THE FUTURE OF WORK

How the Pandemic Has Altered Expectations of Remote Work
KEY FINDINGS

1. Americans who are working remotely during the pandemic have had largely positive experiences, with clear majorities saying it has given them more time during the day, improved their health, and brought them closer to family members – without significantly impacting productivity.

2. Among Americans who have careers where remote work is possible, more than three quarters would like to work remotely at least one day a week. A similar share of this group say they would be more likely to apply for a job that offers remote work options.

3. There are major disagreements among employees when it comes to the suitable timeline for returning to office environments, and nearly a third of current remote workers say they won’t return to the office until a COVID-19 vaccine is available.

4. Flexible work options will be crucial for companies that are able to offer them: While many employees like the option of remote work, there are also those for whom remote work remains burdensome and alienating, meaning a one-size-fits-all solution is unlikely to be well received.
Definition of audiences

There are two core audiences that this report focuses on. Those audiences are defined here, and the labels will be included throughout the report to designate which group is the focus of a given slide.

### Current Remote Workers

This audience includes just those adults who are currently working remote. The sample size is 482 U.S. adults.

### Adults Able to Work Remotely

This audience includes two groups: people who currently have a job where remote work is possible, and people who are likely to have such a job in the future.

It does not include retirees, people in careers where remote work is impossible, and others for whom the question of remote work is not relevant.

The purpose of this audience is to include all members of the workforce that employers should keep in mind when considering remote work policies. For example, this sample includes someone who is currently out of work due to the recession but will likely take an office job in the near future.

The sample size 1,066 U.S. adults.
PREFERENCES FOR REMOTE WORK

RETURNING TO THE OFFICE

IMPLICATIONS FROM INCREASED REMOTE WORK
Among current remote workers, the pros of remote work have outweighed the cons.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**Positive impacts**
- Working from home has saved me a lot of time during my day: 43% strongly agree, 35% somewhat agree
- My work life and personal life feel more blended together: 27% strongly agree, 47% somewhat agree
- I feel more comfortable working from home than in an office: 41% strongly agree, 30% somewhat agree
- Working from home has given more time to focus on my health: 31% strongly agree, 39% somewhat agree
- I feel more connected with my family because I am working from home: 33% strongly agree, 34% somewhat agree
- While working from home, my daily routine has changed for the better: 27% strongly agree, 37% somewhat agree
- The quality of my work has increased since working from home: 21% strongly agree, 34% somewhat agree
- Working from home has made me feel more isolated and lonely: 16% strongly agree, 28% somewhat agree
- I’m finding it harder to concentrate at home than in an office: 17% strongly agree, 26% somewhat agree

**Negative impacts**
8 in 10 current remote workers are satisfied with how their company has handled the transition from the office to working at home.
PREFERENCES FOR REMOTE WORK

The pandemic has caused most adults who are able to work remotely to view the prospect of remote work more positively.

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic and thinking about your own experiences and what you know of the experiences of others, do you feel more positively or negatively about people working from home?
**PREFERENCES FOR REMOTE WORK**

Most adults who are able to work remotely enjoy doing so and would be more likely to apply for a job where remote work was an option.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Don't know/No opinion</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy working from home</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be more likely to apply for a job if they offer an option to work remotely</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more comfortable working from home than in an office</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more productive working from home because there are fewer distractions</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three quarters of adults who can work remotely say they would like to do so at least 1-2 days a week once the pandemic is under control.

After work from home measures have ended and the COVID-19 pandemic is under control, how many days a week would you ideally like to work from home?
PREFERENCES FOR REMOTE WORK

RETURNING TO THE OFFICE

IMPLICATIONS FROM INCREASED REMOTE WORK
Current remote workers have varying levels of comfort when it comes to a timeline for returning to the office.

Considering your employer’s current work from home policies, specifically when do you expect to feel comfortable returning to work at your office?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In two weeks</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the next month</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the next two months</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the next three months</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the next six months</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than six months from now</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/No opinion</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nearly a third of remote workers would not return to an office until a vaccine is available.

Which of the following is closest to your opinion, even if neither is exactly right?

- 48%: I would return to work at my office before a COVID-19 vaccine is available.
- 31%: I would not return to work at my office before a COVID-19 vaccine is available.
- 22%: Don't know/No opinion.
Workers are divided over readiness to return to work in the short term

If your office announced that you could return to work starting next week, how comfortable would you feel returning to the office?

- Very comfortable: 27%
- Somewhat comfortable: 18%
- Don't know/No opinion: 8%
- Somewhat uncomfortable: 24%
- Very uncomfortable: 23%
Daily cleanings are the most effective way to increase comfort, but Americans are interested in a wide range of measures.

If a company implemented the following policies, to what extent would you feel more comfortable working in-person there?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Much more comfortable</th>
<th>Somewhat more comfortable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily office cleanings and sanitation</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing more sanitation stations in the office</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social distancing policies</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing the number of employees allowed in the office at a time</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory temperature checks for everyone entering the office</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory COVID-19 testing for all employees</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requiring face masks at work</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separating work stations using plexiglass</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All employees must participate in contact tracing</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banning the use of public transportation to commute to work</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The pandemic has made the prospect of working in a traditional office environment less appealing to many workers.

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, do you expect you would feel more or less comfortable in a traditional office environment in the future?

- 27% Much more comfortable
- 14% Somewhat more comfortable
- 17% No change
- 23% Somewhat less comfortable
- 8% Much less comfortable
- 12% Don’t know/No opinion

Adults Able to Work Remotely
PREFERENCES FOR REMOTE WORK

RETURNING TO THE OFFICE

IMPLICATIONS FROM INCREASED REMOTE WORK
REMOTE WORK IMPLICATIONS

More than a quarter of adults who can work remotely would be likely to move to a new place if their work became remote indefinitely.

If your work becomes remote indefinitely or you choose to switch to working remotely indefinitely, how likely is it you would move to a new city or state?

- Very likely: 36%
- Somewhat likely: 16%
- Don't know/No opinion: 19%
- Somewhat unlikely: 12%
- Very unlikely: 17%

MORNING CONSULT
Almost half of adults who are able to work remotely believe that virtual meetings are at least as effective as in-person meetings.

Do you believe that virtual meetings are more effective, less effective, or just as effective as in-person meetings?

- Virtual meetings are more effective than in-person meetings: 17%
- Virtual meetings are just as effective than in-person meetings: 41%
- Virtual meetings are less effective than in-person meetings: 31%
- Don't know/No opinion: 11%
REMOTE WORK IMPLICATIONS

And about a third find that they participate more during virtual meetings

Compared to in-person meetings, do you participate during virtual meetings more or less, or is there no change?

- Participate more during virtual meetings: 33%
- No change: 41%
- Participate less during virtual meetings: 14%
- Don't know/No opinion: 12%
REMOTE WORK IMPLICATIONS

Technological issues remain common with remote work

To what extent have you experienced issues with technology while working from home? I have experienced...

- No technology issues: 46%
- Minor technology issues: 34%
- Major technology issues: 9%
- Don't know/No opinion: 12%
REMOTE WORK IMPLICATIONS

4 in 10 current remote workers have made purchases related to remote work

Have you made any purchases in the past few months to make your work-from-home environment more comfortable or convenient?

And specifically, have you purchased any of the following items?

- Upgraded headphones: 25%
- Office chair: 25%
- Faster in-home wifi: 21%
- Desk lamp: 17%
- Office desk: 17%
- Monitor: 14%
70 percent of current remote workers say the new reality has caused at least “somewhat” significant changes to their daily routine.

How significant are the changes in your daily routine due to working from home?