



# Millennials Driving Remote Work

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## CHAPTER 1

# Attract and Retain Millennials in Your Remote Workforce

A significant workforce transformation has been gaining momentum over the past few years – yet many people are unaware of this change. Millennials have already become a dominant factor in the office and remote workforce.

In 2016, Millennials became the largest generation of the U.S. workforce. Having steadily come of age during the 2000's, this group today now comprises more than one-in-three American workers (adults ages 18 to 34 in 2015). According to a study from the [Pew Research Center](#), “56 million Millennials...were working or looking for work” as of 2017. That’s more than Gen Xers and Baby Boomers.

### Communicating with Millennials in the Workforce

Given this demographic now comprises a third of the workforce, it is now mandatory to consider their impact on how business is conducted. What does this mean? To start, it is a good idea to understand how Millennials live, to then best manage this group of unique workers. Here are a few stats to gain clarity on this demographic:

- They only know the concept of being available 24 x 7 x 365, with regards to work or play
- Social media has always been a part of how they communicate – typically on a smart phone
- 80% sleep with their phones next to their beds
- 55% say flexible working is very important

- 23% of Millennials want an even mix of office / home working
- 96% of Millennials say the reputation of the company they work for is important to them

## Remote Working Ideal Complement to Millennial Workforce

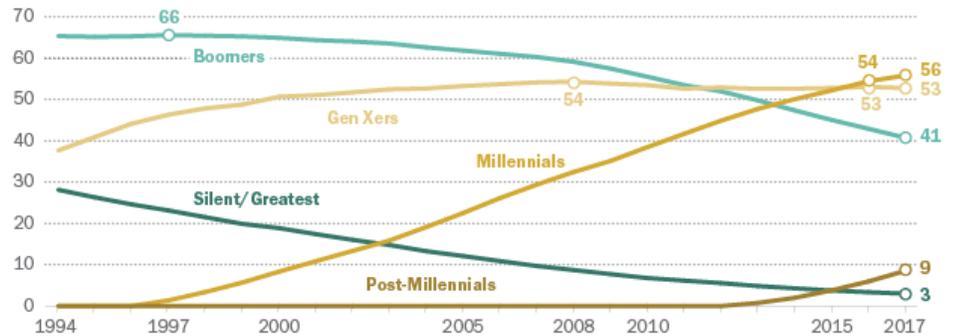
Given the above insights into how a Millennial lives their life, it should come as no surprise that there is an expectation of being able to work remotely, whenever possible.

### Do you have a work-from-home policy already?

If not, this article might be worth reading: [Is Remote Working More Productive Than In-Office Work?](#)

## Millennials became the largest generation in the labor force in 2016

U.S. labor force, in millions



Note: Labor force includes those ages 16 and older who are working or looking for work. Annual averages shown. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of monthly 1994-2017 Current Population Survey (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Expectations of Privacy

One byproduct of growing up as a Millennial is there is little expectation of privacy. Online, cloud-based applications are a given, as is texting or messaging through Facebook as the best way for real-time communications. Email is used reluctantly, given all the spam that comes through in any given day. Growing up in an

all-digital world means that it is understood that anything that is posted can be read by anyone. If you offer a Millennial the opportunity to work remote, with the caveat that a time management tracking program is necessary, there will be little resistance or objections – it is simply a given that any activity can likely be tracked by so many different programs, it just doesn't matter.

## Cloud-Based Applications

The ease of not worrying about storing programs or files locally is attractive to a Millennial. Therefore, it would be a good idea to invest in cloud-based applications—and having the flexibility to work with Google Docs



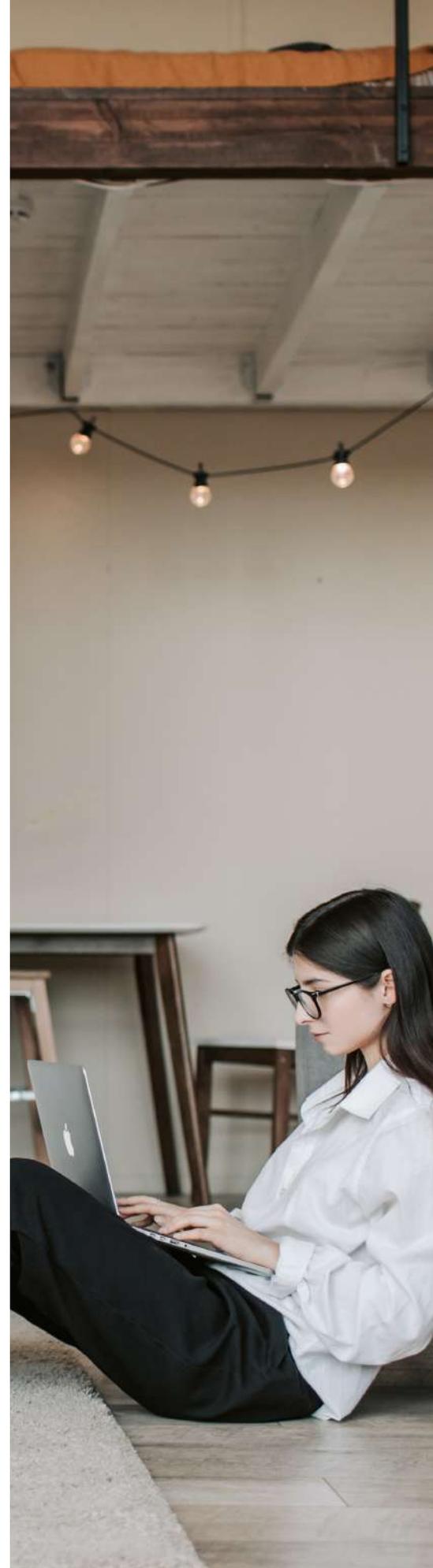
and their other web-based work applications (or offer equivalent alternatives) as part of their work experience. When all files and applications are online, it makes it easy to work anywhere.

## Short Tenure of a Millennial

It would be a good idea to move quickly to address the items discussed in this article. Millennials are not a patient bunch—they want to get ahead, and are not afraid of jumping jobs quickly to move up. **Thus, the average tenure of a Millennial employee is just two years.** In the span of a professional career, two years seems like nothing. In comparison, the average tenure for Gen X employees is five years and seven years for Baby Boomers. One of the primary reasons Millennials are

more likely to change jobs is because they are not willing to stick around if they do not believe they are receiving any personal benefit or growth.

Here is another reason why cloud-based applications and remote work options make a lot of sense—cloud-based apps can be deployed quickly, and offer intuitive menu options (at least in the mind of a Millennial) and can help accelerate the time required to train new employees. With Millennials being “on” 24x7x365, remote management intelligence applications can be a real benefit to help coach and identify process improvement across the team. This scenario affords the manager of a Millennial to spend more time with strategic visions and sales execution strategies.





## CHAPTER 2

# Remote Working: Perk to Attract (And Retain) Top Workers

If you turn back the hands of time to 2007-2008, the world was a very different place. Here in the US, we were looking at the start of a new presidency with the first African American to have ever held that post. There was optimism for change, but also, big concerns about how deep the recession was going to be amid a global financial crisis that impacted the entire global economy.

Those who had a job were thankful, and willing to put up with working longer hours for the same or less pay. Remote working as a perk was not common, and certainly not something expected as part of a job opportunity.

The chart (below) helps show what happened in the eight years that followed the global meltdown, at least in the United

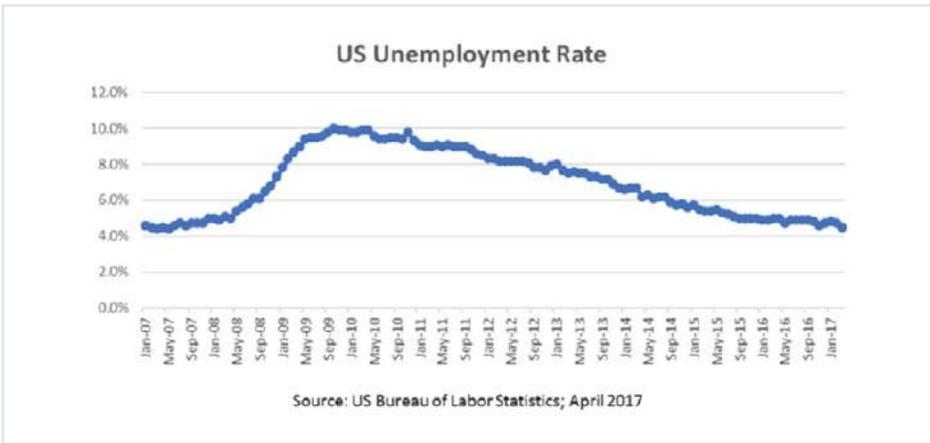
States. Unemployment rate exploded from about 5% to about 10% in a period of 18-24 months. And, the rate that it grew was alarming. The world was bracing for a depression.

Today, the employment rate outlook in the US looks much better—at least as of April 2017 at the time of my writing this post. The country is at full employment, real estate

markets across the country are experiencing a building boom cycle, and even the stock market has completed its recovery from the dark days of 2007-2008.

### **Worker Shortage**

What this means for employers, however, is another story. Signing bonuses are back! So too are the hiring wars we remember hearing about



back in the 1990s. Interestingly, in October 2016 there were 322,000 job openings in manufacturing – about the same level as in 2007. That figure tripled since hitting a low of 99,000 during the recession in 2009 ([source: CNN](#)). And, with President Trump now in office with a top objective of bringing “back” manufacturing jobs, sure to put more pressure on employers to attract new hires.

We have a crisis to fill all the open job positions, which likely can be primarily addressed by increasing wages and stoking the inflation engine. Recent Federal Reserve rate increase and the signaling that now is the time to begin liquidating purchases made during the Quantitative Easing period are sure to follow.

### What Matters to Workers?

[Inc. Magazine’s article](#) “6 Employee Perks That Matter” offered insights as to what today’s workers is looking for in

a new job—insights that might now be worth exploring in greater detail. Their conclusion? That beyond the basics, a handful of benefits can make the difference between a company that attracts top talent and those people going elsewhere.

I found it interesting that the TOP perk listed in the study was the ability to have flexibility around one’s work schedule and location. An example was provided in the article about AgileCraft employees, which are spread over three countries, 14 U.S. states, and six time zones. Apparently, more than 80 percent of the company works remotely. People are hired based on talent, not location. It isn’t hard to see that if you have a worker shortage in one geographical region, then a great way to overcome that challenge is to expand your talent pool to be a larger region – or even the world, if you can figure out a way to manage it.

This change of expectation is well documented in a Korn Ferry article, which states that technology has been a key contributor to the rate of workplace change in the last 20 years. More recently, advancement in personal technology and mobile devices has made us all more mobile than ever. Generation Y are the first employees to work exclusively in a setting with email instead of fax, social media instead of printed media, and more importantly – where mobile is king.

### A mobile workforce is not just something Gen Y’s want, they demand it ([source: Korn Ferry](#)).

As you consider your hiring challenges for the year, and begin exploring what perks could be considered to help attract (and retain) top talent, perhaps there is a role for flexible and remote working that could play an important role in helping you to achieve your sales and growth targets with a minimal (if any) cost.





## CHAPTER 3

# Establish a Flexible Work Schedule to Address Millennial Needs

The workforce is going through a significant transformation—both in the US and across the globe. By 2020, employers will be tasked with attracting top talent that places a high value on whether or not employers offer a flexible work schedule. Are you ready for this change?

Gordon Benzie wrote an article that explored how organizations can [best assess competitive risk](#), based on where they stand with their remote working policy. This is a pretty significant topic—one worthy of further discussion.

Benzie quoted Mike Elgan, a contributing columnist at Computerworld. He wrote an article challenging his

readers that the term “remote working” may soon fade away from our vocabulary. His rationale was based on the increasing impact Millennials are having on workplace demographics.

### **Millennials Impact on the Workforce**

According to a recent PWC report, the millennial

generation, born between 1980 and 2000, is now entering employment in vast numbers, to a point that will permanently change the workforce. Attracting the best of these Millennial workers will be critical to the future of every business, ultimately impacting their ability to grow and thrive, or perish and fail. Millennial career aspirations, attitudes about

work, and knowledge of new technologies will define the culture of the 21st century workplace ([source](#)).

The PWC report explains that millennials matter because they are not only different from those that have gone before, but that they are also more numerous than any demographic group since the soon-to-retire Baby Boomer generation. By 2020, millennials will be 50% of the global workforce. That figure is forecast to grow to 75% globally by 2025.

These are truly shocking figures. A single demographic group quickly become the dominant part of the workforce. Those organizations that are not



adequately prepared will be impacted in many ways, some of which might be a surprise:

- Hiring workers to fill open positions or grow the business will become increasingly more difficult and costly
- Employee turnover will likely increase—unexpectedly—costing much time and effort to try and understand and fix
- Finding new customers could potentially become more difficult, given the importance placed on mission statements and the

vision of what companies stand for vis-a-vis the purchase process

The [Millennial Mindset](#) is an organization led by Adam Henderson, a prominent writer, speaker and subject matter expert on the Millennial workforce. He has published some very interesting research findings on his website.

The following infographic he prepared illustrates that almost 50% of the workforce will have an expectation that their current role will not last more than 12 months, before

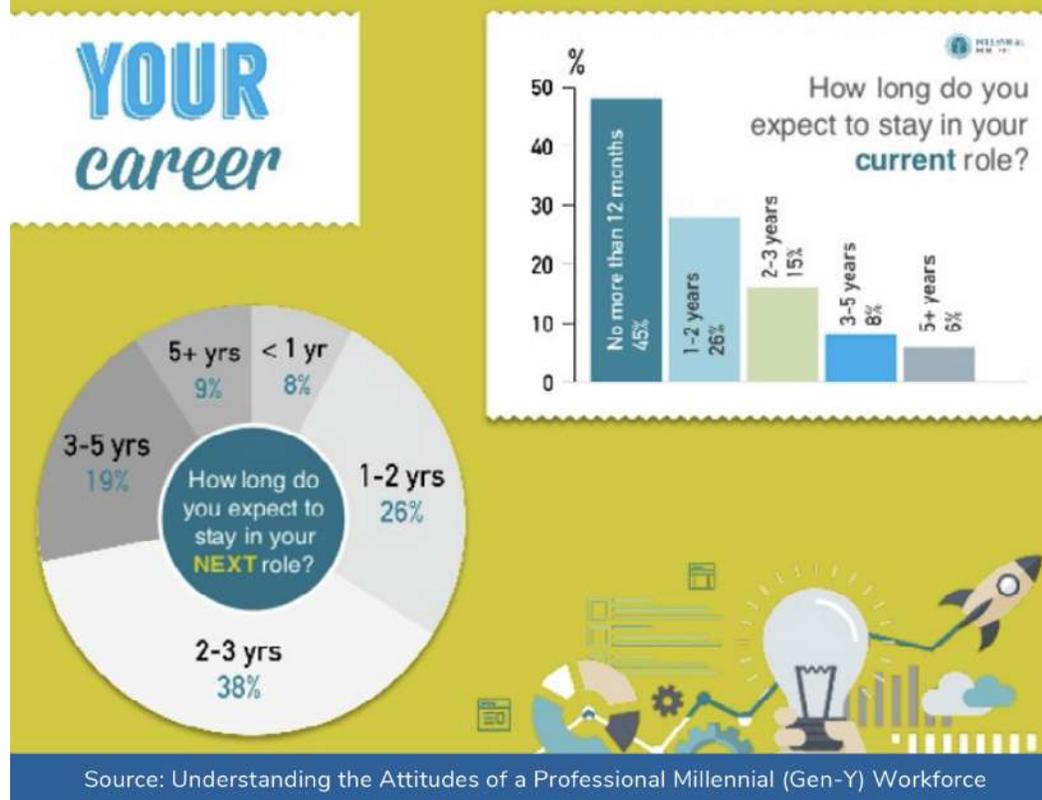
being promoted. Fortunately, expectations are extended for the second role.

This is a different set of expectations than what the Baby Boomer considered normal, so is likely to lead to potential conflict and misalignment with career expectations and human resources departments.

Another interesting attribute of Millennial expectations is that of flexible work, which correlates directly with achieving the right work/life balance. Millennials see this as a very important job requirement. But, their employers have not been able to successfully deliver upon this promise.

## The Importance of a Flexible Work Schedule to Millennials

Here is where remote working comes into play. But, in the eyes of the Millennial, it isn't that they all want to telework. Just the opposite. They want the choice to be able to work where and when they want, to help achieve a better work/life balance.



A better term to describe this need is “flexible” working. Adam Henderson commented on this topic in his article If you can't trust your employees to work flexibly, why hire them in the first place?

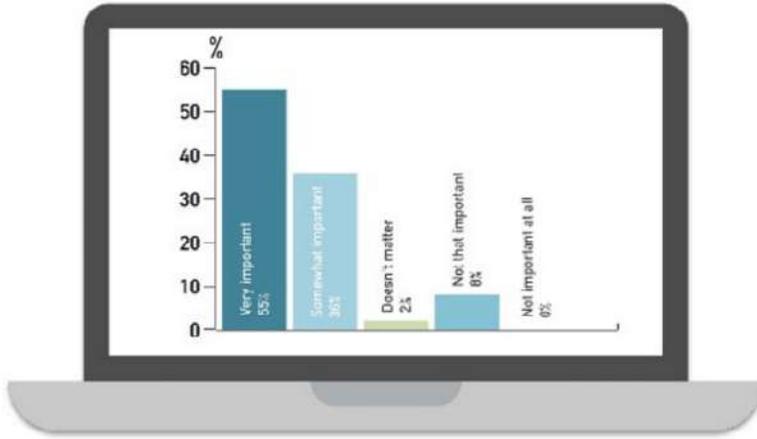
In his article he commented that 91% of the Millennials he surveyed said flexible working was important, and that 92% said they wanted the option to work from home. Note the importance of having the choice. Millennials are not saying they all want to work remotely from home. In fact, just the contrary, 66% said they would prefer to work more in the office than at home. No one wanted to work exclusively from home.

Below is another infographic that helps to visualize this concept (source). Just over 90% of Millennials surveyed said that it was “somewhat” or “very” important to have flexible working. Doing the math, this means that in just three years' time, 45% of the workforce will place a significant importance on employers offering flexible working.

## What is a Flexible Work Schedule?

A flexible work schedule is an alternative to the traditional 9 to 5, 40-hour work week. It allows employees to vary their arrival and/or departure times. Under some policies, employees must work a

# WAYS OF working



How important to you is flexible working?

www.millennialmindset.co.uk

Source: Understanding the Attitudes of a Professional Millennial (Gen-Y) Workforce

prescribed number of hours a pay period and be present during a daily “core time.” The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) does not address flexible work schedules.

### Alternative work

arrangements such as flexible work schedules are a matter of agreement

between the employer and the employee (or the employee’s representative). The Department of Labor has conducted numerous surveys and published articles and reports on the subject.

Here are some examples of how a flexible work schedule can be seen as a significant employee benefit:

- A husband and wife working for the same employer enter into an arrangement to ensure their shifts are staggered so that they will have childcare

coverage for their three children

- A worker who cares for an elderly mother during the evenings enters into an arrangement with the employer ensuring that he/she will not have to work the evening or overnight shift
- A worker may be authorized to swap a shift with a willing co-worker
- A worker with diabetes is allowed to set his/her own break schedule in order to ensure an opportunity to eat snacks and meals every three hours
- Workers may request scheduled time off in advance of schedules being prepared

Just as many companies shifted to a 40 hour work week, 9-5, based on worker demands, expect another shift to flexible scheduling over the next decade.

Comparison Table on Flexible Work Schedules		
Employee Benefits	Employer Benefits	Challenges to Overcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule flexibility has been found to be highly associated with job satisfaction</li> <li>• Employees who perceived having more flexibility on the job reported better sleep, more exercise, and a healthier lifestyle in general than those employees who did not perceive the availability of flexibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible work schedules have “positive effects on employee productivity, job satisfaction, satisfaction with work schedule, and employee absenteeism.”</li> <li>• Flexible work schedules are positively related to employee engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blending employees’ schedule requests with business demands;</li> <li>• Using managers’ time efficiently (the process of creating numerous schedules can be time-consuming, diverting managers’ attention from other responsibilities)</li> <li>• Ensuring fair and equitable practices</li> <li>• Maintaining customer loyalty (i.e., for example, the customers interact with different salespeople every time they come in)</li> </ul>



## CHAPTER 4

# Can Remote Working Solve Geographic Wealth Disparity?

The workforce is going through a significant transformation—both in the US and across the globe. By 2020, employers will be tasked with attracting top talent that places a high value on whether or not employers offer a flexible work schedule. Are you ready for this change?

Standards of living, resource availability and health insurance disparately all contribute to a world where some are privileged, and others are not. Could remote working solve geographic wealth disparity, or at least help reverse some of this inequality between different regions of the US? Or, must we simply accept that life is not fair, as recognized by Bill Gates, among others?

The truth is that evolution or change is never consistent, nor fair. Survival has always been of the fittest, which means there will be winners and losers. Some will be better at adapting and reap the rewards of change while others won't.

The hope is that in aggregate, overall levels of wealth, well being and opportunity can be increased for all. With the advent

of remote working, there is a chance for regions that have been left behind by economic growth to catch up with the rest of the country.

### **A History of Prosperity in the United States**

Today, the United States holds 4.5% of the world's population yet produces 22% of the world's output—a fraction that has remained consistently stable



over the past two decades, despite growing competition from emerging countries ([source](#)). Per Capita income in the US was about \$53,000 in 2016, a figure that few countries can beat today. Even back in the early 1800s, the US was a global leader in this measurement.

[The City Journal](#) suggests that this leadership in wealth creation was a byproduct of strong intellectual property rights. As Thomas Jefferson observed, the absence of accumulated wealth in the new nation meant that its most important economic resource was innovation, which America's laws encouraged, and that helped drive innovation. Over two centuries later, the United States has more patents in force—1.8 million—than any other nation (Japan, with 1.2 million, holds second place).

Another factor that has contributed to the wealth aggregation in the United States was the vast territory of available land coupled with a scarcity of population. This disparity created a drive for innovation, which pushed up early labor costs. With American wages being significantly higher than those in Europe, American businesses were forced to improve productivity, automate tasks and ultimately help drive the first industrial revolution.

The Southern states made a choice to bypass much of the industrial automation strategies, at least initially, which led to income disparities that to this day have never truly caught up.

Similar inequities resulted when the third industrial revolution gained momentum – the implementation of

technology and computers to run production environments. In this case, the wealth from the central, manufacturing-focused regions of the US shifted to the coasts, where investments in technology companies became a leading source of business value creation, high paying jobs and significant capital investments.

### **The Inequality of Prosperity – Could Remote Working Solve Geographic Wealth Disparity?**

Median US Household income from 1999 to 2016 was essentially flat, eking out a minor gain from \$58,665 in 1999 to \$59,039 in 2016. This period witnessed a massive, global financial meltdown whereby standards of living declined, household income dropped significantly, and many businesses closed their doors.

These figures however, are misleading. While in aggregate the US has recovered to the



same prosperity as 1999, when the recovery is examined on a more regional level, a different story emerges.

According to Bloomberg, in the Northeast and West, median household incomes are now markedly higher than they were in 1999 and 2000. In the South, the median income is about the same. In the Midwest, it's still well below its 2000 peak. Over the long run, the Midwest has gone from being similar in affluence to the Northeast and West to significantly poorer. The South is a little bit further behind the coasts now than it was in the mid-1970s ([source](#)).

Nowhere is this more pronounced than in real estate prices. The West and Northeast now have some of the most expensive real estate prices in the nation, a trend that has been fueled by the record amount of income that has been generated by the technology transformations now impacting our world in the way we socialize, consume goods and services, and earn a paycheck.

## Change is The Only Constant

A pattern should by now be clear. Growth is seldom even, predictable or linear. Innovation,

hard work and ingenuity have led to spectacular history of sustained growth in the US (and other countries).

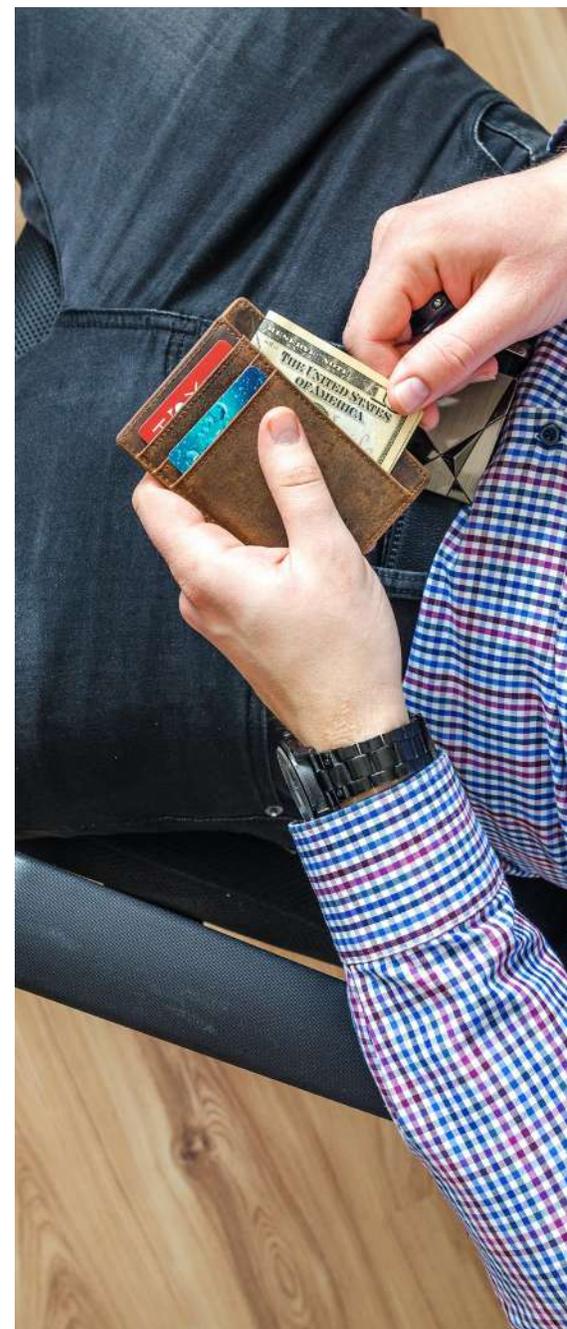
But, to continue to fuel growth, change must be embraced to think differently, find new opportunities and move to where new jobs are being created. For economic progress to occur, obsolete activities and technologies must disappear, and capital must shift from old uses to more productive ones.

Both government efforts to save or bail out companies that stick with outmoded products, services, or management methods and corporate monopolies protect the existing order at the expense of innovation, growth, and future jobs. This, in its core, is the fuel behind a Capitalistic economy.

A free-market economy that can readily allocate resources based on where the market deems the best ROI on these resources will lead to the highest, and most sustained growth. Centrally planned societies led by a group of individuals (whether the government or small collection of corporations) can never perform with as great a consistency or efficiency as the open market.

This same concept applies to where people live, or how readily new labor can be harnessed to work on the next “big thing.”

Interestingly, the advances of [remote working](#) –and the willingness of employers to embrace it or block it–might have a profound impact on not



only the choices companies make, but in the surrounding geographic regions where they operate or have offices.

## Remote Working – An Instant Allocation of Scarce Resources

Ironically, the embracing of remote working could just trigger the next real estate “land grab” or income equalization at a level we have witnessed over the past two decades. With this model, remote workers need not relocate to apply their skills to a new employer or industry – regardless of where that employer resides.

This is a paramount shift in what could happen with migration patterns, and of course, real estate prices. If new demand for housing is not driven directly by



local labor requirements, it will be possible for real estate values to become more standardized or normalized, at least over a period.

We could also see a spread of wealth throughout the country as remote workers spend more locally and boost their region’s economy. We’ll have to see what happens in the next 15-20 years, to see whether this trend does indeed materialize.

This could be an opportunity for those regions in the US (and other parts of the world) that missed out on the last economic or real estate boom,

to play catch up. Those taking up residence in a low-cost geographic region, yet having access to higher paying, remote working opportunities, could be the impetus to drive new wealth creation across the US and world.

What is important to recognize is that any time a resource can be more readily accessed with less barriers to that access, better efficiency will result, and a new baseline of wealth transfer will have been set. It should be interesting to see how this next chapter plays out. Yes, indeed, we live in interesting times.





## CHAPTER 5

# The Importance of Mentoring in a Remote Working World

Most people recognize that remote working has become mainstream. Now we can easily collaborate with IM and email, communicate with video conference calls and group edit presentations without second thought. Other factors, however, still need to catch up, including the role of mentoring in a remote working world.

Those of us with a few decades of experience have the benefit of perspective. We grew up in a different world where the social part of work was an embedded component, integrated as part of our normal routine. Group lunches were a common way to seek feedback on business opportunities or policy changes. Nothing like two-martinis to help the discussion.

Today the working world has changed. This means social expectations must also shift, to then become more comfortable with how our working experience has changed.

The cultural and physiological factors that comprise what it feels like to work will likely take much longer to become accepted and recognized as the status quo. This should come

as no surprise, as has been the case in other areas of our life where a digital transformation has changed the status quo.

### **A Brave New World for Millennials Now in the Workforce**

The concept of a virtual organization is not revolutionary anymore. I met with a team just a month ago that all work from

home. This virtual organization doesn't have a corporate headquarters. The staff are left to decide where they want to work, based on where they feel they can be the most effective.

The sheer number of remote workers has steadily increased over the past couple of years. The proportion of Americans who did some or all of their work from home is now at 43%, up from 39% in 2012, as reported by a [2017 Gallup poll](#). Over the same period, the proportion who only work remotely went to 20% from 15%.

Those now starting their professional careers are entering at an interesting time. I see this first hand through my daughter, who just graduated from college 18 months ago. She now works for a virtual organization. The company is relatively small, with 18 full time staff, but the level of collaboration they can achieved is remarkable, as is the quality of their work. They meet twice a week in a shared executive space, which includes a group meeting from 10 to 3 through lunch. The staff can then work anywhere for the other three days of the week.

Those who work at these types of organizations are happy to have the flexibility that this work environment has to offer. Young families can now better manage parenting duties – as can those with aging parents, where schedule flexibility is a highly appreciated benefit. And, let's not forget about all the time saved by not sitting in a long commute, especially if that journey lasts an hour or more in each direction.

## Reinventing Social in a Work Setting

One item, however, that has the potential to be negatively impacted is the social part of working, when in a virtual office environment. There is something to be said about physical contact and interaction with your co-workers. Being able to share exciting news is far better when done in person. The same can be said of when support is needed when faced with a family situation, or dealing with a loss.

I think [Shakespeare](#) had it right: too much of a good thing or excess may do you harm. Perhaps the perfect work environment is one that has a balance of both. Some



days are best spent working remote, finding yourself in a zone to be productive, creative or whatever else you need to do to overcome your current list of tasks and objectives. Other days, however, might be best spent interacting with others, either in the office, over coffee for a meeting, or coming into the office, if that option exists.

This difference may be even more pronounced for those who are in the early phases of their careers, still finding their path and learning the language and characteristics of their respective industry. More seasoned workers have achieved more of a stability such that remote working might be better suited, or less of a challenge.

As a suggestion to those organizations that are 100% virtual, it might make sense to have regularly scheduled time for group interactions, perhaps once a month or every other month. If your team is geographically dispersed, then these meetings will need to be split up to offer each local employee an opportunity to be the host, welcoming his or her co-workers to their



hometown. Over time, this activity will create a sense of closeness and trust, key qualities that are necessary in order to go from “good” to “great,” in the words of Thomas Friedman.

### **Mentoring in a Remote Working World**

One of the concepts that is a bit more difficult to achieve is the role of a mentor, and how constructive feedback can be shared without it being too “canned” or impersonal. Quite often these types of lessons are best learned on-the-fly as they occur. It is

often very difficult to recreate situations weeks later, with the goal of self-reflection on how a situation might have been managed differently or handled better.

A mentor can come in many forms, not necessarily an employee’s immediate superior. This education typically came from proximity to having an office down the hall from a seasoned veteran that always has their door open. Alternatively, it could build from sharing a common interest, or even getting in the habit of having lunch together on a regular basis.



In the absence of physical proximity to strike conversations on life lessons, the more senior employees need to take greater care to look for signs that co-workers need help, or if they could use a sounding board on a difficult decision. In these cases, a virtual clue needs to be shared that the “door is always open”. This could come in the form of an IM program, such as Slack or Microsoft’s Skype for Business.

One of the things I like about Skype (and other IM applications) is the color-coded status button, indicating if you are in a meeting, away from your desk, or currently available. A green persistent light is the equivalent of an open door – provided you are quick to respond to an IM with a question. A timely response is critical. Often opportunities for learning are fleeting, depending upon what the unique set of circumstances are that led to the issue that needs discussing.

Managers can also use applications such as [Prodoscore](#) to see when

employees might be experiencing issues and intervene to help them or see what’s going on.

## Conclusion

Younger workers entering the workforce today do so without previous knowledge or experience of what they don’t have, as well as how good they have it. With no comparative baseline, their experience today will become what all future jobs are compared to. Those of us with more experience under our belts have an obligation to help navigate our younger peers through these potentially tricky waters such that a sense of understanding can be learned, including the role of a mentor.

Despite all the advances in Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, nothing can take the place of a “real” human touch (at least not yet!). Having someone to speak with in person, to be there at the right time to help provide guidance and experience, is still a basic human need that we all still need.



## CHAPTER 6

# Why the Remote Working Revolution is Gaining Momentum

As we start the new year, it is a time when new budgets and goals are put in place. Now comes the challenge of how to actually achieve expectations of 5-10 percent performance improvement. As the remote working revolution gains steam, this might be a good time to consider your [remote working policy](#) or replace office workers with remote ones.

New data increasingly confirms that remote workers are more productive than their office-based counterparts.

Of course, it shouldn't matter where an office worker sits – as long as their work gets done. Those working at large, multi-national organizations are well aware of the virtual nature of today's global business

world. Business is done 24/7, so inevitably, this involves getting on an early morning or late-night call, to collaborate and complete one's job duties.

While it is quite common for larger organizations to operate globally, smaller and mid-sized companies are increasingly going global as well.

## Global Business Practices Driving Remote Working Revolution

As international trade continues to become an increasing factor driving growth, remote working becomes an increasingly necessary requirement to get the work done. Those who are traveling or meeting



with international clients must accommodate various time zones and travel schedules.

This is hardly revealing to those of us that spend a bit of time in airports. Device charging stations are now everywhere, as are workspace areas for those to catch up on emails or put the final touches on a presentation while on layover between flights. This change reflects a cultural shift where the new norm is that airports are now extensions of the office, at least when in transit during non-holiday times.

Working remotely is just a routine that is now part of the traveler mind set. So too can this mentality shift occur for those whose travel is limited to

a commute from their home to the office.

But where are workers most productive?

This is a harder question to answer than it might appear. And, if one approach is indeed better (remote vs. office working), will it continue to be the case over an extended period of time?

### **What is at Stake? The Cost of Lost Productivity in the Workforce**

As part of this review on where workers are most productive, I thought it might make sense to place a measurement gauge on what is really at stake with

regards to worker productivity. Is it worth the effort to better understand the remote working revolution? Are the figures significant with regards to lost or gained productivity?

It turns out they are.

According to an article published by [SurePayroll](#), employers lose an estimated

\$1.8 trillion in lost productivity each year because of lack of engagement with the job, parents stressed over the cost of child care, hangovers, chronic health problems and more.

SurePayroll created an infographic that illustrates several of the other productivity “drags” impacting worker performance:

- Every week employees spend 20 hours online and 5 hours surfing non work related sites, all done while “working” in the office



- In a nationwide survey of 2,060 professionals 18 years and older, 61% agree that loud colleagues are the biggest office distraction, 86% prefer to work alone and 40% consider impromptu meetings from co-workers stopping by their workspace as a major distraction (the proverbial “chat by the water cooler” may not be as beneficial as previously considered)

According to the State of Workplace Productivity Report, which surveyed 2,009 full time employees 18 years and older, a significant gap still exists between those wanting to work remotely, and those employers agreeing to do so; based on the survey, 65% think a flexible and remote work schedule would increase their

productivity, but only 19% can actually do so ([source](#)).

Would you be willing to wear a wearable tech product to let your employer track your job performance? It turns out that 76% of those surveyed said “yes,” and that they would be willing to share that data provided some sort of remuneration was provided; examples included an extra vacation day per month (54%), the ability to work remotely with a more flexible schedule (46%) or to have a 5% reduction in their work week ([source](#)).

### One CEO’s Perspective

Brian de Haaff is co-founder and CEO of [Aha!](#), a product roadmap software company, believes remote workers outperform office workers based on three

criteria, as explained in [his blog post](#). Here are his three reasons:

### 1. Productivity

Simply stated, when you are out of the office, there are less distractions and you have greater autonomy.

In other words, a remote worker has much more freedom to plan their day, including how best to achieve their work and person needs, such that in the end more gets done. This is something most people crave. According to a survey he referenced, 65 percent of workers said that remote work would give their productivity a boost. Another 86% said that working alone allows them to hit maximum productivity.

### 2. Teamwork

This was a perspective that surprised me. One would think that proximity would be one of the best determinants for building a stronger team. Yet, despite the distance, he feels that remote workers make better teammates.

In an interesting kind of way, his rationale is that because you are working at a greater distance, you must communicate more, and, must take greater care when doing so realizing you need great relations to “watch



each other's back." Without having physical proximity, remote workers must reach out to one another frequently and with purpose. This leads to stronger collaboration and camaraderie. And all those long-distance video chats? Do it! An astounding 92% of workers say the video collaboration actually improves their teamwork.

### 3. Presence

Honestly speaking, life in the office is not all productivity and working. There are many hallway chats, long lunches, potluck deserts, birthday celebrations, and the list goes on and on. There is definitely a social part of office life. And, let's not forget about all the workers who call in sick or sneak out early to run an errand or get to an event on time. Remote workers, on the other hand, don't need to make up any excuses. As a master of their own domain, a remote worker plans their workday to meet the demands of their lives. If they have a cold, they can work from home without spreading the germs

to others. And if they need to run an errand, they can handle it quickly without losing a workday. This ultimately makes remote workers more present for their work and team.

Two megatrends are now impacting how our society treats remote working. To start, our world has become increasingly global or "flat," such that co-workers, business partners or customers are increasingly located in another city, time zone or country. Remote working is a natural outcome, providing a seamless option to collaborate and engage with those necessary to get the job done, having only a positive impact on productivity. It doesn't matter where you are sitting when on a phone call.

Secondly, with increasing demand to achieve better work / life balance, the remote working revolution is accommodating that need, and doing so in such a way that productivity is increasing as a result.

And that is truly a win-win situation.

**Interested in more insights around remote work productivity?**

[Check out some of our latest research](#)





## CHAPTER 7

# Stay at Home Moms – a Powerful, Untapped Workforce in America

After I graduated from college with an undergraduate degree in history and a minor in Chemistry, I got accepted to law school in my home state of Michigan. I was very focused on building my professional career - nothing was getting in my way! I didn't see myself as a future stay at home mom.

As I continued my career journey, I ended up working for a large wholesale lender within the financial services industry, in Irvine, California. I was a top performer amongst my peers, working hard every day, every hour and every minute. This went on for years, as I climbed the corporate ladder.

I would consider myself an exceptional employee. My employer was very fortunate

to have me on their team. The thought of being a stay at home mom never entered my mind.

Then the day came when I decided not to re-turn to work. I had just given birth to my first child, and I remember wanting to work and needing the income for my family. But, I made the decision not to go back into the office, at the expense of missing out on my child's life. I had become a stay at home mom.

I had reached out to my employer wanting to see if they would let me work from home part of the time, figuring I was one of their best employees, and I was certain I could add value to their workforce. Unfortunately, they saw things differently, telling me that would not be possible.

I was very disappointed and a bit shocked.



I eventually started working from home for my husband and his company, moving into a permanent role of a remote General manager for the company. That company was then sold and I continued to work as a remote General Manager, running the sales department, hiring, and developing business strategy.

## Striking the Right Balance

We won't likely ever return to a period of time where the single-earning family is the dominant structure. Back in the 1960s, 49% of women were stay-at-home moms.

According to the [Pew Research Center](#), more moms are staying home, a trend that has grown over the past decade, reversing a long-

term decline in stay-at-home mothers. They point out that in the U.S. today, 71% of all mothers are working outside the home.

One factor that is driving this change is a growing consensus that a stay at home mom is the best option to raise a family. Despite the fact that most mothers in the U.S. work at least part-time, 60% of Americans say children are better off when a parent stays home to focus on the family, while 35% say they are just as well off when both parents work outside the home [\(source\)](#).

## My Life Today as a Stay at Home Mom

Ironically, part of my role today is hiring new employees.

Given my history and experience, I have made some major hiring decisions that have really paid off for the company. I have hired three different career women, all with college degrees from prominent fields and schools. As you might have guessed, our policy is to allow them to work from home. They can now better take care of their families and children while still working as great employees for the company.

In return, I now have amazing, dedicated employees at a lower cost than what I would have expected to pay if I had made it a requirement to be in the office every day. It is truly a win-win scenario. I get to have someone of their caliber of professionalism and expertise in exchange for letting them work from home with flexible working hours.



One of the moms was an aerospace engineer at Boeing. She then decided to become a stay at home mom after giving birth to their first child. She now runs the company's Product Quality Assurance (QA) program, as part of the Research and Development team for application projects. She also helps document workflows for some of our processes.

From what I can tell, she loves her working arrangement, and is very grateful for this opportunity and to be part of the team. She has a great work-life balance, which has empowered her to feel like she is still continuing with her career while taking important time to raise her family, a rewarding feeling for all of us.

I am so glad to be in a position of power at my company. It allows me the opportunity to give other career professional women an opportunity to work from home. Then, these women don't have to choose between their careers and their kids. Working remotely accomplishes both objectives.

