



The Insurance
Institute of
Manchester

Chartered Insurance Institute

SELF PROMOTION & PROGRESSION IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD



Introduction



Agenda

- WFH- Current Picture
- LinkedIn Survey Results
- Employee Outlook, Positives and Negatives
- Leadership Outlook
- Challenges in Summary
- Tips & Advice
- Questions/ Discussion (chat box)

Working from home, the current picture.

- ▶ Number of “home workers” expected to double in 2021
- ▶ Productivity measure demonstrates remote work is working.
- ▶ 74% of US companies plan to permanently shift employees to home working after Covid-19 crisis ends.*
- ▶ 94% of employers said productivity was the same or higher than before the pandemic**

*Gartner CFO

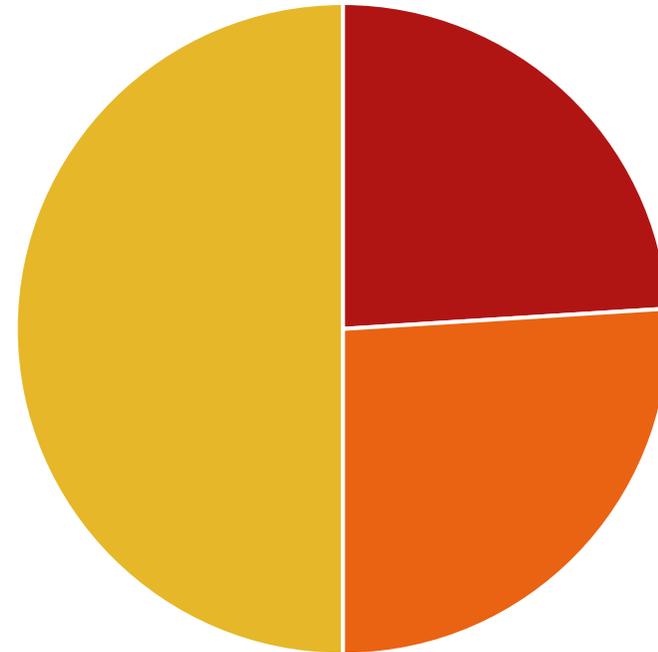
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LinkedIn Survey

How do you feel lockdown and home working has affected your visibility within your organisation and opportunities for progression?

Results



- No difference
- Positive impact
- Negative impact

Employee outlook, positive

“Positive for me as I was already remote from my team.

A lot of office chat and meetings were held in person more than 200 miles away from me.

Now everything is online we have team chats and online meetings that not only lead to me feeling more involved, but also give me greater opportunity to share my experience and raise my own profile.

It's definitely been beneficial from an internal point of view”



“Everyone has responded to this pandemic in their own unique way.

Personally, I had a very supportive leader who advised me to use the time whilst WFH to (1) focus on building a robust Personal Development Plan and (2) set monthly meetings with Directors to improve my visibility within the company”

Employee outlook, negative

“I can only speak for myself, but the communication from my employers have been pretty much nil.

So the vast majority of us feel undervalued and neglected - my employers have even put a video on our WhatsApp group and then not followed it up in any way!!”



“I feel that not being in the office, participating in conversations with people and seeing people you’re not necessarily linked to directly means you’re less visible.

I feel I’ve had to take more proactive actions to make sure I’m visible in my business, and I’m in people’s minds when opportunities may arise.

It’s harder to do that remotely when calling people out of the blue seems a much bigger deal than just having a chat at the coffee machine’’

“I found myself in the unenviable position of being made redundant shortly before the Pandemic took hold of the world last year.

I have a thirty year career in underwriting where I was known and – I like to hope – respected. People knew me and my capabilities. I secured a new position in the same field of Insurance but, as a broker.

Having spent thirty years developing my career it feels like I have taken several paces backwards. When you start a new job, contact with your immediate and wider colleagues is so important.

Offices are ideal places to encourage collaboration and learning and it plays a massive role in your individual visibility within the company.

Opportunities for progression often come from the networks you build on a daily basis, not hiding away in the spare room at home.

Without a workplace and exposure to real people, I feel that my future career progression could be massively affected.”

Leadership outlook



Is this something you are receiving feedback on from your team, following the pandemic and working from home rule?



“I have to be honest this is not something which has been a topic of conversation.

I think we are in an environment where people recognise the economy is going to tough for a while and job security is the top priority for many people.

Having said that my team is very settled with lots of people in a role for a long time and not necessarily looking for progression.

I think if I had a lot of younger, more ambitious people in the team this might be more of an issue.”

MD, National Broker



“I couldn’t be prouder of the way all of the team have stepped up to the challenges faced in working in a remote environment.

The main feedback is around the lack of exposure to more senior leaders and other teams/branches caused by the inability to travel and meet face to face, particularly in respect of access to Head Office/London teams.”

Branch Director, Global Broker



“No feedback from the team on this but I’d expect that larger teams especially less established employees will be experiencing it.”

Regional Business Development Manager, Insurer



“No, we have continued with all our development programmes as we have moved to operating virtual, which is testament and credit to our teams and people leading those initiatives.

Clearly, we have had to adapt how we deliver training and development given the change in our current operating model.

In addition, we have continued to promote people, moved people into new roles and recruit new people into the business as well”

Head of Trading, Global Insurer



Is this something that as a business you are looking at in terms of employee development strategy?

“Currently my focus is very much on the financials and keeping the business on track throughout this phase and the day to day wellbeing of staff.

Some of the longer term priorities such as career progression have had to take a back seat. We anticipate the majority of staff working from home for the first half of this year and then a gradual return to office based working from maybe the summer onwards.

During this period our priority is very much focussed on the financials and ensuring we are able to protect our staff from any need to cut costs.

If we found ourselves in a lockdown situation for much more than a year that is the point at which I think we would need to revisit our career development strategy and adapt to the new reality.

For now it is coming second to shorter term priorities such as ensuring we and our clients' businesses survive.

I do expect at the end of lockdown there will be some pent up demand for progression both within our company and externally.”



“We are taking the situation seriously.

Our talent identification team set up a working group mid-2020 to discuss the exact topic.

The general feedback is that there will always be individuals who are finding ways to remain visible and putting themselves forward for opportunities that are arising out of the current situation.

There will always be a proportion of individuals who need more of a helping hand and we are using the annual appraisal cycle accompanied by monthly progress 121's to support them further.

We launched a 'Skills & Behaviour' Framework mid 2020 that runs alongside our annual appraisal review. It is designed to identify skills gaps and support an individual's development in those areas with a specific action plan.”

Branch Director, Global Broker



“No – due to the nature of our team. I think that larger employers need to look at better quality staff engagement on zoom/teams – one that gives the participants the chance to contribute rather than a leader talking at them.

An idea for companies would be to have breakfast meetings with people they would normally meet with – e.g. Director with 6 people from the front line and ask for their input on how things are going .

I feel that employees will need to be even more accountable for their own personal development rather than waiting for it to happen – use of LinkedIn courses, podcasts, volunteering for projects, taking the initiative”

Regional Business Development Manager, Insurer



“We are constantly looking at new and more efficient ways to develop our people – whether technically, trading skills, market knowledge and broader access and understanding across our business.

This ranges from formalised programmes run centrally through to more local initiatives and development plans working with individuals.

The key is understanding what the employee wants to develop and ensuring they have the right level of support and space to do this.

Equally this has to be driven by the employee and not the manager – the manager is there to facilitate, support and guide.”

Head of Trading, Insurer



In this virtual new environment what kind of indicators or behaviours do you personally look for from team members (aside from productivity), in order to measure contribution and make decisions around promotion?



“Working remotely presents many challenges and with the added influence of a hardening insurance market it is clear that things simply take longer to resolve and complete.

I’m looking for team members to remain positive and demonstrate a continued enthusiasm for delivering the best service to our clients, especially when it gets tough.

I have been most impressed by those who have continued to put their hands up for more in support of their colleagues.”

Branch Director, Global Broker

“ Adaptability – key to different and changing working environments

Ability to deliver without having a manager next to them or someone that needs to be micro-managed – a good indicator is around how organised they are

Their desire to go the extra mile – i.e., do they look like they are working on a zoom, not just appearance but preparation etc, always having a good question

Visual communication in this environment is even more important – there are some good podcasts on how to come across – its very easy for someone to look disinterested and even worse switch off the video function”

Regional Business Development Manager, Insurer

“We are fortunate that we are able to take high productivity as a given. For various reasons people have been working very hard, sometimes very long hours over the past year.

The things which stand out for me amongst my team are the softer things such as maintaining a positive attitude in adversity, keeping their colleagues spirits up, helping colleagues who are struggling with workloads, IT problems, psychologically.

When we have team video calls there are some people who I know will speak up and always have something positive or encouraging to contribute.

There are some people who have taken on the challenge of operating in lockdown head on and shone in the process. Others have ended up becoming less visible, maybe struggling or hiding.

As much as people's productivity or financial performance it is the small things that reveal someone's character in the face of adversity which have been the most telling and marked out the people who have shone in the past 12 months”

MD, National Broker

Challenges

- An office setting creates an environment to build strong relationships that doesn't exist working remotely.
- Potential breakdown in communication / relationship without the regular interaction an office setting provides.
- Email communication can make engagement more difficult to demonstrate and harder for employers to identify.
- Lack of regular/ spontaneous access to your boss, mentors, supporters and senior leaders.

Continued...

- More difficult to “stand out” from colleagues if not in a team environment.
- Increased responsibilities at home, making focusing on doing more at work difficult.
- Feeling isolated / demotivated generally, which can lead to lack of focus on career progression.
- Not having the same access to more experienced colleagues can inhibit personal; development, especially in a technical environment where learning from more experience colleagues is part of a development plan.

How to promote yourself & achieve progression when working remotely



Questions/ Discussion