

# An Executive's Guide to Making Remote REALLY Work for Your Business



The shift towards remote work has become a defining feature of the modern workplace, with many companies transitioning to partially or fully remote workforces. For executives and upper management, optimizing productivity and fostering a strong organizational culture in remote settings is crucial for sustaining efficiency and enhancing employee satisfaction. Moreover, the strategic implementation of remote work can provide a competitive edge. Notable examples of successful remote work implementations include [GitLab](#), [Buffer](#), and [Riseup Labs](#).

The objectives of this article are:

- to give executives insights into benefits and challenges of remote work;
- to provide specific, evidence-based best practices (with links to relevant resources) for best managing a team of hybrid or fully remote resources for optimum productivity; and
- to outline approaches to cultivating a sustainably robust organizational culture in remote operations.

Overall, the rise of remote work is a testament to the changing dynamics of the modern workforce. It offers numerous benefits for both employees and companies, and its popularity is only expected to continue growing in the future.

## Benefits of Remote Work

### Increased Flexibility

Remote work offers employees the ability to balance work and personal life more effectively. Studies indicate that flexible work arrangements are highly valued by employees, leading to increased job satisfaction and retention. In fact, in [McKinsey's American Opportunity Survey](#), **workplace flexibility was a top reason employees accepted new jobs**. [HubSpot](#), a U.S. based company with over 7,600 global employees, offers employees choices for work preferences. In 2023, HubSpot had the following work preference breakdown: **63.4% at home, 8.3% in the office, and 28.3% flex**, a combination of the two.

### High Job Satisfaction

Remote employees have been shown to have higher job satisfaction and overall happiness compared to their in-office counterparts. This is supported by research that highlights the benefits of remote work on employee morale and engagement. In a study [published in the National Library of Medicine](#), **78% of respondents preferred working from home**, while [a large-scale study by Tracking Happiness](#) determined that **the ability to work remotely increases employee happiness by up to 20%**.

# Benefits of Remote Work *(continued)*

## Access to a Broader Talent Pool

Fully remote organizations can hire top talent from any location, significantly expanding the talent pool and potentially reducing salary expectations. This advantage enables businesses to attract high-performing individuals who may not be available locally. In [this ADP Research Institute study](#), researchers delved into data to show the rise in "domestic off-shoring" and the boosting of employment interconnectivity between cities. According to a December 2023 [LinkedIn Global State of Remote and Hybrid Work study](#), **remote roles in the US received almost 5x the share of applications compared to the jobs available**, giving you a broader reach and prime choice candidates. While the share of fully remote roles is dropping, the demand for remote roles remains high.

## Cost Savings to Company

Remote work can lead to substantial cost savings for companies, reducing overhead costs for office space and utilities. In [this Forbes article](#), Global Workplace Analytics estimates that **companies can save well over \$11,000 annually per employee by adopting remote work practices**.

## Reduced Costs and Commute Times for Employees

Employees benefit from reduced commute times, leading to significant time savings and reduced stress. This often enhances both productivity as well as overall employee well-being and talent retention. In [this USA Today article](#), FlexJobs is quoted as saying that **remote workers spend about \$6,000 a year less than office-based workers**. According to the US Census, **average commute times in the U.S. are 26.7 minutes** (see [this Bankrate article for average commute times for your state](#)). That's wasted time that employees could put to better use elsewhere.

# Benefits of Remote Work *(continued)*

## Reduced Carbon Footprint

Remote work significantly lowers the carbon footprint by reducing the need for commuting and office energy consumption. This has substantial environmental benefits, as highlighted in [a study by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#), **up to 58% of work's carbon footprint can be reduced by switching from onsite to WFH** (work from home).

## Challenges of Remote Work

### Communications Barriers

Clear and effective communication is critical to any organization. Companies must implement both robust communication tools and communication practices to mitigate misunderstandings and maintain team cohesion.

### Maintaining Productivity

Keeping employees engaged and productive can be challenging without the physical oversight of an office environment. Managers need to establish clear goals, instrument the workforce to measure their time and progress against those goals, and provide the necessary resources for employees to succeed.

### Building and Sustaining Company Culture

Fostering a sense of belonging and team spirit is essential for maintaining a strong company culture. Remote work requires intentional efforts to build and sustain this culture through virtual interactions and activities. In a [2023 Hybrid Work Report published by HubSpot](#), **52% of respondents would prioritize great relationships with their colleagues over a 10% salary increase**, and **66% of respondents who report having a close friend at work say that this impacts their intent to stay**.

# Challenges of Remote Work *(continued)*

## Managing Performance

Monitoring and evaluating employee performance remotely can be difficult. In addition to low friction time- and work-tracking automation tools (which we at Journyx can help you with, by the way) implementing performance metrics and regular check-ins can help managers assess productivity and address any issues promptly.

## HR Management

Navigating multiple regulatory structures for labor rules, time off, payroll, and tax rules can be complex in a remote work setup. Companies need to stay informed about different regulations and ensure compliance across various jurisdictions.

## Strategies for Optimizing Productivity

### Implementing the Right Technology and Tools

Essential tools for remote work include collaboration software like Slack and Zoom, project management tools like Trello and Asana, and time tracking tools, like [Journyx](#). Case studies from [Slack](#) and [Zoom](#) highlight their effectiveness in supporting remote teams.

### Establishing Clear Communication Channels and Protocols

In [an article by Harvard Business Review](#), the authors provide insights and guidance on how to maintain clear communication channels and protocols to ensure team alignment and productivity.

# Strategies for Optimizing Productivity

(continued)

## Operating Using Outcome-Based Management

- **KPIs:** Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) help measure ongoing performance that contributes to organizational outcomes. Here are a few relevant resources for your use in determining the best KPIs for your organization:
  - [Remote work realignment case study](#)
  - KanbanZone's [Remote Work Metrics: Measuring Productivity and Talent Performance with OKR and KPI](#)
  - Remote Hire article: [Top 6 Effective KPIs for Measuring Remote Employee Performance](#)
- **OKRs:** Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) define clear, time-bound objectives and their success metrics. Slack's use of OKRs is an example of how this can be implemented effectively. For more information, visit [whatmatters.com](http://whatmatters.com), from the team that literally wrote the book on OKRs.

## Encouraging Flexible Work Schedules

A [study by Stanford University](#) demonstrates the effectiveness of flexible work schedules in improving employee productivity and satisfaction, showing a **22% increase in productivity for WFH workers.**

## Providing Training and Development Opportunities

Offering continuous training and development opportunities is crucial for remote employees. Examples from [Udemy](#) and [Continu](#) highlight successful remote training programs. Additional resources include [LinkedIn Learning](#), [AIHR](#), and [Remote.co's curated list](#) of some of the best online courses.

# Building and Maintaining a Strong Remote Culture

## Promoting Regular Virtual Social Interactions

Buffer's methods for maintaining connections in a remote environment include virtual coffee breaks and team-building activities. Further insights can be found on [Buffer's website](#) and [We Work Remotely's guide](#).

## Encouraging Work-Life Balance

Research highlights the benefits of work-life support for employee satisfaction and performance. Articles from [Harvard Business Review](#) and a [study published in Frontiers in Psychology](#) on work-life balance and job satisfaction in SME's (small-medium enterprises) provide valuable insights.

## Recognizing and Rewarding Remote Employees' Achievements

Recognition programs are often instrumental in maintaining remote employee motivation. Case studies from [RecognizeApp](#) and resources from [NectarHR](#) illustrate successful recognition programs.

## Fostering Inclusivity and Diversity

A study by [McKinsey](#), "[Diversity Matters Even More](#)", emphasizes the importance of fostering an inclusive and diverse remote work environment, showing that companies with **more diverse executive teams have a 39% greater likelihood of financially outperforming those with less diversity.**

# Building and Maintaining a Strong Remote Culture *(continued)*

## Maintaining Transparent and Open Communication

GitLab's transparency practices, as detailed in their [Remote Work Playbook](#), serve as an excellent example of how to maintain open communication in a remote setting.

## Remote Work as a Competitive Advantage

### Capital-efficient Workforce

Remote work allows companies to hire talent from anywhere, improving the talent pool and reducing labor expenses. Additionally, higher retention rates are achieved as employees prefer the flexibility of remote work.

### Operational Advantages of a Distributed Workforce

Remote work offers better connection to customers and markets in different geographies, resilience in case of outages or emergencies, and compliance coverage across multiple jurisdictions.

### Faster Adaptation to Market Changes

The ability to adapt quickly to market changes is a significant advantage of remote work. The [McKinsey study on adaptation during COVID-19](#) highlights this agility.

# Remote Work as a Competitive Advantage (continued)

## Agility in Scaling Operations

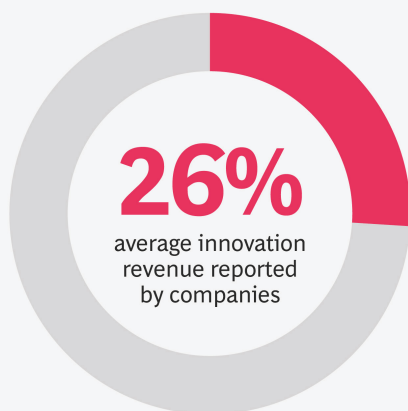
A flexible labor pool allows for faster and more efficient talent acquisition. Virtual teams can be formed, expanded, or restructured swiftly, free from the limitations of physical co-location. This flexibility also simplifies addressing other geographies, more rapidly accommodating language, time zone, and compliance requirements rapidly with local-relevant resourcing.

## Enhanced Innovation Through Diverse Perspectives

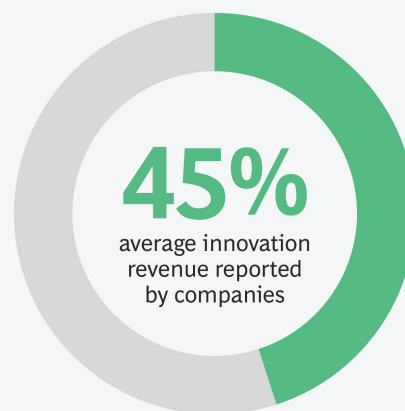
Multiple studies show a strong correlation between remote work diversity and innovation, leading to enhanced creativity and problem-solving capabilities. This [Neuroleadership Institute article](#) cites numerous studies explaining why diverse teams outperform homogeneous teams. In a [Boston Consulting Group study](#), **companies with above-average diversity scores almost doubled the average reported innovation revenue.**

**EXHIBIT 1 | Companies with More Diverse Leadership Teams Report Higher Innovation Revenue**

Companies with  
**below-average** diversity scores



Companies with  
**above-average** diversity scores



**Source:** BCG diversity and innovation survey, 2017 (n=1,681).

**Note:** Average diversity score calculated using the Blau index, a statistical means of combining individual indices into an overall aggregate index.

# Conclusion

The evolving landscape of remote work presents both opportunities and challenges for executives and upper management tasked with navigating its complexities. As the modern workplace continues its shift towards remote or hybrid models, it becomes imperative for organizations to strategically manage their workforce to optimize productivity and foster a strong organizational culture.

Through this article, we have outlined the benefits and challenges of remote work, providing evidence-based insights and best practices for effectively managing remote or hybrid teams. From increased flexibility and job satisfaction to access to a nonlocal talent pool, the advantages of remote work are evident. However, communication barriers, maintaining productivity, and building a robust company culture remain significant challenges that require deliberate strategies and investments.

To optimize productivity in remote settings, organizations must:

- prioritize the implementation of the right technology and tools,
- establish clear communication channels and protocols,
- operate using outcome-based management practices such as KPIs and OKRs,
- encourage flexible work schedules,
- provide training and development opportunities, and
- promote regular virtual social interactions

All of the above are essential for building and maintaining a strong remote culture.

Furthermore, remote work can serve as a competitive advantage, offering capital-efficient workforce solutions, operational advantages, faster adaptation to market changes, and greater agility in scaling operations. Embracing remote work not only enhances diversity and innovation but also positions organizations for long-term success in an ever-changing business landscape.

## Conclusion *(continued)*

In conclusion, the effective management of remote or hybrid workforces requires:

- a proactive approach,
- leveraging technology,
- fostering open communication, and
- prioritizing employee well-being and engagement.

By embracing remote work as a strategic imperative, organizations can unlock new opportunities for growth, innovation, and sustainable success in today's environment.

Contact [Journyx](#) today about how our [automatic time tracking](#) and [AI-powered time intelligence solutions](#) can help you optimize your organization's hybrid or remote workforce.

