

# WFH Impact on Work Culture and Future of Work Place

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## Abstract

This research paper will explore the impact of the shift to remote work on work culture and the future of the workplace. Work from home (WFH) innovations, notably driven in large part by COVID-19, has radically altered the culture of work and redefined the old office. In this paper, we look at the main effects of WFH on organizational structure, wellbeing, and productivity. And it also discusses the latest trends and possible future paths of workplace transformation, as flexible working is weighed against remote collaboration.

**Keyword:** Work from Home (WFH), HR Policy, Data security, Hybrid model, Work culture

## Introduction

COVID-19 has changed the paradigm of work and never before have you found such an increased prevalence of remote work or work-from-home. This has reshaped work culture and workplace future [1] [2] [3]. The rapid and widespread influx of remote working has left companies and workers having to make shifts to new ways of working, both good and bad. WFH as an economic model of working has undermined traditional work structures. Though it used to be just certain sectors or professions that work from home, now most companies have to. This has affected work culture, employee expectations and corporate strategies, and the purpose of the workplace has been redefined as one of collaboration, innovation and community.

## Impact on Work Culture

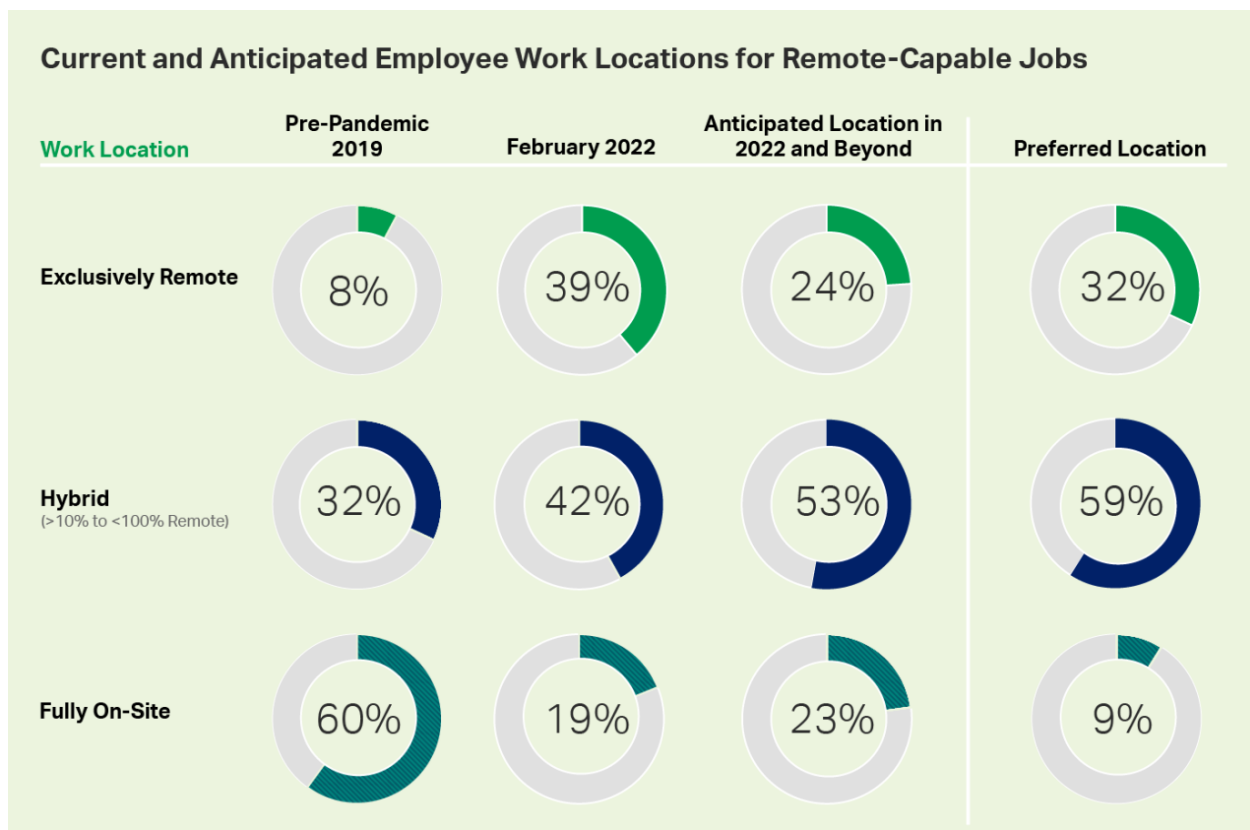
The transition to remote work has had a profound impact on work culture. [3–6] Prior to the pandemic, remote work was often presented as a planned choice that required careful design and preparation to support employee productivity and work-life balance. However, the COVID-19 outbreak has forced most organizations to adopt this mode of working without providing employees with the necessary skills and support for remote work.

One of the key changes observed in work culture is the increased reliance on asynchronous communication, which has both advantages and disadvantages. While asynchronous communication can provide employees with more flexibility and autonomy, it has also led to a slowdown in communication efficiency and decreased initiative to communicate, as employees may feel less connected to their colleagues and the organization. [4]

Additionally, the home environment has brought its own set of challenges, including distractions from household responsibilities and a lack of dedicated work facilities. However, some employees have embraced the work-from-home arrangement, finding it to be a more comfortable and productive environment [4].

## Impact on the Future of the Workplace

Remote work also has given a new hope to the very idea of the office. The pandemic has proven that remote working is possible, but it has also shown that organizations need to adjust their processes and systems to accommodate the challenges of remote and hybrid work. [1] One of the main things for the future of work is a more mobile, open workplace. Companies will have to innovate on hybrid workplace arrangements where workers can work from home or in the office, as needed for the role they are playing. [5] And the workplace of the future is one that will have more of an emphasis on worker happiness and productivity. If companies provide their employees with tools, resources and support for working from home, it will prevent mental health and productivity damage caused by having less face-to-face interaction and the encroachment of the work-life line. [5] [6] [7]



**Figure 1 Future of WFH jobs cited from [12]**

## Impact on HR Policy

The trend of working from home has also made waves in terms of HR policies and procedures. Companies had to adapt their HR processes to accommodate these new realities of working from home — from providing the equipment and technical support needed for the work to protecting data and privacy to dealing with work-life balance and employee happiness. Another issue that HR has had been struggling with is keeping the staff engaged and happy while working from home. Employee communication and team building exercises were primarily based on face-to-face interaction and outings. But COVID-19 forced HR to innovate on how to bring community and connection to remote workers. Even HR had to retool performance management and appraisal systems to remain effective at remote work. As the office has also become an encroaching issue due to the virtual revolution, many businesses are considering shrinking their office space, or moving towards hybrid remote and office models. In the end, the future of HR policies and procedures will only change as organizations adapt to the new norms and expectations around remote working.

## Change in Work Culture

Work culture has also suffered the effects of working from home. Prior to the pandemic, working from home was viewed as an option that had to be designed and planned carefully in order to maximize employee productivity and workplace flexibility. But now COVID-19 outbreak have forced all companies to move towards this working style, denying remote work skills and support to workers. Perhaps the biggest shift that has happened to work culture is that we've seen a lot more asynchronous communication, both for good and for ill. Asynchronous communication might give employees flexibility and autonomy, but it has also slowed communication and lack of initiative in communicating because employees may feel isolated from the team and the company. [6]

There are also issues associated with the home, such as being thrown off-task in the household, and the absence of any separate workstation. Yet there are some workers who have adopted the home-working schedule, which is more conducive to efficiency. [6]

## WFH impact on organizational culture

The shift to remote work has had a significant impact on organizational culture, as the traditional office-based environment has been disrupted. One of the key changes observed is the increased reliance on asynchronous communication, which can both improve flexibility and autonomy, but also slow down communication efficiency and decrease initiative to communicate [4].

The home environment has also brought its own set of challenges, including distractions from household responsibilities and a lack of dedicated work facilities. However, some employees have embraced the work-from-home arrangement, finding it to be a more comfortable and productive environment. Organizations will need to evolve their infrastructure and support systems to better accommodate the challenges of remote and hybrid work arrangements. This may involve designing and implementing hybrid workplace models that allow employees to work both remotely and in the office, depending on their needs and the nature of their work. [5] Work from home is now influencing company culture because office culture has been thrown out of the window. One of the most notable improvements is that we now have more asynchronous communication which may increase flexibility and autonomy, but also reduces the speed of communication and lack of initiative to communicate [4].

Even home has not been without its problems: distractions from home duties and no workstations. But some workers have also welcomed the work from home plan as a more accommodating and productive working culture. Businesses will have to adapt their technology and processes to deal with the demands of remote and mixed-resource work. That can mean creating and deploying hybrid work environments that allow for remote and office working as employees require and their work is. [5]

## Challenges of Remote Work

The pandemic has shown us that remote work can be achieved, but it has also made us see how businesses must adapt their infrastructure and systems to support the realities of remote and hybrid working. [6] One of the major areas of focus for the future of work is more open-ended, adaptable work. Companies will have to architect and develop hybrid work models where workers can work from home or in the office, as per their need and their work. And the future of work will also be more based around employee wellbeing and workplace balance. If organizations give employees the tools, resources and assistance needed to work from home, they can mitigate the effects on mental health and productivity that a lack of human interaction and the disintegration of work/life balance can have. Working from home also benefits physical and mental

health of the employees. [6] A survey showed that most employees would prefer a hybrid model over the standard working model as it was more work-life compatible, more creative, and healthier. [5]

### **Drawback oh WFH culture**

Remote working has not only benefited but it also hurt work culture. One is that a greater use of asynchronous communications allowed employees more mobility and freedom [2]. But this has also meant that the efficiency of communication has declined, and there is less will to talk, as employees have become alienated from colleagues and company.

However, there have been some issues brought about by the household environment, too — interruptions from household chores, lack of proper work spaces. There are workers who've been very supportive of the work-from-home model as it has proved to be more conducive and productive than others, who have dreaded the absence of face-to-face connection and the obliteration of work-life boundaries.

### **Hybrid model and its future**

Remote working has made the question of the office obsolete. The pandemic has proven that remote working is possible, but it's also shown that companies must adapt their infrastructure and systems to accommodate remote and hybrid working. The work-world of the future must be more open and adaptive. Companies will have to build and adopt hybrid workplaces where people work from home or in an office, as needed and based on their work.

What's more, the workplace of the future will likely have more to do with employee wellbeing and work/life balance. As long as employers offer their workers the right tools, materials, and resources for working from home, they can reduce the harms to mental health and productivity that can be caused by the loss of face-to-face interactions and the dissolution of work-life boundaries.

This has increased the rate at which people work remotely because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had major effects on work culture and the workplace of the future.

### **Data Security in WFH**

Although the pandemic has shown that remote working can be achievable, it has also given organizations a call to adapt their systems and tools to adapt to the challenges of working from home and through hybrid models [6] [5]. It's important to think about a less static and more dynamic work environment where data security comes first, and that is one of the most pressing issues for the workplace of the future. Businesses will also have to use strong cybersecurity to keep information secure and keep data private, intact and accessible in a remote working environment. That can be secure VPNs, multi-factor authentication, encryption to protect against hackers and data leaks. [8] In addition, businesses will have to give the workers a complete training and assistance about best practices regarding data security and remote working [9]. With the right knowledge and tools, companies can reduce the risk posed by decentralizing the conventional office network architecture.

### **WFH impact on employer and employee relation**

Employers and employees also have changed because of this transition to remote working. employer will have to prioritize good communication, tools and resources for working from home, as well as the employees' wellbeing and work-life balance [2]. Being connected and connected with remote workers is one of the biggest issues for the employer. Companies will need to invest in online team-building exercises, weekly calls, and social activities to get people engaged with each other and the company. Employers will

also need to think about what remote working can be like, from the smearing of work/life boundaries to potential stress and burnout. Employers can reverse the negative effects on mental health and performance if they can support and empower their employees.

The shift to remote work has also had significant implications for employee relations and the overall work culture within organizations. One of the key changes observed is the increased reliance on asynchronous communication, which can provide employees with more flexibility and autonomy, but can also slow down communication efficiency and decrease initiative to communicate, as employees may feel less connected to their colleagues and the organization. [6]

Additionally, the home environment has brought its own set of challenges, including distractions from household responsibilities and a lack of dedicated work facilities. However, some employees have embraced the work-from-home arrangement, finding it to be a more comfortable and productive environment. To address these challenges, organizations will need to evolve their infrastructure and support systems to better accommodate the needs of remote and hybrid work arrangements. This may involve designing and implementing hybrid workplace models that allow employees to work both remotely and in the office, depending on their needs and the nature of their work [6].

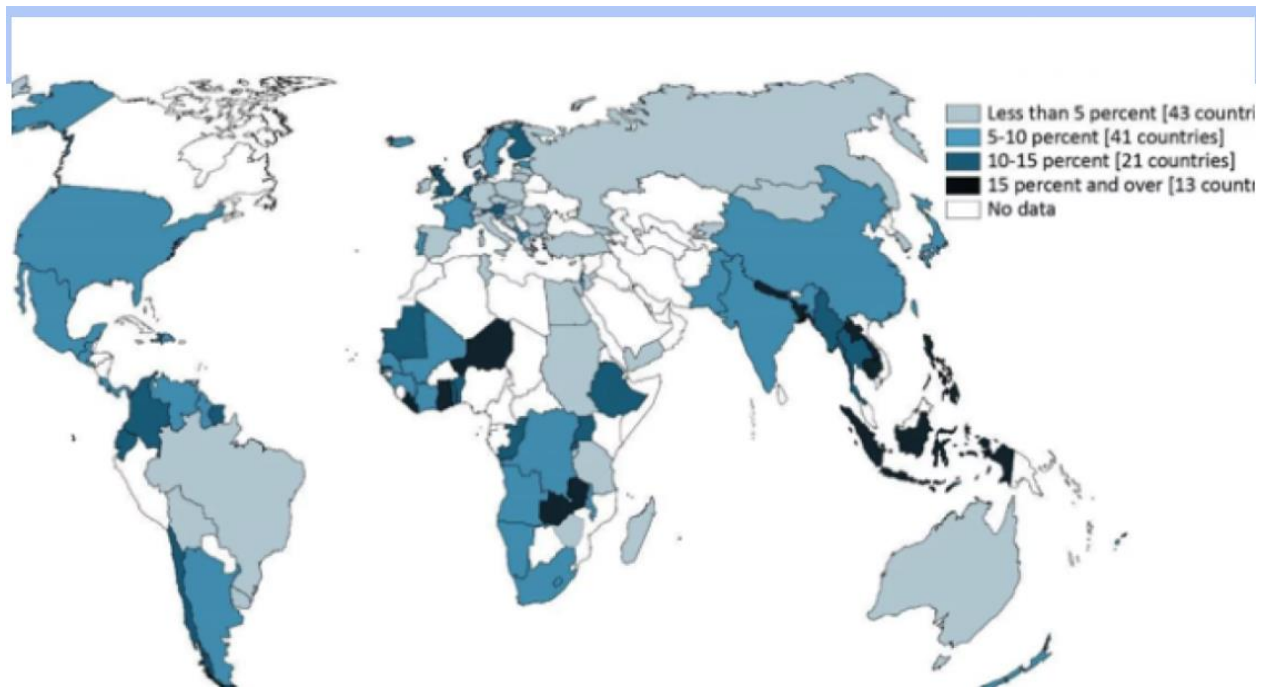
### **WFH in developing countries**

In developing countries, the shift to work-from-home during the COVID-19 pandemic has presented unique challenges and opportunities. Many workers in developing countries may not have access to reliable internet, adequate living space, or the necessary equipment to effectively work from home. Additionally, the economic impact of the pandemic has disproportionately affected workers in the informal sector, who may not have the option to work remotely. [8] Despite these challenges, some organizations in developing countries have been able to adapt to remote work arrangements. The adoption of hybrid workplace models, which combine remote and in-office work, has been

shown to have benefits for both employers and employees, including increased work-life balance, improved well-being, and enhanced creativity. [5]

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, most companies in developed nations had to quickly embrace remote working to keep the company up and running and protect workers' wellbeing. This radical change in working from home without much planning and guidance has affected work culture and workplace future. The most significant one has been the shift towards asynchronous communication which in turn can slow down the rate of communication and lack of will to communicate [7]. And home also has its own distractions: chores, etc., which can undermine productivity and wellbeing of workers. [6] [1] Nonetheless, there have been some studies which found that working from home increases productivity, retainment, and overall dedication to the company [8]. The message is, if organizations are going to make use of remote work's potential, they will need to figure out how to support and accommodate it effectively. As the pandemic has also pushed new technology and digital tools into use to collaborate and communicate remotely. This could change the future of the office and it will increasingly involve flexible and hybrid work arrangements where remote and office work are combined.





**Figure 2 WFH impact on different countries cited from [13]**

### **WFH in onsite and offshore companies**

We've seen the effects of work-from-home in the office in both onsite and offshore companies. In onsite enterprises, this sudden shift to remote working has flipped the office paradigm on its head and businesses have needed to adapt their infrastructure and assistance systems to support remote and hybrid work. Such companies have needed to make sure they communicate well, offer employees tools and resources for remote work, and are looking after their employees' wellbeing and work-life balance. Then again, offshore firms, which have traditionally fostered remote work have also been better prepared for the work-from-home transition in the pandemic. They've also usually had processes and technologies in place to accommodate distributed teams, so remote work has rolled off the tongue with little hassle. But, also, companies with offshore have experienced special issues like data security issues and managing collaboration and teamwork effectively on the go.

### **Discussion**

Remote working has forced organizations to adapt their infrastructure and support systems to address the realities of remote/hybrid work. A huge piece of work for the future of the workplace would be more amorphous and adaptable working patterns; companies create and use hybrid workplaces where employees can work both remotely and in an office. [1] [11] Moreover, work will be much more focused on employees' wellbeing and life balance in the future. By offering remote workers the tools, resources and services they need to work remotely, companies can prevent mental health and productivity damages caused by in-person isolation and intermixing of work and life. This trend of working from home also has ramifications for HR policies and practices. HR policies needed to change for the new working realities in the work from home world: equipment and technical support, data security and privacy, work-life balance and employee wellbeing.

The explosion in remote work in the COVID-19 pandemic has made a big impression on work culture and the future of work. Until the pandemic, working from home was seen as a deliberate decision to be thoughtfully designed and pre-arranged to promote employees' productivity and work/life balance. But the

COVID-19 pandemic has forced the vast majority of companies to work this way of working without giving employees the training and tools they need to work remotely.

As a significant evolution of work culture, the more we rely on asynchronous communication, it's not only for good reason. As the more employees are given flexibility and autonomy, asynchronous communication has also brought lower communication efficiency and less will to talk because employees feel disconnected from their colleagues and the company. There are also the issues of domestic life, a disconnect from domestic duties and no separate work space. But some workers have accepted the home-based working arrangement as it was a more comfortable and productive workplace [6][5].

## Conclusion

The shift to work from home changed work culture and future of the office forever. Most of the changes are due to the shift towards more asynchronous communications (both for good and bad). As asynchronous communications can allow for more freedom and flexibility for workers, it's also caused communication to slow down and lack the drive to communicate because workers no longer feel they are as connected to their peers and the company. And there are also problems in the home setting like distractions from household duties and the absence of separate work areas.

But some workers have embraced the work from home model because it is more convenient and productive.

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