
Hybrid Working and its Impact on the Future of Working

Expectations from Employers and Employees

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Workwize is a platform that helps companies in setting up remote workspaces by integrating logistics, service, advice, and financial handling into a single online application for your entire workforce.

Key Takeaways

We performed a survey to research the public opinion on hybrid working after the COVID-19 crisis, and whether the companies who want to implement it are prepared for it. This survey was performed between employers and employees of different ages between a broad range of industries.

Our three main findings are listed below:

Employers and employees indicate **they would like to work from home for at least two days a week**, which is **more than twice** as much as before the pandemic.

We found that **a great majority of people will take the possibility of hybrid working into account during a job application**. This indicates that this possibility will start playing **a key role in the future of working**.

Only **little more than 10% of all companies** already have a structural solution for facilitating home offices.

A broad range of different solutions to facilitating home offices exist, for example reaching out to traditional office furnishers, E-Commerce environments linking to different suppliers, and customized webshops from which office supplies can be bought. Also more recently tools have appeared which specialize in providing a long-term hybrid working solution, such as home office procurement platforms.

As pointed out by Forbes, the business world is going to experience a great shift in power between employers and employees, namely employees will have more employment options than ever [1]. Among others, this introduces the idea that a great war for talent is ahead.

The most talented employees are the ones with great enthusiasm and intrinsic motivation towards achieving a companies' goals.

Consequently, **these employees expect the company to better identify and understand the preferences of the employees** to ensure their needs can be provided to the best standard they can.

With the irrepressible spread of COVID-19, people across the globe were then forced to work from home in spring 2020. Zooming in on our home country the Netherlands, most of the people who used to work from home hardly, for one day per week, were eventually working from home up to 3 days a week on average [5].

Even though it is projected that people will return to their offices once the pandemic is controlled, many companies have indicated that hybrid working will

remain a a key focus point within their company.

Some are leading the stride, with **large tech of companies like Twitter and Facebook** allowing their employees **to be completely free in their choice of where to work from.**

This trend has already been developing for years before the pandemic, with the number of people working from home steadily increasing each year. In the Netherlands, this amount has increased to 5% of the working population in 5-year time [7][8].

This trend has been greatly accelerated by the recent pandemic. Many people now understand the advantages it provides them to work from home a few days a week. Companies have started looking for solutions to allow their employees to keep working hybrid, but it appears as if the majority has not found a structural solution yet [9].

Two surveys were conducted to examine the public opinion on working hybrid in the future, and to identify the relevant existing structural solutions accordingly.

A Somewhat Concerning scenario

During our preliminary research with over 100 HR professionals, we identified a problem with the current state of hybrid-working:

While **most people** want to keep working from home for **at least 2 days a week**, almost **90% of companies do not know how to provide their employees with the right equipment** to work well from home.

Having determined the need for hybrid-working in future, two different surveys were designed: one targeted the 'employers' and the other targeted 'employees'.

In total, about 600 responses were collected, of which 85% were from employees, and 15% from employers. These respondents were from a randomly sampled set of the higher educated working population in The Netherlands.

The survey respondents were,

- People of ages 1-80,
- Working at small firms (<50 employees), corporates (>5000 employees) and all sizes in between,

- Had associations to more than 30 different job sectors.

The intention of the research is to find the differences between the expectations of employer and employees. The surveys had a number of main questions which were the same for both, and also a few questions which were asked specifically to employers or employees only.

Questions asked to both:

- How many days a week would you like to work from home after the pandemic?
- How are home offices currently being facilitated at your company?

Questions asked only to employees:

- Do you take the possibility of working from home into account when applying for a job?
- Do you expect your home office to be facilitated by your employer?

Questions asked only to employers:

- Do you expect job applicants to take the possibility of working from home into account when applying for a job?
- Do you expect the funding of home offices to play a role during future job applications?

How many days a week would you like to work from home

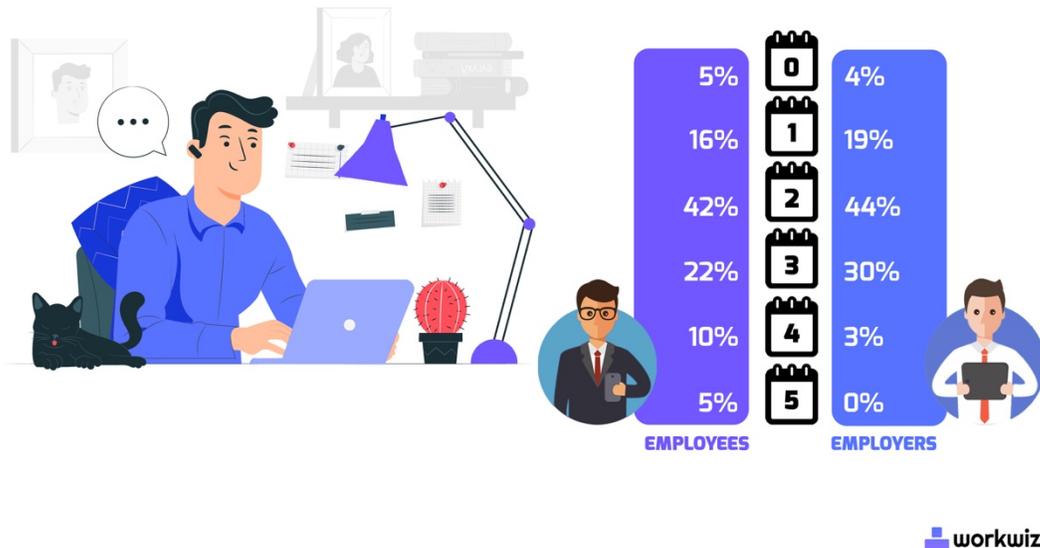


Figure 1: Working from home expectation from employees and employers

Firstly, the participants' preference for how many days a week they would like to work from work after the pandemic is covered. Secondly, an insight is given into the expectations of both employers and employees during a future job application. Lastly, the companies' facilitation of home offices at this moment is reviewed.

on average **at least 2 days a week**. For employees on the other hand the results indicate they would like to work home **on average at least 2.3 days a week**. It is interesting to see here how this statistic has moved considerably from its pre-pandemic number, namely from hardly 1 day to 2 or 2.3 days [5].

How many days would you like to work from home?

As shown in Figure 1, **more than 75%** of both employers and employees want to keep working from home **for at least 2 days a week**.

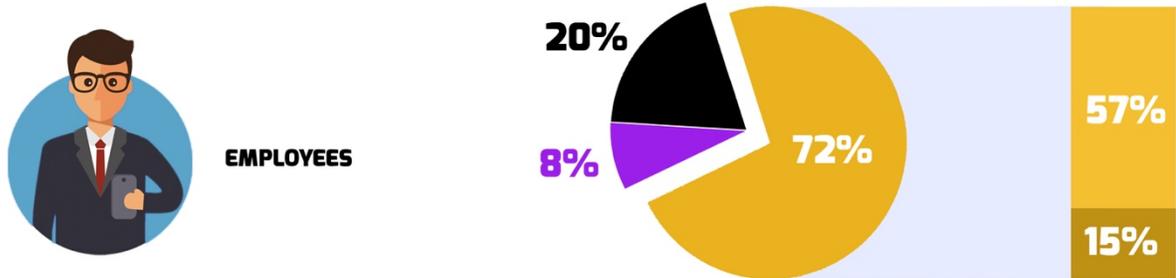
Specifically employers, it is shown that they would prefer to work from home for

What do people expect during a job application?

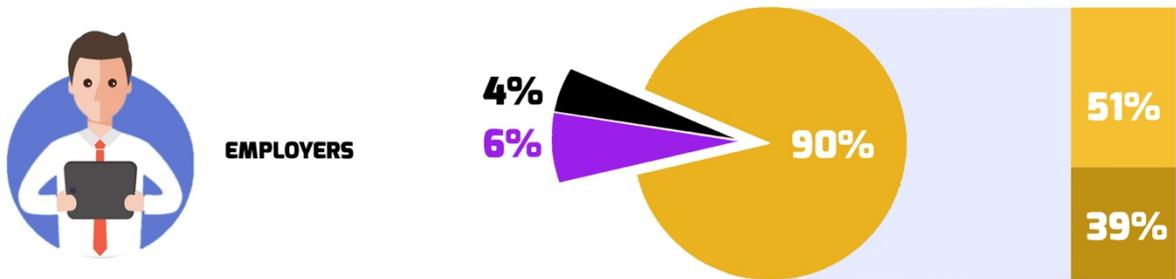
From this first statistic it has been established that in order to compete in the war for talent, companies should search for a structural solution to their companies' developing hybrid-working needs, as people expected some kind of

policy implemented for it. The results for the expectations for job applications from employees and employees is shown in Figure 2 below.

On the other hand, employees do not only prefer this freedom but also expect their companies to facilitate their home offices. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that offering this freedom will



When applying for a job, I take possibility & facilitation of working from home into account



During an application, I expect applicants to take possibility & funding of remote working into account

● Agree & Agree
 ● Agree & Disagree
 ● Disagree & Agree
 ● Disagree & disagree

Figure 2: Expectations from Employees and Employers during job applications

Figure 2 illustrates that both employers and employees expect that hybrid working is something they will consider during future job applications.

90% of all employers realize that applicants **care about their freedom of choosing where to work from.**

start playing a key role in the war for talent. 72% of employees seem to take it in consideration during application for a job. Together, this indicates that although employees are not all thinking about it yet, employers seems to very much realise it is an important aspect in acquiring talent during the job application procedure.

How are home offices currently facilitated at your workplace?

Although the vast majority of both employers and employees expect the possibility of hybrid working to play a crucial role in future job applications, it is interesting to see that structural solutions are absent at almost all companies.

Figure 3 shows that currently, **only very few** [11% and 17%] **companies indicated to have a long-term solution for hybrid working.**

Most of the companies where our employers and employees reside at currently only opted for temporary or no solutions yet [71% and 64%], like allowing their employees to take items from the office if they need anything, or providing a one-time budget to purchase some items that could help them with working from home.

Some companies [11% and 17%] have employed a structural solution, such as setting up a dedicated portal where employees can order products from. With these portals, companies are able to supply their employees with the

What does your company do to facilitate working from home?



Figure 3: What does your company do to facilitate working from home?

products they need, regardless of where in the world they live and work, but can also keep track of their employees' spending.

Unfortunately, there are twice as respondents indicated that the company they work at [18% and 19%] do not facilitate anything at all than the ones that have figured out a structural solution.

What needs to be done

A number of great solutions exist in order to facilitate home offices. Below we will discuss a few of them.

Traditional Office Furnishers

Traditional office furnishers have started to provide the option of building custom webshops for their clients so that their products can be ordered from here. Using these webshops, companies can order products in a personalized environment from the office furnishers' inventory. The catalogs often consist of basic office items such as desks and chairs from a few different suppliers.

Aside from these webshop solutions, traditional office furnishers sometimes also gather orders from employees in a company through programs such as Google Forms, which are then sent to the

office manager within a company after which he/she can confirm the requested items.

However, there still exist certain limitations with these two solutions.

For instance, there is a limited range of products, due to the solution often being provided by a single supplier. This often results in some office being provided well, like an office chair and desk, but some items lacking such as a height-adjustable monitor or a feetrest. Furthermore, this solution often can only provide a single catalog, and carries with it a lot of overhead work for the HR department in a company.

E-Commerce Webshops

In addition to the traditional office furnishers' solutions, there are also existing E-Commerce webshops which did have started to sell office supplies once demand increased during the pandemic. These webshops often have a broader range of products and are therefore better at fulfilling each employee's personal needs. Some of these portals even allow companies to give their employees a personal account and budget to spend on products from a catalog.

Certain limitations exist, though it is a great solution for many smaller companies. For instance, the products that these platforms offer are still limited by their suppliers. Additionally, they do not make any distinction between

employees, i.e., not all of them might need or are not eligible to buy the same products. This results in often budgets being misspent by employees.

Figure 4: Top reasons for employees and employers to consider working from home in their jobs

Top reason to work from home: Ranked on most common answers



Hybrid Office Procurement Platforms

New platforms that help cater to the individual needs of employees themselves have started to become more prevalent. These platforms can provide a wide range of products from different categories that suit a companies' developing needs best post-pandemic.

These hybrid office procurement platforms offer their own product catalog with the best available prices, but also offer the option for connecting suppliers the companies' have themselves. As a result, the company is assured that their employees can order anything they need to work well from home

Key benefits of these new procurement platforms:

- **Financial overview:** One invoice for all employee orders each month
- **Supplier independent:** Existing company suppliers can be onboarded
- **Traceability:** Employer can see who ordered which products to where, and can trace exactly where different office assets are located.
- **Onboarding new employees:** New employees can be easily on and off-boarded on the platform as your company changes in size.
- **Different catalogues and budgets for each employee:** Each group of employees can be offered a customized catalogue, with custom assigned budgets per group.

The screenshot displays the Workwize procurement platform interface. At the top, the 'workwize' logo is visible on the left, and the user's name 'Sebastiaan' is on the right. Below the logo, there is a user profile section for 'Sebastiaan' with a 'Shop' button and 'Orders' link. A 'HELP' dropdown menu is also present. The main content area is divided into a 'Filters' sidebar and a product grid. The 'Filters' sidebar includes sections for 'Product Type' (Buy, Rent), 'Price Range €' (From 0 to 100000), and 'Categories' (Accessoires, Air conditioner, Air quality check, Beverages, Cables). The product grid shows eight items, each with an image, a 'BUY' or 'RENT' label, a description, and an 'ADD TO CART' button. The items are: FRANKIE (€99), FELT (€82), Stool Upis1 Interstuhl (€96), Chair EVERY1s1 Interstuhl (€507), Chair Intrata + armrests Nowy Style (€21 / mo), Chair PUREis3 Interstuhl (€614), Chair PUREis3 Interstuhl (€614), and Chair SSI Proline P1 + armrests (€296).

Workwize's platform

Workwize supports companies in the facilitation of full-fledged home offices through its hybrid office procurement platform.

All the products ordered are aggregated into a single invoice conveniently, which minimizes the administrative burden for the finance and other back office departments related to facilitating home offices.

The platform also gives insights into who ordered what, which allows companies to buy back products when an employee leaves. Or automatically cancels the subscription on the products, so that Workwize can fully offboard your employee. These insights significantly reduce the administrative burden on the companies' HR department or other taskforce set up to organize hybrid-working for a company.

Another advantage for employers is that employees often do not spend their full budget all at once, but are careful with their budget spending, and instead spend it only on the products the employer wants to offer to them. This allows companies to save on costs of funding work from home while the employers can be sure that all their

employees' work from home needs are met.

Wrapping up

To conclude, it has become clear that people will continue working from home in the future. At least two days a week might become the new default, provided that companies prepare properly for it. Right now, a really small percentage of all companies already have a solution. This has to change to live up to the demands of future applicants. People will take the possibility of hybrid working into account during an application, so companies must adapt to win the war for talent. Fortunately, different solutions exist, that can fulfill each employee's personal needs. Visit www.goworkwize.com to find a structural hybrid working solution which fits your company.

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