

READY OR NOT THE FUTURE OF WORK IS HERE

The COVID-19 outbreak is speeding up the evolution of work and changing multiple industries. A new study by The National Research Group uncovers what different generations want from our new remote work reality, identifying white space for new solutions as we rethink everything from conferences to collaboration.



"And just like that...the future of work is here, drawing every country, industry and age group into a huge experiment. Already, our research reveals big divides in terms of what different demographics want from our remote work reality. **It's up to us to design better experiences and solutions, fast, that bring us closer together, now that we're farther apart.**"

- Jon Penn, CEO of National Research Group

HOW ARE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS ADAPTING TO OUR NEW REMOTE WORK REALITY, AND HOW CAN WE BETTER PREPARE THE FUTURE WORKFORCE?

Due to the current situation, **51% of workers agree that they would feel safer working from home compared to coming into the office**—and this is particularly pronounced for those who are NOT currently working from home (58%), suggesting a strong call to action for employers to be mindful of these concerns and allow for the freedom to work from home in these unprecedented times.

Z GEN Z AGE 18-24 **M** MILLENNIALS AGE 25-39 **X** GEN X AGE 40-54

PRODUCTIVITY

50% Z (+12% above avg) say they are **less productive when they work from home** compared to coming into the office: a key area for employers to address when shaping the future workforce

51% Z (+5% above avg) say they are **more distracted when they work from home**

They are also the group most challenged by environmental or technical set-up, with **43% (+8% above avg)** saying they **don't have the necessary equipment/resources at home to do their job remotely**

SOCIAL & CULTURAL IMPACT

71% Z (+6% above avg) & **67% M** (+2% above avg) **Younger generations are more concerned about the cultural impact of COVID-19 on how we communicate with one another.**

56% Z (+5% above avg) are **compelled to come into the office because they enjoy being social with their coworkers**. They also find it far easier to communicate and share ideas in person (+7% above avg).

Gen Zers are most concerned about social distancing, with **46% (+4% above avg)** believing **more people working from home would make our society more isolated**

ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

3 IN 4 M X Generations who lived through our previous recessions are **most concerned about the financial impact of COVID-19**

52% M (+2% above avg) & **60% X** (+2% above avg) say they would **save money** if they worked from home because they wouldn't have to commute.

52% X (+8% above avg) say **I like the idea of working from home because it's better for the environment**

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

52% X (+7% above avg) say it's **more convenient to work from home rather than work from an office**

55% X (+10% above avg) say they **would enjoy the freedom of being able to work anywhere**

49% X (+5% above avg) say they **don't mind staying inside their homes for long periods of time**

TOP 3 PAIN POINTS

consistent across generations

- 1** Easily **distracted** while working at home
- 2** **Loneliness** from missed social interaction
- 3** Wish I had **access** to the devices I have at work

MOST POLARIZING PAIN POINTS

with the future workforce struggling most

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY

1 Irritation from **too much screen time**

Z GEN Z 23% — vs — **X** GEN X 11%

Ahead of:

- Bad Wi-Fi at home/dropped calls
- Poor audio quality during calls
- Poor video quality during calls

PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY

2 Bad work-life balance while working at home

Z GEN Z 21% — vs — **X** GEN X 15%

Ahead of:

- Difficult to convey my thoughts over email/chat
- Feel less engaged with who I'm speaking with
- Easily distracted while working at home

ENVIRONMENTAL SET-UP

3 Can't find a quiet place to take calls

Z GEN Z 18% — vs — **X** GEN X 10%

Ahead of:

- Don't have a good space to work at home

WHAT ARE THE KEY AREAS IMPACTED BY COVID-19, AND WHAT DO PROFESSIONALS WANT FROM FUTURE SOLUTIONS?

THE ECONOMY IS A FRONT OF MIND CONCERN ACROSS AUDIENCES

Nearly **3 in 4 (74%)** professionals believe **COVID-19 will impact financial markets**. This is led by **services/hospitality industries at 77%**, who are feeling the biggest hit due to current legislation/closures.

AT A FOUNDATIONAL LEVEL, WE NEED BETTER COMMUNICATION

More than **3 in 4 (76%)** professionals would find the following solutions useful:

Shared documents for seamless real-time updates

DRIVEN BY: GEN M 83%, GEN X 80%, CIVIC SERVICES 80%

Reliable communication with multiple colleagues

DRIVEN BY: GEN M 79%, GEN X 76%, TRADES 78%, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES 77%

Healthcare

Education

Home Services & Construction

Manufacturing & Warehousing

Transportation

Consulting

Business Services

Finance & Banking

NEXT-GEN VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS BEAR STRONG FUTURE POTENTIAL

~7 IN 10 professionals would find the following next-gen solutions useful:

- 1** Hands-free screens on-the-go (69%)
work from anywhere from multiple screens, enabling real-time collaboration; watch anything, anywhere at the size you want
- 2** Virtual events (67%)
participate in industry forums through remote conferences/forums, meeting new people, or entertaining clients digitally with engaging alternatives to in-person meet-ups
- 3** Document/record memories (66%)
capture photos/videos of what you're experiencing, and share with friends/collaborators to see from your perspective in VR at any given moment
- 4** Interactive learning / skill development (65%)
touch, get hands-on and interact with 3D subject matter spatially, learn by "doing" rather than "seeing" with augmented reality tutorials
- 5** Remove language barriers (64%)
instant translation allows you to communicate with anyone, anywhere for immediate understanding

Z Gen Z values more **meaningful collaboration solutions** and is excited about the potential AR/VR presents.

40% Z identify as users of both AR & VR. The technology has a big base...they're just waiting for the experiences.

All industries are gearing up for new **virtual meeting spaces**, that allow for a sense of genuine connection and participation.

69% of individuals working in professional services are **seeking out these solutions**. The most cutting-edge brands will anticipate these changing behaviors, pioneering new ways to engage customers and more effectively relate to one another in remote settings.

There is an opportunity to leverage demand for interactive learning for resonant experiences that **boost personal productivity**.

Parents, as well as education and health professionals, are the **most distracted** while working at home of all demographics. E-learning presents a sizable opportunity for all ages and industries: from families adjusting to school closures, to medical professionals continuing to practice important procedures from remote locations.

HOW DO WE QUICKLY ADAPT TO THE "FUTURE OF WORK" ARRIVING TOO EARLY?

"Today, we have all been thrust headlong into the future of work—remote collaboration and distance learning, like it or not. As an industry, we've built tools and infrastructure that are working remarkably well given the circumstances, but they cannot be modified quickly enough to make remote work feel natural just yet. The tools and infrastructure we're relying on are doing their job admirably, but they were never designed for this massively disruptive and chaotic situation happening **all at once**. Given that reality, **it is us who need to change quickly, not the tools we use.**"

- M. Pell, Author & Envisioneer, Director of The Microsoft Garage - NYC