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RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

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How to Manage Your Remote Workforce – What Does The New Norm Look Like post COVID-19?

Times are tough and this pandemic has not only changed the way we go about our daily lives, but the way in which we work. A lot of jobs which previously were not considered suitable to be done remotely, now out of necessity can be undertaken from outside the office.



Remote work has often been viewed as a millennial's demand for greater work/life balance, and in many corporate cultures where there is typically a hierarchical style of

“COVID-19 has shattered many of the myths associated remote working”

leadership, it was a pipe dream. Now COVID-19 has given organisations no choice but to implement remote work and to make it work for them.

What COVID-19 has done is to shatter many myths associated with remote work such as laziness, need for supervision or an abundance of distractions. A key argument against allowing for remote work has been communication effectiveness, but now COVID-19 has

overcome many of the myths surrounding perceived remote communication issues. IT departments that have previously struggled to get system upgrades signed off or properly implemented, are now able to integrate their technology with less resistance from both the management and employees. An increasing number of organisations have been forced to adopt new tools and systems in order to have their business adapt to the current situation.

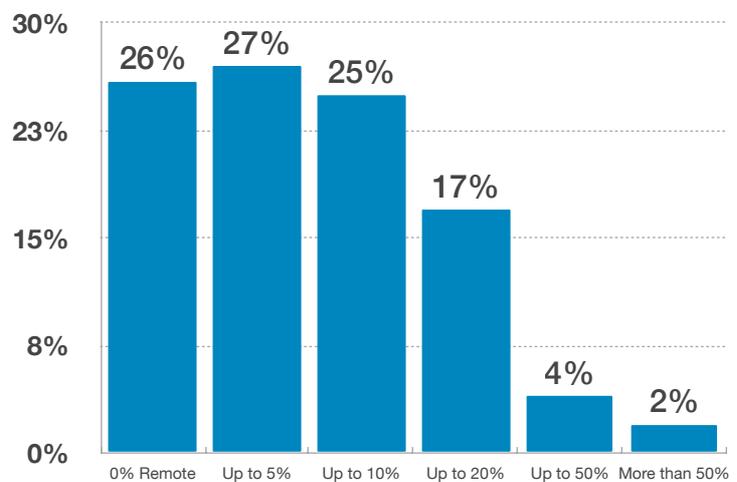
According to a new survey from research firm Gartner of 317 CFOs and Finance leaders on March 30, 2020, 74% of companies will move at least 5% of their previously on-site workforce to permanently remote positions post-COVID 19. The survey results showed that only 26% of companies planned to make a permanent shift.

One of the big shifts that we will notice as we move forward and towards the new norm will be a cultural change in terms of the way in which many companies manage their teams, from which there will be a learning curve as to how teams are most effective when they work remotely. Organisations will be forced to ensure that employees have the

right tools at their disposal, whether that be hardware, software or open data and that they have all the right systems in place. This cultural change also means that companies need to have the right people, with the right behavioural traits on their teams at both a line and managerial level.

Alongside this cultural change, there will no longer be a need for the compliance-driven, autocratic or hierarchical management styles that were in place in some organisations before the virus outbreak. Our clients are increasingly throwing these types of management styles out the window in favour of more objective and outcome directed styles. Business leaders have become less interested in how an employee completes a

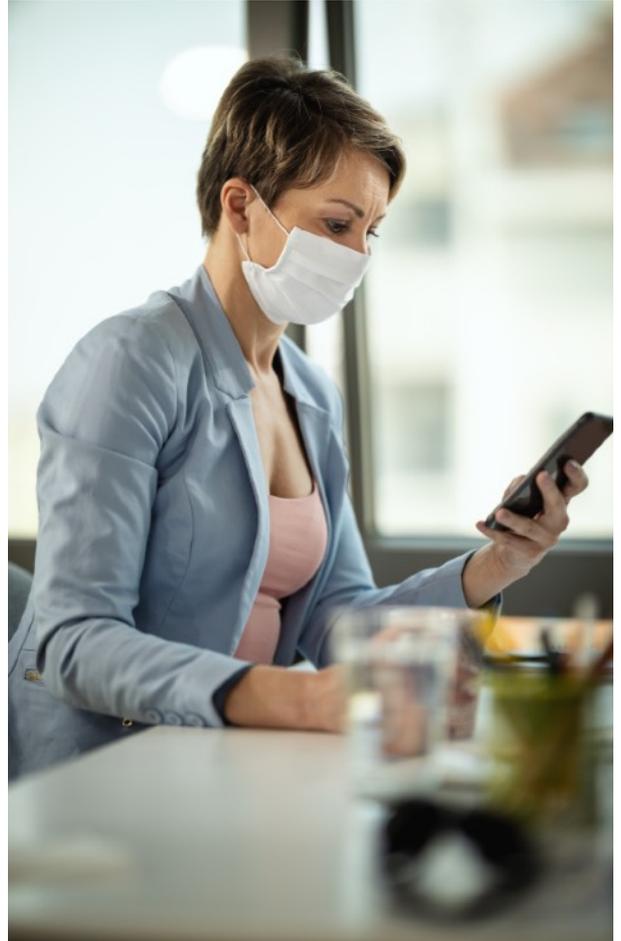
What percentage of your workforce will remain permanently remote post COVID-19 who were not remote before COVID?”



task and how much time they spend doing it and are now solely focused on ensuring the outcome is achieved on time meeting quality standards.

In reference to other global events such as 9/11 or the Global Financial Crisis, we see that short term measures taken in response to global crises such as this, tend to have a lasting effect on how organisations drive their businesses forward. COVID-19 is nothing short of a huge disruption to the way in which businesses operate. Organisations had no choice in this shift. However, what we are seeing in the marketplace and through our clients are the following likelihoods:

- *Communication will no longer be a major issue. Organisations have had to adopt new tools and systems to face this current period and are not likely to throw them out once the we resume the new norm.*
- *There will be a flattening out of some hierarchical structures as more employees have access to open data.*
- *We will see more Flexi working arrangements.*
- *We will see less reluctance or barriers to working remotely.*
- *Organisations will have smaller offices configured with more free workspace rather than allocated desks for individuals.*
- *Talent will be more widespread across different locations/geographies.*
- *Management styles will tend to become outcome rather than process driven.*



Organisations that fail to embrace these new norms and address them as priorities will lose their competitiveness in the marketplace. The efficiency with which they operate relative to their competitors will be significantly tested as will the ways in which they attract talent and the quality of the talent that will be available to them. These are some of the consequences that we are seeing in the marketplace and are currently working with our clients to help mitigate these risks, develop and execute their new strategies.

The lessons that many companies have been forced to learn throughout this period have hopefully given them the confidence needed to continue having their employees work remotely where practical and will now start to reflect in their thinking, actions and decision making going forward.

The discussion does not end here. Tune into our podcast where we are featuring a COVID-19 series covering the current global situation all the way through to the impact on driving business forward and future supply chains. Talk to us about how we can partner with you to:

- *Implement best in class leadership principles that maximise the your remote workforce's outcome.*
- *Develop a talent attraction strategy that suits your business post COVID-19.*
- *Coach your talent so that you have the right people on your team with appropriate behaviours that fit the new norm going forward.*
- *Train your workforce to embrace the new norm.*