

# THE NEW WORKING REALITY

This March marks the one-year anniversary of one of the biggest corporate shifts in recent history – the mass move to work from home strategies by companies all over the world as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This corporate shift has tested the digital strategies of every company on the planet to the hilt. It has also escalated the search for solutions that empower companies to digitize their legacy administration systems. These same solutions have to enable the interaction with employees working from home and interacting with consumers as if the employees were sitting at the office.

12 MONTHS ON, THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED



## WORKING FROM HOME REALLY DOES BOOST PRODUCTIVITY

Researchers at New York University and Harvard Business School published an analysis of the emails and online meetings of 3.1 million remote workers in such cities as Chicago, New York, London, Tel Aviv and Brussels, in the very early phases of their countries' first lockdowns. They found that the length of the average working day had increased by 8.2%, or nearly 50 minutes, "largely due to writing emails and attending meetings beyond office hours".

The researchers acknowledged the possibility that longer days might sometimes be the result of people having "freedom over their own schedule", but also talked about a possible "blurred distinction between work and personal life, in which it becomes easy to overwork due to the lack of clear delineation between the office and home".

At MIP, we have found that our 450-odd people are working harder than ever before. Most people value the freedom and have given MIP most of their travel time to and from work in the push to prove to our customers that the work from home strategy is adding greater value to our relationship. While some have managed to keep a healthy work-life balance, we have encouraged everyone to arrange their schedules according to what works best for them, as long as the flexibility has no impact on delivery or commitment to our customers.



## PEOPLE STILL NEED PEOPLE

A recent Aviva survey found that 95% of its staff would choose either full-time remote work or a flexible home-office split once lockdowns end. The company is now attempting to institute what it calls a “smart” working policy, closing some offices and allowing everyone the option of logging in from home, with access to redesigned company facilities when they feel the need.

For those with a family, working from home can be easier than for those who live on their own. They have the human interaction of a spouse or children on a daily basis, whereas single people are alone for much of the time. The other side to that coin is that family in your workspace can make it more challenging to complete your tasks, and some people prefer the relative quiet of an office environment for that reason.

This is why MIP is providing the flexibility to allow people to work where they want to, when they want to. We have implemented a “hot desk” policy that allows everyone to come into the office when they feel the need – whether it’s for direct consultation with colleagues, group meetings, or just some human interaction. We have also implemented more social events to ensure our culture and camaraderie remain firmly in place.

## THERE’S NO GOING BACK... AND THERE’S NO NEW NORMAL

There has been a change in mindset brought on by the pandemic. People have experienced working from home, and no-one wants to go back to sitting in traffic to get to the office. That being said, people (and companies) are still figuring out what works best for them, and there is no right or wrong way to ensure productivity together with employee satisfaction.

At MIP, we are continuing to listen to our team members and our customers to make sure that everyone has what they need, when they need it. We have open channels where our people can raise issues or concerns with working from home. The people working in rural areas are finding that the power stability is a real issue and it is tough working remotely in the knowledge economy with an unstable power supply. MIP negotiated a central cost-effective deal for the supply and delivery of UPS’s all around the country. Also, MIP agreed to pay up to 30% of the price for each person who elected to take a UPS. It was amazing, over 300 people purchased and received a UPS within the month that MIP identified this as a critical issue to service delivery. Note, gone are the days where a board or executive can take six months to resolve internal company issues!



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