The balanced workforce playbook

A guide to achieving greater workforce balance and flexibility

women will

a Google initiative

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Introduction

This playbook for achieving a balanced workforce represents an evolution of the "work-life balance" ideal by modeling a broader sense of balance within the working world. A balanced workforce incorporates gender equality, flexibility in how, when and where we work, and workplace well-being (integrating healthy, sustainable practices into our jobs). It's also a workforce that balances the needs of the present workplace with training for the technology-driven future of work.

Many of these concepts can be mapped back to the late 20th century as women moved more widely into the professional ranks (while still handling the majority of parenting and domestic work at home). This led to the rise of new workforce models, including job-sharing and flex-time, that reshaped the traditional 40+ hour, office-bound work week.

Though some companies initially viewed these alternative work styles as "accommodations" for working women, the benefits soon revealed themselves for everyone. Since the 1990s, flexible working models have taken hold at companies large and small around the world, thanks in large part to technologies that have untethered workers from their traditional workplaces. Laptops, mobile devices, WiFi, email, chat, shared servers, and cloud-based collaboration and communications software are among the tools powering this revolution in the way we work and live.

Organizations that have embraced this new way of working benefit in myriad ways, from increased productivity and reduced overhead to access to a wider array of talent across time zones and continents. Yet, old habits and negative perceptions die hard, and not every company or worker has reaped the rewards of this revolution. Yet.

This playbook explores the fast-growing flexible, collaborative, and distributed work styles that reflect this change, with research and case studies as well as tools, techniques and best practices for transforming and balancing your organization. We also look at how companies around the world are achieving greater balance, and how they can prepare for the future of work.

Though our mission is to help companies move toward a truly balanced workforce, you'll still see references to "work-life balance" throughout,, as that term is still commonly used among the companies, media, and NGOs we discuss. In the end, the goals are the same.

Please join us on this journey toward achieving a more balanced workforce for all.

01.

Work-life balance around the world

Everywhere in the world, the way we think about work-life balance is changing. Whether you start the day with congee or with croissants, whether you enjoy summer in December or stay up late in the Land of the Midnight Sun, you are likely seeing a shift in the interplay between your work life and your personal life.

Many factors contribute to these changes, including technology that enables people to work from anywhere, more women in the workforce, a globalized 24/7 economy, and a new generation of workers that demands flexibility. These combine to increase the number of hours people are working, but also give workers more agency to determine how, where, and when they work. At the same time, employers are gaining increased performance, cost reductions, and access to a wider world of talent thanks to this new, more flexible, collaborative workforce.

The end of the 9–5 workday

In an in-depth survey and synthesis of its research (first published in 2012), the United Nations' International Labour Office (ILO) reported that non-standard working hours are on the rise around the globe. As the report notes, "In many countries, a sizeable proportion of men and women work at non-standard times, for example in the evening, at night, or during weekends. While the prevalence of such arrangements varies between countries, their incidence has been rising as part of the spread of a more globalized 24/7 economy."[1]

Technology—including widespread WiFi, laptops, mobile devices, and cloud-based communications and collaboration software—is driving the freedom to work with colleagues from anywhere. Based in part on the growing workforces in Asia, the Middle East, South America, and Africa, the Boston-based research group Strategy Analytics estimates that the mobile workforce is set to increase from 1.45 billion in 2016, accounting for 38.8% of the global workforce, to 1.87 billion in 2022, accounting for 42.5% of the global workforce.[2]

1 Colette Fagan, Clare Lyonette, Mark Smith and Abril Saldaña-Tejeda, "The influence of working time arrangements on work-life integration or 'balance': A review of the international evidence." The International Labour Office, December 21, 2011. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_187306.pdf

2 Gina Luk and Andrew Brown, "The Global Mobile Workforce is Set to Increase to Increase to 1.87 Billion People in 2022, Accounting for 42.5% of the Global Workforce." Strategy Analytics, November 9, 2016. https://www.strategyanalytics.com/strategy-analytics/news/strategy-analytics-press-releases/strategy-analytics-press-release/2016/11/09/the-global-mobile-workforce-is-set-to-increase-to-1.87-billion-people-in-2022-accounting-for-42.5-of-the-global-workforce

While some view women as being the primary beneficiaries of the workforce flexibility, the G-7 recognizes that everyone benefits if women have greater access to economic power. In an April 2018 report, they said that achieving gender equality in the workforce could increase global GDP by $12 trillion in a single decade.[4]

In a far-ranging study of work-life balance,[5] the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) rated its 35 member nations on criteria that demonstrate that balance, including hours worked, personal time, and family-friendly public policies. Not surprisingly, the results prove how the power of flexible working arrangements and family-centered policies will bring more women into the workforce while making it easier for everyone to shape the ways in which they work and live.

OECD rankings for work-life balance

Rankings for the top and bottom 10 countries or federations among the 38 ranked by OECD for work-life balance.[6]

Top 10		Bottom 10	
#1	Netherlands	#29	New Zealand
#2	Denmark	#30	United States
#3	France	#31	Australia
#4	Spain	#32	South Africa
#5	Belgium	#33	Iceland
#6	Norway	#34	Japan
#7	Sweden	#35	Korea
#8	German	#36	Israel
#9	Russian Federation	#37	Mexico
#10	Ireland	#38	Turkey

3 Leora Klapper, "How mobile phones are changing women's lives." World Economic Forum, March 4, 2016. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/04/how-mobile-phones-are-changing-womens-lives

4 G-7 Public Engagement Paper: Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment." April 30, 2018, Charlevoix, Canada. https://g7.gc.ca/en/g7-presidency/themes/advancing-gender-equality-women-empowerment/g7-public-engagement-paper/

5 "OECD Better Life Index, Work- Life Balance." The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017. http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/work-life-balance/

6 ibid

The OECD puts the Netherlands and Denmark at the top of the list. Only 0.5% of the Dutch and just 2% of Danes work long hours—compared to the average of long hours worked by 13.5% of the global population. In Danish, there's even a word for "work happiness": *arbejdsglæde*.

Progressive policies in Nordic nations, which claim three spots in the top 10, make it easier to balance personal and work responsibilities. In Denmark, for instance, innovative "Flexjob" agreements accommodate people who need to work shorter hours or at a different pace, with employers only paying for work done. Women also represent a far greater segment of the working population in Denmark than the global average.[7]

Even those countries on the lower end of the OECD work-life balance rankings are increasingly aware of and responsive to the global tilt toward a more balanced approach. Mexico ranks low in nearly every category—long hours, mostly men in the workforce, etc.—yet it has introduced and funded five days of paternity leave.

In Japan (which also scores low on the OECD rankings), two of every three women leave the workforce when they become mothers and rarely return full-time, according to the World Economic Forum.[8] Yet, in Japan, the government has been striving to increase support for working mothers by increasing access to childcare and extending maternity leave benefits. In fact, despite the disappointingly low number of mothers returning to the workforce, overall, the percentage of women aged 15–64 participating in the workforce surpasses that of the US (in part due to a Japanese labor shortage caused by an aging population, as well as laws such as The Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace, which took full effect in April 2016).[9]

7 ibid
8 Insight Report, "The Global Gender Gap Report, 2016." World Economic Forum. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF_Global_Gender_Gap_Report_2016.pdf
9 Kathy Matsui, "'Womenomics' continues as a work in progress." The Japan Times, May 25, 2016. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/05/25/business/economy-business/womenomics-continues-work-progress

South Korea is also trying to address the gap between men and women in its workforce with the highest increase in public investment in early childhood education among the OECD countries. According to the OECD, overall, public spending in South Korea on early childhood education and care increased from 0.1% of GDP in 2000 to 0.9% in 2014, compared to an average of 0.7% among other OECD nations.[10]

The US (the only OECD country that lacks a national policy requiring paid parental leave), Japan, and South Korea boast some of the largest percentages of people who work long hours. The same technologies that are bringing developing nations onto the economic stage are also the tools that allow companies in nations like these to burn the midnight oil, regardless of time zone.

Employers reap the rewards of a flexible workforce

Happy workers usually make for happy employers. In a 2016 survey conducted by Vodafone of 8,000 professionals across three continents, the company found that nearly 60% of the US companies saw an increase in their profits after implementing flexible working options.[11]

Wherever you look on the map, you'll see economies in flux, adapting to new technologies and cultural shifts that erase the boundaries between work and home, with a growing cohort of young men and women in the workforce who want and demand those permeable boundaries. The ILO reports that women experience greater job satisfaction in environments with flexible working arrangements, as they are able to accommodate their work schedules to help aging parents and care for their children.

No matter their country of origin, companies and their employees are increasingly leveraging technology to shift their mindsets away from long, office-bound hours and toward greater flexibility. And as we move closer to the "future of work" (in which, according to global accounting consultancy PwC, only 9% of US workers will be employed full-time by 2030, mirroring a global trend)[12], the time is now for organizations of all sizes and types to learn how to work smarter, not harder, in our fast-changing world.

10 OECD, "PF3.1: Public spending on childcare and early education." Last updated November 22, 2016. https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF3_1_Public_spending_on_childcare_and_early_education.pdf

11 Vodafone, "Vodafone Study: 75 Percent of Global Companies Leverage Flexible Working Policies." February 8, 2016. http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/vodafone-study-75-percent-of-global-companies-leverage-flexible-working-policies-2094647.htm

12 PwC, "Workforce of the Future: The Competing Forces Shaping 2030." 2017. https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/services/people-organisation/workforce-of-the-future/workforce-of-the-future-the-competing-forces-shaping-2030-pwc.pdf

02.

The flexible workforce

One of the keys to work-life balance is fluidity. Work and personal life tend to flow in and out of each other in increasing ways as mobility rises to the fore of everyday life. Thankfully, the office-bound, 40+ hour-week has changed radically in the past two decades, ushering in the fast-growing era of the flexible workforce.

Flexible work can mean different things to different people. To some, it's about working remotely 100% of the time, whether as employees, freelancers, or contractors. For others, it can mean anything from job-sharing and flextime to a compressed work week (working longer hours over fewer days), shift swapping (switching shifts with colleagues as needed), and seasonal scheduling (working part of the year, or working on-site for only part of the year).

From the laptops and smartphones (and ubiquitous Wi-Fi) that allow for mobility, to the software and apps that enable remote connectivity (including email, shared calendars, video conferencing, cloud-based file storage, and collaborative communications tools), technology is the not-so-secret power behind this flexible revolution. Now anyone with a laptop or mobile device can work from almost anywhere, and companies have access to a global, flexible workforce.

Shifting perceptions through a flexible work pilot

Google's Work Culture Reform program (part of Google's Women Will effort to create more inclusive workplaces across Japan) invited 30 companies to participate in a Future Work Style pilot that ran between 2015 and 2016. The pilot trained companies on flexible working tools and techniques to improve work-life balance and get more done in less time. Participants were surveyed about their perceptions before and after the pilot.Here's a sampling of the results:[13]

Working from home:
Before the pilot: 47% of participants said they thought work couldn't be done from home
After the pilot: Only 12% thought this was the case

Tracking the progress of remote workers:
Before the pilot: 35.3% of employees believed they couldn't effectively track remote workers' progress
After the pilot: That number dropped to 21.7%

Security concerns about remote work:
Before the pilot: 20.6% of employees worried about leaking sensitive information while working outside the office
After the pilot: Leak concerns dropped to 4.3%

Difficulty in communicating with remote workers:
Before the pilot: 44.1% of employees believed communications with remote co-workers would be difficult
After the pilot: Only 20.3% of employees had those concerns

So, what's in it for companies? Companies that allow employees to work more flexibly and offer other benefits that encourage work-life balance can be more attractive to potential hires—especially younger workers and those in caregiving roles. At the same time, being open to alternative hours and locations gives employers access to a world of talent (vs. hiring just people who live near a physical office location).

Fewer people working on-site also means lower overhead for facilities, less time wasted on unnecessary meetings, and a greener footprint overall. When flexible workers are well-equipped and trained, they can be highly productive.

13 Google Women Will, Work Culture Reform pro 015 - 2016. https://www.womenwill.com/programs/workculturereform

Dell makes flexibility part of its culture

Dell, founded in 1984 by then-college student Michael Dell, has long been a leader in corporate innovation (in 2010, Newsweek magazine named it "America's Greenest Company"). So it's no surprise that Dell has also committed to a flexible workforce. With global offices, Dell already knew that remote collaboration enables far-flung colleagues to work together; in 2009, Dell formally adopted a company-wide flexible work program.

Dell offers employees a variety of flexible work opportunities, including mobile work (telework) at approved locations and remote work from any location, as well as options for compressed work weeks, job sharing, flextime, and part-time work.

By FY 2018, 58% of Dell's employees "said they leveraged work flexibility in their jobs (defined as working remotely at least one day a week in a typical month),"[14] exceeding the computer giant's goal of 50% global workforce participation in flexible work programs by 2020 (as stated in the Dell 2020 Legacy of Good Plan).[15]

Flexible workforces can be found in every industry; in fact, it's hard to find a large company that doesn't offer some form of flexible opportunities. From AT&T to KPMG and American Express to BBC Worldwide, flexible workforces are here to stay.

The remote workforce has fully arrived

In announcing its 2018 list of "100 Top Companies with Remote Jobs,"[16] FlexJobs notes, "In previous years, remote work has often been described as a trend or a perk, but by reviewing this data annually for five years, we've seen remote work's reputation shift from a trend to an acceptable mode of working."

The flexible job listing site ranks the top companies based on the number of remote positions they posted in the prior year. Here are the top 10 global companies on the 2018 list:

1. VIPKID
2. Appen
3. Conduent
4. Rev
5. Liveops
6. TTEC
7. Amazon
8. SYKES
9. Dell
10. Working Solutions

While larger companies have rapidly adopted widespread flexible workforce models, smaller companies have taken a little longer to adopt these practices, in part because they have less room to experiment with off-site staff and unusual working hours.

Newer companies of all sizes (those that are "born digital") lean toward flexibility because their younger founders are comfortable with fluid workstyles (many small businesses are founded and operated from home). Likewise, those that rely heavily on freelance and contract work are naturally flexible.

14 Dell, "2020 Legacy of Good Plan, Annual Update." FY 2018. http://legacyofgood.dell.com/people.htm
15 Dell, "2020 Legacy of Good Plan." http://www.dell.com/learn/us/en/uscorp1/2020-goals

16 FlexJobs, "100 Top Companies with Remote Jobs in 2018." January 15, 2016. https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/100-top-companies-with-remote-jobs-in-2018/

The trend is clear, however: Flexible work is on the rise, and companies everywhere are adopting it to drive success as well as work-life balance.

MTM LinguaSoft taps a world of flexible talent

When Myriam Siftar founded MTM LinguaSoft in 2003, she knew from the start that it would be a flexible company. In fact, her business depended on it: Her company uses linguists around the world to provide localization services in over 40 languages. "Our linguists were always a flexible workforce because it is impossible to staff all language proficiencies and subject domain expertise with a reasonable and realistic number of employees," Siftar notes.

Siftar, who was born outside of Paris, has always had a global mindset, so she's quite comfortable with a flexible workforce. The company has five full-time employees based at its Philadelphia headquarters, and draws upon a trusted network of about 1,000 contract and freelance linguists to support customers across a range of needs, from legal communications to technical content.

MTM LinguaSoft relies on an array of technologies to keep its global team in sync. "The cloud and collaboration tools allow the company to grow faster," Siftar notes. "By having all those tools, and with quick access and responsiveness, it allows me to have access to a diversity of subject domain expertise as well as languages."

How to build a flexible workforce

Tools and techniques for a flexible workforce:

Email, chat, and shared calendar: Communicating by email and text and sharing schedules on a teamwide calendar helps keep everyone in sync and on schedule.

Video conferencing: By freeing team members from in-person meetings, it's far easier for flexible workers to attend events.

Collaborative writing and editing tools: These cloud-based systems are a game-changer for teams that need to quickly write and collaborate on reports, site content, spreadsheets, and other assets.

Secure, shared file servers: By storing documents in the cloud, team members can share and access files anywhere. As with collaborative writing and editing tools, people can set permissions so that only designated users can view or download documents.

Virtual Private Networks (VPNs): Protect online workplace communications, systems, and work products from prying eyes with VPN software installed on team laptops and mobile devices.

Best practices for a flexible workforce

1. Flexibility comes in many flavors. Rather than having a one-size-fits-all flexibility policy, create an array of options to suit the different roles and personalities within your organization.

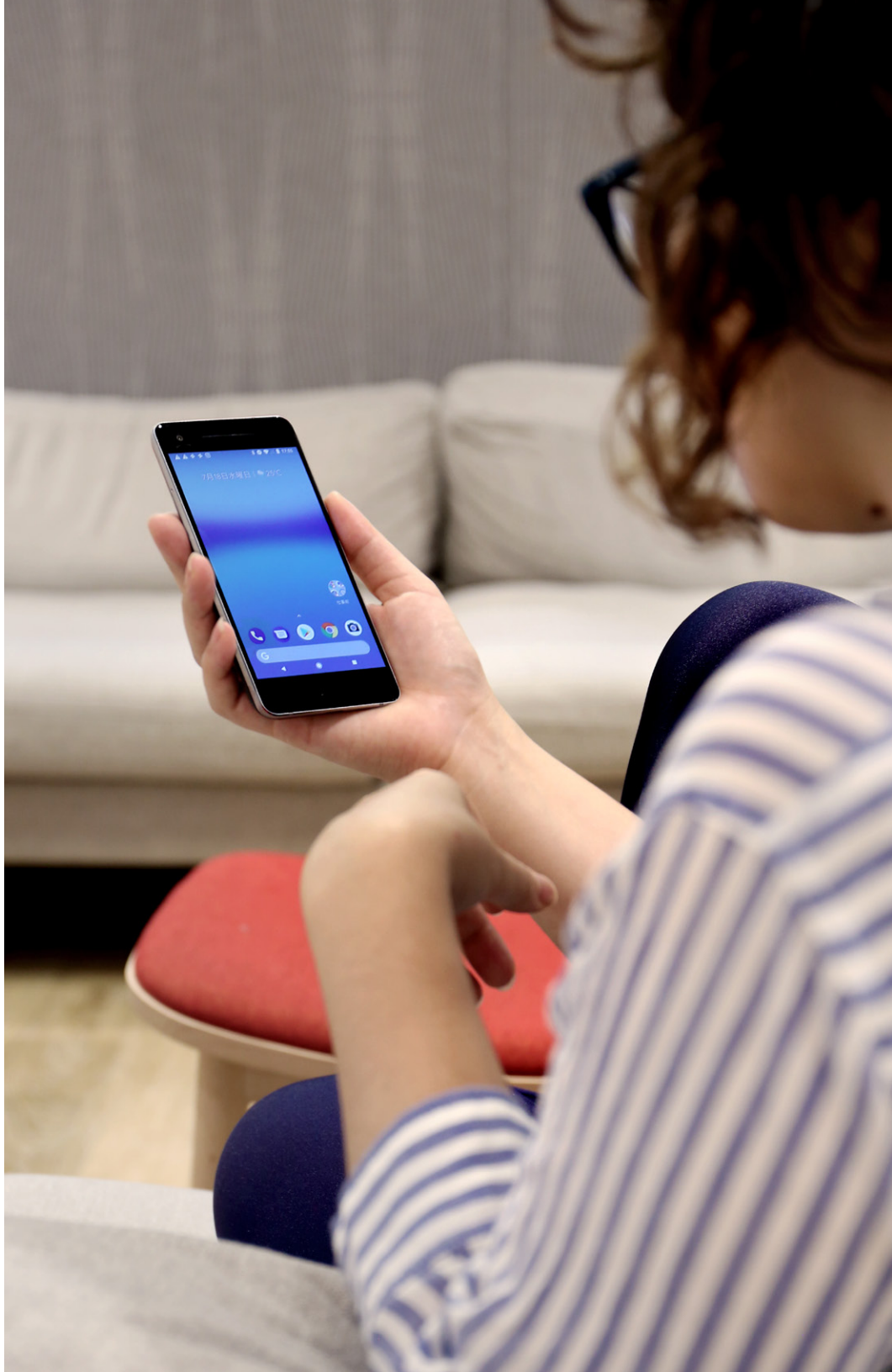
2. Policies matter. Put policies in place to support, manage, measure, and train a flexible workforce. This helps everyone benefit from flexibility while avoiding the pitfalls of lack of

guidance, internal conflict, and unset (and then, unmet) expectations and goals.

3. Think globally. Once you break free of location constraints associated with office-based workforces, a world of talent awaits. Use global hiring platforms such as FlexJobs and UpWork to find the best team members for your needs.

4. Provide the right tools and training. Identify and acquire the tools that everyone in your organization should be using, and train everyone on how to use them. No matter where staff, freelancers, or contractors are located, they should all use the same tools.

5. Move beyond preconceptions. One of the biggest challenges with running a flexible workforce is the lingering sense that somehow remote or flexible workers are less productive or not contributing their fair share. These stigmas—particularly around women in the workforce—hold everyone back.



03.

The collaborative workforce

Businesses have long understood that effective collaboration can increase creativity and drive productivity. When people can get more done with better results, everybody wins. That's why collaboration is one of the keys to achieving work-life balance.

Collaboration drives performance

In 2017, Forbes[17] reported on a finding in a recent joint study between the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) and Rob Cross, the Edward A. Madden Professor of Global Business at Babson College. The study found that companies that promoted collaborative working were five times as likely to be high performing.

Collaboration comes in many forms. For on-site workers, physical workspace design—open plans, undesignated "huddle" spots, and social spaces—can foster idea-sharing and innovation, as well as networking and stronger relationships. And for both on-site and off-site workers, technology can play a key role in bringing team members together.

Technology enables businesses to create virtual, collaborative environments wherever their employees and contractors are located. Cloud-based apps for video conferencing, group chat, shared document editing, and file sharing allow people to collaborate in real time, anytime, from anywhere. This technology, in turn, is driving a new work culture that frees people from the confines of traditional offices and schedules while still helping teams work together effectively.

To help people achieve true work-life balance—and to prepare for the future of work—businesses need to ensure that collaborative technologies are not only in place, but also embedded in their company and workforce culture. In doing so, they stand to realize quite a few benefits of their own.

A century-old food business adopts a collaborative platform

Founded in 1908, Noberasco is an Italian leader in the food industry, specialising in dried fruit and nuts. It's also a family business run by fourth-generation CEO Mattia Noberasco with an eye for innovation. While consolidating the company's two main offices into a central headquarters, Noberasco saw the chance to replace previous collaborative processes with a cloud-based productivity platform from Google.[18]

Before then, collaboration was difficult. Staff was wasting valuable time emailing attachments or downloading large files from separate servers just to see basic data. Within months of migrating to the new platform, they began seeing drastic improvements.

As Noberasco notes, "We used to spend half our day replying to internal emails. Now, with video meetups, we can share information instantly and take meetings without having to walk 15 minutes from one end of our plant to the other. A shared calendar has dramatically improved our efficiency as well." Collaborating with suppliers is much easier, too, now that team members use a shared drive for documents. And because 80% of staff time is spent outside the office, the ability to do all of this on the go, from mobile devices, is a game-changer.

17 Adi Gaskell, "New Study Finds That Collaboration Drives Workplace Performance." Forbes Magazine, June 22, 2017. https://www.forbes.com/sites/adigaskell/2017/06/22/new-study-finds-that-collaboration-drives-workplace-performance

18 "Noberasco: Sows the seeds for success with G Suite." Google case study. https://gsuite.google.com/customers/noberasco.html

The long-term results look just as promising. In the year following the Google migration:

- 90% of the team has adopted the suite of cloud-based collaboration tools into their regular routines.
- Over 75% of employees use video conferencing, minimizing the time they spend on email or traveling to meetings.
- IT costs have been lowered and IT staff have time to develop new processes such as optimizing analytics.
- The company launched 70 new products; having the right information at the right time helped them capitalize on more opportunities.

Improvements like these are more than a technology upgrade. They've changed the company's entire operations and work culture. "It's an evolution of our organization and a whole new way for our employees to collaborate," Noberasco says. It's the kind of innovation his company needs to keep growing for another hundred years.

Because of its inherently personal nature, working collaboratively means more than architecture and apps alone. As noted by Accenture,[19] "...collaboration literally means working together —co-laboring, not just co-talking." Tools that provide virtual communication don't engender collaboration on their own; the differentiator is the way people use them.

19 Mary Hamilton, Alex Kass, et al.. "How Collaboration Technologies Can Boost Business Performance." Accenture Outlook Point of View, December 2013, No. 2. https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insight-outlook-how-collaboration-technologies-are-improving-process-workforce-business

Businesses that overcome these barriers stand to gain a lot, as do their employees. A 2017 Gensler Research Institute workplace survey[20] of Latin American companies found that while employees in the region love to work together, they also love to work from home. Collaborative technology provides this solution. And it's investments in this technology that set innovators apart from the rest.

The global call for collaboration

According to Gensler Research Institute's 2016 Workplace Surveys, collaborative technology is a key innovation driver worldwide. What's more, a common theme among all 11,000+ workers surveyed across the globe is the value of at-work relationships.

Aviation giant soars through collaboration

GE Aviation, a world-leading aviation and aircraft supplier, is defined by innovation. When they wanted to make their business more social and digital, they looked to the latest cloud technologies. Their goal: Connect with customers and manage opportunities.

Their new collaboration platform, powered by Salesforce,[21] began as a way to give everyone access to customer data, but soon, the collaboration it enabled was changing the way they did business. The shared data platform and chat functionality connected people across the organization in new ways, allowing them to easily share documents, answer questions, and get instant feedback.

20 Jessica García, Francesca Poma-Murialdo, et al., "Gensler Latin America Workplace Survey, 2017." May 18, 2017. https://www.gensler.com/uploads/document/535/file/Latam_WorkplaceSurvey_2017_English_051817.pdf
21 "Collaboration helps GE Aviation bring its best inventions to life." Salesforce.com case study. https://www.salesforce.com/ap/customer-success-stories/ge

Collaborative technology offers solutions that not only enable connectivity, but also improve the way people work together. This translates to greater productivity, innovation, efficiency, and work-life balance, by allowing people to work together meaningfully the way they work best—whether casually chatting throughout the day, editing documents in real time from around the globe, or hosting a meeting in the comfort of their living room or an airport terminal.

How to build a collaborative workforce

Tools and techniques for a collaborative workforce:
For a list of tools and techniques to help build a collaborative workforce, refer to chapter 2, "Tools for a flexible workforce." In addition, consider implementing shared calendars to help team members view each other's schedules and find the best time to meet.

Best practices for a collaborative workforce
1. The right design. Collaborative companies invest in workplace design that makes it easy for on-site workers to meet up, gather informally, and choose between shared and solo environments.

2. The right tools. Implementing and managing collaborative technology is fundamental to a collaborative workforce. Businesses should look for cloud-based tools that are easy to use and maintain, and embed them within business processes.

3. The right management mindset. Simply making tools available is not enough; businesses need to create, encourage, and incentivize collaborative behaviors. It's also vital for leadership to model the practices they preach.

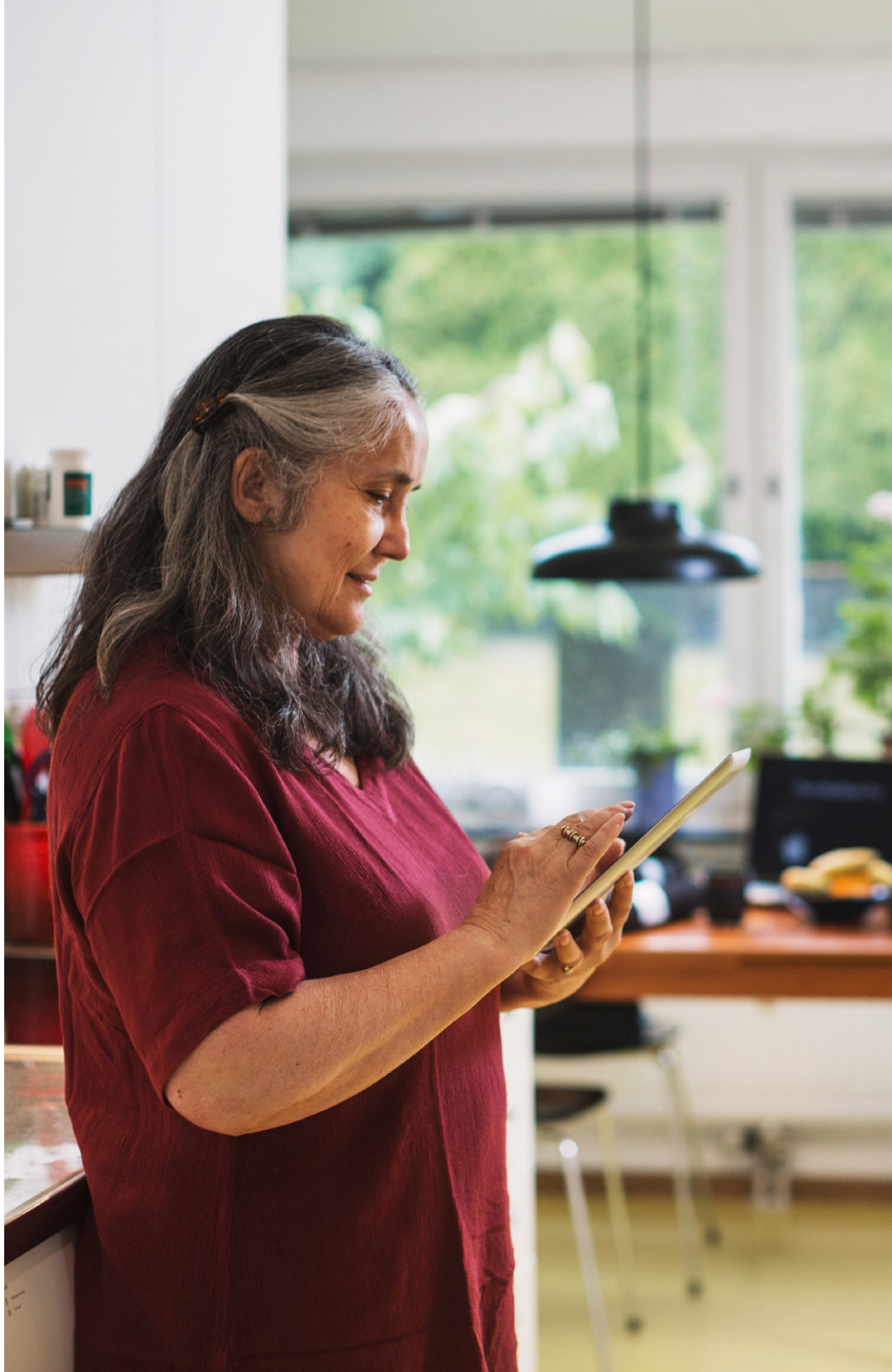
4. The right culture. A collaborative workforce goes hand in hand with an office culture that values employees as unique, autonomous people. A culture that embraces the personal as well as the professional is conducive to true collaboration.

5. The right team dynamic. Collaboration begins with relationships, and forging them takes effort and care. There are many resources on how to build a great team; one tip is that the most innovative team is as diverse as it is bonded.

04.

The distributed workforce

With technology changing how, where, and when we work, many businesses are taking flexible, collaborative work a step further, allowing people to work from dispersed, decentralized locations. Some companies employ both on-site and remote workers (these are the flexible workforces we discussed in chapter 2), while others are fully distributed, with no central office. In this chapter, we look at fully-distributed companies.



While distributed workforces come in many varieties, they are increasingly the wave of the future. Allowing people to live and work wherever they choose gives them more freedom to do the type of work they choose (instead of just jobs that are geographically close) and affords them more opportunities to live richer personal lives. According to several studies, people with the option to work remotely are happier,[22] more productive,[23] and more loyal to their organizations.[24] This makes the distributed workforce a win-win scenario for companies and staff alike, and part of the new playbook for achieving work-life balance.

Distributing opportunity

The first step to supporting a distributed workforce is removing the stigma around not showing up at a centralized office. The majority of respondents in a global Polycom, Inc. survey of workers in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, Singapore, the UK and the US expressed concern that they weren't perceived as hard-working if they weren't in the office.[25] Yet almost all respondents felt more productive when they were allowed to work from anywhere.

How to bridge this perception gap? Instead of hours worked, businesses can focus on work outcomes to assess whether goals are being met. By measuring performance rather than time spent in the office, businesses are discovering they can—and should—diversify and disperse their talent. That's why many organizations—especially those "born digital"—are realizing that they don't need a headquarters or centralized office at all.

22 Sarah Kesler, "The happiest worker spends about one day a week in the office." Quartz Media, February 16, 2017. https://qz.com/908116/the-happiest-worker-spends-about-one-day-a-week-in-the-office
23 Cassie Werber, "People who love working from home are right: It's more productive." Quartz Media, January 30, 2015. https://qz.com/335754/people-who-love-working-from-home-are-right-its-more-productive
24 Corinne Purtill, "How to manage remote employees." Quartz at Work, October 11, 2017. https://work.qz.com/1095920/how-to-manage-employees-who-work-from-home-a-guide-from-quartz-at-work
25 Polycom, Inc., "Global survey of 24,000+ workers unearths the 'need' for flexibility in the workplace in order for businesses to thrive." March 20, 2017. http://www.polycom.com/company/news/press-releases/2017/20170321.html

Perception versus productivity

A global survey of 24,000+ workers in 12 countries conducted by Polycom, Inc. shows an increasing demand for flexibility in the workplace.[26] According to the survey:

- 62% of global workers take advantage of flexible working practices.
- 62% of workers worry they're not seen as "hard-working" when not in the office, including 66% of millennial workers.
- 98% of workers say that "anywhere-working" has a positive impact on productivity.
- 92% of workers say video conferencing improves their teamwork.

Everybody into the cloud

A distributed workforce is about shifting the concept of when and where people work best to one of how they work best, usually through collaborative, cloud-based technology. Technology such as shared file servers, calendars, chat, video conferencing, and collaborative writing and editing tools enable distributed workers to work together remotely, accessing and interacting with the same resources as if they were in a shared office. These tools help people not only interact in real time, but also stay connected to their distributed community of colleagues. No matter how widespread workers are, they're never more than a few clicks away from each other—and that's especially important when there's no centralized office for face-to-face interaction.

26 Polycom, Inc. survey.

Automattic for the people

Automattic Inc., is the web development business behind WordPress.com and the open source WordPress software, as well as several other platforms, including WooCommerce, Simplenote, and Longreads. Founded in 2005, Automattic is also a distributed workforce pioneer, with 697 employees in 62 countries that collectively speak 80 languages.

How do they work without a centralized office? As Automattic Marketing Manager Sara Rosso and Global Head of Human Resources Lori McLeese explained in a Q&A with Remote.co,[27] their creed includes the statement, "I will communicate as much as possible, because it's the oxygen of a distributed company." Their employees do this through their own blog platform as well as through Slack chat and video conference calls.

And they make sure to chat not only about work projects, but also about personal topics, via "watercooler" blog channels for "music, games, literature, fitness, home ownership, pets, tattoos—just about anything that creates a bond between Automatticians." To deepen these bonds, they also get everyone together once or twice a year in person to work, learn, and socialize.

Automattic attributes its distributed success to the ability to "find talent wherever they live," which opens doors to new possibilities and enables team members across time zones to work in a truly flexible and collaborative environment.

27 Automattic Remote, "Company Q&A with Sara Rosso, Marketing Manager, and Lori McLeese, Global Head of HR." https://remote.co/company/automattic

One of the most celebrated work-life benefits of a distributed workforce is that it eliminates commuting. According to a study of 52 cities around the globe by Dalia Research, the average commute time worldwide is 69 minutes each work day, with extremes over 90 minutes in several major cities.[28] This takes a toll on businesses and people (not to mention the environment).

The stress and anxiety of commuting leads to documented health problems and is detrimental to family life, as noted in a 2015 Gulf News article.[29] Also in 2015, 73% of respondents to a Smith Group poll in Israel said they would change jobs and take a pay cut just for a shorter commute.[30] Yet even a brief commute can be stressful, as in Japan, where an efficient public transportation system keeps travel times short, but where severe overcrowding means professional pushers, or oshiya, forcibly pack people into jammed trains.

Eliminating the time, stress, and environmental impact of regular commutes can greatly improve people's lives, affecting the health and wealth of businesses, nations, and even the planet.

An increasing number of businesses are moving toward the fully-distributed working model. This enables them to tap into a wider range of talent and access a wealth of candidates who might otherwise be limited by location or their desire for flexibility.

FlexJobs, a job listing site that helps match people to remote and flexible jobs, identified 125 fully-distributed companies in 2016. As of early 2018, their database includes some 49,000 companies with remote-friendly job options throughout North America and around the globe. FlexJobs itself is a fully-distributed company: FlexJobs' founder and CEO, Sara Sutton Fell, was motivated to launch the company due to the lack of flexible work options when she started her family.

28 Anisa Holmes, "The Countries with the Longest and Shortest Commutes." Dalia Research, March 31, 2017. https://daliaresearch.com/the-countries-with-the-longest-and-shortest-commutes
29 Maram Zabaeda, "Long daily commutes lead to health issues." Gulf News, February 2, 2015. http://gulfnews.com/your-say/your-reports/long-daily-commutes-lead-to-health-issues-1.1450326
30 David Shamah, "Poll: 73% of workers would leave jobs for a shorter commute." The Times of Israel, September 2, 2015 http://www.timesofisrael.com/poll-73-of-workers-would-leave-jobs-for-a-shorter-commute

Totally distributed companies span the globe

In 2017, Zapier, creator of an automation tool that connects popular apps, published an article listing "25+ Fully Remote Companies that Let you Work from Anywhere."[31] This sampling shows just how global distributed companies can be:

Arkency (https://arkency.com) is a business software development and training firm with roots across Europe.

Buffer (https://buffer.com) is a social media management company with 80+ employees across 10 timezones.

Gitlab (https://about.gitlab.com) is an enterprise code collaboration platform with staff in three continents (and a manifesto about their dedication to remote workstyles).

Ghost (https://ghost.org) is an open-source blogging platform staffed across five continents with staff with seven nationalities who speak six languages.

Invision (https://www.invisionapp.com) is a popular design prototyping and collaboration tool with a totally distributed team of 220+ in 14 countries.

Toggl (https://www.toggl.com) runs a widely used time-tracking app, and was founded in Estonia but has team members in nine time zones across five continents.

Zapier (https://zapier.com) published the list, and is itself a totally distributed company with a workforce that spans 13 countries.

The article also shares Zapier CEO and co-founder Wade Foster's perspective on running a distributed company: "It's a better way to work. It allows us to hire smart people no matter where in the world, and it gives those people hours back in their day to spend with friends and family."

To help spread the word, Foster wrote "The Ultimate Guide to Remote Work," a free guide that Zapier shares at https://zapier.com/learn/remote-work.

So where do all these people work? For those not content with a home office or internet cafe, coworking life beckons—and the options are plentiful. One of the most popular coworking operations, WeWork, began with a single New York location, and now has over 200 spaces in 20 countries and counting. Some coworking offices cater to specialized interests. The Wing and HeraHub are female-only coworking communities based in the US. There are even more short-term options such ShareDesk, which let people book on-demand workspaces, when and where they need them.

By leveraging technology that enables people to work from anywhere and with anyone, businesses with distributed work-forces are leading the way for the future of work-life balance. These companies have no boundaries for hiring the best talent, and their workers can choose from among companies that best match their skills instead of trying to find a local employer. Everyone wins, and people can balance their work schedules while enjoying more time and flexibility for the life they want to lead.

31 Melanie Pinola, "25+ Fully Remote Companies that Let you Work from Anywhere." Zapier.com, May 18, 2017. https://zapier.com/blog/companies-hiring-remote-workers

When the world is your office

The popularity of remote work has given rise to a new kind of worker/traveler known as the digital nomad—one who travels the world without missing a paycheck. (Fast Company recently profiled several digital nomads earning six-figure salaries.[32]) And businesses have quickly popped up to accommodate them.

Teleport, a MOVE Guides company, creates "software for digital nomads" to help people find and move to the best cities for them. No surprise, their own company culture is "fluid, diverse, and borderless." For those who prefer a flexible home base, Roam, a startup founded in 2015, offers a global web of coliving spaces where members get private accommodations, communal hangouts, and "battle-tested Wi-Fi" in spots such as Bali, Tokyo, London, and Miami. As described by The New York Times, "Roam has no offices and no headquarters except its locations. For its clients and employees alike, the startup provides a comprehensive structure for a post-place life."[33]

Remote Year offers guided working gap years, bringing groups to 12 cities in 12 months and offering workspaces, professional development, and networking along the way. Founder Greg Caplan told The Guardian in 2015, "The main point of Remote Year really is the community," noting that people could work while traveling alone for less.[34] Participants on their website credit the organization for changing the way they work, live, and see the world.

32 Lindsay Tigar, "Advice on Living the Dream from Digital Nomads who Make Over Six Figures." Fast Company, January 19, 2018. https://www.fastcompany.com/40517739/advice-on-living-the-dream-from-digital-nomads-who-make-over-six-figures

33 Kyle Chayka, "When You're a 'Digital Nomad,' the World Is Your Office." The New York Times, February 8, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/08/magazine/when-youre-a-digital-nomad-the-world-is-your-office.html

34 Rin Hamburgh, "Working gap years: How going Remote can connect you with like-minded people." The Guardian, December 10, 2015. https://www.theguardian.com/money/2015/dec/10/working-gap-years-how-going-remote-can-connect-you-with-like-minded-people

How to build a distributed workforce

Tools and techniques for a distributed workforce:
For a list of tools and techniques to help build a collaborative workforce, refer to chapter 2, "Tools for a flexible workforce." In addition, consider implementing project management practices to set tasks, manage workflow, and keep tabs on progress.

Best practices for a distributed workforce:

1. Use the right technology. Find the suite of collaborative tools that works best for your business, and commit to it with training and follow-up.

2. Practice makes perfect. Embrace the tools and techniques at every level of the business, and evolve your systems and work processes as you learn.

3. Stick to your values. Set clear, consistent expectations about performance, work hours, and communication.

4. Communicate, communicate, communicate. Successful distributed teams use several different regular forms of communication.

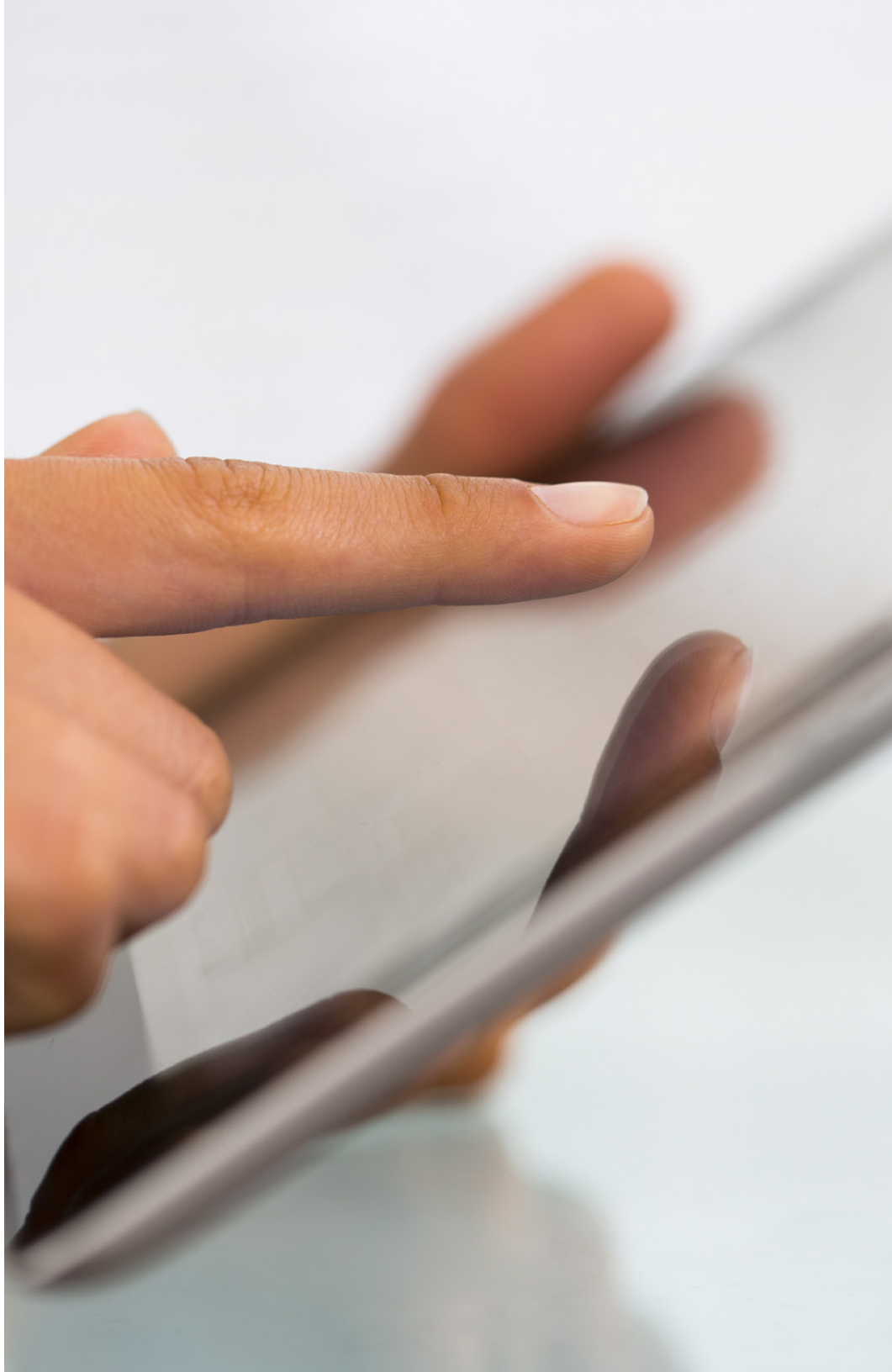
5. Plan for isolation. Provide a coworking stipend, and extra support for first-time remote workers. Automattic uses a mentor system that pairs new hires with a chat buddy in their time zone.

6. Meet in person when possible. Give people a chance to bond and build rapport so they have a sense of face-to-face community with their colleagues. It's the foundation that they'll take with them when they're apart.

05.

The future workforce

As we've seen throughout this playbook, a variety of trends are driving a shift in how, when, and where we work. And with automation and artificial intelligence (AI) on the rise, no one knows exactly what the "future of work" will look like. The one thing we can be sure of is that things will change: A dramatic shift is already underway, and employers and workers need to be ready for this fast-approaching future.



The first stage of the future of work has already arrived. We've seen new technologies hastening a new work landscape, freeing workers from offices thanks to widespread Wi-Fi, laptops, mobile devices, and cloud-based communications and collaboration software. These technologies are a catalyst not only for increased productivity, but also for a transformed workforce that is increasingly achieving work-life balance through flexible, collaborative, and distributed work arrangements.

The rise of a work-from-anywhere workforce coincides with the rise of an independent workforce. In a survey of 8,000 respondents in France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the US, the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) reports 20–30% of the working-age population has spent time as independent contractors, and 70% of them are doing so by choice because they want flexibility and autonomy.[35] When CEPR took the survey data and extrapolated it to the US and 15 other EU countries, they estimated that 20–30% represents as many as 162 million people who have spent time working as independent contractors.[36]

A 2016 survey of hiring managers sponsored by the Markle Foundation, the Aspen Institute's Future of Work Initiative, Burson-Marsteller, and TIME found that 57% of companies who reported using contract labor at the time expected to rely more heavily on these workers over the next five years. Only 31% of respondents said they expected to rely less on contractors.[37]

It's easy to promote the upsides of the work-from-anywhere lifestyle, but some of the independent contractors who make up the freelance and gig economies aren't doing so by choice—some are full-time employees phased out of their jobs, while others work various gigs while they seek full-time employment,

35 Jacques Bughin and Jan Mischke, "Exploding myths about the gig economy." VoxEU, November 28, 2016. https://voxeu.org/article/exploding-myths-about-gig-economy
36 Bughin and Mischke.
37 Burson-Marsteller, "Workforce of the Future Survey." June 2016. http://www.bcw-global.com/what-we-do/our-thinking/workforce-of-the-future-survey/the-workforce-of-the-future-survey

put themselves through school, or contribute to an extended family income.

You may have heard about the "gig" economy, but it's not quite the same thing as the freelance economy—"giggers" are those who take multiple, short-term jobs or income-earning opportunities they receive through online platforms such as Uber, Airbnb, and TaskRabbit. The freelance economy, on the other hand, usually involves professionals—consultants, copywriters, developers, accountants, and others—that have long offered their services on a contract as well as employment basis.

No matter how they work, however, non-traditional workers often live with heightened financial instability. The Century Foundation found that non-traditional workers experience nearly twice as much earnings volatility as traditional workers.[38] The Aspen Institute's Financial Security Program found that among low- and middle-income workers, the self-employed were 58% more likely to experience income volatility than full-time traditional workers.[39]

The flexible, fluid workforce we see now is just the beginning, both for workers and companies. The next stage of the future of work will shake things up more profoundly, altering not just how, when, and where we work, but, more importantly, the very nature of the work we do.

> **"The nature of work may be changing, but the value of work has not. The future of work relies on our ability to design new arrangements to ensure that the promise of opportunity keeps up with the pace of change."**
>
> —"Toward a New Capitalism,"
> The Aspen Institute Initiative on the Future of Work

38 Andrew Stettner, Michael Cassidy, and George Wentworth, "A New Safety Net for an Era of Unstable Earnings." The Century Foundation, December 15, 2016. https://tcf.org/content/report/new-safety-net-for-an-era-of-unstable-earnings
39 Conor McKay, Ethan Pollack, and Alastair Fitzpayne, "Modernizing Unemployment Insurance for the Changing Nature of Work." The Aspen Institute, January 29, 2018. https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/modernizing-unemployment-insurance

AI, robotics, virtual assistants, and more are no longer science fiction concepts: Every industry will soon be leveraging technologies that are capable of replacing a portion of the traditional workforce. Traditional, full-time employment may become the exception rather than the rule, and tomorrow's workers will need to collaborate not only with each other, but also with intelligent machines and systems.

Yet many of the obstacles for workers and management are a matter of perspective. For Deloitte's 2018 "Global Human Capital Trends" report, more than 11,000 HR and business leaders across 140 countries were asked about the potential impact of automation on the future of work. Nearly half of the respondents (47%) said their organizations were deeply involved in automation projects and 72% said automation was important, but only 31% felt ready to address it.[40] Given this attention gap, it's important that companies acknowledge the fast-approaching shift in work, and communicate how they plan to address its impact on their workers.

Organizations can help workers embrace this changing landscape, not only by creating a flexible work environment, but also by fostering an atmosphere of continuous curiosity and lifelong learning, especially around the skills that will be needed in the coming decades. Machines and humans can and will work together well into the future, so everyone from management down should take a proactive approach to adapting to change.

Erik Brynjolfsson, Director of the MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy and professor at MIT's Sloan School, noted in a 2013 TED Talk that when we consider how technology and especially AI will change the way we work, we should reflect on how electricity transformed human life.[41] He explained that, despite fears to the contrary, electricity didn't put people out of work: It transformed the way people did their jobs and increased productivity and opportunity.

And while AI will likely reduce the number of some types of full-time jobs, it's likely to create new ones as well, while also launching a vast wave of entrepreneurs who leverage it for their own new companies. So, just as electricity actually increased economic opportunity, new ventures driven by AI may sprout as a result of the same forces that led their founders to leave their prior jobs.

Working = learning

One of the best ways for companies and workers to prepare for this radically changed future workforce is by training for the skills of the future. Whether employees in a company or independent contractors, workers will need to embrace new technology and commit themselves to regular skills training.

Management can play a big role in creating an environment that supports lifelong learning in general, along with offering training for specific, in-demand skills in areas such as digital marketing and data analytics.

Corporate training for the future

In a 2017 consortium of executives, educators, and consultants brought together by McKinsey to discuss lifelong learning in the digital age, Julia Stiglitz, Vice President of Enterprise Solutions at leading e-learning platform Coursera described a project the company did with AT&T that transparently communicated the skills training employees needed to thrive.

40 Anthony Abbatiello, Dimple Agarwal, et al., "The Rise of the Social Enterprise: 2018 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends." Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, March 2018. https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/human-capital/topics/human-capital-trends.html?icid=wn_human-capital-trends

41 Erik Brynjolfsson, "The Key to Growth? Race With the Machines." TED Talk, February 2013. https://www.ted.com/talks/erik_brynjolfsson_the_key_to_growth_race_em_with_em_the_machines/transcript

> "At AT&T, they have taken all of their job categories, mapped them onto competencies, and aligned them to learning opportunities. Individuals can go onto a personalized-learning system and see if their jobs are on the decline or on the rise. They can discover jobs that they are interested in, see the associated competencies, and take advantage of learning opportunities that will enable them to make a transition."[42]

Even if the future workforce is largely independent, that doesn't mean that workers have to do everything alone. Loose associations of independent contractors or small-business entrepreneurs can be united and strengthened via technology-based networks. Models of this are already out there: Platforms like etsy and eBay currently run certification programs to help their sellers establish their professional credentials, and offer online tutorials and networking events to hone their skills.

Google is committed to providing skills for the future through a variety of initiatives. Grow with Google (www.grow.google) offers a vast assortment of digital training, tools, and live events for teachers, entrepreneurs, and job seekers of all stripes. Google's Women Will initiative (www.womenwill.com) works with women around the world to boost their economic standing through free training on technology, leadership, and advocacy. And Google's Digital Garage (https://learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage) is a free resource where people can learn valuable digital skills, burnish their interview expertise, and prepare for a career pivot.

Upon announcing the launch of Grow with Google, Google CEO Sundar Pichai noted, "The nature of work is fundamentally changing. And that is shifting the link between education, training, and opportunity."[43]

42 McKinsey & Company, "Getting Ready for the Future of Work." McKinsey Quarterly, September 2017.
https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/getting-ready-for-the-future-of-work
43 Sundar Pichai, "Opportunity for everyone." The Keyword (Google) Blog, October 12, 2017.
https://blog.google/topics/causes-community/opportunity-for-everyone/

Skills training is not a one-time bridge to carry the present-day workforce into the future; it's a mission-critical foundation for all workers, everywhere, on an ongoing basis. According to the World Economic Forum, one-third of jobs in 2020 will require skills that aren't common today. Technology won't stop advancing, so learning and skills development shouldn't stop either.[44]

It is often said that intelligence is the ability to adapt to change. As workers and managers, a positive open-minded attitude, a willingness to learn new things, and a commitment to community even when we work alone will remain the key to how we adapt and thrive in this brave new future of work.

44 World Economic Forum, "The Future of Jobs." January 2016.
http://reports.weforum.org/future-of-jobs-2016/skills-stability

06.

Creating a work-life balance, now and for the future

While there is no single formula for work-life balance, global organizations of all types and sizes that embrace flexible, collaborative, and/or distributed workforce models see improvements in worker well-being and upticks in productivity.

The good news for businesses is that happy workers lead to an increase in teamwork, diversity, and innovation, and a decrease in turnover rates. Many work-life balance initiatives, like flexible and remote working arrangements and family-centered policies, can also allow businesses to reach a greater pool of talent, and bring more women into the workforce.

A key driver of this new era of possibility is cloud-based technology. In order for employers and employees to reap the myriad benefits of work-life balance, businesses must put new technologies into place that enable new kinds of collaboration and more flexibility around where and when someone can get work done. Businesses must also remember that implementing this technology is not enough. They must also properly train and maintain people on these technologies, and instill a culture of continuous learning that inspires everyone to adapt and be prepared for the future of work that lies ahead.

Next steps: piloting work-life balance in your organization

Tools and techniques

As referenced above, technology is the foundation for creating a work-life balance in any organization. The specific needs of every business will determine which solutions best fit with their goals, but there are a few basics that can foster collaboration and flexibility in every company.

- Email
- Chat
- Video conferencing
- Shared calendars
- Shared drives/secure file sharing
- Shared documents/collaborative writing and editing tools
- Virtual private networks (VPNs)

Best practices for a happier, more productive workforce

Beyond technology, some level of organizational change needs to occur to promote better working conditions for both employers and employees. Here are some ways to achieve this:

Acknowledge and let go of bias. At the root of work-life balance is the need to protect people from the perils of overwork and rigid policies. This requires a shift in thinking from traditional business models that value in-person face time and long hours at the office to a mindset where remote workers can be as productive as (or even more productive than) traditional onsite workers. It's important to expect and acknowledge biases that may stand in the way of progress. They are powerful, but they can—and must—be let go.

Start with office culture. Work-life balance can only exist in an atmosphere where people feel their lives, inside and outside of work, are valued. Think about the shifts that must be made to foster a culture that embraces the personal as well as the professional. Don't underestimate the power of management to endorse workplace culture by modeling it.

Make it universal. For far too long, work-life balance initiatives were seen as only being focused on women, and/or those with a special need to work remotely or alternative hours. This is a damaging and counterproductive approach that perpetuates bias and tilts the playing field. Work-life balance policies should apply to all employees equally, from top management to the most junior positions.

Set clear expectations. Letting employees know what is expected of them is good management in any context, and especially important when introducing new technologies and

policies. New business values should be defined and shared widely with employees. If you're drastically changing your workforce model, it may mean recalibrating and communicating success metrics that focus on outcomes as well as factors that will not be expected, like attending meetings in person.

Provide training, not just tools. Technology is only as useful as the way it's used. Build training and trial sessions into any new technology ramp-up, and find tools that are simple to use and maintain. Further your readiness and agility by offering supplemental and advanced learning opportunities on new technologies. And help your team prepare for the future of work with ongoing skills training so they're ready and able to thrive in the years to come.

Fostering work-life balance across your organization

Feeling ready to bring work-life balance to your business? Here is a checklist on how to pilot and implement a work-life balance program, based in part on Google's Work Culture Reform initiative (https://www.womenwill.com/programs/workculturereform) in Japan.

1. **Get buy-in from management:** Company-wide as well as management-level commitment is crucial for success. This commitment should be voiced to the entire team—directly or virtually—throughout the process.

2. **Identify work-life balance leaders:** Decide on a few core members who will be point people for the effort. Their role includes promoting the plan, sourcing feedback, and taking the lead on participation. Try to diversify the group across position, gender, age, and other factors so that these leaders have broad input and reach throughout the business.

3. **Seek everyone's input:** Have work-life balance leaders solicit insight and ideas from as many people as possible through roundtable meetings, interviews, and surveys. Focus on areas of work-life conflict, as well as specific ideas for improvement, and discuss what the benefits might look like.

4. **Communicate your plan and timeline:** Create and communicate a well-defined and realistic timeline for your work-life balance pilot, and include clear objectives and desired outcomes so that everyone knows what to expect. It may help to have a theme, such as increasing flexibility, reducing work hours, or improving collaboration.

5. **Have everyone participate:** It's important to get everyone in the company on board. This helps drive input and engagement at every level so that everyone will feel invested and more likely to participate.

6. **Model best practices:** Work-life balance leaders should model the participation they seek from others by sharing their thoughts and observations and facilitating input from others. Positive and negative feedback can both be useful to shape and improve your initiative.

7. **Validate the impact:** Once your pilot is underway, set a timeline and milestones to check on program progress and impact. Conduct before-and-after surveys or individual interviews, and document benefits and issues at each point. This will help identify successes you can replicate and stumbling blocks to avoid.

8. Take it to the next level: Once you've learned what works and what doesn't, you can optimize your program and expand it for lasting impact on your organization. Remember that it can take time for changes to take hold (and that it can be easy to fall back into old patterns). And continue to check in across the organization and to measure how well your workforce is performing and benefiting from this new way of working. Tackling this now is the best way to make a positive, lasting difference in work-life balance, and also to prepare your workforce and organization as a whole for the future.

Learn more

For further information on work-life balance, including best practices, policies, insights, and the latest data and research, the following resources provide a good starting point.

Grow with Google: Grow with Google offers free training, tools, and live events to help businesses, entrepreneurs, and job seekers improve their digital skills and learn some of the latest technologies driving the future of work.
www.grow.google

Harvard Business Review: A subsidiary of Harvard University, Harvard Business Review provides leading-edge content and tools, including insights and best practices, to help businesses lead more effectively and make a positive impact.
www.hbr.org/topic/work-life-balance

ILO: Founded in 1919, the ILO (International Labour Organization) brings together governments, employers, and workers of 187 Member States to set labor standards, develop policies, and devise programs promoting decent work for all women and men.
www.ilo.org

OECD Better Life Index: The OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) identifies, quantifies, and monitors factors contributing to work-life balance and well-being among its 35 member countries.
www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org

Women Will: Women Will is a Google initiative to provide more economic opportunity for women everywhere, so that they can grow and succeed. Helping women make the most of technology to build skills, get inspired, and connect with each other through trainings, events and advocacy, we aim to drive conversations promoting gender equality to benefit everyone.
www.womenwill.com

Get started

Visit www.womenwill.com to learn more.

About the agency that created this playbook

This playbook was created by Wordsmithie, Inc., a distributed company. Based in the United States and working with team-members and clients around the world, Wordsmithie uses cloud-based tools and best practices like those in this book to collaborate with its widespread team of writers, editors, designers, strategists and project managers. The agency worked remotely with Google on this playbook from beginning to end.

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