



MANAGEMENT DECISIONS IN THE AGE OF PANDEMIC SITUATIONS: FUTURE OF WORK TRENDS

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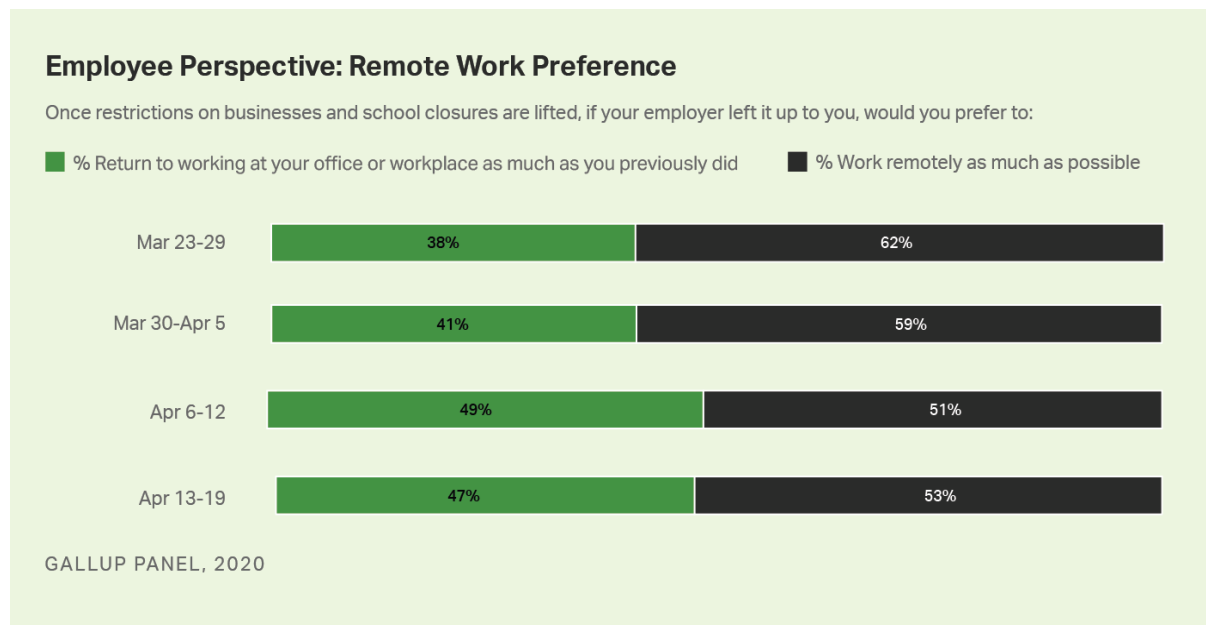
Abstract: *COVID-19 has brought unprecedented human and humanitarian challenges. Many companies around the world have risen to the occasion, acting swiftly to safeguard employees and migrate to a new way of working that even the most extreme business-continuity plans hadn't envisioned. Across industries, leaders will use the lessons from this large-scale work-from-home experiment to reimagine how work is done—and what role offices should play—in creative and bold ways. Before the pandemic, the conventional wisdom had been that offices were critical to productivity, culture, and winning the war for talent. Companies competed intensely for prime office space in major urban centers around the world, and many focused-on solutions that were seen to promote collaboration. Top management is often away on business trips and there is an increased risk that some employees may not be available in the office due to a quarantine or illness. The companies should develop an effective process of management decision making under various scenarios. This Research Paper aims to study about the Future performance of Business through Change in work culture.*

Keywords: Work Culture, COVID-19, Business Performance, Management Decisions.

INTRODUCTION

The uncertainty brought on by COVID-19 requires organizations to recognize leadership and employee sentiments and explore new ways of working for business continuity. This perspective piece provides change management insights and best practices to assist organizations in minimizing the COVID-19 impact on people, operations, and businesses. Even as work and life have become completely blended for many people, more than half of at-home workers say they would prefer to

continue working remotely as much as possible once restrictions on businesses and school closures are lifted. It's worth noting, however, that this percentage has dropped from 62% to 53% as employees have had the daily experience of working from home. Gallup research finds the percentages that prefer continuing to work from home are highest in technology, insurance, arts, entertainment, media, finance and professional services. Those with lower preference to work from home in the future include education, retail, transportation and construction.



Source: Secondary Data

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study about the Future of Work Trends Post-COVID-19
2. To analyze various steps to Reimagine Work and Workplaces

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The source of data for this study is collected from various secondary sources such as journals, articles, websites, magazines, etc.

Future of Work Trends Post-COVID-19

COVID-19 has forced the pendulum of a long-observed pattern to one extreme. Following are the some of the Future of work trends post COVID-19 :

1. Increase in remote working:

Employees will likely work remotely at least part of the time after COVID-19 versus 30% before the pandemic. As organizations shift to more remote work operations, explore the critical competencies employees will need to collaborate digitally, and be prepared to adjust employee experience strategies. Consider whether and how to shift performance goal-setting and employee evaluations for a remote context.

2. Expanded data collection:

Employers are using technologies more frequently to monitor their employees through methods such as virtual clocking in and out, tracking work computer usage, and monitoring employee emails or internal communications/chat. While some companies track productivity, others monitor employee engagement and well-being to better understand employee experience.

Even before the pandemic, organizations were increasingly using nontraditional employee monitoring tools, but that trend will be accelerated by new monitoring of remote workers and the collection of employee health and safety data.

3. Contingent worker expansion:

The economic uncertainty of the pandemic has caused many workers to lose their jobs and exposed others for the first time to nonstandard work models. Many organizations responded to the pandemic's economic impact by reducing their contractor budgets, but there has since been a shift.

Organizations will continue to expand their use of contingent workers to maintain more flexibility in workforce management post-COVID-19, and will consider introducing other job models they have seen during the

pandemic, such as talent sharing and 80% pay for 80% work.

4. Expanded employer role as social safety net:

The pandemic has increased the trend of employers playing an expanded role in their employees' financial, physical and mental well-being. Support includes enhanced sick leave, financial assistance, adjusted hours of operation and child care provisions. Some organizations supported the community by, for instance, shifting operations to manufacturing goods or providing services to help combat the pandemic and offering community relief funds and free community services.

5. Separation of critical skills and roles:

Before COVID-19, critical roles were viewed as roles with critical skills, or the capabilities an organization needed to meet its strategic goals. Now, employers are realizing that there is another category of critical roles — roles that are critical to the success of essential workflows. To build the workforce you'll need post-pandemic, focus less on roles — which group unrelated skills — than on the skills needed to drive the organization's competitive advantage and the workflows that fuel that advantage.

6. (De-)Humanization of employees:

While some organizations have recognized the humanitarian crisis of the pandemic and prioritized the well-being of employees as people over employees as workers, others have pushed employees to work in conditions that are high risk with little support — treating them as workers first and people second.

Be deliberate in which approach you take and be mindful of the effects on employee experience, which will be long-lasting. Address inequities if remote and on-site employees have been treated differently. Engage task workers in team culture and create a culture of inclusiveness.

7. Emergence of new top-tier employers:

Prior to COVID-19, organizations were already facing increased employee demands for transparency. Employees and prospective candidates will judge organizations by the way in which they treated employees during the pandemic. Balance the decisions made today to resolve immediate concerns during the pandemic with the long-term impact on the employment brand.

8. Transition from designing for efficiency to designing for resilience:

To build a more responsive organization, design roles and structures around outcomes to increase agility and flexibility and formalize how processes can flex. Also, provide employees with varied, adaptive and flexible roles so they acquire cross-functional knowledge and training.

9. Increase in organization complexity:

After the global financial crisis, global M&A activity accelerated, and many companies were nationalized to avoid failure. As the pandemic subsides, there will be a similar acceleration of M&A and nationalization of companies. Companies will focus on expanding their geographic diversification and investment in secondary markets to mitigate and manage risk in times of disruption. This rise in complexity of size and organizational management will create challenges for leaders as operating models evolve.

Changing attitudes on the role of the office

Before the pandemic, the conventional wisdom had been that offices were critical to productivity, culture, and winning the war for talent. Companies competed intensely for prime office space in major urban centers around the world, and many focused on solutions that were seen to promote collaboration. Densification, open-office designs, hoteling, and co-working were the battle cries.

Many employees liberated from long commutes and travel have found more productive ways to spend that time, enjoyed greater flexibility in balancing their personal and professional lives, and decided that they prefer to work from home rather than the office. Many organizations think they can access new pools of talent with fewer locational

constraints, adopt innovative processes to boost productivity, create an even stronger culture, and significantly reduce real-estate costs. These same organizations are looking ahead to the reopening and its challenges. Before a vaccine is available, the office experience probably won't remain as it was before the pandemic. Many companies will require employees to wear masks at all times, redesign spaces to ensure physical distancing, and restrict movement in congested areas (for instance, elevator banks and pantries). As a result, even after the reopening, attitudes toward offices will probably continue to evolve.

The reality is that both sides of the argument are probably right. Every organization and culture is different, and so are the circumstances of every individual employee. Many have enjoyed this new experience; others are fatigued by it. Sometimes, the same people have experienced different emotions and levels of happiness or unhappiness at different times. The productivity of the employees who do many kinds of jobs has increased; for others it has declined. Many forms of virtual collaboration are working well; others are not. Some people are getting mentorship and participating in casual, unplanned, and important conversations with colleagues; others are missing out.

Steps to Reimagine Work and Workplaces

Leading organizations will boldly question long-held assumptions about how work should be done and the role of the office. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. The answer, different for every organization, will be based on what talent is needed, which roles are most important, how much collaboration is necessary for excellence, and where offices are located today, among other factors.

1. Reconstruct how work is done

During the lockdowns, organizations have necessarily adapted to go on collaborating and to ensure that the most important processes could be carried on remotely. Most have simply transplanted existing processes to remote work contexts, imitating what had been done before the pandemic. This has worked well for some organizations and processes, but not for others.

For both processes and cultural practices, it is all too tempting to revert to what was in place before the pandemic. To resist this temptation, organizations could start by assuming that processes will be reconstructed digitally and put the burden of proof on those who argue for a return to purely physical pre-COVID-19 legacy processes. Reimagining and reconstructing processes and practices will serve as a foundation of an improved operating model that leverages the best of both in-person and remote work.

2. Decide 'people to work' or 'work to people'

In the past couple of years, the competition for talent has been fiercer than ever. At the same time, some groups of talent are less willing to relocate to their employers' locations than they had been in the past. As organizations reconstruct how they work and identify what can be done remotely, they can make decisions about which roles must be carried out in person, and to what degree.

3. Redesign the workplace to support organizational priorities

Few offices have been intentionally designed to support specific organizational priorities. Although offices have changed in some ways during the past decade, they may need to be entirely rethought and transformed for a post-COVID-19 world. To maintain productivity, collaboration, and learning and to preserve the corporate culture, the boundaries between being physically in the office and out of the office must collapse.

CONCLUSION

As employers around the world experiment with bringing their employees back to offices, the leadership must act now to ensure that when they return, workplaces are both productive and safe. Organizations must also use this moment to break from the inertia of the past by dispensing with suboptimal old habits and systems. A well-planned return to offices can use this moment to reinvent their role and create a better experience for talent, improve collaboration and productivity, and reduce costs. That kind of change will require transformational thinking grounded in facts. Ultimately, the aim of this reinvention will be what good companies have always wanted: a safe environment where people can enjoy their work,

collaborate with their colleagues, and achieve the objectives of their organizations.

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