# Georgia Commute Options
# Remote Work Analysis and Recommendations

**May 2020**

GEORGIA**COMMUTE**OPTIONS

# Contents

# Introduction

Georgia Commute Options has provided remote work consultation services for employers within the 20-county district served by the Atlanta Region Commission (ARC) for many years creating a solid foundation for organizations ranging from small business enterprises to Fortune 500 companies. According to the Regional Commuter Survey conducted in 2019 by ARC, 41 percent of Atlanta regional commuters worked from home, at least occasionally. Among these respondents, 43 percent reported having a formal remote work program.

On April 2nd, 2020, Governor Kemp issued a statewide Shelter in Place Executive Order applying to all Georgia residents and nonessential businesses. As shelter in place orders were taking effect across the nation, there was a subsequent massive shift to remote work. In more traditional circumstances, remote work required establishing an employee/supervisor agreement and ensuring that remote technology capabilities and equipment supported a productive workspace. Beyond not having the typical preparation, many employees also faced specific pandemic-related challenges, including providing childcare, coordinating homeschool requirements, experiencing health anxiety, or lacking access to a dedicated workspace and necessary technology.

Georgia Commute Options led the region as companies prepared for a level of remote work that was unprecedented. The team conducted multiple regional and local webinars designed for company decision makers; participated in multiple interviews with various media outlets to promote Georgia Commute Options services; and continued to establish remote work programs for employers in the Metro Atlanta area.

To better understand this once in a lifetime impact to the nature of work, Georgia Commute Options conducted one-on-one executive interviews with some of the largest employers in the metro Atlanta region. This was complemented by electronic surveys targeting multiple audiences, including executive decision makers, managers, and non-managerial employees. These surveys gathered over 2,900 responses offering both quantitative results as well as key input through open-ended questions.

The following document showcases the key findings of this research, including data on the level of remote work currently occurring within the Atlanta region and key insights on the future of work provided by major Atlanta employers.

# Executive Interviews

Between April 23rd and May 8th, the Georgia Commute Options team conducted one-on-one interviews with executive and human resources professionals representing 13 of the largest employers within the metro Atlanta region. The interview questions were developed to understand the degree to which remote work programs have contributed to businesses' ability to maintain operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview questions focused on the following topics:

- pre-pandemic participation in remote work programs at these organizations,

- the current state of their business operations,

- thoughts on the transition back to the workplace, and

- feedback on how Georgia Commute Options could support their organizations.

The following is a summary of the interview results and key findings. Refer to Appendix A for the complete Executive Interviews Summary Report.

## Summary

### Remote Work Before the Pandemic

Eight companies did not widely promote working remotely as a frequent practice for their employees. While many stated that there was a formal policy, the option was only available to employees for a rare event (e.g., family leave, home repairs, minor illness). Reasons cited for this limited participation include infrequent manager approval, a corporate culture focused on in-person collaboration, technology limitations, and in-office job requirements.

Two companies allowed remote work for employees in specific departments, including executives and IT; however, the policy was not open to additional employees.

Three companies allowed most or all of their employees to work remotely. The average employee frequency for working remotely was one to two days per week.

### Remote Work During the Pandemic

Twelve companies noted that their business operations have remained stable since the shelter in place order was enacted and that most employees were directed to transition their workspace to their homes between mid-March and early April.

One company whose operations were impacted estimated that they are operating at about 60 percent of pre-pandemic levels. This site is responsible for the research and development and

quality assurance testing of their products, which requires in-person collaboration with clients. Since client offices are working remotely, the testing cannot be performed.

Three organizations have specific departments that are still working on-site; these are limited to particular job functions, including manufacturing and employees in the field.

# Key Findings

**Feedback from company leadership, management, and employees about remote work has been positive.**

**Leadership:** Many interviewees noted that leadership that was previously resistant to remote work are now more receptive within their organizations because they have experienced the value proposition for themselves.

**Management:** Seven companies mentioned an improvement in collaboration between team members and cross-departmentally. Companies that were reliant on in-person collaboration and relationship building are adapting their interactions and communication methods to support their culture virtually.

One organization has realized direct business benefits through increased productivity. The increase in productivity is so impactful for this organization that they are now exploring a sustained remote work model packaged with a four-day workweek and unlimited vacation benefits.

*"We are actually getting more things done in a shorter period of time. What would normally take someone two to three days to turn around, now takes a day."*

**Employees:** Interviewees are also seeing positive benefits from employee productivity, satisfaction with reduced commute times, and work-life balance.

**The return to the workplace will be coordinated through a thoughtful and phased approach.**

A majority of the interviewed companies are considering a slow and staggered return to the physical workplace. By early May, only one company has provided official guidance on a return date for some employees. Almost all representatives noted that their employees' health and comfort were the most important factors when considering a return to the worksite.

*"We are committed to the [scientific] data and not a timeline."*

While some of the businesses have not officially closed their offices because they are deemed essential businesses, they managed the remote work participation through an employee- and manager-led decision process. Employees at these locations have the option to work in the office, but very few are doing so. Other companies have closed their offices and will deem which employees will have the option to return as part of their re-entry plan. Most

representatives noted that they do not expect to see the entirety of their employee population return to the office for the remainder of 2020.

## There will be an ongoing increase in remote work participation.

Most companies expect that their in-office employee population will be much smaller than pre-pandemic levels. Some companies will only allow essential employees to access the office and will redefine what "essential" means to their company. One interviewee noted that they might not have many employees that need to be in the office at any point. Other companies will be implementing staggered schedules (e.g., one week in the office, one week remote) to reduce the number of on-site employees.

Almost all companies noted that they expect to see a permanent increase in remote work participation at their organization. Six out of eight companies that did not have an active remote work program are now considering regular remote work in their long-term plans. All companies with existing remote work programs are planning to increase the rate at which employees work remotely. For example, one company noted that the average pre-pandemic frequency across

*"If we just look at what work really is, it's less about a place to go and much more of a thing for us to do."*

the company of working remotely was one day per month; this would increase to an average of one day per week for the long term. One of the corporate headquarters locations is exploring the idea of never going back to the office.

## Office spaces will evolve to provide safer working conditions.

Many companies discussed the potential of their physical work environment, including accommodations for social distancing in shared spaces, increased space between individual workstations, and enhanced cleaning procedures. One organization even noted that their employees would be required to interact with a health assessment app to confirm that they are fit to be in the office that day.

## Space utilization within the office will become more flexible.

Several representatives mentioned the potential real-estate savings that their company could realize as they anticipate fewer employees in the office at any given time. Three organizations noted that they were outgrowing their space or planning an office merge; they are now putting any upsizing or reorganization plans on hold. Additional companies mentioned transitioning their layout to an agile workplace with hoteling.

## There will be an ongoing demand for regional coordination and Georgia Commute Options support.

Several companies discussed the opportunity that employers now have to make a difference in the region as it relates to air quality and traffic.

*"It takes a regional collaborative to talk about [the benefits of fewer commutes in the region]. There are things we can actually do as employers to ease the traffic burden. We knew that, but we weren't sure we could do it. We've done it. Instead of asking ourselves, 'Why do people have to stay at home?' we ask ourselves, 'Why do people need to come into the office?' How can we then reframe that to understanding the regional impacts of these efforts?"*

Executives at many of the companies interviewed are participating in state and local "reopening councils" with their peers. One multi-national company noted that they had been locally sharing the insights that they are learning from their colleagues in other countries that are a few weeks ahead of the United States as it relates to the nation's response to this pandemic.

Most companies expressed interest in regional support. The most requested support was for information on how peer companies are responding during this time, best practice research, and regional data. For example, most companies are interested in the output of this interview process. One company noted that their leadership is most influenced by hard data and that any shifts in corporate policy have always started with this as a foundation. Participants also requested:

- communications for employees who are adjusting to the evolving remote corporate culture or their new workspace,

- assistance with creating or updating remote work policies,

- a centralized source for transparent and updated COVID-19 information, and

- communications materials that their organization can leverage internally to support their employees.

# Remote Work Survey

Between April 1st and May 5th, Georgia Commute Options partnered with five local Transportation Management Associations (TMAs): Livable Buckhead, Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association (CCTMA), Perimeter Connects, ASAP+, and Downtown Connects to distribute an electronic survey. The intent of the survey was to learn more about the remote work experience from the perspective of executive leadership, managers, and employees. Survey questions were developed to assess the employee remote work experience and to gather additional data around what the future of remote work might look like at their organizations.

Refer to Appendix B for the complete Remote Work Survey Analysis and Summary.

## Process

The survey was promoted through regional and local social media, e-newsletters distributed to existing employer members and engaged employees, direct emails and phone calls to employer partners, and via economic development organizations. Survey respondents were incentivized with the opportunity to win a $25 VISA gift card or a $20 Amazon gift card, depending on the outreach territory. ARC plans on conducting a regional commuter focused survey, using similar questions.

## Summary

There were over 2,900 survey responses to the survey; 72 percent of respondents identified as employees without management responsibilities, 21 percent manage at least one other person, and 7 percent identified as executive leadership who are involved in strategic planning and policy decisions. Any survey respondents who were not working remotely at the time were not included in this survey analysis.

Before the shelter in place requirements, 44 percent of respondents had never worked remotely, while 24 percent worked remotely one to two days per week. Executive and management respondents estimated that an average of 80 percent of their workforce is now working remotely.

Survey respondents have experienced many positive benefits from working remotely including saving money by not commuting (73 percent), decreased stress due to not commuting (54 percent), having more time to spend on household projects (54 percent), spending more time with family (52 percent), and sleeping more (46 percent).

Survey respondents noted that there had been challenges with the quality of their work environment. Over 40 percent lack access to desired or needed technology equipment (e.g., dual monitors, printers, external keyboards) and 33 percent responded that their home workspace

does not meet the same quality standards as the office. However, over 93 percent of survey respondents have access to video conferencing or meeting capability (e.g., Teams, Zoom), and 74 percent have access to an instant messaging program.

# Key Findings

## The scale of the remote work transformation brought by the pandemic is remarkable.

Before the pandemic, 44 percent of respondents had never worked remotely, and only 3.5 percent worked remotely five or more days per week. The corresponding numbers are now 71 percent working remotely five or more days per week, and only nine percent of those still working are reporting to their workplace every day.

## Respondents want to continue to work remotely more often than they did before the pandemic.

Before to the pandemic, respondents worked remotely an average of 0.8 days per week; given a choice, respondents want to work remotely an average of 2.5 days per week after business "returns to normal."

*"… the most positive thing that might come out of this whole experience … is that many of us are actually more productive when working from home and deserve the trust of management. "*

## Remote work is leading to an improved quality of life.

*"...my lack of commute has allowed me to sleep more, spend more time with my family, exercise more, and my chronic back pain has disappeared. "*

Respondents noted experiencing many positive benefits that lead to an improved quality of life. Over 54 percent of respondents have experienced a decrease in stress due from the lack of a commute; 52 percent spend more time with their family or friends; and 46 percent are sleeping more. There was also been an increase in positive habits with 38 percent of respondents exercising more and 37 percent eating healthier.

## There were clear trends indicative of a more positive employee remote work experience.

The factors that positively impact the remote work experience are access to technology tools/resources and virtual "water cooler" time or other scheduled workplace social opportunities. Experienced remote workers were far less likely to encounter technical challenges and in general reported more positive benefits.

Larger companies are doing better with the transition to remote work.

*"… the transition to working remotely was relatively smooth because our team already had clear policies, established software/tools, and expectations around virtual communication."*

There were clear trends indicative of a more positive manager remote work experience.

Supervisors who did not have previous experience managing remote employees reported experiencing more challenges and said they are spending more time managing remote employees.

Managers who were experienced with remote work were statistically less likely to report inadequate communication with staff and a lack of awareness of what staff are doing as compared to managers with little remote work experience.

*"I have found that my team is incredibly productive and successful working from home. I can always reach my team either via phone, text, or Zoom. We are far more agile, productive, and creative as a remote work team."*

Executives understand that shifting to remote work was critical to the ongoing operation of their organization.

Sixty seven percent of executives responded that remote work was the main reason for continued operations during the pandemic, and 27 percent indicated that remote work was partially responsible.

A large majority of executives think more employees will work remotely after business returns to normal.

When considering future work arrangements, 69 percent of executives agree that more employees will work remotely periodically after business returns to normal, and 23 percent think employees will work remotely nearly full-time.

*"Thoughtful implementation of new routines requires significant time investment. "*

# Appendix A: Executive Interviews Summary

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- pre-pandemic participation in remote work programs at these organizations,

- the current state of business operations,

- thoughts on the transition back to the workplace, and

- feedback on how Georgia Commute Options could support their organizations.

The Georgia Commute Options team conducted these interviews between April 23rd and May 8th.

## Participants

Responses were received from 13 companies. One company did not participate in the one-on-one interview; however, they submitted written answers to the interview questions. The following companies were included in this process:

- Atlanta Regional Commission

- ███████████

- Coca-Cola Company

- Conure Telecom Services

- Cox Enterprises

- Georgia Environmental Protection Division

- Georgia Power Company

- Insight Global

- Mercedes-Benz USA

- ███████████

- Primerica

- State Farm

- WSP Global

The titles of the interviewees include:

- Assistant Branch Chief

- Assistant Vice President of Corporate Communications

- Chief Human Resources Officer

- Chief Operations Officer

- Global Head of IT Operations

- Operations/Human Resources Director

- Problem Manager

- Senior Human Resources Specialist

- Senior Vice President

- Senior Vice President of Engineering

- Vice President

- Vice President of Technology and Innovation

# Individual Interview Responses

Interview responses have been paraphrased for brevity.

## 1. Title: Senior Human Resources Specialist

### Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

Remote work was an option up until two years ago, when the company's leadership changed and moved to a "five days per week" in-office policy, with exceptions for occasional remote work as needed. They changed the policy to emphasize in-person collaboration and interaction with colleagues.

### Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The degree to which remote work policies and resources have been responsible for the ability to maintain continued operations:*

Today there are no existing remote work policies. However, tenured employees, those who previously participated in remote work, were able to transition naturally to working remotely.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

They experienced initial challenges with the technology infrastructure and responded with

education classes to address common issues. Overall, there are no significant issues, aside from less organic in-person interactions that would happen in the office.

## Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

Official guidance on when the return to work will happen (May 18th) has been distributed. There has not been official guidance provided on whether that will be through a staggered return or if employees will be encouraged to work remotely throughout the week. This will be navigated within the individual departments and will probably be flexible. Employee safety is a priority, and business continuity will follow. They are treating this on a day-by-day basis.

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*

Through working with employers throughout the region. By providing support by addressing not only the technical challenges, but also the emotional aspects. By providing education on how employers can mitigate employee challenges as they continue to work remotely.

# 2. Title: Assistant Branch Chief

## Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

There was a remote work policy in place. Employees were required to sign a "telework agreement" and designate which days they would be working remotely. One-third of the office participated.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

Almost 100 percent of the company is working remotely. The primary concern is morale, as there was previously a robust in-office work environment. They have adapted to virtual social meetings that have had a high participation rate.

Some employees are not as busy as they were previously, and the company has been creative with ways to utilize their talents. The company understands that these are exceptional times and are flexible.

They have used this situation as a spark to push forward new process innovations within the company (e.g., new technology tools, paperless processes). These process updates will benefit the company for years.

## Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The degree to which remote work policies and resources have been responsible for the ability to maintain continued operations:*

The transition was smooth because of the number of employees who were previously working remotely. They had recently conducted training on core technology tools and had secured a

license with a remote meeting technology product. Employees who were previously "in the field" have been required to adjust the way that they do their job.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

Almost 100 percent of the company is working remotely. The primary concern is morale, as there was previously a robust in-office work environment. They have adapted to virtual social meetings that have had a high participation rate.

Some employees are not as busy as they were previously, and the company has been creative with ways to utilize their talents. The company understands that these are exceptional times and are flexible.

They have used this situation as a spark to push forward new process innovations within the company (e.g., new technology tools, paperless processes). These process updates will benefit the company for years.

## Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

The policy will be to ease back into the office very slowly. If the company can maintain business practices and meet client requests, then there is no rush to return. If those services suffer, then they will adjust. If they can maintain business as usual, then they will keep the vast majority of employees working remotely as long as needed.

However, some employees do not like working remotely and want to return to the office. The company will need to strike a balance between meeting those needs while maintaining a safe office environment. There are many unknowns.

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*

The company is interested in the data the Georgia Commute Options is collecting. By providing insight on strategies that companies have found to be effective, tips for creating connections between remote employees, and how to preserve the culture within the company. Organizations are experiencing this without having a comparison point.

## 3. Title: Vice President of Technology and Innovation

### Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

About 20 percent of the company was provided with the option to work remotely. Specific departments had the opportunity, while others were required to be present in the office due to their job duties. Many of that 20 percent did not participate in the remote work option because former leadership disapproved. The new administration has taken a more progressive approach.

## Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The degree to which remote work policies and resources have been responsible for the ability to maintain continued operations:*

The company is a national call center that traditionally used desktop computers. However, they were in the process of distributing laptops to employees when the shelter in place orders were enacted. They turned a three-month distribution process into a nine-day process and distributed 1,500 laptops to employees across the nation.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

The company is running close to business as usual. Internally, they have seen an increase in collaboration. Employees feel more comfortable about working remotely and will request to work remotely in the future.

The company is moving to a new office within the next few months and had felt it was already too small. Further compounded with social distancing requirements in the office, they anticipated capacity challenges. However, they now feel equipped to stagger schedules and rely on remote working instead of having to work around the space issues.

The company has also created virtual offices to support smaller cities in which they were planning to build physical offices. In sum, they have expanded their reach during this time while increasing their revenue stream.

## Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

The company conducted an internal survey to assess the level of comfort and identify the concerns of employees. Based on the results, the company is planning for a phased approach and will provide employees with the option to return to the office when they are comfortable.

They expect a permanent shift to the culture. Across the company, the average of remote work was about one day per month; this will increase to an average of one day per week. Most employees will have access to this option.

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*

Previously, the company was reluctant to participate with Georgia Commute Options as it related to the remote work programs because their leadership did not want to convey that they were working remotely. They have now proved that remote work is successful, and they have the tools, so they anticipate an opportunity to reengage with this group.

# 4. Title: Chief Operations Officer

## Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

There is a remote work policy within the *company*; however, less than five percent of the workforce participated. Working in the office has been a part of the *company*'s culture. The metrics and productivity standards are reliant on in-office collaboration.

## Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

By March 27th, 90 percent of the company was working remotely. Externally, company service levels have been maintained. Internally, there has been effort put into increasing communication and collaboration. The CEO sends out weekly video messages, and there are town hall meetings with 2,000 employees. Employees are enjoying working remotely.

The company has provided flexibility during this time. Traditionally, employees are provided with five weeks of paid time off (i.e., sick and vacation time), and the company has provided an additional four weeks, at a reduced salary, to accommodate for childcare, sick leave or any other needs. Time off can be requested in smaller increments to accommodate for disruptions during the day.

There is a concern that employees are running on adrenaline, and they are unsure if they can sustain this. At some point, they anticipate needing to be in the office to develop plans and strategies collaboratively.

## Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

A phased return policy has been drafted; however, there is no timing designated. The return will be slow and influenced by guidance from the government, the CDC, and additional companies. Nonessential employees will be slowly rotated into the office. Employee health and comfort will be taken into consideration. There are a few employees who do not feel comfortable returning to the office.

Several months from now, they anticipate that much more than the previous five percent will be working remotely. The remote work formalization process is being discussed with leadership. They will identify new technology and training opportunities needed to increase productivity.

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*

The company would like assistance with change management information, including how to phase employees into the office. Additional information on how other companies are reacting and planning.

## 5.  Title: Problem Manager

### Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

The remote work program was limited, with 33 percent of employees having the ability to work remotely on an as-needed basis for rare events. Executives and employees in the technology group were issued with company laptops, whereas everyone else had desktop computers at their workspace.

### *Remote Work During the Pandemic*

The degree to which the organization has been able to maintain operations during COVID-19 impacts:

The company is operational. Because of the customer interaction that is required, some positions and departments were requested to remain in the office during the first few weeks of the shelter-in-place orders. At the time of the interview, all employees were working remotely except for call center employees. Employees who previously only had access to desktop computers were provided with company-issued laptops.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

Employees enjoy working remotely, citing an improved work-life balance, and lack of a commute. Team morale and communication has improved. The Atlanta market now participates in weekly "all-market" calls, whereas the frequency was previously monthly. There were initial challenges with employees experiencing technical issues; however, these have decreased significantly in recent weeks.

### Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

Official guidance has been distributed. Essential employees representing 33 percent of the workforce will return to the office as soon as possible. Additional employees will be called in at their own pace. Department managers will make the decisions for the nonessential teams.

Managers have indicated that the company may not change its current process.

## 6.  Title: Operations Director, Human Resources

### Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

A new remote work policy was recently implemented, and 70 percent of the company was able to work remotely. Most employees worked remotely at a minimum of two days per week. Some groups, such as case managers and phone bank employees, worked remotely 100 percent of the time.

## Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The degree to which the organization has been able to maintain operations during COVID-19 impacts:*

The company is fully operational and has not experienced any layoffs or reduced staff hours. All employees can work remotely 100% of the time.

*The degree to which remote work policies and resources have been responsible for the ability to maintain continued operations:*

The remote work policy contributed to the company's ability to maintain operations. Before the pandemic, a more flexible remote work policy was implemented, providing all employees with the ability to work remotely a minimum of two days per week without exception. All employees and managers participated in the required training to work remotely.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

Everything is going well. The company has set guiding principles that direct every supervisor to conduct weekly check-ins with their employees to address how they are doing. They prioritized messaging on employee wellness and mental health and received feedback that employees feel connected, some even more connected, despite being away from the office.

Employees appreciate not being stuck in traffic and the cost savings of not parking. Work-life balance has improved, and employees have enjoyed time with their family.

There has been a massive shift in perception in leadership where they are more open to working remotely; they have experienced it and realized it is a good thing. The pandemic has forced the company to innovate new processes, such as e-signatures and remote employee onboarding. The company was already thinking futuristically, but this moved them along faster.

## Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

The company has put together a five-part task force that will begin to work on the re-entry to the workplace. They want to ensure that no harm comes to employees and that they are placed in the safest environment as possible.

Short term, there will be physical changes in the office to maintain social distancing. Long term, the workspace will never be the same again. Previously, there were space capacity issues within the office. As the company moves forward with more remote work, this space will be underutilized.

In the future, employees may work remotely between a minimum of three days per week and full-time. The company is evaluating which roles could move to full-time remote status. When employees do come back to the office, the company is considering a rotating schedule (i.e., one week in the office, one week out of the office).

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*

With employees working remotely more frequently, they may want to shift their mode of

transmission from driving to an alternative to avoid purchasing a monthly parking pass. It would be helpful to have Georgia Commute Options provide support to managers and employees at all levels by participating in manager and staff meetings and providing communications that can be sent to all employees.

If there is a pattern across other organizations, they would like to know what they are thinking.

## 7. Title: Global Head of IT Operations

### Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

The remote work policy was only for special accommodations. Most employees were not working remotely, with some exceptions.

### Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The degree to which the organization has been able to maintain operations during COVID-19 impacts:*

On the corporate side, productivity was not impacted. The company transitioned to remote working seamlessly. The technology infrastructure could handle the increased traffic, and platforms worked well. The company had to prioritize certain projects and put other projects on hold.

*The degree to which remote work policies and resources have been responsible for the ability to maintain continued operations:*

The company leveraged their remote work policy but did not let policies dictate all behavior. Instead, they did what they thought was the right thing to do and are adjusting policies as needed. For example, the policy stated that company equipment could not be taken home, but they have allowed employees to take home monitors and other equipment as needed.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

Offices are officially closed. Less than five percent of employees are in the office for emergency services and facility work, and a small number of people are allowed in the office on an as-needed basis.

Things are going well. The company has seen increased collaboration and productivity has not decreased. They recently introduced new technology tools (i.e., Microsoft Teams and Yammer) and were concerned about their adoption, but people have embraced the resources on their own.

The company published a survey for Atlanta employees. They had 70 percent participation, and most people reported they are happy with the way things are going and are not in a rush to get back to the office. Employees said they would rather stay home longer to reduce the risk. They have organized virtual cocktail hours and themed events to keep people going, which, combined with seeing people in their natural environment (at home), has strengthened the culture.

## Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

The company will follow the government and CDC recommendations. The safety of employees is a top principle, and everything they do is in service of that. While it is a work in progress, they will have three stages of re-entry. Phase One will commence sometime in June for less than 10 percent of employees who cannot do certain things at home. The company has not defined dates for Phases Two and Three, where everyone goes back, but the bulk of the population will work remotely for the rest of the year. Beyond 2020, it is difficult to say.

Decisions have not been made, but the general feeling is that remote work will become a permanent change. The advantage of bringing people into the office is using the common areas, but these are the areas to avoid right now. They envision a shift with more employees working remotely by default and are considering a hoteling setup for when employees are back in the office. Employees would work remotely, but as they work in the office a few days per week, they would pick a hoteling space instead of having a dedicated space or office.

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*

Facilitate discussions with other companies to brainstorm. They are interested in how things will evolve, specifically with contact tracing and using applications to see what people are doing.

The company is a multi-national organization that is learning pandemic response best practices from their colleagues in China and Europe. They are applying the lessons learned here and are happy to share with others.

## 8. Title: Senior Vice President of Engineering

### Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

There was no formal policy before the pandemic. The nature of their business is very interactive and requires working together in clients' offices or testing in the field.

### Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The degree to which the organization has been able to maintain operations during COVID-19 impacts:*

The Atlanta office is about 60 percent operational and was the most affected due to the nature of the job responsibilities at this location. They are responsible for research and development and in-client support. With client offices closed, there has been a decrease in operations. Some new initiatives and ongoing projects have been put on hold.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

The company responded to shelter-in-place restrictions and started working remotely quickly. They were swiftly impacted but also had the opportunity to adapt.

Working remotely has forced company leadership to prioritize and formalize requirements because people are distributed. Managers are coping well with managing teams remotely.

Remote work will be on the table in the future now that the company realizes certain things can be achieved with people working independently.

### Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*
The company plans to open through a phased approach. They hope to move forward cautiously and safely in a manner that helps their business, clients, and employees. Remote work will be an option now that the employees have tested it, and they have proven that people can work outside of the office.

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*
Any support in terms of transparent and consistent information to deliver to their employees would be helpful—specifically, information for small businesses related to unemployment and medical benefits.

## 9. Title: Vice President/Georgia Area Manager

### Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

The remote work policy in place, which includes compressed weeks, was at the managers' discretion. Less than five percent of employees worked remotely, with most doing so under particular circumstances.

### Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The degree to which the organization has been able to maintain operations during COVID-19 impacts:*
The company has managed business operations as usual. Metrics have shown that the level of efficiency is the same. While the Georgia offices did not officially close, all employees were made fully capable of working remotely, and most chose to do so. Less than five people are going into the office regularly.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*
Everyone has adapted well and embraced technology tools. Project work has not slowed down. Employees report working longer hours and having more time in the day without their commute.

Managers are concerned with timely completion of deliverables; however, efficiency remains the same, and there is no evidence to prove otherwise yet. Many managers are more open to remote work than before.

## Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

The company is allowing staff to decide when they are comfortable returning to work. They anticipate coordination between departments, with no more than one-third of the employees present in the office at any given time.

Social distancing parameters will be put into place, including company provided masks and disinfectants, enhanced cleaning procedures, and restrictions on common areas. Employees will be required to complete a daily self-guided health assessment through an app, and a zero-tolerance policy for signs of illness will go into effect.

Ultimately, the company will not move to a majority remote workplace in the future. However, the Atlanta office is transitioning to an agile workplace model where all employees will utilize hoteling, and more employees working remotely may impact the ratio of workspace for which they plan.

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*

Keeping the company informed and distributing program information to staff is the best way to be helpful.

# 10. Title: Chief Human Resources Officer

## Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

The company had a formal policy that enabled all employees to work remotely one day per week. They didn't have the full buy-in of the policy, but roughly 80 percent of employees were in favor of remote work. People became accustomed to the policy, even if they did not like it.

## Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The degree to which the organization has been able to maintain operations during COVID-19 impacts:*

The company was thankful that they implemented a remote work policy several years ago because they were able to just flip the switch and start working remotely. Almost 800 to 1,000 employees in the HQ and an additional 200 people nationwide are now working remotely.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

Things are going remarkably well. Employees are more productive and seemingly less distracted by being away from the office. While there are distractions at home, their team has been working remotely for years and is prepared for many of these household distractions. The decrease in office distractions could be the reason for increased productivity; employees have more time to focus on their work. They are completing tasks faster. Employees are working long hours and have adapted their communication methods. There are more avenues to get ahold of people (e.g., direct calls to cellphones during off-hours), and that has created a strain.

It has been challenging to recreate the collaborative nature of the physical office environment. *The company is* working to identify a solution to bring collaboration and brainstorming capabilities into the virtual environment.

## Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

The fatigue felt by the company when migrating all employees home during shelter-in-place requirements is not something they want to undertake again. This experience has leadership considering the restart effort. The company is exploring the idea of working remotely on a more sustained basis. There would be benefits on both sides of the ledger by keeping employees remote. The increase in productivity has enabled leadership to think radically with long-term plans, including a four-day workweek and unlimited vacation time, which could create relief for remote employees working longer hours.

With such a drastic culture shift, there would be complications along the way, including change management, social re-engineering, training, and increasing access to remote tools. They feel they must push themselves to get on the other side of traditional thinking because they might be forced to adapt again in the future.

The workspace will change. The company is focusing on the infrastructure and resources that employees will need when in the office. Workspaces will be reconfigured to accommodate social distancing. The company is focused on the employee experience and ensuring that the engagement level remains high.

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*

Data, evidence, and hard facts are compelling to their leadership. The company used this information to establish the remote work policy initially and will continue to look for additional data as the situation evolves. The company expects that some of their employees will want to return to the office, and the pandemic rate data can inform them on how that impacts their safety.

## 11. Title: Assistant Vice President, Corporate Communications

### Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

The company implemented a remote work policy in 2019, opening it up to all employees in early 2020. They started to see a culture change. The frequency varied by department, as it was directed by department leadership. Some employees experienced manager disapproval of working remotely up until the shelter-in-place orders were enacted.

### Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The degree to which the organization has been able to maintain operations during COVID-19 impacts:*

In one division, 100 percent of employees are working remotely. Another division has 40 percent of employees that are still traveling to their worksites; however, there are safety measures to protect

them. Leadership was very forward-thinking; most employees were working remotely, starting on March 11th.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

The board of directors recently presented on positives that the company has experienced during this "new normal." One of those was the increase in collaboration. The *company* has many divisions located throughout different buildings. They realized a breakdown of silos and improved communications occurring cross-divisionally. The pandemic is bringing the employees together. It has accelerated the use of technology, changed the way that they work, and impacted the way in which they serve customers.

## Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

The company is taking a conservative approach to reopening. Due to mixed messages from the government, they are focusing on educating employees to ensure they are aware that the office is not open. There is a four-tiered response level. At the most extreme, only essential employees can come back to the office. As there is additional reopening, more employees may be allowed back to the office. Leadership is identifying which employees need to be in the office at the most open tier, and there might not be many.

In-person interactions and communication heavily influenced organizational culture. This is a cornerstone of the culture, and it becomes emotional as they think about what it looks like to go back to the office. They have worked to reset employees' expectations about when re-entry will happen and what the interaction with the workspace will be. There will not be as many people in the hallways or cafeteria. They are looking towards how to keep the culture alive and shift the way employees think about interactions.

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*

They want to hear from corporate neighbors and vice-versa. They are interested in the output of this interview process and additional best practices.

## 12. Title: Senior Vice President, Northwest Region

## Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

Managers expressed a general reluctance to allow remote work, and decisions were made on a case by case basis. The company had a robust policy and had tools in place, but very few employees were working remotely. A small number of customer service employees worked remotely as part of their job, but it was less than five percent of the time for most employees.

## Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The degree to which remote work policies and resources have been responsible for the ability to maintain continued operations:*

It has gone well for the company because they had the infrastructure in place. Many employees had recently transitioned to laptops and tablets and could take their devices home to work remotely. All office employees and approximately 65 percent of the larger organization are working remotely. The only employees not working remotely cannot do so as their job duties require them to be in the field, and they have converted some field positions to office jobs where possible.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

Aside from the lack of social contact, employees are enjoying working remotely and doing things at home instead of being stuck in traffic. Managers have adapted and are confident that their employees are getting work done. The company shifted to weekly check-ins to monitor employee anxiety and stress that may be related to COVID-19.

They challenged themselves to figure out what had to be done in-person and have moved to more electronic methods as a result of not being able to do things in-person. There has been an increase in productivity without having nonessential meetings or office politics.

## Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

There is a re-entry program across the company, but it will depend on external factors. They are focusing on data and not a timeline. The safety of employees and customers they interact with is a top concern, and they are flexible.

The company is taking this experience to figure out what makes sense for employees and the work they have to do. The success of employees working remotely has encouraged the company to consider converting some positions to remote positions. Leadership is more receptive to the concept that not everyone has to be in the office.

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*

Creating a forum to understand what other companies are looking at is beneficial, especially companies that are more forward leading.

## 13. Title: Corporate Communications Department

## Remote Work Prior to the Pandemic

*Working remotely as a standard practice within the organization:*

Remote employees accounted for 10 percent of the workforce. Occasional remote work was an opportunity for many employees.

## Remote Work During the Pandemic

*The degree to which the organization has been able to maintain operations during COVID-19 impacts:*

Due to ongoing change modernization efforts, the company was able to adapt quickly to a remote work model. Early in March, thousands of employees were provided with laptops and technology, and almost all employees were moved to a remote status within just ten days. They are leveraging virtual tools to support customers.

*The organization's experience during remote work:*

This experience has revealed that the *company* can remain productive and thrive with a remote workforce. Where people work may matter less than how they connect and collaborate. This situation has allowed the *company* to test processes and systems so that they can be more confident in saying that remote working will be one of the ways they can offer flexibility.

## Transition Back to the Workplace

*On what the transition back to work looks like:*

The decisions will be driven by the health and safety of employees, operational stability, and the ability to serve customers. The company anticipates that the physical work environments will be needed to continue to support the recruitment of talented employees. They intend to get back to having most employees in the office once it is safe to do so but will consider opportunities to work remotely when it makes sense.

*On how Georgia Commute Options can help the organization transition back to work:*

The company looks forward to working with other organizations on how to innovate and potentially impact the numbers of commuters traveling during peak periods.

# Appendix B:
# Remote Work Survey
# Analysis and Summary

# Appendix B: Remote Work Survey Analysis and Summary

The following report is based on data collected from six surveys administered between April 1, 2020, and May 5, 2020. The surveys were distributed to employees served by five transportation management associations (TMAs): Livable Buckhead, Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association (CCTMA), Perimeter Connects, ASAP+, and Downtown Connects. It was also distributed to employers that participate in the Georgia Commute Options program.

The purpose of the survey was to assess the employee remote work experience in response to COVID-19 and gauge what organizational leaders are thinking about the future of where employees work. These findings will help identify recommendations that can lead to a more successful remote work experience both now and in the future.

This report is organized into two sections: research questions and analysis followed by the full survey summary.

## Research Questions and Analysis

The research questions below were posed to inform key findings and specifically understand:

- the scale of the remote work transformation brought on by the pandemic;

- factors that can positively impact the remote work experience for the employee;

- factors that can positively impact the remote work experience for the manager;

- resources that can help improve the remote work experience; and

- what executive leaders are thinking about the future of remote work.

To answer the research questions, the survey data was analyzed to identify relationships between different variables, including access to tools and resources, prior remote work experience, company size, employee type, and the passage of time.

It is important to note that when the data was broken-out by activity centers, any differences between activity centers were attributed to differences in industry composition. Some industries, such as technology, financial services, and insurance, were more likely to have had established remote work policies and have made a prior investment in remote work tools.

# 1. How frequently were people working remotely before COVID-19, how frequently are they working remotely now, and how frequently do they want to work remotely in the future?

Survey respondents were asked how frequently they worked remotely prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, how often they are currently working remotely, and how often they would like to work remotely after business returns to normal.

The scale of the transformation brought by the COVID-19 pandemic is remarkable. Before the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, 44 percent of respondents never worked remotely, and only 3.5 percent worked remotely five days per week or more. The corresponding numbers now are 71 percent working remotely five days per week or more, and only 9 percent of those still working are reporting to their workplace every day.

On average, respondents want to continue to work remotely more than they did before the pandemic. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents worked remotely an average of 0.8 days per week; given a choice, respondents want to work remotely for an average of 2.5 days per week after business returns to normal.

There is a strong, statistically significant relationship between prior remote work frequency and desired future remote work frequency. Respondents who reported either never or only occasionally (fewer than two times a month) working remotely prior to the pandemic wanted to work remotely fewer days per week on average than employees who regularly worked remotely prior to the pandemic, as the chart below shows. Each group wanted to work remotely more frequently except for employees that exclusively worked remotely prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Prior Weekly Remote Work Frequency and Preference for Future Remote Work Frequency
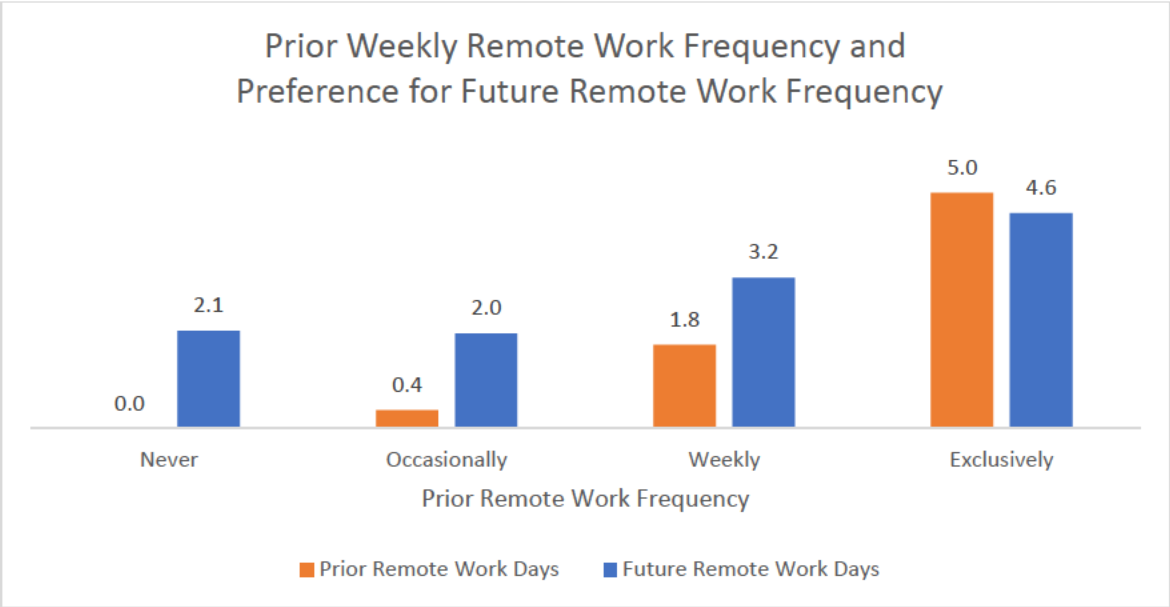
## 2. What factors impact the employee remote work experience?

The data was analyzed to understand what factors are associated with employee satisfaction and negative experiences. Access to tools and resources, prior remote work experience, employee type, company size, and the passage of time were analyzed to determine their association with satisfaction. Positive experiences were enhanced by:

- Access to tools and resources

- Prior Remote Work Experiences

- Social Time

- Larger employer size

This is further detailed below.

### Access to Tools and Resources

Respondents were presented with a list of tools and resources and asked to select the options they had access to when working remotely. When controlling for other variables, there was a positive, statistically significant relationship between access to tools/resources (as a total number) and the number of positive personal benefits reported. Employees with access to adequate equipment, software programs, and cloud-based infrastructure had overall better remote work experiences than employees with no or limited access.

### Prior Remote Work Experience

Respondents with previous remote work experience reported fewer challenges and more positive outcomes. The charts below show all factors where there is a statistically significant difference in responses between employees who regularly (one day per week or more) worked remotely and those who only occasionally or never worked remotely (a few times per month or fewer) before the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Personal Challenges

**Prior remote work frequency**

| Challenge | Once a week or more | Less than once a week |
|-----------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Morale is lower | 11% | 15% |
| Miss commute time | 11% | 14% |
| Less productive | 10% | 13% |

Legend: ■ Once a week or more ■ Less than once a week

## Negative Impacts

**Prior remote work frequency**

| Impact | Once a week or more | Less than once a week |
|--------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Lack access to equipment | 30% | 46% |
| Worse home workspace | 24% | 37% |
| Network drive/file issues | 9% | 17% |
| VPN connection issues | 7% | 13% |
| Software/database issues | 5% | 11% |

Legend: ■ Once a week or more ■ Less than once a week

### Access to Social Time

There is a subtle but statistically significant relationship between having scheduled (organization or department) virtual "water cooler" time or other social time and experiencing positive benefits from working remotely. Additionally, there is a positive correlation between access to virtual water cooler time and access to equipment, as shown in the chart below.

**Negative Impacts and Scheduled Social Time**

Lack access to software or databases: No scheduled social time 10%, Scheduled social time 6%

Lack access to equipment: No scheduled social time 44%, Scheduled social time 35%

■ No scheduled social time   ■ Scheduled social time
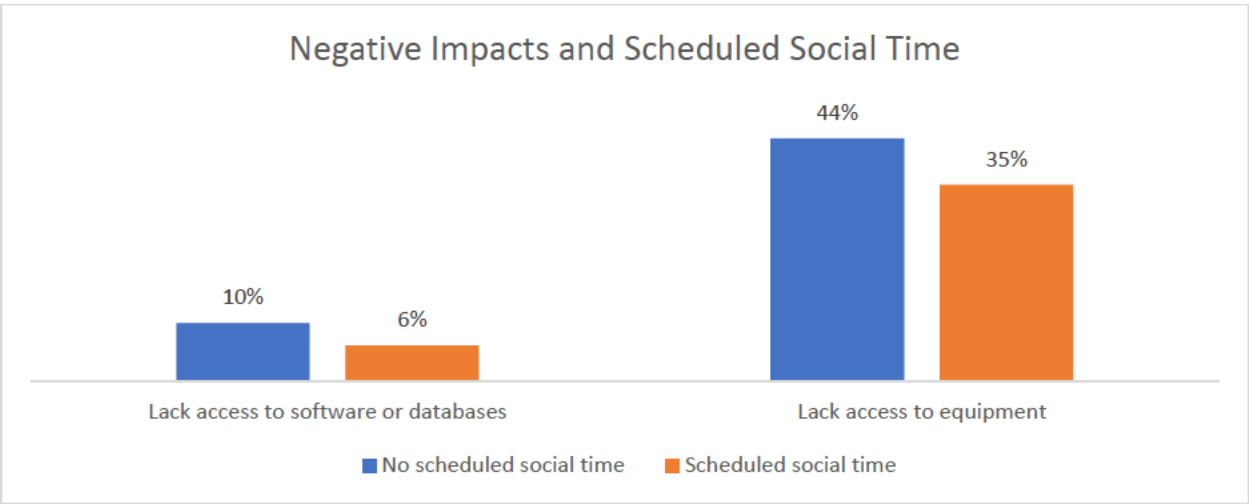
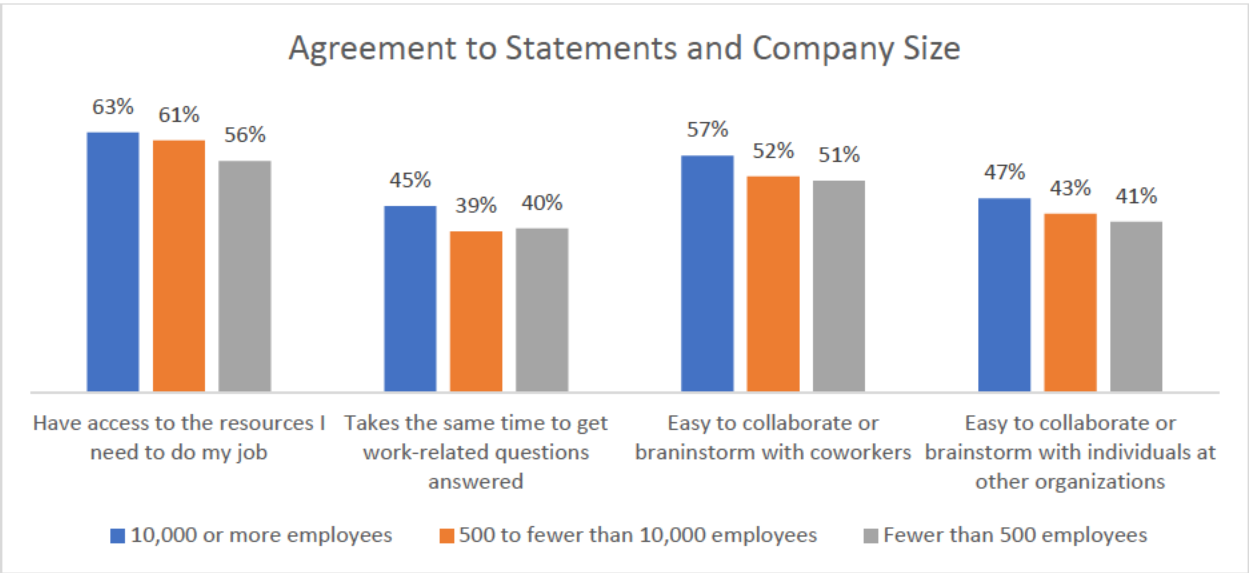These correlations are potentially evident because access to virtual water cooler time is an element of an advanced remote work program. Scheduled water cooler time means it is likely that the company has provided its employees with the basic infrastructure (e.g., equipment and software) and training needed to have a more positive remote work experience.

## Company Size

Four of the six surveys (Georgia Commute Options, CCTMA, Livable Buckhead, and Downtown Connects) included a question that asked how many employees are at the respondent's work location. The results show that larger companies have had slightly better results with their transition to working remotely.

Employees at larger companies are significantly more likely to agree that they have access to some resources that make it easier to do their job. This includes both access to the interpersonal aspects of collaborating with colleagues as well as the material resources the employer provides.



**Agreement to Statements and Company Size**

Have access to the resources I need to do my job: 63%, 61%, 56%

Takes the same time to get work-related questions answered: 45%, 39%, 40%

Easy to collaborate or braninstorm with coworkers: 57%, 52%, 51%

Easy to collaborate or brainstorm with individuals at other organizations: 47%, 43%, 41%

■ 10,000 or more employees   ■ 500 to fewer than 10,000 employees   ■ Fewer than 500 employees
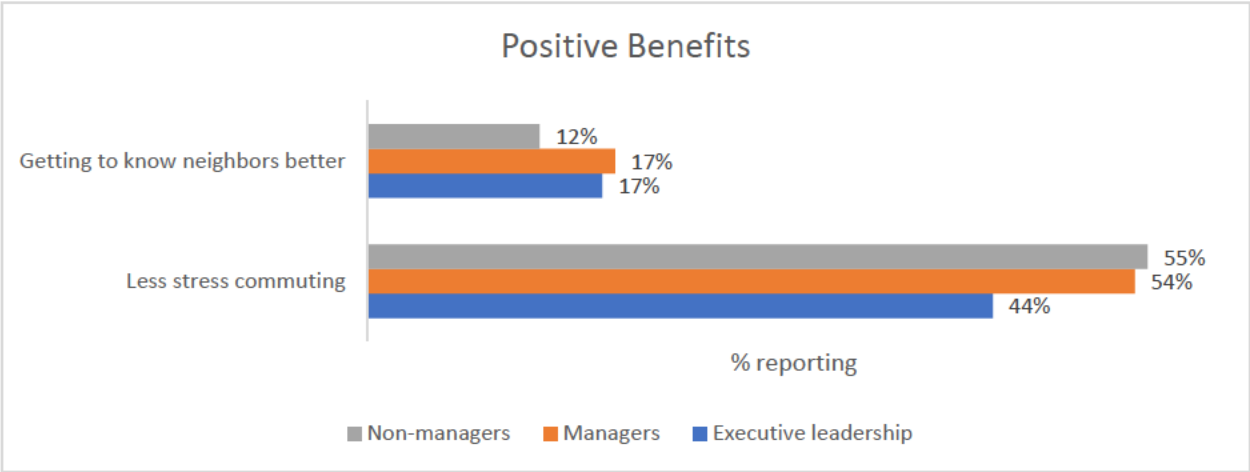
Large companies are also more likely to provide employees with digital tools that make it easier to access shared systems and coordinate tasks virtually. While respondents did not report whether they made use of these tools, it is possible that the increased access allows them to be better equipped for work outside of the office. Employees at larger companies were less likely to report difficulty accessing network drives and files as well as essential software and databases.

## Employee Type

Respondents were asked to select their position from the following:

- executive leadership: involved in strategic planning and/or policy decisions for your organization or location/department;

- manager: manage at least one other person (direct reports);

- or non-manager: do not have direct reports.

Overall, non-managers have fewer personal challenges and negative impacts than managers or executive leadership members. The charts below show responses for all positive benefits, personal challenges, and negative impacts where the difference in responses between employee types is statistically significant.



**Positive Benefits**

Getting to know neighbors better
- Non-managers: 12%
- Managers: 17%
- Executive leadership: 17%

Less stress commuting
- Non-managers: 55%
- Managers: 54%
- Executive leadership: 44%

% reporting

■ Non-managers  ■ Managers  ■ Executive leadership

## Personal Challenges



| Challenge | Non-managers | Managers | Executive leadership |
|---|---|---|---|
| Difficult staying motivated | 19% | 23% | 20% |
| Frequent distractions | 21% | 30% | 26% |
| Less productive | 11% | 17% | 8% |
| Morale is lower | 13% | 16% | 13% |
| Struggle to unplug | 24% | 37% | 46% |

% reporting

Non-managers  Managers  Executive leadership

## Negative Impacts



| Impact | Non-managers | Managers | Executive leadership |
|---|---|---|---|
| Network drive/files issues | 14% | 19% | 12% |
| Internet connectivity issues | 23% | 31% | 30% |
| Worse home workspace | 31% | 37% | 39% |
| Lack access to equipment | 38% | 48% | 45% |

% reporting

Non-managers  Managers  Executive leadership

## Changes in Impacts Over Time

Questions were raised as to whether employee experiences are improving with time. While the five-week duration of the survey allowed for measuring the impacts of the shift to remote work

over time, it was problematic to do so. The Perimeter Connects and the ASAP+ surveys were distributed first, while the Georgia Commute Options, Downtown Connects, Livable Buckhead and the CCTMA surveys were only distributed during the survey's final two weeks. The TMAs and Georgia Commute Options activity centers represent different industries with different remote work possibilities and cultures.

An analysis was conducted that controlled for TMA and company size (due to size being correlated with employee satisfaction). However, the correlation between positive impacts, negative impacts, personal challenges, and time was not statistically significant. This does not mean that employee experiences are not improving in time; this data set does not provide evidence of such an occurrence.

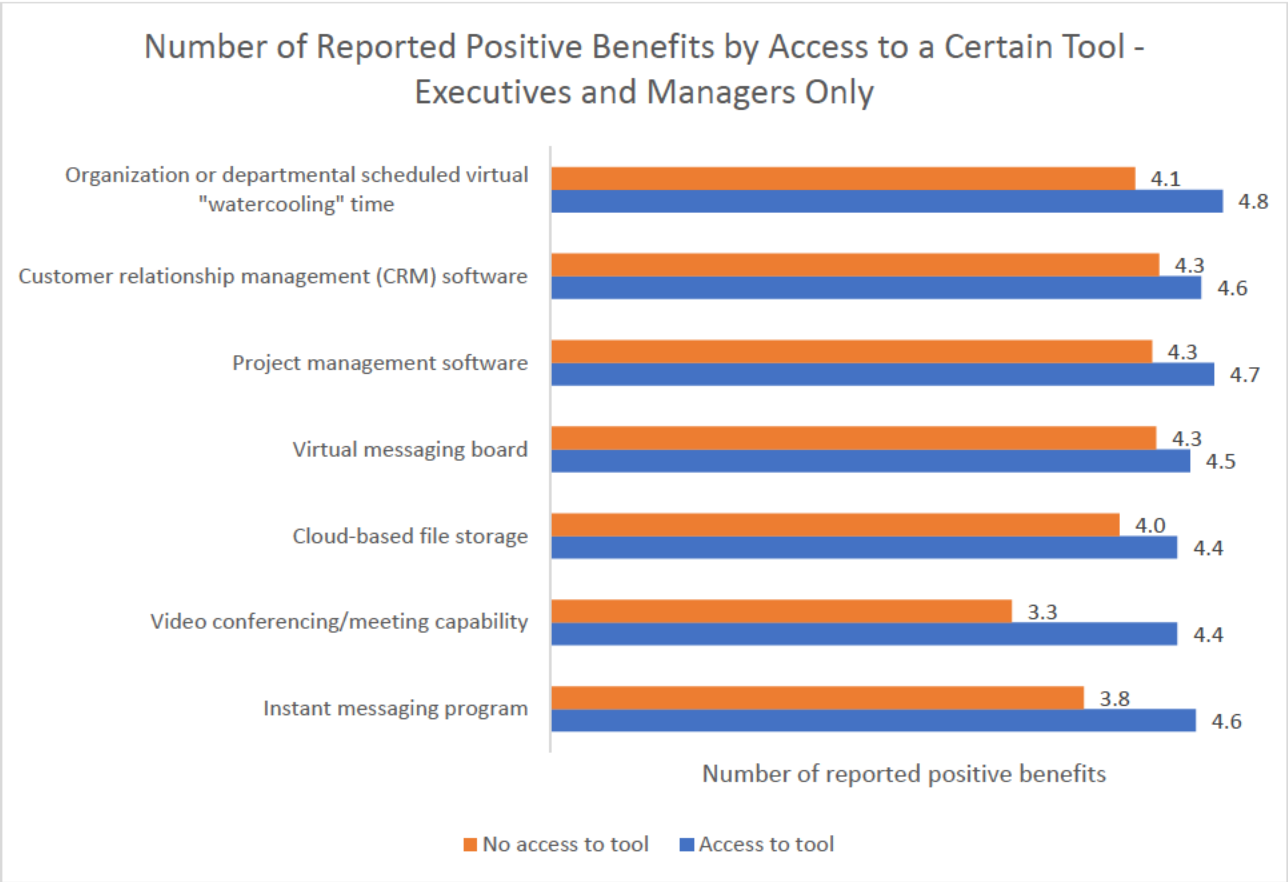## 3. What factors impact managers' remote work experiences?

To analyze the factors that impact the manager and executive remote work experience, the analysis reviewed the differences between reported satisfaction and negative experiences by access to tools and resources, by prior remote work experience, by company size, and by employee type. Positive experiences were enhanced by:

- Access to tools and resources

- Prior remote work experiences

- Larger employer size

This is further detailed below.

### Access to Tools

Managers and executives reported whether they had access to a number of digital tools to complete their work. The following chart shows the number of positive benefits reported on average out of eleven possible benefits by access to each tool. Generally, the managers and executives who had access to these tools reported more positive benefits from remote work.

## Number of Reported Positive Benefits by Access to a Certain Tool - Executives and Managers Only

| Tool | No access to tool | Access to tool |
|---|---|---|
| Organization or departmental scheduled virtual "watercooling" time | 4.1 | 4.8 |
| Customer relationship management (CRM) software | 4.3 | 4.6 |
| Project management software | 4.3 | 4.7 |
| Virtual messaging board | 4.3 | 4.5 |
| Cloud-based file storage | 4.0 | 4.4 |
| Video conferencing/meeting capability | 3.3 | 4.4 |
| Instant messaging program | 3.8 | 4.6 |

Number of reported positive benefits

■ No access to tool   ■ Access to tool

The correlation of access to tools and reported negative impacts and personal challenges is more nuanced and less statistically significant.

## Prior Remote Employee Management Experience

Managers were asked if they supervised employees who worked remotely before the COVID-19 pandemic and then were presented with a list of potential concerns regarding managing employees remotely and asked to select all relevant concerns or to indicate if they had no concerns.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 40 percent of those with supervisory responsibilities managed employees who worked remotely while 60 percent did not. This experience appears to have helped supervisors with specific challenges. Two critical challenges are statistically less likely to be encountered by experienced managers: inadequate communication with staff and not knowing what staff are working on. Experienced supervisors are more likely to report spending more time supervising staff.
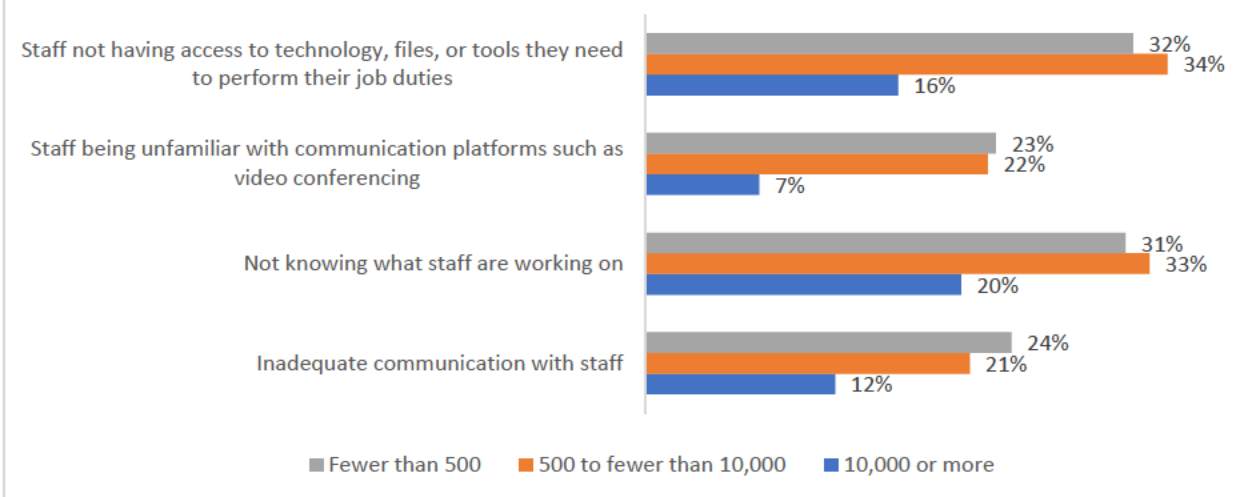
**Concerns Regarding Managing Employees Remotely**

| Concern | No prior experience | Prior experience |
|---|---|---|
| Spend more time supervising staff | 10% | 16% |
| Not knowing what staff are working on | 29% | 20% |
| Inadequate communication with staff | 22% | 9% |

Legend: No prior experience supervising employees remotely / Prior exerpience supervising employees remotely
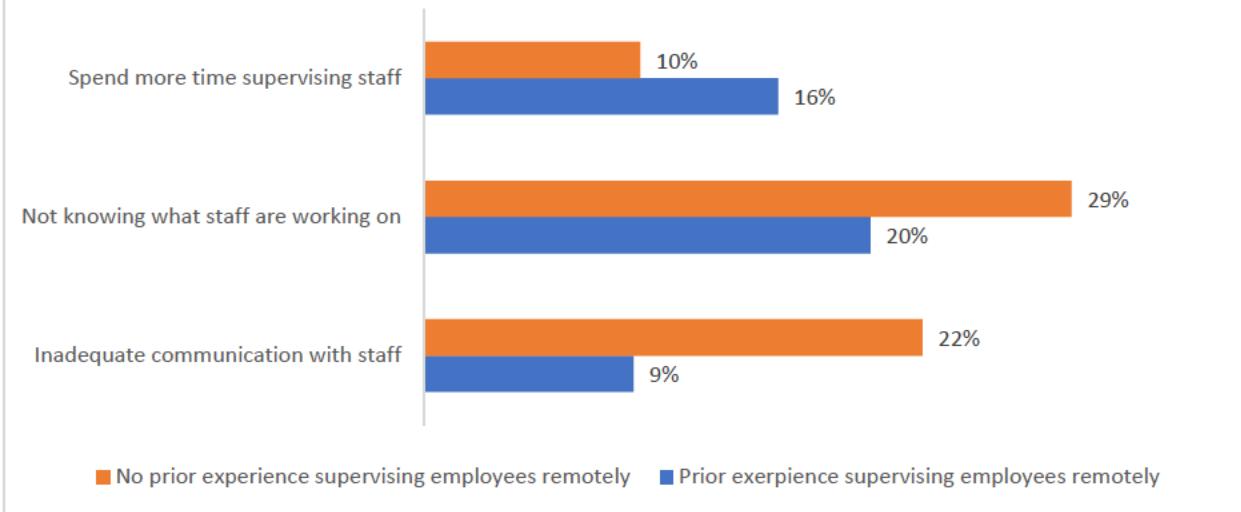
## Company Size

Managers and executives with supervisory responsibilities at large companies report fewer concerns managing employees than those at smaller companies. This corresponds with the individual experience reported by employees, and it could be an indicator that supervisors at large companies have access to a better support system and additional resources. An indicator that large companies may provide access to a better support system and additional resources is that employees at large companies report access to more tools; employees at companies with 10,000 employees or more have access to an average of 3.6 tools compared to 3.0 tools for employees at companies with fewer than 500 employees.

**Concens Regarding Managing Employees Remotely by Company Size**

| Concern | Fewer than 500 | 500 to fewer than 10,000 | 10,000 or more |
|---|---|---|---|
| Staff not having access to technology, files, or tools they need to perform their job duties | 32% | 34% | 16% |
| Staff being unfamiliar with communication platforms such as video conferencing | 23% | 22% | 7% |
| Not knowing what staff are working on | 31% | 33% | 20% |
| Inadequate communication with staff | 24% | 21% | 12% |

Executives and managers are generally more likely to report adverse impacts and personal challenges than non-managers.

Managers without executive responsibilities struggle from personal challenges more than other groups. This employee group often must implement policies that were created without their input and can lack access to critical necessities in times of change. Any successful future remote work policy should ensure not to forget about this employee group and carefully consider their needs.

The increased rate of personal challenges that managers experience does not disappear when controlling for prior remote working experience, indicating that the issue needs active intervention and will not disappear over time.

The most pronounced difference between employee types is the rate at which they report struggling to unplug from work. While 46 percent of executives and 37 percent of managers' report struggling to unplug, only 24 percent of non-managers respond that they do.
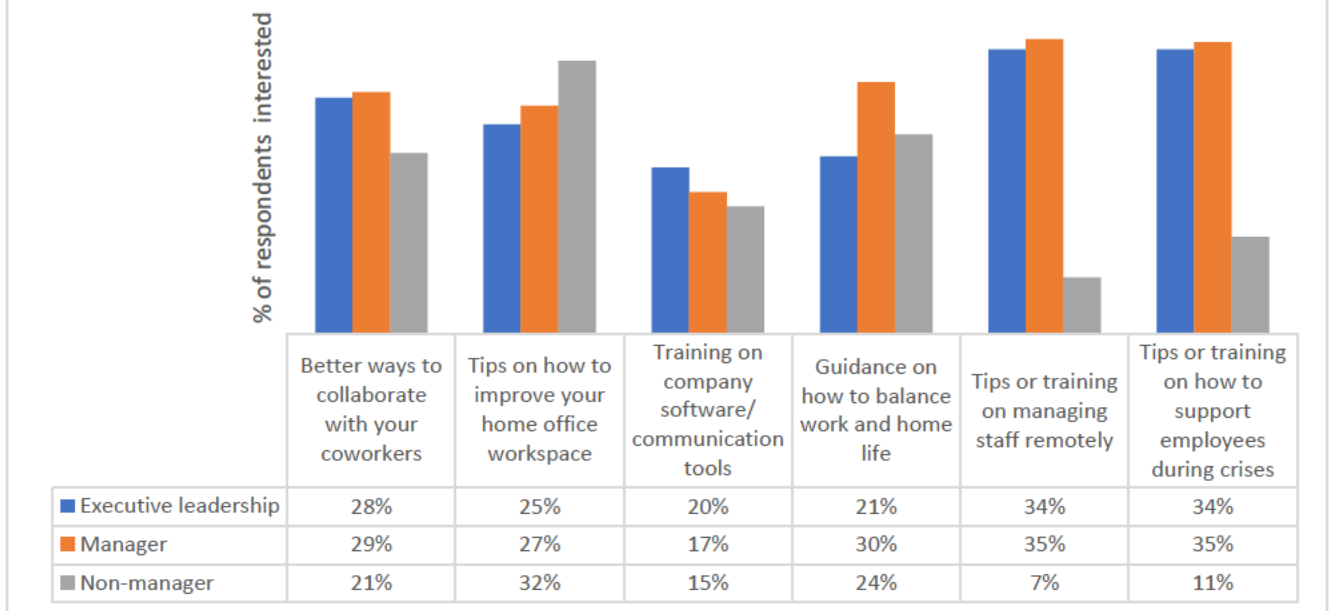
## 4. What resources would be most helpful?

All respondents were presented with a list of resources and asked to select any resources that would make it easier to work remotely--Sixty-nine percent of all respondents selected at least one resource from the list. The distribution of selected resources was broken out by employee type.

All resources except for training on company software/communication tools were found to have small but statistically significant differences between each resource and employee position.

The chart below displays the percentage of respondents who selected each resource from the total number of respondents in each employment category.

## Interest in Work from Home Resources by Employee Position

*% of respondents interested*

| | Better ways to collaborate with your coworkers | Tips on how to improve your home office workspace | Training on company software/ communication tools | Guidance on how to balance work and home life | Tips or training on managing staff remotely | Tips or training on how to support employees during crises |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Executive leadership | 28% | 25% | 20% | 21% | 34% | 34% |
| ■ Manager | 29% | 27% | 17% | 30% | 35% | 35% |
| ■ Non-manager | 21% | 32% | 15% | 24% | 7% | 11% |

Respondents were also asked what format they would like to receive remote work resources. Largely, there were no statistically significant differences between employee positions. The top three formats for each position were: email, webinars, and online or downloadable toolkits.

However, there were significant differences in the preference for email between employee types. Email was selected as the top choice for non-manager employees and managers and secondary choice by executive leadership (webinars were first). Fifty-eight percent of non-managers selected email as a preferred format versus 47 percent of executive leadership, and 51 percent of managers.

## 5.  What are leaders thinking about the future of remote work?

Executives understand that shifting to remote work was critical to the ongoing operation of their organization. When presented with this question, 67 percent of executives responded that remote work is the main reason for continued operation, and 27 percent said remote work is partially responsible for their organization's ongoing operation.

## Impact of Work from Home Policies on Continued Operations
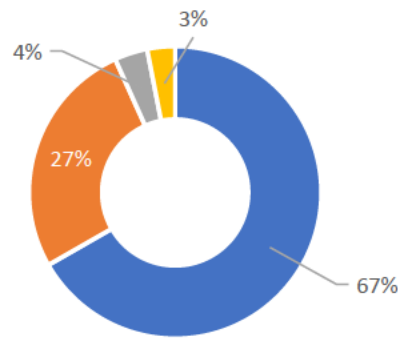
- 3%
- 4%
- 27%
- 67%

- ■ Telework is the main reason for our continued operations
- ■ Telework is partially responsible for our continued operations
- ■ Telework has no impact on our continued operations
- ■ We are not operating or operating only minimally

Executives were also asked how they think the COVID-19 pandemic will change how employees at their organization work in the future.  The table below summarizes the results. The majority of executives agree that more employees will work remotely periodically after business returns to normal, and 23 percent think employees will work remotely nearly full-time.

| Answer | % | # |
|---|---|---|
| More employees will work from home periodically | 69% | 107 |
| We will take steps to make it easier for employees to work from home in case of future emergencies | 55% | 86 |
| More employees will work from home nearly full-time | 23% | 36 |
| We will consider reducing the physical size of our workplace | 21% | 32 |
| Nothing will change | 14% | 22 |
| We will distribute employees across more offices/work locations | 7% | 11 |
| Other, please specify | 5% | 7 |
| We will consider increasing the physical size of our workplace | 2% | 3 |
| Total | 100% | 156 |

# Survey Report Summary

The following report summarizes combined responses to survey questions from the six surveys.

Responses were collected from employees that are actively working. The chart below shows the response breakdown by TMA. Each survey contained the same questions unless otherwise noted.

Six multiple answer questions contained an "other choice." This report includes a summary of the top three to five original responses to the "other" category for these six questions. The last open-ended question asked respondents to share any remaining challenges or positive experiences they have had working remotely or to recommend tools or tips to improve the remote work experience.
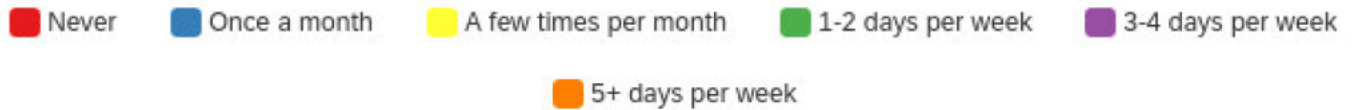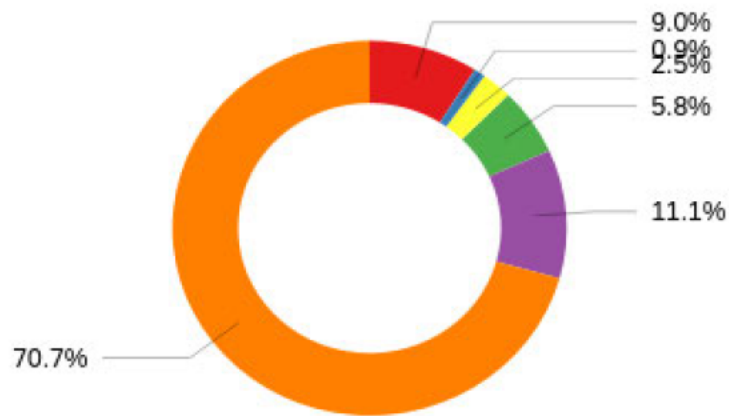
**Response Breakdown by TMA**
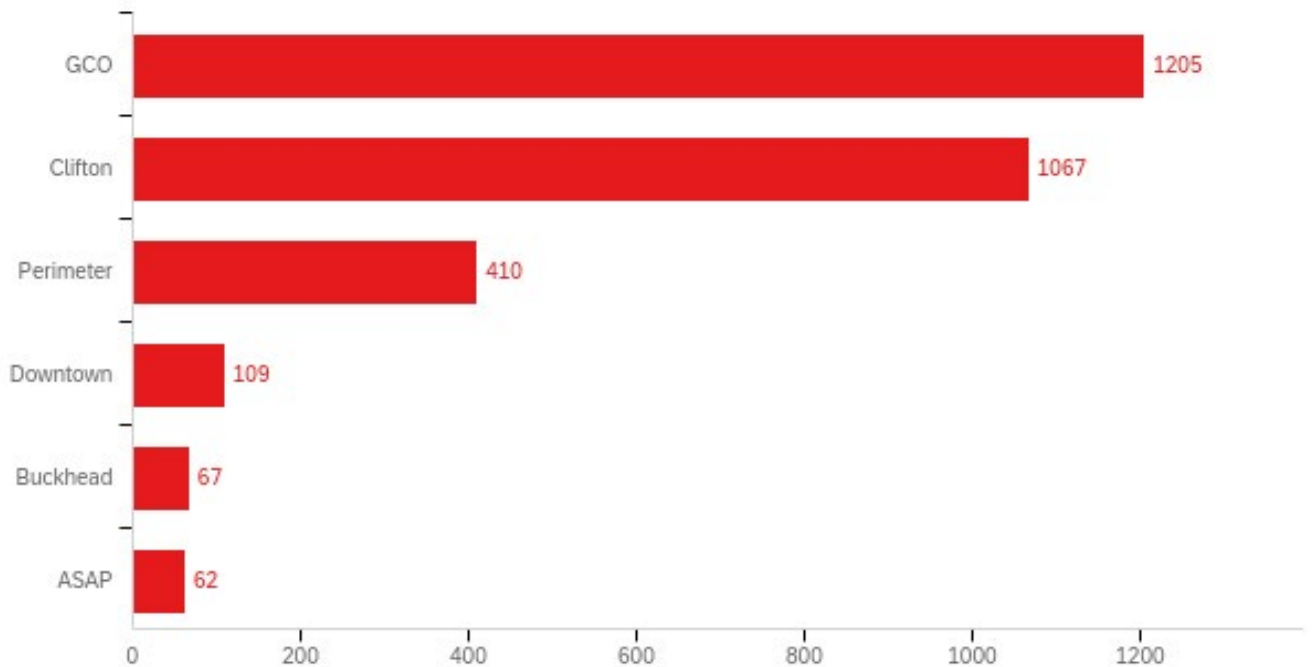
**Q1 - Which of the following best describes your position?**
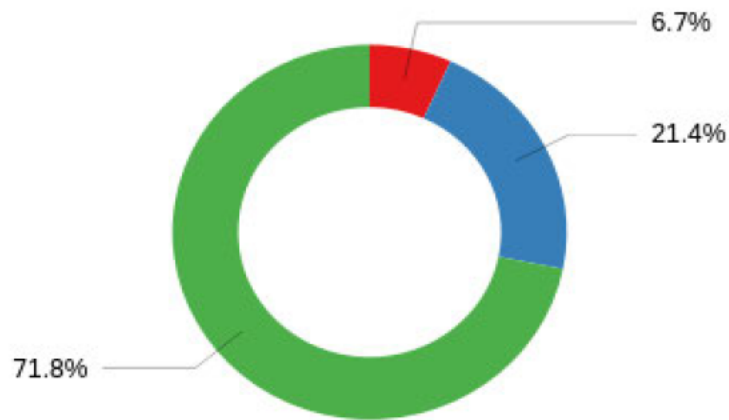


6.7%

21.4%

71.8%

🟥 Executive leadership: involved in strategic planning and/or policy decisions for your organization or a location/department

🟦 Manager: manage at least one other person (direct reports)          🟩 Non-manager: do not have direct reports
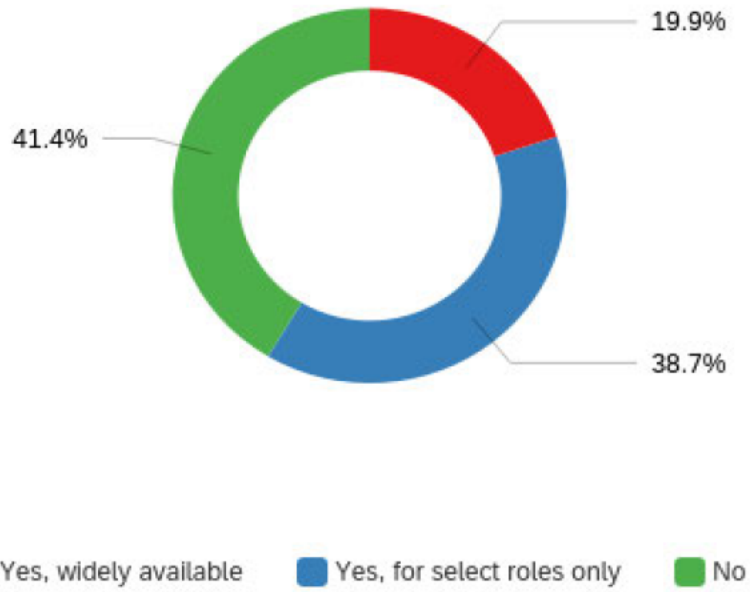
| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| Executive leadership: involved in strategic planning and/or policy decisions for your organization or a location/department | 6.7% | 197 |
| Manager: manage at least one other person (direct reports) | 21.4% | 625 |
| Non-manager: do not have direct reports | 71.8% | 2098 |
| Total | 100% | 2920 |

**Q2 - How often, if at all, are you currently working from home?**



9.0%
0.9%
2.5%
5.8%
11.1%
70.7%

- 🟥 Never
- 🟦 Once a month
- 🟨 A few times per month
- 🟩 1-2 days per week
- 🟪 3-4 days per week
- 🟧 5+ days per week

| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| 5+ days per week | 70.7% | 2064 |
| 3-4 days per week | 11.1% | 324 |
| Never | 9.0% | 262 |
| 1-2 days per week | 5.8% | 170 |
| A few times per month | 2.5% | 73 |
| Once a month | 0.9% | 27 |
| Total | 100% | 2920 |

**Q3 - Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, was working from home a common practice at your organization?**



| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| Yes, widely available | 19.9% | 486 |
| Yes, for select roles only | 38.7% | 946 |
| No | 41.4% | 1011 |
| Total | 100% | 2443 |

**Q4 - Since working from home in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**
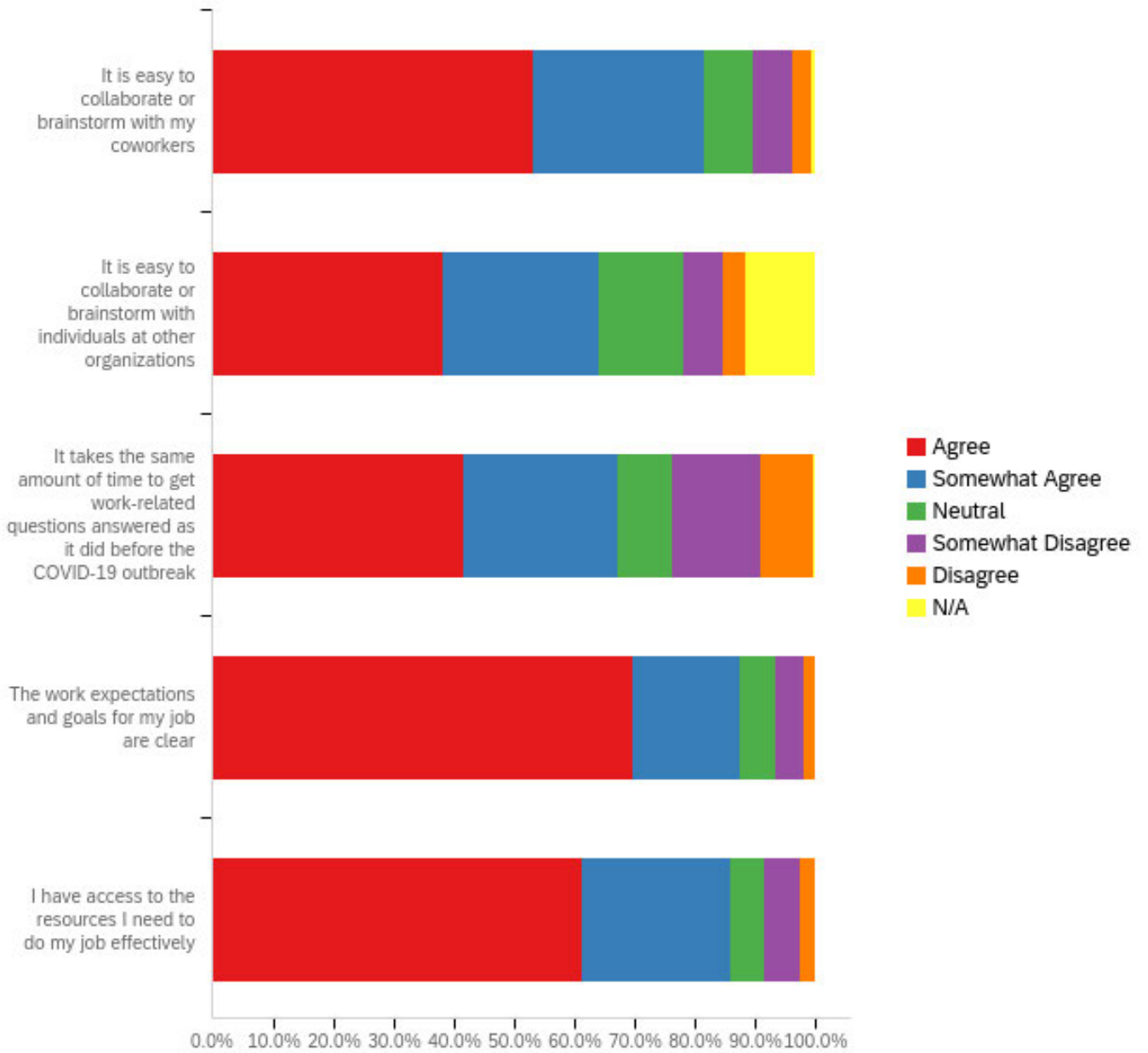
| Statement | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It is easy to collaborate or brainstorm with my coworkers | 53.1% <1320> | 28.3% <704> | 8.2% <204> | 6.6% <164> | 3.1% <77> | 0.6% <16> |
| It is easy to collaborate or brainstorm with individuals at other organizations | 38.3% <947> | 25.9% <640> | 13.9% <343> | 6.7% <165> | 3.6% <88> | 11.7% <290> |
| It takes the same amount of time to get work-related questions answered as it did before the COVID-19 outbreak | 41.8% <1036> | 25.5% <632> | 9.0% <224> | 14.5% <359> | 9.0% <223> | 0.3% <7> |
| The work expectations and goals for my job are clear | 69.6% <1725> | 17.9% <443> | 6.0% <148> | 4.5% <112> | 1.9% <48> | 0.2% <4> |
| I have access to the resources I need to do my job effectively | 61.2% <1520> | 24.7% <614> | 5.6% <139> | 5.7% <142> | 2.5% <62> | 0.2% <5> |

**Q5 - Thinking about your experience working from home since the COVID-19 outbreak, have any of the following negatively impacted you? Select all that apply.**
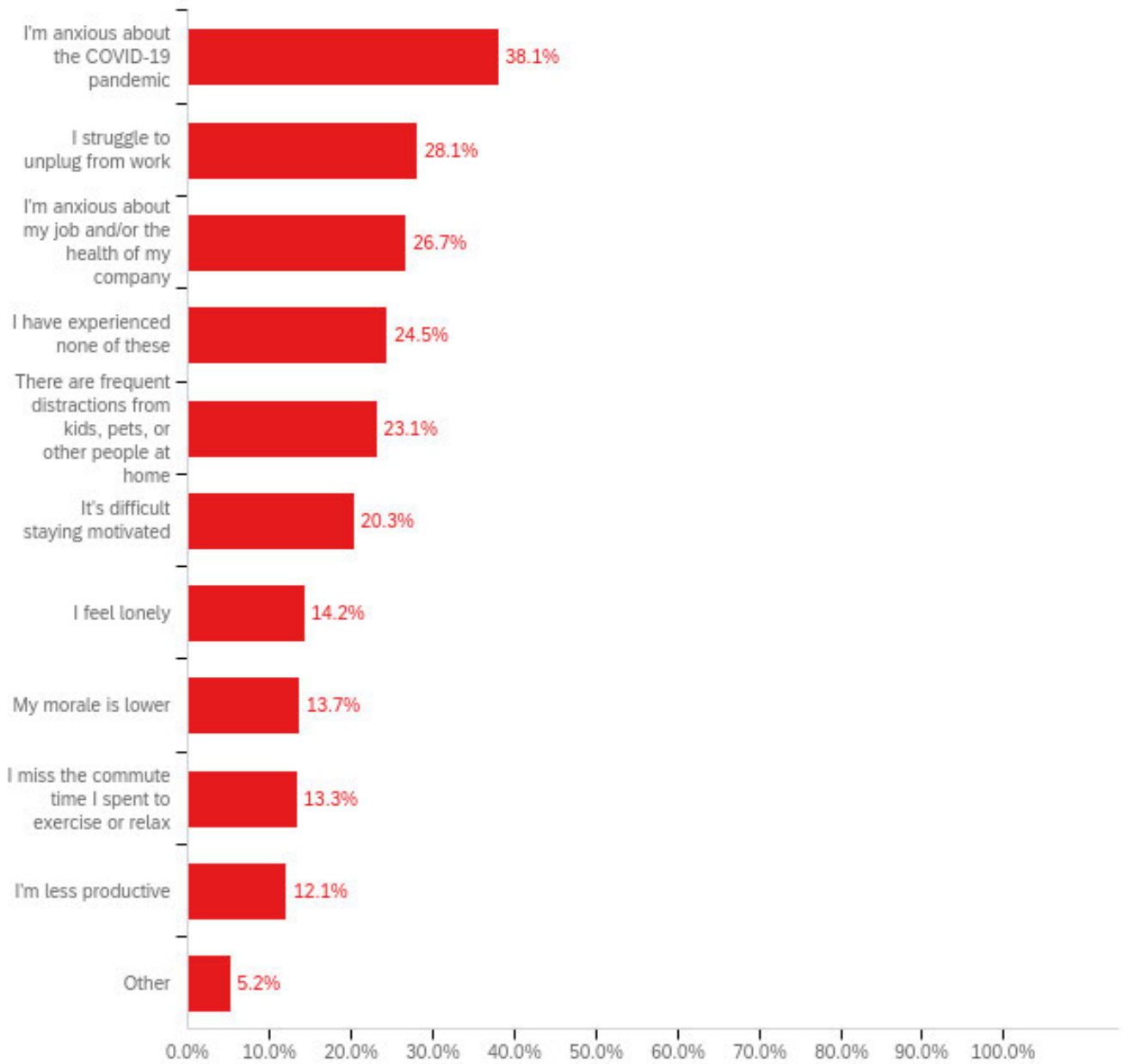


| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Lack of access to equipment like dual monitors, printers, external keyboards, scientific equipment, etc. | 40.7% |
| None of these have negatively impacted me | 33.3% |
| My home workspace is not the same quality as that at work | 33.2% |
| Internet connectivity issues (reliability, slow speeds) | 25.4% |
| Difficulty accessing network drives/files | 14.7% |
| Difficulty connecting to a VPN | 11.2% |
| Other, please specify | 9.2% |
| Lack of access to important software or databases | 9.0% |

| Answer | Percentage | Count |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of access to equipment like dual monitors, printers, external keyboards, scientific equipment, etc. | 40.7% | 994 |
| None of these have negatively impacted me | 33.3% | 814 |
| My home workspace is not the same quality as that at work | 33.2% | 811 |
| Internet connectivity issues (reliability, slow speeds) | 25.4% | 621 |
| Difficulty accessing network drives/files | 14.7% | 359 |
| Difficulty connecting to a VPN | 11.2% | 274 |
| Other, please specify | 9.2% | 226 |
| Lack of access to important software or databases | 9.0% | 220 |
| Total | 100% | 2445 |

**Top "Other" Responses**

- Challenges setting up equipment.

- Challenges learning or troubleshooting new technology.

- Burdened by needing to help others learn or troubleshoot new technology.

- Outdated software.

- Use of personal cell phone to make and receive work calls.

**Q6 - Have you experienced any of the following personal challenges since working from home as part of the COVID-19 outbreak? Select all that apply.**



| Challenge | Percentage |
|---|---|
| I'm anxious about the COVID-19 pandemic | 38.1% |
| I struggle to unplug from work | 28.1% |
| I'm anxious about my job and/or the health of my company | 26.7% |
| I have experienced none of these | 24.5% |
| There are frequent distractions from kids, pets, or other people at home | 23.1% |
| It's difficult staying motivated | 20.3% |
| I feel lonely | 14.2% |
| My morale is lower | 13.7% |
| I miss the commute time I spent to exercise or relax | 13.3% |
| I'm less productive | 12.1% |
| Other | 5.2% |

| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| I'm anxious about the COVID-19 pandemic | 38.1% | 930 |
| I struggle to unplug from work | 28.1% | 687 |
| I'm anxious about my job and/or the health of my company | 26.7% | 653 |
| I have experienced none of these | 24.5% | 598 |
| There are frequent distractions from kids, pets, or other people at home | 23.1% | 565 |
| It's difficult staying motivated | 20.3% | 496 |
| I feel lonely | 14.2% | 348 |
| My morale is lower | 13.7% | 334 |
| I miss the commute time I spent to exercise or relax | 13.3% | 326 |
| I'm less productive | 12.1% | 296 |
| Other | 5.2% | 126 |
| Total | 100% | 2444 |

**Top "Other" Responses**

- Home schooling responsibilities and or childcare duties.

- Missing personal interactions and or co-workers.

- Personal health: Difficulty sleeping, eating too much, and or exercising too little.

- Anxiety about reduced hours/pay and or personal finances.

- More work responsibilities.

**Q7 - Have you experienced any of the following positive benefits working from home since the COVID-19 outbreak? Select all that apply.**
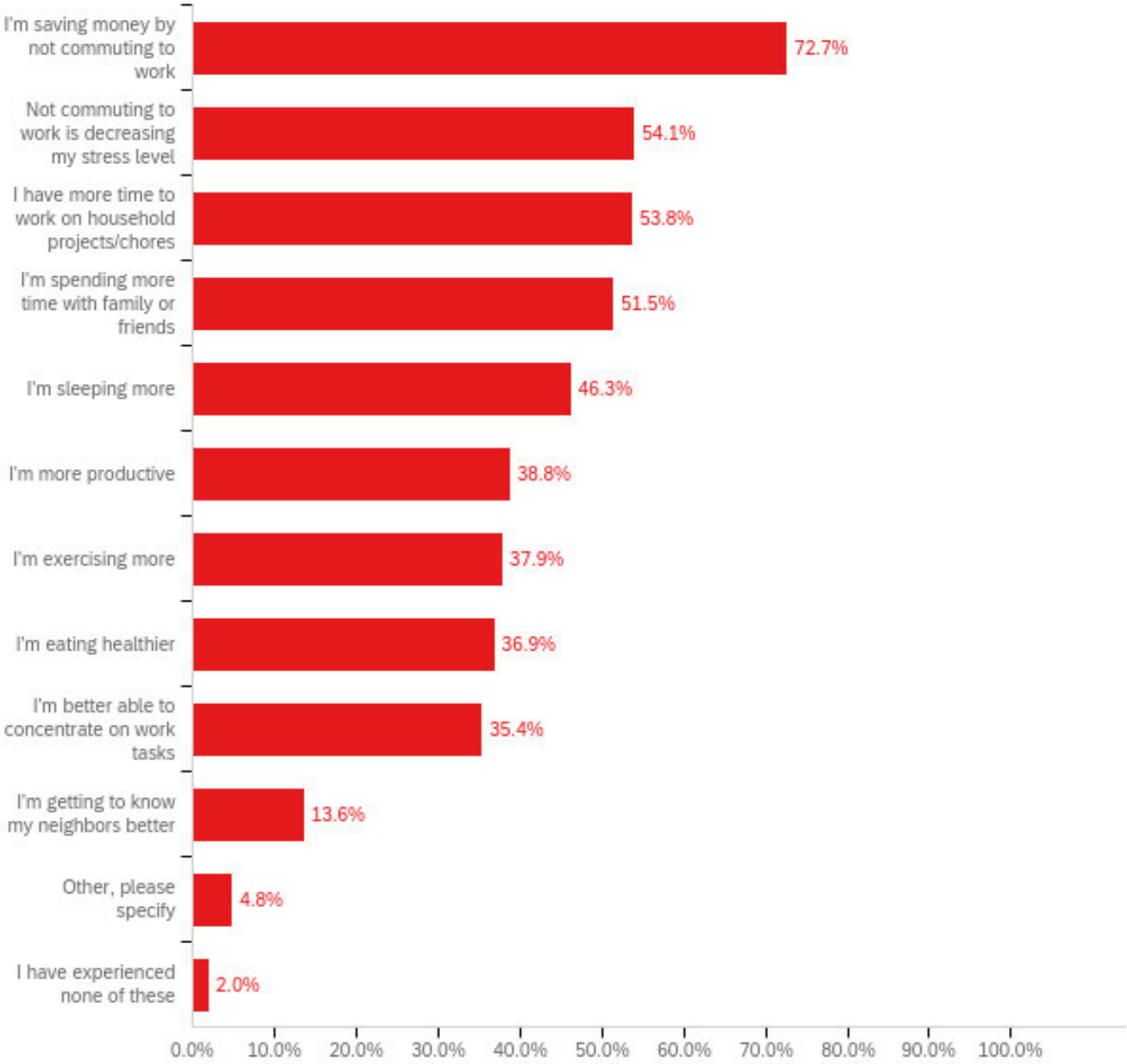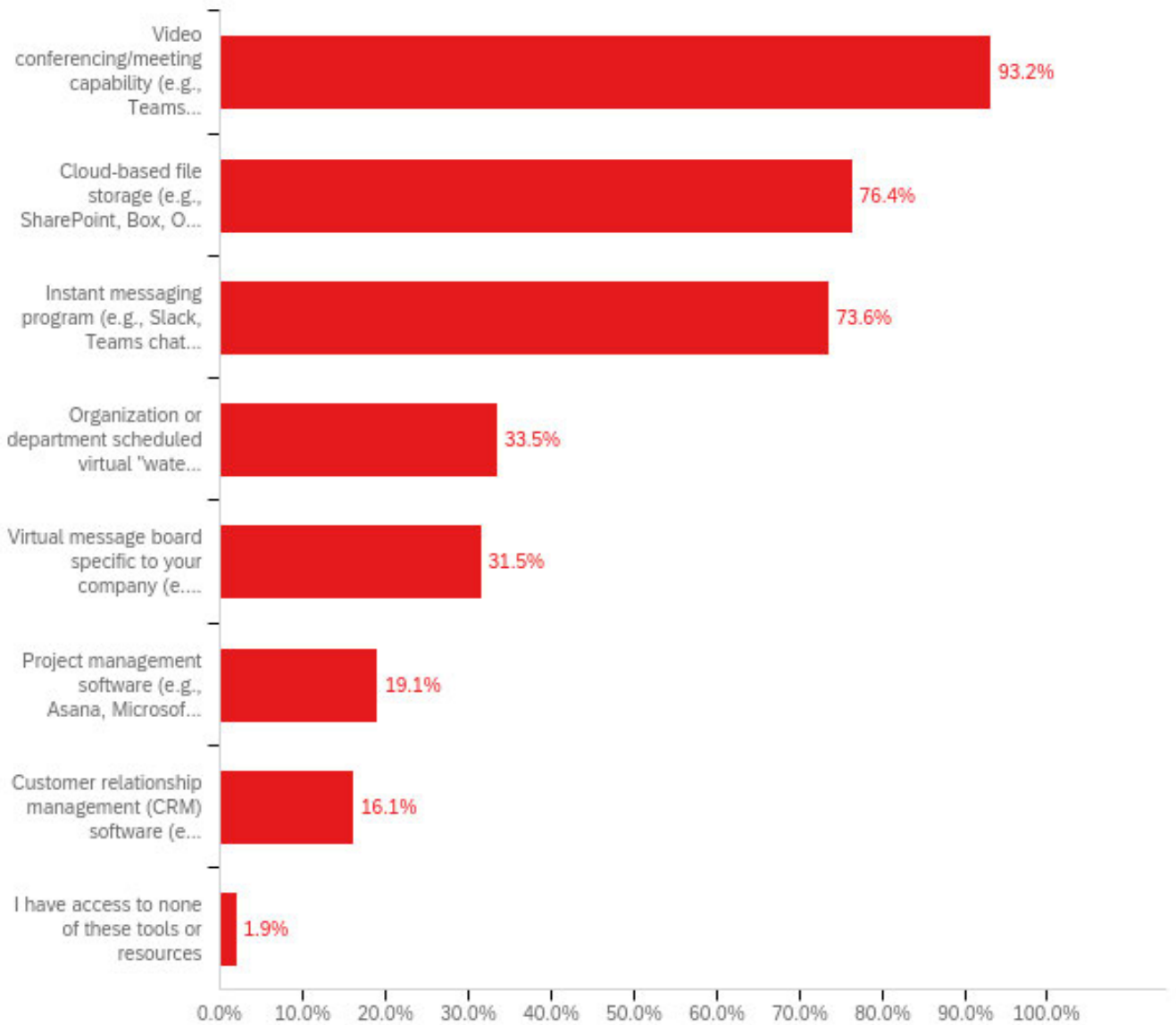
| Benefit | Percentage |
|---|---|
| I'm saving money by not commuting to work | 72.7% |
| Not commuting to work is decreasing my stress level | 54.1% |
| I have more time to work on household projects/chores | 53.8% |
| I'm spending more time with family or friends | 51.5% |
| I'm sleeping more | 46.3% |
| I'm more productive | 38.8% |
| I'm exercising more | 37.9% |
| I'm eating healthier | 36.9% |
| I'm better able to concentrate on work tasks | 35.4% |
| I'm getting to know my neighbors better | 13.6% |
| Other, please specify | 4.8% |
| I have experienced none of these | 2.0% |

| Have you experienced any of the following positive benefits working from home since the COVID-19 outbreak? Select all that apply. - Selected Choice | Percentage | Count |
|---|---|---|
| I'm saving money by not commuting to work | 72.7% | 1771 |
| Not commuting to work is decreasing my stress level | 54.1% | 1317 |
| I have more time to work on household projects/chores | 53.8% | 1310 |
| I'm spending more time with family or friends | 51.5% | 1255 |
| I'm sleeping more | 46.3% | 1127 |
| I'm more productive | 38.8% | 945 |
| I'm exercising more | 37.9% | 923 |
| I'm eating healthier | 36.9% | 899 |
| I'm better able to concentrate on work tasks | 35.4% | 863 |
| I'm getting to know my neighbors better | 13.6% | 331 |
| Other, please specify | 4.8% | 118 |
| I have experienced none of these | 2.0% | 48 |
| Total | 100% | 2436 |

**Top "Other" Responses**

- There is now a plethora of virtual wellness resources available for free – workouts, group counseling, church services, weight loss programs, etc.

- Opportunity to spend quality time with children and support their schoolwork.

- Environmental benefits of people not having to drive to work.

- Easier access to coworkers due to not having to schedule time for an in-person meeting.
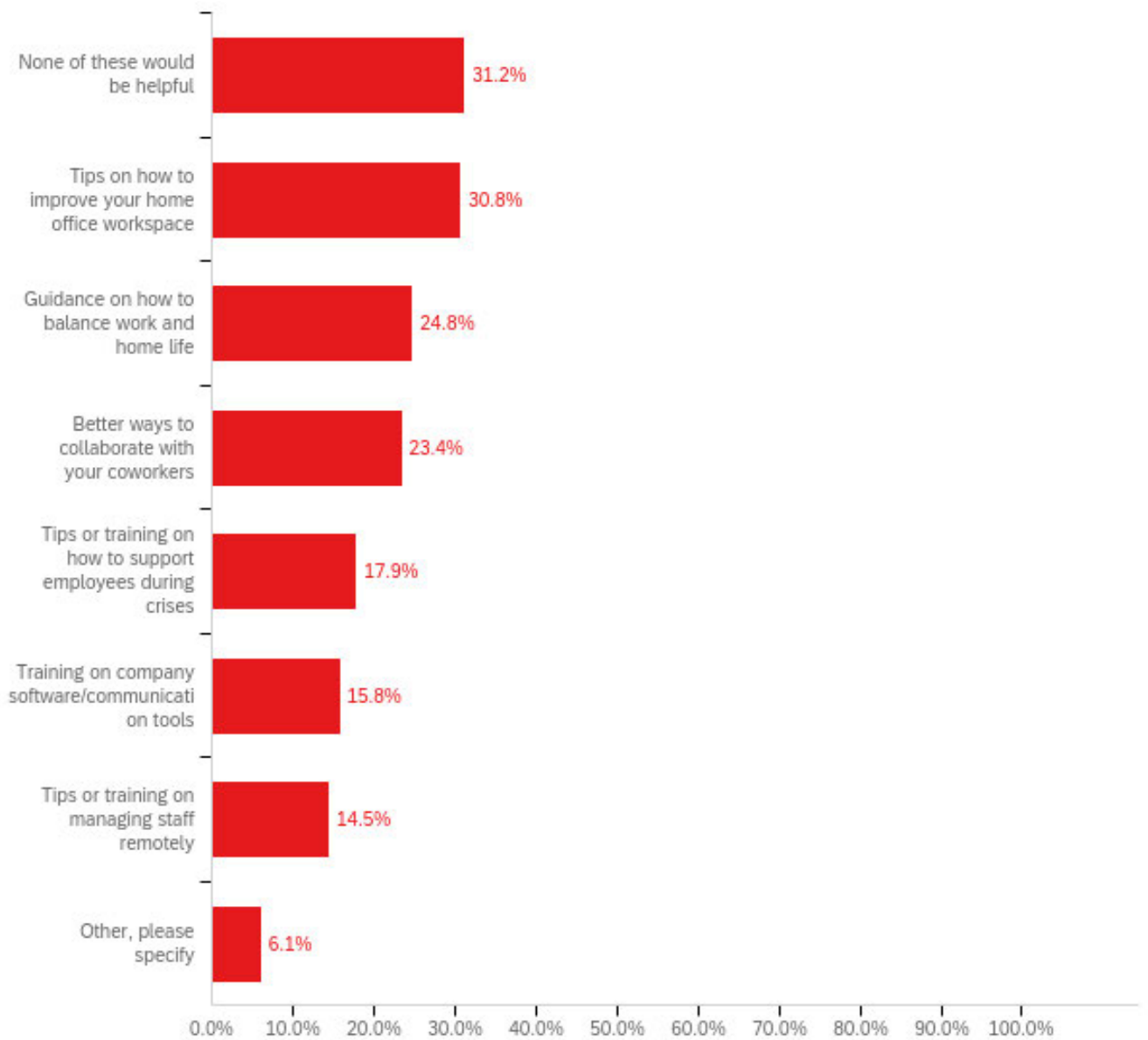
- Better food, better coffee, better access to work outside.

**Q8 - Do you have access to the following tools or resources when working from home? Select all that apply.**



| Tool or Resource | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Video conferencing/meeting capability (e.g., Teams… | 93.2% |
| Cloud-based file storage (e.g., SharePoint, Box, O… | 76.4% |
| Instant messaging program (e.g., Slack, Teams chat… | 73.6% |
| Organization or department scheduled virtual "wate… | 33.5% |
| Virtual message board specific to your company (e.… | 31.5% |
| Project management software (e.g., Asana, Microsof… | 19.1% |
| Customer relationship management (CRM) software (e… | 16.1% |
| I have access to none of these tools or resources | 1.9% |

| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| Video conferencing/meeting capability (e.g., Teams, Skype, Zoom, GoToMeeting) | 93.2% | 2264 |
| Cloud-based file storage (e.g., SharePoint, Box, OneDrive, Dropbox, Google Drive) | 76.4% | 1856 |
| Instant messaging program (e.g., Slack, Teams chat, Skype chat, Google Hangouts) | 73.6% | 1787 |
| Organization or department scheduled virtual "water cooler" time or other social time | 33.5% | 813 |
| Virtual message board specific to your company (e.g., Yammer, Slack, Chanty) | 31.5% | 766 |
| Project management software (e.g., Asana, Microsoft Planner, Wrike, Monday) | 19.1% | 463 |
| Customer relationship management (CRM) software (e.g., Salesforce, HubSpot, Zoho) | 16.1% | 392 |
| I have access to none of these tools or resources | 1.9% | 47 |
| Total | 100% | 2428 |

**Q9 - Would any of the following make it easier for you to work from home? Select all that apply.**



| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| None of these would be helpful | 31.2% |
| Tips on how to improve your home office workspace | 30.8% |
| Guidance on how to balance work and home life | 24.8% |
| Better ways to collaborate with your coworkers | 23.4% |
| Tips or training on how to support employees during crises | 17.9% |
| Training on company software/communication tools | 15.8% |
| Tips or training on managing staff remotely | 14.5% |
| Other, please specify | 6.1% |

| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| None of these would be helpful | 31.2% | 743 |
| Tips on how to improve your home office workspace | 30.8% | 732 |
| Guidance on how to balance work and home life | 24.8% | 590 |
| Better ways to collaborate with your coworkers | 23.4% | 557 |
| Tips or training on how to support employees during crises | 17.9% | 425 |
| Training on company software/communication tools | 15.8% | 375 |
| Tips or training on managing staff remotely | 14.5% | 344 |
| Other, please specify | 6.1% | 144 |
| Total | 100% | 2380 |

**Top "Other" Responses**

- Need a way to better identify on-duty/off-duty times – both to oneself and to colleagues and supervisors.

- Employer support in purchasing equipment like an ergonomic desk, chair, monitor, etc.

- Find new fun ways to socialize with coworkers – especially important for extroverts.

- Whiteboarding tool

**Q10 - In what format(s) would you most like to receive work from home resources? Select all that apply.**
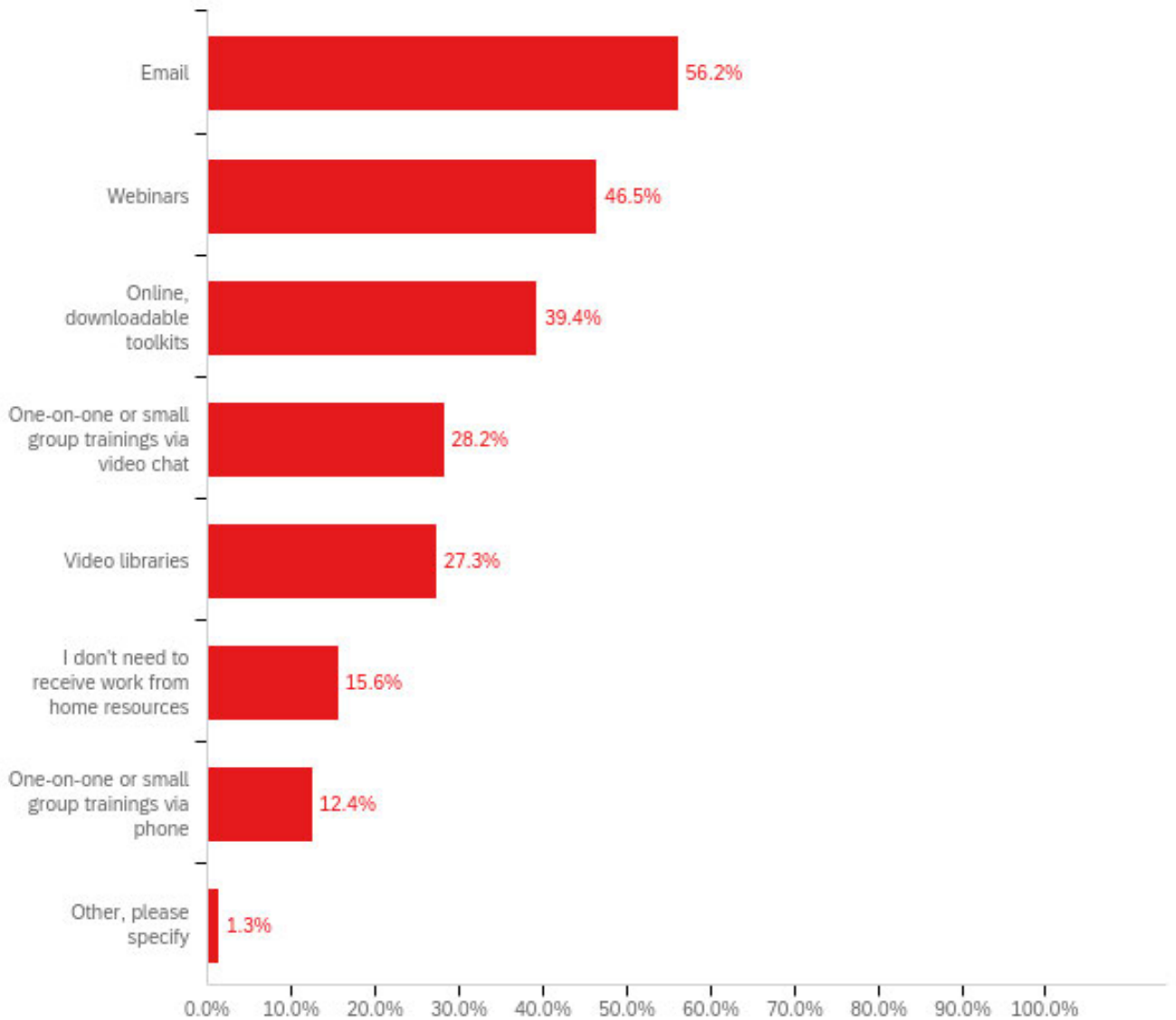
| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| Email | 56.2% | 1351 |
| Webinars | 46.5% | 1119 |
| Online, downloadable toolkits | 39.4% | 946 |
| One-on-one or small group trainings via video chat | 28.2% | 678 |
| Video libraries | 27.3% | 656 |
| I don't need to receive work from home resources | 15.6% | 374 |
| One-on-one or small group trainings via phone | 12.4% | 299 |
| Other, please specify | 1.3% | 32 |
| Total | 100% | 2404 |

**Top "Other" Responses**

Would appreciate format that allows direct feedback and the ability to ask questions

- Short on-demand videos

- Training should not require a substantial time investment

- Format that is easy to share and forward

**Q11 - Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, how often did you work from home?**

3.5%
3.9%

24.1%

44.2%

13.7%

10.6%

■ Never　■ Once a month　■ A few times per month　■ 1-2 days per week　■ 3-4 days per week
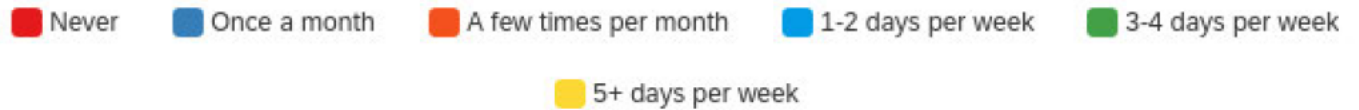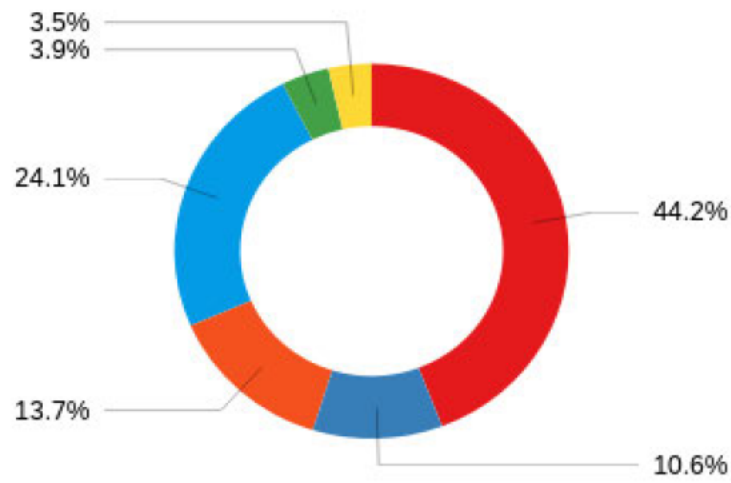
■ 5+ days per week

| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| Never | 44.2% | 1063 |
| Once a month | 10.6% | 256 |
| 1-2 days per week | 24.1% | 579 |
| 3-4 days per week | 3.9% | 94 |
| 5+ days per week | 3.5% | 85 |
| A few times per month | 13.7% | 329 |
| Total | 100% | 2406 |

**Q12 - Given the choice, how frequently would you choose to work from home after business returns to normal?**
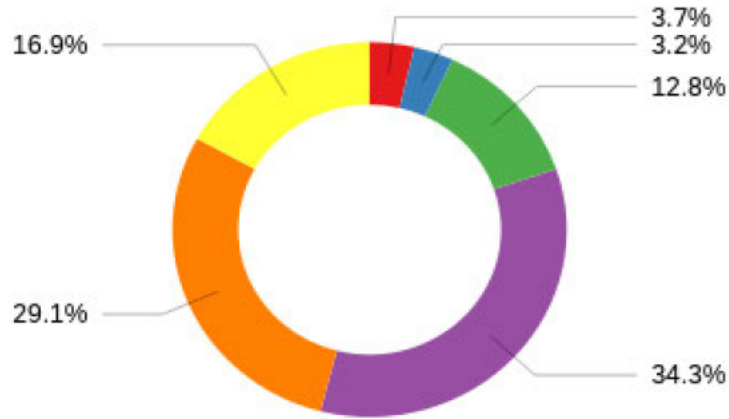


| Answer | % | Count |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Never | 3.7% | 88 |
| Once a month | 3.2% | 78 |
| A few times per month | 12.8% | 309 |
| 1-2 days per week | 34.3% | 824 |
| 3-4 days per week | 29.1% | 699 |
| 5+ days per week | 16.9% | 407 |
| Total | 100% | 2405 |

**Q13 - How many employees work at your organization? If you have multiple locations, provide an estimate for your entire organization across all locations.** *Note: This question was added at a later time and was only included in the following surveys: GCO, Clifton, Buckhead, and Downtown Connects.*
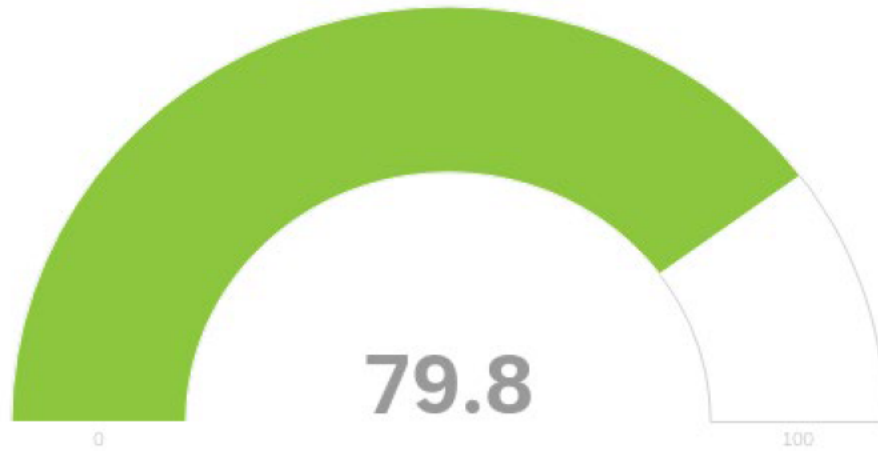


Legend:
- Fewer than 10
- 10 to 49
- 50 to 249
- 250 to 499
- 500 to 999
- 1,000 to 4,999
- 5,000 to 9,999
- 10,000 or more

Values: 2.7%, 7.6%, 12.4%, 8.4%, 11.7%, 13.4%, 10.9%, 32.8%
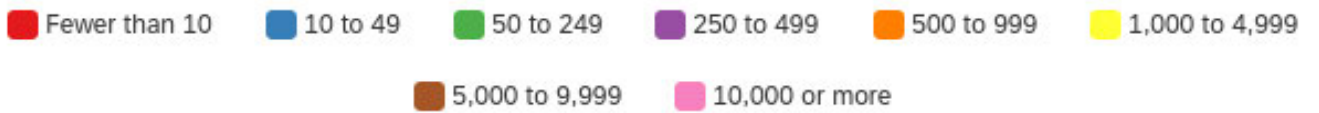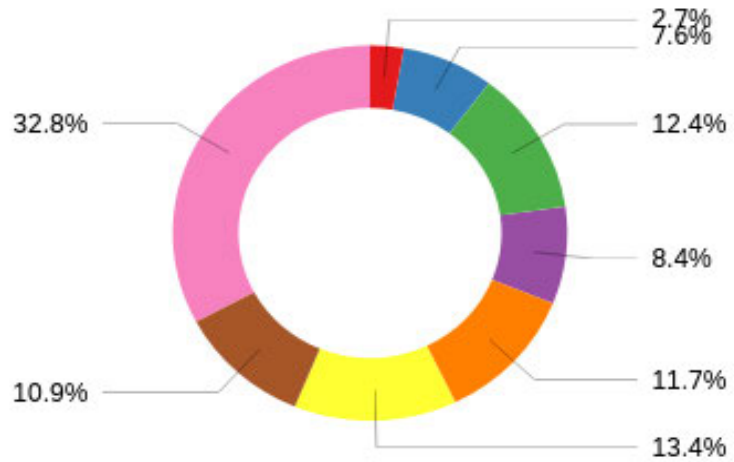
| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| Fewer than 10 | 2.7% | 54 |
| 10 to 49 | 7.6% | 149 |
| 50 to 249 | 12.4% | 244 |
| 250 to 499 | 8.4% | 165 |
| 500 to 999 | 11.7% | 231 |
| 1,000 to 4,999 | 13.4% | 263 |
| 5,000 to 9,999 | 10.9% | 215 |
| 10,000 or more | 32.8% | 646 |
| Total | 100% | 1967 |

**The following questions were asked to Executives and Managers only (Q14 – Q18):**

**Q14 - What percentage of your organization's staff do you estimate is working from home currently? If your organization has multiple locations, please report for the location where you are assigned to work. Enter 0 to 100.**
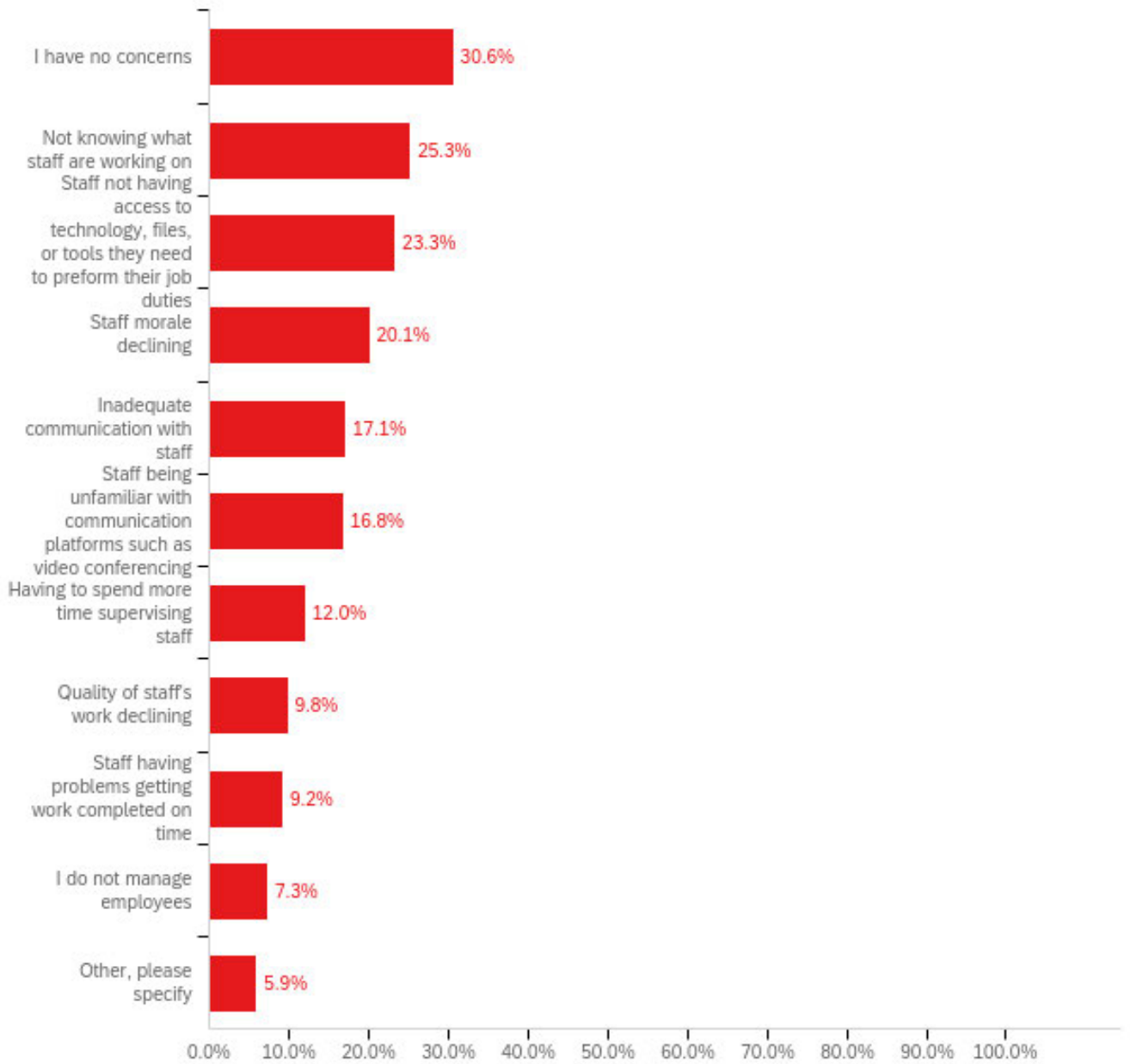
Mean



79.8

| Field | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std Deviation | Variance | Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| What percentage of your organization's staff do you estimate is working from home currently? If your organization has multiple locations, please report for the location where you are assigned to work. Enter 0 to 100. | 1.0 | 100.0 | 79.8 | 26.9 | 722.6 | 576 |

**Q15 - Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, did you supervise employees who worked from home?**
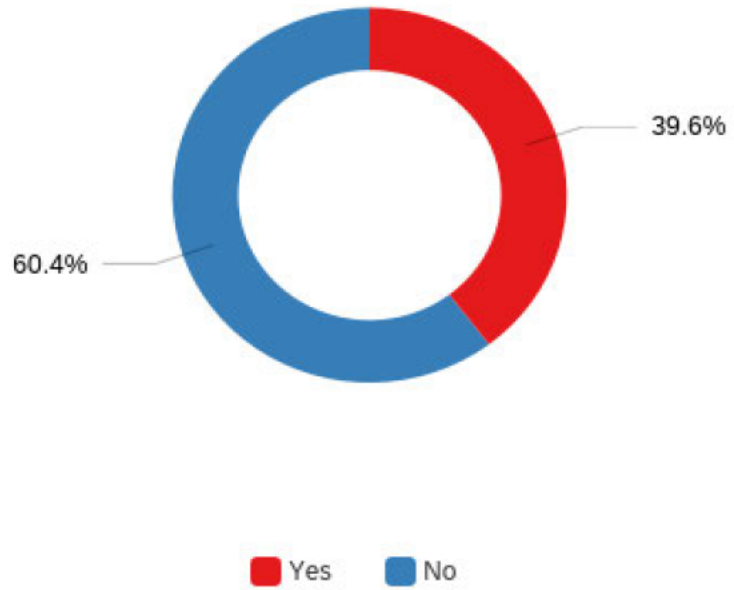


| Answer | % | Count |
|--------|------|-------|
| Yes | 39.6% | 268 |
| No | 60.4% | 408 |
| Total | 100% | 676 |

**Q16 - Thinking about your experience managing employees remotely since the COVID-19 outbreak, do you have any of the following concerns? Select all that apply.**



| Concern | Percentage |
|---|---|
| I have no concerns | 30.6% |
| Not knowing what staff are working on | 25.3% |
| Staff not having access to technology, files, or tools they need to preform their job duties | 23.3% |
| Staff morale declining | 20.1% |
| Inadequate communication with staff | 17.1% |
| Staff being unfamiliar with communication platforms such as video conferencing | 16.8% |
| Having to spend more time supervising staff | 12.0% |
| Quality of staff's work declining | 9.8% |
| Staff having problems getting work completed on time | 9.2% |
| I do not manage employees | 7.3% |
| Other, please specify | 5.9% |

| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| I have no concerns | 30.6% | 206 |
| Not knowing what staff are working on | 25.3% | 170 |
| Staff not having access to technology, files, or tools they need to perform their job duties | 23.3% | 157 |
| Staff morale declining | 20.1% | 135 |
| Inadequate communication with staff | 17.1% | 115 |
| Staff being unfamiliar with communication platforms such as video conferencing | 16.8% | 113 |
| Having to spend more time supervising staff | 12.0% | 81 |
| Quality of staff's work declining | 9.8% | 66 |
| Staff having problems getting work completed on time | 9.2% | 62 |
| I do not manage employees | 7.3% | 49 |
| Other, please specify | 5.9% | 40 |
| Total | 100% | 673 |

**Top "Other" Responses**

- Communication is harder if one cannot read facial expressions and body language.

- The organization will likely be less cautious about implementing new technology.

- Concerns about onboardings and integration of new employees.

- Thoughtful implementation of new routines requires significant time investment.

- Especially employees with children struggle and require additional flexibility and resources.

**Q17 - To what degree have work-from-home (telework) policies and resources been responsible for your organization's ability to maintain continued operations?** *Note: This question was added at a later time and was only included in the following surveys: GCO, Clifton, Buckhead, and Downtown Connects.*
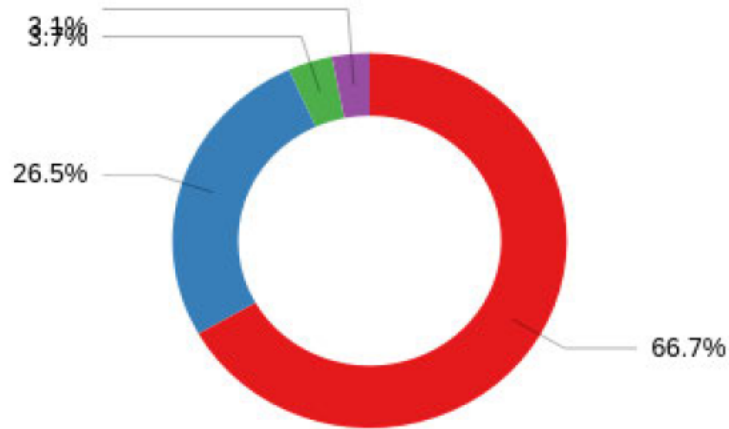


Telework is the main reason for our continued operations

Telework is partially responsible for our continued operations

Telework has no impact on our continued operations    We are not operating or operating only minimally

| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| Telework is the main reason for our continued operations | 66.7% | 347 |
| Telework is partially responsible for our continued operations | 26.5% | 138 |
| Telework has no impact on our continued operations | 3.7% | 19 |
| We are not operating or operating only minimally | 3.1% | 16 |
| Total | 100% | 520 |

**The following question was asked only if organization is not operating or only minimally operating <Executives and Managers only> (Q18):** *Note: This question was added at a later time and was only included in the following surveys: Georgia Commute Options, Clifton, Buckhead, and Downtown Connects.*

**Q18 - Why is your organization not operating or operating only minimally? Select all that apply.**
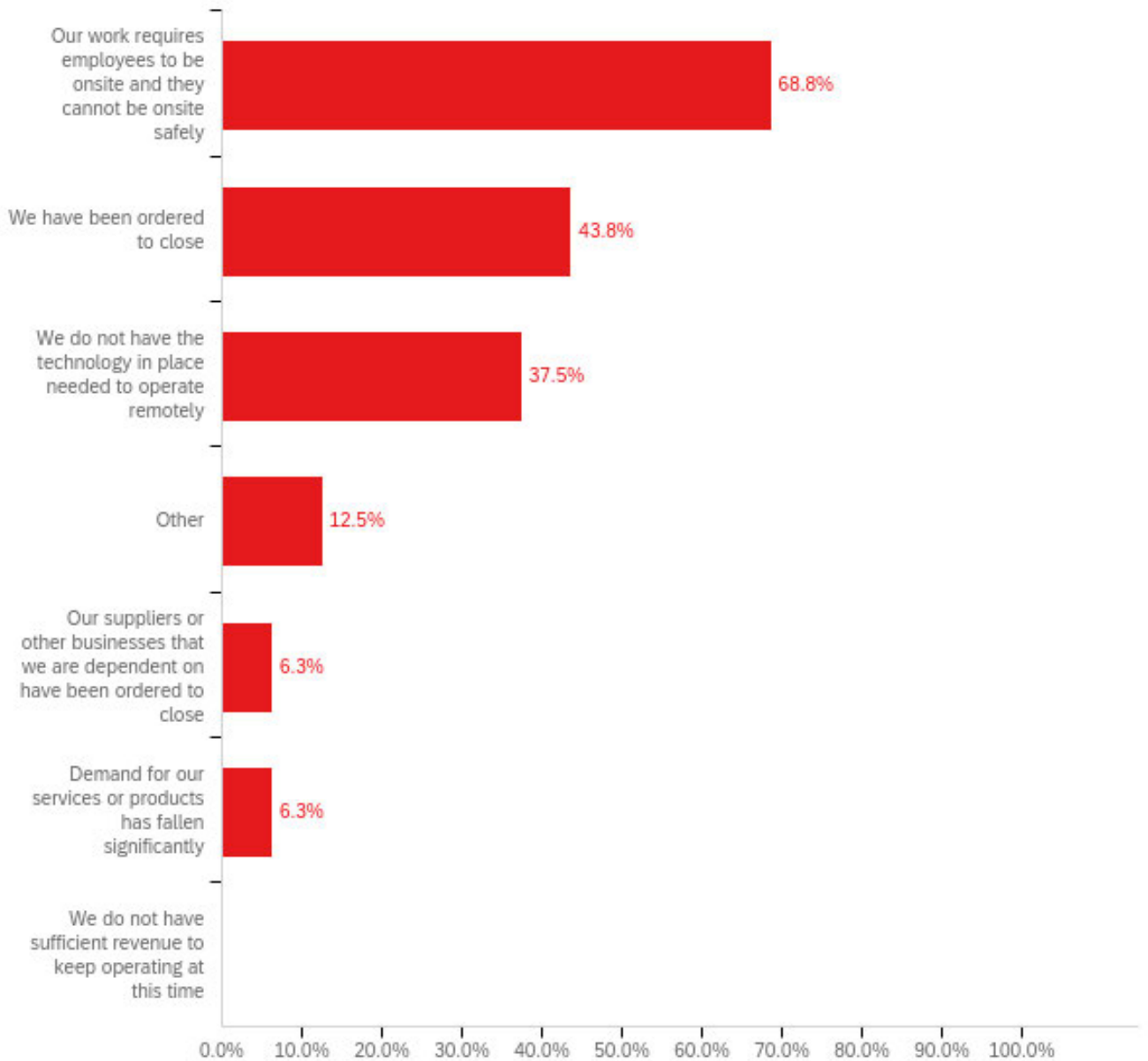
| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| Our work requires employees to be onsite and they cannot be onsite safely | 68.8% | 11 |
| We have been ordered to close | 43.8% | 7 |
| We do not have the technology in place needed to operate remotely | 37.5% | 6 |
| Other | 12.5% | 2 |
| Our suppliers or other businesses that we are dependent on have been ordered to close | 6.3% | 1 |
| Demand for our services or products has fallen significantly | 6.3% | 1 |
| We do not have sufficient revenue to keep operating at this time | 0.0% | 0 |
| Total | 100% | 16 |

**Top "Other" Responses**

- N/A

**The following question was asked to Executives only (Q19):**

**Q19 - Recognizing there are many unknowns, how do you think the COVID-19 outbreak will change how employees at your organization work in the future (compared to before the outbreak)? Select all that apply.** *Note that the last option, 'we will consider increasing the physical size of our workplace' was added later and only provided in the Clifton Corridor and Georgia Commute Options surveys. When Clifton Corridor and Georgia Commute Options are analyzed separately, 2.7% of respondents selected this option.*
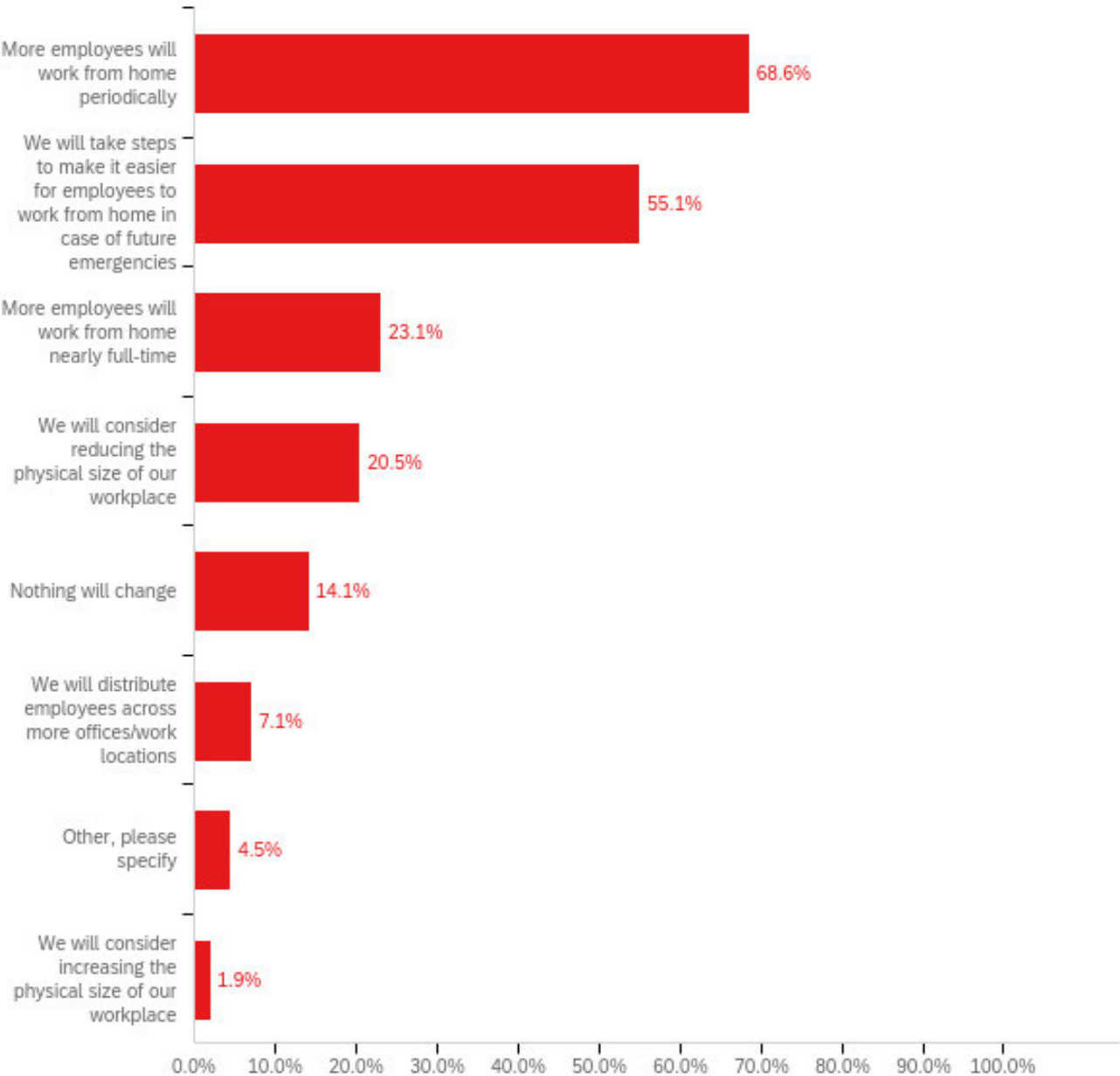
| Answer | % | Count |
|---|---|---|
| More employees will work from home periodically | 68.6% | 107 |
| We will take steps to make it easier for employees to work from home in case of future emergencies | 55.1% | 86 |
| More employees will work from home nearly full-time | 23.1% | 36 |
| We will consider reducing the physical size of our workplace | 20.5% | 32 |
| Nothing will change | 14.1% | 22 |
| We will distribute employees across more offices/work locations | 7.1% | 11 |
| Other, please specify | 4.5% | 7 |
| We will consider increasing the physical size of our workplace | 1.9% | 3 |
| Total | 100% | 156 |

**Top "Other" Responses**

- The public need for oversight of government employees will likely not allow state employees continue to telework.

- The organization will likely be less cautious about implementing new technology.

**Q20 - Is there anything else you would like to share with us such as: challenges or positive experiences you have had working from home and tools or tips you would recommend to other people working from home?**

*The following responses represent a curated selection of responses to show the breadth of answers:*

*After working from home these past few weeks, I'm realizing that there really are no boundaries. We can pretty much do anything from anywhere. It is more efficient to work from home. Less time is spent traveling, shopping, worrying about being somewhere on time.*

*Be content with the situation and enjoy it while you can. We can all learn from this experience.*

*Being able to work remotely/from home before the pandemic made the transition relatively seamless.*

*Companies need to utilize the technology that is available and allow employees the option to work from home if their position allows this flexibility. It helps moral and going forward, will play a critical role in helping keep the population safe.*

*Encourage staff to share positive affirmations each day in one or two words and let staff vent their fears/frustrations about the crisis in "water cooler" social time.*

*I absolutely love not getting dressed and the stress of getting to work on time. I was surprised at how tense it makes me.*

*I coordinated a virtual retirement party on Teams and created a card for everyone to sign placed in a cloud drive.*

*I get a lot accomplished working from home, but I cannot stop working easily. I don't take enough breaks, and I work long hours. I feel more driven than ever to prove that I am working, to prove that I am a good employee.*

*I have been amazed at how easy the transition to working from work has gone. At work my employees and I were in separate locations. While working from home we are in frequent communication through slack and I am much more aware of their daily work accomplishments.*

*Personally, my lack of commute has allowed me to sleep more, spend more time with my family, exercise more and my chronic back pain has disappeared.*

*I have found that my team is incredibly productive and successful working from home. I can always reach my team either via phone, text or zoom. We are far more agile, productive and creative as a remote work team.*

*I have had numerous opportunities to participate in training activities through online webinars and courses. This has been an excellent time for professional development, and I have increased my knowledge and skills in a number of areas.*

*I know so many colleagues who are juggling multiple life roles. I would love to see more sensitive message out in the world about showing some grace to those in this situation. We are NOT currently teleworking. As is circulating now - we are working from home during a pandemic. There is a lifetime of difference between the two concepts. A distinction needs to be made and sensitivity training for administrators and managers should be had. Also, I would love to see more information about how those of us working from home can support those who still have to go into places of work. Healthcare workers, yes, but custodial staff, transportation workers, utility workers, farmers and grocery store attendants, etc.*

*I think one challenge is the lack of the "open door policy" and being able to run down to my boss's office to show her something and get a response. Phone and email just don't work the same.*

*I think the most positive thing that might come out of this whole experience as it pertains to work is that many of us are actually more productive when working from home and deserve the trust of management.*

*I wish I had enough time to write an essay about how WFH has made our lives better at the OUA. If you are able to contact Angela Holman angela.holmon@emory.edu to inquire about copies of our new weekly newsletter called #OnTheBrightSide. It's a collection of all the positive things our staff contributes every week to our "good feeling" Slack feed while we are all working remotely. It's been an uplifting project for all of us :)*

*It's 2020; it shouldn't have taken a pandemic for these options to be available to most people whose labor is intellectual.*

*My biggest challenge is that I don't have space in my little condo for me and my husband to comfortably work from home when we both have phone calls. We are constantly competing for the one room where we can shut the door. If that was fixed, I think it would work much better!*

*My hardest challenge has been caring for my 15-month-old daughter alone while my husband is still required to go into work. I have been trying to work from home the best I can but have been having to learn that during this time I just will not be as productive and that is okay. It will have to be okay.*

*Overall, I have overall less work stress. I think that being able to incorporate even 1 work at home day a week could be very beneficial for my work/life balance*

*Positive experience is micro-manager can't stand over you so creates less stress. Tip - engage with colleagues daily to keep your sanity.*

*Since working from home, my husband and I are spending more time together which has made our relationship much stronger vs being stuck in traffic for 50min to an hour from work and coming home frustrated from traffic, so we are in a happier place these past few months of working from home.*

*The majority of our staff have transitioned to working from home with ease, but our leadership continue to work from the office (while "practicing" social distancing). Because they are not challenging themselves to adapt to teleworking, I fear we will not reach out goal of challenging leadership to approve a non-pandemic telework policy.*

*The workload needs to be adjusted because some faculty still expects quick turnaround and that isn't possible being home with family and children*

*I struggle with disconnecting from work while at home.*

*Until someone invents a robot that can mind my children, I do not want any more "tips" on how to manage working while also homeschooling them. It's patronizing and irritating.*

*Being an African American, I do not feel the stress of "office politics"; the feeling of being treated differently because you are of another race. I no longer have to deal with the stress of colleagues not saying "good morning" to you. Working from home has balanced me out a lot.*

*Working from home comes with a kind of guilt because you feel like you cannot take a break or lunch because someone may think you are not working or playing hooky. Have a set break or lunch time is needed.*

*Working from home has been a great experience. Although I miss riding the bus as well. I had come to know a lot of the riders. The bus drivers were always courteous and almost always on time. Buses were comfortable and clean. Thank you for your services as well!*

*Working from home is great. I hate commuting (waste of time). And this is so much better for the environment. I am eating healthy, working out more and feel less stress. provided.*