

# 7 Myths

## About the Post-Pandemic Workplace

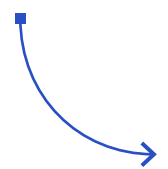
→ **Distributed working isn't new**, but it's been accelerated by the pandemic and organisations across the world are reconsidering how their workplace strategies can best support new ways of working. But as we look toward the future, it's important for us to ditch our assumptions and make smart, data-informed decisions. Only then can we ensure that we keep our workforce healthy, happy, and connected. Here we shed some light on some common myths that may be holding back your workplace strategy.



### 01

#### The office is dead

Removing staff access to offices can greatly damage organisations as people expect their workplaces to foster culture and community. Gallup states that close work friendships boost employee satisfaction by 50% and people with a best friend at work are seven times more likely to engage fully in their work<sup>1</sup>. GWA's Global Work from Home Experience Survey<sup>2</sup> showed employees preferred to work from home 2-2.5 days a week.



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## 02

### Offices will now be designed for collaboration only

We know from Leesman's 800,000+ global respondents<sup>3</sup> that offices designed for collaboration only, greatly underperform in allowing people to do productive work. A day in the office to work with others will most likely also consist of time for you to do head-down focused work. Just as online collaboration moved into our allocated working from home days, so too should we cater for uninterrupted focused work when we are in the office.

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## 03

### Everyone can/wants to work from home permanently

We can't assume that everyone has the same home working experience. There is a mammoth 12-point difference in the Leesman Home Working<sup>4</sup> experience between having a dedicated work room/office and a non-specific home working location (like a sofa.) Not to mention the family members, multiple housemates or other distractions you might have to deal with. Going into an office gives us that social connection that reconnects us to our organisations and our sense of purpose, even if it's just 1-3 days a week.

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## 04

### An average office is good enough

The majority of employees who worked in high performing office buildings pre-pandemic prefer to go back to the office. Whereas the majority of employees from low performing office buildings prefer to work from home permanently<sup>5</sup>. This is clearly an indicator to show that the office experience is not equal and that those who invest in their workspace clearly reap the benefit.

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## 05

### It is sustainable not going to the office

Electricity and heat production are responsible for 25% of the global greenhouse gas emissions<sup>6</sup>. When staff decide not to go into the office, all the output for the office and public transport stays the same, but greenhouse gases increase due to the additional production of gas and electricity to heat homes or boil your kettles.

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## 06

### Technology is the silver bullet for collaboration

In the first lock down, we scurried to fill our calendars with never ending video calls. Suddenly we were reliant on shiny, new technologies to keep us connected and collaborating. Without the proper training, however, the technology designed to help has become a hindrance – Zoom fatigue is through the roof and multiple platforms all tracking your activity have created a new type of digital presenteeism. Technologies should allow employees to work asynchronously – working at a time that suits them, with performance measures based on output (rather than how many video calls they've attended).

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## 07

### My physical health is looked after when working remotely

The Institute of Employment Studies homeworking wellbeing survey<sup>7</sup> reported that in the first lockdown in the UK 58% of people complained of new neck pain. We moved into home working with many still hunched over laptops. How you sit today will affect your body forever. You simply can't be working from your bed or sofa for a whole day. When working remotely we need to ensure that the monitor or laptop is at the correct height (eyebrow level) and that we are policing our postures to ensure we never slouch keeping our heads directly over our spines.

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**➔ People can be productive working elsewhere, but offices still provide value as on-demand resources for individuals and teams. To remain relevant, offices of the future will need to build a culture and community, support individual focus, and facilitate intensive teamwork.**

The work from home experience is different for everyone and finding the right hybrid strategy for you is paramount. Companies should strive to help people stay healthy and productive, no matter where they are working.

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#### References

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