SAi360
Risk | Learning | EHS | Sustainability

A Review of
Work from Home (WFH) Strategies

Pre-, During, and Post-Pandemic

Continuity Insights

2021

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Infographic: Key Findings

More than 86% of the respondents said that none or less than 25% of their employees worked from home prior to COVID 19.

Since March 2020 more than two-thirds of the employees worked from home on a full-time basis.

In the case of a disruption to their remote office, 56.37% will recover to an existing office location, while 23.53% will recover to an ad-hoc location.

More than 28% said that no changes are required or planned in their Work Area Recovery Strategies. However, nearly 50% said they are currently re-evaluating their plans and contractual arrangements.

What issues might impact your ability to return to work at your facility?

► **57.84%** I feel that I can be much **more productive** in a WFH scenario.

► **46.57%** **Continuing health concerns** about commuting, confined office environment, etc.

► **40.20%** The **financial benefits** realized with WFH are significant.

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Introduction

The ongoing pandemic crisis has clearly challenged us in ways we've never seen before, essentially impacting every aspect of our personal and professional lives. While moving an entire workforce from offices to remote environments would normally involve great preparation and planning, this was not an option in 2020. This shift to work from home was immediate. But still to be answered is how the resulting "new" work environment will be defined. Most certainly various work from home scenarios will continue going forward, and for many organizations the new hybrid model will become the standard.

SAI360 and *Continuity Insights* sponsored this report to learn more about the impact of the Work From Home decision, looking at pre-pandemic status, actions taken during the past 18 months, and some forward-looking thoughts on the "next" normal. Additionally and of particular interest in this report, was a closer look at work area recovery decisions, actions, and strategies of the respondents, to best ensure a resilient organization.

"Work / Life Balance is better with partial WFH. Being able to WFH during a week helps with other family or home needs that happen during work hours."

A response to the Question: What issues might impact your ability to return to work at your facility?
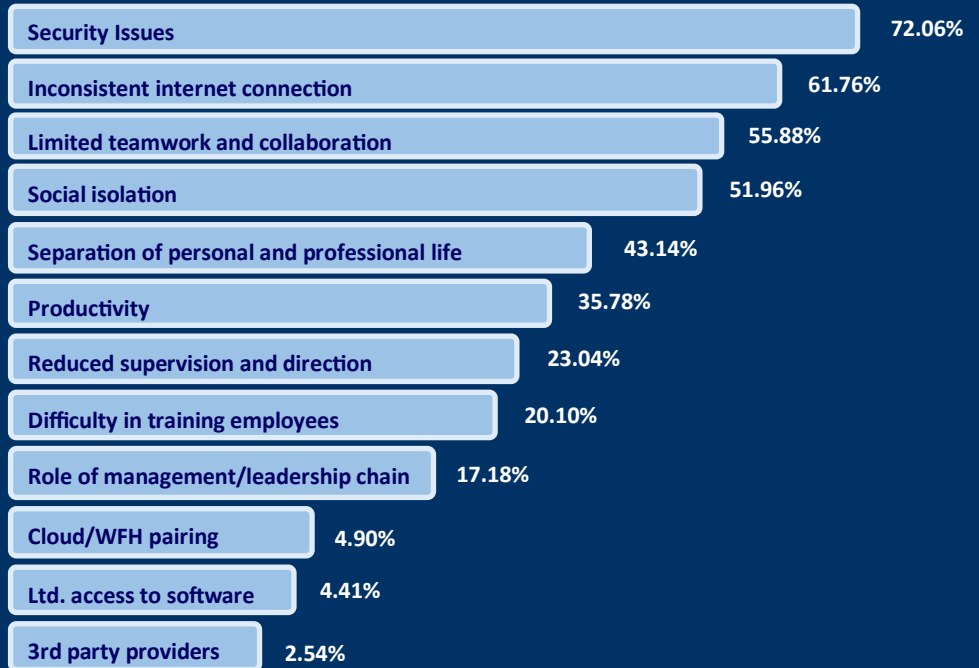
Methodology

This report was based on a survey sponsored by SAI360 and conducted by *Continuity Insights* in July and August 2021. Participants are employed in more than 20 different businesses and industries, representing organizations ranging in size from "Less than 100 employees" to "Greater than 50,000 employees." The respondents are involved the many aspects for business continuity and disaster recovery. The most common titles are mid-to-senior level business continuity executives, risk management, executive/senior management, IT/IS management, planners/coordinators/analysts, emergency management, crisis management, and others.

This study sought to find out how organizations are adapting and responding to the WFH scenario and where they go from here. The main objectives were to learn more about the state of WFH in their organization, acknowledging and addressing employee issues and concerns, while maintaining a resilient organization.

There were a number of interesting insights about the current state of WFH among business continuity professionals and what the future might look like, which are shared in this report.

In a new WFH environment, what issues concern you the most regardless of whether you have one WFH employee or 1,000 WFH locations?

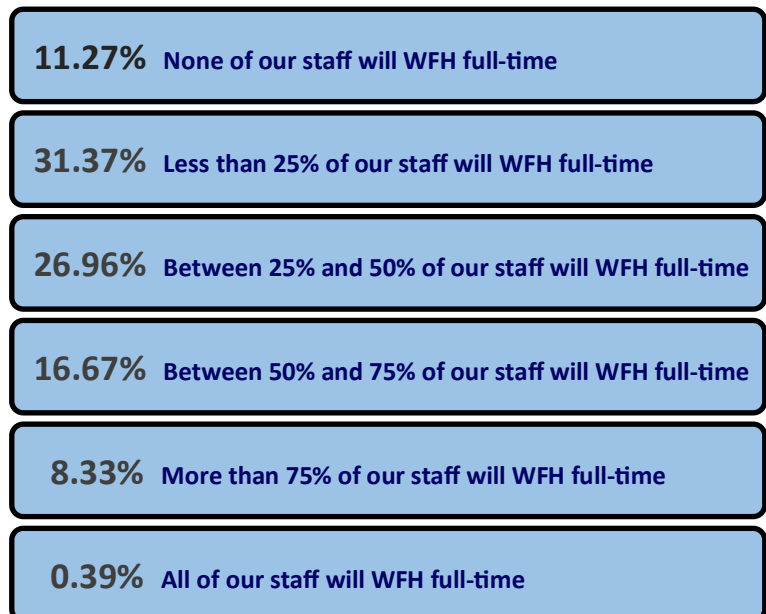| Issue	Percentage
Security Issues	72.06%
Inconsistent internet connection	61.76%
Limited teamwork and collaboration	55.88%
Social isolation	51.96%
Separation of personal and professional life	43.14%
Productivity	35.78%
Reduced supervision and direction	23.04%
Difficulty in training employees	20.10%
Role of management/leadership chain	17.18%
Cloud/WFH pairing	4.90%
Ltd. access to software	4.41%
3rd party providers	2.54%

Other included: Impact to the company culture, less identification with the company, impact of power outages, require direct contact with customers, issues with employee ISP provider, lack of support and recovery strategies for remote workforce, mental wellbeing (distinct from social isolation), inconsistent standards around who can WFH and who needs to be in the office, and burnout.

"More than 70% of the respondents indicated a review or change to their Work Area Recovery strategies. It will be interesting to observe how Business Continuity professionals and service providers respond to this distributed employee risk. Rather than planning for an outage at a single facility, industry professionals will need to plan for impacts to key staff working from home at thousands of discreet locations."

Tim Mathews, D.Sc., MBA, MBCI
Executive Director, Enterprise Resiliency
Educational Testing Service

As you begin to re-open facilities, how many of your office staff intend to continue to work from home on a full-time basis?

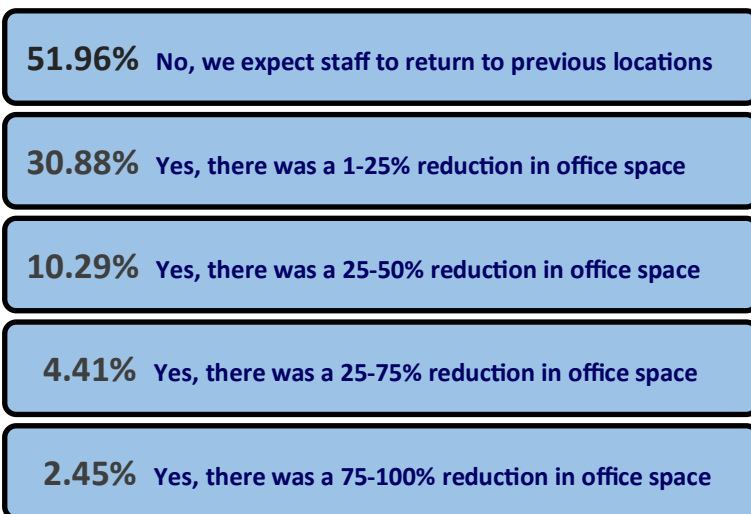| %	Description
11.27%	None of our staff will WFH full-time
31.37%	Less than 25% of our staff will WFH full-time
26.96%	Between 25% and 50% of our staff will WFH full-time
16.67%	Between 50% and 75% of our staff will WFH full-time
8.33%	More than 75% of our staff will WFH full-time
0.39%	All of our staff will WFH full-time

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Has your organization downsized or eliminated traditional office space due to a revised work-from-home strategy?

51.96% No, we expect staff to return to previous locations

30.88% Yes, there was a 1-25% reduction in office space

10.29% Yes, there was a 25-50% reduction in office space

4.41% Yes, there was a 25-75% reduction in office space

2.45% Yes, there was a 75-100% reduction in office space

"We recognized a lot of opportunity to eliminate some offices that were already underutilized pre-covid, so we have been making moves on real estate contracts/leases."

Michael Allman
Director, Organization Resilience
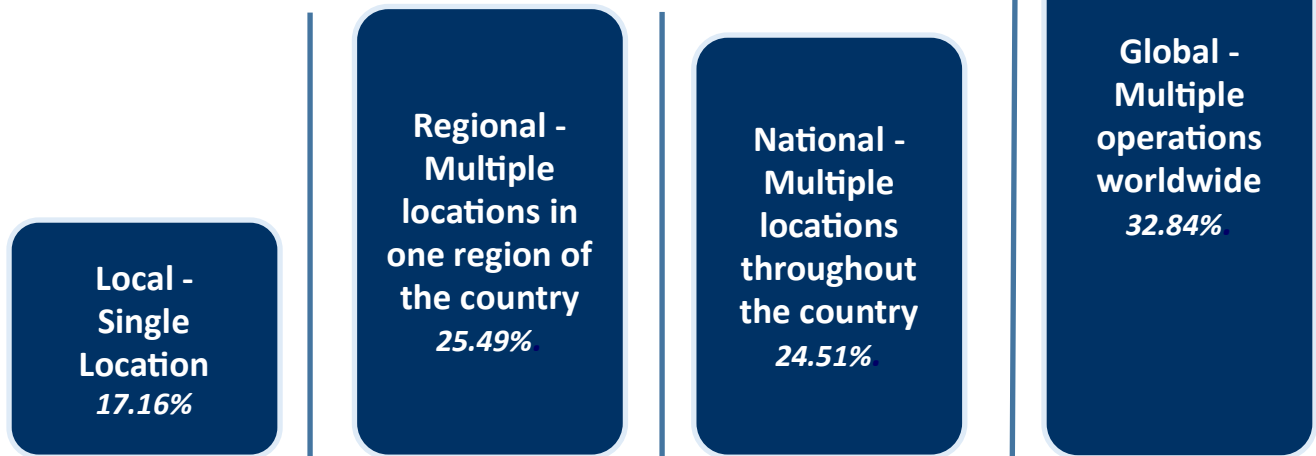Global Security Risk Services
Citrix, Inc.

What is the status of your Work Area Recovery strategies, plans, and contractual arrangements?

No changes are required or planned.

We are currently re-evaluating our strategies, plans and contractual arrangements.

We have modified our strategies, plans, and contractual arrangements.

28.43%

47.06%

24.51%

"The disconnect between employer expectations for return-to-office and workers embracing work-from-home as an employer value will intensify the ongoing fight for talent."

Howard Mannella, CBPC, MBCI
Managing Principal
Alternative Resiliency Services Corp.

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How would you describe the geographic range of your company?

Local - Single Location
17.16%

Regional - Multiple locations in one region of the country
25.49%.

National - Multiple locations throughout the country
24.51%

Global - Multiple operations worldwide
32.84%

Conclusion

The pandemic will have lasting results on organizations of all sizes. Remote work is here to stay. As we prepare for our return to the "next normal", the number of employers plan to bring everybody back to the office full-time will be the minority. The future of work is hybrid – some employees will work remotely all the time, some in the office all the time, and many coming into the office a couple of days a week.

For all companies and functions, the evolution of a hybrid This new dynamic will challenge all organizations with respect to resiliency, security, productivity, culture, leadership chain, teamwork and collaboration. How will organizations invest in this new WFH environment? What new tools and skillsets will be required. Organizations that devote increased attention and spending in this new normal will yield positive results. Decision-makers need to carefully consider the polies, protocols, tools and technologies needed to achieve a productive WFH workforce.

For all companies and functions, the evolution of a hybrid workforce is an opportunity for a wider effort to improve efficiency, agility, and creativity.

"While there are some real, predominant concerns in the areas of Security, Internet, etc., it is heartwarming to see employee-centric issues such as productivity and distraction lower on the list. With that degree of trust, the other issues are addressable; without that trust, resolving the other concerns is next to impossible."

Mark Carroll
SVP - Business Risk Officer
INCOME RESEARCH + MANAGEMENT

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