

HR Matters

Namibia Newsletter

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A quarterly newsletter published by PwC Namibia providing informed commentary on current developments in the People & Organisation arena.

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Can we really work from home forever? The hard truths

Article from HRMornings.com by [Michele McGovern](#)

More than half the people who work from home now want to keep it that way. But really – can we work from home forever?

Despite employees' desire to stay put some or all of the time, the hard truth is it can't be the reality forever.

HR professionals will need to continue to navigate remote work situations, prepare for a return to work in the near future and plan for the days when everyone is on site again.

"Working remotely is now extremely common, though under very challenging conditions," says Stanford Economist and Researcher Nicholas Bloom. "Of the dozens of firms I have talked to, the typical plan is that employees will work from home one to three days a week, and come into the office the rest of the time."

Even Bloom, who has researched work from home extensively, argued people need to be in the workplaces at least some of the time.

Here's why researchers say we can't work from home forever, and tips to alleviate the issues until we're settled back on-site.

We aren't as productive

Just half of employees who've worked from home since the pandemic started are at least 80% efficient as they were on-site, the Stanford study found.

Many leaders have found employees were originally more productive at home. But as time has worn on, employees were significantly less productive on Mondays and Fridays.

To help now: Encourage front line managers to meet weekly with employees. They can set goals and decide on the strategies to stay the course for the week.

We aren't technically equipped

One-third of employees said they don't have the internet capacity to handle video calls, the Stanford researchers found. Others don't have the level of technology they had on-site.

To help now: Do what you can to help employees get the internet capability they need. Or you might try this lower-tech solution. Schedule meetings very early or late in the day when other people in employees' homes aren't taxing the internet, too!

We don't have the space

More than half of the people working from home share workspace. Spouses, roommates and kids in virtual school crowd them in.

That's not comfortable or sustainable.

To help now: Send employees regular tips on ergonomics best practices for working from home. And assess employees' situations. For instance, if someone is working from a bed, can you supply her with a desk?

The equality gap widens

Working from home "is generating a time bomb for inequality," Bloom says. "Our results show that more educated, higher-earning employees are far more likely to work from home. So they are continuing to get paid, develop their skills and advance their careers. At the same time, those unable to work from home – either because of the nature of their jobs, or because they lack suitable space or internet connections – are being left behind."

Workplaces are diverse. Homes aren't so much. So the diversity gap widens, too. People aren't as exposed to diverse ideas and colleagues.

To help now: It's important for managers to keep their teams and cross departmental teams in touch. They need to regularly hear and share different views. In the meantime, HR pros want to continue and adjust diversity and inclusion plans for the work from home situation.

We're lonely

Many employees aren't just isolated from the office. They don't see or interact with family and friends. Many people working from home are lonelier than ever. That seriously affects their morale and productivity, which hurts businesses further.

To help now: Zoom happy hours can't completely replace real-time, in-person interaction. Try to create opportunities for employees who face similar circumstances to connect and share stories and best practices. For instance, you might create group meetings for working parents with kids in virtual school or Millennials living alone.

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We're anxious

The longer employees stay out of the workplace, the longer they feel trapped in unpredictable circumstances. They don't know how long and to what degree work will infringe on their lives and lifestyle. Moving quickly to the work-from-home, and now working from home indefinitely, will continue to make employees anxious, according to Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzik, an authority in leadership assessment, people analytics, and talent management.

To help now: Normalize your operations as much as possible. While some employees need flexibility, many are more comfortable with the schedule and demand similar to what they had on-site. Also, keep employees updated on your return-to-work plans so they can prepare for the new – or return to – predictability.

We're suspicious

This could be the most surprising HR/COVID-19-related research we've seen: Employees are more suspicious now. Many are more prone to conspiracy theories than ever before, Harvard Business School researchers found.

Why? People have less control over their lives – where they work, the places they go, the people they see and the routines they like. When they lose control, they look for any kind of pattern – even if it's ludicrous. For instance, an employee might believe he'll be fired because his boss ignored him for two days. Meanwhile, the boss was just busy with Zoom meetings – something the employee couldn't see.

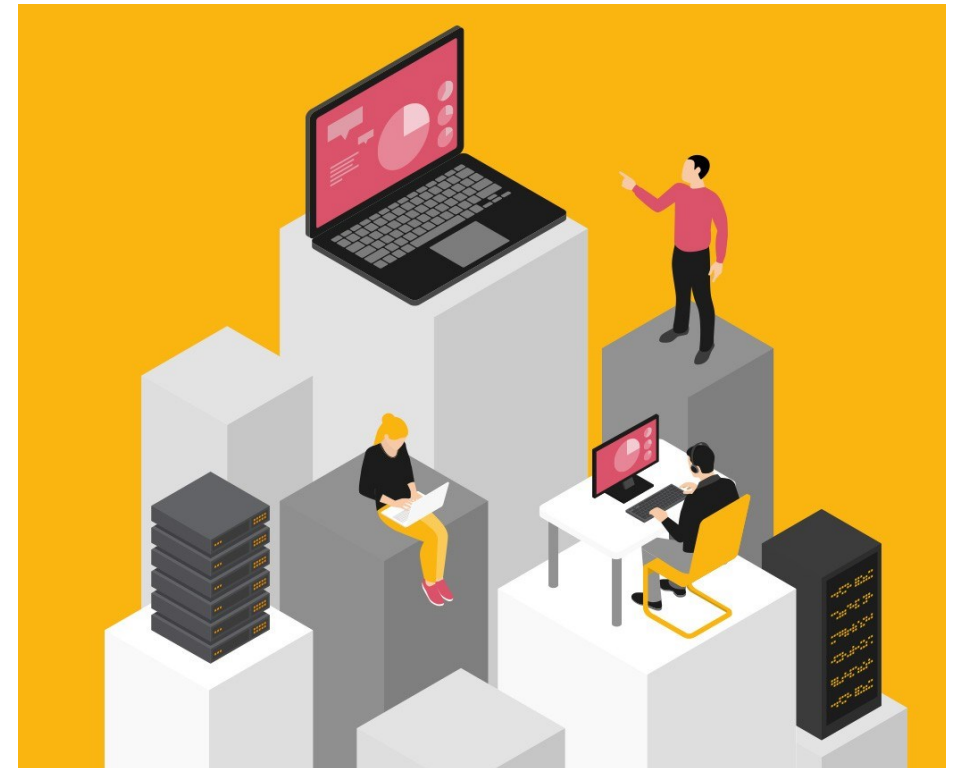
To help now: Managers need to be more transparent than ever. Update employees on company, department and colleague news regularly. Ask if they've heard rumors and dispel what you can.

We're burned out

HR leaders shouldn't be surprised that employees who feel isolated, stressed and suspicious will become burned out. Gallup researchers recently found employees who work from home are more burned out than those who work on-site. Prior to the pandemic, the opposite held true: Remote employees faced less stress.

Why now? Researchers say there's a difference between choosing to work from home and being forced to work from home. When people had flexibility and autonomy to go to the office, they didn't feel "trapped" at home.

To help now: Many companies asked for volunteers to be the first on-site again and to test their COVID-19 safety protocols. Other managers set staggered schedules so fewer employees work on-site at any given time. Try a hybrid plan so employees who need to get away from home to avoid burnout can.



How 2020 changed work – and what 2021 will look like



Article from HRMornings.com by [Michele McGovern](#)

2020 changed work. The pandemic affected nearly everything – where, when, how and why we work. Now it's time to adjust for 2021.

Gallup researchers recently uncovered the biggest changes to work in 2020 – and how those will impact HR leaders and their organizations in the coming year.

Of course, some insights won't surprise you because you lived it. For example, most companies found remote work is a viable solution when workplace health and safety are a concern. (Which, in the case of the coronavirus, it feels like that's the most pressing concern.)

Other insights were happy, unforeseen results that might help you create an even better corporate culture.

Here's what Gallup researchers found – and tips for making it all work better in the coming year(s).

Make remote work better

When companies closed their doors, and employees were sent home to work, many leaders didn't think it would last long. Some didn't think much would get done. Others doubted their own ability to manage employees from a distance.

Truth is, the transition to remote work didn't go smoothly either. People were challenged by technology, personal space, broadband, caring for others and stress.

But Gallup researchers found, as time marched on, employees worked out the kinks and be-

came re-engaged with their work. Now, 55% of managers say they'll let employees work remotely more often – or even all the time.

2021 Outlook: Most HR leaders and many front-line managers will work remotely or supervise off-site employees at least part-time going forward. So you'll want to make sure everyone is as efficient at home as they are on-site. You can find dozens of ideas on how to set up and train employees to work better from home here.

Give more feedback

Employee engagement dipped, then rose, in 2020. And it makes sense: Employees were uprooted, uncertain and scared in the early months of the pandemic. Nearly everyone struggled to focus on work whether they were remote or on-site. Engagement fell.

Then, as things fell into place, employees got focused and reengaged.

But Gallup researchers found one thing made a big difference in the level of engagement. Feedback from the boss.

Managers who regularly talked to employees were able to engage and motivate their team better than those who took a more hands-off approach. Employees even said any feedback – positive and/or constructive – was helpful.

2021 Outlook: Keep it coming, HR leaders! Give weekly feedback and remind your front-line managers to stay in touch with each of their employees at least a few times a week – whether they're remote or right outside the door. Ask employees about the challenges they face, both professional and personal if it impacts remote work. Then work on ways you can help.

Forget annual reviews

Frequent feedback can help eliminate an archaic management tool: the annual review. Even before COVID-19, traditional performance reviews and the tools leaders use to execute and manage them were plagued with problems, Gallup researches said.

Yearly reviews were too infrequent – and long physical absences in 2020 made it worse. Annual goal setting and irregular feedback became irrelevant as conditions, circumstances and demands changed so quickly this year.

2021 Outlook: Managers want to have more frequent, timely and informal performance conversations with employees. Even if it's a one-on-one Zoom call, it'll help everyone stay focused on the right objectives and adapt as your business does.

Help curb burnout

People are stressed from the pandemic and all the complications its caused. Work is just a piece of the complicated puzzle. But it's significant enough that HR leaders and front-line managers saw a serious increase in employee burnout in 2020.

Here's the good part: Managers can help employees avoid burnout because they have control over

the biggest causes. Gallup found the major reasons employees burn out include:

- Unfair treatment
- Unmanageable workload
- Unclear communication
- Lack of manager support
- Unreasonable time pressure

2021 Outlook: Managers want to regularly gauge employees' experience and feelings about the five major factors. Employees will inevitably have to power through a few times of heavier workloads and short deadlines. But managers want to monitor employees to make sure it's not happening all the time. That will make them feel supported, inspired and motivated.

Focus on well-being

"If leaders have learned anything in 2020, it is that employee well-being is an essential factor in business survival. If your people aren't healthy — physically and mentally — you won't succeed," Gallup researchers said.

You've heard it hundreds of times in 2020: We're all in this together. At work, being in it together is essential – and will continue to be. Companies supported employee physical and mental well-being more than ever since the pandemic hit.

2021 Outlook: HR leaders will want to look for ways to bolster and communicate your wellbeing initiatives and resources. "When employers support well-being, they support their employees' engagement, performance, and productivity as well," Gallup researches said.

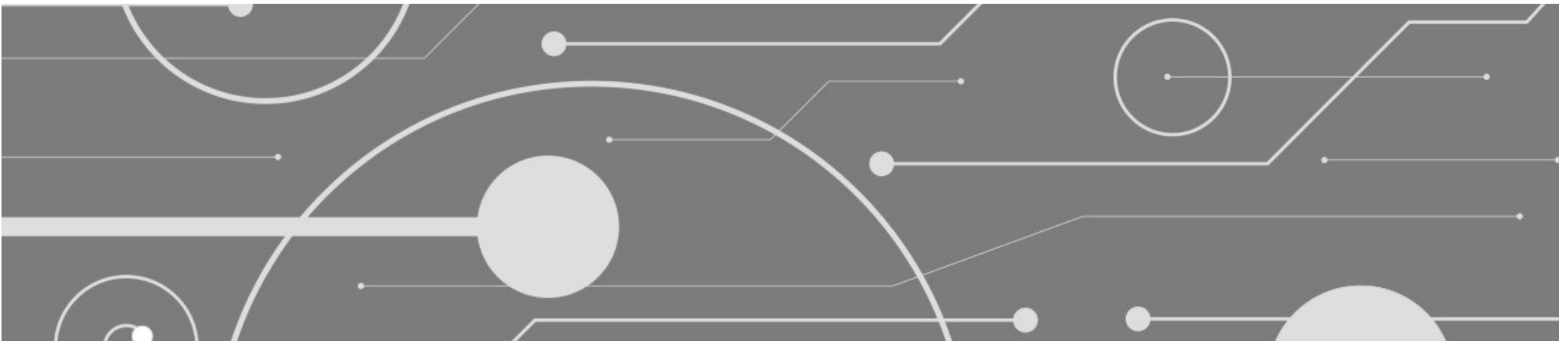
Emphasize your mission

Employees – and even front-line managers – who have worked remotely, socially distanced and behind masks all year feel disconnected.

Many lost touch with the organization's mission and sometimes their own goals. Some lost sight of what makes their company and their work special or better than the competitors', the Gallup study found.

Leaders want to focus again on what makes your company, people and mission important.

2021 Outlook: Get employees re-involved in corporate ideas and ideals. Perhaps they can revamp your mission statement. Or create a cross-functional team so employees from different areas can share best practices for the new work norms. Then they can create regular updates, guides and resources to help all employees navigate the new year and beyond.



Annual Salary increments — on the road to Recovery or not?

From our previous publications and review of remuneration trends with specific reference to anticipated annual salary adjustments, we wish to continually share the trends and movements since 2020 and monitor how increases are impacted.

The average NCPI statistics were reported as follows:

2,7%

NCPI for February 2021

2,5%

Average CPI over past 6 months

2,3%

Average CPI over past 12 months

We've noticed an overall improvement in the expected annual increments from December 2020. Statistics from REMchannel reflected on the right indicated the anticipated increases over the next 12 months from the Namibia National dataset.

	ACTUAL % INCREASES OVER PAST 12 MONTHS	ANTICIPATED % INCREASES FOR NEXT 12 MONTHS
Executive & Management		
Basic Salary	4,8%	4,0%
Total Package	3,6%	3,5%
General Staff		
Basic Salary	5,0%	4,2%
Total Package	3,8%	3,8%
Unionised Staff		
Basic Salary	4,7%	3,6%
Total Package	3,6%	3,2%

Learn @ PwC | HR related training & info sessions

Job evaluation and Grading Principles

7 April 2021

Virtual Training hosted by PwC Business School

Time: 08h00 – 16h00

Course Content:

- Introduction to Job Evaluation
- Job Evaluation Process
- Paterson JE System
- Introduction to PwC's REMeasure JE System

Who should Attend?

- Employees at all levels of the organisation

Registrations close 2 April 2021

Register via email na_busschool@pwc.com

Job Description Writing Training

11 May 2021

Virtual Training hosted by PwC Business School

Time: 08h00 – 16h00

Course Content:

- Define the purpose of job descriptions
- Identify the key elements of an effective job description
- How to write complete, accurate and objective job description
- The importance of job description during job evaluation

Who should Attend?

- Line Managers and Supervisors
- Employees and Union Members

Registrations close 7 May 2021

Register via email na_busschool@pwc.com



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