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## The Future Is Here: The Legal Profession Can Succeed Working Remotely

Now is the time to figure out if remote working is for you and your organization. It can be a positive distinguishing factor for companies that embrace it going forward.

By **Andrea Bricca** | May 27, 2020



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For years now, the push for organizations to implement regular work-from-home policies and practices has been a major area of debate. While the legal profession is typically slow to change, when forced into the change, it has become clear that legal work can be done effectively and efficiently remotely. Take away the distractions of children and spouses at home, along with the overall vibe of the current crisis, and work from home is rapidly becoming the chosen way of doing business for many industries, including the law. Furthermore, in order to attract top legal talent going forward, remote work options will need to be among the benefits offered by law firms and legal departments.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations had basic work-from-home policies in place ranging from one scheduled day a week (sometimes only allowed after a year of employment) to allowing time at home on an as-needed basis for necessary appointments or other personal emergencies. However, in-house legal teams and law firms are now realizing they may not need as much traditional face time with their teams and discovering that remote work may lead to happier, harder working lawyers.

In-house lawyers are telling me they are busier than usual and are effectively working from home. One general counsel indicated that, while he offered his team a once-a-week option to work from home previously, he would probably expand that going forward, as he's received positive feedback from his team and found they've been just as efficient while at home. In David Morley's article, "COVID Crystal Ball (<https://www.legalbusiness.co.uk/blogs/covid-crystal-ball-aos-former-chief-sets-out-the-post-lockdown-dynamic-awaiting-the-legal-elite/>)," he writes that flexible work has "overnight gone from tolerated to mainstream. A winning strategy will embrace that change and figure out how to prosper from it."

Legal leaders are seeing that their attorneys can be productive at home without the distractions of neighboring conversations and an often lengthy commute. They are able to focus on the tasks in front of them without being pulled away unexpectedly. They are also able to flex their hours to take care of personal needs, working into the evening or starting earlier in the day to get work-related tasks taken care of before tending to themselves.

The opportunity also exists for cost-saving measures to be taken, specifically for office space to be downsized. While office space will always be necessary for meetings and face time, it won't endure on the same scale to which we've grown accustomed.

Strong remote work policies will also be attractive to new talent. According to Major, Lindsey & Africa's Gen-Z: Shaping Tomorrow's Law Firm Culture (<https://www.mlaglobal.com/en/knowledge-library/research/gen-z-shaping-tomorrows-law-firm-culture>) survey report, 74% of respondents (current and graduating law students) expect that they will be able to work remotely occasionally. Gen-Z are digital natives, so they are technologically savvy enough to navigate virtual meetings, access documents on company servers, and connect with their team from anywhere. Remote work also opens up a more diverse talent pool, especially when recruiting for difficult locations or niche specialties.

As more of Generation Z enters the workforce and millennials are promoted into leadership roles, remote working was already positioned to take a stronger hold; COVID-19 just sped up the implementation. Millennials currently make up the bulk of the workforce and have led the charge to make work from home more prevalent for years. They have long been defined by their strong desire for flexibility—firmly believing they can, and should be able to, accomplish their work from wherever they are—and the present status quo is proving they are right for the most part.

Now is the time to figure out if remote working is for you and your organization. It can be a positive distinguishing factor for companies that embrace it going forward.

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