



Three Benefits of Building an Intentional Remote-First Work Strategy



Changing Expectations

A majority of companies (69 percent) worldwide have an *ad-hoc telecommuting policy*.¹ Most organizations likely adopted these procedures to temporarily accommodate a valued employee, or group of employees, unable to work at a physical office location for some reason. This practice has resulted in many businesses never intentionally building a digital workspace for their distributed workforces, which is why when everyone needs to work remotely, most organizations aren't as prepared as they could be.

In 2015, it was estimated that a Fortune 500 company should expect to lose *\$4,000 per day per end user without desktop access*. Today, smartphones may help reduce that loss but only when employees have easy access to the applications and data they need to do their jobs effectively away from the office.

Leadership directives to work from home are more common after natural disasters and in times of uncertainty. That's why investing in a digital workspace strategy is more important than ever and will be especially beneficial during future emergencies.

¹ SHRM. "2019 Employee Benefits Survey." April 2019.



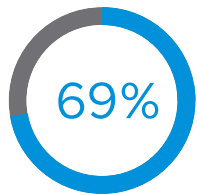
A recent *Digital Workforce study* indicated empowered employees are more productive employees. During the workday, individuals whose firms make apps available and highly accessible said they spend nearly 20 percent less time on manual processes, experience increased collaboration, and make decisions faster. Moreover, providing employees with consumer-grade experiences aggregates to gains that positively impact overall company performance.²

In addition to helping businesses keep operations going, a remote-first strategy powered by a digital workspace can give businesses a competitive advantage when it comes to

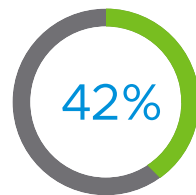
- Talent recruitment and retention
- Workforce diversity
- Employee productivity

The average employer savings is \$11,000 for each half-time telecommuter per year, including the impact of increased productivity and reduced office costs, absenteeism, and turnover.³

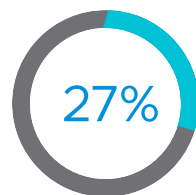
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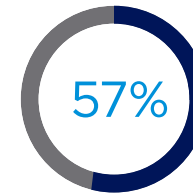
Ad-Hoc Telecommuting



Part-Time Telecommuting



Full-Time Telecommuting



Flextime During Core Business Hours

Source: SHRM. "2019 Employee Benefits Survey." April 2019.

² Forbes Insights. "The Impact of the Digital Workforce." August 2017.

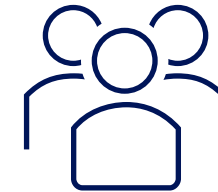
³ GlobalWorkplaceAnalytics.com. "State of Telecommuting in the U.S." June 2017. Updated August 16, 2019.

1. Attract and Retain Talent

Geographically widening a talent pool can result in dramatically higher candidate volume. According to the CEO of remote work consulting firm *Distribute Consulting*, Laurel Farrer, “The average application rate for a remote job post versus an onsite job post is an increase of 3,000 percent.” Having a remote option not only increases talent acquisition quantity, it can improve the quality of applicants, too. But only after an organization has considered its approach to what locations and skill sets will be uniquely valuable to the company.

Farrer counsels companies to think strategically about distributed recruiting. “Instead of hiring from anywhere,” she says, “consider finding five or six opportunistic regions that would uniquely benefit your organization, such as states with cheaper licensing and tax rates, or that have colleges with great talent pools that can become instant channels to fill specialized roles. This will help your team access an even higher level of both quantity and *quality* of talent than simply offering a general remote work option.”

Then, give those distributed employees the tools they need to be successful. With flexibility facilitated by proper onboarding and engagement strategies within a digital workspace, employees are more likely to stay in their roles for longer and less likely to feel isolated socially or informationally.



What employees want most in their next job is flexible hours and the ability to work remotely.

WORK ENVIRONMENT SURVEY,
CAPITAL ONE, AUGUST 2019



Flexibility is something nearly all workforce segments agree on.

GLOBAL TALENT TRENDS STUDY,
MERCER, FEBRUARY 2019

Keep Talented Employees Longer

In a tight talent market, offering current employees a remote-first option can be more cost effective for employers than finding a replacement. This is particularly true when a valued employee who is also a cross-functional team member has to leave for personal reasons such as family and elderly care needs, mental health days, or a spouse relocation. Departures in these cases can have a wider negative impact on the production cycle—productivity, product quality, customer service, and more.

Costs associated with turnover vary, but employers can avoid all of the following by retaining employees and allowing them to intentionally work remotely:

- Human resources (HR) exit interviews and paperwork
- Recruiting services
- HR time doing new hire interviews and paperwork
- Hiring manager interviews
- New hire training
- Overtime pay or additional workload for current employees during replacement period
- Supervising new hires until they're productive



Make Best-Fit Tools Available, Everywhere

Working from anywhere with the right tools enables organizations to attract and retain talent by delivering an exceptional employee experience. A digital workspace brings together many different processes and portals, tools, and apps into an easy-to-access, simple-to-use interface compatible across devices.

Employers can engage prospects from the first touch and new hires from the first day and beyond with a digital workspace that is as mobile as their team. Organizations can also take advantage of access to cloud resources to avoid the significant time and capital expenditures required to get employees access to corporate resources. By leveraging virtual desktops and apps on the cloud of their choice, employers can quickly empower employees with secure access to corporate resources that enable them to work remotely and from anywhere.

At the same time, employers can ease IT management and governance as they formalize a remote work relationship with security and protections to cover legal and liability requirements. Because information security is often the top-cited reason organizations avoid distributed work options, the digital workspace helps keep sensitive work beyond the corporate firewall safe by intrinsically securing apps and data wherever they are.

In a well-designed virtual work environment, employees are more innovative, productive, compliant, and loyal.⁴

⁴ Forbes. "5 Proven Benefits of Remote Work for Companies." February 12, 2020.



Moreover, employers with a remote-first mindset have better protections in place not only for employees required to work out of the office but also distributed customers and investors should disaster or uncertainties strike. A digital workspace supports employees working to keep customers and partners satisfied and developers coding as well as supporting government continuity of operations (COOP) requirements.

The power of a digital workspace is further distinguished when employees can get secure access to data and all apps, including data secured in mobile, SaaS, and traditional app environments, as well as in virtual desktops and virtual apps.



2. Boost Workforce Diversity

Targeting a certain geographic area saturated with the profile of the candidate needed is one way to become a more inclusive and diverse workplace. So is adding a remote working or distributed workforce strategy. With a more dispersed workforce comes a greater variety of cultures, experiences, and perspectives in team members.

Planning and executing an intentional flexibility policy help employers reach beyond traditional diversity categories—such as gender, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation—to include others such as family status, height, office proximity, and neurodiversity. Workplace independence can also offer flexibility in schedule, cognitive processing time, and environmental stimuli to help level the playing field for all workers—enabling them to work in the place and the way in which they thrive personally and professionally.

Organizations that intentionally go remote tend to rely on “objective-based productivity tracking or results-based productivity tracking,” explains Farrer. “The result: Businesses become more focused on what people do, and less about who or where they are.”



Enterprises can boost equality with a secure digital workspace. A self-service catalog, governed by IT-established policies, makes it easy for all types of workers to quickly find all the tools and apps, across devices and operating systems, they need to produce their best results.

Farrer says, “In the virtual business world, level playing fields aren’t just metaphorical. Our tools and systems literally track performance equally and empower all workers to access growth opportunities equally.”

An intentional remote or distributed work strategy powered by a digital workspace can be critical in controlling unconscious bias.



3. Increase Employee Productivity

The most successful organizations realize work is something people do, not somewhere people go. And that reorients their focus—from location to productivity. Studies like the Status of Telework in the Federal Government not only report a more than 60 percent boost in productivity but also reductions in cost and energy use.

Yet sometimes, it is still hard for leaders who rely on outdated management strategies to accept employees working outside a traditional office. As organizations put remote-first cultures into place, it's incumbent upon executives to train all employees, but particularly managers, on the nuances of virtual collaboration, such as self-management, proactive communication, and independent critical thinking. In practice, operation cycles and leadership methodologies are evolving from a control-the-workers mentality to a control-the-results mindset. In this dynamic, more trust and communication are required.

Quantifiable Results of Remote Working

- 63 percent of Status of Telework respondents attribute telework to an [increase in performance](#)
- 65 percent of federal teleworkers have an [increased desire to stay at their agency](#) due to the policy
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office [saved \\$42 million per year in real estate costs](#)
- General Services Administration [saved \\$30 million per year in real estate and energy costs](#)
- The Department of Education [saved over \\$6 million per year in real estate costs](#)
- Security and Exchange Commission [saved \\$870,000 per year in transit subsidies](#)⁵

⁵ U.S. Office of Personnel Management, "Status of Telework in the Federal Government Report to Congress, Fiscal Year 2018."

The ideal remote work environment, explains Farrer, is one where “employees are responsible for controlling their own time, their own tasks, and their own energy. And managers are responsible for supporting the employees and keeping them accountable, making sure their team has everything they need to successfully produce results along the way.”

A digital workspace empowers managers to supervise and support their offsite team members without micromanagement. Increased visibility of progress during production boosts productivity and decision-making, helping every employee work faster and smarter. Simultaneously, the higher levels of trust and responsibility enhance company culture, giving businesses a competitive edge. Digital workspace technologies are another way for businesses to also avoid burnout and improve flexibility by monitoring application usage trends in aggregate through intelligence.



Intentionally Go Remote with VMware Workspace ONE

VMware is a trusted partner in helping businesses quickly make the necessary adjustments to meet employee experience expectations and transition to a distributed, friendly, remote-first environment for all workers. Choose the VMware digital workspace to deliver greater flexibility and work-life balance to your team. Boost productivity, diversity, and sensitive information security while changing company culture.

Don't just *allow* working from anywhere for your organization, *leverage* it. Capitalize on mobility as an innovative solution by enhancing virtual engagement with VMware Workspace ONE®, the digital workspace for a remote-first culture.

Get more information about how VMware can help your enterprise keep operations going with a remote-first strategy powered by a digital workspace.

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