The long-term effects of our remote reality on the workplace vary in severity, depending on a company’s line of work. Some sectors of the economy paused operations, trimmed teams, and then restarted operations with a leaner workforce.

For these industries, remote work will not have impacted companies in the same way as those that could shift 100 percent of their workforce to a work-from-home setting.

Knowledge-based industries have changed the most. These include Human Capital Management (HCM) providers as well as many of their current clients.

Fortunately, many of these effects were positive, and opened our eyes to new ways of working: Cross-border teams are now no different to those tied to headquarters, and employee wellbeing has been forced to the forefront of business plans in a way that can only bring more benefits long term. Plus, greater demand for digital HR solutions is undeniable.

So that you can prepare your teams and your clients to adapt to the opportunities of remote work, we gathered the five major ways in which workforces are likely to evolve.

**#1: New roles will emerge**

Strategic workforce planning is ever more important in the remote work age. Companies are seeing the opportunity to hire talent in lower-cost, emerging markets, but where makes sense for the larger business strategy?

In people resources and management, roles such as Global Mobility, Remote Work Directors, and Remote Change Management are taking center stage, helping to guide executive level talent management decisions.

This the moment to re-imagine talent investment and distribution.

In people resources and management, roles such as Global Mobility, Remote Work Directors,
and Remote Change Management are taking center stage, helping to guide executive level talent management decisions. Click To Tweet

#2: Nomadic culture will become more mainstream

The digital nomad is a lifestyle that first emerged among bloggers and influencers. Today, working where the Wi-Fi is, regardless of the country, has spread. Finance, HR, administrative, and other professionals are sparking the creation of remote work permits, known as Digital Nomad visas. While these visas were first offered in Barbados and Bermuda to professionals earning above a certain threshold, other countries followed suit and legally embraced the mentality of working wherever there’s an Internet connection.

This way of living — moving to different countries for medium-term stays and working remotely — brings complexities for HR teams and employers of digital nomads.

Each country has different regulations that employers must respect. The ruling on whether taxes should be paid in the host country or the employer’s country is also murky, and depends on the individual country, length of stay, and even employment type.

For HCM companies, offering expertise in legislation for unusual work locations might be a new area of business to explore. Supporting nomadic employees may become a significant industry niche for companies well poised to adapt.

For companies, it’s imperative to proactively assess business risk, and form workforce location policies that protect the company and its employees.
#3: Digital upskilling will become a top priority

Technology advancements and new strategies for global expansion are creating different opportunities in innovation. Physical offices no longer represent a business absolute and remote, global recruiting opens doors for HCM providers to guide clients through wholly digital candidate selection.

A survey by PwC found that 61 percent of CEOs say their businesses will be more digital in the future. The findings indicated that employers will rely more heavily on technology that facilitates working from home, digital collaboration, and automation. Internal HR teams are currently adopting technology to enhance all processes, and this requires upskilling on a personal level for many individuals.

The need for rapid technology adoption is not limited to internal HR teams and their partners. However, since employees’ first and last contacts with a company tend to be via HR, the technological dexterity of HR professionals might be the most lasting impression.

Employees should start and end their journey believing that technology was leveraged to ensure a fair digital selection process, or a professional and considerate offboarding.
Fortunately, technology solutions such as Globalization Partners’ Employer of Record model can smooth this process.

**#4: Higher employee expectations will change how company’s form benefits packages**

Standing out as an employer is no longer all about offering a good salary, and genuine work-life balance is no longer an expectation only held by Millennials and Gen Z. Boston Consulting Group called the Covid-19 pandemic a “people-based crisis.” Growing expectations of flexibility, support, mental health awareness, and cultural integration challenged employers during 2020’s global lockdown. Today, internal HR teams around the world must quickly modify their long-established processes, and upgrade “quality of employee life” to obtain and retain the best talent.

The driving force behind companies is their people, and in response, global brands like Adobe, Salesforce, Twitter, Fujitsu, and Amazon have changed their HR policies to protect employees. In this process, they have facilitated a radical shift in working culture and possibly their output — many companies are just as effective, if not more so, while working remotely.

A large part of this increased effectiveness can be attributed to enhanced productivity. In fact, an early pandemic survey found that working from home increased productivity. Employers should consider matching this higher output with more incentives or flexibility.

Specialist HR providers in coaching or leadership may see this as a gap in the market. Training for companies on improving employee experience and retention schemes will need to evolve to match permanent remote work.

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**# 5: Closing the global legal knowledge gap will prove vital**
Regulations and norms that already vary from country to country are subject to regular change, especially as priorities shift in our now virtual-first business world. Authorities expect companies to stay informed of local laws if their teams moved to another country while working remotely, or if they hired internationally to take advantage of remote work.

Internal HR teams must frontload learning how to regulate employees in home offices, perhaps in multiple jurisdictions, and many will look to HCM providers for clarity.

Remote work has normalized hiring wherever the talent is located. This opens an opportunity for HCM brands to offer their clients a solution for building global teams and taking advantage of cost efficiencies and skilled talent available around the world. By partnering with a global Employer of Record, HR-specialized companies can facilitate their customers’ international expansion and grow alongside their clients.

**Supporting the employee lifecycle end-to-end**

As companies evaluate how to communicate across time zones, set up effective knowledge sharing processes, manage health and wellbeing, and protect client data, HR professionals will lead the way.

If you’d like to know more about how to support your clients as they switch to permanent remote work, check out our guide on the employee lifecycle and learn the best practices at each stage, so that your clients can pivot to an effective remote global workforce.