

A complex, layered collage background. It features a man in a dark suit and striped shirt in the foreground, with a glowing lightbulb on his shoulder. Behind him, a woman in a blue shirt and pink tie looks forward. To the left, a woman is on a mobile phone. The background is filled with office desks, computer monitors, and abstract network diagrams. The overall color palette is dominated by oranges, greys, and blues.

THE FUTURE OF WORK

The Good, The Challenging, and The Unexplored

Table of Content

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Overview | 03 |
| | |
| The future of work is now | 04 |
| | |
| Embracing a people-centric culture- the need of the future | 05 |
| | |
| The future of the work has to be transparent | 06 |
| | |
| Reimagining technology for the workplace of the future | 07 |
| | |
| Making virtual teams work | 08 |
| | |
| Hybrid working model: the future has begun! | 09 |
| | |
| The perfect storm is here | 10 |
| | |
| The future of secure remote work | 11 |
| | |
| Seizing the new future of work with high productivity and accelerated speed | 12 |
| | |
| Beyond the Mirage - The Future that Works for All | 14 |
| | |
| What we have learned from the biggest remote working experiment | 16 |
| | |
| Final Thoughts | 17 |
| | |
| About Tavant | 18 |

THE FUTURE OF WORK THE GOOD, THE CHALLENGING, AND THE UNEXPLORED

American Science fiction writer William Gibson once quoted, “The future is already here. It’s just not evenly distributed.” The building blocks of the future prevail now, and they will extend to create the ‘normal’ of the future in the coming years. This certainly holds true in the way some businesses have swiftly embraced a new paradigm of work in response to the new normal.

The world of work is constantly changing. The increasing adoption of next-gen digital technologies such as AI, ML, and robotics seems to suggest that the role of humans will shrink drastically, wiping out millions of jobs. However, the actual picture is more nuanced. [This MIT paper](#) paints a more sanguine picture. Rather than fostering the desuetude of human labor, the paper predicts that AI will continue to drive massive innovation that will fuel many existing industries. It will potentially create many new sectors for growth, eventually leading to the creation of more jobs. The future will not be ‘man vs. machine,’ but ‘man enabled by the machine.’

As businesses look towards the future, remote work is gradually becoming part of the plan; however, some challenges come with remote work. According to a recent global [survey](#), 92% of workers revealed that they have experienced burnout from the stress linked to remote working.

Another [research](#) carried out during the pandemic indicated a stark rise in loneliness for people assigned to work-from-home environments. Besides the human toll, loneliness has led to higher rates of burnout, turnover, and disengagement.

What began as a short-term break from the office has transformed into an entire workforce transition.

What does the future have in store? Will we ever go back to what we considered normal a year and a half ago? It might never happen, as we have learned a whole new and enhanced way how many things can work seamlessly.

The Silver Lining of the Pandemic: A Better Work-Life Balance and a Flattening of Talent World

The pandemic threw lives completely out of gear, and every individual, organization, group was left figuring out how to address the unprecedented questions the situation posed. However, even the darkest of clouds bring along with them silver linings. For software companies, this lining translated to flexible working, higher productivity, better work-life balance, and access to remote global talent. For the employees, the opened-up opportunities hitherto unavailable. They could save hours in commute, work from the comforts of their home or any remote location (imagine working from any exotic location), less disturbance, higher productivity, flexible working hours and the ability to work for any global company without having to relocate.

The nature of work of the software industry always lent itself well to hybrid/ remote working, but unfounded concerns & a lack of trust always presented hurdles to this paradigm. The result was hours of commute, costly physical infrastructure, among others. The pandemic shook the foundations of all long-held (perhaps misplaced) beliefs. Working from office, 5 days a week and from 9 to 6, is **undeniably an antiquated relic from the past and will** soon become a chapter from history in the post-covid era. A complete takeover of remote-working culture is well on its way to forcing an end to the good old traditional 40-hour workweek.

A recent Gartner [survey](#) reveals the same story "Employees are 3 times more productive when provided flexibility over where, how, and when they work." Remote working fosters increased productivity, enhances flexibility,

better job satisfaction, eliminates the commuting time, and maybe reduces our carbon footprint, eventually helps the environment.

A global nonprofit organization, [Catalyst](#), found that women with child-care responsibilities are 32% less likely to quit their job if they have access to remote work. Remote working allows employees with young children and differently enabled employees to design their work environment to suit their needs and contribute productively. All this has resulted in eliminating geographical boundaries and other artificially defined constraints with respect to the talent pool and thus making it much wider & deeper, which companies can tap to their advantage.

As stated by 20th Century philosopher of technology Lewis Mumford, "True leisure is not freedom from work but freedom in work." People perform best when they have better control over their schedules. They are happier if they can manage their biorhythms, chores, home responsibilities, and hobbies. As we emerge from the pandemic, a hybrid form of working combining the best of office work (people working side by side) and remote working will be the norm. Companies who can make this seamless transition will emerge triumphant.

Witnessing the bigger picture and developing a new worldview is how one needs to consider what will happen.

Embracing a People-centric Culture- The Need of the Future



Organizations will embed culture into the DNA of the business, together with profitability and growth in the post-covid era.

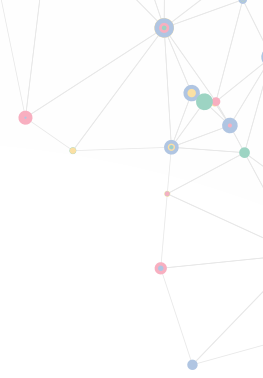
An organization's culture is often a defining characteristic, and successful organizations go to great lengths to highlight the importance of their culture, preserve, and spread it. Culture has many intangibles, and it cannot be superimposed on to any environment-establishing a culture in a 'Work From Office' situation cannot be adopted as is in a remote working situation. Understanding the core aspects of culture, adopting the essence but defining different mechanisms to make it successful in the new mode of working is critical, especially where it is a key differentiator.

An area that often breaks down in remote working is communication. The bigger challenge in the remote/ hybrid setup is the absence of verbal clues and face-to-face interactions. In the absence of these, it is important for the team leader or manager to communicate effectively - have the right tools, channels, and practices to ensure effective and respectful communication.

Interpersonal conflicts, misuse of power, behavioral issues, disrespectful interactions, etc., are possible in remote/ hybrid environments as in working from office scenarios. It is challenging to figure out the true impact of these; over time, it can fester and make working conditions unbearable resulting in dysfunctional teams.

To ensure the right culture is established, leaders must set the tone for everyone else to follow. They need to build mutual understanding and have to mend anything found to contravene the defined or agreed upon virtual/ hybrid working principles expeditiously to avoid resentment building up over time.

In conclusion, it is incumbent of good leaders to create an environment of trust, wellbeing, psychological safety, strong cultural values where every employee can work unhindered, raise their issues without concerns, make and admit mistakes without fear of retribution and contribute effectively. The future belongs to those who emphasize openness, connections, empathy, and compassion.



The Future of the Work has to be Transparent

The secret weapon for building the best culture is transparency. When information is lost or warped in a virtual game of Chinese whispers, it can breed an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust. Achieving a culture of honesty and openness should be every leader's top priority. Leaders need to be inclusive, build trust, transparency and ensure everyone is heard; do not brush aside concerns or constraints raised.

Communication, Collaboration, Connectivity, and Culture will Continually Drive the Future

Communication, collaboration, connectivity, and culture will remain the unsung heroes of the future of work. These 4Cs will create an effective digital workplace that provides people with a seamless experience across locations, devices, and situations.

The essential ingredients for a successful remote people-centric strategy are communication, collaboration, seamless connectivity, a culture of trust, and these don't just happen. They are the outcome of a well-implemented remote working strategy as well as strong leadership.

Organizations must communicate what is happening throughout the entire transition process, risk over-communicating rather than under-communicating.

Communicate not just with your teams but also with your customers. Have regular interactions, seek early feedback, especially on projects, incorporate and share status updates regularly. Be a true open kitchen – let the customers know exactly what is cooking, how it is being done, and the current state.



Reimagining Technology for the Workplace of the Future

As wise Jedi Master Yoda observed, "Difficult to see. Always in motion the future is". Nobody knows what the future brings, but we should constantly take proactive action to prevent future impediments.

Technology is not the panacea for every communication challenge, but it provides the right channel to communicate. Use collaboration tools to create a sense of community and team connect; identify and promote a common toolset to promote desired behavior.

Organizations must identify the right collaborative platform from the available options that align with the team/organization culture (including customer stakeholders sometimes) while giving importance to face-to-face interactions. Virtual teams must use the technology and tools to elevate human feel in interactions and emulate the effectiveness of in-person practices. It is advisable to move from on-prem to cloud-hosted platforms and environments; this subsequently increases the team's agility and resilience through shared and always available environments.

Recommendations



Making Virtual Teams Work



Organizations need to use transparency, inspection, and adaptation (the core tenets of the Agile method) to enhance the working practices continuously. Also, leaders must follow meritocracy and keep open communication lines with their teams. Customers are a key part of this extended team; leaders need to align their practices and output with purpose, mission, and values to help them achieve their goals.

The Workplace of the Future: Agile, Mobile, Flexible, and Hybrid

Jolted by COVID-19, the future of work mobility has arrived earlier than expected. We have proved that flexible work patterns can be successful, so creating permanent workspace mobility will be the next frontier. The constant focus will be on creating an intelligent, agile digital workspace. The shift to hybrid work will highlight the importance of a personalized workspace for the user and proactively provide the specific resources needed for the task.

Working in a hybrid/ remote mode and interacting with such a team is differs greatly from the usual way of working while everyone is in the office. It will inevitably require a change in the way we work, how we are monitored, the way work is assigned & tracked, and the way reviews are conducted.

Virtual teams, in most cases, will be working from home. Therefore, flexibility with their work hours is significant. It is good to allow a certain degree of flexibility in managing virtual teams; otherwise, things will become erratic and challenging.

Transition to remote/ hybrid working indicates a new process, guideline, tool, or bigger structural changes. To make these changes in a virtual setting, one needs clear intentions, documentation, and a deeper understanding of the human psyche and what works best in current circumstances. Fear, lack of clarity, doubts, lack of psychological safety can wreak havoc in a virtual setting. Further, if the larger industry supports virtual working, attrition is a clear and present danger in such cases.

All other support and benefits employees get from the organization include learning, team-building activities, team outings, appreciation days, awards, and recognition; updates should continue unhindered even in a hybrid/ virtual mode of working. These activities have a massive role in ensuring the employee morale remains high & positive. It is very easy to lose sight of these activities, given that we are not interacting with people in person.

Hybrid Working Model: The Future has Begun!

The hybrid working model has the power to reshape traditional perceptions of work and employees. Organizations now connect people and ideas with a fresh approach rather than the traditional 9-5 approach.

Hybrid working includes the following three scenarios:

01

Office-centric hybrid
(some people working
from office all days)

02

Remote-friendly hybrid
(some people working
remotely all days - local)

03

Fully flexible hybrid (some
people working a few days from
office and other days from
remote (local or otherwise))



The Perfect Storm is Here

Organizational leaders increasingly see the potential in this flexibility. It will provide a tremendous advantage to companies as, theoretically, the entire world is available for recruitment drives. This will enable businesses to take advantage of markets where talent competition is lower, define locations that companies would like to invest in, develop talent pools, hire in different locations, and truly adopt a 'Follow-the-Sun' service model.

From an employee perspective, it will allow them to work for the best companies in the world even if they are not present in these cities and towns. It will truly flatten the opportunity space, eliminate a significant barrier to employment, and enable the development of smaller towns and cities as satellite centers.

A hybrid working model will also reduce the load on a city's infrastructure and the extent of IT job-related migration. The environmental, social, and economic benefits of this cannot be overstated. The hybrid model will allow companies to tap into the global prospective employee pool and put together the best talent in a true distributed model.

The Future of Secure Remote Work

The world now sees that employees can stay connected and productive while working away from the office for prolonged periods. It is likely that many businesses will move toward a hybrid work environment that caters to both in-office and remote employees. This offers employers and employees greater choice and flexibility from business and human capital perspectives and brings more diversity into the workforce.

However, the abrupt shift to remote working has also created a series of cybersecurity challenges — keeping your business running in a very different environment or securing access at a greater scale than ever before.

In hybrid working, people work from multiple locations, use multiple devices, and send data over public internet connections to company infrastructure, thereby allowing miscreants to steal sensitive information. This eventually increases the vulnerability to cyberattacks.

Working remotely often requires additional tools (e.g., VPN, RDP clients), and these increase vulnerabilities to phishing or malware attacks. Often, people are less cognizant of these risks in home settings, and the devices are less likely to be patched with the latest security fixes.

Businesses need to create a safe, secure, and flexible hybrid work environment with high levels of protection.

Recommendations



Seizing the New Future of Work with High Productivity and Accelerated Speed

The challenge of gauging productivity

Tracking performance in a remote/ hybrid working environment is challenging due to the absence of being at one place of work and the ability to monitor the team's work & output visually. Remote/ hybrid working requires a lot of trust and faith in the team to meet the deliverables and the quality objectives.

Just because someone is connected to the office by a VPN doesn't mean they're working. And it also does not necessarily mean they're not.

Measuring a developer's productivity is complex and cannot be explained with simple metrics like lines of code or the time taken to complete a task. Developer productivity may include a lot of other activities/tasks in addition to writing a piece of code such as designing new features, design, or functional discussions, writing code, reviewing code, documentation, bug fixes, meeting with other team members or customers, testing and refactoring their code and many other such tasks.

One way to effectively measure productivity is to look at the final output of the overall effort, and in the case of developers, it would be the piece of software or application that they create. Another important aspect of measuring productivity is to look at overall team productivity. Project managers can closely monitor key metrics at a team level and then drill down to individual hotspots and other factors that may affect overall productivity.

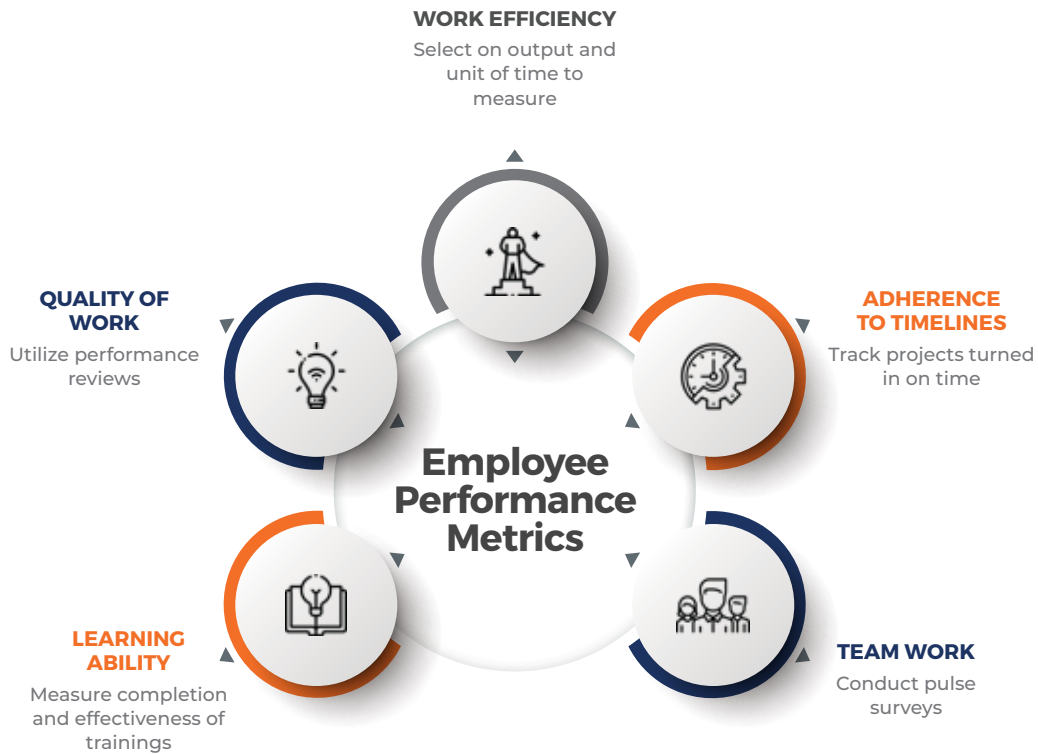
Understanding their specific output and how it stacks against the productivity of others in the team helps people aspire for higher levels and productivity & seek guidance to achieve the same.

Leaderboards highlighting top contributors in various areas have proved to be effective. It is important to create an environment of healthy competition and reward those who achieve top honors. This helps everyone become better and enhances individual and team productivity.

For intensive activities like coding, distractions and interruptions have a debilitating impact on productivity. Research shows that a programmer takes 15 to 20 mins (maybe 30 mins) to resume work after an interruption. To ensure high productivity, leaders need to monitor and address activities that cause these distractions and impede progress. Creating a conducive environment and providing the right set of tools motivate engineers to produce their best and maximum.

Recommendations

Tavant ensures to make remote work more productive and engaging for its employees while focusing on these productive metrics.



Tavant leverages online, seamless, integrated, and intuitive collaboration tools, particularly instant messaging such as Microsoft Teams over more traditional ones such as e-mail or team workspaces that enhance our employees' ability to work together.

Tavant strategically designs virtual team-building activities such as cultural evenings, Zumba, and Jam sessions to boost remote team's morale, encourage collaboration, and keep them social while social distancing. These online team activities also mitigate the engagement-draining challenges of our remote workforce.



Reflect, Recommit, Re-engage, Rethink, and Reboot!

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent; it is the one most adaptable to change," as Charles Darwin stated. The recent pandemic has revealed that humans are incredibly adaptable. The pace at which people have transformed their work and embraced new technologies has demonstrated that new future work is visibly achievable if executed with a clear purpose and leadership. Organizations will have to focus on five crucial actions: reflect, re-engage, recommit, rethink, and reboot.

Set higher goals and bars and help people become better and achieve higher productivity goals of output and quality. Be focused on customer success; hybrid/ virtual working creates concerns for them since they cannot interact with the team in person. Alleviate their concerns through regular transparent updates and metrics.

In conclusion, adapt to survive; the human race is enormously flexible but also risk-averse at the same time. Work out what holds you back and create the future of work that works for all.



The Road to the New Reality



The new normal will continue and speed up the move towards digital spaces in the future. The pandemic has also rekindled appreciation for the unique role that IT Delivery plays in enabling smooth, consistent, and productive operations.

For Tavant, the pandemic was a litmus test, and how we fared in this became an important benchmark. We adapted rapidly to continue to focus on the successful delivery of projects aligned to the roadmap and digital technology and ensured a clearly defined governance. We focused more & strengthened on our core values of customer focus, people centricity, communication, collaboration, and teamwork. The objective was to put a good process in place quickly and fine-tune rather than try to evolve the perfect process. The right intent is always the key.

A combination of a slew of measures that Tavant undertook early on enabled us to ensure our employees' safety with zero impact on client deliverables - no call hours/days, multiple ways of collaborating, informal coffee corner virtual chats, town halls, Friday fun, virtual seminars,

Appreciation days, daily pulse checks, transparency, trust, working comforts at home, war rooms for mock productivity drills, learning and upskilling and many such mechanisms ensured a low stress, high productivity, business continuity, and delighted customers.

What we have learned from the biggest remote working experiment

Insight gathered from a few of Tavant's associates on the key learnings from remote working:



Shipra Singh

Associate Project Director,
based in India.

"Working from home is like a swing: up and down. I ensure to focus on the positive side, but I am also not immune to the downsides. I really miss the person-to-person interaction I had beyond my teams, whether it's picking up on the best practices of the colleagues or having an impromptu brainstorming session over lunch. However, I keep working out ways by extending our virtual coffee conversations for more collaboration while working remotely."



Brad Sivert

Business Marketing Head
based in the US.

"I have adopted a balanced routine that matches in great lines. I have designated office space and time for work that suits me well. I ensure to get dressed every morning that helps me feel more productive and in work mode. I experienced a few funny remote working moments once when my daughter tried to seek my attention while in a meeting and brought a rice crispy treat to share with me. I feel that it's amazingly nice to discover this side of life as well. But at times, I miss my team, and I suggest we should get the entire team together in person once or twice a year to feel connected."



Rajesh Sampath

Senior Director,
Program Management
based in the US.

"I believe that we all must accept what is happening in the world and learn to adapt to it. During the first few days, it wasn't easy for me to adjust. Staying at home for most of the day felt unnatural, but I got used to it as days passed, and it's the new 'normal'. What I miss most about the office are my colleagues and an informal chit-chat that helps me build relationships much beyond work. I feel it was definitely more pleasing to be together in the office than to interact through various communication platforms."



Padmavathi V

Associate Director,
HR based in India.

"That remote working is going much smoother than I expected as I no longer have to consider the commute to the office and back home. But the major challenge I initially faced was organizing the space for having a proper home office setup, which I feel is crucial to stay healthy in the long run."

Final Thoughts

Tavant believes that there's no one-size-fits-all approach to how and where teams are their happiest and most productive when it comes to working. Some prefer to work from home, while others thrive off the day-to-day social interaction in an office. Teams need trust, familiarity, and strong relationships to do their best work. The most precious reward that we can give to our people is to create opportunities to bring teams together—and create space for that trust, familiarity, and relationship-building to happen.

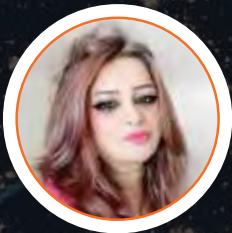
Many of the steps taken are novel, and tools are new as well. Both the process and the toolsets are evolving as we understand the world of remote working more. One common refrain from people is that they miss their colleagues, friends at work, and the bonhomie—this is a critical factor for success and innovation. Hybrid working aims to address this by providing the best of work together + flexibility at work. As we become more familiar with this new terrain, we will develop approaches to address the gaps and maximize the benefits.

About TAVANT

As a trusted digital partner for 20+ years, Tavant provides impactful results to its customers across a wide range of industries such as Fintech, Manufacturing, Agtech, Media & Entertainment, and Retail in North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. Tavant is one of the frontrunners of next-gen technologies implementation and thrives on applying its experience and knowledge to help organizations improve their customer experience. Our AI-powered, data-centric solutions enable businesses to improve operational efficiency, productivity, speed, and accuracy in the digital world.

To learn more, visit www.tavant.com reach out to us at hello@tavant.com.

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