

# 2022 Global Virtual Work Survey



culturewizard™  
by RW3

“ The fully remote and hybrid work model is here to stay. As a result, organizations will need to develop systems geared to support the new workplace.”

– MICHAEL SCHELL, CEO, RW3 CULTUREWIZARD

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**Remote work and hybrid work models are here to stay.** The 2022 Global Virtual Work Survey study, supported by other research, finds that employees say they are most productive with a hybrid work model. Nearly two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, 75% of employees are still working from home offices at least some of the time, and they state they do not want that situation to change very much.

This means that global employers will need to restructure their employee support functions and internal departments, such as Tech support and HR, to accommodate the growing population of hybrid workers.

Furthermore, from the verbatim comments, it appears that employees have overcome many of the initial barriers of working virtually and remotely. They've worked out effective solutions for the challenges they initially had and now find they can manage business relationships and collaborative interactions quite efficiently from their remote offices. While the challenges of building relationships and collaborating effectively remain, they do not appear to impinge dramatically on productivity.

In this time when inclusive work environments and developing a sense of belonging are increasingly important, the hybrid workplace makes it far more complex and challenging to accomplish those goals. Not only are relationships more difficult to build and trust more difficult to establish, but in the era of the Great Resignation, onboarding employees and integrating them into the organizational culture is increasingly challenging.

It's clear to us that organizations need to modify their systems and procedures in support functions, and also need to develop new methodologies for creating inclusive, collaborative environments in the new hybrid setting. We see that as one of the main corporate challenges for 2022 and beyond.

Global employers will need to restructure their employee support functions and internal departments, such as Tech support and HR, to accommodate the growing population of hybrid workers.



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## Summary of Findings

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For better or for worse, the 2022 Global Virtual Work Survey confirmed that over 60% of corporate employees still work from home, full time. But not all of them like that situation. 58% say their ideal work situation is hybrid; they are most productive when there is a split between remote and office work. Surprisingly, only 34% feel that being fully remote is their most productive state, and almost 9% want full-time on site.

The challenges they face are directly related to relationships, personal interaction and communication. They mention this is either one-on-one or team-related activities.

In addition to the social interaction, employees state that access to the office is also beneficial because there are business resources, more reliable technology, and the ability for more effective collaboration.

We notice a new finding reported by people returning to the office, namely the distractions that the office environment can create.

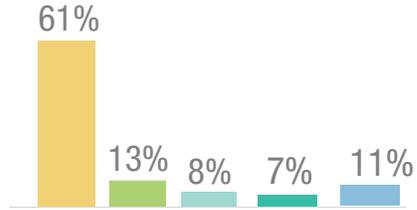
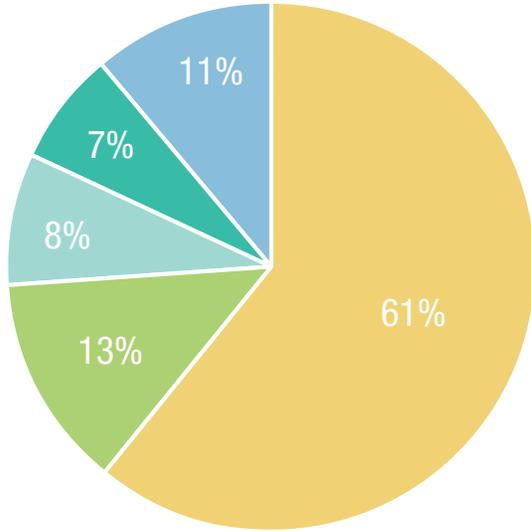


In spite of the fact that many employees feel comfortable and productive in the new hybrid work environment, managers will need to monitor how that environment impacts creativity and innovation.

— MICHAEL SCHELL,  
CEO, RW3 CULTUREWIZARD

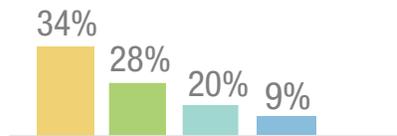
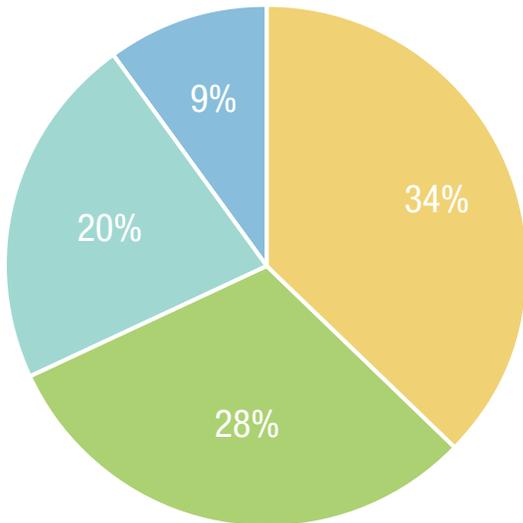


### Current Situation



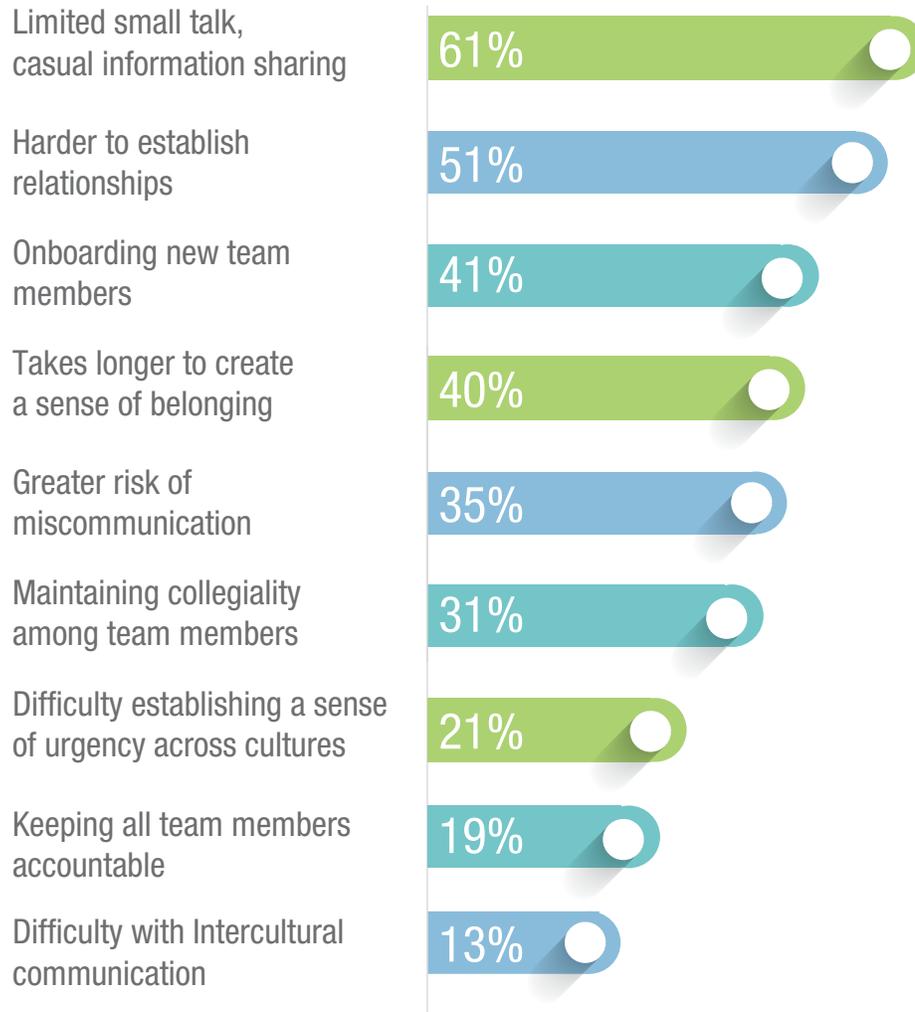
- Fully Remote: 61%
- 75 Percent Remote: 13%
- 50 Percent Remote: 8%
- 25 Percent Remote: 7%
- Fully On-Site: 11%

### Most Productive Mix of Office and Remote

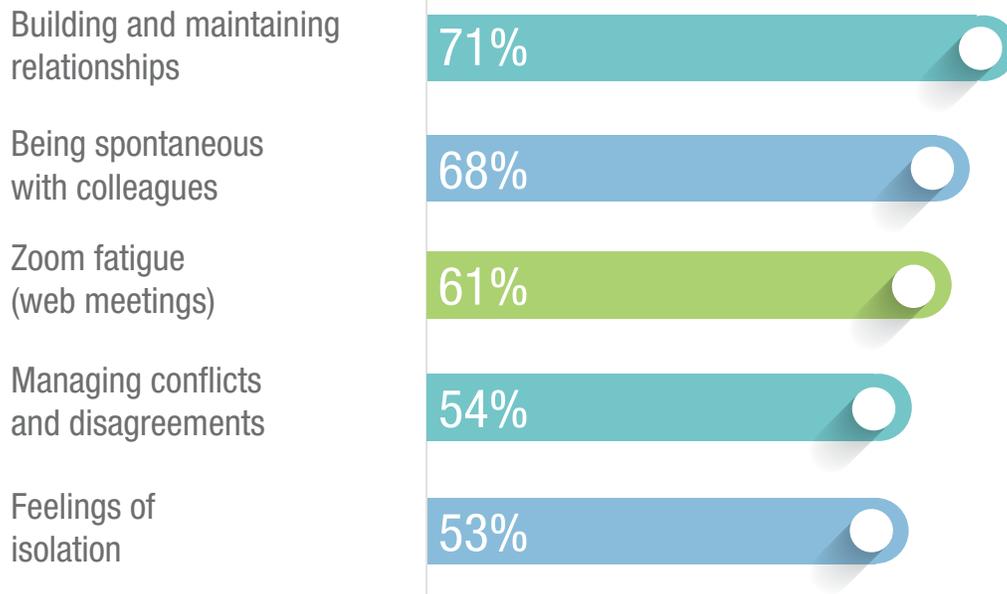


- Fully Remote: 34%
- 75 Percent Remote: 28%
- 50 Percent Remote: 20%
- Fully On-Site: 9%

## Biggest impact on Virtual Work



## Somewhat or Very Challenging



**Companies that thrive on deeply creative innovation face a particular challenge** because they require so much interpersonal collaboration, and yet enforcing face-to-face interaction is likely to stifle both creativity and employee engagement.

For example, many respondents shared that they didn't have access to collaborative software and had to rely predominantly on emails. The result: the number of emails increased to unmanageable numbers and efficiency was significantly reduced. By contrast, people who used collaborative software didn't complain about the growing number of emails and were able to keep projects moving.

While the majority of remote workers have adjusted well to communicating virtually, a significant number (40%—590 respondents) acknowledge that they find it more difficult to communicate, presenting real barriers to productivity and creativity. The quality of interactions suffers to a significant degree.

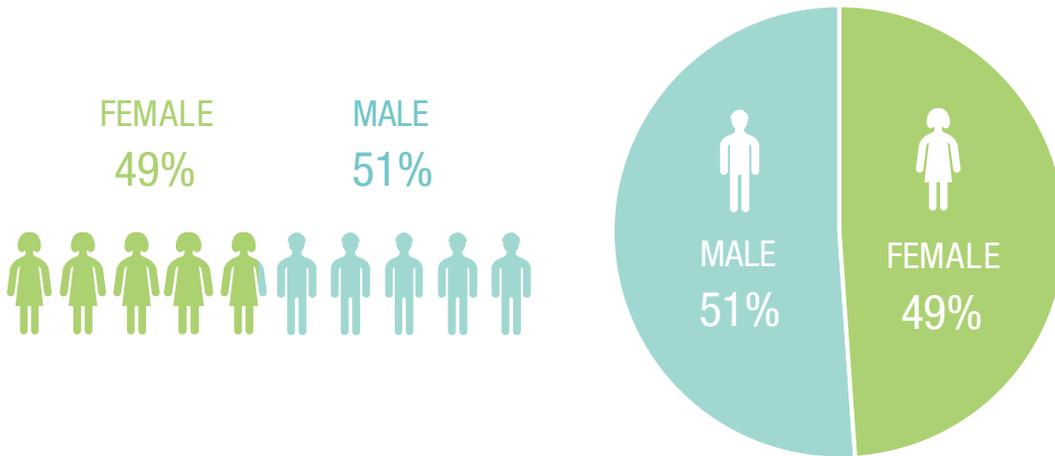
In addition, new employees in virtual roles find it more difficult to integrate into the organization. Not surprisingly, organizations find it more challenging to onboard new hires.

The challenge faced by today's organizations is more than just collaborative software and corporate systems. Managers will need to find alternative ways of generating creative energies required to drive innovation.

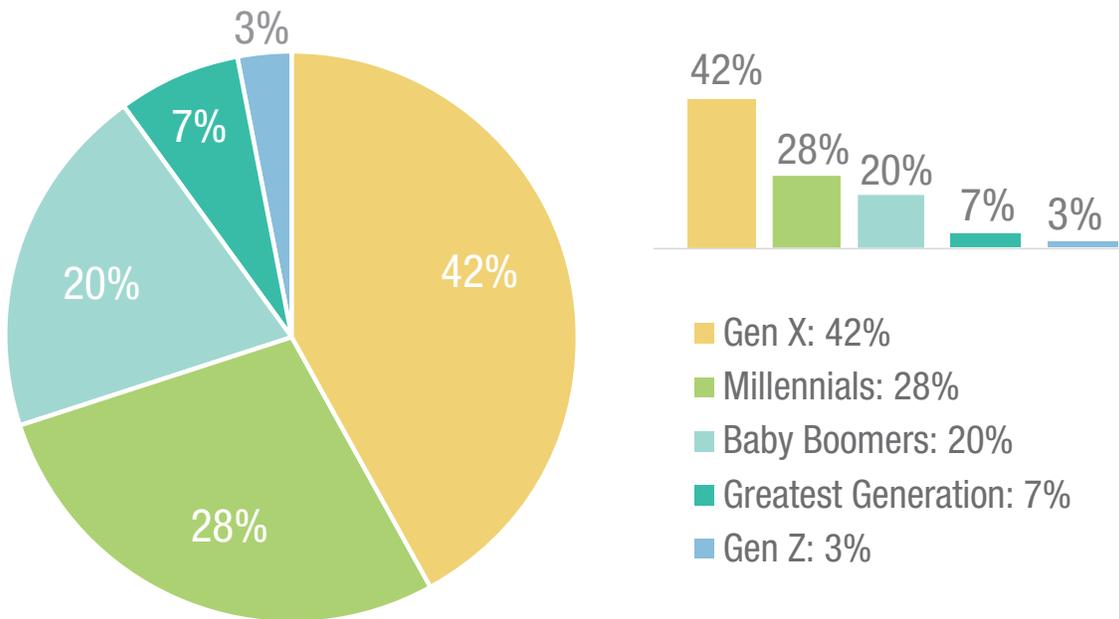


It's important to note that 40% indicated they had a challenge with communicating virtually, and these same individuals shared many comments about the consequences of those difficulties. It seems to have a significant impact on productivity. Therefore, organizations need to develop better virtual communication processes and monitor if their implementation is responsive to their employees' needs.

### Demographic Information



### Generations



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## Sample Participant Verbatim Comments

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### Biggest Impact

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- “It has highlighted that there are not clear communication processes in place that capture “casual” business improvements. Now a new process must be developed and agreed, which is hard when remote.”
- “Harder to sense reactions/tones of participants in a meeting, Unable to feel (or read) atmosphere of audience.”
- “My experience has been the opposite of much that is listed here. we get along better because we make an effort. buy in is easier when everyone must respond to an email - more decisions are documented. we reduce the risk of miscommunication by putting things in writing and asking for clarification. And it has proven to be a good way to learn cross-culturally because we ask questions - we would still be remote with our coworkers in distant areas anyway. the only thing missing is the random conversations but we do increase productivity by not chatting in the common area.”
- “Productivity aside, office days are more enjoyable, and I anticipate that continuing unless/until 3+ days per week become expected.”
- “All these impacts are challenges, I disagree. I’ve found that working remote has meant colleagues are now making the effort to contact and catch up. I’m far more productive. My work/life balance is so much better, I’m not as stressed.”
-

## Biggest Challenge of Remote Work

“My frustrations are generally with the communication channels and systems we are using ineffectively. This has ripple effects and is not the fault of my colleagues. I am not frustrated by any remote team members who I work with directly. I understand there are unique challenges with remote work.”

“The biggest challenge to working remotely for myself and my direct reports is a lack of department-specific IT support, leadership-specific IT support, and knowledge management training/tools/resources. Teams are often left to re-invent the wheel and the department, as a whole, is not implementing current best practices for communication, organization, and knowledge management. As an example, we still use Outlook for everything rather than using SharePoints, Teams, and other tools effectively to improve and streamline communication and resource access. Today is a light email day and I received 166 emails. There is room for proactive IT support and engagement with tech issues and tool development/identifying leadership solutions for employee management.”

“I believe so far the remote work is not impacted negatively, i believe i'm as productive (or maybe sometimes more productive) working remotely as when working on-site.”

“My team has had particularly positive experiences in the transition to remote. I believe this has allowed many individuals to learn “how to fish” and become self-sufficient, which has been a true benefit for both our team and adjacent teams. It has also brought to light previous communication/process gaps that have been remedied. All-in-all, learning and teaching the team how to work remotely has been a benefit and created efficient workplace processes.”

“Very challenging in building team trust.”

“Either to have all remotely or to have all in a room—having part in one room and the others connected remotely does not work so well.”

“Back to back meetings without gaps in the middle.”

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## Is Effective Communication Difficult? [mixed]

“Team engagement: I, personally, have found it is easier for me to establish relationships remotely and establish a culture of reliability. It does seem the culture has shifted to productivity-only now that water cooler chats don't occur naturally. Because of ineffective communication channels, attempts to engage often just add to the number of emails one receives.”

“Lacking the full attention of customer in virtual setting. Losing concentration faster; harder to focus. No feedback of body language. Risk of technical breakdown; cost time and energy. This is out of my control often so it can get very frustrating and leaves me with an unfinished job.”

“Miscommunications; harder to convey emotions (sarcasm gets lost)”

“We often do not use video communications and getting non-verbal communications is hard. We cannot fully read the board language.”

“One-on-one: no, it's not more difficult. In a group: yes, it can be more difficult. Only one person can talk at a time in a virtual meeting, and if people don't have their webcams on you can't analyze the body language of the participants to gauge how they're feeling.”

“It depends. There is the requirement of better preparation. If you have a spontaneous side topic—this is more difficult virtually than face-to-face.”

“One example would be that we are technically challenged when communicating virtually (poor audio/video quality).”

“Online communication can't substitute live interaction. It is not possible to transfer your real feelings thru the glass monitor and make your counterpart understand you fully. We all are human and need real-time, face-to-face communication.

“No facial/physical cues to read. Some colleagues are shy about sharing in writing (chat) or when recorded, while they might have spoken up during an in-person meeting.

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## Ways to Overcome the Challenges

“Optimize the technical equipment Split up trainings into several shorter sessions Being more flexible about splitting the schedule up Offering more breaks to avoid screen fatigue.”

“Creating virtual networks to maintain team harmony. Establishing personal clear work schedules to avoid burnout and communicating clear deliverables and timelines to achieve team deadlines.”

“Face-to-face Touchpoints: I have set up regular check-ins and touchpoints with my team as a whole and individually to discuss updates, projects, issues, etc. Text-communication can be interpreted differently by each reader, even on the best day. I use email or Teams posts to begin engaging my team with a given topic and follow up with a touchpoint. Cameras are currently optional but encouraged-- I've established that it's OK to not look business-ready for these touchpoints (i.e. wearing a hat if hair isn't done, etc.) to encourage participation and include nonverbal communication. For individuals who struggle with multi-tasking during touchpoints, I plan to require cameras (for some key touchpoints only) and find ways to help them feel they can step away from the things going on in the background.”

“Office Hours: I try to have designated hours each week that I have no meetings or planned tasks for myself-- where I'm available for my team if they have ad hoc/pending questions, concerns, etc. Notifications: I've worked with my direct reports to help make sure they are receiving the right notifications at the right time and aren't bogged down by unnecessary pings throughout the day across Teams, Outlook, etc. We've adjusted their settings and identified which communication channels work best for high vs. low priority items, discussions, questions, praise, etc.”

“Accountability/Ownership: I've given my direct reports visibility into our team's daily tasks by building them a one-stop-shop task dashboard that calls out today's tasks, upcoming tasks, tasks with various errors, items that need to be data checked, etc. They are able to work together over the course of the day to ensure the workload is balanced effectively and that items do not get dropped, in spite of the constant changes.”

## Ways to Overcome the Challenges (continued)

- .....
- ““ Use tools like teams and calls to communicate effectively”
- .....
- ““ Set regular hours, regular chat messages, use more “group chats” on a per-project basis.”
- .....
- ““ Be as engaging with people as possible, get that personal connection from the start.”
- .....
- ““ I bought a nice webcam and microphone to improve virtual meetings.
- .....
- ““ Adapt my workspace, sleep well, and have schedules because it is easy to spend many hours in front of the computer.”
- .....
- ““ Tried wearing a smile more often during virtual mtgs; been more generous in praise; been more forgiving of apparent slights.”
- .....
- ““ Increased my interaction with others outside of work since the lack of human interaction is the only thing that really impacts my productivity due to the hit on my mental and emotional health.”
- .....
- ““ I take 5-10 min breaks every hour/hour and a half. I get up away from the computer. Walk, or perform a small chore.”
- .....
- ““ Use video for all calls, build in time for idle chit chat.”
- .....
- ““ Kept virtual working days to be “quiet / focus” days and the days in the office as the time to discuss and share information.”
- .....
- ““ Set up challenges/goals for motivation. Keep to do lists and calendar updated and follow closely. Regular catch-ups with colleagues/line manager.Honesty about how I’m feeling.”
- .....
- ““ Overcommunicate, ensure you get both written and verbal confirmation for important task.”
- .....

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## Ways to Overcome the Challenges (continued)

- “Spending more time in meeting and planning every detail of earlier and communicate it.”
- “Do more 1-on-1 interactions since people tend to be more inhibited in virtual group meetings.”
- “The online trainings available have been helpful keeping motivated be clear about what virtual participation means - ask questions, just listen, share ideas, etc. keep in contact with your manager regularly even if there’s nothing to say. for leaders, communicate more often than in a physical setting so that people are not disconnected and left to wonder what’s going on or if they/their work counts.”
- “Switching off times for larger time zones (India to the US) so not one team is burdened with being up late/staying too early. Also keeping in touch with a co-worker(s) when you do “over the wall” chats. IE: “Oh I found this while working on that”—talk through the solution—send that solution out to remote/in house team members. (Or chat room it).”

## Frustrations with Colleagues

- “Not being available when you need to speak to them.”
- “Hard to catch someone for an urgent matter or a quick chat when remote.”
- “Sometimes they don’t show up on time. They don’t take the schedule as seriously as they would in person.”
- “In meetings, some people are totally invisible and do not speak unless asked directly.”
- “Not available for calls; not immediately responding to emails and work especially during deadlines.”

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CultureWizard is a powerful blended-learning system that develops the intercultural expertise necessary to succeed in a global marketplace. Owned by RW3, with offices in New York, Los Angeles, London, and Hong Kong, CultureWizard is known for its culturally-based training solutions supporting a Global Mindset, global teams, business travelers, and the understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion in achieving much-needed intercultural proficiency and organizational success.

Through an effective combination of online learning, in-person courses and access to a vast multimedia library, business professionals master doing business across cultures with an ease and confidence that dramatically improves personal and company performance.

“ The important goals of creating inclusive work environments and developing a sense of belonging are far more complex and challenging to accomplish in the hybrid workplace.”

– CHARLENE SOLOMON, PRESIDENT, RW3.CULTUREWIZARD