

83pc of workers want to continue working remotely after Covid-19

Out of the 7,241 individuals surveyed who work across a wide range of industries and sectors, 51pc of said they had never worked remotely before the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a new survey carried out by the Whitaker Institute at NUI Galway and the Western Development Commission (WDC), researchers have found that 83 per cent (pc) of workers surveyed want to continue working remotely after the Covid-19 crisis.

Out of the 7,241 individuals surveyed who work across a wide range of industries and sectors, 51pc of said they had never worked remotely before the Covid-19 pandemic, with a further 78pc of those adding would like to work remotely for some or all of the time after the crisis is over.

These are the initial findings from the national survey which took place over a one-week week period in April and May 2020, and was led out by professor Alma McCarthy, professor Alan Ahearne and Dr Katerina Bohle-Carbonell at NUI Galway, and Tomás Ó Síocháin and Deirdre Frost at WDC.

Challenges

Separate studies have found that remote workers are more productive, healthier and enjoy a more positive work-life balance, however, this new way of working can come with its challenges.

The top three challenges of working remotely included not being able to switch off from work, harder to communicate and collaborate with colleagues and co-workers, and working from a poor physical workspace.

The top three benefits of working remotely included no traffic and no commute, reduced costs of going to work and commuting and a greater flexibility as to how to manage the working day.

Balancing home life has also been a major issue for remote workers since the outbreak of coronavirus in Ireland. With children being off school, parents are finding it increasingly difficult to concentrate on work for the entire working day.

In relation to current levels of productivity, 37pc of respondents indicated that their productivity working remotely during Covid-19 has not dropped, with 30pc reporting that their productivity level is higher than normal.

However, 25pc of respondents admitted that their productivity is lower than normal and 9pc said it is impossible to compare productivity as the demand for products and services has changed over the last two months.

Discussing the results of the survey professor Alma McCarthy said; “The findings of our survey indicate that employee preferences to continue working remotely will facilitate the opening up phase and aid with social distancing.

“The future of work post-Covid-19 is really interesting. The vast majority of respondents want to continue to work remotely when the crisis is over. Many roles and jobs can be performed effectively remotely.

What is the benefit of long commutes to work and sitting in traffic if we can leverage technology at least some of the week to do our work? Productivity does not necessarily correlate with presence in the workplace. A mind-set change is needed by managers and employers in terms of managing work remotely. The current crisis provides an opportunity for organisations and managers to rethink how we work.”

The survey report is [publicly available here](#), and the research team will be carrying out further analysis over the coming weeks and months.

By Stephen Larkin

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