

FROM GOOD ENOUGH TO WELL ENOUGH

The business case for transforming today's remote workspaces with wellness-driven technology

Introduction

It was only supposed to be temporary. Remote work was expected to be a short-term response during the pandemic. But more than two years in, organizations are exploring and implementing permanent changes.

Hybrid has become the dominant work model, and negative pre-pandemic assumptions about remote productivity have been shattered. The crisis proved that work can and will get done outside the office, and it fueled an initial surge of seemingly positive productivity implications for remote and hybrid work models.

But are the gains sustainable?

The reports of rising employee burnout and turnover signal no. All is not well in the world of work.

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Executive Summary

Wellness is essential for sustained productivity. The home office is the perfect place to start making changes.

- **Poor remote work setups and longer remote work hours** combine to create challenges for employees' physical and mental wellbeing
- **These wellbeing challenges for employees** then ripple out and cause direct and indirect consequences for the businesses they work for
- **Deploying wellness-driven tools to home workspaces** can help course-correct toward an improved employee experience and sustain hybrid work productivity for the long haul



Wellbeing holds the key to sustained productivity

Businesses have puzzled over how to reconcile employees' preference for flexible work with increased rates of talent loss. Many have prioritized employee experience efforts in an attempt to curb the effects of the Great Resignation.

For positive employee experience, physical and mental wellbeing are key. Challenges in these areas have been exacerbated by remote work setups rapidly deployed for function, not comfort and prolonged use.

To improve employee experience and performance, go beyond productivity.



Some employees, having recognized that their home workspaces weren't cutting it, dedicated time and money toward their setups. In the U.S. alone — where new patent applications for work-from-home technology doubled in 2020 — the average worker invested 15 hours and \$561 USD toward equipping their remote workspace.¹ This means IT may not know what's connected to their systems, which can create additional stress when resolving technical issues.

While the historical focus of a strictly in-office workplace has changed, remote workspaces deployed during the pandemic shouldn't be the new business-as-usual either.

It's time to transform workspaces for wellbeing

Business leaders now have a chance to recognize the complementary roles that in-office collaboration and



Employee wellness starts in the home office.

work-from-home productivity can play for their workforces and outfit employees' remote workspaces accordingly.

Organizations that seize this moment seize a critical opportunity: earning a real competitive advantage among their most valuable asset — their people.

IT leaders will play a major role in moving toward this new paradigm; one in which remote workspaces are transformed from good enough to *well* enough. In this white paper, we'll take an in-depth look at what IT needs to know and how to get there.



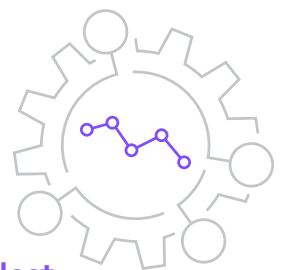
Wellness challenges of long-term remote work

Even before the pandemic, work stress was sounding alarm bells.

A 2018 study of workers in the U.K. and U.S. reported that 94 percent of respondents felt stress at work, with one-third saying their stress levels were unsustainably high.² The World Health Organization officially classified burnout — defined as “chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed” — as an occupational phenomenon one year later in 2019.³

There's a steep price to pay for not icing out workplace stress: Worker burnout amounts to \$322 billion USD in turnover and lost productivity costs globally each year, according to the World Economic Forum.⁴

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“Continued working on sub-par equipment and tools leads to a loss of productivity, frustration, and ultimately disengagement of the workers.”

International Labour Organization⁷

Remote work is preferred by many employees but can exacerbate burnout

While executives searched for reasons behind the Great Resignation last year, burnout reared its ugly head once more. Almost half of employees have experienced burnout symptoms since the start of the pandemic,⁵ and it drove many to move on to a new job.⁶

Beyond the added strain of dealing with the pandemic effects outside of work, what contributed to such overwhelming stress?

The International Labour Organization’s early pandemic findings offer a clue: “Continued working on sub-par equipment and tools leads to a loss of productivity, frustration, and ultimately disengagement of the workers.”⁷

Remote employees average 16.8 more days of work every year than those in an office and speak to co-workers

about non-work-related topics 37 minutes less a day than their in-office counterparts.⁸ That means they’re working longer hours, opening the door for repetitive strain injury or other physical pain problems down the line if their remote workspaces are not equipped properly.

It also means they’re losing moments of interpersonal connection that strengthen emotional ties to their job and drive a sense of belonging, both of which impact mental wellbeing.

When combined, poor remote work setups and longer work hours collide to create a perfect storm — with negative physical and mental wellness effects rippling throughout the global workforce as a result.



PHYSICAL WELLNESS

EMPLOYEE IMPACT

INCREASED PAIN

More employees have reported neck, back, and musculoskeletal pain since the start of the pandemic,⁹ and there has “been a notable uptick in musculoskeletal issues in those working remotely for over a year with limited or insufficient workspace,” writes Risk Management Magazine.¹⁰

In a recent Croatian pilot study of telecommunications workers, only one-third of respondents did not report musculoskeletal problems related to working from home. The rest reported stronger pain in the upper back and neck (45 percent), lower back (39 percent), and hands (27 percent) compared to previous in-office work.¹¹

BUSINESS IMPACT

DIRECT AND INDIRECT COSTS

Employers potentially face financial consequences if team members suffer workplace injuries such as repetitive strain injury or Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, which can cost an employer almost \$65,000 USD in direct compensation and indirect productivity costs for each instance.¹²



\$40,000 to \$80,000 USD

Amount paid by employers for the average back pain claim⁹

MENTAL WELLNESS

EMPLOYEE IMPACT

INCREASED STRESS

Since the start of the pandemic, mental health concerns have also been on the rise. In a 2020 Aetna International survey of workers, 74 percent reported that poor mental health negatively impacted their work performance since the outbreak and 84 percent agreed their mental health was more important to them than the year before.¹³

BUSINESS IMPACT

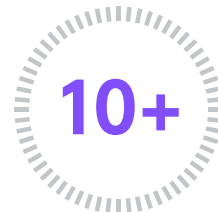
SHORT- AND LONG-TERM LOSSES

The impact of mental health on performance can result in lost productivity. The percentage of full-time workers in the U.S. who lost 10 or more hours of productivity per week due to mental health issues grew from 58 percent pre-pandemic to 65 percent during the pandemic.¹⁴

These short-term losses add up and do damage to employee engagement and satisfaction. Burnout was the top reason employees who started a new job in 2021 left their old one.⁶

“There is now an even more significant role for managers to play in ensuring the psychological wellbeing of employees.”

International Labour Organization⁷



7% increase in full-time workers who lost 10+ hours of productivity per week due to mental health¹⁴



Equipping a new employee experience

Improving employee wellbeing is a recognized but missed opportunity.

Organizational programs to support employee wellbeing and combat burnout in a meaningful way have proven difficult to implement. Fewer than half of the companies in a recent diagnostic survey had employee wellbeing programs, and only 14 percent of those felt they'd delivered on the value proposition of their program.¹⁵

Employers do, however, recognize wellbeing as an area that needs attention fast — especially to attract and retain employees. In the same survey, 73 percent of companies said they will have a differentiated wellbeing strategy in three years to compete for talent.¹⁵

While wellbeing is the heart of the solution, technology is the head of it.

What might a differentiated wellbeing strategy include?

Explicitly integrating wellbeing into the design of work is a good place to start. Doing so is not the norm, according to Deloitte's 2020 Global Human Capital

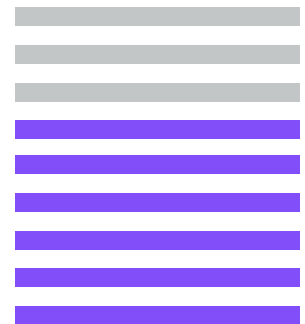
Trends report, "representing a huge missed opportunity." Organizations that are already redesigning work around wellbeing incorporated such tactics as introducing wellness behaviors in day-to-day work and rethinking workspaces themselves.¹⁶

Indeed, workspaces and the technology they're equipped with can act as centering elements of any organization's long-term wellbeing strategy. While wellbeing is the heart of the solution, technology is the head of it. The two must work together for best results.

As global surveys of workers in the U.S., U.K. and France, and Australia all find the same thing — "most office workers want a hybrid model"²⁰ — off-site setups are an obvious place to start incorporating changes. Remote workspaces are here to stay, but any discomfort their equipment's causing doesn't have to be.

66%

of global workers say their remote setup negatively impacted their performance since the start of the pandemic¹³





STUDYING WORKSPACE WELLNESS FROM SWITZERLAND

The **Logi Ergo Lab** was created in 2018 to accelerate Logitech's already deep ergonomics focus. Here, scientists design, develop, and reinvent tools that help people feel and do better at work.

Dozens of prototypes are created for every Ergo Series product, and all Logitech mice are first sculpted by hand and/or 3D printed. Activity in the six key muscles a person uses when working with a mouse or typing is measured, as well as the relative position of different body segments via sensors placed on key areas of the neck, arm, and hand.

Physiological data collected is complemented with subjective data such as look and feel. The goal is to help find the sweet spot between ergonomics, comfort, and design.

The Ergo Lab cross-functional team spans Logitech engineering, design, product development, and business groups. Together, the team works relentlessly to unleash the potential of every workspace through ergonomics and rigorous investigation of workspace wellness. For Logitech's latest wellness tips and research, visit [Logitech.com/ergo/wellness-tips.html](https://www.logitech.com/ergo/wellness-tips.html)

For physical wellbeing

A transformed remote workspace is equipped to be secure, well connected, and ergonomic. The best-fit ergonomic technology to resolve long-term remote work's physical wellness challenges depends on many factors.

It's beneficial for IT leaders to survey employees on what they need in addition to being informed by demographic differences that employees voluntarily provide. For example, **Logi Ergo Lab** studies have shown that women generally have a higher muscle activity than men when using a mouse or typing.¹⁷

Such employee-specific research will provide the knowledge necessary to deploy products with a greater degree of personalization, accommodating different physiques including [hand size](#), [shoulder width](#), and even left- or right-handed preferences.

Making ergonomic adjustments resulted in a 75 percent reduction in lost workdays and a 48 percent decrease in turnover, according to a report by Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (DLI).⁹



For mental wellbeing

While IT leaders can't support the mental health of hybrid workers directly, they can reduce the barriers to getting work done seamlessly.

The stress around tech issues, at least, can be alleviated by outfitting potentially overwhelmed employees with hardware that [works while charging](#), ensuring [enterprise-grade wireless connectivity](#), and selecting [software-empowered tools](#) that streamline a workflow based on the end user's personal preference.

Furthermore, don't underestimate the value of communicating the soft skill-related reasons behind workspace tech changes. One of the biggest drivers of employee belonging at work is "feeling aligned to the organization's purpose, mission, and values," according to Deloitte's 2020 Global Human Capital Trends survey.¹⁶

For example, outfitting remote workspaces with technology that prioritizes environmental responsibility or inclusive and ergonomic design principles can support broader mental wellbeing goals by making off-site employees feel socially and emotionally engaged with their work community — even if they can't be together in person.

What makes a transformative workspace?

Today's IT leaders are tasked with addressing the issues and opportunities of long-term hybrid (including remote) work. The research suggests increased value in equipping employees with workspace technology that's suited to their wellness needs and workstyle preferences.

Since the start of the pandemic, 37 percent of global employees said they'd like to see their employers prioritize enhanced mental and physical healthcare benefits.¹⁸ Their growing interest in these wellness-related priorities can be used to inform workspace technology purchasing opportunities too, whether through stipends for ergonomic workspace tools or deploying different tech to enhance the company's employee wellbeing efforts.

A model for workspace research

When determining which workspace changes to prioritize in a transformation toward wellness, consider this: What annoys you most about your home-based workspace? A group of workers ages 25 to 40 were posed this question for a qualitative study conducted by ZHAW, a leading university of applied sciences in Switzerland, in partnership with Logitech.

Participants' responses revealed that physical challenges are the source of myriad frustrations. "Noise" was the most commonly mentioned pain point, while poor lighting and physical pain in the back, neck, eyes, and wrists also rose to the top of the list. Technical annoyances included having to charge devices and slow loading times.¹⁹

If you've ever experienced one of these pain points while working outside the office, you know how these frustrations can impact your wellbeing. Like a paper cut, even a minor technical or physical irritation can slow you down.

Effective variables to consider when equipping a transformed workspace — from a worker's app usage and hand size to work locations and device types — can be studied and documented within your own organization.

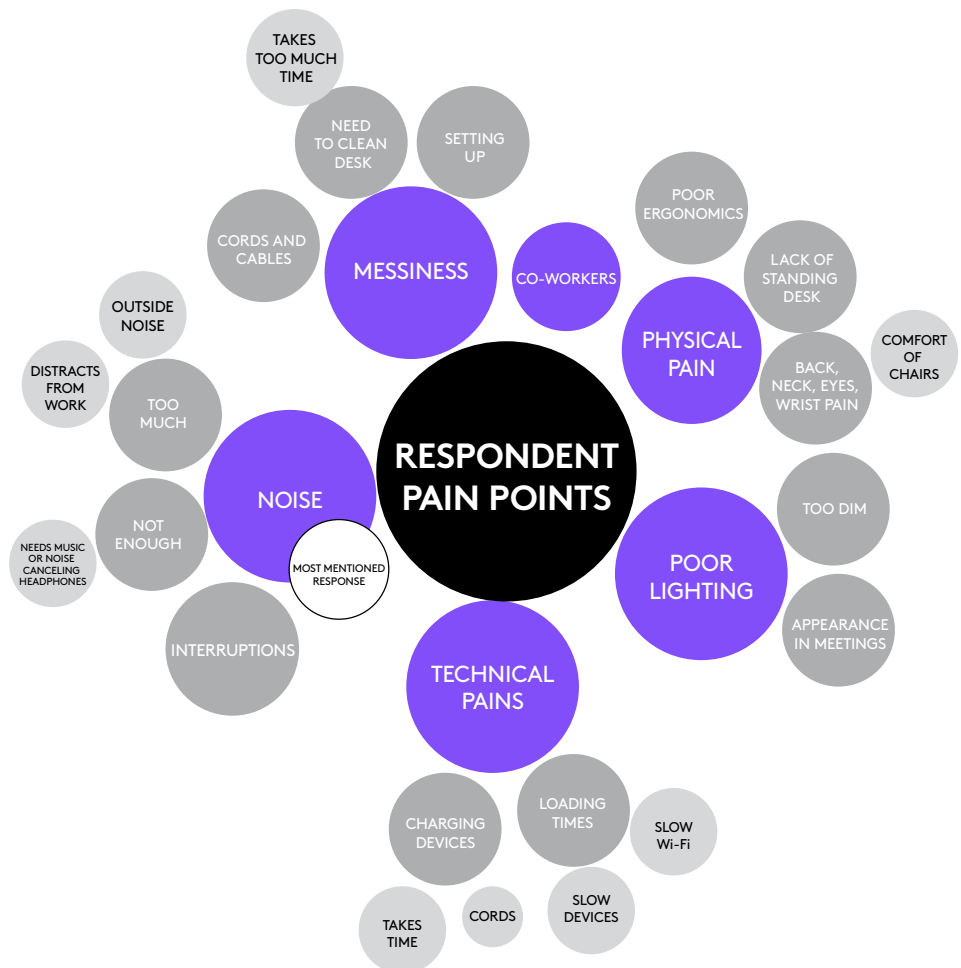
For example, our project researchers asked respondents from 13 different countries to complete an open-ended and multiple-choice questionnaire about their workspace experience, engage in a supplementary interview, and upload a picture of their space (defined as any working location other than their stationary in-office setup).



"The keyboard and mouse are often the entry point to the digital world."

Lars Lauridsen

Senior Global Product Manager
Logi Ergo Lab



From these three source references — questionnaire responses, interview answers, and provided photos — the researchers were able to construct several user personas and journeys to inform future discussion around workspace needs.

Through the project’s discovery process, researchers were able to not only identify the aforementioned pain points but also tap into what respondents already enjoyed about their current workspace. (“Music and sound” was reported to be the most helpful instigator for creativity and productivity.)

The research uncovered unique end-user experiences and surprising workspace opportunities to support physical comfort — as well as mental and even social wellbeing.

When conducted in your own company, this research model can help IT leaders better understand employees’ unique workspace needs/challenges and uncover surprising opportunities of your own. Building out human-centered user journeys and identifying cross-department workspace strategies can help you better support employee wellness and productivity business-wide.



“Music and sound” was reported to be the most helpful instigator for creativity and productivity.

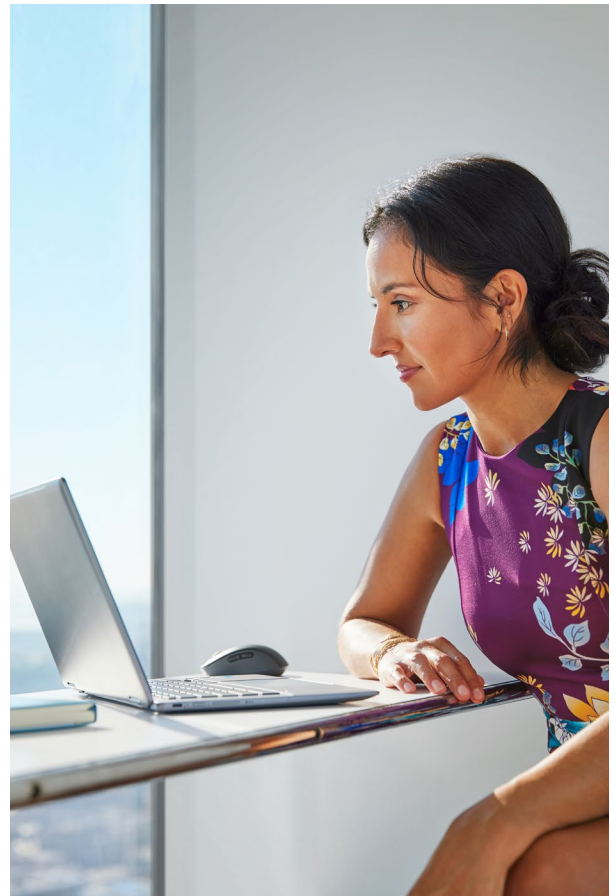
WORKSPACE PHOTO REQUESTS

To receive consent and get the best results:

- Tell respondents why you’re asking for the photo as part of your research.
- Inform them who in your company will review the photo and if you will delete it when the research is over. In other words, preemptively soothe any concerns they might have about their workspace being reviewed by IT team members and/or management. (There should be no repercussions for a messy workspace!)
- Tell them why it’s important they send a photo representative of their typical workday — clutter, food, or non-work tech and all. Include details about what you will be looking for, which is simply opportunities to deploy technology and tools to help them feel better at work.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW PROMPTS

- Please describe your working environment and daily routine.
- What do you dislike and like most about your personal workspace? Why?
- What device adds the most value to your home workspace?
- What accessories, applications, and software do you use every day?
- Do you have any tips for working more efficiently from home?
- How do you see your personal workspace in five years? If you had a magic wand, what would you change or add?



The New Logic of Work

Today's evolving business landscape has placed many new demands on IT; forecasting a sustainable technology strategy can seem a murky endeavor. However, transformed workspaces that support employee wellbeing — both physical and mental — are a clear path toward long-term productivity and business success. To achieve this new benchmark in the future of work, remember: One size does not fit all.

Logitech for Business has a broad range of solutions to cover every workspace need and the expertise to support every IT team. Contact us today to discuss how enterprise-grade mice and keyboards can unlock the new logic of work.

Explore the full Logitech
for Business lineup at
[Logitech.com/business](https://www.logitech.com/business)



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