Intro

Whether it's avoiding the commute, the quiet focus of working at home or being able to stay in pajamas all day, one thing is clear — lots of people enjoy working remotely.

It used to be that people punched in and ground away at their desk all day. But times have changed. Recent research shows that 70% of people work remotely at least once a week. Not only are people working out of their homes and coffee shops, but an entire industry of membership-based remote workspaces have emerged.

What is less clear are the effects on productivity and the company bottom line. IBM, an early adopter of remote working, reversed its remote working policy in 2017 and pulled thousands of employees back into offices because they felt teams needed to be in the same space to be successful. And as recently as 2013, Google's former CFO said that "as few people as possible" telecommuted at Google because they felt unscheduled, in-person interactions led to the sharing of great ideas and, ultimately, the company's success.

We wanted to know more about how employees and employers are feeling about this, so we surveyed over 500 employees and over 500 employers to ask them about remote work.

What do employees say?
It turns out that not everyone works remotely or even wants to. Only slightly more than a third of employees (37%) currently work for a company that has a remote work policy. And under half (47%) say that whether or not a company has a remote work policy is important to them when looking for a job.

Even for employees who are allowed to work remotely, when we asked how often they worked from home, the most common response was "never" (29%). Almost a quarter (23%) said they work from home between 1-2 time a month, 21% work from home 1-3 times a week and 20% work from home 4-6 times a week or every day.

But about half of respondents who work for companies without a remote work policy are feeling frustrated — 52% say they wish they could work from home. And they are motivated to make this happen — of those who wish their current company had a remote work policy, 37% have considered looking for a job with the ability to work remotely and 14% are actively looking for that job. Additionally, 40% of employees would even consider a pay cut to have the option to work remotely.

Of those who are allowed to work from home, they feel that it has many benefits. The overwhelming majority (75%) said that they believed that working from home has improved work-life balance. And more than half said that it reduced stress (57%) and reduced absences (56%) and improved morale (55%) and decreased sick days (51%).

And they don't want to lose this benefit — almost a third of workers (30%) said they would consider looking for other work if their company took away the existing remote work policy.

Benefits of remote work for employees

Better work-life balance	75%75%
Reduced stress	57%57%
Reduced absences	56%56%
Improved morale	55%54%
Fewer sick days	51%50%
I don't believe that remote work has provided any benefits to my company	4%4%
Other	2%2%

Additionally, those that work for companies with remote work policies feel more productive (57%) when they work from home. Another 38% feel as productive working from home as they do from the office, and only 4% felt they were less productive at home.

There are some downsides to remote work, however. Almost 4 in 10 (37%) people at companies with the option to work remotely believe that working from home can lead to less visibility and access to leadership.

What do employers say?
A little over half (55%) of the employers we surveyed offer a remote work policy. Having a remote work policy was most common in mid to large companies. Employers with 201 to 500 employees were the most likely to have remote work policies (67%), and the smallest companies (5-20 employees) were the least likely to offer it (42%).

Employers that allow for telecommuting reported experiencing numerous benefits. Over half (57%) said that remote work improved morale and reduced employee turnover (52%). Half of employers said it reduced absenteeism (50%) and saved on operational costs (50%). Cost is one of one of the explicit reasons some companies offer remote work options in the first place.

Benefits of remote work for employers

Improved morale	57%
Reduced employee turnover	52%

Reduced absenteeism	50%
Operational cost savings	50%
Reduced health insurance costs	31%
My company hasn't experienced any benefits after offering a remote work policy	54%
Not sure	3%
Other	2%

Employers agreed with employees that productivity is a significant benefit of remote work — 72% of companies with remote work policies reported that the policy has the effect of making workers more productive. Another 22% said that workers are just as productive and only 3% say they think workers are less productive.

How can you make working from home work for your company?

In a test in China, researchers found that employees that worked from home were so productive it was like they had worked an entire extra day. There was also a huge decrease in attrition. However, employees didn't like working from home 100% of the time — they felt too isolated. It seems that working from home can also impact team cohesion.

Sample from Seven best practices for managing a remote team:
1. Check in frequently
2. Have as much face time or at least voice time as possible
3. Be available

Conclusion
It turns out that working from home is not for everyone. In fact, over half (53%) say it's not important to them when they are looking for a job. And almost a third (29%) of employees who could telecommute never do.

But the benefits of remote work possibilities seem pretty great for employees and employers who offer them.

OPffering remote work seems like a good idea when possible. But reigning in employees from using it every day seems like a solid measure as well - the risk is isolation and other things.

Those who do want to work remotely, however, seem motivated to find a place that has that policy.

[Atlantic article:](#) For jobs focused on personal productivity (i.e. sales calls) remote work is fine. For jobs where collaborative productivity is important, remote work is less great.

Remote working policies are most common in larger companies (Q2)
Small companies could use a remote work policy to stand out from the competition

REPORT: Remote Work Can Bring Benefits, but Attitudes Are Divided

Posted on November 14, 2018 by Indeed Editorial Team (http://blog.indeed.com/author/indeededitorialteam/)

It used to be that people punched in and worked away at their desks all day, but times have changed. Whether it's to avoid the commute, leverage the quiet focus of working at home or simply to stay in pajamas all day, recent research shows that 70% (https://www.cnbc.com/2018/05/30/70-percent-of-people-globally-work-remotely-at-least-once-a-week-iwg-study.html) of people work remotely at least once a week.

Many employers support and encourage remote work, as well. Flexible policies let employees choose where they will feel most productive and let companies hire the best talent for the job regardless of location. Cost savings are also a factor: Dell reports saving about $12 million per year

(https://money.cnn.com/2016/06/09/pf/dell-work-from-home/index.html) in real estate costs by encouraging employees to work from home. The company would like to see 50% of its employees (https://money.cnn.com/2016/06/09/pf/dell-work-from-home/index.html) working at home at least a few days a week by 2020.

While remote work offers many benefits for employees and organizations alike, some companies prefer in-person employees. IBM, an early adopter of remote work, reversed its policy (https://qz.com/924167/ibm-remote-work-pioneer-is-calling-thousands-of-employees-back-to-the-office/) in 2017 by bringing thousands of workers back to the office, citing the need for teams to be in the same space to be successful. And Google discourages telecommuting on the basis that chance encounters between colleagues improve performance (https://www.inc.com/scott-mautz/telecommuting-is-future-right-science-says-not-so-fast-and-more-companies-are-agreeing.html).

To learn more about the perceptions and experiences of remote work, we surveyed over 500 each of US employees and employers across a variety of industries. We found that most employees and employers see the benefits of remote work, in terms of both productivity and employee happiness. But there are downsides as well, and most people still don't work from home.

A majority of employees can't work from home but would like to

According to our survey, most people aren't currently remote workers: Only slightly more than one-third of employees surveyed (37%) work for a company that has a remote-work policy. But this may soon change since almost half (47%) say that whether a company allows remote work is an important factor in choosing a job.

47%

of employees say that whether or not a company has a remote work policy is important to them when looking for a job

Source: Indeed

indeed

A majority of respondents who work for companies without a remote-work policy feel frustrated, with 52% saying they wish they could work from home. And they are motivated to make this happen: Of those who wish their current companies allowed remote work, 37% have considered looking for a job that does, and 14% are

actively looking. What's more, 40% of employees would consider taking a pay cut for the option to work remotely.

40%

of employees would consider a pay cut to have the option to work remotely

Source: Indeed

indeed

Three-quarters of remote workers cite work-life balance as the top benefit

Among employees who are allowed to work from home, the overwhelming majority (75%) say that doing so has improved their work-life balance. More than half say it reduces stress (57%), absences (56%) and sick days (50%) and improves morale (54%).

Employees don't want to lose this benefit, either — almost one-third of remote workers (30%) say they would consider looking for another job if their companies took away the existing remote-work policy.

Benefits of remote work according to employees

Benefit	Percentage
Better work-life balance	75%
Reduced stress	57%
Reduced absences	56%
Improved morale	54%
Fewer sick days	50%
Remote work hasn't provided any benefits to my company	4%
Other	2%

Source: Indeed

indeed

However, according to employees, working from home isn't all upsides. Almost four in 10 (37%) people at companies that allow remote work believe working from home can result in less visibility and access to leadership. And other research shows that remote workers are more likely to feel left out and that their colleagues don't fight for their priorities (https://hbr.org/2017/11/a-study-of-1100-employees-found-that-remote-workers-feel-shunned-and-left-out).

Avoiding some of the downsides could be why, even when given the option to work remotely, many people (29%) still go into the office every day. But as soon as they try telecommuting, most people seem to really like it — 41% of people work from home at least once a week, and 20% work from home almost every day.

Contrary to popular belief that you can't get things done at home, the majority of remote respondents (57%) report thinking they are *more* productive when they work from home. Another 38% think they are equally productive working from home as they are in the office, and only 4% think they are less productive at home.

This may be due to the fact that the workplace can be distracting — almost 70 percent (https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/300508) of US companies feature open floor plans, and a number of studies indicate that these types of environments distract workers and lead to less productivity (https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/300508).

57% of employees think they are more productive when they work from home

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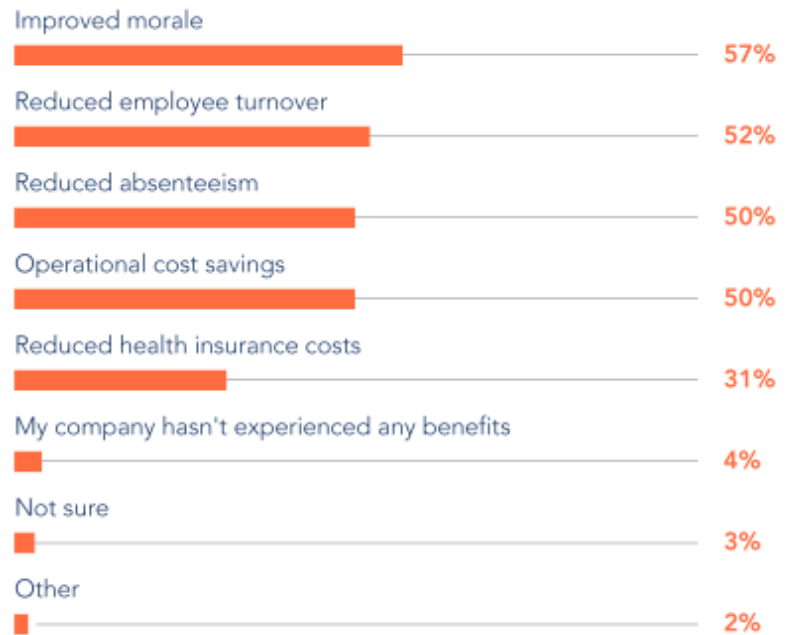## Employers see worker productivity improve with telecommuting

Not only do workers feel more productive, but their employers also agree: 72% of companies with remote-work policies say they make workers more productive. Another 22% say remote workers are equally as productive, and only 3% say their workers are less productive at home.

A little more than half (55%) of the employers we surveyed offer a remote-work policy. Allowing remote work is most common in midsize companies (201 to 500 employees), two-thirds of which (67%) have remote-work policies. The smallest companies (five to 20 employees) are the least likely to offer remote work options (42%).

Employers that allow for telecommuting report numerous benefits. Over half (57%) say remote work has improved morale and reduced employee turnover (52%), and half say it has reduced absenteeism (50%) and saved on operational costs (50%).

Benefits of remote work according to employers

Improved morale	57%
Reduced employee turnover	52%
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My company hasn't experienced any benefits	4%
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Other	2%

Source: Indeed

indeed

Making remote work "work" for your company

Both employees and employers experience benefits from remote work — the most notable of which is increased productivity.

A recent study of workers at China's largest travel agency supports this: Researchers compared a control group of employees at company headquarters with a test group of employees who volunteered to work at home full-time. The study found that employees working from home gained the equivalent of an entire day's worth of productivity (https://www.inc.com/scott-mautz/a-2-year-stanford-study-shows-astonishing-productivity-boost-of-working-from-home.html). However, half of the remote employees ended up changing their minds about working from home full-time — they felt too isolated.

If your company does allow remote work, you can get the most out of your workforce by following these best practices for managing a remote team (https://hbr.org/2017/11/a-study-of-1100-employees-found-that-remote-workers-feel-shunned-and-left-out):

- Make expectations clear.
- Get comfortable with communication technology.
- Provide as much face time or voice time as possible.

One in five employees we surveyed at companies that allow remote work telecommute every day or almost every day. Another step toward greater inclusion could be limiting the number of days employees can work from home.

Striking a balance

Remote-work policies are popular with many employees, who cite an improved work-life balance among its many benefits, and employers, who gain from reduced operational costs. But other companies think workers perform and collaborate better when they're in the office, and employees who work fully remotely tend to feel isolated.

It is up to each company to decide what works best for them — and, like with most things, balance may be crucial. For instance, limiting the number of days employees can work from home will help foster in-person teamwork, but providing the option of remote work can be a powerful differentiator for employers looking to be more competitive in the labor market and attract top talent from anywhere.

« [5 Productivity Hacks to Save Every Recruiter Time (http://blog.indeed.com/2018/11/15/five-productivity-hacks-to-save-recruiter-time/)](http://blog.indeed.com/2018/11/15/five-productivity-hacks-to-save-recruiter-time/)

[The Impact of Online Reviews: How Feedback Leads to Change in the Workplace (http://blog.indeed.com/2018/11/08/impact-online-reviews-change-workplace/)](http://blog.indeed.com/2018/11/08/impact-online-reviews-change-workplace/) »