**The future of work**

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It has been almost a year since the world was drastically changed by Covid-19. During February and March last year, Pakistani businesses, educational institutions, and corporations began to shut down their physical activities as many resorted to the work-from-home system. Our lifestyle has altered and perceptions about work have shifted to a great extent.

Where remote working or work-from-home was a concept predominantly followed in the West and especially by freelancers around the world, this system of work was relatively new to the older generation in Pakistan. The youth, however, adjusted to it without much hassle. Now that the vaccine is being given to frontline health workers followed by senior citizens and others, the future of work may as well be changed forever.

According to Korn Ferry, a global organisational consulting firm, “social distancing and mask wearing will, hopefully, go away once a vaccine is developed. Some experts, however, believe there are other Covid-19-inspired changes that will have some staying power.”

[WHO issues mental health warning stemming from COVID-19](https://nation.com.pk/06-Mar-2021/who-issues-mental-health-warning-stemming-from-covid-19)

According to Korn Ferry, five elements will redefine our future of work. They include flexible work schedules, mental health upgrades, data-based employee metrics, less corporate travel, and touchless tech. The lockdown enabled us and to a larger extent compelled us to work-from-home. This was achieved since tech companies integrated our personal and professional lives over social and digital media.

As we can save our files and data over our emails and on cloud storage, we have access to them no matter where we are living. Because of flexible work schedules, managers monitored their team and worked with them from the comfort of their home.

When considering flexible work schedules, companies would need to focus on the output of each employee. Since people are expected to work at different work hours or shifts, they will be judged by the results they produce and not who logged into the system the earliest or the longest.

[EU: ‘Real opportunity’ to seize settlement in Cyprus](https://nation.com.pk/06-Mar-2021/eu-real-opportunity-to-seize-settlement-in-cyprus)

Employees’ mental health must also be a priority for organisations. The Covid-19 pandemic and its resulting news, along with the life spent in isolation took a toll on the employees’ mental health. The trauma of living amid the news of people losing their lives to Covid-19 was indeed a painful experience.

Covid-19 also reduced traveling. According to a survey conducted by Fortune, 51.1 percent of the respondents suggested that business travel at their company may not return to the levels as observed during the pre-pandemic days. In response to the question, “have you laid workers in response to the crisis?” 22.6 percent of the CEOs said that more than 10 percent of the workforce was laid off. 48.9 percent said that they did not order any layoff.

The pandemic has also strengthened the concept of maintaining hygiene at all times. We have been using sanitisers ever since the pandemic spread in 2020. To prevent people from touching too many buttons and door handles, companies are expected to install touchless tech, such as elevators, doors, and entrance kiosks, that are hands-free to use.

[Ballistic missile strike kills one in northern Syria](https://nation.com.pk/06-Mar-2021/ballistic-missile-strike-kills-one-in-northern-syria)

It is yet to be seen when we will return to the pre-Covid days. However, with the world still gripped with the fear of being affected by a new virus variant, social distancing measures will continue to be implemented and followed. Life as we know it has surely changed. We are living in the new normal and we need to accept it. The future of work that was once an idea is upon us. We must adapt or perish.

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