

# Why we need to fight to preserve remote roles

Ever since the rise of remote working brought about at the start of the pandemic, the debate around whether office or home is best has been fierce. Some senior business leaders, including the director general of the Confederation of British Industry, have dismissed remote-first roles as the world of work “gone crazy”. Citing worries about employee productivity, many have called for a national full-time return to the office. But they should be careful what they wish for.

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Of course, for many, the benefits of working in the office – such as collaborating with teams in person, and the value of keeping work and home life separate – can be really important, and the option to do so should remain. But, for many others, the ability to work remotely is still vital. As we move forward into the future of work, we should not be fighting for a return to the past, but embracing a new, more flexible and accessible workplace for all.

Remote working has a key role to play in making this a reality. Whether your team is fully-remote or exercising a hybrid approach, there are a number of significant benefits to be gained from remote working. In my team at *Cinapsis*, we’ve certainly found this to be true. Working remotely has positively impacted

both our work as a team and our individual wellbeing. Over time, we've been able to consciously adapt and evolve our approach to ensure that this mode of working continues to provide optimal outcomes for everyone. From my experience leading a remote team, here are some of the main reasons we should think twice before waving goodbye to remote roles.

## More concentrated work

Three quarters of managers say that remote work increases employee productivity and motivation. With work-from-home roles allowing employees to focus in an environment that suits them, many have noted fewer distractions and more focused work thanks to the ability to complete tasks in a quiet, comfortable environment at home, or from wherever they work best.

One study even found that those who were able to work remotely reported significantly lower rates of burnout in comparison to employees without flexible working policies. Giving employees choice when it comes to where and how they work can make a big difference to managing stress and wellbeing. As a result, providing the choice to work remotely can create a more conducive atmosphere for employee productivity.

## Better work-life balance

A CIPD report carried out during the pandemic revealed that many employees found that the option to work remotely has helped improve their overall lifestyle and wellbeing. For many, waving goodbye to a long commute to the office has played a big role in this by freeing up significant amounts of time in their day. Employees can repurpose the time they would have spent commuting for other, more meaningful activities, such as spending time with family and friends, or balancing other commitments such as managing childcare responsibilities.

A pre-pandemic survey in 2019 found that the average commute time was taking almost an hour a day. By saving this time, employees gain the freedom to fit more around their work, improving their overall work-life balance and consequently enabling them to be more productive within their working hours.

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# Employee savings

During a cost of living crisis that shows no sign of relenting, working remotely can also help employees save money that they might otherwise have spent on transport and other expenses. Commuting can represent a significant cost for employees, and with train fares set to rise even further this year, as well as predicted petrol price increases, remote working offers an opportunity to make notable savings.

For employees who are parents or carers, high childcare costs can also present an additional financial burden when having to travel to and from the office. By scrapping remote roles, companies would significantly reduce flexibility and threaten to push up costs for their employees amid an increasingly tough economic climate. Giving workers the option to work from home enables them greater financial flexibility, which can have a huge impact on their wellbeing and consequently their job satisfaction and productivity.

## Broader pools of talent

With the scope of recruitment no longer limited to how close someone lives to the office, employers are offered a much wider talent pool to choose from when hiring for remote roles. This ensures that employers can hire the best person for the available position, whether they are based locally, nationally or internationally. This opens up a wider network of opportunities for the company, and can help build a more diverse team. For employees, this also unlocks a broader range of potential experiences and opportunities, while making it easier for them to stay in their current job if their personal circumstances change; for example, if they choose to relocate.

Supporting employees to work in a way that accommodates their lifestyle and maximises their wellbeing, is crucial to allowing them to contribute fully in the workplace. This ultimately boosts retention, increases productivity, and helps build and maintain more diverse teams. Remote roles do not represent a step backwards for the world of work, but rather point towards a more accessible, fair and inclusive future. It's certainly not time to ditch the remote role, but to instead continue evolving the ways we work to offer increasingly flexible and accessible options which cater to all.

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