

Why Everyone **Loves** Remote Work

People like to harp on the failings of remote work. Loneliness. Distractions. Not unplugging. Lack of collaboration. **Dog hair.**

But in reality, people love working remotely. And they're willing to forgive its failings because it's just that good.

We surveyed **486 people about remote work** and found something really surprising:

91% of remote workers said working remotely is a good fit for **them**.

And they don't just prefer it for themselves.

96% of remote workers would recommend working remotely to a **friend**.

Remote work isn't just here to stay, it's becoming the new norm. A way of working that people love and strive for.

Not just the people who work 100% remotely today either. We're all exposed to remote work on a weekly - if not daily - basis.

Whether it's a meeting where someone joins from home or another office. Collaborating with a vendor who works in another location. Or working from home or a co-working space part of the week. We're all increasingly exposed to forms of remote work.

And the tools are here to help. Productivity tools have caught up to the remote trend. Remote integrates seamlessly into our work lives. Thanks to the likes of [Slack](#), [Zoom](#), [Google Hangouts](#), [G Suite](#), [Office 365](#), [Evernote](#), our partner on the survey [Miro](#), and the slew of other ever-expanding and new cloud collaboration tools.

But the tools aren't enough to make remote work. There are behavioral changes that organizations and people need to make in order for remote work to be successful. We'll cover tips from remote workers on how to best work remotely, plus all the other juicy insights we learned about remote work and meetings.

Remote work is on the rise

Remote work isn't a new thing. It's been on the rise for years.

63% of US companies now have remote workers, according to a [2018 Upwork Study](#).

Gallup's [State of the American Workplace Report](#) found that 43% of employees work remotely at least some of the time. And among those who work remotely at least part of the time, the percent of employees who work remotely 100% of the time is now 20%, up from 15% four years prior.

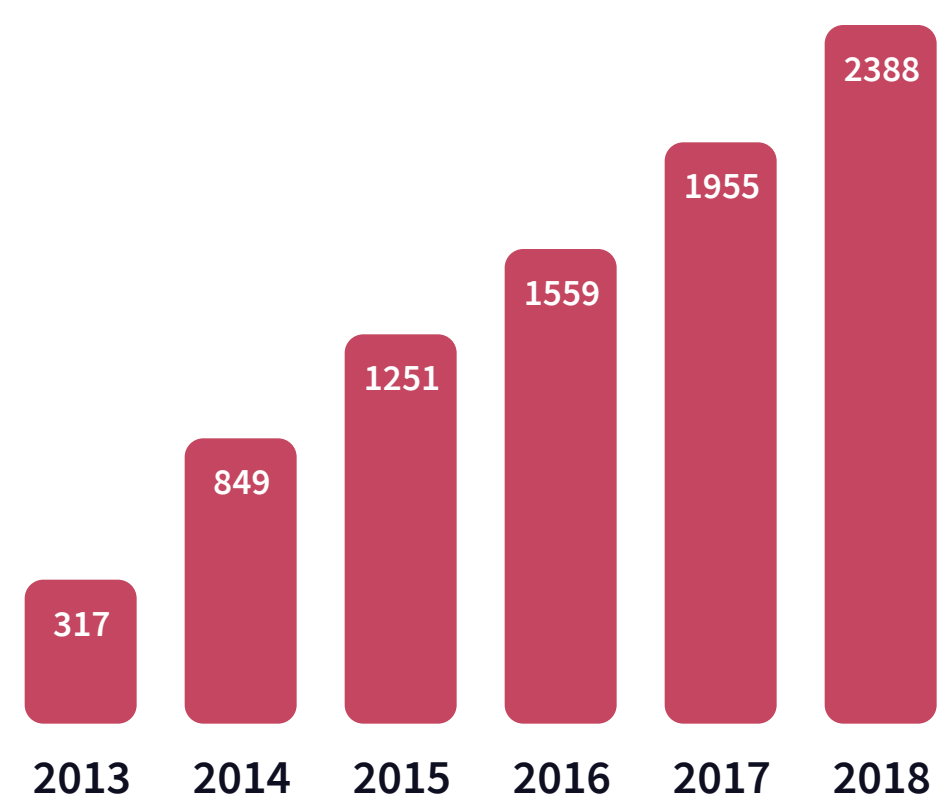
People are increasingly attracted to remote jobs, with 37% saying they would switch to a job that gave them the ability to work off-site at least part of the time.

WE WORK REMOTELY

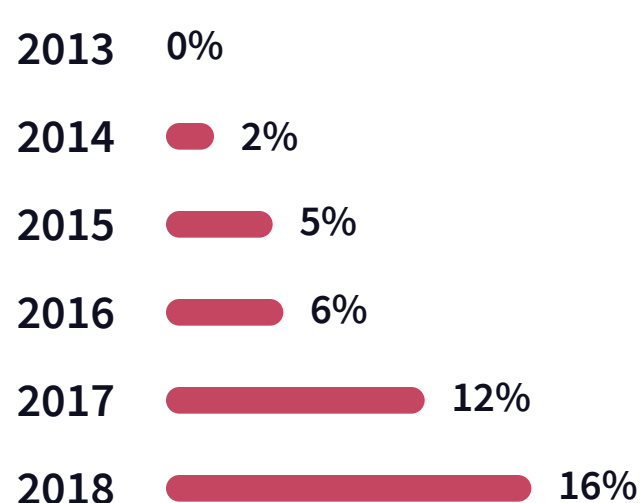
The largest remote work community in the world and remote job board [We Work Remotely](#) shared insights with us about the remote work trends they've seen since 2013.

WWR is the top destination for posting remote jobs. And they've seen a huge increase in the number of jobs posted on their site over the last 6 years - from just over 300 in 2013, to nearly 2400 in 2018.

Number of jobs posted on **WWR**



Percentage of **WWR** roles at remote companies (no HQ)



[AngelList](#), a site for startups, investors, and job-seekers looking to work with startups, has also seen a surge in remote jobs.

29% of all the startups with roles posted on AngelList live in August 2019 were hiring remote roles. That's over 7600 startups hiring remote roles, more than 1500 of which are mostly or fully remote companies themselves.

And it's likely we're about to see even more remote roles in the market.

According to AngelList, younger startups are more likely to hire remote than more established companies. In August 2019, 31% of companies younger than 2 years old had at least one open remote role, compared to 26% of companies older than 2 years.

The younger startups of today are much more likely to be remote friendly as they grow.

Companies with one or more open remote role on AngelList

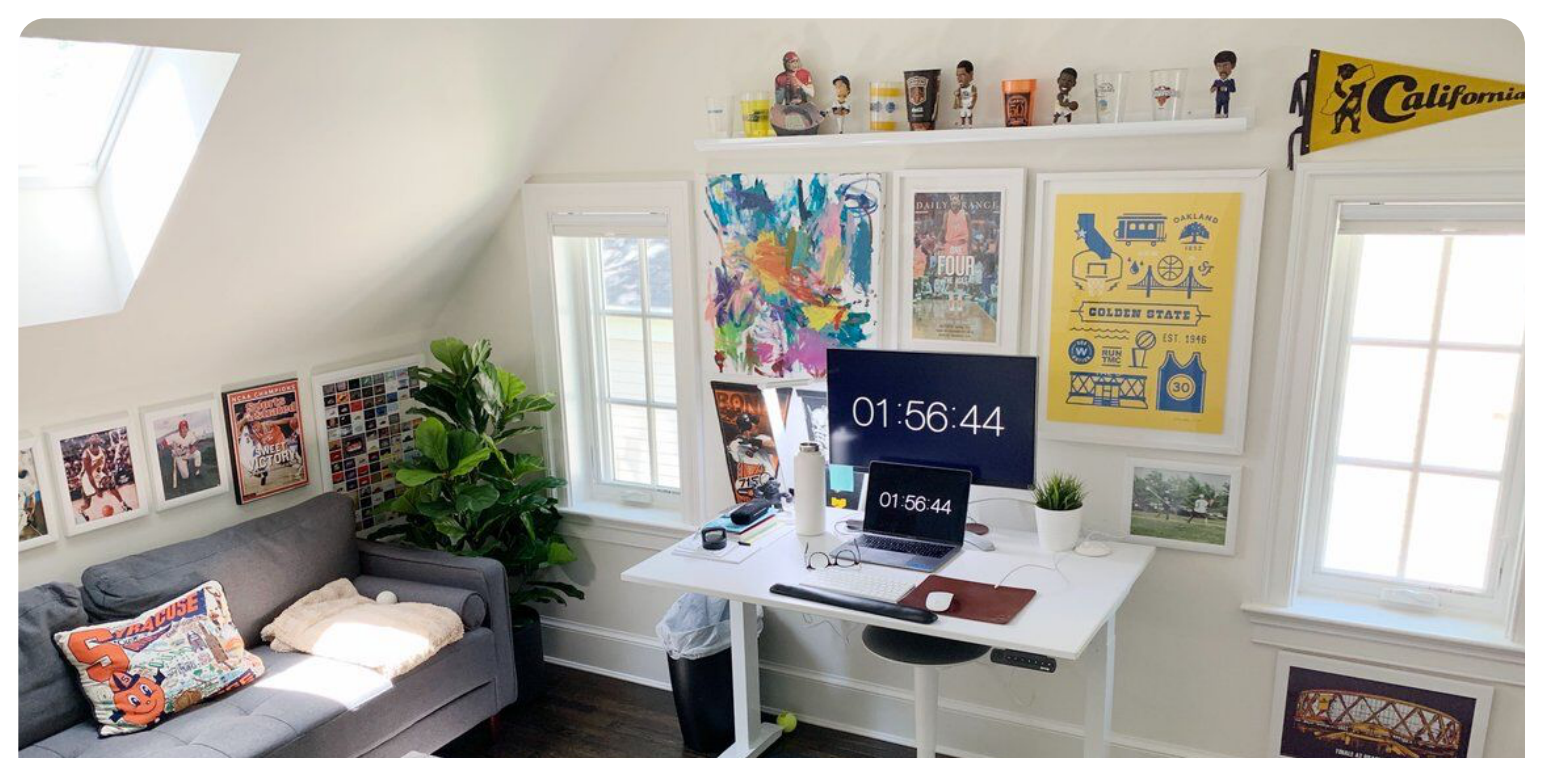


AngelList has even hired someone to lead their efforts on remote work, pointing to a focus on the growing category.

And millennials are leading the charge when it comes to remote.

Fifty percent of millennials consider flexibility of hours and the location where they work to be very important when choosing whether or not to work for an organization.

They also expect to stay at jobs with more flexibility for longer, according to the [2018 Millennial Survey Report](#) by Deloitte.



Millennials prefer working for companies that provide flexibility

Remote work is nothing new

These days it seems as if everyone is talking about remote work.

But remote isn't as new of a trend as we think it is. Remote work has been here to stay for years, we're just now starting to pay attention.

60% of the people we surveyed said they work remotely 100% of the time.

We were so surprised by that high number that we took to Twitter to see if we could get a gut check. And it turns out, 60% was spot on.



Of those who said they work 100% remotely:

42% have been working remotely for more than 5 years.

28% have been working remotely for 3 to 5 years.

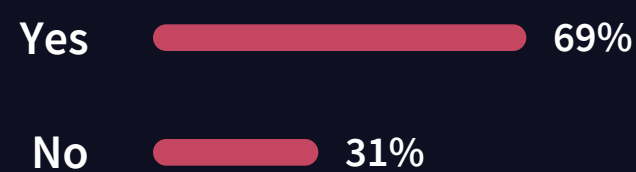
That means **70%** of remote workers have worked remotely for 3 or more years.

How many **years** have you been working 100% remotely?



Odds are, even if you aren't working remotely, you probably have a team member who is.

Does anyone on your **team** work remotely 100% of the time?



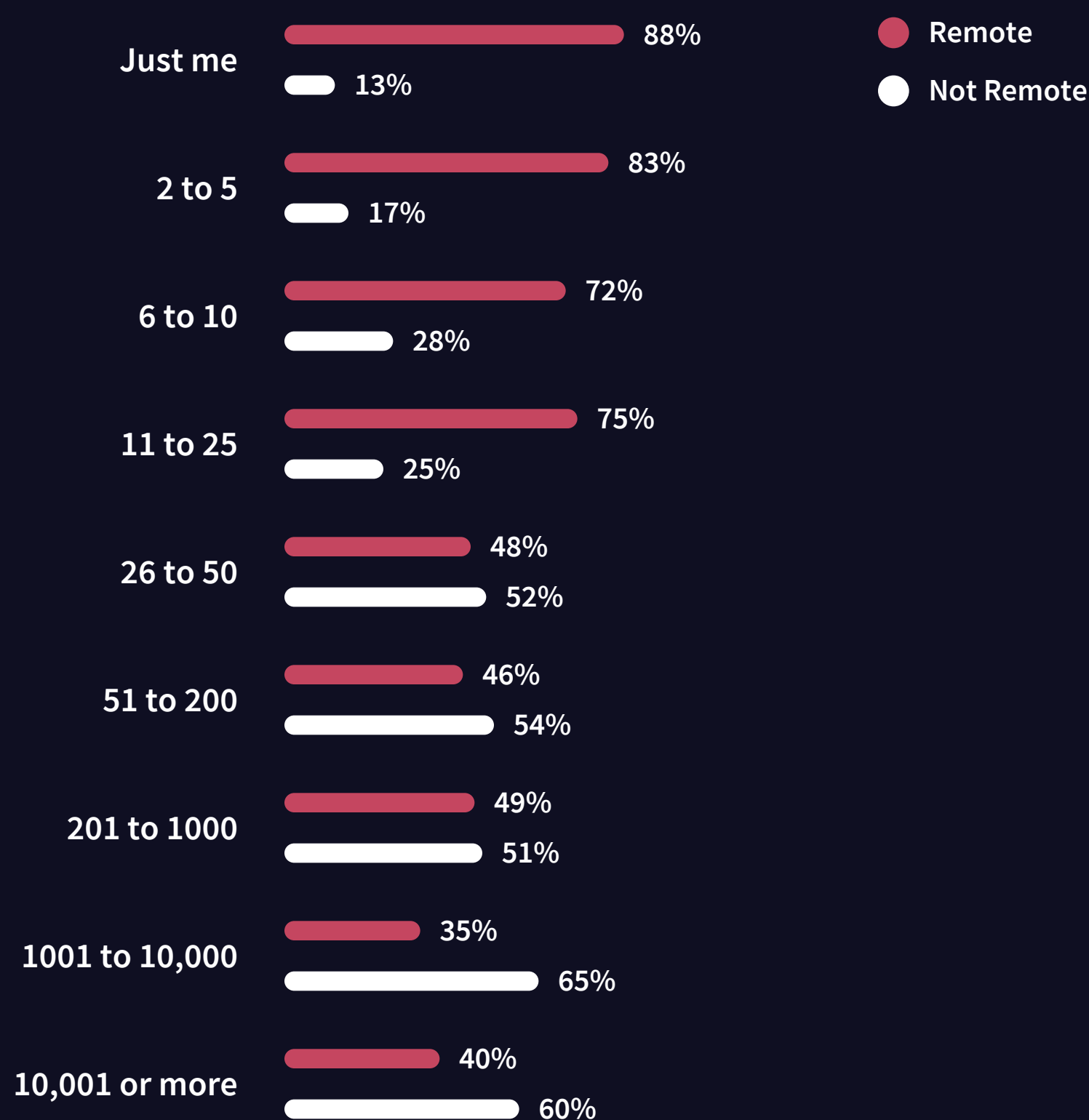
When asked if anyone on their team worked remotely 100% of the time, 69% of respondents said yes.

That means that **nearly 70%** of people have at least one team member who works remotely.

When it comes to remote, size does matter.

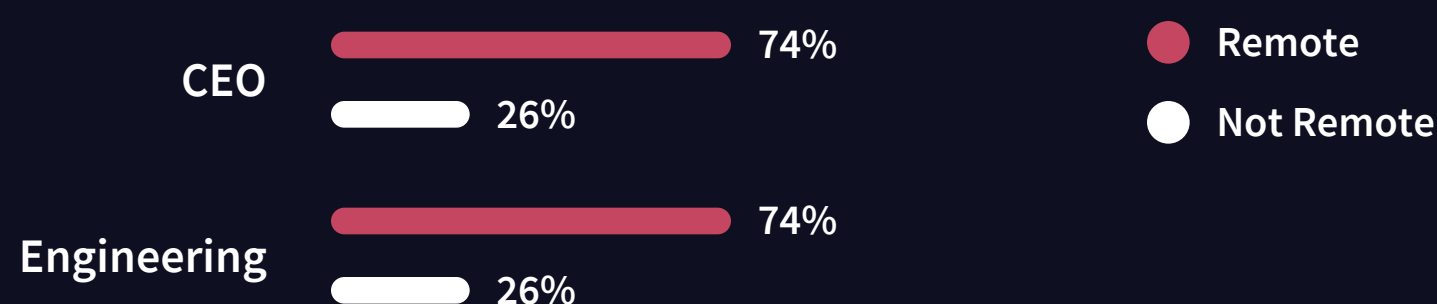
We found that the smaller the company, the higher the percentage of remote workers. Even though remote isn't a new trend, larger companies are still less likely to adopt remote work than smaller companies. Large companies are more likely to have offices, cultures, processes and policies that make remote work more challenging than for smaller, more nimble companies.

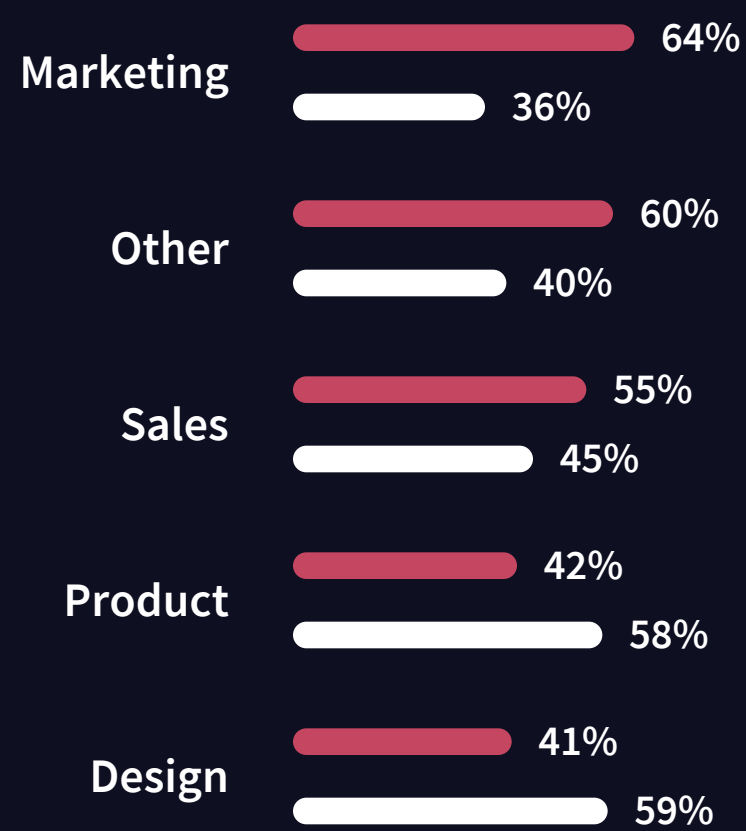
Remote workers by company size



Which types of roles work remotely the most? CEOs, Engineering, and Marketing have the highest concentration of those who work remotely 100% of the time.

Which roles work remotely?



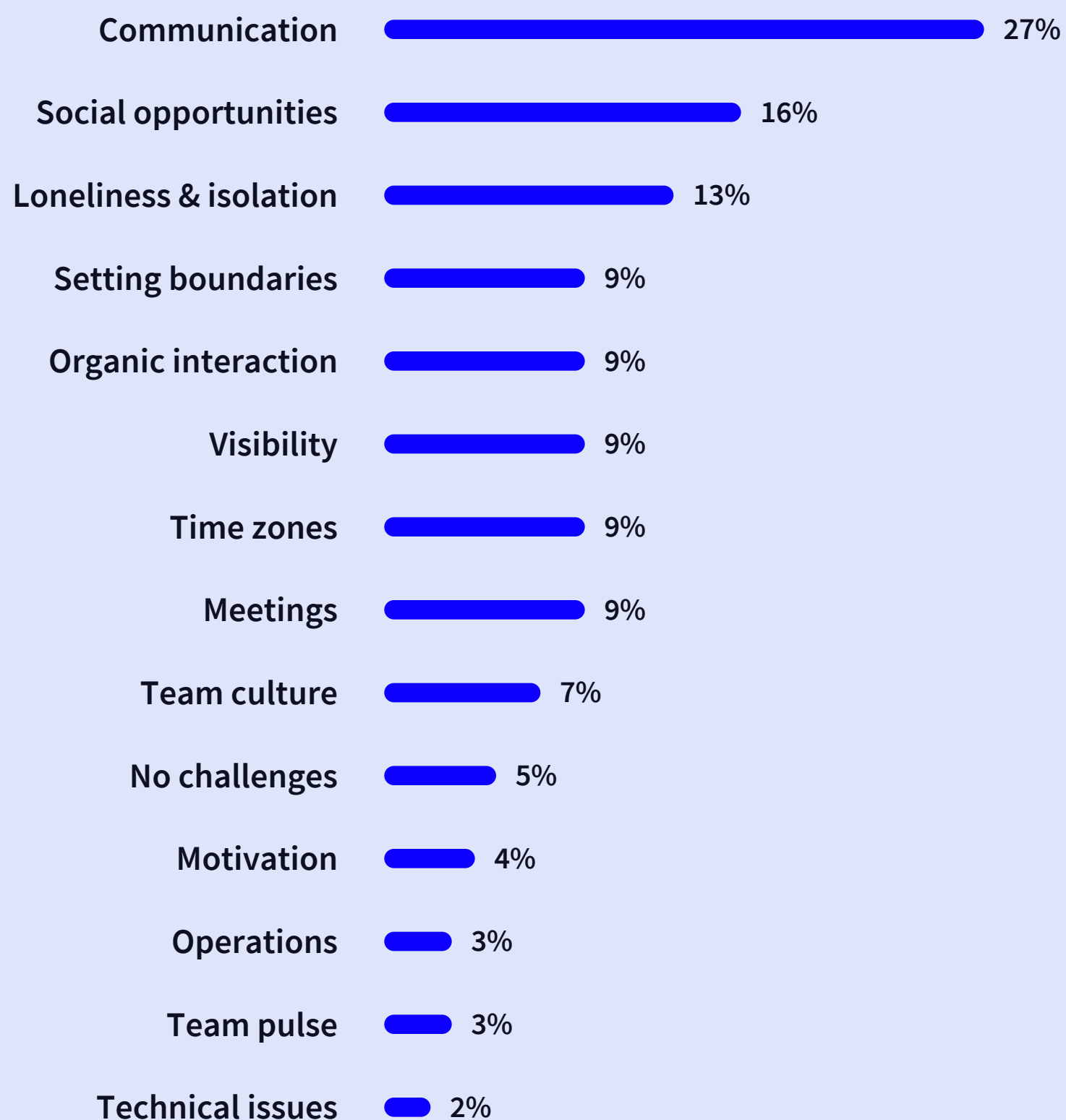


Remote work is nothing new

Working remotely is not without its drawbacks.

We asked remote workers an open-ended question: “What’s your #1 challenge with remote work?” Here’s what we learned.

What is your #1 challenge with remote work?



Communication is the #1 challenge of remote work

Communication is seamless for people who work in offices. But for remote workers, it’s a whole different story.

You can't walk over to someone's desk, schedule an in person meeting, or give a coworker a quick call anytime you want (they might be in a different time zone, after all). With remote work, you have to be much more purposeful and planned in your communications.

It's no surprise that communication is the #1 challenge of remote work.

Communication is particularly challenging for remote workers who are on distributed teams, where part of the company works at an office, while others are remote.

“Making sure everyone on the team is on the same page all the time.”

“Staying connected on the day-to-day ins and outs of what's going on at the office. I'm one of only a handful of remote workers, so I don't hear the little minute details that happen, the last-minute decisions etc.”

“Getting others in an office to communicate with me. People who have not worked in a company where a large proportion of contributors are remote are not used to this way of working/communicating.”

“Certain conversations can take longer... rather than tap someone on the shoulder for a quick idea, I might have to write my idea down and email it, or I might not know if my colleagues are busy or on calls or at their computers.”

“Everything has to be 100% intentional. Serendipity occurs less.”

Few opportunities to socialize with colleagues

Most people who work remotely do so from their homes. They don't get the benefit of seeing people at work, grabbing coffee or lunch with a colleague, or after work drinks.

And although dogs are a great perk of working remotely from home, they can't fill the human need of socializing.

“Missing out socializing & networking, you know, the office vibe, and also losing the skills to be productive in an office environment - cabin fever is real.”

“Maintaining social connections, as there's no longer a commute or an office, nor are there coffees with colleagues or after-work drinks. While I appreciate the flexibility to set my own schedule, I often end up working into the evening, further precluding social activities.”

“Missing out on office culture.”

Working remotely can get isolating

Working remotely often means working independently in the same room, every day, all alone. Or, silently sitting by strangers in coffee shops and coworking spaces. And that can get lonely, as well as repetitive, leaving people feeling isolated and alone.

“I never ever met any of my colleagues face to face, so isolation is definitely a huge factor - it feels like I'm not part of the company.”

“I get really "in the zone" when working. It's easy for an entire day to fly by where I only get up from my desk once or twice (or where I don't leave the house). This creates feelings of disconnection / isolation.”

“Not leaving my house and therefore feeling socially isolated or like I "didn't do anything" all day...sometimes if I don't change my physical scenery, I can get this creepy feeling that nothing really happened or changed throughout the day and that I didn't really do anything. I do talk to my coworkers over Zoom, but it doesn't feel the same as interacting with real people in the world.”

Staying visible without being in person

It's easy to stay top of mind when you see your colleagues, team, manager, and executive team in person at an office.

People who work remotely have to make an effort to stay visible with their teams, whether it's the team that they manage, their managers, or people who could help them get promoted. That's why visibility was the 4th most commonly mentioned challenge.

“My biggest challenge is visibility: making sure people are aware of what I'm working on and making sure they keep me in the loop -- two sides of the same coin. There have been more times than I can remember that I saw a meeting on someone's calendar and asked to be included. The usual response is ‘of course, you should definitely in that meeting.’”

“My #1 challenge with working remotely is that I have close to 0% opportunity for career advancement. Most teams and managers don't have confidence in a remote employee, so I'm severely limited to what I can do. I've been in the same position for 7 years.”

“Lack of networking opportunities, difficult to gauge impact, limited growth opportunities.”

“Making myself available to my direct reports when they need me and being 'visible' even though I am remote (this includes my direct team, and other stakeholders outside of marketing).”

Work never ends when you work from home

Coming to an office and leaving that office clearly delineates when it's time to work, and when it's not. But when you work from home, a coworking space, or a coffee shop, work can always feel "on". It's not clear when work begins and when it ends.

Similarly, when you work from home, people around you can assume you are free even though you're deep in work, whether it be family, friends, or neighbors.

"Boundaries between work and life — knowing when enough is enough."

"Drawing the line between work and life. I used to just sit all day long and work, even when waking up and still being in the bed."

"Work never ends."

"Always at home, always at work."

"My wife is a stay at home mom & we have a toddler. I need to always do a good job making sure they both understand why interruptions can be very frustrating & how to do them well."

"Getting friends/neighbors/family to respect the fact that I'm not 'at home,' but I am 'working from home.'"

"Working with coworkers and clients across time zones, which can result in getting Slack pings at dinner or when I'm putting my kids to bed."

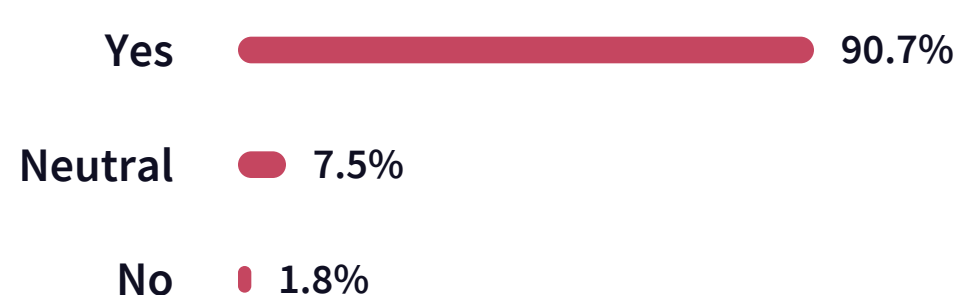
People **love** working remotely

In spite of these challenges, people who work remotely love remote work.

We asked the open-ended question "Is remote a good fit for you?"

A whopping **91%** said yes.

Is remote a **good** fit for you?



"I've always worked remotely, and always will."

"Distributed Work FTW!"

"Absolutely. I could never go back."

"Yes!! I love being in my home or choosing my location. I love being available for my kids."

"It's the ONLY fit for me."

"Yes, I love it. Never looked back."

"Yes! I don't think I can go back to being full time in an office. It's too distracting and eats up too much of my personal time."

"Remote work is perfect me - particularly for my unique family dynamic as a military spouse."

The responses to this question were overwhelmingly positive - people threw around declarations of love for remote work left and right. In fact, the word "love" was used 36 times in the responses. Plus loads of exclamation points and words in all caps. People just love remote work that much.

It's no surprise that an even higher percentage of people, **96%**, would recommend working remotely to a friend.

Would you **recommend** working remotely to a friend?



Why?

The top 3 reasons people would **recommend** working remotely to a friend:

1 Freedom and flexibility

2 No commute

3 Increased productivity

Best practices and tips for working remotely

We asked survey participants to provide their top tip or best practice for working remotely. It turns out a lot of people have figured out how to address remote work challenges like communication, socializing, loneliness, boundaries, and much more.

Communication

No such thing as overcommunicating. Write everything down. Send lots of emails. File issues for everything. Link your Slack threads from issues and emails so they're not lost in the wind. Accompany your PRs with screenshots. When in trouble, ask for help immediately.



Nicolás Bevacqua
Sr. Software Engineer at Elastic

Being able to communicate well through writing.



Mikael Cho
Co-founder and CEO of Unsplash

Slack emojis and giphy gifs are my best tip. They bring the human factor that could lack if you didn't have these small ways to express yourself.



Ryan Seamons
Co-founder at Sprintwell

Way of Working

Splitting the day in deep and shallow work. I usually spend my mornings doing deep work, and I spend the rest of the day doing shallow work.



Amir Salihefendić
Founder of Doist

Be hyper-aware when and why you are productive. Surrender to your natural rhythm. Earlier in my career, I was most productive in the night hours. I just accepted it and shifted my entire daily routine. Nowadays, with family, I know my productive hours are after the kids got dropped off at school. And then again after they are in bed until midnight or a little longer. And don't fight writer's block. Trust the process :-)



Kai Gradert
Designer at Angellist

Pay attention to your habits and design your day around your peak productivity



Sarah Daily
Digital Marketing Programs Manager at GitLab Inc.

Space

Create an environment in your remote office that makes you smile each time you step in.



Chris More
Premium Subscription Services, Head at Mozilla

You need to have a dedicated home/remote office space. You should stick to a schedule and get up/get ready each day and go to your home/remote office. You need to stay focused and not let the distractions of home hurt your productivity. This isn't working in your pajamas in your bed; you actually need to take working remotely seriously and remain professional.



Stephanie Thomas
Senior Consumer Forums Specialist at LinkedIn

A space different than 'home' even if you work from home. Gotta be able to turn it off.



Tim Heuer
Developer Relations at Microsoft

Meetings

“All or nothing” rule: either everybody is together in one room or nobody is together and dials in separately from their computer or phone.



Greg Caplan

Founder and CEO of Remote Year

Always use video in conference calls. People tune out when it's an audio-only call.



Stephane Kasriel

CEO of Upwork

We hold bi-weekly “water cooler” meetings on Zoom. Anyone can join, no agenda, just say hi. We often use it to commiserate over expense reports.

All the normal “good management” rules apply: never cancel weekly 1:1s, bi-weekly staff meetings, quarterly skip levels, etc.



Prashant Sridharan

Principal Manager Developer Relations at Microsoft

Social

Have a strong social calendar depending on your introversion/extraversion needs. Participate in social Slack communities. Make sure your workspace has sunlight :)



Rose Kuo

Technical Project Manager at [TED Conferences](#)

Being remote might mean that you don't have work friends to share that after-work drink with. Find other remote workers to build your own in-person community. Co-working spaces, meetups, and Slack groups are great places to make friends.



Vivian M. Chen

Founder and CEO of [Rise](#)

Get out of the house frequently. Spend time around other people when you can.



Velda (Harper) Christensen

Happiness Engineer at [Automattic](#)

The state of remote meetings

Meetings are an essential part of getting things done for people who work remotely.

They are the glue that holds remote and colocated teams (companies with team members who work from different places) together. And they are fraught with challenges.

For teams that work in person, it's easy to pop into a conference room, throw slides or a document up on a projector screen and discuss. Whiteboarding is seamless. Everyone can get a read of the other people in the meeting: Are people nodding? Smiling? On their cellphones? Even scheduling is simpler with everyone on the same time zone.

Remote meetings are reliant on so many factors, like finding a quiet space, good internet or phone connections, video conference tools, and time zones and energy levels.

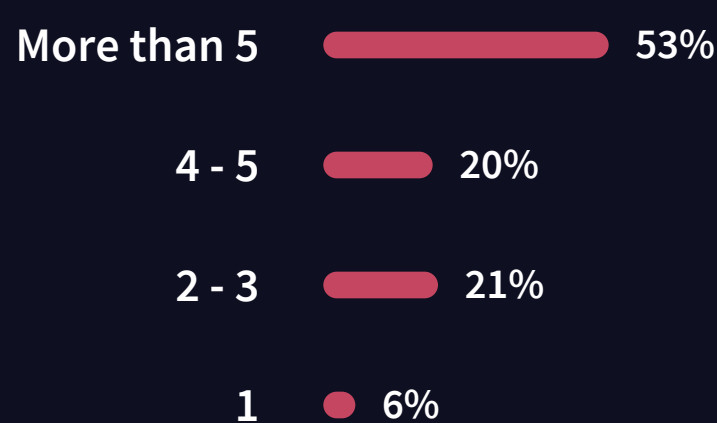
Almost everyone is exposed to remote meetings, even if they work in an office. Whether it's an agency partner joining from another office, a remote team member on the call and everyone else in the same room, people on a call in offices in different parts of the country or world, or a fully remote team where everyone dials in from their own office. We're all exposed to remote meetings on a weekly, if not daily basis.

Here's **everything we learned** about remote meetings, from people who work 100% remotely and those who don't:

Did you have a **remote** meeting in the last 7 days?



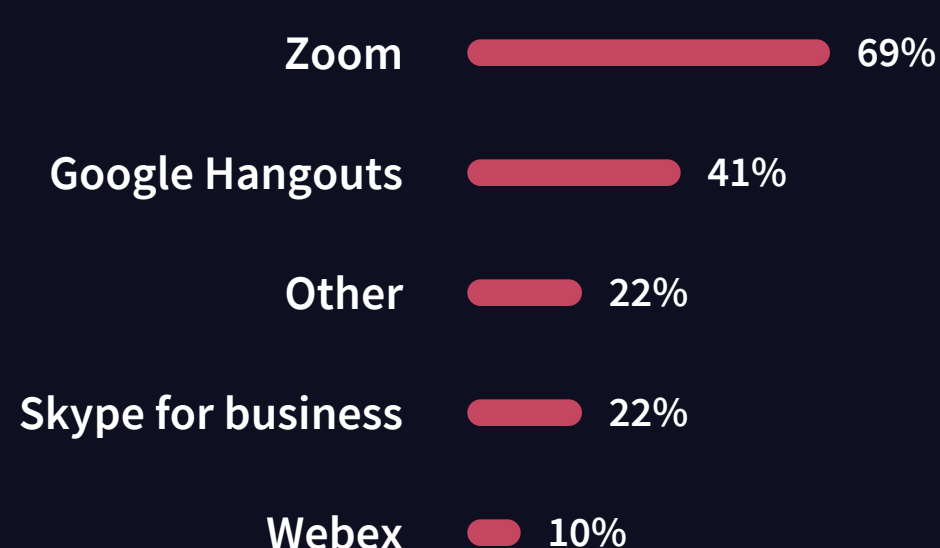
Approximately how many **remote** meetings did you have in the last 7 days?



Who do you have **remote** meetings with?

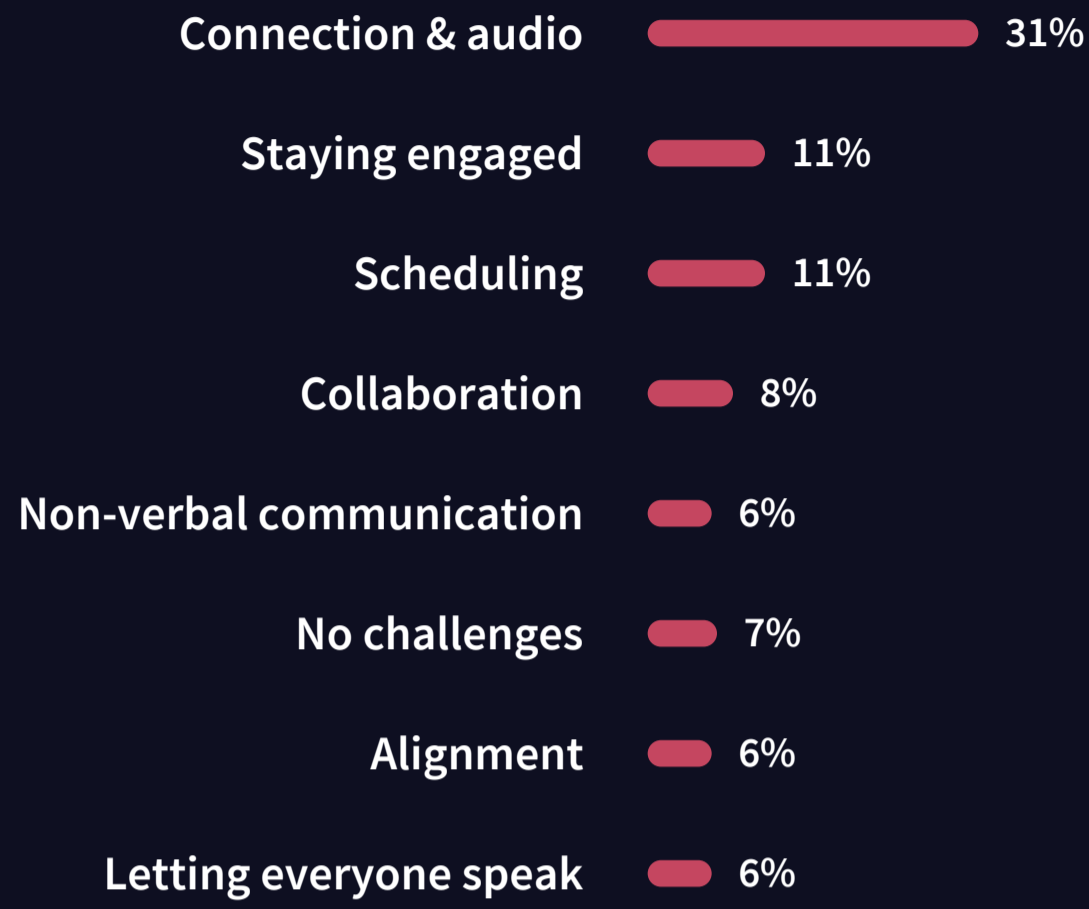


Which of the following video/audio chat tools do you use in **remote** meeting?





What's your #1 challenge with **remote** meetings?



Connection and audio quality

“Connectivity. Seems like there are constantly issues with someone on each call with their internet cutting out, their video freezing, etc. However, it's basically a tie between this and audio problems. People forget they are on mute, their mic is bad/fuzzy, they are hard to hear, or they have unpleasant background noise. Happens all the time.”

“Audio quality in conference rooms! People clattering near the speaker, hard to hear distant folks, ambient noise during presentations.”

Staying engaged

“Making sure everyone is engaged and contributing as much as they would be in person. It's easy to feel removed from the conversation, and the dynamic feels less spontaneous.”

“Without discipline, it's easy to have meeting participants to zone out or multi-task, thus leading to less effective or fruitful meetings.”

Scheduling

“Timezone sync. Google Calendar lists work hours of everybody but those don't necessarily mean that team members can't speak to you outside of those hours. I need to know those "unofficial hours" as well.”

“Finding a time that suits everyone since people can be in multiple time zones.”

Fun at work, remotely

What makes remote work near and dear to people's hearts? We took to Twitter to find out more. Here's everything we learned about remote pets, embarrassing moments, workspaces, and what people appreciate the most about remote.

Remote work and pets

Everyone is going cuckoo for remote work. In part, because we can be closer to our four-legged friends.

Here's what a few people had to say about pets in our remote survey:

“Want to take a walk @ 3pm for 45 minutes? Do it! Do it! Want to play with your dog for 30 minutes? Done!”

“Hug your kids or pat your pets or take walks throughout the day.”

“I don't ever want to work in an office again. I have a 600 square foot detached garage that I have all to myself (and my dog). And the worst thing about my commute is dodging the occasional dog poop I forgot to pick up the day prior.”

One person's top challenge with remote meetings, was, no surprise... “my dog barking in the next room.”

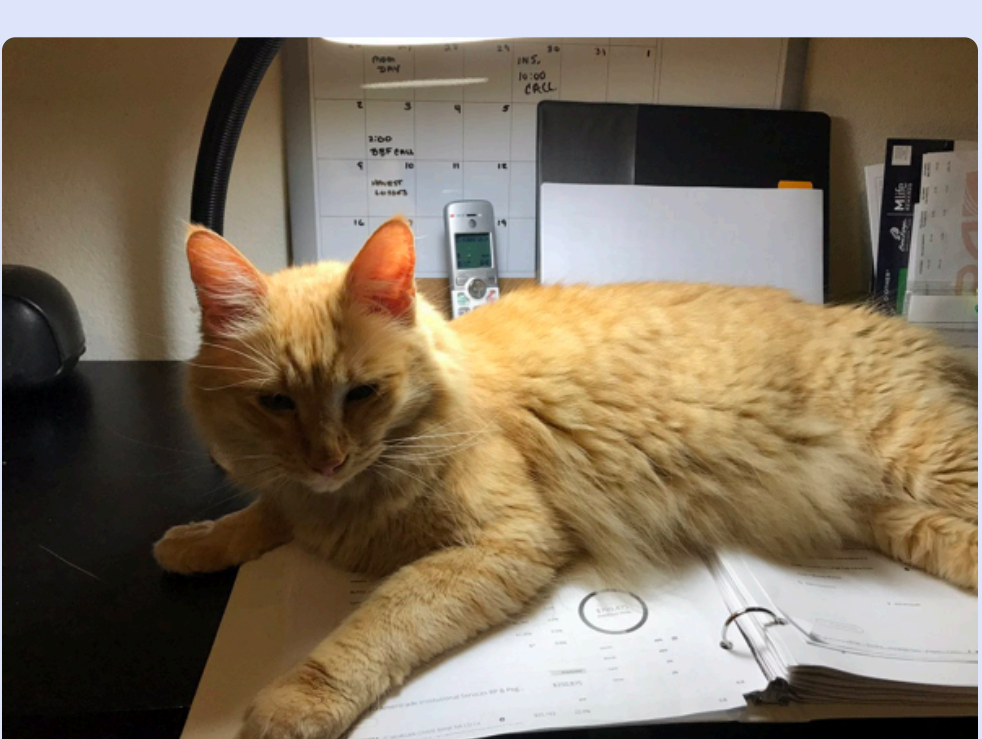
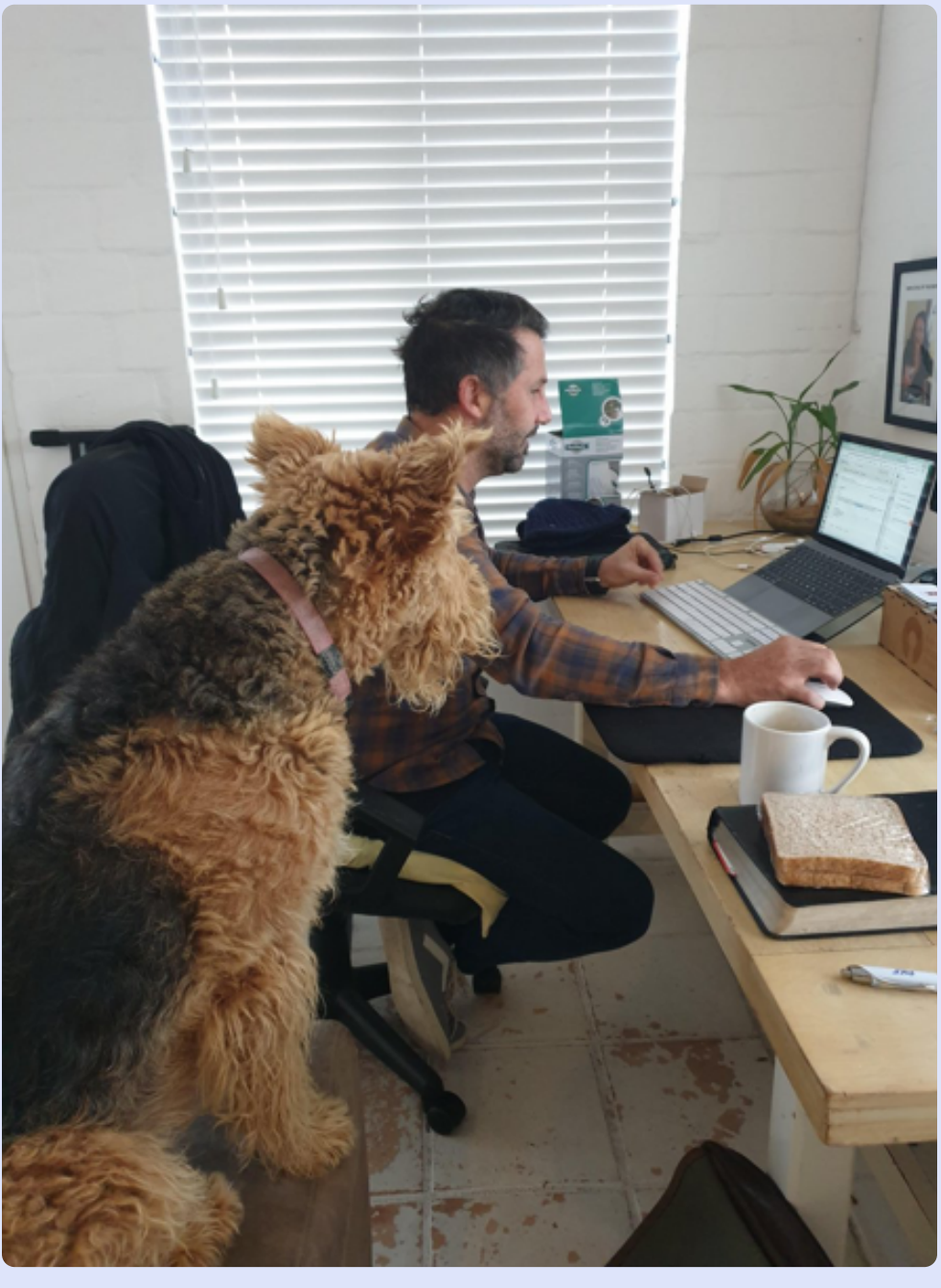
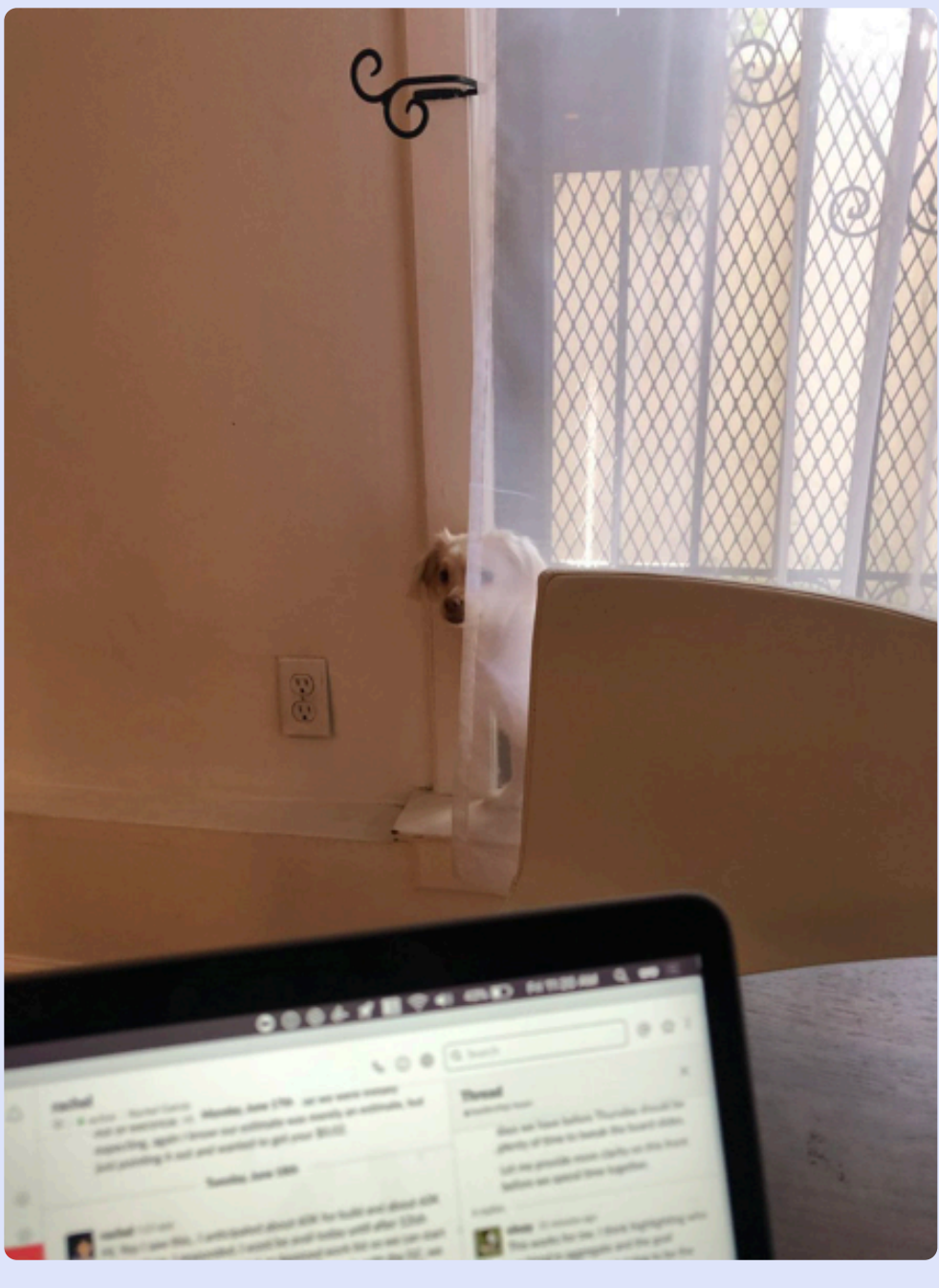
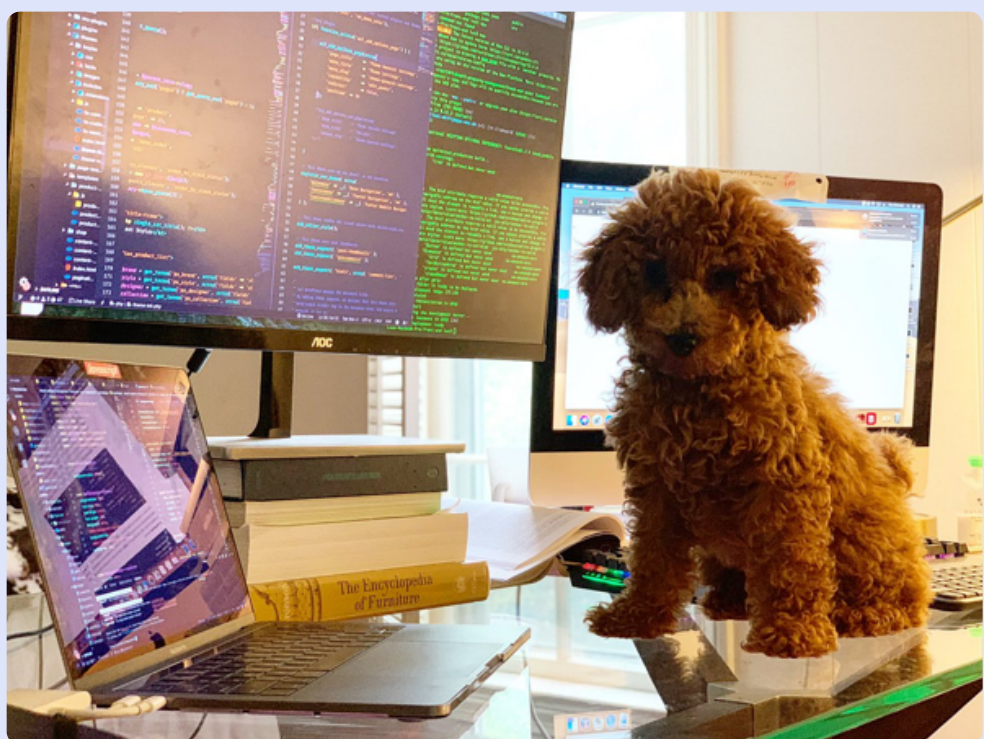
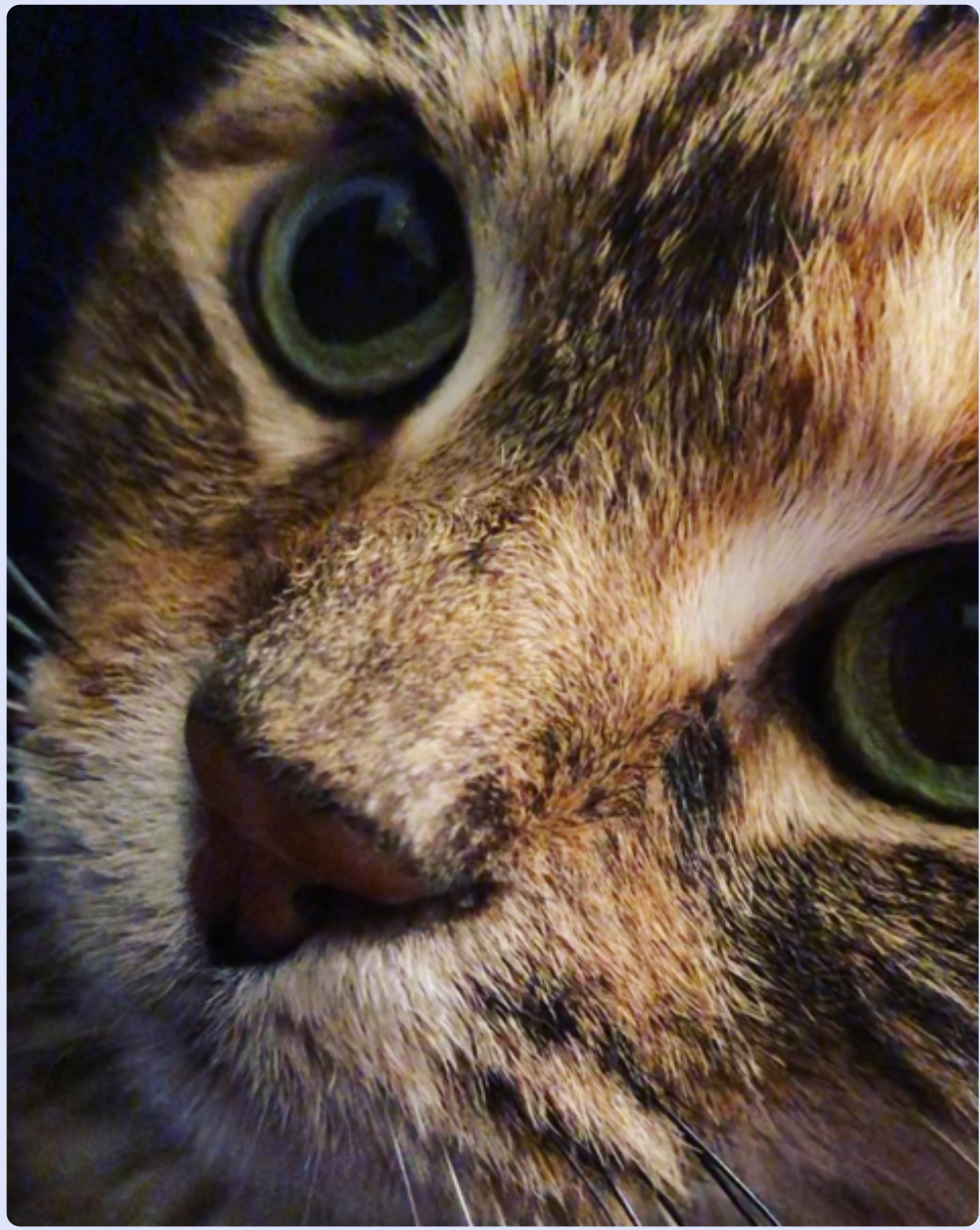
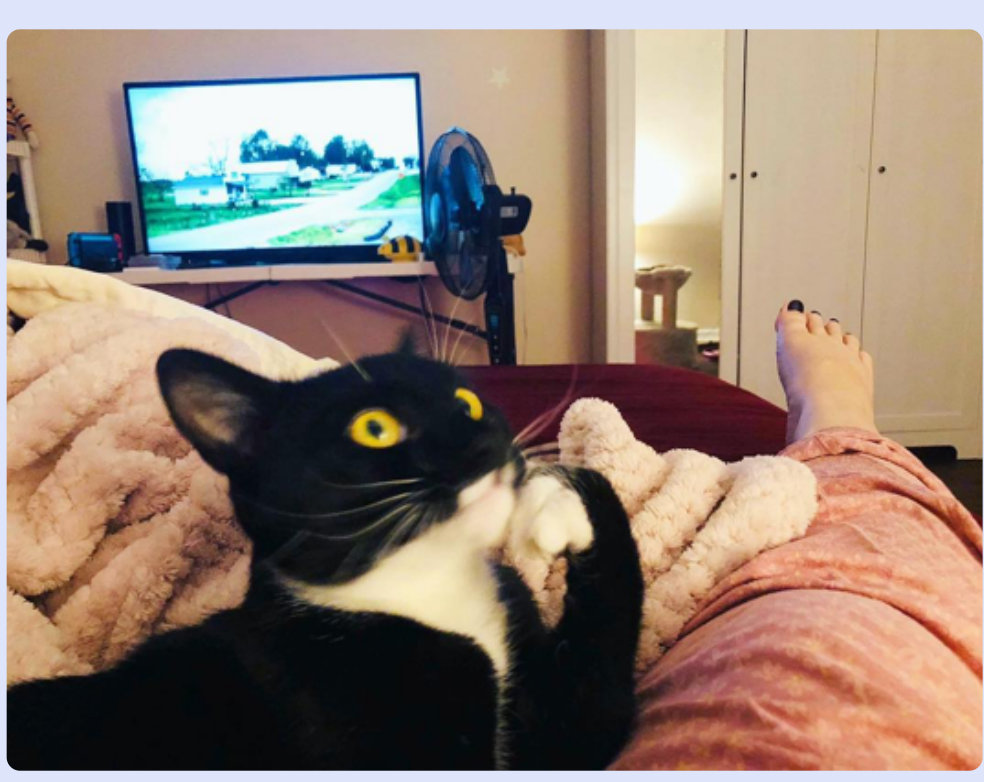
Not everyone loves the furry friends that come with remote work.

“Did you remember to mute yourself when you're not talking so the rest of us can hear each other even though your dog is barking?”

“[during meetings, people] spend an inordinate amount of time talking about people's pets.”

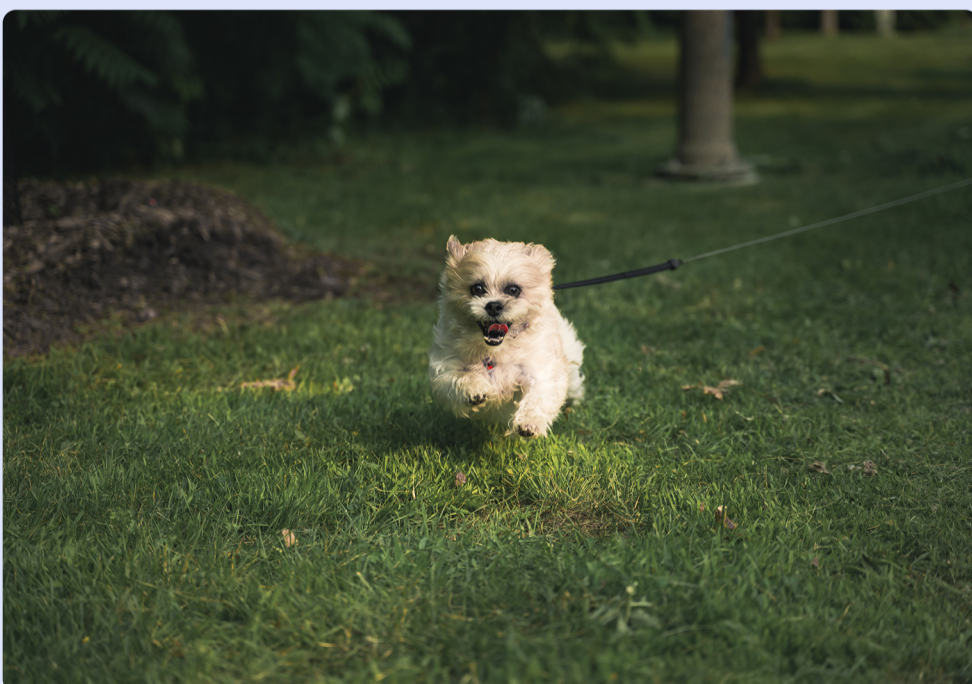


We couldn't help ourselves. Selfishly, we wanted to see cute pets that brighten people's days working remotely. And the internet delivered.



Pets of FYI

As a remote team, at FYI we appreciate the extra time we get with our four-legged furry friends. Belly rubs are always a good excuse to take a break from work, in our opinion. Here are a few of our remote work office mates.



Embarrassing moments while working remotely

Remote work isn't all fuzzy slippers and dog petting. Sometimes, we're so comfortable that we relax a bit too much and... embarrassing things happen.

Here's what people shared when we asked "What are your most embarrassing remote work moments?"

My dad coming over during my weekly 1:1 with my boss, hugging me, and asking to say hi to my "work friend"

 @BarronCaster

My husband has a habit of reorganizing the freezer during client meetings.

 @MJB_SF

I had just come back on an early flight after a sleepless night, and naively decided to tough it out by doing a normal day working from home. A Zoom call at 1pm was cancelled, so I used that time for a 30 min power nap...until 4pm. Stood up my manager and an important customer.

 @jpgcc_

Zoom automatically turns video on while i have morning hair.

 @cfarm54

My husband walked through the background of a video call in his underwear.

 @bethmorgan

While wearing wireless earbuds: getting up from a Google Hangout, going to the bathroom, and forgetting to mute.

 @kentbrew


Discussing a candidate's interview results on early conf call. Sternly told my colleagues "Hey! Upstairs right now. Mommy's on the phone!" My boss said "uhh...."

 @OaklandDD

Headset on, answered the door to sign for a package. Dog bolted out the door to sniff the delivery person, knocking off my headset and unmuting it. The whole call got to hear my "Zoe, no", crashing and banging, and profuse apologies.

 @BenSS

Probably my dog barking to answer questions that were really intended for me.

 @stubalcombe


While presenting a ppt and explaining an important slide Alexa starts saying "I am sorry I didn't get that" 🤖🤔

 @bikashsharmabks

Meeting with a client who shows up on the Zoom call in the bathroom - not wearing much... 😞

 @Sandra__Lewis

In the middle of a meeting I was running and sharing my screen, the conversation was hijacked to another topic for quite a while. Such a long time, that I started checking Twitter for what was happening in the world...while my screen was still being shared 🤖

 @RyanGreives

My WIP resume popped up just as I started an internal presentation hooked up to the screen with the senior team watching. 🤖

 @NoSylviaPlath

I was in an all hands when my cat jumped up on my back while I was speaking and dig into me with her claws.

 @angiegaz

What do you appreciate the most about remote work?

We asked people what they appreciated most about working remotely, and were shocked to have over 1,200 replies.

Here are a few of our favorites:

working in @lululemon pants

 @om

Personal hat: Freedom to work anywhere and on my own time (mostly)

Company hat: Ability to recruit strong teammates from around the world

 @rrhoover

The biggest (almost only) reason: Flexible schedule means I'm there for my kids.

#2: No commute. That was k-i-l-l-e-r.

#3: Productivity. Non-productivity in the office was fun. Chatting, coffee, books...

Here, non-productivity = zombie-ing over my LI feed. I'd rather work.

 @NikkiElbaz

I am closer to my son and wife now more than I ever could be working anywhere else. I love my job but I love it even more because I can be with my family when I need to recharge. It's the little breaks but also that even long days don't end with a long commute.

 @professor

Being able to live in a cheap city while working for a company located in one that's way, way more expensive.

 @BMCarbaugh


1. No unnecessary meetings/chatter
2. Save money on clothes and makeup
3. No commute or face time.

 @MJB_SF

Setting own hours
Managing own energy

Trust. For it to work at all everyone has to trust each other.


 @mscccc

 Less time commuting or travel during non-peak hours.

 Being able to work in comfy clothes.

 Peace and quiet to think and work.

 Temperature control.

 Ability to design/build my own office space to optimize my productivity.

 @MelissaHui

Not commuting to an office so I can Slack the person sitting next to me wearing headphones.

 @lukebussey

Choosing my hours so I'm always operating at peak productivity.

 @sariazout

Lack of commute; it's 3 hours a day I get back to spend with my family.

 @Mataway

- The lack of commute is huge
- Living in a place that's affordable, and has to be near a co-parent
- Butts in seats doesn't mean productivity. I get so much more done at home
- Working with people from different countries and backgrounds

 @sarah_edo

being home with my dog and not wasting time, energy and money going from a to b and back to a every single day

 @ericaeumesma

More time with kids. I also feel like I leave less of a carbon footprint by not commuting or idling in traffic. I can avoid too cold AC in my home office.

 @smulpuru

I don't have to sit at my desk, staring at my screen in an open office environment. I can work, do chores, work in different areas/places, run quick errands and I don't have to work 9-5 every day. I just have to work 40 hours a week on a schedule I determine.

 @ParissAthena

Not commuting, managing introvert energy levels, having the flexibility to go to doctors visits, vet visits, take care of the car without feeling guilty, over-communicating and being really nice in person!

 @tsunamino

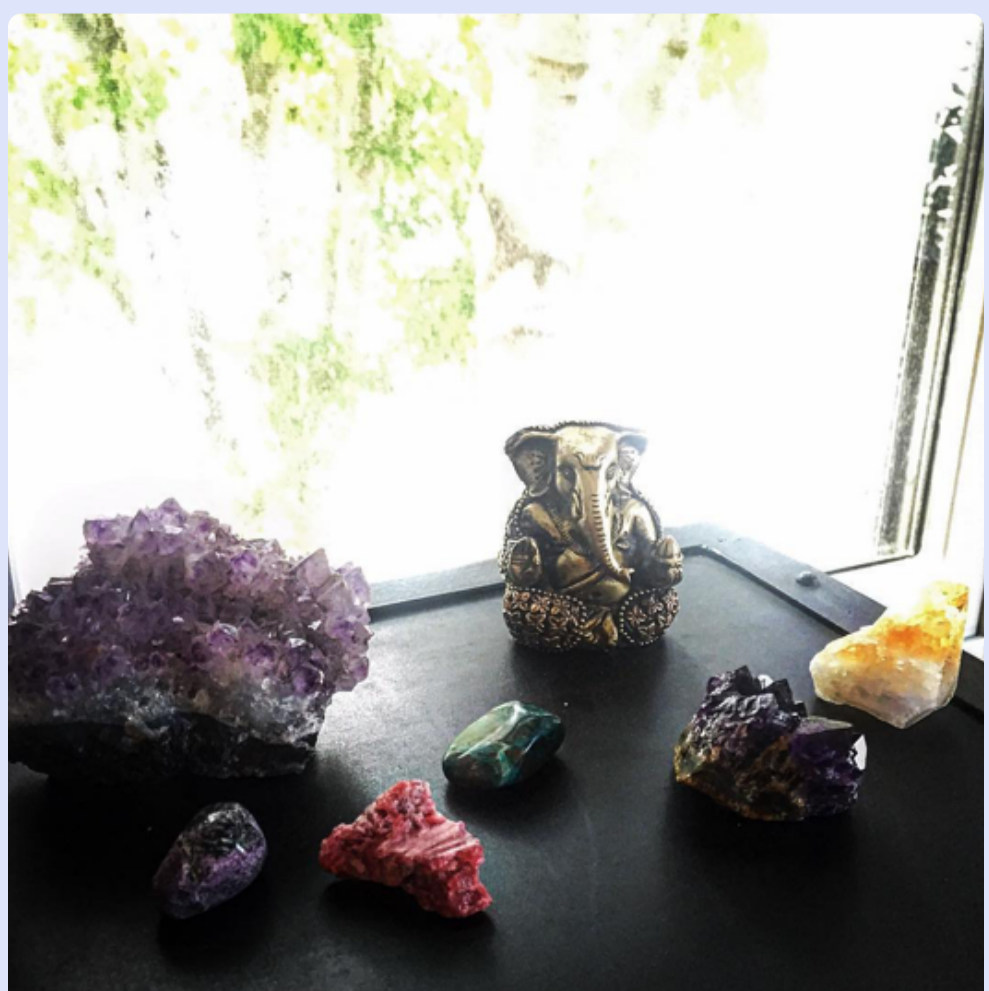
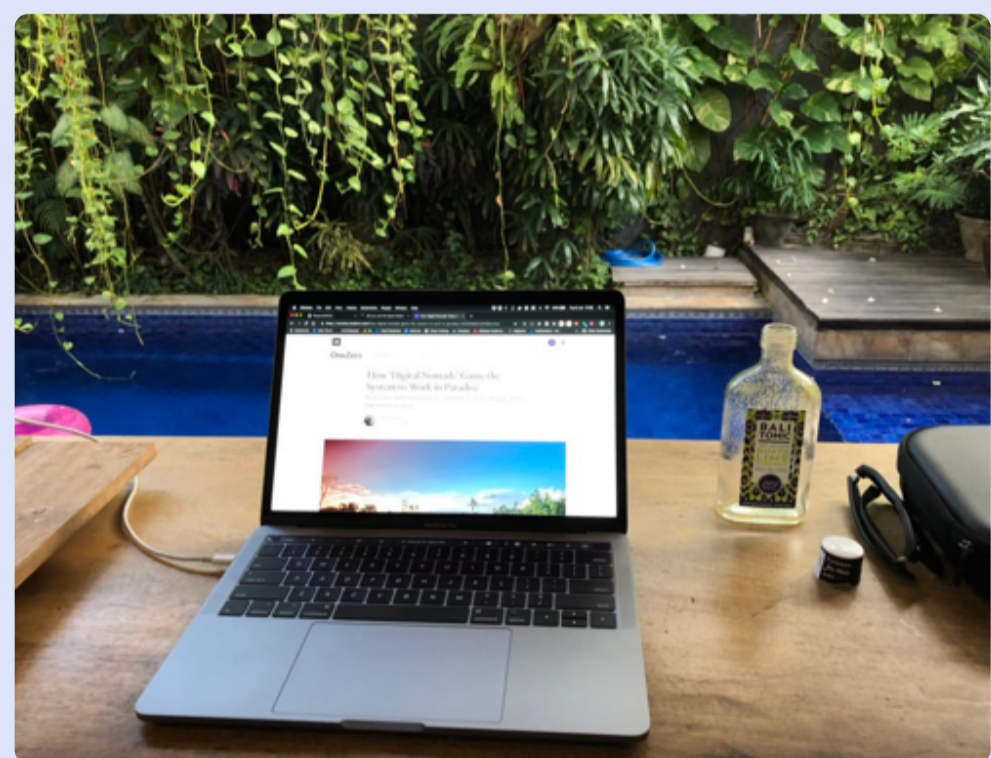
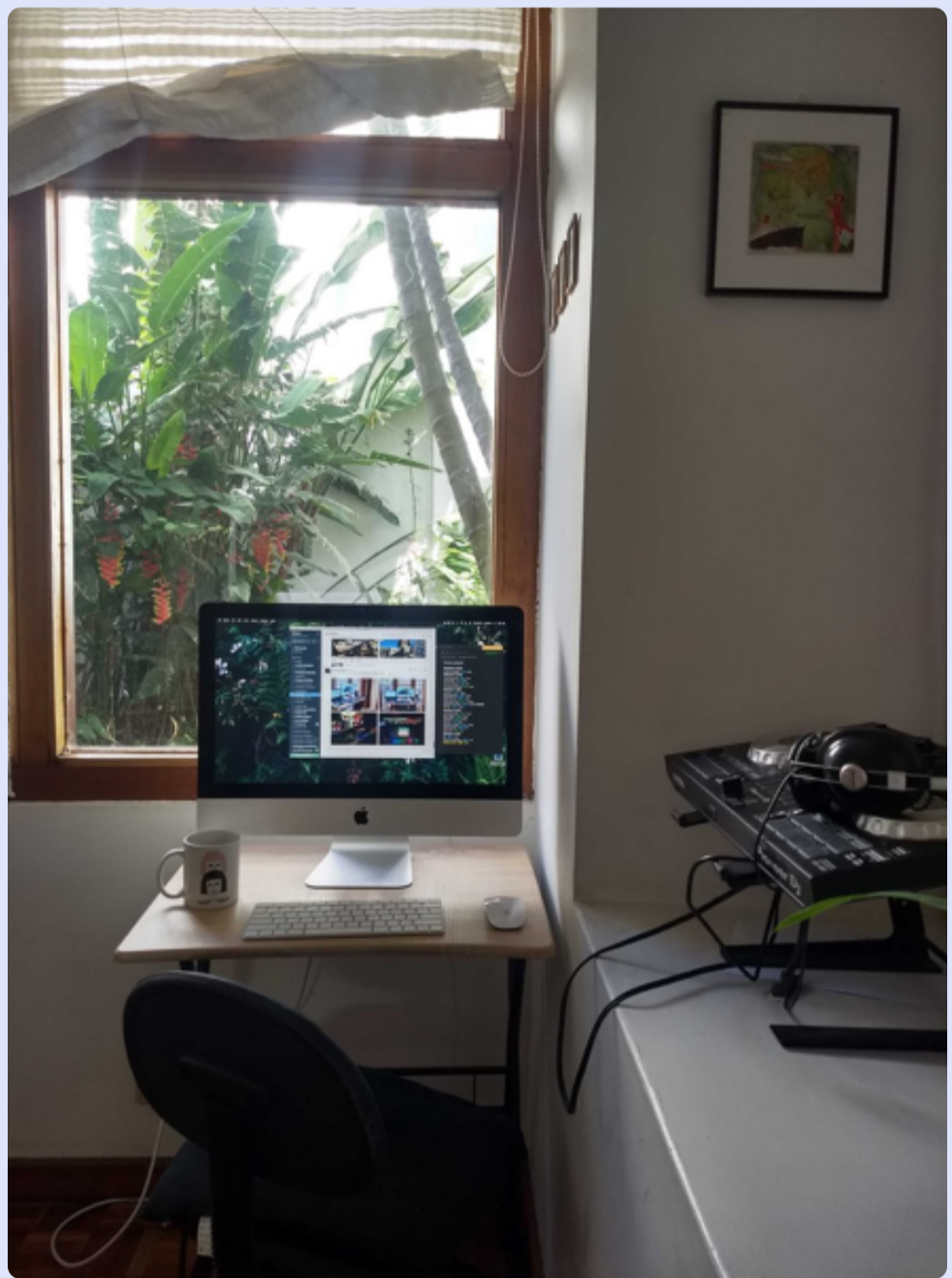
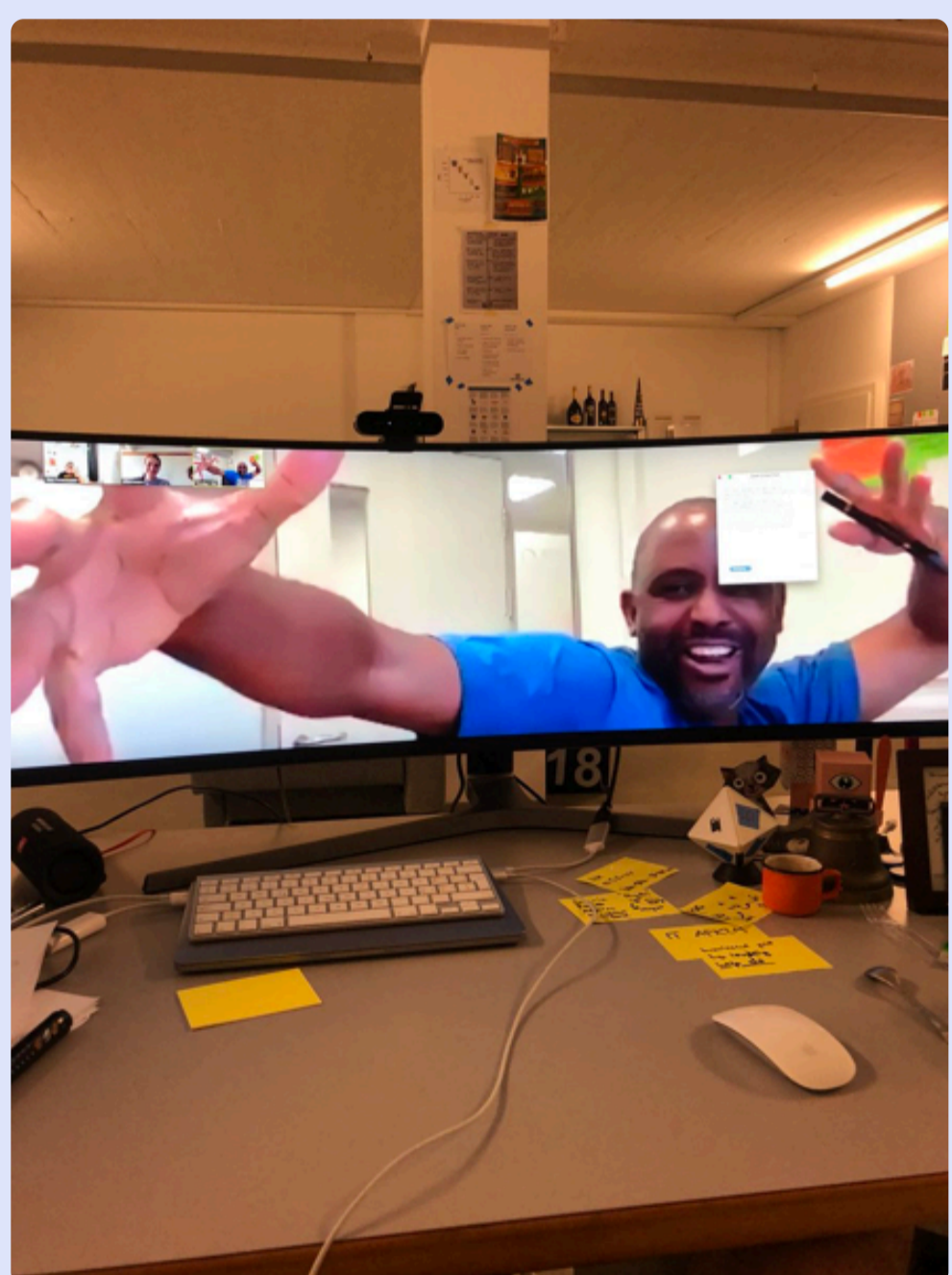
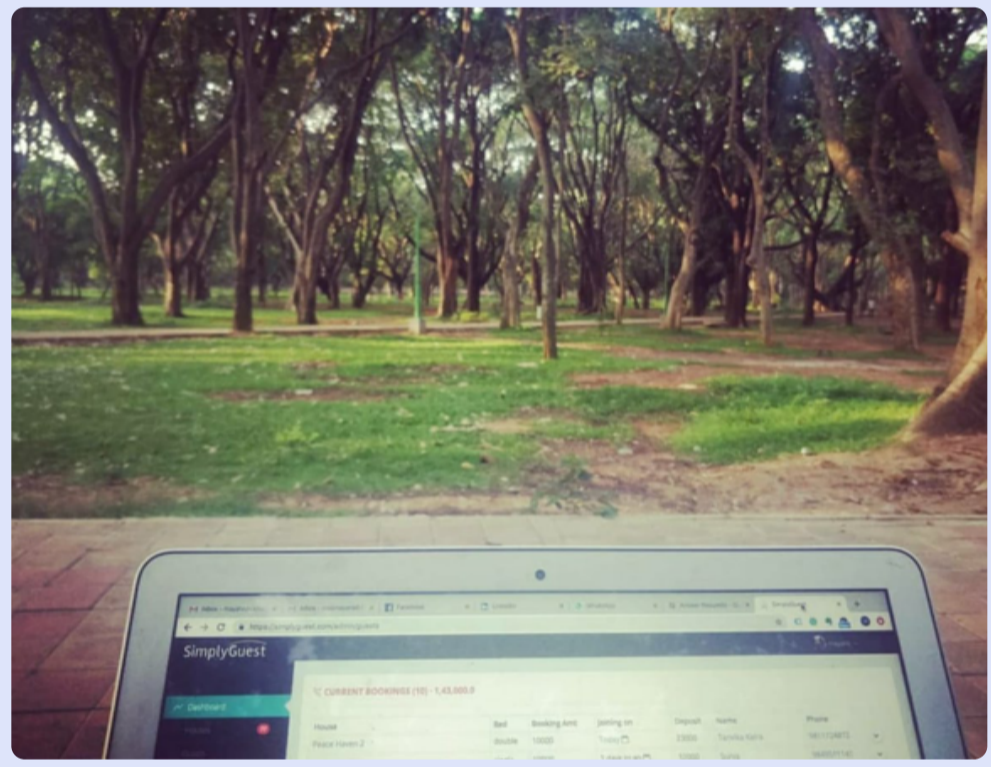
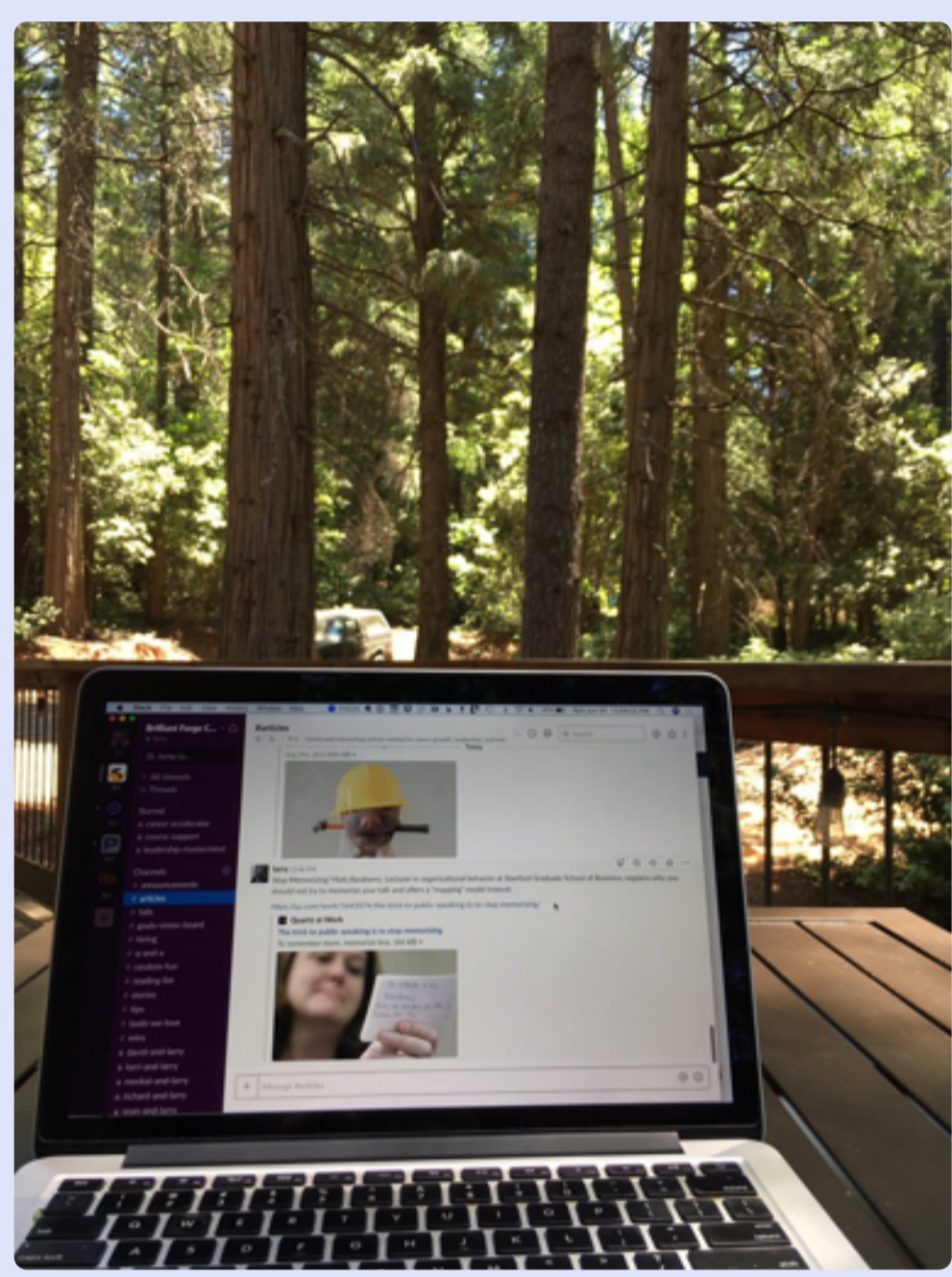
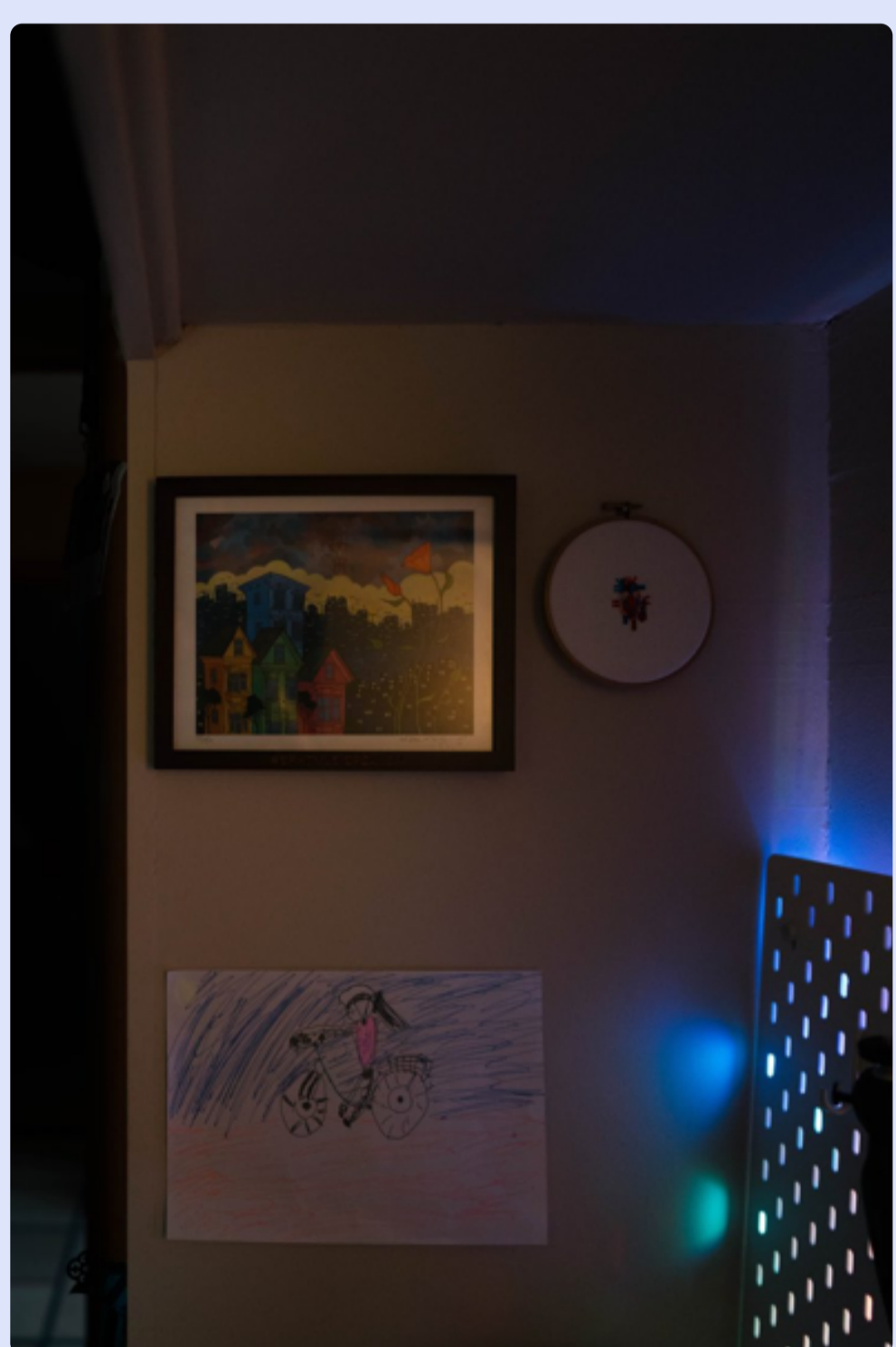
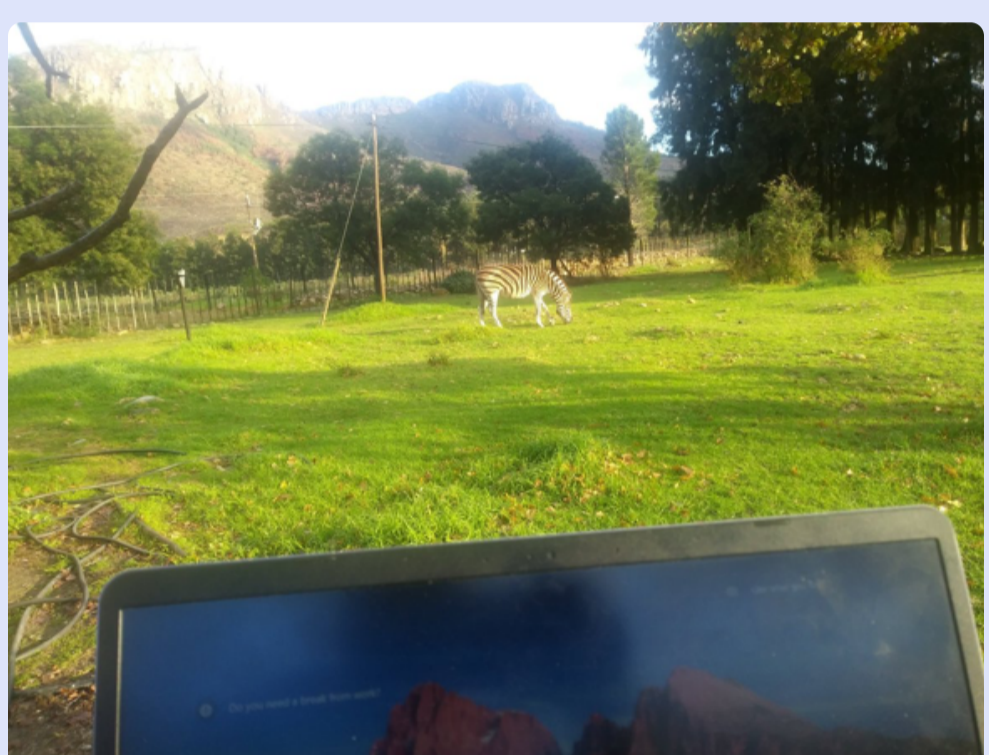
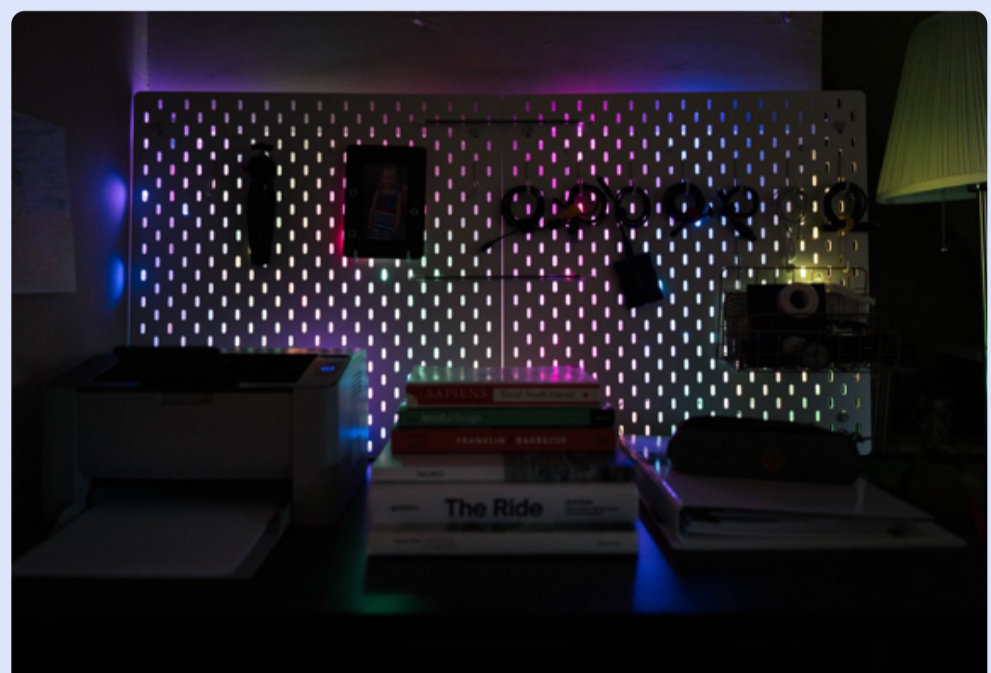
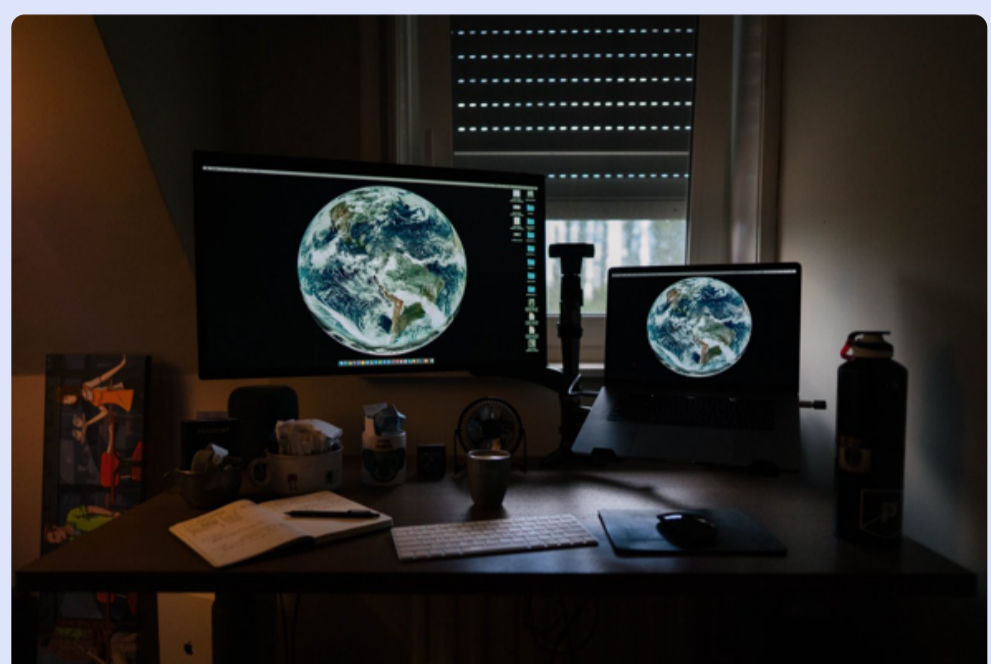
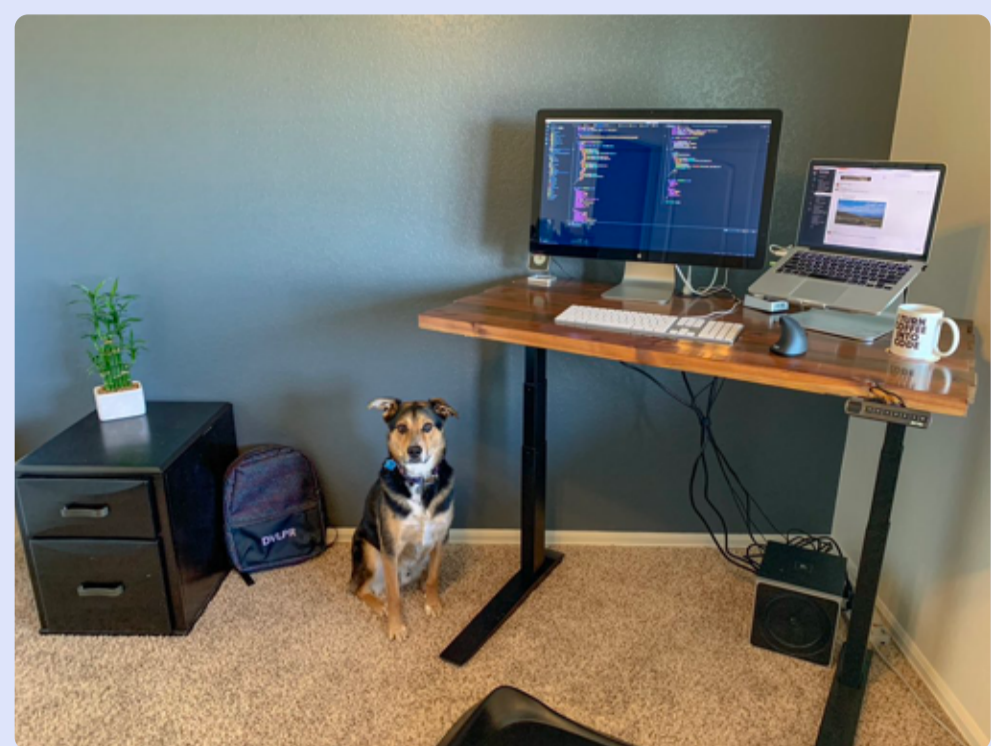
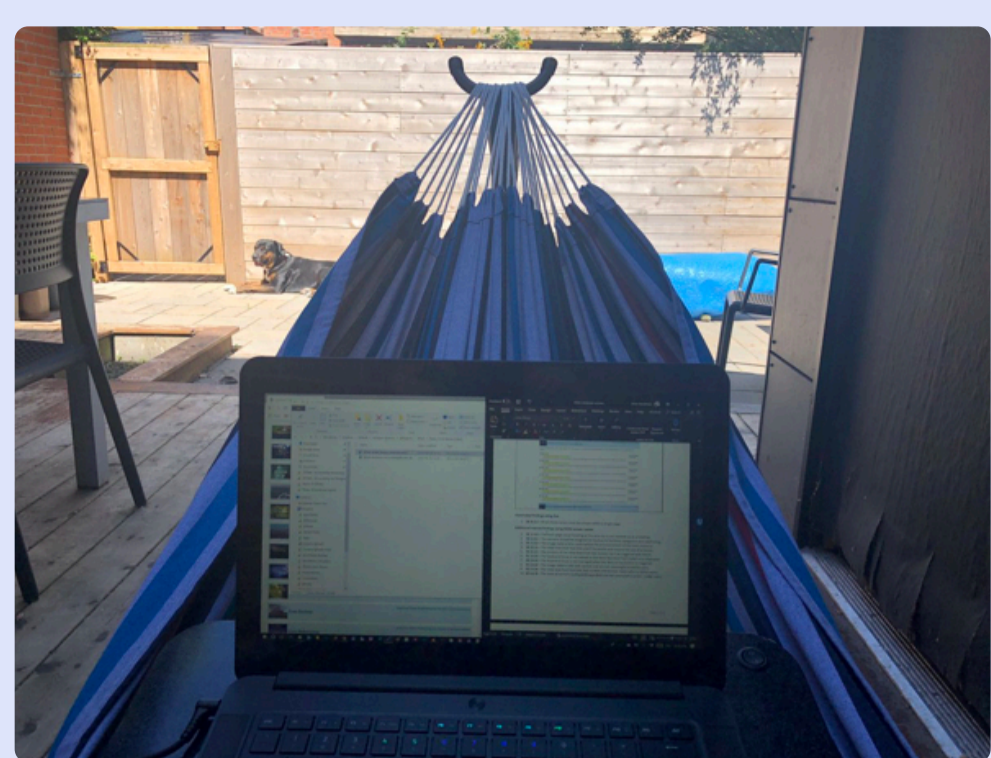
Remote doesn't rob my kids of daddy.

 @ericcllemons

Remote work setups

The home office is a sacred place for most remote workers. It's where people get into the zone. Where they have Zoom call after Zoom call. And since home offices aren't in a company building, remote workers have a lot more freedom to decorate them. Or, to ditch the home office altogether and travel.

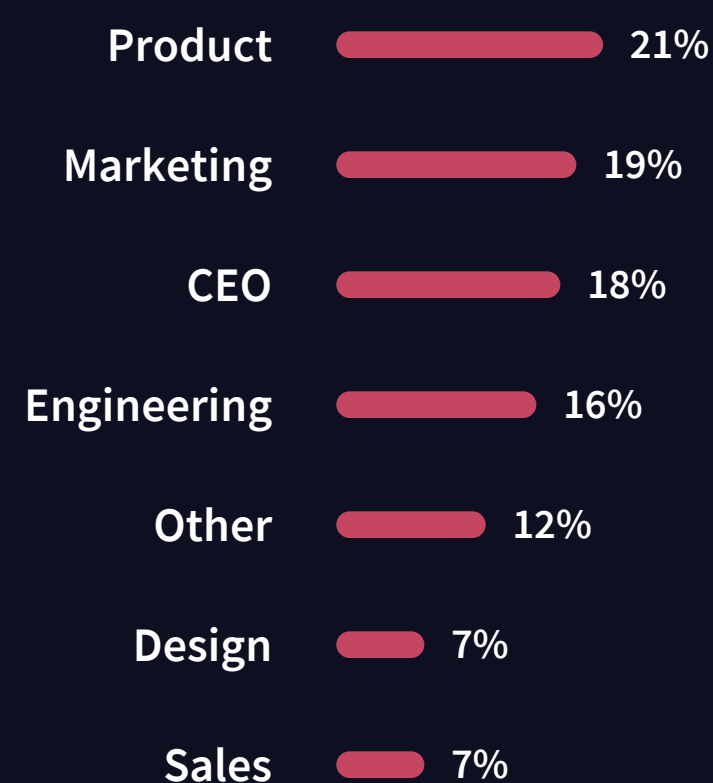
Here are some of our favorite remote work setups that people shared with us - including Zebras, RVs, and Bali:



Survey participants

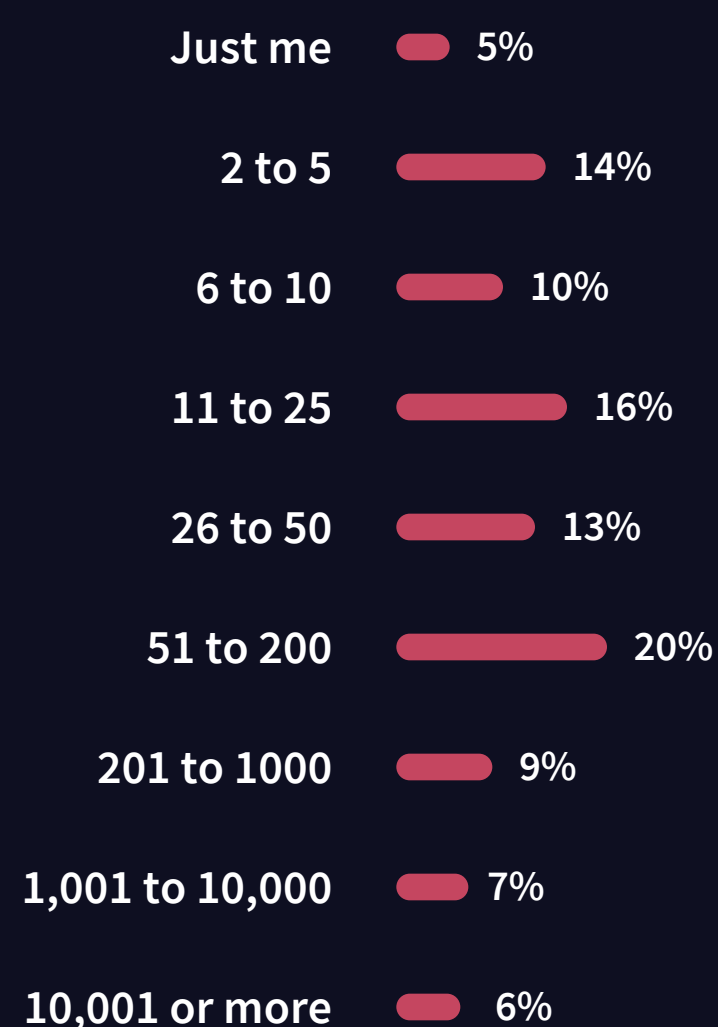
We surveyed **486 people across different roles** - including Product (21%), Marketing (19%), CEO (18%), Engineering (16%), Design (7%), Sales (7%) and Other (12%).

What type of **role** do you have?



Survey participants came from companies of all sizes. From companies of 1 to over 10,000.

How **many** people work at your company?



A majority (62%) of respondents were managers, while the remainder were non-managers.

Are you a **manager**?



A note from *fyi*

Remote has a special place in our hearts at [FYI](#). We're a fully remote team with folks based all over the world. We love working remotely! And we love helping our team (plus everyone else!) have a better experience working remotely. **FYI is a product that helps any team - remote, distributed or in an office - find information across the company, faster.**

Also, a special thank you to [Miro](#), who we conducted the remote survey with. They also wrote about [remote work](#).