



The Post-Covid Workplace

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Work Has Evolved

Everything we once knew about work has changed. In the current environment, disruption should be expected but we also need to make sure we're learning from our experiences. Organizations that get the next year right are paving the way for success and a people first approach is the only one that will win.

Putting your people at the core of your operations doesn't just help you retain and attract

talented staff, it also gives companies the flexibility they need to respond to future headwinds.

Only 20 years ago, offices consisted of noisy fax machines, clunky phones, and piles of paper. Today, workplaces are far more efficient, operating primarily in the cloud and across multiple devices. Digital tools have streamlined processes across various industries and there's much more to come.

The most successful organizations are those that have stayed ahead of the curve.

After months and months of disruption and turmoil, we have learned more about people and the workplace than in the previous 10+ years and we can't ignore those learnings.

In this eBook we'll explore some of the key takeaways.





01 | Hybrid and Remote are Here to Stay

Survey after survey shows that [the majority of US workers want to see remote work implemented in some way into their workplace](#). Whether it's a full work from home routine or a hybrid model, employees are now used to the benefits of being able to work from home, at least some of the time.

Working from home is actually so important to some employees that it could play a major role in deciding whether or not they seek employment elsewhere or continue with their current employer. For many, the prospect of returning to the office for seemingly endless unproductive meetings, a noisy open-plan office, take-out or brown-bagged lunches and hours of miserable commuting each and every week simply

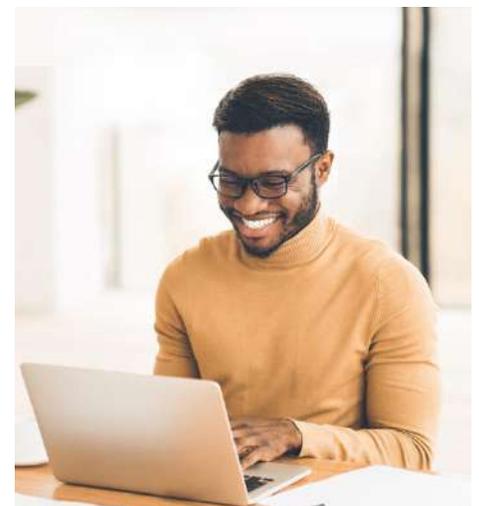
isn't palatable. Home is a place that is uniquely our own, which makes it a more attractive workspace for some people, primarily who have a dedicated home office space.

Why is working from home so important for workers? Increased flexibility.

In a lot of cases, workers didn't have 40 hours of work to do each week. In fact some have a lot more and some less. But at a minimum, employees had to give the appearance of working 40 hours. So, some would create meaningless meetings, take long "work" lunches, stand around talking in the breakroom...whatever they had to do to get those 40 hours in. In a remote setting, we don't need to waste hours on

performative theater. It's ok to walk the dog, exercise, run an errand, or just take a break.

Working in an office can stifle flexibility with its unflinching rigidity, making it far more difficult for people to spend quality time with loved ones, find time for appointments and other personal life commitments, and create a healthy work-life balance.



When working from home, employees are more inclined to see friends and loved ones, take a walk away from their desk for a few minutes, eat healthy meals, get some quick exercise in between meetings or tasks, and even take care of minor household chores without sacrificing productivity. In fact, that [balance can boost productivity](#).



The ability to address personal emergencies should also not be overlooked. When something suddenly goes wrong or takes a direction for the worst during working hours, remote work allows employees to address it immediately and directly rather than sit in the office distracted and demoralized waiting for the opportunity to tackle the problem at the end of the day (or needing to stand in a hallway whispering over the phone).

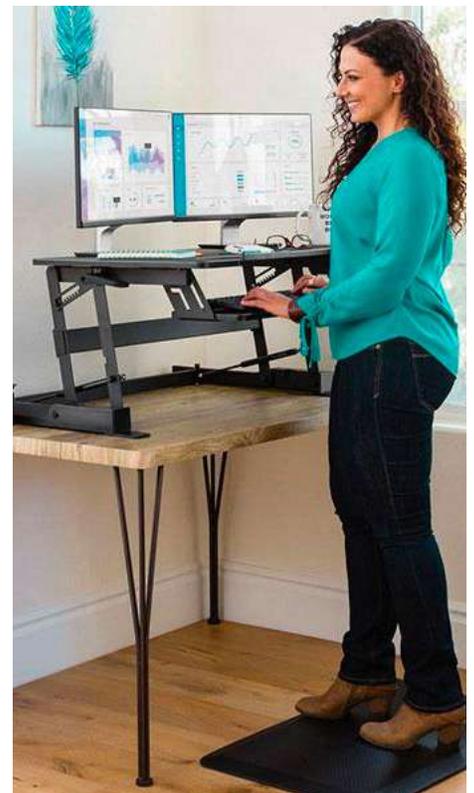
Customized schedules are also a big plus. With customization, employees may have set “core hours” that would include team

meetings and synchronous communication, as well as asynchronous hours when they work when it makes sense for them individually. Whether this means starting work earlier and taking advantage of the most productive hours of the day or getting an extra hour of sleep and starting later in the morning, this flexibility was never possible with a traditional 9-5 office job.

employees who want to work is already difficult, this could be devastating to companies seeking new hires and wanting to retain top talent but unwilling to provide that freedom.

According to a McKinsey survey, 9 out of 10 organizations will be combining remote and in-person working after the pandemic. [read more](#)

[Staying nimble helped many businesses navigate the pandemic and that need for flexibility is just as important as we embrace the future.](#) In a market where finding talented





02 | How to Make Remote Work Work

If we agree that even the most reluctant leaders are going to have to embrace flexibility to keep staff happy then remote work in some form is going to exist and there are many ways to make it viable (and successful!) for your organization.

With employees potentially alternating between working from home and being in the office, organizations need to identify ways to maximize resources so the new environment works for everyone. **Hybrid can either boost productivity and employee wellbeing or create chaos and inefficiencies.** Flexibility requires parameters.

Scheduling

For starters, be smart about scheduling. Meetings are

a great way to use low-productivity windows - times when employees aren't in the right headspace to start on deep work or high-intensity tasks but should not keep employees from having time to do actual work. Internal meetings are best done on Mondays or Fridays, when productivity is traditionally lower.

And if there are days when more people are expected to be in

the office, hold team meetings then to avoid the lone office employee joining a meeting via Zoom.

Attendance

The calendar is your friend. Using a shared schedule will give employees visibility into when their colleagues are available for in-office work so meetings can be scheduled accordingly.



Also remember that some departments require more collaboration than others so may need to plan for being in the office together, but that doesn't mean they're tied to the office. If hybrid is the new strategy then all office-based team members (i.e. knowledge workers) should be given the same liberties.

According to Gartner, 86% of corporate real estate teams expect to have a 'seat reservation' application tool in place by the end of 2022.

[read more](#)

and far too crowded mid-week. Although mandating in-office days runs counter to the hybrid ethos, a less heavy-handed approach can still achieve results. Some companies are using 'seat reservation' applications where employees log into an app to select what days they want to come in, based on office capacity limits.

experience is essentially nonexistent. Rather than an in-person introduction to your company and its culture, new remote employees must communicate through video conferencing and collaborative tools so it's critical to keep a few things in mind:

- 1 Set clear expectations and goals that highlight the value of their new role
- 2 Establish accountability guidelines to ensure deadlines and expectations are clearly laid out
- 3 Encourage collaboration and communication between colleagues (in different roles and departments too!)
- 4 Consider a buddy system where new hires get paired with a "buddy" who they can go to with general questions and who can serve as a starting point for social interaction

Office Space

It follows that if you give your employees free rein over their schedules, you could quickly end up sitting in an empty office. Given the choice, most employees would prefer not to be in the office on Fridays or Mondays. But if everyone in the office wants the long weekend your high-value office space is mostly vacant on those days

Onboarding New Hires

The orientation experience is one of the most important elements of starting a job, setting the tone for your employee's new career by showing them everything they can expect out of their new employer and position. With remote employees, the traditional orientation

Maintain Social Capital

Social capital is a set of shared values that make it possible for people to effectively work together as part of a group to achieve common goals. Basically, it's how members of a team are able to work and live



together in harmony, building mutual respect and shared values that make it easy to generate new information and innovative ideas that often lead to a business's success. Without social capital in a workplace, it's nearly impossible for meaningful relationships to blossom, leading to a lack of trust and respect, and affecting the overall performance of an organization or team.

Social capital is a critical concept for sustained work from home arrangements, requiring little effort to actually maintain but having a tremendous impact on how your team members interact and work with each other. Failure to uphold social capital will inevitably lead to alienation, distrust, and dissatisfaction, as well as all the negative effects that come with these traits.

In order to experience long term remote work success, employers, managers, and supervisors need to be willing

to build social capital through creative exercises, open communication, consistent action, and constant learning that brings teams together, builds trust, and maintains a sense of community at all times.

Manage Effectively

And finally, with a global team comes a new set of communication challenges. Team members are often working in varying time zones and are from different cultures, which can make it tough to maintain cohesion and team spirit, but there are ways to make everyone feel welcome and valued.

Offering employees time to connect with managers, empowering local leaders, and creating structure are some of the key tips for managing a globally distributed workforce. Keeping in mind that anyone invited to a meeting must be there for a reason and to actively contribute to



the meeting agenda is also important.

Project management tools are your friend in a globally distributed environment. Deadlines and deliverables must be clear with all tasks assigned to specific members and a straightforward process for keeping all team members informed.

Culture is another area to keep in mind. It's not a bad idea to become at least somewhat familiar with the various cultures being represented on your team. Some cultural norms may seem strange to you but totally normal to others. Whether or not you agree with those norms, and as long as they don't get in the way of getting work done, try to conform to your team's work styles rather than expecting them to conform to your norms.

A survey of 700 remote workers, who had previously worked in offices, named social connection the thing they missed most about offices, outranking office banter, a dedicated workspace, and face-to-face meetings. [read more](#)



03 | The Benefits of Flexibility

Remote work does certainly present challenges but it's here to stay and it is a viable business option in most cases. Whenever you're struggling or concerned that it may not be working, consider some of these benefits:

1. Cost Savings (for employees and employers)

Avoiding rush hour traffic is always a great feeling, but making your gas go further is even more enticing for drivers. According to one study, remote workers in New York save \$381 a year on gas prices alone while those on the other side of the country, in San Diego, cut their annual gas bill by \$486.

With the opportunity to buy rather than rent a house outside the city limits, more and more remote employees are becoming homeowners. Without being required to live downtown, for example, employees can venture out and find housing options that make more sense.

Remote workers can save on clothing, lunches, and coffee runs too. Those small savings do



accumulate and will make a big difference over time.

For employers the savings are palpable too, having the option to move offices from high cost commercial facilities to less urban-centric for example, or enjoy lower real estate and utility bills.

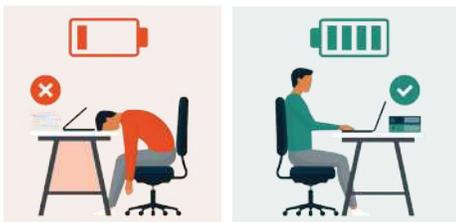
2. Hiring Pool



In a globally distributed world, the talent pool is essentially wide open. Without geographical boundaries, recruiting efforts are not limited to candidates located within a certain commuting distance from an office. That means companies can pursue top talent and create a more diverse and inclusive workforce at the same time.

Employers will quickly find that there are skilled workers everywhere and giving them the opportunity to work for top employers is huge and means they'll be excited, loyal, and motivated to succeed.

3. Health



Maybe the most obvious benefit of being able to work remotely is the ability to improve your work-life balance. Remote work allows employees to work in

an environment where they'll naturally be able to spend time with those who matter most to them, whether it's a spouse, children, family members, roommates, or pets.

Rather than spending hours each week commuting, employees can work from the comfort of their home office, using breaks to spend quality time with loved ones and having more time for hobbies and activities.

It also makes it easier to relax and unwind during times of stress - employees can simply walk away from their desk for a few minutes, read a few pages of a book, practice yoga, seek comfort from a loved one, or even just take care of a few nagging chores.

At home you can even customize your office space to better match your own personal preferences and health goals (ergonomic office furniture for example), natural lighting, a standing desk...

In the office, employees generally get stuck in a rut and develop poor habits - eating out often, choosing unhealthy snacks, not drinking enough water, and not exercising throughout their day. These

habits develop largely due to the convenience they offer, and the limitations of the office space. Many people simply don't want to use their time in the office to exercise or take a walk, nor do they want to spend the time preparing a healthy lunch or packing healthy snacks after a long day in the workplace.

Working remotely means that the stresses of the modern workplace can be almost entirely avoided and employee health (and sanity) can be a primary focus.

4. Innovation



Research shows that remote working can actually improve creativity - if done correctly. It provides opportunities for virtual brainstorming, allows employees to think in a neutral space without office pressures, encourages openness between employees, and provides distance that may in fact spark creativity. [A recent behavioral science research study reveals how brainstorming in a remote setting can be more powerful than in an in-person setting.](#)

Looking ahead

We are at a tipping point where everything we know about the ideal work arrangement – from where we work to how many hours we work – may be called into question. Is it time to rethink the traditional concept of the workweek, and let knowledge-based workers create their own working schedule (within reason)? Is [Tim Ferriss' controversial call for the four-hour workweek](#) more prescient than we could have imagined?

How effective were the “before times” if we really take a deep dive? Did companies know who was working and who wasn't? Is “number of hours worked” an adequate proxy for determining productivity and engagement?

Thinking back to pre 2020 brings up a lot of questions...

We often reference “the good old days,” but with the benefit of hindsight and reflection it may be worth questioning just

how good they were. Draining commutes, in-office distractions, skipped workouts, drive-thru meals, missing your daughter's dance recital...those were the good old days. It was a grind and too many people felt like there was no alternative. Now that so many have reconsidered their priorities, many are ok to skip the cool office vibes of fancy ping pong tables and stocked kitchens to enjoy personal freedom and flexibility.

Disruption to the traditional ways of doing things is about more than just that process or protocol. While we know that it will be challenging and even unwieldy as we navigate through, we are often unprepared for the long-term implications, many of which remain unknown for months or years to come.

Most companies were unprepared for the transition to a remote workforce but now flexibility is the norm. Are you ready for it?

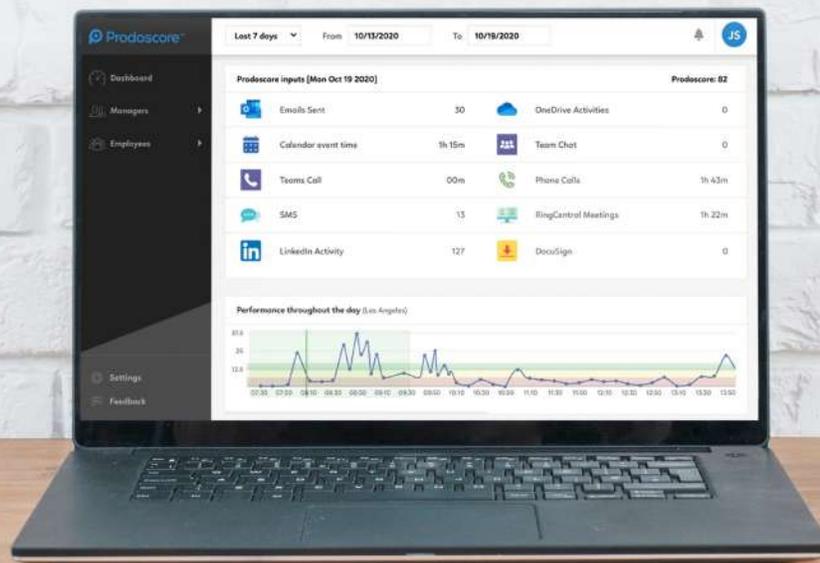


How Can Prodoscore Help?

Prodoscore's Employee Productivity Monitoring (EPM) software provides insights into daily engagement and behavior that help leaders understand how employees are working and encourage better informed decisions rooted in data, not gut feeling.

EPM supports the future digital workplace and the growing trend in flexibility by creating accountability. The data surfaced provides

visibility into how employees spend their days so success can be replicated and efficiencies identified, tool adoption is clear, at-risk employees can be flagged, and much more. Those actionable insights support a better employee experience in a transparent environment, decreasing the need for awkward one-on-ones and ensuring smart decision making as we embrace all that we've learned over the last couple years.



Get in touch with us to learn more about the important role of productivity insights in your future workplace.

[Get in Touch](#)