Table of Contents

Remote Work 4
  Remote Working Benefits 5
  Remote Working Challenges 5
Emerging Trends 6
  Role of Technology 6
  Role of Globalisation 6
  Role of Workplace Culture 6
Personality and Remote Work 7
  Phase 1 9
  Phase 2 10
Participants 10
  Age Range 11
  Residence and Employment Location 12
  Education 13
  Occupation 14
  Primary working environment 15
HPTI & Remote Work 16
  Group HPTI Scores 16
  Most Important HPTI Traits for Remote Work 18
Preferred Feedback Frequency 19
Happiness at Work 20
  Predictors of Desired Feedback Frequency 21
  Preferred Feedback Method 22
Personality of Remote Workers 23
Performance Management of Remote Workers 24
  Snapshot overview of HPTI Traits 25
  Practical Implications 28
1. **Executive Summary**

*Background*

Remote work is no longer the ‘work of the future’, it is the work of today.

Remote working is growing rapidly, and technological, demographic, and social trends suggest that remote working will continue to grow. Flexible schedules and remote working options are the preferred option for many employees, and are linked to improved productivity, job satisfaction, and work engagement.

One of the key differentiators in performance is personality, which can be assessed using the High Potential Trait Indicator (HPTI). While the HPTI has previously been used to assess performance and potential (especially leadership potential) in traditional workplace environments, we predict that the HPTI can be applied to predicting performance and managing employees in different roles and environments.

HPTI traits help predict how employees will react to managing workplace factors like: organisation, long term-planning, managing stressors, novelty, ambiguity, risk, and competition. Therefore, assessing HPTI traits of remote workers offers a great opportunity to:

1. Select those with high potential to succeed in remote working environments
2. Understand how to manage and motivate remote workers based on their HPTI traits

*Results*

This research included a diverse group of remote workers from different backgrounds, countries, industries, and remote working conditions. The level of remote work ranged from 2% to 100% of time working. It was found that remote workers overall had significantly higher levels of Conscientiousness, Adjustment, and Curiosity than the general population; implications for this are discussed in Sections 3 and 4.

The results also showed that Adjustment, Risk Approach, and more time spent working remotely predicted happiness at work among this sample. Those remote workers with higher Curiosity, lower Ambiguity Acceptance, and higher Competitiveness wanted more frequent performance feedback on their work.

*Practical Implications*

Based on the personality of remote workers, we suggest that they need more stimulation and challenge than the average worker, but are less likely to ask for feedback or demand recognition. Therefore, it is important to remember to recognise and reward good performance among remote workers, as well as proactively managing performance issues. Information regarding how to manage and motivate the different HPTI traits of remote workers is also provided.
2. Background

Remote Work

According to Remote Year™, the term ‘remote work’ refers to those who work outside of a traditional office environment. It encompasses those individuals who do not have to report to a specific, physical space, on a regular basis, in order to get their work done. Currently, one will recognize various terms referring to this form of working: working from home, freelancing, distributed, location independent, and telecommuting. However, whatever name we give it, remote work is not a new phenomenon.

Throughout human history, people have used their places of residence as their workspace. Until the industrial revolution, working from home, or telecommuting, was the norm. By the 1960s, most people commuted to work in factories and offices; however, groups of creatives were not ready to give up their work-from-home lifestyle. (BenefitsPro, 2017).

Several influencing events happened in the 1970s that affected remote work. In 1971, the Canadian Clean Air Act was passed, the results of OPEC oil embargo caused great concern regarding the cost and supply of gasoline, and the term ‘National Gridlock’ in the US was used. On one highway alone the traffic tripled over a 10 year span (BenefitsPro, 2017). In 1973, while Jack Nilles was working remotely on a NASA Telecommunications System, he stated:

"Either the jobs of the employees must be redesigned so that they can still be self-contained at each individual location, or a sufficiently sophisticated telecommunications and information-storage system must be developed to allow the information transfer to occur as effectively as if the employees were centrally collocated."

(The Telecommunications-Transportation Tradeoff, 2007)

Needless to say, these events brought the value of remote work, or working from home, back to the forefront. North America had certainly reached a point of discontinuity: a point at which ‘something’ had to change in order to address a need, or fix a problem. However, as with every great solution offered, there have been naysayers. In 2007, Niles, stated:

"We've found for more than 30 years now that generally technology isn't the problem. It's certainly not a fundamental barrier to more telecommuting. Management attitude is still the fundamental issue." (Niles, 2007)

People can work remotely in varying degrees. Some employees work outside the traditional office environment as little as once a week, while some work remotely 100% of the time. The context can vary as well. Freelancers and consultants may have the flexibility to work from anywhere, while others mainly work from a home office. With more companies moving towards flexible and remote working options, remote work is an important area of research.
Remote Working Benefits

Today’s business landscape sees millions of people working remotely. Research clearly shows the benefits of working in a remote or distributed context: people are more productive, experience a better work/life balance, save organisations money on office space and equipment, save time and money on driving back and forth to the office, and leave a smaller environment footprint, to name a few. Laurel Farrer, a Remote Work Strategist and Advocate, outlines the benefits for companies and teams. She identified such things as easier scaling, expanded recruiting pool, and employee retention as benefits. Painting an even broader picture, Farrer notes global benefits such as economic stimulation and environmental sustainability. Indeed, remote working can provide benefits for both productivity and employee well-being when it is managed well. In addition, advances in communication technology has greatly contributed to the achievement of these benefits. What Jack Nilles stated back in 1970 has been realized today...in 2019.

Remote working, fueled by technology, is becoming increasingly common in the workplace. An estimate from the Office of National Statistics estimates that 50% of workers in the UK will be working remotely by 2020. A report by Upwork in the US estimates that by 2027 the majority of their workforce will be freelancers (Upwork, 2017).

Remote Working Challenges

To be clear, there are challenges associated with remote work as reported by individuals and organisations. Previous research revealed some of those challenges such: as the potential for feelings of loneliness and isolation, reality of virtual distance, work boundaries, and effective management of time. As well, it is important for managers to understand that managing those working in a remote context is not the same as doing so in a traditional office environment. Performance management can be more difficult when people are not physically present, requiring communication that is more intentional with clearly defined performance management criteria. Without effective communication and relevant performance management, remote workers can struggle to work effectively and may not realise the benefits of the intended flexibility and autonomy.

While inadequate technology can create a barrier to success for the remote worker, ongoing advances in communication technology have made a great difference over the years in how remote work is being done.

A final comment regarding challenges in remote work is that not everyone is equally effective in the same environment. While some people are fully able to manage themselves and their performance when they work independently, others can struggle with less clarity and oversight in a workplace setting. Personality traits like conscientiousness and adjustment explain how people behave, act, and feel in the workplace and can help to explain which environments can be most productive for different people.
Emerging Trends

Three areas call for added attention as we examine the current and future state of remote work: the role of technology, the role of globalisation, and the role of workplace culture.

Role of Technology

The growth of new technologies, such as Internet connectivity and artificial intelligence (AI), are also changing trade patterns. From 2005 to 2017, the amount of data flowing across borders every second grew by a factor of 148. The availability of cheap, fast digital communication has boosted trade. E-commerce platforms allow buyers and sellers to find each other more easily. The Internet of Things—everyday products with Internet connections—lets companies track shipments around the world and monitor their supply chains. (Lund, Manyika and Spence 2019)

Technology today has enabled conversations to happen across the globe between two people or 200 people. Virtual meetings can take place on interfaces like Sococco or Remo allowing attendees to break into smaller groups and come back together to share ideas created. Technology has provided access to learning that allows us to stay on top of what is going on in our area of expertise, to investigate new things—all readily available on a device that fits in the palm of a hand. Technology also provides tools to help individuals and teams work transparently, showing progress as well as sharing and networking projects. It enables both worker and employer to connect anytime if a concern arises.

Role of Globalisation

“While the demand for knowledge workers grows, the domestic supply is shrinking.” (Cheese, Craig, Thomas. 2007). This demand is partly being met through the hiring of remote workers. If successful completion of the job is not location dependent, organisations now have the world at their fingertips. Take for example an organisation situated in a small Canadian city, who needed a project manager to lead a team of developers distributed across the globe…the successful candidate resided in Europe. Or the small business located on a small Greek Island who needed a graphic designer with a global mindset. They contracted a remote worker living in Finland. Perhaps a larger organisation needs to hire a senior level manager with unique talents; no longer is their reach limited to their geographical location. Rather, they can connect with talent anywhere in the world and determine how to bring them into the company either physically, remotely, or a combination of both.

The increase of remote work nurtured by globalisation has also seen the rise of on-line recruiting sites. Sites like FlexJobs, Aboodoo, ACEWORKS or Remote.com serve as avenues for both organisations and remote workers to connect, no matter their global location.

Role of Workplace Culture

Workplace culture does not exist independently from overall shifts in economies, societies, and governments. Workplace culture has been shifting towards being more flexible, more independent, and more autonomous. For those who want to work flexibly, remotely, or independently, this has provided excellent opportunities to work in ways that were not possible or seen as socially desirable in previous decades.
Workplace culture, for many companies, has also been shifting quickly towards a focus on employee health and well-being. Psychological health and safety, and improved mental health awareness is on the rise for many companies. In the war for talent, many companies are shifting their culture to providing more benefits, supports, and initiatives to promote both physical and psychological health in the workplace.

Of course, not all workplaces have embraced this shift, but organisations that want to attract the most skilled, most intelligent, and most capable talent are rapidly moving in this direction. There is fierce competition for the most skilled workers who are more mobile, more flexible, and often more independent than in previous decades. Shifts towards positive workplace cultures that prioritize employee health and well-being will continue to be driven by the battle for top talent.

**Personality and Remote Work**

Personality traits, measured by the High Potential Trait Indicator (HPTI) are an excellent indicator of performance and potential. These six personality traits have been used to predict leadership potential and career success. Personality traits explain the complex connections between thoughts, emotion, and behaviour in the workplace so can also be used to predict and enhance the success of remote workers, and their managers.

**Conscientiousness** describes worker’s motivation, discipline, and capacity for long-term planning. Employees with higher Conscientiousness tend to be more self-motivated and able to manage their own schedules and deadlines independently. Those with lower Conscientiousness are likely to need more oversight and support when working more independently or remotely.

- Remote workers had significantly higher Conscientiousness than the general non-remote population
- Conscientiousness was rated as one of the most important traits for remote workers

**Adjustment** explains how people react to stressors and someone’s ability to manage and regulate their own emotions. Those with higher Adjustment levels tend to have an easier time adapting to some of the new demands and stressors of working remotely. Those with lower Adjustment levels may find new working environments stressful. They may, however, also find working remotely relieves some of the stressors present in traditional working environments: from things like workplace conflict, to the challenges of the daily commute.

- Remote workers had significantly higher Adjustment than the general non-remote population
- Adjustment was rated as one of the most important traits for remote workers
- Higher Adjustment was linked with higher happiness at work
Workers with higher levels of **Curiosity** enjoy learning new things like new work environments and processes. Those with higher Curiosity are likely to adapt more quickly to new working environments, and are likely to be quicker at picking up new tools and technology associated with remote or flexible working environments.

- Remote workers had significantly higher Curiosity than the general non-remote population
- Curiosity was rated as one of the most important traits for remote workers
- Remote workers with higher Curiosity wanted more frequent feedback on their work

**Ambiguity Acceptance** explains people's approach to complex situations and environments. Those with higher Ambiguity Acceptance thrive in complex and ambiguous work situations, whereas those with lower Ambiguity Acceptance prefer consistency and clarity. Ambiguity Acceptance will be an important trait for predicting success of remote workers because those with higher Ambiguity Acceptance are more likely to be successful at navigating the intricacies and vagaries of working more independently.

- Remote workers with lower Ambiguity Acceptance preferred feedback more regularly

**Risk Approach** describes how people deal with conflict and challenges in the workplace. Those with higher Risk Approach tend to have a more proactive style of dealing with difficulty whereas those with lower levels tend to be more reactive (and less constructive). The levels of risk and difficulty associated with remote working can be framed and set-up in a more constructive way to optimise performance. Implementing proper performance management procedures, communication systems and clarifying accountabilities will improve the performance of all remote workers.

- On average, the remote workers who participated had higher risk approach
- Among the remote workers, higher risk approach was linked to lower work satisfaction (it only explains about 6% of the variation), but the remote workers with higher scores in risk approach reported slightly lower job satisfaction

Participants based in a traditional office environment spent, on average, 28% of their time working remotely. Those based in a home office environment spent 91% of their time working remotely, meaning they still spend about 9% of their time working in a traditional office environment. Those who use their home living area as their primary workspace work remotely 78% of the time, on average.

**Competitiveness** is related to an employee's need to be recognised for their work and demonstrate their own achievements. Those with higher Competitiveness often enjoy the opportunities for recognition and competition that a traditional office environment provides, and may struggle to work more independently if their contribution is not recognised.

- Remote workers had lower Competitiveness than the general non-remote population
- Competitiveness was rated as the least important HPTI trait for remote working
- Remote workers with higher Competitiveness preferred more frequent feedback on their work
3. Research Results

This research is part of an ongoing project of remote work and remote workers to understand what makes remote workers successful, and to identify the organisational factors that contribute to the success of remote working.

Qualitative Results

Phase 1

Phase 1 of the research was an initial study with 250 individuals. Of those 250 individuals, 109 participated in a survey, and 149 participated in qualitative research, either face-to-face or on virtual platforms.

“Much research exists pertaining to the necessity of hiring based on identified competencies, abilities or attributes, described in terms of behaviour, key to effective and/or highly effective performance within a particular job” (University of Nottingham, 2018). Skills are about what is done while competencies look at how a task is done. Competencies link to performance management in both face-to-face and remote settings; however, as confirmed by Al-Husaa (2005), most examinations of appraisal systems focus on organisations built on collocated settings, not on those virtual or distributed. Key information provided by researchers even go so far as to identify competencies on which to base those appraisals (Wang & Haggerty, 2011). However, the gap becomes evident when considering performance evaluation, based on relevant competencies, from the perspective of remote work. Certain complexities exist around remote teams that may not be evident in collocated teams.”

(Sawatzky & Sawatzky, 2019)

The full results from Phase 1 are available here. The Phase 1 research focused on discovering the key competencies for success of remote workers. The results revealed the following competencies as being critical:

- Communication
- Self-direction
- Trustworthiness
- Discipline
- Curiosity
- Adaptability
- Self-efficacy

With understanding, the key competencies required for remote work, the next step could be to investigate personality traits of remote workers, and consider if there are certain traits that increase effectiveness in remote working. If that were so, we could improve the selection of remote workers and make recommendations to improve the performance management of these individuals.
Phase 2

The focus of Phase 2 was to investigate specific personality traits of remote workers, and to further affirm the competencies necessary for success in remote working.

The first objective was to compare High Potential Traits Indicator (HPTI) traits of remote workers to workers in the general population. This helped us to understand if specific traits tend to be more dominant in remote working. The research also asked remote working participants which traits they believed were the most important for remote working.

The second objective was to look at additional competencies and their importance for remote working. We confirmed that of the key competencies identified in Phase 1, all were important indicators of success in remote working and are strongly linked to HPTI personality traits.

The third objective was to investigate performance management and feedback for remote working. Previous research has shown that effective communication, feedback, and performance management systems are essential for remote working. This aims to provide more insight into specific feedback preferences, frequency and methods.

Participants

In addition to the 250 individuals surveyed in Phase 1, an additional seventy three (73) respondents completed the second questionnaire. The responses covered a wide range of remote workers, with participants ranging from spending 2% to 100% of their time working remotely. Collecting data from a wide range of remote working schedules was desirable because it allows a more detailed analysis of different types of remote working arrangements.

- On average, participants spent 59% of their time working remotely
- 28% of participants worked 100% remotely
- 56% of participants worked 50%+ remotely
Age Range

62% of respondents were women, and 38% men. Ages ranged from 20 years old to 68 years old, with an average age of 40.5 years old.

Figure 1. Distribution of Participant Age
Residence and Employment Location

70% of respondents reported that English was their native language, and because this was a sample of remote workers, we asked what county people *lived* in and what country they were *employed* in. Although the majority of respondents lived and worked in the same country, results showed that not all respondents lived in the same country in which they were employed. Figure 2 shows the connections between where people live and where they are employed.

The majority of respondents lived and/or worked in the UK, Canada, and Ireland, but it can be observed that many people live in a different country from where they are employed.

*Figure 2. Distribution of Employee’s Country of Residence and Country of Employment*
Education

The majority of participants had completed post-secondary education, with 74% having completed either a BA/BSc or MA/MSc. This is far higher than national averages with 39% of people in the UK having completed post-secondary education (41% in Ireland, 54% in Canada).

Figure 3. Distribution of Education Attainment

These results are consistent with the other background characteristics of employees, particularly occupational sector. This sample of remote workers tends to be attained higher educational qualifications than the general population and work in professional business and managerial occupations.
Occupation

The majority of respondents came from occupations in business, finance, administration, and management occupations. This is unsurprising because some occupations are conducive to remote working while other occupations are much more difficult to do remotely.

Figure 4. Distribution of Industry Sector

- Business, finance, administration
- Management
- Education, law, social, government
- Health
- Sales and service
- Sciences
- Manufacturing/Utilities
- Natural Resources
- Art, culture, recreation, sport

![Distribution of Industry Sector Chart]

Page 14 of 31
Primary working environment

Participants based in a traditional office environment spent, on average, 28% of their time working remotely. Those based in a home office environment spent 91% of their time working remotely, meaning they still spend about 9% of their time working in a traditional office environment. Those who use their home living area as their primary work space work remotely 78% of the time, on average.”

*Figure 5. Primary Working Environment of Participants*

*Figure 6. Percentage of Time Spent Working Remotely by Most Common Locations*
HPTI & Remote Work

Group HPTI Scores

One of the primary objectives of this research was to investigate the personality differences between remote workers and the general population.

HPTI scores are based on national norm groups, so a score of 50 is an average score.

Table 1. Average HPTI Scores of Remote Workers and General Working Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Remote Workers</th>
<th>All Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>57.14</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment</td>
<td>55.59</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>58.41</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity Acceptance</td>
<td>52.54</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Approach</td>
<td>59.46</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>46.52</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conscientiousness, Adjustment, and Curiosity are all higher in the samples of remote workers, which is consistent with the traits that were rated as most important for remote workers (see Figure 8). Risk Approach was significantly higher among remote workers, compared with the general population.

Competitiveness was significantly lower among remote workers than in the general population. This is consistent with results shown in Figure 8, where Competitiveness is rated as far less important for remote workers than all other HPTI traits. Those with high Competitiveness scores tend to like more recognition and praise for their work, and remote workers tend to get less of this recognition day-to-day.
Figure 7. Average HPTI Scores of Remote Workers and General Working Population

- Conscientiousness
- Adjustment
- Curiosity
- Ambiguity Acceptance
- Risk Approach
- Competitiveness
Most Important HPTI Traits for Remote Work

Five of the HPTI traits were rated as important success factors in remote working, which is not surprising because HPTI traits are predictive of success in the workplace.

Curiosity, Conscientiousness, and Adjustment were rated as most important for remote workers, and these three traits are the best predictors of success in most types of work.

While five HPTI traits were rated as important, Competitiveness was rated as much less important for the success of remote workers.

Figure 8. Ratings of Importance of HPTI Traits for Remote Work

![Bar chart showing the importance of HPTI traits for remote work. Curiosity, Conscientiousness, and Adjustment are rated the highest, while Competitiveness is rated the lowest.]
Preferred Feedback Frequency

Regular feedback on their work is important for remote workers. The results show that annual performance feedback is not enough for remote workers; more regular feedback with a clear performance management framework is important for the success of these individuals.

Favoured frequencies range from weekly to quarterly, and as show in Figure 12, remote workers like to get feedback from a variety of sources including face-to-face meetings, written and email feedback, and messaging apps. Formal feedback through a traditional performance review may not be practical or desirable on a weekly basis, but formal performance management frameworks can be combined with more informal feedback communication.

*Figure 8. Preferred Frequency of Feedback, Remote Working Respondents*
Happiness at Work

The combination of remote working and HPTI personality traits predicts nearly one-quarter (24%) of the variation within job satisfaction. Participants who spent more time working remotely reported increased happiness with their work and those with higher Adjustment and lower Risk Approach also reported higher levels of happiness in the work.

Adjustment consistently predicts factors including happiness at work, job satisfaction, and work engagement (MacRae & Furnham, 2018), so this finding is consistent with previous research. Those with higher Adjustment tend to be more resilient to stress, and report more positive emotions which explains why it is consistently predictive of happiness and measures of well-being.

Remote workers in this sample with lower Risk Approach reported higher levels of happiness at work.

Figure 10. Predictors of Happiness at Work

Among the remote workers who participated, spending an increased time working remotely predicted higher happiness at work. These results show that the flexibility and autonomy that remote working can provide increases an employee's happiness at work. This is consistent with the qualitative findings of this study and previous research.
Predictors of Desired Feedback Frequency

HPTI traits predict 16% of the variation in how frequently the remote workers who participated in the research wanted feedback.

Those with higher Curiosity, lower Ambiguity Acceptance and higher Competitiveness wanted feedback more frequently. These HPTI traits can help to explain how frequently people want workplace feedback because:

- People with higher Curiosity like new information
- People with lower Ambiguity Acceptance like clarity
- People with higher Competitiveness seek to improve their performance

These combinations of HPTI traits can help to explain what kind of support and feedback remote workers need based on their personality.

Figure 11. Predictors of Feedback Frequency
Preferred Feedback Method

Participants reported how they prefer to get feedback on the work from managers and peers. The preferred feedback method was face-to-face feedback, with over 80% of participants responding that face-to-face feedback was one of the preferred methods.

It was interesting to see that although participants work remotely at least part of the time, most still wanted to receive feedback about their work in person. This is an important finding to remember as work becomes increasingly remote, people still value face-to-face interactions for important workplace conversations like performance feedback.

Instant messaging was also one of the preferred methods of feedback, but far more respondents liked to receive feedback from peers over instant messaging (44%). However, only 22% said they preferred getting performance feedback from their managers using instant messaging. This is a more informal method, so while some remote workers may be happy to talk about their work over instant messaging, it’s not the best platform for managers to have important discussions about performance management.

Approximately half of participants liked to talk about their performance in writing (including email) and through video calls. Respondents also reported that when they are talking about performance with their managers, they prefer that conversation to be followed up with a further conversation, while the follow up conversation was less important with peers.

*Figure 12. Preferred Feedback Method from Peers and Managers*
4. Looking at the Data

Personality of Remote Workers

Using the HPTI data, we can see the distribution of personality traits amongst remote workers. In the general population, the average score would be 50, with about two-thirds of people falling within an average range between 38 and 62. However, we can see amongst remote workers, the average traits scores are higher for all traits except Competitiveness.

*Figure 14. HPTI Personality profile of all remote workers*
Performance Management of Remote Workers

- **High Conscientiousness and High Curiosity**
  These are highly motivated, interested workers. Keep these workers stimulated. They like to have new tasks and challenges at work, and might get bored if the work becomes too repetitive. Change things up every now and then to encourage their drive to succeed. These remote workers will be goal orientated, so make sure they have both short- and long-term goals to work towards, and the right structure in place for them to meet deadlines, deliverables, and success. High Ambiguity Acceptance also fits within these recommendations.

- **High Conscientiousness and Low Ambiguity Acceptance Profiles**
  Remember that those with high Conscientiousness but low Ambiguity Acceptance profiles may be very effective remote workers, but will need clarity, structure and direction instead of autonomy and flexibility.

- **Provide Regular Feedback**
  Structure regular feedback from fortnightly to quarterly, if regular performance feedback is not already in place. More regular conversations about performance do not necessarily need to be lengthy or create an administrative burden, but can be quick check-in conversations to confirm if everything is going well, and offer opportunities to discuss anything they haven’t had the opportunity to raise.

- **Don’t Ignore Success**
  The typical profile of a remote worker suggests hard workers who won’t actively seek much in return. A surprise gesture of recognition when appropriate and deserved can help to build morale and reinforce the importance of the person’s work. The workers in this group tend to have low Competitiveness, so are far less likely to seek recognition and praise for their work. While these workers tend to work independently and demand less attention, they will still appreciate appropriate recognition for their contributions.

- **Remember to Offer Feedback Opportunities**
  Generally, the profiles we see indicate workers who can work independently, get the job done and are less likely to raise issues unless they are directly asked. Make sure you are giving these employees opportunities to raise issues or make suggestions about what could improve their performance – they are less likely to bring this up unless asked directly.

- **Remember to Encourage Positive Behaviour**
  Good performance and individual achievements should be recognised in a timely and specific way. There is a tendency to forget about higher performing employees when they work reliably and independently.
Remote workers emphasised the importance of direct conversations and communication. Remember that even amongst remote workers who are very effective at working remotely, it can still be useful, valuable, and motivating to have direct face-to-face (or a virtual substitute) interactions instead of relegating everything to less personal alternatives.

Snapshot overview of HPTI Traits

Below is a snapshot overview of HPTI traits, providing insight for those leading in a remote context.

Conscientiousness and Remote Work

- **Lower Conscientiousness**
  - Needs more external motivation
  - Has difficulty prioritising, tends to procrastinate
  - May require deadlines or incentives to perform to the best of their ability

- **Higher Conscientiousness**
  - Good at self-motivating
  - Prone to workaholism
  - Better at setting own deadlines and managing schedules

Adjustment and Remote Work

- **Lower Adjustment**
  - More prone to stress and frustration
  - May worry about getting less feedback, encouragement
  - May be seen as too needy

- **Higher Adjustment**
  - More resilient
  - Less insecure about abilities and performance
  - Can be too aloof, less worried about regular performance management
Curiosity and Remote Work

**Lower Curiosity**
- Dependable and focused
- Sticks to similar format, process or technique
- Limited learning and development activities independently

**Higher Curiosity**
- Embrace new ideas and enjoy exploring alternative solutions to problems
- Adaptive, and good at finding new techniques and methods
- Prioritises own learning and development

Risk Approach and Remote Work

**Lower Risk Approach**
- Conflict averse, may have difficulty approaching and resolving problems
- Supportive, cooperative, amenable
- Doesn’t work beyond own abilities

**Higher Risk Approach**
- Likely to deal with conflict proactively and promptly
- Sees risks as opportunities
- Rises to a challenge
Ambiguity Acceptance and Remote Work

**Lower Ambiguity Acceptance**
Consistent and methodical
Needs clarity and direction at work
May come across as fussy or stubborn

**Higher Ambiguity Acceptance**
Embraces and thrives in unstructured or uncertain environments
Seeks complex information from a range of sources
Can be seen as indecisive or unclear

Competitiveness and Remote Work

**Lower Competitiveness**
Generally cooperative and accommodating
Will usually work better in a collaborative environment
Less need for praise and recognition

**Higher Competitiveness**
Likes to be the "winner".
Driven by competition with others
Needs praise and recognition for work
5. **Practical Implications**

The prevalence of remote working has been increasing quickly, and will continue to be more prevalent, more in demand, and an even bigger force that will shape the world of work. As remote working grows, it is important to remember that remote work must be integrated into HR processes and be a fully functioning component of the talent pipelines.

Remote working is no longer just a quirky alternative for a very small segment of the workforce. Estimates suggest that the majority of people will spend at least some time working remotely as soon as the early 2020s. Forward thinking leadership, organisations, and HR departments should make sure they are developing and integrating processes for identifying, developing, and retaining remote workers just like they would do for any other worker.

There are great gains to be made from increasing the access to remote working options and in supporting remote workers’ success. Giving employees more autonomy and independence in their work will be desirable for many employees. However, the necessary workplace resources, along with managerial and colleague support is necessary to make remote working an effective and productive endeavor.

When it is managed effectively, remote working has the potential to create substantial gains for teams and organisations. Employees who have more independence and control over their own work schedules and environments, along with choosing how and when they complete tasks report higher levels of satisfaction with their work and well-being in the workplace. They tend to have higher levels of productivity and are often able to manage their time more effectively. Conversely, the less autonomy and control people are given in the tasks they are willing and capable of completing on their own, the more people tend to become disengaged and demotivated.

Yet, remote working is not for everyone. Classic tools and resources like psychometrics tests and assessments that help us to identify high potential at work can also be applied to remote working environments. We should not assume that every person has the same degree of potential to succeed in a remote working environment. Some employees will be more productive in traditional, structured office environments. Others enjoy the camaraderie or clarity that a traditional working environment provides. The lessons of remote working demonstrate that there is no one “right” way to work, and if workplaces want to maximize productivity and well-being, there needs to be a range of working styles and environments to improve the effectiveness of all staff.

We should not expect remote workers (like any workers) to be successful or effective without the proper selection, support, resources, developmental opportunities, performance management structure, tools, and technology to enable their success. As remote working becomes a driving force in how and when people work, we have the opportunity to be prepared and proactive in making it an effective and productive way to work.

This research helps to set the stage and introduce some of the key issues that will affect the performance of remote workers and the workplace of the future. We know that remote workers have specific personality traits and capabilities that help make them successful, and that performance management and communication is essential to ensure remote workers (as well as all workers) can be effective. This initial research helps to point the way, but as the world of work continues to evolve, so will this conversation on how to improve work both for organisations and the people in them.
6. References


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