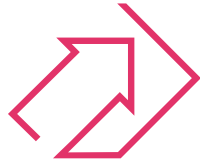


Workforce Trends to Watch

Preparing for Your Next
Key Career Moment





Preparing for Your Next Key **Career moment**

Intro

We all reach those moments in our careers where the big questions can no longer be ignored. What's next for me in my career? Is there an opportunity for me to do something different? Take on new challenges? What kind of company do I want to work for? What kind of boss is right for me?

Whether leaving a position on your own or if you've been let go, you'll want to ask yourself these questions. As you get ready for the next stage of your career journey, have a candid conversation with yourself – about what you want and how exactly you'll take control of your career. Even if you're just at the very beginning of “what's next,” assessing where you are and where you want to go will move you that much closer to finding a new job, landing a promotion, starting a lucrative side hustle, or reinventing yourself altogether.

But there's no denying that today's professional landscape looks very different than previous years. A global pandemic, a more volatile economy, and sociocultural

forces have all converged to create uncertainty. But don't let this deter you from making your next play.

The opportunities are there. However, with technology displacing some jobs, augmenting others and creating whole new roles, you need to think about how to future proof your career. The good news? With online learning resources, it's never been easier to refresh what you know and expand even more. Yet the new skills go beyond the tactical. You've heard that information is power but in today's landscape, being agile, resilient and willing to learn is the real power.

It's also important to have perspective on the major workplace and hiring trends—plus how they might affect you. In the pages that follow, you'll find a detailed look into these trends, the outlook for specific industries, and the skills you'll need to support your next move. You're on your way to taking ownership of your career path and making it a very rewarding experience.



Are You Ready For the “Work from Anywhere” Reality?

Out of necessity, the pandemic shifted the work environment—in many cases, moving workforces from the office to the home in a matter of a few short weeks. But then something remarkable occurred: executive leaders saw firsthand how productive employees could be, regardless of physical location. Consequently, companies like Facebook, Twitter and others have opened the door to hybrid work—a mix of home and office—and some have embraced an entirely remote setup.

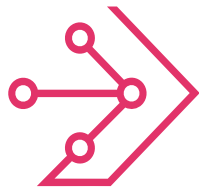
The future of the workplace is looking increasingly like a “best of both worlds” approach, with 73% of employers indicating they’ll adopt the flexibility of a blended office/home paradigm. **Sixty-eight percent of employers** estimate employees will be in the office three days a week while 55% of workers would prefer to work three days remotely. Although the precise makeup of a worker’s weekly schedule will ultimately be left to the individual employer, the research makes it clear that the question is no longer if employees should be remote. Now it’s only a matter of how much.

Employers are also working through making needed changes to physical workspaces to ensure employee wellness and safety

concerns are addressed. According to the Edelman Trust Barometer, 48% of those who will go back to the office will do so because their employers made them feel safe.

As you consider what’s next for you, make sure you prioritize a redesigned employee experience as part of your employer evaluation process. Ask about what companies have done to make the office environment safe for employees—whether it’s staggered schedules, new HVAC technology, reconfigured office arrangements, etc. You’ll also want to understand what new tools and solutions exist to enable virtual collaboration and ensure security across hybrid environments. That’s important because you’ll be asked to learn new communication skills and become conversant in these technologies as part of any role you take.

Always probe what success looks like in a virtual work landscape. Companies have had to rework work itself—so it’s not inconceivable that the metric for employee success has changed too.



A New Way of Working



Work models are changing rapidly. From full time to flex, from contract to contract to hire, you'll have options. Have you considered what you want? Ask yourself the right questions.

Are you a parent of young children? A caretaker of aging parents? You may want to orient toward flexibility that supports family life while thinking through the kinds of benefits different arrangements offer.

Ready to go full bore? Your options might look different. If you're not sure about a position or company, contract-to-hire is a nice way for you (and your employer) to "try before you buy." In any situation, it's always useful to consult a tax specialist or financial planner to understand what the advantages and disadvantages are.



6 Must-Know **Trends** for 2021

In a changed environment, what can you expect? There are six major workplace trends to consider in 2021.

#1 Mental Health: Building Resilience and Preventing Burnout

Now that millions have been working from home for a year or more, it's easier to see some patterns emerging. One clear issue: the blurring of the line between work and home. For many, the result is an extended workday; new research shows that on average, people are spending **an extra 48.5 minutes** working. And that means more sitting, more video conferencing fatigue, more mental stress, more ergonomic issues, the list goes on.

But you can build resilience and employ strategies to counter the demands of a new work model. Just like building physical strength, practicing will build your ability to set boundaries and weather challenges. Consider doing the following:

- Schedule blocks of time on your calendar to prevent meetings being scheduled before or after certain times of day.
- Establish a new “commute”—a quick walk around the block to reset your mind, for example, or some other routine you determine to mark the start and/or end of your workday.
- Make time for breaks that will help you physically and mentally: stand up to stretch, for example, and take lunch away from your computer.
- Meditate using an app like Calm or Headspace. Meditation helps people learn to focus and, according to [Harvard Business Review](#), “an ability to resist urges will improve your relationships, increase your dependability, and raise your performance.”
- Explore some courses on time management, presence in virtual calls, productivity and other pandemic-related work topics (LinkedIn has [some excellent free options](#)).

#2 Productivity Powerhouses

This trend may seem counterintuitive to the focus on maintaining balance and boundaries noted in #1—but the reality is that productivity and a healthy work life aren't at odds. So how can you stay engaged and productive?

- **Define your to-do list every day.** Putting some light structure in place keeps you focused and motivated, which is especially important in remote environments. Conclude each workday by walking through what you need to do tomorrow. Feeling organized and ready to go is always the optimal way to begin the day.
- **Make a point of reaching out to coworkers daily.** Connection is always important—but working remotely in a pandemic? Potentially in a new job? It's more vital than ever to forge positive, powerful relationships. Turn on your camera for video calls; seeing your face will help your colleagues get to know you. Schedule a coffee or lunch date over Zoom. If your company offers virtual events, like lunch-and-learns or more casual get-togethers, join in.

It's also worth setting up a routine of touchpoints, be they brainstorming sessions, small group meetings, or one-on-one reviews; [research shows](#) this supports better collaboration and innovation virtually.

- **Understand and adapt to new forms of feedback.** The annual performance review is rapidly giving way to more real-time, regular feedback that allows employees to adjust quickly. Why? As the sharpest [minds in management](#) have noted, old-school performance evaluations “hold people accountable for past behavior at the expense of improving current performance and grooming talent for the future.” This means there will be ongoing opportunities for you to adapt and fine-tune your performance.





#3 Building Durable Relationships in a Virtual-First World

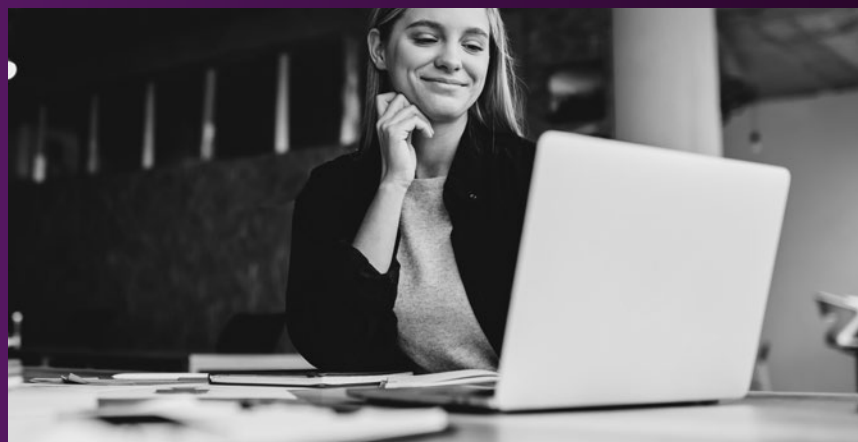
In a virtual world, what falls by the wayside are the casual mentoring and opportunistic knowledge-sharing moments that naturally occur in the office. It's an issue that's overcome by intentionally recreating those opportunities yourself for you and your team.

- **Strengthen your network.** Look for informal mentors and ask them to do quick informational interviews or more lightweight chats. Join groups within your organization—or if there are none, organize one yourself, perhaps based on shared interests from the casual (“learning to code”) to the more formal (e.g., all people in one job type gather to discuss best practices).
- **Move things off video.** Look for ways to connect that don't involve sitting and looking at a screen. Suggest taking a virtual walk and talking via Bluetooth along the way, for example.
- **Step up your game as a leader.** If you're in a management role, be creative and look for ways to help your team connect. Perhaps it's a book club where team members read and discuss a book that's relevant to the industry or their job function. Even podcasts, Ted Talks and white papers can prove useful (and free!).

#4 Soft Skills Will Reign Supreme

In a hybrid environment, soft skills will be as important— if not more—than anything else in your arsenal. They are similar to the soft skills that have always been required for in-person workplaces but amped up in response to the distance imposed by the remote factor. These skills include:

- **Active listening.** Being an excellent listener will set you apart from the pack as polite, interested, and sincere. And—bonus!—you'll get more out of conversations. Research [shows that when people don't listen](#), “speakers volunteered less information and conveyed information less articulately.” So, pay attention.
- **Empathy and vulnerability. In other words, be human.** Nothing forges connection faster than genuinely supporting others, recognizing their perspectives and challenges while sharing your authentic self. And there's something in it for you too: research [consistently shows](#) that across industries, those with a high degree of emotional competence outperform and out-earn their less emotionally competent peers. As a result, good employers are actively hiring for high EQ as well.
- **Agility and continuous learning.** The world changes quickly—that's always been true. But the pace and proliferation of change means your ability to adapt will be paramount—as will your ability to collaborate in a digital environment. Show that you're a continuous learner through your willingness to take on a stretch assignment, pursue new certifications, etc. That kind of growth mindset always registers positively with future employers.





#5 Create a Career Upswing through Upskilling

As discussed, it's fundamental to stay current and sharp on the skills and attributes required for movement in your industry—and these do change over time. But how do you do that?

- **Scan your industry.** Even if you're not looking for a new role right now, take a minute every now and then to check out the postings for the next job you might want. What technical skills do they emphasize? You can put them on your roadmap and check them off on your timetable, well before you even start your search.
- **Look for practical, sustainable ways to upskill.** If this is a busy time for you personally, start small by reading credible business books that broaden your understanding of your industry or function. Attend networking events, seminars, conferences and workshops as you can—even online, these are still excellent ways to get a sense of trends and direction in your profession. If you have more time available, take a virtual self-paced course through resources like Udacity or Lynda.com or take an evening class online.
- **Consider working with a career coach.** They can help you smooth some rough edges and point out some opportunities you might not otherwise have considered. A coach offers an objective perspective and can help you establish goals, develop a plan and alert you to challenges—and even take on some tactical things like helping you build confidence by practicing for an upcoming interview.

#6 Crafting Real Social Trust in a Virtual World

Many of us have migrated from a world that was incredibly high contact—seeing each other every day in person, grabbing lunch, meeting for coffee, doing happy hours, brainstorming in a conference room—to one that’s remarkably devoid of in-person interaction. Increasingly, employees will be required to find new ways to connect and build the trust that is so core to working relationships.

Get good at deploying the simple strategies that recreate social trust in a virtual world:

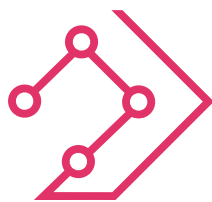
- **Remember small talk is anything but small.** It might sound basic but sometimes feeling removed from colleagues can lead to forgetting the social niceties. These still matter because they’re the glue that helps forge lasting connection. Take a few minutes at the start of a call to have some chit chat. Ask about families, show interest in the everyday happenings of your colleagues’ lives. This kind of conversation warms everyone up for the real conversation to come. Most importantly, trust comes from feeling you know someone.
- **Double down on integrity.** In a virtual environment, there’s no visibility into how people are spending their day and no opportunity to stop by to touch base. Go a little overboard on following through on your commitments. Make a point of sharing your progress—a quick status update along the way is reassuring. And if you hit a snag that won’t let you meet a deadline, don’t beat yourself up. Just keep people in the loop on when you’ll get there.
- **Be aware of non-verbal communication.** In a video-first world, self-awareness is something to cultivate. Keep an eye on your non-verbal communication. Do you maintain eye contact? Look interested and approachable? Stay focused and avoid distractions? Listen and reflect back what you’re hearing others say? Are you actively working to create or support an inclusive environment, ensuring all voices are heard?
- **Celebrate the accomplishments of others.** One of the best things you can do, in the home office or in the office, is recognize the moments that matter for your colleagues and teams. You don’t have to be in management to celebrate others: send a note, give a verbal compliment, or make a point of sharing something laudatory with a person’s management chain.



4 Steps for Mapping Your **Career Plan**

Some jobs are being replaced—and others augmented—through technology while completely new roles are simultaneously emerging. Regardless, we know there are some core skills that will continue to carry substantial weight, transferable from function to function and industry to industry. Do you know what skills are transferable? Do you know what new skills you need? Here's how to evaluate and set yourself up for the future.

- 1 Make a list of your current skills.
- 2 Research jobs you want to determine what skills are in demand. How do these map up with what you currently have?
- 3 What options are available to you to fill those identifiable gaps?
- 4 Develop and execute a manageable plan to fill your gaps (i.e., take courses, find a mentor, engage a coach, initiate a career coaching conversation with your manager to understand learning opportunities).



In summary

The world is opening up—and with it comes new opportunities for professional change and growth. If you're ready to embrace the new workplace models, adapt to the communication and collaboration skills required, and look for ways to continuously learn, you'll be well positioned for your next opportunity.



About LHH

In today's marketplace, organizations are discovering the need to turn their attention inward to find their future talent. At LHH, we help companies see the possibilities in their people. Through assessments, coaching, upskilling and transitioning, companies can realize the untapped potential within their own workforce, resulting in increased productivity, morale, and brand affinity.

A division of The Adecco Group—the world's leading HR solutions partner—LHH's 4,000 coaches and colleagues

work with more than 7,000 organizations in over 60 countries around the world. We make a difference to everyone we work with, and we do it on a global scale. We have the local expertise, global infrastructure, and industry-leading technology to manage the complexity of critical workforce initiatives and the challenges of transformation. It's why 60% of the Fortune 500 companies choose to work with us.

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