

# The State of Remote Collaboration Report

2021





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# Part 1

# Introduction



# Introduction

For most of modern history, work has been synonymous with the office, a physical space populated by cubicles, filing cabinets, water coolers, and, of course, our coworkers.

Over time, and especially in the last year, we have discovered that we don't need many of the trappings associated with traditional workspaces. In “the new normal,” your cubicle is now the kitchen table or a home office, your filing cabinet is the cloud, and the water cooler is your fridge. But one thing remains the same: we still need a way to collaborate with our colleagues.

Even before the onset of COVID-19, working remotely had been gaining popularity steadily over the last decade. However, due to the mass influx of remote work in 2020, more thought has been put into how we can be more successful as teams when working together virtually.

With more than 900 global customers who use Vibe boards to collaborate on projects, Vibe is particularly invested in determining how organizations successfully manage remote collaboration. For this Remote Collaboration Report, 1,199 respondents across the United States provided insight into their experience with remote work. We aimed to understand the benefits and drawbacks of working remotely, and to learn what employees need to be successful in a remote work environment. These insights can serve as a guide to help you understand more about remote collaboration and the future of teamwork.

## ■ Highlights

83%

of companies changed their remote policy in response to COVID-19



36%

of people want to work in a blended(remote and onsite) environment



18%

of people will want to stay remote entirely even after it is safe to go back to the office



33%

of people would not consider taking a role that did not offer a remote option



17% In tech

of respondents said that they would like to primarily work in an onsite environment (vs 27% for all organizations)



70% In tech

of tech respondents said that their organization provided a stipend or allowance for remote work equipment (40% for all organizations)



# What is remote collaboration?

Remote collaboration extends an office's collaborative capabilities and translates them to a digital workspace. The goal is to enable communication and teamwork while allowing team members to work from various internet-connected locations.

Before remote working gained popularity, companies were already playing with ways to foster interconnected and efficient collaborative workspaces. But what makes a collaborative workspace?

When constructing modern office spaces, companies realized that a more open space facilitated increased communication among departments and teams. What makes a collaborative workspace is the ability for workers to share tasks and assignments, view documents and the status of projects, meet to discuss and plan work with their teams, and even build relationships and rapport with coworkers.

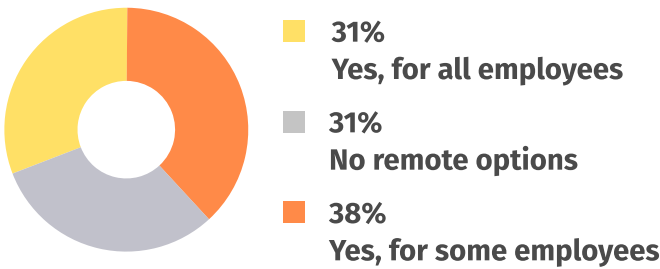
So then, what is a virtual collaborative workspace?

Virtual collaboration enables teammates to work together in real time, regardless of location or time zone. It's simply a collaborative workspace moved to the digital world that allows workers to do all of their work, including communal work, remotely.

# Shift to remote collaboration in the last 10 years

Organizations have increasingly been making the switch to remote work after finding numerous benefits for employees and employers alike. Once technology evolved to allow for faster internet, remote data security, improved shared drives, and other collaboration tools, forward-thinking companies jumped on opportunities to provide remote collaboration as an option for employees.

Did your workplace allow remote work options prior to COVID-19?



In Vibe's study, 69% of respondents reported that their companies offered remote work options to at least a portion of their workforce prior to changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 31% percent of respondents reported that their companies offered all employees the opportunity to work remotely. Companies in the technology, sales, and consulting sectors were most likely to provide remote options to all staff.

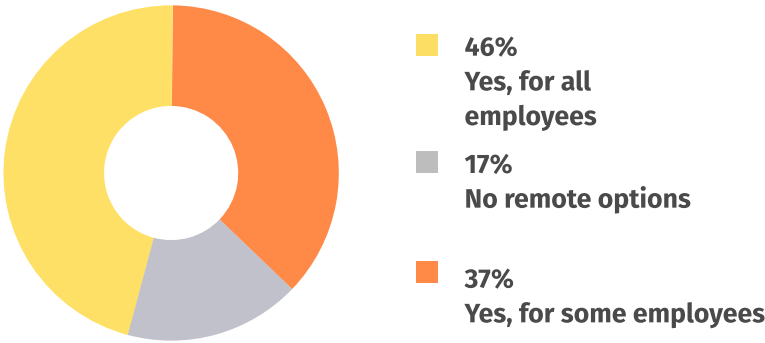
Another 31% of respondents indicated that their organization had no remote work options prior to COVID-19. Unsurprisingly, these workplaces included many industries that aren't generally conducive to off-site work, such as the healthcare, education, retail, and hospitality industries.

Respondents from organizations that provide a split of remote and in-person teams were less satisfied with remote work than those with fully virtual teams. This could be due to the fact that collaboration issues often arise when trying to blend approaches that are best suited to either on-site or virtual mediums.

# COVID-19 has changed how employers and employees think about remote work

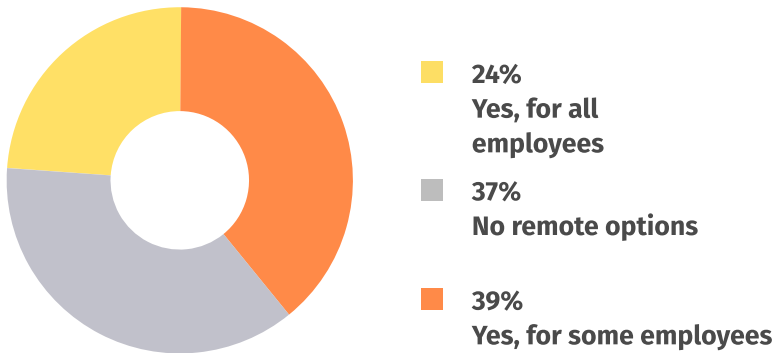
Remote work options changed dramatically in 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing many workplaces into a totally remote environment. Organizations had to rapidly build remote-work infrastructure to avoid a loss in productivity and earnings.

Did your workplace begin providing remote options for employees in response to COVID-19?



Of the respondents from organizations that had previously eschewed remote roles, 63% indicated that their organization was offering remote options to at least part of their workforce in response to COVID-19.

Did your workplace begin providing remote options for employees in response to COVID-19? (For companies that previously had no remote options)

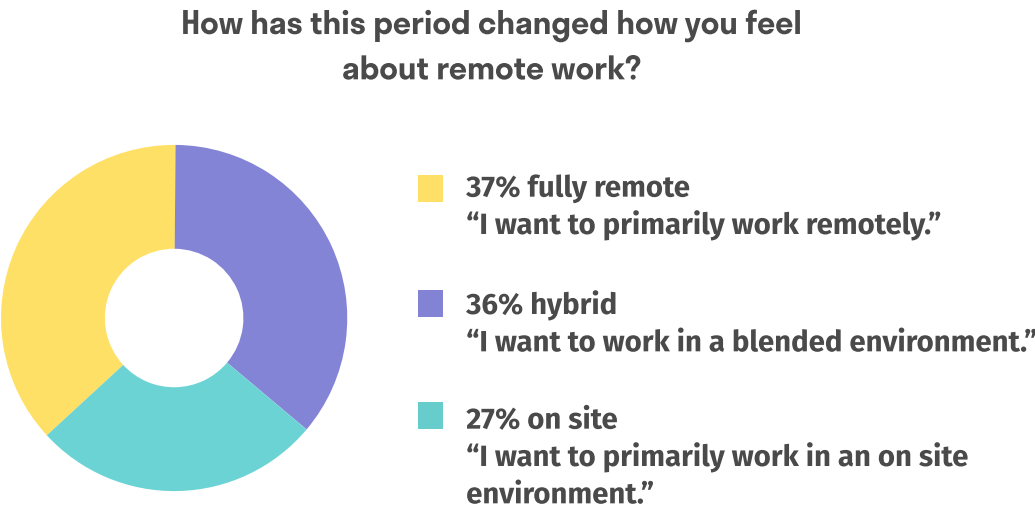


The 38% of respondents working for companies with no remote options before during or after COVID-19 are, once again, overwhelmingly represented in industries that aren't conducive to off-site work, such as healthcare, education, retail, and hospitality.

COVID-19 has been a catalyst in driving companies to use technology to achieve more efficient systems of work.

## How and why is remote work changing?

COVID-19 has shifted the attitudes of both employees and employers toward remote work. As remote collaboration becomes more efficient and findings illuminate that productivity levels are better or unaffected, more companies are taking advantage of the benefits of remote work.



**73% of respondents would prefer to work in an environment with some degree of remote options.**  
**Only 27% of respondents preferred working solely in an on-site environment.**

Going a level deeper, respondents who were working remotely — either originally or in response to the pandemic — preferred to remain in environments with a remote component. Forty-two percent of these respondents favored completely remote work, with 39% favoring blended options. Of the remote employees, only 19% indicated that they would want to work primarily in an on-site location.

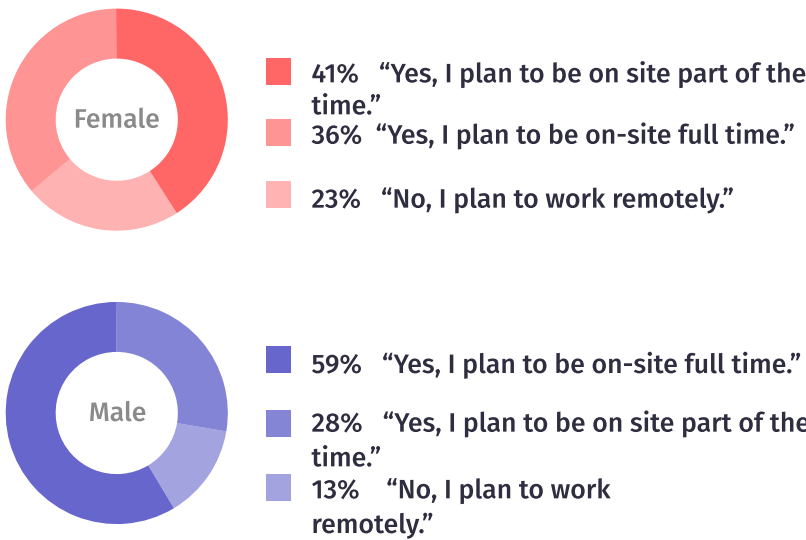
Many workers may still prefer to go into an office, perhaps because they had been accustomed to an on-site work location.

## Post-COVID plans

So what are businesses planning to do when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted? All indicators point to remote work continuing to expand, even after COVID-19 is controlled.

We asked participants if they planned to return to a physical workplace after restrictions are lifted. The responses reflected that more than half expected that their roles would be either remote (18%) or hybrid (35%).

**Do you plan on returning to your workplace when it is advised in your area?**



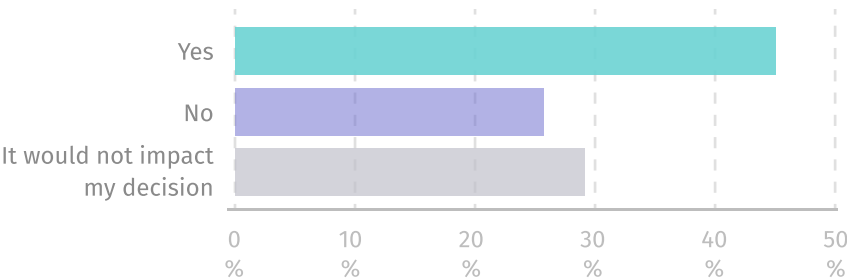
Forty-eight percent of respondents reported that they would return to on-site work to some degree when it is safe to do so again. There was a gender split for those planning to return to the office full-time, with 36% of women vs. 59% of men choosing this option. A distinct split in this preference still remained when comparing women and men with parenting and childcare responsibilities.

In contrast, 18% of respondents indicated that their preference is to work primarily in a remote environment. Many employees wanted a hybrid approach that would let them choose when to go back into the office. This is a growing trend, and employers are considering offering employees more of this flexibility in the future.

**The new normal**

Many employees see the upsides of fully remote or hybrid work styles and have come to prefer them. Determining how strong their preferences for remote and hybrid work are can help employers make the right decision for their workforce. We asked respondents about remote options will affect their future employment decisions.

**For your next job, would you consider taking a role that did not offer a remote option?**



Having no remote option was a dealbreaker for a large number of people. Twenty-six percent of respondents answered that for their next job, they would not consider taking a role that did not offer a remote option. With so many companies, from Amazon to Zillow, adopting new ways of work, employees seek out the ones that can provide the best options for them. Companies that don't offer alternatives to on-site work may see their job pool shrink.

The highest proportion of respondents who would not consider a role with no remote options came from industries that

tended to employ knowledge workers. Finance and financial services led the way, with 36% of respondents in these sectors indicating that they would not consider an on-site role. Surprisingly, government work was another leader, with 33% of respondents saying they would not consider an entirely in-person position. Professional services such as legal or consulting work came in at third for those who would decline a role without remote options.

Finally, the fourth-highest number of respondents who said they would not accept a role with no remote option came from the technology, telecommunications, internet, and electronics industries. Further stats from tech workers revealed that only 17% said they would like to work primarily in on-site environments (10% lower than the answers for all respondents). Ninety-two percent of tech workers reported that their company had options for remote work prior to COVID-19.

The job description also played a part in whether respondents wanted a remote, hybrid, or on-site work environment. Respondents in IT (16%) and customer service (14%) were the least likely to consider future roles without remote options.

Working from home has become a significant incentive for many employees who have become used to the flexibility that a remote work lifestyle affords them. Workplaces will need to adapt or risk losing talent.





## Part 2

# Benefits



## Hire the best talent

By offering remote positions, companies can expand their applicant pool and broaden their horizons when it comes to hiring the best talent. By allowing people to apply from any geographic area, companies can improve the quality of their candidates. This also benefits potential employees, since they can find jobs that match their wants and needs without sacrificing their current location. If they prefer to live in a rural area over a city, for instance, now they can.

Broadening the talent pool will enable companies to hire stellar candidates who wouldn't have even been on their radar in the past. Access to the top talent improves the largest asset that any company has — its people.

## Diversify perspectives

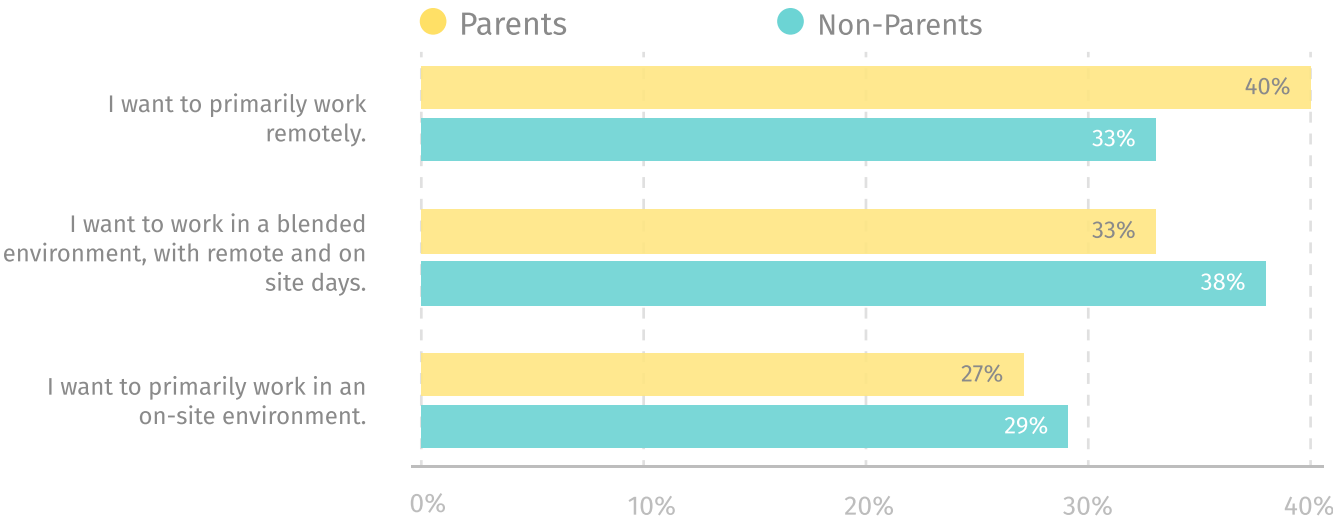
Geographic regions tend to have similar cultural practices, which can be as granular as city vs. suburbs. Opening up the pool of available candidates means gaining a wider variety of perspectives. Diversity of thought is essential to having an innovative workplace, and diversity in gender identity, race, and sexual orientation all increase the range of possible perspectives, an important advantage for companies. Remote work opens the door for many people to overcome obstacles that traditionally kept them from some types of work, such as a high cost of living near the office or long commute times. By bettering diversity initiatives, companies are more successful and inclusive.

## Support workplace flexibility for parents and caregivers

Balancing work and family life has always been a challenge for parents and caregivers. Remote work and flexible schedules can help employees be more present with their families. A commute-free workday also frees up hours for tasks like helping with homework or cooking dinner.

In addition to these benefits, remote work can save some families thousands of dollars per month that would otherwise go toward costs such as sitters or afterschool care. While remote work may present challenges to some parents and caregivers during COVID-19 if schools and daycare centers are shut down, some companies have been more flexible in giving employees time to help with online school and other activities.

How has this period changed how you feel about remote work?



## Retention

Remote work can improve company loyalty and retention in a number of ways, one of which is by removing location barriers. Employees who relocate no longer have to find a new job; they simply set up their computer in another spot. Companies can retain their best talent even when a staff member moves, saving them in turnover costs. By offering remote flexibility, companies will keep workers who previously would have looked for opportunities elsewhere.

You can boost loyalty and retention with remote work, since it minimizes downsides such as draining commutes and undesirable office conditions. This means that as long as you are offering opportunities for growth and have a streamlined work process, more employees will stick around and be happy about it.

## Productivity

One of the biggest concerns companies have with remote work is whether it will affect productivity. It will, and it's likely to make a positive impact. Many employees report feeling less distracted and stressed while working at home, so they are better able to focus on their work. Teams that work remotely also report logging more hours in addition to having more time to plug in and focus. Working from home also makes it easier to work through a cold while removing the chance of spreading illnesses to coworkers.

When asked if employees could still come up with good ideas at home, 85% of respondents said they would have no problem. Remote employees are often more engaged with their teams and work, which is linked to caring about their coworkers and the company and with feeling like they are part of the team.

## Cost of labor

Remote work setups allow companies to save vast amounts of money that would have otherwise gone to office-related expenses. Depending on the location, rent, property taxes, and utilities can eat up a company's cash quickly. Many businesses have even been able to downsize or get rid of office spaces altogether. Organizations also no longer have to pay for cleaning, cafeteria, or food services, and other expenses related to office materials and travel costs are reduced when the majority of their workforce is at home.

Companies also save on healthcare in the long run. Remote employees tend to be healthier, with more time for exercise, lower stress levels, and improved work-life balance. These all make companies operate in a leaner, and more efficient manner.

## Other benefits

Remote work can also positively impact the environment, a benefit businesses may have overlooked in the past. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have already started to see a reduction in traffic, decreased air pollution, and wildlife territory expansion. The more we can cut out lengthy commutes, office waste, and business travel, the more positively we can impact the environment. Because work will no longer be location-centric, regions outside of traditional large metros may benefit from a more mobile workforce and see substantial economic growth.

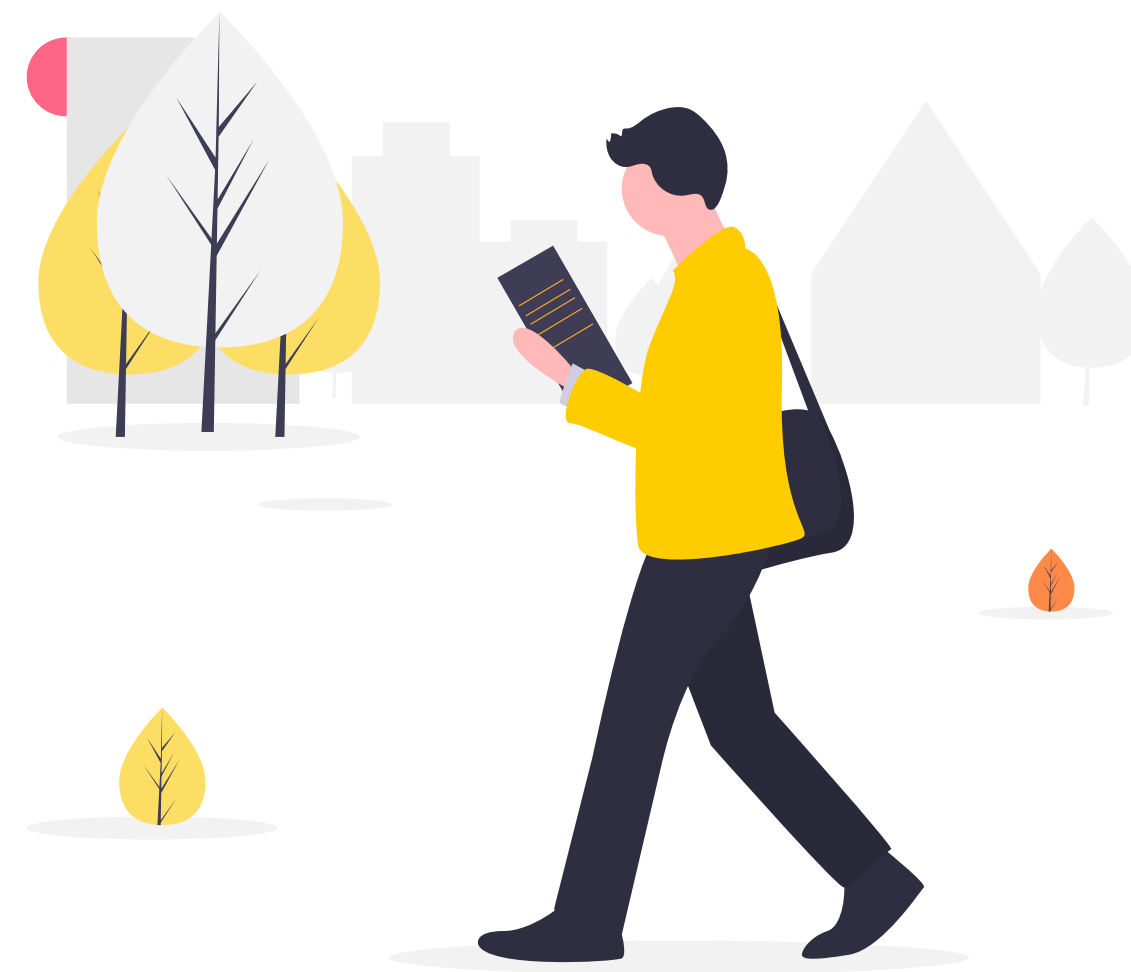
Prudential notes that “rural workers show deep concerns about job opportunities — with nearly half (46%) stressing that their community does not have enough jobs.” Removing geographic barriers means that members of rural communities will have greater potential to access new opportunities.

Finally, this new mobile workforce has a varied skill set that they'll carry with them to new regions, allowing their expertise to transcend geographic borders. Wooing high earners (and their taxable income) to smaller cities could potentially level out disparities between city and rural earnings, bringing a higher tax base to fund schools and other community services. In its 2020 study “Fastest-Growing Cities in America,” WalletHub found that many small cities are seeing high population growth and a reduction in poverty rates.



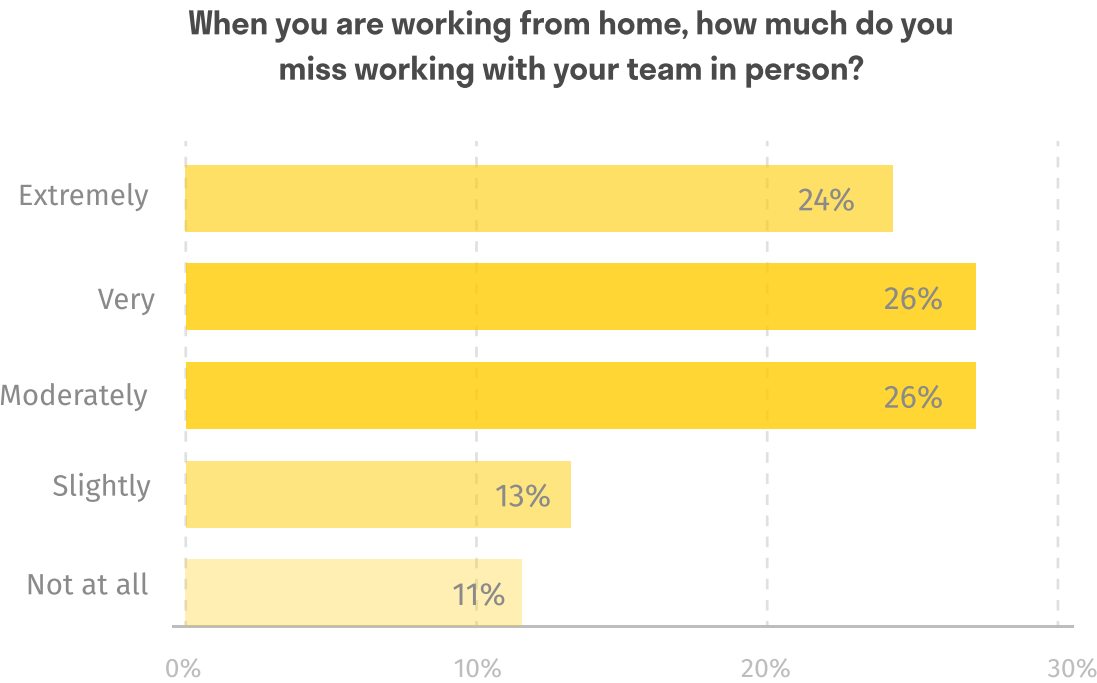
# Part 3

# Challenges



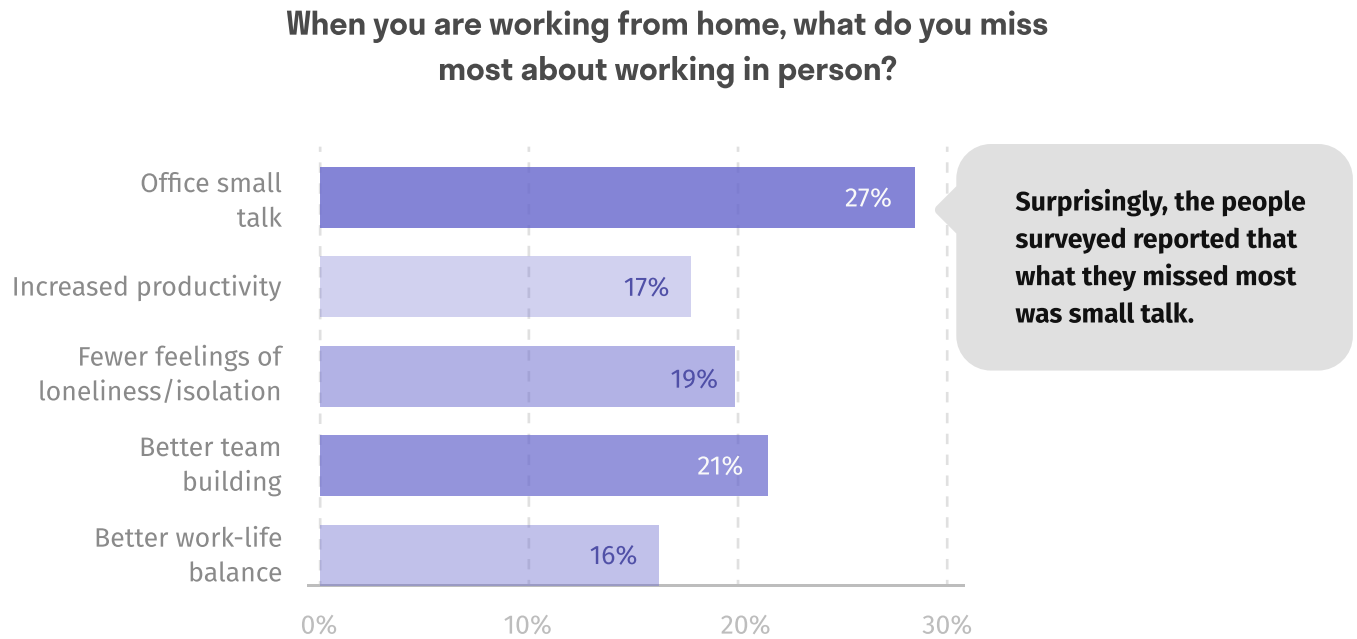
# Culture

One of the most obvious drawbacks of remote work is the lack of daily in-person interaction and team building that is regularly found in traditional work setups. Businesses are no longer able to host the same friendly interactions and team-building activities that leaders use to build more cohesive teams. There’s something to be said for face-to-face interaction that doesn’t rely on a screen.



Eighty-nine percent of all respondents said they miss working with their teams in person at least on some level. We form friendships at work that are tough to replicate in virtual environments. Taking lunch together or going out for happy hour could still be options for

remote workers, but lack of proximity makes it less likely to happen. About half of the respondents reported that they felt this separation acutely (“extremely” or “very”).



Surprisingly, the people in this study reported that what they miss most was small talk. Basic human interaction like this can be hard to come by, as remote workers often have those they live with as their only source of conversation. Twenty-seven percent of remote workers surveyed have found that coworking spaces can provide solutions for the lack of small talk and 19% said coworking spaces can help with feelings of loneliness and isolation. However, people in coworking spaces are less likely to commiserate with those around them because they may not work within the same organization.

## Onboarding

When welcoming new employees, setting the right tone is essential for building positive relationships. Many companies have strategies for this that they have perfected over decades, but remote work can make some past methods difficult or impossible to execute. In-person training and onboarding can be a boon to get a feel for a company and its culture. For example, managers could give a physical tour of the office, walk through tools and equipment, and introduce the new hire to the rest of the company.

Another challenge in onboarding remote workers is meeting their equipment needs. Before, in-office employees had access to all of the hardware and software that was necessary to do their jobs. Now, bosses have to take an extra step to make sure new hires have what they need to start working at home. Maybe the most considerable drawback to the remote onboarding process is that it can be a precursor to other problems with remote environments — isolation, lack of engagement, and a negative perception of the company culture. Company leaders must put in extra effort to make new employees feel welcome and heard in the onboarding process.

It will be important to survey them about what did and didn't work so your company can refine this new way of onboarding.

## IT support and compliance

Tech support and compliance are two departments that help keep companies protected. Remote workers still face a variety of technical support issues that they often have to solve on their own. IT at on-site locations can usually solve any issues in a matter of minutes by gaining direct access to phones or computers. However, this can be difficult when employees work from home on their personal computers and networks. It is challenging to keep compliance watertight when employees are working remotely, so companies have to put in the effort to make sure employees follow guidelines.

## Happy employees are engaged employees

An engaged workforce is powerful, as it's a core indicator of whether a business succeeds or fails. Engagement is the emotional attachment employees feel toward helping a company reach its goals. In short, an engaged employee is

one who cares. Keeping remote employees engaged can be a struggle if they are used to working on-site with their team. With much less face-to-face interaction, some find it hard to stay motivated and find meaning in their work. It's up to company leaders to provide an extra boost in positivity and added context to work tasks.

## Collaboration

While remote workers have done a remarkable job of collaborating, collaboration is usually harder to achieve remotely than in person. When we work in offices, it's relatively easy to ask questions or grab a few people for a brainstorming session. Now, we must make extra efforts to bring people together and communicate virtually.

Remote collaboration projects can fail when tasks aren't spread appropriately between team members, the goals and timelines for projects are unknown, pipelines become clogged waiting for others to complete work, or when there's a breakdown in communication. Managers can combat this by scheduling frequent meetings or brief check-ins to make sure that everyone knows the progress and status of work.



# Part 4

## Collaboration types

The State of Remote  
Collaboration Report





# Collaboration types

Collaboration is at the heart of remote work. A collaborative workspace is simply a workspace laid out in such a way that it enables cohesive work and shared ideas between colleagues and team members. These workspaces foster environments where teams are engaged and produce results. Collaboration can take a few different forms. We can apply these collaboration types to our remote workplaces to better understand how to get the best outcomes from employees.



**Community collaboration:** This form of collaboration centers around shared interests and information sharing rather than task completion within a business. It fosters inter-departmental collaboration, where people give each other advice and build a wider community.



**Team collaboration:** This type centers around a team that knows each other and works together every day. The team usually collaborates with some direction from a leader to complete a common goal or task.



**Network collaboration:** This form can happen within a company or externally, and centers on people taking an interest in their own personal and professional growth. Network collaborators can share and receive advice from others and also offer their own subject matter expertise.



**Cloud collaboration:** Cloud-based collaboration is a powerful tool that lets teams work together in real time on projects. Whether editing documents and spreadsheets or accessing company instructions, cloud collaboration is essential to remote employees.

# Learning styles

Everyone has a different way of learning, and many people use multiple learning styles to process new information quickly and efficiently. Organizations must take into account that what works well when teaching and training one employee may not work for others. The different learning styles are outlined in the VARK learning model.



**Visual learners:** Visual learners prefer graphics, illustrations, pictures, or other visual components to help them learn, synthesize, and process new information. They prefer information to always have a visual component.



**Auditory learners:** Auditory learners like to hear and have information conveyed with voice and sound. These learners will want instructions conveyed verbally and may not be as good at processing written or visual information. Discussing project specifics with teams and having meetings where they can listen in will benefit this learning type.



**Reading/writing learners:** Readers and writers prefer information in written form. They also learn by note-taking, which improves their memory. This learning type may like PowerPoints with lots of descriptions, written manuals that they can break down to help them retain knowledge, or internet research they can refer to at any time.

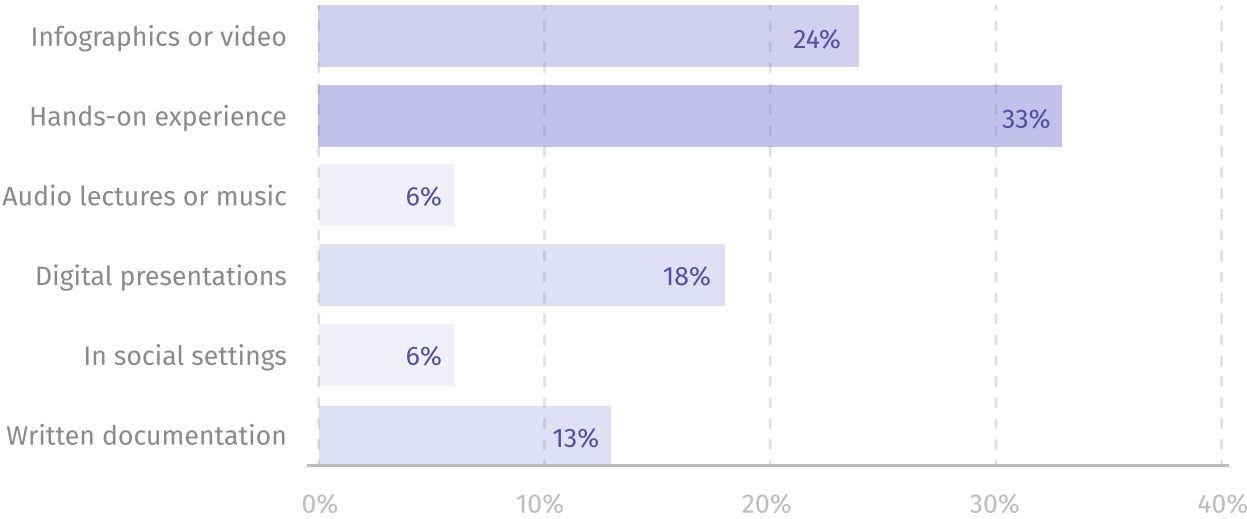


**Kinesthetic learners:** Kinesthetic learners like to use their hands and be physical when processing information. They use all of their senses when learning, but have an especially good memory when it comes to touch. When accounting for remote work and physical distance between employees, you may find it difficult to support this type of learner.



Learning styles play neatly into how we prefer to have work materials presented. While there are many communication styles to use in on-site professional settings, remote work constrains these format choices.

How do you primarily prefer to have materials presented to you?



Thirty-three percent of respondents said they prefer to have materials presented to them through hands-on experience. As noted above, this can be difficult in remote work and virtual collaboration setups. Hands-on and physical learners may need extra time to walk them through new processes, but tools like screen sharing can make this easier. Supervisors can observe employees as they go through tasks and provide immediate feedback.

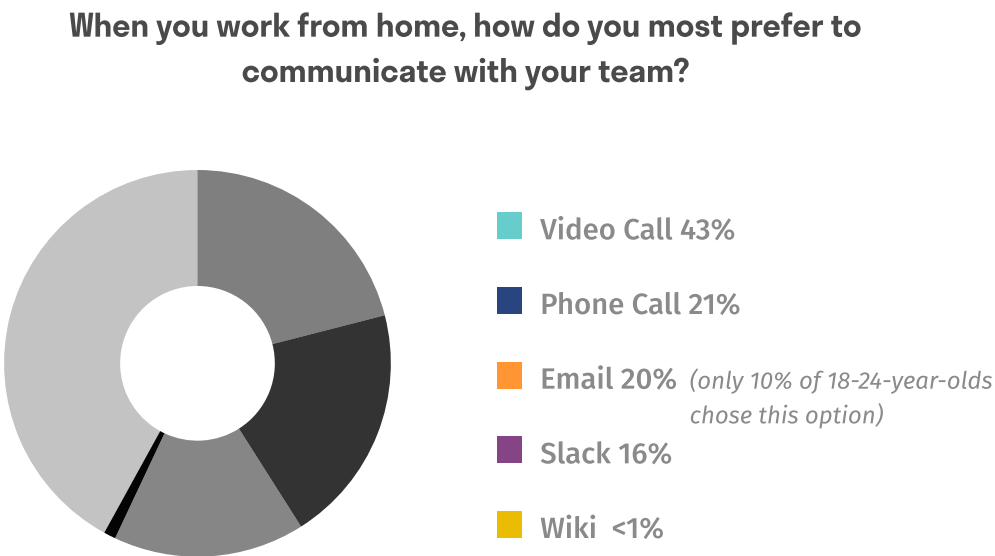
Coming in at a combined 62%, employees who prefer digital presentations, audio lectures, written documentation, and video or infographics make up a large proportion of presentation preferences. Fortunately, these preferences are easy to accommodate remotely.

Overall, respondents didn't indicate a single format for learning as being overwhelmingly more effective than others. One respondent noted, "I find (communicating ideas) takes a combination of approaches and most remote scenarios end up being rather limited in that regard." Another wanted "tools that meet every personality type via visual, voice, and other mediums." Using a combination of methods is the best way to ensure that all employees are engaged.

## Remote team collaboration preferences

Unsurprisingly, respondents preferred video conferencing to any other method of communication in remote work. This format allows for a level of communication that is second only to face-to-face conversations, and respondents cited a desire for “video conference software that works like you're in the same room as your team.”

Working remotely limits the collaboration options available, given that people aren’t in shared physical spaces and remote work tends to be more asynchronous.



Results show that team members like to get as close as possible to face-to-face communication, with 43% of respondents choosing video conferencing as their preferred method of remote communication.

A respondent noted, “Body language is an important way for me to relay what I'm thinking.”

Phone calls came in at number two, and they happen to be the second most personal form of communication. Phone calls may be so high on the list of preferred methods of remote communication because people still have the comfort of hearing someone's voice on the other end. Phone calls allow workers to hear tone of voice and convey large amounts of information more quickly than in an email or chat. As one respondent indicated, “It's hard to judge tone in the written word.” Phone calls allow for this nuance and intonation.

Email is best for sending short chunks of text and information, and 20% of respondents preferred this communication type. Email is a popular choice for asynchronous communication and is useful for keeping track of information from multiple stakeholders. Interestingly, email preference skewed more positively with older respondents. Only 10% of those in the 18-24 age group indicated that it was their primary preference.

Chat communication (like Slack or Microsoft Teams) came in as the top communication choice for about 16% of respondents. These platforms were initially designed to convey quick bits of information and updates in real time, but are increasingly being used in asynchronous applications.

The least popular communication option, by far, is wikis, with less than 1% of respondents indicating them as a top choice for communication. Wikis are an all-encompassing communication platform with open editing systems where people can add text and notes, have discussions, and collaborate. Some popular options include Confluence and Notion. While wikis are great for asynchronous documentation, they are usually most useful as a secondary source or repository.

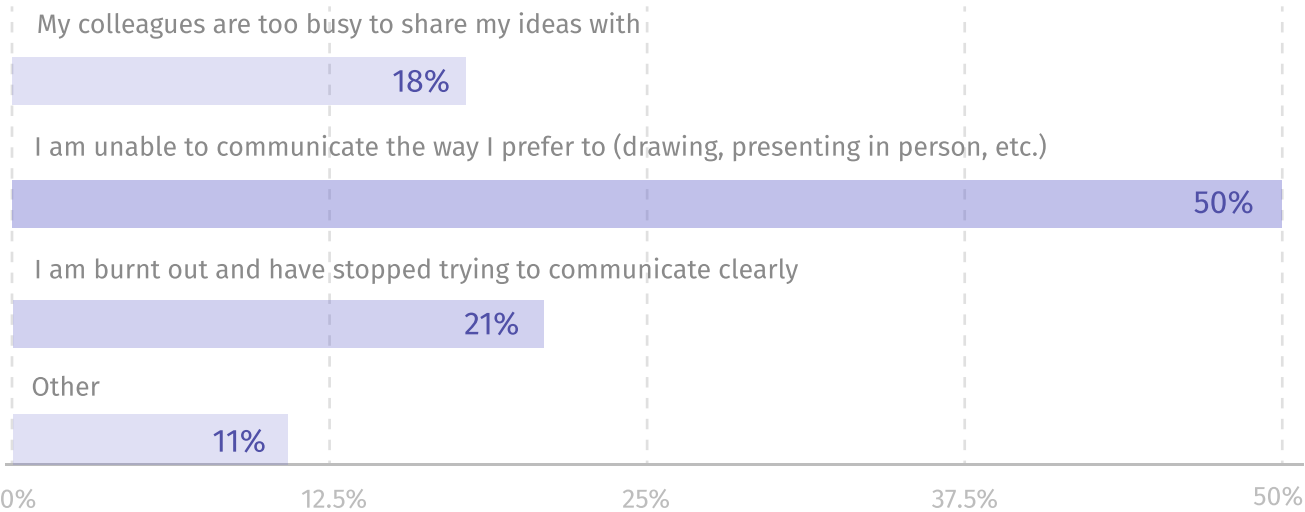
## Work-from-home communication needs improvement

When working in different locations, your team won't always be available at any time, and communication can suffer. More than half of respondents claimed they found working remotely made it more challenging for them to communicate clearly. One respondent noted that virtual work “feels more disjointed and harder to collaborate,” and another emphasized that there are “challenges to present what I do online.”

**Nearly 25% of employees responded that they don't feel like their ideas are clearly communicated when working remotely.**

Employees reported three main reasons why they're prevented from communicating effectively. The top reason: 20% of remote workers said that they weren't able to communicate in the way that they prefer, be it drawing or presenting in person. The proportion of those citing a lack of preferred communication style rose to 67% in professional services (consulting, legal) and in finance. Eighty-three percent in healthcare and pharmaceuticals said the same.

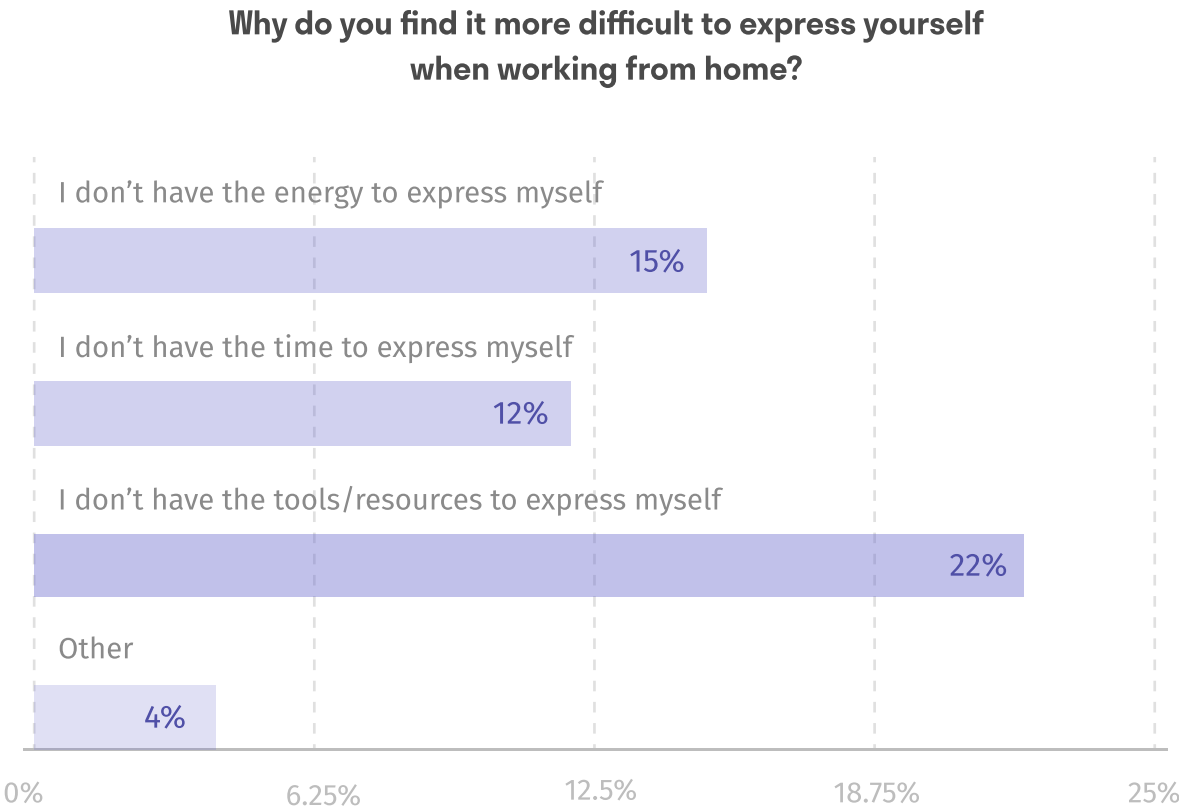
### Why aren't your ideas clearly communicated when working remotely?



Around 18% of respondents felt that their colleagues were too busy, preventing them from sharing ideas with them. Remote work can lead workers to be overly focused and siloed on their own tasks. With 2020 bringing disruptions to nearly every facet of our lives (childcare, school systems, etc.), there are more distractions than ever before. Additionally, waiting for emails or documentation translates to a longer turnaround time than being able to have a quick chat with someone on-site to clarify points.

Seven percent of respondents reported that they were too burnt out to try and find more effective ways to communicate. This burnout is understandable, given that 2020 was an extraordinarily stressful year. Burnout often occurs when employees are stressed, become only internally focused, and worry about just completing their tasks so they can get through the day.

**More than half of respondents (52%) indicated that working from home made it more difficult to express themselves. Many noted that remote communication felt more disjointed and disconnected.**



They also felt that video conferencing tools were crude replacements for face-to-face meetings in a shared physical space, explaining that it required more effort from presenters to ensure they were being understood.

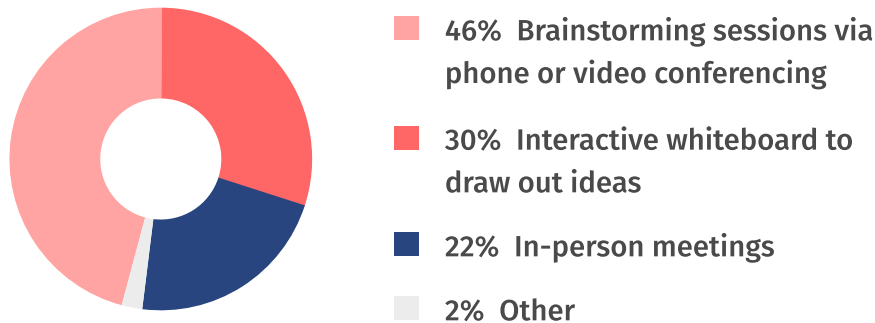
Of those who cited difficulty expressing themselves when working remotely, the top reason for dissatisfaction, accounting for 22% of respondents, was that they didn't feel like they had the tools and resources needed to express themselves in the way in which they were most skilled.

About 15% answered that they simply don't have the energy to adequately express themselves in a virtual environment. Much of this is due to the simple fact that remote collaboration can be taxing. Taking the extra effort to clarify what they are saying can be too exhausting to some who are already overcoming other drawbacks of remote work.

The last of the respondents who noted difficulties were those who felt that they don't have time to express themselves when using remote tools. The extra time it takes to present ideas adds up with every project, and this can become overwhelming when speed is often an important part of completing daily workloads.

These challenges all stem from a lack of tools. Twenty-two percent of respondents agreed, citing specifically that they didn't have the resources to express themselves effectively in virtual work environments. Giving employees proper resources, could address the challenges respondents noted: insufficient time, lack of energy to convey ideas, and other communication challenges.

What do you think would make collaboration easier for you while working from home?



Forty-six percent of respondents expressed that they wanted more brainstorming sessions via phone or video conference to improve collaboration efforts. An easy fix for leadership is to schedule time for sessions with existing virtual collaboration tools.

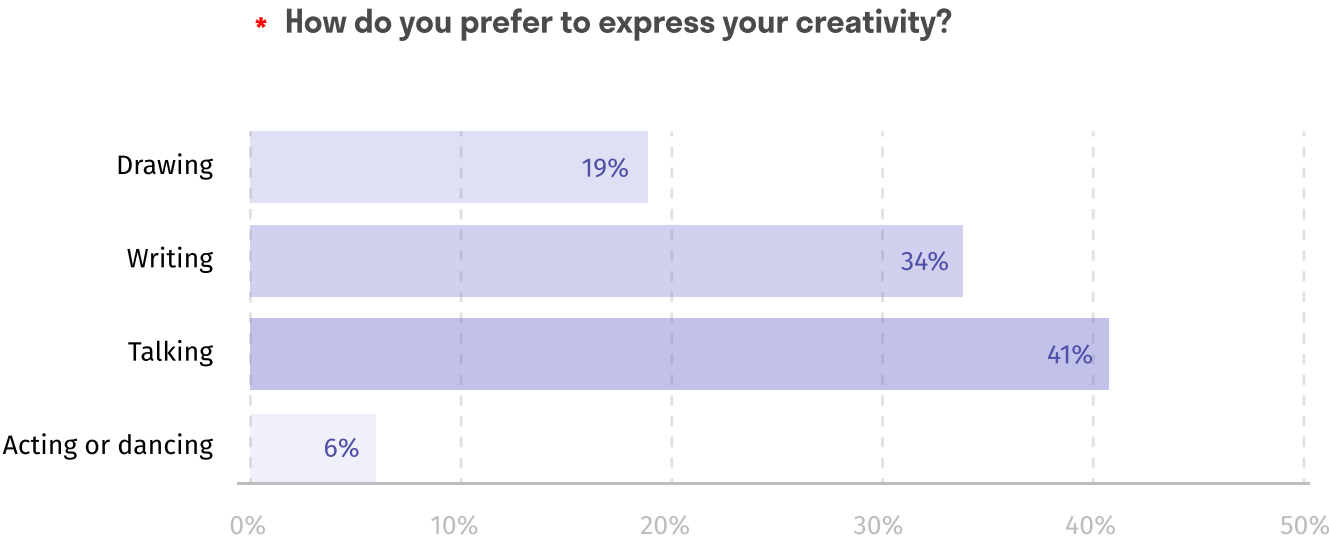
About 30% of respondents wanted to collaborate visually with an interactive whiteboard. Such a tool would help visual and hands-on learners, who we identified in the previous section. Many companies don't have access to touch interface interactive whiteboards. However, there are many virtual collaboration software options that allow teams to draw with their mouse, stylus, or even fingers if they have a touch screen on their computers.

This could appeal to those looking to better express themselves when collaborating. Respondents expressed interest in collaborating in non-work environments such as coffee shops or other public places to discuss projects face-to-face. While the pandemic may make this difficult right now, scheduling these types of meetings in the future could be a great way to combat remote employees' feelings of isolation and lack of connection.

Conveying ideas

Learning styles showcase how we best receive information, but successful communication is a two-way street. Generating and presenting ideas, building consensus, expressing opinions, and conveying past experiences to others are crucial skills within professional communication. People's communication preferences tend to be closely linked to their learning styles.

Communicating creatively is essential to business growth. In her book "The Creativity Leap," strategy consultant Dr. Natalie Nixon notes that, "Leaps of creativity are the only way to solve the complex problems and to innovate for the future." The next chart shows how employees like to express their ideas and receive new information.



The largest percentage of respondents (41%) prefer to express their creativity by talking. This is good news for remote workers, since phones and VoIP applications are ubiquitous and inexpensive. Thirty-four percent of respondents preferred to express themselves through writing, which many low-cost tools can support.

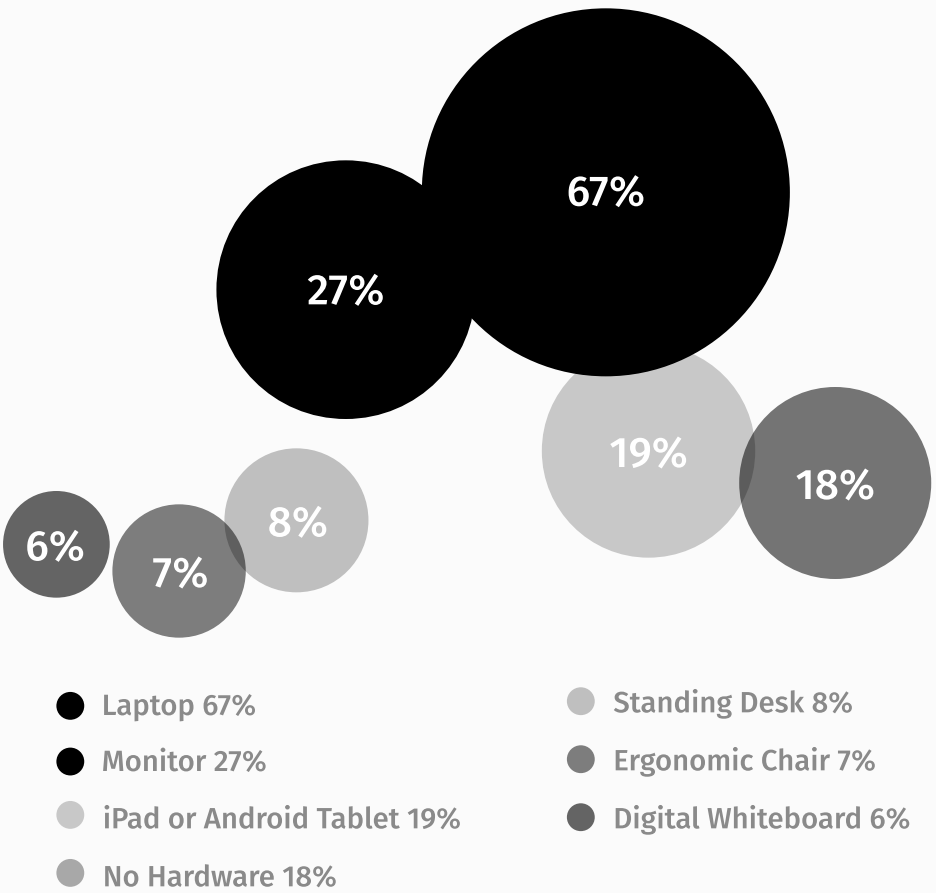
Of the remaining respondents, 19% preferred drawing, and 6% preferred physical expression like acting or dancing. These two communication methods present a real challenge in remote environments. While nearly one in five employees best explain concepts through drawing, there's a shortage of online tools that make sharing ideas in this way easy and collaborative. Jotting down thoughts on a notepad, taking a photo, and then attaching it to an email isn't an ideal workflow. And many whiteboard options that are part of video conferencing applications aren't meant for ongoing use; they can only be used while the meeting is in progress.

## Hardware and home office

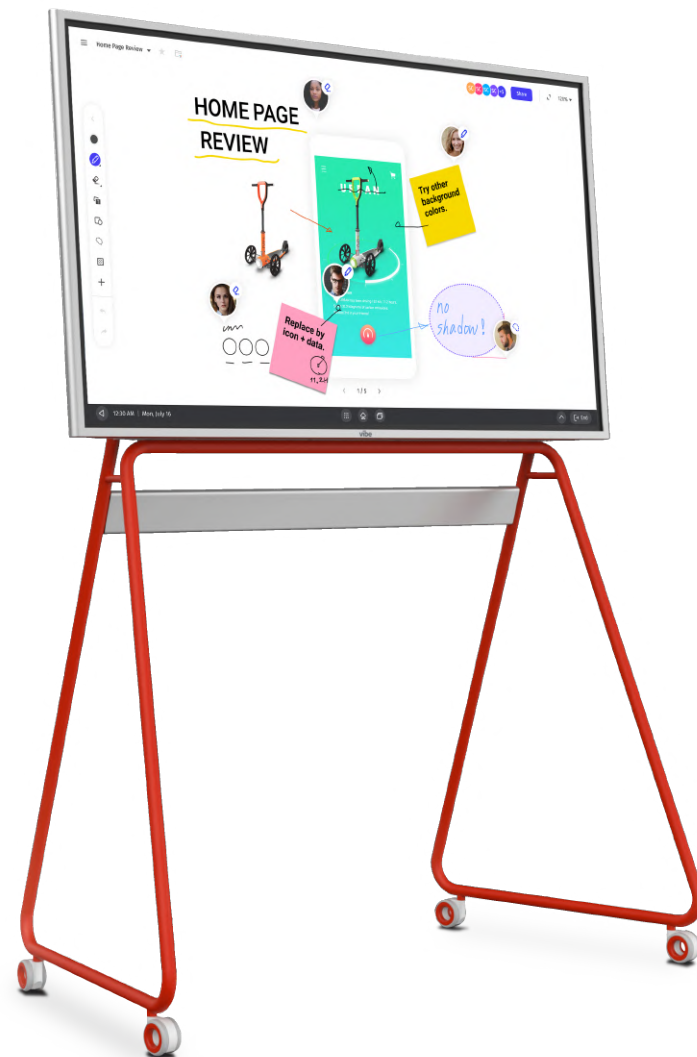
While software allows greater levels of collaboration, remote work wouldn't be possible without the hardware that workers use every day. A comfortable and easy-to-use home office setup will inevitably boost productivity and make for a happier team.

With employees working remotely, organizations are finding different ways to provide the tools needed for home offices.

### \* What hardware does your organization provide for working remotely?







Most employees (67%) said that their company gave them a work laptop to take home, while others went beyond the basics and offered equipment such as standing desks, ergonomic chairs, and digital whiteboards.

Digital whiteboards used to express ideas were one of the most desired tools for employees. More than 30% of all employees thought that having a digital whiteboard, like a Vibe board, would make virtual collaboration easier when working from home. In the technology sector, this number was even higher at 47%. However, only 6% of all employees actually received interactive digital whiteboard equipment from their organizations. Digital whiteboards, though, are likely to continue gaining popularity. They are powerful meeting tools that help keep teams engaged by providing a tactile solution to kinetic learners.

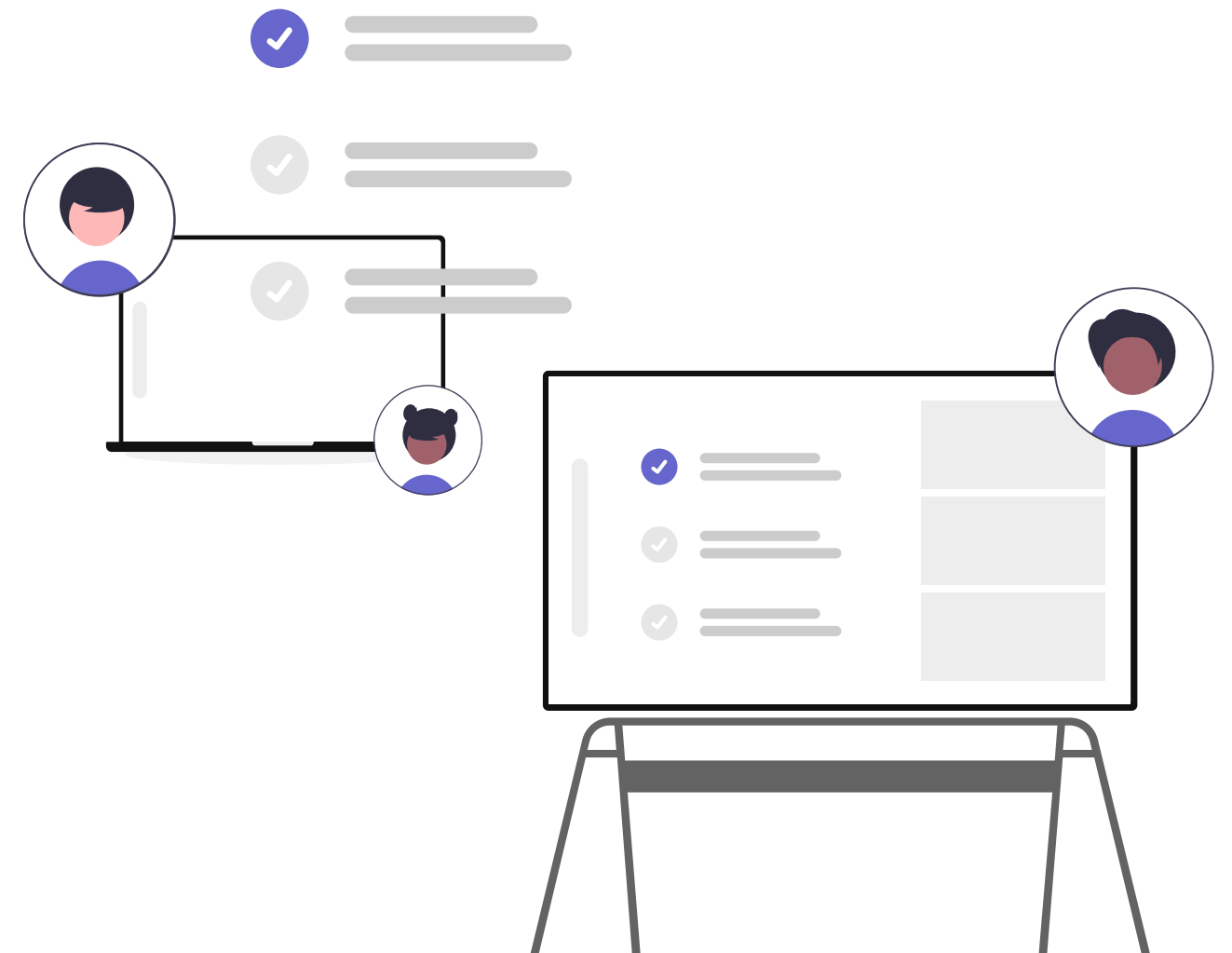
In lieu of providing employees with work-from-home equipment from the office, many employers opt to give remote workers an equipment stipend to help them comfortably put in work hours at home. This can come as a one-time payment that may cover the basics, or employees can ask for funds to purchase needed supplies. Forty percent of respondents said they received a stipend for remote work equipment. Seventy percent of those in the technology sector said their employer had given them one.



## Part 5

# Successful remote collaboration

The State of Remote  
Collaboration Report





## Remote collaboration overview

Remote work conditions, whether they're voluntary or due to extenuating circumstances such as COVID-19, require organizations to put resources and practices in place that will promote success. Although it is becoming more common, remote collaboration is still relatively new and requires careful planning and execution. The goal is to help employees stay productive, efficient, and engaged.

We're also helping companies understand and address remote workers' struggles and pain points. Whether employees struggle with setbacks with company culture, feelings of isolation, breakdowns in collaboration, or not having the right collaboration tools, companies can provide resources for their remote staff and ultimately create a more loyal and engaged workforce. By eliminating barriers to productivity in remote work, organizations can keep work output high and have happier and healthier employees.

Overall, remote collaboration will continue to revolutionize the nature of work, allowing for better outcomes than what can be done with in-person work alone.

## Conclusion

Gauging trends in the new remote work landscape is important as we prepare for workplaces of the future. It's important to note the nature of collaboration and how people naturally find ways to come together. The shift toward remote work accelerated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, but telecommuting and digital collaboration options have been on the rise for years.

By studying employees' attitudes about working from home since the pandemic, we can better plan to keep them happy and keep organizations productive going forward. Remote work is here to stay; it suits a growing number of people and comes with many benefits. In our research, we also saw the drawbacks of remote work, such as isolation and challenges with collaboration. Fortunately, there are specific resources that can help remote workers overcome obstacles and be successful. Organizations that adopt these tools are in a prime position to thrive alongside their workforce.

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