside the home



38% say they know their employers had carried out COVID-secure risk assessments



34% are concerned about not being able to socially distance from colleagues



TUC/BritainThinks 2020



“They can also be super for people who want to work in different organisations and blend different skills

employees from sectors as diverse as banking, healthcare and media.

Others are keen to emphasise that while job sharing can be incredibly rewarding, it shouldn't just be seen as something that can improve work-life balance.

For Dr Jo Yarker and Dr Rachel Lewis, who are both academics at Birkbeck, University of London and directors of Affinity Health at Work, a research consultancy, job sharing allowed them to embark on portfolio careers and take on more challenging work.

Yarker explains that it's important not to pigeon hole job sharing as something that's just taken on by women with caring responsibilities. “For us, we love our academic careers and our consultancy work, and we're not keen to give either of those up. Typically, when we think of job shares, we're largely thinking about women who want to spend part of their life with children,” she says.

“They can also be super for people who want to work in different organisations and blend different skills. It's a chance to really enrich people's careers. This could be relevant to millennials too, who have shown they're keen to take up different areas of work.”

While Yarker and Lewis have found they've been able to work together seamlessly, it's easy to see how job sharing could be an altogether more daunting prospect for others. What if one person isn't pulling their weight, for example? How can you tell your job partner that you're not happy to answer emails at weekends?

Without careful planning and regulations in place, job shares could quickly descend into miscommunication and conflict, causing tensions in teams and a host of problems for human resources departments.

Open conversations about priorities and pressure points have both helped the two colleagues to make their working relationship a success, but much of it comes down to being able to trust each other. “The overriding thing is mutual trust. We both do a good job and have the same aims in mind, so even if we go about things in a different way, we both know we're working in each other's interests,” says Yarker.

Rather than job sharing creating problems, it seems like it could only exacerbate existing issues or strengthen working relationships that are already fruitful. And if the cracks in your team are starting to show, then isn't it time to fix them? ●

Beaumont Sate is far from alone. The Timewise 2020 Power 50 list, which features leaders in part-time roles, included seven senior

COVID-19 as the furlough scheme winds down.

“The chancellor has said he will never accept unemployment as an unavoidable outcome. But by ending the Job Retention Scheme too early, and with no plan for protecting jobs in local lockdowns or a second wave, that is precisely what is happening,” says Clare McNeil, IPPR associate director for work and the welfare state.

“Up to two million jobs could be lost, not because business owners are not working hard or smart enough, but because of continuing social-distancing measures.”

In response, the think tank urged the government to introduce a coronavirus work-sharing scheme, through subsidising part-time work at a rate of 10 per cent.

Coupled with an overhaul of the universal credit system, IPPR's report claims the move could save around two million jobs: “It could pay for itself, as it keeps people in work, helps support incomes, both now and in the future, and so would sustain the economy's productive capacity,” says Carsten Jung, senior economist at IPPR.

Beyond the immediate economic benefits, one of the more obvious draws towards job sharing is its potential to improve work-life balance.

The civil service, which launched an online portal to help its workforce into job-sharing schemes, noted that those with disabilities, people looking into partial or phased retirement, and those with caring responsibilities could all benefit from job sharing.

Sue Beaumont Sate, civil service senior policy adviser, found that working in a job-share scheme made it easier to keep on top of her workload as a parent and improved her productivity overall. “As a working mum with a long commute, I found working as part of a job share not only meant that I wasn't coming back into work at the start of the week to an overwhelming inbox, but it also enriched the work I delivered and my job satisfaction,” she says.

“It definitely improved our productivity, creativity and commitment to success in that role. It also enabled us to balance a stretching job with caring commitments.”

Beaumont Sate is far from alone. The Timewise 2020 Power 50 list, which features leaders in part-time roles, included seven senior

3m

of the 4.5 million employees being supported by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme may still need support beyond the scheduled end of the Scheme in October 2020

Institute for Public Policy Research 2020

draws towards job sharing is its potential to improve work-life balance.

The civil service, which launched an online portal to help its workforce into job-sharing schemes, noted that those with disabilities, people looking into partial or phased retirement, and those with caring responsibilities could all benefit from job sharing.

Sue Beaumont Sate, civil service senior policy adviser, found that working in a job-share scheme made it easier to keep on top of her workload as a parent and improved her productivity overall. “As a working mum with a long commute, I found working as part of a job share not only meant that I wasn't coming back into work at the start of the week to an overwhelming inbox, but it also enriched the work I delivered and my job satisfaction,” she says.

“It definitely improved our productivity, creativity and commitment to success in that role. It also enabled us to balance a stretching job with caring commitments.”

Beaumont Sate is far from alone. The Timewise 2020 Power 50 list, which features leaders in part-time roles, included seven senior

“[Job sharing] could pay for itself, as it keeps people in work... and so would sustain the economy's productive capacity

WORKING PATTERNS

Job-sharing trend gains momentum

While many employers remain unconvinced at the practicalities of the concept, job sharing has become a favourable solution for some workers in uncertain times

Rachel Muller-Heyndyk

Not so long ago, it seemed as though normalising flexible working and slashing the nine to five were dismissed as welcome but unfeasible options for many employers, with one in three flexible working requests rejected in 2019, according to the TUC.

But as the government plans to end the furlough scheme in October and the country faces its worst recession since records began, rethinking the way we work is non-negotiable. It's also become increasingly clear that working full time is neither preferable for everyone, nor a necessity.

That's where job sharing comes in. Far from a new phenomenon, John Lewis, Lloyds Banking, the BBC and the Green Party are just a few of the

organisations with leaders taking on joint roles on a part-time basis. As research shows that job-sharing schemes could be the key to saving millions of jobs lost in the coronavirus pandemic, is it time to make job sharing the norm?

While the benefits of job-sharing schemes have been touted by economists, policy-makers and employees for years, the idea has still failed to become a reality for the majority of workers.

There's a strong argument for why this should change. A report by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in August suggested that job sharing could be a lifeline for millions of employees at risk of losing their livelihoods as a result of

Commercial feature



Using facial recognition, a fingerprint, or a PIN, Windows Hello (above) is a fast, secure, and password-less way to unlock Windows devices

Home working revolution puts laptops centre stage

Increasing requirements to multi-task during the pandemic has accelerated the need for hardware and software innovation

One of the most striking consequences of the coronavirus pandemic has been the shift to remote working by British employees. As schools and universities return after the summer, there's still a reluctance to return to the office in the UK. With concerns over further outbreaks, it's likely that a hybrid model of working will now emerge. This also has consequences for home office tech.

The numbers are stark. Only a third of UK office workers are going back to their office compared with 83 per cent in France, according to research by Morgan Stanley. The novel and largely positive experience of home working has made staff rethink the attractions of the office.

Painful, long and expensive commutes mean the sofa, the bath, even the toilet at home is a more

frequented place to work, while video conferencing and the use of collaborative tools is now a daily occurrence. Going forward, employees may be unlikely to return to the office in their droves soon.

“This unplanned experiment has shifted us all to work from our living rooms and shared spaces at home. It has huge ramifications for employee productivity in the short and long term. It also has implications for the digital tools, platforms and hardware we use,” explains Ciprian Donciu, country manager for the UK at Asus, a multinational and global leader in electronics and hardware.

A recent survey found home workers start much earlier, at 8.12am, than if they were going into the office. One in three of the more than a 1,000 people surveyed are so busy they carry on working when they go to the

“Many employees now desire using more than one screen when they work at home

texting friends or preparing meals. In the same poll, 55 per cent said they had also increased their level of multi-tasking when it came to their work.

“People are combining a lot of activities at once while working from home. Multi-tasking is the new norm. It doesn't mean people are less productive. What it means is that we are going to have to develop better ways of managing this multi-faceted environment going forward, especially if it's set to continue. Our digital software, hardware and home office tools will need to reflect this intimately,” says Donciu from Asus, which ranks number one globally for worldwide sales of motherboards and number three for consumer notebooks.

In the same poll, it was found that the average British home worker has 11 tabs and 11 documents open during the working day on their laptop or personal computer. Interestingly busy Londoners have more open with 13 tabs, which increases to 16 for high-wired millennials.

“Employees now desire using more than one screen when they work at home, because they need to deal with many more information feeds than in the past. This is one of the reasons why we have revolutionised conventional laptop design in recent times, by adding a second ScreenPad display into our latest ZenBook Duo range,” says Chris Walker, marketing manager for the UK at Asus, which has been named

one of the world's most-admired companies by *Fortune* magazine.

“Workers need to multi-task and remain as equally productive on a laptop at home, with many not having the space nor the access to external monitors as they would in the office. Multiple displays means video conferencing, editing documents and reading emails can now be done simultaneously anywhere, without compromising on the experience. Match that productivity with the right performance and you come to what we've achieved with our latest ZenBooks.”

It is not surprising that during lockdown sales of monitors went up by 360 per cent in the UK, mobile computing purchases also skyrocketed by 230 per cent, according to data from GfK, as employees had to manage the future of their work in the home environment.

Whether hybrid working models, mixing both office days and more remote working in a multi-functioning environment, is the answer to Britain's productivity puzzle remains to be seen. The UK has seen slow rates of productivity growth over the past decade, with hourly output and real wages no higher now than they were prior to the 2008 global financial crisis.

A reluctance by UK employees to return to the office could drive more of us to commit time and energy to our work. A study in Europe, North America and the Middle East by Harvard and New York University economists found that people working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic spend around 48 minutes more time a day connected to their office. They also spend more time in meetings with more people.

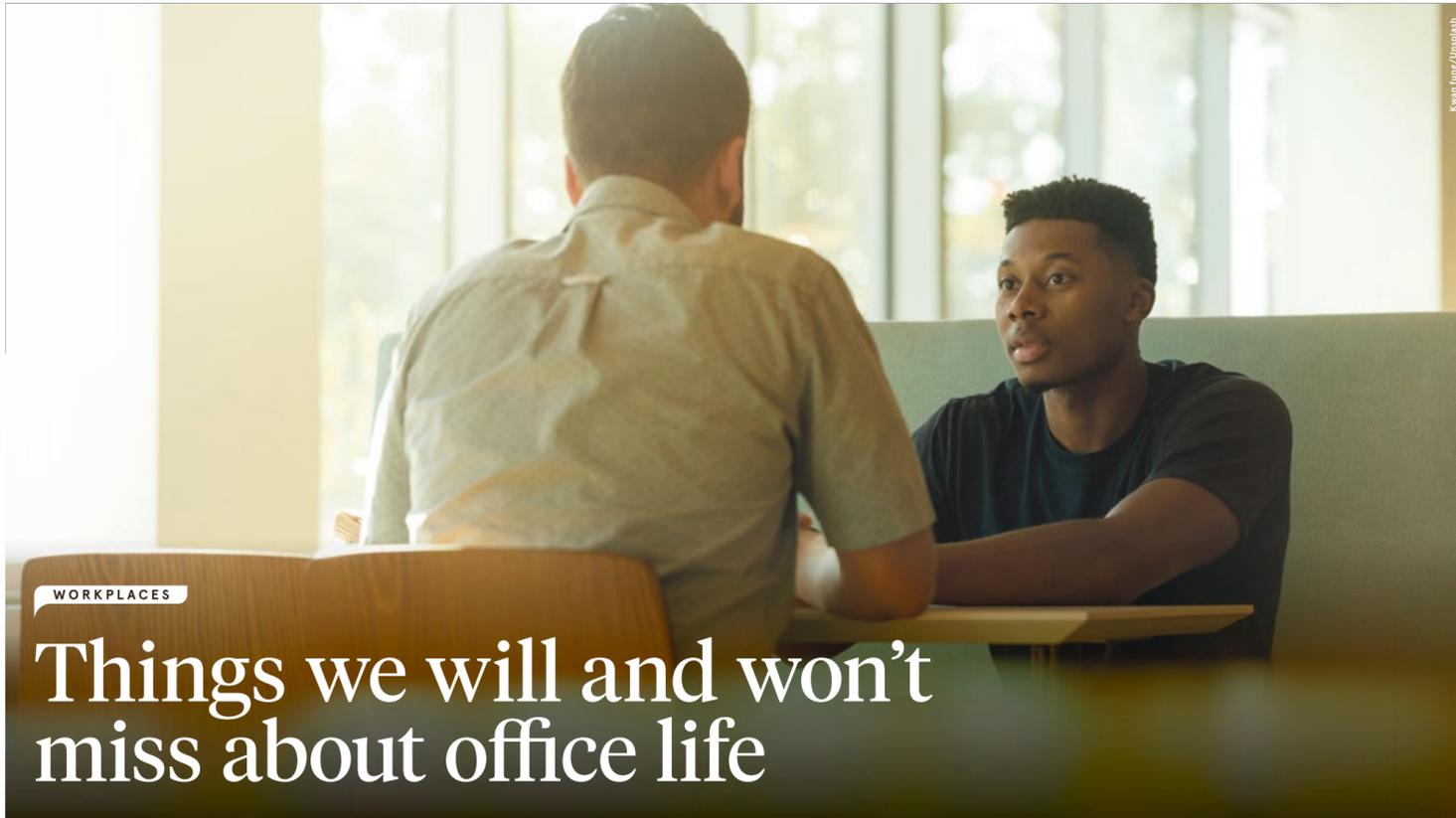
It is not just hardware that is going to have to deliver more to employees sitting in the bathroom working at home, or in their pyjamas, but soft-tasking when it came to their work.

“Having great hardware is only as good as the software that's onboard, which is why all of our ZenBooks are powered by Windows 10. Microsoft have done a great job in providing the tools necessary to keep people connected at home, be it their cloud services with Microsoft 365 or helpful features such as Windows Hello, which reads biometric data through our laptop's infrared camera to securely login a user without the need for passwords. It's definitely a team game,” says Walker.

It is certain that there's no going back to the way things were before the pandemic. Our working day is unlikely to be the same ever again. The question is whether it's likely to boost UK productivity in the long run. A better balance between home and office work, multi-tasking and new digital tools could in fact make a difference. Only time will tell.

Working from home with Asus, please visit www.asus.com





WORKPLACES

Things we will and won't miss about office life

With home working now accepted, there are things employees may miss out on away from the office, but there are also aspects of the workplace they won't regret leaving behind

Peter Crush

Things we will miss

Office romances

Offices don't just breed ideas and innovation, they've long been fertile grounds for love. It's hardly surprising. Managers might well disapprove, but when office culture is such that people regularly put in eight-hour or longer daily stints, inter-colleague collaboration can quickly turn into something much more, especially when studies reveal some people's entire social sphere is through work.

Data from CareerBuilder shows 36 per cent of office workers have, at some point, dated a colleague, with between 10 and 25 per cent of marriages thought to originate from romances that blossomed in the office. Office workers are serial matchmakers too, often introducing colleagues to their own circle of friends.

So with at-work interaction all but dead at the moment, so too could many people's love lives. Psychologists suggest a snatched

day in the office every so often is not sufficient to get to know people at a deep enough level to trigger love.

Our overall mental health could be the worse for not finding at-work friendships. New research by Milkround finds millennials want, and seek, real friendships through work, and 75 per cent of those who say they struggle to make friends at work say it has a negative impact on their mental wellbeing.

Chit-chat

Those who say they'll miss nothing about office culture are in the minority – just 13 per cent according to data from collaboration provider Unipos – and by far the biggest thing they say they miss is informal face-to-face chit-chat (71 per cent).

"We're social creatures and it's lots of micro-moments that make us feel more connected to our colleagues and even connected to the purpose of the business," argues Noreena

Hertz, author of just-published book *The Lonely Century*.

"Bosses need to embrace remote working with caution, because what they'll gain in reduced financial costs, they'll lose in terms of loyalty and productivity and shared values."

According to Stephanie Davies, former stand-up comic, turned psychologist and founder, of consultancy Laughology: "Chit-chat is everything from saying hello to the receptionist, to someone stopping someone as they see them, to develop an idea.

"Chit-chat doesn't just build camaraderie; it gives us all a sense of normality and familiarity. It also gives us a social boost, of dopamine, that creates what psychologists call social capital."

Nicola Downing, chief operating officer of Ricoh Europe, adds: "There is no substitute for unplanned interactions. We've all learnt something new about our business, customers or industry when 'talking and walking' with a colleague. While chats by the watercooler can seem passé, impromptu conversations in the office lead to better relationships, ideas and outcomes."

Training and development

"The pressing and devastating impact of moving to remote-first ways of working will be lost learning opportunities, especially among younger workers," says David Spencer-Percival, founder of Life Science People.

"The benefits people get in the early stages of their career through learning on the job cannot be underestimated and it provides a foundation for how they will perform during the rest of their lives."

“Chat-chat doesn't just build camaraderie; it gives us all a sense of normality and familiarity

Dr Sophie Ward, programme team leader for postgraduate psychology at Arden University, says that due to a lack of visibility, there's a very real chance remote workers will now get left behind. "They could

miss out on training opportunities and/or be passed over for a promotion," she says.

Evidence suggests staff are now realising for themselves that being out of sight could indeed see them out of mind too, with LinkedIn this month revealing that employees are having to take matters into their own hands. It found workers have invested more than 1.3 million hours learning new skills over the past year, a 153 per cent increase compared to the previous year. The most popular skills being developed include strategic thinking, developing emotional intelligence and time management.

Things we won't miss

The commute

Take your pick: an hours' commute or a three-second walk from one room to another? Some 34 per cent of people, according to e-days, find the sheer grind of commuting is enough of an annoyance to maintain a preference for working from home.

Notwithstanding new-found health fears of being on public transport, some staff were already tiring of the daily commute. According to human resources consultancy Robert Half, 23 per cent of workers claim to have quit their jobs due to their commute, rising to a third among those aged 18 to 34.

The Office for National Statistics says women feel most strongly about commuting to work; women who have an hour-long commute are 29.1

per cent more likely to leave their jobs than if they had a ten-minute journey, compared to 23.9 per cent for men.

Even though some people don't have room at home, particularly flat-sharers, on balance they seem to be prepared to put up with this. Flexible workspace provider OSIT found 72 per cent of workers say avoiding commuting has been the main benefit of working from home. Pre-coronavirus, one in seven workers spent a wasteful two or more hours a day getting to and from the office, and paying a lifetime £135,000 for the privilege, according to research from Instant Offices.

Jessica Heagren, founder of flexible working recruitment consultancy That Works For Me, says:

“It will be a real struggle trying to convince people to pay to come back to offices when COVID-19 dies down

"People are realising they can be doing other stuff now with their previous commute time. They don't miss the office culture of old and aren't rushing to get back to it. Instead they're doing things that emotionally or physically enrich them. Data shows people who feel they control the hours they work do 20 per cent more work in 20 per cent less time.

"It will be a real struggle trying to convince people to pay to come back to offices when COVID-19 dies down."

Bullying and discrimination

While Zoom calls rarely recreate the spontaneity and vibrancy of a bustling office, significant new data finds this technology ushering in positive changes to a form of office culture many won't miss: bullying and discrimination.

New post-lockdown research by Culture Shift finds 37 per cent of employees felt more likely to experience something they would describe as bullying or harassment in the workplace, compared to 26 per cent while working from home.

Culture Shift chief executive Gemma McCall says: "With findings like this, there won't be a stampede back to the office, because people sense that if they do, old ways will return too."

Meanwhile, without an office to be judged in, people could be hired and assessed according to their skills or output, rather than their colour, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation.

Dr Esther Canónico, lecturer and researcher at the London School of Economics, says people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), who face significant employment challenges, will benefit from a more level playing field. "Communications associated with teleworking often suit workers with ASD," she says.

"Working remotely allows less neurotypical people to have more

control on aspects of their workspace, for instance noise and light levels, than they would otherwise have at the office."

Office irritants, meetings and hot-desking

While there's plenty a happy office culture provides, for legions of newly confident home workers, one thing they certainly won't be missing is the contagion of constant interruption.

A post-lockdown poll by Capterra among 500 small business employers found 27 per cent of staff say they welcomed disappearing distractions and the ability to get on with work unimpeded.

Other data suggests employees would happily live without having to work alongside loud, rude, unhygienic and smelly colleagues. Pet peeves, an AXA PPP Healthcare study found, include working with colleagues with "disgusting" habits, such as nose-picking and eating messily in front of them.

Now online meetings have to be scheduled, rather than convened by rounding people up at the drop of a hat, staff won't be pining for meetings for meetings sake.

Also, staff who hated hot-desking will be breathing a sigh of relief. "Many office workers are creatures of habit, fiercely protective of their right to create their own base camps in the office," says Gavin Sutton, head of learning and development at media agency Ogilvy UK.

"The advent of more working from home means hot-desking will no longer be 'a thing' and many will applaud this. Most of an employee's desk work will be done at home, while the office could become more about community, collaboration, co-creation, working sessions and anything else that it might be deemed advantageous to carry out in person." ●



Small businesses must overcome the digital divide

Small business owners face the greatest challenges to survive during the coronavirus crisis. In a rapidly changing environment, they have to embrace opportunities to be more digital

Small businesses are often lauded as the backbone of the economy, accounting for three fifths of employment in the UK and more than half of private sector turnover. Yet while they are subjected to the same regulations as large companies and, during the coronavirus pandemic, the same restrictions, they are often more vulnerable. Many work on smaller, more precarious margins, with less access to finance. Therefore, though many are very resilient, generally speaking they are less stable than their larger counterparts.

To survive during the pandemic, businesses have effectively been told to migrate online, embracing remote working and opportunities like e-shops. Though this may seem an obvious solution, it is also an overly simplistic one because it completely overlooks the reality that a huge number of particularly localised small businesses rely on a physical presence. It's impossible to get a virtual haircut or sports massage and, even companies that could operate online, require drastically different business models and skillsets.

A personal trainer at the local gym and online coach Joe Wicks can both get

you in shape, but they monetise their service very differently, as do a corner shop owner and an Amazon seller. A lot of small business owners are out there in the big wide world on their own, without the training budgets of large corporates and so lack the understanding and skills to adapt to a digital environment. However, there are still opportunities available to them.

"The most basic digital skills are actually very common," says Adi Engel, chief business development officer at vcita, a business management app that allows small businesses to manage their day-to-day operational needs and processes. "We all have smartphones, we all know how to use an app and we already manage so much of our lives in this environment, such as contacts, emails, Facebook and WhatsApp conversations.

"The digital divide lies in the ability to assess how technology can be applied to your own business. If you are going to use social media as a promotional tool, how do you reach your target audience and, even companies that could operate online, require drastically different business models and skillsets.

Ultimately, small businesses require more than just technology to adapt to the new normal; they need to learn the rules of this new medium, through dedicated educational and upskilling opportunities that will help them survive and thrive in the digital age. Already, vcita has 1.5 million small business users and works with strategic partners to extend its reach even further.

Partners include traditional service providers to small businesses, such as financial services firms, telcos and marketing agencies, which share

vcita's eagerness to support small and medium-sized enterprises through the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. Earlier this year, vcita and Mastercard launched Business Unusual, a customer relationship management and learning platform enabling small companies to run their business more digitally. And vcita also runs a series of webinars to help businesses assess their current situation, working with strategic partners to expand their opportunities.

Business management platforms and upskilling opportunities are vital to ensuring small businesses can adapt to a much more digital world. If companies fail to adapt, in an increasingly unforgiving and uncertain business landscape, their customers will move to those that do. The threat of being displaced by more formidable competitors has always existed, but the difference now is the pace of change is rapidly accelerating.

"The core of managing a business is never going to change; you need to provide a great customer experience and a great service to survive," says Engel. "That has always been hard work and will remain so. But technology will be there to extend the business owner's reach and automate some of the work, allowing them to spend more time engaging with their clients. A lot will change, but nothing will change at the same time."

For more information on how we can support small businesses operate more digitally, please visit: vcita.com/partners



“The digital divide lies in the ability to assess how technology can be applied to your own business

COLLABORATION

Making '15-minute cities' a reality

Are so-called 15-minute cities, where employees work and socialise close to their homes, the answer to collaborating effectively in a remote-working age?

Cath Everett

Even before the coronavirus crisis, a key topic of debate among town planners was how to create a sustainable, healthy urban environment that is easy to get around by either walking or cycling. To this end, Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo, who has been leading a radical overhaul of the city's mobility culture since taking office in 2014, embraced the notion of reshaping France's capital into a 15-minute city. The concept, which was developed by Sorbonne Professor Carlos Moreno, advocates the creation of a city of neighbourhoods, in which workers find everything they need in terms of work, retail and leisure within 15 minutes of their home. In a work context, this would see offices added to neighbourhoods that lack them so people could work closer to where they live. There would also be local co-working hubs, enabling

them to come together for meetings and to collaborate when necessary. But this raises the question of whether Hidalgo's 15-minute city could be one possible answer, in an urban environment at least, to widespread concerns over the intangible capital of innovation and creativity being eroded by remote digital working. The problem is the often ad hoc sharing of knowledge, ideas and skills, which is commonplace in most offices, is very hard to replicate on digital communication platforms, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. In fact, the importance of such informal social interaction in enabling innovation was illustrated clearly in research published last year by the US National Bureau of Economic Research. It revealed that the number of patents filed in 1920s Prohibition America fell by between



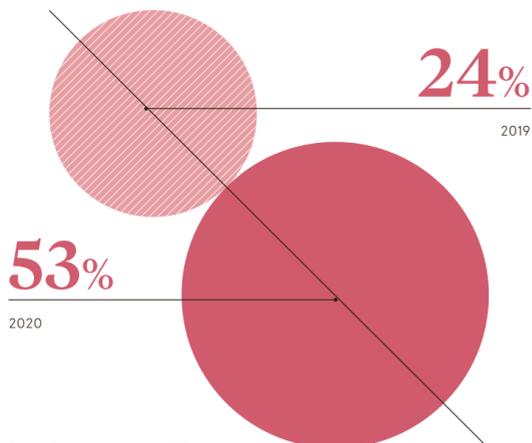
8 and 18 per cent, depending on the state, because important social hubs in the shape of bars were closed. As Brian Kropp, chief of human resources research at advisory and research firm Gartner, points out: "The magic of innovation occurs when people with very different ideas come together to create something new and different. This means that to innovate, you need people with expertise to be in the same place." So with such dynamics in mind, what workplace shifts are we likely to see in a post-COVID world and where does the notion of Hidalgo's 15-minute city fit in? Ian Mulcahey, urban planner at design and architecture firm Gensler, believes many of the ideas behind the concept reflect the current zeitgeist and are likely to make themselves felt over time, whether actively planned for or not. While most urban environments in Europe at least were originally based on the idea of the 15-minute city, in that it was possible to walk across their centres in that time (about a mile), things changed when urban design became car focused. This situation has resulted in present-day inhabitants spending most of their time in what Mulcahey terms as "two 15-minute villages", the one in which they live and the one in which they work. Into the future, however, he expects these two villages to increasingly merge. Cities will move away from their current role as large employment centres surrounded by dispersed residential communities. Instead as employers repurpose and, in many instances, downsize their offices and more high street stores become vacant, there will be an increasing shift towards city-centre living.

At the same time, amenities, which include co-working spaces, will improve markedly in the suburbs, with people choosing to live in one environment or the other, depending on their preference and life stage. This situation will go hand in hand with a shift in the traditional office function. Mulcahey explains: "There's currently a weird analogue debate going on that people will either work from home or in the office, but we see more of a blended environment, where they'll work in both, but also in transit and in places like co-working hubs and the foyers of art galleries. Things are already gravitating that way, but ultimately it's about moving from rigid workplaces to a range of different work styles based on what people need to do." Josh Bersin, president and founder of enterprise learning and talent management consultancy Bersin & Associates, agrees. "Hybrid location work is the future," he says. "We'll see people working in many places on any given day, with high-quality video connectivity and high-quality meeting spaces offering the mix that will get the most out of us." But this scenario does not necessarily mean the office is dead, in an urban environment or elsewhere; in fact, far from it, says Mulcahey. Instead he believes: "It's about repurposing the office and using it for what it's really good at: bringing people together to collaborate, innovate, learn and share. I don't see that disappearing." Gartner's Kropp takes a similar view, saying office space is on the verge of a big redesign as it starts to take on "a different job".

"Companies are currently thinking hard about what they want their corporate office space to become and I believe it will be quite dramatically different," he says. "It won't be a place where employees go to do everything; it'll be a place where they do specific things like meet customers or engage with their local community, and their desk at home will be used to focus on tasks that can be undertaken alone." This means office headquarters, even in large urban environments, are likely to be smaller, no longer containing banks of desks. They will instead be purpose-designed and consist of an appropriate mix of meeting rooms, social areas, and collaboration and learning spaces. "Employers are appreciating that collaboration and creativity is hard in a virtual environment. So offices will assume a different purpose and become all about building social and cultural relationships, which are always at the heart of innovation," Kropp concludes.

END OF THE TRADITIONAL OFFICE?

Percentage of employees in the UK and Republic of Ireland who believe the traditional office space would no longer exist in ten years



Opinium Research/Ricoh Europe 2020



Bad audio is bad for business

As the world embraces remote working, overcoming poor audio experiences is imperative to ensuring high productivity, performance and employee wellbeing in the new normal

A post-coronavirus world will see transformations in how and where we work, and the skills and competencies needed in the labour market. The pandemic has accelerated organisations' digital transformation efforts and new technological deployments will lead to an increasingly virtual and hybrid work model, with workplace strategies built around more asynchronous workflows. Some workers will be on company workspaces, which are likely to be reimagined for the new normal, while others will be working distributed remotely and at different times.

Since remote working has become a natural part of people's lives, intrusive audio is no longer confined to office environments. A recent study by high-end audio solutions company EPOS, titled *Understanding Sound Experiences*, found nine in ten workers have experienced at least one painpoint due to poor sound quality during calls or virtual meetings, with common problems including excessive background noise, having to repeat information and bad connections cutting off speech. The EPOS survey revealed that, on average, users spend five hours and nineteen minutes daily on activities related to sound and meetings,

whether virtual or face to face. Nearly every respondent said their concentration and efficiency at work has suffered due to sound problems. Disruption caused by loud colleagues was the most raised issue, among 50 per cent of those surveyed. The average audio solution end-user loses 29 minutes a week due to poor sound quality on voice calls and time spent double-checking information via follow-up emails or calls, according to the research. For the average full-time worker, this equates to just over three days of lost time a year. Meanwhile, the study found poor audio quality on calls also resulted in dissatisfied

“It not only enhances performance, but also improves employee wellbeing, which is quickly becoming a key differentiator for job seekers

clients among 23 per cent of the decision-makers surveyed and financial loss due to incorrectly undertaking a task or losing a deal among 18 per cent. The consequences of bad audio don't stop there. As businesses increasingly view flexible working as crucial to their long-term work model, they have the challenge of keeping morale and communication levels high, and preventing employees from feeling isolated and distant. "In response to this, we're expecting a renewed commitment from industry to foster better tech collaboration and integration into our day-to-day lives, ensuring no employee is left behind," says Theis Moerk, vice president of product management, enterprise solutions, at EPOS. "With collaboration software still in its infancy, awareness is lacking and many companies are yet to fully realise the benefits to day-to-day working life. It not only enhances performance, but also improves employee wellbeing, which is quickly becoming a key differentiator for job seekers.

"With the *Understanding Sound Experiences* survey, we wanted to emphasise how important high-quality audio solutions are to productivity and performance by looking at how the opposite - bad audio - can result in miscommunication, misunderstanding and misinterpretation, with significant consequences for businesses and their employees. Many people are mishearing each other on conference calls daily and bad audio is often to blame."

It is clear employees would benefit from high-quality audio solutions to enhance productivity and wellbeing in a remote-working environment. Fortunately, 93 per cent of decision-makers are planning to purchase these within the next 12 months, according to EPOS's research. This is expected to include collaboration tools like headsets and speakerphones, which organisations are likely to start providing to new employees in the same way they set them up with a laptop and phone. Simply providing headsets won't meet the needs of modern workers in the new normal, however; audio quality is paramount. As a leading provider of high-end audio solutions for business professionals

and gamers, EPOS delivers advanced and pioneering solutions with design, technology and performance as paramount parameters. Headquartered in Denmark and part of the Demant Group, it builds on more than 115 years of experience working with innovation and sound. The company offers three core umbrella technologies: EPOS AI, EPOS Voice and EPOS Sound.

EPOS AI adapts speed to every environment to create an optimised audio experience that enhances speech clarity. The machine-learning system makes sound decisions independently by interacting with advanced beam-forming and noise reduction algorithms to adapt speech automatically to the environment. By removing noise disturbances and optimising noise levels, EPOS Voice improves speech intelligibility and ensures a more natural reproduction of the human voice. And EPOS Sound delivers a natural, augmented and immersive listening experience through continuous monitoring of ambient sound and varying noise levels.

"The technological breakthroughs we're seeing in the audio sector, from artificial intelligence-integrated headsets that monitor users' auditory preferences, to collaboration software in speaker phones, are bringing us closer to an age of convenience and ease of connectivity," says Moerk.

"In fact, eight in ten of those experiencing audio painpoints believe good audio equipment is the right solution to solving their workplace challenges. To maintain their competitive edge in the market, companies must provide the best equipment for their employees, ensuring optimum productivity levels. Equipping them with the right tools allows them to be more time efficient as well as focus on the more strategic tasks at hand.

"While high-quality audio solutions might be an investment, it is worth considering the additional costs that can be avoided as part of this. If communications solutions are optimised, much business travel becomes a needless expense. Often, an effective audio or video call can facilitate an international meeting at a fraction of the cost of train or plane tickets. For these measures to be successful and beneficial to businesses, it comes down to the quality of audio.

"Without clear sound and uninterrupted connection, video conferencing, as well as headset and speakerphone use, will be redundant and successful remote working will be a pipe dream."

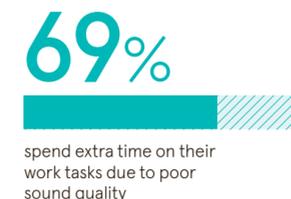
For more information please visit eposaudio.com



END USERS SPEND AN AVERAGE OF 5 HOURS AND 18 MINUTES DAILY ON ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SOUND AND MEETINGS, WHETHER VIRTUAL OR FACE-TO-FACE.



a week lost by the average audio solution end user, due to poor sound quality on voice calls



COLLABORATION CONUNDRUM

Working remotely, away from our colleagues and peers, has had clear ramifications for how well we communicate and collaborate. From rising levels of "Zoom fatigue" to a drastic reduction in ad-hoc workplace interactions, the future of workplace collaboration can look bleak. New technology may well be the answer, but as long it is implemented with care

IS TECHNOLOGY KEY TO COLLABORATION CHALLENGES?

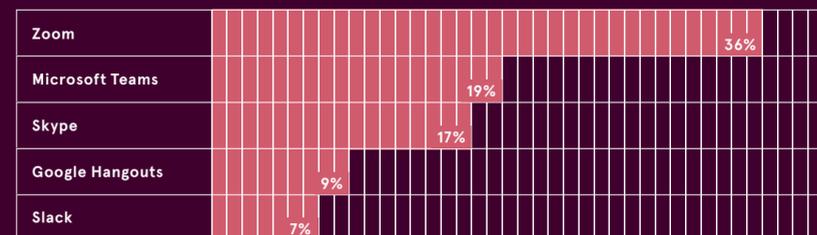
Global talent professionals say collaboration is one of their top remote working challenges, with tech providing the key to overcoming it

	TOP CHALLENGES OF REMOTE WORK	TOP WAYS TO OVERCOME REMOTE WORK CHALLENGES
1	Team bonding	Instant messaging
2	Collaboration	Audio conferencing
3	Work oversight	Video conferencing

LinkedIn 2019

TOP TECH TOOLS BOOSTING REMOTE COLLABORATION

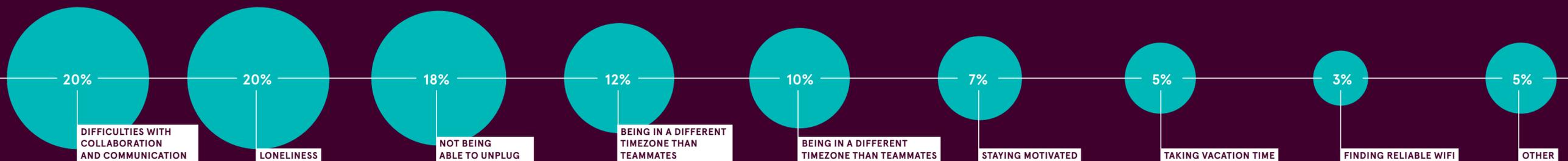
Remote workers in the US on their most-used collaboration tools



Clutch 2020

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION SUFFER UNDER REMOTE WORKING

Remote workers from around the world were asked to share their biggest struggle when working from home



CHOOSING THE RIGHT COLLABORATION TECH IS KEY

Although a top form of remote collaboration, a recent study has shown that video meetings – especially those of over 30 minutes – are more likely to cause us fatigue, and feelings of overwork and stress

GAMMA WAVES

Brainwaves produced when you are alert and highly focused, at peak concentration

BETA WAVES

Brainwaves associated with active, busy or anxious thinking and active concentration

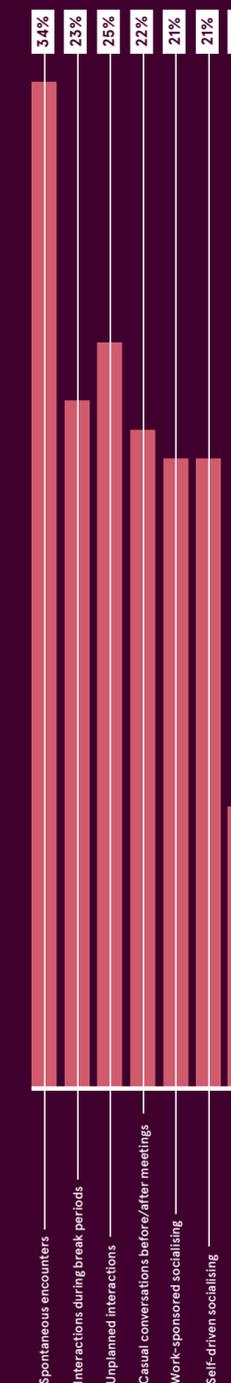


Microsoft 2020

WHAT COLLABORATIVE WORKERS ARE MISSING

Workers characterised as "collaboratives" (spending over 65 per cent of their work time collaborating with others) have noticed a 12 to 18 per cent drop in performance, due to a lack of workplace interactions

WeWork 2020



Buffer 2020

REMOTE WORKING

Making home working work for you

While there's lots of talk about the productivity of home working and new technology to track everything from the hours you've worked to your mental state, little has been said about the physical practicalities of turning over part of your home to workspace. So what do people need to consider?

Mark Hillsdon



Working space

First, try and create a space that feels like an office, somewhere that says work and, if possible, is separate and clearly demarcated from the rest of the house. "It's all psychological," says architect and author Sarah Susanka. "If you're working out of your second bedroom, you feel like you're camping. You have to build buffers and your environment needs to tell you: 'This is where I'm working'. It

doesn't have to be expensive, but it does have to give you the cues that you are at work." Of course, if you've had home working thrust upon you, finding somewhere to set up in a cramped flat or shared house can be tricky. Yet there are ways of managing the situation. If you do find you're using the spare bedroom, says Susanka, think about replacing the divan with a futon or fold-up bed, something that takes away some of the temptation to grab a power nap before you've even started. If you are working at the kitchen table, clear it completely before you start

and even think about moving it to a different position. Also play around with the lighting. "Spatial separation is the most important issue when it comes to working from home, but also the one which people have least control over," says Dr Frances Holliss, senior researcher at London Metropolitan University's School of Architecture and author of *Beyond Live/Work: the architecture of home-based work*. "People can make these small adjustments that then change the mindset and that helps them to switch off at the end of the day, too"



Let there be light

Next you need to think about lighting which, says Susanka, "needs to offer pools of warmth, with good task lighting for concentrated work and a warm glow for the space as a whole". If possible, try and find a space that offers some daylight too and a view out across the garden, or even on to the street, can help to lift the spirits. "Many of us, up until COVID, were working in little warrens of dark space with very little access to daylight and that throws off all our circadian rhythms," says Susanka. "We feel tired a lot of the time and, although we're probably

overworking too, a big piece of it has to do with daylight." People also need to be aware where the light is coming from and how it lands on their computer, says interior designer Sarah Palmer-Granville, who believes that whether its natural or artificial light: "You need to get it right so you've not got glare on the screen and you're not straining your eyes." And, in the age of the video call, being back lit is a big no-no. "Make sure the light is not behind you so your face is in shadow," she advises. "If you can't see somebody's face clearly, it's very difficult to read their body language."



Silence is golden

Ideally, the home office should be as far away from sources of potential noise, such as children, dogs and doorbells, as possible, with a door that can be shut. "Try and get that double barrier between you and the rest of the house," suggests Susanka. "You need to feel comfortable about having your business call without having kid noise in the background." However, such splendid isolation is a tall order for many of us. But there are options and Holliss

recommends noise-cancelling headphones if you're easily distracted by the neighbours. There is also a phone app that generates a gentle burble of white noise, an idea that is increasingly common in open-plan offices. Of course, the reverse can also be true and some people find it very hard to deal with the silence of home working, when they've been used to working in a busy office. Thankfully, there's an app for that too, which reproduces the general hubbub of a café.



Tools of the trade

"If there's one investment you should make, it's a good chair," says Nick Pollitt, managing director of DBI Furniture Solutions. "You're not going to get any work done with your feet on the sofa or propped up in bed and of course that can have a detrimental impact on your posture and physical health, too. Sitting up straight and in the correct position will help prevent tiredness and sluggishness." Even if you do find yourself at the kitchen table, he says, a chair that's adjustable, with a good back and lumbar support, will help you get into the correct position and height. Employers have as much a duty of

care to staff working from home as they do in an office and must ensure your work station meets health-and-safety requirements. Although the rules are slightly opaque, this could stretch to buying equipment for the home office. "Lots of companies have been caught on the hop with this," says Holliss, although not BT that introduced the concept of the home-shored contact centre adviser several years ago. The company has a whole department dedicated to home working, with home visits to assess working environments and a standard home-working set-up with desk, chair, bin and light delivered straight to the home.

Better by design

For some, such as the business owner who has decided to run things from home, there is the option of creating an office from scratch, a whole new space ergonomically designed to meet specific needs. Spare rooms can be transformed, garages repurposed and new garden offices built amid the herbaceous borders. "You have to make it so that it's your workspace, and you have to create it with the same care and lay out as you do a kitchen," says Susanka. "It's very specific; it's not like any of the other rooms in a normal house. It needs to be ergonomically organised into highly functional places and decorated with objects that inspire."

Holliss believes such has been the shift towards home working, it might be time to rethink what we want in a new home and start to introduce flexible spaces, which can easily be transformed to offer privacy and that all-important barrier from the rest of the house. "What's been extraordinary about this coronavirus-related enforced home-based work is that the myth of it not being possible has been busted," she says. "My research shows that most people like it because it gives them more control over their lives and most employers like it because their employees are more productive. "Fundamentally, I think we need to start designing our buildings differently; home-based work is here to stay and I believe we need to change our built environment to accommodate it."



Commercial feature



Flexibility drives the future of work

As businesses continue to embrace flexible working, they also require flexible transport solutions that are more cost efficient, employee friendly and environmentally sustainable

The last few years have seen a gradual shift towards more flexible ways of working, rapidly accelerated by the coronavirus pandemic. While a permanent, full-time embrace of remote working is unlikely – the pandemic has also highlighted how some industries simply can't operate in a totally virtual way – it's clear businesses will seek to refine a more hybrid work model in the coming years, defined by a healthy combination of central hubs, localised offices and home working. At the heart of the model won't just be flexible working, but a need for more flexible transport solutions too. The notion a company requires a fixed fleet of cars or vans for its workforce, or even that employees need their own car to get them to the office and to their meetings each day, will begin to look increasingly outdated. The traditional fleet, therefore, is likely to go in the same direction as the traditional office nine to five, as companies turn to highly scalable carsharing services that allow them to only pay for the time they actually use the vehicles.

The decisions companies make on both their work model and transport solution will be defined not only by employee wellbeing, productivity and cost efficiencies, but also sustainability. As environmental concerns have shot up the global agenda in recent years, so has the eagerness among businesses to reduce their own carbon footprint. "During the pandemic, we've all experienced what cities look and feel like with fewer cars on the road, not least the cleaner air quality and less noise pollution," says James Taylor, UK general manager at carsharing company Zipcar. "This is something we can hopefully try and retain post-pandemic. A key part is reducing the overall number of cars on the road while still providing businesses with a transport solution that meets their needs. And that's clearly where carsharing has a large role to play. "As workplaces become more flexible, we need a flexible transport option to sit alongside. There is no longer any reasonable need to invest significant sums in traditional transportation fleets, which also harm the environment. Flexible on-demand transport is the most befitting model of the new world of work we are entering, providing a vehicle, with simplicity and ease, only when you need it. That's what we offer at Zipcar."

Zipcar is a flexible, affordable and easy alternative to private car and van ownership, offering on-demand access to thousands of vehicles around the clock, all bookable and unlocked via the Zipcar app. The company offers two core services to both consumers and businesses. Flex is the one-way option, allowing users to drive to their destination and leave it there, while Roundtrip offers cars and vans that live in their own bay which they must return to. Everything is included in the service, including fuel, insurance and congestion charges. Zipcar's business solution, Zipcar for Business, which offers driving rate discounts and the first year's membership free, also allows organisations to host whole teams on one account where they can monitor vehicle usage, both from a cost and sustainability perspective. More than 13,000 businesses already use Zipcar for Business with many enjoying a more tailored service to meet their needs, including extended bookings or contracted usage of vehicles at certain times of the day or week. "There is no doubt the trend we're seeing around flexible working is going to continue in the long term and people will start making different choices around how they get around," says Taylor. "As we come out of the pandemic, and the economic damage endures, businesses will be looking to save costs where they can and transport is where they can reduce costs while also embracing sustainability. Zipcar is perfectly placed to tap into that, providing businesses with a totally flexible, sustainable and reliable solution."

Businesses will be looking to save costs where they can and transport is where they can reduce costs while also embracing sustainability

For more information please visit zipcar.com/en-gb/future-of-business



Set your business free with Whereby



TALENT

Enabling a borderless talent pool

The current economic climate is ripe for the emergence of new platforms to help companies recruit and retain talent in a truly borderless way

MaryLou Costa

An Australian heading human resources for a Norwegian company in Amsterdam. An Italian leading growth of a San Francisco-headquartered firm from Italy. An Estonian startup founder leading the charge in bringing digital technologies to international immigration systems. And they're all women.

These are examples of how access to a global talent pool is playing out in business. A burgeoning shift pre-coronavirus, it's now steadily gaining momentum in our new pandemically punctuated, remote-working times.

"When it comes to recruiting talent, COVID-19 has given businesses a new lens through which to view modern working. Technology has accelerated the transformation of businesses globally, enabled teams to grow, diversify and socially connect, regardless of location," says Xena Lappin, executive vice president of transformation and innovation at Teleperformance.

The remote-working specialist company has expanded rollout of its Cloud Campus remote client service hubs to accommodate an increasingly remote, globally agile workforce. The rise of remote working is opening up a wealth of global talent possibilities for both companies and individuals liberated by a borderless recruiting process.

Belief that economic hubs like London and Silicon Valley are no longer the source of the best talent is growing, as shared by 57 per cent of respondents in global human resources and payroll platform Remote's latest *Global Workforce Revolution* study. Around 62 per cent felt entrepreneurs should look beyond these areas to find the best global talent and 42 per cent felt international remote working would unlock a greater talent pool.

Most importantly, 63 per cent agree that the best person for the job is the right person, regardless of where in the world they are.

"People want to be close to their families. They want to be close to their ageing parents. They want to be

somewhere their kids can have a better childhood. All these metrics need to be taken into account when designing an attractive employee benefits package," says Remote's head of growth Elisa Rossi, who recently returned to her native Italy with her young family after 15 years in San Francisco.

With a mission to "drive the remote economy" against the complexities of global employment, tax and immigration rules, Rossi says Remote is seeing a spike in demand from companies of all sizes. Desired roles sourced from a global talent pool range from data scientists, to marketers, heads of HR, up to the C-suite, even chief executives. "Now, all of a sudden, there's this democratisation of global employment," she says.

Perhaps the biggest impact is on diversity and inclusion. Some 45 per cent of respondents in Remote's report agreed a greater level of international remote working could make the tech industry more inclusive, with 30 per cent believing remote work could help build ethnic diversity and 25 per cent saying it would improve gender diversity.

The concept of borderless talent is even set to be "the greatest lever for diversity, equity and inclusion", argues Jessica Hayes, vice president of people and talent at Whereby.

"In our leadership team, we have more women than men and we have a strong approach to working families. We have plenty of working mums and also shared parental capacity with fathers," she says.

"We have a long way to go in terms of ethnic diversity, because we've pretty much exclusively recruited out of Norway for the last two years. But this year one of our goals is to spread the geographic locations of our teams."

A remote-first company that offers a video-calling alternative to the likes of Zoom, Whereby is now doing just that, using Remote to recruit more readily from a global talent pool.

Hayes has just hired a Toronto-based executive and, in another process, the final three candidates are based in the UK, Spain and the Netherlands in



"We believe talent is equally distributed across the world, while the opportunity to do your best work is not"

Amsterdam, where Hayes now lives. Coming from a small town in rural Australia, she believes the growth of the remote economy will in turn reinject local regional economies.

"We have a strong ethical underpinning in terms of opening up the economics of small communities, rather than global hubs," says Hayes.

"We believe talent is equally distributed across the world, while the opportunity to do your best work is not. I am now perfectly capable of going back to my home town and working there if I want to and I likely will when I have children."

A boost to regional hubs fuelled by borderless global talent is something Michael Cockburn, co-founder of workspace booking platform Desana, is backing. Demand for the Desana platform is playing into the work-from-home trend evolving into work near home, connecting employers and employers with bookable, flexible workspaces worldwide.

Edinburgh-based Desana is rolling out pilot programmes with two household names. It is also working with a social media platform with a new mandate of hiring the best talent wherever it is.

"This has accelerated the business case for facilitating people working close to home and COVID has accelerated the number of companies we're talking to about facilitating that. Without committing to an office, or one brand of office-space provider, companies can use this large network of space globally," says Cockburn.

Desana partners with independent workspace providers that are considering acquiring new regional real estate to accommodate an expanding borderless, global talent pool.

"We're seeing the decentralisation of every industry. So why shouldn't we be focusing on how we create decentralised hubs that provide the resources we need to be happy and fulfilled in where we're working, in a well-established workspace people can walk or cycle to from where they live?" he questions.

Such decentralisation is also opening doors for talent in emerging markets, with new platforms such as Andela and Remotely supplying remote software engineering teams out of Africa and Latin America. Remote has also partnered with Pesto, a talent accelerator for Indian software engineers, and Microverse, a coding program focused on Latin American and African students.

While this may do wonders for improving diversity, Whereby's Hayes warns of the need for ethical pay scales. "Many businesses working in a distributed fashion are naturally reluctant to submit to compensating their team according to 'big city' salaries," she says. "But, if you do not have a comprehensive and egalitarian compensation structure, businesses are more likely to fall into a trap of pay gaps or taking advantage of emerging markets."

"If you are a HR people leader in a distributed workplace, you must prioritise developing a compensation methodology which takes these facts into account. Prepare for them early; do not let yourselves fall into unsustainable or unethical pay practices."

Whether this means driving down London salaries in favour of regional pay or some kind of equilibrium remains to be seen. But Karoli Hindriks, founder of global immigration platform Jobbatical, believes salaries may become less geographically driven and more about a price tag for a certain skill-set and level of expertise.

Either way, Tallin-based Hindriks, who helped pioneer the development of the world's first digital nomad visa, allowing remote workers to be legally based in Estonia, says a widespread adoption of borderless talent is dependent on international immigration systems becoming more open and efficient.

"We can build as much tech as possible, but if policies don't change, we can't really help companies," she says. Hindriks has been called on to advise the Croatian government, which is looking to plug its COVID tourism gap with remote workers and has worked with immigration authorities in Berlin on submitting applications digitally via Jobbatical, cutting processing time from ninety days to five.

"We are having similar discussions with other governments, but things aren't going to change overnight. We need countries like Germany, Spain, Italy, United States and the UK to follow suit," she says. "The biggest problem is the whole immigration industry is outdated. Maybe this pandemic will make the public sector think about efficiency more."

While Whereby's Hayes agrees immigration and employment law need to catch up, Remote's Rossi says borderless talent and the remote economy is a macro trend and there's no going back.

As Desana's Cockburn concludes: "Now people's expectation is to be able to work where they want and companies just have to facilitate that."

42%

of tech business decision-makers in the UK and US say international remote working will unlock a greater supply of talent than is available in domestic markets

63%

agreed that entrepreneurs should look beyond Silicon valley and London if they want to find the best talent in the world*

57%

say that the best talent doesn't necessarily exist in these areas anymore

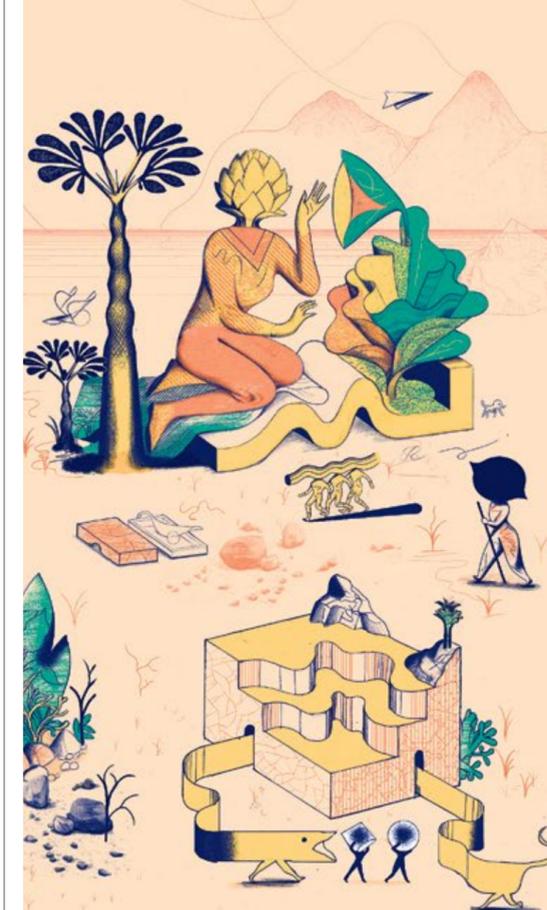
*UK respondents only

Remote Technology 2020

The easiest way to meet over video

With no app or installs required, and the same meeting link every time, Whereby gives you the freedom to work from anywhere.

whereby.com



COLLABORATION

How teamwork has evolved

Although enabling personal interaction, offices can sometimes stifle our ability to collaborate, so has limited exposure to our colleagues during the pandemic facilitated more efficient teamwork?

Tom Ritchie

The great work-from-home experiment has now been running for six months. We may have been physically working apart from our peers, but this hasn't stopped us from needing to collaborate. Watercooler chats, stand-up meetings and quick catch-ups have been replaced by Zoom calls and Slack messages.

Has this lack of proximity made working together harder? Or has time away from our colleagues made our interactions more fruitful?

Collinson Group, a global loyalty and benefits company, has seen little drop off in employee satisfaction or productivity since the breakout of coronavirus. In July, 79 per cent of its 2,100-plus employees reported they were working efficiently with

their colleagues, a 12 per cent increase since the previous survey in April.

"We have found we are just as effective and just as productive with 80 per cent of our people agreeing they have been performing as or more effectively than pre-COVID," says Corey Archard, Collinson's head of talent acquisition. "Collaboration across our global offices has become slightly easier with an increased number of meetings taking place between different office locations."

Archard cites Collinson's speed in implementing new technologies as being crucial in their positive results. Digital collaboration tools have become ubiquitous in our working lives. Zoom saw its global daily users spike from 10 million to 200 million during the first month of lockdown,

while Microsoft Teams, Slack and TeamViewer have also seen a sharp increase in demand. "Any tool that organisations choose to encourage collaboration and sharing must be simple to use and integrate seamlessly into existing IT set-ups," says Andy Wilson, global head of media technologies at Dropbox. "New tech should work as intuitively in the office as it does at home. Put simply, these tools need to be able to meet the demands and preferences of everyone that uses them."

While technology has obviously been crucial in facilitating collaboration, the first step is fostering a culture that promotes effective teamwork.

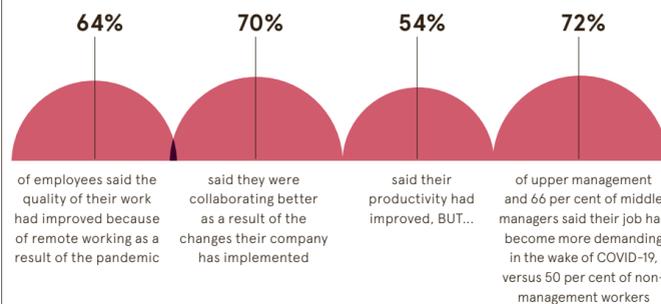
"It is not difficult to specify the characteristics of a high-performing team," says Adrian Furnham, occupational psychologist for financial advisory firm Stamford Associates. "They develop clear goals and plans; they communicate clearly, honestly and regularly with each other; they solve problems and make decisions on a timely basis; they manage conflict well."

At the law firm DLA Piper, collaboration has been a focus for the past two years, following a reset of the practice's values. "Ensuring people's emotional well-being and working supportively were already embedded in the business," says global law firm DLA Piper's international head of talent development Liza Strong. "It hasn't been a leap. Allocating work and tasks has always been done in a collaborative way, with a clear set of shared objectives."

Widespread remote working has accelerated the transition from command-and-control leadership to focusing more on output. This trend is set to snowball further, as polling by the global research firm

EMPLOYEES BENEFITTING FROM WFH, BUT NOT MANAGERS

Survey of 1,000 US employees and managers published in May



KPMG 2020

Gartner found that just under half (48 per cent) of employees expect to be working from home following the pandemic.

Managers will need to allow time and space for their staff, earmarking periods when solitary work is encouraged. The average UK worker has 4.4 meetings a week, half of which they deem to be unnecessary, according to a 2018 report by the meeting tech firm eShare.

Dropbox's engineering team have implemented a "No meeting Wednesday" policy to allow staff to work through complex programming challenges and facilitate better interactions during the rest of the week.

"Teams may need to be able to set aside 'focus time' as a result of working from home where distraction is aplenty," says Wilson. "Not every company update needs a team meeting and not every piece of feedback needs to be conveyed instantly."

Despite the desire to work from home and the capability of digital tools, there are still drawbacks to the lack of face-to-face contact with our colleagues.

"There are all sorts of constraints when it comes to virtual communication," says Furnham. "People need to get to know each other well so they can trust and like them. It is the 'watercooler moments' that make all the difference in getting to know people's preferences."

He suggests that video calls are often too formal, restricting participants from speaking their mind or sharing ideas. Furnham also points out the importance of visual cues and body language in understanding the perspectives of workmates.

Research by Adecco Group found 77 per cent of British workers would prefer to adopt a hybrid model, splitting their time between office and home. As we move back into the shared workspace, how should leaders handle the need for face-to-face interactions, while still including staff who work remotely?

Strong says all DLA Piper meetings involving remote workers take place via video conferencing to avoid excluding people from key decisions.

"It's often at the start or the end of the meeting where incredibly valuable informal conversations are had," she says. "Even if someone is quarantine or shielding, we want everyone to be involved in those moments and to start from the same base."

This desire to keep people involved touches again on the need for a commitment to collaboration throughout an organisation. A supportive and trusting culture goes a long way to keeping teams performing at a high level, whether the conversations happen over Zoom or by the watercooler. ●

“Even if someone is quarantine or shielding, we want everyone to be involved in those moments and to start from the same base



Preparing for a hybrid future of work

Companies are embracing a new normal that places video-first engagement at the heart of work and collaboration

From the moment the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a global pandemic in March, businesses faced a race against the clock to ensure staff could continue to work productively and securely from home before a national lockdown was enforced.

With technology crucial to enabling the transition to remote working, reliance on IT operations teams increased substantially as they were tasked with moving employees from a relatively controlled environment with few variables to a highly unpredictable one.

Companies suddenly had employees connected via all different types of internet methods, which IT had barely any control, visibility or influence over. They were working in a shared environment alongside families and housemates, creating a chaotic experience that put an exceptional burden on IT teams to support as best they could.

"There were a handful of organisations that we saw do it quite well," says Bryan Osoro, vice president of sales at EOS IT Solutions, a global technology and logistics company, which provides collaboration and business IT support services to some of the world's largest organisations. "They embraced policies and consumed technology that enabled the transition to happen pretty quickly. They can look back and pat themselves on the back."

"Then there was a much larger contingency of organisations that just scrambled through. It was very much a raw transition and, expecting it to only be temporary, they gave their employees

more or less just the bare bones to connect to the apps they needed to stay productive. As they didn't see it as a longer-term transition, the experience was subpar."

Having seen how successful remote working has been for them, many companies are planning to embrace work-from-home policies in the long term as part of a more hybrid workforce. To enable that and improve the employee experience, they are reviewing what they can give them. Whether it's particular types of internet connectivity, or standardised equipment such as dedicated video endpoints or professional-grade headsets, employees must have a consistent work experience wherever they are so they are engaged and not isolated.

In this emerging new normal, businesses are re-evaluating what their work landscape looks like and repurposing it so employees feel comfortable, productive and collaborative when, and if, they eventually return to the office. A more touchless office experience is also central to return-to-work plans. Reducing contact in workspaces means utilising collaboration technology such as voice assistant and touchscreens to book rooms.

"Fortunately, many technology vendors like Microsoft, Google, Zoom and Cisco had already started incorporating artificial intelligence-based mechanisms within their platforms, even before COVID-19 arrived," says Osoro.

"Cisco, for example, allows users of its collaboration technology to walk into a video room and say, 'Hey, Webex, join my

call'. Microsoft also have a similar feature, through the team's mobile app which allows users to control in-room devices without touching the centre console."

"People are already comfortable using this kind of technology with the likes of Amazon Alexa and Apple Siri in their personal lives, and companies can now bring that experience into the workplace so staff can join meetings, take notes and see who's on a call without having to touch a device."

"The need for touchless collaboration technology is in huge demand more so than ever. Fortunately for companies, EOS continuously scales hurdles to provide global IT excellence for a multitude of customers in order to support them in making a safe and successful return to work experience, through fast-global deployment that is cost effective and risk-free."

"Not only will organisations now need to embrace this new technology, but they will also need to re-evaluate their meeting rooms to comply with social distancing guidelines."

“We are taking our knowledge from building tens of thousands of video rooms and applying that to people's homes

"Through our conversations with customers about how their work-patterns will look, we are seeing several common themes. Some companies are taking existing conference rooms and repurposing them to reduce capacity by half or more. Others are moving away from the conference room notion altogether and instead building use case-specific spaces, such as interview rooms and small, yet open, huddle areas with good airflow."

As companies embrace this hybrid world of work, the need for a well-thought-out and complete IT life-cycle service has become apparent. EOS is bringing its heritage of global scale and logistics together with expertise in deploying the most powerful video-based collaboration experiences together to offer a consistent and standardised work-from-home environment, which dramatically improves the remote work experience.

EOS Remote Excellence is a solution that proved particularly valuable during the pandemic and will continue to feature heavily as companies enter the new normal. The solution that is offered by EOS streamlines the design, procurement, delivery, onboarding and support of the work experience, wherever an employee is based. Simultaneously, through fast-global deployment that is cost effective and risk-free.

"It is a challenge for IT organisations to get equipment to people's homes because they have to schedule shipping. Logistically, it's just a hassle to deal with," says Osoro. "With our strong logistics background, EOS is proficient at getting equipment and technology in the full IT supply chain into approximately 175 countries. We are taking those learnings and reapplying processes for home workers, creating a standard support model for the equipment available to them, through a build, operate, transfer model."

"In this new world of video-first collaboration, we are also able to lean on our extensive expertise in video endpoint

deployments when looking at the work-from-home experience and the burden on IT. We are taking our knowledge from building tens of thousands of video rooms over the years and applying that to people's homes."

The pandemic has caused consumer patterns to shift drastically, often enabled by video-based technologies. Through this transition, people have become much more comfortable with video-first engagements in their personal lives, whether it be attending a yoga class via Zoom or cocktail party with friends via Google Duo. Now, as with smartphones before, consumers are demanding what they are using in their personal lives to be operational at work. A video-first experience will be central to the hybrid workforce and IT organisations there-fore need to prepare to support this in a way that's as simple for employees to implement.

"They need to take advantage of one-button-to-join functionality for meetings, so employees aren't fumbling around trying to find a long URL to join or having to dial in manually," says Osoro. "That has to be a focal point for IT operations teams, keeping it simple for employees." In a response to a global pandemic the future of the workplace is digital technology, which EOS can provide at scale. It is through EOS IT Solutions' 35-year heritage in IT distribution and experience in deploying thousands of endpoints worldwide that they have the ability to support organisations to make the transition to the hybrid work experience securely, with diligence and at speed.

For more information on EOS IT Solutions please visit www.eosits.com or contact info@eosits.com



AUTOMATION

A future where no jobs are boring



Technology has the ability to rid employees of repetitive, mind-numbing tasks, but it will be up to organisations to ensure workers' adapted roles are challenging and rewarding enough to keep them engaged

Oliver Pickup

Will it soon be impossible to have a wholly boring job, given the gallop of automation and artificial intelligence? Already technological capabilities enable workers, across the gamut of business sectors, to relinquish repetitive, menial tasks and use that clawed-back time to focus on more exciting and engaging endeavours.

Perhaps it was a surprise when, in June, a French court ruled that Frédéric Desnard's former employer, a perfume business, should pay him €40,000 after his mental health deteriorated due to "boreout", the antithesis of burnout. Under closer inspection, though, Desnard's unfortunate mismanagement was the result of strict legislation that complicates

the redundancy process in France. French employment law needs updating, evidently. Consider that by 2030 up to one fifth of the global workforce, or 800 million people, will see their jobs replaced by robotic automation, according to an oft-quoted McKinsey & Company report from November 2017.

This headline figure fails to account for all the new, and more exciting, roles that technology will create in the coming decade. The key takeaway for business leaders, though, should be that it is crucial to invest in employees or risk paying a higher price for not evolving boring jobs. Employers that narrow the digital skills gap and help human and machine work side by side will gain a competitive advantage.

Psychologist Portia Hickey, co-founder of the Smart Collaboration Accelerator, posits the model presented in the mid-1970s by organisational psychologists Greg Oldham and Richard Hackman still remains the blueprint for job design today. "They identified the significance of the job, being able to see the outcome of their work, variety, autonomy and feedback were all key," she says.

"Jobs are generally becoming more interesting, partly because organisations are more aware of job design, but also because technology can take over highly repetitive, lower-skilled work. However, what makes a job more enjoyable is autonomy."

The gathering of knowledge allied with autonomy is the perfect combination to motivate workers, according to Karthik Krishnan, chief executive of Britannica Group. "Learning happens when one is stretched outside one's comfort zone," he says. "Dopamine is the brain's reward system and is secreted when accomplishing a challenging task. If the task is too challenging or not challenging enough, negative emotions set in, such as stress, apathy and boredom."

Krishnan, who lists TikTok content creator, drone operator and driverless car engineer among the most exciting jobs spawned by tech recently, also notes that people's boredom threshold

has never been lower. "The 'always-on' mode, the 24/7 information flow and stimulation lead to constant distraction and craving for newness," he says.

Employers should "design jobs and identify the right talent to be successful", says Krishnan, adding that it is vital to understand a worker's *ikigai* – a Japanese expression that translates loosely as "reason for being" – to keep them engaged and happy.

He says the ultimate goal is to create a culture where employees feel inspired, challenged and empowered. "The good news is that today, technology increasingly performs jobs that are well-defined, regimented and repetitive, thus reducing boring and risky jobs. From taxi drivers to shop workers to soldiers, the range of traditional jobs that will decline or disappear is huge," says Krishnan.

Technology increasingly performs jobs that are well-defined, regimented and repetitive, thus reducing boring and risky jobs

Research published in September by multinational software company Pegasystems suggests intelligent automation has a critical role to play in crafting a new, tech-enabled, post-pandemic future of work. The global study surveyed more than 3,000 global senior managers and frontline IT staff, and 76 per cent agreed that increased use of tech is improving employee satisfaction, says Pegasystems' chief technology officer Don Schuerman.

Further, more than half of the surveyed UK businesses (51 per cent) say intelligent automation currently saves them over ten working hours per person a week, freeing up roughly a quarter of their time. And with that available time, the top-three activities are working alongside machines, engaging more with customers and innovating. "What this study makes clear is that technology is one of the top trends shaping the future of work," says author and futurist Jacob Morgan.

Research presented by robotic process automation (RPA) leader UiPath supports this insight. "Some 35 per cent of UK workers believed that automation would deliver more interesting and creative jobs for future generations," says Chris Duddridge, UiPath area vice president and managing director in the UK and Ireland. He offers UiPath's work with Brent Council's housing benefits

departments as an example to highlight how RPA "cuts out the dull parts". Before embracing RPA, all rent adjustments had to be uploaded manually on to the system. "It was described as 'mind numbing,'" says Duddridge. "A single rent change that could take a staff member over four minutes manually now takes fewer than 40 seconds. The council estimates that this automation alone has saved it over £32,000 in the overtime costs needed to ensure deadlines were hit."

Having the right tech is paramount for workers' happiness. In a new Freshworks study, some 82 per cent of business leaders around the world acknowledge that how their workplace tech performs is imperative to engage employees. "This is especially true now in the time of home working," says Arun Mani, president of Freshworks Europe. "Not having the necessary IT services on hand in the same building means businesses need to ensure their technology works and provides a flawless experience for users."

Alarming, the Freshworks research also found 77 per cent of employees will look for a new employer if their current job does not provide the tools, technology or information they need to perform.

It's not all about tech, though. A balance must be struck and leaders have to understand what motivates individuals. "You have to foster a culture where employees feel comfortable talking about what they need and want," says Nabila Salem, president at Revolut Group, who recommends holding regular one-to-one meetings.

Organisations unprepared for mass remote working when lockdown was enforced in March are playing catch up in terms of engaging staff, particularly new hires, says Charlie Johnson, founder and chief executive of BrighterBox, a London-based recruitment firm. "A lack of contact time or on-the-fly coaching has left a few joiners feeling lost, unable to ask simple questions," he says.

Janine Chamberlin, director at LinkedIn, agrees and points to her

You have to foster a culture where employees feel comfortable talking about what they need and want

company's research that shows 75 per cent of UK C-level executives say workers now expect greater availability and transparency from leaders. "This closer connection is a great way to engage employees, motivate them to achieve their potential and keep them focused on business goals," she says.

"Great employers recognise the importance of change and present opportunities for internal mobility and skills development so employees can benefit from a new experience and progress in their career."

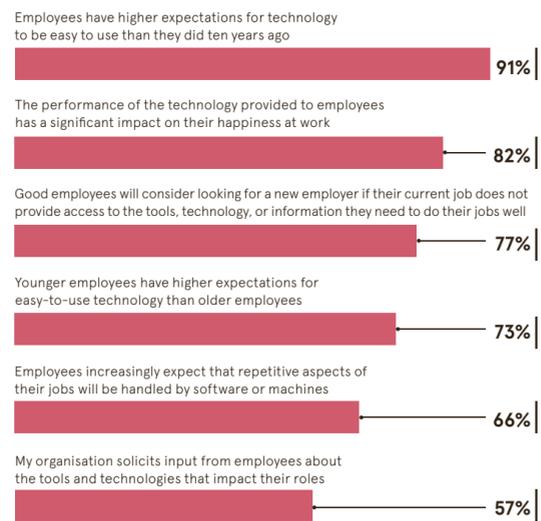
This chimes with Erica Brescia, chief operating officer of leading software development platform GitHub. "Forward-thinking companies have found new ways to drive employee engagement beyond activities and modes of working that are tied to physical offices," she says. "They adapt how they operate to support a distributed team, from changing how they communicate to how they track, manage and report on projects."

"They move from highly synchronous ways of working to more asynchronous and collaborative work. And they encourage team camaraderie through virtual activities, such as quizzes, scavenger hunts, cooking classes and happy hours."

Looking ahead, Brescia concludes: "The new future of work is not dependent on office locations or physical workspaces, but rather on adapting to new ways of getting work done to provide employees with the best environment for their success." ●

GROWING EXPECTATIONS FOR WORKPLACE TECH

Share of workers who agree with the following statements



Harvard Business Review/Freshworks 2020

Commercial feature



Embracing the post-COVID meeting space

After months of coronavirus orders to stay at home, many who once longed to work remotely find themselves looking forward to returning to the office, albeit not every day

The fact is how we work is evolving. There's an increasing realisation that individual projects can easily be done at home, while collaborative work is best done in the office. This hybrid approach has a profound influence on the spaces we use and the digital tools we interact with.

This sentiment can equally be applied to what's happening to our workplaces in the wake of COVID-19. The pandemic has been a revelation for business leaders.

"The number of people at desks no longer translates to productivity; it's more about employees engaging with their work in a way that works for them," explains Ed Morgan, chief operating officer at DisplayNote, a leading digital meeting room company.

"A surge in the use of Zoom and Teams has seen remote digital collaboration on a scale previously unheard of and there is no going back. Many of us understand that sharing content and ideas digitally should be as easy as saying hello. Collaborative interfaces matter; the user experience needs to be second to none."

"Tools such as DisplayNote's Launcher allow employees to walk into any meeting space and collaborate effortlessly by sharing content and accessing apps on the meeting room screen. Plus, video calls can be launched remotely without the need to touch a screen or shared computer. They can do it via their mobile phone, which uses proximity detection to access a large touchscreen," says Morgan.

"But with BYOD, workers want reassurances over security. This is why we've built in data clearing features when sharing content. There is no doubt that both coronavirus and the rise of hybrid working is setting the bar higher. The three Cs of collaboration – communication, content and co-ordination – have never been so important. Solutions that enable workers to do all three with superior user experience will drive productivity for businesses. Right now, that's crucial. Organisations want to work on their own terms. It's software developers like ours who are stepping up to help them to achieve this."

In its role as a hub, the office will promote collaboration, innovation and interaction between employees

Figures from the *Homeworking in the UK* report show 88 per cent of employees who worked at home during the lockdown would like to continue doing so in some capacity. Furthermore, those previously unfamiliar with remote working have not been put off by the experience. Some 50 per cent show a preference for part or full-time working from home after restrictions are lifted. This suggests a potential shift to blended working habits long term.

DisplayNote, who work with the likes of Dell, Fujitsu and Heineken, understand the challenges of the modern workplace. "The office needs a new lease of life to once again be attractive to employees, especially those reluctant to return. We are seeing much greater expectations of the office environment. Employees want workplaces to be more collaborative, with spaces to share ideas in. This means digitally-enabled meeting rooms and less siloed working. And there's an appetite for solutions like our Launcher software, which is currently present in over 5,000 meeting rooms worldwide," says Morgan.

"These expectations actually come from home working. You can connect to anyone in just several clicks using software and platforms you are familiar with. Employees are increasingly asking whether meeting rooms can have the exact same seamless functionality that's easy, enjoyable and safe to use, just as if they were working from home."

Health and safety are of increasing concern for office workers, especially with fears over a second wave of COVID-19. This raises the issue of sharing digital devices such as mice, keyboards, touchscreens, as well as the use of communal kitchens. BYOD (bring your own device) will be part of this process. The rise of touchless technology is undoubtedly being spurred on by the pandemic fallout.

9 out of 10

of those who worked from home during lockdown would like to continue in some form

"Tools such as DisplayNote's Launcher allow employees to walk into any meeting space and collaborate effortlessly by sharing content and accessing apps on the meeting room screen. Plus, video calls can be launched remotely without the need to touch a screen or shared computer. They can do it via their mobile phone, which uses proximity detection to access a large touchscreen," says Morgan.

"But with BYOD, workers want reassurances over security. This is why we've built in data clearing features when sharing content. There is no doubt that both coronavirus and the rise of hybrid working is setting the bar higher. The three Cs of collaboration – communication, content and co-ordination – have never been so important. Solutions that enable workers to do all three with superior user experience will drive productivity for businesses. Right now, that's crucial. Organisations want to work on their own terms. It's software developers like ours who are stepping up to help them to achieve this."

Simplify your meeting room with www.displaynote.com

DisplayNote



Cromwell®

cromwell.co.uk



Keeping Industry Working™



For 50 years we have built a reputation of serving businesses to keep operations running and people safe.

We believe that those who make, manufacture and build the world around us deserve the very best support. For us, that means we listen to our customers, understand their needs and then provide them with the right products and expertise.



More than just a supplier

- UK & Overseas Branch network
- Online Business Trading Account
- KeepStock: Customer Inventory Solutions
- Corporate Clothing & Workwear Division
- Sourcing Specialists
- Technical Expertise

Your safety is our concern

- Cromwell are here to support your business and have a wide range of PPE products available for immediate free next day delivery*.
- As a **British Safety Industry Federation** approved safety supplier and **British Safety Council** member, we have a complete range of compliant and fully certified quality PPE products for all applications and environments.



COVID Assurance Statement 24/09/20



Get in touch

Order online cromwell.co.uk
call **0870 850 0055** email contactus@cromwell.co.uk

If you contact via phone or email please quote **CromwellTimesSeptember**

Find us on:



<https://go.cromwell.co.uk/Times-Campaign>

GRAINGER®

We are proud to be part of Grainger, North America's leading broad line supplier of maintenance, repair and operating products.

*Free delivery over £20. Order before 5pm, Mon-Thur and before 3:30pm Fri, for next working day delivery on stocked items. Please see cromwell.co.uk for full T&C's.