Lunch out. Spontaneous pub drinks. A latte that didn’t come out of a sachet. As the UK transitions out of lockdown, we’re back in the game – but not necessarily back in the office.

Businesses scrambled to adjust to the challenging events of last year as work went remote almost overnight, and many found themselves in a better position once the dust had settled. Despite initial difficulties, benefits soon emerged. Time was saved by not commuting, juggling childcare became easier, and most people managed to find a new balance of life amidst the chaos.

Now, as traditional office spaces begin to whirr into action once more, employees are set to enjoy a return to socialising and a more concrete start and end to the working day – but not everyone’s excited. That’s why we surveyed over 1,000 British businesses to discover their employee preferences as we move out of lockdown.

It’s clear now that things will never go ‘back to normal’ – so let’s examine what you should be doing to make the new world of work, work for everyone.
WORKING BETTER AT THE OFFICE

While the office undoubtedly has its advantages, half of respondents don’t feel ready to go back full time. But why might that be? When only 28% of respondents’ employers have implemented a formal hybrid working policy, it’s easy to see why so many may be feeling unsure.

However, the reasons for this are numerous, from concern over lost time to health fears, with 64% worried that going back to the office will increase their chances of catching Covid.

☑️ PROS...
- The top 3 tasks respondents found easier to do in the office included collaborative work (50%), managing others (37%) and meetings/conference calls (28%).
- Respondents were also able to achieve more of the items on their to-do list when they were working from home (72% vs. 66% respectively).

☒ AND CONS
- Over half (57%) of respondents felt anxious about being around people again.
- Not being able to access IT support was cited as a big challenge of working from home by over a quarter (26%) of respondents.
- 66% of respondents were worried about losing time on their commute.
- Almost 6 in 10 (59%) said they weren’t excited to wear proper work attire again.
TIPS
Here’s how you can make the gradual transition back to office life stress free, safe, and suitable for everyone:

– There’s no need for everyone to go back at once. Ease your staff back in to office life with attendance staggered by team.

– Relax company dress codes or consider introducing casual days to ensure staff feel comfortable, even at the office.

– Win big on employee satisfaction by implementing flexible working hours that would mean a better chance of getting a seat on public transport and being able to do something productive.

– Limited access to tech support caused a strain for many during lockdown. To remedy this, set up specific days when employees can come into work and get help from an IT professional in person if unable to provide adequate remote support.

– Video calls are here to stay, so having a dedicated video centre in your office is no longer negotiable. Take group meetings to the next level with Logitech’s Rally Bar and Rally Bar Mini solutions, combined with the MeetUp touchpad to make syncing calendars and connecting to different call providers seamless.

– Encourage employees to come into the office once reopened by all means, but respect that physical attendance doesn’t necessarily mean better performance.

On average, on a general day in the office, respondents get more of their ‘to do’ list completed while working from home (72%) compared to when in the office (66%).
With 100% of survey respondents having worked from home over the last 12 months and roughly six in ten (63%) employees rating it as a positive experience as we come out of lockdown, many will be pleased that the home office is here to stay in some capacity.

In fact, over half (56%) said they wouldn’t feel relieved to be in a proper office again, so businesses must take care not to make anyone who chooses to stay home feel ‘othered’.

**WORKING BETTER AT HOME**

**PROS...**
- The top 3 types of work that respondents were more productive at outside of the office were deep thoughtful work (54%), attending to emails/messages (43%) and administrative/repetitive tasks (42%).
- The most positive aspects of working from home were saving money on commuting (63%), having more time to do things (49%) and more time with family/friends (35%).

**... AND CONS**
- Half of respondents were more likely to work over hours when working from home.
- The biggest challenges of working from home were not being able to socialise with colleagues (38%), not being able to dissociate work life from home life (35%) and being distracted by things at home (29%).
Despite getting more of their to do list done while working from home, respondents are more likely to work over hours when working from home.

55% of those in companies with over 10,000 employees are more likely to work over hours at home.

Those in individual contributor roles are more likely to work overtime at home (52%) than those in C-level roles (33%).

TIPS

Whether you’re going hybrid or fully remote, this is our advice on how to improve home office conditions for your employees, wherever they’re working from today.

- Invest in proper, enterprise grade equipment for employees. Having the wrong gear can make meetings a waste of time, not to mention eating into schedules with endless troubleshooting. The Logitech Pro Personal Video Collaboration Kit with Zone Wireless headset and Brio 4K webcam is a fantastic place to start.

- With no commute to bookend the day, it can be easy for tasks to spill over into afterhours. Advise your team to draw strict boundaries between personal and work time, and remind them that they won’t gain brownie points for still being on Slack when the street lights are on.

- Schedule regular ‘concentration days’, during which employees are encouraged to go dark on communication solutions such as Teams, and book out their calendars in advance to give them an uninterrupted day to get their heads down on intense or important tasks.

- Consider how any money saved from no longer renting physical premises can be reinvested in your employees if applicable – better equipment (desks, ergonomic chairs, webcams), training programs, new perks, etc.

- Keep company culture alive by maintaining regular nights out, coffee mornings or teambuilding events.
Having made it to the other side of last year is an achievement in itself, but there are still huge strides to be made in improving the modern office, home, and hybrid workplace. Now, businesses have a big opportunity to get the best out of their teams by making their lives easier. By taking the time to consider what factors set your staff up for success, you can finetune your operations for efficiency and ensure employee satisfaction at the same time. It’s all a matter of deploying the solutions that give your staff the power to reach their full potential – because when people win, work wins.

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