



A Case for a Remote Workforce: Why the Return to the Office is not Working

Terry Jaqua

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARAFMS/v12-i3/14409> DOI:10.6007/IJARAFMS /v12-i3/14409

Received: 13 June 2022, **Revised:** 18 July 2022, **Accepted:** 01 August 2022

Published Online: 20 August 2022

In-Text Citation: (Jaqua, 2022)

To Cite this Article: Jaqua, T. (2022). A Case for a Remote Workforce: Why the Return to the Office is not Working. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting Finance and Management Sciences*, 12(3), 280–284.

Copyright: © 2022 The Author(s)

Published by Human Resource Management Academic Research Society (www.hrmars.com)

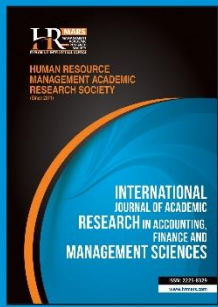
This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this license may be seen at: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

Vol. 12, No. 3, 2022, Pg. 280 - 284

<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/IJARAFMS>

JOURNAL HOMEPAGE

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/publication-ethics>



A Case for a Remote Workforce: Why the Return to the Office is not Working

Terry Jaqua, PhD, MBA, SHRM-CP
San Antonio Regional Hospital, Upland, CA

Abstract

While some organizations have embraced the idea of a remote workforce brought by the pandemic, others are urging their employees to return to the offices. The recent rise in the remote workforce has perhaps signaled a shift in the way employees feel about their workplace and careers. Top talent candidates are typically looking for benefits and employers who offer a better work-life balance option and the flexibility to work remotely or a hybrid option of some days working remotely. In a new recent study conducted by Tracking Happiness, found that the ability to work remotely was strongly linked to happiness at work. In the study, 12,455 employees were surveyed about their working conditions. The study found that on average employees who had the ability to work remotely had a higher happiness assessment score by as much as 20% (Tracking Happiness, 2022). The remote workforce evaluation has hit mainstream and we intend to explore the many different benefits for adopting a remote or hybrid workforce.

A Case for a Remote Workforce: Why the Return to the Office is not Working

The rise of the remote workforce has been a hot topic recently, especially in the tech industry. With the ability to work from anywhere at any time and with an array of tools that allow workers to stay connected, there is no doubt that remote workers are here to stay. This remote workforce phenomenon has recently increased since the COVID-19 pandemic where many employers have shifted to a remote or hybrid workforce model due to necessity rather than intentionally based on the many costs saving and productivity incentives. Employees who want to spend more time with families and less on the road have embraced the ability to work from home or even the Office. Additionally, the Internet is a big part of our lives, and with the COVID-19 Outbreak, it became even more critical. The objective of this article is to bring to light the many attributes a remote or hybrid workforce can be to the overall business but to also point out the cost saving and productivity benefits that can exist from this model. Objectively I would like to cover the following two items. First I will cover the advantages of a remote workforce for organizational productivity, and secondly why returning to the Office is not working for many employers.

The return to the Office works for some, but not all. In the past few years, there has been a shift away from the traditional Office and toward more flexible, distributed work models (Gerdeman, 2021). The reasons for this are varied, but one thing that seems clear is

that people are happier when they work remotely. However, when knowledge workers return to the Office, they often find their productivity and satisfaction have decreased. Bosses and employees have different ideas about what remote working is. After more than two years of working remotely, everyone has created unique expectations about how they should use their time (Molla, 2022). Most people dislike being at work and feel obligated because their employers tell them to come back every day and do their job, which is what we call "*job security*."

The proliferation of the Internet changed how people work, and many Americans choose to work at home rather than Office. While it may seem like a simple shift, many factors come into play when determining whether or not this is the right choice for a company. While most Americans do not work from home, there is a growing trend toward remote and hybrid workforces. According to a new Pew Research Center study in early April, over half of U.S. adults (53 percent) believe the Internet was crucial during the covid-19 Outbreak (Vogels et al., 2021). Some employees are even choosing to work remotely full-time. Some employers believe that having a remote workforce can help them attract top talent more likely to stay with them for more extended periods than if they had been forced into an office environment where they were not comfortable or happy (Prossack, 2021). While this might seem obvious, it is worth considering what it means for employees working in offices for years without any remote working model and how they feel about it now that they are asked to go back every day at 8 am and stay until 5 pm (Alexander et al., 2021). It is not just about forming a team around a shared vision but also about ensuring everyone feels taken care of and has the space and support they need to do their jobs effectively.

The benefits of a remote workforce are clear in that such workers are happier and less stressed than their office-bound counterparts. Employees with access to virtual assistants who can work from home tend to be more productive and content with their jobs. They also report feeling more engaged with their colleagues and the organization, making it easier for them to build strong relationships with those around them (Tunggal, 2022). Many remote workers choose not to work full time because they have families or other obligations requiring them to spend time at home regularly. This means that employers can save on benefits packages for employees who might otherwise take advantage of flexible schedules or telecommuting options offered by their employers (Prossack, 2021). The cost savings from reduced overhead associated with employing remote workers can make up for any expenses related to hiring additional staff members or sending them on expensive trips out of town. Additionally, for companies struggling with employee retention and attrition rates, this new way of working has become increasingly appealing as they look for ways to retain their best employees while improving their bottom line (Alexander et al., 2021).

Many companies, however, still do not allow employees to work remotely for several reasons. First, suppose an employee is working remotely. In that case, they may not be able to respond quickly enough if something important comes up at work, and this can cause severe problems for businesses that rely on high-quality customer service (Pinola, 2020). Secondly, since it is so easy for employees to switch between different locations on their phones or computer, it is much easier for them to work outside of regular business hours or during holidays and weekends. It can lead to missed deadlines or other problems when it comes time for things like payroll and taxes deadlines. Third, when remote employees work from home, the effects on teams can be more detrimental than the effects of working from home on individuals. Remote employment frequently disrupts the systems that allow a team to collaborate productively. Team flow refers to the state of concentration in which all team

members are focused on a single task together. However, remote labor makes it harder for everyone to maintain this flow state when fixing problems since no one is physically present in the same place simultaneously (Nguyen, 2021). Therefore, Employers should consider these downsides before implementing remote working policies at their businesses because they are still better than having everyone under one roof every day.

In addition to this issue, there are also some concerns regarding whether or not remotely working is sustainable over time as it becomes more normalized within an organization's culture. For example: will employees be able to focus on their tasks if they are constantly interrupted by phone calls from colleagues at home for questions about what they are working on? Or will employees become so accustomed to remote working that they stop taking breaks, leading to burnout and an inability to perform at their best? In many ways, we have already seen it: remote work will become the norm in many sectors of the economy (Cherry, 2021). Moreover, while it is true that companies can make their remote workers feel like they are still part of a team and not just some faceless cog in a machine, that does not mean it will take some effort. The truth is, making remote work sustainable requires much thought and planning for both employers and employees.

In conclusion, the case for a remote workforce is clear, and the benefits are overwhelming. The question is no longer whether or not to implement a remote workforce but how to best structure it. As new principles for business surface, it is essential to be aware of the growing number of workers looking for remote work opportunities. If businesses want to stay competitive, long-term remote work plans are something they'll need to implement if they wish to remain relevant. Company executive and recruiters are always trying to find top talent and we know many workers are now looking for businesses who have remote or hybrid options. A remote workforce can have many benefits: increased flexibility, lower costs, and the ability to be more responsive than an in-house workforce. However, these advantages should be weighed against the disadvantages of having a remote workforce: higher turnover rates, less communication between employees, and less collaboration between teams. This study is important because it brings to light a remote workforce concept that is not easily understood or even accepted because it highlights the differences between the standard establishment of onsite office work to a more modern concept of working remotely or a hybrid system where the worker works remotely some days during the workweek. This research is important because it creates a counterbalance and view points demonstrating the positive contributions a remote workforce can make to the overall business growth by saving costs and creating a more productive workforce.

References

- Alexander, A., Smet, A. D., & Mysore, M. (2021). *Reimagining the post-pandemic workforce*. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved July 27, 2022, from <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/reimagining-the-postpandemic-workforce>
- Cherry, L. (2021). *The Hybrid Work Revolution Is Already Transforming Economies*. Bloomberg.com. Retrieved July 27, 2022, from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-08-26/will-remote-work-become-the-norm-hybrid-offices-are-transforming-economies>
- Gerdeman, D. (2021). *Covid killed the traditional workplace. What should companies do now?* HBS Working Knowledge. Retrieved July 27, 2022, from

- <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/covid-killed-the-traditional-workplace-what-should-companies-do-now>
- Molla, R. (2022). *Why the return to the office is not working*. Vox. Retrieved July 27, 2022, from <https://www.vox.com/recode/23161501/return-to-office-remote-not-working>
- Nguyen, M. (2021). *Why working from home does not work for many employees*. Time. Retrieved July 27, 2022, from <https://time.com/6088110/remote-work-structured-hybrid-research/>
- Pinola, M. (2020). *The seven biggest remote work challenges (and how to overcome them)*. Zapier. Retrieved July 27, 2022, from <https://zapier.com/blog/remote-work-challenges/>
- Prossack, A. (2021). *Five statistics employers need to know about the remote workforce*. Forbes. Retrieved July 27, 2022, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashiraprossack1/2021/02/10/5-statistics-employers-need-to-know-about-the-remote-workforce/?sh=62d96478655d>
- Tracking Happiness. (2022). *Remote work is linked to happiness: Study of 12,455 respondents*. Tracking Happiness. <https://www.trackinghappiness.com/remote-work-leads-to-happiness-study/>
- Tunggal, A. T. (2022). *21 benefits of remote work for employees and employers*. The Himalayas. Retrieved July 27, 2022, from <https://himalayas.app/advice/remote-work-benefits>
- Vogels, E. A., Perrin, A., Rainie, L., & Anderson, M. (2021). *53% of Americans say the Internet has been essential during the covid-19 Outbreak*. Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech. Retrieved July 27, 2022, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2020/04/30/53-of-americans-say-the-internet-has-been-essential-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>