



Zimyo

**THE FUTURE
OF WORK IN 2023
AND BEYOND**



The Covid-19 pandemic truly changed the status of remote work as something seen as an added perk to it becoming the norm. Thousands of workers across the globe had to start working from home as lockdown restrictions continued across countries as a response to the pandemic. It's been a whole year of this remote work arrangement, and it is definitely not going to disappear even with the pandemic gone. With the invention and gradual roll out of a vaccine, companies do plan to go back to working in office spaces.

By 2025, an estimated **70%** of the workforce will be working remotely at least five days a month.

UK companies saw levels of home working nearly quadruple from **one-in-five employees (20%)** in 2019 to nearly three-quarters (**73%**) in **2020** due to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to research from Willis Towers Watson.





However, the pandemic and its effects on the way of work and the workforce has changed a lot of the otherwise usual practices. It is imperative for HR leaders to study how the trends of remote working have been shaping up before they make any decision, or worse, imposition, to alter the current remote work arrangement of employees. With one year of the pandemic behind us, now is a good time to study the benefits and pitfalls of remote working under a magnifying glass. Going back to the old way of working is definitely not going to be an easy or smooth process.



Pros of Remote Work For Employers



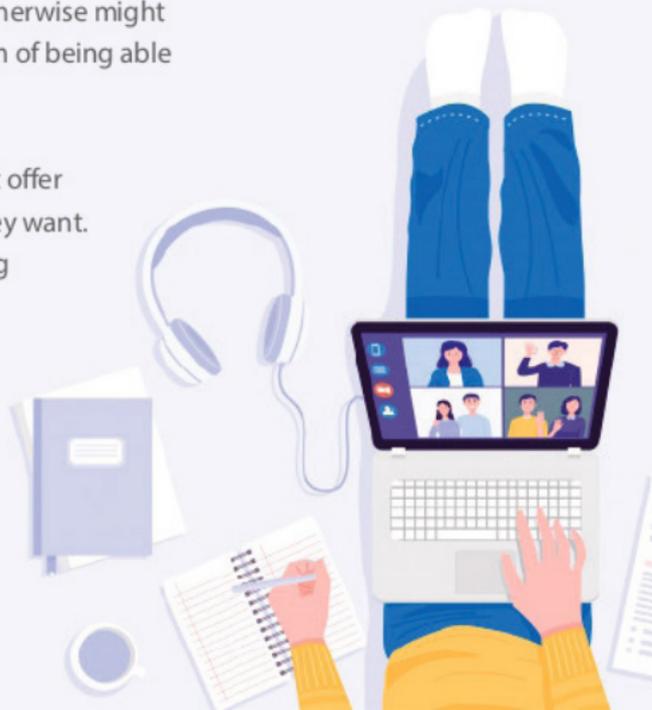
Access To Creative Talent

With a remote work option, employers can hire the best talent from anywhere. A recruiter can market the available jobs to a pool of people who otherwise might not be interested. For instance, many millennials and GenZers dream of being able to live abroad without putting their career on hold.

This creative workforce becomes more accessible to companies that offer remote opportunities that allow them to change their location if they want. Personal growth and chance to travel matters more to the upcoming generation who will soon be taking over the workforce.



81 percent of US college seniors want to work abroad.





Cost Benefits for Companies

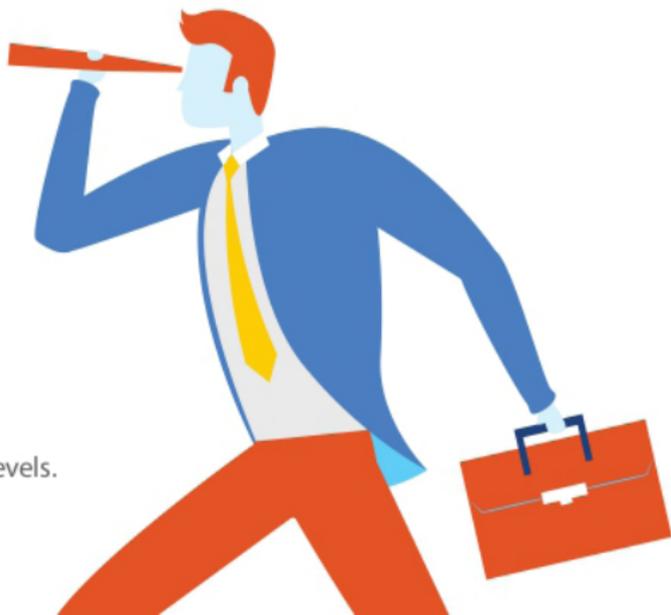
With remote work, companies have lower costs with respect to real estate. With spend on pay unlikely to change significantly, companies are also anticipating that any savings they make will come from real estate, where over a third (37%) are expecting to reduce their spend next year and 60% over the next three years. Over half (53%) also expect savings in 2021 from expenses connected to commuting to work, such as transportation and travel. Some of these savings are being channelled into equipin employees to work from home.

Employee Retention

Offering flexible work schedules have been a low cost way to help retain employees facing challenging childcare and other responsibilities at home. While 86 percent of UK employers cited safety concerns for their employees as one of the main reasons for offering remote work arrangements.



55 percent were aware that **this flexibility** could maintain or increase employee engagement, as well as employee retention levels.





Higher Productivity



Remote work has actually led to an increase in employee productivity and reduced employee turnover. A recent Harvard Business Review study found that output increased by 4.4 percent after a transition to remote work. Another Stanford study of 16000 employees found that remote work increased employee satisfaction and helped halve the previous employee attrition rates.



Fewer Distractions

Employees highlighted that fewer distractions at home helps them concentrate and focus better on their tasks. Employees working from home are also able to create their own personalised work environments and schedules, which helps them plan and achieve their goals better. Without distractions like coffee breaks, long lunch hours and impromptu meetings, employees find it easier to organise their schedule and stick to it.



Lower Commute Time

Working from home or remotely has helped employees save hours of travel time they otherwise spent commuting. Londoners are saving the most cash thanks to teleworking, at an average of £57.78 per week, which possibly reflects the capital's high commuting costs. This is playing a significant role in improving employee health and morale.



More Belonging



Gallup's State of the American Workplace Report found that engagement levels for remote workers is 32 percent as compared to 28 percent for office workers. The study also found remote workers feeling more belonged and connected to their teams. A background to achieving this successfully is to establish clear OKR's around remote working to ensure everyone feels focused and comfortable to work around shared goals. Remote workers also take fewer sick days and those working remotely report 56 percent fewer absences overall.



A Better Work-Life Balance

Working remotely was an impossible perk until a few decades ago. Advancement in technology has made it much easier to complete projects across a team dispersed all across the globe. Remote work does offer a better work-life balance for employees as a lot of time wasted in commute, meetings and impromptu distractions can be avoided, giving employees more time to finish their work.



Reduced Carbon Footprint

Remote work has a significant impact on the environment with way fewer cars on the road, going paperless and monitoring air conditioning, heating, lighting etc. Office spaces can lead to a lot of wastage and a whopping 7.8 billion vehicle miles aren't travelled each year for those who work at least part time from home. This also leads to 3 million tons of greenhouse gases being avoided and fuel savings reaching \$980 million!



Competitive Advantage for Businesses

Products, services and customers do matter when it comes to business success, but they do not matter more than the employees of a company. It is the people who drive business success and shape the products of the future. Remote work can play a great role in attracting and retaining top talent that is a key differentiating factor in a competitive business world. Companies that offer flexible work arrangements and take care of their employees.




Companies with high employee engagement are **21 percent more profitable!**

Challenges of Remote Work



Lack of Remote-First Policies

Even though high levels of remote working are anticipated in the future, most organisations do not have the current job architecture (45 percent) or job levelling (43 percent) processes to support a flexible workforce. Over 28 percent of employers do not have the policies in place to manage flexible working arrangements.

Less Opportunity to Showcase Achievements

Remote working makes it difficult to highlight professional achievements. With remote working becoming the norm, employees might find the need to put extra effort into showcasing their achievements virtually to ensure they have access to new opportunities. A remote setting can also make it harder for workers to convey their feelings and for employers to identify what their workers are going through. Collaboration via email and devices makes the human touch go missing that can be read only via face to face conversations.





Worker Fatigue

Working in the same place as one lives comes with challenges. This is especially true for employees with toddlers, new parents, pets or those who live in joint families. There can be so many distractions at home and bridging the gap between personal and professional space can lead to a lot of stress. Work hours become blurred and it inevitably spills over the weekend too.

Worrisome Internet

Reliable and secure broadband services along with tools that can help set up an office at home play a major role in the success of remote work. Unfortunately, the findings of GWS' performance testing highlighted that this is not the case for a sizable proportion of the UK's growing remote workforce. Almost one-third of properties across the UK do not have access to sufficient internet speeds to engage, communicate and work effectively. 30 percent of people are still struggling to hit even 2 Mbps download or 1 Mbps upload, based on performance testing of home internet connections.



Threat to Cybersecurity

With organisations allowing a significant part of the workforce to work remotely, cybersecurity has resurfaced in leaders agendas. 85 percent of respondents reported that cybersecurity is extremely important or more important now than before the pandemic in Cisco's Future of Secure Remote Work Report. Access to confidential data and how it can be secured has emerged as a growing concern with remote work. While remote work has made organisations make new investments in IT systems and infrastructure, the security deb created in the process is yet to be addressed in all places.

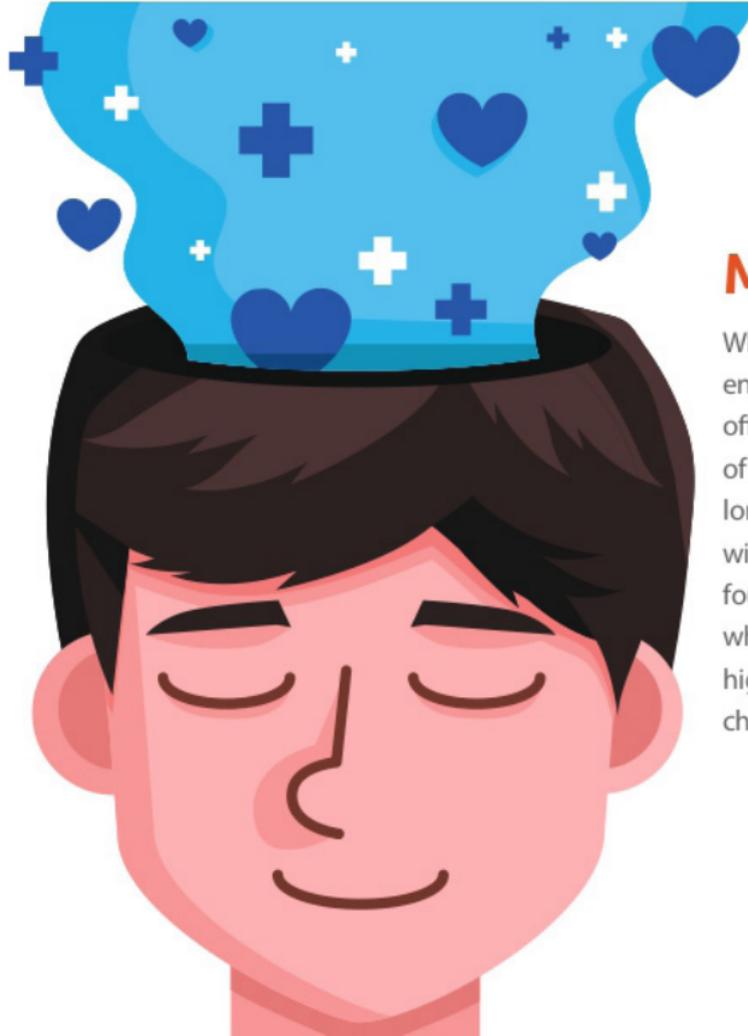




Managing Employee Performance

Remote work has considerably changed the way employee performance is measured. Organisations will have to focus on work done instead of hours spent working. Investments in apps and tools that can help manage remote employee performance will become more essential. These tools will help track and maximise employee efficiency, while also offering more visibility over what workers are doing. Many companies are making changes to their current systems to ensure there is someone to oversee production and collaboration across remote teams. Avenues to make conversations and feedback more continuous will become essential as managers strive to help employees navigate their job responsibilities and meet performance expectations.





Mental Health

While most employees are loving the remote work environment, some of them also cannot wait to go back to the office. A survey by O2, ICM and YouGov found that 30 percent of UK employees believed that work from home could be lonely and 26 percent admitted missing informal socialising with colleagues in the office. Another survey by Moneypenny found 72 percent of staff saying they have experienced a day when they did not speak to any colleagues. That's an awfully high number. This makes loneliness a considerably big challenge to making remote work effective.



Lack of Technological Support

More than 62 percent of remote workers in the UK want their employers to provide better technology that helps them stay connected with their colleagues. However, as much as 53 percent of workers in a survey said they did not receive any support from their company to help and set them up to work at home. Most employers were caught off guard with remote work as the pandemic hit organisations large and small. Organisations are still getting used to the whole idea of remote working and how to best support their employees through the stages.





How Do Employees Feel About Remote Work?

Considering that remote work was an immediate after effect of the pandemic, does it mean organisations can ask employees to come back to office once the pandemic fades? The answer is not going to be a simple yes or a no. During the pandemic, people did not only embrace remote work, they have now grown to expect it. A recent study by OwlLabs found that UK workers prefer remote work, with almost one in two workers willing to take a pay cut to continue working from home in the long run.

Here are the considerations leaders should consider before deciding the future of work for their employees.



Employees are planning to work remotely for the coming future As much as 84 percent of full time workers in the UK are planning to work remotely in some form.



Employees are willing to take a pay cut for remote work option 15 percent of employees are willing to take a pay cut of 5 percent if given a remote working option.



Employees are willing to resign if forced to return to work. As many as 41% employees would be likely to resign if they were forced to return to the office against their will. 1 in 2 office workers (46%) would be likely to resign from their current role if their company were to cut their pay as part of cost savings across the business.



Employees enjoy a better work-life balance with remote work. Around 52 percent of UK staff said that they enjoyed a better work-life balance in the lockdown months. If employers decide to remove the remote work option from contracts, they might have to say goodbye to staff that prefers remote working options, as more than one-third of the workers are also mooting a career change.



Employees do not intend to return to office soon as opposed to employers. Executives expect to return to the office faster than the employees.

61 percent of office workers expect to return to the office for at least half of their time by July 2021, while the number for the executives is **75 percent**.

Employees who report being less productive in a work from home set up are more likely to want to return back in office. Returning to office like old times will require a lot of confidence regarding the roll out of vaccines, getting employees back safely and ensuring their continuous well-being. A lot will also depend on workforce scheduling based on school reopening, resuming business travel and other external factors.



Are Remote Workers Productive?

One of the biggest inhibitions to adopting a mass remote work arrangement comes from executives who fear that remote work makes employees less effective. However, several studies have emerged which see a spike in employee productivity in remote work arrangements.

The Covid-19 pandemic has proven that we can work from home and do it effectively—without losing productivity. In a survey by Mercer, an HR and workplace benefits consulting firm, 94% of employers said productivity was the same as or higher than before the pandemic, even with their employees working remotely.

One such recent study by PwC found employees stating that they are more productive now (34 percent) than they were before the pandemic (28 percent). 52 percent of executives also say employee productivity has improved.





Productivity is a Two-Way Street

Rise in employee productivity also reflects the actions that companies have taken to help their employees perform effectively in any environment. It is a two-way street as the majority of employees surveyed have said that their companies have been successful in finding ways to make WFH more productive.

Companies that were quick to adopt technologies and create clear rules and structures around WFH have seen a hike in productivity levels. The ones who did not are following suit.



The Future of Work - Rise of a Hybrid Work Arrangement



The benefits of working in physical proximity to one another cannot be understated. Working in an office space leads to better communication, increased motivation levels, stronger human bonds and better collaboration among teams. At the same time, employees are also loving the flexibility that remote work offers. So what can be expected in terms of the future of work?

As a result of these pros related to both kinds of work arrangements, companies are heading towards the creation of a hybrid workforce, where a large number of employees rotate in and out of offices configured for shared spaces. According to a recent Glassdoor study, 70 percent of employees said they prefer a hybrid remote-office work arrangement post Covid-19. The timing of setting up a hybrid workplace will depend on the rollout of vaccines.

The hybrid workplace is here to stay. Companies will have to optimise this hybrid workplace by accelerating investments that support virtual collaboration, build relationships and foster innovation and creativity.

The good news is that over 60 percent of executives expect to raise spending on collaboration tools and manager training for remote working that can help reap the benefits of a hybrid workplace.





Because a lot of the future of work is still uncertain, companies must focus on developing a strategy that helps them meet their goals, while also keeping employee safety and preferences for higher flexibility as core aspects of their business. Now that hybrid workplaces are going to be the norm even as the pandemic is behind us, it is a good time for companies to lay down the purpose of a hybrid workplace to keep a vibrant culture intact.

The HR team and C-suite will have to devise strategies that clearly state the purpose of the office and remote work. For office, specify who needs to be in the office and what needs to be accomplished while there. Is there enough value in people coming to offices, if yes, state whose values and communicate them to your staff.

Most importantly, the hybrid workplace should offer safety and a sense of security to employees. Employees have gone through a lot of mental stress induced by the coronavirus pandemic. Employees should be given the structure of a set schedule so that the line between personal and professional life does not get blurred, and employees can better manage their responsibilities.

Collaboration tools will play a significant role in making the hybrid workplace a sustainable option, but technology itself won't rescue us until decisions are made from a humanistic perspective to start with.

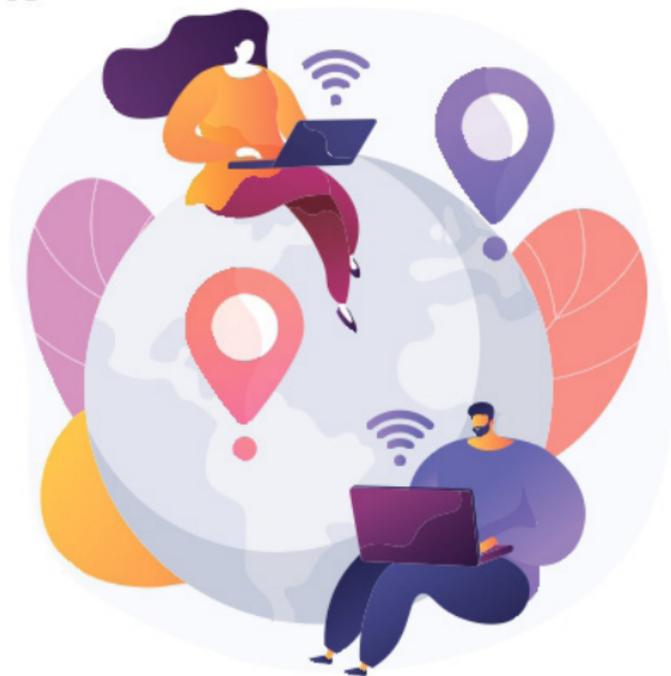




The Future of Remote Work

The future is here and now. This future will require many changes to current schemes. Investing in digital infrastructure and freeing office space, along with reinventing systems and policies in place that take a remote-first approach.

The changes in the workplace and worker preferences caused by the pandemic are here to stay. Employers that manage to understand what employees want and are able to create and manage a flexible workforce will be best positioned to embrace a hybrid workforce and engaged employees.





Employee Engagement

Since remote work is here to stay, engaging employees becomes even more important.

At Zimyo, we have developed solutions that empower HR leaders to build a workplace that employees want to be a part of. Our employee engagement module "Engage" is specifically designed to help organisations establish, enhance and refine company culture while boosting productivity.

The 6 key features of "Engage" include:

Organisational Social Networking

Employee Recognition Platform

Senti-Meter

Announcements

Discussion Room

Breakroom



With Zimyo, you can enable your remote workforce to have upfront conversations, hold brainstorming sessions, manage projects, share informative and valuable content and truly collaborate with one another. Because it is all about staying connected and feeling valued.

[Schedule a demo](#)



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