The impact of a global pandemic on the future of remote work

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – We have most recently witnessed drastic overnight changes globally, brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. This unprecedented world level event has shown that the whole earth can shut down in an instant, with major reconstructions rapidly applied when the stakes are so high. Remote work provides an alternative method of working for organizations with benefits and challenges for both employer and employee. The rise and transition to remote work seems to be at its peak as more people work from home or look to secure an avenue to work from home for the future. The focus of this paper is to assess the likely impact of covid-19 pandemic on remote working attitudes and the feasibility of home working on a mass scale.

Design – Based predominantly on a literature review alongside primary data source of interviews. Using a qualitative approach to elaborate on and explain qualitative theories, data and findings. This will be accomplished drawing upon data and literature relating to jobs, resources, management and dynamic capability theories. An interview sample of 10 respondents provide the data set complimenting the literature review.

Findings – The findings indicate the feasibility and challenges of long-term remote working on a mass scale for greater society. The significant drivers of remote work are; autonomy, digitalisation, automation, work life balance. Whilst significant barriers are; lack of trust, training and adaptation, lack of tools, costs and reclusion.

Practical implications – The proposed thesis ultimately helps to understand remote work and transitions, either currently taking place or that will eventually take place. Recommendations for future research will also be delivered.

Value – This thesis provides real time testimony to a very pressing current and global predicament, whilst contributing to an understanding of factors leading to the success or failure of Remote work.

Keywords; Adaptation, Agile work, COVID-19, Digitalisation, Dynamic Capabilities, Home Working, Knowledge work, Remote Work, Self-Management, Strategy, Transformation, Virtual teams.

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1: INTRODUCTION

Remote work is a fascinating enough topic to cover outside of this context, but current global events and trends give credence for research, now more so than ever. The world stage has currently been set up as the blank canvas for an experiment on remote working capabilities. We must then wonder if we are witnessing a working revolution or just experiencing a fleeting moment? Accordingly, we must round up and examine the data, in real time; in order to access the current situation, its scale and its impacts.

Many places of work have had to adapt by having their employees work remotely from home, wherever possible. There have even been some instances of companies waiving their own policies and rules to accommodate this challenge. Companies unable to do this, have either had to make significant cutbacks or are at increased risk of doing so, during this time. We have seen lockdowns affect individuals in different capacities, notably: financially, and socially (Pan, Cui, & Qian, 2020) as well as mentally, physically and emotionally.

This project was initially conceptualized as an exploration into the broad field of "future of work" leading to more specific insights on the changing management styles and approaches to work. There were considerations given to study co-working spaces or digital nomads. However, due to difficulties arising from the resulting COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, some adjustments understandably had to be made. The mentioning of the COVID-19 pandemic is necessary here as it relates directly to the core of this study. This turn of events has come as a blessing in disguise for this topic, as the pandemic has given cause for a real time, worldwide experiment in the application and effectiveness of remote work and virtual management. During this time, we've experienced a pivotal shift in global working structures, as we continually experience national lockdowns and border closures (UNWTO, 2020) taking place. In fact, 96% of all global destinations imposed some degree of travel restrictions as of April 2020 (UNWTO, 2020). Where once remote working was unheralded, being neither possible nor practical; now it has become a necessity. Organizations which are not digitalized yet, have really struggled to adapt to these dire circumstances.

Through the conceiving of this very thesis, it became apparent that recent happenings may be setting the precedent for the next decade of working lives; as transitions begin to take place. So, delivering a report on this topic is not only most relevant but also a timely service. As mere mortals, we all have expiration dates, as a result, we fear becoming obsolete; just as we fear death. This is understandable because it's only natural as we fear a world in which we don't understand or belong to (Salehi, 2016). Yet we tend to forget that time, is in fact infinite, it's just that we are not. This fear of a future where we will no longer be needed (Salehi, 2016)

causes anxiety in our societies, as we generally feel at our most fulfilled when we can add value, not only to enrich our own lives, but to those around us in our respective communities as well. The media preys on people's fears (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2020), playing up to paranoias, but the reality remains that the future, will likely be much more in the grey than it is being made out to be. This means that it won't necessarily be as devastating as some make out, but equally won't be as utopic as some futurists may claim. It will most likely be in between the two extremes, as has historically been the case. So much remains unknown to us, that it is incredibly difficult to predict the future. Some will benefit greatly whilst others will not, depending on the; where, when, time and place of it all. However, we can be sure to expect that there will be greater freedom and flexibility for the where and when of work, if not the type of work. The where and when will be much more open and optional than ever before, with the birth of the digital nomad's proof of this.

The following research question was devised for this most intriguing of circumstances; How are knowledge workers perceiving remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic? And how do organizations develop their dynamic capabilities through remote work?

This main question will be further broken down by **Three** complimentary sub-questions:

1. What are the main drivers & barriers to remote work?

2. How best should remote workers manage motivation & limit distractions?

3. Do the quantifiable sustainable benefits to remote work provide organizations with enough incentive to practise it more often?

These Three sub-questions will be addressed in the discussion segment.

The Merriam-Webster definition of Work is any "activity involving mental or physical effort done in order to achieve a purpose or result regularly for wages or salary". We as humans work and need to work for a multitude of reasons: to provide for ourselves and families, to have something to do with our time and to feel fulfilled. But not all these elements go hand in hand. Often, one of these factors is much more dominant than the rest, especially when considering the type of work being undertaken. Work engagement is characterized by a high level of energy and strong identification with one's work and it has been linked to important outcomes such as; improved productivity, better performance and overall organizational success (Panteli et al., 2019).

A myriad remains unknown regarding the future, so whilst many predictions can be made, much remains a mystery and difficult to predict. We must test the true cost of technological innovation (e.g. artificial intelligence) on the changing nature of work in the digital age. Remote work then is defined as an employee working mainly from home and communicating with the

company primarily via email or telephone (Parris, 2020) although to be considered a remote worker doesn't always have to be at home. Generally, any location which you set as a designated work spot, not the employer base, can be considered a remote workplace (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017).

Through research, insights into the clashing perspectives and potential scenarios of the coming decade and their plausibility will be considered and tested. We will be focusing on results of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, scrutinizing the available date in order to get to a focused and rationale conclusion on the implications set for the coming years. Published data, insights, theories and hypothesises, will be amongst key sources identified and examined, along with a set of interviews conducted to bring first-hand testimony straight from the source; remote workers dealing with transition.

The most difficult human abilities to augment are those which are abstract and complex (Salehi, 2016). In Societies there is an exchange of goods or services for money, this has historically been the case. Some currently call for a more primal societal reform of basic universal income and reconstruction of the workweek (Bregman, 2017) or have a vision whereby everyone contributes to the community with either a good or service in return for other goods and services hence becoming very self-sustaining but community abound. Technology is taking over many menial jobs (Dølvik and Røed Steen, 2018) but this could in turn promote for more scientists coming through with more advancements and breakthroughs being made in fields of medicine and technology. perhaps this could also pave the way for humans to solve other critical issues such as; climate change, space exploration or other unknown aspects of life. Whilst life has become easier physically, it has arguably become more difficult mentally, emotionally and spiritually; with many people feeling unfulfilled or disenfranchised in the digital age. This is partly borne from high expectations and comparisons with false ideals (Parveen, 2018). Increasing numbers of the younger demographic are comparing their lives and relationships with others, particularly celebrities on social media platforms; causing dissatisfaction and depression (Parveen, 2018). It has been proven that if workers had more time to enjoy with their families and to work on creative or recreational projects, they would be much happier and content (Cebr, 2019).

New technologies are disrupting markets (Forbes, 2020), such technologies include machine learning and augmented reality. Digitalization has given birth to remote work, digital nomads and the whole gig economy (Healy, Nicholson and Pekarek, 2017) of electronic platforms and outlets. Knowledge workers must learn to first recognise, then maximise these opportunities new technologies bring (Forbes, 2020). Robotics are not eliminating jobs in such a way as to force many into early retirement (Bathgate, 2020) yet. This capability is making work more

exciting and interesting for humans while creating new opportunities for individual and organization-wide advancement (Bathgate, 2020). If employees have more time to think critically and creatively, and enjoy doing so, they can bring truly innovative ideas to the forefront (Bathgate, 2020).

 Everett Rogers (1995) posits that we are social creatures and we learn through example by watching others. He classifies five groups of people in his diffusion of innovation theory. These groups are: 1) innovators, 2) early adopters, 3) early majority, 4) late majority, and 5) laggards (Rogers, 1995). Whilst being an early adopter of innovation tends to come with more risk, it is generally considered strategically wiser, especially in business to be ahead rather than lagging. We have historically seen early adopters flourish during times of radical change whereas laggards have really struggled (Rogers, 1995). But in a rapidly changing world, it can be difficult for companies to meet the expectations of their customers, develop a strong brand identity, being able to adapt quickly enough to radical shifts within their respective industries or addressing new demands that are hard to anticipate the need for. It has thus become increasingly difficult for companies to meet all these goals simultaneously leading them to appreciate and develop the dynamic capabilities first proposed by Teece and Pisano (1994).

 Some countries have had the foresight for this coming transition as in 2009, more than 20% of German firms offered their employees the possibility to work at least a few days per month from home (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017). Remote work could be a proactive solution to many of the problems we face today. The idea is that generally, employees work outside of a typical workplace, more often the home (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017). This means that there must be a solid connection between the employee working from the home office and the company site for best practice so there can be a consistent flow of information (Dretske, 2003) between the two locations and parties.

 During the course of the pandemic, remote work has been thrust into the spotlight and the mainstream, with many wondering if it would be effective on a mass scale and long term, we have seen many early adopters reap the benefits during this time whilst others try to scramble and adapt, as best they can last minute. Since remote working is accompanied by greater employee autonomy and lower organizational behavioural power, managers' willingness to reward workers based on their performance, as opposed to their physical presence; can be a critical factor in the adoption of such policies (Miele and Tirabeni, 2020). This element remains to be examined and confirmed on a much larger scale than previously assumed.

1.1: Topic Delimitation

In order to fulfil the required delivery guidelines of a master thesis, the study was narrowed down to focus on the COVID-19 pandemics effects on attitudes towards remote work and distance working. Therefore, this thesis explores the causal link between the COVID-19 pandemic and changing attitudes towards remote work. The focus here is on capabilities of adjusting to remote work in a time of heightened stress without the necessary implementation phase for either employer or employee; and the impact of this for the future. The main research is focused around dynamic capabilities and the uncertain future of traditional job roles including; how best to adapt to remote work and the necessary tools required on top of the effectiveness, strengths and limitations of remote working. The primary data consists of Interviews with several individuals undergoing the transition to remote work during the crisis, adds unique perspective and insight into the problem question of this thesis by those facing such problems in real time. Other data sources include; books & journals, online resources (videos, interviews, websites) & news articles.

1.2: Structural Integrity

Six chapters follow this here introductory chapter to round off seven complete chapters. For the purpose of accompanying the reader, a short structural overview is delivered below: Chapter two introduces the methodology and approach to data collection and analysis. Strengths and limitations of the methodology will be touched upon here. The third chapter Provides the background into the topic and the circumstances attached to it in order to provide some key relevant information to bring the reader up to speed before delivering the literature review in the fourth chapter. The fourth chapter will be the largest of the thesis as this is a predominantly literature-based thesis. Information relating to remote working and the adaptation and suitability for the masses and mainstream will be explored. Previous research will be examined and quoted in order to best define key concepts. Chapter five concerns data analysis, bringing the data together to analyse empirical findings and cross reference against the literature. Whilst the Sixth chapter offers a discussion based on the findings from both the literature and the data whilst referring to the research question. Chapter 6 will also include a fair assessment on the limitations of this paper. Finally, chapter seven presents a conclusion of the results and implications of the study for business practices, as well as future recommendations for research. The reference list will include all the sources used to support the research, for ease of referral they are included in text. An appendix will also be included.

2: METHODOLOGY

To answer the given research question in the allocated timeframe, qualitative means would be best suitable. This is what the literature on related topics suggest (Malhotra and Birks, 2006; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). The initial intended methodology, for the hypothesis, included more elements of field work. It was originally planned, to spend some days and weeks assessing firms and co-working spaces, as well as conducting a batch of interviews as part of the field work. However, due to circumstantial changes, through the events which transcribed over the course of early 2020 and the ensuing lockdowns, this was no longer viable. As a result, adjustments had to be made. The thesis has now been modified into a more prominent literature-based thesis. This will be in the form of a critical literature study completed through a comprehensive literature review. Literature-based research can be as, if not even more so; relevant for practice as empirically based research can (Malhotra and Birks, 2006). A proper critical literature study paints a picture of tendencies in the research field during a certain period. The chosen period here ranges from the COVID-19 pandemic to the ramifications for the coming years.

The changing nature of work and various management styles will be investigated against the backdrop of the pandemic. This will be done through theoretical analysis on top of a data set made up of telephone interviews. The critical literature study will be structured in the following way; identifying and dissecting of recurring key theoretical concepts within research in the specific field; Insights from interviews then add weight to the theories; and finally identifying of current trends. Much of the published books and papers in this research domain, solely contain a critical literature review perspective, so have been a source of inspiration; on how ideas can be restructured.

The primary source of data comes in the form of interviews. Interviews are a great practise of seeking information and expanded perspectives (Opdenakker, 2006). The results from the interviews provide complimentary empirical support for the research and will be examined more in-depth in the data analysis portion of this thesis, in chapter 5. In order to avoid a dogmatic view, a wide variety of theoretical sources have been relied upon, which will provide for a well-reasoned, rounded and varied view of remote working and self-management principles and dynamic capabilities. Further research was conducted to expand upon interview findings in order to try find any discernible patterns.

A diverse and varied number of secondary sources of data will then offer the insights, trends, statistics and figures to expand on the primary interview findings. Such secondary sources include; books, journal articles, news articles & press releases, published surveys & reports,

online sources, Podcasts & Video entries. The secondary sources are meant to not only offer the theoretical data and background but to also provide up to date data; as they transcribe. An integral part of this thesis relates to recent events. All secondary sources cited are available in the references.

The type of methodology chosen here is mainly utilized best by examining first, then critically analysing from the existing literature pool, from all ends of the spectrum; on the given subject matter. Not only to make sense of the research, but to also put forward as objective as possible thesis. Seeing as though we are all susceptible to bias, we can often seek out confirmation bias (Nickerson, 1998). So, it is critical to gain insights from opposing arguments and treat them with the same respect and academic integrity as others, regardless of personal beliefs or biases.

So as established, literature-based research methodology will be undertaken with the additional batch of interviews, to find correlations and test validities. This process requires more engagement through research as opposed to direct contact. Some key factors to consider here are; philosophical biases, theoretical approaches, the different data set loads being accessed and using of literature as textual data (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Theories rests on several assumptions, so these assumptions need to be challenged and put to the test in order to prove their stability. The outcome is a biproduct of analytical and critical observations and skills, applied to other problems.

There can be a blurred understanding between the concepts of a literature review as a methodology and its utilization, in processes of empirical research. So, it is important to differentiate the two here. Literature based methodology is the designing of a research project, where existing literature is the primary source where a researcher needs to examine (Malhotra and Birks, 2006). This examination is done through data collection and data analysis. Utilization comes from not only the ability to address the research question, but to also present a strong case. If new insights and interpretations can be made from the existing literature on a subject, then this is a positive outcome (Malhotra and Birks, 2006). This can be considered collaging, meaning that instead of merely regurgitating the same sentiments, something entirely new and purposeful is created using the same resources at a disposal. The aim here is to also offer up some uniqueness. The thinking behind this process is, if data can be gathered and analysed yet bring some unique but relevant insight to a table which is already considered as being full, then the objective has been achieved.

This style of research does have its flaws, as they all do. Firstly, interviews can be difficult to organize. You must justify the need for interviews and have valid, relevant questions drawn up. Considerations must also be given to the fact that interviews may just be used as a

convenient means of gathering a sample, or to provide confirmation bias (Nickerson, 1998). This is a process which should not be rushed, so even in dealing with time constraints; emphasis was put on a small but diverse pool, whereby everyone offered different perspectives into the changing landscape of work. All candidates where experiencing the same thing first-hand but also comparatively differently, in having to transition in their jobs in most cases. The interviews were conducted with integrity and indeed proved to be valid. Diversity is also beneficial in order to give a wide scope, especially in a topic such as remote working as preferences can differ greatly on this matter. The interviews being conducted at distance seems fitting as it is testament to the research being conducted, in relation to the remoteness element of this paper.

I searched for articles published in academic journals, focally over the past 30 years. I utilized Google Scholar, CBS libsearch, JSTOR and DJOI as the primary search engines. Each search combined keywords in search of the defined domain (remote working, telecommuting, teleworking, virtual work, dynamic capabilities, agile work) and other words related to crowd work and coworking.

A criticism for this approach is that it is too methodological; not based on an explicit specified method or scientific process with no clear steps in design. The key issue here is to ensure that the quality and rigor of the research conducted is demonstrated and the link is made apparent from beginning to end on the pedagogical issues (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015).

Part of the overall aim is to deliver a timely report dealing with a very current and topical issue. Therefore, data will be constantly scoured, right up until date of publication. This is in order to keep a good flow of information (Dretske, 2003) along with providing reliability and accuracy. Offering a timely examination on the global situation at large as it stands for us to divulge any discernible pattern as to figure out the most likely outcomes that will result from this impromptu global experiment, if it is to be considered in such a light.

2.1: Data Collection

The primary data for this thesis is the small sample of detailed interviews of knowledge workers. Regarding the interviews a structured approach was undertaken with the purpose of obtaining in depth quality information. The sample size consists of 10 interviews with the method of sampling being purposive. The questions were designed to be close ended, but open to interpretation. The interviewees range from a variety of working positions and roles, from multiple locations. All interviewees offer their own diverse remote work experiences. Interviews reflect on first-hand experiences of remote work in the current climate and will be used as real time evidence to mix and match with the theories inspected. The major footnotes

and commonalities will be used in this report. The full transcript of these interviews can be found in the appendix section of the thesis.

The data is intended to reflect real-world sentiments regarding the research. Interviews took place primarily via telephone or interface applications. This is because telephone interviews are still a form of asynchronous communication (Opdenakker, 2006). They are a synchronous communication of time, but asynchronous communication of place (Opdenakker, 2006). This is another consequent side effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as down to geographical separation; due to an international sample of interviewees. This is another benefit of telephone interview as they provide extended access to participants and hard to reach populations (Opdenakker, 2006). The interviews derived from a small batch of individuals working from home for the first time, with little to no prior experience of remote work; as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 global pandemic. This will provide different perspectives into the transitions which are currently taking place. Granted, the interviews were a late addition, but they will amplify the results of the thesis greatly. This is because at the time of conducting the interviews, all individuals had experienced at least one full calendar month of virtual work. These conditions set the stage for a quasi-experiment as the selected candidates have all had to adjust in both their working and personal lives during this period.

The semi-structured format of interviews is conducted utilizing a topic guide, containing a list of previously prepared questions connected to the different intertwined topics that emerged from the frame of reference for this paper. Please refer to the appendix for the interview guide that was used when conducting the interviews. The advantage of using semi-structured interviews for this research is that we can address the areas identified in the literature. Also, it acts as an aide for us to better understand the potential themes desired to be analysed, such as how organizations are coping in a tumultuous climate and whether or not they are pursuing dynamic capabilities to innovate their business models aiming for digital transformation and the potential accompanied challenges this brings forth. Besides that, semi-structured interviews enabled us with the goal of making the answers comparable (Blumberg et al., 2011), but still with the flexibility to ask the respondents additional follow-up questions.

The data will be critically analysed and evaluated through a cross examination in order to seek out relevance, biases, validity and accuracy. Literature-based research can be as, if not even more so, relevant for practice as empirically based research can. The data sample is sufficiently large enough to ensure the reliability of the data but the number of participants low enough to not be enough to allow for categorical conclusions about remote work capabilities.

The aim here is to present findings concisely, providing renewed insights where interpretations can be made; based off the existing literature base. The interviews bring more original and

unique content; however, they too can be abused. If interviews are sought out of convenience, then they could just become a form of confirmation bias seeking. Interviews must be relevant to the topic and relatable to the literature. Insights from published and well thought out, written sources seem fairer to scrutinize. cognizable patterns and trends.

2.2: Philosophy of Science

A brief philosophy of science statement seems fitting; being that the concentration of studies is based in the field of social sciences Afterall. The philosophy of science will come as a welcome supplementary feature of this thesis. Science is, in the modern world, is thought "to do with physics or electric fields" more than anything else. But the actual definition of the word "science" means knowledge; what we know or what is there to be known. So, if science is knowledge, then the thesis writing process should be one in which knowledge on a certain topic or field of study is gained, and then relayed.

Philosophy of science practices relate to the research aspects of the thesis process, such as; the data, methods, tools and analysis wherein accurate research can be drawn. Data sources will provide a unique and insightful perspective of each author. Sources must be correlated and complimentary to the research. Sources must also be traced and credited to their original authors.

For this study, a subjectivist epistemology was chosen, since much of the dealings are in theory and based in predictive text. This though, helps us understand the complex layers of change and interactions that occur in our world. This paradigm would indicate that humans try to make sense of the situation they are in, so ergo social phenomena are the result of subjective human interpretation. The priority is to comprehend individual interpretations and perceptions of reality. It views learning as a social process with meaningful learning only happening when people work together collaborating. This places special importance on individuals and the insights their interactions can reveal. Constructivism holds the belief that everyday knowledge stems from the way people make sense of their interactions with the physical world and the people that surround them (Blaikie, 2009). Consequently, this perspective states that the method used to collect findings will be affected by how researchers comprehend and understand the knowledge that emerges from the participants. Nonetheless, it was deemed the most suited approach to allow for unexpected insights and findings.

Future of work assessments require a certain level of prediction, as we cannot fully conclude what will happen but in order to analyse and make sense of the findings, some semblance of logic and reason must also be applied. So, an abductive reasoning approach will be best

utilized. Abductive reasoning can help us to understand the plausibility of possibilities, by examining the data available and arriving at the most logical conclusion or plausible theory of what will come after. This is essentially what future of work studies boil down to, predictions. But in order to understand and what the future holds, we must gage the current situation, from both scientific research and real-world sentiment from people out in the field. This helps to paint a picture and give us an idea on the back of trends and statistics to form a sound logical conclusion; based on the data available. This abductive reasoning is the same strategy widely used in sports betting, because it is the best form of scientific prediction based from what we know to what could be.

Abductive reasoning, much like the inductive approach, begins from empirical data but does not reject theoretical preconceptions. With an abductive approach, the researcher gathers just enough data to be able to make some presumptions and begin to formulate theories (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009).

3: BACKGROUND

This section is intended to deliver some contextual data to the overall research area and question. One of the first questions we are asked as kids is "what do you want to be when you grow up?" previous generations grew up assured that no matter the answer, there would always be options available. This has now changed, no longer being as certain as it once was. The sheer pace of changes and the stunning capabilities of AI machinery are revolutionizing the human relationship to work (VICE News, 2019) and technology. There are now beliefs that the future holds a human-tech symbiotic relationship and that at some stage we will become one with technology. The analogy for this is based on mobile phones and how leaving the phone in the car is enough to bring about a panic attack for many people. Economists are paying close attention to this aspect as technologies are intended as tools, they ultimately don't decide what humans do with these tools, humans decide what to do. But can we be certain this will last? This technology is very young, only gaining traction as AI machine learning begin to intensify showing promise.

3.1: COVID-19 Pandemic

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) designated the COVID-2019 outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern." Scientists rapidly started working to elucidate the epidemiological factors of the virus, including transmissibility, death rate, and origin (Perlman, 2020). In tandem, public health officials started working to communicate critical information to the public so that individuals could take necessary and appropriate precautions and governments could plan and respond accordingly.

Parts of this thesis correlate directly to the COVID-19 pandemic taking place at the time of writing. This is not just for typical disclaimer purposes as something irrelevant to the research, quite the opposite in fact. This pandemic has created a makeshift experiment (of sorts) for the research question being addressed here. Therefore, it would be remiss to not include the pandemic into the project. Some adaptations have had to be made to accommodate this, but this is an inevitable part of remote working itself. A major consideration must be given to the ramifications, of which are entirely unclear at this moment in time but expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

During this time, global economies have taken a beating along with many job losses globally, with many more at risk as the turmoil continues. COVID-19 is simply devastating economies. In the US, unemployment levels have risen from 3.5% to 14.7%, with 20.5 million jobs lost in April 2020 and many other countries face recessions (BBC News, 2020). Markets have

plummeted to dangerous levels as fears of economic collapse become widespread. It is generally agreed that the longer this continues, the bigger the tole it takes on global economies and markets.

Paradoxically, while journalists and public health officials worked to communicate critical information globally regarding risk assessments and recommendations, a related threat emerged: psychological distress resulting from repeated media exposure to the outbreak. This has implications not only for immediate suffering in a population already grappling with unprecedented social and economic fallout, but also for downstream effects on physical and mental health over time. Prospective, longitudinal studies have demonstrated that heightened stress responses during and in the immediate aftermath of a threatening event are associated with adverse physical and mental health outcomes over time (Garfin, Thompson, & Holman, 2018).

Restrictions on daily life have led to the closure of many companies and the dismissal of staff, either temporarily or permanently (BBC News, 2020). As of 7th April 2020, a total of 81% of the global workforce of 3.3 billion people have had their workplace either fully or partly closed (BBC News, 2020). This means most people are either; working from home, receiving some form of governmental financial aid or out of a job. This then sets the stage for a global experiment on the validity and effectiveness of remote working, with implications for the coming decade. We can widely agree that the arrival of a deadly virus isn't the ideal circumstances for a company to be forced into remote work (Tigar, 2020). But whether the circumstances are ideal or not will be irrelevant in the decade to come, as hope of a cataclysmic shift towards remote work career options are plentiful because the "cat is out of the bag" (Tigar, 2020) now.

Coronavirus has exposed more people to working remotely than anything prior (Tigar, 2020) so most people are becoming aware of the possibility having grown accustomed to the benefits of this lifestyle including; the autonomy, not having to commute and surprisingly having less distractions than open offices in some cases. Companies that don't allow for remote work now, will have to continue supporting it going forward as it now shows promising results globally; whilst health and safety concerns will likely remain a prevalent issue in the coming years.

People working from home can be excellent because it brings the workshop to them. They would be doing the same work but would have less complaints and be happier leading to higher loyalty standards. When employees are happy, they work hard and efficiently, so the employers are happy too; which if setup correctly this is the cycle of remote work. By giving people what they want, you satisfy their demands and fulfil their desires so you will face less resistance. Which could become more rewarding for employers and organizations than the employees, in the long run.

Whilst some thrive in such surroundings, others may struggle to cope with remote work; especially mentally and emotionally. Working from home, after a long period of time, could begin to feel like a prison sentence. Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced remote work to the global workforce, it remains temporary and the results will only reflect for a short period of time with a lot of turmoil. There still needs to be more concrete evidence gained through consistent data gathering over several years in order to soundly put to bed the argument and have definitive answers to the research question. Whether the overall strengths of virtual work outweigh the limitations, for both employee and employer, remains to be seen.

Post pandemic, businesses will likely attempt to revert to normal. There is a very real possibility that professionals may change their tone about what matters most to them (Tigar, 2020). That's already the case for many, according to recent research from the International Workplace Group; with their March 2019 findings showing that 80% of job seekers would choose a job with a flexible work-from-home possibility over a job that doesn't offer the same.

We are currently witness to the world's largest ever work-from-home experiment (Tigar, 2020), one which could end the lingering stigmas regarding the ability of workers to be productive outside of a traditional office surrounding. There may still be validity to these anxieties after all, however it remains to be seen. Data gathered during this time has some validity, as not only due to the sheer numbers included globally, but also because it's a highly distressing time, meaning discrepancies would be far more likely to take place now than at any other time. This factor will likewise show if any reasonable doubts or scepticism of remote working are legitimate. The fact that this is a predicament quite unlike any other which companies have experienced before has been a huge wake up call for them (Tigar, 2020). Perhaps the outbreak will prove that remote work is a very real and effective option, essential for a business' continuity plans. COVID-19 presents this opportunity to demonstrate how successful and sustainable remote work can be, for those professionals who desire more flexibility and responsibility.

Many entrepreneurs were ahead of the curve, being early adopters (Rogers, 1995) to the model; founding their companies with remote working strategies in mind. Allowing employees to pick their location fundamentally impacted their bottom line, culture, and ability to scale; but this has paid off in such times. Some brands are now used to working across different time zones, hiring from extended networks outside their own which shows incredible adaptability. Pooling talents in this way gives the competitive advantage of having a diverse global workforce, often leading to open innovation cultures. Those companies with prior remote work capabilities are at a competitive advantage at this moment in time, so are currently either thriving or strongly sustaining. Online businesses are thriving for example streaming sites (Netflix) are dominating the entertainment realm (Rodriguez, 2020) whilst cinemas, theatres,

sporting events and most other forms of outdoor activity and entertainment remain largely shutdown globally.

On the other hand, incoming data shows that 7 out of 10 employers have reported that they are struggling in adjusting to remote work (Newsweek, 2020). Even if this could be excused due to the lack of preparedness for such a transition at this time; it could be interpreted as alarming, indicating that the global workforce is not just ready yet to commit entirely to remote work. However, the other takeaway here is that 30% still highlights a significant share of the market; which is only likely to increase given more time, planning and preparation. Another survey by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC, 2020) found that roughly half of the companies believe they witnessed a dip in productivity levels by transitioning. This is in stark contrast to the feedback from my own interviews, but every case is different; with the experience of employers and employees also differing. The validity of these findings can be scrutinized as these only indicate temporal results (Newsweek, 2020).

3.2: Essential Work

Following on from the Pandemic, in 2020 we have come to understand the term "essential work" and its definition has been put through the ultimate stress test. Previous assumptions would have society viewing working class jobs such as; supermarket clerks as subpar, often being overlooked on their value and importance. But through recent trauma (Garfin et al., 2018), this stigma has been challenged. But In order to realize the importance of such roles and why they are so "essential" in our society, we must examine the essential work criteria.

There certainly seems to be a raised awareness of what are the most or more essential lines of work. Many would now argue the salaries of these jobs do not adequately reflect their value to society fairly. But whether the rewards for these, usually low paying jobs will increase any time soon; remains ambiguous at best but unlikely. This something that will become clearer with time, as equally whether these newfound respects will last. Trade unions will come stronger out of this, gaining leverage and having more pull going forward. If a strike were to take place right now, the ramifications would be cataclysmic. Many governments and authorities would likely cave and give in to some demands rather quickly. But the reality is lives are at stake and unfortunately such actions would be completely immoral as people are depending on such services and roles. The point here is that governments will be aware of this factor, that if these services were not available or went on strike at a time like this; then it would be disastrous for all so this will factor into their considerations regarding future policies.

Certainly, these trades such as supermarket workers; have gained some new or at least more respect during such times of turmoil. Previously they could be easily dismissed, being taken for granted, but now they are getting more recognition; not only from the people but also from governments. But we must concede that this is as far as praise can go, actions speak louder than words. It is entirely unreasonable and to some extent unrealistic to expect supermarket employees to accept second-rate treatment (Bloomberg, 2020) beyond this point. These are the workers whom form the backbone of the produce and medical supply chains. Moreover, lower-paid hospital staff could understandably soon walk off their jobs as well, and they would be entitled to do so. This could cartwheel and lead to a dire set of circumstances for the general public at large. The retail and supermarket sector are another at risk with automation as self-service checkouts gain popularity, now they may evidently be a safer option too. This could also factor in after the pandemic for health reasons as to lessen risks of transmission between people and the supermarket workers who must remain surrounded by people whilst the majority remain at a safe distance.

The consequences could be even more pernicious, as more employees go on unemployment and see their incomes rise as a result (Bloomberg, 2020). Resentment among essential workers could naturally grow. Because not only have they been asked to do more, without the additional assistance that they require, but, in certain countries they are even operating at a financial disadvantage, relative to laid-off or non-essential workers. As a result, we can expect they will unionize (if not already) coming together strong after this crisis. Doing so right at a time when world economies will be fragile, which could become problematic for wider society. This will give credence to governments to give in the exasperated demands somewhat, if not entirely deserved ones at the very least.

Prior to the pandemic many knowledge workers would likely consider their roles as essential. Perhaps they would be right to do so, as all jobs are essential for a strong economy. A strong economy and low unemployment figures are essential as it has been proven that suicide is more frequent among people who are unemployed (Agerbo, 2003) as is crime and drug use. Albeit this is a different kind of "essential" as to more urgent essential matters. As we have learned from recent events unfolding, this image will likely be changed in relation to how we perceive essential non-essential works. These new terminologies are becoming familiar to societies at large and this vernacular is set to long remain in the mainstream, it appears.

A YouGov survey conducted 2015 found that 37% of working British adults feel their job is not making a meaningful contribution to the world (Dahlgreen, 2015). Half of British workers (50%) say their job is meaningful, and 13% are unsure. We must also consider this was before the pandemic and the scale may have tipped even further as a result of the pandemic with many

in the UK currently being furloughed. A further interesting factoid here is that men (42%) are more likely to say their jobs are meaningless than women (32%). As such, occupational status can be affected by societal changes and more specifically, by changes in what is being perceived by society and individuals as "more important work" versus "less important work" (Kramer and Kramer, 2020).

These essential roles are mostly manual and considered to be on the frontlines during crisis. There may come from this experience then a clash between the "essential" workers manning the frontlines in a time of crisis and their knowledge worker counterparts whom will generally be safer and better compensated. These disproportionalities have always existed, but tensions may flare up again just as xenophobia (United Nations, 2020) has recently risen.

4: LITERATURE REVIEW

There is much literature for a field relatively qualitative and speculation heavy, as much of it comes down to estimations as it is simply too early to tell in many regards. We just don't know how things will shape up. Hence why a comprehensive literature review is in order to shed some light on the situation as it stands. There is a growing consensus regarding the main drivers that are expected to shape future developments (Dølvik and Røed Steen, 2018) in the literature on the future of work.

Some of the key recurring variables pertaining to the context of future work include; Increasing automation, climate change, economic downturns, global health, political racial and religious tensions, population growth, social unrest, wars. One of the prime concerns is that we can expect high unemployment figures globally, when automation meets with a rising population. High unemployment figures can lead to disillusionment (Agerbo, 2003) as an; angry, unemployed, poor population is not good. Neither is having a highly educated workforce working below their skillset (Gratton, 2010). Data backs up that suicide is more frequent among people who are unemployed (Agerbo, 2003) or working below their skill level or pay grade. Humans are ultimately creatures of habit; patterns, trends and routines keep us sane and are needed in order to have life structure. Without such traits it can cause havoc which is why mass unemployment is problematic for societies at large. This is not only attributed to poorer living standards but, more so the mental stigma attached to it. This is also the reason why young, unemployed men are feared (Agerbo, 2003) being more likely to conduct in criminal activity or intravenous drug use.

We are truly living in unique times, having to deal with newly phrased terminology such as "click baiting" by which; slanderous, sensationalized or false headlines are published in order to generate revenue through website traffic thus "baiting" readers (Chen et al., 2015). This all signals a different world than the one just a decade ago. So, it is entirely reasonable to assume the world will look and operate somewhat differently again in another decade (Forbes, 2020). This is not to mean that there will be flying cars, far from it, more in the sense of overall lifestyles, working culture and currency. As such, the number of studies on the 'future of work' has increased exponentially, over the past few years. Such studies primarily estimate the potential impact of automation on employment. However, they have received very little critical analysis or opposition and warrant closer inspection. One area of concern is in the shortcomings of their methodological approach (Boyd and Huettinger, 2019), which relies heavily on measuring the technical feasibility of automating occupations and tasks (Boyd and Huettinger, 2019). Yet these studies have managed to irrationally work up fears and paranoias regarding the pace of changes.

 The literature review further revealed that working styles naturally evolve, needing to for organizations to evolve. This evolution is the driving force, pushing society and indeed humanity forward. Both futurists and historic economists would agree that change is a necessity comes naturally.

According to Lynda Gratton (2010) there are five main forces drive change;

1. Technology

2. Globalization

3. Demographic changes

4. Societal trends

5. Environmental

 These five forces present the world as it is, representing the trajectory we are currently on. All these five elements here are recurring themes among the literature reviewed, most notably technology; which has drastically changed the world and continues to do so. Technology is at the core of automation with developing technologies which continue to push the trend forward. Demographic changes would be considered the next pivotal focal point, as we are experiencing, in real time; gradual increases in the global population. Life expectancies continue to increase (United Nations, 2019) simultaneously with reproduction rates on the rise, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia (United Nations, 2019) which could multiply by as much as double in 2050. Furthermore, Demographic shifts, globalization and cost-cutting have already led to significant changes in the contractual models between employer and employee (Maitland and Thomson, 2011).

 Goffin and Mitchell's (2017) compliment Gratton's view, by presenting five similar required factors for innovation:

1. Technological advances
2. Changing customer demographics
3. Competition
4. Changing business environment
5. Organization's own aspirations

 This is somewhat harmonious with Gratton's (2010) five forces of change; as innovation generally brings about change. Innovation empowers firms to shield themselves from highly volatile scenarios, which in turn makes them more proficient at seeking out new opportunities and exploiting existing ones more efficiently (Matzler et al., 2013).

Societal trends can be considered as the "norms" (Thaler et al., 2012) through which appropriate behaviours are shaped around. It is through such norms through which nudging practices (Thaler et al., 2012) can be derived from. Nudging is a process of behavioural control through which choices are orchestrated as if to be of one's own thinking but, have been orchestrated. An example of this is the method of recycling plastic bottles in Denmark whereby you must pay a surplus for bottled beverages and only get it back if you recycle that bottle. Perhaps a strategy of nudging through norms (Thaler et al., 2012) could be used to shape future career prospects or to gradually ease society into radical shifts. Societal trends dictate the direction societies head towards, but this can be tampered with and steered through nudging practises, evident through the social distancing protocols (New York Times, 2020) in place right now. Governments, organizations and innovators are the entities who can manipulate future work standards this way.

In Rutger Bergman's book Utopia for realists (2017) the Dutch historian offers up a critical proposal, claiming a practical approach to reconstructing modern society to promote a more productive and equitable life based on three core ideas:

1. a universal and unconditional basic income paid to everybody

2. a short working week of fifteen hours

3. open borders worldwide with the free movement of citizens between all states

Whilst this will be music to the ears of the populists, it raises the question of realistically being able to pull off such an endeavour, especially at the global level. Alas the work and cross section unity and resolve needed to attain this leaves a lot to be desired.

Bregman's (2017) proposition is that seeing as though rogue capitalism is going to automate away most of our jobs, human wellbeing can only be assured by everyone receiving a universal basic income. This is evident as a poll in the UK showed that 37% of British workers think that their job doesn't need to exist. This is clearly not the bin men or the care workers and teachers that we so heavily rely on that would say this. This sentiment comes from consultants, bankers, accountants, lawyers and so on. The implications of this are radical. Therefore Bregman (2017) suggests we could cut the working week by a third but be just as rich if not richer.

Generally it is Senior management that set the tone (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) so they may imply they reward their staff based on results but in practise they are shown to favour those that put a lot of time in the office instead of the home, then this will become the cultural norm (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) and the standard by which employees will behave on.

In the past, success was achieved through personal drive, ambition and competition. In the coming years, it will be achieved through the subtle but high-value combination of mastery and connectivity (Gratton, 2010). One prime example of this is the rolodex method (Valuetainment, 2020) by which your *"network is your net worth",* loosely translating as the network being one's foremost asset in the professional realm. Gratton (2010) claims that high-value networks will consist of a combination of strong relationships with a few knowledgeable people (the Posse) and a larger number of less-connected relationships with a more extensive network (the Big Ideas Crowd). Gratton's (2010) Hypothesis has been proven accurate thus far; as many organizations and individuals view their network as a highly asset, especially today with the breakthrough of such platforms as LinkedIn.

Kramer and Kramer (2020) are of the belief that the current pandemic is likely to widen the divide between good and bad jobs even further. Organizational investment in employees which are concentrated in high skilled occupations is likely to increase because these employees allow organizations to maintain productivity even in extreme working conditions such as those presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Kramer and Kramer (2020) identify three key areas of research inquiry:

1. Changes in occupational status and their relationship to meaningful work and calling;

2. How the work home arrangement might change organizational attitudes toward which occupational groups and individuals are better suited to work from home; and

3. How occupations may be further segmented into core and periphery.

Kramer and Kramer (2020) conclude that, while some occupational groups might benefit from the pandemic, its overall impact will increase and broaden income, gender, racial, and ethnic inequality. Coming more down to societal disparities arising of opportunity or difficulty. Five additional areas have emerged as the most important cornerstones to the changing landscape of work, as according to Gratton (2010), they are as follows:

1. Transparent and authentic leadership
2. High performing virtual teams
3. Valuable cross-business networks and relationships
4. Valuable relationships with partners, consumers and entrepreneurs
5. Flexible working

Gratton (2010) argues that previously, success was obtained through personal drive, ambition and competition. Such as is the case from previous wall street archetypes. But Gratton (2010), as well as many others, proclaim that in the future success will be determined through the

effective combination of mastery and connectivity. Remote working is a method which can address this criterion. The nature of the work we do today would have been unimaginable for previous generations. What might we be astonished by if we invest in the possibilities of a better future? Questions Salehi (2016); Much of the disappointment derives from a sense of betrayal. Science fiction endows many of its viewers with false expectations. Surely the logic goes that if mankind can; cure disease, send vehicles deep into space or to the deepest depths of the oceans, to undertake projects of tremendous size and scope (Earle, 2020), then we can adjust our working standards too.

Existing research shows that job autonomy, job control, social support and feedback are prime job resources which positively contribute to the engagement of employees in permanent work settings and organizations (Panteli et al., 2019). Hackman and Oldham's (1976) Job Characteristics Model (JCM) as the most established motivational human resource management theory. Drawing on decades of wide-ranging empirical evidence, the JCM identifies skill variety, task identification, task significance, feedback from the job itself and task autonomy as five enriching and thereby motivating, characteristics of work (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). These job-related factors are framed around the JDR model, which explains how the interaction between job resources and demands impact on the engagement of employees (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). In particular, the JDR model is based on the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which argues that individuals protect the resources they value the most and when these are threatened (or lost), they seek to replace them. This is understandable and reminisces of the classical VRIO framework or resource-based view.

The jury is still out on whether the digital revolution will be as transformational to innovation processes as the industrial revolution (Lifshitz-Assaf, 2016) but most would argue that it will certainly be equal to, if not more so. Within the context of today's turbulent climate, a dynamic career environment will consist of; rapid growth in small businesses, outsourcing and downsizing alongside a changing landscape wherein employee mobility is more so rewarded over stability (Ensher, Murphy and Vance, 2000). This coincides with the "digital nomad" phenomenon taking place, in which employees are actively seeking to work remotely; more so as a lifestyle choice than just a career path. The main motivations of digital nomads are to have more flexibility and responsibility allowing them to travel the world, consistently changing locations whilst working from distance in order to have a steady stream of income. Digital nomads have successfully paired the security of a steady paycheque with the diversity and excitement of frequent travel. This trend has also increased the popularity and demand for Co-working spaces.

4.1: Digitalization

The popular term "digital transformation" has become a crucial element on every organization's agenda. Fitzgerald et al., (2014, p. 2) define digital transformation as "the use of new digital technologies" to "enable major business improvements such as enhancing customer experience, streamlining operations, or creating new business models". More recently, Warner & Wäger (2018, p. 19) have contributed with abstracting the scope of this definition by adding that "Digital transformation is an ongoing process of strategic renewal that uses advances in digital technologies to build capabilities that refresh or replace an organization's business model, collaborative approach, and culture". Digital innovation is no longer just the business of software companies (Ciriello et al., 2018), influencing every aspect of our lives in this increasingly digitalized world (Nambisan et al., 2020).

The debate surrounding the digitalization of work and its consequent effects on working conditions and labour markets have been hotly contested (Ilsøe, 2017) for many years within; the media, politics and scientific research. Automation is a concept which dates right back to the industrial revolution (Ilsøe, 2017) but digitalisation has greatly accelerated the processes (Ford, 2015) behind this. Increasingly more sophisticated robotics and software are emerging as a result of this accelerating automation, exasperated with the invention of the computer, then later the Internet revolution. The pace of changes is also intensifying, with subsequent job losses expected to be further intensified by the increasing use of big data (Ilsøe, 2017) in various professions. Albeit, automation is helping to create new job formats and platforms such as e-commerce software development (Ilsøe, 2017) and technician work. In sum, automation in all its glory; both its early and latter forms, has altered the functional flexibility of work (Ilsøe, 2017), which in junction with the combination of job functions; make up a job and the job functions necessary or not (Benner, 2002).

The advancements in technology continue to grow as we head into another pivotal decade of big tech. Technology is continually evolving, so I have thus coined the term "technolution" to signify this phenomenon. This evolution of technology or "Technolution" is the diversification and evolution of technology. This is certainly a real phenomenon and may even be the key to the next stages of human evolution. Proof of this trend already exists with the recently announced "Neuralink" (Alexander, 2020) a company that is exploring the human brain and how it can be connected to a computer interface with the aim of Ushering in a new era of "superhuman cognition" (Alexander, 2020).

This technolution is changing the way people are working in their existing jobs (Dølvik and Røed Steen, 2018) which is facilitating outsourcing; as well as new and non-standard forms of employment. In both existing and new job types, digital tools and processes can alter; work organization, job content, task execution and important aspects of job quality. This has bigger implications for; working time schedules, health and safety, learning opportunities and job security. Along with this predicted polarization of work, job quality is likely to improve for knowledge workers in high-skilled high paid jobs involving; analytical, interactive and problem-solving tasks (De Groen et al. 2017).

More recently, digitalisation is generating work and business without the need for jobs (Ilsøe, 2017). Work is becoming commoditized, being bought and sold "on-demand" without major commitment or contractual obligation, serving instead as single assignments (Ilsøe, 2017), this can be referred to as 'gigs' (Hill, 2015). These gigs, including zero-hour contracts and freelance jobs, are on the rise. Unorthodox employment has grown over the last few decades, particularly so in much of the Western World (Ilsøe, 2017); meaning that the standard full-time job on an open-ended contract has come under jeopardy (Gautie and Schmitt, 2009). The developments on this matter include but are not limited to (Ilsøe, 2017); temporary or zero-hour contracts, agency work, informal work, freelance jobs and even self-employment.

In countries such as the US and UK, the rise in this type of unorthodox work has been largely associated with a more general trend of increasing work precariousness (Kalleberg, 2011), but in other countries such as Germany, non-standard employment has been associated with a dualization of the labour market distinguishing between standard and nonstandard jobs (Palier and Thelen, 2010). Digitalisation is contributing to such trends by allowing for more work to be done through digital platforms, thus skirting the legal definition of work; acting without a clear legal employer-employee entity (Ilsøe, 2017). Responses to digitalisation of work in Denmark, Sweden and Germany occur in labour market models characterised by coordination and cooperation between the social partners (Ilsøe, 2017).

One important element of digital transformation is business model innovation (Demil & Lecocq, 2010). Successful digital transformation requires enterprises to develop a wide range of capabilities while incorporating digital technology into the core of business operations thus aligning as well as creating a digital transformation strategy. More importantly is the potential re-thinking/inventing of their respective business model to sustain competitive advantage (Doherty et al., 2016). Now, more firms have higher expectations linked to business model innovation so start a number of initiatives to change the way they create, deliver and share value; it appears evident that the academic research agenda needs to move forward to develop

a better understanding of these complex transformations (Warner & Wäger, 2018). Digital technology has three key characteristics that change the nature of innovations:

1. Once digitized, information can be; stored, transformed, transmitted and traced by any digital device irrespective of its content.
2. Second, digital information is editable by way of re-programming, making digital solutions malleable to changes after deployment by interaction with external systems.
3. Inherently self-referential, digital technology is needed to create digital technology.

(Ciriello et al., 2018)

So Digital technology is both the result of and the basis for developing digital innovations, implying high scalability and low entry barriers and leading to wide participation and democratized innovation (Ciriello et al., 2018). Much of our everyday activities are shaped and influenced by various digital services. Therefore, firms that pursue new forms of digital innovations must think about how their products and services affect their users and what are the long- and short-term social, economic, and cultural consequences (Nambisan et al., 2020). We can look to the recent examples of; Uber, Facebook and a myriad of other digital companies suggest the far-reaching implications (including at the global level) of digital innovation pursued by individual firms (Nambisan et al., 2020).

4.2 Knowledge Work

Knowledge workers make up what is now known as the "knowledge economy" (Moussa, Bright and Varua, 2017) in which knowledge makes up the most valuable resource and a major source of power to boot. This knowledge no longer must come from only human capital as sophisticated algorithms and programs are affording companies a level of intelligence that borders unethical grounds.

Knowledge is becoming the main currency of power in the current digital age and this power moves to the knowledge source (Panteli and Tucker, 2009). Hence why knowledge sharing is increasingly sought after and platforms opened to encourage networking or open innovation strategies for both individual employee benefit, but also, companywide. According to Govindarajan and Trimble (2010), innovation and ongoing business are always in conflict. So, if conflicts between innovation initiatives and ongoing operations are common, leaders must counter conflicts by constantly reinforcing a relationship of mutual respect. Where possible, open innovation allows interactions leading to exchange of knowledge and other resources between the different actors involved (O'Toole and Bennis, 2009). The application of open innovation can be tricky though, often being tough to implement further after the initial fruitful

ideation phase. The major sticking points being; the divulging of company information, which can become a nightmare in terms of IP, patenting and ownership (Chesbrough, 2003), also that of making public future product or service plans which competitors may capitalize on. However, it is a phenomenon that is increasing in popularity, which we will undoubtedly be seeing utilized much more as we go forward, especially in scientific fields; such as space exploration.

In such kinds of roles knowledge acts as the main input of effort as the method of achieving the work and the output is mental rather than physical (Newell et al., 2002). Virtual work will be none more available and effective for knowledge workers. The term knowledge work refers to organizational competency's occupations (Newell et al., 2002) which are characterises by an emphasis on theoretical knowledge, creativity and use of analytical and social skills are predominant. Knowledge work under these conditions encompass both what are traditionally referred to as professional work (Newell et al., 2002) and more contemporary types of work such as advertising, marketing, accountancy, legal sector work. But this is not to say these are automation immune industries (Sahota, 2020) as previously thought.

Knowledge has come to be known as a resource, which needs to be 'unlocked' from employees' brains *(Newell, 2015)* through appropriate management. *A shift is taking* place in relation to the parameters for managing knowledge and knowledge work (Newell, 2015). We, hereby see how organizations are moving from viewing knowledge as a valuable commodity which is used by knowledge workers and that needs to be managed effectively internally but protected from the outside, to seeing how 'the wisdom of the crowd' (Newell, 2015) can be exploited for firm benefit. This wisdom of the crowd ideology is in line with Lynda Gratton's (2010) view of "the Posse" which is the big ideas crowd. However, this notion gives rise to a double standard dilemma, whereby organizations seek open innovation but are reluctant of trading secrets and strategies.

We are seeing that in the current climate, knowledge workers require less micromanagement and more self-management principles. Self-management is not a new concept by any means. The philosophers of ancient Greece provided scripture on self-discipline, stoicism and virtues. Peter Drucker first discussed the principles and tools for managing oneself. Based on Drucker's (2012) teachings true self managers should focus on their strengths as performance cannot be built on a foundation of weaknesses. The best way to identify and improve strengths is through feedback analysis (Drucker, 2012) whereby you can formulate an action plan based on based on constructive feedback. The goal should always be to improve on strengths and limit weaknesses by avoiding pitfalls of intellectual arrogance. These sentiments align with "unlearning" and "reskilling" ideologies (Hedberg, 1981) wherein you seek to acquire skills as required whilst remedying any bad habits. It's of significance to note that a weakness could

likely just be a bad habit which needs managing. Eliminating bad habits would eliminate the weakness. Over time gaining knowledge of what not to do by identifying areas of incompetence and then avoiding them.

Knowledge is intangible so is viewed as a possession of the human mind and treated as a mental (or cognitive) capacity, or resource, that can be developed, applied, and used to improve effectiveness in the workplace. (Galliers and Currie, 2011). Currently, in the information age, knowledge is viewed more so as a commodity (Galliers and Currie, 2011) as competition is high with more educated people now than ever before. This is not only because of increased access to higher education, but also because the educational capabilities of online resources. This 'knowledge as possession' (Galliers and Currie, 2011) view is implicit in much of what is written about managing knowledge within contemporary organizations.

More recently, organizations have adopted various modes of computer-mediated technologies with the hope that such tools would make the process of knowledge sharing not only easier, but consequently more likely to occur (Leonardi, 2017). Such technologies include, but not limited to; discretionary databases, intranets, and more recently, knowledge management systems, were each believed to hold the promise of more effective knowledge sharing among employees (Leonardi, 2017) falling into an open category of innovation. Interestingly, most technologies created and implemented with the explicit goal of increasing knowledge sharing aim to do so by creating forums where individuals deliberately present their knowledge to others in a public forum (Leonardi, 2017).

Knowledge management is "how distributed group members and their Organizational colleagues, locate, store and retrieve the data, information and knowledge that they need for their individual and collective work" (Child and Shumate, 2007). The transactive memory theory (Child and Shumate, 2007) focuses on knowledge as objects embedded within certain individuals in a team or organization. This approach emphasizes the team's knowledge as "who knows what" within an organization that consists of individuals with more specified insights. Child and Shumate's hypothesis rests on how information is distributed and applied and how expertise is updated within teams. This perspective on knowledge assumes that although knowledge resides in the network, the primary area of interest is in the nodes of the network and how they contribute unique knowledge-as-object to the network at large (Child and Shumate, 2007).

In relation to knowledge management in the digital age, we could consider absorptive capacity. Absorptive capacity refers to a dynamic capability, formed by a set of organizational routines and processes of external knowledge acquisition and assimilation (potential absorptive capacity) as well as knowledge transformation and application (Huang et al., 2018).

Thus, absorptive capacity involves individuals, groups, and organizational levels. Individuals are involved in the knowledge sharing and recognition aspects, but at the organizational level, routines, histories and stories, documentation, procedures, heuristics and know-how are important in creating shared understandings of the knowledge at the firm level (Foss, Lyles and Volberda, 2009). Potential absorptive capacity represents the knowledge-seeking capabilities of enterprise development but may or may not be used for innovation realizing that absorptive capacity represents the ability to develop products and services (Huang et al., 2018).

 Kogut and Zander (1992) consider knowledge to be the most important resource of the firm and the main determinant for success. The knowledge-based view of competitive advantage strongly influences the relevance of the absorptive capacity construct, as absorptive capacities are pivotal in developing and increasing a firm's knowledge base. In the case of knowledge-intensive firms, learning at the organizational and individual level is of paramount importance (Foss, Lyles and Volberda, 2009).

 Homeworking is most suitable and beneficial for employees who mainly perform knowledge-based tasks with limited face to face contact (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017). From a theoretical vantage point, working from homes impact on employee's effort and motivation is unclear (Klopries, 2018). Whilst working from home increases employee autonomy but on the flip, side lowers the firm's possibilities to monitor their employees, but it is at least known that Knowledge is more likely to be transferred between people with similar training and backgrounds (Huang et al., 2018).

4.3 Remote work

 When sight of workers is not tangible, employers cannot see their employees work; so, might suspect they're not pulling their weight. Although some jobs do involve quantifiable work outputs which could alleviate these concerns, it is worth noting that most jobs do not (Reyt, 2020) for now. A project manager, for example, may only issue one deliverable every few weeks, which limits the opportunities for monitoring. Managers will face the important challenge of redefining what supervising employees means in the context of remote work. The traditional tools of micromanagement are not as easily at the disposal here and forms of macro management must be utilized. There needs to be a sophisticated level of self-efficacy for remote work to be successful (Kevill et al., 2017). self-efficacy is described as the ability to self-evaluate one's own abilities to influence action and behaviour (Kevill et al., 2017). So, this is where self-management can be utilized for best practises. Someone self-employed choosing to work for their self out of their own initiative and motivations will of course work to a very high

standard. There is a big difference between the self-employed manager and the self-management approach worker. So, it would be best to trick the employees into accepting the responsibility, so as if to bring their focus, drive and attentiveness to the levels of a self-employed worker.

This all too familiar, all-encompassing scenario describes a typical principal-agent dilemma, wherein employees have incentive to abuse the power afforded to them through their autonomy by reducing their individual work effort thus resulting in shirking behaviour (Rupietta and Beckmann, 2017). However, an opposite conclusion could also be drawn from other well-established motivational theories of the past such as job characteristics model or self-determination theory (Klopries, 2018). According to such theories, working in a job that has high degree of autonomy increases an employee's intrinsic motivation, which subsequently leads to higher levels of motivation and more work effort.

Rupietta and Beckmann (2017) investigated the effects of homeworking for the general population, while diligently considering the influencing factors relating to the socio-economic background and job characteristics. They find a significant positive effect for working from home and its frequency onto the self-reported work effort, thus extending on Beckmann et al.'s (2017) earlier findings. Two critical issues arise from Rupietta and Beckmann's theory; firstly, is the employed measure of work effort; and secondly is the used line of reasoning concerning intrinsic motivation. Both points are critical for the interpretation of the paper's results and for directing any future research.

Moving to work from home arrangements, where individual characteristics triumph over vocational characteristics, may require selection of workers that are better equipped to work from home. Training of such workers on more efficient methods of remote work and greater monitoring of the quality and productivity of those assigned to work from home (Kramer and Kramer, 2020) are necessary steps. On the other hand, if occupational characteristics trump individual characteristics, moving to work from home arrangements may depend on the average level of productivity at home versus work and will not require much selection, training, and monitoring if deliberating on whether or not to allow employees to work from home (Kramer and Kramer, 2020).

Rupietta and Beckmann (2017) argue that the measure can be utilized as a proxy for effort, and therefore productivity. But realistically this seems unviable as time does not equate to effort so there is no way of examining the real productivity (Klopries, 2018). Another aspect to consider is, whether the same employees reporting longer working hours at home would be able to spend longer working hours in the office. In certain organizations it may be commonplace to go home at 6pm or certain opening hours must be adhered to. Therefore,

employees staying in the office might not be able to spend the same amount of time as they would do at home, irrespective of productivity or their desire to provide more work effort (Klopries, 2018).

Location won't matter as much for job applicants' prospects, so long as they have the soft skills related to long-distance collaboration i.e.; communication, giving/receiving feedback, project management, self-management, abstract thinking, and problem solving. While overreliance on screens is considered a public health concern, mobile phones, tablets, and laptops are now also seen as vital communication links to the outside world (Bailey et al., 2019). It is entirely fair to expect accelerated 5G rollouts in markets across the world as traditional network architectures strain under the enormous traffic loads (Cheng, 2020).

Organizations may struggle to keep up with the acceleration of changes required for a remote workforce. As Prompted by the quest for innovation and adaptiveness, some organizations have developed innovative working models performed outside of typical spatial and temporal organizational parameters. This is achieved through the conjoining of information and communication technologies (Bartel et al. 2012; Errichiello and Pianese 2016). In this context, terminology such as; remote work, telecommuting, telework, homeworking and virtual work have been used interchangeably to describe distant execution of work (Errichiello and Pianese 2016). permitting virtual work modalities enables employers to attract and retain international talent, while employees benefit from flexible working arrangements (Henke et al. 2016) at the expense of more employee responsibility. The latest polls show that 5 out of 8 companies (International Workplace Group 2019) have such flexible working policies in place worldwide.

As according to Johansson (2017) and DeMers (2014) the characteristics possessed by remote workers, largely boil down to personal traits; but the nature of the homeworkers also corresponds to organizational standards and a tailored code of conduct. In accordance to these conditions, three main character archetypes represent the most significant portion, of the homeworking labour force. They are as follows:

Archetype 1: Harry Homer - This first persona consists of a semi-experienced mid-management tier of employee. This individual is content with the exchange between financial and social gains of virtual work, as it is more suited to their personal life; allowing them to actively care for family members. Crucial competencies of this personality type are; self-motivation, technical ability, self-evaluation, self-confidence and resourcefulness. From the organizational point of view, they recognize the advantages that virtual work can bring about in relation to employee satisfaction and quality of life as well as enabling them to maximize cost efficiency through the reduction in overheads. Organizations will then support this character through oversight and provide the tools required to perform in this role.

Archetype 2: Flexi Fiona – The second archetype is representative of individuals which have some considerable years of experience. They work remotely, mostly part time, due to privileges; but they tend to enjoy the social and communal experience of office working. They are considered to value wellbeing, often carrying out tasks that require more concentration and critical thinking from home whilst preferring to conduct group assignments such as meetings from the office. Key components of characteristics include; Trustworthiness and adaptability of communication skills according to the situation. From the organizational vantage point, they admire the employees flexibly in balancing homeworking half of the time; consequently, resulting in reduced utility costs and carbon footprint. Organizations should ensure that this type of employees are supported with the tools and supplies necessary to complete the work remotely.

Archetype 3: Office Ollie – lastly, this persona is representative of entry level employees who have little to no prior experience and developing their business etiquette. The nature of their position and level of (lacking) experience requires a more hand on approach from their supervisor through micromanagement principles. Key competencies of this archetype are; enjoyment of social interaction with co-workers, committed in learning through more senior colleagues (mentors) including supervisors. From an organizational viewpoint, they work for the organization. The organization believes that working in an office style environment breeds the grounds for creativity, thus increasing productivity and reinforcing company values. Though employees can take a day now and again to work remotely, it is not encouraged or promoted by the company (Swisher, 2020).

The obvious critique to the above is that it is too simple to narrow down and generalize personality types to caricatures. However, it must be recognized that this is merely presented as an outlier, not the exception. But in terms of a general spectrum, it is one which applies to the most recent instances of knowledge workers adapting to home working, as confirmed by the data.

Not all work is suited for remote working, Schools and retail are two industries that come to mind. However according to Golden and Gajendran (2018), a study conducted on 273 knowledge workers such as; engineering, accounting, sales & marketing professionals found that they perform better in virtual work, so long as their role doesn't require social collaboration. Furthermore, job descriptions which require high levels of concentration and problem-solving abilities perform better within a home setting (Golden and Gajendran, 2018), presuming the normal office interruptions occur daily. Two of the individuals interviewed, echoed such sentiments of feeling much more productive at home than their regular places of work. In addition, within a specific job description, there may encompass tasks which can be more efficiently completed in the setting of a home; such as writing reports and articles (Golden and

Gajendran 2018) while duties akin to conducting performance reviews with a subordinate, should still be executed face to face.

 Workers with both flexibility over time and place are described as 'Timelords' (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) they hold a lot of power and leeway and this is a most coveted position as backed by the data. Those with limited flexibility in time teamed with static location for their work are 'Time-stretchers', and those with fixed times but variable locations are 'Remote-controllers' (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). We can expect to see the majority of the labour force eventually become remote controllers over the next decade with a considerable rise in timelords (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) also.

 Further to boot, one key component recurs more often than others, this being communication; specifically, telecommunication. Telecommuters generally experience reduced physical presence with colleagues thus receive fewer opportunities for impromptu conversations or remain unaware of the tacit norms of the organization as this comes with the territory of increased reliance on computer-mediated communication (Raghuram et al., 2019).

 In telecommunication research, temporality is conceptualized as temporal flexibility (Raghuram et al., 2019) available to employees to structure their working hours. The temporal flexibility surrounding telecommuting is an important consideration for telecommuter productivity because it enables telecommuters to work during their peak performance times and save commuting time (Raghuram et al., 2019). Furthermore, spatial separation will now be looked as a safer option health wise subsequently following the pandemic.

 Successful entrepreneur Patrick Bet-David (Valuetainment, 2020) goes on to provide 10 tips for working successfully from the home, which are listed below:

1. Work from home – getting tasks done.
2. Dressing for work – as if going into the office.
3. Leave home to go to work at home – simulating commuting.
4. Check internet connection – make sure it's secure and not lagging.
5. Set standards and expectations with whomever lives with you – respect boundaries.
6. Build a workplace - a designated area only for work purposes in the home.
7. Over communicate and document everything – providing evidence if ever needed.
8. Don't tell friends you're working from home – so they don't come to distract
9. Protect confidential information – from family or housemates.
10. Deliver everything on time – hitting deadlines with quality to retain and build trust.

 One interview respondent seemed to back this claim "the best way to stay motivated and limit distractions in my opinion is to keep a routine which mirror what you are used to, that way it

feels normal". Routines become embedded in organizational memory (Tsang and Zahra, 2008). Many will find that sticking to similar routines, as one would in an office setting, can be entirely beneficial and even though its relatively subjective, methods have been proven to increase productivity. It has been found that such methods are being advised to remote workers of the world throughout 2020. Another recurring point from the data, for those dealing with sensitive information, was that protecting confidential information can be more difficult than it sounds. Those working with sensitive data felt their fair share of anxieties over managing this information on a regular basis from home.

This topic is largely subjective and there is no one size fits all approach. This mostly boils down to the mindset of each individual worker, as many can function equally as well or better using alternative methods of virtual work such as working to their own timeline and setting other daily routines not similar that of those in office settings. This subjectivity is reflected through the collected data, as there was a split between those who saw value in their normal day to day routines which they either missed or replaced whilst others were seemingly content at not having to commute or dress for work. It's not difficult then to see why such behaviours would induce a level of psychological energy to increase productivity levels. Anything positive which helps the process should be encouraged and utilized. If it works for a few it could work for many, but of course this is not a guaranteed certainty.

Makarius and Larson (2017) suggest **four** key competences which lead to successful remote working and performance outcomes which the improve effectiveness and satisfaction:

1. establishing behavioural guidelines

2. developing trust

3. coordinating information

4. using media.

Setting boundaries through behavioural guidelines is almost akin to a code of conduct policy style which sets boundaries for employees to differentiate between virtual work and free reign. Developing trust on both ends is necessary in remote work just as it is under any normal circumstances for maximum productivity there must be transparency and people on the same wavelength. Coordinating information in order to have at disposal to be able to accomplish tasks to best possible and most accurate standard. Finally using media for communication putting it to best use such as via phone, email or now with the many conferencing applications available (Makarius and Larson, 2017).

Makarius and Larson (2017) observe that much of the existing research on virtual work implicitly places the responsibility of the development of individual virtual workers on organizations, managers and team leaders; rather than on the actual workers themselves. But any research conducted on the validity of virtual work should primarily focus on the individual worker. Successful virtual working relies more on the workers than managers as there is bound to be less physical contact between the two, so workers carry a heavier burden of responsibility but also have the luxury of more freedom.

As the nature of work continues to evolve, the skills needed to succeed in changing climates become even more important. Here, we shift the conversation about virtual work to a broader context, to one which is argued, better represents the reality of virtual work in today's context. Individual workers should be imbued with greater agency and responsibility to develop their own virtual work skills. The process of individual adaptation to virtual work should be highlighted as focal point for the argument of having a policy of self-management for virtual workers. This could be a key mechanism in connecting established factors such as individual differences and intellectual capacity to the developmental behaviours needed to succeed in the virtual work environment. The self-management model could provide a foundation for future research incorporating virtual work, cognitive process, and the development of virtual intelligence and responsibility.

A common mistake manager's make is that they tend to over-compensate for lack of direct observation, by closely monitoring how remote employees do their work. This strategy is doomed to fail (Reyt, 2020) because managers don't know everything that's going on in the lives of remote employees. For example, an employee might decide to work on a weekend to compensate for taking care of a sick child during the week. As previously mentioned, boundaries must be set and likewise respected. Time must be permitted; however, it is understandable that if deadlines are consistently missed or the work standard is subpar without valid reasoning, then this gives causality for dismissal or termination of contracts. If such breaches are indeed included in the signed employment contract.

Managers must ensure that every employee has the capacity to dial into the office if they need to do that, to get work done, to get through firewalls etc. You need to make sure that every individual has access to the devices that they need and the skills that they need to use their devices (Harvard Business Review, 2020). You also need to make sure that no one feels left out. You must make sure that everyone's included.

Technology, training and the prioritization of who needs what, when and all related to the work that you're doing, the stakeholders that you need to serve and the deadlines that you need to make sure that you need to achieve (Harvard Business Review, 2020). It's really a set of

activities that must be thought through very carefully while at the same time ensuring that your organization is dealing with the traumatic events (Garfin et al., 2018) from a socio, emotional, psychological perspective. Once the entire infrastructure, the technical means, are set up, you must have managers do their team do their working from home team launches, and that must happen right away. Remote work is an actual learned skill and craft in itself.

 Such conditions often bring about best practice methods. The creation of routines for the home front related to work, increases productivity greatly (Neeley, 2020), as workers often need to differentiate professional and private lives. These lines of course become blurred when blended together, so a default separation point is necessary. This Means you have to; wake up at the same time, take a shower, get dressed, not necessarily entirely professional attire but no pyjamas at the very least, You've got to go carve out that space where you would work, that comfortable space, negotiated space. If you have a partner, you've got to figure out what that space is, and you must be much disciplined. You need to find out what your physical activities are going to entail on a regular basis. Otherwise you're going to start feeling bad, very quickly (Harvard Business Review, 2020) thus stagnating.

 It turns out that flexibility is one of the greatest benefits of remote work (Harvard Business Review, 2020) but this works best when being very, very disciplined and working in bursts. Turn off all the things that would draw us and during a certain period, meaning cut off all access to external social media, phones, television etc. Do the things that you would do normally, be much disciplined about those (Harvard Business Review, 2020) as mentioned the key is to be able to separate the professional from the personal. Remote work is going to be more permanent than previously thought (Harvard Business Review, 2020); this year is proving to be the clear example of this.

 According to the research of Raišienė et al (2020) paint the portrait of the most satisfied teleworker as "a Millennial woman holding a higher education degree, with 4–10 years of professional experience, and working from home two days a week in the management and administration field." In contrast the employee most disillusioned with telework appears to be a "man of the baby boomers' generation, holding a university degree, of up to 20 years or more of professional experience, and who started working remotely during the quarantine" doing so only because it was mandatory. It then appears that those most satisfied with telework are young to middle-aged employees who can combine telework with traditional office work and who have enough professional and telework experience (Raišienė et al., 2020).

4.4: Tools for Remote Workers

One prominent success factor, for an organization contemplating transitioning to remote working arrangements to consider are; the availability of technical tools to provide their employees with. Afterall a mediocre technology pursued within a great business model may be more valuable than that of a great technology exploited via a mediocre business model (Chesbrough, 2010).

Andriessen (2003) provides information and telecommuting tools in five categories, which assist remote workers in notable ways. **Firstly**, applications such as E-Mail, instant message/chat applications or telephone/ mobile technology*;* provides geographically separated workers with access to quick and easy interaction. **Secondly**, *Information sharing and consulting tools* such as document sharing drives, offers storing and sharing of information capabilities remotely. **Thirdly**, *Collaborative tools* facilitate teamwork through the sharing and co-authoring of documents. As a subgroup, *Group decision support systems* provide a means of brainstorming, evaluating ideas and decision-making processes. The **fourth** is *Coordination tools*, which synchronize workers and manage the sequencing of tasks through group calendars and workflow management systems. **Finally**, *Tools to support social encounters* enable geographically separated remote workers to meet unintentionally "at the coffee machine" through permanently available cameras (Andriessen 2003). Under these conditions, Andriessen (2003) provides evidence as to why remote work is not only viable but could be more beneficial in some instances. We must also remember that the technology behind the tools is also developing, only becoming better and more efficient as we go forward.

Panteli et al., (2019) show that due to the dispersed nature of virtual teams, technology becomes pivotal in communications throughout the different phases of a project. This is understandable as otherwise no one would be able to report back or be on the same wavelength and things would become muddled with potentially more mistakes and colleagues repeating tasks which may have already been completed by another colleague or even remain unaware of a transition in priorities. As corroborated in the data, the primary means of communication was by e-mail, telephone/video call or some form of IM. That is, despite its text based and asynchronous nature, e-mail is generally the primary means through which virtual team leaders informed, updated and motivate their scattered workforce (Panteli et al., 2019). This in turn keeps the remote workers engaged, despite the task complexities and uncertainties. Panteli et al., (2019) findings show that it is not the type of medium, but rather, how it is used that matters in dispersed teams and that even a simple medium, such as e-mail, can be used for promoting engaged employees.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about with it a major player in the remote work sphere, Zoom (Evans, 2020). Video conferencing applications overall have enjoyed a significant rise in users worldwide seeing as they provide a service which is crucial for home working and conferencing. Zoom is a video conferencing application akin to Skype, however whilst Skype have ventured into other business functionalities, Zoom are dedicated to only video conferencing for now. Benefiting greatly from recency bias, Zoom has gained the greater market share and capitalized from the current global situation. Accordingly Zoom company stock rose massively from the beginning of February 2020 to the end of March 2020; as daily downloads surpass 30 times this year (Evans, 2020) over last. Whilst Skype also remains a prevalent tool available for knowledge workers as well as many other such applications offered by the likes of Microsoft. Although skype has been shrinking over this time, indicating that the Zoom application is gaining market share at a rapid rate.

The Zoom tool has seen a huge spike in users from March 2020, with 200 million users per day up from roughly 10 million per day in December 2019. But there are many alternatives to Zoom and the competition in the field is diversifying. So, while there are so many similar services like zoom such as; skype, facetime, google hangouts and other business-to-business solutions such as WebEx and MS teams, Zoom seems to be gaining the most traction and popularity in the mainstream. One element of this success is that Zoom is attractive to the mainstream because it has business capabilities, allowing for conferencing of more than 20 people at a time (Evans, 2020) but also has been marketed for social use. Zoom has become the go to platform for fitness classes, university classes, family and virtual "house parties" for socializing.

Some actually have had their presumptions proved entirely wrong through this practice as Harvard law professor Jeannie Suk Gersen (Harvard Business Review, 2020) found, claiming "I'd never taught online before in any format. I had a lot of uncertainty about exactly how it would work, and I also had assumptions about it that proved to be incorrect." This adaptation in turn brought some interesting results "you look in their face, you're really seeing their expressions (in real time), and they're about as close to you as you are to them and to everyone else." So, you can really engage in a dialogue which in some ways can be better.

However, such applications and methods do come with privacy concerns, as expected. Suddenly million daily users around the world, including dignitaries are broadcasting themselves online (Rosenblatt, 2020). This then comes to be a target for hackers or other forms of data breaches. Zoom has been sued for allegedly sharing user data with third parties (Rosenblatt, 2020) without users' consent. In such light important meetings, with confidential

information may be at risk of data hacks and breaches due to lapses in security or breach of policies. Thus, trust on such applications should be taken at one's own risk.

 The privacy issue doesn't only apply to video conferencing applications but is also a stipulation from home working. Many workers and organizations alike may feel sceptical about home working due to privacy concerns whether it be abuse of power, risks of fraud, money laundering but also on the organizations side they may feel workers won't have adequate firewall protection at home and be at more increased likelihood of data breaches or hacks; of course they could cover the costs of firewalls and other tools applications they may feel best suited for their safety concerns but this could prove to be too costly for many organizations.

4.5: Managing Remote Workers

 One of the key ingredients for a successful remote working arrangement is management. Historically, managers have been accountable for the provision of work to their staff (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). Managers have been in command, deciding; what needs to be done, by whom and when by. They would then monitor the progress and use various motivational methods (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) accompanied by rewards and punishment (Woolley and Fishbach, 2018) to encourage (or deter) their subordinates to perform efficiently. This whole process assumes that the single manager knows best so ergo has the authority to tell underlings what to do without resistance. But for the longest time now, respected management writers such as Drucker (2012), have been arguing that motivation is about giving people responsibility and creating an environment where they can use their skills to achieve something satisfying.

 These are not entirely new sentiments, as they have long been theorized by the likes of Hertzberg et al (1959), whom identified a series of "motivators" which are factors which motivate people to work harder, they considered these factors to be hygiene factors. If these hygiene factors are not followed, it will demotivate employees. Simply being present at work is not enough of a motivator, even in traditional offices, so if these hygiene factors are not present in the remote workplace, then there arise demotivating effects. If the hygiene factors are in place and adhered to, then that's good yet they solely are not enough to simply be considered as "motivating" factors. Hertzberg et al (1959) still believed that there were other factors that were more instrumental than them. Hertzberg (1959) first identified that giving employees significantly more responsibility in their role would motivate them. Thus, by designing Employees jobs and giving employees work which they found fulfilling and perhaps challenging yet rewarding, not just financially. Hertzberg also stressed the importance of recognizing

achievements by recognizing when employees were performing well which contributed greatly to the business success.

According to the literature, the core phases of a virtual project lifecycle often include the: welcoming, performing and wrapping up phases (Panteli et al., 2019). In the welcoming phase, the main purpose or mission of the team is elucidated upon and resources along with roles being allocated. Because of members' heterogeneity and dispersion, it is critical at this early stage to embark on a socialization process in order to promote synergies and shared understanding (Panteli et al., 2019) of the overall goals for the team. Moving on, in the performing phase team members are expected to complete various tasks assigned, attend any meetings, report back to the team and update their progress with other members. The performing phase involves the team moving the goal forward by meeting deadlines (Panteli et al., 2019). Once action is underway, the team leader should provide the team with feedback regarding the task and performance. Moreover, there should be an acknowledgment and communication of what has been completed towards reaching the team's goals during this phase; whilst motivating the team should occur on a continual basis (Panteli et al., 2019). Finally, during the wrapping up phase the overall successes of the team are celebrated, and members are prepared for redeployment to other tasks, another branch or another team entirely.

Under innovation theory, leaders should promote a team climate of emotional safety, respect, and joy through emotional support and shared decision-making (Schein, 1995) albeit this is easier said than done. A climate can be locally created by what leaders do, what circumstances apply, and what environments afford. A culture can only evolve out of mutual experience and shared learning (Schein, 1995).

Brian Tracy (2014) is a leading authority in the field of leadership and management. Tracy (2014) lists many models of leadership but here a handful have been singled out for closer inspection in relation to remote working arrangements:

Structural - This form of management is self-explanatory, being very rigid. It is classified as the most popular, classical form of top tier management, of which most workers have experienced at some point in time. The basic concept here is that the workers know exactly what needs to be done, why it needs to be done and to what standard. The responsibility of staff is to be completely accepted by the manager. Quick decisions are made without the input or challenge of others (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). The rigid nature of this style allows for more transactional activities, such as rewarding or punishing team members to occur. Pre-determined goals are usually set in the form of KPIs or similar metrics in order to boost motivation and performance. This is a leadership style best suited for when a team is already

motivated experts, needing little guidance. However, this comes with limited to zero flexibility which makes it dually incompatible with remote work. The structural model is very autocratic and heavily focused on the singular leader filtering commands down the chain. Whilst this approach can often improve performance, it can be highly frustrating for most remote workers and some knowledge workers (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). This can cause paralysis within an organization leading to breakdown in communication (Tracy, 2014) where new opportunities tend to be missed.

Participative - Here managers make their teams aware that they care about them, by putting them first. This is often done through practice of the friendship factor with the team. This strategy consists of **Three** components:

1. **Time**; having patience and understanding
2. **Caring**; expressing care and concern for workers and their problems
3. **Respect**; treating them with the same respect, patience and understanding as you would family members or close friends.

This democratic approach is concerned with the input of those most affected by the very decisions regarding them. The overriding focus is on the team, with decision making powers shared across the team. This can create a good working environment producing high performing teams through employees feeling valued and respected and heard, but this comes at the cost of a slow decision-making processes with an over dependence on team unit and burden of collaboration causing friction over original ideation. This democratic form of management is best utilized when subordinates are better experts than their superiors, so it becomes necessary to create barriers of ownership. This strategy indicates compatibility with many forms of knowledge work, where qualified employees could have higher knowledge levels, on certain matters, than their superiors. Participative management can lead to open innovation practises too.

Servant – Servant management is a more radical version of the participative style; in the sense that it is more one sided, whereby the manager views their role as a means of servitude to their team. The **golden rule** here is to manage workers the way one would want to be managed themselves. Priorities are Ensuring that everyone fully understands their role and has all the tools they require, before they begin. If they don't then the manager provides plenty of learning, training and improvement opportunities. Servant management can elicit peak performances by allowing employees to learn critical skills. This strategy is best suited for a diverse team, where personalized management is necessary for each member. So, servant management could be the best for a firm embarking on a semi remote work basis. This could bring about a great deal of respect, trust and loyalty as well as building a Strong culture, as its tailored to the

team's needs. But, if there is no balance, this style could very well lead to the team gaining the upper hand and thus full control. This would create an environment with lacking unclear authority, vision and direction.

Transformational - This is the style most favoured by Tracy (2017) himself. Here managers transform people by tapping into their hopes, dreams and ideals. Motivating employees by example, through being highly motivated oneself which then becomes the cultural norm. The transformational leadership theory posits that leaders can transform followers threefold:

1. Increasing their awareness of task importance;

2. By focusing them first on team or organizational goals;

3. By activating their higher order needs

(Bass, 1985)

Productivity is thus enhanced through high transparency and communication. Transformational management is best for building lasting personal strengths which make the team more successful. This method can inspire employees and alleviate fears ultimately helping to overcome obstacles; unless there is a lack of proficiency or the team is defiant or unwilling to change (Tracy, 2014).

Laissez-faire - Here a manager mostly delegates, allowing the team to self-manage, following a self-efficacy (Kevill et al., 2017) model of effectuation. This follows the guidelines set by Peter Drucker (2008) in relation to managing oneself and can be considered an "everyone for themselves" approach to management. The laissez-faire model can be highly effective for remote work but can be tricky and risky; taking time to implement and perfect. This is best utilized when working with creative experts, where workers have a proven track record and the team is driven. Of course, these are not the only means of leadership available today, but these are at the fore in relation to knowledge workers and remote work. Other variations such as strategic and servant style leadership have been accessed earlier in the research and are also noteworthy. But the crucial outcome here is that we understand that self-management (Drucker, 2008) fits neatly into a laissez-faire model of free leadership. The question this raises is that is this the best method for knowledge workers working remotely? Under this free leadership approach personal responsibility is relied upon and thus develops, supporting fast course corrections and higher retention rates. This model also encourages freedom and mobility but comes at the high price of pressure, missed deadlines, negligence and unclear guidelines which lack of accountability (Tracy, 2014).

This permits workers the freedom to perform individually and stay out of each other's way, once tasks are assigned (Drucker, 2012). Input or guidance is only available when demanded. Here the main manager acts as a spearhead only by pointing the team to a vision or goal. The means of how tasks are achieved up to the workers themselves which can in turn illicit feelings of entrepreneurial spirit and higher sense of purpose. It is rather evident that the laissez-fair model relies heavily on proficient self-efficacy (Kevill et al., 2017). Thus, this style is best utilized when there is tremendous expertise along with a team of highly experienced employees who don't require constant micro-management (Tracy, 2014). Though this approach does not work as well when employees require more constant supervision, which can ultimately lead to poor production, output, lack of regular feedback and lack of control.

We know that management styles differ, boiling down to a default style a manager feels most comfortable and natural with, for their respective institutions and field of work. The goal is to communicate and lead others to achieve their own vision or their firms' vision. Understanding which category of management is best suited for the work being undertaken is of paramount importance to outcomes. This should be done through assessment of type of work, method of work, organizational competencies and strengths against weaknesses which are elements covered by Drucker (2012).

Structural leadership is the least ideal for the remote working arrangements. This is backed up by the interview data, where structural forms of management have had to adapt and adjust to some degree to meet the challenges of remote working. The biggest reason for this is the prerequisite for physical presence and micromanagement which remote working doesn't offer. Additionally, Structural hierarchies are fast becoming obsolete (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) belonging more to a bygone era.

Now with the emergence of more highly qualified employee's and knowledge workers, there isn't as much faith and belief in the hierarchal system (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) of filtering down orders. Participative management is very middle ground so could prove to be effective but would require constant dialogue so would be slow and impractical. Principles of transformational and laissez faire management would be best deployed for remote working arrangements. This is evident through the interview findings, where most respondents had experienced a considerable shift from structural and participative management styles to more flexible and free practises when working from home. This signals that organizations seem to be aware that remote working arrangements require different management tactics.

Being a successful manager for remote work comes down to people and distance management skills as well as understanding how to deal with the assortment of characters one will find in remote knowledge workers. Management itself is an inexact science (Tracy, 2014)

with no one size fits all approach readily available for any situation. The best people managers can improvise, knowing when and how to change their approach to adapt to any situation. Neufield (2008) also establishes communication effectiveness as a significant mediator of both transformational and transactional contingent reward leadership style on leader performance. Communication effectiveness is also positively associated with perceived leader performance (Neufield, 2008). The implication here is that managers who are perceived to engage in effective communication behaviours are also seen as exhibiting stronger performance wield (Neufield, 2008).

So far, we have been building up to the pairing of remote work and self-management. Kevill et al. (2017) especially raises the importance of evaluating one's own abilities, reflecting on past experiences and knowledge in order to improve future actions. We have so far conceded that automation and digitalization will lead to some restructuring of working lives, as will now the COVID-19 pandemic of 2019-2020. These objectives having been unearthed leaves us pondering the next steps in the future of work chronicles. Remote working has been slowly gaining traction, becoming more popular and demanded over the last few years; as computing technology advances. But now, we have seen evidence on a mass scale, where worldwide labour markets and economies having to recently adapt to some form of remote work or suffer dire consequences. The resulting economic upheaval and heavy job losses incurred (BBC News, 2020) are proof enough that remote working isn't the outright solution for all work just yet, but over the next decade will have likely eaten a significant portion of developed nations labour markets.

Self-management is perhaps none more so effective than when paired with remote working. When working remotely, there is no other physical presence to spur workers on (Reyt, 2020) so individuals must stay on top of their own deadlines and goals with targets to meet (Drucker, 2012). There is no place for discourse, distraction or laziness as no work would get done. It's this lack of productivity, which is a concern for remote working, but is this fear justified? Some argue that this more so comes down to the personality and work ethic (Drucker, 2008) of the individual. Granted people differ greatly in their motivations and career upbringing, so employees may require different forms of leadership and management (Drucker, 2012) in order to get the best results and management can be an inexact science (Tracy, 2014). The whole field of leadership studies is dedicated to this very matter, so as not for it to be as plainly pinpoint outcomes on employees work ethic alone. This is probably why then self-management is best for remote work, as the ends justify the means. Even the title of "manager" is arbitrary yet has shown to positively impact an individual's outlook, confidence and increase productivity in people's work; viewed as a promotion almost.

The results from the data further highlight that remote work can be a viable option for many forms of knowledge work. Though there are points of contention such as; social security, privacy concerns and data protection policies. Also, the rules and regulations can differ between industries and countries prohibiting remote work for certain roles. Of the select few interviewed, all but one considered remote work as a viable option for their roles. Most of these individuals would consider at least a part time remote working arrangement in the future with two respondents going as far as to claim they would prefer to work from home full time.

Afterall Maslow's (1943) pyramid of human needs includes "sense of belongingness" which can be a consideration here as it will be hard attained for those working remotely, in isolation. A strong sense of culture and camaraderie is lacking which are sentiments shared by several of the interviewees. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs finishes with self-actualization. This can be difficult to achieve without the solid foundation of the core basic needs; belonging and esteem. Self-actualization is essentially the cherry on top and not the starting point of human needs. So, it is understandable that not all the remote workers during lockdowns, thrust into the fire, will immediately reach a level of self-actualization and become adept at self-management.

The literature similarly echoes these sentiments that remote work is entirely possible for many industries. Once companies realize if benefits outweigh the disadvantages, then there is now reason for them to purposefully avoid embracing it. Companies are profit driven so care greatly about the numbers, statistics and performance the most; so, if they have an opportunity to cut costs whilst delivering the same quality if not better standard of work whilst also being more sustainable, then they would absolutely commit. This sentiment was largely shared amongst a handful of interview respondents who stated the above reasons as some factors to why remote working arrangements would be attractive for organizations and will likely become more mainstream over the next decade.

There has been a semi-consensus belief that the future of work was always going to be remote, based largely in cloud systems and mobile technology. Trends have been heading this way, long before the masses were ordered to shelter at home for the foreseeable future in 2020 (Patel, 2020). This change was supposed to be gradual, played out over the course of many years; as technology develops to enable safe and secure access to the tools and information remote workers require for the proper upkeep of businesses. COVID-19 has simply accelerated the trend; placing us ahead of the curve. The number of remote employees at most knowledge worker-based industries rose from 10% to almost 100% over the span of a few days (Patel, 2020) in early 2020.

Whatever comes next, there's little chance of going entirely back to the way things were prior to 2020. Commuting from home to a central office where you have face-to-face interactions with co-workers suddenly seems quaint (Patel, 2020) which is also reflected by interviewees. Organizations that will not adapt to enable flexible homeworking arrangements for knowledge workers; will likely struggle to retain their employees and attract newly qualified applicants. The educated workforce will expect to have the ability to work from home, using new and emerging technology (Bailey et al., 2019). Such technologies include; Software as a Service (SaaS) platforms, VPNs, video conferencing, and online collaboration tools to complete tasks (Bailey et al., 2019). Those workers which have experienced trauma (Garfin et al., 2018) from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as losing their job; will remember this feeling. They will ensure that future roles offer work from home possibilities, in case of a similar turn of events in the future. So, job security will also be factored into knowledge workers decision when mulling over new opportunities.

Furthermore, according to entrepreneur Patrick Bet-David (Valuetainment, 2020), there is proper etiquette to working from the home which if abided by, should not be challenging in the slightest. Bet-David (Valuetainment, 2020) gives the example of how many freelancers work highly functionally from home around the same distractions as everyone else yet can manage difficulties and limitations with ease. A critical component of limiting distractions is to first identify them, then to be aware of them and finally deal with them accordingly (Drucker, 2008). Distractions come in many forms and can range from procrastination through electronic devices, televisions, radio, music, sports to family members and housemates being home causing some disruption.

Remote working requires very honest, clear and transparent relationships (Valuetainment, 2020) between employees with employers and themselves (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). Employers often question whether employees will work honestly or take advantage of them (Reyt, 2020). One solution to such concerns is to base salary on a Project based pay. So, income is dependent on projects being completed in a timely and accurate manner. One of those interviewed stated that fearing job security was motivation enough to work from home as employers can dismiss employees at any time if they are not satisfied and would have reason to do so if deadlines are consistently not met or hastily prepared lacklustre work. But this is not ideal for employees either as you would not want quick turnover of employees which would need retraining and may be less committed and developing loyalty.

Peter Drucker (2008) professes that its possible for quick career progression to result from sheer drive, talent and ambition. However, to achieve this, one must individually guide their own career (Drucker, 2008) rather than relying on an organization to do so. Drucker (2008)

goes on to explain that individuals must carve out their place in the world and recognise when to change course of action. He implicates this through a series of questions one must ask themselves regarding their satisfaction and prospects.

Drucker (2008) advocates what he calls the mirror test; this is where one would ponder the type of person they would want to see in front of the mirror. This stress test provides an outline and creates a personal value system which should then be used to find compatibility with that of the type of organization one would desire to work for. One should avoid conflicts where values differ, for example a company's focus on either short-term gain or long-term goals do not match with the employee, then one should not waste the time, effort and energy in committing to that employer. This is all about goal alignment and is why many organizations nowadays tend to have mission statements, as this could be a deal breaker for many knowledge workers moving forward.

Still the reality remains that most people don't know where they're best suited until they're well past the mid-20s. This has become more prevalent than ever before, as life expectancies generally increase where advancements in modern medicine meet the confusion caused by over exposure to media and boundless career avenue options for knowledge workers. We come to find that often successful careers are not planned, they develop over time when workers have trained and are prepared for the moment opportunity comes because they have figured their best way of working, their values are aligned, and they play to their strengths (Drucker, 2008). For employers, knowing what suits employees best can transform an average worker that is competent but mediocre, into an outstanding performer.

To manage oneself requires taking responsibility of relationships (Drucker, 2008) as most knowledge workers work with other people so are affected through other people. Developing good working relationships and etiquette are important for home workers as it is important to take command for communicating with colleagues. Performance relies on this so it should be sought to reduce personality conflicts and build trust between colleagues. This is the solid foundation that strong companies are built on this; this doesn't have to mean that colleagues necessarily like each other but recognise they need each other, understand one another and are stronger together.

Drucker (2008) goes on to conclude that in the modern working world managing oneself requires unprecedented things from the individual. This effectively means that each knowledge worker should think and behave like a CEO which is the burden of responsibility carried by all at this moment in history and time with the future of society relying on it (Kevill et al., 2017). Whilst Drucker (2008) raises many valid points that can provide framework for those seeking to better themselves, it is entirely a fair assessment that not everyone can apply these

philosophies. This is just the way of life, where not everyone is cut out to be a leader, not even for themselves in their own life or will take a lot longer to develop the skills to get there than some others will.

Motivational work design theory hypothesizes job enrichment producing a range of positive employee and organizational-level outcomes (Moussa, Bright and Varua, 2017). These include high-internal work motivation, higher quality work, increased job satisfaction, reduced absenteeism and lower staff turnover. Drawing on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Hackman and Oldham posit three "critical psychological states" as mediators of the motivational task characteristics and these hypothesized outcomes. Hackman and Oldham's (1976) job characteristics theory posits that there are five core job characteristics:

1. Skill variety - Using an appropriate variety of a skillset; too many might be excessive, too few may be boring.

2. Task identity - Being able to identify with the work at hand as more whole and complete, hence enabling more pride to be taken in the outcome of said work. This brings a relatability factor along with it also which will be beneficial for the collective if other employees identify in the same way.

3. Task significance - Being able to identify a task as contributing to something greater, for society or a group over and beyond the self. Hackman and Oldham (1976) suggests that one will be more motivated if they are contributing to the firm for the greater good by looking after someone else or doing something that will benefit someone else. Conversely, one will be less motivated if they are only making a faceless owner wealthier or providing a pointless service.

4. Autonomy - Responsibility is, by definition, derived from autonomy. An autonomous job provides substantial freedom, independence and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used when carrying out tasks.

5. Feedback - Knowledge of outcomes then arise from feedback. It implies an employee's awareness of how effective they are at converting their effort into performance. This can range from output figures to customer satisfaction ratings. The point is that the feedback offers information that once known, can be used to do things differently if necessary. Feedback can come from other people (managers, colleagues and customers) or the job itself.

These five characteristics are then further enhanced by three critical psychological states; experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of the actual results. Hackman and Oldham's (1976) theory proposes that high motivation is related to experiencing these three psychological states whilst working. These three states can be recognised as: (see below)

1. **Meaningfulness of work**

Work must have meaning to the worker, being something that one should identify with. This does not occur just as a set of movements to be constantly repeated. This is something fundamental to intrinsic motivation, so much so that work should be motivating in and of itself (as opposed to motivating only to an end). Hence why most companies today incorporate mission statements, in order to attract those that will find the most meaning in their chosen field.

2. **Responsibility of outcomes**

One is given the opportunity to be a success or failure at their job when enough freedom of action is awarded. This would include the ability to make changes and incorporate the learning you gain whilst doing the job. However, this is a double-edged sword and any mistake or shortcoming would have to be personally accounted for.

3. **Knowledge of actual results**

Importance here is twofold. Firstly, to provide the person knowledge on how successful their work has been, which in turn enables them to learn from their mistakes. Moreover, the second is to connect them emotionally to the customer base of their outputs, thus giving further purpose to their work (Hackman and Oldham, 1976).

These three core psychological states in turn influence work outcomes of; job satisfaction, absenteeism, work motivation and so on. The five core job characteristics can be combined to form a motivating potential score (MPS) for a job, which can be used as an index of how likely a job is to affect an employee's attitudes and behaviours (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Roy & Khokle (2016) corroborate the importance of management in order to build dynamic capabilities via the use of clear communication. Additionally, the inception of cross-functional teams together with dedicated resources, on top of acknowledgment of organizational limitations; are necessary to realign organizational operations (Roy & Khokle, 2016). Managerial cognition relative to dynamic capabilities, refers to abilities such as attention retention and perceptions of change, communication, reasoning and problem-solving skills (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015).

4.6: Impact for Knowledge Workers

Researchers have shown keen interest in the impact of remote work on knowledge workers. These pinpointed impacts can be broadly narrowed into three categories; family and nonwork, interpersonal outcomes and work-relatedness. Working from home has been promoted to lessen work-family life clashes (Allen et al. 2015). As such, remote work offers individuals the

flexibility to manage work, personal and family lives in a self-determined way facilitating alternatives for family care. However, remote workers are tasked with several challenges, as their work becomes muddled with the family domain (Eddleston and Mulki 2017). Difficulties may arise in families accepting that individuals are working when at home (Olson 1983) or vice versa.

Additionally, a variety of work-related principles of remote work have been identified by scholars. Generally, remote work is positively associated with job satisfaction (Gajendran and Harrison 2007) and overall quality of life. This effect is enhanced by way of remote workers being perceived as having more autonomy. Alas, larger influxes of remote work can lead to career satisfaction plateaus; the lack of social interaction (Golden and Veiga 2005) could be at the root of this. Supervisor rated job performance has positive correlations to remote work (Gajendran and Harrison 2007) likewise with career progression. Though some workers can be more productive working remotely, others may struggle to limit distractions. There is data which suggests that some remote workers may find negative consequences (Coltrane et al., 2013) despite the positive correlation between remote work and job performance.

Remote workers may come to be viewed as less committed, bringing harm to long term career progression (Olson 1983) aspirations. This damage could still occur even if undeserved or not true. On the other hand, some studies suggest that remote work has positive associations with organizational identity and commitment (Hunton and Norman 2010). Workers may be found to be more committed to the cause, because having the option of working from home (Olson 1983) is still viewed as a luxury. Meanwhile, due to a lack of occasions to validate work-related identities (Bartel et al. 2012); organizational development is challenged. Remote work has been correlated to the disruption of social proximity, which could affect relationships with colleagues and enhance feelings of isolation (Allen et al. 2015); with regards to interpersonal outcomes. Considering this, remote workers may have limited opportunities to build a stable of professional networks, find mentors or share kinship with colleagues (Allen et al. 2009). Still, physical interaction is rated as the most important form of communication (Sias et al. 2012); for the creation and upkeep of workplace relations. Really, the extent to which each employee values formal or informal socializing (Cooper and Kurland 2002) varies; with the level of isolation experienced by remote workers being largely dependent on this.

4.7: Dynamic Capabilities

Dynamic capabilities are defined as a firm's ability to alter its resource configurations by applying certain capabilities for adapting to changing environments and to achieve new forms of competitive advantage (Teece et al., 1997). Dynamic refers to the capacity to renew existing

competencies to achieve flexibility while dealing with a changing environment. The term "Capabilities" emphasizes the key role of strategic management in appropriately adapting, integrating and reconfiguring internal and external organizational resources and competencies to match the requirements of changing environments or even influence them in desired ways. An important element of resource allocation and management has been a necessity during these trying times and has largely been the difference between survival or not in many cases.

Dynamic capabilities concern the firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments (Teece, 1997). They tend to involve higher-level activities that can enable an enterprise to direct its ordinary activities toward high payoff endeavours (Teece, 2014). Within evolving and competitive fields, firms must constantly conceive and produce new value propositions; hence rethinking their entire strategy (Gay, 2014). Thus, designing viable business model configurations should be an unending task, No matter the sector or industry (Gay, 2014).

Thus, dynamic capability refers to the ability of a firm to renew itself in the face of a changing environment by changing its set of resources (Teece and Pisano, 1994). This could be done through an acquisition of another organization which would then become an asset (resource) to the firm (Dannells, 2011). Aspects of this include; Leveraging the brand (brand extension), leveraging distribution channels & leveraging customer understandings. In relation to mergers and acquisitions, the notion of "leverage" holds a lot of power and influence (Dannells, 2011). Configuration of resources Then enable the firm to accomplish a task. After a merger or accusation has taken place there will need to be configuration or, better yet, reconfiguration of some sort to form an alignment in order to move forward.

Tripsas and Gavetti (2000) Explore how the combination of capabilities and cognition helps to explain organizational inertia in a time of radical technological change. By focusing on cognition at the level of the senior management team gives critical influence of top management teams on strategic decision making. They Examine how managerial cognitive representations may play a central role in terms of constraining organizational behaviour, and ultimately, the development of a firm's capabilities.

Organizational inertia is the "Influence" of top tier management, whereas organizational behaviour directly correlates to the culture of the workplace. Organizational behaviours tend to change more often, such as during merger's or acquisition but so does harmony within the firm along with it. These are important factors to consider in relation to organizational routines and behaviours. Dynamic capabilities of a firm must be considered as a concept in relation to the transition to remote working modalities. Teece and Pisano (1994) suggested that a firm's dynamic capabilities are determined by:

- ➢ Processes – managerial and organizational "routines";
- ➢ Positions – current endowments of technology, customer bases and suppliers;
- ➢ Paths – available strategic alternatives.

The term "Capability", in the strategic context of a firm, should serve two fundamental purposes, namely, performance and coordination of activities (Helfat and Peteraf, 2003). The capability of an organization means that it has reached some minimum level of functionality that permits repeated and reliable performance of an activity, in contrast to ad hoc activity that does not reflect practiced or patterned behaviour. The magnitude of the capability could vary from firm to firm for the same functionality. For example, in the e-commerce industry, firms such as Amazon or eBay have effective online-sales service capability at different levels of functionalities.

Winter (2000) defines operational capabilities simply as "high-level" routines such as manufacturing a certain product, processing transactions and so on. On the other hand, dynamic capabilities are the unique and rare capabilities which don't involve the production of a good or provisions of a service, they instead build, integrate or reconfigure the existing operational capabilities of the firm (Helfat and Peteraf, 2003). DCs work inversely to operational capabilities, which are generally static and operate independently. Therefore, DCs cannot be easily replicated, integrated or imitated by competitors. DCs cannot be transferred, in a complete sense, between different firms because of the attendant interdependencies in the firms' resources, routines and systems, all of which make it impossible to change one without another. Enterprises with stronger DCs tend to be more flexible and adaptive to changing environments, and hence more successful too (Teece, 2014). Thus, DCs provide a foundation for sustaining competitive difference over time (Teece, 2007). Several alternative conceptualizations of DCs were subsequently offered by various thinkers.

An important consideration to recall within dynamic capabilities research, has been the role of managerial capabilities. Previous research has particularly focused on features such as: managerial cognition, self-efficacy, human and social capital, along with communicative qualities (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Roy and Khokle, 2016; Kevill et al., 2017). Human resources play a pivotal role in all firms, but especially more in dynamic environments; adapting new ways toward strategy formulation and execution is a humane activity. According to the recent advances in the emerging field of social cognitive neuroscience, cognition and emotional logic in human resources play a significant role in the process of their strategic adaptation underpinning the capabilities that promote organizational learning, adaptation and performance (Hodgkinson and Healey, 2011).

Part of the process of discovering or renewing dynamic capabilities has very much to do with experimentation. Chesbrough (2010) raises the importance of experimentation for business renewal. It is in such pressing times, where it becomes evident that the 'old' business models no longer work; so therefore, business model experimentation becomes imperative (Chesbrough, 2010). It is good practise to experiment to discover what works and what doesn't, especially in such trying times as during a global pandemic. However, it is important to note, that it won't be entirely clear what the eventual 'new' business model will turn out to be, only that experimentation can help to identify it and create the data needed to justify it (Chesbrough, 2010).

Organizational learning literature states that learning is a dynamic process in which forgetting knowledge, old logics, behaviours, and routines leads to new knowledge acquisition (Hedberg, 1981). Therefore, organizations should abandon outdated knowledge, practices, and routines before embarking on acquiring new knowledge (De Holan and Phillips, 2004). This process of organizational unlearning as a dynamic process whereby the firm can identify obsolete knowledge and routines and then eliminate them is a prerequisite for the acquisition of new knowledge (De Holan and Phillips, 2004). A company's absorptive capacity enables the firm to turn knowledge into new products, services, or processes (Leal-Rodríguez et al., 2015) which in turn support innovation. Firms that foster creativity yet struggle for innovation, are more likely to identify and attract interesting new opportunities that might lead to beneficial outcomes (Leal-Rodríguez et al., 2015) in the long run. Understandably innovation practices always involve high risk and its implementation can never guarantee success.

Innovations such as digital transformation (Fitzgerald et al., 2014) enables firms to protect themselves from highly uncertain, unstable scenarios, making them more capable of seeking out new opportunities and exploiting existing ones more efficiently (Matzler et al., 2013) and executing strategy more effectively. In order to generate the most economic value, firms should sustain their capabilities through the infusion of new knowledge and innovation into their operations, a process which requires multiple skills and competences (Zahra, Abdelgawad, & Tsang, 2011). Ultimately organizations build dynamic capabilities to innovate their business models. structured in accordance with the dynamic capability framework with three micro foundations of; sensing, seizing and transforming (Teece et al., 1997). Managerial capabilities are then tied into the framework as an internal enabler and facilitator of dynamic capabilities for business model innovation where new digital products and services; new markets and segments; along with key partnerships contribute to overall digital transformation (Fitzgerald

et al., 2014) which in turn provides the capability to work remotely. A visualizer to highlight this concept can be seen below.
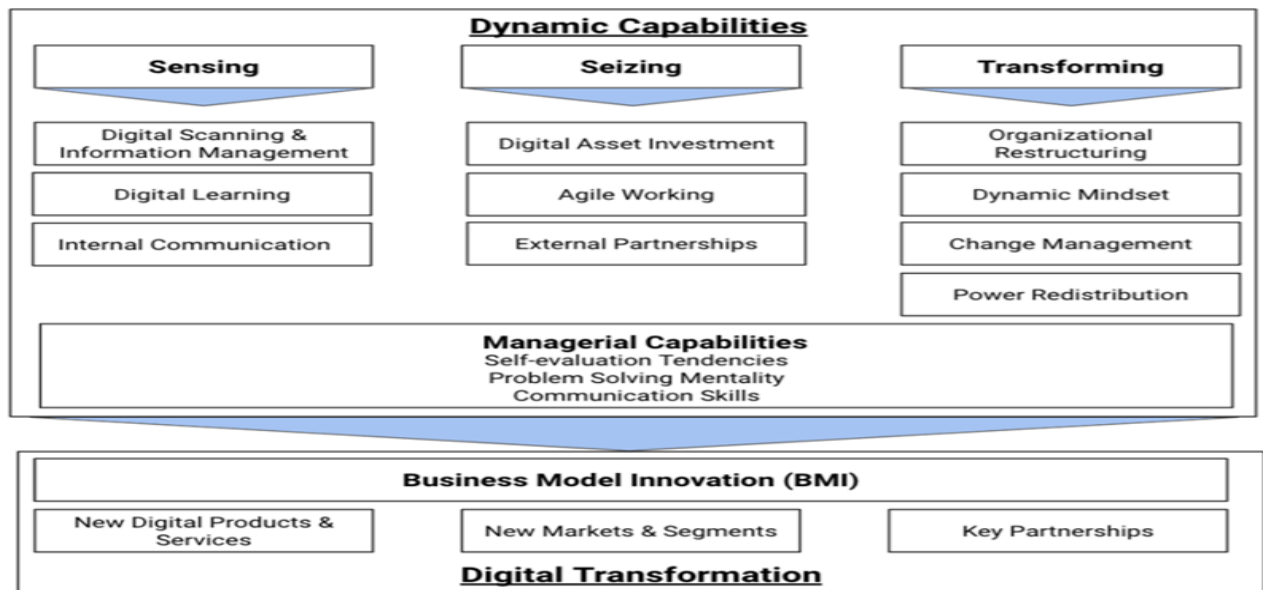
4.8: Agility

Teece' (et al., 1997) concept of dynamic capabilities indicates that corporate agility matters greatly for businesses. Teece et al., (1997) consider corporate agility as the capacity to; sense and shape opportunities and threats; seizing those opportunities; then maintaining competitiveness. This is achieved through; enhancing, combining, protecting, and reconfiguring the organization's intangible and tangible assets. There is a necessity of deploying relevant resources towards opportunities and threats, as elaborated on by Roy & Khokle (2016). This is further supported by Helfat & Peteraf (2015), whom convey for a positive influence of top management's problem-solving and reasoning capabilities on seizing capabilities including the design of business models.

Throughout the process, I found that companies are in fact investing in new digital skills and projects, which are supposed to drive change and work on new products & services as well as partnerships to reach untapped markets, which is supported by the claims of Helfat & Peteraf (2015). Such resources and digital departments claim to work in an agile way. Teece et al. (2016, p. 17) frames agility as "the capacity of an organization to efficiently and effectively redeploy/redirect its resources to value creating and value protecting (and capturing) higher-yield activities as internal and external circumstances warrant" much akin to Rigby et al. (2016); finding that agile methods are not only more commonly used within IT departments, but also in the digital departments organizations by working with, product owners, scrum masters, proof of concepts, minimum viable products and the continuous development of their digital offerings.

Agile working also entails flexible sourcing arrangements, such as building on organizational slack and adopting open innovation processes as outlined by Teece et al. (2016). Open innovation is the process of allowing for outsiders to participate in innovation practises. Many firms have successfully pulled this off, with the reasoning behind the method being that there are more options of brilliant and creative minds out there. Privatised firms historically have the mindset of having the best and only capable staff, but open innovation methods challenge this stigma by there being others outside of the organization whose insights could provide for great innovations. Open innovation could be considered as a collaborative process, collaborating with a wider group to reach better and more far reaching solutions. It could also be helpful to reduce costs of internal R&D enabling firms to put more resources on external search strategies and relationships. Chesbrough (2004) suggests that we should manage open innovation as a poker game. In a highly uncertain and changing market, information is not always available and data collection continuously brings new information that needs to be taken into consideration. These methods then build capabilities, as according to (Sambamurthy et al., 2003) by: 1) working together with the customer to build digital solutions; 2) achieve speed and faster decision making as well as; 3) orchestrate agility via external partners.

Although agility seems to be a key component of seizing new opportunities and adapting current business models of the organizations, it comes with its own drawbacks and respective challenges. Similarly, several authors have outlined that for incumbents, real agile action tends to necessitate a deeper and broader digital transformation (Birkinshaw, 2018; Svahn et al., 2017), which concur that agility is usually only a reality in I.T, and digital departments, not necessarily suitable for other areas of an organization. Besides agile methods, organizations often work with further innovative techniques internally, such as innovation challenges and hacker days, which bring forward digital topics and change the way the organization creates value for its client base.

4.9: Sustainability

One recurring theme throughout the data collection phase, was surprisingly regarding sustainability. This leads us to question, is remote working more environmentally sustainable? Growing concerns about climate change pollutants teamed with the widening gap between rich and poor classes, resource shortages, droughts and the range of ecological problems we face have placed new pressures on environmentalists (Caradonna, 2014). According to the likes of Bregman (2017), there is a simple solution to sustainability threats, higher taxation levels. He claims the real issue hindering sustainability practises is tax avoidance, as the richer classes

and certain powerful organizations do not pay their fair share. Levying more taxes would restrict the negative aspects of climate change. Bregman (2017) points to the Nordic countries as examples of proof for this. Whilst this may seem obvious, one must appreciate that such a strategy becomes much more difficult to implement in such countries as the US a china with their domineering mega economies and global influence.

As it stands, most people are stationed in their homes; through practicing social distancing and working remotely (Harapan et al., 2020). Thus, we have seen a drastic drop in carbon emissions as entire industries, transportation systems and all other business formats have shut down. Air pollution levels in New York city have dropped almost 50% Compared to spring of 2019 (Saadat et al., 2020), due to the restrictive measures of 2020. Furthermore, In China, emissions data shows a 25% decrease at the starting point of the year as factories closed, citizens advised to stay indoors, and coal use dropped by 40% at china's largest power plants since the last quarter of 2019 (Saadat et al., 2020).

There are several factors which inspire social change, most notably being the turnover of new generations in the population (Sulich et al., 2020). Population redistribution is needed for society to grow and is part of human life and our evolution. The younger generation always bring innovation and try to outdo and perform better than the last. Environmentally speaking this is where the young generation will start becoming disillusioned that if we don't give them a fair chance to have all the opportunities previous generations have had. Socio-economic theories, along with conclusions of observers and analysts of social life, highlight the importance of generational transitioning. If generational change didn't exist the world would not evolve (Sulich et al., 2020). These periods of change are defined by increased societal expectations and hopes connected with the rise of the younger demographic. Furthermore, when a society faces issues of sustainable development, it turns to the youth; if their innovativeness will allow it to tackle the critical challenges.

Due to rapid societal and technological changes, traditional employment patterns are under threat, being replaced by various atypical forms; where unstable employment practises pose a significant threat. Regulations are intended to expand the labour market whilst decreasing unemployment in areas of high unemployment (Sulich et al., 2020) but this has led to segmentation of the labour market. These disparities in-between segments can however be mitigated by "green jobs" (Sulich et al., 2020) and the further developing of the green economy. However, such mitigating measures would have to be part of intelligent specialization, thus encompassing responsible and sustainable development. The present data shows that a consequential number of green jobs are developed in regions encompassing capital cities, due to their global influence on domestic labour markets. This makes sense and only seems right,

as generally, most policies, laws and regulations are created and passed through in capital cities, setting a precedent for the rest of the country to follow.

The term "Greening" (Liu et al., 2017) has now been coined, meaning to become (more) environmentally sustainable. Generating of green jobs will influence changes in a country's society and economy (Sulich et al., 2020) to positively affect the environment. Greening the modern economy is vital in increasing good employment opportunities for young people (Liu et al., 2017) because we need a good environment to do so. This is not only necessary for employment opportunities, but general life prosperity also. The Nordic region is probably the best example of countries that in some shape or form have already or are in the process of large-scale greening, of not only their economies; but the country entirely. It is no accident then that some of the highest rates of quality of life and overall life satisfaction are shared between the Nordic countries (Dølvik and Røed Steen, 2018).

Remote work could certainly be categorized as "green jobs" (Sulich et al., 2020) as it cuts out commuting through transport, ergo cutting fuel usage whilst also having less unnecessary power and waste from mega office structures. We could even go farther, as less international travel would not only be good for the environment but could now also prove to be beneficial in terms of global health, preventing disease spread; as we enter a new decade with the outlier of COVID-19. The interviews conducted also reflect these sentiments that remote work would certainly be a "greener" option than the traditional way (Liu et al., 2017). The sustainable elements of remote working will be taken into serious consideration by organizations as they seek to better their stance on corporate social responsibility policies. After the events of 2020, home working, where possible; will be encouraged not only for environmental sustainability but now also for health and safety. Over-crowdedness will look to be avoided wherever possible from here on out so any aspects of digitalized work which can be transferred into remote working or outsourced to freelancers, will be.

The 2020 pandemic has sourced extensive job losses, threatening the livelihoods of millions of people as businesses struggle to cope (Saadat et al., 2020) and shut down. Economic activities have halted, and stock markets plummeted along with the falling carbon emission levels. On the contrary, it is a decarbonized, maintainable economy that many have been supporting for decades (Saadat et al., 2020). But a pandemic of this grandeur, which is actively taking lives, should not be the route to bringing about environmental change. It remains uncertain how long the recent dip in emissions will last. If carbon and pollutant emissions return to past figures post pandemic, then it would be as if this clear skied interlude never happened at all. The changes we see today may not have lasting impact unless the right lessons and value is taken away by; governments, organizations, institutes and the general population.

5: DATA ANALYSIS

 I gathered the data by conducting 10 semi-structured interviews. The was done to gain common and contrasting patterns emerging from the sentiments based on a loose framework of topics that were presented within the scope of this research; in turn enabling for better discovery. This level of depth would not have been reached by conducting highly structured interviews, as it would have been too rigid a format, involving utilizing predefined responses thus providing less flexibility for asking potential probing questions during the interviews (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Likewise, the choice of not conducting unstructured interviews was in part due to the nature of this research. As aforementioned, the goal here was to explore digital transformation during a global pandemic, through the framework of dynamic capabilities. Thus, the interviews were designed to follow a loose framework of topics derived from the literature, thereby not adhering to the format of unstructured interviews, which is comparatively spontaneous, open, and based without a general guideline in mind (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015).

 The interviews were conducted via telephone or video call, due to circumstances beyond the realm of control as well as being an international sample of interviewees (Opdenakker, 2006). More in depth conversations took place to allow interviewees to expand on their points and experiences. This was intended to provide a more intimate and honest reactions instead of just a one answer, survey type of interview. In total there were eight respondents, each varied with different levels of careers and experience. The respondents represented six nations; Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, UK and USA. This adds diversity, comparing between respondent's respective views. Allowing for the interviewees to expand on their points and give reasoning behind their thinking added quality through open dialogue (Opdenakker, 2006). The interviews also provided unique and different outlooks from the respondents. Certain aspects were universally agreed by all candidates whilst answers on other topics were all over the map or not previously brought up by other candidates.

 One reminder regarding the interviews is that the times are not reflective of "normal" circumstances. All candidates were made aware of this and told to speak freely regarding their experiences of adapting to remote working and how they feel it would translate under normal circumstances or impact their future. These were not ideal circumstances for the correspondents to taste remote working and all interviewees shared this sentiment as there was a general lack of preparation from themselves and their respective employers. But this is adding an extra dimension of excitement as it is the global "lockdown" situation which has given credence to work from home. In this sense, it could be considered a pseudo experiment with the only difference being that it's not controlled.

 The key aim of the interviews was to gain insights first-hand real time experiences of remote work and the implications (if any) it will have for the future; both on a personal and global level. Exploring whether significant changes would come sooner than expected as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or if some aspects of what has already changed will remain this way from now on. The interviews were structured in this way; a 30 to 60-minute telephone/video interview was arranged with each participant, at a time they would not be disturbed. They were conducted between 18th to 30th of April 2020. By this time all interviews had experienced at least one full calendar month of remote work. The questions were designed with the idea to first provide some background working up to their current experience and finally end with predictions for the future. So, bearing this in mind the questions were as follows:

- ➢ What are the main duties of your role?
- ➢ How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?
- ➢ How are you finding the experience?
- ➢ How are you being managed?
- ➢ What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company?
- ➢ What have been the expectations?
- ➢ Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time, in the future?
- ➢ Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?
- ➢ How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?

 Most of the respondents had no prior experience of (paid) working from home, as part of their current or previous jobs up to this point. All seemed to be coping well with most the stresses coming from the situational side of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown regulations rather than the actual working from home. Two of the respondents were self-employed, so they had prior experience of working from home; this is part of the perceived benefit of being self-employed and why many desires and pursue self-employed careers. They generally agreed that the benefits outweigh the negatives and as of now their bigger concerns were regarding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their respective businesses. Those from Denmark and Germany mentioned that their respective governments had offered financial support during this time. Likewise, in the USA where an initial stimulus cheque was paid out to citizens.

5.1: Findings

 All the interviewees were managing their workloads, in most cases work was less than usual but many did attribute this situationally as businesses are closed and economies are in recession globally (BBC News, 2020). One respondent was a Sports Operation supervisor

which entails a lot of physicality and needs to be done in person. These are the types of roles which won't be able to be completed remotely full time as brought up by the interviewee. This is likewise true for employees with a limited choice in their time and place of work. Such roles include customer services, which must be provided in person or they may be part of a continuous process that always needs to be operational (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). Albeit he was content with the fact that he had been made aware of his job security and was completing administrative tasks such as planning, budgeting and updating policies from home; which is an element that could be carried over after the pandemic, however this individual preferred to work at their work site rather than from home. He reasoned that for him personally there is too many distractions at home, and he tends to be tempted to procrastinate whilst also enjoying the social and team elements of the workspace.

Surprisingly distractions were not as big of a deterrent as one would assume. The usual suspects of procrastination, lack of supervision, electronic devices and family were brought up, but all individuals seemed to have their unique ways of managing their distractions. Two respondents felt they had much less distractions from the home than they did in an office (Golden and Gajendran, 2018), citing "In the office there a lot of distractions such as; noise, odd disruptions throughout the day, people eating, the smell of food, colleagues talking too much, personal conversations going on" they found this assortment of office intrusions detrimental to their output and quality of work (Golden and Gajendran, 2018).

A respondent from the USA claimed "I also enjoy more privacy, not having to share office, kitchen or bathroom space with many others" this ability of using personal kitchen and bathroom is very gratifying and whilst quite minor can positively impact your peace of mind and thus output of work. When pressed on this issue he gave an answer that companies offering remote work could expect more loyal and dedicated employees; as those seeking remote work capabilities to suit their lifestyle would appreciate the opportunity and lifestyle. They would not want to return the office atmosphere, so would not squander the chance by taking the position for granted and abusing that power.

On the other hand, one individual bluntly stated "no, I wouldn't prefer working from home at all… I prefer to go into physical workplace" expanding that "I like having some pressure when working and being in an environment built specifically for work only" Another person echoed similar sentiments "I miss the social interaction of having people around and working directly with colleagues"

Another factor which was universally agreed was that remote work will indeed become more common place in the future and that we can expect the process to be sped up after the COVID-19 pandemic. It was explained that the capabilities are being proven possible for many

industries and workers. The level to which remote work would become the norm differed but it was widely agreed that it will become more popular and sought out by workers.

The perceived benefits were based on; employee and employer (organization) benefits, environmental benefits and governmental. For the individual knowledge worker, the common benefits were not having to commute daily, allowing for more time in the day to commit to a better morning routine or earlier start to work. A couple of respondents did however state that they enjoy their commute to and from work as it gives them a chance to get out of the house early and have a nice scenic walk or go to grab a coffee before work.

There was ubiquitous harmony on the fact that the technology driving remote work is very young and only get better. Many of the tools and applications currently at our disposal, were not a viable option last decade. Mobile technology alone has become so advanced that many aspects of work can be done through telecommuting using the latest in mobile technology. One point of contention which arose, was the fact that not everyone has or would have ideal working conditions in their homes. Whether this be down to families, housemates, noise pollution in the area, distractions, not good enough supplies or tools for working.

Across the board each of the working individuals had at least one or two weekly meetings with their managers or supervisors; to update on progress of work and be filled in on any details regarding relevant recent developments. It was commonly agreed that the tools at our disposal today, make many aspects of remote working more convenient now than it was say ten years ago. There was all round faith that the technology will continue to develop, only becoming stronger. Most of those interviewed pointed to the fact that the circumstances of their remote working were not ideal, stemming more from necessity. Understandably then, preparations had been lax. But This is something which can be easily addressed, given time; as organizations and workers themselves prepare by setting up their workstations best suited for the work they do.

Understandably, some of the jobs had physical elements, such as; client interaction, signing of documents, customer facing services and things of this nature. Such aspects of the jobs still require this physical presence, so this aspect will remain largely prevalent just as it remains so for industries such as retail, dining and nightlife. However, many of the digital elements of the diverse job ranges can be completed from anywhere, not necessarily just the home; even surprisingly for a sports facility coordinator. These aspects can include; planning, documenting, procedural work and administrative tasks so long as the necessary tools are made available.

Some individuals found that they had managed to save a substantial amount of money working from home. This stems from less expenditure for travel and food. One individual believed they were eating healthier at home by being able to cook fresh meals for lunch instead

of purchasing something quick outside; or saving the time and stress of preparing meals the night before or morning of work. Another interviewee shared this sentiment, being appreciative of having access to his private kitchen and bathroom as opposed to the communal ones of an office.

The "zoom" application was mentioned several times and seems to be a popular choice right now for virtual meetings, conferencing and general social interactions. It appears that the rumors of zooms spike in popularity and growth during 2020 (Evans, 2020) are somewhat concurred here. Zoom have really capitalized on this moment, managing to solidify a stronghold on the mainstream video call/conferencing market.

In a bid to limit distractions some shared tactics where common. chief amongst them being electronic devices and storing them away in a bid not to get sucked into the rabbit hole of games, social networking and videos. The support the respondents were receiving generally varied. One self-employed individual from Germany cited the support of the German government, which was keeping him afloat during these difficult times as a small new enterprise CEO. Most other employees had mentioned that whilst non-compulsory, they had been made aware of the services available to them as employees ranging from mental health and emotional distress help to career guidance.

In regard to motivation working from home "when you have things to do and deadlines to reach it more or less takes care of itself" another different interviewee backed this up with the claim that the "main motivation is job security" meaning that if work isn't done on time, they would lose their job so that being reason enough to work as hard as in an office.

One individual was working towards targets and had KPI (key performance indicators) to work towards. Being a case worker, he had mentioned that they had to complete a minimum of two cases daily and work beyond this minimum if it was met earlier than intended, so either way they still had to clock in seven hours each working day. This same individual also mentioned that his company had provided him with a better laptop as his was old and lacking. This laptop could be monitored and accessed remotely by his employers at any time, so they were tracking work this way and making sure there was no misconduct or abuse of privileges. They had also been made aware the employers could remotely access the webcam any time they deemed necessary. Bearing this in mind though, this same induvial stated that they had been granted more flexibility and could take as many breaks as they wanted and work to their own schedule as long as it was between 07:00 am to 18:00 pm.

Corporations will favour employees that can adapt to remote ability and mobility whilst also being able to work in clusters and with other people in an office setting at the same time. The results of the interviews show remote working in a very positive light. Many views it as a

blessing rather than a curse. This is the basis of the argument for that the opportunity actually wouldn't be wasted or taken for granted because those that are lucky enough to work from home will not want to lose that privilege, so would ensure they work equally as hard; if not harder at home than in the office.

One respondent, a gameplay programmer, who had no prior work from home experience, was really struggling and not at all enjoying the experience. They too were primarily being managed through zoom and had daily meetings every morning, unlike other respondents which on average had one briefing a week. This respondent brought up a relevant point about the industry and how he relies heavily on the collaborative process and practicality with many tools missing at the home and the lacking human interaction (Maslow, 1943) being bothersome to this individual. These are sentiments shared by Netflix's own CEO, Reed Hastings (Flint, 2020).

Most of the uncertainty and anxiety aspects came more down to the trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic than the actual structure of working (Garfin et al., 2018). Part of the reason for this, is that this was still so fresh right now; throwing everything out of sync for everyone. Interviewees were also cautious of the economic damage which could have ramifications which last longer than a decade, just as the market crash of 2008. All interviewees acknowledged that this were not the ideal introduction to remote work or conditions for transitioning their work and lifestyle. Each respondent did concede that they may feel differently under normal circumstances; it may look and feel a different experience than the one they face today.

Self-management and office etiquette were also recurring themes with a view that they come down primarily to; way of life, organizational culture and behaviour patterns. It isn't as easily said that everyone can self-manage, some cultures are not compatible with this. Some people just can't handle a certain level of responsibility and will function much worse managing themselves than if they had a manager (Drucker, 2012). With time and training and developing of skills this could be overcome (Drucker, 2008), but it may take some time that some organizations may not be willing to allow for. This could then mean that organizations will seek out the most independent and motivated highly functioning workers they can to not have to be concerned about their work output from home or remote locations.

Remote workers may after developing skills and experience seek to become completely self-employed, pursuing entrepreneurship as the next steps in their career development and this could be good because more entrepreneurs and businesses create more jobs for others, opening doors for future or more workers to come through behind them. The interviews relayed some concern regarding the possible immediate outcomes of the pandemic, fearing job

security and economic crisis in the wake of the devastation. Some were concerned by the fact which there is no deadline as to when things will resume back to normal, or if things would return to normal after all.

A supply chain manager from Sweden, who had some prior experience of working from home, albeit nothing scheduled, raised some interesting talking points. They mentioned that initially they had a boost in productivity and were working more efficiently but that this has stagnated, and they feel, whilst not as if they were not efficient anymore, had significantly dissipated some 6 months on. The reasoning behind this they offered up was the isolation and not being able to collaborate so well on tasks with other members of their respective team. This person also noted that at their workplace they were having more frequent meetings than usual and not the opposite, pinning it down to the distance and lack of physical daily presence as usual. They were provided with some tools such as screen monitors and keyboards to take home if they didn't already have them.

The interviews also highlighted the fact that they are now more aware of major unforeseeable and unpredictable factors that life holds in store, Major changes can happen overnight such as the closing of borders. The feel of the tone indicates this more as a lesson and possibly alarming but more so just realized and not as much cynicism around the matter, which is a good indication, showing that people are willing to and can adapt when the time calls for it.

Some interviewees also mentioned the points regarding the social aspects of communal working. This is where coworking spaces may thrive then in the future as working remotely does not necessarily have to mean working from the home. Co working spaces have gained traction and become more popular over the last decade which show no signs of slowing. Of course the pandemic factor has most recently affected this, but this comes down to temporary lockdown laws around the world, when the lockdowns are lifted and over time when health and safety concerns are properly addressed and handled, if there is this dramatic rise in remote working we now expect, then there will be plenty more co-working spaces as the workers who still need and seek out the sociality of communal working will be drawn to such offices.

Offices provide employers access to employees so they can monitor staff to do the actual task and motivate them to be productive (Reyt, 2020). It's much easier doing so in person. Google and Facebook are just a few that have bought into this idea, designing big open offices with communal spaces for ingenuity and to get those creative juices flowing. Offices can also be a place of social bonding, mentorship and professional development. This sentiment was certainly shared amongst most of those interviewed. We are social beings with man nonverbal forms of expressions which we use to communicate; this is something which cannot be replaced through two-dimensional digital mediums, in the interim at least. (Rosalsky, 2020)

Based on the feedback from the interviews, many of the interviewees aligned with the flexi Fiona (Swisher, 2020) personality type where they have considerable experience and intend on working remotely on a part time basis in the future. We will see this becoming more prevalent, due to demand from employees and willingness to supply from their firms. This is especially true for younger generations which are attracted to more flexible working arrangements. Working on your own schedule is viewed much akin to be your own boss, without being a boss or business owner. This can explain part of subconscious attraction behind this, to experience a "boss's" lifestyle.

Other key points of consideration and unique insights relating to only one individual were as follows; One respondent mentioned difficulties in trying to arrange meetings or organizing and getting everybody on the same page; showing the difficulty of collaboration. Another interviewee claimed that they felt they had been working more productively and were getting more work done from home. The results from the interviews show that workers would welcome the opportunity to work from home, at least part time, with many seeing it as a blessing of sorts.

The self-management style of hierarchy could work greatly for remote workers as being that your spending less physical time around a team or manager you really must prioritize and learn to draw the line between personal and work life when working from home. It just goes with the territory that at home there will likely be more distractions, such as tv, hobbies, partners, kids, friends, family etc so these have to be managed and limited in order to have an encouraging work environment which promotes productivity and not distractions and procrastination.

Ultimately Correspondents were quick to point out "this whole situation has given the opportunity, for the people whom wished the chance to work from home, to show that it can be done effectively" so many of the excuses for digitalized forms of knowledge works were being rendered null. For anyone that wanted to provide concrete evidence that it can be done and done well, now is the chance to prove for their industry or their field of work. As on individual had observed "It seems to be working for most everyone I know at the moment and most seem to prefer it this way." Further to the cause "both the willingness of workers and technology maturing are contributing to it becoming much more commonplace."

What we learn from this is that certain things change that are not in our power or realm of control such as natural disasters and pandemics. As one interviewee stated, "after the pandemic many jobs will become virtual as a result of health concerns, resulting from working in small environments surrounded by many others." So it is those organizations and nations which prepare and scenario plan for such outcomes which will incur the least damage and may somehow even thrive in such circumstances.

6: DISCUSSION

"Our best estimate is that 25-30% of the workforce will be working from home multiple days a week by the end of 2021" - Kate Lister, president of Global Workplace Analytics (Svaldi, 2020)

The data shows the following objective truths; technology behind remote work is developing rapidly (Dølvik and Røed Steen, 2018), knowledge work will account for most available work (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) and younger knowledge workers desire more flexibility and responsibility over themselves and their work. These factors in coalition lead to remote work gaining fast traction with all signs pointing to the COVID-19 pandemic speeding up the process. There will likely be restructuring of work methods and standards, globally. Surprisingly though, this will not destroy all non-knowledge worker jobs as we know them. Quite the contrary in fact as we have come to learn true essential work. Though the lack of non-essential work has greatly impacted global economies which economists would argue classify as "essential" as there is only so much damage an economy can take before disastrous consequences. We should expect a restructuring where remote work will play a pivotal role, over the course of the next decade which should be met with processes of unlearning and reskilling for best economical outcomes.

Now, more so than ever before, there will be additional forms of knowledge work (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) than any other format. As Such implementation of unlearning and reskilling (Hedberg, 1981) practises at all; national governmental and organizational levels, would be best appropriate in assisting their labour force adapt to the changing playing field. There is already a higher educated workforce globally than any time before. Those coming from more manual disciplines will likely need to go through a phase of unlearning and then reskilling (De Holan and Phillips, 2004) in order to fit into the dynamic digitalised setting of remote work. Many of these manual disciplines have found one avenue into a sort of remote work through entering the gig economy as an independent contractor (Healy, Nicholson and Pekarek, 2017). This is akin to reskilling except that its less of the knowledge variety. Platform work in the gig economy has its own flaw namely that the workers have very little rights added to the fact that these jobs remain at greater risk of automation interference.

Still we remain in the early stages of any major overhaul on working styles, due to corporate cultures and management styles not keeping pace with technological advances (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). There is a view that work is becoming more of a tradable commodity (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) than a single occupation. Meaning there will be more independent contractors and freelancers as exampled by the rise of the gig economy and digital nomads (Sherk, 2016).

Many forms of manual labour practises will either be outsourced to cheaper parts of the world or automated so there will no longer be many opportunities in industry (Dølvik and Røed Steen, 2018). These types of manual disciplines will require a phase of unlearning and then reskilling in order to compatibilized them into current labour practises. Perhaps Amin Toufani; Ceo of T labs, another respondent to the Talent Garden (2019) survey, is on the right track, claiming that the future belongs to those with imaginations; *"Imagination is the key: if you think bigger, something magical happens. Intelligence is hitting a target that nobody else can; genius is hitting a target nobody else can see."* This is a quality sentiment, yet it is entirely unfair and unreasonable to expect the mass population to be "imaginative" or "creative" by painting themselves out of a corner. Unless we interpret this message as in those with imaginations re innovators and entrepreneurs, so they lead others and will create the opportunities not just for themselves but for others as well.

Entrepreneurship is already glorified (Moore, 2019) by many of the younger generations through "hustle culture" and this trend will continue to grow (Griffith, 2019) however only a few will truly succeed as entrepreneurs. Much of the previous texts on entrepreneurial research investigate the influences on the entrepreneur for starting a new business, however the theory is lacking in understanding how entrepreneurs progress throughout their careers (Ensher, Murphy and Vance, 2000). Entrepreneurship will undoubtedly continue to be pivotal to the world economy in this new millennium, especially with the advancements in technology and the post Internet boom (Ensher, Murphy and Vance, 2000). This will in turn enable entrepreneurs to meet the challenges of the next century (Ensher, Murphy and Vance, 2000). Organizations should instead place emphasis on building intrapreneurs (Hisrich, 1990) both to satisfy this dream for employees by offering the opportunity akin to entrepreneurship and by also providing the organization with innovative and creative ideas. An intrapreneur is an employee who is tasked with developing an innovative idea or project within a company. The intrapreneur may not reap the outsized awards of being an entrepreneur but they won't have to face the outsized risks to get there. Intrapreneur have access to the resources and capabilities of an established firm, betting with the company's money and not their own.

Companies need to adapt to the changing landscape, COVID-19 has changed and will continue to affect and change a lot of things, Social distancing, people will use more online facilities for both work and pleasure, even for food shopping and deliveries and businesses slowly transitioning online. People working from home will be more common. More educated people will create more competition, job security concerns so people will see no guarantee because of the recent job losses and unforeseeable circumstances so there will more desire to generate other or secondary income or have like a second job which ideally they would be able to do from home.

Power was also found to play a large role within global virtual team interactions and team dynamics surrounding such interactions (Panteli and Tucker, 2009). The power dynamics and exchanges' are important in any job and indeed wider society at large, however they become even more challengeable in a virtual setting as you are not able, in a physical capacity at least, to engage with subordinates so must bank on the fact that orders are being followed through and adhered to. Consistent with this prediction, power has been associated with reduced empathic concern as Magee and Smith (2013) posit that asymmetric dependence between individuals (i.e., power) produces asymmetric social distance, with high-power individuals feeling more distant than low-power individuals. The social distance theory predicts that high-power individuals are less concerned with and indeed less responsive to, other people's mental states (Magee and Smith, 2013). People are less inclined to experience empathic concern for dissimilar than similar others and tend to offer greater help to individuals with whom they have closer relationships with (Magee and Smith, 2013). Thus, relative to low-power individuals, high-power individuals' social hierarchy diminishes their motivation to attend to what others are thinking or feeling. This is to say that higher power individuals, such as managers and CEOs will interpret the remote work experience much differently than their respective underlings and may have higher hopes and expectations.

Another trivial point the data raises is do weekly face to face meetings need to happen at all? If the information can be communicated by email, voicemail or any other type of remote technology then what's the purpose or value of face to face meetings (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) if they encompass the same topics and outcomes. While face-to-face meetings can be of importance for workers and teams whom spend most of their time working remotely, it could also be difficult in arranging a physical meeting on a timeframe suitable to all. really, conventional office meeting methods must be reshaped. This then has signalled to many that digital work is an excellent opportunity for businesses and society. The lock-down has not only indirectly helped to reduce travel and the related consequences for our climate (Guyot & Sawhill, 2020) but It has also allowed for employees to connect in new ways, to work more flexibly and to establish new leadership structures and work autonomy (Richter, 2020).

As one interviewee explained "The younger generation are growing up more and more self-centric because of social media and other influences" they have dreams, desiring and demanding independence. Self-management practices offer a sense of entrepreneurial achievement in the vein of being a "boss" without being one. Working on one's own time and dime remotely from anywhere, gives a sense of freedom akin to be a boss. This can then lead to increased quality of life, ethics and loyalty towards organizations (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) but can also bring loyalty against the employer because of the granted freedoms. Those

working remotely will have gratitude and work hard anyway because they wouldn't want to lose the privilege of remote work to go work in a company where they become just a number.

For larger more established firms and multinational corporations, transitioning to remote work may come with relative ease. But small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) will likely need extra support, trust and funding from their respective governments to have their staff to work remotely where possible. This could reorganize the working structure as we know it into a much better one. This could give rise to more coworking space for those still in need of an office atmosphere, which builds up an entire industry. The failed IPO of WeWork (Zeitlin, 2020) signalled that it was too soon for this previously, so the timing will need to be done right. Post COVID-19 pandemic will be a good opportunity for more remote workers to buy into the idea of coworking spaces once the health and safety concerns are addressed.

Schroders (2020), a British multinational asset management company, have announced that they have permanently embraced flexible working across all business operations. Schroders (2020) hope the move will empower employees to adopt working practices that best meet client responsibilities, business requirements and their individual working patterns, while also ensuring they maintain face-to-face interaction in order to uphold their culture of collaboration, innovation and strong productivity. It is important to remember that flexible working does not necessarily have to always be remote, but it is implied that there will be a heavy reliance on remote and distance working; more than usual. Schroders, like many of the interviewed parties, continue to see many benefits from people coming into the office, so this will remain a prevalent part of their approach to flexible working (Schroders, 2020). This is a shining example of a firm adapting to timely changes and developing upon their dynamic capabilities. Though, it does seem in this instance that Schroders had been incorporating such changes long prior to the events of the pandemic, so just saw this as the right time to shift gears and fully embrace flexi-work after a gradual adaptation period.

Yet most organizations aren't prepared well enough to suddenly move their entire workforce into remote work (Neeley, 2020), although they had portions of their organizations participate in dispersed work in the past. But this is an unprecedented type of scenario, which we're only just experiencing for the first time (Harvard Business Review, 2020), so currently a great deal remains unknown, simply as we have yet to experience it. You have to ensure that infrastructure is in place to accommodate your workforce, meaning that you should have the resources, available technologies, and that you're prioritizing who needs what rapidly (Neeley, 2020) ensuring that you have the capacity to deploy the equipment and also to start training people at scale. However, we must consider that the lockdown was an extreme situation, unlike one we had ever experienced before, that did not give the necessary adoption time.

Henceforth, many employees felt increasing pressure to 'make digital work, work' (Richter, 2020) which led to negative associations. Ideally, employees are now given more time to explore and experiment with the tools at their disposal.

Organizational change can come in many forms for example through change in ownership (Tsang and Zahra, 2008) via a merger or acquisition. The other example, which we are witnessing before our very eyes is episodic "crisis-triggered" (Tsang and Zahra, 2008) where the unlearning process is much broader in scope. During a merger or acquisition, there is some form of structure or planning in place before the takeover, where unlearning processes can be a means to filter out any bad habits present or qualities which may be perceived as counterproductive to the tasks and goals set. In contrast, crisis-triggered change is very sudden and requires a think on the feet move as you go approach, where any unlearning must be very fast.

The term 'continuous change' describes ongoing, evolving and cumulative organizational change (Weick & Quinn, 1999). It occurs through continuous Human Relations practises. An entity learns if "through its processing of information, the range of its potential behaviours is changed' (Huber, 1991). Huber further argues that organizational unlearning is conceptually subsumable under learning, and that the term 'unlearning' refers primarily to 'a decrease in the range of (a firm's) capabilities.

For remote work to be effective for an organization, it must be viewed as a collaborative process and communication between colleagues and managers is vital. Open dialogue is needed, and conflicts must be addressed and resolved as to not harbour an atmosphere of resentment or distrust between colleagues. Company's should ensure regular contact with their virtual workforce and promote collaborative practises between colleagues and their own individual networks as well opening doors for strategies of open innovation (Gay, 2014) and extensive networking capabilities. According to Hargadon and Bechky (2006) creativity is something in-between people, not something inherently within people so creating a culture of continuous learning by promoting such things as a book club, opening the lines of communication throughout the company between senior management and employees in order to have feedback through good conversational fields & dialogue (Isaacs 1999) as moments of creative insights are formed as a result of interactions between people (Hargadon and Bechky, 2006).

Being familiar with the company, its products and culture, will undoubtedly instil confidence amongst the staff, whilst also being good for morale having a familiar face around during a time of uncertainty and change. Improving communication through open dialogue and conversational fields would be very beneficial, and in fact we see from recent events that

communication is pivotal, not only to organizations health but also to human health and wellbeing. Effective methods of Communion are significant for managers within organizations to perform the basic functions of management such as Planning, Organizing, Leading and Controlling. Dialogue & the ability to communicate is the reason that humans are the most advanced and well-developed species for without it our civilization would fall into certain collapse. A field of Conversation is made up of the atmosphere, energy, and memories of the people who are interacting (Isaacs 1999) within it. The message we get from Isaacs (1999) is that the quality of a conversation is paramount & that success is very much dependent on the quality of the dialogue rather than ideas. Basically, if there is no focus on dialogue and collaboration then resistance will likely grow.

One subsequently emergent market influenced by remote work is the "gig economy" based around platform work. The gig economy is based on flexible, temporary, or freelance jobs, often involving connecting with clients or customers through an online platform (Chappelow, 2020). The gig economy can benefit workers, businesses, and consumers by making work more adaptable to the needs of the moment and demand for flexible lifestyles. Gig workers can be considered as independent contractors. This means that they generally have little to no employee rights and usually operate on zero-hour contracts or on a pay as you go basis. Examples of gig workers include; online platform workers, contract firm workers, on-call workers or temporary staff (Chappelow, 2020). Gig workers enter into formal agreements with on-demand companies to provide services to the company's clients. The gig economy is ultimately at the expanse of remote working capabilities (Chappelow, 2020). Some view it as a threatening trend whilst others as opportunity (Healy, Nicholson and Pekarek, 2017) as exampled through the mobility as a service or Maas category disruptors al a uber. Only time can tell which direction it is likely to sway. This kind of remote work is to the detriment of knowledge workers both in terms of skill and salary.

The COVID-19 experience temporarily changed the means and indeed the definition of work, globally. Some of these changes will likely incur long lasting ramifications for the way in which we perceive and experience work and management over the next decade. While there are many advantages for both employees and employers to work remotely, there remains significant challenges ahead for both parties too. Working remotely is distinctively different than the norm for most, so it's important to establish some ground rules. Virtual teams still need a lot more nurturing than face-to-face teams; in large part because the customs which emerge from face-to-face encounters, take much longer to establish online. It's vital that teams know; what is expected of them, decision making processes, how to communicate, how progress will be tracked and so on. It's also vital that roles are clarified, and lines of accountability set. Communication should be clear, expectations explicit, and feedback and

mentoring given frequently. It's important that your remote workers feel just as much a part of the team as those in the office. Such clarifications extend to various parts of working life, which are often overlooked or ignored when working in a physical office. Time and patience will also be required for workers with no prior experience to settle into their virtual roles.

 Indeed, as backed by the data, trusting workers to act as adults empowers them to decide the best way to work, including the 'where' and 'when', is the secret of success (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) not the opposite. The firms which have already noticed this, are now reaping the rewards as everyone else plays catch up, struggling to adapt. Those that have not are in any danger of being swept under by recent events.

 Home workers need a schedule to stick to say researchers (Kaplan, 2014). If time at home provides the luxury of several hours without interruption, an early-career researcher needs to use that time to do work — many warn that it is all too easy to give in to the siren song of smartphones and social media. "You have to motivate," says Diaper. "You have to be strict and say to yourself that you have to get the job done. You can't be swayed by your partner's request or your own temptations." There are pitfalls for those whom work from home. They include the possibility of a lower profile because of reduced visibility (Kaplan, 2014). It would be smart to interact often and regularly with colleagues, associates and superiors in person. Working from home "can be very isolating" says one interview respondent; this is already a challenge of homeworking but especially more so during a time of self-isolation and quarantine. According to Kaplan (2014) "You need to be networking — you need to be seen." Some ways of counteracting the potential 'out of sight, out of mind' problem include securing a mentor who is particularly sympathetic to junior researchers' telecommuting and career-support needs. An understanding mentor might help to keep a home worker's profile high by routinely talking up their work, thus mitigating the impact of decreased visibility. Remote workers risk missing impromptu chats, which are more than merely trivial or rapport building; they also offer access to unofficial intelligence which is a key part of understanding the changing dynamics of each workplace (Kaplan, 2014) and the specifics that come with it.

 The sentiment from the data is that many still views working from home as a luxury and opportunity rather than a long term obtainable and sustainable career. People seek to generate passive income and multiple revenue streams in order to attain financial security to work when they want and be able to travel more and spend more time with family and spend more time on creative pursuits and interests. Bearing this in mind, it is very likely that remote working could lead to either higher generation of entrepreneurs or creating more loyal and devoted employees, possibly even both at the same time. Preferences can change and some employees who thrive in remote settings may after some time seek out different opportunities or ways of working for some excitement, but this will likely be a minority and not the majority.

A manager with higher ambition and drive is far more likely to get the best results from their team as opposed to the one which is more carefree (Woolley and Fischbach, 2018). However, ego and narcissism must come into consideration as there is a fine line between drive and confidence to ego and narcissism. If motivations are purely selfish drive and greed, then this may turn out worse; as they would only think of self-preservation above all else so the staff would become an afterthought (Drucker, 2012). This is damaging though because if the team performs badly and lacks harmony, this doesn't look good so reflects poorly on the leader (Drucker, 2012). As a leader one must respect and gain the respect of the collective team in order to achieve the best results.

Dubey and Tripathi's (2020) research aimed at analysing the sentiments and emotions of workers towards working from home methods during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study revealed that more than 73% of people had positive sentiments towards working from home whilst 27% people had a negative perception towards WFH experience. Furthermore, over 60% of the people responded with emotions of trust, anticipation and joy for work-from-home culture while a handful replied with fear, sadness, anger and disgust. Their obtained results show that experiences of homeworking had a positive perception, globally.

With the considerations from the literature and data, the conclusions on the count of the three sub-questions set earlier, are as follows:

What are the main drivers & barriers to remote work?

Based on the results from the data, knowledge workers do prefer remote working to some extent. Several claimed they would prefer it full time with capabilities now proven whilst one individual did not prefer it at all citing the social isolation as the primary reason for this. The vast majority landed in the middle ground of part-time remote working for the desired flexibility whilst still experiencing the crossover collaboration and teambuilding of a traditional workspace.

Additionally, through the sharing and receiving of knowledge between knowledge workers and for organizations themselves. One criticism of remote work is that the isolation leads to missed chances of collaboration for ideation and innovation. However, research shows it can be quite the contrary after digitalization and technology development where remote workers can generally be found to have very active networks and more reliant of the network of actors than that of a hierarchy or single organization.

In all probability, most people won't want to work remotely full time, rather opting to have the option to pick and choose when its best suites them (Gaskell, 2020) on a part time basis. This notion is backed up by the data from the interviews, with most respondent's bar a few, opting

to work remotely part time. So, the ability to successfully manage remote teams will be a key skill in the arsenal of any modern manager. This is where the practise of self-management or management through proxy seems suited to work best. The illusion of choice and power is one that is highly effective so allowing workers that freedom will likely actually bring about more positive results in the long run as opposed to negative ones. Granted it may be tumultuous to begin with and difficult, but once adjusted employees would feel respected and valued and have increased drive and motivation to perform and a higher quality of life meaning happier employees which means loyal and productive employees.

Further factors contributing to cost reductions for employers including better recruitments, higher retention rates and reduced absenteeism (Cebr, 2019) will provide as extra incentive to drive remote working capabilities of a firm. Whilst the main barriers of; lack of trust, training and adaptation, lack of tools, costs and reclusion remain.

How best should remote workers manage motivation & limit distractions?

This is the main cause for concern for employers and to a lesser extent some employees. Motivations can simply just come down to the individual, however this is a vague generalisation that needs deeper dissection in order to understand organizational motivation. Motivation can come and go, often being difficult for managers to not only provide but sustain. Something needs to be put in place to routinely increase morale and motivation levels. This is where rewards come into consideration. People tend to perform better when there are rewards, this is just human nature and why we play sports. Give people a chance and they may rise to the occasion. In this sense self-management throws you into the deep end by having to manage yourself, especially if you are not familiar with managing but it is why the rewards of being able to set own working times, salary etc can seem so lucrative, especially to the young workforce who want more freedom and responsibility.

Although it does remain critical to mention that managers can also lack motivation or suffer from lapses in morale judgement, so they too need to manage their own motivation and drive before then being able to transfer that onto their teams and employees below them. This is the same for self-managers, except that there is no other input of extra motivation as you are your own source of motivation. In one sense because the people you would be working with would be considered peers and equals, not superiors this could be beneficial by not feeling belittled, however on the other hand if peers are performing much better or much more motivated this can cause self-conscious and self-esteem issues as to make an individual not feel as adequate as the better performing peers. This could subconsciously take some of the prestige of self-management away.

Rewarding is a system that works, both in terms of managing others but also managing oneself (Drucker, 2008). Rewards and punishment come in all walks of life diet reward is cheat day or desert and punishment is not eating. One significant reward associated to work is promotion whilst its equal in punishment terms would be dismissal. Rewards are important tools for management in generating motivation. Rewards are an important tool for motivation in all forms of management, a key aspect of the management process. Self-reward then is the process of rewarding oneself on completion of a set task (Ensher, Murphy and Vance, 2000). For example, an entrepreneur may decide to, on the completion of a particularly gruelling work task, reward themselves with some time off. In contrast self-punishment, otherwise known as criticism, is the strategy method of punishing oneself for ineffective behaviour or uncompleted tasks. Whilst this technique can be effective, extreme use can be highly unproductive. Imagine, an entrepreneur who stays late to complete an incorrectly done task is utilizing non-productive self-punishment (Ensher, Murphy and Vance, 2000). This example highlights the fact that oftentimes, working through pain, tiredness etc won't result in benefits, in fact quite the opposite tends to happen as there will be a lack of focus and individuals generally won't be operating at their best, so will not get the best results.

Woolley and Fishbach (2018) found that extrinsic Rewards akin to bonuses increase, not decrease, intrinsic motivation. This is because the presence of rewards does not decrease the experience of an activity as intrinsically motivated. immediate rewards increase intrinsic motivation by changing the purpose of the activity (Woolley and Fishbach, 2018). For example, people pursuing exercise for an immediate reward may envision exercising as "running whilst watching TV" instead of just "running." This takes something thought of in negative light and makes it more enjoyable and fun to trick the mind and look forward to it as opposed to resist it. This is a practise that could greatly benefit knowledge workers and their remote work in a bid to limit distractions by setting rewards for completed tasks or if they can multitask then for example work with music on in the background which can make the work more enjoyable for them so long as they focus.

Some of the interview respondents raised up the fact that they had to have a separate workstation at home solely for work, otherwise they would get caught in the endless distractions present at home such as partners, kids, electronic devices, television or even just house chores that needed to be done.

Do the quantifiable sustainable benefits to remote work provide organizations with enough incentive to practise it more often?

The overwhelming evidence points to remote work being more sustainable environmentally as reductions in commuting, whilst not significant in sole proportions, compile over time into

exuberant reductions in emissions. Regardless of outcomes, environmental sustainability will continue to be high on the agenda (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) for many organizations, employees and even governments. So, provided that the figures and data continue to back up pro sustainable benefits; then this will be another box checked in the favour of remote working.

Further to the point of pro sustainability arguments, this isn't a far stretch as data backs this up. A few years ago, BT (British Telecom) claimed their agile working strategy had reduced employees' commuting time by 1800 years, saving 12m litres of fuel (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). That's a considerable reduction of emissions as well as time, money and general hassle saved for employees.

There seems sound logic and promising initial data in terms of remote working being more sustainable, but it remains to be seen long term, as these could be temporary side effects to the greater lockdown situation and not solely attributed to remote working (Saadat et al., 2020). Remote workers generally have more freedom of movement so just because they are remote does not outright mean they won't have to commute or have the same output of energy, power and waste as they would in an office. Perhaps this is a perceived benefit for knowledge workers who make the association that they must be traveling less so it is much more sustainable where it may not be as impactful as one may think. In terms of the sentiments from the interviews, we must also take into consideration that during this time everyone has not left their home so the impact may feel greater than it otherwise would under any normal circumstances.

So, all in all remote working also has a positive impact on the environment by enabling companies and employees to reduce their carbon footprint through shortened commuting hours and smaller office spaces. At a time when sustainability is a major global concern and organisations are under increasing pressure to reduce their carbon emissions, remote working can be viewed as a cost-efficient and simple way of doing so (Cebr, 2019). Whilst sustainability alone, probably won't be enough of a reason for companies to shift to remote working, the benefits will be highly considered as pros. At the very least the "greenwashing" (Corcione, 2020) publicity whilst cutting costs will be enough of a reason to shift to more remote work modalities as organizations will see a win/win solution, both for cost cutting as well as bettering their corporate image.

6.1: Limitations

The first limitation of this paper is related to the depth of empirical findings. I also acknowledge the unequal representation from the interviews, in the form of demographic; as a limitation of this paper. Additionally, due to time constraint and difficulties of gaining access to additional individuals in management positions various companies, I understand that these additional

insights would have given a clearer perspective on the topic. Furthermore, it would have provided us the opportunity to explore the topic from additional vantage points, thereby providing not only richer empirical material, but potentially also a deeper analysis.

 Secondly, considers the time horizon of the study. As it is a contemporary case approach, I explored how firms are adapting to difficult circumstances by building upon there dynamic capabilities to innovate their business models for digital transformation at this juncture in time. Likewise, from the perspective of the knowledge workers adapting to remote work in the tumultuous present tense. However, as adaptation to remote work and the true consequences and implications of the global pandemic will last at least several months or years. Any data will ultimately be inconclusive at this moment in time so a longitude data set design which encapsulates the phenomenon over some time will be more insightful (Langley et al., 2013). Likewise, dynamic capabilities, which, are referring to managing continuous change; may be better observed over time as outlined by Easterby‑Smith et al. (2015).

 Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews were solely conducted in English language. Seeing as though English was not the native language for all the respondents, it may lead to issues considering the transferability of meaning including loss of meaning and possible misinterpretations as some things can become lost in translation. Van Nes et al. (2010) have previously brought to light that individuals expressing experiences in a non-native language may complicate the research process, as language has an impact on the construction of meaning. To overcome this limitation, we used a simpler and more understandable way of communication, purposefully avoiding difficult academic terms. In various cases we additionally tried to clarify interviewee's statements and elaborate on the meaning of their explanations.

 Finally, whilst the interviews were lengthy and conducted with time and focus, being unrushed, the fact they were completed over the phone could be viewed as a little cold. Meaning that you're not able to gage in a full conversation and see their reactions or facial expressions in order to get the full weight of their answers (Barrett, 2019). Their behaviour, manner and body language cannot be observed and generally tend to be shorter than face to face conversations (Barrett, 2019). However, in return they do offer an international set of participants which would otherwise be very difficult to accomplish face to face (Barrett, 2019) and the answers are still as valid as a response.

7: CONCLUSION

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it" – Alan Kay

This paper has tried to show, through real time minute by minute data as they transpire; what lays in store for work over the course of the next decade. We may very well be at the first moment of a conveyance transposition in global standings as global power is consolidated. There is no doubt that the world of work is changing, so adaptations will be necessary (Talent Garden, 2019) to cater to these changes. The initial aim of this thesis was to assess the future of work landscape and deliver a different perspective on such matters. Assessing the various arguments and critically looking at the research, literature as well as recent events and real time world problems the conclusions which can be drawn will be displayed here.

All in all, Knowledge workers have mostly positive experiences of remote work, with the caveat of the pressure and stir-crazy consequences of being in lock down during a pandemic. The key perceptions are that more autonomy leads to more productivity (Hertzberg et al., 1959). There will need to be a changed approach of leadership to fit the mould of the remote worker. The traditional transactional autocratic structural methods of management are not compatible with remote working as they are heavily reliant on micromanagement principles (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). It is best to pursue a model of transformational leadership (Tracy, 2014) combined with a laissez faire approach of developing self-management principles and training employees to better manage themselves.

As technology continues to develop at rapid pace, becoming increasingly accessible and affordable; employers will begin to recognise the value that tech-enabled remote work can offer. From the organisational standpoint cost saving is ensured by the reduction in overheads, lower printing costs and opening of desk space within the office (Cebr, 2019). These financial incentives are dependent on businesses adopting a flexible working culture and implementing technology which enables employees to work from distance effectively. Remote work offers many benefits and certainly adds to dimensions of many firms' dynamic capabilities, by allowing for or offering works that can be done at distance, whether be by choice or by force.

Organizations ultimately need to build up on their dynamic capabilities to enable them to leverage new technologies (Warner & Wäger, 2018) and cope with the strains and rapid changes in the current world. Offering up remote working solutions can certainly be considered as one such capability. Of course, a settlement phase is to be expected, but this will ultimately pay off and lead to long term cost reductions as well as sustainable benefits. This has somewhat already proven true, through 2020 where early adopters (Rogers, 1995) of remote work have seen fruitful results whilst late adopters have struggled to adapt.

A shared affinity about remote working styles is that team spirit will suffer (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). In the traditional workplace, workers often sit together sharing their ideas and share breaks together too. There is a lot of interpersonal dialogue in-between work just by virtue of being together and sharing an environment, a team spirit is born. Good managers recognize this and oft encourage their staff to collaborate (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). With remote working arrangements comes the risk of deteriorating team building practices. Therefore, Managers should understand the significance of informal lines of dialogue (Isaacs, 1999) between team members. If all communications are in relation to work only, then it will take a long time for remote workers to get to know their colleagues (Maitland and Thomson, 2011). The scarce instances of sharing personal experiences unrelated to work are imperative for developing and maintaining team relationships (Maitland and Thomson, 2011).

Still, not all are convinced by the dynamic capabilities offered up through remote working. One such example is Netflix founder and CEO Reed Hastings, whom doesn't see any positives from remote working (Flint, 2020) Explaining that "Not being able to get together in person, particularly internationally, is a pure negative" and that "debating ideas is harder now" (Flint, 2020). Hastings ultimately envisions a future where "the five-day workweek will become four days in the office while one day is virtual from home" (Flint, 2020) which is not too far from where the majority of interviewees landed on their predictions so seems a reasonable and sensible enough prediction to expect, coming from those on the ground experiencing the shifts, both at the employee and organizational level.

According to Maria Xanthoudaki, director of education & CREI at the national museum of science and technology Leonardo da vinci of Milano (Italy) "65% of the students in high school today will be doing jobs that do not even exist today." (Talent Garden, 2019) due to the rising automation and the changing global work landscape. Maria further explains that "The era of jobs that lasted 40 years is long gone, today the average duration in a single job is 4.2 years. 35% of the skills necessary for the work market will have changed by 2020." (Talent Garden, 2019) This statistic will likely become even more skewed as a side effect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adaptation is a necessary to human survival as Charles Darwin once theorized that its "not the strongest or smartest species that survives, but the one that adapts the best" this is a sentiment which also reflects well onto businesses. We have evidence of this through the many businesses struggling or going out of business as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic yet those which have had stronger adaptation capabilities continue to fight and resume work to some standard of normalcy. These are mostly larger businesses which have already dismissed many

staff members, or they are those which have the remote working capabilities so can extend beyond a singular designated workspace.

This process, on a personal level; has been very informative as I have learned a great deal throughout this project, achieving a new level of personal growth. Learning to adapt and overcome major obstacles beyond the realms of individual control is a competency which will be a highly valued trait for the future. If this is relayed and conveyed to the reader, then one of the key conclusions has been recognised. My personal recommendation is that we must come accept and learn from the past, recognise and appreciate the present and accordingly prepare for the future as best as we can. These are the building blocks for a healthy professional, spiritual, and happy life. On a personal individual level nothing is guaranteed, so the best advice to truly adhere to, is to prepare for the future and changes which lay in jest but live in the present moment where possible.

In terms of a definitive answer, to the question of remote work benefiting both organization and employee outright, I must humbly concede, that it is simply too early to tell; being entirely dependent on a plethora of external factors. As the quote from the esteemed Alan Kay (above) indicates, perhaps the most revolutionary forms and tools of future work have simply not even been invented yet. One certainty which is apparent, is if knowledge work entities have not digitalized to some capacity, they will be facing major problems (Maitland and Thomson, 2011) in the current and future globalized climate (Gratton, 2010). Adaptability both on an individual level and organizational level come highly recommended. Learning self-management principles is a necessity (Drucker, 2008) for those which desire having more freedom and responsibility in their roles. Much also depends on time (temporal), place (spatial) and career trajectory wanting to be taken. One recommendation on a personal level, would be to ensure a means of remote working capability, either within a career or outside of the career; so that in times of uncertainty, job loss or lockdown, one can still have a daily objective and an income stream.

To summarise, dynamic capabilities and digital transformation go hand in hand, especially within the scope of remote work. Both are perceived as being unending and highly necessary in order to achieve a sustainable advantage (Gay, 2014). The sophistication of technology (technolution) teamed with organizational preferences towards new methods of value creation and competitive advantage, will spur them to engage and implement dynamic activities over extended time periods to gradually shape, adapt and innovate their respective business models to persevere. This likely means we should expect to see more companies (of all sizes) attempting to shift to digital modalities. Most upstarts will likely initiate with digital capabilities from the offset.

Nevertheless, future research should continue to examine how organizations with virtual teams can use new and alternative technology-mediated communication tools for developing employee engagement among dispersed employees. Also, longitude data would paint a much better picture of the true effects, positive or otherwise, of firms integrating remote working to their dynamic capabilities. Furthermore, studies examining how well small and medium-sized enterprises or family firms adapted to the current climate by building on their dynamic capabilities to innovate their business models for digital transformation, would provide a greater all round picture of this years impact towards transitions in working lives.

8: DECLERATION OF WORK

 I declare that this thesis is my own original and unaided work. It is intended to be submitted for the Master of Social Science in organization innovation and entrepreneurship program at Copenhagen Business School. This work has not previously been submitted for any degree, diploma or examination at any other tertiary education institution.

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10: APPENDICES

Transcript of Interviews

Format

Name:

Age:

Location:

Job title:

Questions:
 - ➢ **What are the main duties of your role?**
 - ➢ **How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?**
 - ➢ **How are you finding the experience of remote working?**
 - ➢ **How are you being managed?**
 - ➢ **What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company?**
 - ➢ **What (if any) have been the expectations?**
 - ➢ **Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time, in the future?**
 - ➢ **Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?**
 - ➢ **How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?**

Name: Milad Zamatkesh

Age: 32

Location: St Louis, Missouri - USA

Job Title: Administrative support specialist

What are the main duties of your role?

Data entry and data transfer are the essential aspects of my role. Besides this it's just some other menial admin tasks, such as calls, emails, follow ups and so on.

How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?

Had never worked from home, for this current position, before the pandemic. I have been working exclusively from home for about one month now.

How are you finding the experience?

It's been a good experience so far. I like it because there is no travel, so this saves time and avoids the daily inconvenience of commuting to and from work. I also enjoy more privacy, not having to share office, kitchen or bathroom space with many others. I'm doing the exact same things as I normally do at the office. I did go into the office to get an office chair and mouse in order to make the set up at home more efficient. One disadvantage is that I don't have all the supplies which the office can provide such as; printer, scanner, copier or telecom system. Also do not have direct access to a supervisor. Sometimes there is router trouble and internet go down as it is for personal household and is not strong enough for certain tasks at times, especially if the family at home are also using the internet at the same time. I have found that I have been making better use of free/personal time such as breaks or lunch. The office can be very noisy which sometime hinders my productivity, at home I am working more productively in silence, so I've been working faster and more accurately at home. Also, the temperature of the office was too cold for me, but now at home I am in control of the environment, so I have much more comfort by setting temperature myself.

How are you being managed?

Primarily by telephone and mostly only if really needed, otherwise it's all being done by email and sometimes through skype. Because I mostly work individually anyway, I am used to working independently. This is how I am comfortable and work best this way. I'd say this is to some degree a self-management style of working. Because I am really proficient with computers, most computer errors or issues I can fix myself so rarely need IT support; granted it may take me longer to restore the problem but I prefer to do it myself this way as it is more convenient for me and feels faster even if it isn't. The managers always have access to see summaries of work and can see how much work has been completed and how much remains. If deadlines are met and everything is on schedule, then there are no issues. Once a week we receive an email to check progress of work, but really most checks are done in the system. So far, I have not been notified that deadlines are not being met or work is outstanding.

What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company?

Once a week there is a meeting to check the status of things. There are supervisors on standby if needed, also colleagues are available on messenger and email, and we can always organize skype group calls if required. Because of the pandemic they are offering a level of emotional/psychological support, but this is only if needed so you have reach out; which is comforting to know that the lines are open but it's not compulsory. So, I feel that the company cares about us and are "just a phone call away" if needed. Generally, they have encouraged staff with any questions, problems or concerns to contact without hesitance. This has boosted morale, knowing we're all in this together, because of the current circumstances and the business itself being closed and suffering as much as anyone else.

What have been the expectations?

To work as normally as possible, meet deadlines, get tasks done, stay up to date with ongoing changes and transitions and stay in touch with supervisors to provide updates on state of things.

Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time in the future?

Yes, 100 per cent I wish to work from home in the future. I would prefer to carry on working from home full time, no problem. for a company that offers this kind of work not just solely or independent.

Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?

Most certainly because this has been an experiment and the fundamentals are already in place ready and proven it can work, maybe not for every industry but for many companies its possible. It seems to be working for most everyone I know at the moment and most seem to prefer it this way. Companies won't have to pay rent or utilities whilst employees are more comfortable working on their own terms. If the work gets done and deadlines are met, then companies will not hesitate in changing their working style. It may even be found to be more productive in some cases.

How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?

I personally have not had much difficulty limiting distractions. In my personal experience, there are more distractions at the office than at my home. In the office there a lot of distractions such as; noise, odd disruptions throughout the day, people eating, the smell of food, colleagues talking too much, personal conversations going on and so on which each to their own are not so detrimental but when added up accounts for a lot of lost time which I find to be unproductive. I have trained myself to work home and really enjoy the responsibility attached to working from home. At the office it's a very hierarchical scheme but now it's still much the same yet feels different as I feel more like a manager myself.

At my work there are only four guys (me included) and the rest of the colleagues are women, this is not a problem at all but if there's every like handywork to do or heavy things need lifting etc. that's extra work for us guys so this can take a good chunk of time and effort from the day. On top of this there are office happenings going on a handful of times a month like baby showers, birthdays, karaoke, raffles and the likes. Whilst these can be morale boosting with good team building benefits, I find they occur too regularly and really distract those people who want no part of it or are trying to work whilst such things go on in the background.

Additionally, we have a morning briefing every day which is useless and takes away one hour each day. This is because all departments are involved in this meeting but very little of the information going around concerns the staff in those other respective departments. I understand communication is important between departments, but this should be more for the leaders and managers not all the staff because as I say there is very little relative information in these morning briefings, once a week would be much more appropriate. Instead other irrelevant topics are discussed in these briefings relating to personal lives such as; sports teams, families, relationships and weight loss. Again, whilst this can create a good and open office culture for staff to feel embraced and heard, making friends at work the cost is that it detracts from the work that needs to be done. Without having these elements at home, I'm finding that I'm working much more productively and meeting all deadlines well ahead of time. This allows me to undertake new and more projects.

How do you think the current situation impacts the future?

After the pandemic many jobs will become virtual as a result of the health concerns and consequences of working in a small environment surrounded by many others. Also, I think a precedent has now been set. One of the reasons we couldn't work from home in the past

was down to data protection regulation as we deal with patient sensitive and secure information like social security number etc. We were told we couldn't have access to this information from home but with the government closures forcing the company to shut down the office and work from home, it has signaled that this reasoning wasn't final nor valid. The precedent has now been set as regulations and company policies are waivered all over the world showing that it can and will be changed eventually. Ultimately working from home is just more functional and when companies check the statistics and weigh up the pros and cons, it will come down to the numbers and they will adjustment to what will ultimately benefit the company.

Name: David Persson

Age: 26

Location: Gothenburg - Sweden

Job Title: CTO chief technical officer

What are the main duties of your role?

Implementation of upkeep and modernizing IT systems. On top of this I do some bookkeeping as it I work for a small business Keeping it systems up to date and configuring them to run remotely

How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?

Yes, about once a week or a bunch of days a month depending on the type of work and schedule; but other than that, always at the office as the necessary books, records and data are there. I would do a lot of email correspondence and drafting, filing documents from home. I can conduct any business specific tasks such as bookkeeping and other shared documents and folders as well as to be able to upload and use other documents as though I were in the office. Part of my job is also client facing, so this is clearly something I can't do from home, whilst can discuss certain things over the phone but a large part of the business is done face to face.

How are you finding the experience?

It has been more work than usual, just because of weird problems that have arisen, but it's still a manageable workload. I've faced some problems such as incompatibility with printers or other windows/mac specific problems with business programs and remote software for cash registers and so on. But this is because the transition came without warning through the pandemic, so certain things were not in place prior to this. Given time and preparation it could work and in fact would be much easier in many ways. We would plan for everyone to have standardized IT infrastructure and the necessary tools, such as; same computers and access to drives, files and folders so that everything is available and easy to integrate for all employees. I'm learning that if planned and prepared for then home working can be both practical and beneficial but because it came as surprise very suddenly, there have been some difficulties. Apart from the physical client interaction aspects of the job, the rest is feasibly doable at home.

How are you being managed?

There has been no real noticeable difference in management as the small business has a lot of self-management aspects of independent working, in the sense that we all know our roles and what is expected. It has certainly been harder to coordinate with other colleagues for group tasks due to scheduling conflicts. Some of the other minor difficulties include things such as; access problems, misuse of filing systems and misplacement of folders in shared environments.

What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company;

Workwise, the tech needed has mostly been provided, infrastructure and restructuring has been done without intervention from higher ups. I feel that so far, we have had adequate space and cooperation so feel needs are being met and requests considered. Financially, I feel very secure as have been assured that my job is secure with no risk of loss of pay, so this has been very helpful during this time of crisis. There hasn't been much emotional support, but it hasn't really been needed, although lines of communication are open if this kind of support is required which I am aware of, so I would just need to reach out, which is comforting to know I suppose.

What have been the expectations?

Expectations have largely remained the same. Deadlines are to be met, so we are expected to do the work but there has been more flexibility with the working hours; working to your own daily schedule with the caveat that the work is done in timely fashion. On top of this, it is agreed that we should be on time for any briefings, conferences, telephone or video calls.

Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time in the future?

I would happily work from home in the future and would say that it is a personal goal of mine. I would choose to work from home part time though. This is because I find value by going into the office and having some semblance of structure. I like this personally for my life structure as I feel more accomplished and sense a level of achievement just by going into an office to get work done so I can enjoy some off time at home. This helps not to blur the lines between home and work life to avoid unproductive traps by not falling into patterns of procrastination habits. This way I can leave work at the office and get a good rest at home, to differentiate between work and relaxation. Working from home is a blessing but can become a curse because of distractions. I also wouldn't want to be confined to one place meaning you would always be home, because you live and work there. After a while this could become depressing. Going in to work I have a commute, certain routines, even if just in passing such as getting breakfast or coffee out. These are some aspects of normal office working which I still enjoy and wouldn't want to give up entirely just yet.

Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?

Absolutely, the pandemic (COVID-19) has been a good steppingstone for this shift. Both the willingness of workers and technology maturing are contributing to it becoming much more commonplace. The Pandemic has already proved that's its possible on large scale. Many sectors which can transition, will do so, leading to smaller hubs in smaller office spaces. But certain sectors such as social (bars and restaurants) and retail will still need to be done physically. Most companies will incorporate it to some degree if not outright. We may even see a scenario where employees work in an office environment once or twice a week, sharing smaller office spaces, then work the remaining days from home. This might even be considered as virtual downsizing without having to downsize. There are financial incentives for companies such as not needing real estate, bills, injuries in office, other on-site liabilities etc. which will be irresistible for them.

The pandemic will change the world, but it will be much slower than suggested. It will have long term effects beyond the short-term economic damage and will raise awareness on public health concerns such as pandemics in general, which the media will play around with for some time potentially making matters worse. There will be skepticism and distrust between people for a while, but people will rebound quickly as we are socially dependent. Once people see others going out doing normal things not getting sick then they will fall back into a normal social life, it's only a matter of time.

How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?

This has been the biggest challenge by far, especially as I share a household with people on different schedules. Turning my personal phone to silent and using the work phone only when working is the first thing. Logging into a remote desktop, not using my personal computer or internet access as well as not using other private electronic devices in order to limit distractions and avoid procrastinating. I'm following a routine of sleeping and waking up on time as normal in order to help with the mindset aspect of the change. I set working hours, shifting them around to suit my circadian rhythm and productivity better, but the set hours must be done daily no matter what.

Name: Ramin Peroznejad

Age: 28

Location: Bristol – UK

Job Title: Pension Administrator

What are the main duties of your role?

I manage pension accounts for our clients. This can extend to other duties such as investment properties, asset management, writing of deeds and general customer service.

How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?

Never.

How are you finding the experience?

It's been Good so far; I like it a lot but there are certain things which have been difficult. The difficulties lie in the fact that certain things must be done in the office whether because of departments, regulations or tools needed to complete tasks such as anything to do with legal documents can't be done at home, physical signatures have been a major problem for us, some staff are struggling with the lack of printers scanners and other office supplies lacking in their homes. physical signing in person is a critical aspect of the job and obviously the lockdown has made this increasingly difficult challenge for us, but I would say this is more so down to the lockdown and limited freedom of movement right now instead of a result of working from home.

How are you being managed?

MS (Microsoft) teams have been a very practical application for us. We are holding briefings on MS teams with the manager and team once a week. This meeting gives us a chance to check progress and overall status of things. We oversee managing our own deadlines as is expected under normal circumstances, so this hasn't changed so much.

One consideration for us is that managers don't need to know every little detail regarding cases as there are too many schemes; I personally manage 320 schemes, so the supervisors don't know all the details because they don't need to. They can check progress and have access to all details but there is generally a lot of trust and competence, so it is expected that all cases are completed to a high standard. There is trust because they know I'm a good and competent worker with a great track record, completing and meeting deadlines usually well ahead of time.

What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company?

As mentioned, we have the ongoing compulsory weekly meeting but besides this contact is achieved through calls or email. The contact lines are open, and we have been made aware of this, so we can contact superiors or colleagues at any time if assistance is required. We have also created WhatsApp groups between different departments in order to communicate easily with other colleagues, this has been a great addition both for technical and morale support and is an addition I imagine will remain once we return to normal. So, we have plenty of support available and we're all very aware of this.

What have been the expectations?

Well it has been expected that we try no work as normally as possible and to get the tasks we can get done at home done it a quick and efficient manner as if we would in the offices. But there is an understanding that obviously because of the current circumstances some things will just take a lot longer to process. They have given us the digression to prioritize tasks and let them know if something is delayed or outstanding or if there needs to be a shift in our priorities.

Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time in the future?

I would prefer working from yes and full time at that. Because I prefer the comfort of home as it makes me feel more productive as the setting and planning of the day is in my control so I can arrange it to fit me best. I could do this full time long-term because if I wanted the team building experiences and socializing, I could still do this outside of work such as linking up with colleagues for a drink or other social activities.

Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?

In my view it depends entirely on the stipulations such as; industry regulations, social security and privacy concerns, abuse of the system etc. If some workers slack and productivity dips, then this would affect all those who work normal or even better from home so this can have an impact. Overall, the data will be collected and show if the pros outweigh the cons. companies care greatly about the numbers so track records will prove its an efficient way of working and benefits them the most. If it does, then of course they'll widely implement the practice but if not, then it won't be pursued further or implemented on a mass scale. Another consideration is that companies can just revert to normal working conditions after implementing home working, because if it starts to become a burden, they will just cut their losses and change to a different model as is normal in organization life cycles.

How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?

The main motivation is job security, meaning that if the work is not done then I lose the job, which is only fair and is to be expected as the same rule applies to any normal form of working. Whilst the TV can be a distraction for some, I actually enjoy having it on in the background, mostly just for some background noise which I feel replicates the background noise of an office somewhat and this makes me more productive because I prefer not to work in silence.

Name: Patricia Eijkmans

Age: 27

Location: Amsterdam – Netherlands

Job Title: Relationship Manager

What are the main duties of your role?

I manage clients' accounts and build up relationships. I also provide some secondary customer service, commune with accountants, draw up invoices and provide digital marketing assistance where needed.

How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?

I had never worked from home, in any capacity, for this job prior to recent events.

How are you finding the experience?

I'm enjoying it. In the past I was always interested in remote working to some capacity and desired to do it at least one day a week, if not more. Now that I have experienced it and seen that it is possible for my current role, I would want to continue and work from home at least once a week, but ideally more than just once. I would still like to also work in an office setting because of the social interactions and morale provided, so would split my time between the two. I find a lot of benefits in the social aspects of the office surroundings.

How are you being managed?

We have meetings once a week, every Wednesday, on zoom (video call application) with our manager and another colleague in the same department. We usually don't really get micromanaged under normal circumstances, unless it is urgent; so, this hasn't changed and supports this style of working. I'm not too familiar with the concept of self-management for working but would argue that there is a certain level of self-management both in my normal role under normal circumstances which has been amplified during this time of home working. I normally manage my own work and there is a lot of trust between myself and my superiors based on history and prior working record.

What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company?

Communication is open as we have direct lines on contact for supervisors and colleagues alike. As with most in this position, most our contact is being achieved through calls and emails.

What have been the expectations?

There has for sure been a more relaxed approach, but this leniency has been a necessary adjustment given the current situation, but the workload is still heavy, so we have been very busy and have not felt a such a noticeable difference in that sense.

Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time in the future?

For sure, I would continue to work from home as it stands but I would choose to do it part time for reasons mentioned earlier regarding the social aspects of office working. I suppose this could also be achieved through co working spaces, but the difference is that not everyone in coworking projects are working for the same company or on the same projects so there would be less relatability and support I feel.

Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?

Yes, because it will be a cheaper alternative for companies where possible, as most companies try to keep costs down. At my place of work there are two offices, so if things changed up and some staff worked remotely then there would only be need for the one office; either those who can work from home do or people work part time shifts between

home and the office. Many of my colleagues prefer the office work environment for a variety of reasons like the fact that not everyone has a good working environment in their home; one of my friends lives with her parents and partner all in the same house so it would be difficult to manage this, even more so if there are others working from home at the same time. So really it depends on circumstances too, but overall, we will be seeing more remote work yes. I personally work with two big screens in the office, but this can take up a lot of space at home and can also be difficult and expensive to set up without any support from an employer.

How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?

I have done some small things which have had a big impact; early in the process I went into the office to grab some basic supplies, such as; an office chair, mouse and mat to create a better working environment at home. Initially I had some TV on in the background, mainly just to follow the news, but I would say this comes more down to the current situation, wanting to stay up to date with proceedings relating to the pandemic. Under normal circumstances I would not have the news on all day, but it has been nice having some background noise and has not negatively affected my productivity. Sometimes I'll take a break and have a tea and watch some reality TV just as a break, but I treat it as a luxury and do not do this daily. But overall, I'm still very productive from home and getting the work done on time. Working from home has had some other benefits including access to my own kitchen, which gives me a chance to cook something fresh and healthy daily, avoiding the stress of prepping meals late the night before or early the day of work.

Name: Jomo Leaver

Age: 30

Location: Bristol - UK

Job Title: Sports Operation supervisor (University of Bristol)

What are the main duties of your role?

I work as a sports operation's supervisor at the University of Bristol. I act as a line manager to a team of 7 people, 3 receptionists and 4 sports assistants. This means I manage student sports programs and sports facilities both during and out of term times. On top of this I do day to day management of 3 different sports sites

How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?

Very rarely. If we're counting the time before the shift in which I go about my morning routine which includes elements of work, then roughly 2-3 hours a week. This is time for preparing for the shift, checking emails, scheduling, planning the day and week ahead. Duties of the job require me to do very little work from the home as the actual project being done at home wouldn't be paid for this. These hours are made up of time supposed to be at work. Reply emails answer questions, feedback to staff check things from home.

How are you finding the experience?

It has been difficult. I have had to adapt, having to use skills not necessarily had to use before. I am proficient with computer work but now had to work with new; software, apps and different platforms in order to communicate with different people. There has been a lot of reading and taking on a lot more information than usual. I've generally been finding myself getting more distracted by not being in my usual working environment. This is because there is a lot of distractions around at home. My job really requires physical presence so there's only so much we can do from home. Right now, we're working on; how improve our services, future planning, updating operational procedures and things of this nature. I also am updating our environmental procedures so how our division can be more sustainable going forward and working on marketing procedures with marketing the officer. We're generally using this time to improve our services for when we resume all operations as normal. Considering this we are also planning for post COVID-19 complications which could arise. We have already been informed about a potential restructuring of the academic calendar with delays ahead of the next academic year which would mean big adjustments for not only my department (sports) but the whole university. Ultimately, we need to get back to operation as soon as possible as it is an operational position. Much of the work I'm doing now could be classed almost as secondment, because can't carry out normal duties.

How are you being managed?

I have weekly meetings on skype with my manager and a facility operations manager once week, usually every Monday. The difference is that I don't see my manager every day like I do at work. I don't see my manager every single day at the university but see him at least 3-4 times a week; although it's worth noting that could just be in passing as I don't always have direct contact with my manager. Usually we meet once a week face to face, so that's still the case, just over skype instead of in person. But overall, less contact than under normal circumstances understandably. Less face to face contact but more virtual contact. That's down to manager making sure we use the form of communication at our disposal. Honestly, I feel like I have more contact with my manager right now but that's also because he has me working on certain projects that require more correspondence. Generally happy to use each other for things than we otherwise would. During the meeting with my manager I update him on the progress of my work, and he passes on any necessary information to too. He has also allowed me to work with different sections of the division on other projects generally how being managed also have monthly sport operation meetings with management team.

What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company?

There is quite a lot of support on offer. We have the university's own intranet site, SharePoint; which is designed with a section for up to date news and information around the virus crisis. Additionally, on this SharePoint there is also updated contact information for a range of services the university can provide to students and staff members during this time. These services range from mental health support to exercise instruction packages. I also have the support of my line manager, whom passes on relevant information about what I should and need to be doing for my job, as well as keeping me on track. The university executive group such as the dean and vice chancellor are doing weekly live streams; where they provide updates on the university's response to the crisis and answer any questions submitted, live on this stream. There's advice passed on to line managers from higher ups about how best to communicate with staff. The university have also been great in assisting me with the tools I need to work from home, my personal laptop is very old and not capable of complex work, so the university provided me with a better laptop. I would say that I have been provided with what I need for the most part but if looking for more or specific information then I've got to really get in contact with the other departments of the university. This has been necessary for me when conducting, for example sustainability reports; to call the various departments to get statistics and figures relating to usage and west, but of course this is too be expected when conducting any report as such. For this data gathering aspect of the work I contact the various branches of the university, but they are all available and I have the means and information on how and when to contact them; some have been slower than others in responding, but I do get the information needed eventually.

What have been the expectations?

We have been encouraged to communicate regularly by staying in touch with team and proceedings. This includes; providing regular email updates, calling colleagues to arrange meetings, having to update managers on progress or difficulties faced. My manager hasn't set explicit deadlines for me per se its just expected to regularly provide updates on status of work and keep supervisors generally in the loop. I'm working more on a project basis where managers communicate what they need me to do. However, there is one project on staff integration which I'm currently working on and we have a deadline for the final idea submission we are working towards. If there are any urgent matters, then they take precedent and we work to get the most important tasks done first. I would say more of an element of theory work, doing work from home, remote virtual work, aspects of this kind of work in my regular job but lot of physical aspects to it too. Electronic tasks still have certain amount of work to get done by certain amount of time.

Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time in the future?

No, I wouldn't prefer working from home at all. This is just my preference; I prefer to go into physical workplace, just for the variation alone. Also it's a really necessary aspect of my current role in sports development, which is an active role which demands a lot of physicality and working with others such as sports teams, so whilst certain aspects can be done remotely (temporarily), it's not something that can be done full time virtually. I don't want to be a coach, facility manger or sports manager full time in the future; eventually, as I work my way up the career ladder, it will likely end in a mixed sports and facility role - where I could potentially do a lot of the work from home remotely. So not to say I don't see myself ever working from home or going into a role where its more normal being able to work remotely. But at this point in my career, having a role which incorporates hands on operations as well as computer-based work, is good for me I feel. Ultimately for now, whether it's an office or a sports center, I enjoy being able to get up and leave to go to work.

Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?

Yes, I think a lot of business and governments will review their strategies and look closer at parts of their businesses that can operate remotely and pursue transitioning them full time.

The data should show the productivity levels so maybe some people are more constructive and make better use of their time working from home. So, in the future I'd imagine there be a lot of people using this method of work whether coming by workers demanding it themselves or companies requesting it from their employees. The impact of COVID-19 will have long lasting ramifications for almost all industries, in my opinion. For us, it has really messed up the academic calendar for the foreseeable future with much dependent on the turn of events. There is a governmental furlough scheme here in the UK and my university have applied to be part of the scheme. The university is planning to nominate some of the divisions, to request members of staff to be furloughed. This ultimately means they can't do anything that can contribute to official business practices or university work and they'll be paid 80 per cent of their salary by the government. This comes with the caveat that university of Bristol will pay the remaining 20% to make up the full salary. So, the furloughed staff are getting full salary, without even having to do any work from home. Of course, this isn't an ideal situation for anybody and can't go on long term like this but for now, they've got it till June with options for extension.

How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?

This has been the real difficulty, as I'm not in an ideal working environment; so, there has been less pressure which is a bad thing for me. I like having some pressure when working and being in an environment built specifically for work only. Also, there isn't as much of a time constraint, so I find it easier to get distracted by anything at home such; TV, playing PlayStation, exercising etc. Not having other work colleagues around is difficult for my line of work and not being in my usual place of work means that I just don't have the same sense of urgency. There are still some deadlines to meet and there is pressure to do work from home, but just not so much that sense of urgency; which I miss. This sense of urgency makes me feel much more productive. I have found that from home it's much easier to work early getting tasks completed from around 08:00 in the morning to about 13:00 in the afternoon, before there is a dip in productivity as distractions and temptations begin to grow. Distractions for me include; electronic devices, housemates; I get on well with them, so we often socialize; music playing - which isn't ideal but that's just expected. Neither of my housemates are currently working from home, so they have a lot freer time but generally it's alright and I can manage this as we are all adults. Having deadlines to meet is a motivator as I know to get the work done by a set time. Also, the work has given me something to do in the day which has been nice during the lockdown as otherwise I would be going a little stir crazy.

Name: Ahmet Hussein

Age: 27

Location: London - UK

Job Title: Review Officer

What are the main duties of your role?

My role mainly consists of reviewing cases of financial misconduct. My main responsibilities are to investigate previous cases, check for and correct any errors, if not then hard done by mistakes and open case and re review basically see what we owe that customer financial reimbursement, calculate what is owed to customers. Some aspects of loan resettlement in a way. Also touch on loans, credit cards, mistakes, bank hasn't treated them well, sent wrong notices. But essentially just Casework

How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?

Not once.

How are you finding the experience?

It has taken some time to get accustomed to but it's going well and I'm getting much more used to it. I miss the social interaction of having people around and working directly with colleagues. I enjoy it in a way, part of me just needs to be around people as I find it helps make the day go by quicker. It has been nice not having to commute to and from work, which takes a lot of my time although sometimes I enjoy the journey. I would certainly consider adjusting to this style of working in the future, but not outright. What the experience has showed me is that it is possible and can be done, for my job at least. It has shown it can be done and we don't always have to go into the office thus saving on costs both for the company and employees. This is because you're not spending on public transport or petrol which is also so more environmentally friendly. Also, for the company, smaller offices would mean less energy usage as the company wouldn't need such a large office if most workers were working from home. Our work laptops are being constantly monitored as we deal with very sensitive information. We work with work laptops only and never our personal ones, in order to be safer both for the company and us individually. We are using the companies own internal system "citrics" only, so we can be monitored, examined and watched closely with all work history visible. On top of this there is restricted access with blocked sites, we can only access files relevant to us and our work. Timestamps are visible which would indicate activity and any possible breaches if committed. We can only access the sensitive information of the names involved in each case and nothing more, so if I were to even log into my own personal bank account this gives cause for instant dismissal as it is a breach of data and contract.

How are you being managed?

Not much has changed except for the physical daily access to managers. We have targets to meet and set KPIs (key performance indicators) in order to motivate us and track ours progress. We have a minimum of two cases to complete daily, if this isn't met consistently then there is a formal warning or more training required but if this trend continues; then it gives cause for dismissal. We have constant contact with managers using zoom or other alternatives such as; internal system called "jabber" where we can video conference, WhatsApp and personal telephone via mobile for any urgent matters. Were also communicating through various IM resources such as Facebook messenger and our own internal IM system is also available for quick, non-urgent queries with colleagues and supervisors. Managers are contacting us twice weekly to check in with our progress and general state of affairs. But Managers are available, if they are needed beyond these two occasions so their lines are open. Managers are keeping us up to date with situation as best they can, as it develops. We are constantly receiving emails regarding up to date news and relevant information. However, in the office there is still a lot more micro-management as a line manager usually sits in to monitor us.

What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company?

Well as mentioned the lines are open so we are free to seek help by email, IM, audio/video calls when needed. We are getting paid as normal but no extra reimbursement but also not being docked any pay which is much needed right now. We also had an email sent out in relation to speak to qualified staff from HR if you are struggling personally or going through any other difficulties. This is not a compulsory service but is readily available if it is needed and is very personal with discretion given to the employee.

What have been the expectations?

To be honest we haven't really been told much about specific expectations. There is an understanding that this is a difficult time and not ideal circumstances, but we are to work as normally as we possibly can. We must complete at least two cases a day but can take as many breaks as we want, for the most part so long as the target is routinely met. How you run the day is up to you, but two cases must be completed and submitted by the end of the day. There is more flexibility as to when you can start your day of between 7:00 and 10:00 (am) and can finish between 15:00 to 18:00 (pm) so a regular 7-hour day with a one-hour lunch. If the two-case target is met before the end of the day then we must carry on working on more cases, the day doesn't end with two cases; two cases is the minimum we are to hand in at the end of the shift. If we are in the middle of a case at the end of the day, it is saved for the next day and counts towards the following days tally when completed. We are still being monitored as we have a dial up system which we log onto then there is a pop up on the system that we are logged in and working for supervisors to see. We have been provided laptops from work which they can control and have remote access to so can check the webcam to see we are at a station when we are meant to be. On this system there is a status menu so if we are on a break, lunch or a meeting; then we update the status, so managers know that we are away at that time. If your available, then you should be working so if no work is being done for a long period then managers would contact to find out the cause. Generally, though management are understanding of the situation and not too strict, just as long as the work is being done on time.

Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time in the future?

I would say part time, ideally two days in an office and three from home. The benefits I have found in; saving money, not commuting, environmentally better - not having to drive every day. Also, it has benefits for mental wellbeing as I find it's nice to mix it up and change space more often; its fresher and diverse this way and can inspire more creativity. I don't feel as worn out by not getting stuck in traffic before or after work and feels like I have more freedom but more responsibility too. The flip side to that is though that productivity can be lacking, as I have found to be less productive at times right now. This is partly circumstantial and can be managed over time, as one of my gripes for example has been; I haven't got enough screens to be able to do what I'm supposed to be doing. At work, normally I have two big screens, which allow me to multitask and review multiple files; but at home I have a small laptop, so a lot of files are open at the same time on top of one another which can be confusing. There's been a lot of bouncing around between files which is time consuming and cause for a headache and also the laptops processing speed is lot slower than our workstation computers. Understandably though, given time this is something which could be accommodated. This is just lacking the best possible tools for the job, but this is fixable and can be addressed down the road so shouldn't be a long-term excuse against home working.

Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?

I would have to say yes. This whole situation has given the opportunity, for the people whom wished the chance to work from home, to show that it can be done effectively. Small to medium businesses could save money and office space by having their staff work from home as will large businesses too. With the technology available today, any kind of office/admin job can technically be done at home. You no longer must be in an office to get work done. If

HSBC (employer) can manage it, dealing with highly sensitive information, then I would assume a lot of other businesses can do the same.

How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?

Managing distractions hasn't been a difficult for me. I don't have a tv or really watch much tv and put away my own personal laptop during the day to avoid procrastination. Luckily there isn't too much noise pollution where I live and even though I live with housemates, I've got a good enough setting to get work done. For me I'm just following the stock market and the news updates, but not to extreme levels to affect my work productivity and I've limited distractions in these ways. For me the bigger concern has been the Coronavirus lockdown affecting the social aspects of normal life; morale is a little low not being to partake in my usual hobbies or see friends, but I understand that this is temporal and under normal circumstances, this would be different.

Name: Vincent Marx

Age: 24

Location: Wiesbaden - Germany

Job Title: CEO

What are the main duties of your role?

I am currently both a student and Self-employed, I do not work for any other company; as such I take on a variety of roles. Working in my own start-up requires me to work in many different fields. My main duties are creative work in terms of designing my new collection, building up & maintaining my online shop & social media, producing quality content in terms of pictures for both website & social media, creating ads, building up a supply chain so that the product are being shipped efficiently to the customers, and customer support. Of course, bookkeeping duties must be done as well throughout the year in collaboration with my accountant.

How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?

Due to my brand being solely sold online, I wasn't affected too much. However, there have been struggles regarding meeting my production company in order to check the status of my products. We needed to shift personal meetings to online communication. Thus, products were shown through pictures instead of checking them personally. This resulted in some risks as I was not 100% sure of the quality, but so far, it has worked out well.

How are you finding the experience of remote working?

I've been doing it for a long time, so overall its good. The problem is that I have issues with focusing at home due to the many disturbances: neighbors want our dog, ring bells due to parcels being shipped to my home, etc. it is nothing too crazy to handle, but it just interrupts the flow of working. The most important issue when working from home is that it is difficult to split your work and private life. You take breaks in between, however, work overall for a longer time which seems more inefficient to me. I miss going out and taking a break or doing an outside lunch to just refresh my brain.

How are you being managed?

Well, seeing as though I'm the CEO and self-employed, I largely just must manage myself and the company, so for me personally it comes down to a lot of self-management.

What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company?

Germany and our government have offered help to businesses. However, your company needs to have clear evidence of struggling because of the pandemic. For some it is easy to justify, for others it isn't. However, if I had employees, I could put them on temporary work if there was no work to be done for them, in order to retain them. This means, they don't have to work so to speak & the government would pay 70% of their wages. This is very important and life saving for many companies. I do not have employees yet, thus, no need for doing this.

What (if any) have been the expectations?

I guess expectations of the pandemic's impact on business. Well, I am working in the e-commerce field, so I knew I was safe. However, for local stores, there are many issues as they need to be closed. I thought about providing consultancy for some local stores in order to make them ready for online business, however, didn't end up doing so as I did not have enough time to work on that besides writing my thesis and working on my own brand.

Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time, in the future?

It should be a mix. I think the best option would be flexible working options. If you have no meetings, working from home should be given and not seen as something bad. everyone

does it now and it works. However, personal meetings should still be conducted personally, if possible. I think this will be important for the team spirit, etc.

Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?

Yes, I think & hope so!

How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?

I started to put my phone away, which is a major distraction. Sometimes browsing through the internet is also an issue. Besides that, doing other stuff at home include; Cleaning, eating for too long, playing with my dogs, these are all things that waste a lot of time. So, I try to structure my day and work a routine, so I know I'm getting work done even if I get caught up in some distractions. I'm a self-motivated individual, working for myself and this my continual goal to keep it this way so I make sure I'm doing good work not to lose this.

Name: Elias Fuglsang Andsager

Age: 26

Location: Copenhagen - Denmark

Job Title: Commercial Excellence Assistant

What are the main duties of your role?

Supporting the following three workstreams within Commercial Excellence; Customer Relationship Management, Field Force Excellence and Multi-Channel Marketing. The actual support goes across several different activities such as; project management and assistance, building and maintaining reports, stakeholder management and communication.

How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?

Rarely. Maybe once a month.

How are you finding the experience of remote working?

Overall good, under the circumstances. A lot of things that were deemed impossible to do (or had long timelines) i.e. the digitalization of many ComEx activities has been accomplished in a very short time. So, from works perspective, it has been good, but also extremely busy.

How are you being managed?

My manager checks in regularly to ensure that I am doing good and that the task I have are being, and can be, solved within the timeline set. This is done through e-mail correspondences and through video-calls.

What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company?

Several guidelines and courses have been offered. Overall, they have been very proactive and engaged in ensuring that the employees have been able to successfully do their job.

What (if any) have been the expectations?

Honestly, didn't really have any set. It's just good to be able to get something done with the circumstances we're currently facing. So, I think there is an understanding and leniency during this time.

Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time, in the future?

I can definitely see the benefit of working from home once or twice a week. It saves a lot of transportation time and allows for more flexible working. However, I would not like to do it full time, there are still limitations when it comes to aligning with team members and reaching out to colleagues when working from home.

Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?

Yeah, I could see that happening, especially as most of us are "knowledge" workers where we don't necessarily have to be at work physically to do our tasks. Also, it grants people more freedom and flexibility in terms of getting their family life filled with practical tasks to work out.

How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?

When you have things to do and deadlines to reach it more or less takes care of itself. Although it also makes it difficult to separate and balance work life and off time, which is one of the negatives of working from home full-time. But the best way to stay motivated and limit distractions in my opinion is to keep a routine which mirror what you are used to, that way it feels normal – this however also means shutting down at 16:00 or 17:00 pm so that work doesn't consume everything.

Name: George Godfrey

Age: 29

Location: Warwick - UK

Job title: Gameplay programmer

What are the main duties of your role?

I'm working in game programming, so the main duties are writing the code for gameplay interactions adding extra features to the game and fixing any bugs whilst optimising the game for playing. I also work with level designers to see what needs to be done to make the gameplay work.

How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?

Virtually never.

How are you finding the experience?

I am not enjoying the experience as I often feel I lose motivation. Communication with other team members has been a nightmare. My role is pretty practical and requires a lot of collaboration which has been lacking during this time.

How are you being managed?

We are managed through zoom, with meetings held every morning. In these meetings we simply explain to everyone what we are currently working and how it is progressing, and then receive feedback if there is any to be given.

What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company?

Not much support has been given during this time, but the management don't put much pressure on us. So, with that in mind they don't seem to mind tasks taking longer than usual to complete and have been understandably lenient.

What have been the expectations?

The expectations have been very fair. We are basically left to our own devices, working at our own pace. Still things must eventually be completed, and the daily briefings make sure that we are at least on track to some degree.

Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time, in the future?

I would honestly much rather be in the office full time. I miss the collaborative process and the comradery of being in the office. Especially for my role, which is quite practical also, it just feels much more effectively accomplished back in the main office with all the tools at our disposal.

Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?

I think working from home will become more common in general for sure. But it also probably depends on the industry in question. Game development is a very collaborative and practical process so I believe that in our industry, will all go back to offices eventually and this practise won't be changing for us anytime soon.

How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?

For me, motivation is not so high when working from home, as I miss the human interaction and traditional management of being in the office. It's also much easier to get distracted by YouTube, Netflix, Facebook and so on.

Name: Oscar Karlsson

Age: 24

Location: Gothenburg - Sweden

Job Title: Supply chain manager

What are the main duties of your role?

I work within supply chain with duties of; analysing costs within the aftermarket of spare parts, to make our way of working more effective and coming up with new methods and tools for working to improve our service.

How often prior to the pandemic did you work from home?

Prior to pandemic I worked from home every once in a while, but this was nothing scheduled.

How are you finding the experience of remote working?

Remote working was fun at first to be able to avoid commuting to and from work. In the beginning I think I was working much more efficiently as well. However, now 6-7 months into working from home; I think that the connection and teamwork with colleagues is not as good as when we all were at the office. The initial boost in efficiency seems to have dissipated somewhat also.

How are you being managed?

We have more frequent meetings to check that everyone is coping all right. Apart from that, it is not very different than compared to normal.

What kind of support (if any) have you been offered from your company?

We have been provided with some basic tools, which has been very helpful. We got provided with monitor screens, keyboards and other essential working equipment for home. But the other essentials such as table and chair are on ourselves to fix, which is standard.

What (if any) have been the expectations?

Expectations have been relatively the same in regard to workload and deadlines. We are having more meetings than usual, but this is understandable given the circumstances and that we are all at distance so require more digital supervision and communication.

Would you prefer working from home, full time or part time, in the future?

I would prefer to work from home a few days every week in the future, as it frees up time that I would otherwise spend commuting. However, I would not like to spend all my hours at home since I feel that I lose the social aspects of working that goes on in the office and the collaborative effort.

Do you think remote work will become more commonplace in the future, under normal circumstances?

I think working from home will be common in the future as companies realize they can save money by renting less office space and spend less money on equipment and other work-related physical objects. It could become that companies will be hesitant to let employees have the freedom of working from home as it is harder to monitor their performance.

How are you finding motivation and limiting distractions from home?

I need to have a separate workstation at home where I only work. Otherwise I am distracted by putting on the tv in the background or thinking about all the million things I have to do inside the house that I can see around me.