

Which major players are ditching their offices... & which can't wait to return?

From Amazon to Unilever, here's how the world's most famous household names plan to work post-pandemic.



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Endless possibilities

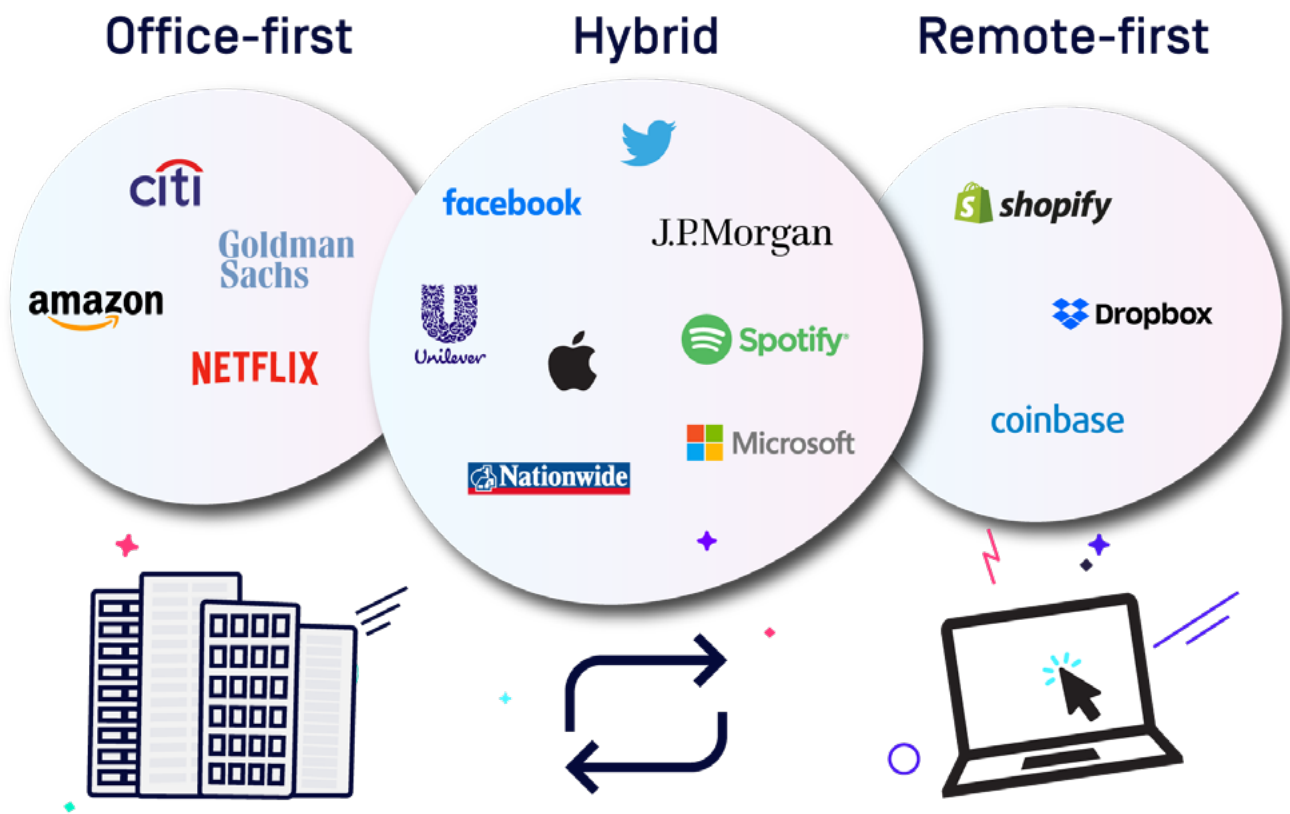
Pre-pandemic, managing thousands of employees remotely would've seemed like a logistical nightmare. But, give or take a few teething problems, companies of all shapes and sizes have transitioned to working from home fairly seamlessly.

With that in mind, it seems inevitable that remote working will continue to be a part of many companies' future workplace strategies in some form or another.

But different companies have responded in different ways.

For some, the experience has been so positive, that they've now chosen to join the likes of Zapier, GitLab, and Buffer, and go **fully remote**. Meanwhile, others stand firm in their belief that going **back to the office** is the best option for their company. And of course, there's a heavily populated middle ground—filled with companies who've enjoyed the flexibility that WFH affords, but still see value in having some form of physical office space—and are now opting for a more **"hybrid"** approach.

Now that there are so many more options available to businesses, knowing the best one for you can be a daunting prospect. In these times of uncertainty, it can be useful to see what the market leaders are doing. So, we've done some digging to find out how some of the world's most famous companies—Amazon, Facebook & Netflix to name a few—are approaching their workplace strategies.



Get in touch:

Office-first



First up, the companies who've identified that the majority of work will continue to take place in the office. This isn't to say that remote working won't be allowed at all for employees working at any of these companies—but these organisations have publicly indicated that for them, the office remains the primary workplace.



Amazon

Amazon is more pro-office than some of the other tech giants. While some companies are reconsidering their need for offices at all, Amazon recently leased several new offices in America for around 3,500 employees. Even if these workspaces won't be full for a while, Amazon clearly sees a future in the physical office.



Citigroup Inc

Citigroup Inc have made it clear that they don't see remote working as a permanent company strategy. At a virtual investor conference in May, CEO Mike Corbat implied that he doesn't plan to incorporate remote working into their future workplace practices, saying: "Our goal is to get our employees back."



Goldman Sachs

David Soloman, the CEO of Goldman Sachs, has been keen to get his 60,000 employees back to their desks ASAP—saying in a recent Bloomberg Television interview "I certainly would expect a lot of Goldman Sachs employees back in full by the end of the year."



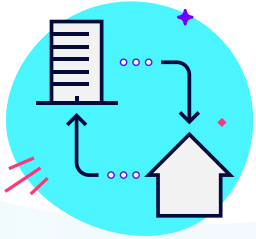
Netflix

Arguably the most outspoken business leader around remote working, Netflix CEO, Reed Hastings apparently doesn't "see any positives" to working from home. In an interview with the WSJ, he stated: "Not being able to get together in person, particularly internationally, is a pure negative."

Whilst Hastings is keen to get his team back into the office, he's waiting for it to be safe to do so, and employees continue to work from home until then.

Get in touch:

Hybrid



The hybrid camp is seemingly the most popular amongst the big names. But as you'll see in the examples below, what "hybrid" actually means can vary drastically from company to company. Each of these organisations has opted for their own unique workplace configuration; for some, this involves giving all employees the freedom to choose where they want to work, whenever they want to work there. Others are choosing to implement more structured policies— for instance, designating certain days or times to be in the office, and allowing employees to work remotely for the rest of the time.

Apple



Apple CEO Tim Cook has implied that the company's success during the pandemic could enable more flexibility to work remotely in the future—though he still sees the value of colleagues and teams working together in person.

In a Bloomberg Interview, he stated that "there's no replacement for face-to-face collaboration", but that "all of these learnings are important. When we're on the other side of this pandemic, we will preserve everything that is great about Apple while incorporating the best of our transformations this year."

Facebook



Facebook's 50,000+ employees have been working remotely since March, and CEO Mark Zuckerberg is said to be considering the benefits of a remote workforce. In May 2020, he claimed he could see half of Facebook's employees permanently working remotely within the next 5-10 years.

Nevertheless, Zuckerberg also sees the office playing a key role in maintaining company culture and accommodating team growth, as well as for meeting the needs of those who don't want to work from home—which explains why the company continues to invest in physical office space amid the pandemic. In an internal employee survey carried out in May, approximately 65% of Facebook employees said they were eager to return to the office as soon as possible.

Get in touch:

Google



Opting for a more uniform and structured implementation of hybrid working, Google CEO Sundar Pichai has stated that he wants to introduce more flexibility into the company's working practices, but informed employees by email in December that they will still be expected to work in the office at least three times a week—meaning they'll still be required to live near their office.

"I see the future as being more flexible," Pichai said in an interview with Time Magazine. "We firmly believe that in-person, being together, having a sense of community is super important when you have to solve hard problems and create something new so we don't see that changing. But we do think we need to create more flexibility and more hybrid models."

J.P.Morgan



Daniel Pinto, CEO of the banking giant, said a rotational model—where employees work a few days in the office and a couple of days at home—would reduce demand for office space, support their sustainability efforts, and help make significant savings.

Pinto told CNBC in August: "We are going to start implementing the model that I believe will be more or less permanent, which is this rotational model... Depending on the type of business, you may be working one week a month from home, or two days a week from home, or two weeks a month."

Microsoft



Microsoft has told employees that they have the option to work from home part-time on a permanent basis, without needing formal approval from their managers. The company will cover home office expenses, but those who opt for the permanent remote work option will lose their assigned office space. They will, however, be able to use "touchdown space" available at Microsoft's offices.

Nationwide



Nationwide has announced a permanent transition to a hybrid model, with employees working from the office in the four main corporate offices, and working from home in the majority of the other locations.

Nationwide CEO Kirt Walker said: "Our associates and our technology team have proven to us that we can serve our members and partners with extraordinary care with a large portion of our team working from home."

Get in touch:



Spotify

Spotify is also adapting its working practices in light of the pandemic and in-depth employee feedback. They plan to do this by implementing a new framework that they hope will give employees the “perfect balance of flexibility, employment security and job fulfilment”.

However, the company also emphasises that it still believes in the importance of in-person interactions and the role that the office plays in these.

Twitter

The social media giant has announced that employees can work from home “forever” if they want to. The policy isn’t too surprising, as Twitter has always had remote employees, even before the pandemic.

In an article published on their own blog back in May, they stated: “Twitter was one of the first companies to go to a work from home model in the face of COVID-19, but we don’t anticipate being one of the first to return to offices.

“We were uniquely positioned to respond quickly and allow folks to work from home given our emphasis on decentralization and supporting a distributed workforce capable of working from anywhere. The past few months have proven we can make that work. So if our employees are in a role and situation that enables them to work from home and they want to continue to do so forever, we will make that happen. If not, our offices will be their warm and welcoming selves, with some additional precautions, when we feel it’s safe to return.”



Unilever

Alan Jope, CEO of Unilever, has said: “We anticipate never going back to five days a week in the office”—but added that Unilever was still keen to return to offices in some capacity after seeing a “slow erosion of social capital” as working from home prevents colleagues from meeting in person. As such, Unilever will adopt a hybrid model, with employees alternating between working from home and in the office.

It seems that the floodgates really are now open for new methods of flexible working for the consumer goods giant—as Unilever are also trialling a four-day work week for their New Zealand employees, with a view to rolling it out for their 155,000-strong workforce if the experiment proves successful.



Get in touch:

Remote-first



Finally, there are the companies who have enjoyed the working from home experiment so much that they feel that remote working is not just a viable long-term policy, but the preferred one—and will be remote by default. To clarify, being “remote-first” doesn’t necessarily mean that employees *can’t* work from an office, rather that default systems and processes will be geared around a distributed workforce.

coinbase

Coinbase

Coinbase has made remote working a permanent arrangement for their employees. CEO Brian Armstrong told his employees in May that whilst the company will continue to offer office space for those who would like it following lockdown, the “future of Coinbase is remote-first” and that their working processes would now have to reflect that.

Dropbox

Dropbox

In October, Dropbox announced that they had officially become a “Virtual First” company, meaning that working outside of the office would be “the primary experience for all employees and the day-to-day default for individual work.”

Once deemed safe, they then plan to allow in-person collaboration and teamwork in places called “Dropbox Studios”, located in the cities where they already have offices. These spaces will exist specifically for collaboration and community-building (so employees won’t be able to use them for solo work).

shopify

Shopify

Shopify Inc. has announced that it will allow its 5,000 employees to work from home indefinitely, and reduce their office capacity to 20-25%. Tobi Lutke, CEO, told Bloomberg that “they will adopt a “digital by default” mindset and adjust to a remote work environment.”

“We expect that the majority of people will work from home and home offices in the future,” Lutke continued. “The choice is really, are we passengers on this tidal wave of change? Or do we jump in the driver’s seat and try to figure out how to build a global world-class company by not getting together that often.”

Get in touch:

Find out where your organisation fits on the spectrum

Clearly, there's no one-size-fits-all solution to the future of where we work. Whilst it can be helpful to draw from these examples, it's important to remember that what works for one company won't necessarily work for the next.

It's essential to listen to what your employees need and want from their future workplace. You can use the **free** Hubble [Workplace Strategy Tool](#) to get an in-depth understanding of your entire organisation's "back to work" preferences. With it, you're able to:

- easily survey your own team using our curated questionnaire
- access the data immediately via your own [personalised results dashboard](#)
- get free, professional advice on the best next steps from our team of experts.

GET STARTED



"The results made me much more comfortable moving away from a full-time in-the-office strategy, and I'm now investigating more flexible and cost-effective options as a direct result."

Daniel van Binsbergen,
CEO of **LEXOO**



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