

Developers Remote Work Report

How developers feel about working from home



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About OfferZen



Your developer shortlist is already waiting. OfferZen gives your company the hiring edge with access to a curated list of skilled developers ready for their next career move.

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Introduction



Since the outbreak of COVID-19, we've seen the appetite for remote work increase from both candidates and companies on our platform. Remote work is now a necessary consideration for every company worldwide.

We surveyed our developer community to gather in-depth insights on the topic, to help your team get an edge in an extremely competitive hiring market. The report covers how remote work affects the productivity, team work, and motivation of developers.

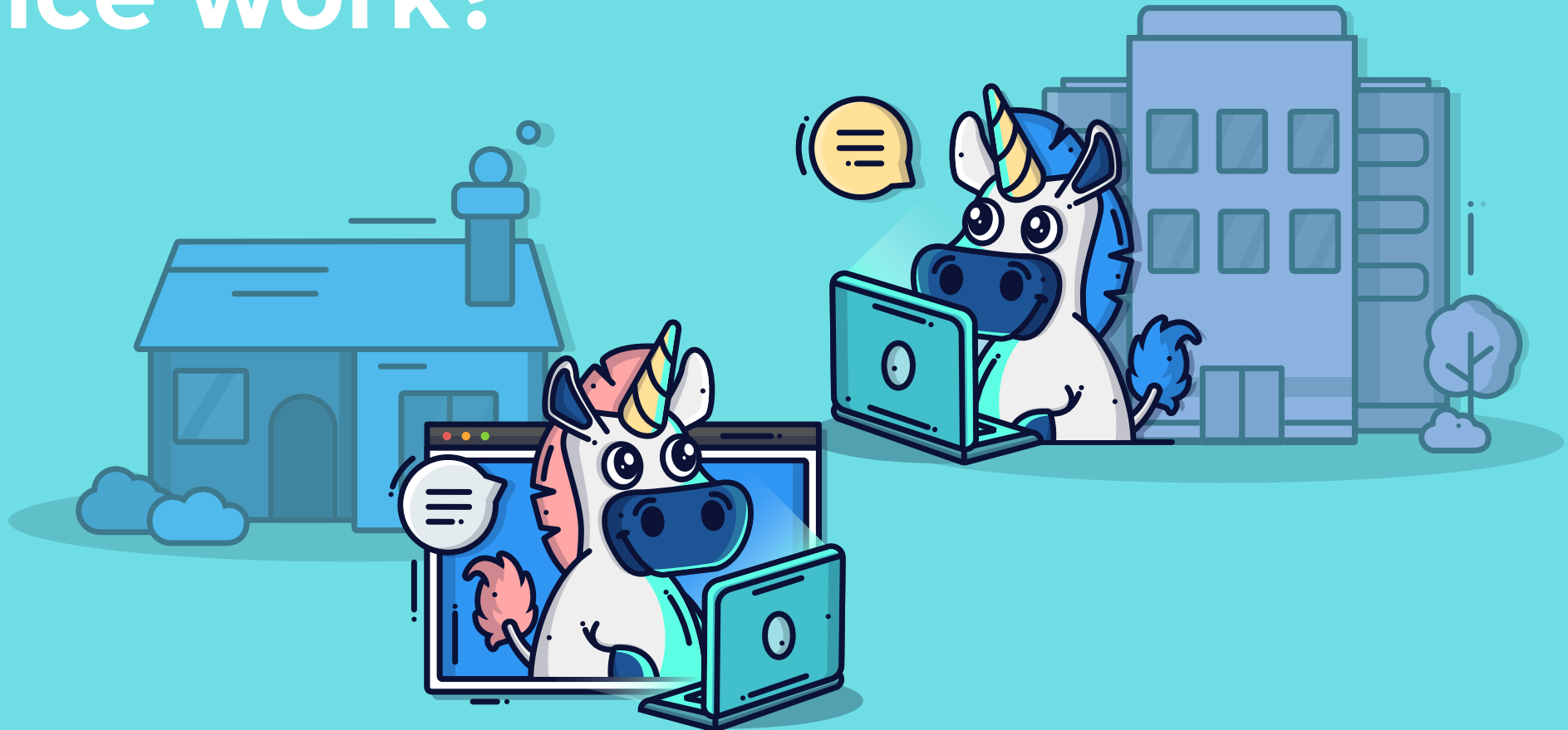
The insights shared by the community in this report have helped me get a much better understanding of what remote work means for our team, and software developers in general. We hope you also find it to be a valuable reference in navigating this new world we find ourselves in.



Malan Joubert
OfferZen Co-founder

Which do developers prefer

Remote vs office work?



“ Between working remotely and in the office, which option do developers prefer? ”



56.6% working from home

Top reasons why:

- Get more work done
- ↺ Waste less time (on things like traffic)
- 🕒 More agency over time

36% partially at home/in office

Top reasons why:

- 🗨 Team interactions and collaboration
- 💖 Maintaining work-life balance
- 🕒 More agency over time

7.4% working in the office

Top reasons why:

- 🗨 Increased focus and productivity
- 🗨 Team interactions and collaboration
- 💖 Maintaining work-life balance

Developers care about being efficient



Across all three work setups, one thing becomes clear: Developers care about getting work done and getting it done well. The respective main themes are: Getting work done, collaborating with the team and getting more focused productivity time.

It's interesting that people who prefer remote and people who prefer working at the office find their respective environments more conducive for focused productivity. One reason here could be their personal circumstances.

However, it's striking to note that the vast majority of developers believe that they can get more work done while working from home.

91% of developers are more likely to choose a job with remote work benefits



The sweet spot when it comes to a job offer? The **option** to work remotely.

Based on the reasons shared by respondents, developers seem to feel higher levels of **autonomy and freedom** when they have a remote option because they have more control over their time and *where* they work. The second most mentioned reason for wanting remote work when choosing a job is a decrease in time spent commuting.

But what about those developers who do want to work from an office?

For the respondents who selected this option, many said that they prefer having an office or space readily available and the ability to choose where they work – which again points to the importance of autonomy.

Given these responses, it seems that distributed teams and co-working spaces may become the future of work.

Deep-diving into remote work

Productivity and collaboration during remote work are big concerns for many tech leads and companies as a whole. To dive further into the topic, we focused on the following areas:

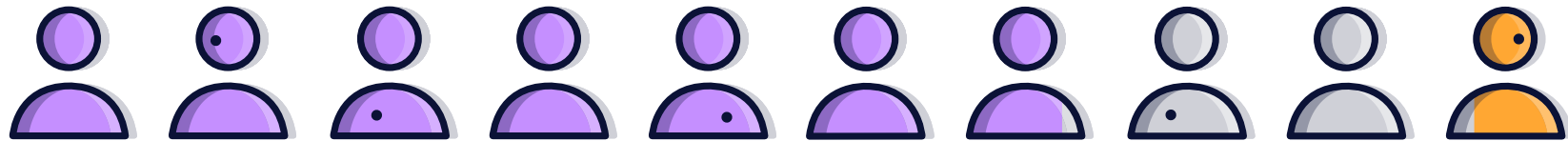
- 🔍 Productivity
- ☆ Motivation
- 💬 Collaboration
- 👤 Interactions with managers
- 🔧 Company setup



The impact of remote work on Developer productivity



“ How does remote work affect developer focus and productivity? ”



69.2% positively

Top reasons why:

- Less distractions
- More comfort/less stress
- No commute

8% negatively

Top reasons why:

- More distractions
- Hard to switch from work to life mode

Survey respondents could select “neutral”, which came to 22.8%

Home is where distractions aren't (unless that's where they are)



It's probably unsurprising that developers think they're more productive at home. 'Quick questions' from co-workers, socialising, and other office distractions are productivity killers for many developers.



“

Since I have been working from home, I have been able to organise my to-do list in such a way that I am able to complete most if not all of it during the course of the day. (...)

Distractions and unnecessary breaks are taken out of the equation resulting in more time to deliver as well as develop myself.



“

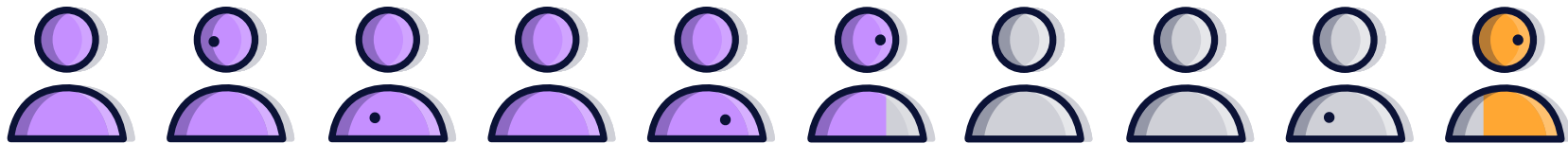
Working remotely allows for flexibility (i.e. working at times that are suitable), and without disturbance or distraction at the office. Thus it is fantastic for concentration and keeping my attention focused on the dev tasks I have. I'm often far more productive at home, because I can structure the way I work and plan my day.

On the other hand, a few respondents felt less productive in their remote setup and found it to be more distracting. They attributed this to their personality or personal family situations, like having children at home. Another reason for feeling unproductive at home was the 'blurred lines' between home and work and not being able to switch modes effectively.

The impact of remote work on Developer motivation



“ How does remote work affect developer motivation? ”



57.5% positively

Top reasons why:

- ☆ Need to “prove” their productivity and are motivated through that
- ⚡ More comfort/less stress
- 🚗 No commute

8.9% negatively

Top reasons why:

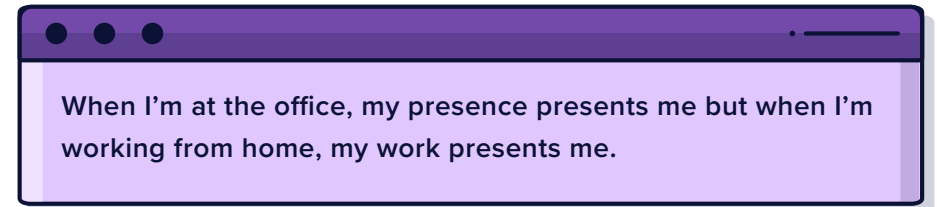
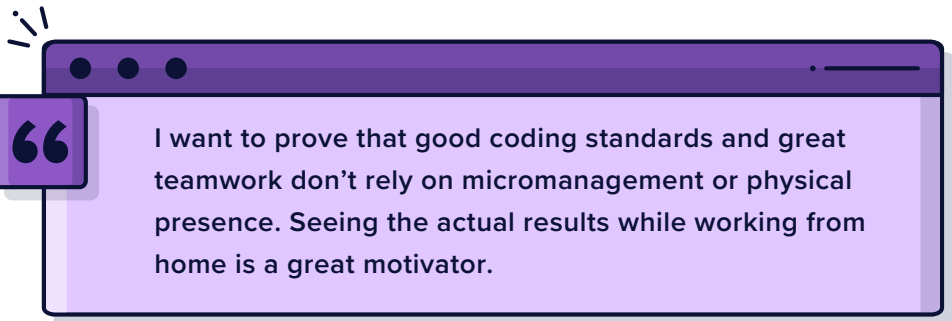
- ☆ Hard to self-motivate
- ✂ Disconnected from team
- Hard to switch from work to life mode

Survey respondents could select “neutral”, which came to 33.6%

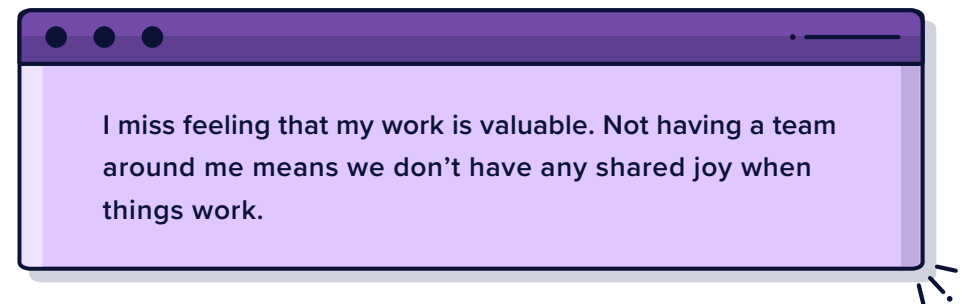
Developers are motivated by the need to prove that remote can work



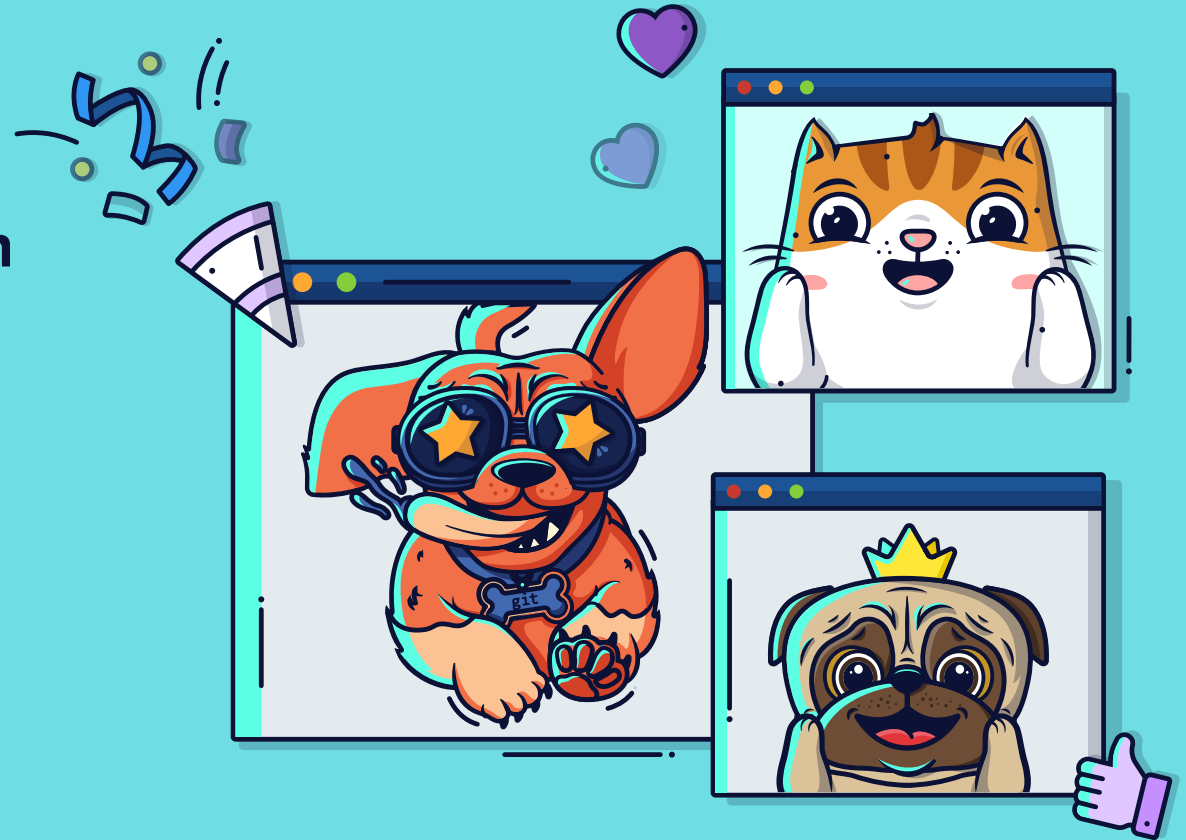
The majority of developers feel more motivated when working remotely. The most popular reason given by respondents is the feeling that they have to prove their productivity to their team. Many respondents shared the sentiment that they would like remote work to stay for good.



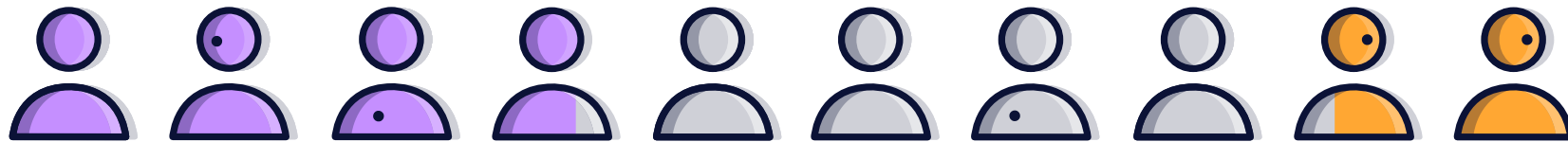
The second biggest reason that had an impact on motivation was the lack of stress and increased comfort. On the other hand, respondents who struggle with self-motivation in a remote setup mostly mentioned a lack of connectedness:



The impact of remote work on Developer team work



“ How does remote work affect developers’ collaboration with their team? ”



37.8% positively

Top reasons why:

- Tooling
- Increased intentionality in interactions
- More communication between team members
- More productive meetings

17.5% negatively

Top reasons why:

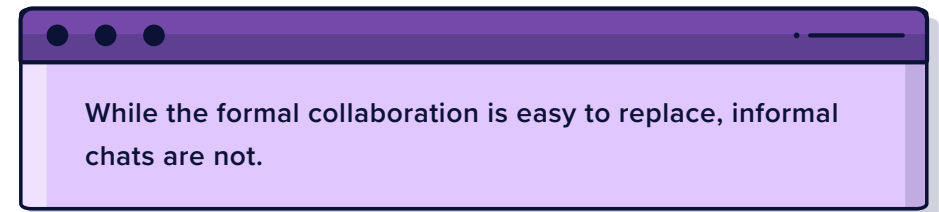
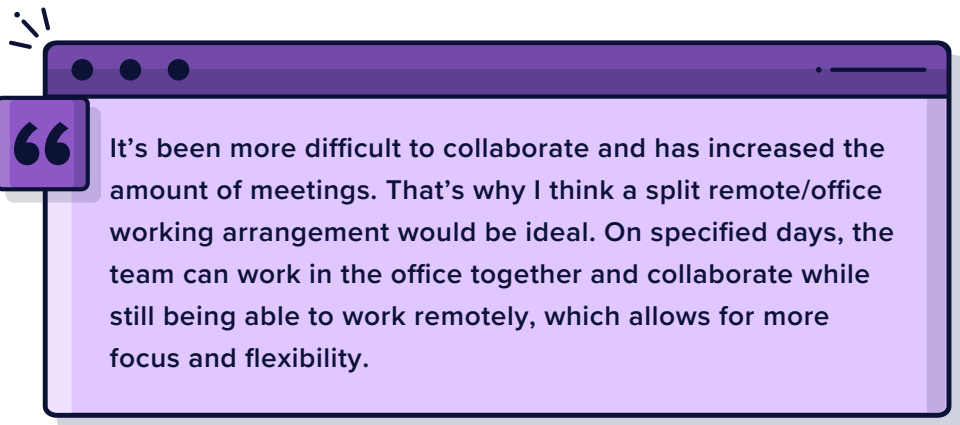
- Worse overall communication
- Harder to solve problems
- Disconnected from team
- Slower communication

Survey respondents could select “neutral”, which came to 44.7%

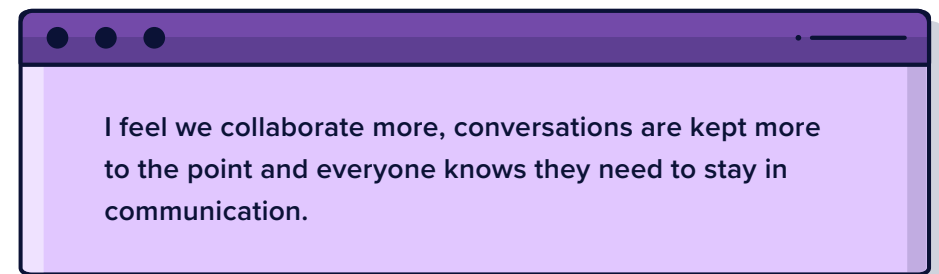
The most at risk when remote? Team collaboration

Of the four work-health factors given as options, team work seems to be the most negatively impacted by remote work.

Remote work has two main downsides: It gets in the way of informal team building and collaborative problem-solving types of communication. It also results in more meetings that interrupt the developers' schedules.



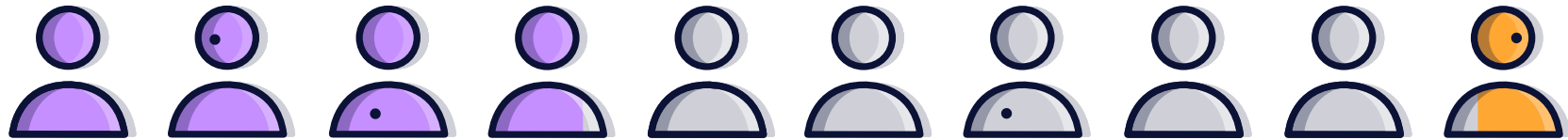
That said, the majority of developers still feel that they’ve been empowered by tools to communicate and run effective meetings. It seems that the overall sentiment amongst those positive about remote collaboration is an increase in intentionality and discipline in communication.



The impact of remote work on A developer's interactions with their manager



“ How does remote work affect developers’ interactions with their direct manager? ”



38.9% positively

Top reasons why:

- Managers are more available
- Great tooling enables more effective communication
- More productive meetings with managers

9.7% negatively

Top reasons why:

- Managers are less available
- Micromanagement
- Worse communication

Survey respondents could select “neutral”, which came to 51.4%

Tech manager availability can make or break remote work

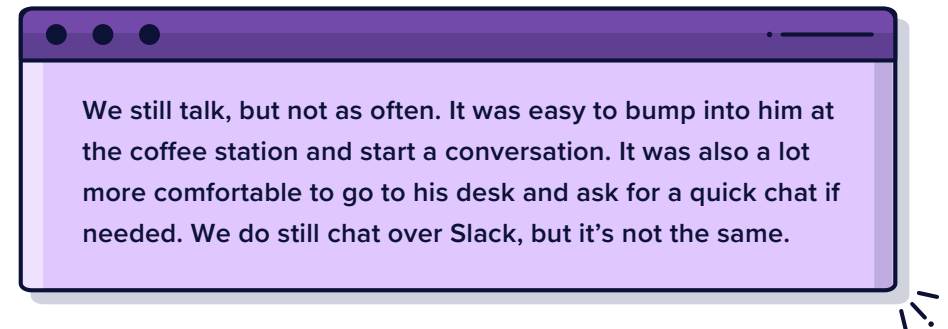


Most respondents indicated that their interactions with their managers haven't changed when being remote.

Where it has changed, respondents have indicated that they've had mostly positive experiences. The biggest win seems to come from the area of communication – managers are perceived to be more available, communicate more effectively thanks to tooling, and run better meetings.

"I can pop him a Slack message anytime without feeling like I'm disturbing him," says one respondent. "We are forced to get direction from resources such as Trello, which allows our project manager more time to focus on topics other than explanation," says another.

On the other hand, the main reasons for negative experiences with managers while working remotely are that some managers are less available and communication has worsened.



Company setup

Are companies ready to support remote work?



“ How well do developers feel their companies are set up to accommodate remote work? ”



87.2% well

Top reasons why:

- Useful tooling
- Remote was in place before
- The nature of software building
- Remote team support
- Allowances and equipment given by company

2.8% poorly

Top reasons why:

- Bad remote processes
- A lack of allowances and equipment
- Bad tooling

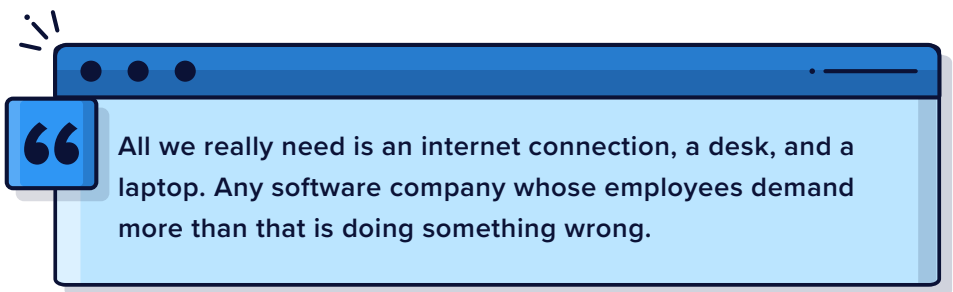
Survey respondents could select “neutral”, which came to 10%

Great news: Companies are ready for remote

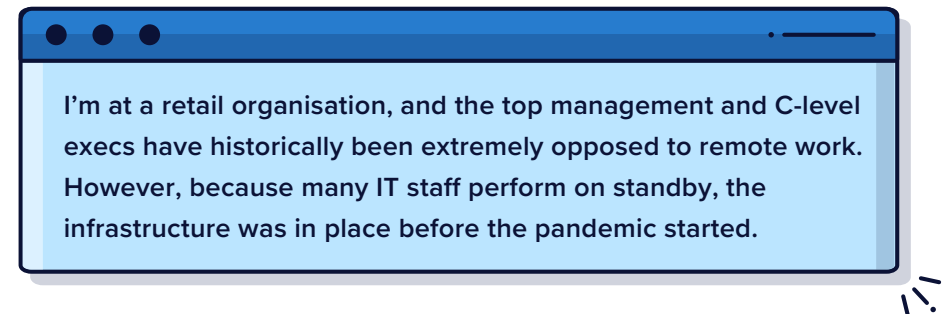


Most developers feel that their company is well set up for remote work. In addition, the majority of reasons for a successful remote setup are things that companies can provide: The necessary tools, team support, and equipment.

What also seems to help is that many companies have previous experience with implementing remote work. Many developers made another point that the intrinsic nature of software development lends itself well to remote setups. As one respondent put it:



Interestingly, the move to remote work caused by the pandemic seems to have accelerated something that, until now, has been largely reserved for technical disciplines. It seems that remote options are now being considered more seriously by other industries too.



Summary

In summary: Developers want remote work options from their employers.

More than most other professions, they are able to work independently and thrive when they have agency over their own time. An at least part-time remote setup can not only work well but is also likely to result in an increase in productivity, collaboration and motivation if a few key things are taken into consideration:

- The team is set up with the necessary equipment, tooling and connectivity
- Strong team cadences are created for:
 - Communication
 - Collaboration and
 - Bonding
- Managers set clear expectations and check-in points

While remote work might have started as a global experiment during the pandemic, it is now here to stay. Employers who try to reverse the tide on the freedom and choice remote offers team members, risk losing their strongest talent to competitors.

Remote has real benefits for both individuals and their companies. Perhaps most excitingly, organisations are now afforded the opportunity to redesign their structures, tech teams and ways of working to optimise for a balanced, efficient and more intentional work life.

Methodology



OfferZen conducted two polls to find out more about our community's experience of remote work. A total of 1541 people took the first online survey on remote vs office work between 16 June and 30 June 2020. A total of 414 people took the second online survey that deep-dived into the remote setups between 30 June 2020 and 14 July 2020.

We hosted the survey on Google Forms and recruited respondents via emails sent to over 30 000 software makers in the OfferZen community and social media posts to the public.

While the polls were open to our entire community, the general split of the community is roughly 85% developers to 15% other roles, such as product owners, UI/UX designers and data scientists. That's why we've opted to use the term "developer" throughout this report.

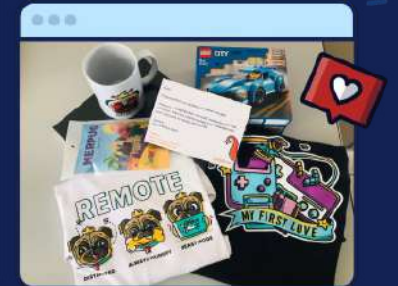
Quantitative responses were added up automatically in Google Forms. We also asked respondents to give us free-form qualitative responses. We analysed these by going through all responses and manually creating high-level categories based on common keywords, which helped to establish the main themes. While this categorisation is subjective, we believe that it is a solid representation of the data. Where respondents have been quoted, quotes have been kept verbatim.

About the OfferZen community

OfferZen is a community-first job marketplace that helps companies accelerate their developer hiring.

But this effort actually encompasses a much wider mission: To help developers and their teams thrive in the tech ecosystem. Over the last five years, this mission has manifested in a multitude of ways. Beyond helping software makers find awesome new jobs, we've hosted tech events, launched mentorship programmes, tech documentaries, as well as in-depth developer reports and content. We want to help build an inclusive, transparent, and thriving tech ecosystem.

This continued and long-term focus on adding value to the software maker community allows companies on OfferZen to access a unique and hard-to-find source of candidates to hire from.



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Further reading from the OfferZen blog



Hiring remotely

- [Q&A with Top Tech Sourcers on Finding, Attracting and Assessing Tech Talent Remotely](#) – Vanessa Raath & Sjamilla van der Tooren
- [Hiring Remotely: Why Companies Need to Care More About Employer Branding](#) – Vanessa Raath & Sjamilla van der Tooren
- [4 Tips for Maintaining Human Connection in Remote Hiring](#) – Leonard Mahlangu, Investec
- [3 Key Elements of Successful Remote Hiring: Mindset, Setup and Empathy](#) – Vanessa Raath, Freelance Tech Sourcer, David Küsel, Sanlam Indie and Laila Kramer, SPAN Digital Innovation
- [4 Remote Onboarding Essentials](#) – David Küsel, Sanlam Indie
- [The Importance of Engaging Remote New-Joiners](#) – Laila Kramer, Head of People at SPAN Digital
- [3 Key Things to Get Right in Remote Onboarding](#) – Baadier Sydow, HomeChoice
- [4 Questions to Ask to Evaluate a Company's Remote Culture](#) – Kat Ten Velthuis, OfferZen
- [COVID-19 FAQs: Tech Hiring in a Remote World](#) – Robyn Luyt, OfferZen
- [Tech Community Chats: How Talent Leads Tackle Remote Hiring Challenges](#) – Merandi Roode, K2; Peter Ferreria, Dariel; Duke Coulbanis, Cash Connect; Shara Chernel, OfferZen
- [Q&A: 4 Tips to Prepare for a Remote Interview](#) – Domina McQuade, Microsoft

Further reading from the OfferZen blog



Communication and teamwork

- [5 Communication Habits That Keep My Team Aligned](#) – Jacques Blom, Names & Faces
- [A 3-Step Process to Communicate More Effectively as a Developer](#) – Parham Doustdar, Booking.com
- [How Prioritising Tasks Helped Toasty Go Fully Online in 4 Weeks](#) – Kevon Cheung, Toasty
- [4 Steps Aerobotics is Taking to Help Their Team Thrive Remotely](#) – Benji Meltzer, Aerobotics
- [10 Tips for Getting Started With Miro for Remote Collaboration](#) – Phil Barrett, OfferZen
- [Miro Template: Remote Retrospective](#) – Megan Boshoff, OfferZen
- [Hacking Asynchronous Communication as a Remote Team Member](#) – Benita Volkman, JourneyApps

Remote culture

- [How We Ran a Virtual ‘Murder Mystery’ Team Event](#) – Alex Hanson, OfferZen
- [How to Be On Leave When You Can’t Leave Your House](#) – Zsa Perry, OfferZen
- [4 Ways Luno Fosters Human Connection in a Fully Remote Team](#) – Neil Kelly, Luno
- [How My Team Intentionally Creates Non-transactional Touchpoints](#) – Candice Grobler, OfferZen
- [Panel Discussion: Team Engagement, Onboarding, and Opportunity in Remote Work](#) – Jumo, Allan Gray, Equal Experts, Matchbox Solutions, Luno and Nomanini



Further reading from the OfferZen blog



Remote setups

- [How to Create a Productive Home Setup](#) – Malan Joubert, OfferZen
- [How OfferZen Parents Are Managing Childcare While Working Remotely](#) – Louise Bailey Tait, OfferZen
- [Best Prep for Remote Team Members](#) – Thabang Tseboho, SnapScan
- [How To Win at Working in a Distributed Team](#) – Sander Voorwinden, Entersekt
- [What I've Learned About the Dos and Don'ts of Remote Working](#) – Stephanie Truter, OfferZen
- [What to Pack in Your 'On-The-Go', Remote Work-Ready Backpack](#) – Benny Ou, Matchbox Solutions

Remote setup tips for People Ops

- [How We Briefed Our Team to Be Fully Remote](#) – Louise Bailey Tait, OfferZen
- [How We're Setting Our Team Up with Reliable Internet Access for Remote Work](#) – Louise Bailey Tait, OfferZen
- [How to Set Up Video Conferencing on Zoom for Your Entire Team](#) – Louise Bailey Tait, OfferZen
- [4 Steps Aerobotics is Taking to Help Their Team Thrive Remotely](#) – Benji Meltzer, Aerobotics



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