



THE CHANGING FACE OF WORK

5

trends shaping
the future of work

HYBRID WORK
CHANGES ATTITUDES

THE TIME OF PRETENDING
TO WORK IS OVER

THE BEST CULTURE WINS

SOULLESS OFFICES ARE OUT

EMPLOYEES HAVE BECOME
MASTERS

FOREWORD

WHERE WILL YOU WORK TOMORROW AND WHAT DOES IT MATTER?

AN ADJUSTABLE DESK AND CONVENIENT POSTURE.

A laptop, Teams and a video test. Sitting by the lakeside, birdsong. Working from home, kids screaming. Your work mates' cheery chatter, now getting into the flow. A street level cafe, listening to customers' problems. Taking a jog, with air pods on, the annual report and changing views. A co-working space, hipster in a hat, a lingering smell of nicotine chewing gum.

The ways and places of working have become many in the last couple of years. Some like to mix business with pleasure and work from their sailing boat, summer cottage, home, a downtown café or a co-working space while others want to stick to their headquarters routine to be able to meet people, maximise the ergonomics, maybe even to keep business and pleasure apart.

Remote work has been common in expert positions since at least the turn of the millennium, but it was not until COVID-19 that the office worker's daily routine turned around permanently. The massive

scale and speed at which the shift to remote work happened created new challenges and opportunities both to the employees' well-being and management practices and corporate culture.

After the pandemic, people are slowly returning to the office – perhaps to support their daily routines, creativity and the team. There has been random speculation in the media declaring the death of the office, lessened demand for office space, quiet quitting, burnouts, imbalance between work and free time, well-being issues, and, of course, everything always staying the same.

At the same time, since the daily routines of individuals, teams and organisations have changed, we – the office developers, city officials, office tenants and property owners – are putting in maximum effort to finding out how the changes will affect the planning of cities, city districts, city blocks, apartments and offices.

The outpouring of questions brewing in my brain under the surfer hair is endless:

How should the corporate culture be enhanced? What would be the suitable space size and environment for each function? How should the employees be committed to the organisation? Would it be a good idea to provide shared spaces? Is it more important to minimise the carbon footprint than it is to ensure the employees' mental well-being? How to support people

in different life situations? Why doesn't technology work all the time?

We could go on speculating like this forever, but we wanted to understand what the experts in the fields of brain, intuition, recruitment, work, working environment research and ordinary knowledge workers thought about working. That is why we partnered up with the expert team of strategy company Un/known to interview these people, seeking answers to the questions looping round and round in our heads.

In the process of the survey we got the strong impression that the future office concept would depend on the corporate culture – and vice versa. Based on the views of 13 experts and over 550 knowledge workers, the study helped us acquire in-depth understanding of how we can collaborate with the city dwellers and organisations in the development of more sustainable, meaningful and attractive environments for working, leisure, living, and self-actualisation.

No matter where and when you work, our team hopes that this publication opens new horizons to the future of your work. You now have way more say and responsibility for your own work than probably ever before.

For NCC Property Development Team, Office-hippie
EELIS RYTKÖNEN

THIS IS HOW THE RESEARCH WAS DONE

INTERVIEWED EXPERTS

Niina Sihto, Partner, Senior Designer, Fyra Oy

Milka Kortet, Leading Expert, Technology Industries of Finland

Timur Kärki, Chairman of the Board, Gofore Oy

Asta Raami, Independent Researcher, Trainer and Writer, Innerversity Oy

Antti Pitkänen, Chief Experience Officer, Agile Work Oy

Liisa Holma, President, Un/known Oy, Lähtijät Podcast

Alf Rehn, Professor, University of Southern Denmark

Sofia Jakas, Director, JLL

Pietari Päivänen, Director, Supercell Oy

Terhi Klemetti, Founding Partner, The X Search Oy

Vitalija Danivska, Researcher, University of Applied Sciences Breda, the Netherlands

Suvi Nenonen, Leading Expert, University of Helsinki

Minna Huotilainen, Professor, Brain Researcher, University of Helsinki

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Research among knowledge workers based in the biggest cities of Finland, N=586.

Data collection in May-June 2022.

WORK GROUP Sampo Axelsson, Ulla Holma, Uku Jaatinen, Maria Monikainen, Eelis Rytönen, Miia Savaspuro, Marjo Totro, Fanni Tuomisto **COLLECTION OF MATERIALS** Un/known Oy **EDITOR** Miia Savaspuro **GRAPHIC DESIGN** Double Happiness Oy



1

Hybrid work changes attitudes

FULL-TIME RETURN TO THE OFFICE IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE

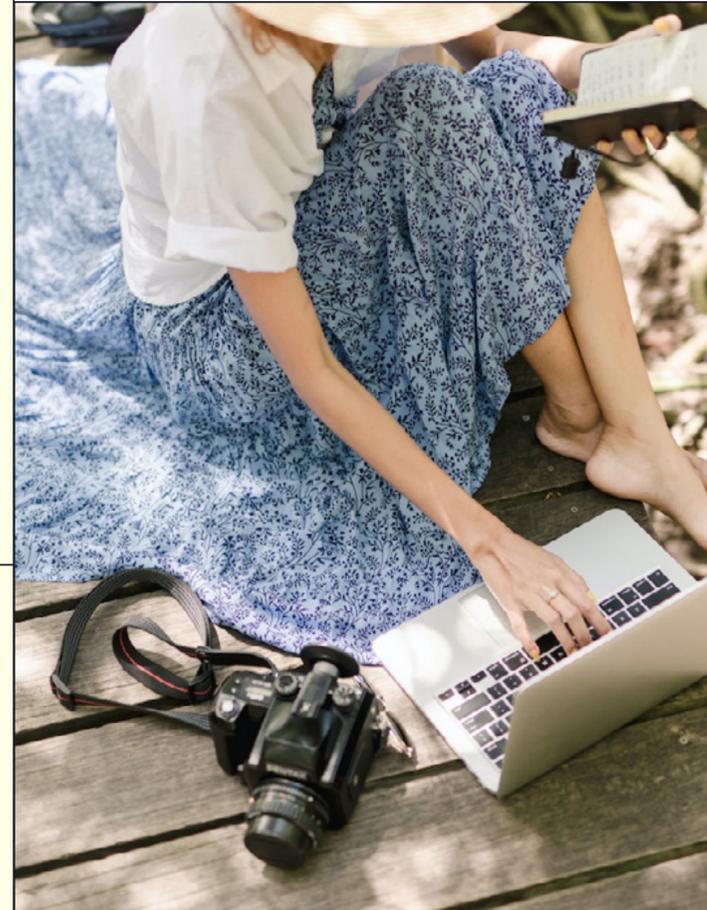
- Hybrid work is the new normal
- People want to choose for themselves where to work
- Well-being, humanity, responsibility and values are increasingly in focus

Hybrid work changes attitudes

THE BEGINNING OF 2020 will go down in history as a point of no return in the lives of office workers. It marks the start of a transformation which will affect all white-collar organisations and will continue to affect them even after the end of the corona pandemic.

Now that work has been done remotely for more than two years on a previously unheard of scale in the post-industrial period, it is clear that there is no returning to times of old.

According to an extensive research survey executed by NCC in June 2022, 72 per cent of Finnish knowledge workers are finding the changes brought by COVID-19 to have had a positive effect on the quality of their lives. 79 per cent of the respondents consider it a possibility to work in the future for a company that operates fully remotely. About half of the respondents say that being able



72%

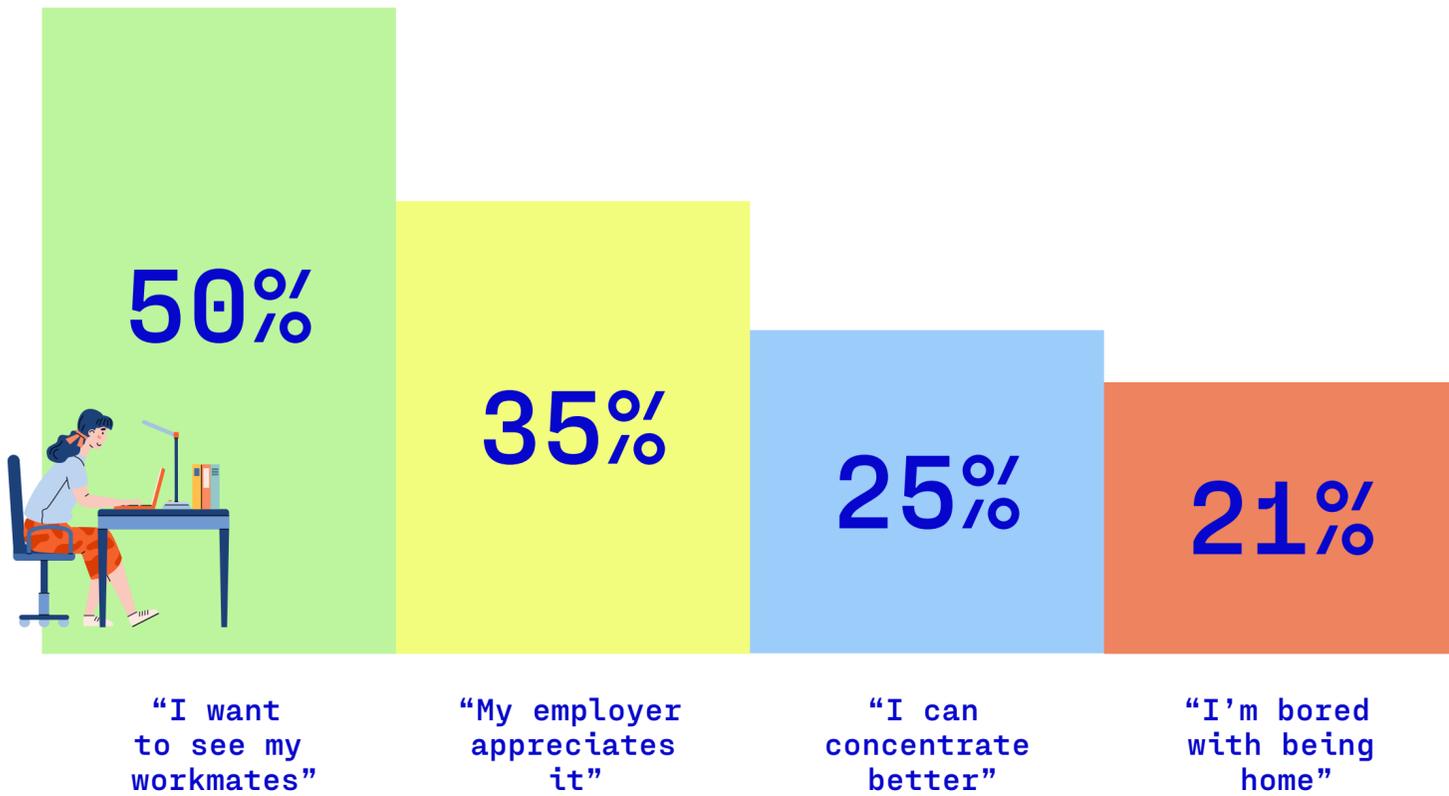
OF OFFICE WORKERS
THINK THAT THE
PANDEMIC HAS HAD
A POSITIVE EFFECT
ON THE QUALITY OF
THEIR LIFE.

to work where they want is among the top four criteria for choosing their future workplace.

“Never again will white-collar professionals work at the office five days a week. You must be able to better motivate people to come to the office,” Leading Expert of Technology Industries of Finland **Milka Kortet** says.

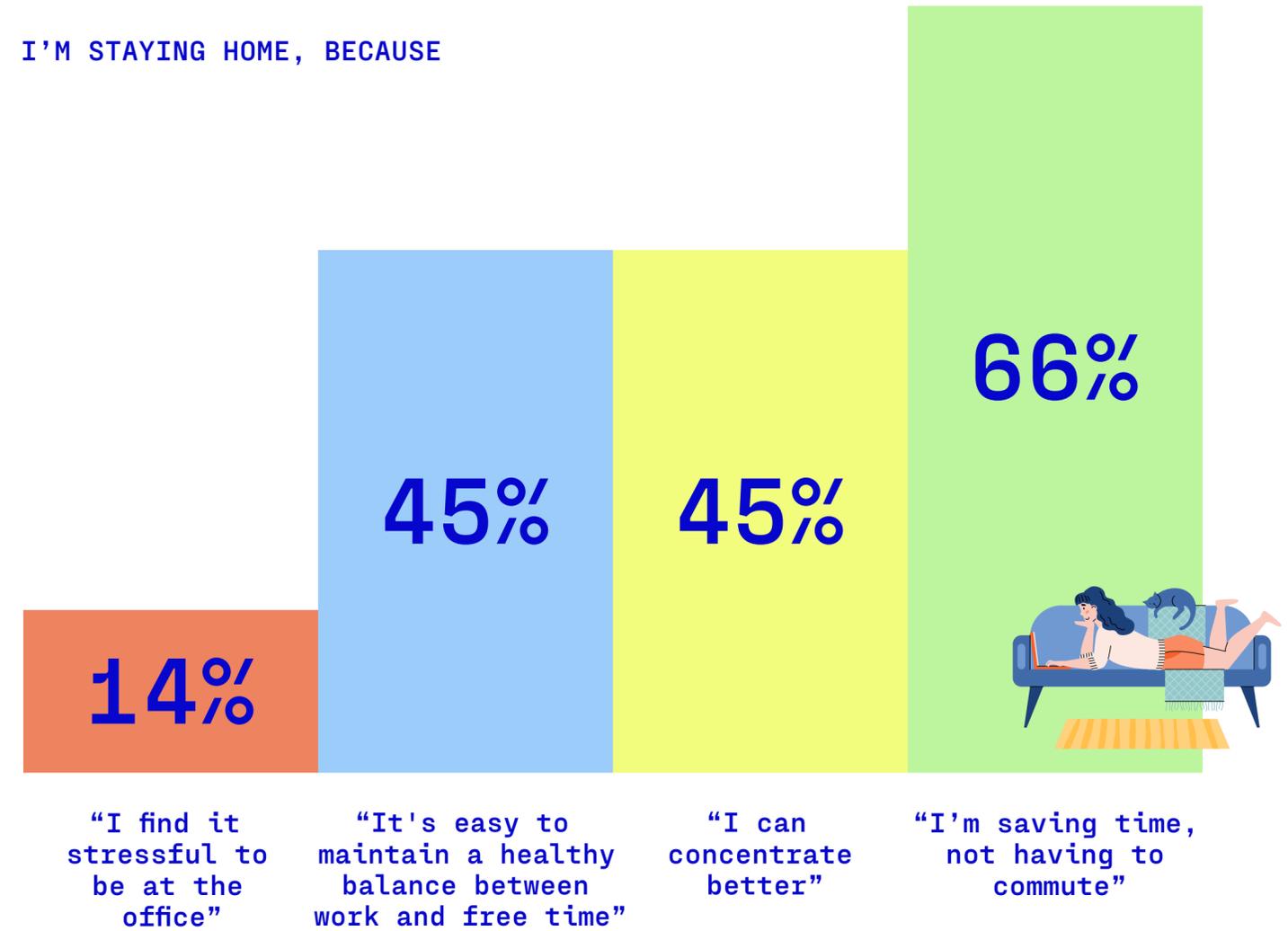
TO GO OR NOT TO GO – OFFICE OR HOME? WHAT DRIVES THE DAILY CHOICE?

I'M GOING TO THE OFFICE, BECAUSE



What drives your choice between staying at home / going to the office to work? (From 7 alternatives, tick 1-3 most relevant to you).

I'M STAYING HOME, BECAUSE



Research was executed among knowledge workers based in the biggest cities of Finland May-June 2022, N=586

Terhi Klemetti, a founding member of The X Search, a company specialising in recruitment of experts and executive personnel, shares the same opinion: “The candidates nowadays require flexible work arrangements. That’s the only option, otherwise they will not even consider accepting the job. Questions of responsibility and freedom are a priority, and they will be even more so in the post-covid working culture.”

Professor and brain researcher **Minna Huotilainen** from the University of Helsinki reckons the biggest change in the future knowledge will boil down to the questions ‘where’ and ‘with whom’ the work will be done.

“People will become more and more demanding in regards to the workplace location, tools and people are concerned. They will become even more picky when choosing the places and the people they want to work with.”

COVID-19 changed the status quo of working. Since the start of the pandemic the focus of discussions about remote work has shifted to ways in which remote work can be flexibly combined with working at the office. Working in both places has quickly become so common that hybrid work is now considered the new normal.

According to experts, there are other considerations to be made about hybrid work than whether one works at home or at the office. This is a question of a profound change taking place in the ways of thinking and working. There are now more aspects to working than ever before: mental and physical well-being, humane leadership and management, supporting the community spirit, committing to one’s own work community, combining remote and in-person work, smooth use of digital tools, the suitability of homes for working, and the purpose of office spaces.

Above all, work must be determined anew, establishing how people would like to spend their precious time.



"PEOPLE WILL BECOME MORE AND MORE DEMANDING, WHERE THE WORKPLACE LOCATION, TOOLS AND PEOPLE ARE CONCERNED. THEY WILL BECOME EVEN MORE PICKY WHEN CHOOSING THE PLACES AND THE PEOPLE THEY WANT TO WORK WITH."

- BRAIN RESEARCHER MINNA HUOTILAINEN

Huotilainen reminds that human encounters and the feeling of inclusion are fundamental needs of human beings. Such needs remained vastly unfulfilled during the pandemic, and we now understand the value of collaboration and doing things together in a whole new way. That is why people want to be at the office and see each other also in the future.

However, such encounters and being at the office must be based on self-initiative. Any rules by which the employees are forced to come to the office, just for the sake of convention, say, every Monday and Friday are, according to Huotilainen, “a stillborn idea”.

However, not everyone thinks this the case. Apple advised last August that they will invite everyone living in the vicinity of their Californian headquarters to come to the office at least three times a week. According to the company, Tuesdays and Thursdays are compulsory office days

TEKIJÄT VAATIVAT,
TYÖNANTAJA PALVELEE



for everyone, in addition to which a third in-person workday is to be chosen jointly with the team. The company President Tim Cook justified this rule to the workers in an e-mail by saying that meeting face-to-face is an essential part of Apple's corporate culture and that device development requires physical presence. This practice will later spread from California also to other Apple offices around the world.

Also Alphabet, the owner of Google, has required their workers to be present at the office three days a week. On the other hand, companies like Meta and Amazon still allow a more flexible remote working model.

Introducing hybrid work and adopting proper practices to ensure successful



working has been a huge trust exercise to organisations. It has required reconsidering, not only the physical workplace, but also the working time, methods, culture and leadership.

“Trust is the important lesson to be learned here. Many organisations have lacked it. Remote work has not been seen as a matter of trust, but as some kind of reward. All this is history now,” Huutilainen says.

The most essential learning is to understand that people can no longer be forced into one single work arrangement. This has been a big lesson even to the pioneers of free and flexible work.

“Working life has changed so that the group must be able to offer an individual employee experience,” Founder and Chairman of the Board **Timur Kärki** of Gofore, a software development and IT consulting firm, says.

At Gofore, agile models and flexible working practices have already been in use for 20 years. Still, the company faced a new situation due to the pandemic when they had to consider how to relate to the people working in different parts of Finland and how to support their community spirit and create commitment.

“Also we had this funny moment of pondering whether we could recruit employees, say, in Kajaani. Now it is clear without a doubt that we can.”

According to Kärki, the important thing is to create value for the employee.

“There are elements involved in this which we do not entirely understand yet. The key is to recognise that there are quite different employer experiences in one and the same organisation. People may share the same basic values, but their realities are quite different. That's why companies setting rigid rules or allowing for just one way to be for a quite homogeneous group of employees will be in trouble.”



2

The time of pretending to work is over

WORKING HOURS WILL DECREASE ALREADY IN THE NEAR FUTURE

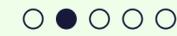
- Discussions of a four-day work week are becoming more frequent
- Time as a measurement of work is losing its value
- Success and financial value is determined based on results and efficiency

The time of pretending to work is over

FIVE DAYS OF WORK, TWO DAYS OF REST: the Finnish weekly routine is nearly 60 years old. The last working time reform took place in 1968 when Saturday became an official holiday. The law that sets forth the eight-hour workday is as old as Finland itself, 105 years. Today, the average length of a regular workweek is 37.5 hours, about 7.5 hours a day, five days a week.

The working time is brought up in public discussions at a regular interval, but the official working time has not been touched in years. The latest change dates back to 2016, when the Sipilä Cabinet pushed through the unpopular agreement to restore cost-competitiveness. The agreement that raised huge complaints finally only prolonged the weekly working time by 30 minutes.

In 2020, the new Working Time Act came into effect in Finland. The law was issued to better adapt to the changes taking place in the working life,



such as working independently of place and time. The law endows workplaces the tools to introduce different working time arrangements, such as flexitime, flexible working hours and the provision of time banking. However, the law still restricts regular working hours to eight hours a day and 40 hours a week.

In 2019, Sanna Marin then acting as Minister of Transport and Communications Sanna Marin envisioned a four-day workweek to be taken into use in Finland in the future. According to Marin, people would thereby have more time for their family and friends, for hobbies, arts and education. This would result in better well-being, since people would have enough time to recover. The idea was not a new one.



There have been similar proposals in Finland before. Marin's proposal was not received in a new way either – the opposition and the business community shot it down while employee associations and public opinion supported the idea.

Owing to COVID-19, discussions about working time arrangements were raised again. During the pandemic many people started questioning their habits and conventions. Knowledge workers who worked remotely noticed that the same amount of work could be managed in a shorter time. Many people started to contemplate their values more deeply: how would I want to use my precious time? Could I use it however I see fit? Could I work six hours a day and use the remaining two hours for outings, doing sport, visiting museums, helping the kids with their homework, even knitting a pullover?

Many of the experts interviewed for this publication were of the opinion that, once the rules of the hybrid work are better learned and old-fashioned thinking patterns are let go, moving over to the four day workweek is only a matter of time.

As many as 88 per cent of those who participated in this survey made by NCC would adopt the four-day workweek, given the opportunity to do so without having to settle for a smaller salary. Nearly half of them were interested in a shortened workweek even in cases where their salary was reduced. Fifty six per cent of the respondents say they could manage their work assignments in four days.

“More and more, people are contemplating the necessity to work as much as they do now. Or, what's the point in observing a weekly working time when the intellectual work involved in professional jobs goes on even outside working hours,” Leading Expert of Technology Industries Finland Milka Kortet says.

Overall, time as the unit for measuring an employee's salary is subject to increasing criticism. Work is acquiring a more project-oriented, network-



MANY EXPERTS BELIEVE THAT, ONCE THE RULES OF HYBRID WORK ARE BETTER LEARNED AND OLD-FASHIONED THINKING PATTERNS LET GO, MOVING OVER TO A FOUR-DAY WORKWEEK IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.

based and intellectual nature which is independent of time and place. It is difficult to measure success by time.

“I myself am a believer in the coming of the four-day workweek already in the near future. Work should definitely be measured by efficiency and results instead of time,” says founding member of The X Search Terhi Klemetti.

The next big amendment of the Working Time Act could take place sooner than we think. In 2022, an experiment was made in Great Britain where 3000 employees of 70 different companies moved over to a

"TIME AS A MEASUREMENT OF PRODUCTIVITY IS TAKING ITS LAST BREATHS, AND IS BOUND TO DIE AWAY AT SOME POINT. MAYBE NOT IN FIVE, BUT IN TEN YEARS AT THE LATEST."

- MILKA KORTET



four-day workweek without having to cut their salary. This experiment is said to be the world's widest working time pilot of which the purpose was to establish if the shortened working time improved peoples' health, motivation and efficiency.

The experiment was made also to have those that quit their jobs during the pandemic return to the workforce and make them stay longer with the same employer.

"One cannot turn back time to the pre-pandemic era. The pandemic was a big revelation for people who realised what it meant to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Companies are starting to better understand that one must focus on the quality of work, not on the hours worked," Project Leader Joe O'Connor commented for The Guardian.

In Milka Kortet's opinion, the pandemic proved you could no longer pretend to be working. You cannot go to the office just to pass the time and fake working.

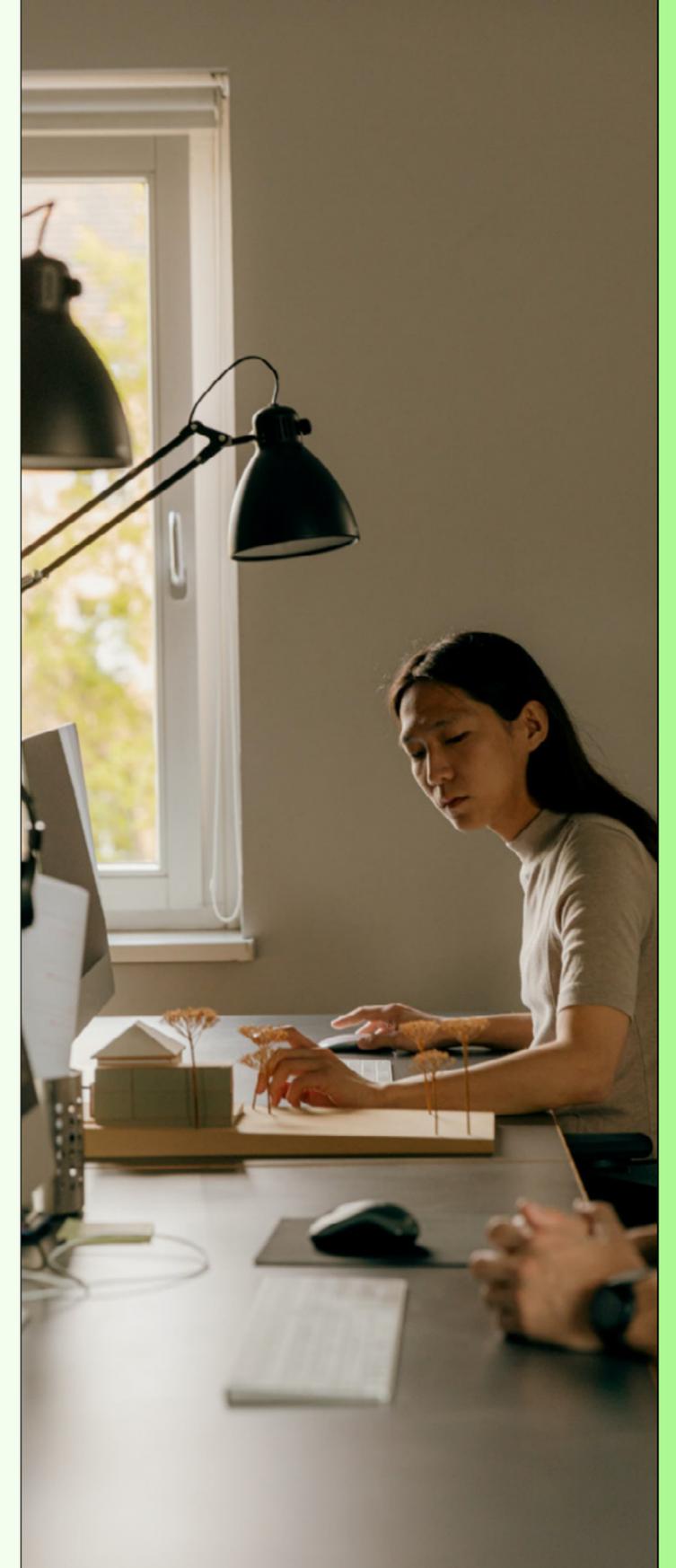
"In our country the labour law is put in place to protect employee. The starting point is good, but the law lags largely behind. It does not suit our time, neither does it resonate with the younger generations. One day they want to extend the workday, the other take it easier. They don't want to commit themselves to the same employer for long, but prefer project-oriented working."

Kortet is convinced that time as a measurement of productivity will become obsolete in the future.

"It is taking its last breaths, and is bound to die away at some point."

She is also worried of the current trajectory.

"If we fail to bring the talent from wild pastures back to companies, there will be a lack of workforce. The economy will decline if companies cannot submit offers, serve customers and deliver goods. The tax income will decrease and social expenses go up. This equation is unsustainable."





3

The best culture wins

CORPORATE CULTURE REQUIRES DECISIVE LEADERSHIP

- Employees will have more power
- The best talent will go to companies with the best culture
- Culture will be steered more strategically and with more determination

The best culture wins

UNDERSECRETARY OF THE STATE OF MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

Elina Pylkkänen has called the post-pandemic change taking place on the labour market as the biggest transformation since World War II when women first entered working life in large numbers. The current change is mostly related to demographics: there are more people leaving than entering the labour market.

Labour shortages have become chronic in many fields. The situation is worst in the welfare and healthcare sector, but workforce is also scarce, for example, in the hotel and restaurant sector and in the construction industry. Companies are competing also for specialists and executive personnel.

“The talent war has got a lot worse,” Professor **Alf Rehn** of the University of South Denmark says.

“Data scientists, coders, marketing people, engineers; all of them are snatched from our hands. The education system seems unable to respond



to the demand for workforce in all of the Nordic countries, and there are not enough immigrants.”

The competition on the labour market is so severe that employers must pay way more attention to working conditions than before. You can compete with salaries up to a certain point, but after that, it is the other factors that count. Young people are particularly interested in the kind of corporate culture that prevails in organisations. Forty seven per cent of the respondents say quality of leadership and freedom to choose where they work have an effect on how attractive they find the job. Forty three per cent regard the meaningfulness of work as an important selection criterion.

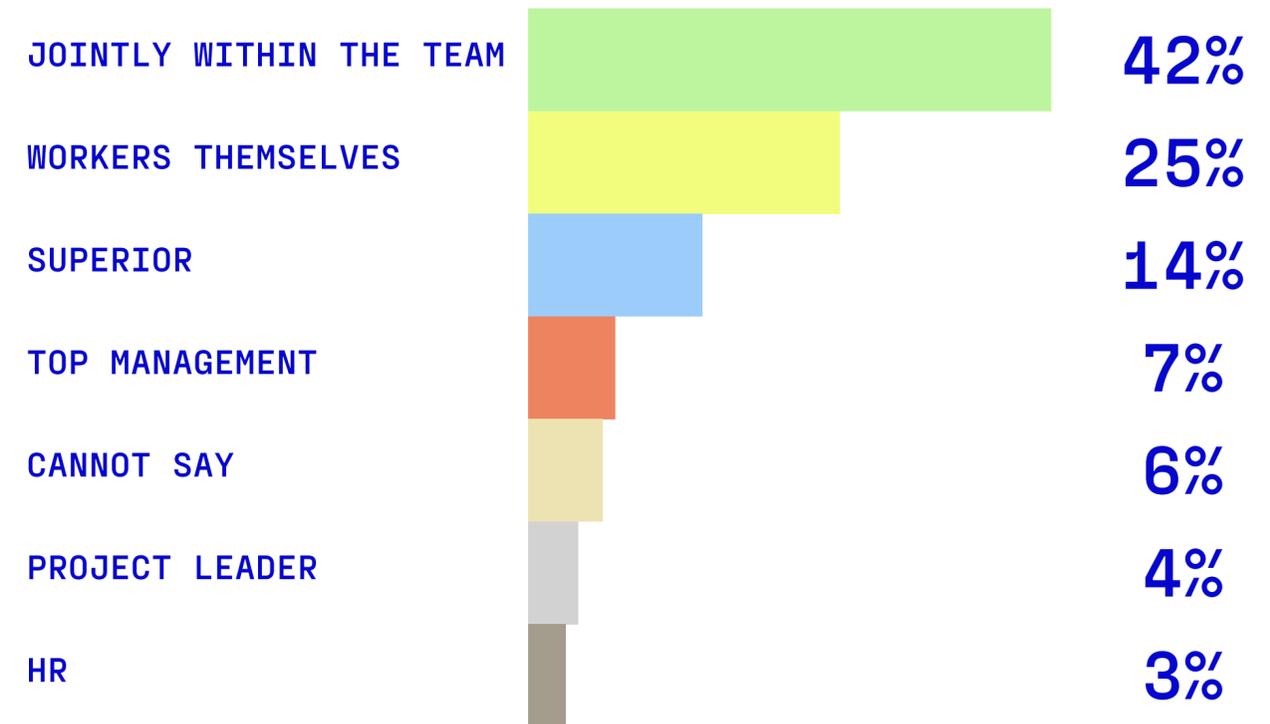
Many experts interviewed for this publication think that culture will become the most important strategic competitive factor on the deficient labour market. Commitment, employer image, motivation, development and learning can only be supported, if the organisation turns leadership and management, working conditions, atmosphere, career paths and work duties into a strategically prioritised goal.

In practice this means that the HR department needs reinforcements, and there must be somebody in the organisation to take responsibility for leading the culture in a purposeful way.

“Organisations are making a big mistake, should the culture work be missing ownership. It must be managed based on the strategy and steered towards the common goal. It is outdated to have the executive group set the company values and then assume people will start living accordingly,” Director **Sofia Jakas** of property consultancy firm JLL says.

Many companies find it hard to build their culture when people come to the office irregularly. Many have ended up adopting a model where the teams decide upon the rules of ensuring encounters with each other. Creating a

WHO SHOULD MAKE THE DECISION ON HOW MUCH WORK IS DONE REMOTELY AND HOW MUCH AT THE OFFICE?



Research was executed among knowledge workers based in the biggest cities of Finland May-June 2022, N=586.



"DATA SCIENTISTS, CODERS, MARKETING PEOPLE, ENGINEERS; ALL OF THEM ARE SNATCHED FROM OUR HANDS. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM SEEMS UNABLE TO RESPOND TO THE DEMAND FOR WORKFORCE IN ALL OF THE NORDIC COUNTRIES, AND THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH IMMIGRANTS." - ALF REHN

culture solely based on remote connections is often considered challenging.

Making the decisions on the team level resonates also among the knowledge workers. 42 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that the team should decide jointly on how much work is to be done remotely and how much should be done at the office.

Leading Expert Suvi Nenonen of the University of Helsinki describes how the employees' thinking is evolving from personal work planning towards a more team-oriented one.

"I will decide myself how I work, but at the same time I understand that it has an effect on the rest of the team as well. Always consider your own choices from the viewpoint of the entire team. Even if you do not need the office yourself, you could be needed at the office."

Gofore founder and Chairman of the Board Timur Kärki says he has delved deeply into the essence of corporate culture over a long period of time. What is culture, if one can no more walk the corridors to sense it? What is the culture made of?

In Kärki's opinion, culture is understood a narrow way, while we actually know very little of it. He puts the experience of meaningfulness first. It is made up of work that the employee finds important, but also of other people; of people who accomplish something inspiring and do it together.

"People must be able to experience joy together. This is a fact. You must laugh and succeed together. If you can't, things just won't work. Sparkling wine on Fridays will not help, neither will other tricks, if the emotional side is lacking. Meaningfulness is made of doing things together and getting feedback for it. After all, this is the most important thing."

Among other things, it is important to understand individuality and diversity. Work communities with little diversity, a culture based on one truth only



and rigid working conditions will be in trouble.

Consultancy firm Un/known's President Liisa Holma who has a podcast by the name Lähtijät ('quitters') has interviewed dozens of people who have quit their jobs. According to Holma, the same matters come up in the quitter stories all over again: poor leadership, atmosphere and values.

"The contents of work or salary are not a reason why people resign. They leave, because they feel that the culture is unhealthy in some way." Holma points out that quitters share the common mindset of an improver. If these people feel out of options when wanting to improve things or themselves, they will choose to move forward."

Holma believes we are headed towards a time when the ability to lead different personalities becomes emphasised. The same model is not suitable for all, but the leader must have the time, the skills and the interest to provide the leadership it takes to serve the demands of an individual or a small team. Accordingly, executive personnel should no longer be appointed as a reward for good work or as means for moving up the ladder, but regarded as a service position suitable only for those who can adopt the role of a coaching leader.

"This is a healthy way to go."

Holma and Kärki both believe future employment contracts will be signed based on individual terms instead of collective labour agreements or the legislation.

"It's clear that we cannot serve everyone personally, but companies nowadays have lots of data on what their people really want. A big change will happen when such data will actually be studied and models created on its basis to allow for diversity when providing leadership and management," Kärki says.



4

Soulless offices are out

PEOPLE COME TO THE OFFICE SEEKING CREATIVITY AND EACH OTHER

- Less space which will be used in a smarter way
- The spaces must support community spirit, creativity and sharing
- The winning office concept is yet to be invented

Soulless offices are out

THE MOST INTRIGUING QUESTION in the world of modern hybrid work is, what will happen to the offices. How many square metres will be necessary, where to place the offices, and what should the spaces be like. Many organisations are contemplating if they have too much space, if they are paying for the spaces in vain, and which space investments would be worth making.

When the first wave of the pandemic calmed down, offices were already declared dead. The news, however, turned to be premature. After a long silence people have returned from their summer holidays to the air-conditioned offices and lunch buffets of workplace canteens. Many companies have reported nearly full occupancy rates, where it has been at times difficult to find a vacant workdesk or conference room.

Nevertheless, the experts interviewed for this publication are unanimous that the amount and function of space is undergoing an enormous transformation.



Remote work is done far more than before. Nobody wants to waste time commuting between work and home. The functionality, ergonomics, aesthetic values and feeling must all reach a level where coming to the office seems more tempting an alternative than staying home.

Partner at design firm Fyra and Senior Designer **Niina Sihto** says that companies are now pondering, above all, the ways in which the culture must be built, when a large part of interaction between people happens through a remote connection.

“Physical space can be used to steer and build a culture, but how will this work, when physical space becomes less relevant?”

Decisions about office spaces have become more strategic. An increasing number of people from different areas of expertise participate in the decision-making process, including top management. Sihto believes that real estate executives will be playing an essential role as culture shapers.

“A property manager must be competent also in the culture of the organisation. They should take on the role of the culture lead jointly with the HR.”

Director of real-estate consultancy company JLL Sofia Jakas wonders why companies are taking so little advantage of the teachings of the coronavirus pandemic regarding modification of spaces.

“It is clearly not easy to make the decisions. Maybe they are afraid of making the wrong decisions. As I see it, those learnings received from the pandemic would be worth putting to use as soon as possible, since, in any case, there is no going back to the old.”

On the other hand, Jakas recognises there is a better understanding of the overall situation. There are people being included in space planning from different functions in organisations, and the decision-makers are more attentive to workers' views.



"THE IMPORTANT THING IN GETTING THE EMPLOYEES COMING BACK TO THE OFFICE IS TO REALISE WHAT THE ESSENTIAL REASONS ARE FOR THEM TO COME AND TO GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE CHOICES"

– ANTTI PITKÄNEN, AGILE WORK

“You no longer blindly count square metres, but want to understand for how to create an environment that genuinely serves and brings added value to the workday experience. Developing the working environment cannot be regarded as a process that is separate from other life, but it is an ecosystem that changes and fluctuates all the time.”

“The important thing in getting the employees coming back to the office is to realise what the essential reasons are for them to come and to give them the opportunity to make choices,” Chief Experience Officer Antti Pitkänen of consultancy firm Agile Work says.

The IT consultancy Gofore decided to reduce their office space right

THE FUTURE OF SPACES IS SOLVED BY THREE FACTORS: LOCATION, SPACES TO ENABLE CREATIVITY AND ENCOUNTERS AND SHARING.



after the pandemic started. Chairman of the Board Timur Kärki estimates that their office space was reduced by 15 per cent.

“Pretty early on we analysed the situation and noticed that the occupancy rate of some spaces would be very low. We then decided to downsize the space, although the company was growing.”

The company is currently building a new head office at Tampere Central Station. The decision to build a new head office was already made before COVID-19, and the company did not want to revoke it.

“Nobody knows if the decision was right. Time will tell.”

In Kärki’s opinion, the space planning is guided by responsibility, enabling encounters and fulfilling demands of the Gofore employees. These were mapped out by several questionnaires and workshops.

“The most important thing is to solve how people will meet and communicate with each other. We must be able to offer the facilities for this, since the most important reason to come to the office is other people. Another reason is good tools and ergonomics. The third big thing is the experience shared by many: work flows better at the office than at home.”

In the expert views, these three things will determine the future of offices: location, creativity supported by encounters, and sharing. This could mean that gigantic headquarters located along the ring roads will be a thing of the past, as more and more employees assume that the office must be accessible by

“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO SOLVE HOW PEOPLE WILL MEET AND COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER. WE MUST BE ABLE TO OFFER THE FACILITIES FOR THIS, SINCE THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON TO COME TO THE OFFICE IS OTHER PEOPLE.”

– TIMUR KÄRKI, GOFORE

public transport, bike or on foot. This opinion is repeated in the demand of building company clients: the preferred location for spaces is close to city centres, served by excellent connections. The spaces must also be modifiable and, if necessary, shared with other companies, even competitors.

“Nobody knows how to solve these matters in a smart way. The future office concept is yet to be invented,” Kärki summarises.



5

Workers become masters

THE EMPLOYEES HAVE MORE POWER THAN EVER BEFORE IN THE HISTORY OF THE POST-INDUSTRIAL ERA.

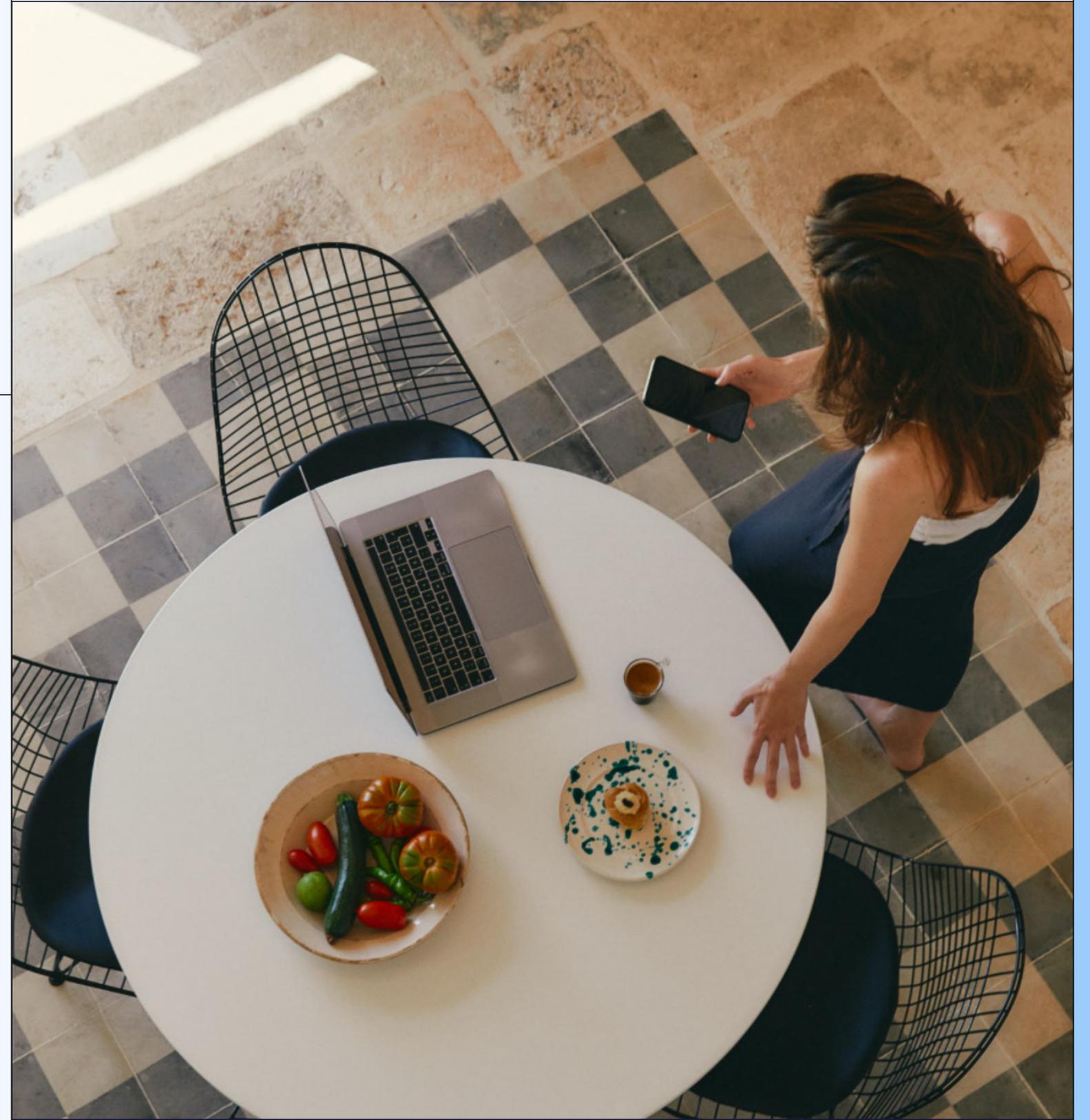
- Commitment to a single employer weakens
- An employer is chosen based on values
- A more comprehensive approach is pursued to working life and policies related to it

Workers become masters

AFTER ABOUT A YEAR OF LIVING WITH CORONAVIRUS, a phenomenon called The Great Resignation surfaced in public discussion. The phenomenon concerned the United States and Great Britain in particular. In these countries the resignation percentage has ranged from three to six depending on different estimates. This means several millions employees resigned.

The resignation wave did not occur in Finland as severely, but according to different surveys, also Finns became more willing to change jobs. Twenty four per cent of the respondents in NCC's survey had changed jobs during the pandemic, and 35 per cent thought they would probably do so within the following year.

The phenomenon has been called "quiet quitting". On social media it means usually two things: contemplations about changing jobs, even the field, and an overall pursuit towards a more meaningful, slower way of life.



THE RECRUITMENT MARKET IS OVERHEATED, THERE ARE LOTS OF VACANCIES, AND EMPLOYERS HAVE TO SETTLE EVEN FOR A BIG DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY AND INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS IN ORDER TO ATTRACT A WORKFORCE.

The pandemic brought along a myriad of considerations regarding individual values, time management and ways of leading a meaningful life. Combined with the changed values, the aging population and the labour shortage prevailing in several fields has created a situation which the experts have for long referred to as the increasing power of the workers. The recruitment market is overheated, there are lots of vacancies, and employers have to settle for a considerable degree of flexibility and individual requirements in order to attract a workforce.

In many fields of expertise, such as the welfare and healthcare sector, IT, gaming industry and financial administration, competent people can largely dictate their own conditions. It is up to the employer to consider which conditions are acceptable to them.

“Free time is given higher priority, and the commitment to a single employer is weaker. The share of project-oriented work is growing. There are people working for several companies simultaneously, possibly through a company of their own, or on the side with the employer’s permission,” founder of



recruitment company The X Search Terhi Klemetti summarises the current trends.

According to Klemetti, Finns want to play it safe in that they are seldom left without work, but the willingness to change jobs is clearly on the rise.

“Jobs are being changed now in Finland more frequently than before. People have had time to think about what they really want from their lives. Values are in focus. People will choose the employer by their own values.”

Often times the values mean work-life balance, employer flexibility with regard to working time and place as well as questions of environmental and social responsibility. According to Klemetti, the young and the highly educated are very specific about the field in which the company operates and attempt to find a match with their own values.

Job seekers are also very specific about how the company fulfils the values in practice. The strategy is sorted out in advance, the management’s social media profiles are checked out and conclusions drawn on the company’s integrity.

“We are witnessing a time of becoming seen,” intuition researcher **Asta Raami** crystallises.

According to Raami, it took a global pandemic for both the existing megatrends and underlying weak signals to become visible. Poor leadership, unacceptable treatment, the constant claims for higher efficiency and unethical business models become common knowledge more often. On the other hand, people have more control over their lives and time management and can shape these in the way they deem meaningful for themselves.

“As if there was some kind of a thinning curtain between what is seen

and what lies under the surface. This is an ongoing trend,” Raami says.

Workspace and real estate market researcher Vitalija Danivska from the Dutch University of Applied Sciences says the change taking place in work-related areas is so profound that it is impossible to predict all of its impacts.

According to Danivska, the biggest changes are related to determining working time and payment of salary as well as to the impacts of the climate and environmental crisis. Now that hybrid work is becoming all more common, a new approach must be taken to the way work is defined and compensated. Danivska believes that, in the future, the salary will not be based on the time spent, but on the work performance. Working time in its turn will transform into something the employee can determine themselves.

“Those companies and industries which restrict the workers’ opportunities to work remotely will probably face difficulties in the global workforce competition, since people are more willing to transition from one industry to another.”

The companies will also become aware of the emission reductions achieved by making remote work possible.

“In the big picture, a more holistic approach will be taken to working life and related policies. Here everything affects everything.”

All of the experts interviewed for this publication agreed that, despite the challenges, Finnish working life will change for the better owing to the pandemic. This vision is supported also by the extensive follow-up survey ‘Miten Suomi voi’ (How is Finland doing?) carried out by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health which comprised following up the well-being of people in working age throughout the pandemic.

When people have more autonomy, feeling of control and ownership of their own life, the positive impacts will be sustained for a long time ahead.

"JOBS ARE BEING CHANGED NOW IN FINLAND MORE FREQUENTLY THAN BEFORE. PEOPLE HAVE HAD TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHAT THEY REALLY WANT FROM THEIR LIVES. VALUES ARE IN FOCUS. PEOPLE WILL CHOOSE THE EMPLOYER BY THEIR OWN VALUES."

TERHI KLEMETTI

CONTACT INFORMATION

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Eelis Rytönen, Urban Developer-hippie
eelis.rytkonen@ncc.fi

OFFICE LEASING AND SALES

Uku Jaatinen, Head of Sales
uku.jaatinen@ncc.fi

MARKETING

Marjo Totro, Marketing Manager
marjo.totro@ncc.fi

COMMUNICATIONS

Nelly Haapalainen, Communications Manager
nelly.haapalainen@ncc.fi