

Vacation Tracker

LEAVE MANAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Current Remote Work Trends
Leave Management Struggles
Creating Leave Policies



Published: October 18th 2021

vacationtracker.io



Contents

Contents	1
Introduction	2
Current Remote Work Trends	3
Leave Management Struggles	6
What Are Leave Policies and Why Are They Important?	7
The Importance of Leave Policies	7
How to Create a Leave Policy	8
Consult your legal counsel	8
Decide on the leave types	8
Available leave quota	9
An eligibility criteria	9
Duration of planned absence	9
Part-time/hourly leave	9
Leave request period	10
Communication	10
Vacation Tracker's Leave Policies	10
How Vacation Tracker Can Help Your Organization	12

The information in this document is intended only for general informational purposes, and should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion.



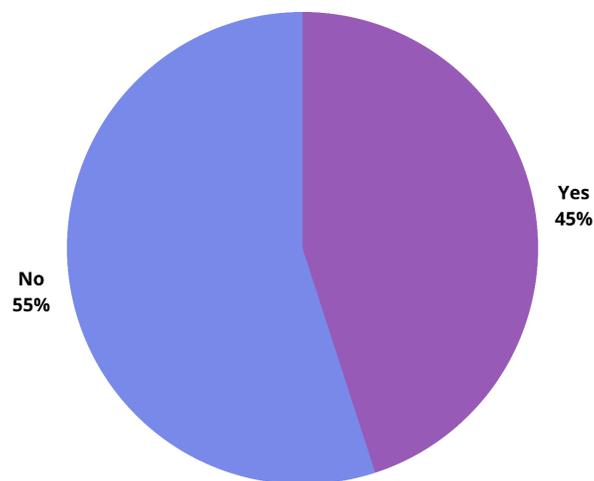
Introduction

The way a company is managed reflects not only on the goals that need to be achieved but more importantly - on its team members, whose well-being is a top priority. By having clear policies in place, companies can ensure their employees are productive and motivated, and that the company runs smoothly.

Now more than ever, we are reminded how important our work-life balance is. We are all doing our best to work through the challenges of COVID-19, which includes balancing work and personal obligations.

Many people had to adjust to working remotely, which meant, for the most part, working from their own homes. Suddenly, the lines that divided work and home life blurred, and thus came what seems like an ongoing work shift.

Are you working remotely as a result of COVID-19?



1

¹ 'The 2021 State of Remote Work' *Top insights and data from one of the largest remote work reports.*
<https://www.betterup.com/blog/challenges-of-working-from-home>

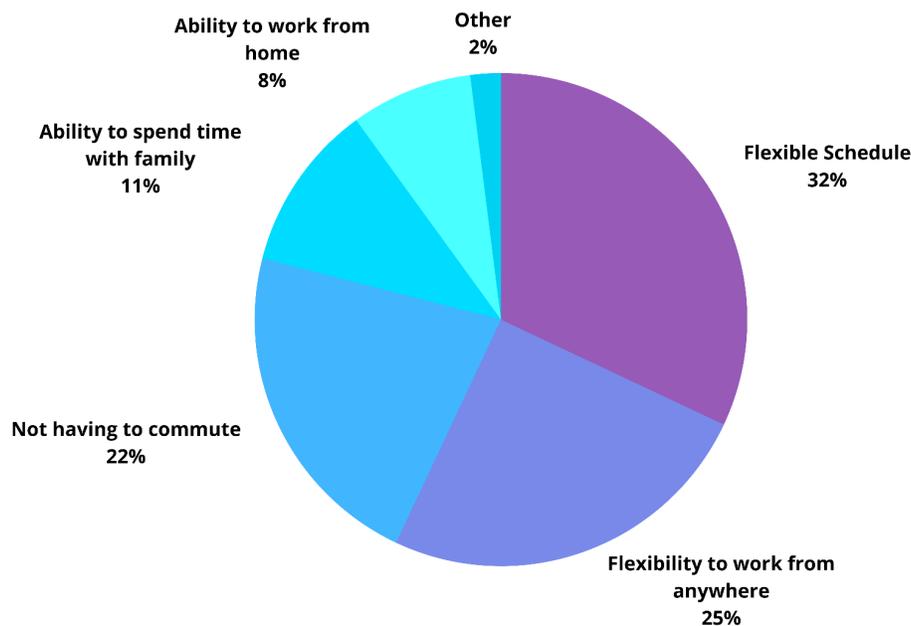


Current Remote Work Trends

For some employees, the world of remote work has been a welcome change; For others, adjusting to a work-life balance in one environment has been a challenge.

The biggest benefit that remote workers see to working remotely is the flexibility that it offers. Thirty-two percent selected flexible schedules as their top benefit, followed by 25 percent who selected the flexibility to work from any location.

What's the biggest benefit you see to working remotely?



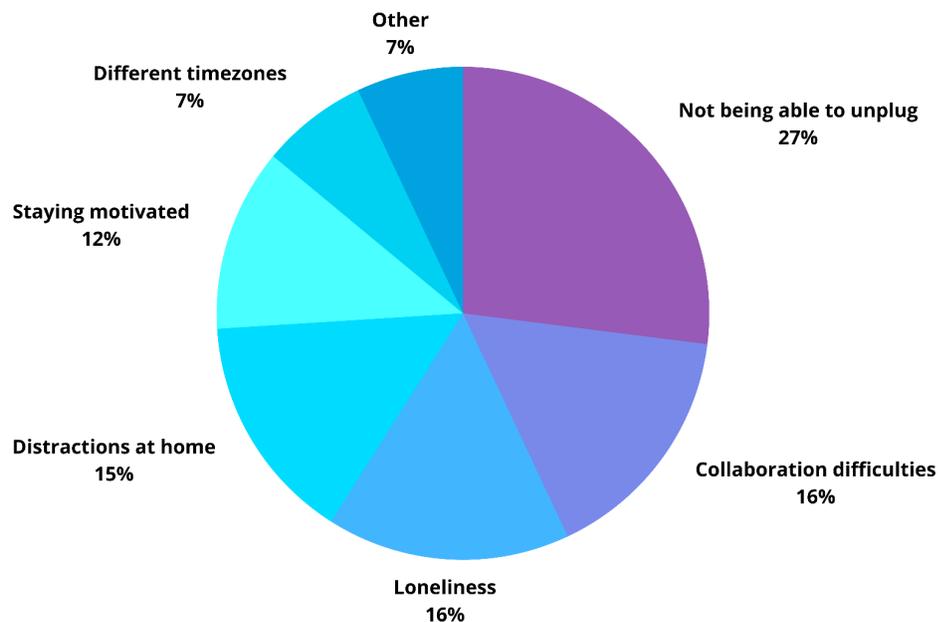
2

However, for some, the change to remote work hasn't been as great.

² 'The 2021 State of Remote Work' *Top insights and data from one of the largest remote work reports.*
<https://www.betterup.com/blog/challenges-of-working-from-home>



What's the biggest struggle with working remotely?



3

According to Forbes, some employees rate personal interactions with their coworkers as important as productivity, and likely to influence their decision to return to their workplaces. In their article, [Remote Workplace Trends To Look Out For, In 2021](#), Forbes also suggests that organizations will likely adopt a “hybrid” structure that involves both remote and in-person working conditions.

Employees across the globe have had to adjust to this new normal, and there is no indication yet as to when, or if we will return to the pre-pandemic world of employment. An article by Global Workspace Analytics estimates that between 25 to 30% of the current workforce will be working remotely multiple days a week by the end of 2021.

³ 'The 2021 State of Remote Work' *Top insights and data from one of the largest remote work reports.* <https://www.betterup.com/blog/challenges-of-working-from-home>

4



Even though a large number of companies were remote before, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the world of remote work.

Remote working by country and sector

% of knowledge workers in the following countries/sectors who can work from home*

By country

	India	81%
	UK	77%
	Australia	76%
	USA	75%
	Global	75%
	Brazil	73%
	Singapore	72%
	Germany	68%
	Spain	67%
	France	64%
	Japan	50%

*working from home is either permitted in some circumstances or permitted broadly

By sector

Technology & Communication	87%
Management Training	82%
Arts, Media & Advertising	79%
Non-profit	79%
Financial Services	77%
Legal, Law Enforcement, Military	74%
Manufacturing, Industry & Logistics	73%
Environment & Resources	72%
Retail, Leisure & Hospitality	68%
Healthcare	66%
Education & Research	66%
Government	64%

Question: What is your company's policy towards the following? (Remote working (e.g. work from home, work from another location) **Source:** GlobalWebIndex Work 2019 **Base:** 17,000 knowledge workers aged 16-64

4

⁴ 'Are businesses ready for remote working?'
<https://blog.gwi.com/trends/businesses-ready-remote-working/>



According to an article published by GWI during the onset of the global pandemic, larger companies initially promoted the work-from-home standard.

Although larger companies have more access to up-to-date technology, remote work is quickly growing among smaller and medium-sized businesses around the world. In 2020, many tech companies such as Spotify announced that they will be transitioning to remote work permanently.

Leave Management Struggles

Employers are also forced to adjust to these new circumstances. Along with the challenges of managing workflows, employee scheduling, and adjusting to their own personal obligations, employers must also change the way they manage their employees. One aspect that continues to be a challenge is regulating and managing leave policies for remote employees, especially if there are many employees working in more than one location.

Generally, this wasn't expected to become an issue, as no one could predict the impact that the global pandemic would have on our working realm. Many people expected it to be over within a few months. Now almost two years later, even with vaccines and mask mandates available, experts are still not able to accurately depict when this will end.

As seen in the above-mentioned report, 27% of remote workers said that not being able to unplug after a working day is their main struggle with remote work⁵. With that being said, taking PTO is now more important than ever. And because of the big change in the way we work, back-and-forth emails and excel sheets are no longer enough in order to manage employee leave properly. And the need for clear leave policies has become evident, because that's the only way miscommunication related to PTO can be avoided and employers can make sure their organization is running smoothly.

⁵ 'The 2021 State of Remote Work' *Top insights and data from one of the largest remote work reports.* <https://www.betterup.com/blog/challenges-of-working-from-home>



What Are Leave Policies and Why Are They Important?

A simple explanation is that within organizations, Leave Policies are a collection of regulations associated with the types of leaves that employees are generally entitled to and how often they can be requested/taken. The most common leaves within organizations include sick days, paid time off/vacation, parental leave, and statutory/religious holidays.

For more please consult our [10 Types of Leave to Offer in Your Leave Policy article](#).

Leave policies are necessary for employers and employees to understand how time off is organized, regulated and managed within their workplace.

The Importance of Leave Policies

- ❖ Provides clarity in the organization and sets expectations;
- ❖ Gives employers the ability to address unexpected situations;
- ❖ The company is able to prevent misuse of available PTO;
- ❖ Shows employees that they have options in personal matters.

Without a Leave Policy in place, many problems can arise. If an employee isn't aware of one's leave rights, they might experience stress, fear and anxiety to take an extended leave of absence, which can result in the employee's low productivity, lack of motivation and eventually - resignation.

For companies, this can become a huge problem - as they'll lose valuable employees, miss deadlines and create an unhealthy work environment. Employees' well-being is and should always be the company's first priority, and by having a leave policy in place, this can easily be achieved and miscommunication can be avoided.



How to Create a Leave Policy

Now that we've realized the importance of having a leave policy in place, especially during these challenging times, it's time to go through the steps of creating one.

Consult your legal counsel

Depending on your location, you'll have specific rules you have to follow when creating your leave policy. That's why it's recommended you consult your legal counsel before you start creating your leave policy. This way you'll make sure you're not breaking any rules while doing so.

For example, employees in Canada, and employees in Germany don't have the same amount of PTO days available to them.

If you want to learn more about leave laws in specific countries, visit our [Leave Laws section](#).

Holidays are also regulated by the country, and are not counted in the available PTO days.

Decide on the leave types

The first thing you need to decide on is which leave types will be available in your organization. Is paternity leave required by law in your country? If so, you'll need to include it in your leave policy.

After you've included all the obligatory leave types, you can go ahead and add some of your own that you feel your employees could benefit from. Whether that's gonna be a day off for their birthday, or a day off for a Conference, it's up to you.



Available leave quota

Your starting point - your country's leave laws.

In many cases, countries have rules on what the minimal number of days off an organization needs to have for their employees. This is only for the leave types that are required by law.

For all other leave types you've added on top of the required ones, it's up to you to decide how many days off is available in a leave type.

You can also add days off for a specific employee if you feel they've deserved it during their work.

An eligibility criteria

Many companies have Accruals - which means available PTO isn't available as soon as you start working for a company, but after a specific number of days. Depending on the company, employees can accrue days on a monthly, bi-monthly, weekly or daily basis. This all depends on your company, or on the law, in case your location has certain regulations when it comes to leave accruals.

There's also an option where you grant your employees all of the available leave quota as soon as they start working.

Duration of planned absence

Many companies have rules when it comes to the number of consecutive days an employee can request at once. This is most commonly related to vacations.

However, this is also something that depends on the leave type, because Maternity leave lasts longer and is regulated by the country's law.

Part-time/hourly leave

It's up to the organization to decide whether they'll offer part-time and hourly leave in addition to the full day leave.



Leave request period

When creating your leave policy, it's important to specify how many days in advance an employee should request their time off.

Communication

Another important thing to note when communicating your leave policy to your employees is the channel through which they'll be requesting leave. That can be done through email, HR softwares, leave management system, spreadsheets and so on.

Once you've created your leave policy, you need an efficient way to manage everything. Keeping track of employees' vacations is time consuming and prone to errors. That's why having a leave management software, such as Vacation Tracker, can be very helpful.

By using Vacation Tracker, you'll be able to automate your leave tracking process. From counting accruals to notifying your team of planned absences.

Vacation Tracker's Leave Policies

Within Vacation Tracker, leave policies are linked to leave types and are designed to be easy to set and understand. Each leave policy is tied to a specific location previously set within Vacation Tracker. You can have multiple locations, and different leave policies for each of them.

The settings for the leave type/ leave policy can include options such as requiring approval, allowing half-days, and allowing a negative balance. Depending on the needs of the organization, the leave policy options can be customized and updated at any time.



Select Leave Type ————— 2 Assign Leave Policy

You can use a template from another leave or location.

Copy Policy From [?]:

Leave Policy

Accrual Type [?]:

Approval Required: Allow Negative Balance [?]:

Unlimited Days: * Yearly Leave Quota:

Allow Half-Days: Reason Required:

Hide Leave Type [?]:

Rollover settings

Rollover type: [?]:

* Max number of days:

6

Leave tracking tools are beneficial and can ease the burden of manually updating calendars, spreadsheets and email requests. Vacation Tracker has been around since 2018 and our system is designed to manage leave policies for all types of companies, including those who work remotely.

As a leading leave tracking tool, we strive to provide our clients with as many customization options as possible. Our system allows employers to create and customize as many leave types and as needed!

⁶ Learn more: <https://vacationtracker.crisp.help/en/article/how-do-i-create-and-configure-leave-policies-14cflyu/>



Additional information on Leave Policies can be found on our Help Desk article: [How Do I Create and Configure Leave Policies?](#)

As a bonus, within Vacation Tracker, statutory/bank and religious holidays can be set and are automatically given to employees; There's no need to send a request to have a holiday off.

More information on setting holidays within Vacation Tracker can be found here: [How Do I Set Holidays?](#)

How Vacation Tracker Can Help Your Organization

It can be difficult for employers to keep track of, and manage existing leave policies for multiple locations and holidays while working remotely. It can also be unclear for employees to understand what leaves they are still entitled to while working from home. Using Vacation Tracker to create leave types and leave policies can help clarify some of these questions.

Our system provides a clear breakdown of the leave entitlements for each employee, which is visible on their profile page. The quota amount will automatically update once leaves have been requested and approved. This can help employees and their managers keep track of their remaining leave balances. Vacation Tracker will also display the upcoming holidays for each location for all employees on the calendar view.

Planning and assigning workloads are simple when managers know who is away. When using our Slack and Microsoft Teams integrations, leave notifications can be sent to employees on a daily and/or weekly basis. These notifications will include upcoming scheduled leaves and holidays.

Information on types of notifications that can be set within Vacation Tracker can be found here: [Guide: What Types Of Notifications Can I Set?](#)

Employees can also send leave requests using the Slack and Microsoft Teams integrations. This can make it easier for sick days and emergency leaves to be sent to managers. Once a



request has been submitted, it is sent automatically for approval. When the request is approved, it is automatically included in the calendar view, as well as the upcoming leaves.

For more information on requesting leaves, please see the following guide: [How Do I Request A Leave](#)

Managing leave policies and tracking time off should not be a cumbersome task, especially during these times. If you are looking for an easy way to manage your employees' leaves, feel free to reach out to us for additional information!

You can send us a [Personalized Demo Request](#) and schedule a call with our team, where you can learn about all the features that Vacation Tracker has to offer. We can also review your current leave tracking efforts and help optimize your process.

We also invite you to sign up for our [Free 14-Day Trial](#) to see what we can offer your company. In addition, you can view our online demos, which go over the basics of Vacation Tracker!

Feel free to check out our [Vacation Tracker](#) YouTube channel for more information!