Equity and the Hybrid Workforce: Generational Perspectives

From Day One
May 10, 2022

Heather Tinsley-Fix, Senior Advisor, AARP
Let’s Start with the Basics: Hybrid Landscape

McKinsey: Executive Survey, January 2021

In the post-COVID-19 future, C-suite executives expect an increase in hybrid work.

Past and future expectations of time spent at work location, % respondents

Pre-COVID-19

Post-COVID-19

1 10 40 7 40

Fully remote
≤20% at work
21–50% at work
51–80% at work
>80% at work

PWC Pulse Survey: Next in Work, August 2021

Company workforce location plans for fall 2021

- Mix of in-person, hybrid, and fully remote 33%
- All in-person 19%
- All hybrid 18%
- Mix of in-person, hybrid (no fully remote) 18%
- All fully remote 4%
- Teams self-organize 4%
- Delaying implementation 3%

*Note: Total may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Q: Which of the following statements best describes your workforce location policy that will be in effect this fall? (Select one.) Source: PwC US Pulse Survey, August 19, 2021: base of 752 business executives
Let’s Start with the Basics: Hybrid Landscape

Gartner: Redesigning Work for the Hybrid World, April 2021
Let’s Start with the Basics: Which Generations?

- By 2026, workers 50+ will make up 35% of the labor force.
- By 2044 whites will no longer be the majority population.
Most adults who are teleworking all or most of the time say it has been at least somewhat easy for them to feel motivated to do their work... But there’s a distinct age gap: 42% of workers ages 18 to 49 say this has been difficult for them compared with only 20% of workers 50 and older.

The New York Times

Why Older People Managed to Stay Happier Through the Pandemic

New surveys over the last year show that the ability to cope improves with age.
The experience of working remotely is closely correlated with job level. The more senior you are, the more likely you are to adapt to remote work and report higher productivity.

While Baby Boomers feel more apathetic toward internal and external factors during the pandemic, younger generations may need more emotional support in the workplace.
Different Generations’ Attitudes to Remote Work

The Conference Board: Return to Work Survey, June 2021

Percent of respondents who do not see the need to return to the office

- Individual contributors: 56%
- CEOs: 18%
- Women: 50%
- Men: 33%
- Millennials: 55%
- Gen X: 45%
- Baby Boomers: 36%

Percent of respondents who are comfortable returning to the office

- Individual contributors: 23%
- CEOs: 66%
- Women: 31%
- Men: 49%
- Millennials: 24%
- Gen X: 38%
- Baby Boomers: 43%

Generation Gap
Different Generations’ Remote Work Experience

Microsoft: Work Trend Index, March 2021

Gen Z is struggling more than other generations
The last year has been more challenging for Gen Z in many ways — from bringing new ideas to the table, to simply feeling engaged or excited about work.

The Work Trend Index survey was conducted by an independent research firm, Edelman Data x Intelligence, among 31,092 full-time employed or self-employed workers across 31 markets between January 12, 2021 to January 25, 2021.
Detour: Office Environments Through History

1950s
- Structure
- Control
- Conformity
- Visibility

1970s
- Control
- Conformity
- Trust
- Visibility

2000s
- Flexibility
- Trust
- Diversity
- Invisibility

1950s→1970s→2000s

During 2020, many people have spent more time working at home. With this in mind, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: - I need to spend time with my colleagues face to face in order to carry out my work effectively

“One of the most important developmental milestones for young adults is establishing a professional identity and as such, work opportunities and professional relationships play a huge role in this. COVID has taken away the opportunity to have that crucial in-person and ad-hoc contact that helps build a professional identity.

Dr Linda Papadopoulos
*Unfollow: Living Your Life on Your Own Terms*
Impact of Remote Work on: Work Life Balance

Pew Social Trends Survey, February 2022

For workers who’ve made the switch to teleworking, most have found more balance but less connection with co-workers.

Among employed adults who rarely or never worked from home before COVID-19 and are working from home at least some of the time now, % saying...

- Harder to balance work and personal life: 16%
- Easier to balance work and personal life: 64%
- About the same: 20%

- Less connected to co-workers: 60%
- More connected to co-workers: 4%
- About the same: 36%

Note: Based on those who say, for the most part, the responsibilities of their job can be done from home. Share of respondents who didn’t offer an answer not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Impact of Remote Work on: Productivity

Work From Home Research, May 2020 - March 2021

- Nearly **six out of 10** workers reported being more productive working from home than they expected to be, compared with 14 percent who said they got less done.

- On average, respondents’ productivity at home was **7 percent higher** than they expected.

- **Forty percent of workers** reported they were more productive at home during the pandemic than they had been when in the office, and only 15 percent said the opposite was true.

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Impact of Remote Work on: Engagement

McKinsey: Executive Survey, January 2021

Most C-suite executives report improvement in their organizations' productivity, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and diversity and inclusion.

Performance improvement,\(^1\) % respondents

<table>
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<th>Area</th>
<th>Significantly improved</th>
<th>Improved</th>
<th>No change</th>
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<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
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\(^1\)Question: How has _____ changed in the remote workplace compared with pre-COVID-19?

\(^2\)Employee engagement was calculated as the average of two questions, one assessing engagement in employees with more senior roles, and one assessing engagement in employees in less senior roles.
Impact of Remote Work on: Burnout

The Conference Board: Return to Work Survey, June 2021

Percent of respondents who are concerned about mental health & burnout

- **Individual contributors: 61%**
- **CEOs: 30%**
- **Women: 62%**
- **Men: 43%**
- **Millennials: 70%**
- **Gen X: 59%**
- **Baby Boomers: 42%**

"What's striking is that the same workers who question returning to the workplace given high productivity while working remotely have also expressed greater concerns about mental health, stress, and burnout."

Rebecca Ray
EVP Human Capital, The Conference Board
Impact of Remote Work on: Mental Health

Nationwide and Ipsos Poll, March 2021

To what extent, if at all, has Covid-19 impacted your overall mental health?

- Better
- Stayed about the same
- Worse

- Gen Z
- Gen Y
- Gen X
- Baby Boomer
Impact of Remote Work on: Connections

Microsoft: Work Trend Index, March 2021

Teams are more siloed in a digital work world
Collaboration trends in Microsoft Teams and Outlook show that interactions with our immediate team, or close network, strengthened with the move to remote work. However, our interactions outside of that team, or distant networks, have diminished.

“...When you lose connections, you stop innovating. It’s harder for new ideas to get in and groupthink becomes a serious possibility.”

Dr. Nancy Baym
Senior Principal Researcher, Microsoft
Designing Hybrid Work to Promote Equity

• Ask employees what they want – look for patterns and design strategies to support emerging “clusters of need”

• Be consistent – this does not mean one-size fits all, but a consistent process or rationale for decision-making

• Be clear – employees both want and expect you to communicate clearly and often, even more so in times of change

• Equip managers – clarity and consistency from the top only go so far; ensure managers have the tools they need for this shift
Designing Hybrid Work to Promote Equity

• Be fair – whether that’s salary design or access to working remotely

• Be deliberate – design meetings to fit core hours, actively include remote workers in meetings and projects, continue tinkering

• Invest in togetherness – some degree of in-person gatherings will help preserve cohesion

• Keep track – monitor who is getting access to opportunity in order to maintain DEI momentum
Final Note: *Listen to Each Other*
Thank You

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