DNA Test of Work From Home

**Adapting to the new normal :
The key to Corporate Future**

PIONEER
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT PVT. LTD
Talent Is Not An Online Commodity

Index

Purpose:
How The Research on DNA Test of Work From Home came into Picture

- To explore work from home effectiveness and organizational and employee preparedness to embrace the new normal.
- To analyze the benefits and the challenges encountered by the Working professionals in adopting to remote working.
- Role of the organizations in ensuring the mental and physical welling of their employees.
- The likely impact of Covid-19 on future workplace plans, designs, and practices.

On 2nd March 2020, Speaking at the COVID-19 media briefing, the **Director-General of WHO, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,** emphasized that the virus is capable of community transmission. Kerala recorded India's first confirmed COVID19 case in India

on 30th Jan 2020, complete Lockdown came into effect on 25th March 2020, wherein complete movement of life and business was restricted. No one had fathomed the scale of impact COVID 19 pandemic would have on our lives and businesses.

During the onset of this abrupt lockdown, everyone was in a dire state of an anomaly. The whole corporate world was disconcerted and quite doggy for the continuation of work in the near future. *COVID-19 pandemic has enforced the concept of remote working i.e. 'Work from Home' (WFH) into an officially mandated, strictly enforced rule to ensure safety and to contain the spread of the virus.* The compulsion to Work from home became a survival rule for the companies and their employees alike, either adopt or perish.

This sudden unforeseen transition made not only the organizations but also the employees uncertain and braced. Gradually this dubiety came to a little rest, and the new normal started establishing itself, which hence made us meticulously observe the ins and outs of remote working. However, with passage of time and accumulating more experience on the nuances during the nationwide lockdown, some made it successfully through all the thick and thin but, some still face the struggles of remote working.
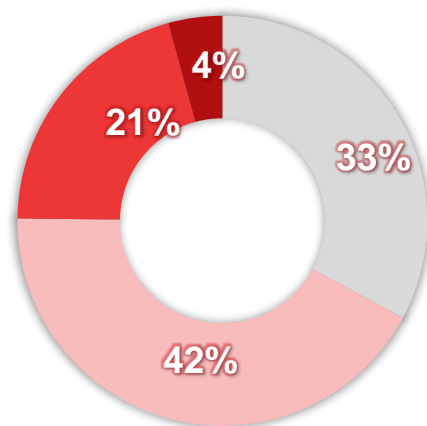
SURVEY DETAILS

Organization Strength

Upto 50	21%
50-250	23%
251-500	10%
501-1000	9%
1001+	37%
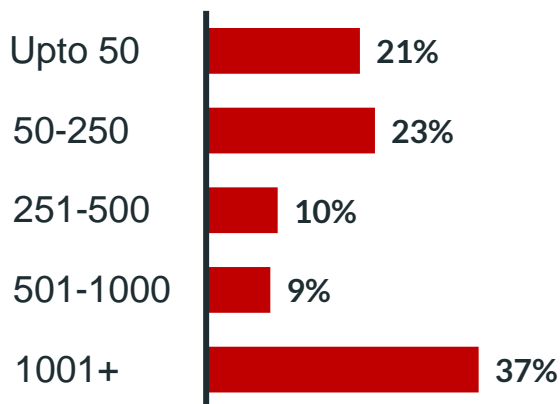
423 Working Professionals

Survey Sample

Designation

- Entry Level — 33%
- Mid Level — 42%
- Senior-level — 21%
- C-Suite — 4%

How long have you worked from home before COVID 19 Outbreak?

62%	18%	10%	5%	5%
NEVER	1-15 DAYS	ABOVE 30 DAYS	15-30 DAYS	FREELANCER BEFORE

THE BEGINNING OF NEW NORMAL

The Beginning of New Normal

We don't know what the future holds. Neither we know what is going to happen next; we accept, process, and get used to it. COVID-19 pandemic has put the entire world into a halt! And my world is my family, so let's listen to the story of an employee surviving the pandemic.

I'm an employee in a company having a duty of 8 hours, a husband, and a father of 2 kids. Because of the pandemic crisis, my wife and I both lost our jobs! Of Course, as you all know, pay cuts are mandatory!

During the lockdown, all days seemed alike. Perhaps we decided to discuss with our kids the challenges we were facing during the lockdown. Challenges as in, lack of money, and that their both parents were jobless! My kids didn't react though, they understood us! My daughter introduced me to a new form of work, i.e., WFH.

WFH has been particularly onerous for families with kids cooped up. Still, we managed, somehow, with one laptop. After doing much research, I got a job in a new company. I was entirely new for this WFH type, but, in this scenario, talking through workplace issues enables the family to support each other and feel a part of each other's lives! We recognized that COVID-19 has dramatically changed personal and work dynamics, but, we need to let go of its cons!

As a father, I'm happy to learn new things from my daughter & son. I got to spend enough time with my family after ages! WFH has really been helpful in this critical situation! Life has its own ways to make us understand and value things. Sometimes life is harsh, but we always hope that tomorrow will be better than today!

Work From Home: A Bliss in Disguise

Amid lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we've got this opportunity to practice the concept of WFH. The spread of home working is opening up a new range of possibilities for business work. Along with the responsibilities, WFH also has many opportunities for its employees. Employees get their own space to work, which eventually helps increase efficiency and quality work. No office means there are chances of working with any company/organization in the world only with your caliber.

Finding#1 - Work from Home undoubtedly benefited employees economically, as 68% of respondents accepted that they saved money from traveling and snacking expenses.

Finding#2 - In a debatable yet interesting result, 49% of people agreed that they were giving more time to family.

Finding#3 - With 46% of people admitting that they could start and end whenever they can, flexible timings have proved to be a boon from employees.

Finding#4 - In an encouraging result, 21% of people accepted that they suffer lesser stress at Home.

Finding#5 - 22% of respondents were happy to avoid office politics due to Work from Home.

Finding#6 - While a discouraging result also shows that 14% didn't find any benefit from Work From Home.
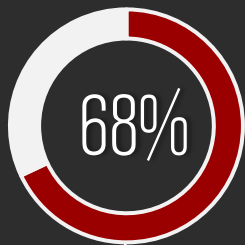
"Since there was no stress of travelling, Work from Home was definitely more convenient and time saving for me."

- *General Manager*
16 Years Experience

What benefits did you find of Work From Home?
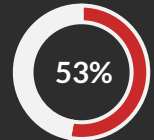
*Multiple Choice Question

68%

Saved Money from Traveling Expenses.

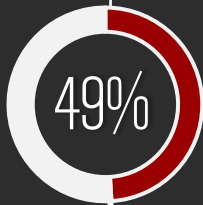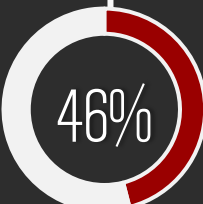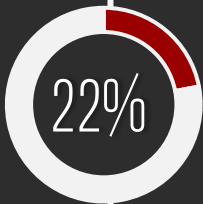**72%**
Of Entry level

70%
Mid level

53%
Senior level.

49%

Gave more Time to Family.

46%

Flexible Timings

22%

Avoid Office Politics

21%

Suffer lesser Stress at Home.

14%
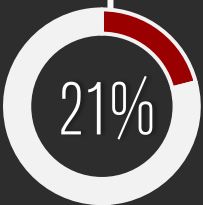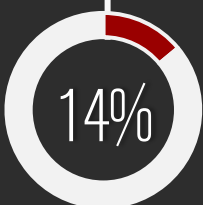
Didn't find any benefit

■ Agree ■ Can't Say ■ Disagree

Mental Health Deteriorated
- 28%
- 20%
- 52%

Physical Health Deteriorated
- 36%
- 12%
- 52%

Got enough time to Rest during the day
- 46%
- 15%
- 39%

Struggled to get out of Work Mode
- 44%
- 13%
- 43%

Have to reduce Quality time with Family
- 33%
- 18%
- 49%
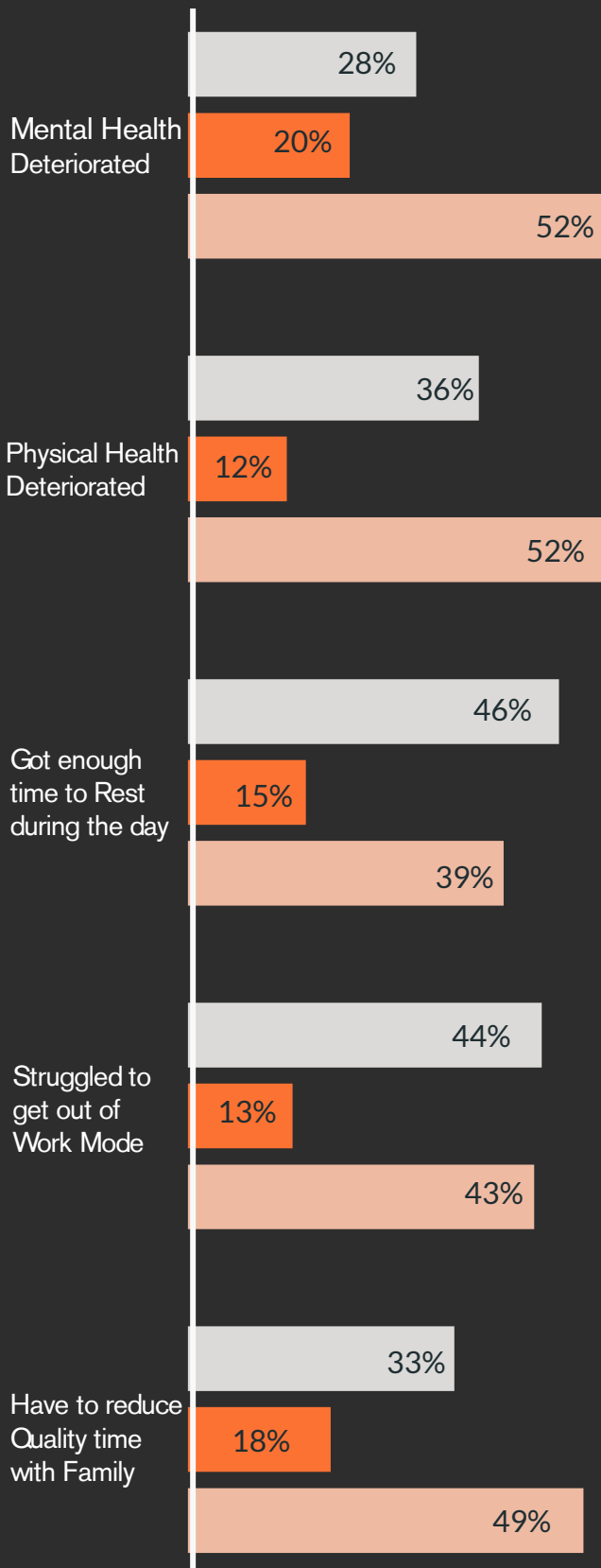
Work From Home: Bitter-Sweet Experience

Finding#1 - 52% of people did not experience any physical or mental health deterioration because of the work from home environment whereas 36% found an ebbing physical health and 28% reported decline in mental wellness.

Finding#2 - As the pandemic brought corporates at a midway of a revolutionary change in the working patterns and ways, it was observed that employees have very diverse effects on their lives for rescheduling themselves to the new normal. According to the survey conducted by PMCPL on the effects of work from home it was found that 46% of people were quite fortunate to get enough time to rest during the day whereas 39% totally disagreed to it.

Finding#3 - The abrupt change of the living space into workplace made it very difficult for 44% people to get out of their work modes whereas approximately equal 43% were successful in demarcation of proper work and personal spaces however 13% were not clear about it.

Finding#4 - The proper demarcation and time allotment for work and family by 49% of candidates made them spend more quality time with their families whereas 33% found it hard to do so because of constantly increasing workloads or the non manageable changing environment.
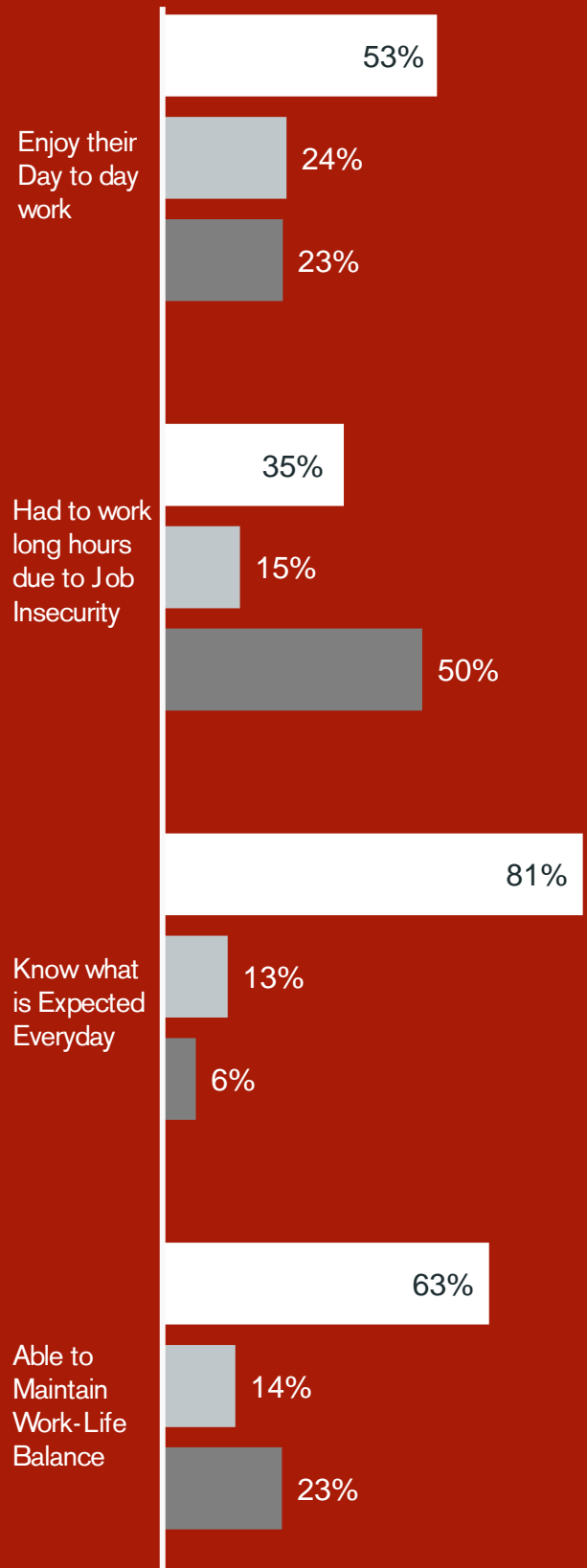
Finding#5 - Furthermore, it was seen that 53% of employees were taking proper rest and fostering their relationships and health which further made them enjoy their work, however 23% disagreed and 24% were not sure for the conditions.

Finding#6 - However, every situations brings some negative aspects with it too and a increasing job insecurity was reported by 35% of people which led them to work for long hours whereas a significant 50% was found to posses no job insecurities which made it easy for them to work efficiently without giving extra hours and a blurriness of assessing the situations was found in 15%

Finding#8 - Working in these times was observed to be quite tricky as there were no interactions still it was reported by 81% of employees that the ease of working and clarity of the daily tasks was significantly increased. At the same time 13% of employees were not clear about the situations.

Finding#9 - Moreover, 63% of people were quite successful in maintaining their healthy work life experience and allocation proper time for their personal and professional lives whereas 22% were very disappointed in doing so because of the increased stress and workloads or due to improper management with 14% not able to asses the situation.

■ Agree ■ Can't Say ■ Disagree

Enjoy their Day to day work
- 53%
- 24%
- 23%

Had to work long hours due to Job Insecurity
- 35%
- 15%
- 50%

Know what is Expected Everyday
- 81%
- 13%
- 6%

Able to Maintain Work-Life Balance
- 63%
- 14%
- 23%

What Challenges did you face during Work From Home?

Multiple Choice Question

Challenge	Percentage
Long Working Hours than Usual	57%
Had to Attend Unnecessary Meetings	34%
Sleep cycle Affected	34%
Productivity Deteriorated	33%
Salary Inconsistencies and Pay-Cuts	28%
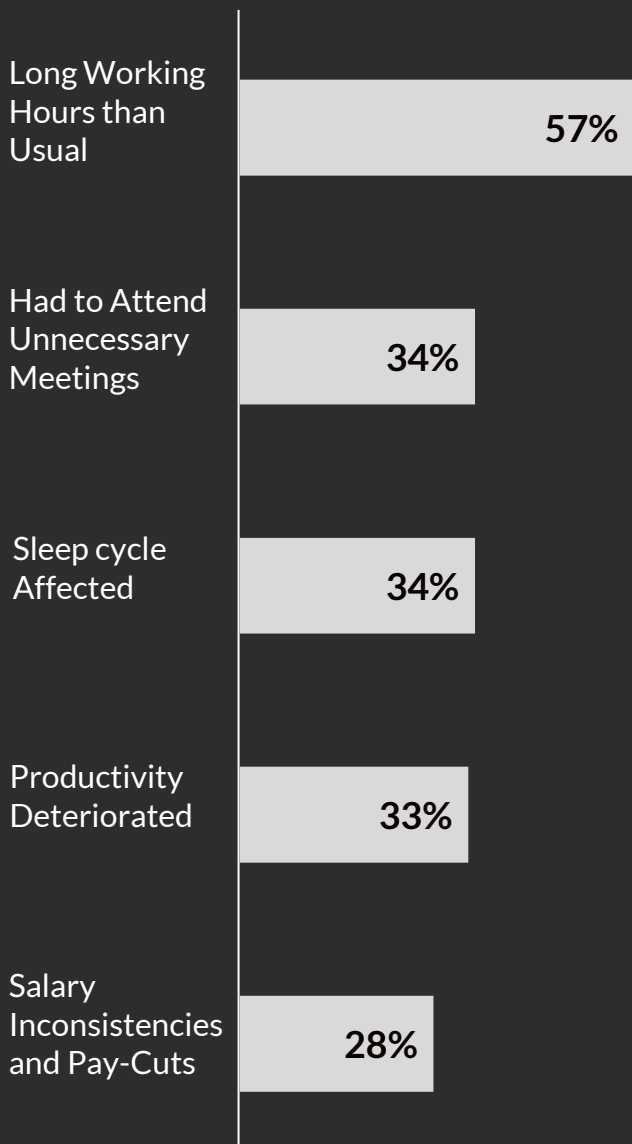
Work From Home: A Misery

Life always surprises us, positively or negatively; all we can do is develop more resilience.

Finding#1 - 57% of people admitted that they were forced to devote more hours to work than usual which was sometimes unnecessary.
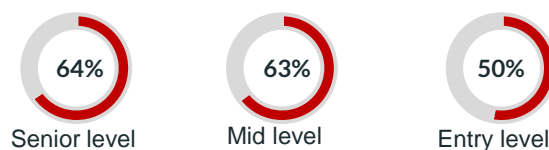
Long Working Hours than usual

64%	63%	50%
Senior level	Mid level	Entry level

Observation

Finding#2 - Approximately 34% of participants reckoned that their normal sleep-wake cycle was disturbed because of the long working hours and no proper rest. This may happen due to various reasons like increased workload to meet targets, due to mismanagement of time leading to overworking.

Finding#3 - 34% of participants stated that they had to attend unnecessary meetings as work from homemade a simple 15-20 minutes task at the office, an hour task while working remotely.

Finding#4 - In a very discouraging result, 33% of participants responded for a significant productivity loss.

Finding#5- 28% of participants reported that the salary inconsistencies and irregular pay cuts, an adverse effect on employees.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a sudden shift in the workforce's behavioral dynamics. Working remotely under these circumstances means adapting to a new environment, battling a new set of distractions, and experiencing a fusion of work and private life. Offices have free WIFI connections, air conditioners, personal desk, and an appropriate environment for working, which is convenient for an employee to work efficiently, while employees face many distractions working from home. And all jobs are not meant to work, from home, and it has become challenging for the employees to complete their tasks.

" If WFH is minimizing our physical outgoings, it is also maximizing our working hours, which leads to mental health issues. "

- Engineering Manager
25 years of Experience

Recommendations

✓ **Trick yourself about the start and end time is what you need to do to avoid overworking. This can be done a few methods such as: -**
   i) **Setting up reminders to take breaks.**
   ii) **Setting up a schedule of what you will be doing over the day.**
   iii) **Setting up alarms, or appointments in the calendar to tell yourself that it's time to get to next task or informing, about the deadline.**

✓ **Going out for a walk or trying to leave your house for some time, will change your mood and give you a feeling of refreshment!**

✓ **Involve yourself into some form of relaxation exercises like yoga or meditation to stimulate your mental faculties' to take care of your mental well-being, it will help to deal with anxiety and depression as there is a lot of uncertainty prevalent.**

✓ **Stay connected with family, friends, and support systems using technology like FaceTime, Skype, Google Hangout and other video-based options. Talk about your fears and concerns with people you trust.**

✓ **Avoid continuous exposure to news, media, and social media that may trigger or elevate anxiety, stress, or panic. Stay informed by following few, authoritative resources, but limit media consumption.**

✓ **You need to be more proactive about nurturing relationships when you work from home!**

✓ **Create an office environment when you work, using VPN networks, useful data, office related equipment, etc. It will give you the feeling of working in an office environment.**

✓ **Embrace that you are safe at home and that you could work and earn!**

Imprints of Work From Home on Professional Life

These adverse times can be managed easily if the employers, employees, and colleagues work in order of camaraderie and compassion. In creating an atmosphere of trust, newer and modern technologies can play a significant role as well.

"Yes, Bosses will have trust issues with the employees. As in the office, proof wasn't needed , but now here it is not same so yes trust issues are there."

- Prof. Shija Abhilash
Assistant Professor

This remote working mode has put forth many challenges for employees; thus, setting small goals and focusing on priority work can significantly increase their performance

Finding#1 - A good communication is the key factor for maintaining camaraderie and compassion between the co-workers which was reported to face a rift by 21% people.
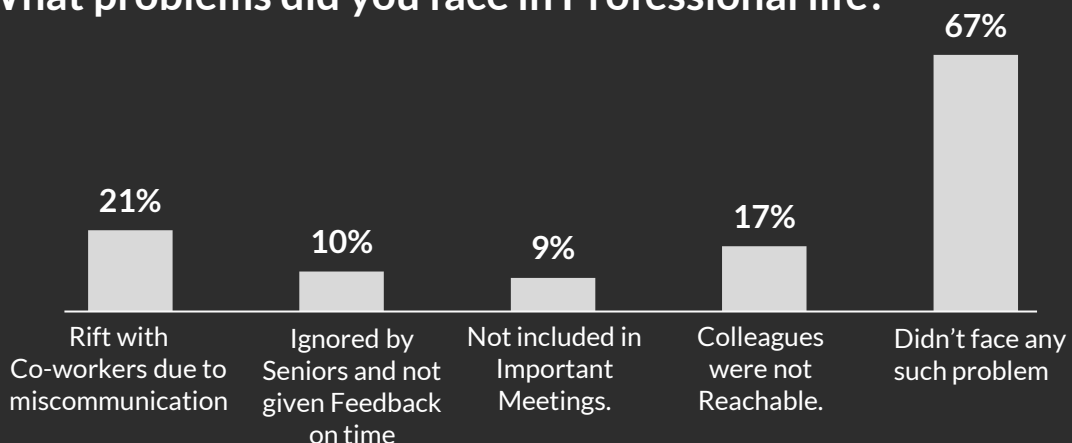
Finding#2 - Absence of in person interactions was reported by 10%, facing lack of proper feedback and attention by the higher authorities.

Finding#3 - A small section, 9% also encountered exclusion from the company meetings intentionally or unintentionally.

Finding#4 - It was accepted by 17% candidates that accessibility and approachability to their colleagues was reduced significantly during these times

Finding#5 - A significant proportion of 67% reported a proper trust channel with the organization which is a very good sign.

What problems did you face in Professional life?

21%	10%	9%	17%	67%
Rift with Co-workers due to miscommunication	Ignored by Seniors and not given Feedback on time	Not included in Important Meetings.	Colleagues were not Reachable.	Didn't face any such problem

What were the steps taken by Organization for Well-Being of Employees?

Step	Percentage
Organized Motivational Sessions	64%
Provided Necessary Work Tools	57%
Tried not to disturb Family Time	56%
Took Survey to Know Problems faced	54%
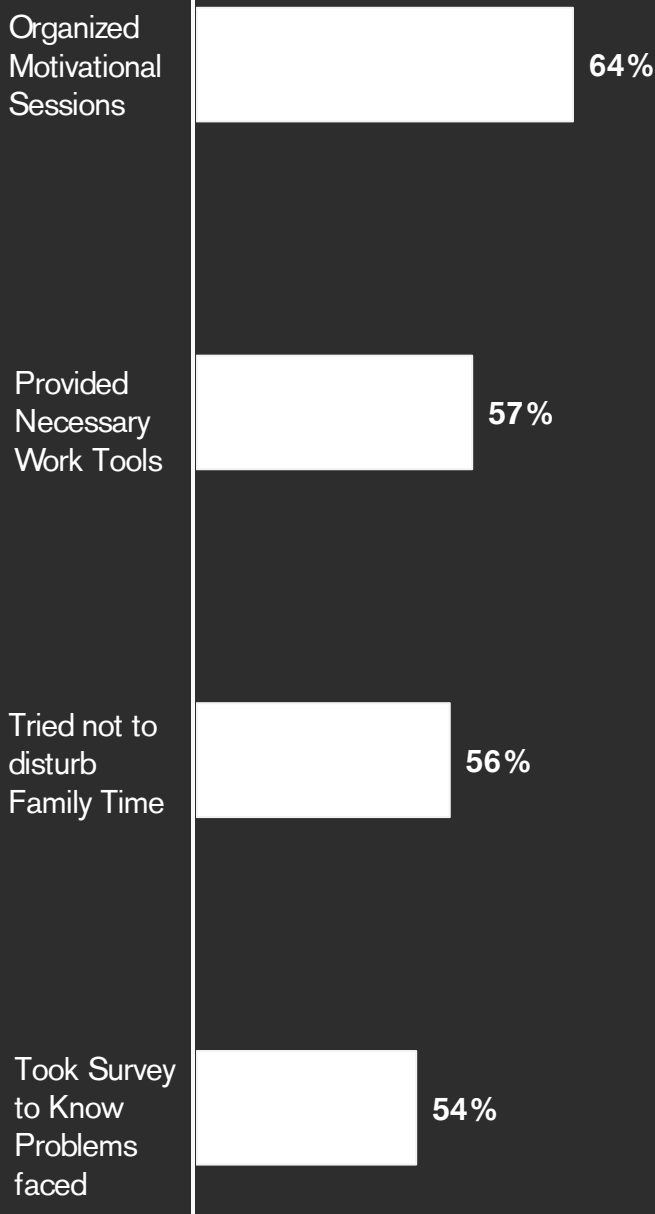
Employee Management during Work From Home: Moving towards a more Prosperous Future by Evolving from the Shortcomings of the Past

COVID has been unprecedented in terms of its impact on people's lives, societies, businesses, and the economy. Organizations will have to evolve to mobilize during these challenging times, stabilizing in the new environment and strategizing for what's next. It is evident that companies have been able to manage the crises so far by taking proper measures for their employees to ease remote working.

Finding#1 - 64% admitted that their organization organized motivational sessions, workshops or training sessions.

Finding#2 - Only 57% of participants admitted that their respective organization provided them with necessary work tools required for work, while others have to manage on their own resources.

Finding#3 - 56% participants' companies ensured that their work schedule doesn't interfere with family time.

Finding#4 - 54% of respondents admitted that their organization took a survey to know problems faced by them during Work from home.

Employees' Trust on Employer

COVID pandemic has created a scenario of uncertainty and insecurity in employees and employers a like. This situation can be managed by building a trusting work ecosystem.

Trust is an essential element for the functioning of organizations because of its indirect effects. When trust is in place, people will act in a certain way which is conducive to outcomes that drive performance. Establishing trusting work relationships makes companies perform over time. Lack of trust is an important threat to businesses, still companies hesitate to consider building trust as a strategy that warrants significant investments as trust as a factor is intangible and hard to measure or quantify. It is in how an organization treats its employees that trust is built or destroyed.

Building trust has to be a continuous project only then can it reap dividends overtime.

Q. Did you feel a lack of trust from your organization during Work From Home?

79% No   21% Yes

Finding : 79% of the respondents expressed their TRUST on their organisation, 21% respondent express they felt a lack of trust from the organisation.

Suggestions

Organizations have to invest in building trust. Trusting work relations fosters a culture which brings positive outcomes. Trust should not be mistaken with compliance or control. Building trust is an important leadership responsibility and one that should be exercised continuously and should be a long term project for the organization.

Recommendations

Organizations thrive through a sense of belonging, shared purpose, and an inclusive culture.

Team experience is a critical driver of virtual culture—and managers and team leaders have a massive impact on their teams' experiences and performances.

Managers need to guide, inspire, and enable their teams, helping them navigate challenges that pull them down, equipping them with the right expertise, and giving them the tools they need to deliver their positional and organizational goals.

Stepping up the Motivation Game

Motivating teams in a face to face scenario is entirely different from when teams are working from Home and are dispersed across many locations. It is more complex and challenging.

When the workforce is virtual, it requires more of an inspirational form of leadership. Managers need to display new leadership traits to make up for the reduced socio-emotional quotient, which is an innate facet of virtual platforms.

Be the Right Role Model

Managers need to recognize how their actions affect and will be interpreted by other employees and their subordinates. Work from Home is new and challenging for most of the employees. Managers need to conduct themselves empathically and responsibly to build a positive impact on their teams.

Promoting Informal Interactions

Informal interactions are an indispensable part of any organization's culture. It helps to build social bonding and trust-building among team members. Informal interactions, which are characteristic of an office environment, don't come about as quickly in a virtual environment. Leaders need new approaches to make the transition from physical to virtual more seamless and relevant. This will make the WFH employees feel managers and leaders more accessible and part of the system.

Promoting Wellness

Companies and their managers need to ensure that employees are motivated-physical and mental wellbeing is an important aspect.

Managers need to create programs and integrate them with the Employee's routine to stimulate their physical and mental wellbeing. As the quote goes, "A healthy mind rests in a healthy body."

"Salesforce is offering its employees a bundle of articles and webinars on emotional health and a mediation app. Also, Starbucks is providing up to 20 therapy sessions for all employees for mental health benefit."

Create safe workspaces

Psychological safety requires more attention in a virtual work environment. Organizations need to consciously create an environment where employees feel comfortable making mistakes, speaking up, and seeking redressal against complaints.

Keeping track

Once the Virtual transition is in place, sustaining and enhancing individual and organizational performance is essential. Tracking results and practices can help managers quantify the outcomes and accomplishments in the transition to a new virtual model during Work from Home.

Reinforce organizational culture

The current pandemic has strengthened the importance of corporate culture and values in helping staff be productive and find purpose in their work. Therefore, it is especially important for employees working from Home to stay connected to each other and the organization's values.
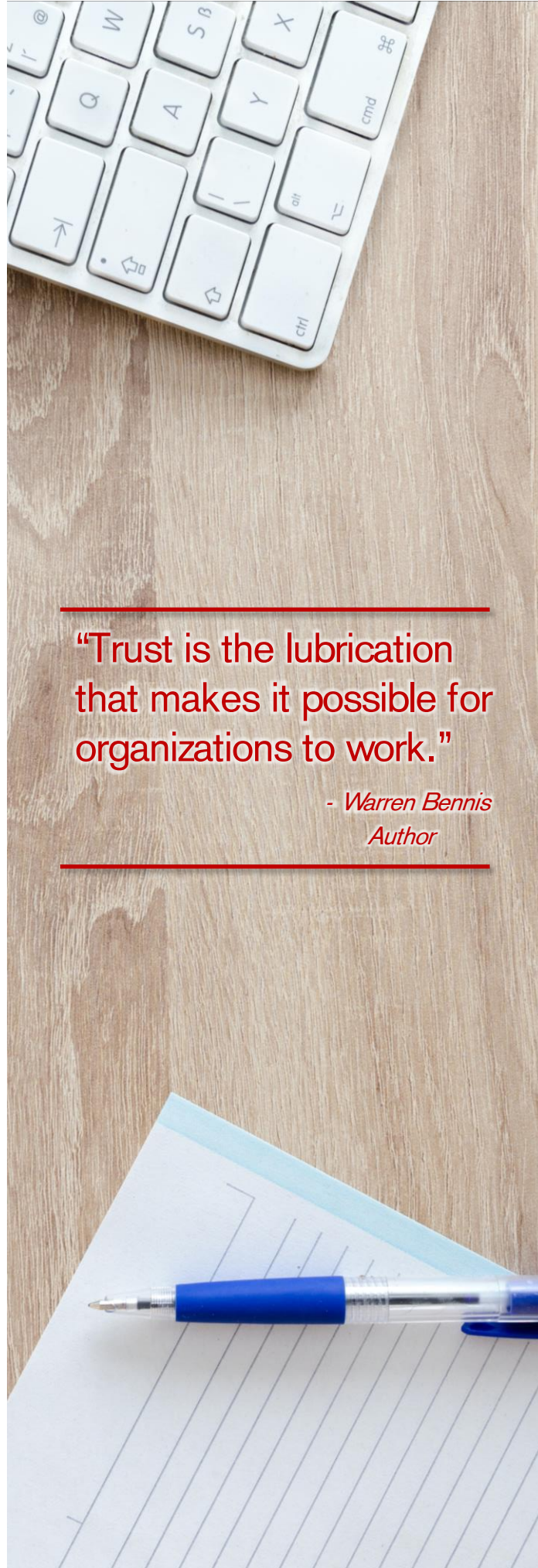
"Trust is the lubrication that makes it possible for organizations to work."

- Warren Bennis
Author

PMCPL's Perspective

Work From Home is tough nut to crack . But it's **Worth it** !

While many of us are acquainted with going to offices, whether we are ready or not, COVID-19 has forced many companies to switch to remote working, i.e., WFH at a colossal scale. "Work is not a place," this was realized by the employees of every organization, you can work anytime, anywhere, only if you have a strategic plan, sincerity, and faithfulness. To make employees accustomed to work from home, organizations should conduct frequent corporate communications- daily, weekly, or as available. Though some companies were already practicing WFH, it was only for minorities but now is imposed on almost everyone.
Cooperation and trust are the prerequisites for any company to acquire overwhelming heights, which should be encouraged between the intertwined network of employers, employees, and colleagues with a proper channel for effective communication. This act will bolster the company's performance significantly.

Organizations should make themselves independent by focusing on skill development and the appropriate management qualities of the employees. Moreover, just as importantly, the workload policies should be revisited as the most valuable possessions of any organization are its employees who can take it to much superior elevations. Hence, their ease should be considered the utmost priority by training them from the beginning to handle adverse situations.
Technology has evolved in the past decades and now is on its peak, with most advanced applications, therefore, proper availability of these resources and training the employees can make WFH more efficient. The key for managing any crises is preparation. Companies can include some policies, if required, to make sure it helps in managing the future crises. Businesses should also have an emergency or continuity plan. However, nothing hits harder than reality so backup strategies and policies should be made mandatory because precautions are always better than cure. Moreover, hard times make the strongest bonds, therefore we should nurture them and the best way of surviving any crisis is by taking care of each other.

Participants' Opinion - Work From Home/Office/Combination of Both

71%
Combination of Both

19%
Work From Office
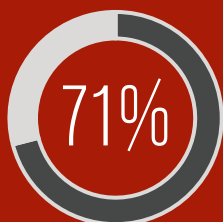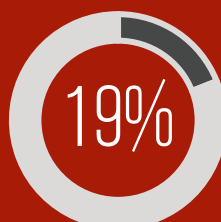
10%
Work From Home

WORDS OF WISDOM

> In my job function, WFH is barely possible. For example, it's like cooking something on field by sitting remotely. We all know that cooking is physical work, similarly, my job involves physical work & it can't be done by WFH just by checking few emails or doing some computer stuff. Due to the COVID - 19 pandemic, we are bound to WFH. Working from home doesn't make any difference to me. I am from the maintenance domain , in order to diagnose and rectify the problem I have to be present on the shop floor.
>
> It is more challenging too, as we are not working on the shop floor and can't remark on the issues on the site. We have these conference calls for working online! WFH has reduced my physical stress but also has increased the mental stress. Although yoga helps me out with physical stress, it isn't easy to stay calm while WFH. I don't think working from home is convenient and time saving. In my field, we are already used to working extended shift timings. Nowadays, we don't get off even on weekends and are supposed to work. This equally affects my personal and family time. I think we all are facing workload problems due to the pandemic, we have to learn to address it..

Engineering Manager
25 Years Exp.

> Being a professor, I've never worked from home before, neither am I enjoying it. WFH is a completely new way of working in our field. Initially, it wasn't easy to properly manage things because ours is an academic institution. With online lectures, through many online applications & managing network issues, we cannot reach out to all the students. Some students can't even attend online classes because they don't have a system with them smartphones, laptops, internet. Moreover, there might be some issues later on because these online lectures couldn't reach maximum students.
>
> I don't find WFH convenient. We have to do office work, which includes arranging lectures on time. Prior to the lockdown, we worked for a fixed time either 10 Am to 4 Pm or the latest by 6 pm, but now its not the same. We are given targets, so we have to work anytime, anyhow. Due to this, our work life balance has gone for a toss. There are trust issues with the employees, which adds to mental stress, though I stay calm by meditation & yoga. I would prefer Office to work as it gives lot of freedom and opportunity to maintain a work-life balance.

Prof. Shija Abhilash
Assistant Professor

WORDS OF WISDOM

"

Honestly, this is the first time I'm typically working from home, and it's quite different from going out and working in an office environment. My company maintains an excellent working policy. For me, WFH is somewhat convenient as it saves me from the hassle and also saves the commuting time. The flip side is that it has increased the workload & the operating hours.

Now, frequent meetings have taken precedence over personal lives as there is no definite schedule and time frame causing an imbalance. Nevertheless, I know how to manage my work and at the same time maintain a work-life balance. In the WFH scenario, we interact more; in the present circumstances, I have a conversation with my boss for 2-3 hrs. while before we didn't use to interact much. There is increased coordination and involvement from everyone in WFH.

I would prefer to go to the office as it provides a space for physical interaction with colleagues and superiors at the same time tasks get completed in a specified time frame. Going forward, a balanced combination of WFH and going to the office would help maintain a healthy work-life balance

Mr. Yogesh Gaur

"

I have spent more than six years in a Telecom multinational and now for several years, I've been working from home on many occasions, so basically, WFH culture is not new to me. ***IT and telecom employees can work from any location apart from the land network, which is in the office***. The WFH culture, due to the pandemic, has increased in the working hours like, long conference calls(saying this to be done & this not to be done), which could have been very easy ***in a face to face interaction; it could have been only a 15 minutes job.*** There are electricity and internet speed issues, even difficulties like staying in small places & online school meetings of kids! In WFH, ***8 hours of working becomes 12 hours a day***! This has led to mental stress and illness. I'm convenient to go to the office as I interact with many bankers, analysts, recruiting agencies & auditors, and those are getting affected, so this is a limiting factor in WFH. I would prefer a combination, it always helps for flexibility, and I would not even encourage a complete culture of WFH because WFH is convenient only in severe conditions!

Mr. Rahul Mehta
Chief Financial Officer

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