

Remote Work Life

Four remote working insights for
Communication Service Providers
(CSP) in a post-pandemic reality



New research reveals unique opportunities around the current and future remote workforce.

As working from home becomes a more permanent reality for employers and employees, a new, alternative, remote workforce has emerged and with it a new customer base.

Accenture's flagship R&D and innovation center, The Dock, undertook an in-depth qualitative, ethnographic study on this remote working experience, to recognize potential opportunities in a post-Covid-19 world. This robust ethnographic research on the remote working experience across the US and Germany examines key changes across:

- Consumer needs and opportunities
- Technology usage and attitudes

With many workplaces exclusively work-from-home at the moment (though most on a temporary basis), this study also aims to understand what influence this unique moment in time will have on the future workplace and workforce. It is believed that the future workforce will be primarily "hybrid", with

53%

of people who never worked from home previously now planning to work from home more often in the future.¹

This "hybrid workforce" can be defined as a workforce who will spend up to half their week working from home and the other half in an office or on location.

With this new workforce will come a new hybrid consumer - what does this new consumer look like? And what does a productive, future, work-from-home environment look like for them? The insights gained from the Remote Life research can help Communication Service Providers (CSPs) identify key growth opportunities within the remote workforce and prepare for the future hybrid workforce as they move to a post-pandemic reality.

Here, we'll focus on four key insights that are most relevant to CSPs. The full report contains 14 insights that clients can use to inform their strategies around this remote working life space.

¹ https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-130/Accenture-Retail-Research-POV-Wave-Seven.pdf

Insight One

Providing for All

With the onset of working from home, we've become more connected and reliant on our technology devices than ever before. Our devices are a lifeline: they help us work, stay connected to friends and family and entertained.

However, when we think of our devices – such as our phones and televisions – it is often entertainment or streaming brands that come to mind rather than the CSPs who are enabling our connection to these various sources of entertainment.



Our study shows that when remote workers think about their CSPs, they characterize their provider into one of three categories:

“A close friend”

In positive terms, the provider is like a close friend: trustworthy, reliable, and available when needed. They hang out and entertain people all day but can also be a know-it-all who can't admit when they are wrong.

“I think I would describe it as my best man and my really close friend. He's always there when I need him and very reliable very trustworthy. And when things go rough he's there and fully supports me”.

[Colin, 27. Reluctant Witherer]

“An acquaintance”

In indifferent terms, the provider are “a friend of a friend”, someone we don't think about very often, have little in common with and, we don't notice the relationship until something goes wrong.

“I actually haven't thought about them one bit since the pandemic started. I should probably give them a little bit more credit for keeping things up and running so smoothly!”

[Kyle, 35. Reluctant Witherer]

“A lackluster co-worker”

In negative terms, the provider are a lackluster co-worker that people are often stuck with as there are no other options. They coexist, but let-downs are anticipated or seen as inevitable.

“My relationship with my provider is habitual. There is no special relationship.”

[Marcus, 48. Maladapting Survivor]

What this demonstrates is a valuable opportunity to reshape this narrative between CSPs and their remote workforce consumers.



Considerations:

- How can CSPs create new, impactful relationships with consumers that better reflect the value they provide?
- How do CSPs become more than the connection point between consumers and their end goal of retail and entertainment?

Insight Two

City in the Home

Our homes have become much more than simply our havens. They are now our gyms, our schools, and our entertainment hubs. People are changing and adapting their homes to accommodate their increased consumption of activities and events. With this new investment in the home and in themselves, comes a huge reallocation of spending away from the downtown and into the home.



Post-pandemic, there are four key areas that people are keen to sustain as we enter a hybrid workforce era:

1. A hybrid-working model

Well documented in numerous studies, many people are keen to continue working from home at least part of their week.

2. Home workouts

There has been a surge in the popularity of the Peloton along with home gyms and online workouts.

“My ultimate self in my home would include areas for exercise, meditation, and relaxation. I would love to have a steam room and a sauna with piped-in music in all the rooms. I somewhat experienced that with my Sonos. I would like to continue home workouts in the future and even have a trainer come in and a space in the house for that.”

[Denise, 60, Firm Thriver]

3. Healthy cooking habits

With restaurants forced to close in many parts of the world during the pandemic, many have found themselves getting more creative, experimental, and healthier in their cooking habits at home.

4. An investment in family entertainment

People are spending more on entertainment services and subscriptions while cinemas and other entertainment centers remain closed.

“I [would like my home to] be much more spacious and much more connected to the things I normally go to, as in the gym, yoga, culture events, something like this.”

[Nina, 33, Flexi Flourisher]



What do traditionally outside-the-home experiences such as the gym, the cinema and the restaurant look like in the future?

Considerations

- What key partnerships can you strike up now to not only meet but exceed consumers' new professional and personal needs?
- How might we capture the spending habits originally in-person to in-home?
- What does a connected home look like for key moments such as the summer blockbuster movie releases, the MasterChef-at-home experience, or the cross-fit training program at home?

Insight Three

At Home in the Office

The ideal working environment is now a single purpose, separate space. People want to either shut off distractions to get work done or shut off work to enjoy their home life.



“Getting by” is no longer acceptable when it comes to the home office.

People expect equipment, services and supplies to make their remote work life run as productively and efficiently as it would in an office. Strong Wi-Fi connections, security and other miscellaneous costs and considerations (eg. Tech support, subsidized food and drink) once incurred by the company in office have been shifted to increased internet and electricity bills for those working from home.



“[I would like] some sort of monetary support [for] everything I need to properly work from home like a screen, chair, standing desk extension or similar so that I don’t put my health at risk. But also the flexibility to decide which days I want to work from home and which I want to work from the office.”

[Sebastien, 35. Firm Thriver]

“I want a room that is only for my office, so that the space is separate from anything else I do. This would help me switch my mindset immediately to ‘work mode’ when I walked in there.”

[Chelsea, 27. Firm Thriver]

Our research revealed that many people who are currently working from home are feeling the loss of easy access to IT services and strong cybersecurity.

“I miss my desktop that is encoded to protect my work information. Which allows me to not take additional steps during my day to make sure everything is secure.”

[Rosa 24. Flexi Thriver]

“[In the future] I would expect full support in acquiring all the equipment and supplies to make our work life run as efficiently and productive [at home] as if we were still on location. Tech support should be extended to at-home office service too.”

[Miguel 40. Maladapting Survivor]





There is a unique opportunity for CSPs to develop partnerships with other companies – for example IT security companies – to replicate the rounded experience of the office environment at home.

Considerations

- We have experienced the work office and the home office. But what does the human office look like? Is it one that consumers can pick up, pack up, plug in, expand, contract, connect – and most importantly – clear away?
- Who can CSP companies' partner with to create an all-in-one future home office experience?
- What does the future hybrid work offering look like for enterprise clients who want to attract talent?

Insight Four

Balancing the Imbalance

Could the virtual work trend potentially be setting women back years in terms of pay and progression in the professional workplace? With women still bearing most of the domestic burden, working from home is presenting fewer benefits for women than men. Women have seen their earnings decline almost **two thirds more sharply than men, dropping by 16.5% on average since the pandemic began, compared with a drop of 10.1% for men.**²



² <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zX4XTMFRNakr2f4qMuKJzv9udpEzNhnO/view>

Inside the home

Women are taking secondary workspaces in the home and incorporating more of their children's schedules into their own.

29%

Mothers are spending an additional one hour 20 minutes per day on childcare – an increase of 29%.³

“I know he’s back at work in the office more days than not, but I don’t have time to run a business from home AND run the home alone.”

[Andrea, 31. Flexi Flourisher]

Out of sight, out of mind

There is a fear that not being in the physical work environment meeting clients, impressing employers, building rapport, and getting personality across could have a negative effect on prospects for advancement.

Professionally, I’ve been getting less and less work, so lately I’ve really had to go to bat for myself and be upfront with my boss about giving me the work that I need and desire and holding him accountable

[Chelsea 27 Firm Thriver]

³ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zX4XTMFRNakr2f4qMuKJzv9udpEzNhnO/view>



How can we prepare for a fair hybrid working world, where people are seen? One where people's potential is not stifled by the decision or necessity to work remote.

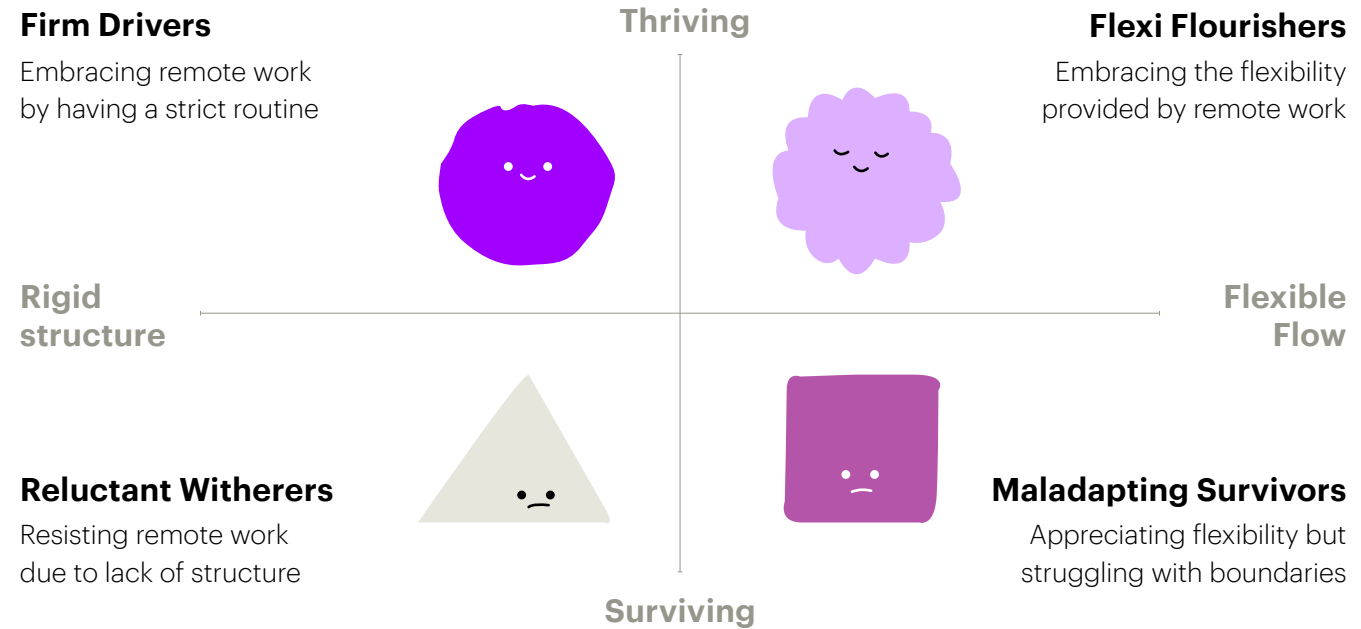
Considerations

- How might we proactively narrow the gender imbalance in the remote work world?
- How might we ensure women are seen, heard, and amplified in the virtual workplace?
- What does the "work from home, but be seen" bundle look like?

Also included in the study is a set of remote worker consumer mindsets, which organizations can use to refine their strategies.

Home has become a new ecosystem of human experience beyond just the domestic. It is now our office, our gym, and our entertainment hub. These insights can help inform how our CSP clients could unlock new value and unearth new growth opportunities within this space.

Our Remote Life experience – the research, online tool, and guided facilitation – can help clients to truly see the human at the center of this unprecedented technological challenge.



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Contact the Authors

Get in touch with The Dock for a guided experience that will help bring the research to life and show how your clients can tailor their strategy to the hybrid consumer and help create new business.

Learn more:

Contact **Rachel Earley** and **Michael Torrans**

Contact **Jeff Wang** and **Boris Maurer**

Future Home webpage

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