



# 2020 FUTURE OF WORK REPORT

What the Future Holds for  
Coworking and Remote Work



**COWORKING INSIGHTS**

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## ABOUT COWORKING INSIGHTS

Coworking Insights is the leading source for data, advice, and trends in the flexible office industry.

Founded in 2015, Coworking Insights is Coworker's partner publication that is committed to sharing expert insights on the coworking industry's evolution and latest news. All data is based on information shared with Coworker by the platform's member coworking spaces, which has expanded to include over 14,000 spaces in 171 countries worldwide.





# INTRODUCTION

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Ever since 2008, the amount of remote workers has gradually increased year over year. Though many resisted the transition to an online workforce at first, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have forced remote work into existence for just about everyone.

Once lockdowns are lifted and people can return to work, the question arises of whether it's wise — or even necessary — for companies to have a central office. For the coworking industry in particular, the return to work will certainly be complicated. To address distancing and safety, operators will need to rethink both the architectural and behavioral interventions in their workplaces—a concern that will apply to office spaces across the board.

But perhaps the bigger question is: **will employees want to return to an office setting?**

Or will they now prefer a more flexible arrangement where working from home is an option? In partnership with Coworker, we set out to answer these questions, collecting responses from 350 coworking spaces and 364 remote workers worldwide. From Germany and the UK to Australia and India, the respondents represented countries from five continents.

The first survey for coworking spaces, titled “How is your coworking space navigating the consequences of COVID-19?”, was distributed between March 13-16; the second survey for remote workers, titled “Is remote working the future of work?”, was distributed between April 16-28.

By gathering information on the steps that coworking spaces are taking in light of the pandemic, along with the advantages and challenges of remote work, this report gives valuable insights into the future of flexible work.

# KEY INSIGHTS

## 77/100

### HOW RESPONDENTS RATE REMOTE WORKING

Working remotely is clearly favorable and comes with many perks — leading 87.1% of respondents to say they would recommend it to a friend.

## 73.9%

### OF REMOTE WORKERS ENJOY HAVING A FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE MOST OF ALL

People also enjoyed the other benefits of remote working, such as being able to work from anywhere (70.6%), no commute (62.6%), cost-savings (50.8%), improved productivity (47.5%), and less stress overall (39.6%).

## 79.7%

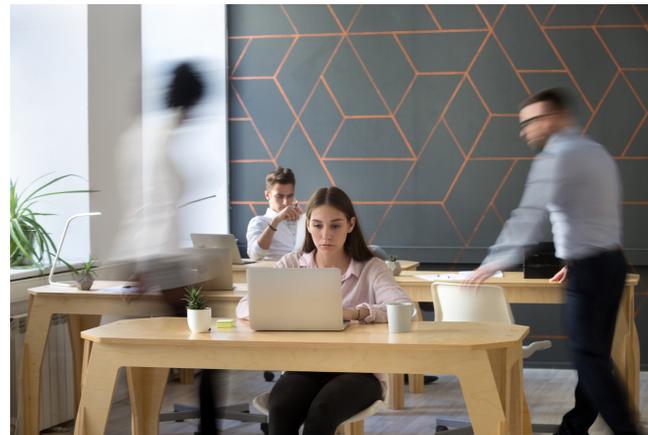
### OF RESPONDENTS ARE MORE PRODUCTIVE WHEN WORKING REMOTELY

Plus, remote work had a positive impact on several other factors in their lives, including mental health (77.2%), finances (77.5%), and family/social life (76.3%).

## 71.5%

### OF REMOTE WORKERS PLAN TO RETURN TO COWORKING

Though spaces have faced many challenges from COVID-19, the flexible office industry will gradually recover as more people (54.9%) claim they will consider joining a coworking space as a remote work solution in the future.



# Distribution of Respondents

From India and South Africa to Canada and Peru, survey respondents represented a truly global range of remote workers and coworking spaces who shared their views on the future of work.

## Coworking Space Owners & Operators

**“How is your coworking space navigating the consequences of COVID-19?”**



**350**  
Respondents

Top 5 Countries:

1. United States
2. Canada
3. Spain
4. Portugal
5. Australia

## Employees

**“Is remote working the future of work?”**

Top 5 Countries:

1. United States
2. India
3. Canada
4. Spain
5. Philippines

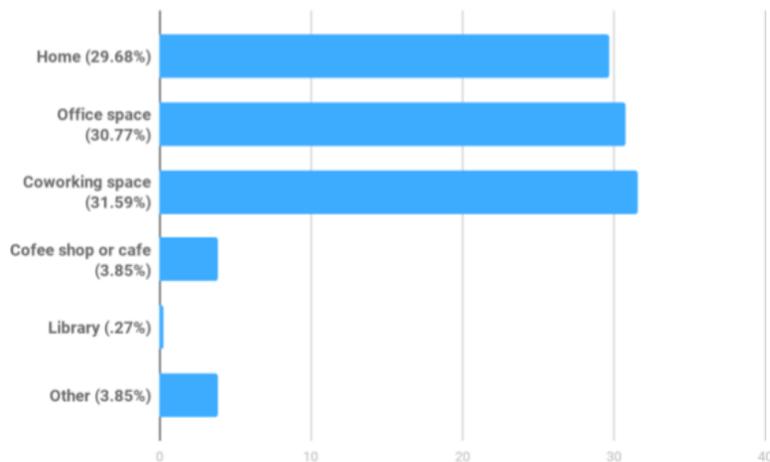


**364**  
Respondents

# REMOTE WORK STATISTICS

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 and government orders to stay inside, the numbers were split almost evenly between the amount of people working from home, from an office, or from a coworking space.

Before the outbreak of COVID-19 where did you primarily work from?

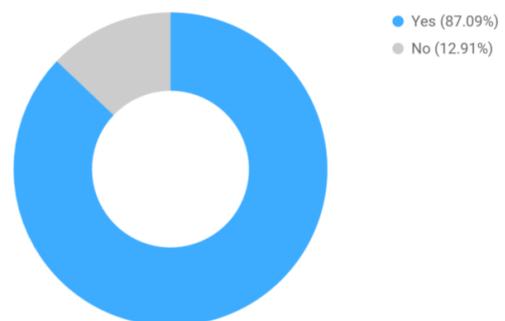


Clearly, people enjoy remote working, with a whopping 87 percent of respondents claiming they would recommend it to a friend.

**77/100**

Is the average rating of the remote experience.

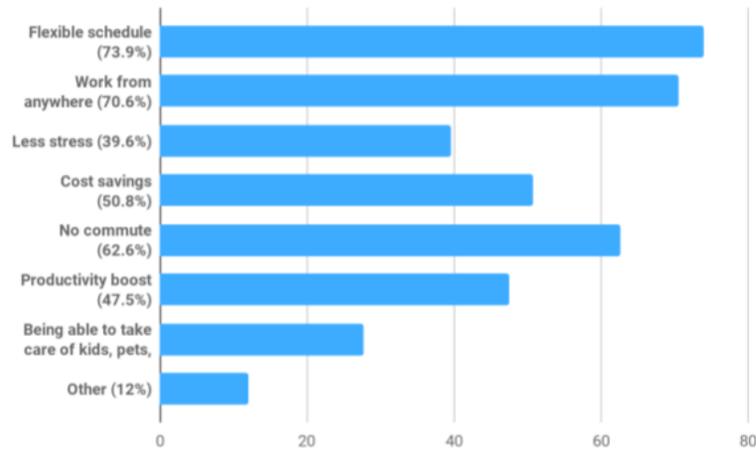
Would you recommend remote working to a friend?



# REMOTE WORK BENEFITS

With such a large number of remote workers willing to recommend flexible work to their friends and colleagues, it is clear that this style of work comes with many benefits.

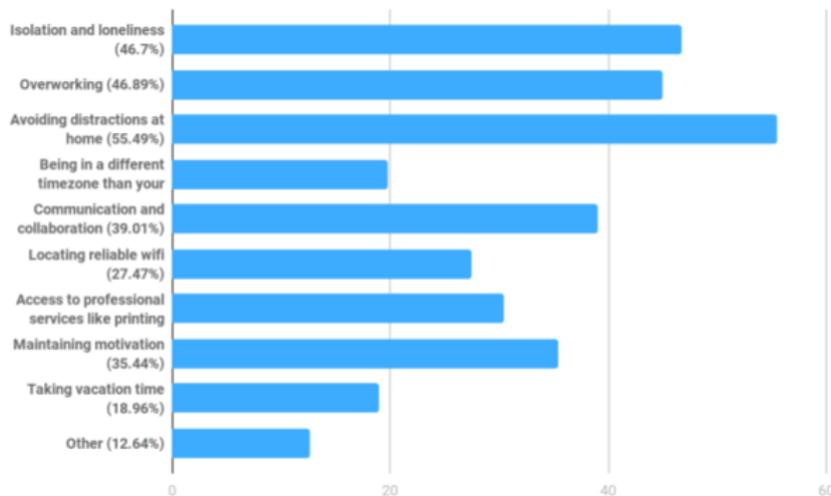
What do you enjoy the most about remote working?



# REMOTE WORK CHALLENGES

However, some people find remote working to be more difficult than working in a traditional office setting, especially when it comes to feelings of isolation and avoiding distractions.

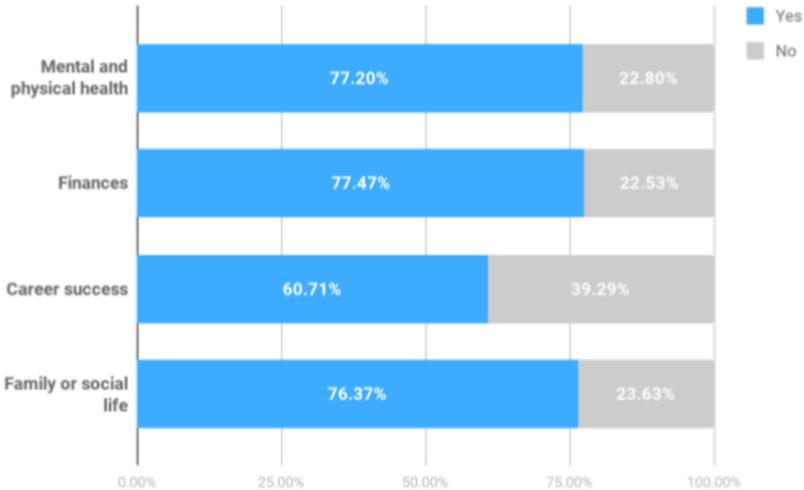
What are your biggest challenges when working remotely?



# MORE REMOTE WORK BENEFITS

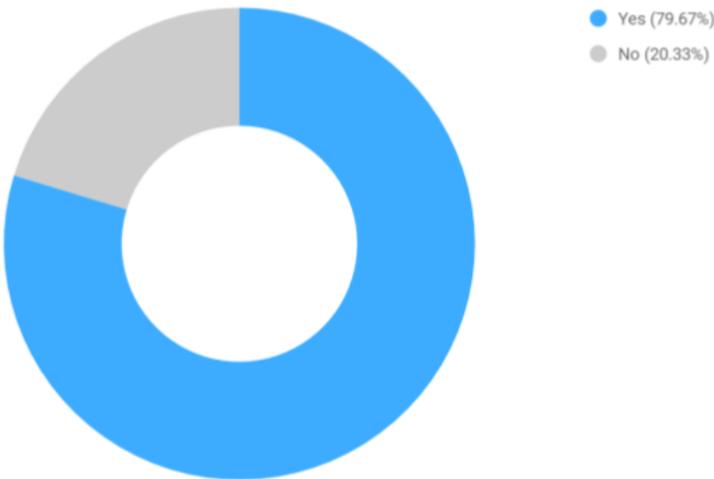
Despite the challenges, a majority of people found that remote working had a positive impact on many aspects of their day-to-day lives, both personally and professionally.

Has remote working had a positive effect in any of the following areas?



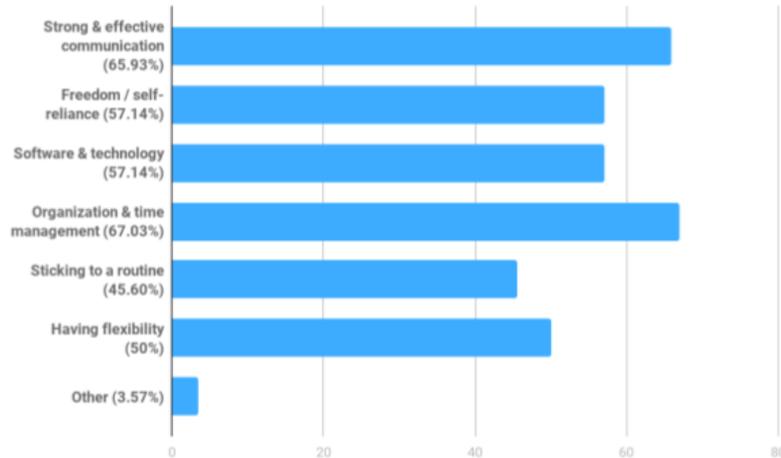
In addition to the many positive effects of remote working, people claim that they are able to be more productive because of their flexible working arrangement...

Do you believe your remote work arrangement allows you to be more productive?



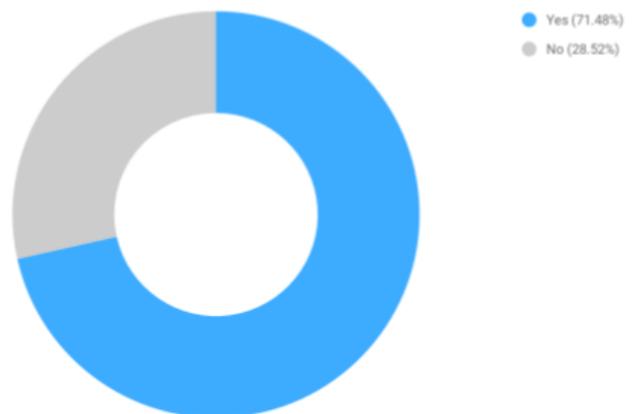
...and that several key factors allow them to be successful while working from home.

Which are the most important factors that allow you to be successful while remote working?



For those that worked from a coworking space before lockdowns were instated, a significant majority said they plan on returning to the space once isolation ends.

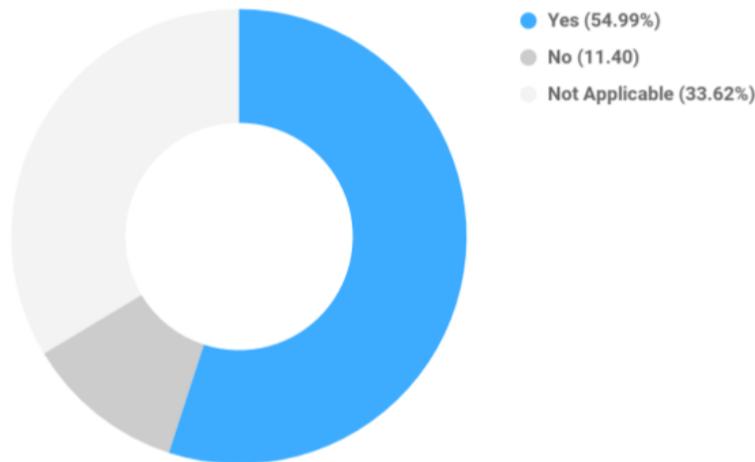
If you regularly work from a coworking space, do you plan to return to it once isolation ends?



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Moreover, remote workers were largely in support of trying out a coworking space or shared office after lockdowns are lifted. This suggests that the flexible office industry will indeed recover, albeit gradually, as more companies consider shifting to a permanently remote workforce or an alternative “de-densified” office setup.

If you don't regularly use a coworking space, would you consider joining one in the future as you remote work?



## COWORKING STATISTICS

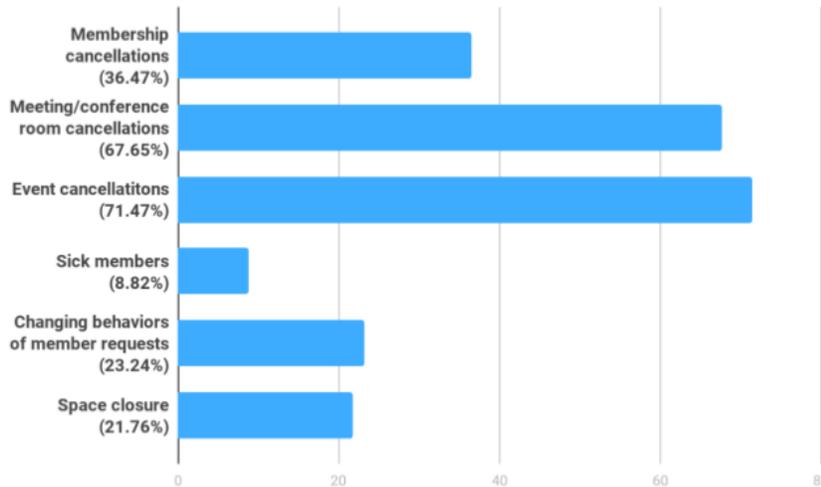
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Like businesses in all industries, coworking spaces and flexible offices have faced a major drop in the amount of people utilizing their services.

- **71.67%** of spaces said they have witnessed a significant drop in the number of people working from their space since the outbreak.
- **40.8%** of coworking spaces reported a negative impact on membership and contract renewals since the outbreak.
- **67%** of spaces have experienced a drop in the number of new membership enquiries.

In addition to facing significant membership losses and low attendance, coworking spaces were also experiencing several other consequences as a result of COVID-19 as well.

What consequences has your space experienced as a result of COVID-19?



To combat these difficult consequences, coworking operators that were able to remain open introduced several new measures to reduce the spread of the virus. These measures emphasize higher standards of hygiene and safety—which will be crucial to the management of all shared office spaces going forward.

## Most Common Measures By Coworking Spaces To Stop The Spread of COVID-19

-  More frequent sanitization of all high-frequency touchpoints (84.56%)
-  Making hand sanitizer accessible throughout the space (74.16%)
-  Creating and sending out an email with tips for prevention (68.46%)
-  Posting signs around your space with tips for prevention (57.05%)
-  Limiting space access (37.25%)
-  Space closure (20.13%)

% Represents percentage of spaces that were actively taking these measures between March 16 - March 19, 2020

## INDUSTRY AGILITY

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As evidence of the adaptability of the coworking industry – which, by its very nature, is dedicated to providing flexible solutions in whichever manner is needed most – many coworking spaces adapted their operational models in response to COVID-19.

### Have you adjusted your business model or introduced any new business models in response to the outbreak?

#### Some responses:

- Adjusted cancellation policies to allow for more relaxed cancellation periods
- Lower pricing for new members and discounts to current members
- New student memberships for university students transitioning to online classes
- New “virtual plans” and offering virtual mail services, in which no physical presence is required
- Ability to roll over any unused days to future months for part-time shared desk members or pause membership entirely
- Single-person rentals of meeting rooms for virtual meetings
- Virtual member events and online workshops, including collaborations with video conferencing companies
- Partnerships with local businesses to assist members and their families, including additional services by food delivery companies
- Changing marketing strategies to reflect a new focus on selling private office memberships



# OUR PREDICTIONS

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## REMOTE WORK POLICIES WILL SHIFT

- A significant number of corporates and SMEs will adjust their policies to reflect the success they experienced during the pandemic with a remote workforce.
- Of the respondents who worked in an office setting and whose employer did not allow them to work remotely prior to the pandemic, 53.6% said they anticipate their employer's remote work policy changing.

## FIRST-TIME REMOTE WORKERS REAPED MANY BENEFITS FROM FLEXIBILITY AND ASPIRE TO WORK REMOTELY PERMANENTLY

- Respondents who were forced to try remote working for the first time during the pandemic found it to be a positive experience, rating remote work a 70 out of 100 on average.
- For 70.6% of first-time remote workers, they believed their flexible arrangement allowed them to be more productive than usual.
- As a result of this increased productivity and satisfaction, 52.9% of first-time remote workers said they now aspire to work remotely for the remainder of their career.

## UTILIZATION OF COWORKING SPACES WILL INCREASE

- Of the respondents who regularly utilized coworking spaces prior to the pandemic, 88.6% said they will plan on returning to them post-pandemic.
- Significantly, a majority of first-time remote workers who worked in an office prior said they would consider joining a coworking space in the future if they continue to work remotely.
- As a result, people that weren't previously exposed to coworking spaces before the pandemic will look to try coworking for the first time.



## FINAL THOUGHTS

Now that the largest remote work experiment has taken place on a global scale, the number of people that are working remotely – and finding success – is increasing every day. While there are certainly some challenges to remote work, the majority of people seem to believe it has more benefits than drawbacks, including a better work-life balance and boosted productivity.

Perhaps most significantly, people who were forced to work remotely for the first time as a result of the pandemic have found it to be an overall positive experience that has effectively boosted productivity. Much to the surprise of many employers, remote work has largely been successful, allowing for business continuity, and even improvement in some scenarios, to be achieved.

The way that companies organize their workforces will likely face a tectonic shift. The experiment has proven that centralized offices are simply not as necessary, which will likely lead to more distributed teams in service-oriented, shared workspaces.

As the return to work gets underway, businesses will look to revise their flexibility policies based on the success they experienced during the pandemic with a remote workforce. And with so many first-time remote workers now aspiring to continue working remotely, more businesses will view flexibility as an integral part of employee satisfaction and continuity.

2022

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