

# Life Sciences & Healthcare 2022 Trends Survey

How remote working and hiring practices  
are evolving with global trends.



# Foreword by the Executive Director of IIC Partners

The colossal rise of remote working over the past two years has dramatically changed business operations and hiring practices.

But how has this trend impacted the Life Sciences and Healthcare industries? We decided to investigate by surveying over 200 C-suite leaders and senior HR professionals in these sectors.

The research identified some dominant trends — like how offering remote or hybrid working is crucial for talent attraction and retention — but also highlighted that every organization has had a unique and complex experience.

For some, productivity has increased, while others have seen a negative impact. The same divide appeared across many other areas of our study.

It is clear that generalisms must be left behind and that we are still working out how to optimize our performance and well-being within this new normal.



Christine Hayward  
Executive Director  
IIC Partners

# Key learnings

1

Remote working is a positive trend for Life Sciences and Healthcare organizations, and adoption has increased dramatically since the pandemic.

2

Remote and hybrid working is a key element of attracting and retaining talent. Employers who cannot offer remote options face challenges in today's highly competitive talent market.

3

Competition for talent has increased dramatically, and candidates are negotiating more during the hiring process. This is causing additional strain on HR professionals and teams throughout the organization.

4

On average, recruitment is taking longer, and remote onboarding is less effective. However, many organizations are experiencing the opposite. This shows just how varied the new realities are.

5

Fostering a positive corporate culture now takes more time and effort, and it is increasingly difficult to meet employee expectations.

6

For many organizations, productivity is rising due to remote and hybrid working. However, not all have realized these gains, and for most organizations, collaboration has been negatively affected.

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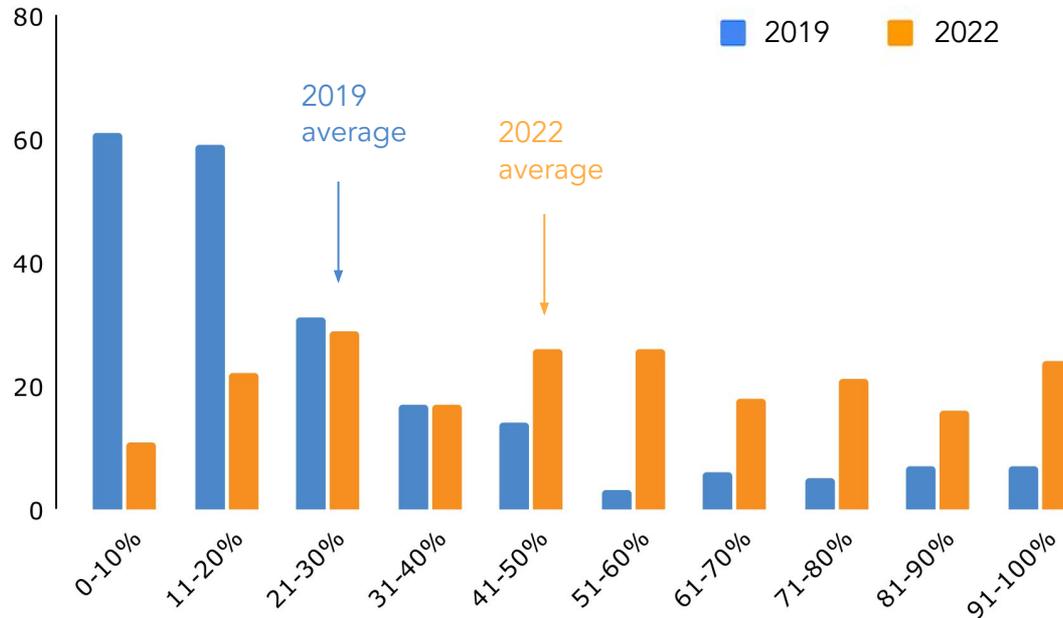
Organizations are continually optimizing their response to the ever-changing new normal. The majority are planning to invest in additional tools and training to manage their remote workforce, and are offering more incentives to encourage office participation.

# 1

The colossal rise of remote working and how Life Sciences and Healthcare organizations are responding.

# Dramatic shift sparked by the pandemic

Q. Estimate the total percentage of employees that had access to remote or hybrid working options in 2019 and 2022.

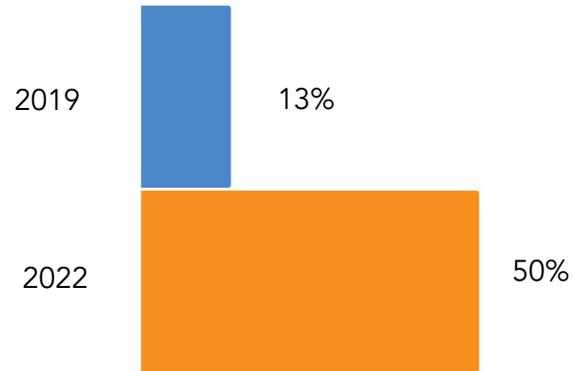


In 2019, an average of 21-30% of employees had access to remote or hybrid working.

By 2022, this had increased to 41-50%, showing the dramatic shift in working practices due to the global pandemic.

# Organizations are now 4X more likely to offer remote or hybrid working to over 50% of their workforce

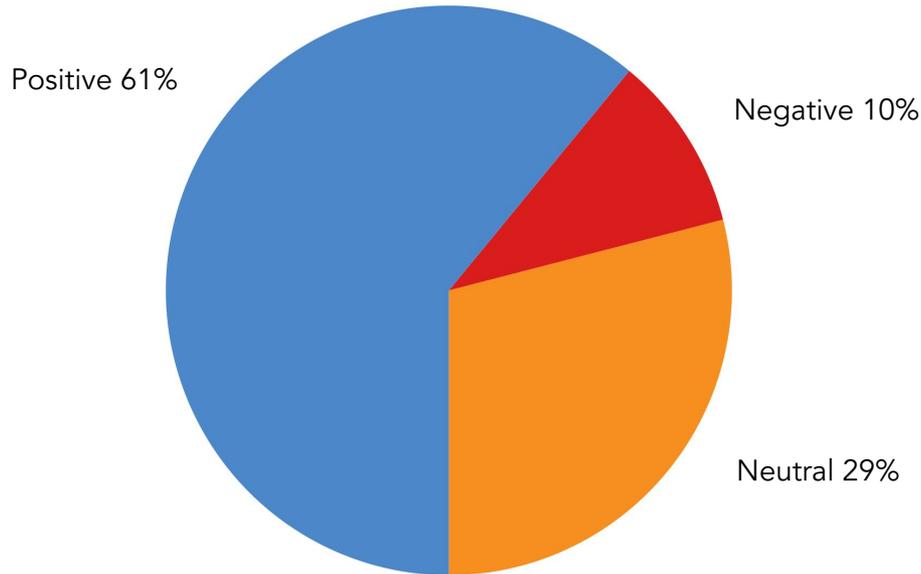
Before the pandemic in 2019, only 28 of survey respondents (13%) said they offered remote or hybrid working to more than half of their workforce. Now, in 2022, that number has increased almost 4X to 105 organizations (50%).



Percentage of organizations that offer remote or hybrid working to more than half of their workforce.

# And most see it as a positive trend

Almost two-thirds of respondents (61%) see the increase of remote working in the Life Sciences and Healthcare industries as positive, compared to just 10% who see it as negative.



“

Our clients shared with us that remote and hybrid working has had a positive influence on workforce diversity. For research and development functions, where people can work together independent of location or time zone, clients are able to attract candidates (especially young talent) from a wide array of cultural backgrounds.

”

Gerald Knol  
Managing Partner  
Holtrop Ravesloot



"At YBL, as long as the team member can successfully deliver their work and achieve team objectives, it is between the reporting manager and the individual to agree on remote and hybrid work options.

We don't have a company-wide remote working policy as we want our employees to be self-aware and self-regulated and to know their responsibility in parallel with their freedom.

For most functions, this works well and keeps the team member self-motivated. However, in a manufacturing set-up, especially in the operations and R&D departments, the work requires an in-person presence, which team members understand.

During recruitment, we have found that candidates often prefer employers who are able to offer remote or hybrid working, and it is an advantage when our roles can accommodate this.

Overall, we have seen three key benefits from remote and hybrid working: enhanced productivity, enhanced responsibility, and stress reduction by improving work-life balance."

Chief People Officer, Yashraj Biotechnology Ltd

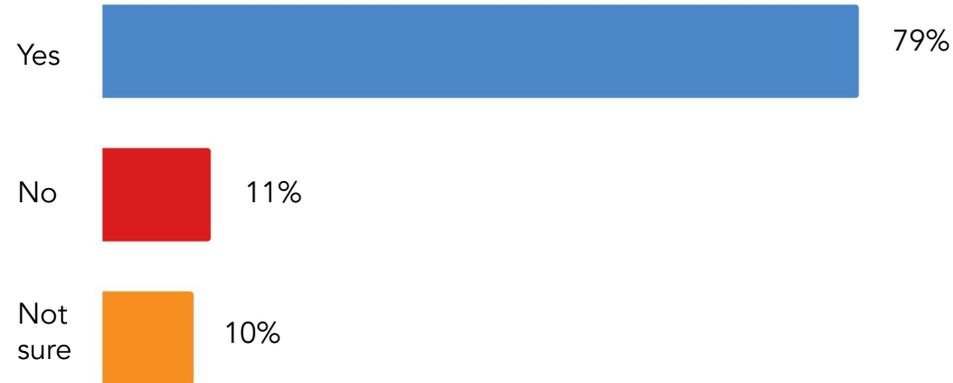


# 2

Remote and hybrid working is a key element of attracting and retaining talent.

# A large majority (79%) believe that offering remote or hybrid working makes them more attractive to candidates

Q. Does offering remote or hybrid working to candidates during recruitment make your organization more attractive?



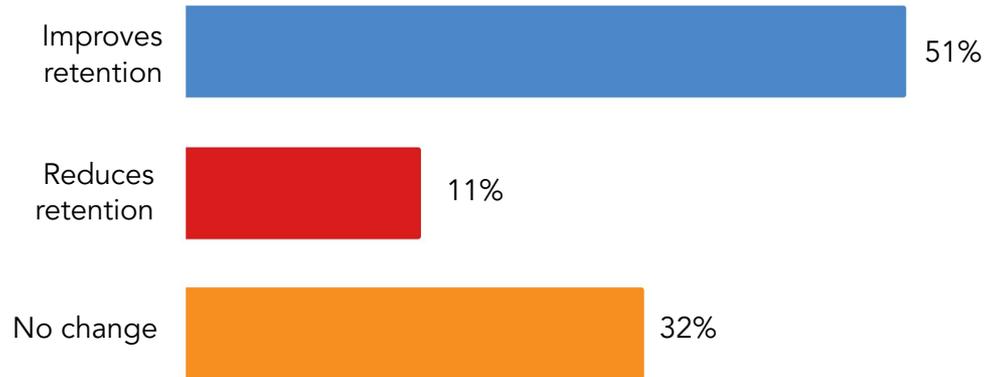
# Half of respondents (51%) believe that remote working improves employee retention

Interestingly, more survey respondents found remote or hybrid working as useful for talent attraction (79%) than retention (51%).

This may result from the belief that other factors have a greater influence on retention, such as inflation-matching wage increases or high competition for talent.

Still, over half of respondents saw remote and hybrid working policies as an important aspect of employee retention.

Q. How has remote working affected your employee retention rates?





“

When considering remote and hybrid policies, keep in mind employee preferences and potential disruption from changes. One HR executive I spoke with was afraid of being less competitive in the talent market after being instructed to remove all remote working options. They were also concerned they could lose key staff to competitors.

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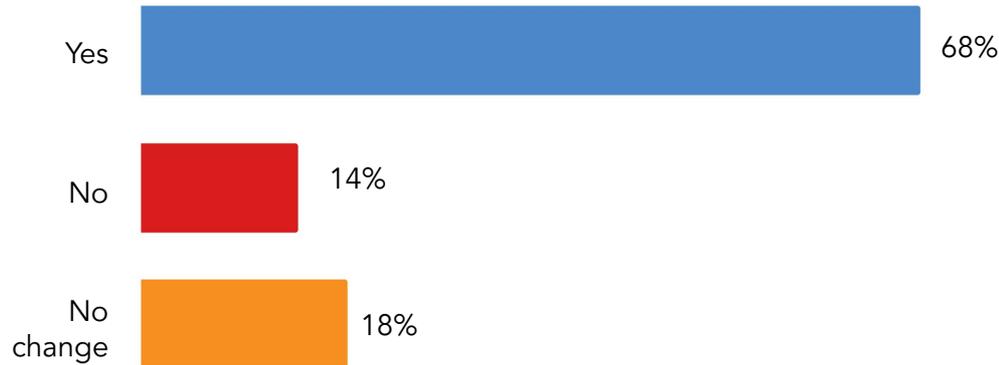
Heikki Vahtera, Senior Partner, JFP Executive Search

# 3

Competition for talent has increased dramatically, and candidates are negotiating more during recruitment.

# 7 out of 10 HR professionals believe there is more competition for talent in 2022 compared to 2019

Q. Comparing pre-pandemic (2019) to today (2022), do you feel there is more competition for top talent during recruitment?



The advantages of offering remote options to improve talent attraction and retention are more pronounced in this highly competitive market.

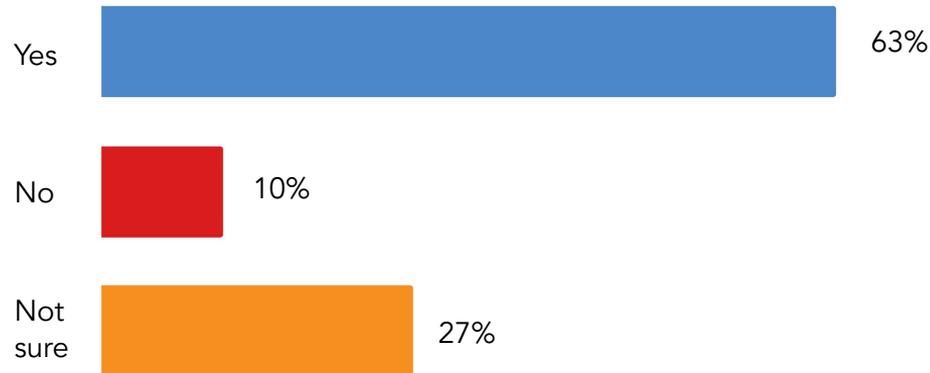
# Why competition for talent is increasing

1. Many reconsidered their work-life balance and left the full-time job market in place for consulting, part-time job shares, and various other flexible working options.
2. New jobs have opened up that never existed before and there are not enough qualified people. In addition, some specialist functions like Data Science are maturing and require increasingly niche skills.
3. Remote working opens up competition across geographies. You are no longer just competing within your city, but now organizations are competing nationally, regionally, and even globally.
4. Both employers and candidates are expanding their searches to new industries, meaning that some organizations now face greater competition from players they have never competed with before.



# 63% say candidates are negotiating more during the offer stage

Q. Comparing pre-pandemic (2019) to today (2022), are candidates negotiating more for increased compensation and benefits during recruitment?



More competition for talent results in more competing offers and higher counteroffers from existing employers, giving candidates increased leverage to negotiate.

Prepare for this likelihood instead of it coming as a derailing surprise. And be sure to communicate the total value of your package, not just the salary.

“

For us, it is not so much about salary negotiation. Instead, candidates are asking more in-depth questions about the company's culture, values, and purpose. The question about home office/flexible working has become standard, and there is a keen interest in an outcome-based approach in place of "pure working hours." To be a competitive employer, you need to offer both. Candidates also show high interest in flat hierarchies and working models, where they can drive projects (not only tasks) in a relatively independent way. Thus, the expectations toward leadership have also changed.

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Dr.MMag. Astrid Müller, eMBA  
Head of Scientific Affairs / General Manager ad interim  
LEO Pharma Gesellschaft m.b.H.



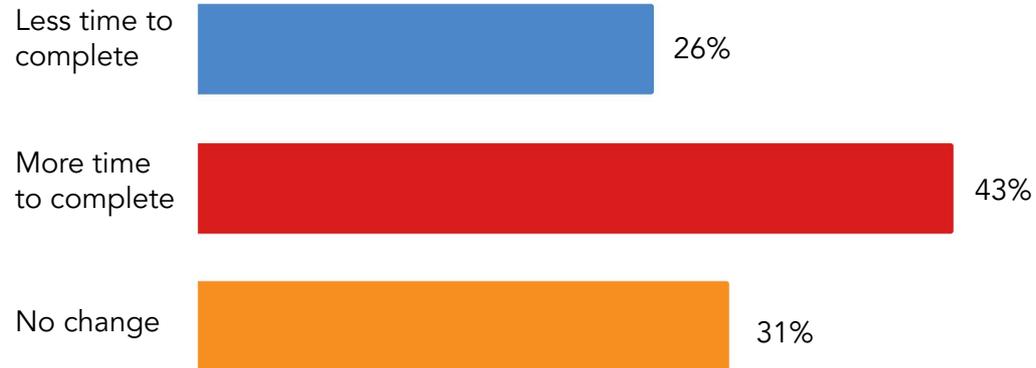
# 4

Recruitment processes are taking longer,  
and remote onboarding is less effective.

# Recruitment processes are taking longer

Almost half of the respondents (43%) say recruitment processes are taking longer to complete, while others have managed to shorten their hiring timelines (26%). On the next page, we share why this may be occurring.

Q. Comparing pre-pandemic (2019) to today (2022), has the length of time to complete a recruitment process changed?



# Factors that are changing hiring timelines

## Speeding hiring up >>

- Remote interviews make scheduling easier as candidates don't need time off for travel.
- Employers are acting faster so they don't lose candidates to competing offers.
- Wider adoption of digital collaboration tools makes internal candidate discussions and feedback collection faster.
- Remote working has opened up new geographies and talent pools, making it easier to find candidates.

## << Slowing hiring down

- In this highly competitive market, many organizations are losing their top candidates to other offers and are having to start again.
- Digital collaboration has increased the number of people involved in making decisions. It is harder to receive timely input from all parties and reach a consensus.
- Despite high competition, many employers are not willing to prioritize on their requirements, leading to lengthy searches.
- Poor preparation for digital interviews leads to gaps in evaluation and the need for follow-ups, or worse, the disqualification of great candidates.



Stephan Breitfeld  
Managing Partner  
ingeniam Executive Search

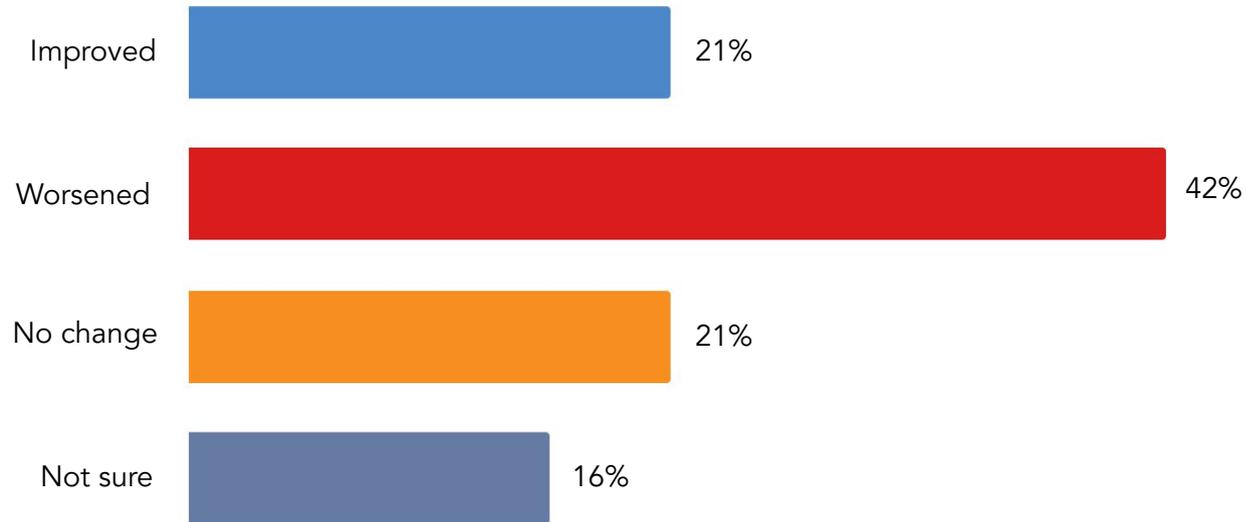
“It is important to remember that candidate requirements and target skill profiles can directly relate to the person’s propensity towards remote or hybrid working. For example, ‘entrepreneurial’ may now translate to someone more independent with a higher interest in remote working.

In addition, the words we use in job descriptions have taken on new meanings. For example, ‘work independently’ used to mean little oversight required, but today it may be understood as being able to work in any location.

Apply caution when considering target candidate profiles or writing job specifications to ensure that what you offering matches the candidate's expectations.”

# Remote onboarding is less effective

Q. How has remote onboarding affected your ability to introduce new hires to your organization and set them up for success?



“Since covid started, we changed our international onboarding from in-person to fully remote. The biggest challenge is to keep everyone engaged and interested in the topics. On-site it is naturally easier.

Another aspect is to make sure the process is efficient and that all onboarders get the right amount of information. We started shooting onboarding product videos to improve the process. This was another challenge, especially in the beginning.

For local onboarding, the situation is easier, and we follow a hybrid mode. The first day is on-site, and subsequent meetings can be done on-site, online, or in combination (some onboarders on-site, some online). The biggest challenge now is coordinating everything and everyone. It is a lot more complex.

Another area that needs attention is supporting your presenters through the change. Topic lecturers now have to get used to talking to monitors instead of people.”



Jana Krblichová  
HR Partner/Senior Recruiter  
Linet spol. s r.o.



Mag. Sigrid Giehsauer  
Head of Human Resources  
EBG MedAstron GmbH

“Many topics and framework conditions have changed in recent years. One thing has not changed for long-term retention: successful onboarding!

In our experience, training exclusively remotely took longer, both on the technical side and in terms of team bonding. The impression has been that "remote onboarding" has made social and cultural integration very difficult.

What has remained with us is a largely hybrid training and onboarding phase for our new joiners, as the trainers also work hybrid.

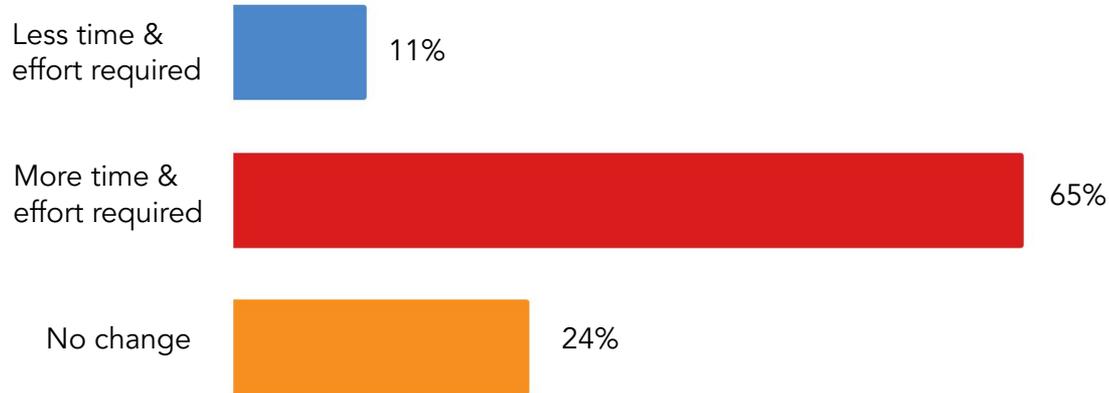
Over time, we have found small tricks and maximized the benefits of collaboration tools: for example, to minimize the hurdle of asking questions by new joiners, we find space for virtual get-togethers.”

# 5

A positive culture is harder to maintain,  
and it is increasingly difficult to meet  
employee expectations.

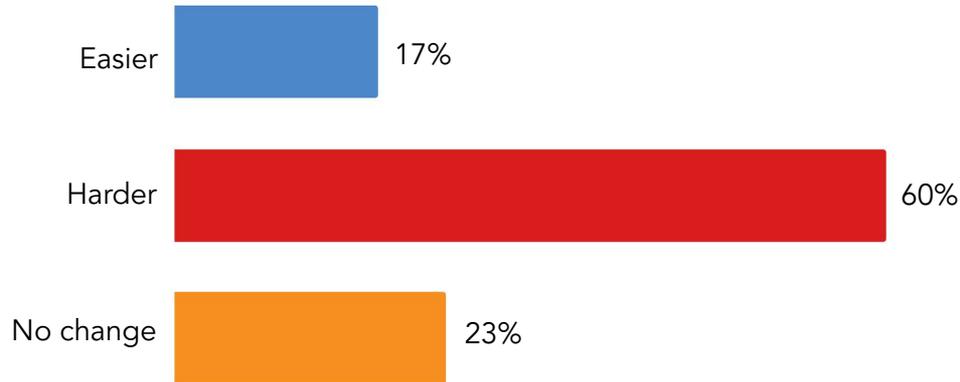
# 65% believe more time and effort are now required to build a positive organizational culture

Q. How has remote working affected the time and effort required to build a positive organizational culture?



# And 60% are finding it harder to meet employee needs and expectations

Q. Comparing pre-pandemic (2019) to today (2022), do you feel it is harder to meet employee needs and expectations?



“

Successful leadership of individuals working remotely or in a hybrid model requires increased attention from the leader. They should proactively address their team members to better understand individual needs and create personalized plans to support their mental and emotional well-being. Social contact, such as interaction with others in an office, is essential for some employees, while it's less important for others.

”

Anders Fogstrup, Transformation Manager, Pharmaceutical



# 6

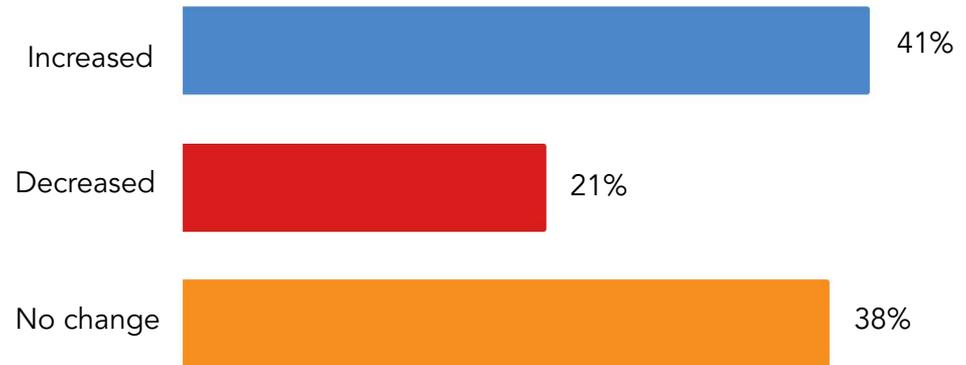
Productivity is on the rise, but collaboration has been negatively affected.

# 41% have seen an increase in productivity due to remote working

Regarding productivity, 41% saw an increase due to remote working, almost double the number of respondents who saw a decrease.

While the implementation of remote and hybrid working is highly variable across organizations, it is working well for many.

Q. How has remote working affected employee productivity?





“

We are adopting a Human-Centered Design approach to our decision-making, ensuring that our customers and colleagues are our focus. Our leadership team is actively looking for ways to eliminate pain points and non-value-added activity.

”

Max Buetow, President and CEO, CoxHealth

# Collaboration has been negatively affected by remote working

While productivity is on the rise for many, 43% believe that collaboration has been negatively affected, compared to just 28% who believe it has improved.

Q. How has remote working affected employee collaboration?



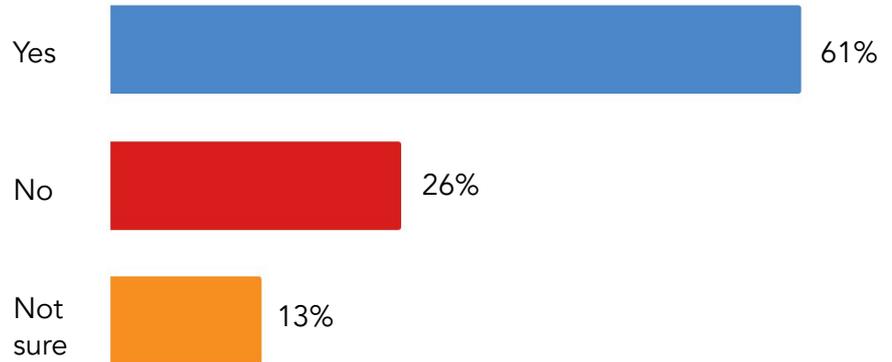
# 7

Organizations are continually optimizing their response to the ever-changing new normal.

# 6 out of 10 will invest in new tools and training to better manage their remote workforce

Most organizations we surveyed are still evolving their approach to the new normal, with 61% of respondents planning to introduce new tools and further training to improve remote workforce management.

Q. Are you planning to introduce new tools or training to better manage your remote workforce?



“

“Our organization has worked very hard to have open communication and to increase the speed to address important facets of our internal and external environments. We continue to explore the ways we can utilize technology to increase the satisfaction of our team as well as the satisfaction of patients and families.”

”

Jackie Kendrick, CEO, Treasure Coast Hospice



# Incentivizing office participation

When it comes to office attendance, it is no longer a given. Almost half of the respondents (48%) are now offering increased incentives — such as events, food/drink, volunteer opportunities, gym, etc. — to entice employees into the office.

Q. Is your organization incentivizing office participation more now (2022) than before the pandemic (2019)?





“

Accommodations to the work schedule, setting, and priorities are no longer the exception; they have become standard practice. No longer is working from home something special. It has become the norm, and for healthcare, that often looks different. A part of a day or task is related when work from home all the time is not feasible in healthcare.

”

Margaret Cogswell, RN, CEO, Hospice of the Panhandle



# Conclusion

From our research, it is clear that changes to working and hiring practices ushered in by the pandemic are here to stay — despite having a high variability across organizations and being in a state of continual evolution.

This variability even includes deciding who is empowered to make remote or hybrid working decisions. Some employers have tightly defined policies led by the HR function, while others allow decisions to be made at the manager level. The latter approach is part of the shift towards greater employee autonomy — it is not just where people work that is changing.

Another key outcome of the survey is that it is now harder to maintain a positive corporate culture. With employees geographically distributed and working patterns more diverse, communication and engagement efforts have become far more segmented and complex.

This new reality requires a great deal of extra time and effort from team leaders and HR professionals, and the scope of their work has increased dramatically. Be sure to recognize this and listen to their needs.



Looking towards recruitment, candidates now must navigate prospective employers' highly variable working practices. Along with an increased focus on purpose and social impact, the interview process has become far more investigative and requires greater transparency.

Employers offering remote or hybrid working options have an advantage in today's competitive talent market. Candidates will be comparing the full details of your working model to competing organizations, so staying informed of what others are offering is essential.

We also advise that you consider your diversity, equity, and inclusion programs when considering remote or hybrid working policies. Offering greater flexibility in the mode of work and operating hours will allow you to tap into a greater diversity of employees. Of course, in-person participation is required for many healthcare, manufacturing, and R&D roles.

Our overarching recommendation from this survey is that connecting with industry peers to share and discuss approaches is vital to staying competitive and meeting your employees' needs. We are all on this journey together, despite taking different paths, and through information sharing, we can maximize benefits while minimizing downfalls.

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Gerald Knol  
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Stephan Breitfeld  
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As an owner-managed, independent executive search and human capital management consultancy, we understand the way that senior executive talent thinks, and what organizations need to do in order to attract high level talent. We have proven our ability to source and develop both executive and specialist talent.

For more information, send an email to Stephan Breitfeld, Managing Partner at ingeniam: [stephan.breitfeld@ingeniam.de](mailto:stephan.breitfeld@ingeniam.de).

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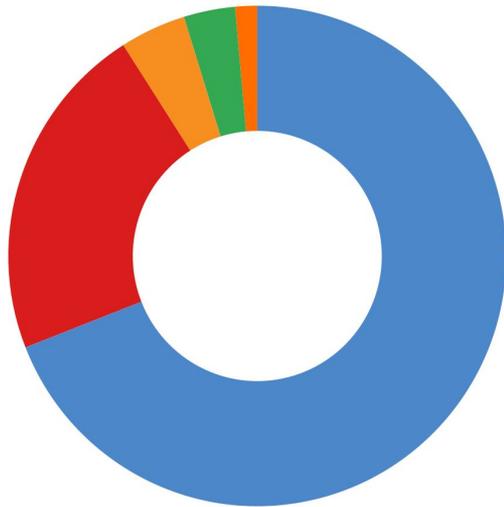
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# About the trends survey

Executive search consultants from IIC Partners member firms contacted their clients — senior professionals in the Life Sciences and Healthcare industries — asking them to fill out our trends survey. The primary function of respondents was Human Resources. However, we also had input from CEOs and C-suite leaders who have oversight on the topics of this study.

We had 210 respondents from around the world between July 1 - 31, 2022.



● Healthcare	145	69%
● Pharmaceuticals	46	21.9%
● Bio-Tech	9	4.3%
● Medical Devices	7	3.3%
● Other	3	1.4%

## About IIC Partners

IIC Partners is a top ten global executive search organization. All IIC Partners member firms are independently owned and managed and are leaders in local markets, developing solutions for their client's organizational leadership and talent management requirements. For more information, please visit [www.iicpartners.com](http://www.iicpartners.com).



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