

# HOW WORKPLACES WILL SHAPE THE FUTURE OF WORK



Many organisations have found themselves operating entirely or partially on a remote basis over the last year, and there are decisions to be made on the extent to which this will remain the case as employees return to the physical workplace, writes Anthony Hickey, Organisational Culture Analyst with Great Place to Work Ireland.

**W**here the future of work is concerned, there is a tendency to speak as though we have already arrived at our destination, or that we are mere passengers on the journey, with little influence over our trajectory. Neither are true, both assumptions disempower organisations and the individuals who comprise them.

The position we find ourselves in as we begin to emerge from the shadow cast by the pandemic presents a rare and exciting opportunity. It is possible now, to be agents of change and exert influence that will guide how we work for years to come.

It is the organisations at the forefront of their industries, those who push the boundaries of organisational culture

**Amongst Ireland's Best Workplaces, an average of 75% of employees agree that:**

Management involves people in decisions that affect their jobs or work environment.

**Amongst Ireland's Best Workplaces, an average of 81% of employees agree that:**

Management genuinely seeks and responds to suggestions and ideas.

that will be looked at to determine the shape that the future of work is taking. This bears reflecting on, the future is not prescribed, it is shaped through rigorous planning and informed actions.

Many organisations have found

themselves operating entirely or partially on a remote basis over the last year, and there are decisions to be made on the extent to which this will remain the case.

It is how an organisation arrives at those decisions that will shape the culture moving forward. The means through which choices are made and communicated will play a major role in the success of any model, whether that be fully remote, on-site, or hybrid.

From this data (on the left), drawn from the combined responses of tens of thousands of employees, it is clear that a 'Great Workplace' is one where employees are given a voice and opportunities to shape their environment.

Of course, it is not possible to involve employees in every decision, leaders will always need to make choices that guide



Solutions for Organisations

- Communicate your intention to develop future working arrangements.
- Hold focus groups to understand the associated challenges and opportunities.
- Draw on survey data to understand the areas to focus on and develop actions plans.
- In a hybrid model, collaborate to determine reasons for coming together on-site.
- Trust that suggestions from employees are genuine, valuable, and well-intentioned.

Naturally, it is first and foremost necessary to continue to deliver for customers, clients and external stakeholders. Ensuring continuity of service in this area will always be a priority, but there is much room for flexibility when this is occurring. Work in conjunction with your employees to shape your shared future, and your

customers will surely feel the benefits of an empowered, engaged workforce.

For our part at Great Place to Work, we will be with you every step of the way. This is very much a shared journey for us, and we will be here to offer guidance and support through our consultations, publications, and webinars. Our role will be to leverage this brand to shine a spotlight on organisations that continue to create Great Workplaces, whatever form they take.



For further information please visit [www.greatplacetowork.ie](http://www.greatplacetowork.ie)

*When restrictions end, will you continue to facilitate remote working, and if so, what will be the role of the office in your way of working? The time is fast approaching where organisations will need to provide the answers to these questions.*

the direction of the business, but on this issue in particular, it is beneficial to draw on the perspectives of staff members.

Questions for Organisations

- When restrictions end, will you continue to facilitate remote working?
- If so, what will be the role of the office in your way of working?
- How did you arrive at those decisions?
- Have you integrated lessons learnt from the last year into your plans?
- If so, where did you draw those insights from?

**COMMUNICATION IS KEY**

The time is fast approaching where answers to these questions will be needed. Do not wait and see what others are doing, as it is Great Workplaces that will set the standard here. Continue to engage with employees to determine what will work for your organisation.

Leverage those tried and tested communication tools to arrive at a decision as a group.



*“Continue to engage with employees to determine what will work for your organisation” – Anthony Hickey, Organisational Culture Analyst with Great Place to Work Ireland.*