



Future of the Workplace

Survey Report 2021

International headhunting consultancy
Hanson Search recently ran a survey to secure
industry views on the future of the workplace.
This report has been produced to share findings
that can be used for internal decision-making
as well as planning the next steps in your career.
We specialise in Marketing, Communications
and Commercial roles.

This survey polled over 1100 respondents

- 56% Female
- 43% Male
- Over 50% London-based
- 21% EU based
- 8% Dubai based
- 45% respondent's middle management
- 36% Directors
- Over 10% c-suite and owners
- 29% respondents in Creative/Marketing agency, the rest are an even split across in-house in Education, FMCG, Finance, Media, Non-profit, Pharma and Tech



Executive Summary

Businesses are facing an unprecedented set of challenges and at the centre of their thinking is company culture, community, and employee wellbeing. The creation of new working practices that are practical and inclusive, as well as offering an inspiring vision for the future is no easy task to navigate, yet it is undoubtedly one of the most important issues on the business agenda today.

With the war on talent heating up and a noticeable shortage of skills across industry sectors, those that get it right, will be at an advantage. Businesses that move in step with their employees and create an environment where learning, diversity of thought and approach is celebrated rather than stifled, will be on the front foot of attracting the best talent for the future.

This survey has demonstrated some interesting insights and learning for all businesses. There are complex decisions to be made, employees are very polarised on what they perceive as a safe career for the future, some even backing themselves and looking to freelance. Attracting good talent is becoming even more competitive with a brain drain from the industry, as a third of those who responded are looking to change careers, others looking to freelance or work abroad.

This is going to impact businesses, companies need to think about how to attract and retain good talent even more so than before, as throwing money at it is not the answer; people, culture and values are now the priority. Interestingly, businesses are responding and putting employee wellbeing at the heart of their decision-making process.

Businesses are going to need to look at the benefit packages, making them less office focused and much more about adaptable to working from home. The ability to work a few months every year abroad was of interest to employees, which we are already seeing implemented, as well as money towards office set ups.

Flexibility is a clear priority for women, focusing on a flexible working environment and smaller to medium-sized firms that they perceive can offer a more tailored solution. Interesting a considerably high percentage of women, than men missed collaboration with colleagues and both sexes felt productivity had improved with working from home. Communication is going to be key over the next few months as working from home/office policies are developed and adapted, employers need to ensure they are clearly communicated with the workforce – with 1/3 of those surveyed felt that internal communication on the topic wasn't adequate.



Alice Weightman
CEO & Founder, Hanson Search

Employee Responses

Q. What was your experience of working from home during lockdown?

Productivity

- 50% said they increased productivity
- 60% of women vs 39% of men said it 'increased productivity'

Mental Health

- 65% of women vs 34% of men said their 'mental health suffered'
- 37% felt their mental health suffered, feeling more anxious and under pressure to work longer hours, which had a negative impact on their work/life balance
- 49% Felt they had more control of working hours which improved work/life balance

Employees Aged 25-34

- 54% of those aged between 25-34 said their 'mental health suffered, felt more anxious and under pressure
- 55% of the same age group 'worried that job progression slowed'

In Person Collaboration

- 58% missed in person collaboration and learning
- 60% of women vs 40% of men missed 'in person collaboration and learning'

Q. How much involvement have you had in the decision-making process by your senior management team regarding the future of working?

- Nearly a third of respondent feel that communications from their senior management team has been limited

"The pandemic prompted more women than men to question whether their current career was right and considered alternative paths."

Employee Responses

Q. Once lockdown fully eases, employees suggest they would prefer:

- 66% of employees wish to split their time between office and work from home
- 14% to work from home full-time
- 41% senior execs wish to define their working location on a weekly basis compared to 38% of employees
- 15% of employees want to be able to work abroad

Men vs Women

- 64% of women opted to 'split time between home and office' vs only 36% of men
- 65% of women wanted to 'define working location on a week-by-week basis' which was less of a priority for men at 36%

Q. What impact has the covid-19 pandemic had on your future career plans?

- 27% will remain in current role
- 24% will prioritise working for a large firm
- 27% will prioritise working for an SME
- 21% consider going freelance
- Women prioritise working for a 'smaller-medium sized firm'





“Only 3% of employees
wish to work in office
full-time”

“62% respondents who
are considering going
freelance are women”

Employee Responses

Q. What impact, if any, has the UK leaving the EU had on your future career plans?

- 36% will remain in the UK and continue to build a career
- 14% will look for opportunities outside of EU
- 18% will look for opportunities inside of the EU

Q. When searching for a new role what do you see as an important factor of the job package?



Q: Have you sought or accepted a role based entirely on the flexibility of its working practices?

- 31% YES
- 53% NO

“Respondents are equally optimistic and pessimistic about their futures.”



A low-angle, upward-looking perspective of several modern skyscrapers with glass and steel facades, reaching towards a clear, pale blue sky. The perspective creates a sense of height and architectural scale.

EMPLOYER RESPONSES

Employer Responses

Q. What was your experience of working from home during lockdown?

- 65% respondents missed in-person collaboration
- 12% worried about their job progression
- 29% senior execs questioned their current career paths and considered alternative careers

Q. Once lockdown fully eases, employer respondents would prefer:

- 66% senior execs would prefer to split their time between home and office
- 41% want to define their working location on a weekly basis

“Nearly 73% senior executives thought their productivity and quality of work increased working remotely”

“Employers believe that hybrid working is the way forward, but employees should get to choose.”

“Only 4% of employers would like to work from the office full-time”

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Employer Responses

Q. What impact has the covid-19 pandemic had on your future career plans?

- 17% choosing to stay put in their current role
(79% of these respondents were at director- level)
- 18% are considering freelance
- 26% will prioritise working for a large, international firm
- 25% will prioritise working for a small-medium sized firm

Q. What concerns, if any, have resulted due to the UK government's handling of the covid-19 pandemic and its transition out of the EU?

- 40% of respondents fear that good talent will disappear abroad, making hiring all the more challenging and 24% fear that investments will dry up
- 30% have confidence in UK attracting talent
- 25% confidence in UK attracting business and commercial opportunities

“A quarter of the respondents believe that the UK may have lost its edge over attracting the best talent and exciting business opportunities.”

Employer Responses

Q When searching for a new role what do you see as an important factor of the job package?

1. Nearly half of senior executives set the team, people, and culture of the new company as their topmost priority
2. Flexible working
3. Competitive salary and bonus structure

Q. Have you sought or accepted a role based entirely on the flexibility of its working practices?

- 59% of senior leaders said no
- 30% would in fact prioritise flexible working
- 61% of these respondents being women

Q: Has the need for flexible working policies/ arrangements had an impact on your ability to hire?

- 58% said that more candidates are now requesting for flexible working arrangements
- 43% of respondents, flexible working arrangements have not had an impact on the ability to hire

“Sense of purpose, Diversity and Maternity policy- were key priorities”

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Employer Responses

Q. How do you plan to revise your flexible working practices as a result of covid-19?

- 14% of respondents have developed a fully working from home model
- 7% are offering their employees membership to co-working spaces
- 11% of respondents do not plan to revise their flexible working policies

Q. What motivates the decisions you will make around the future of the workplace?

- 76% of senior execs and business owners would prioritise employee wellbeing over financial and commercial concerns
- 69% were motivated by their ability to attract and retain good talent

**All questions in this survey were multiple choice, percentages are based on number of respondents per answer.*

“73% of employers have either developed or are in the process of developing a hybrid model enabling employees to choose where and how they work.”

“Businesses are much more employee-focussed rather than clients first”

About Hanson Search

Finding talent to drive your commercial success, Hanson Search is an award-winning international headhunting consultancy, specialising in all areas of marketing, communications and commercial roles. From our offices in UK, Europe and Middle East, we recruit globally for world's most successful brands, agencies, and start-ups at a mid to senior level. We are trusted advisors to our partners and known for the quality of our candidates, speed of delivery, deep understanding of the market and commitment to supporting diversity in the workplace.



Alice Weightman
CEO & Founder, Hanson Search

Alice established Hanson Search in 2002 and has since gained a reputation as one of the leading search professionals in senior appointments across communications, developing an incredible network globally. A fellow of the REC and member of the 30% Club, Alice actively supports diversity as a business imperative, and she is proactive about encouraging economic and social diversity within the industry. In 2018, Alice launched The Work Crowd, a global platform that connects businesses with freelance talent globally in communications and marketing.

**To discuss your career or hiring needs
in absolute confidence, get in touch.**

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