

PORTLAND BUSINESS JOURNAL



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a hot stock to a new shot at success.
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PETE DANKO | 4-7

MUST READS



There's a new maestro in town

David Danzmayr (above) has a big baton to fill as he takes over Carlos Kalmar's role with the Oregon Symphony. Danzmayr's new gig begins in July. **JONATHAN BACH, 12**

Thinking small (business)

President Joe Biden's latest attempts to nurture entrepreneurs gets a hearing in D.C. His mission: to help Black, Latino and Asian-American communities. **MATTHEW KISH, 14**

Adjustments, giving at Intel

In an eventful month, Intel has both pledged millions to a historically Black college and worked to resolve age discrimination claims. **MALIA SPENCER, 10**



REMOTE WORK IN A NEW WORLD

24-25



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**PORTLAND
BUSINESS JOURNAL**

February 26, 2021
Vol. 37, No. 51, \$2

851 S.W. Sixth Ave.
Suite 500
Portland, Ore. 97204





HOW OREGON WORKS

REMOTE WORKFORCE

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LEADING THE ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY

REMOTE CONTROL

The events of 2020 put more than a few wrinkles in the business plans of companies and organizations around the planet.

One of the biggest sea changes was the sudden plunge into working from home that nearly every American workplace where such a move was possible embarked upon in March.

Therefore, in the Business Journal's annual survey of Portland metro-area management consulting firms, we asked firms for their perspective on the costs and benefits of remote work and how they have advised clients to locate their workers going forward.

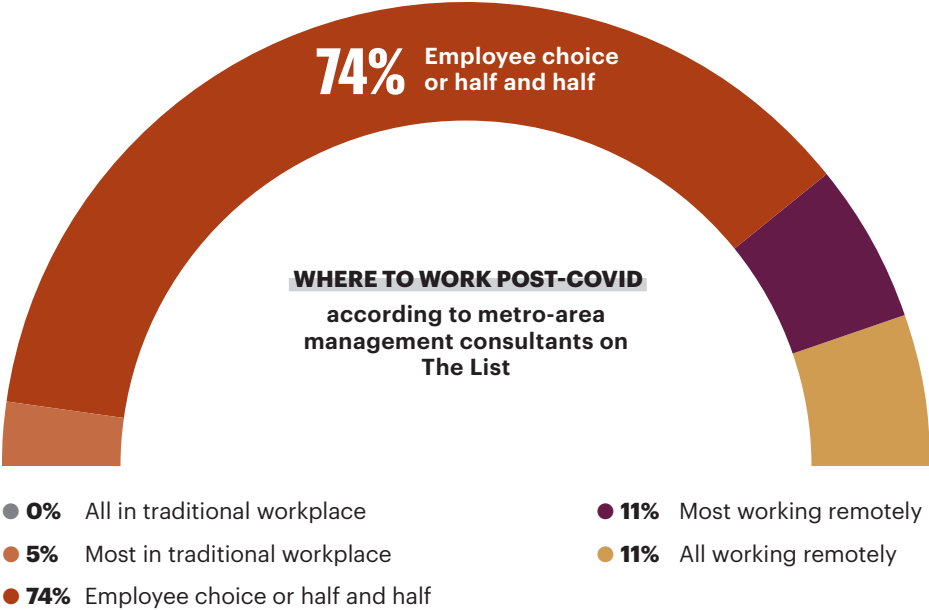
With the exception of industries and occupations that require in-person labor, none advised keeping all workers

in a traditional workplace and only 5% thought it best to keep most employees there. By contrast, 22% pushed for most or all workers to work remote permanently.

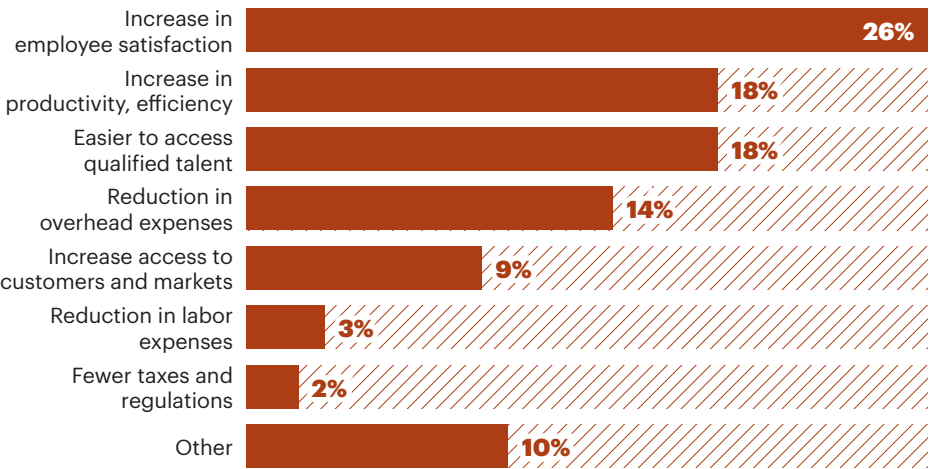
The biggest share, though, said a mix of remote and traditional workplace was most ideal, allowing employees some choice in the matter.

"The question is, 'What does each employee need to be fully engaged and committed, in other words to perform at their best?'" said Andy Robbins, principal at Oyster in Portland. "This is different for every person, and involves as much about how they are managed, as it does their location."

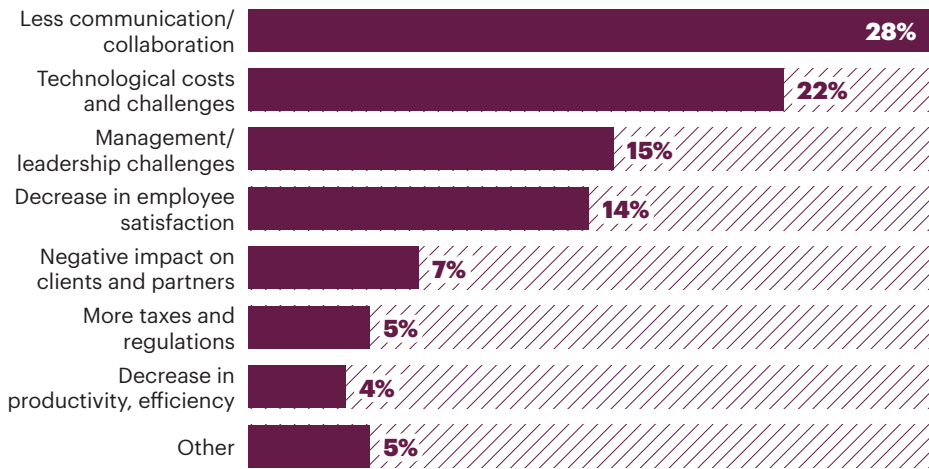
- Brandon Sawyer



▲ BIGGEST ADVANTAGES TO A REMOTE WORKFORCE



▼ BIGGEST DISADVANTAGES TO A REMOTE WORKFORCE



SOURCE: PORTLAND BUSINESS JOURNAL SURVEY OF LOCAL MANAGEMENT CONSULTING FIRMS

Considerations for Managing the Remote Workforce

The pandemic-induced change from in-person meetings and water-cooler chats to Zoom calls ad nauseum requires employers to shift their thinking about how to maintain employee morale and ensure legal compliance.

Faced with these unusual times, employers should reach out to remote employees with empathy and creativity. Whether they are assisting young children with home schooling, managing fears of COVID-19, or navigating political and racial issues – not to mention facing disrupted internet connectivity or power outages – remote workers must confront unique stresses and distractions.

Employers can help by:

- Reminding employees of available resources, such as those provided by an Employee Assistance Program;
- Seeking out new and creative ways to build personal connections with employees and maintain company culture;
- Remembering the importance of training and mentorship, especially in the remote environment; and
- Creating channels for open and frequent communication with employees in order to cultivate strong relationships and avoid the misunderstandings that are common when people rely exclusively on email communication.

Remote work also offers new twists on familiar legal issues:

- **Wage and Hour Compliance.** Employers should ensure that non-exempt employees track their hours – including “after-hours” emails by employees who now have 24/7 access to their “workplace” – and remind them to take meal and rest breaks.
- **“Workplace” Accommodations.** The same disability accommodation laws that apply in the workplace apply to remote work. If an employer provides computer equipment for home use, for example, it may need to provide an ergonomic keyboard, larger monitor, or other specialized equipment to enable an employee with disabilities to work from home.
- **Work-Related Injuries.** An injury at home that arises out of and in the course of the employee’s work may be covered by Workers’ Compensation. The employee should receive the same 801 form used to report an injury in the workplace. If the injury is work-related, it may also be reportable to OSHA.
- **Vacation Usage.** Employees are reporting less vacation time because they can more easily flex their hours while working from home and COVID-19-restrictions limit travel. Employers should encourage employees to take time off. Taking time off is important for maintaining a healthy, energized workforce. In addition, employers who

pay out vacation upon termination may want to avoid the accrual of large vacation balances.

- **State and Local Laws.** Employees working remotely outside an employer’s regular geographic area create state and local law questions, including which jurisdiction’s leave laws and payroll tax regimes apply. While many employers are eager to capitalize on the expanded talent pool available with a remote workforce, employers should be mindful of the legal complications that accompany a multi-state workforce.

Learn more about managing remote employees, fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce, navigating personal opinions in the workplace, and understanding leave laws at **Stoel Rives’ 19th Annual Labor and Employment Law Conference, held virtually on March 3 and 4.**

For more information, go to [Stoel.com](#).

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