

WHITE PAPER

Remote working –The benefits and issues for Employers and employees ISBN978- 0-9571117-9-0. 12.8.2024 paper 3 on remote working

Written and researched by Dr Tony Miller *adjunct Professor, M.B.A., F.C.I.P.D., FinstAM, M.R.S.H., MAPS, M.B.P.S., FILM – full report on Google Scholar*



INTRODUCTION

Amidst a mass of hear-say, finding hard data that supports the fact about productivity from remote is difficult. In this white paper examined are; what needs to be done to create a stable and productive remote working base. Also, what financial benefits employers can expect from using this different type of working.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- Flexible remote working , where the employee does their work over a 24-hour – 7 day a week span, but 40 hours needs to be worked. This gives employees

the greatest flexibility. Flexibility empowers workers as it provides them with autonomy over their work lives. A flexible work model offers employees the trust to curate their own schedules. They can decide when and where they want to work. With management buy-in, the employee can create their own schedule, along with input from their team leaders

- Hybrid working, where the employee works in the office for X days and at remote for the remainder. The downside of this is the old-style managers will still want to be employed to keep their old status quo.
- People crave the opportunity to be trusted to do their best work, as a cookie-cutter forced program may not align with their needs and hamper their productivity. In a separate [study](#) conducted by the Pew Research Center from this year, 48% of respondents with a child 18 years or younger left their jobs because of inadequate or nonexistent childcare options. Nearly 40% of those surveyed said they quit because they were working too much. Unable to make their own hours, 45% of workers left their organizations due to a lack of flexibility. This should be a clear signal about how and where remote workers work and the type of leadership that will work best in this new working environment. (Forbes 2022).

Again, **profiling is key here** and remember remote working will work best for 40% of the average employees and for the talented employees in the company. Poor performers will cause you a mass of problems if allowed to be remote workers.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

Using remote workers has enormous savings for the employer.

- Pay, for instance, you can pay remote workers less.

- U.Y.O., Use your own. It's inconceivable in today's world that a remote worker won't have a laptop, cell phone and access to a printer. The trend is U.Y.O. and not funded by the employer
- Office space is a big issue. Companies have already reduced office space, look around any city, and you will see the evidence of a glut of vacant office space.
- The new workplace flexibility is being offered to staff by their employers.
- In June 2022, The Guardian Newspaper reported A 20% reduction in the office space needed by businesses.
- With remote workers accounting for a significant proportion of the workforce, there is an immediate need to overhaul the structure of organizations and to ask the question, what role do managers and supervisors have now?
- Productivity gains. If you look at creditable research on remote workers, most published research shows a rise in productivity.

A REMOTE WORKING CULTURE

Remote working brings many advantages and some rather significant pitfalls for employers to be aware of. Very recently, some Trade Unions have started to say it's an employee's right to be able to do remote working. Shortly I can imagine this being extended to new mothers and other areas of the workforce. H.R. needs to be alert. It's the employer who makes the decision and decides the suitability of those best able to be remote workers depending on personality, the numbers involved, and in which areas of the business. All of this is a massive Paradigm shift.

Very little good has come from the COVID-19 epidemic. It has, however, created a new world of work. Despite years of managers saying, "if people work remotely, they won't do

any work, " the reverse has been the case. Many case studies have shown productivity increases which can be described as substantial. According to a recent McKinsey American Opportunity report, nearly 90% of the people surveyed said, if offered, they would accept a flexible work option. This finding was consistent across the demographics among the 25,000 Americans polled. In the United States, almost 60% of people currently work from remote at least one day a week, with 35% working from remote full time.

With childcare issues, concerns about Covid resurgences, and other potential health hazards like Monkeypox, burnout, and the savings on gas achieved by not having to commute, a flexible work model provides the answer to achieving a greater work-life balance. Other research in America, which you may find interesting, has shown working from remote is a relatively new experience for a majority of workers with jobs that can be done remotely – 57% say they rarely or never worked from remote prior to the coronavirus outbreak. For those who have switched to remote working, their work lives have changed in some significant ways. On the plus side, most (64%) of those who are now working from remote at least some of the time but rarely or never did before the pandemic say it's easier now for them to balance work with their personal life: And many (44%) say working from remote has made it easier for them to get their work done and meet deadlines, while very few (10%) say it's been harder to do this. At the same time, 60% say they feel less connected to their co-workers now. Most (72%) say working from remote hasn't affected their ability to advance in their job.

So, what are the significant benefits of remote working for the employee?

Commuting

Most people have to commute to get to their place of work. In the U.K., the capital London is a location used for the data given here:

- Time travelling to and from work daily 3.5 hours
- Cost of rail fare to and from London (average) per year £5680.00
\$6916.00
- Cost of food and beverages while travelling and at work 226 PWD x
£8.00 = £1808 \$2202

For our commuter, the savings per year amounts to £7488.00

\$9188.00

Time saved in a year (minimum) 3.5. hours x 226 PWD = 791 hours

Remote working situated

For remote workers, the cost savings and time are very significant. Also, the quality of life is better, less stress and more time with the family and loved ones.

Remote working does not necessarily mean working from remote. It could be in any remote location or a mixture of both – called Hybrid working. A coffee shop, public library, a beach in Barbados, anywhere where you have the internet and are productive when working.

Although remote work has a great amount of flexibility today, surprisingly, the majority of remote workers (84%) work where they live. According to recent studies, remote workers feel that working from remote improves their performance because of the convenience and the quieter work environment.

You need to be disciplined and get into a routine that works for you. A good strategy is to keep a daily log of how you spend your time. Record it in 30-minute slots. It will help keep you on track, and should you require it later; it will provide you with an accurate picture of how you have spent your time. This technique is used by most consultants, lawyers and accountants who have to account for and bill their time to clients.

So, what type of person are you? Do you see yourself as someone who views the current situation of change as positive or negative?

You can live where you want to

Approximately 5 million workers moved between 2020 and 2023 because remote work made it possible. No longer connected with a physical office, many fully remote employees could keep their jobs and move closer to family, to a dream location, or to an area with a lower cost of living. (Maybe all three!) Just keep in mind that in some cases—like employers that want you to attend in-person meetings once a week—changing locations may not be ideal. You should also make sure to check that your organization can legally employ someone based in the state or country you're looking to move to. (The Muse)

Typical types and their views

Is your glass half empty (Pessimist), or is your glass half full (optimist)

A pessimist would view remote working as:

- Only a temporary measure, and I will be glad when things get back to normal.
- Resent having to use my own laptop and equipment.
- Be worried about making decisions without their manager to support them.
- See this situation as an encroachment on their family life.
- Worry about who will pay for the extra electricity used to recharge the laptop.

An optimist would view remote working as:

- Inevitable and a great chance to do things differently.
- No more commuting.
- I will save lot's of money.
- A tremendous amount of flexibility.
- Perhaps I don't need a car anymore?
- It means immense freedom - I could work from anywhere or

do something completely different.

One common theme among remote workers is that they can feel isolated. The universal use of Skype, What's App, Microsoft Teamwork or Sysco Webex means we can all be in touch with our work colleagues when needed.

Start up opportunities

If you have ever thought of starting up your own business, there has never been a better time. Working patterns and people's needs have changed dramatically during the COVID period. Everywhere you will see good deals on shops and office premises. All you need is a business opportunity that you see as an extension of what already exists or something completely new that will explore a new idea in a rapidly changing environment. In his book Zero to One, Peter Thiel explains how the current business environment has opened up a range of new opportunities. Of particular interest is his model, which helps you to focus on which direction to take.

The vertical line typically relates to technology in its many guises, but this is not exclusive. Match your thinking to the current environment, masses of change in every aspect of our lives; do you have that unique idea(s) that could make you the next Elon Musk?

Will remote working make you happier?

A new study found that the ability to work remotely is strongly linked to happiness at work. In the study by Tracking Happiness 12,455 employees were surveyed about their work conditions. A total of 65.1% of respondents were male, and 34.5% were female. The location of the respondents varied with 38.6% coming from North America, 36.1% coming from Asia, 19.5% from South America and 5.1% from Europe.

The survey respondents were asked, "If you look at your work, how would you rate your happiness on a scale from one to ten?" and "How much of your work is currently done remotely or from remote?"

Key findings of the study include:

- The ability to work remotely increases employee happiness by as much as 20%.
- Millennials are happiest when working remotely. That is Generation Y and Z.
- Returning to office-based work after the pandemic reduces employee happiness.
- Employee happiness decreases as commute times increase.
- Happiness at work is significantly correlated to overall life happiness.

Can you predict who will make the best remote workers? The research is very consistent on this. Using OCEAN Personality profiler, we have a very good model that shows us who will be a good remote worker and more importantly who will not.

Work at a time that's best for you

Known as Owls and Larks, as a remote worker you can work at the time that's best for your body clock and productivity. By selecting the best time for your body clock you will also be happier.

Contract of employment

The employment contract provides the basis for either creating high productivity or generating many problems. Current employment law in Europe and the United States of America makes it very difficult to alter any aspect of their contractual agreement. The written word always takes precedence, so take care and get the best legal advice when setting up your contract templates.

Not everyone is a winner.

Remote working has had a dramatic effect on small businesses in Cities. Primarily coffee and sandwich shops have been massively adversely impacted by the remote working trend. The rail networks have seen a massive reduction in commuters on a large scale. In the U.K

Not every remote worker can be trusted

There is a need to profile those suitable to be Remote workers/ remote workers. Failure to do profile will lead to the abuse of the system by poor performers and those with a Low C (Conscientiousness) on the OCEAN personality inventory. The Use of Tasker software is becoming increasing popular. At the time of writing its free.

TAKE CARE

Don't call it home working. If you do you are labeling the place of work as someone's remote and you may be libel for a range of unexpected costs such as:

- Insurance

- Doing risk assessments
- Paying for all office type furniture, computer printer etc
- Paying for electricity costs
- Providing I.T. Support

AT LAST MANAGERS CAN SEE THE BENEFITS

In January 2024 a survey of managers showed that they could now see the benefits of remote working on productivity.

59.5% agreed that it increases productivity, and 62.8% agreed that it increases motivation. Furthermore, an even larger proportion of managers, 76.5% believe that flexible working generally increases productivity. Importantly, the study also found that line managers were more likely to see flexible working as a performance-enhancing tool (71.2%) than senior management (65.6%).

THE TASKMASTER SURVEY

The benefits to the employer should not be understated. Productivity increases of 11 hours per month represent per 100 employees $132 \times 100 = 13200$ extra hours of productivity a year. If you are using our right sizing formula that means you could do a rightsizing exercise specifically for remote workers

REMOTE WOKERS Won't go back to the traditional place of work.

Recent evidence (August 2024 Miller) has shown that over 60% of remote works will not go back to work to their original offices or base. What has come as a surprise is that many remote workers have moved; across state's and into area they have always wanted to live, or to be closer to family and close friends. For them there is never going to be a return to non remote working

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WWW.tony-Miller.com

Tony@tony-miller.com