

insights

on the Future@Work

Issue 1 | January 2022

THE FUTURE OF OFFICE SPACE

Meetings in the metaverse?

ADAPTABILITY IS KEY

In conversation with Ken Cooper, CHRO at Bloomberg



Welcome

A WARM WELCOME to Insights Magazine Volume 1, our new monthly digital magazine that digs deeper into the trends surrounding the Future@Work. In this inaugural issue, we're exploring the flexible new normal and how companies around the world are renovating and rethinking their office spaces.

The new world of work is here, and to keep up, leaders need to reimagine the why, where, and how of working in an office space. From "Zoom rooms," to third workspaces, to the metaverse, businesses are retooling offices to fuel collaboration, culture, and conversation. The office of the future has become more than just a flashy way to attract workers back to the office: it's become a new tool to retain top talent as well.

As talent scarcity continues to threaten companies, our CEO Alain Dehaze, offers his advice to leaders looking for new tactics to assuage workers. Also in this issue: the gig workers taking their flexible future into their own hands, one CHRO's secret tool for hiring talent in this shifting labour market, and our top trends from the world of work in January.

We'd love to hear from you and welcome your feedback and suggestions for future issues. Shoot me an email:

mara.stefan@adecgroup.com.

Sincerely,

Mara Stefan, Editor of Insights Magazine

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1 Top Story





The Future of Office Space:

How Companies Redesign Office Spaces for the Flexible Future

Image courtesy of Meta



From “Zoom rooms” to the metaverse to desk sign-up sheets, businesses are retooling offices to attract and retain top talent when building the office of the future. It’s clear the future of office space has changed over the course of the pandemic. But how are businesses harnessing technology to build a new future of the office?



IF YOU’VE BEEN back to the office in recent months, you may have entered a corporate space that looks just a little bit different. Gone are the days of open floor plans and rows of desks. As the talent scarcity problem becomes increasingly dire across the globe, leaders are looking to their corporate office space to attract and retain top talent in a new way. The office of the future - the office space that many workers will visit in the post-pandemic future - may feature Zoom rooms, desk sign-up sheets, and health-focused touches. Some office workers may even head into the metaverse instead of a physical office. One thing is becoming increasingly clear: the future of the office is changing, and businesses are completely rethinking the corporate office space idea.

If the future is flexible, what does that mean for the future of the office space?

There wasn’t an obvious answer once the pandemic started to slow down in 2020, and there isn’t an obvious answer now. Some experts confidently predicted the end of urban headquarters buildings. Businesses, they said, would transition to a work-at-home model, perhaps with regional office-space hubs. Why pay the massive overhead on vir-

tually empty buildings in prime city center locations, when workers weren’t using them?

And to some extent, corporations have followed suit: British corporation BP downsized their headquarters in 2021. Sales and marketing giant Salesforce announced that all their workers could now work from home - and they weren’t alone.

Over time, many workers have said that they hope to find a balance between coming into the office and working from home, research from the Adecco Group uncovered. As a result of endless surveys, some top architects envisioned resilient, flexible office-space hubs, others anticipated a large central communal area surrounded by smaller, more personal spaces. Many experts compared the office space of the future to today’s hotel lobby areas: large spaces subdivided by clever use of lighting, furniture, and temporary dividers.

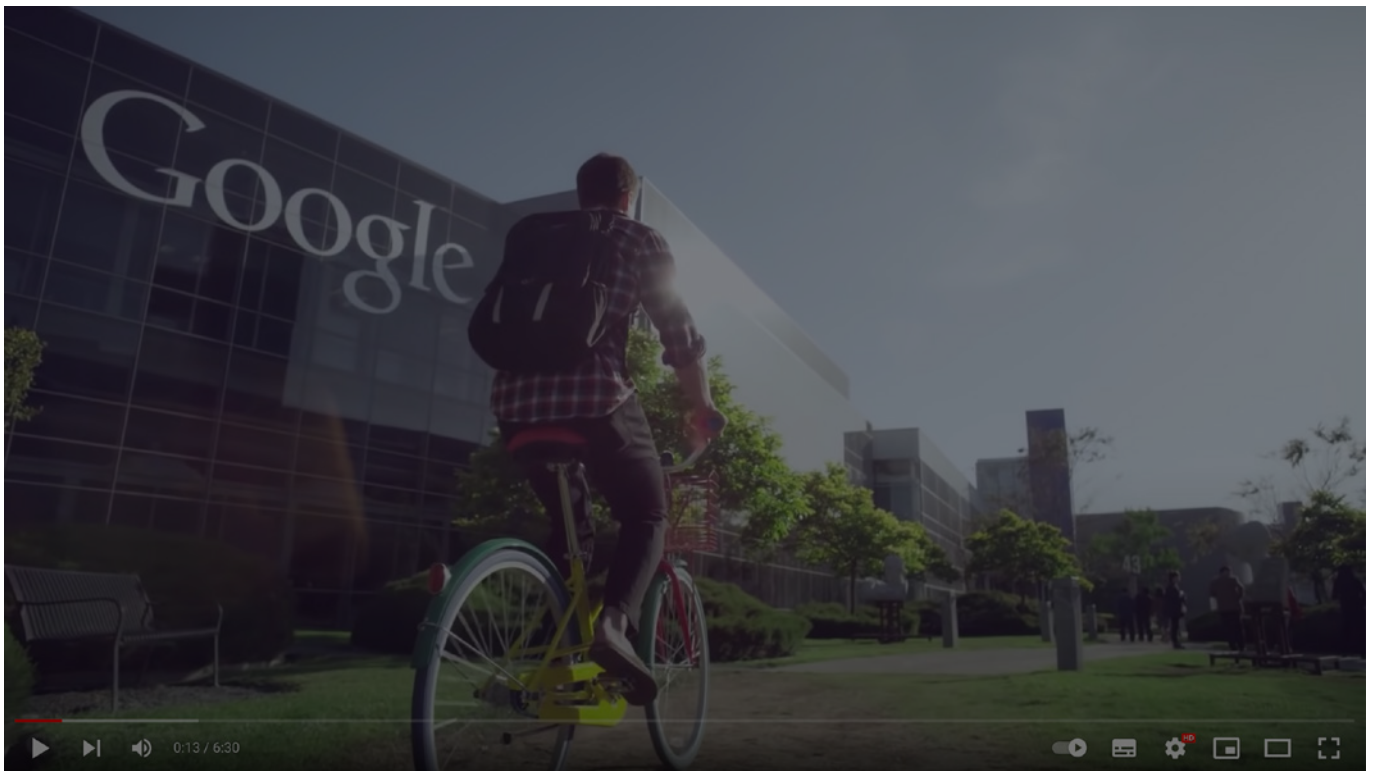
There’s no denying it: the future of the office space is changing, and quickly. The future of the office will be rebuilt to attract and retain talent in addition to fostering conversations and collaboration. How are companies redesigning their office spaces? Will the metaverse become the new office?

Are corporate office spaces disappearing?

Some large employers do appear to be pulling back on their office-space demands.

“Large companies don’t need all the space they had in the past because not everyone is back in the office fulltime,” Tosha Bontrager, Senior Director, Brand and Products, at WorkSuites, a coworking provider headquartered in Dallas, Texas, said in an interview with the Adecco Group.

This is especially evident among large tech companies, which have spent the better part of a decade competing to build the largest, most outlandish corporate campuses (see: Google). After Covid struck, Pinterest paid close to \$90 million to pull out of a San Francisco lease deal. Twitter began subleasing large swathes of its own San Francisco office space.



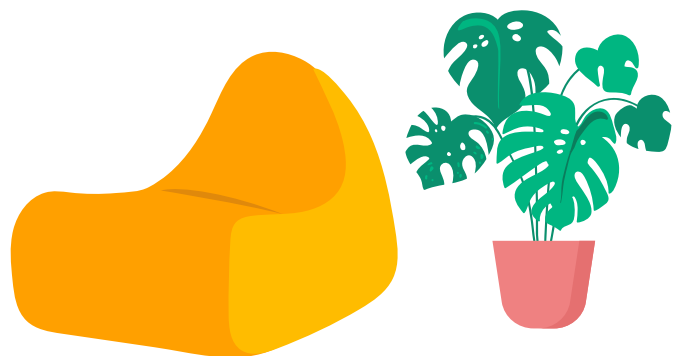
And it's not just tech firms. In a June study, 74% of cross-industry Fortune 500 CEOs said they expect an office-space pullback.

Discussing the hybrid work model, JPMorgan Chase's CEO predicted that **for every 100 workers, the financial services giant will require only 60 desks**. Instead of downsizing, the company is revamping their New York office space to draw workers in by including spaces to gather, places to sit quietly, places to socialize, and more work, eat and play outlets. *"They expect different kinds of seating, different places to*

set down their computer and informally walk around and meet," Amol Sarva, founder of Knotel, which provides flexible workspaces for companies, told JPMorgan Chase. *"They don't expect closed doors."*

But will corporate offices disappear? For Alain Dehaze, CEO at the Adecco Group, physical offices will never disappear - they will simply change.

"They play a vital role in the next normal. There are some areas where in-person, face-to-face contact is unrivalled. Those are culture, collaboration, and coaching," he said.



The world of work is moving to the metaverse

The *metaverse* may seem like just another buzzword right now, especially when tech companies like Meta (formerly Facebook) are revealing their plans to build virtual worlds. But these virtual worlds, where users can work, play, and socialize, are going to become a crucial part of the future of work.

In a way, tools like Microsoft Teams or Zoom are already a form of a Metaverse. In his annual end-of-year blog, *Bill Gates noted* that the pandemic has already “revolutionized” the workplace. “Those changes will only intensify in the years to come,” Gates writes. The remote work landscape will pull people into the metaverse, he argues.

“Within the next two or three years, I predict most virtual

meetings will move from 2D camera image grids...to the metaverse, a 3D space with digital avatars,” Gates writes in his *blog post*.

“The idea is that you will eventually use your avatar to meet with people in a virtual space that replicates the feeling of being in an actual room with them,” Gates continued.

To make this happen, people may need to wear headsets.

Not everyone may be tuned into the metaverse yet, but some tech companies are already working on it: In August 2021, Facebook announced their *Horizon Workrooms*, a place in the metaverse where workers can work together - online. Dial into *Horizon Workrooms* and work together, remotely.

How will communication change in the office of the future?

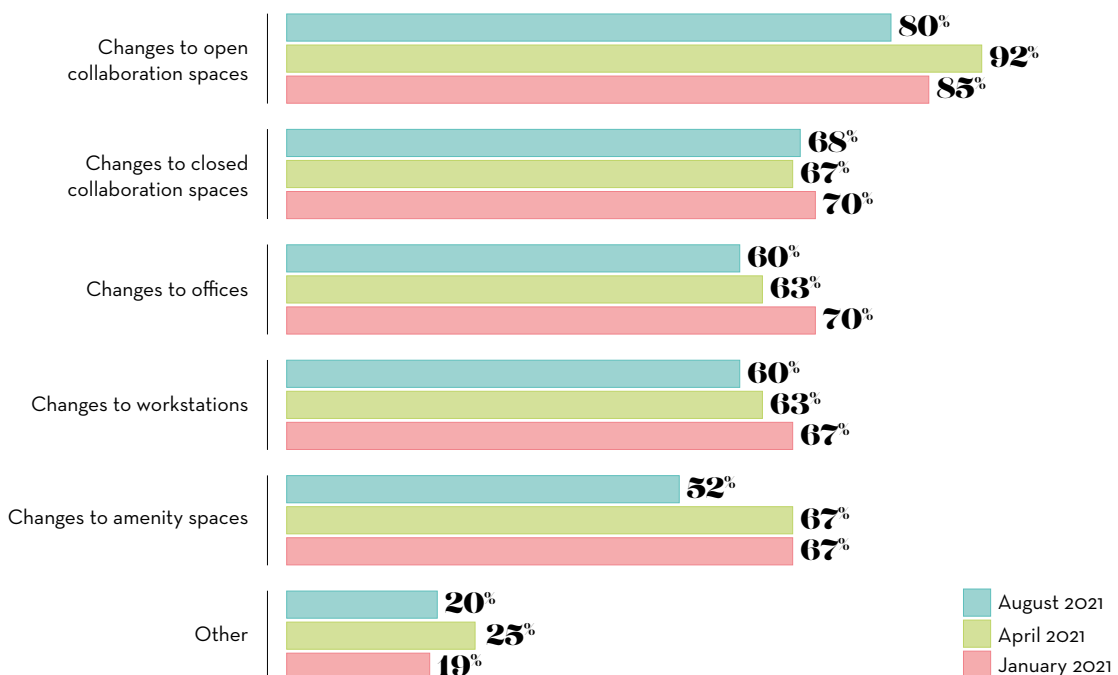
While virtual and remote working spaces like the metaverse will become a bigger part of our daily work, physical office spaces are likely to stay, but they will look vastly different than the pre-pandemic offices.

In a *recent survey* from commercial real estate services firm CBRE, 63% of organisations say they’re changing the way they design space, with a full 80% redesigning collaborative spaces.

Why the focus on collaborative spaces?

The answer revolves around the difference between heads-down work—administrative, creating or studying reports, and other solo activities—and heads-up work, which essentially means collaboration. While even heads-up endeavors can be performed virtually thanks to the explosion in tools such as Slack and Microsoft Teams, in the CBRE study, employers and employees alike named it as the top reason to return to the office.

Types of changes reported by occupiers



Changes vary by company size (large, global organisations are adapting better than smaller firms), industry (financial services and tech are leaders), and region (Europe and the U.S. are ahead of Asia). But whether it's a question of Bring Your Own Device policies, welcoming *pets to the office*, or better accommodating parents, employers are adjusting—because they must.

“We’re in the midst of an enormous talent war and everyone’s competing for the same people,” notes Brian Tolman, *Head of Product at Convene*, a company that designs and services next-generation workplaces. *“Folks are realizing they have to do something different in the workplace.”*

Naturally, changes to the physical workspace are a key component of this adaptation. Even if workers will spend only a day or two per week at the office, it's important to make the space safe, welcoming and useful.



Designing an office space that workers want to visit

Companies heading into 2022 face one key issue: talent scarcity. For many companies, it's becoming increasingly difficult to attract and retain top talent. Having that sleek, elegant workplace is no longer a “nice to have” feature – it's now an absolutely critical part of an employer's brand and culture.

It's all about making employees covet the office space. The idea is to create a sleek, elite facility reminiscent of a high-end members-only club—that is, a space that workers

will enthusiastically want to frequent. CBRE looked at firms' headquarters and found 58% are building auditoriums, 31% have outdoor spaces, and 69% have onsite baristas or coffee shops.

“We're going to see dynamic and flexible lounge environments and quiet spaces and team rooms and access to great food and beverages. The idea of the sea of desks with perimeter management offices is moving to the way-side,” Tolman predicts.



Employee feedback on office spaces is key

It's too early to tell whether better snacks and different desk layouts will work, but this raises another point about office space in a post-COVID world: Experts say that seeking and heeding employee feedback will be vital for companies.

"This is the time to test solutions, gather feedback, make necessary changes, adopt, assess and then repeat. Create next-level engagement with staff to kick-start a new office culture, post-pandemic," SmithGroup, a U.S. Architecture firm, puts it.



The newly redesigned Trip Advisor headquarters in the U.S. were redesigned to accommodate more collaboration opportunities and more team meetings. In addition, the office renovation included a fun quirk for each floor: every floor is themed after a different continent or area of the world.

Image Source: [Baker Design Group](#) via Office Lovin'

No longer will employees spend years in a cubicle farm, daydreaming about working their way over to that big corner office. Rather, the previously mentioned heads-down work will be performed at home or another offsite location, with heads-up work taking place in an office built for collaboration, connection and communication.

Even here, though, Covid's continuing influence is being felt, as is increasing comfort with digital collaboration tools.

"Communal coworking areas are less important than they were 18 months ago," WorkSuites' Bontrager told the Adecco Group in an interview. *"So we've made common workspaces smaller and added more private workspaces at new locations. We also include more private office use in our coworking memberships, so clients have the choice of working alone or sharing a space with a few other people. Cramming 20 people in a room to network with strangers seems less important to professionals."*

What does the office of the future look like?

For decades, large, open spaces were in favor among commercial architects. Their clients enjoyed the lower construction costs and the increased ability to keep an eye on employees, and claimed the open office improved collaboration—a claim that has remained largely unsubstantiated, by the way.

But long before Covid, some employees complained about noise, lack of concentration space, and even the health ramifications of these wide-open spaces, believing they allowed the common cold and other maladies to spread like wildfire. Regardless of the science on this question, the perception alone, when combined with a deadly pandemic, may sound the death knell for the open office.

However, as the pandemic enters its third year, furniture solutions, floorplans, and circulation plans will all be designed with easy changeability in mind. Architects say offices of the future will be designed from the ground up with this sort of adaptability in mind, adding that retrofitting existing spaces for improved flexibility is very much underway.

Here are some features and characteristics that will categorize the future of work and the future of the office space, according to experts:

Designing offices to focus around human health

In a post-Covid world with increased health concerns, employees clamor for operable windows. In a related trend, even before the pandemic hit, workers have been demanding easily operable shades.

Employers need to focus on redesigning spaces better suited for human health. “We’ve designed buildings for 100-year floods,” Kevin Van Den Wymelenberg, director of the Institute for Health in the Built Environment, told [NPR](#). “Now we have to learn to design for the 100-year flu.”

“There will be another epidemic or another pandemic – or there might just be another flu season,” Eve Edelstein, co-founder of the research-based design consultancy Clinicians for Design, told [NPR](#). “Let’s go ahead and design for that reality.”

What does that mean? Better hand washing stations, more hand sanitizer, and a general focus around providing clean and tidy spaces. There’s a big argument for spending time near more sunlight and open-air, so employees may need control of windows, blinds, and other systems that help them control their environment.

Speaking of systems, clean-sheet-of-paper office designs will change in ways not easily seen by the layperson. Highly sensitive MERV 15 filters, increased minimum relative humidity, bipolar ionisation, and germicidal UV lighting systems will all be in play.



In this rendering from Steinberg Hart, an office tower in San Jose, Calif., incorporates large central light to help maximize natural light on each floor. Source: Steinberg Hart via NPR

Building materials may also come into play, too. Asheshh Saheba, managing partner at the San Francisco office of the architecture firm Steinberg Hart, told [NPR](#) that employers may consider using high-performance natural construction materials, such as cross-laminated timber, in place of concrete, to create a more inviting office that is also environmentally sustainable office building in the long term.

Desk booking software and “hot desk” setups

In the office of the future, employees will sign up for desks as needed, just as they have long reserved conference rooms. Naturally, the mechanism for this will be a simple app.

Desk booking software has already become a popular feature for many offices as they try to navigate flexible working amid a pandemic. Software like Skedda are trying to tackle this by allowing people to see, in real time, who is in the office – and where they might be sitting.

Another trend: “Hot bunks,” an old naval term for submariners sleeping in shifts, are evolving into hot desks—temporarily occupied by those who sign up for them, as noted above. The architectural fallout here is that without desks and cubicles, workers will need lockable spaces for their personal items and gear. To address this need, architects are finding space for small lockers.

Transparency regarding building systems

More than ever, workers are demanding to know how safe their environments are. How many occupants are in a given space? What are the CO2 levels, and what measures are in place to adjust them?

When were public spaces last sanitised? Experts anticipate dashboards, available to all, that track these variables and others.

Changes in the space mix

As noted above, the vast open spaces of the past are obsolete. They will be carved up into smaller suites of offices, “focus rooms” for work requiring prolonged concentration, dedicated areas for video meetings, and so on.

Some employers are also empowering their employees to take ownership of the space, in hopes that they will want to visit more often. The Zappos headquarters, for examples, intentionally left lots of space for employees to decorate their halls and desks.



Image Source: Wikipedia, via [Turning Art](#)

Zoom rooms

Those rooms built around video collaboration deserve further explanation, given their importance. A cross between a television production facility and a conference room, they

feature audio/video capabilities, furniture, and lighting that allow participants to interact with someone half a world away as easily as with the colleague seated next to them.



Photo by Mikael Blomkvist from Pexels

New materials

Look for more copper (due to its *antimicrobial properties*) as well as surfaces and fabrics that can more easily be cleaned.



Alternative sites

With employees voicing their priorities in new ways, experts anticipate changes even at the outset of building construction. For example, today's interest in sustainability, combined with a desire to reduce commuting time (and the resources consumed therein), could prompt employers to repurpose unused or underused structures in the suburbs in which workers live. Imagine a vacant big-box store being converted for corporate use. Or an underperforming mall transformed into a hive of business hubs.

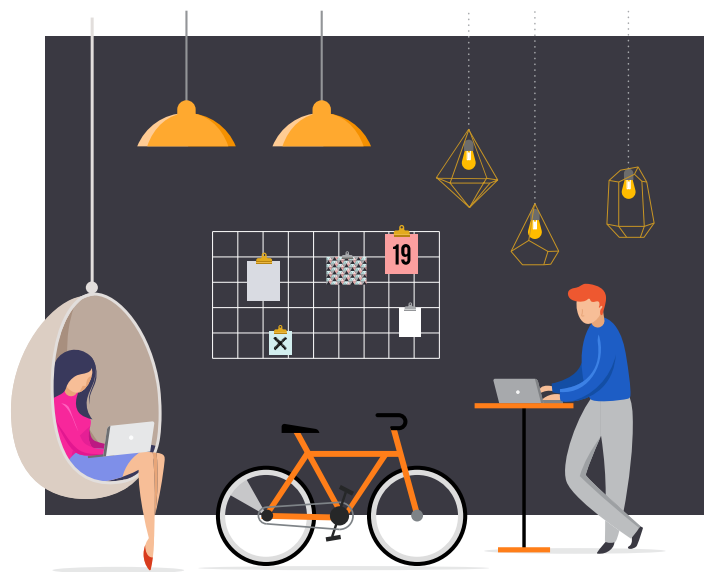
A glimpse of the future

As the Omicron variant proved starting late in 2021, predicting the future of anything is a perilous endeavour in today's world. However, we can study ongoing trends, including some that preceded the pandemic, and safely draw some conclusions.

For example, even before Covid hit, collaboration software, combined with near-universal broadband access, enabled global teams of knowledge workers unrestrained by geography. Add in the success of lockdown-enforced remote or hybrid work and it seems clear that the days of demanding that employees shuffle to their cubicles promptly at 9:00 a.m. are over.

Another long-term trend is the shift toward empowered workers who have a voice in decisions affecting them. With that in mind, it's easy to see that digital dashboards informing workers about building occupancy, traffic conditions, etc. are here to stay.

Covid-driven changes to office space are being made with flexibility in mind, so that if and when trends shift again, employers can respond without undue difficulty or expense. This may be the single most valuable lesson for businesses as the world learns to live with Covid.



Future of work conversations



In conversation with...

Bloomberg CHRO, Ken Cooper

On the first episode of our Future of Work Conversations series, Ken Cooper, the CHRO of Bloomberg, makes the argument for hiring new workers and employees that possess one key skill: the ability to quickly adapt and change to new situations.



WHAT'S THE MOST important skill new hires should possess nowadays? Ken Cooper, Chief Human Resources Officer at Bloomberg, always has the same answer when talking to students: adaptability.

When organizations hire new workers, they should be looking for people who can quickly adapt and change to evolving situations, Cooper told Cynthia Hansen, the managing director of the Adecco Group Innovation Foundation.

Organizations should consider hiring workers from diverse backgrounds as well. Workers with backgrounds in different industries may not seem like a natural fit for some positions, but their soft skills should be a larger focus in the hiring process.

[Listen to the full conversation on our podcast](#)

The future of work is constantly shifting – and fast. How can you keep up?

The Future of Work Conversations is a podcast all about the intersection of human talent, and leadership in the shifting world of work. Whether you're a CHRO leading a human resources function or a business leader, this podcast brings together experts, decision-makers and C-suites to discuss everything impacting the changing world of work – and how companies are shifting to become future-proof.

Dive deeper into the first episode of our Future of Work Conversations series, Ken Cooper, the Chief Human Resources Officer at Bloomberg, reveals the most important skill new hires should possess when applying to jobs. Likewise, when organizations hire new workers, they should be looking for this one skill. Listen to the full conversation with Cynthia Hansen, the managing director of the Adecco Group Innovation Foundation, now.

3 a-suite voice



Struggling to Retain Top Talent?

Try corporate empathy

Alain Dehaze, CEO at the Adecco Group

- The Great Resignation has left business leaders looking for new ways to attract and retain talent
- Talent turnover is expensive for businesses already struggling to recover post-pandemic
- Building a culture of corporate empathy could be one part of the solution

This article is part of the World Economic Forum's Davos Agenda

TODAY'S EMPOWERED EMPLOYEES have taken the driver's seat. They've got their foot on the throttle, both hands on the wheel, and are enjoying the ride for all it's worth. According to research on *global workers*, 41% of the workforce are considering changing jobs this year.

In a post-pandemic world with low barriers to job migration, today's leaders would do well to practice something that may not have occurred to them: corporate empathy. The concept is closely related to emotional intelligence: the ability to recognize, reason with, and regulate emotions, both in oneself and in others. Dr. Jochen Menges, Professor of Human Resource Management and Leadership and Director of the Center for Leadership in the Future of Work at the University of Zurich, says, "If leaders are able to read and regulate their own and their team's emotions, they can better help people navigate uncertainty and inspire people to seize opportunities."



The great re-evaluation: why we need a balanced approach

The factors leading to the “Great Resignation” are well understood. Leaders have pivoted to the question of how to excel in this environment – how to retain their best workers and attract new ones who will help them thrive. Understandably, they view pay increases as one of their primary tools.

The Resetting Normal study asked 15,000 workers about their priorities in 2022, and while salary is not unimportant, both culture and wellbeing issues ranked higher for 80% of workers.

Important aspects of working life by Generation [Top 5 - % not shown]

Trust & agency
 Culture & engagement
 Wellbeing
 Career & security

	Generation Z	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers
1st	Praise & recognition for good work*	Good salary / pay scheme		Being able to maintain a good work / life balance
2nd	Good salary / pay scheme	Being able to maintain a good work / life balance		Feeling trusted to get the job done
3rd	Strong enjoyable company culture*	Feeling trusted to get the job done		Good salary / pay scheme
4th	Good learning & development opportunities*	Feeling confident that my job is secure		
5th	Feeling trusted to get the job done	Retaining / having flexibility over my working hours / schedule		

* **Bold Statements** in Top-5 for Gen-Z only

Q20. How important will the following be to your working life after the pandemic? (NET Important) Base: Generation Z (380), Millennials (6,908), Generation X (6,159), Baby boomers (1,353)

Source: *The Adecco Group Resetting Normal 2021 Report*.

Leaders should consider two truths: first, talent turnover is an expensive problem and therefore must be solved. Second, it’s a problem that can be solved. For the most part, *employees leave* for reasons that are within the control of employers: culture, work environment, growth opportunities, and leadership disconnect. The tools are there to prevent the Great Resignation.

Before we explore one of the underutilized tools, a word about the traditional ones. While corporate empathy and culture issues are more important than ever, leaders cannot ignore other factors that make a workplace great. The work itself must be productive, the compensation fair. Social protections must be in place. Employees should have opportunities for personal development as well as the freedom to express their concerns, organize, and participate in decisions that affect them. Finally, equality of opportunity and treatment are mandatory.

“Corporate empathy is a proven key to boosting workforce engagement and talent retention, which in turn produce better business results”.

—Alain Dehaze.

Improving talent retention and producing better results

Of course, empathy is making a consistent effort to understand how others feel – putting oneself in someone else’s shoes. The concept is deeply ingrained in our personal lives, but scaling it to global organizations with hundreds or thousands of associates is challenging.

The empathetic organization embraces a culture, starting in the C-suite, that practices and values empathy. That means developing emotional intelligence at the enterprise level, and genuinely listening to and sympathizing with workers’ feelings. Empathy comes naturally to humans. It’s the right thing to do and it also brings business benefits. When employees feel heard, understood and cared for, they work harder, take more risks, and help others succeed. This in turn improves talent retention.

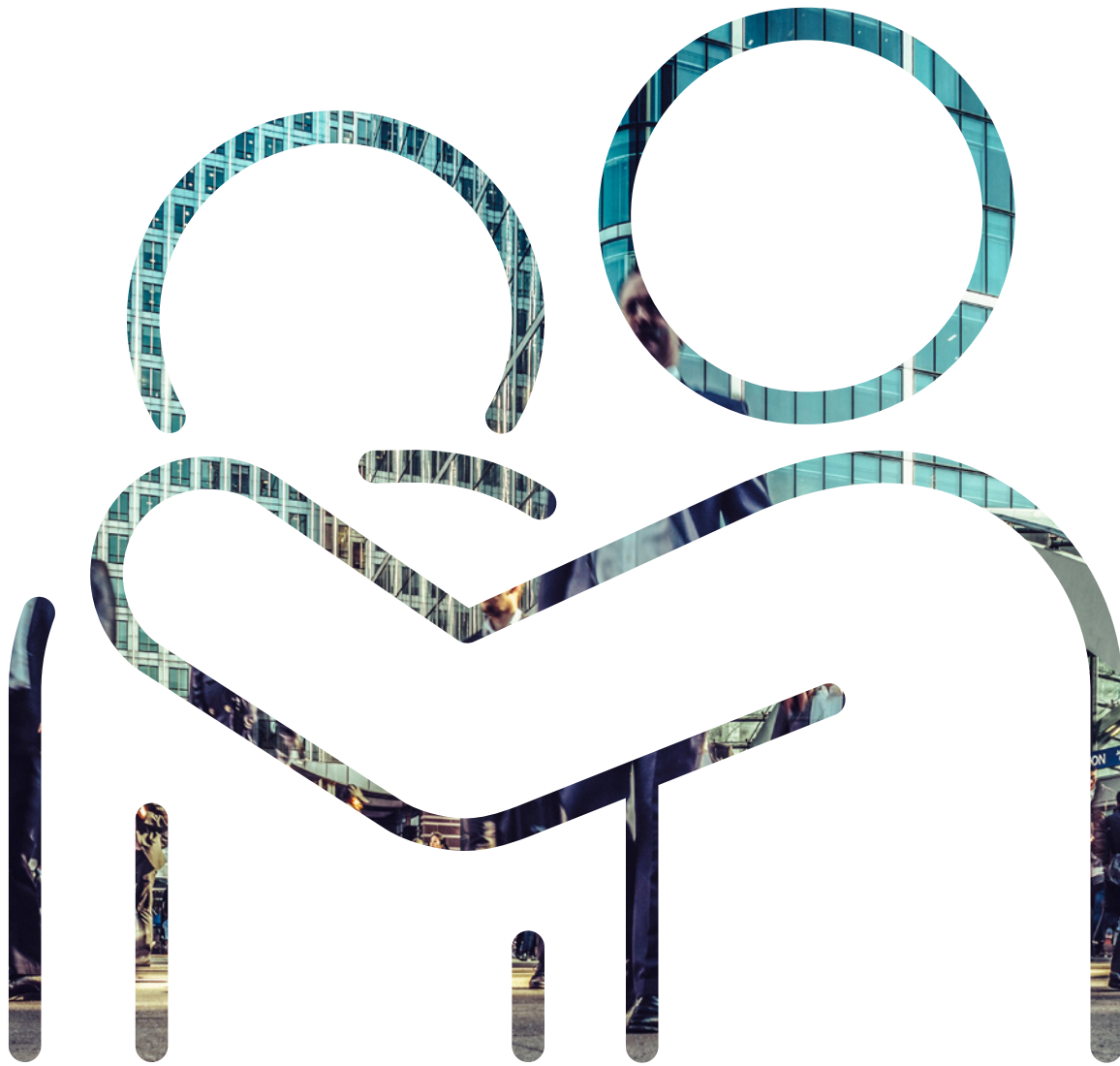
If corporate empathy is appropriate, natural, and beneficial, why is it often lacking? The answer pulls us back to the 20th century, a hierarchical time of stiff upper lips and bottled-up feelings. “Never complain, never explain” went the famed maxim of British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. To this day, unfortunately, many leaders fear they will lose respect if they show emotions and empathy in a business context.

We must put to rest this obsolete view. Corporate empathy demonstrates the strength of both the individual and the organization. Leaders with empathy are better at connecting with and supporting their employees, ultimately leading

to better results. Corporate empathy is a proven key to boosting workforce engagement and talent retention, which in turn produce better business results. What could be stronger than that?

Make no mistake – some organizations are gaining competitive advantage through empathy, according to Dr. Menges, “These companies care for their employees’ emotions, they help employees develop their emotional intelligence, and they embed these principles into the entire organizational system both formally (through HR processes, for example) and informally (through organizational culture).”





Taking steps to reboot corporate culture

Leaders whose organizations lack empathy may wonder how to change the culture. I wish I could say it's easy, but it requires focused, consistent effort that starts at the very top.

Keeping in mind that empathy by its very nature involves listening to others, many leaders have begun retention campaigns with "stay interviews." Where the notorious exit interview asks employees why they're leaving, a stay interview asks why they stick around. What motivates them? What improvements would they like to see? How would they like their career to progress?

Another vital component of corporate empathy is learning about, sympathizing with, and responding to employees' needs. Generational change has shifted priorities, and leaders who fail to respond will lose top talent. In one recent study, 72% of Gen Z employees called it important that their manager "makes time to develop and maintain relationships," and 64% said it's important that managers "openly share unique aspects of themselves with the team."

So much for never complain, never explain. A related message from younger workers is that building a more diverse and inclusive workplace is an absolute must.

Responses to worker needs take many forms. During COVID-19 lockdowns, many workers adopted pets and were loath to leave them when office work resumed. Forward-looking leaders have responded with more liberal (yet well-defined) policies allowing dogs and cats in the workplace, deeming such policies an easy way to keep top talent happy. However, the key to corporate empathy, is to listen rather than assume what workers want. Offering perks without understanding employee needs, can be a "hit-and-miss" for talent retention.

Empathy is deeply ingrained in our souls. Now it's time for leaders to inject it into the corporate soul. As Dr. Menges eloquently puts it, corporate empathy and emotional intelligence are vital and will grow even more so, "As ever more intelligent machines take on what we used to do with our heads and hands, people will increasingly rely on what they are able to do with their hearts."

21 Research



Delivery Pending:

Making The Gig Economy Work For Everyone

Instant delivery services have the potential to create real jobs while meeting consumer needs efficiently. But if the gig economy is to offer the protections and job quality that workers rightfully expect, all stakeholders must embrace certain responsibilities that amount to a New Social Contract.



OVER THE LAST 15 years, the ongoing globalisation and digitalisation of many industries have contributed to a proliferation of digital platforms of all kind, with instant delivery platforms in particular. The rise in number of both delivery platforms and affiliated workers has created a need to regulate the relationship between them.

In our new whitepaper, we analyse the delivery platforms' business ecosystem through the lens of working conditions, offering recommendations to platforms as well as policy makers to help promote a responsible, flexible model that creates a fairer relationship between delivery platforms and affiliated workers. These are based on a wide series of interviews with representatives from platforms, unions, as well as policy makers. Turn over to read some of our key takeaways.

A young and growing industry

How many times have you ordered a quick meal from Uber Eats or your local instant delivery platform? Platforms like Deliveroo or Just Eat have popped up in growing numbers in recent years, especially during the pandemic, acting as intermediaries between the customer; a supplier such as a restaurant or other merchant; and the delivery worker affiliated with the platform (whom we'll often refer to as a "rider"). The platform charges a commission to connect the three parties. Operating margins are thin in this world, often resulting in lower profits for merchants and less disposable income for delivery workers.

For platform workers, the most commonly cited benefits of this gig work are flexible hours, low barriers to entry, and easy access to income and work experience. As it turns out, though, the work is often unpredictable and the earnings heavily dependent on parameters set by the platform. As independent contractors, workers also typically lack the social benefits and protections that accompany direct employment.

Consistency is lacking

Today, there is no consistent regulatory framework that sets parameters for a "fair" relationship between the platform and affiliated workers. Policies vary by country; thus far, national or state-level courts generally make legal decisions related to the platform-worker relationship (especially workers' employment status) on a case-by-case or company-

specific basis. Top considerations for policymakers include workers' job and income security; access to benefits and social protections; career development opportunities; and the right to negotiate contracts.

Creating a more balanced relationship between delivery platforms and affiliated workers, while at the same time maintaining business growth and worker flexibility, will require an inclusive approach that results in a productive conversation at the policy level. Only this approach—featuring riders, unions, platforms, workforce solutions providers and academia—will create a mutually beneficial outcome.

We believe policymakers must address the complex question of how to redefine labour models for the digital age, including those for instant delivery work, to provide workers more options for economic stability, professional upward mobility, and certainty in their future. Effective solutions might include the following:

- Decoupling employment status from access to benefits
- Collective bargaining or cooperatives for negotiating platform workers' conditions
- Flexibility in contracts and employment models
- Government subsidies for platform workers' benefits
- Leveraging workforce solutions firms as a way to help platforms hire workers on a more flexible basis without becoming their direct employers



Source: Uber

The way forward

As stakeholders seek the most appropriate framework and standards for the instant delivery platforms industry, we at the Adecco Group introduce our labour market expertise to the discussion by advocating for three guiding principles outlined here.

1. Social protections should be key to all forms of platform work

Competition between platforms should not go at the expense of social protection for workers. In most countries, there are plenty of opportunities to organize decent flexibility for all platform workers when they are employees - including the agency work model. Equally, for those workers who truly appreciate the freedom that comes with self-employment, there are usually options for them to organize their own safety nets as they see fit. While this freedom for freelancers is important, governments should consider ways to protect vulnerable groups of self-employed by creating

universal basic protection, or an obligation for self-employed to buy into social protection systems.

2. Clear criteria are needed to define the worker status

Not all riders are self-employed, not all riders are employees. In most jurisdictions, especially in Europe, the difference between employment and self-employment lies in the autonomy of the worker versus the level of hierarchy exercised by the client or employer. Specific criteria might differ slightly between countries, but often mirror elements of the “*Yodel-criteria*,” named after the ruling by the European Court of Justice in 2020 identifying these criteria: the ability to accept or reject assignments, the ability to set working hours, non-exclusivity to one platform, and the ability to use subcontractors or substitutes. In other jurisdictions, particularly in the US, the focus is more on the “periphery vs. core activities” criteria. Regardless, the fact that a platform operates digitally cannot be seen as a determining factor.



3. The price for platform services should reflect the cost for social protection.

Many freelance riders today may not have the financial means to invest in organizing their own safety nets. Whichever way social protection is organized, it will bring some additional costs. It is also clear that none of the

stakeholders involved currently has the financial leeway to absorb these costs, and so the only way to maintain profitability for all stakeholders involved will likely be to increase the price for the end consumer.

The image features two pairs of glasses on a light blue background. The top pair has blue-tinted lenses and a thin metal frame. The bottom pair has orange-tinted lenses and a thicker metal frame. A teal graphic consisting of three overlapping leaf-like shapes is positioned behind the word 'Trends'.

Trends

Top 5 trends

from the world of work

The concept of a [four-day work week](#) started out a few years ago as a social experiment. The concept – giving employees an extra day off each week for the same pay – sounded implausible and unrealistic.

BUT THIS MONTH, two big tech companies are joining the movement and offering their employees a four-day work week. Plus, a new four-day work week trial begins in the UK for the first time with dozens of companies on board.

“I couldn’t imagine running a company any other way,” one CEO said. In our [2021 Resetting Normal research](#), there was overwhelming support for a more flexible working schedule in the future. Has the four-day work week finally become mainstream?

What else made headlines this month?

Studies show that [half of today’s 5-year-olds will live to 100](#). Here’s what that means for the world of work – and the **pace of work** as we know it.

Microsoft is [betting big on the metaverse](#): they’ve purchased gaming company Activision Blizzard, positioning them as a **major rival to Facebook**.

In the U.S., [workers quit their jobs](#) at record levels in November.

Last year was [Earth’s fifth hottest on record](#), European scientists announced.

[Ikea is cutting sick pay](#) for unvaccinated staff forced to self-isolate because of COVID exposure.

We’ve got a full breakdown of all the top headlines you can’t miss this month.

1. Growing number of companies around the world join the four-day work week revolution

Around the world, the idea of a [four-day working week](#) is [gaining traction](#). Now, the UK is joining the movement with a six-month trial period of the four-day working week. Approximately 30 British companies have signed on to take part in the pilot; employees will not see a loss in pay for working one fewer day a week. However, they will be asked to maintain 100% productivity for 80% of their time.

“The four-day week challenges the current model of work and helps companies move away from simply measuring how long people are “at work”, to a sharper focus on the output being produced. 2022 will be the year that heralds in this bold new future of work,” Joe O’Connor the pilot

programme manager for 4 Day Week Global, told [Metro](#). The UK trial will run alongside similar trials in the US, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Spanish and Scottish governments have already launched four-day work week trials.

Earlier in the month, Japanese company Panasonic announced an optional four-day work week for their employees. The move will allow workers to spend less time working – and more time volunteering, spending time with family, furthering their studies, or even picking up a side job, according to Panasonic CEO Kusumi Yuki. Read more at [Mashable](#).

The move comes after tech start-up Bolt announced their move to a four-day work week last week. The company said they first piloted the program last fall, and found the results were overwhelmingly positive. “I couldn’t imagine running a company any other way,” CEO Ryan Breslow told CNBC. The company found some overwhelming benefits to the

extended weekend, including streamlined work processes, happier employees, and greater productivity. Internal data found that 94% of workers and 91% of managers wanted to program to continue following the trail, and nearly 90% of both workers and managers reported greater productivity as a result. Read more at [CNBC](#).



2. Can remote workers keep Venice afloat? One pilot program hopes so

The newest remote work experiment is happening in Venice.

The historical city is facing a key problem: it’s historic center isn’t very populated anymore. But the new Venice-based project *Venywhere* is hoping to change that by attracting young, skilled and nomadic workers to their city.

Italian officials are looking to bring in young workers who want to live in Venice, not just visit. The move comes after similar program have cropped up in Italy and around the world. These cities, which have long relied on tourism to drive revenue, want to diversify their economies and help repopulate the historic centers.

The Venice project has been designed with freelancers and remote workers in mind, but they are also hoping to entice companies to send their teams to live in Venice for months-long stints.

“The pandemic has created a large population of highly skilled people who want to move,” says Venywhere founder Massimo Warglien, a professor of management at the Università Ca’ Foscari. “It’s a way of repopulating Venice.”

Unlike other programs, though, Venice will ask workers to pay a one-time fee to ease them into life in the city. That fee covers apartment viewing assistance from afar, help with the healthcare system, and more. Read more at [Bloomberg](#).





Photo by Ono Kosuki from Pexels

3. Why is it considered okay to be ageist at work?

In 2018, Ian Tapping, a project manager at the Ministry of Defence, met with his human resources team. He had been in a dispute with his employer, and wanted to make a harassment claim.

In that meeting, his HR manager bluntly asked him when he intended to retire. Tapping, in his early 60s, quit his job and sued the company for age discrimination.

Last month, he won the case when a judge ruled that it is illegal to ask someone about their retirement plans unless they have brought it up themselves.

But survey after survey establishes the same thing: people over 50 find it much more difficult to get job interviews, and

they are more likely to be eased out of existing jobs.

Although ageism is everywhere in the world of work, few victims take their case to court like Tapping.

“It’s still under the radar,” Lyndsey Simpson, founder of the employment website 55/Redefined, told the *Financial Times*, *“because people don’t want to go on the record. They think they’ll be attacked and they think it will be career-limiting. I’ve lost count of the number of men who are turned down for jobs and are told: you are overqualified, or you don’t meet our diversity requirements.”*

Read more at the [Financial Times](#).

4. How work from home affects (and imperils) work-friend prospects

Can you make new friends and forge strong bonds with new colleagues when all your communications are digital?

Most adults are likely to make friends at work over any other place, according to [Gallup research](#).

But with so many workplaces moving to the virtual space, one [Boston Magazine](#) piece argues that it may become even more difficult to make new friends. With remote work, gone

are the days of water cooler chats or lunchtime gossip.

“Work gives us social connections, professional friends, personal friends,” says Tsedal Neeley, a professor at the Harvard Business School. She sums it up in one word: nourishment.

Read the full piece at [Boston Magazine](#).



Photo by Fox from Pexels

5. Buffering burnout as you return to the office

How many days has the pandemic lasted? It's been nearly two years, and many workers have adjusted to their new normal - whether that be work from home or masks in the office or something in between.

As workers start their journeys to return to the office, there's talk of burnout amid inevitable resistance. Why?

"We're not re-emerging refreshed and ready to go, it's actually quite the opposite," says Mary Spillane, a clinical psychologist and the Australian mental health expert for the Headspace app.

How can we battle burnout on the return to the office heading into the new year? Dr Mark Deady, a workplace mental health specialist at Black Dog Institute, suggests trying these tips:

- Don't compare yourself to others
- Bounce forward and take steps to live the kind of life you want
- Use healthy coping strategies to tackle problems
- Take steps to craft your job, or balance demands of the job with resources, abilities, and needs
- Reach out if you need help

Read more at the [*Sydney Morning Herald*](#).



Photo by Polina Tankilevitch from Pexels

Editor's picks



What workers in 10 countries really want

Christophe Catoir, President of Adecco.



Adecco

The pandemic has changed what workers are looking for from their employers, and companies have not yet fully understood the extent of the change. That is the take-home message from a survey conducted by Adecco in 10 countries.

THE RESEARCH SPANNED ten countries and the Latin America region. We gathered perceptions of more than a thousand workers and 155 companies, to compare what workers want and what employers think that workers want.

At first glance, employers and workers seem to be aligned on the main criteria that motivate people to apply for a job. They agree that salary is the top consideration, with the

next two positions occupied by workplace atmosphere and opportunities for career development.

However, companies tend to overestimate the importance of salary – 72% of companies mention it as a main factor, compared to 53% of workers. Companies also put too much stock in their own reputation – collectively, they think that working for a well-known employer is the 7th-biggest attraction for workers, whereas workers themselves rate it down in 16th.

Top 3 criteria for workers & companies for choosing a job

#1

Salary

#2

Work Atmosphere

#3

Career Development

Post-Covid, workers want flexibility

Conversely, employers underestimate the extent to which Covid has made workers more attuned to questions of health, safety and wellbeing at work. Interesting job content and the flexibility to work from home – or even from another country – are among the factors more important to workers than companies have realised.

Indeed, Covid has made workers value all types of flexibility, especially in their working schedule and locations. This is especially the case in the UK, Germany and the US, where 22% of workers said they valued the option to work full-time at home, compared to a global average of 9%. Women are more likely than men to rank flexibility as a major factor.

This trend is backed up by anecdotal evidence, for example, a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* reports on how Amazon is driving up wages for warehouse workers: unable to compete on salary, some other employers are competing instead by offering greater flexibility.

Our survey found other differences between regions and generations. Workers in France and Belgium were especially likely to prioritise salary, whereas those in Italy and India place relatively greater weight on career development. GenZ and GenY workers are more likely to be swayed by salary, while older generations focus more on the content of the job and work atmosphere. Only workers in Latin America and Spain tend to prefer collaborative to individual work, though companies think this preference applies more widely.

Companies should rethink leadership styles

When we asked employers what is the main leadership style in their company, their top choice was “pacesetter” leaders, who push for results more quickly. However, when we asked workers what kind of leader they want to work for, pacesetters were not among the top three responses.

Instead, the most common choice – selected by one in four – was “charismatic leaders” who can inspire with a vision. This is closely followed by “servant leaders”, who prioritise the welfare of their workers. Both choices can be seen as reflecting the post-pandemic desire for work to bring a sense of meaning and wellbeing.

The third most common response among workers is that leadership style is not important to them, as long as they are happy at work. This was an especially common response in Belgium, France and Germany.

Another question concerned what kind of social responsibility workers are most interested in from their employer. Here we found a regional split, with workers in Anglo-Saxon countries focusing more on responsibility, transparency and ethical standards, while in continental Europe the higher priority is diversity, inclusion and social justice.

Workers are happy with digital recruitment

Our survey revealed a final important mismatch in expectation between employers and workers – around the recruitment process itself. Recruitment is becoming digital, and candidates are moving more quickly than companies.

We increasingly hear workers, especially in the younger generation, say that they are happy to be recruited via digital processes. Our survey shows that employers have yet to catch on to this: 35% of workers (49% of Gen Z) said they would be happy with an online recruitment process, whereas employers believed this would be true for only 9%.

Similarly, workers are more open than employers expect to have their skills assessed by an online quiz during the recruitment process, and on an ongoing basis.

At Adecco, we are proud to say we change the lives of millions of people every year by finding them employment that suits their needs. We see that the pandemic has changed what workers are looking for, and we urge employers to keep their fingers on the pulse.

Read the Executive summary of the survey [here](#).



Body Language

in the Hybrid Workspace



Photo by Zichuan Han from Pexels

As Modis and many other global organisations increasingly move towards a hybrid of office and remote working, it's clear that the workforce of 2021 and beyond will be creating connections through the computer screen as much as the traditional office. But with non-verbal cues essential to person-to-person communication, what do the workers of 2021 and beyond need to consider when creating working relationships with colleagues in the virtual environment?

AS THE RECENT report *Resetting Normal: Defining the New Era of Work*, The Adecco Group and Modis' new comprehensive global study shows, 71 percent of the global workforce report having created effective remote working environments for themselves since the start of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic.

But given that up to 93% of person-to-person communications can be non-verbal there is a risk that video conferenc-

ing's reliance on appearance on camera provides us with ways both to disengage with our colleagues and to unwittingly display a lack of interest in a way that would not be considered acceptable in the office environment.

So, how can candidates circumvent these Zoom or Teams issues and engage with their potential employers?

It all comes down to body language.



Keeping engaged on and offline

Recent studies show that video calls leave us unable to detect non-verbal cues, Gallery views challenge the brain's "central vision", in-person communications make us happier and watching our own faces is mentally exhausting.

So rather than sinking into a chair during online meetings, try to sit up straight and distribute weight evenly, imagining a thread holding us up without tension.

This posture indicates openness and willingness, showing colleagues we are taking an interest in what they have to say, and making them feel at ease.

And don't forget to focus on the speaker and adjust your posture so that you keep your attention on the other person rather than your own face.

Power-up your body language

In 2012, social psychologist Amy Cuddy theorised that when entering “social threat situations” dominant parties assert themselves with strong, open poses while the “weaker” party withdraws. This can increase levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, making us feel more anxious in a social threat situation like an interview.

So before your next meeting why not try spending two minutes beforehand practising “power poses”. Arms held high, chin up or limbs spread helps us to build confidence. This is not an invitation to channel Freddie Mercury during a Zoom interview, but rather to charge ourselves up with testosterone and feel confident beforehand.

Making an impact in the office

Those returning to the workplace after many months of homeworking may have changed their expectations, so managers should be cautious of this too says Joe Navarro, former body language expert for the FBI. He advises taking a pause and observing our surroundings before diving in and making sure to be aware of co-workers’ preferences and fears.

Likewise, COVID has had an impact, so if people are not ready to be tactile just yet, we should respect that. “Look to see if your staff make eye contact and turn their feet towards you. If we’re comfortable around people, we turn our bellies towards them.”

As we move into the post-covid pandemic world Modis is committed to creating an inclusive workplace that allows all employees to thrive and develop and be respectful of needs. Discover more at [modis.com](https://www.modis.com).

Photo by Mikhail Nilov from Pexels

How to have your vacation and be a better leader too

LHH

by Robert Hosking, Senior Vice President, Managing Director - Search Practices at LHH.

THERE IS A moment during every one of my vacations when I start to hear Al Pacino's voice in my head.

It's the seminal scene from *Godfather III* when an aging Pacino laments his inability to free himself from the criminal clutches of the family business.

"Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in."

Indeed, every time I think I'm safely on vacation, my job pulls me back in.

Even when I plan months in advance, lay all the groundwork for a well-earned respite, I find myself slowly drawn back into the day-to-day of my job.

I change my voice mail to direct callers to someone else, activate my out-of-office reminder and notify just about anyone who needs to know that I'm going to be away.

It doesn't take long before the unanswered calls begin to queue up on the home screen of my mobile phone.

And then, I start getting those emails: *"I know you're on PTO but ..."*

The next thing I know, I'm spending an increasing amount of time each day responding to email. I start to answer some of those calls. It doesn't take long before I'm agreeing to jump on a couple of video calls.

It leaves me feeling like I need a vacation from my vacation.

Why is it so hard for leaders to take time off? In part, it's because right now it's hard for everyone to take time off from work, particularly leaders.

The epidemic of unused vacation time

When you think about the ways in which work creeps back into our vacation time, perhaps it's not surprising that many of us just don't use the PTO (paid/planned/personal time off) we've earned.

A 2021 LHH [survey](#) on LinkedIn revealed that an astounding 35 percent of respondents didn't use any vacation time in

the previous year, and 34 percent only used some of the days they were owed. Only 19 percent - less than one in five - used all the vacation they had earned.

This survey was consistent with a trend established in 2020, the first year of the global pandemic, which saw travel restrictions trigger a significant decline in the amount of vacation time used. A [December 2020 survey](#) by IPX1031, a global investment property exchange firm, found that 37 percent of respondents had put their travel plans on hold indefinitely and another 20 percent were planning to take time off but didn't know when.

It should be noted that this chronic inability to take the time that we've earned predates the pandemic.

[Research](#) from the U.S. Travel Association showed that in 2018, American travelers left 768 million PTO days unused, which represented more than a quarter of all the paid vacation time provided by employers.

We're also reluctant to take time off when we're sick or burned out.

A [2020 global survey](#) from Aetna International, one of the world's largest providers of health benefits, found more than half of all employees with a diagnosed mental health issue lied to their managers about the reasons they were taking time off, if they took time off at all; 30 percent of respondents said they did not take a single sick day, while 47 percent said they would not take a sick day even if they were suffering from crippling stress.

Those findings echo data from a 2021 global survey done by The Adecco Group, which drilled deep into the pandemic-era working experience. This survey found that globally 40 percent of respondents who worked remotely were reluctant to take time off when they were sick.

That same survey showed quite clearly the consequences of not taking time off, either as vacation or to recover from a physical or mental health issue: burnout. The survey found that worldwide 40 percent of respondents were suffering from burnout.

Antidotes to PTO reluctance

Recognizing that the inability to take time off from work is taking a huge toll on their people, some of the world's biggest companies are employing some radical strategies.

PricewaterhouseCoopers has *started to pay* its people \$250 for every week of vacation they take off. Citigroup CEO Jane Fraser *recently announced* she was banning video calls on Fridays and had designated May 28 as "Citi Reset Day," a company-wide, one-day holiday.

"I know, from your feedback and my own experience, the blurring of lines between home and work and the relentlessness of the pandemic workday have taken a toll on our well-being," Fraser wrote in a company-wide memo. *"It's simply not sustainable."*

We need to do something to help our people recharge their batteries. But affecting this kind of change is not going to happen organically; leaders need to be deliberate in rebooting policies and strategies so that they can truly get away from the job for a few days. Here are three practices that can help you take the time off you need to recharge:

1/ How many layers of approval do you really need?

One of the things that constantly intrudes on my PTO is when people need to get my approval for various decisions: big expenditures, contract approvals, troubleshooting problems for a client. Although there are always going to be some things that are so big, you need to be involved, you do need to delegate a bit more responsibility for medium-to-large decisions. Done properly, it can make your team stronger, both in confidence and in performance.

2/ Nominate someone to stand in for you in meetings and decisions.

As a close cousin to my first suggestion, it will be a lot easier to get away from the office if you have a clear "Number Two" in place. Think of it as part of a succession plan; empowering and training someone to stand in for you ensures there is capacity on your team to not only cover you on vacation, but in the event you need to unexpectedly be out of the office or are getting ready to retire. It will allow you to see who is, and who is not, wired for leadership.

3/ Specify when it's okay for someone to intrude on your PTO.

Work is important and you want people on your team who are dedicated and put in lots of discretionary effort. But set boundaries. Working at home during the pandemic, it seems like many people never actually finish their workdays. Put limits on calls and emails outside of business hours. This won't only give you more breathing room, it will help ease the stress on your team.

PTO is not just an earned benefit; it's a crucial commodity needed for any high-performing leader or team. Even the most resilient leaders become worn down by the pressures of the job and the rigors of the pandemic.

Remember, you need some time off to be the best possible leader you can be. Plan and then, enjoy.

insights

on the Future@Work

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