

Predicted Impacts of Moving Toward a Remote Workforce

I remember when I first had reliable internet access on my computer in 2017 when I was 14 and entering a new phase of my social life. Thinking back on my experience it makes me realize how some social behavior hasn't really changed, while how the internet is used as a whole has changed quite dramatically. For example, interactions through online video games remain fairly similar (which is not necessarily a good thing) while the ways people socialize have adapted. Instant messaging was already quite popular by this point but even then the internet felt like a cool place to hang out.

Today, it's become less of a fun place or a useful tool, but a necessity, not just socially but also when considering how much the workforce relies on it, news, economics, etc. According to a Stanford news article written by May Wong

(<https://news.stanford.edu/2020/06/29/snapshot-new-working-home-economy/>), Approximately 42% of the US workforce is working from home. While this is certainly influenced by a global pandemic I think it will become more common for businesses to have their employees work from home. Although we will likely start seeing the results of this after the pandemic ends I am anticipating we will see longer lasting effects over the next several decades. An article written on the Global Workplace Analytics website

(<https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/work-at-home-after-covid-19-our-forecast>) suggests that 80% of workers would prefer to be able to work from home. Although there are potential sociological impacts to less in person interactions with coworkers I believe an increase in the

workforce working from home will make a change in employee morale and how people approach their work. According to website Allwork, 48% of remote workers who responded to a survey related to gathering insight on mental health while working remotely stated that they had a very good or excellent work-life balance

(<https://allwork.space/2020/09/the-impact-of-remote-working-on-employees/>). Though I think more study is needed here and time will tell what psychological effects occur on remote works over an extended period.

I also predict that this change in the workforce will have significant impacts on the commercial real estate market given that more companies may opt to not have a physical office. Magazine US states that the ratio of office space to worker has already been on a decline since 2009 (<https://www.regus.com/work-us/en-us/revolutionising-how-to-sell-workspace/>) and I would expect this ratio to be impacted even more severely as time moves forward.

I work from home myself and I have found that I am more exposed to various cultural behaviors from not just others around the US but around the world. As we move toward a more remote workforce I would expect that some businesses will need to adapt to this, both in terms of differences in legal obligation related to employees in different countries and in creating a comfortable environment for those from different countries and cultures. However, I also believe companies will benefit from more diverse cultures and differences in perspective.

I also believe that a more remote workforce will result in less of a need of overpopulation in large cities and that more people will opt to move to places where housing is more affordable if they are not expected to commute to an office on a daily basis. Forbes refers to a survey conducted where 36% of employees asked suggested they would consider moving if allowed to work from home

(<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jennifercastenson/2020/06/08/value-of-home-life-is-back-and-has-land-buyers-moving-way-out/?sh=d71e94d71f1a>)

I have a genuine interest in these developments as I work from home myself and i'm curious to see how these changes unfold over the next 25 years!