

# How turning to remote has gone from a trend to a reality

Leave it to a global pandemic to fundamentally get organizations to re-think how they work and get the most out of their teams. From Milan to Dublin to San Francisco, companies of every industry are scrambling, defining and refining work-from-home protocols, in certain instances for the entirety of their staff. Will turning to remote today offer lasting organizational change for tomorrow?

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Since 2005, regular “work-from-home” workers have grown by 173%, and currently, about 24% of US workers employed full-time today did “some or all” of their work at home, a trend that has picked up steam the last five years because knowledge workers have been demanding flexible work schedules as a benefit and technologies have transformed the experience, making it more effective for all.

Organizations that have been ahead of the curve by implementing work from home policies years ago can attest to more productive teams, cost savings, better employee retention, and tapping a global talent pool. Remote work enthusiasts will rave about a better quality of life and well-being, the joy of zero commutes, seeing family more and boosts in productivity by controlling where and how they work.

# Working from home isn't new

The idea of remote work as we know it isn't new. The pro & con camps have been debating the effects of telecommuting on workers, organizations, economic development, and traffic for over 50 years.

In 1973, NASA engineer Jack Nilles authored "The Telecommunications - Transportation Tradeoff: Options for Tomorrow". At the height of the national energy crisis and OPEC's oil embargo, Nilles proposed working from home as a solution to traffic gridlock as well as diminishing natural resources. Coining "telecommuting" as the idea of moving the work to the workers instead of moving the workers to work. He offered the first case study to review how adoption would impact management, productivity, costs and benefits, energy conservation implications, and public policy issues.

Without the hindsight of how the Internet, the personal computer, and the mobile phone would radically transform the workplace, Nilles brilliantly wrote that "either the jobs of the employees must be redesigned so that they can still be self-contained at each individual location, or a sufficiently sophisticated telecommunications and information storage system must be developed to allow the information transfer to occur as effectively as if the employees were centrally collocated."

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Few jumped on the bandwagon, though some small experimenting in the 1980s saw companies like J.C. Penney allow its call-centre employees to work from home. At the end of the decade, the state of California commissioned a study on the potential costs and benefits of extending telework to state employees.

The report deemed that, “Telecommuting, if it becomes widespread, can affect almost every aspect of contemporary life, from fundamental job patterns to the physical structure of communities, to broad-scale environmental changes such as global warming, to global economic competitiveness.” The report also stated that remote work, “enhances the quality of work-life for telecommuters, including those with disabilities,” and “Telecommuting more than pays its way ... there are societal benefits as well.”

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## Who is most prepared to go full remote?

The last couple of weeks has seen remote work hit a new peak as companies are testing out new solutions and methods to adopt full-on remote for teams worldwide. But remote work has already been embraced by large portions of knowledge workers in certain areas more so than others. Organizations in these cities may have a leg up in implementing new ways of working and have a larger amount of teams with skills and habits to grasp going full remote in a short period of time.

Cities where over +60% of workers’ time is spent working remotely already.  
(Klaxoon Teamwork Tour Study 2019)

1. Austin – 31% (of workers spent +60% of time remotely)
2. Denver – 26%
3. Washington DC – 23%
4. Seattle – 22.7%
5. NYC – 22%

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# How to make going remote, work

As the number of distributed teams increases the need for incorporating new ways of working will need to spread within organizations to keep pace with change, especially to ensure team alignment, smooth collaboration, and remote worker connectedness. The need to improve is evident, currently when working remotely 63% of employees feel they are less informed than when working from the corporate office. 71% of workers from San Francisco (the most in USA!) claim that they feel they are less informed when working from home. And surprisingly, when surveying all job positions it is managers (67%) compared to all others that feel the least informed when not in the office.

Many of those disconnections stem from our current work practices and hierarchies. When Klaxoon surveyed organizations to find out what was the number one way information was shared with teams, overwhelmingly “in-person” sharing remains the top standard-bearer. That only works if the entire team is co-located and even then, someone will miss a closed-door discussion, meeting, open-space conversation, or hallway chat. That doesn’t breed team synchronization & alignment and most certainly fails for hybrid and full-remote teams. When going remote think about how everything you do can be more visual. Be deliberate and transparent by making visual collaboration the glue that sets your team in motion. Start by using tools like Klaxoon during in-person or virtual meetings, workshops, and trainings to optimize participation when your teams come together while guaranteeing alignment when they are off doing deep work. Slowly but surely new ways of working will start to permeate how idea sharing, participation, consensus building, and decision making are standardized transforming culture and mindsets throughout an organization.

Making remote work work will be a key success factor in enhancing engagement, innovation, creativity, and overall company well-being. Now time will tell if organizations only temporarily put into place a more connected, collaborative workplace or finally decide to make the shift by offering remote work options permanently to enhance the quality of work-life and offer societal benefits to all.

To assist in the challenge ahead Klaxoon is committed to assisting organization worldwide ramp up remote work implementation. A 3-month free trial and dedicated guidance and assistance from an expert team will be provided to all at no cost. To learn more visit [Klaxoon](#).

Charles Kergaravat is head of international marketing at Klaxoon, an award-winning company that is changing the way businesses harness the power of teams with solutions designed to make meetings more efficient and work

practices more collaborative. He has conducted multiple studies to measure how new ways of working are effecting and changing work habits at the intersection of people, places and technology.

Charles is very active in the technology scene, working closely with startups, accelerators, and incubators to further entrepreneurship and innovation. In 2008, he started Velo4Cure to raise funds for cancer research and completed a 3007 km solitary Tour de France by bike.

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