

From the desktop to the cloud. Is the end of the classic office near?

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Working where and when you want, or would you rather have a designated desk in the office? Opinions are divided on this issue. One thing is certain: we are currently in the midst of a rapid process of digital change. Remote working is becoming more and more established and brings with it numerous freedoms, while the traditional office scores with social and productive advantages. The solution lies, as so often, in striking a happy medium.

The growing importance of remote work.

It's just before 7.00 a.m. The alarm clock goes off. Just like every day. On autopilot, we brush our teeth, eat our breakfast and get in the car. Everything has become routine. The way to work, but

also the working day itself. Same time – same station. Little variety, little change.

A situation that is still not unusual for many employees today. The daily trip to the traditional office has become established over the years. It is only recently that the usual structures have been increasingly broken up, driven in particular by the coronavirus crisis. Remote working is the keyword. This means working flexibly from anywhere and requires no or very little presence in the company. Working from home, mobile and hybrid working have suddenly become the new reality for many. Some believe it is a short-term trend, others see it as a seminal reality. The fact that we are in the midst of a change process driven by advancing digitization is undisputed. To what extent varies from industry to industry and from company to company.

Working from home in particular was a widespread tool used to ensure social distancing during the crisis. As a result, the discussion about a long-term shift towards working from home comes up again and again. Supporters see their daily work routine within their own four walls. Visits to the office should only take place for special purposes such as important meetings. One objection raised in this case is the lack of social interaction. Many people noticed this during the weeks and months of lockdown: they miss the contact with colleagues. In this context, the limited exchange of thoughts and ideas inspired in particular by collaborating in the same room together, is also criticised, because creativity and innovation need social friction.

Remote work is not the same as working from home.

Will we therefore make the daily pilgrimage back to the office after all after the crisis? No, say supporters of hybrid and mobile working. Many of them do not see their daily work routine at home or in the traditional office. They want to decide for themselves when and, above all, where they work. Generation Z in particular is pushing more and more towards free and remote working. The trend, for example, is to set up an office in a holiday destination. This new model is called workation, a combination of work and vacation. Work is done where others go on holiday. In our latitudes, for example, destinations such as Dubai, Cape Town, Mallorca or Greece are at the top of the list of popular workation destinations, mainly because of the relatively small time difference. However, you don't necessarily have to go far afield for a relaxing workation experience. Even the nearby lake or a stay in the mountains provides a change of scenery in the daily work routine. The workation model is an attractive solution, especially for digital nomads, but it requires a lot of planning and discipline. With the sun, beach and sea luring you away from your desk. The costs for accommodation and work space should also not be underestimated, especially in the long term. If you choose more distant destinations such as Bali, probably the most popular workation

destination at the moment, the aforementioned time difference could also become a real problem.

The number one reason many workers advocate remote work is the often long and congested commute. Those who still want to meet colleagues and are looking for a quiet place to work can find the solution in so-called satellite offices or coworking spaces. These are fully equipped offices that supplement a company's head office. They are located outside urban hotspots, which can avoid driving through city traffic and the like. Another advantage: work equipment such as good internet or ergonomic office chairs are available, similar to at the head office.

The reinterpreted office.

With all the enticing benefits of remote work, one thing is clear: good collaboration is absolutely essential for business success. Particularly in the creative sector, where it is a matter of finding ideas and innovation, collaboration is of key importance, and with it the office as a meeting place. New types of rooms ensure that work is also possible away from the classic desk. Open, but small-structured coworking units are ideally suited to team and project work, as well as the creative development of ideas. The creative possibilities for implementation are incredibly diverse: [creative spaces](#), [libraries](#), [working cafés](#), communication islands, team offices, [lobbies](#) or [activity gardens](#) are just a few examples of spaces that promote collaboration. External project participants and freelancers can also be integrated here. Silent spaces are a counterbalance to this as retreats for concentrated work. Classic communication rooms are being updated for [hybrid meetings](#). As a result, virtual discussion partners can be integrated into meetings using modern conferencing technology. These new types of rooms also make activity-based working possible. The aim is to create a supportive setting through different room shapes and appealing interiors, depending on the work task.

There will be no blanket solutions for office design in the future. It is always a question of corporate culture, workflows and corporate goals as to whether and how new working models are used. Last but not least, it is also a question of personal attitude. For some, the timed ringing of the alarm clock and the daily drive to work are a cherished routine that gives structure and order to their life, while others can think of nothing worse than the grind of the same daily routine over and over again.