

## Secure, fast access to IT services will enable trust in the future of dynamic working



A White Paper on possibilities for the new world of work  
and how to optimise for it by IDG on behalf of Okta

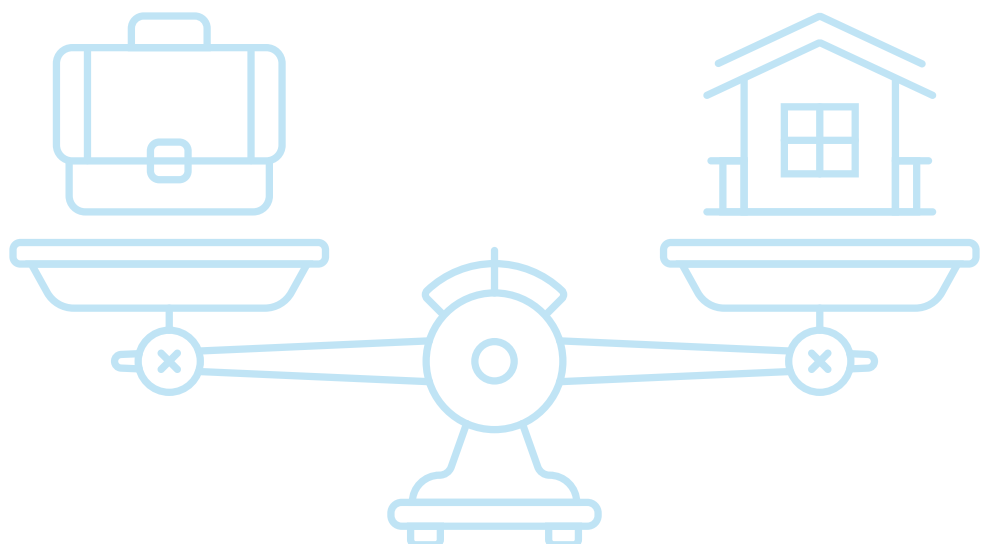
# Introduction



What does the future of work look like? Should we all be like Goldman Sachs and HP Morgan and mandate a return to order where we go back to the old world of work based on five days per week of nine-to-five commuting and fixed-desk offices? Or will it be the let-it-all-hang-out approach of many technology firms such as Twitter where staff can operate from pretty much wherever they want and work flexible hours?

Most likely, in the knowledge economy at least, there will be a hybrid model that [Accenture says](#) is the preference for 83 per cent of us. In this version of the future, we have more freedoms than before the pandemic but are required (for purposes of building team chemistry, spontaneous learning and collaboration), to attend offices for a part of the working week. Some are already speaking approvingly of a “2-2-1” model where two company-named days are in the office, two are optional and one is for working elsewhere. Or then there is the “3-2-2” concept offered by Harvard Business School’s Ashley Whillans: three days in the office, two not and two days of rest. Finally, there are the outliers: four-day working weeks or jobs that offer unlimited holidays. Whichever models prevail, one thing is clear: we are seeing the fulfilment of the modern wisdom that work is something that you do, not somewhere you go.

What we do know is that the new world will look significantly different, even if we are only currently sketching out our blueprints for what that world will be. Companies that impose a return to traditional working patterns are likely to be in a minority but it’s entirely possible that there may be a general return to “business as usual” in some segments. For the rest, this White Paper discusses ways to optimise for the new world.



# Dynamic working



We know that there are some clear advantages for companies opening up more to a dynamic working strategy. Companies that relax their traditional dependence on office life will benefit in several ways. Operating a reduced estate of properties will free up significant outgoings. They will also attract and retain staff who seek to balance office work with time out of the office that lets them spend more time, when they need it, with families and pursuing leisure activities. In large cities especially, there will be significant savings for people on travel, food and out-of-pocket expenses.

There is lots of data that backs up the notion that this appeals hugely, both in the near-term and longer-term. Sixty-four per cent of UK employees have said that they prefer to work at a distance until everyone is vaccinated, according to [CPD Online College](#). In the US, 39 per cent of employees would consider leaving their jobs if returning to the office was mandatory, [according to Morning Consult](#) for Bloomberg News. A [FlexJobs survey](#) suggested that just two per cent of international office employees want to work full-time in offices. However, there are differences across countries with the French most likely to prefer co-working spaces (26 per cent), [said Accenture](#).

Apart from appeasing staff, there are other positives too. They will make companies better prepared for possible future emergencies and they will foster a culture of employer/employee trust rather than punch-the-clock habits. It's likely that brand image will also be polished for those companies that take a progressive stance.



# Offices of the future



We should at this point also recognise that dynamic working needs to be about more than a binary option of traditional office versus working from a distance. Certain tasks are aligned with certain workloads. Offices are a good fit for important client meetings and team meetings where people may not know each other well. Homes could be a good fit for rote tasks, making lots of calls or hosting virtual meetings.

Also, offices are continuing to evolve. Rather than traditional fixed desks, cubicles and pods, we should certainly see more creative workspaces that support collaboration, co-creation, ideation, brainstorming and wellbeing. One possible vision of the future is

that offices become places to meet and entertain; they become fun and attractive venues for town-hall meetings, developing company culture and social activities as well as being an option for everyday tasks for people who prefer having business facilities such as breakout rooms, printers, scanners, stationery and copiers on tap.

But the pandemic has shown that we need to check for hidden biases and question false assumptions too. Millennials will not automatically love the idea of remote working because they will often house-share and lack the domestic infrastructure to cope. They may also appreciate the ability to learn by osmosis when working in close proximity with people: more Gen Z respondents (74 per cent) want a greater number of face-to-face interactions with colleagues than Gen Xers (66 per cent) or Baby Boomers (68 per cent). They will often be attracted to working in cities and appreciate the bonuses of office life such as free or discounted drinks and meals. Veteran workers on the other hand may appreciate the freedom of remote working to spend more time with loved ones and enjoy the flexibility that they probably haven't enjoyed over long careers where presenteeism was rife.

But remote working also raises significant concerns relating to wellbeing, burnout, alienation and disenfranchisement. Any company pursuing a strategy needs to consider that information workers will want to work from anywhere and not just their homes where space restrictions, ambient conditions and competition for broadband may make it tough to be focused, productive and in a positive mental state.

It's notable that a Harvard Business Review report (1) published in March 2020 found that 80 per cent of staff felt that more team communication would fuel better team relationships and 43 per cent said "more face time" would achieve the same goal. There are other, perhaps quirkier points too: remote workers were more likely to worry that they were being talked about behind their backs.

## Offices of the future *(continued)*

As [McKinsey](#) has noted:

“The abrupt shift to remote working in response to the coronavirus has challenged the typical approach to managing agile teams. Traditionally, such teams thrive when team members are co-located, with close-knit groups all working in the same place. Co-location allows frequent in-person contact, quickly builds trust, simplifies problem solving, encourages instant communication, and enables fast-paced decision making. And while we know from experience that agile teams that have worked remotely from the start can be as effective, the sudden transition of co-located teams to a fully remote approach can reduce cohesion and increase inefficiency.”

We just don't know what will happen and we can expect a certain amount of experimentation and trial and error to come into play. Some certainties are available for most of us information workers, however. We will have the chance to work remotely more often than before the pandemic. We will work flexibly, not necessarily being tied to a 9-to-5 treadmill. We will consider mental wellbeing as an essential component of health and an important responsibility for leaders.

But preparing for a future where remote working is common will require significant retooling and investment too. Companies will have to identify new IT vendors that match their visions and introduce new products with cloud services having obvious attractions. And for CEOs and other executives currently pursuing new best practices, one aspect is clear: don't ignore the big impacts the new face of work will place on security, usability and data governance. That means examining the related realms of remote working tools, access management and identity management.



# Tooling up for the new world

We need to foster a world where our people can work from wherever works for them and a ‘Martini’ approach of any device, any technology, anywhere: from the duvet to the shed office to the local café or gym. But that must include ensuring that staff have all the facilities they need and it also means protecting people from potentially harmful actions. Granting the ability to work from other locations than the office should not be viewed as a perk but as a business change process that requires due care and attention.

Security has long been a paramount concern for organisations. Change always impacts the security posture and the pandemic delivered one of the biggest shocks to business operations in modern peacetime history. Covid left users working remotely without the usual defences afforded by perimeter security and the support of on-site staff. Most users relied on consumer-grade infrastructure such as WiFi routers left unpatched for months or even years. Networks and devices were vulnerable to hacks, viruses and malware while users were exposed to a rise in phishing attempts.

Secure logins provide a means for users to authenticate themselves and prove their identity in a convenient manner. Rather than dealing with the challenges of multiple password management, having a means to access services via one simple process will enable users to be productive without incurring risks.

But it’s not just about productivity and security. A single sign-on process also supports onboarding and the whole join/move/leave lifecycle from being recruited and starting work through role changes and, ultimately, moving on.

Implementing new security processes is non-negotiable. Having more employees work from remote locations will ask new questions of our ability to protect data, fend off attackers and abide by governance rules. GDPR has highlighted the importance of our being stewards of data protection and privacy. Any failure to secure the login process can result in data leakage or theft that will potentially lead to severe financial penalties and reputational harm.



# Conclusion

Securing the remote login process will be critical here and ease of use in accessing multiple services will be critical to productivity and in avoiding a meltdown in helpdesks across the country. Remote workers need the same level of IT support as office workers. If we tell staff that they can work remotely, then we need to give them the tools to do the job. We have learned that sub-standard broadband, security tools, output and AV setups can lead to suboptimal employee experiences, so we need creative ways to solve these issues that require investment, support and empathy.

We must recognise that many people are still dealing with the shock of the new. Before the pandemic, according to a YouGov survey commissioned by Okta, more than half of British, French and German respondents surveyed had never worked from home and only a little over half of them felt equipped with the necessary hardware and software.

Despite this, there are many positive signs. During the pandemic, video calls became the essential lifeblood of human communications and now we are nearly all comfortable with making them. But while many of us are enjoying our new freedoms, for others the changes can be jarring and negative. We are amidst one of the most profound changes in our working lives. We need to build trust between us and our people but also trust in our systems... and that begins with security.

*(1) Co-workers working from home and individual and team performance, Harvard Business review, March 2020*

**80 per cent of Okta employees want more work from home options than pre-pandemic.**

**81 per cent of Okta employees feel as productive or more productive when working remotely**

**30 per cent of desks at Okta are in use at any given time**

## Cloud to the rescue

Use of cloud applications and services was already rising before the pandemic but has accelerated during this time. That's because cloud with its universal accessibility, ease of access, inherent collaborative support, shared spaces and utility-based pricing is an excellent match for working remotely.

## About IDG Communications, Inc.



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## About Okta



Okta is the leading independent provider of identity for the enterprise. The Okta Identity Cloud enables organizations to securely connect the right people to the right technologies at the right time. With over 7,000 pre-built integrations to applications and infrastructure providers, Okta customers can easily and securely use the best technologies for their business. More than 10,000 organizations, including JetBlue, Nordstrom, Slack, T-Mobile, Takeda, Teach for America and Twilio, trust Okta to help protect the identities of their workforces and customers.

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