

Time to reassess ways of working

 By [Francois de Wet](#)

6 Jan 2022

The working environment has drastically changed over the past two years, with short-term changes forced by the Covid-19 pandemic becoming permanent. With a skills shortage in South Africa and employers competing for the best talent, it's important that these new trends and ways of working are understood in order to attract and retain the best employees.



Francois de Wet, Founder and Director at Warrly

Technology seems to be a golden thread when looking at growing trends in the workforce. However, it can play either a positive or negative role. For instance, even though we have technology at our disposal which allows us to work from home, it is easy to see how some employees will feel disconnected and insecure, while for others it opens up a world of possibilities.

As we head into 2022, it is crucial for employers to keep team morale up after yet another challenging year. According to a recent survey by Microsoft, 41% of employees across various industries were seriously considering resigning or changing professions this year due to concerns about their health and well-being.

Flexible working environment

Following the enforced work-from-home policies during the pandemic, many businesses are requiring employees to return to the office. It is no secret that people want the best of both worlds. Employees want the option to work from home, as well as work from the office when they crave more in-person interaction.

We are in uncharted waters and are all learning as we go along, but a major trend that I have seen emerging is that people want flexible hours and remote working conditions. Employee expectations are changing. According to an online survey conducted by research institute Ipsos, 29% of employees expressed a preference for working from home, while 51% find it more stressful.

The study also indicated about 49% of employees said that they experienced more interruptions at home. Those aged between 30 to 44 said working in an office built trust and made them feel more valued to the business. Whereas, employees between the age of 45 and 55 found working remotely easier. They even noted that they made themselves presentable, despite not going into the office.

The talent landscape has increased

With the increase in remote working, the talent landscape has widened drastically. Employers now have access to talent that they didn't have previously, from across the globe, and they are also attracting a more diverse group of applicants.

Technology allows employers to now increase their search pool when they are recruiting. They no longer have to only look for people who live geographically near the workplace, and can use tools like video conferencing and other software to run teams virtually. It means that they can now access a global talent pool, and take advantage of things like different time zones to deliver against tighter deadlines effectively.

High productivity is making for an exhausted workforce

There are also negative side effects that result from the increased use of technology. With the growth of online meetings and working remotely, employees feel the pressure to keep up. Many work after hours, finding it difficult to separate work life from their personal time.

Many people have suffered from a digital overload over the past two years. More time is spent in virtual meetings and collaborating online than in person and employees don't have the downtime that they used to. This has a serious impact on health and well-being, so employers need to ensure they are managing this carefully so their teams don't burn out.

With so much change happening so quickly, employees are re-evaluating their priorities and focusing on what is important to them. Ultimately, if employers embrace these trends and learning it will impact their ability to attain and recruit new talent for a better 2022.

ABOUT FRANCOIS DE WET

Francois, Founder and Director at Wamly is a registered Industrial Psychologist with a passion to provide people with insightful information about their talents. By combining his qualifications and experience as a Business Psychologist, together with his knowledge and understanding of a variety of commercial and industrial environments, he has successfully managed large scale business transformation projects, enabling organisational effectiveness.

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