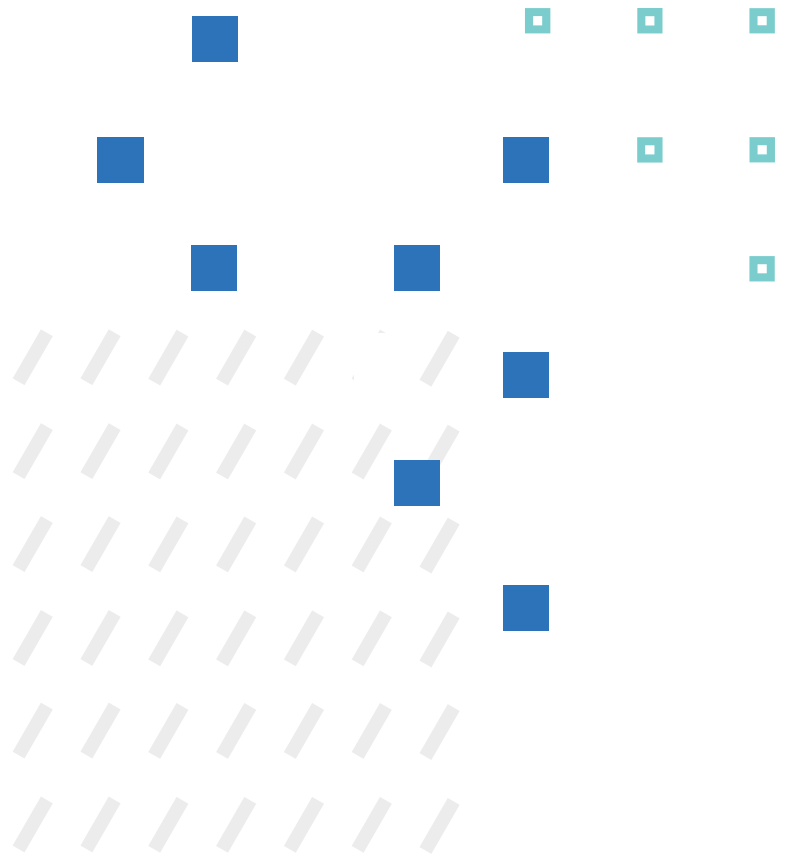


On-site, Remote or Hybrid:
**Employee
Sentiment on
the Workplace**

Executive Summary

ADPRI Staff



Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic turned the workplace upside down, with significant share of the American workforce becoming temporarily remote. With widespread vaccination available and improved but persistent health concerns tied to the pandemic still remaining, companies are facing important decisions on whether to make the shift to remote work permanent or have employees return to the office – and how this can be accomplished most effectively.

Companies and managers no doubt have a wide range of considerations on what makes sense for their organizations, and among those is the employee set of preferences and perspective. For employees who have “settled into” remote work – and for those who haven’t – what are the costs and benefits of returning to work on-site? In what ways do employees who have already returned to the office, or never left, say that on-site work is better than remote work – and vice versa?

To answer these questions and better understand the opportunities and challenges of returning to on-site work from the lens of employees, ADPRi conducted a survey of 9,000 employees in the U.S. who either worked remotely or on-site at workplace locations) during the pandemic. The comparisons between the experience of remote and on-site workers provides unique insight into the benefits and struggles of each work arrangement and how those experiences vary by industry in the new post-pandemic world of work.

The survey results reveal that on the whole, employees working on-site enjoy crucial advantages over their remote counterparts, particularly in terms of perceived amount of social interaction, work boundaries, and career opportunities. This is true regardless of whether employees are in sectors that are conducive to remote working or those who typically require in-person or on-site work.

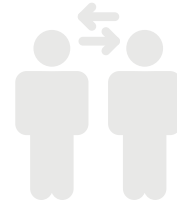
Yet, the experience of remote working – now seen from a much larger population than ever before – has its own set of advantages. **Post-pandemic, there may be demand for companies to weave these perks into the new “normal” of work.**

The findings from this report from the perspective of employees indicate that managers and companies should keep the following recommendations in mind when determining work arrangements for their employees in the coming months:

1 Social connection, promotion opportunities and work/life boundaries are the most cited benefits of on-site work according to employees, and should be a critical area of investigation for firms. Factors to consider include:

The promise of social experience, more spontaneous conversations, and a deeper connection with teammates and other colleagues.

- Returning to a “normal” workday with cleaner breaks between work and home.
- To both be seen and feel that they are being seen when it comes to hiring and promotions (especially for companies that instituted hiring/promotion freezes during COVID).



2 Provide additional support and flexibility in areas where employees may need help acclimating to the change from remote to on-site work:

- a. Employees may miss the “team spirit”** that flourished in teams of remote workers during the pandemic. Remote workers surveyed since the pandemic are more likely to say their team is “collaborative” and “supportive” and less likely to say it is “gossipy” and “cliquish” than on-site workers.

Action: A concerted effort to foster a more collective team dynamic that transcends preferential connections (similar to the onset of the pandemic) may be helpful.

- b. Employees may prefer the flexibility** in work hours (time of work) and location.

Action: Provide employees with the option of a hybrid schedule to ease the transition. It may even promote a new “norm” for work that leverages the best of both remote and on-site working. Employees with family responsibilities may also benefit from the added flexibility to attend to personal and care related needs as their families transition to post-pandemic life.

- c. Employees may prefer the independence** of working from home.

Action: Promote regular connection and feedback with their manager (especially when on-site/in-person), yet allow the trust and independence established during remote working to continue.



3

Certain groups may require special attention from companies and managers in the transition from remote to on-site work:

a. Recent college graduates are more likely than other groups to get “lost in the shuffle” of returning to an environment of more spontaneous communication on-site and perceive less of a collaborative and more of a “gossipy” feel on their team.

Action: Managers and companies should foster team building that is targeted to recent college graduates, in order to ensure this group don't lose out on essential team support and mentoring.

b. Employees whose manager is in a different location may experience fewer improvements to communication with their manager, despite being back in the office, than employees whose manager is in the same office.

Action: Managers should continue to employ communication methods and frequency used during remote work to ensure communication with direct reports, including conveying progress and workload, doesn't deteriorate.

