

The “New” Future of Work



The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated many of the trends we were already seeing, but what will be the practical outcomes of all this disruption? We look at how both the workforce, and workplace, may change in the future of work.

FORCES

Digitisation

Rapid re-skilling
Borderless collaboration
Ability to scale

Technological breakthroughs

Emerging technologies
The ‘augmented worker’
Remote working

Demographic shifts

Younger population
Retirement ages
Greater cultural mix

Rapid urbanisation

Increasing urbanisation
Flexibility of workers
Decentralisation

A world of talent

Traditionally, an organisation’s talent pool was limited to a catchment area (based on travel time) or its ability to persuade people to move into the catchment area for the role. As organisations see the benefits of employees being able to work remotely, talent can essentially be hired from anywhere if they can work remotely — although hiring remotely presents its own set of challenges.

Evolving incentives

Ping-pong tables won’t be consigned to the dustbin of history, but the company car may well be. Instead, incentives geared towards the needs of those working remotely — extra equipment and technology, upskilling, vacation days, paid lunches, personal wellness programmes etc. — will become more common.

Critical thinking is critical

Automation, machine learning and AI are not empty promises, but present and growing realities. Developing people to utilise these technologies — to become an ‘augmented worker’ — means that higher cognitive, critical thinking, social and emotional skills will become even more important.

Digital security and digital trust

As organisations become more digital, cybersecurity will become increasingly important. Organisations will need to increase investments to cybersecurity to protect their employees, ensure digital trust with customers and safeguard internal innovations.

The exponential role of HR

The evolving role of HR from people and process management to strategically designing future-fit organisations will continue at a rapid pace. New capabilities will become necessary as the HR function becomes more consultative, analytical, and solution oriented in responding to the current and future needs of employees and the organisation.

Virtual employees are **29%** happier than on-site employees.
— Owl Labs, State of Remote Work, 2019.

74% of companies plan to permanently shift to more remote work post-Covid.
— Gartner, CFO Survey, 2020

WORKFORCE

WORKPLACE

More than **45%** of remote employees say they have worked from their beds for 11 hours per week.
— Owl Labs, State of Remote Work, 2019.

50% of companies are retraining workers to work side by side with machines.

Redesigned workplaces

Over time, many organisations will reduce their physical office space as remote working grows more common. While a central office space will exist, it will require the physical office space to be reconfigured and redesigned for more dynamic use. The mindset is to create workplaces that don’t just connect people, they connect ideas.

Relocation, relocation, relocation

If your employee can work remotely, why would they rent that expensive apartment in the city-centre? We may begin to see a statistically significant section of the working population deciding to move to more financially advantageous areas to them. If leveraged correctly, organisations can use this newfound flexibility to both attract, and retain, top talent.

The social contract

What responsibility do employers have over their employee’s safety in a remote working environment? What expenses can employees’ claim back when working from home? What services should organisations be obliged to provide during a working day? Clear guidelines will have to be drawn up and agreed between the organisation and employee.

Rethinking collaboration

Collaboration is a key concern for the future of work: from collaboration in a virtual environment and across borders to requiring collaborative networks amongst niche specialists to respond to complex challenges. Designing fit-for-purpose collaborative spaces in offices and using virtual tools such as cloud-based platforms, and SPRINT type methodologies are likely to be in the mix of solutions.

Every home an office

A fundamental question that will need to be answered in the coming years is ‘are homes designed to accommodate an office space?’ This is particularly relevant for those needing multiple offices spaces in their home. If organisations make remote working mandatory in certain cases, there will need to be considerations given by organisations to provide appropriate conditions for that person — or risk losing them.

FORCES

Social Forces

Equitable structures
Wellbeing regulations
Global ecosystems

Shifts in global economic power

Increased talent pool
Increased migration
Emerging competitors

Resource scarcity and climate change

Depleted resources
Regular extreme events
Moral imperative

Purpose-led strategies

Need for agility
Goals driven
Ethical compass

For more insights, visit www.imi.ie

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