Shifting Nature of Work: COVID-19 and Beyond

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You are right! You are **working longer**.

3.1 million people in 16 global cities found that average workday increased by 8.2% or 48.5 minutes
You are right! You are sending more emails.

More emails and more recipients

Employees started sending more emails each day as COVID-19 lockdowns started.

Source: "Collaborating During Coronavirus: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Nature of Work"
You are right! You are **sending more emails**.

**More meetings, but less face time**

Employees started meeting more often, but for less time overall.

Source: "Collaborating During Coronavirus: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Nature of Work"
You are right! You are **sending more emails**.

**Remote workdays blur the boundaries**

Employees—presumably coping with more interruptions at home—started sending more emails after business hours when lockdowns started, lengthening the workday.

Average workday duration in hours | Emails sent after hours
--- | ---
8.0 | 7.5
7.0 | 6.5
6.5 | 8 weeks before... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 weeks after

Source: "Collaborating During Coronavirus: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Nature of Work"
Some are likely struggling to concentrate

Others are doing their best work ever
AGENDA

1) WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO WFH SUCCESS
2) DELVE INTO WFH FOR KNOWLEDGE WORKERS
3) STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVING AND THRIVING IN WFH
4) BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES FOR ENCOURAGING WFH
5) WHERE NEXT
WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO WFH SUCCESS
Remote Working Survey - Global

- ~75 Questions
- Ran for ~6 weeks
- Collected a total of over 44,000 responses
Remote Working Survey

44 States

88 Countries
Remote Work Ecosystem

- Time and Tasks
- Home Environment
- Workplace
- Resources
- Challenges
- Personality
- Demographics
Time and Tasks
Time and Tasks

How are people spending their time before and during COVID? What is ideal?

People are **sleeping more and spending more time with their family**...

...but they’d like these hours to increase even more.

People have lost **productive work time** and gained **unproductive work time**.

*all differences significant at p<0.05 compared to before COVID.*
Time and Tasks

What about *where* people were working and where they want to work?

Whereas people were mostly working from their offices before COVID, they’d like to balance their work hours between *the office and home* in the future.

*all differences significant at p<0.05 compared to before COVID.*
Workplace
Remote Work Opinions

What about *where* people were working and where they want to work?

- My supervisor has a positive attitude towards working remotely
- My supervisor trusts me to work remotely
- Working remotely provides a competitive edge
- The option makes me less likely to look for another job
- Working remotely negatively impacts being promoted
- Working remotely is an important factor in my choice of job
- Working remotely is a win-win for me and my employer
- In the future, I will request to work remotely
- I would support a remote working policy
Workplace Factors

How does perception of organizational support impact remote work?

Those who perceive high organizational support report working more productive hours during COVID and have gained productive working time.

(statistically significant at p<0.05)
Does Remote Work Reduce VMT

This is still a debate...

(Kim, 2018) Findings from Korea suggest that telework reduces commuting. But when measuring travel impacts on a household level, travel increases for other purposes and by other household members, leading to an overall increase in VMT.

(Zhu & Mason, 2014) Findings suggest that teleworkers have higher VMT for work trips and non-work trips.

(Riggs, 2020) Suggests that telework has resulted in fewer miles traveled but more daily trips. Data also suggests that people still conduct short errands (shopping, etc.) via driving.

(Curtis, 2020) found that increases in telework could lead to a 32% decrease in GHG emissions by 2030.
Home Environment
Home Environment

Are those with long commutes under normal circumstances affected differently?

Those with long normal commutes report working more productive hours during COVID and the smallest loss in productive hours during COVID compared to before COVID. (statistically significant at p<0.05)
Employees with kids under 18 are losing more productive time than their counterparts without kids under 18 (especially those with very young kids). (statistically significant at p<0.05)

There is not a difference in productive time between those with and without pets. (p=0.48)
Com 50% dos servidores em casa, União avalia desempenho no teletrabalho

Governo federal define novas regras para o teletrabalho

The Center and Government Partners Contribute To a Teleworking Policy Shift for Brazilian Federal Employees
WFH FOR KNOWLEDGE WORKERS
Time Use Among Knowledge Workers

● We will emerge from this period with a “new normal” for how works get done

● **Guiding Questions**
  ○ What will that new normal be?
  ○ What will we learn that might make work better in the future?
  ○ What might we partner to do to ensure positive changes can be sustained and negative changes be mitigated?
  ○ How can we include safe and active transportation in this conversation?
**Time Use Among Knowledge Workers**

- Our team spoke with **20 Management Consultants**
  - We interviewed all levels (10 female, 10 men)
    - 1 Associate, 7 Consultants, 4 PLs, 4 Principals, 4 Partners
  - Structured interviews for 30-60 minutes
  - We honed in on Project Leaders based on:
    - Time Management Concerns
    - Emerging Work Practices
    - Collaboration
    - Socializing
Time Use Among Knowledge Workers

- **Next, we conducted interviews with 20 Project Leaders and Principles**
  - We interviewed 10 Principles and 10 Project Leaders
  - We conducted Semi-Structured interviews between 30-60 minutes
- **We reached out to 4 teams to conduct interviews and experiments:**
  - **Team 1:** Principle, Female (1x Associate)
  - **Team 2:** Principles, Male (1x Associate, 1 Consultant, 3 Associates)
  - **Team 3:** Project Leader, Female (1x Consultant)
  - **Team 4:** Principle, Male (4 Associates + Consultants)
Building Blocks of “Team Time”

- Q: What are the types of time teams need to get work done and thrive?
  - Process Time
  - Collaborative Content Time
  - Individual Thinking Time
  - Relationship Time
  - Huddle Time
  - Red Light Time
  - Green Light Time
Building Blocks of “Team Time”
Building Blocks of “Team Time”

**Process Time**
- Time teams spend structuring the work that needs to get done, e.g., check-ins, updates, agenda setting.
- Becomes unmanageable in virtual work, overtaking time needed for individual work or personal breaks.
- Some teams resorted to Slack check-outs to reduce burden.

**Collaborative Content Time**
- Time teams spend completing core output and work tasks, e.g., white board time.
- More difficult due to less time scheduled for collaborative work and technology.
- Some teams have open-ended meetings or zoom rooms to improve virtual collaborative time.

**Individual Thinking Time**
- Time that individual team-members spend working on core output.
- Interviewees struggle with this in both physical and virtual work environments.
- Some employees block time in their shared team calendar for “heads-down time.”

**Relationship Time**
- Time teams spend getting to know each other or to learning about the client, work, task or the firm outside of content.
- Includes feedback and development time.
- In virtual work, it is harder for junior team members to connect with clients and senior managers.
Building Blocks of “Team Time”

**Huddle Time**
- Time teams spend debriefing and discussing information learned at an earlier, scheduled meeting.
- Often unscheduled “collective sensemaking.”
- In virtual work, more people are at the meetings, but there are fewer informal debriefs.

**Red Light Time**
- When an individual team member is unavailable to the rest of the team in the workday, due to individual work, meetings or breaks.
- In virtual work, individuals feel perpetually on-call, and do not know when they can take “red light time” for work or personal.

**Green Light Time**
- When an individual team member is doing solo activities (personal or work) and is available to the rest of the team for questions or to engage in collaborative work on an as-needed basis.
- In virtual work, reliance on technology means more green-light time for teams.

**Breaks/Boundaries**
- Blocks that facilitate transitions between different tasks at work or different personal roles.
- Often missing in virtual work due to back-to-back meetings, no commute time, and having to be on 24-7 with few clearly communicated breaks.
## General Suggestions

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<th>Communication</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Culture</th>
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<td><strong>Communicate Structure</strong>: When do teams need to be on vs. don’t?</td>
<td><strong>Limit “Process” Time</strong>: Schedule check-outs over Slack or email.</td>
<td><strong>Share Responsibility for Red-Light Time</strong>: Encourage the entire team to “own” the responsibility of keeping the pace of work sustainable. Junior colleagues should also be responsible for helping senior colleagues slow down. This collaborative style provide the opportunity for junior employees to step up, furthering their development.</td>
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<td><strong>Contract the Day</strong>: Contract the day as much as possible. Decide to meet as a team only when it is entirely necessary.</td>
<td><strong>Schedule “Collaborative Time”</strong>: Schedule collaborative time with no agenda, where the team can interact, surface problems and questions, and learn from one another. These team meetings should be “ideation discussions” with no agenda or slides to enable stress-free, open-ended collaborative conversation.</td>
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INDIVIDUALS SURVIVING AND THRIVING
Individual-level Strategies for Well-being

1. Create Your Own Commute (Break)
2. Give Yourself a Feierabend (Boundary)
3. Focus on a Daily “Must-Win”
4. Put “Proactive” Time in Your Calendar
5. Rethink work structures (3-2-2) weeks
Encouraging WFH if desired

- Normalize talking about safety to encourage safe social decisions
  - **Good**: “This service change is to keep you safe”
  - **Good**: “This service change is due to COVID”
  - **Bad**: “This is to keep our employees/me safe”
- This strategy also works at the individual level
  - **Okay**: “Sorry I can’t go, and you shouldn’t either”
  - **Better**: “Sorry I can’t go, and you shouldn’t either. Spending time in groups of any size risks spreading COVID more.”
- Focus on well-being and minimize social impression concerns
Strategies for Encouraging Active Mode-Shift

1. Communicate Norms About Mode Shift and WFH

2. Encourage Active Transportation before Employees go Back to Work

3. Ask Employees to Commit to Changing Their Transportation Habits
   • Write down detailed actions including anticipated feelings
   • Consider barriers and how to overcome them
   • Communicate personalized travel plans to make changes easy
WHERE NEXT
Travel Rewards Research Pilot: **Partner Structure & Research Approach**

**Research Question:** What incentives have the best ROI to shift SOV to non-SOV?
Resources


8. https://www.amazon.com/Time-Smart-Reclaim-Your-Happier/dp/1633698351/ref=tmm_hrd_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&amp;qid=&amp;sr=

9. https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/6-ways-to-support-covid-weary-employees


11. https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/you-re-right-you-are-working-longer-and-attending-more-meetings